Politics and Society in Scotland

Also by Alice Brown

CHANGING THE FACE OF PARTY POLITICS:

A Major Crisis? (with Werner Bonefeld and Peter Burnham)

Also by David McCrone

UNDERSTANDING SCOTLAND

SCOTLAND THE BRAND

THE SOCIOLOGY OF NATIONALISM: Tomorrow's Ancestors

Also by Lindsay Paterson

THE AUTONOMY OF MODERN SCOTLAND

A DIVERSE ASSEMBLY: The Debate on a Scottish Parliament

Also by Alice Brown, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson

THE SCOTTISH ELECTORATE: The 1997 General Election and

Beyond (with Paula Surridge)

Politics and Society in Scotland

Second Edition

Alice Brown

David McCrone

and

Lindsay Paterson

© Alice Brown, David McCrone and Lindsay Paterson 1996, 1998

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First edition 1996

Reprinted twice

Second edition

Published by

MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS

and London

Companies and representatives throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-74708-7

ISBN 978-1-349-14960-5 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-14960-5

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

Copy-edited and typeset by Povey-Edmondson

Tavistock and Rochdale, England

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
07	06	05	04	03	02	01	00	99	98

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	x
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
<i>Chronology</i>	xvi
1 Scottish Politics, 1707–1997	1
Scotland in the eighteenth century: integration and autonomy	3
The reformed politics of the nineteenth century	7
The growth of the central state	12
Nationalist challenges	16
2 Politics, State and Society	27
What is the state?	28
Defining society	29
Discovering the nation	31
Shifting state–society relations	32
Nations and states	34
Scotland and the British state	38
Scotland in the Union, and the Union in Scotland	40
Conclusions	46
3 Politics and the Scottish Constitution	47
Introduction	47
The nineteenth century: the era of the legal state	50
Nineteenth-century Scotland in a European context	52
The twentieth century: the era of the technocratic state	55
Twentieth-century Scotland in an international context	58
A new constitution for Scotland?	62
4 The Scottish Economy	70
Introduction	70
The Scottish economy: past and present characteristics	72

vi *Contents*

Key debates	77
The 1997 general election and the referendum	94
Conclusions	96
5 Policy-Making in Scotland	97
Introduction	97
Who is involved in Scottish policy-making?	98
Theories of policy-making	106
Prospects for policy-making	118
Conclusions	123
6 Party Politics in Scotland	124
British homogeneity?	125
The political parties in Scotland	128
The rise of Unionism	132
Labour in the ascendant	136
A nation once again?	142
7 Electoral Change and Political Attitudes	151
Is Scotland an anti-Conservative country?	152
Support for the SNP and for a Scottish Parliament	157
Scottish political attitudes	163
Regional differences within Scotland	165
Conclusions	170
8 Women and Scottish Politics	171
Historical background	172
Current position	173
Why so few women?	176
Policies to improve women's representation	182
The constitutional questions: a catalyst for change?	183
Response of the political parties	189
The 1992 general election: no Scottish Parliament, no gender equality	191
The 1997 general election and beyond	195
Conclusions	197

9	Ethnicity, Culture and Identity	200
	The crisis of identity	201
	Identity and ethnicity	205
	Understanding Scottish identity	208
	National and state identities in Britain	213
	Nationalism and national identity	216
	What is a Scot?	219
	Forging new political identities: the European agenda	221
10	The Scottish Question and the Future of Politics	224
	<i>Guide to Further Reading</i>	232
	<i>References</i>	239
	<i>Index</i>	253

List of Tables

1.1	Votes and seats in Scotland, general elections, 1832–1997	8
4.1	Employees in employment in Scotland by major industry or service sector	75
4.2	Scottish and British unemployment 1990–5	84
4.3	Unemployment in the regions of England, and in Scotland and Wales	84
4.4	Total unemployment in the Scottish regions	85
4.5	Employment in Scotland	86
5.1	Structure of the Scottish Office, 1998	101
6.1	The strength of Liberal Unionism in Scotland	134
7.1	Shares of the vote in Scotland and England, general elections, 1945–97	154
7.2	Conservative support, by social class, 1974–97	155
7.3	Party support, by sex, 1974–97	155
7.4	Conservative support, by religion and social class, 1974–97	156
7.5	Conservative support in Britain, excluding Scotland, by social class, 1974–97	157
7.6	Party support, by social class, 1974–97	158
7.7	Support for constitutional options, 1974–97	160
7.8	Support for Scottish Parliament by social class, 1974–97	160
7.9	Support for Scottish Parliament by sex, 1974–97	161
7.10	Support for constitutional options, by party allegiance, 1997	162
7.11	Political attitudes, by area of Britain, 1997	164
7.12	Attitudes towards civil liberties, by area of Britain, 1997	165
7.13	Attitudes towards a Scottish Parliament, by broad region of Scotland, 1997	166
7.14	Party support, by broad region of Scotland, 1997	167
7.15	Political attitudes, by broad region of Scotland, 1997	168
7.16	Attitudes towards powers of the European Union, by broad region of Scotland, 1997	168

7.17	Attitudes towards powers of the European Union, by area of Britain, 1997	169
8.1	Percentage and number of women Parliamentarians in West European legislatures (1997)	174
8.2	Elected women MPs in the House of Commons	175
8.3	Percentage of women candidates and elected councillors, by political party	175
9.1	National identity	209
9.2	National identity by vote in 1997 general election	210
9.3	National identity by preferred constitutional option	211
9.4	National identity by social class	211
9.5	National identity by religion	212
9.6	National identity by country	213
9.7	National identity in Scotland, Catalonia and Euskadi, 1992	220
9.8	National identity: Scottish, British and European	221

Preface to the Second Edition

The electoral events of 1997 necessitate a revision of the edition that first appeared as recently as 1996. The return of a Labour Government for the first time in 18 years would, on its own, have made a difference to Scottish politics. But added to that were two unprecedented further massive shifts: the Conservative Party lost all its seats in Scotland at the general election for the first time ever, and in September the Scottish electorate overwhelmingly endorsed in a referendum not only the principle of a parliament for Scotland but also its capacity to alter the basic rate of income tax by a small amount. The prospects for politics and policy in Scotland were therefore transformed.

This new edition deals thoroughly with the changes. Chapters 7 and 9 have been revised to take into account survey data on the 1997 election. Chapter 5 has been completely rewritten to deal with the new prospects for policy-making. And Chapter 8 discusses the developments affecting women following a general election in which the proportion of MPs who are female rose to an all-time high (although still only 17 per cent). All the chapters have been revised to some extent to take account of the new situation and prospects.

Yet for all that the book remains true to its original intention of taking not only the point of view of political science but also those of sociology and history. According to these perspectives, the events of 1997 were less unexpected than a day-to-day journalistic commentary might suppose. What happened would not have surprised anyone who had read the first edition because the events were the culmination of trends that had been developing for half a century or more. This message was not fashionable when we first wrote it in 1995, still in the aftermath of the Conservatives' surprising victory in 1992. Its caution may be equally unwelcome now, as the country starts out on a new constitutional future. Of course a Scottish Parliament and the electoral destruction of the Conservatives matter. But many features of Scottish society and politics will continue to be shaped by the same forces that have been at work for

many decades. The book is as much about these as it is about the undoubtedly important events that have occurred since it first appeared.

Why a new book on Scottish politics?

The time is ripe for a new textbook on Scottish politics and government. Since the mid-1950s Scotland has diverged considerably from England in its patterns of political behaviour. The weakness of the Conservatives north of the border is complemented by a discourse of nationalism used not only by the Scottish National Party (SNP), but also by the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats. The emergence of a distinctive political agenda in Scotland is, however, poorly understood. On the one hand it is often treated merely as a negative reaction to Conservative hegemony in England. On the other, it is seen as an abstruse and idiosyncratic legacy of former statehood with very few lessons for other societies. This book takes issue with both viewpoints. It argues that Scotland has had a high degree of civil autonomy within the post-1707 British and later UK state, and that a political process emerged through which conflict with Westminster is managed and negotiated. Towards the end of the twentieth century the compromise between Scottish civil society and the UK state is being renegotiated so that a Parliament with control over most domestic affairs will be re-established in Edinburgh after almost 300 years. It is impossible to say whether this will ultimately lead to full formal independence in the twenty-first century as Nationalists hope and Unionists fear.

The book also takes issue with the view that Scotland is a special case. The UK developed as a unitary state but containing considerable national diversity within it. It is becoming clear that (as Daniel Bell, the American sociologist, pointed out) the nation-state is too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small ones. In states like the UK the contradictions between unitary state structures and internal national diversity have become most apparent. The conventional nation-state no longer has the capacity to control in any meaningful way its economic, political and cultural sovereignty. We will argue that the Scottish case should be seen as an exemplar, even a forerunner, for new political arrangements in

which shared and limited autonomy between different levels of government – Scottish, British and European – become more common. In this regard Scotland has to be seen as a marker for the future, not a deviant case.

This book provides an up-to-date review of Scotland's politics in the widest sense. It provides a historical overview of the relationship between politics and civil society in Scotland since 1707 (Chapters 1 and 2); analysis of its constitutional position within the UK and its system of policy-making (Chapters 3 and 5); an account of the development of its economy within political constraints (Chapter 4); a description and analysis of patterns of party political and electoral change (Chapters 6 and 7); a discussion of the changing role of women in Scottish politics, both formal and informal (Chapter 8); and an examination of the relationship between culture, identity and ethnicity (Chapter 9). Conclusions – for Scotland and for other nations too – are drawn in Chapter 10.

Three ways of looking at politics

Thus the book draws on a variety of academic disciplines, looking beyond the institutions of politics to their base and origins in the wider society. The institutions and the events of politics do have their proper place in the book, of course, and this political science approach is our first way of looking at politics. Before we can consider explanations of events, we have to know what is going on in the first place and who is taking part. A large part of the book is concerned with events, agencies and people. Chapter 6, for example, looks at the political parties in Scotland: they have a dynamic of their own which has to be discussed separately from any assessment of their popular support. The outcomes of politics matter, if only because the victors get access to power. So Chapter 1 is primarily concerned with who won, and only secondarily with explaining why. Another way of putting this point about the importance of events is that the explanation of the politics of the 1990s may partly be a matter of what is going on in society in general, but it is also strongly influenced by what happened in politics at earlier points in time. Margaret Thatcher's victories, and Scottish political reactions to these, are as much a given fact of 1990s politics as is, say, the changing social-class composition of Scottish society.

However, in this book the institutions and events of current politics are set in a social and historical context: our second and third ways of looking at politics. We aim to provide an explanation of Scottish politics in the context of Scottish society and the way in which that has changed over time. Thus the current debates about the role of women cannot be understood if we look only at events within the political domain. Certainly the arguments about how to get more women into elected office are most obvious and vociferous among politicians and political activists, but the pressures to which they are responding come from deeper changes in the position of women in Scottish society, which are sometimes only tenuously related to political action. These topics are covered throughout the book, but especially in Chapter 8.

Another current example is in the European dimension. The politics of this in Scotland now has many aspects, from the SNP's policy of 'independence in Europe' through the Labour and Liberal Democrat proposals for direct representation of a Scottish Parliament in the UK delegation to the Council of Ministers, to the Conservative Party's view that Scotland's European interests are best served by a combination of a Scottish Office base in Brussels and the occasional participation of Scottish Office Ministers in the UK delegation. But these political debates can be understood only if we look also at the growing economic importance of the European Union (EU) in Scotland (Chapter 4), and the cultural changes which have brought a European identity into Scottish life as 'Britishness' has declined (Chapter 9). This growing European dimension to Scottish politics is dealt with at many places throughout the book.

Furthermore, if events and society both matter, then our third discipline is unavoidable: history. This is not a history book. It is primarily concerned with Scottish politics as it is now. But when is 'now'? Is it since the 1997 general election when the Conservative Parliamentary representation was wiped out in Scotland? Or is it since 1979, when the referendum on a Scottish assembly failed to deliver one, and when Margaret Thatcher came to power? It cannot be that either, because why Thatcher won, why Scotland did not support her, and why devolution did not command widespread enthusiastic support are crucial questions for understanding what happened in Scottish politics in the early 1980s; and answering these questions involves going right back to the type of welfare state that

was established in Scotland from the 1930s onwards. History, then, comes into this book as a way of explaining the present.

So the book is an attempt to explain Scottish politics using a variety of academic approaches, and paying attention to debates about the nature of late twentieth-century politics in general. Scottish politics are not only interesting in their own right; they also have lessons for small nations throughout Europe and beyond. And, in a world of supra-national government and limited sovereignty, all nations are now 'small', and so the Scottish experience is potentially relevant to everyone.

ALICE BROWN
DAVID McCRONE
LINDSAY PATERSON

Acknowledgements

This book is a collaborative work to which each author contributed equally: the order of names on the title page reflects only the alphabet. We are grateful to Paula Surridge for help in understanding the statistical variables in the Scottish Election Study (used extensively in Chapters 7 and 9). The responsibility for interpreting it is entirely our own. We are grateful also to Professor John Fairley for commenting on a draft of the book, to John Hughes for permission to use Tables 4.1 and 4.5 and to Professor James Kellas and Oxford University Press for permission to use Table 6.1.

List of Abbreviations

CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CP	Communist Party
DORA	Defence of the Realm Act
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ET	Employment Training
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board
ILP	Independent Labour Party
ITBs	Industrial Training Boards
LECs	Local Enterprise Companies
LRC	Labour Representation Committee
MEPs	Members of the European Parliament
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
MSPs	Members of the Scottish Parliament
NPS	National Party of Scotland
PR	Proportional representation
SCOW	Scottish Convention of Women
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
SED	Scotch/Scottish Education Department
SES 92	<i>Scottish Election Survey, 1992</i>
SES 97	<i>Scottish Election Survey, 1997</i>
SHRA	Scottish Home Rule Association
SLP	Scottish Labour Party
SNL	Scots National League
SNP	Scottish National Party
STUC	Scottish Trade Union Congress
STV	Single transferable vote
SWRC	Scottish Workers' Representation Committee
TC	Training Commission
VAT	Value added tax

Chronology

Pre-1945

- 1320 Declaration of Arbroath: appeal to Pope by Scottish nobles and clergy, asserting Scottish independence against England
- 1603 Union of Scottish and English Crowns: James VI of Scotland becomes also James I of England
- 1689 First Claim of Right: assertion of rights of Scottish church in the context of the defeat of the Catholic James VII by the the Protestant king William
- 1707 Union of Scottish and English Parliaments (Treaty of Union)
- 1832 Scottish Reform Act: extension of franchise
- 1842 Second Claim of Right: assertion of the right of the Church of Scotland to be free of interference by the secular state
- 1843 Split in Church of Scotland
- 1885 Establishment of the Scottish Office
- 1886 Scottish Home Rule Association founded: campaigning for a Scottish Parliament within the UK
- 1897 Formation of the Scottish Trade Union Congress
- 1907 Scottish Grand Committee fully established: forum of mainly Scottish MPs to discuss some aspects of Scottish business in the House of Commons
- 1928 Votes for women on same terms as men (all aged over 21)
- 1934 Scottish National Party founded

1945–79

- 1945 Election of Labour Government
- 1946 Formation of Scottish Council Development and Industry
- 1955 General election: Scottish Unionist Party (Conservative) gains over half the popular vote
- 1957 Scottish Standing Committee established: discusses the committee stage of Scottish Bills in the House of Commons

- 1965 Formation of Highlands and Islands Development Board
- 1965 Scottish Unionist Party changes name to Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
- 1967 By-election: Winnie Ewing wins Hamilton for SNP from Labour
- 1969 Wheatley Commission on Local Government Reform
- 1973 Formation of Manpower Services Commission
- 1973 Kilbrandon Commission on the Constitution: recommends elected Scottish assembly
- 1974 General election (February): Labour (40 seats); Conservatives (21 seats); Liberal Democrats (3 seats); SNP (7 seats)
- 1974 General election (October): Labour (41 seats); Conservatives (16 seats); Liberal Democrats (3 seats); SNP (11 seats)
- 1975 Formation of Scottish Development Agency
- 1975 Local government reorganisation
- 1979 Referendum on Labour Government's scheme of Scottish devolution: in a turnout of 64 per cent, 52 per cent vote yes to a Scottish Assembly.
- 1979 General election: Labour (44 seats); Conservatives (22 seats); Liberal Democrats (3 seats); SNP (2 seats). Conservatives, led by Margaret Thatcher, win power at UK level

1980s

- 1983 General election: Labour (41 seats); Conservatives (21 seats); Liberal Democrats (8 seats); SNP (2 seats)
- 1986 Formation of Standing Commission on the Scottish Economy
- 1987 General election: Labour (50 seats); Conservatives (10 seats); Liberal Democrats (9 seats); SNP (3 seats)
- 1988 Third Claim of Right: call for a Scottish parliament, and assertion of the sovereignty of the people of Scotland
- 1988 By-election: Jim Sillars wins Govan for the SNP from Labour
- 1989 Scottish Constitutional Convention established, as recommended in the Claim of Right
- 1989 Establishment of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- 1989 Poll Tax introduced in Scotland

1990s

- 1990 Margaret Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister, replaced by John Major
- 1992 General election: Labour (49 seats); Conservatives (11 seats); Liberal Democrats (9 seats); SNP (3 seats)
- 1992 Government begins 'Taking Stock' exercise
- 1992 European Summit (Edinburgh, December) marked by Democracy March
- 1993 Scottish Constitutional Commission set up for one year
- 1993 Formation of Scottish Labour Women's Caucus
- 1994 Labour Party changes its name to Scottish Labour Party
- 1994 Death of John Smith, leader of the Labour Party
- 1994 Monklands East By-election – Helen Liddell holds the seat for Labour (June) against strong challenge from SNP
- 1994 Report of the Scottish Constitutional Commission to the Scottish Constitutional Convention
- 1994 Local government etc. (Scotland) Bill receives Royal Assent (November) – formation of 32 all-purpose local authorities fully operational in April 1996
- 1995 First meeting of the Scottish Civic Assembly (March)
- 1995 First elections for the new shadow local authorities (April)
- 1995 By-election: Roseanna Cunningham wins Perth and Kinross for SNP from Conservatives (May)
- 1995 Appointment of Michael Forsyth as Secretary of State for Scotland (July)
- 1995 30 November: St Andrews Day. The Scottish Constitutional Convention announces its plans – *Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right*
- 1996 The new councils, 29 mainland and three island, take up office in April
- 1996 The 250th anniversary of the Battle of Culloden in April
- 1996 Tony Blair announces (Edinburgh, June) a referendum on the tax-raising element of a Scottish Parliament.
- 1996 The Stone of Destiny is returned to Edinburgh Castle in November
- 1997 General election (May): Conservative Party loses all its seats in Scotland; Labour (56 seats), Liberal Democrats (10 seats) and SNP (6 seats)

- 1997 The new Labour Government publishes its White Paper *Scotland's Parliament* in July
- 1997 In the September Referendum, in a turnout of 60 per cent, 74 per cent vote Yes to a Scottish Parliament and 63 per cent vote Yes to its having tax-varying powers
- 1997 The Scotland Bill is published in December, and laid before the Westminster Parliament.