
Both Scotland and Quebec are examples of a species hard to locate today: a nation without a state. Ailsa Henderson takes two cases in an attempt to understand how and why they developed. She brings together what she considers to be two previously separate fields, national identity and political culture, in order to better understand specific nuances which may have been overlooked in previous studies. Three questions are threaded through the book: why is Quebec nationalism portrayed as ethnic and Scottish as civic, why does national identity impact quantitative political attitudes so little, and why are people convinced of a difference in political attitudes for which there is little empirical evidence? (p. 3). Through these questions Henderson combats previous perceptions about the form of nationalism present in each nation, assesses the quantitative data that exists about it, and accounts for attitudes which do not appear measurable.

In her first chapters, Henderson concentrates on exploring comparisons that have already been made between Scotland and Quebec. She concludes too much attention has been paid to broad overviews without considering the differing contexts in which national identity is spoken about in each nation. A central point she uncovers here and carries through the rest of the work is the importance that acceptance and recognition of the idea of nation has for political discourse. Scotland is, and has long been, recognised as a nation. Thus its narratives of identity can focus on civic representations of the nation through government and...
material culture (p. 28). Quebec, conversely, is still fighting for universal recognition of nationhood, so its narratives must first establish that. This difference in context has led to perceptions that very different types of nationalism are present in the two nations. However, for Henderson the two nations are more similar than different, despite variations in content and context.

Henderson next addresses identities both within and outside the nation, paying especial attention to internal and external ‘others’. There are issues setting each nation apart from the state governing it, but there also are features that differentiate the nation from some of its own members, such as the role of language in Quebecois nationalism. Anglophone or other minority communities within the nation may feel excluded either because they do not meet the unwritten list of criteria for membership (p. 78), or because of the tone of nationalist rhetoric (p. 142). Scotland and Quebec operate in different constitutional contexts, but both have to cope with variations of identity within their boundaries. How a nation deals with these ‘inside outsiders’ is, to Henderson, a critical component of analysis in the political culture of nations and one that has been ignored by existing scholarship.

In the last of the primarily narrative-based chapters Henderson concentrates on the political treatment of national identity by examining political manifestos and the tone of political rhetoric. Echoing her previous conclusions, she finds politicians in the two nations use similar rhetoric, but differences in political context lead to differing perceptions. Scottish national rhetoric can seem to be more inclusive, and thus civic, because the basic existence of the nation is accepted. Quebec nationalism has been deemed exclusive, and ethnic, because it has to first define what and who the nation is.

In the final chapters Henderson turns away from narrative and historical analysis to present a wealth of statistical data that further demonstrates how Scotland and Quebec operate within differing cultural and political realms. While
political rhetoric in both countries privilege discourses of civic and inclusive nationalism, popular opinions tend to focus on traditionally ethnic factors. However, this could be merely because civic nationalism is harder to define. Henderson then builds on these ideas and uses more statistics to discuss attitudes between and within each nation. She is careful to discuss differences in sampling methods, and the problems associated with each – especially the widely used Moreno scale of measuring national attachment, which asks respondents which identity, national or state, they identify with the most. After aggregating many existing studies of political and cultural identity, Henderson finds that there are differences not only between holders of solely Scottish or Quebeccois identity, but between holders of any unitary identity and any dual one. People who identify as ‘just Scottish’ display attitudes more in line with those who are ‘just British’ than those who are ‘both Scottish and British’ (p. 172). The pattern is nearly identical in Quebec.

These later chapters are both where this work is most unique and where it is open to most criticism. The differing conclusions she draws from the quantitative data allow Henderson to diverge from other studies which have compared these two ‘stateless nations’. However, she too often presents statistics in a mass, devoid of much context. While she has presented extensive context earlier in her work, the statistical chapters can overwhelm a reader without much background in statistical analysis. However, their inclusion helps Henderson strengthen her argument for differences between Quebec and Scotland being based more on differing public and constitutional contexts than on actual measurable differences in how national identity is constructed.

While some readers may be baffled by the many quotes in French, anyone interested in nationalism, how it is measured and presented in modern political and cultural discourses will be intrigued by this study. It brings together existing arguments about two nations and persuasively argues for a more subtle examination of their similarities
and differences. Historians may desire more history, and sociologists will doubtless want more numbers, but Ailsa Henderson brings together these and other approaches to an old problem of why and how nations exist within states not of their nation, and succeeds in presenting a new and interesting viewpoint.

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