

2. Devolution

On the road to divergence? Trends in public opinion in Scotland and England

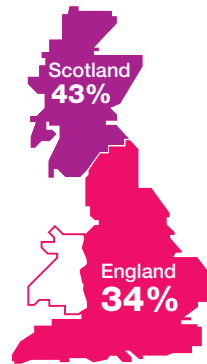
Scotland is often portrayed as more social democratic in its outlook than England. It also has a distinctive religious heritage that might be thought to result in greater social conservatism. But are these claims accurate? And now that devolution is in place and Scotland can debate and decide many policies for itself without reference to England, are the differences between the two countries growing wider – thereby perhaps making it increasingly difficult for Anglo-Scottish relations to be managed within the framework of the United Kingdom?

As evidenced by their attitudes towards economic inequality, people in Scotland are generally a little more likely than those in England to express social democratic views. However, this difference has not widened since the advent of devolution. Rather, opinion in both countries has moved in a somewhat less social democratic direction.

78%

In Scotland 78% say that the **gap between those on high and those on low incomes** is too large, while in England 74% do so. In both cases these figures are six points down on what they were in 1999.

In Scotland 43% agree that the **government should redistribute income** from the better off to the less well off, compared with 34% in England. In Scotland this represents a seven point drop since 2000, and in England a four point one.



Scotland is not more socially conservative than England, as indeed it was not a decade ago. Meanwhile on some issues opinion in Scotland has become more liberal, in tandem with a similar trend in England.

2000 Scotland	66%
2000 England	67%
2010 Scotland	69%
2010 England	69%



Exactly the same proportion in both countries, 69% now agree that it is all right for a couple to **live together without getting married**. The figure was much the same – 66% in Scotland and 67% in England – a decade ago.

In both countries only just over a quarter now say that **same-sex relationships** are always or mostly wrong (27% in Scotland, 29% in England). In 2000 that proportion – in both cases – was nearly a half (48% in Scotland, 46% in England).

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Public policy is not made in a vacuum. It emerges from debate within and between political parties, think tanks, civil servants, pressure groups, together with members of civil society. Debates about health policy, for example, will usually involve the health spokespersons of the political parties, other politicians with a particular interest in the subject, civil servants in relevant departments, think tank and academic researchers with particular expertise in health, and those pressure groups with a professional interest in the health service. These participants interact regularly with each other, and as a result they come to form an informal community of interest or 'policy community' in a particular policy area (Richardson and Jordan, 1979; Rhodes and Marsh, 1992).

The shape of these communities is, however, influenced by the structure of government. Since the introduction of devolution in 1999, health policy in Scotland has been determined by a different government body (the Scottish Government) from the one that decides health policy in England (the UK government). As a result of that change two largely separate health policy communities, populated by different actors and interests, have emerged in the two countries. Indeed across all those policy areas for which responsibility in Scotland has been devolved to the Scottish Parliament, relatively distinct 'territorial policy communities' now exist on the two sides of the border (Keating, 2009).

Different participants can mean different arguments. The balance of views expressed in Scotland's policy communities is certainly often different from that in England. After all, the Conservatives are much weaker north of the border, while the country's distinctive nationalist party, the SNP, are avowedly social democratic (Lynch, 2002; Hassan, 2009). Consequently arguments for a centre-right approach to the role that the state should play in the economy and in the pursuit of greater economic equality are less likely to be heard in Scottish debates than in English ones. At the same time, since devolution there has been a tendency for elites in Scotland to claim that their proposals are consistent with 'Scottish values', and that those values, unlike England's, are social democratic ones (Keating, 2009; Mooney and Pole, 2004; Scott and Mooney, 2009). Scotland's current SNP First Minister, Alex Salmond, has, for example, referred to 'our Scottish social democracy' and 'our social democratic contract with Scotland' (Salmond 2005; 2007). In short, to be a social democrat is often portrayed as part of what it is to be Scottish.

Another area where the policy debate often seems to be different in Scotland is in respect of social and moral issues, such as sexual orientation, family structure and abortion. These, of course, are all subjects on which religious institutions typically take a conservative stance, and especially so the Catholic Church. Historically, levels of attendance at religious services have been higher in Scotland than in England, as has professed adherence to Catholicism (Park, 2002). As a result, statements by religious leaders in Scotland, and especially those uttered by members of the Catholic Church, tend to secure greater media interest and publicity than those of their counterparts in England (see, for example, Puttick, 2008).

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If policy is not formed in a vacuum, neither is public opinion. It is shaped and influenced by elite level debates (Carmines and Stimson, 1989; Curtice, 2010; Zaller, 1992). So if Scotland now has different territorial policy communities that express different views, views that are then disseminated through the country's distinctive media structure, perhaps as a result public opinion north of the border has begun to diverge from that in England too?

That could create strains on the Union. The more that people in Scotland have different policy preferences from those in England, the greater the pressure for different policies to be pursued on the two sides of the border. And different policies may require different levels of funding, thereby putting pressure on the financial arrangements that currently tie changes in the level of funding made available to the devolved institutions in Scotland to changes in the level of funding of the equivalent departments in England. Moreover, there is no guarantee that any Scottish appetite for different policies will be confined to those policy areas that have been devolved (Mitchell, 2004). In short, growing attitudinal divergence could set in train a process that caused people to look once again at Scotland's constitutional relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Yet perhaps this is too apocalyptic a view. Scotland may have developed its own distinctive policy communities, but this does not mean that the Scottish public are wholly isolated from debates and developments in England. Although Scotland has its own distinctive media, people north of the border have easy access to UK-wide (and inevitably English dominated) media too, a media in which, as one of the two largest parties at Westminster, the centre-right voice of the Conservative party is regularly heard. Similarly, debates about specifically English policies, such as how the NHS in England should be organised, are conveyed across the border by the UK-wide media as well.

Meanwhile, Scotland has experienced many of the same social changes as England that have fostered a long-term trend towards more liberal views on social and moral issues, such as a decline in religious adherence and an expansion of university education (Park, 2002; Evans, 2002). Perhaps these forces have proved more powerful than any prominence given to the statements of religious leaders in Scotland. So perhaps, all in all, the advent of devolution may not have set in train a process that is likely to bring about greater attitudinal divergence – and thus perhaps potential for conflict – between Scotland and England after all.

This chapter examines which of these perspectives is correct. First we consider whether since the advent of devolution Scotland and England have diverged in their attitudes towards the issues that lie at the heart of the left-right divide in Britain, that is how much economic equality should there be and what action government should take to reduce inequality (Evans and Heath, 1995). Then, we turn to social and moral issues. Our analysis is made possible by the inclusion of a set of questions on these two topics on both the 2010 *British Social Attitudes* survey and the 2010 *Scottish*



Growing attitudinal divergence could cause people to look again at Scotland's constitutional relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom



Social Attitudes survey. The former provides us with a sample of respondents resident in England, the latter a systematically comparable sample of people resident in Scotland. All the questions had previously been included on both surveys in the early years of devolution, making it possible to compare trends in attitudes on the two sides of the border since that time.

Equality

Our test of whether Scotland has become more social democratic in outlook than England since devolution focuses on attitudes towards economic equality. Relative to opinion in England, has the Scottish public become, first, more concerned about inequality and, second, more favourable towards government action to reduce it?

The gap between rich and poor

Table 2.1 shows views about income inequality that people in Scotland and England have expressed since the advent of devolution in 1999, when asked:

*Thinking of income levels generally in Britain today, would you say that the **gap** between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large, about right or too small?*

In 1999 the vast majority in both Scotland (84 per cent) and England (80 per cent) agreed that levels of income inequality were too large. By 2010 both these proportions had fallen somewhat – but at four points, the difference between them remained exactly what it had been 11 years earlier. So although during the intervening period people in Scotland have, 2009 apart, consistently shown themselves a little more concerned about income inequality than those in England, there is no evidence of opinion in the two countries growing apart.

Table 2.1 Trends in perceptions of income inequality, Scotland and England, 1999–2010

	99	00	01	04	06	09	10
Scotland	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too large	84	85	85	82	78	77	78
About right	11	10	10	13	16	16	15
Too small	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
<i>Base</i>	1482	1663	1605	1637	1594	1482	1495
England	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too large	80	82	79	72	74	78	74
About right	14	15	15	22	22	17	22
Too small	3	2	1	2	1	3	1
<i>Base</i>	1798	1932	2761	1798	913	1932	913

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

A similar picture emerges when we look at perceptions of the distribution of wealth rather than income (see Table 2.2). People were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that:

Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth

In 2000, the first year this issue was addressed by both the Scottish and the British surveys, as many as 71 per cent of people in Scotland agreed that wealth was distributed unfairly, compared with 61 per cent in England. In subsequent years the Scottish public appears (with the sole exception once again of 2009) to have consistently been a little more concerned than people in England about wealth inequality. But the difference between the two countries has not widened. In fact in 2010 it was just a statistically insignificant three points.

Table 2.2 Trends in perceptions of the distribution of wealth, Scotland and England, 2000–2010

Working people not get fair share	00	02	04	05	06	07	09	10
Scotland	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	71	64	63	56	56	62	55	59
Neither agree nor disagree	18	22	23	26	29	22	29	28
Disagree	9	11	12	15	13	14	13	11
<i>Base</i>	1506	1507	1514	1409	1437	1312	1317	1366
England	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	61	61	53	55	54	58	58	55
Neither agree nor disagree	23	23	28	27	29	26	25	28
Disagree	13	13	17	17	14	13	14	15
<i>Base</i>	2515	2419	2185	3005	3195	3057	2495	2360

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

Indeed, far from diverging, together Tables 2.1 and 2.2 suggest that Scotland and England have actually experienced much the same trend during the last decade – a slight decline in the levels of concern about economic inequality. In both countries the proportion thinking the level of income inequality is too large is six percentage points below its 1999 level. Setting aside an unusually high level of concern about inequalities of wealth in Scotland in 2000, there has been a similar reduction in both countries in the proportion agreeing that ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth.

However, perhaps public opinion in Scotland appears more distinctive when asked about one of the possible consequences of income inequality – that richer people

are able to buy better health care and education for their children. We would certainly expect those of a broadly social democratic outlook to state that such a consequence is unjust when asked:

Is it right or wrong that people with higher incomes can...

...buy better health care than people with lower incomes?

...buy better education for their children than people with lower incomes?

People in Scotland do indeed appear to have distinctive views on this subject. Table 2.3 shows that they are 17 percentage points more likely than those in England to say it is wrong that people with higher incomes can buy better health care, and 13 percentage points more likely to do so in the case of education. Moreover, in both cases these differences are rather bigger now than they were in 1999 (when they were 10 and seven percentage points respectively).

Table 2.3 Attitudes towards people on higher incomes being able to buy better services, Scotland and England, 1999 and 2010

	Scotland		England	
	1999	2010	1999	2010
Buy better health care	%	%	%	%
Right	28	31	41	43
Neither	23	25	20	30
Wrong	47	41	37	24
Buy better education	%	%	%	%
Right	31	32	44	45
Neither	21	23	17	24
Wrong	44	41	37	28
<i>Base</i>	1169	1350	1169	773

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

However, this widening of the gap has not occurred because the Scottish public has become *more* social democratic in its outlook, in contrast to the position in England. On the contrary, the percentage of people who think that it is wrong that people can pay for better health care or education has *fallen* in both countries. The gap between them has only grown wider because the move away from a social democrat stance on this issue has been less marked in Scotland than in England. This is, at most, limited evidence of the emergence of an increasingly distinctive strand of opinion in Scotland.

Government action on inequality

If there is little evidence of a widening gap in concern about economic inequality north and south of the border, perhaps we may find more difference in people's attitudes to what should be done about any such inequality. In particular, what matters more, so far as public policy is concerned, is what role people believe government should play in trying to reduce inequality, not least through redistribution of wealth. Attitudes towards such an approach were tapped by asking people whether they agreed or disagreed that:

Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off

In most years since 2000, people in Scotland have been keener on redistribution than their counterparts in England (see Table 2.4). So in 2010, 43 per cent of people in Scotland supported such action compared with 34 per cent in England. However, there is no consistent evidence that the gap between the two countries has grown any wider; in 2000 someone in Scotland was 12 percentage points more likely than someone in England to agree that government should redistribute income, while in 2010 the gap was nine points. Instead what is apparent in both countries is a modest decline in support for such a policy.¹

Very similar results are found if we consider some of the more specific policies that a government might pursue in pursuit of a more equal society. Although not all taxation and government spending has a redistributive impact, a government that was intent on achieving a significant level of redistribution would certainly be expected to

Table 2.4 Attitudes towards government action to redistribute income, Scotland and England, 2000–2010

Government should redistribute income	00	02	04	05	06	07	09	10
Scotland	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	50	45	40	31	39	37	37	43
Neither agree nor disagree	24	25	30	29	26	25	30	28
Disagree	24	27	28	37	33	36	31	26
<i>Base</i>	1506	1507	1514	1409	1437	1312	1317	1366
England	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	38	37	31	32	34	32	36	34
Neither agree nor disagree	24	25	28	27	26	29	27	27
Disagree	36	35	39	40	38	37	35	37
<i>Base</i>	2515	2419	2185	3005	3195	3057	2495	2360

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

pursue relatively high levels of taxation and spending. Both the *British* and the *Scottish Social Attitudes* surveys have regularly asked their respondents to consider the following proposition:

Suppose the government had to choose between the three options on this card. Which do you think it should choose?

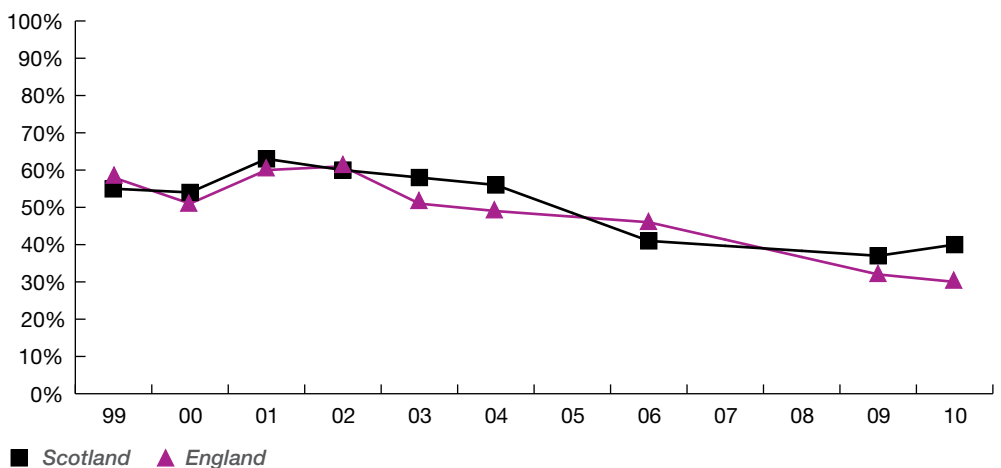
Reduce taxes and spend *less* on health, education and social benefits

Keep taxes and spending on these services at the *same* level as now

Increase taxes and spend *more* on health, education and social benefits²

As Figure 2.1 illustrates, during the course of the last decade people in Scotland have more often than not – though not invariably – been somewhat more likely than people in England to favour higher levels of spending and taxation. Typically support for greater taxation and spending has been at least five points higher in Scotland than in England. Against that standard, the fact that in 2010 the gap was as much as 10 points might be thought to be evidence of divergence. However, in the absence of any supportive evidence of such a trend in any other more recent year, that would seem to be an unwarranted interpretation. In contrast, what is not in doubt is that since the beginning of the decade there has been a sharp decline in support for more spending and taxation in both countries. The proportion stating there should be more taxation and spending has fallen since 2001 from 63 per cent to 40 per cent in Scotland, and from 61 per cent to 30 per cent in England. Both publics have evidently reacted strongly against the sharp increases in public spending that occurred on both sides of the border during this period (Curtice, 2010).

Figure 2.1 Support for increasing taxes and spending on health, education and social benefits, Scotland and England, 1999–2010



The data on which Figure 2.1 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

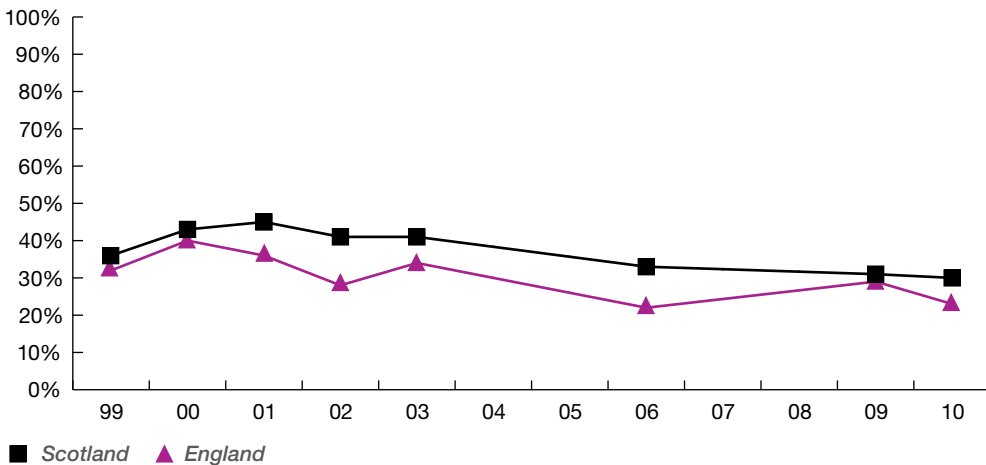
One of the most direct ways in which government can reduce income inequality is through paying benefit to those who are unemployed. When asked which comes closer to their view, that:

*Benefits for unemployed people are **too low** and cause hardship, or,*

*Benefits for unemployed people are **too high** and discourage them from finding jobs?³*

people in Scotland have consistently been more inclined than people in England to state that benefit levels for the unemployed are too low (see Figure 2.2). Thus in 2010, for example, 30 per cent of people in Scotland expressed that view compared with 23 per cent in England. But again there is no consistent evidence of this gap between countries widening over time. Rather, once more there has been a tendency for public opinion in both countries to move away from what might be regarded as the social democratic point of view.

Figure 2.2 Agreement that benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship, Scotland and England, 1999–2010



The data on which Figure 2.2 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter

So we have failed to uncover any evidence that Scotland has become more social democratic, while England has become less so. People in Scotland are somewhat more likely to be concerned about inequality and to favour government action that might be thought to counteract it. However, they are no more distinctive in that respect now than they were a decade ago, when devolution was first introduced. Meanwhile, Scotland has shared in what seems to have been something of a Britain-wide drift away from a social democratic outlook during the course of the last decade. Scotland may have had its own debates about policy since devolution has been in place, and done so against a public mood that is somewhat more social democratic than that in England, but on issues of economic inequality, at least, this development does not

seem to have encouraged people north of the border to become increasingly inclined to come to a distinctive conclusion about the direction that public policy should take.

Social and moral issues

The second area where we suggested attitudes in Scotland might have grown apart from those in England was social morality. Given the greater prominence of religious organisations, not least the Catholic Church, in Scottish policy debates, we wondered whether attitudes towards social morality might have become more conservative in the wake of devolution relative to the position in England. To investigate this possibility we compare trends in opinion in Scotland and England on relationships and parenthood outside marriage, same-sex relationships and abortion.

Relationships outside marriage

Cohabitation has become increasingly common in both countries (Haskey, 2001). This has led to debates about whether or not some of the legal protections and rights afforded to married couples should also be extended to cohabiting couples who are not married, a subject for which responsibility in Scotland is now devolved to the Scottish Parliament (Barlow, 2002; Barlow *et al.*, 2001; 2008; Law Commission, 2007). In part, at least, people's views about this issue will depend on whether they regard it as morally acceptable for a couple to live together without getting married in the first place.

When people in the two countries are asked whether they agree or disagree that:

It is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married

the pattern of responses is almost identical. In both cases, just over two out of three people (69 per cent) agree that cohabitation is acceptable, while only nine per cent in Scotland and 11 per cent in England disagree. The same was true a decade earlier in 2000 when 66 per cent in Scotland and 67 per cent in England agreed, while 13 and 14 per cent respectively disagreed. Both countries have, in other words, remained relatively liberal on this issue, as indeed they have in their attitudes towards sexual relations outside marriage in general.⁴

When it comes to people having children outside marriage, however, opinion is not quite so liberal. As Table 2.5 shows, in both countries more people agree than disagree with the statement that:

People who want children ought to get married

At the same time, however, (and in contrast to the position on relationships outside marriage) opinion in both cases is more liberal now than it was 10 years ago. In 2000,

69% in both countries agree that cohabitation is acceptable

over half (55 per cent in Scotland and 54 per cent in England) agreed with the above proposition, whereas now the figure stands at 36 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. But this of course means that here too there is no evidence that Scotland has developed a different, more conservative outlook than that pertaining in England.

Table 2.5 Attitudes towards children and marriage, Scotland and England, 2000 and 2010

	Scotland		England	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
People who want children ought to get married	%	%	%	%
Agree	55	36	54	42
Neither agree nor disagree	22	32	19	24
Disagree	21	29	26	31
<i>Base</i>	1506	1366	2515	773

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

Same-sex relationships

The lack of divergence in attitudes towards cohabitation and marriage may perhaps seem relatively unsurprising – these are areas where public opinion has been moving in a more liberal direction over a number of decades now. During the last decade, however, same-sex relationships have been the subject of far more public debate and controversy than heterosexual relations outside marriage. Some of that debate and controversy appeared to be particularly contentious in Scotland. This was especially true of the moves to repeal a clause in the 1986 Local Government Act that barred local authorities (and therefore schools) from promoting homosexuality, which north of the border occasioned a conservative inspired private referendum that recorded an overwhelming majority against the move. Thus perhaps on this topic at least people in Scotland may have been especially influenced by the views of their country's religious leadership.

Our findings suggest that nothing could be further from the truth (see Table 2.6). People in Scotland have become much more liberal when asked whether “sexual relations between two adults of the same sex” are “always wrong”, “mostly wrong”, “sometimes wrong”, “rarely wrong” or “not wrong at all”. Only a quarter (27 per cent) now say that sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are “always” or “mostly” wrong,

When it comes to people having children outside marriage, however, opinion is not quite so liberal

compared with 48 per cent in 2000 and 40 per cent in 2005. Moreover, this change of opinion is in line with a similar trend in England. Moves such as the introduction of civil partnerships for same-sex couples and giving such couples the right to adopt may have been opposed by many clerics, but in practice these changes have reflected, and perhaps indeed helped bring about, quite a remarkable change of attitude towards same-sex relationships on both sides of the border.

Table 2.6 Attitudes towards same-sex relationships, Scotland and England, 2000, 2005 and 2010

Same-sex relationships	2000	2005	2010
Scotland	%	%	%
Always/mostly wrong	48	40	27
Not wrong at all	29	35	50
<i>Base</i>	1663	1549	1495
England	%	%	%
Always/mostly wrong	46	40	29
Not wrong at all	34	37	44
<i>Base</i>	2887	1794	913

Source for Scotland: *Scottish Social Attitudes*

Base for England: *British Social Attitudes respondents living in England*

Abortion

Another moral issue of particular concern to many religious organisations, including not least the Catholic Church, is abortion. On this subject too, however, there is little evidence that a distinctive public opinion has emerged north of the border. This is reflected in the answers that people give when presented with the following questions:

Do you personally think it is right or wrong for a woman to have an abortion...

...if there is a strong chance of a serious defect in the baby?

...if the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?

They are asked to state whether they consider a termination in such circumstances to be “always wrong”, “almost always wrong”, “wrong only sometimes” or “not wrong at all”.

For many the circumstances do indeed matter (see Table 2.7). People are nearly twice as likely to feel there is nothing wrong at all about having an abortion if there is a strong chance of a serious defect in the baby than they are to say the same if a termination is sought on grounds of low income. But in both cases the balance of opinion is very similar in both Scotland and England and in neither country has it changed much during the past decade.

Table 2.7 Attitudes towards abortion, Scotland and England, 2000 and 2010

	Scotland		England	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Have abortion if strong chance of serious defect in baby	%	%	%	%
Always/almost always wrong	16	16	13	15
Not wrong at all	52	50	58	52
Have abortion if family cannot afford any more children				
Always/almost always wrong	38	34	36	35
Not wrong at all	28	29	31	28
<i>Base</i>	1506	1366	2515	773

Source for Scotland: *Scottish Social Attitudes*

Base for England: *British Social Attitudes respondents living in England*

In summary then, Scotland shows no discernible signs of developing a distinctive culture on social and moral issues such as relationships outside marriage, same-sex relationships or abortion. Rather than becoming more conservative than England on these subjects during the last decade, opinion in Scotland has either remained unchanged or else become more liberal. Moreover, in each case the trend in opinion – or lack thereof – has been much the same on both sides of the border.

Conclusions

During the last decade or so Scotland has sometimes seemed like a different country socially and politically. The country has continued to reject a Conservative party that in England has experienced a revival in its fortunes. The devolved administration has introduced policies such as free personal care and the abolition of university tuition fees that are often presented as evidence of the country's distinctive adherence to 'social democratic' values. Meanwhile, the country's clerics have seemed to have been more vocal and thus, perhaps, influential.

Yet it seems that Scotland is not so different after all. Scotland is somewhat more social democratic than England. However, for the most part the difference is one of degree rather than of kind – and is no larger now than it was a decade ago. Moreover, Scotland appears to have experienced something of a drift away from a

1 in 3

in both countries say having an abortion is wrong if done because a family cannot afford to have more children

social democratic outlook during the course of the past decade, in tandem with public opinion in England.

At the same time there is little sign that Scotland's distinctive religious heritage means that nowadays the country is more conservative than England on social and moral issues – or that the country has moved recently in a more conservative direction. Rather we have observed that in respect of one topic at least, same-sex relationships, Scotland has in fact exhibited a dramatic shift in a more liberal direction, again in line with a similar development in England.

So despite the apparent danger that devolution might see Scotland increasingly diverge from England in its attitudinal outlook, it would seem that the task of accommodating the policy preferences of people in both England and in Scotland within the framework of the Union is no more difficult now than it was when devolution was first introduced. Despite the differences in their politics, their political structures and indeed their sense of national identity (Ormston and Curtice, 2010), the two countries continue to bring much the same outlook to many of the key questions that confront governments today. Whether that similarity will prove sufficient glue to keep the Union together remains to be seen.

Notes

1. Further support for this claim comes from a question in which people are asked whether “income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary working people”. In Scotland the proportion agreeing fell from 68 per cent in 1997 to 63 per cent in 2010. In England the equivalent figures were 59 per cent and 53 per cent respectively.
2. Full data for the three options can be found in the appendix to this chapter.
3. Full data can be found in the appendix to this chapter.
4. In 2010 65 per cent of people in Scotland and 61 per cent in England said that there was nothing wrong at all if “a man and a woman have sexual relations before marriage”. In 2000 the equivalent figures were 60 per cent and 62 per cent respectively.

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Appendix

The data for Figures 2.1 and 2.2 are shown below:

	99	00	01	02	03	04	06	09	10
Scotland	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	3	4	3	3	3	5	6	5	7
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	38	39	30	32	34	35	45	53	49
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	55	54	63	60	58	56	41	37	40
<i>Base</i>	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1637	1594	1482	1495
England	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	4	5	3	3	7	6	6	8	9
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	35	39	34	32	38	42	44	56	57
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	58	51	60	61	51	49	46	32	30
<i>Base</i>	2718	1932	2761	2897	2734	1798	2775	967	2795

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England

	99	00	01	02	03	06	09	10
Scotland	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship	36	43	45	41	41	33	31	30
Benefits for unemployed people are too high and discourage them from finding jobs	33	28	26	31	32	39	42	43
<i>Base</i>	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1594	1482	1495
England	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship	32	40	36	28	34	22	29	23
Benefits for unemployed people are too high and discourage them from finding jobs	44	37	38	48	41	55	51	55
<i>Base</i>	2718	2887	2761	2897	2734	2775	967	2795

Source for Scotland: Scottish Social Attitudes

Base for England: British Social Attitudes respondents living in England