THEMED SECTION

"We're socialists not nationalists": British labour and the national question(s)

Coree Brown Swan [ID]

HAPP, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, UK

Abstract

The UK Labour Party, which in government delivered devolution to Scotland and Wales, has struggled to adapt to a multilevel and increasingly territorialised political space, where demands for significant territorial reform grow ever louder. These challenges intensified with the Scottish independence referendum and the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. During this prolonged constitutional moment, the Labour Party has had to articulate the case for a plurinational and multicultural British identity and for the Union, and to a large degree, has struggled to do so. Capturing the period from 2012 to 2020, this article examines the discursive strategies adopted by the Labour Party and individuals within it. It identifies a deep discomfort, more pronounced in London and Edinburgh than in Cardiff, with the national questions and a reliance on largely instrumental arguments, albeit ones rooted in traditional left-wing values of welfare and social solidarity between working people.

KEYWORDS
British politics, Labour Party, left and nationalism, nationhood/national identity, secession

1 | INTRODUCTION

As debates over Brexit and Scottish independence raged on, one beleaguered Labour politician emitted a deep sigh and explained "I didn't join the Labour Party to talk about the constitution…" (Interview, 2019d). This statement was to become a recurring theme, repeated in different forms, by politicians I interviewed in the United Kingdom's capital cities. It captures a deep-seated discomfort within the Labour Party on the constitutional question, which seemingly sits at odds with the role that the party played in delivering devolution, one of the United Kingdom's most significant programmes of constitutional change. The challenge facing Labour is multifaceted, pertaining not just to its response to the question of Scottish independence and a second referendum on the subject, but to a broader understanding of nation and nationalism, of Britishness. It is this central dilemma which is of interest in this article.

The Labour Party is currently the United Kingdom's second largest party. Situated on the left of the political spectrum, its recent years have been characterised by electoral defeats and leadership challenges. The party lost to the Conservatives in the 2010 Westminster elections and has struggled to regain ground since, with significant defeats in traditional strongholds in Scotland and the North of England, the so-called Red Wall. The 2014 Scottish independence referendum and the 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union, in which Labour campaigned for remain, amplified these challenges. The party's recent plight is, in some ways, surprising; Labour was swept to power in 1997 in part on a promise to deliver long overdue devolution to Scotland and Wales. Following his election, Tony Blair articulated a vision for a new Britain, pledging to draw "deep into the richness of the British character," and mesh "[o]ld British values, but a new British confidence" (Blair, 1997). Within two years, elections to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly (now Senedd) took place, and Labour was comfortably ensconced in government in Cardiff, Edinburgh, and London.[1] One would assume that, having delivered devolution, Labour would navigate the new, multilevel landscape with ease. However, by 2010, it was in opposition in London and Edinburgh and struggling to reorient itself to a new electoral and territorial dynamic (for analysis of the early years of devolution, see Bradbury, 2006; Hopkin & Bradbury, 2006; Hopkin, 2009; Laffin & Shaw, 2007).

This article forms a part of a special issue on *The Left(s) and Nationalism(s) in Contemporary Western Europe*, which seeks to unpack what the editors describe as the "troubled relationship between the left and nationalism" (Dalle Mulle & Kernalegenn, 2022). These challenges appear particularly, if not uniquely, pronounced for the left in the United Kingdom, as represented by the Labour Party.

Capturing the period from 2012 to 2020, one of intense debate over the constitutional future of the United Kingdom, this article examines the ways in which the United Kingdom, Welsh, and Scottish Labour parties engage with the national questions. During this period, Labour has faced a significant challenge. It must simultaeneously express a form of Britishness that has sufficient resonance with the public -one that is inclusive enough to accommodate the plurinational *and* multicultural identities found within the United Kingdom - and make a case for the Union at a time of disunity. In an effort to do so, Labour has adopted three interconnected but distinct discursive strategies: the first, an attempt to speak to the United Kingdom as "One Nation," in which a British identity comfortably encompasses regional and sub-state identities; the second, an attempt to ignore the issue in favour of a broader social solidarity, effectively minimising the existence of internal boundaries; and the third, an instrumental argument in favour of the UK state on the basis of welfare and economic benefit. These arguments have evolved over time and have had greater or lesser salience with different party factions and leaders, informed by ideological considerations.

The efficacy of these discursive strategies remains a matter for debate. At the time of writing, Labour remains on the backfoot, squeezed between the nationalism of the Scottish National Party and the ardent Unionism of the Conservatives. The party is in government only in Cardiff, where Welsh Labour, independently of the centre, has credibly articulated a distinctly Welsh identity. Of course, the national questions are not the only ones facing the Labour Party, but they do appear to be significant and particularly profound during this prolonged constitutional moment, and thus worthy of further examination.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 sets out a conceptual framework that elaborates on the understanding of state, nation, and nationalism in the United Kingdom and explores Labour's historical approach to these concepts. Section 3 sets out the research design. And Section 4 begins with a brief contextual introduction, before developing the empirical analysis, which captures and examines the discursive strategies employed by the Labour Party during this period. In the conclusion, I reflect on the success of these strategies and the implications of these findings for Labour's future in an increasingly territorialised political landscape.

2 | NATIONAL IDENTITY, UNIONISM, AND BRITISH LABOUR

The process of state creation in the United Kingdom has resulted in a particular understanding of national identity. The United Kingdom was formed through amalgamation: the union of England and Wales and the later incorporation of Scotland. Later still, Ireland was incorporated into the Union, and then, 26 of the 32 counties, left it. This process of union took place without an eradication of its constituent elements, and the Union remains "incomplete"; its survival attributed at least pariallyto its failure to fully absorb the nations (McLean & McMillan, 2005). Bulpitt describes the peculiar historical situation, in which the Union came into being "too late for Celtic territories to regard themselves as natural associates of England" and too early to participate in the "Bourgeois nationalism" of the 19th century (Bulpitt, 1983, p. 95). As a result of this prolonged and differentiated process, there is not the same cohesive narrative of the nation found in neighbouring countries like France, with the emphasis instead on the Union as the core union.

Colley defines the United Kingdom as a "state nation," a form of states that "have to acknowledge and protect the partial autonomy and separate rights and cultures of the various countries and regions," while simultaneously able to "create and sustain and nurture a sense of belonging and allegiance" (Colley, 2014). Both Colley (2005, 2014) and Marquand (2002) emphasise the external manifestation or projection of the British state. For Marquand (1995, p. 287), there was a conflation of Englishness and Britishness, with England the dominant partner in the Union that persisted despite the absence of an "institutionalised Englishness." Sovereignty was embedded within Parliament rather than within the disparate peoples of the United Kingdom, sidestepping the tricky act of defining the demos (Keating, 2009).

Despite these internal and external narratives, British identities and the status of the Union remained contested. Britishness Kearney (1991, p. 4) argues is best conceived as "four nations and one." It is therefore constructed as a hybrid, accommodating subnational identities within a British framework. State elites "have never viewed Britishness in terms of an all-or nothing concept designed to replace the ethnic loyalties of these peoples" (Langlands, 1999, p. 63). As a result, the British state accepted the plurinational character of the polity, recognising national diversity and political unity (Kidd, 2008). As a result, a British national identity has been defined more in terms of a common allegiance to the crown (Aughey, 2018, p. 7) and later to shared institutions and the welfare state, in particular the NHS, rather than an overarching cultural and national identity. (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007).

The Union is central to this understanding of Britishness. Unionism has become, in the place of a strong narrative of national identity, the closest thing that the United Kingdom has to a national ideology (Keating, 2021, p. 108). While not a form of identity (except in Northern Ireland), Unionism can be understood as an argument for the integrity of the political state, a particular form of state nationalism. It can be read as a *looser* form of nationalism, entailing both diversity and integration. It is, at its core, a defence of the maintenance of the Union (Todd, 2020). However, recent years have seen challenges to the Union as well as traditional definitions of the British nation and national identity, necessitating a response from political parties of all stripes (Brown Swan & Cetrà, 2020; Cetrà & Brown Swan, 2020).

This challenge appears particularly profound for those parties on the left, as documented elsewhere in this special issue. This is rooted in a historic opposition between nationalist and socialist actors. Keating and Bleiman describe nationalism and socialism as "two movements each with a distinctive rationale which ignores the claims of

the other" (2009, p. 1). Socialism's interests are both *wider* and *narrower* than that of the nation, underpinned by the assumption that the claims of class cut across national boundaries (Keating 1979, p. 2). Socialist parties, therefore, tend to speak to the wider international community and the narrower working class within a national population while nationalism seeks to transcend boundaries of class whilst operating within state boundaries. Following welfare state retrenchment, right-wing nationalist and populist voices seemed more effective than those on the left in mobilising a defence of national identity (Conversi, 2020, p. 40).

The Labour Party has often had an uneasy relationship with Britishness as a political identity, and Britishness was rarely elaborated. The British state, rather than the nation, was the Labour Party's focus, viewed as the best vehicle to achieve its ideological objectives. (Hassan & Shaw, 2019; Keating, 2010). It stressed solidarity engendered by class rather than by nation (Marquand, 2002, p. 288). Electorally reliant on all parts of the United Kingdom, it could not retreat in the face of electoral decline, as its Conservative rival had, to an English identity. The party was "doomed to be British" (Ibid p. 289), but perhaps without a strong sense of what this Britishness meant. Labour's success has come from what Robinson describes as "a self-consciously modern engagement with the British state rather than radical nostalgia" (Robinson, 2016, p. 379). A more explicit articulation of Britishness was considered to be the domain of the Conservatives (Aughey, 2007, p. 88).

At the turn of the 21st century, Labour was forced to set out its understanding of Britishness in an increasingly diverse world. Writing in 2005, Kiely, McCrone and Bechhofer spoke of the "question-marks" over Britishness, asking "Will it simply become an outmoded, problematic identity, shunted into the sidings of history?" or "will it take on fresh meaning fuelled by new government policies?" (Kiely et al., 2005, p. 80). In government from 1997, Labour made sporadic efforts to articulate a more explicit identity, from Tony Blair's "cool Britannia" to Gordon Brown's more concerted attempts to engage on the British question. This was also a period of attention to issues around multiculturalism and race. With the publication of Bhikhu Parekh's (2000) report, *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* informing New Labour's approach to the UK's increasingly diverse population. However, these efforts represented one-off attempts to engage rather than a sustained and ideologically informed approach, and appear to have had less resonance, particularly post-2007, when the question of the future of the Union came to the fore.

3 | DATA AND METHOD

In order to capture and analyse the Labour Party's understanding of the national question, I created a database of speeches by Scottish, Welsh, English (as self-defined) and UK party leaders and retired and active politicians, relevant parliamentary debates, manifestos and other policy documents, as well as opinion pieces and interviews in major newspapers. This data collection captured the period between 2012 and 2020. In addition, I carried out three dozen semi-structured interviews with current and former political leaders in Cardiff, Edinburgh, and London in the spring and summer of 2019, a point at which independence and Brexit were very much on the political agenda. These interviews were secured with the agreement that I would not directly attribute statements to my interviewees. In order to encourage participants' candour notes were taken but recordings were not made. The corpus for this research included 140 documents.

From each document, I extracted key contributions to the broader debate about the United Kingdom's constitutional future. Arguments were identified from a large dataset (compiled in NVivo), coded inductively. After several rounds of coding and refinement, I identified three core themes, which I operationalise here as discursive strategies. This process allowed me to identify the strategies employed, capture variation between speakers and factions within the parties, and examine change over time as Labour grappled with the immediate challenges posed by Scottish independence and the Brexit debate. As Northern Ireland sits outside the British party system, fielding its own parties, I have, for simplicity, set aside the issue of Irish unification from my analysis.[2] This analysis identified variation between leaders and between territorial parties, as well as convergence around common discourse, and while the

aim of this work is not to establish a causal relationship, I offer some explanation for this variation throughout the text.

4 | SOCIALISTS NOT NATIONALISTS: LABOUR AND BRITISHNESS

The period between 2012 and 2020 was one of significant turmoil for the Labour Party, brought on by the entry of the Scottish National Party to government in Edinburgh in 2007 and the formation of a majority in 2011 and the 2014 independence referendum, exacerbated the defeat of Labour in the 2015 General Election, and intensified by the Brexit campaign, vote, and aftermath, which highlighted deep divisions between and within the nations of the United Kingdom, and within the party itself.

The 2014 referendum was a bruising experience for Labour, which faced intense criticism for their participation in the cross-party Better Together campaign with Conservative rivals. Ed Miliband largely delegated the Scottish question, with former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former Chancellor Alistair Darling joining Scottish Labour leaders on the campaign trail. Following the independence referendum, Scottish Labour leader Johan Lamont stepped down, citing London's treatment of the Scottish party as a "branch office," highlighting tensions between the party at the central and substate level (Lamont, 2014). Only Gordon Brown remained relatively unscathed, speaking for the Union from outside the confines of party politics, a role he continues to play. In 2015, the party lost all but one of its Scottish seats at Westminster to the SNP, alongside significant losses for the party elsewhere in Britain. Subsequent leadership struggled to reconcile the party's constitutional position and its relationship with the party at the centre (Scottish Labour's particular woes have been documented by Bennett et al., 2020, and Wright, 2021). Only Welsh Labour was able to maintain its position.

Following the party's defeat in 2015, Ed Miliband stepped down, triggering a contentiousleadership contest, one that centred on the ideological direction of the party. Elected in 2015 with the support of the Labour membership but with more limited support within the parliamentary party, Jeremy Corbyn faced a further challenge to his leadership following the Brexit vote (Crines et al., 2018).

Writing in 2015, Pearce and Kenny outlined the challenges facing Labour:

> the Labourist tradition, which has prized the idea of class solidarity across territorial differences, and which renounced its Europhobia in the 1980s, appears dazed by its collapse in Scotland, hamstrung by its inability to offer a positive and convincing answer to the English question, and inhibited by its inability to work through the contested legacy of New Labour's immigration and foreign policies. Pearce and Kenny (2015, p. 6)

This situation was further intensified by the EU referendum vote in 2016, which posed a significant threat to the Union (McEwen, 2018). The vote, and protracted negotiation process illustrated divergent viewpoints, both between different nations and regions of the United Kingdom and between the different strands of the Labour Party. At times, there was open conflict between leadership in London, Cardiff, and Edinburgh. As leader, Corbyn had little political engagement with themes of devolution and the constitution, instead focusing on a cross-cutting appeal based on class (Valluvan, 2021, p. 156). One Labour politician interviewed sarcastically remarked that "Corbyn can't even spell devolution, much less understand or care about it" (Interview, 2019c). Labour's electoral performance suffered, even in traditional Labour heartlands in Wales and the North of England triggering a broader crisis within the party. (Cutts et al., 2020; Surridge, 2020). Internally, the party was divided over its ideological positioning and accusations of racism, bullying and antisemitism within the party centrally (Heppell, 2021; Shaw, 2021).

This intense and prolonged constitutional moment, coupled with internal dynamics within the United Kingdom and territorial parties provided the incentive but perhaps not the space for a reflection and renewal of the party's constitutional thinking. A former senior politician described an urgent need to redefine the United Kingdom from a

Labour perspective, moving "beyond God save the Queen, army tanks and the Union Jack" (Interview, 2019a). Labour leadership was unable, I suggest, to articulate a sense of Britishness and a case for the Union that was sufficiently robust to counter Conservative ownership of the national issue, and sufficiently inclusive of Scottish, Welsh, and increasingly English identities. In 2011, Scottish political journalist and commentator Neal Ascherson asked "In whose name, then, should a mass party of the left speak …? " As the analysis which follows suggests, this remained an open question within the Labour Party.

4.1 | BRITISHNESS (RE)DEFINED

The first discursive strategy saw an attempt, by political actors to redefine Britishness for the 21st century. This strategy did not seek to suggest that a British identity could or should supplant English, Welsh, Scottish, or Northern Irish identities or indeed the identities of British citizens who felt affinity with their countries of origin. Instead, it suggested a hierarchy in which Britishness provided an overarching identity, a framework in which these identities could be fully realised. It was in Britishness where key values, defined as British despite their universal nature, were embodied. This approach is not unique to Labour but is found also in the discourse of the Spanish state nationalist parties (Brown Swan & Cetrà, 2020). This strategy found representation in the *One Nation* discourse of Ed Miliband during his leadership, as well as the crucial engagement of former Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the 2014 referendum campaign. Once sardonically dubbed the "Bard of Britishness" by Tom Nairn (2006), Brown has, since the Scottish vote, been active in articulating a case against Scottish, Welsh, Irish, and what he describes as "Brexit nationalism" (Brown, 2020) in speeches across the United Kingdom. Scottish and Welsh contemporaries made arguments which echoed those of Miliband and Brown, but Jeremy Corbyn rarely spoke on themes of Britishness.[3]

Ed Miliband made brief forays into this space, in the form of *One Nation Labour*, a theme which was designed to suggest an emphasis on the UK's unity rather than divisions along the boundaries of class (Atkins, 2015). Speaking at the 2012 party conference, Ed Miliband set out his stall:

> One Nation: a country where everyone has a stake. One Nation: a country where prosperity is fairly shared. One Nation: where we have a shared destiny, a sense of shared endeavour and a common life that we lead together. That is my vision of One Nation. That is my vision of Britain. That is the Britain we must become.

In this effort, Miliband attempted to recognise the diversity of the United Kingdom, but embed it within a system of common values, making the case that the UK could comfortably accommodate the diverse identities contained within it. However, the narrative of One Nation largely ignored the realities of devolution and indeed, *One Nation: Labour's Political Renewal*, written ahead of the 2014 referendum, mentioned Scotland only in passing (Cruddas & Rutherford, 2014). In many circles, this effort was viewed as a rebranding exercise to counter Conservatives, who spoke more comfortably about questions of identity (Hassan & Shaw, 2019: 183; Jackson, 2012).

This discursive strategy that stressed a more overt Britishness was accompanied by an acknowledgment of the continued importance of plurinational identities, which could be realised within a British framework. Given the deep-seated nature of national and regional identities, and their increasing politicisation, it would not serve to deny them entirely. And indeed, UK political leaders often make an effort to claim a familial connection to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom, however tenuous this may be. But the party suggested, it is in a British context where these identities reach their full potential. The ability for individuals to claim to feel strongly Scottish, Welsh, English or Irish, or indeed Pakistani, Chinese, or Polish, alongside a British identity was, adherents to this strategy argued, a result of the open, inclusive nature of Britishness.

Welsh MP Stephen Doughty stressed pride in this openness "In the same way that I am proud to be Welsh and British, I know that voters in Scotland can continue to be patriotically Scottish but also British and continue to enjoy

the benefits of the United Kingdom" (Doughty, 2014). And Owen Smith, who later challenged Corbyn for the leadership following the defeat of the Remain campaign in the 2016 referendum, a campaign in which Corbyn was viewed by some within the party as insufficiently robust in his defence of the EU, picked up the mantle of One Nation. In doing so, Smith spoke of the unique nature of Britain as a "nation of nations":

> Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland are proud and distinct parts of our United Kingdom, each with their own traditions and culture, heritage and history, accents, dialects and even languages. But as much as there are things that divide and distinguish these parts of our Kingdom, there are as many, perhaps more, that bind us together, that also make us One Nation. Smith (2012)

This British identity, proponents argued, was distinct from the nationalism expressed by the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, and English nationalists. These nationalisms, they argued, were exclusive and narrow, requiring the renunciation of British identities. The demand for Scottish independence was framed as a rejection of a British identity, despite strong evidence of a dual identity among even the most ardent nationalists.

> Yes, millions can feel more Scottish than British, but with half of Scots families boasting relatives in the rest of the UK, we don't see the case for giving up on being British too. Quite simply: we don't agree with the nationalists who tell us we must make a choice between being Scottish and being British. Brown (2019)

Delivering the Keir Hardie lecture, Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford called for a return to the values of unity and solidarity, noting that "We can be fiercely Welsh, without that calcifying or congealing into a narrow hostility to others" (Drakeford, 2019).

While Labour paid extensive attention to Wales and Scotland, it was on less comfortable territory talking about England, to the chagrin of some within the party (Denham 2018; Robinson, 2016, p. 380). Miliband attempted to respond to Conservative efforts to speak to England, following the 2014 vote, urging supporters in his autumn conference speech to claim their Englishness:

> And let's be proud of our Englishness too. No political party owns our English national identity. So it is time we fought, this party fought, for the traditions of England and did not cede them to others. Englishness: a history of solidarity. From the Battle of Cable Street to the spirit of the Blitz. Englishness: traditions of fairness. From the Dagenham workers who fought for equal pay to today's campaigners for a living wage. Englishness: a spirit of internationalism. Miliband (2014)

However, efforts to engage with political Englishness, an increasingly salient issue, stalled in the years following Miliband's resignation. Gordon Brown again picked up the mantle of Britishness, but did so largely as an elder statesman rather than a representative of Labour's thinking. Miliband's successor Jeremy Corbyn made little mention of identity during his tenure, instead advancing a discourse of the "many," the working people of the United Kingdom pitted against economic elites. This left Corbyn vulnerable to critiques from within the Labour Party, notably his leadership rival Owen Smith who described Corbyn as having a "metropolitan" understanding of the world, one which downplayed place and meant "nationhood and nationalism and patriotism aren't really part of his makeup" (Smith, 2016). Meanwhile, the party's Conservative opposition spoke more forcefully in favour of both British and English identities, and called into question Labour's commitment to the Union, invoking the bogeyman of a Labour government propped up by Scottish nationalists in the run up to the 2015 and 2017 elections.

4.2 | UNITED BY SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

The second strategy was one which in which politicians attempted to sidestep the national questions and questions of Union, instead centring class in the debate. The interests of working people, Jeremy Corbyn and those politically and ideologically close to him argued, transcend national divisions. Emerging from the left of the party, Corbyn demonstrated minimal engagement with themes of nation and national identity. Hassan and Shaw (2019, p. 267) noted that Corbyn's approach "combine[d] an indifference to both constitutional reform and issues of place, belonging and identity."

Politicians allied to Corbyn employed this strategy to deemphasise the national question in favour of a form of social solidarity, which was to serve as the basis of unity. Common systems of welfare created a common identity, distinct from traditional symbols of the British state and from claims to a British or substate identity. Within this strand of the Labour Party, the United Kingdom is not represented as a nation, but as a project centred around social citizenship. Ichijo notes, in an analysis of Scottish Labour, which predates the referendum, but remains applicable to both Scottish and UK Labour that "politicians stay away from describing the Union or Britain as a nation or a community of fate that would demand ultimate commitment and the British state is described as the guarantor of welfare of citizens" (Ichijo, 2012).

While the party in this period typically eschewed direct reference to class in favour of "working people" or references to "the many," the intention was clear. Richard Leonard described the shared challenges faced throughout the United Kingdom:

> We know that the forces that threaten the life chances of children growing up by the Mersey are the same ones that threaten the life chances of children growing up by the Clyde. So, we should stop dividing people on the basis of nationality and start uniting them on the basis of class. Leonard (2018)

Newly elected Welsh Labour leader Mark Drakeford elaborated on similar themes "But the struggle is not between working people in Merthyr and Middlesbrough, but between the powerful and privileged and those who are held back in a society marred by deep and deliberate inequality" (Drakeford, 2019). This, he argued, should be the focus of a Labour Government. Corbyn also returned to the theme of division in a Welsh speech, invoking families on both sides of the border facing economic turmoil: "Tory austerity means both families are up against it, but they're not up against each other. So, our mission is to back working-class communities in all their diversity" (Corbyn, 2019).

This strategy was predominately employed by Corbyn and those closely allied to him, but it was also evident in the discourse of Gordon Brown who was, on the whole, more comfortable with engaging with themes of Britishness. He claimed the bid for Scottish independence and the Brexit vote were rooted in a similar sense of alienation from politics at the centre and in economic grievance. Brown (2020) spoke in favour of a deep-seated social solidarity on the basis of common interest and common need, rather than competing nationalisms that replicated existing divides.

> While each nationalism considers itself unique and incontrovertibly powerful, their rise owes far more to common problems shared in every part of the UK: anxieties about stagnating incomes, the rundown of manufacturing, insecure employment, poor-quality public services, boarded-up high streets, a lethal cocktail when combined with a strong sense of cultural loss and of a globalisation that seems akin to a train that has run out of control.

In this strategy, social solidarity and the social union, rather than a British identity or the historical Union, was to serve as the underpinning structure of the United Kingdom. Discussions of Unionism were approached with caution, especially by Scottish partisans apprehensive of being viewed as too closely allied with Conservatives on these issues. This is evident in both public statements and emerged frequently in interviews conducted with English,

Welsh, and Scottish representatives of the party. Jim Murphy, who served briefly as Scottish Labour leader ahead of the disastrous 2015 election, disavowed a Unionist affiliation, saying "I am not and never have been a Unionist. I'm a Social Democrat for whom the Union is intrinsic to sharing risk and resources … I'm not a Nationalist - because I don't believe in national exceptionalism" (Murphy, 2018). This rejection of Unionist language was not restricted to Scotland, where it defined the terms of the independence debate and represented the fault lines in Scottish party politics. Veteran Welsh MS Jane Hutt made a very similar argument in a 2020 debate on Welsh independence.

> I'm not a nationalist, and I reject nationalism as a negative and divisive ideology. I prefer an approach that is based on the decentralisation of power, bringing power as close to people and communities as possible. Now, we recognise the common interests that working people and communities in Wales have with their counterparts in England, Scotland and in Northern Ireland. I'm also not a unionist. It's simple: I'm a socialist. Hutt (2020)

Scottish MP Lesley Laird described this dynamic bluntly: "That whether you are from Benarty or Broxburn, Kelty or Kilmarnock, Lochgelly or Lesmahagow, it is irrelevant. If you are up against it, you are up against it" (Laird, 2019). This line of reasoning suggested that economic interests superseded national interests. Continued austerity, partisans argued, undermined the case for the United Kingdom, and only a Labour Government could lead the United Kingdom's renewal and ensure the preservation of the Union.

This discursive strategy represented an attempt to move the party on from uncertain territory, sidestepping discussions of Britishness and national identity, to an ideological ground where it felt more comfortable. Proponents of this strategy argued that the apparent resurgence of nationalism in the United Kingdom was not due to deep-seated divisions between the nations themselves, to which the only solution was radical constitutional change, but due to common hardship, cynically channelled into nationalist projects by Labour's political rivals. However, there was resistance within the party to this approach, particularly from Blue Labour adherents and those keen to see Labour engage more fully with the issue of Englishness (Valluvan, 2021). One MP decried a situation in which patriotism is treated as a "pathology," eliciting "irrational and visceral feelings" among Labour partisans, who fear engaging with Englishness would suggest a move to the right (Interview 2019b). They described their party as one in which leadership was prone to "talk[ing] themselves in circles to avoid saying England" (Interview 2019b). This was a source of conflict within the party, particularly as electoral performance failed to improve.

4.3 | RESTORATION AND RENEWAL

Labour's position in this prolonged constitutional moment was made more difficult by its electoral woes. This presented a strategic challenge—raising the question of how a party makes the case for state unity when the state, at that moment, was dominated by the Conservative Party pursuing a policy of austerity. Labour's answer was one closely linked, but ultimately distinct from the preceding strategy, focused on the future rather than the present. The third discursive strategy consisted of three parts: First, it described the Union as a guarantor of social solidarity, second, attributed centrifugal pressures to the failings of the Conservative government and, third, pledged a programme of renewal and reform. This approach suggested that pressures on the Union were temporary, linked to the neglect of the welfare state and the policies of austerity pursued at the centre. They could, Labour argued, be alleviated by Labour's return to power. The case for the Union thus was made by ensuring its survival and renewal.

This is a strategy with deep history within the Labour Party, which has tended to view the central state as the means by which social goods are delivered and solidarity between the people of the United Kingdom is ensured. The Union, in this view, is underpinned by the pooling and sharing of resources, a deep-seated sense of social solidarity, and common aims and challenges. This was the argument made from the opposition benches and on doorsteps throughout the 2014 referendum campaign.

Unlike the previous discursive strategies, which were more closely associated with specific tendencies within Labour, this instrumental argument in favour of the Union was made by Labour representatives throughout Britain. Those who employed the first strategy, in which they articulated an inclusive British identity, paired this with an argument that rival nationalisms and regional resentments would be pacified by good governance from the centre. Those who viewed the problem through the lens of class and social solidarity spoke about how this solidarity between the many would be strengthened under a Labour government.

Speaking in Glasgow as the Scottish debate gathered steam, Miliband attempted to situate the Labour project and the British project in a historical frame:

> Our story, as a party and as a country, is not what we achieved separately but what we achieved together. The story of the Scotsman, the Englishman, and the Welshman is not just the start of a good joke. It is the history of social justice in this country. It was a Scotsman, Keir Hardie, who founded the Labour party a hundred and twelve years ago. An Englishman, Clement Attlee, who led the most successful Labour Government in history. And a Welshman, Nye Bevan, who pioneered that Government's greatest legacy, our National Health Service. These are the achievements of our nations working together. Miliband (2012)

He continued, speaking of the scale of the challenges facing the United Kingdom, "a country crying out for change," but suggested that instead of seeking a "border across the A1 and M74," Scots should join the English and Welsh in securing a "more equal, more just, more progressive future for Scotland and the United Kingdom" (Miliband, 2012).

Lord Peter Hain, a vocal advocate for UK constitutional reform, argued that the United Kingdom, understood as a sharing union, provided the foundation for social and economic progress, including:

> common welfare standards first introduced by Liberal governments and subsequently consolidated by Labour governments up until 2010 – ensuring common economic and social standards: common UK-wide old age pensions, common UK social insurance (sick pay, health insurance, unemployment insurance and labour exchanges), common UK child and family benefits, a common UK minimum wage and a UK system of equalising resources, so that everyone irrespective of where they live has the same political, social and economic rights and not simply equal social and political rights. Hain (2015, p. 153)

This experience, and that of the post-war construction of the welfare state, informed the current structure of the United Kingdom and served as an argument for its preservation.

Following the EU referendum vote, this was a strategy employed throughout the party. Increases in the polls for independence in Scotland, and Wales, were attributed not to deep-seated nationalist ambitions but as reactions to the Conservative government at Westminster. The threat to the Union was a result of the austerity policies advanced by the United Kingdom and its doctrinaire approach to its nations. Deputy Scottish Labour leader Alex Rowley explained that independence supporters were not inherently separatist, but that

> They will be seeking a political alternative to the harsh policies affecting their lives, and that is what makes them seek change. I hope that Members across the House, especially those in the Government, will recognise the real and serious threats that these policies are posing to the Union. Rowley (2018)

Faced with the economic challenge of Brexit and recent cuts to health and welfare services, Labour made an argument in favour of renewal and reform of both of these institutions. In a House of Commons debate on *Strengthening the Union*, Scottish Labour MP Hugh Gaffney spoke of both the present and future of the Union "Working

together, our family of nations has achieved great things for the many and not just the few, and when we are once again united in common purpose, under a Labour Government" (Gaffney, 2018). Gordon Brown called for "[r]ediscovering the value of empathy and solidarity between nations and regions and demonstrating the benefits that can flow from co-operation and sharing in pursuit of important causes" (Brown, 2020). And newly elected Labour leader Keir Starmer described the future of the United Kingdom as "a force for social justice and a moral force for good in the world" (Starmer, 2020). He went on

> We are all stronger because we choose to pool our resources to share the risks and rewards. We are all better off because we can live, work and trade across borders, rather than behind them. And as one United Kingdom we're better able to weather the storms of a global financial crash, a pandemic, or the climate emergency. Starmer (2020)

This language of redistribution and social solidarity made little distinction between the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. Notably, redistribution was not to take place between London and the North of England, or between Scotland and Wales, but was to be undertaken as a larger project, enabled by Labour in power at Westminster, Cardiff Bay and Holyrood. In many ways, this position ignored the devolution settlements and the devolved health, welfare, and social security functions. It also minimised the national question in its response, which can be read as an attempt to sidestep the question of sub-state nationalism as well as the broader question of Britishness.

4.4 | ANALYSING LABOUR'S STRATEGY

The three discursive strategies employed, in various formations, by Labour partisans during this period represent an effort to articulate a form of Britishness which can comfortably accommodate multiple identities and make a case for the Union at a time of significant challenge. However, the efficacy of these strategies remains up for debate, with the party on the backfoot in Scotland and England. Only in Wales, where the battle for a distinctively Welsh identity was fought and won in the early years of devolution, has the party appeared confident in its ability to do so (Rawlings, 2022). The party's struggle seemed, in some ways, surprising. It had delivered devolution and attempted while in government at the centre between 1997 and 2010 to define a new, more cohesive, and inclusive sense of Britishness, facing the challenges of an increasingly decentralised and multi-ethnic Britain head on. But these successes appear to have masked larger problems within the party, problems exacerbated by the tumult of the period between 2012 and 2020.

In 2012, Jon Cruddas led a policy review, noting that "Labour wins when it speaks authentically for Britain" and pledging to define "the essential character of a Labour England, a Labour Scotland and a Labour Wales" (Cruddas, 2012). This statement suggested the party acknowledged its predicament, and the role that its failure to articulate a sense of Britishness played in its electoral woes. Writing a decade later, these challenges appear equally daunting for the party, particularly in light of bids for a second independence referendum. So why is it that the party which led the United Kingdom into the 21st century, delivered one of the largest programmes of constitutional change, and signed the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, bringing an end to The Troubles, appears so at sea at this profound and prolonged constitutional moment. Three interrelated explanations seem worththy of consideration.

The first two speak to matters internal to the Labour Party, that of the party's ideological make-up and leadership. While New Labour largely abandoned the discourse of socialism and downplayed language of class, and Gordon Brown was (and remains) active in this space, subsequent leaders have struggled to effectively advance a narrative of nationhood which resonates with the public. This can be read as an ideological impediment, and is not unique to the Labour Party, as seen by other contributions to this special issue (Custodi & Padoan, 2022; Dalle Mulle & Kernalegenn, 2022; Dalle Mulle & Serrano, 2022; Kernalegenn, 2022).

The Labour Party's articulation of the nation was one of Britishness, which sat astride the plurinational, and multicultural identities present in the United Kingdom, and at times equated being Scottish or Welsh with being a member of a diaspora present in the UK. This was a shallow form of national identity rooted in universal values similar to those espoused by substate nationalists in Scotland and Wales. It was also broadly instrumental, rooted in the economic and political successes of the United Kingdom, which seemed few and far between in an age defined by austerity politics. Frequent references were made to the establishment of the welfare state and the National Health Service, but more contemporaneous reference points were limited, largely as a result of the party's position in opposition. Miliband's attempt to construct a new form of Britishness, that of One Nation Britishness, was half-hearted, and one imagines, had little resonance in Scotland and Wales, whose inhabitants, unionist or not, viewed themselves as members of a distinct nation.

Miliband's attempts to articulate a British *and* English identity were wholly abandoned by his successor, Jeremy Corbyn, and those ideologically aligned most closely with his leadership. These figures were deeply reluctant to engage with themes of Britishness and Unionism. Instead, there was an emphasis on a political ideology which flattened national identities in favour of an underspecified "many." Their understanding of the purpose of the United Kingdom was contingent on the delivery of social goods and social solidarity within the state, an argument undermined by the party's inability to effect change at the centre through state capture. Those close to Corbyn in Scotland, notably Richard Leonard and Neil Finlay adopted this approach, viewing the UK Labour leader's state-centred programme of nationalisation and redistribution as a route back to power in Scotland. However, gains north of the border were limited over the course of his leadership. Welsh Labour leaders Carwyn Jones and later Mark Drakeford were open to Corbyn's political programme, but benefited from a distinctly Welsh identity and Welsh Labour's decades long position in government. Those hoping for more engagement with themes of Englishness, growing in political resonance in the Brexit era, were disappointed.

Across the party's ideological spectrum, partisans attempted to make an instrumental case for state integrity, on the basis of the economic and social benefits derived from Union, arguing that a Labour government would embark upon a programme of reform and renewal. However, the party faced a challenging electoral landscape. It was squeezed between Conservatives, who channel a British, English, and Unionist identity, and are quick to call into question the UK Labour Party's commitment to the Union; astute observers will recall Conservative posters placing Miliband in then SNP leader Alex Salmond's coat pocket, which were updated during Corbyn and Sturgeon's tenures, and may appear in any future General Election campaign. What Kenny and Sheldon (2021) describe as the "hyper-unionism" of the Conservatives is difficult for the Labour Party to counter, particularly in England, in which the electorate seems to feel a growing sense of its English identity, as documented by Henderson and Wyn Jones (2021). In Scotland, they faced further challenges by the Scottish nationalists, ideologically not dissimilar from Labour, but making the argument that these progressive policies can only be delivered from within Scotland. Wales was, as always, the exception, with Labour effectively wrestling the mantle of Welshness from Plaid Cymru, and demonstrating an ability to engage effectively both with questions of identity and with prospective constitutional change.

The challenges faced by the Labour Party during this period remain salient and are perhaps intensified given the SNP's success at the 2021 Holyrood election which further fuels the debate over a Scottish referendum, and the party's notable defeats in many English local contests which may lead to challenges to Keir Starmer's leadership. Wales remains Labour's only stronghold. The question of how to accommodate Scotland and Wales within the United Kingdom and ensure representation for England remains a live one, and while Labour politicians did not enter politics to talk about the constitution, to ensure their political survival, they may yet have to.

ORCID

Coree Brown Swan https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7448-5966

ENDNOTES

[1] The UK Labour Party remains highly centralised when compared to other British parties. There are close financial links between the party at the centre and the territorial parties operating in Scotland and Wales, and until quite recently, London has had significant influence over internal decision-making processes. Labour does not compete in Northern Ireland.

[2] However, here too, the Labour Party faces difficulties, with Jeremy Corbyn's association with the IRA and opposition to the monarchy allowing the party's political opponents to suggest that Corbyn was, at his heart, hostile to the very institutions of the British state.

[3] The period under examination here was one of significant leadership turnover in Scotland, with Joann Lamont serving until 2014, succeeded by Jim Murphy who served for several months ahead of the 2015 General Election campaign, and stepped down following the election which saw Scottish Labour's Westminster ranks reduced to a single MP. Kezia Dugdale, seen as closer to Brown and Miliband, served until 2017, when she was replaced by Richard Leonard, widely seen as ideologically and politically closer to the Corbynite leadership. In contrast, Welsh leadership was more stable, with Carwyn Jones in office as leader and Welsh First Minister between 2009 and 2018. His successor Mark Drakeford was widely viewed as closer in alignment with Corbyn, but has successfully maintained a distinctive Welsh Labour policy platform.

REFERENCES

Ascherson, N. (2011). *Games with shadows*. A&C Black.

Atkins, J. (2015). Narrating one nation: The ideology and rhetoric of the Miliband Labour Party. *Politics*, *35*(1), 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12076

Aughey, A. (2007). The wager of devolution and the challenge to Britishness. *The Political Quarterly*, *78*, 136–148. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2007.02026.x

Aughey, A. (2018). *The conservative party and the nation: Union, England and Europe*. Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526101389

Bechhofer, F., & McCrone, D. (2007). Being British: A crisis of identity? *The Political Quarterly*, *78*(2), 251–260. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2007.00852.x

Bennett, S., Moon, D. S., Pearce, N., & Whiting, S. (2020). Labouring under a delusion? Scotland's national questions and the crisis of the Scottish Labour Party. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, *9*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2020.1743204

Blair, T. (1997, September 30). Speech to labour party conference. Brighton.

Bradbury, J. (2006). British political parties and devolution: Adapting to multi-level politics. In C. Jeffery & D. Hough (Eds.), *Devolution and electoral politics*. Manchester University Press.

Brown, G. (2019, June 25). Combatting the far right. London.

Brown, G. (2020, January 28). The United Kingdom is too precious to be lost to narrow nationalism. *The Guardian*.

Brown Swan, C., & Cetrà, D. (2020). Why stay together? State nationalism and justifications for state unity in Spain and the UK. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, *26*(1), 46–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2020.1716443

Bulpitt, J. (1983). *Territory and power in the United Kingdom: An interpretation*. Manchester University Press.

Cetrà, D., & Brown Swan, C. (2020). State and majority nationalism in plurinational states: Responding to challenges from below. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, *26*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2020.1716435

Colley, L. (2005). *Britons: Forging the nation, 1707–1837*. Yale University Press.

Colley, L. (2014). *Acts of union and disunion*. Profile Books.

Conversi, D. (2020). The Left and nationalism: from the French Revolution to the Anthropocene. In L. Greenfield & Z. Wu (Eds.), *Research handbook on nationalism*. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789903447.00009

Corbyn, J. (2019, March 25). Speech at the Welsh Labour Conference. Llandudno.

Crines, A. S., Jeffery, D., & Heppell, T. (2018). The British Labour Party and leadership election mandate (s) of Jeremy Corbyn: Patterns of opinion and opposition within the parliamentary Labour Party. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, *28*(3), 361–379. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2017.1403921

Cruddas, J. (2012, September 30). On building the new Jerusalem. *New Statesman*.

Cruddas, J., & Rutherford, J. (2014). *One nation: Labour's political renewal*. Labour Party.

Custodi, J., & Padoan, E. (2022). The nation of the people: An analysis of Podemos and Five Star Movement's discourse on the nation. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12865

Cutts, D., Goodwin, M., Heath, O., & Surridge, P. (2020). Brexit, the 2019 general election and the realignment of British politics. *The Political Quarterly*, *91*(1), 7–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12815

Dalle Mulle, E., & Kernalegenn, T. (2022). The Left(s) and Nationalism(s) in contemporary Western Europe. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12864

Dalle Mulle, E., & Serrano, I. (2022). Universalism within: The tension between universalism and community in progressive ideology. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12867

Denham, J., & Devine, D. (2018). England, Englishness and the Labour Party. *The Political Quarterly*, *89*(4), 621–630. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12566

Doughty, S. (2014, July 31). I do not have a vote in the referendum, but I do have a voice. *LabourList*.

Drakeford, M. (2019, October 11). Neither nationalism nor populism will secure Wales the future it deserves. Keir Hardie Lecture, Merthyr Tydfil.

Gaffney, H. (2018, July 23). Contribution to debate on strengthening the union. House of Commons.

Hain, P. (2015). *Back to the future of socialism*. Policy Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t8979r

Hassan, G., & Shaw, E. (2019). *The people's flag and the Union Jack: An alternative history of Britain and the labour party*. Biteback Publishing.

Henderson, A., & Wyn Jones, R. (2021). Englishness. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198870784.001.0001

Heppell, T. (2021). The British Labour Party and the antisemitism crisis: Jeremy Corbyn and image repair theory. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *23*(4), 645–662. https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481211015920

Hopkin, J. (2009). Party matters: Devolution and party politics in Britain and Spain. *Party Politics*, *15*(2), 179–198. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068808099980

Hopkin, J., & Bradbury, J. (2006). British statewide parties and multilevel politics. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, *36*(1), 135–152. https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjj008

Hutt, J. (2020, July 15). Contribution to debate "an independent Wales". Welsh Senedd.

Ichijo, A. (2012). Entrenchment of unionist nationalism: Devolution and the discourse of national identity in Scotland. *National Identities*, *14*(1), 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2012.657079

Interview conducted by author. (2019a, April 25). Edinburgh, Scotland.

Interview conducted by author. (2019b, June 5). London, UK.

Interview conducted by author. (2019c, June 11). Edinburgh, Scotland.

Interview conducted by author. (2019d, 5 May). London, UK.

Jackson, B. (2012). The masses against the classes: One Nation Labour and the revival of social patriotism. *Public Policy Research*, *19*(3), 160–165. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-540X.2012.00702.x

Kearney, H. (1991). Four nations or one? In B. Crick (Ed.), *National Identities: The constitution of the United Kingdom*. Blackwell.

Keating, M. (2009). *The independence of Scotland: Self-government and the shifting politics of union*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199545957.001.0001

Keating, M. (2010). The strange death of Unionist Scotland. *Government and Opposition*, *45*(3), 365–385. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2010.01317.x

Keating, M. (2021). *State and nation in the United Kingdom: The fractured union*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198841371.001.0001

Keating, M., & Bleiman, D. (1979). *Labour and Scottish nationalism*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-04678-2

Kenny, M., & Sheldon, J. (2021). When planets collide: The British conservative party and the discordant goals of delivering Brexit and preserving the domestic union, 2016–2019. *Political Studies*, *69*, 965–984. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720930986

Kernalegenn, T. (2022). Greens and the nation: Is small beautiful? *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12866

Kidd, C. (2008). *Union and unionisms: Political thought in Scotland, 1500–2000*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511756009

Kiely, R., Bechhofer, F., & McCrone, D. (2005). Birth, blood and belonging: Identity claims in post-devolution Scotland. *The Sociological Review*, *53*(1), 150–171. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.00507.x

Laffin, M., & Shaw, E. (2007). British devolution and the Labour Party: How a national party adapts to devolution. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *9*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856x.2007.00252.x

Laird, L. (2019). Speech to Conference. Scottish Labour Conference. 8 March, Dundee.

Lamont, J. (2014, October 25). I quit. *Daily Record*.

Langlands, R. (1999). Britishness or Englishness? The historical problem of national identity in Britain. *Nations and Nationalism*, *5*(1), 53–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1354-5078.1999.00053.x

Leonard, R. (2018, September 24). Speech to conference. Liverpool.

Marquand, D. (2002). *Uniting the kingdom?* Routledge.

McEwen, N. (2018). Brexit and Scotland: Between two unions. *British Politics*, *13*(1), 65–78. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-017-0066-4

McLean, I., & McMillan, A. (2005). *State of the union: Unionism and the alternatives in the United Kingdom since 1707*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199258201.001.0001

Miliband, E. (2012, October 2). Speech to conference. Manchester.

Miliband, E. (2014, September 23). Speech to conference. Manchester.

Murphy, J. (2018, May 21). England and the union. Policy Exchange.

Nairn, T. (2006). *Gordon Brown: Bard of Britishness*. Institute of Welsh Affairs.

Parekh, B. (2000). *The future of multi-ethnic Britain: Report of the commission on the future of multi-ethnic Britain*. Profile Books.

Pearce, N., & Kenny, M. (2015). What national story does the centre-left need to tell? *Juncture*, *22*(1), 4–10. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2050-5876.2015.00830.x

Rawlings, R. (2022). Wales and the United Kingdom: a territorial constitutional policy drive. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2022.2036630

Robinson, E. (2016). Radical nostalgia, progressive patriotism and Labour's 'English problem'. *Political Studies Review*, *14*(3), 378–387. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929916649613

Rowley, D. (2018, July 23). Contribution to debate on strengthening the union. House of Commons.

Shaw, E. (2021). 'This really has the potential to destroy us': Jeremy Corbyn's management of the problem of anti-semitism in the Labour Party 1. *The Political Quarterly*, *92*(2), 211–219. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12994

Smith, M. (2016, July 26). Owen Smith says Jeremy Corbyn doesn't understand patriotism and national identity. *Daily Mirror*.

Smith, O. (2012, November 19). How does Wales fit into one nation? *LabourList*.

Starmer, K. (2020, December 21). A socially just Scotland in a modern United Kingdom. Virtual address.

Surridge, P. (2020). A mountain to climb: The Labour Together 2019 election review. *The Political Quarterly*, *91*(3), 659–663. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12889

Todd, J. (2020). Unionisms and the challenges of change. *Irish Political Studies*, *35*(3), 335–355. https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2020.1816374

Valluvan, S. (2021). *The clamour of nationalism: Race and nation in twenty-first-century Britain*. Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526126139

Wright, K. (2021). Whatever happened to the progressive case for the union? How Scottish Labour's failure to subsume a clearly left of centre identity with a pro-union one helps to explain its decline. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *75*(3), 616-633. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsab014