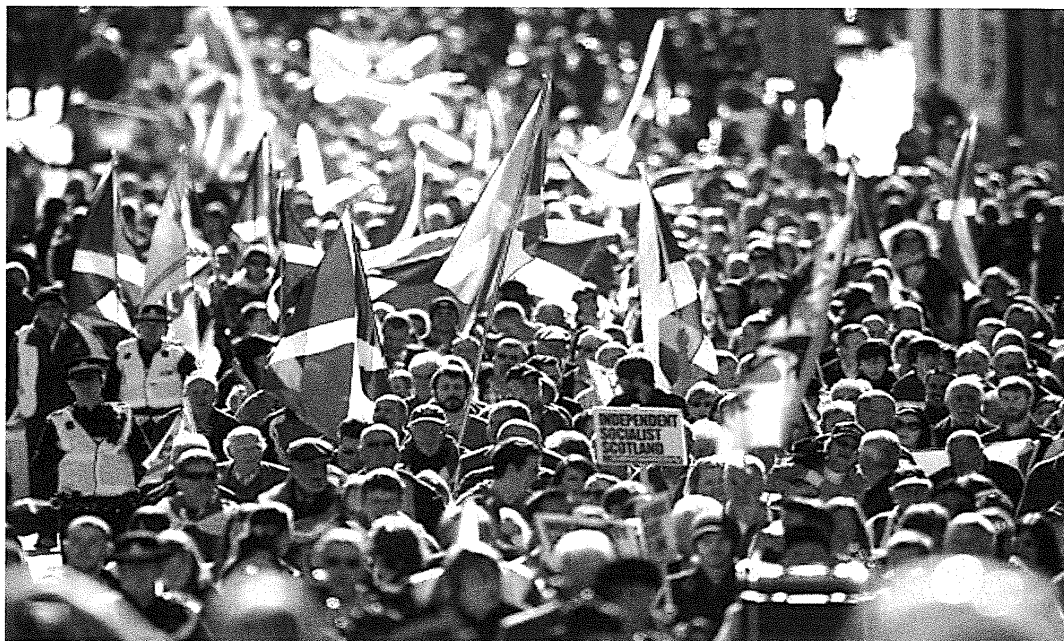


## World Studies Extended Essay

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**Subject Area:** World studies – History, Economics & Politics

**Title:** Factors contributing to the support of separatist movements

**Research Question:**

*Which factors, with a special focus on the 2014 referendum for independence in Scotland, have most contributed to the popularity of separatist movements in Europe?*

**Word count :** 3,999

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# Introduction

Since the birth of civil and autonomous societies, the phenomenon of nationalism has been both a bonding agent and cause for conflict. Despite holding a prominent position in both history and contemporary politics, nationalism is an abstract, almost ethereal concept.<sup>1</sup> This essay explores the factors contributing to the growth of separatist, nationalist movements in Europe, focusing on the Scottish referendum for independence.<sup>2</sup> Separatist nationalism is a branch of nationalism that involves a minority group within a country seeking devolution or self-determination from the majority group.

As a form of nationalism, separatism has gathered popular and political support in Europe in recent decades. Countries with minority groups, such as Spain with Cataluña or Belgium with Flanders, have seen a huge increase in support for parties pushing for independence.<sup>3</sup> In Belgium, for example, the number of separatist political parties has increased by 166.7 % since 1998, and popular support for separatist parties has seen a similar increase.<sup>4</sup> The most popular separatist party in Belgium saw its votes increase from 201,399 to 1,135,617 between 2003 and 2010.<sup>5</sup>

Separatism is brought about by a series of complex and inextricably linked factors. The rise of separatism is having very real consequences in Scotland, which has been in a union with the rest of the United Kingdom for 306 years. That union is now in an extremely precarious position, because a separatist movement, the Scottish National Party (SNP), aims to divide it. The SNP, founded in 1934, has been campaigning for Scottish independence for decades, and has recently seen a considerable rise in its popular support. It achieved a break-through in 1998 when the Scotland Act was passed, enabling the creation of a Scottish Parliament. In the run-up to the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections, the SNP manifesto revolved around holding a referendum on Scottish independence.<sup>6</sup> Having won the elections, the SNP was able to pass a bill enabling a referendum to be held, on Thursday 18 September 2014. This essay will explore and evaluate the importance of the different factors that have contributed to this rise in popular support for the Scottish National Party and the referendum.

The scope of the Essay will be an evaluation of four contributing factors to separatism in Scotland: cultural identity, historical antagonism, political misrepresentation and economic opportunity. These four I consider of greatest importance, but with greater space than is allowed in 4000 words I would also have considered environmental issues, health care, the justice system and inequality. The research methodology was a literature survey of secondary sources on Scottish nationalism, the imminent referendum and its potential effects.

<sup>1</sup> Nationalism has never been a global phenomenon; there are no recorded events whereby the population of the world was united by nationalist feeling. It occurs within a certain part of a given whole. Nonetheless it is a global phenomenon in the sense that it is a

<sup>2</sup> To be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 : "Background On Referendum." Scotland's Referendum 2014 Background Comments. Scottish Government, n.d. Web. 23 Nov. 2013.

<sup>3</sup> "Separatists Are on the Rise across Europe." *Washington Times*. The Washington Times, 14 Oct. 2012. Web. 24 Nov. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> "Belgium- Political Parties." European Election Database (EED). Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), n.d. Web. 17 Sept. 2013.

<sup>5</sup> "Parties and Elections in Belgium." Parties and Elections in Europe. Parties and Elections in Europe- Wolfram Nordsieck, 2010. Web. 9 Aug. 2013.

<sup>6</sup> "Scottish National Party (SNP)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 24 Nov. 2013.

# Art and Culture as a motivation and outlet for separatism

Scotland shares a common language with the rest of the United Kingdom, but its culture and traditions are very different. Historically, intellectuals and artists have supported Scottish nationalism. The need for Scottish people to have a sense of cultural independence has been a driving force for separatist political movements.<sup>7</sup> However, although the arts have raised a sense of nationalist self-awareness, whether they have contributed to separatism by directly affecting the independence campaign, is in contention.

By expressing their love for Scotland through art, poets and singers have given Scotland a clearer national identity.<sup>8</sup> Their ability to disseminate their ideas to the masses, has spurred support for Nationalist movements across generations.<sup>9</sup> The novel *Lanark* is said to have increased Scottish nationalist feeling in the latter part of the 20th century.<sup>10 11</sup> The songs of the folk singers the Corries created a similar effect, by resurrecting songs of old and nationalist sentiments.<sup>12</sup> These cultural contributions seemed to fill the gaps left behind by the disappointing result of the 1979 referendum, this idea is corroborated by Murray Pittock: "Artists created a form of cultural autonomy in the absence of its political equivalence".<sup>13 14</sup>

The contribution of Scottish intellectuals to devolution and possible independence is unquestionable, With the Canongate Wall, the newly formed Scottish Parliament honoured the symbolic role played by Scottish writers in bringing the Parliament into being.<sup>15</sup> However, those very writers now seem largely ornamental in the current debate for independence.<sup>16</sup> As the movement for devolution shifted from the streets and books to the Parliament halls once again in the 90's, these writers and poets, so crucial in the emergence of the separatist movement, were gradually and quietly side-lined. These artists now go by the name of National Collective, their influence limited to blogging.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hames, Scott, and John Aberdein. "Don't Feel Bought, You're Buying." Introduction. Unstated: Writers on Scottish Independence. Edinburgh: WP, 2012 pp.1-19.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to say however that all artists are supporters of nationalism, many have been opposed to it, however artists have always played an important role in separatist ventures in Scotland.

<sup>9</sup> (Hames) pg. 7

<sup>10</sup> *Lanark* Is a cult classic published by Alasdair Gray in 1981.

<sup>11</sup> (Hames) pg. 12.

<sup>12</sup> The Corries were and still are a very popular Scottish folk band, their songs often focused on describing Scottish scenery, culture and values. Such was their influence on Scottish culture and idea of a Scottish « self » that what is now largely recognised as the Scottish national anthem « O' Flower of Scotland » was written by the corries.

<sup>13</sup> After a failed referendum in 1979, the hopes of Scottish separatists were at an all-time low.

<sup>14</sup> Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence ?* (London : Reaktion, 2008), p.114

<sup>15</sup> (Hames), Pg 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Pg 8.

<sup>17</sup> "Mobilising Scotland's Artists, Creatives, Writers & Thinkers." National Collective. National Collective, 26 July 2013. Web. 24 Sept. 2013.

Some argue that "Cultural autonomy has been a crucial substratum for political autonomy".<sup>18</sup> However there are arguments that tell a different story, that culture has had little if any influence on the political debate. As the SNP started to gain political influence in the 1990's, bouncing back after the failed referendum of 1979, they began pushing their campaign for independence once again. Although artists and Scottish culture may have contributed massively to the movement that allowed for the resurgence of the SNP, the party's manifesto failed to reflect this.<sup>19</sup> This is explained by Peter Lynch: "the types of issues the SNP mobilised around from its inception revolved around self-government/ independence in addition to a range of social and economic issues... Significantly, such mobilisations seldom involved language or cultural issues."<sup>20</sup> The SNP had always campaigned for self-determination with a particularly socio-economic approach. The differentiation and clear identification of a Scottish culture was never a priority of the party. Murray Pittock corroborates this view in saying that: "The modern SNP was frequently almost indifferent to cultural matters." However, Alex Thomson argues that though the party may not have been interested in culture, the movement for independence is the "political expression of Scottish cultural autonomy".<sup>21</sup>

After evaluating the academic opinions above, it can be said that culture was never a priority of the SNP. However, the proponents of cultural independence were very influential in the resurgence of the separatist movement amongst the populace. Where culture failed to affect the policy of the SNP, it compensated by galvanizing the people giving them an idea of a distinct and culturally independent Scotland and keeping the separatist movement alive after the failure of 1979.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in the long term, culture and art have formed the core of Scottish national self-consciousness.<sup>23</sup> This Scottish self, being intrinsically different to any British notion of identity<sup>24</sup> created the basic root for a separatist emotion and thus made a considerable contribution to the emotional phenomenon of separatist nationalism in Scotland.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Pat Kane. « Artistic Rage That Cultivates the Scottish Consensus », *Guardian*, 6 February 1992. Web. 18 Oct. 2013.

<sup>19</sup> (Hames) Pg 3.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Lynch, "The Scottish National Party: The Long Road from Marginality to Blackmail and Coalition Potential" in *Autonomist parties in Europe: Identity Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage*, Vol I, 2006, Pg 231.

<sup>21</sup> Alex Thomson. "You Can't Get There from Here: Devolution and Scottish Literary History." *International Journal of Scottish Literature*. International Journal of Scottish Literature, 2007. Web. 24 Nov. 2013.

<sup>22</sup> In 1979 a first referendum for independence was held, though a majority vote passed, an insufficient proportion of the population participated in the vote, and thus the result was inadmissible.

<sup>23</sup> Through things as simple as popular books or television programs set in Scotland, of which there have been many, eg. Books by: Ian Rankin, Irvine Welsh, Iain Banks and Sir Walter Scott, a rudimentary idea of what being Scottish was formed. And what is key is that rudimentary idea of Scottishness differed from any nationally conscious idea of being British. And thus, the subconscious emotional roots are formed for a feeling of difference and separation from the greater entity, in other words, separatism.

<sup>24</sup> Only 5% of Scots believe they are British first and Scottish second : Scotland. Scottish Government. Social Research. Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2011 Core Module : Attitudes to Government the Economy and Public Services in Scotland. By Rachel Ormston and Susan Reid. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, 2012. Print.

<sup>25</sup> (Hames) Pg.5 « Scottishness is being stealthily politicised ».



# Case studies of historical events contributing to Scottish separatism

The inspiration for the artists mentioned in the previous chapter is often derived from historical relations between Scotland and England.<sup>26</sup> This chapter identifies some key historical events, which have both inspired nationalist culture, and have themselves been fulcrums of nationalist sentiments through their interpretations. These events demonstrate the importance of history in Scottish nationalism and are the Battle of Bannockburn and the Act of Union.

## The First War of Scottish Independence 1296-1328

This war left in its wake a plethora of myths that eternalized the Anglo-Scottish struggle in the popular mind.<sup>28</sup> An indication of its importance to the separatist movement and national identity is the disparity between the knowledge of the general public and the historians, i.e., cultural reinterpretation has created a gap between the "truth" and the folklore. The works of Walter Scott and Burns, the stories of the chronicler and, recently, the film *Braveheart* have all romanticised the events glorifying Scotland, boosting nationalism and fuelling separatism by antagonising England.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of the 13th century, a dynastic crisis left Scotland in political disarray.<sup>30</sup> A protracted war against the English and a Civil war ensued as different claims were made to the throne. During this period, England brutally occupied Scotland, but eventually Scotland gained independence when the new king Robert De Brus won his greatest military battle in 1314 at Bannockburn and, by 1318, had cleared Scotland of the last English garrisons.<sup>31</sup>

However, though the textbooks explain that the conflict was caused by the nobility's inability to decide on an heir, the public blame the tyrannical and expansionist policies of Edward I.<sup>32</sup> Whilst history suggests that

<sup>26</sup> Amongst other Historical events, however, relations with England seem to be a favourite amongst Scottish artists as a basis for their works.

<sup>27</sup> For example Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* or the Corries' *O flower of Scotland*

<sup>28</sup> Maxwell, Stephen. *Arguing for Independence: Evidence, Risk and Tackling the Wicked Issues*. Edinburgh: Luath, 2012 p. 26

<sup>29</sup> Macdonald, David -Ditchburn Alastair J. "Medieval Scotland, 1100-1560 ." Knox, R.A Houston W.W J. *The New Penguin History Of Scotland: from the earliest times to the present day*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2001.p. 170

<sup>30</sup> After the untimely death of Alexander II, closely followed by the death of his heir, Scotland was left with no clear heir to the throne and different claimants from different noble families risked tearing the country apart over the crown.

<sup>31</sup> (Maclean) p. 36: The English forces sacked every major castle in Scotland " massacring large numbers of the inhabitants"

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*; p.35

Scottish resistance was divided and that many Scots actually fought with Edward I, people remember a popular united movement against a foreign tyrant.<sup>33</sup> Whilst the general public believe that warriors such as William Wallace made great contributions to the defeat of the English, historians explain that he was an inspirational figure rather than a deciding factor in the conflict.<sup>34</sup> The historian recognises that Scotland gained the upper hand due to the weaknesses of the heir of Edward I, but the Scottish people attribute the change in fortunes to the abilities of Robert I as a leader. Most importantly perhaps, though the books claim that the Battle of Bannockburn did little to truly change the political situation, it is widely considered as a defining moment in Scottish history.<sup>35</sup>

The Battle *was* a defining moment in Scottish history, not for its political effects, but for its popular legacy, exemplified by the fact that the recently written and publically adored Scottish national anthem is a description of this battle.<sup>36</sup> Every factor for the birth of a nationalist movement was present; oppression, a feeling of "us and them" feelings of inferiority and finally, with Robert De Brus, a hero.<sup>37</sup> Events like these, through their interpretations, accurate or not, have led to a resentment of English control that is still prominent in the mind of many Scots.<sup>38</sup> These glorious memories of a bygone era give the Scottish people common ground, a lynchpin for separatist thoughts; an imagined community.<sup>39</sup> It is no coincidence that the 2014 referendum will be held close to the 700th anniversary of Scotland's greatest military victory against England.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Act of Union and its effect on national consciousness**

Despite much of Scottish separatism being rooted in historic folklore, a lot of resentment towards England is based on accurate events. In 1701, with no clear heir to the throne, Scotland was vulnerable.<sup>41</sup> England had a vested interest in Scotland, and sought to control her by absorbing her empty throne into a united monarchy, thus she began to pressure a reluctant Scotland to form a union.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>33</sup> (Maclean) p.38

<sup>34</sup> (Ditchburn et Macdonald) p.169

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* p.170 : "He (William Wallace) provides modern Scots still with a largely mythical folk-hero"

<sup>36</sup> A member of popular folk band The Corries wrote flower of Scotland in 1965 and though it is not actually the official national anthem of Scotland, the public regard it to be. This is an example of how the legacy of such battles still lives on today.

<sup>37</sup> (Maclean) p. 45

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*; p.26

<sup>39</sup> An imagined community is a phenomenon described by Benedict Anderson, the foremost writer on the conception of cultural nationalism. The term imagined community is used to describe the embryonic movement of people with a common ground to coalesce and eventually become nationalists. Common antagonism against the English could be seen as common ground for the creation of an imagined community.

<sup>40</sup> The referendum is to be held in autumn 2014, though the Battle of Bannockburn was fought in June 1314, many still speculate that the date was chosen purposely for symbolic reasons.

<sup>41</sup> Once again Scotland was thrown into turmoil by a dynastic crisis when Queen Anne was left with no heir in 1701

<sup>42</sup> England wanted to stamp out the last breaths of Jacobite and catholic resistance in Scotland, furthermore she wanted Scotland to become her economic subject, both of which could be achieved by a union.

The Union was first proposed in 1702, and, between the years of its proposal and its signing, economic coercion was regularly used to accelerate and incite negotiations.<sup>43</sup> England knew that Scotland's only chance of economic survival was to share the innumerable trading benefits of the English empire.<sup>44</sup> This economic coercion was institutionalised by the passing of the Aliens Act in 1705.<sup>45</sup> Tensions rose and as final encouragement an English army mobilised. With little choice, the Scots agreed to enter negotiations. On 16 January 1707, the Act of Union was passed by a slim majority and Scotland sold her independence for the right to trade with England.<sup>46</sup>

The Union benefited the people of Scotland in the long run, but was only passed because England put Scotland in a position whereby ratifying the Act was the only solution for her economic survival.<sup>47</sup> Immediate popular reaction to the Act of Union was varied due to religious differences, which had been the fulcrum of war and politics of that age.<sup>48</sup> However, most Scots recognised that this was a blatant act of coercion and that Scotland had been sold out.<sup>49</sup>

The legacy of the Union was one of a country without control over its own politics.<sup>50</sup> The Act was the ultimate manifestation of English superiority over Scotland resulting in her national identity being compromised.<sup>51</sup> As opposed to being treated as a previously promised equal, Scotland was instantly subjected to English sovereignty: "Scotland is now but a county of Britain, now she is subject to the sovereignty of England, she must be governed by English Maxims".<sup>52</sup> The years that ensued the Union were marked by a quasi acceptance of English superiority - an attitude that would plague Scottish politics for centuries to come.<sup>53</sup>

The relevance of the Act of Union and history as a whole to this essay is that those who originally rejected the Union are the forefathers of today's nationalist separatists. Nonetheless, this event does not only hold prominence in the minds of active separatists, nor was it a singularity in the history of Scotland. The Act of Union is one of a multitude of historical events that have led to the subjection of Scotland to England and have,

<sup>43</sup> Brown, Keith M. "Reformation to Union, 1560-1707." Houston, R.A. The new Penguin history of Scotland: from the earliest times to the present day. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2001. p. 264

<sup>44</sup> (Maclean) p. 151

<sup>45</sup> (Brown) p. 264 : Passing the Aliens act threatened the Scottish economy with trade embargos and further economic sanctions rendering Scotland's export market almost useless and crippling the country as a whole.

<sup>46</sup> (Maclean) p. 156

<sup>47</sup> The act of Union brought markets to Scotland's exports which were previously unimaginable, though the first 50 years were less lucrative, Scotland eventually gained massively from international trade and the industrial revolution, with Glasgow eventually becoming the « second city of the empire »

<sup>48</sup> (Brown) p. 266

<sup>49</sup> . (Maclean) p.157: Malcontent was widespread with a third of the Burghs petitioning against the union and mobs gathering in the large cities of Scotland

<sup>50</sup> (Maclean) p.156 :Since the passing of the act of union Scotland would « perforce always be in a minority »

<sup>51</sup> (Brown) p. 267:As the famous Jacobite song goes « we are bought and sold, for English gold »

<sup>52</sup> (Maclean) p.157

<sup>53</sup> (Brown)p. 267 : The historian Keith M. Brown reiterates the long-term effects of the Act of Union " Until the latter half of this twentieth century Scotland has continued to be dominated by the key decisions taken in this Era".



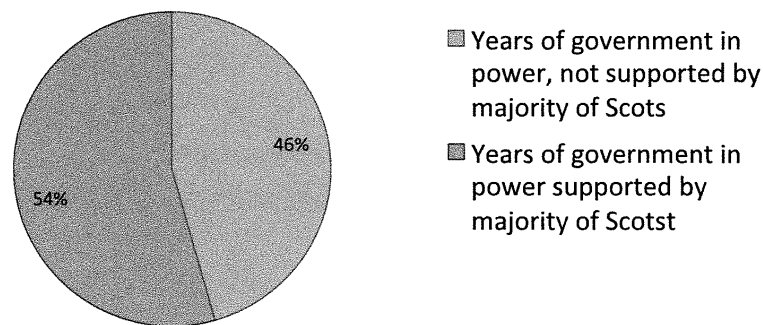
as Neal Ascherson explains, turned being Scottish into “ the sense of being governed against one’s will by the preferences of another, larger nation”, thus creating resentment towards England that now contributes actively to the separatist cause.<sup>54</sup> Common resentment helped people to coalesce, strengthening the imagined community that developed into a full separatist cause. Resentment may not play an active role in the politics of the SNP, but it is the subconscious cornerstone of Scottish separatism and is thus a contributing factor.

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<sup>54</sup> (Maxwell) p.26

## Political Motivations: The Popular Need for Self-Governance contributing to Separatism

**Years of governments democratically accepted by the Scottish people**



55

As seen in the graphic above, since 1945, almost half of the governments ruling the UK won a majority vote in Scottish polls. This discrepancy cannot be ignored. For a culturally united population of 5 million people to be ruled by a government representative of their interests for 46% of the time may be viewed as a democratic farce.<sup>56</sup> An example of the misrepresentation of Scottish interests is that the current party essentially ruling Scotland only won a single seat in the Scottish parliament.<sup>57</sup>

However, Scotland is not only suffering from numerical misrepresentation, but ideological misrepresentation too. For many of the post-war years, the party that governed Scotland was on the other side of the political spectrum to the representative vote in Scotland.<sup>58</sup> Since 1970, four Conservative prime ministers have ruled Scotland for a combined period of 24 years (and counting) despite other parties winning a majority

<sup>55</sup> Pi chart using data from: "Previous UK General Elections." Electoral Commission. Scottish Government Electoral Commission, n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2013. And : "British Governments and Elections Since 1945." British Governments and Elections Since 1945. Politics Resources.net, n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2013.

<sup>56</sup> This of course only applies if you are a separatist and believe Scotland should be a separate country, and this essay is about rising support for separatism, so the judgement is valid.

<sup>57</sup> The conservative party only won a single Scottish vote and is the ruling majority in the governing coalition, furthermore, the prime minister is from the conservative party, showing their upper hand in the coalition.

<sup>58</sup> (Maxwell)p.34

of votes in Scotland.<sup>59</sup> Despite the “game-changing” discovery of North Sea oil in the early 1970’s, economically, it was a difficult period for Britain and especially Scotland.<sup>60</sup> Unemployment was rising and poverty was rampant. At the 1979 elections, while the majority of the Scottish population voted Labour, Margaret Thatcher was elected prime minister, with severe consequences for the Scottish people.<sup>61</sup> Scottish poverty and unemployment doubled, whilst industrial and manufacturing production dropped by 33%.<sup>62</sup> The resultant lack of trust for Westminster which has developed in the post-war years can be proven statistically: while 71% of Scots trusted the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s interests ‘just about always’, only 18% said the same of the UK Government.<sup>63</sup> This lack of trust has driven a wedge between Scotland and England, exacerbating separatist nationalism and antagonism.

For some, the static and powerless feeling of being unable to incite political change has caused widespread political demoralisation, and resulting lack of ambition and initiative.<sup>64</sup> For others, it has simply caused severe frustration, culminating in the need for self-rule and the popularisation of the separatist movement. This thesis is corroborated by the Scottish Social attitudes report, which shows that the people least likely to support the SNP, in other words unionists, are people who are politically apathetic and have “very little interest in politics”.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, the people most likely to support the separatist cause are those that “have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of interest in politics”.<sup>66</sup> A further numerical indication of political apathy in Scotland is that it has averaged a turnout 10-15% lower than England at British general elections in recent years.<sup>67</sup>

The popular need for self-governance has been the driving force behind moderate separatism in Scotland; the movement for devolution. The advantages of self-determination and a true democratic system have also been a key factor in the less popular movement for independence. However, it is the ideological misrepresentation that Scotland has suffered since 1945 that has most contributed to the emergence of a politically motivated mass advocating separatism. Furthermore, the SNP must be accredited for their ability to inspire a nation and win an election during a time of political disinterest. In many ways this sense of disenfranchisement is very similar to that felt during the Act of Union, and those

<sup>59</sup> Labour or the SNP

<sup>60</sup> With her industrial exports being devalued by emerging economies and increasingly efficient existing ones, and with her main exporting partner, England, in poor economic shape, Scotland was in a bad position.

<sup>61</sup> Scots vote Labour in hopes of increasing their job security, bettering working conditions and securing the welfare state. However, despite winning almost twice as many seats as the Conservative party in Scotland, Labour was not elected and the political needs and wishes of the Scottish people ultimately ignored and as a result the Scottish people got exactly what they had not voted for.

<sup>62</sup> (Maxwell) p.34

<sup>63</sup> Data collected from : (Ormston et Reid)

<sup>64</sup> (Maxwell) p.24

<sup>65</sup> (Ormston et Reid)

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>67</sup> (Maxwell) p.45

disenfranchised under Thatcher probably had a propensity to coalesce in common historical as well as contemporary resentment for English rule.

## Contribution of Economic Factors to The Resurgence of Separatism

The economic substratum of the debate is so important because it holds the greatest vested short-term interests, for both the people of Scotland and the SNP. As a result, economic matters directly affect voting decisions.<sup>68</sup> Changes in economic policies are likely to happen if Scotland is to become independent. The success of these changes relies not only on the capabilities of the SNP to apply them, but also on the economic climate of Europe and the economy Scotland would inherit.<sup>69</sup> However, if these new policies were to backfire they could harm the Scottish economy, and, as a result, her people.

Despite this, for three key reasons, economic issues are the hardest to deal with and will probably have an unforeseen effect on voters' decisions. First, the future economic benefits of independence are simply too difficult to quantify, and accurate predictions impossible to make.<sup>70</sup> Secondly, the SNP has focused its political campaign on the political benefits of independence: "Scotland's right to rule herself". They have put little emphasis on the exact economic future of Scotland as an independent state.<sup>71</sup> Lastly, what information they have offered the public has been quite vague and open-ended. This is mostly due to the fact that if Scotland were to achieve independence, the course the state would take is very unpredictable.<sup>72</sup> Through its inability to give the Scottish public sufficient tangible evidence for a prosperous independent state, the SNP has hampered the movement for separatism, especially independence.<sup>73</sup>

One way to quantifiably establish whether economic factors have contributed to the resurgence of separatism is by finding a correlation between the number of votes the SNP has won in elections and the

<sup>68</sup> Scotland. NatCen Social Research. ScotCen. How Will Scotland Answer the Referendum Question? By John Curtice and Rachel Ormston. NatCen, 2011. Web. 15 Aug. 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Such as a change in taxation, interest rates, benefits or even currency policy, could all take place and some would definitely take place if the SNP came to power as leaders of an independent Scotland.

<sup>70</sup> Like those of any country, Scottish economic prospects as a whole and the potential of her assests are impossibly hard to predict accurately.

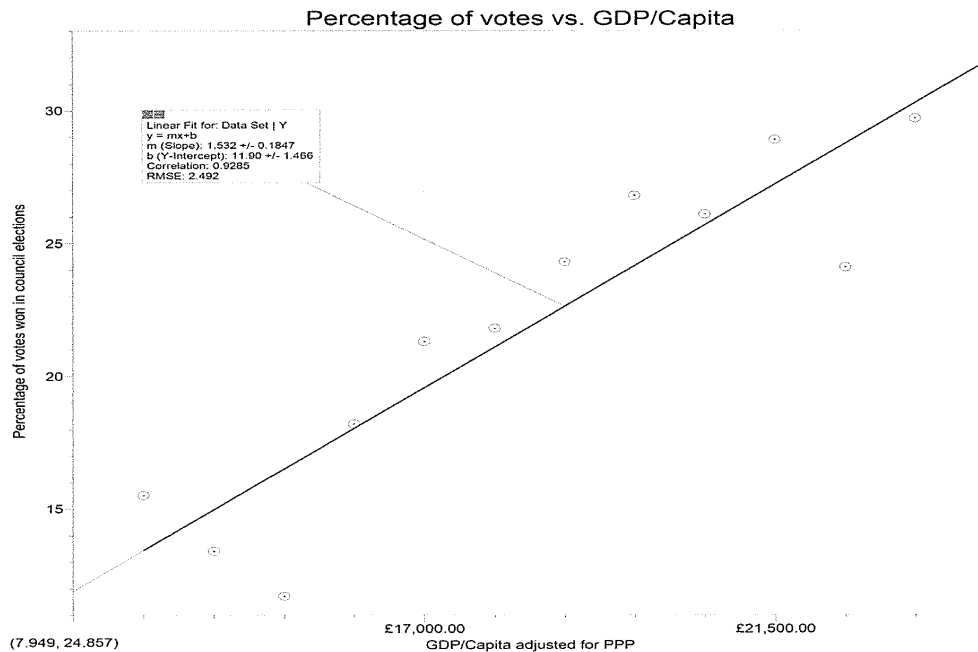
<sup>71</sup> Many policy promises have been maded but the numbers behind them, the costs of these policies and whehter they could actually be paid for, remains largely unknown.

<sup>72</sup> There would simply be too many factors coming into play during the proverbial divorce settlement with the rest of the UK to know what exactly Scotland would attain from it.

<sup>73</sup> It must be clarified that this point was only accurate at the time that the essay was written, in the followin months the SNP may release material clearing up economic issues and the future of a potential Scotland, but at the time of writing, very little clear information has been offered.



average wealth of the Scottish population.<sup>74 75</sup> Through this comparison it can hopefully be established whether a person's economic situation will affect their propensity toward separatism.



76

Though the data range is limited and some of the data itself is limited, it can be seen from the graph above that there is a positive correlation between the two variables.<sup>77</sup> It can thus be concluded, that as the average wealth of Scottish citizens increases, their propensity to vote for a separatist party increases. This contradicts an obvious hypothesis: that worsening economic climate would lead people to "desperately" find alternative solutions of government. However, this data is consistent with a different hypothesis - one revolving around the economic "risk" of independence previously mentioned. It could be said that as some of the Scottish population

<sup>74</sup> This will be calculated by the percentage of total votes won by the Scottish National party at regional and district council elections from 1980 until 2011. The source for the elections result was: "Scottish Election Results." *Scottish Elections*. Scottish Elections.Org.UK, Web. 11 Sept. 2013.

<sup>75</sup> This will be measured by GDP/Capita adjusted for PPP; GDP; Gross domestic product is a measure of a country's economic output, it measures the consumption in the country, the government spending, the investment and the net exports. The raw data has been collected from the Scottish National Accounts Project (SNAP): . The population data for the per capita calculation comes from the National Records of Scotland "Revised Mid-year Population Estimates 1982-2000." General Register Office for Scotland. *National Record of Scotland*, n.d. Web. 26 Nov. 2013. The Power Purchasing Parity calculation was done through a PPP online calculator at : "Measuring Worth-Purchasing Power Calculator of British Pounds from 1245 to Present." *Measuring Worth*. MeasuringWorth.com, n.d. Web. 3 Nov. 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Scatter graph showing relationship between % of district council election votes for SNP and Scottish GDP/Capita, Source: Marco Tenconi

<sup>77</sup> As Scotland is not an independent state it's GDP is deduced from the GDP of the UK as opposed to being calculate separately, thus the GDP is only an estimate.

are wary of the risks of economic independence, being better off has increased their willingness to take the risk as they are more economically comfortable.

Risk aversion demonstrates the inextricable links between the contributing factors to separatism. As a result of political weakness and lack of representation, and, as a further result of centuries of subjection and sometimes oppression from England, Scotland has widely been crippled by an enduring lack of confidence and a general state of apathy<sup>7879</sup>. As previously mentioned, the risk of economic independence during a time of global economic instability is too daunting for a nation which for three centuries has been suffering from a chronic lack of self-responsibility.<sup>80</sup> This hypothesis is corroborated by polling statistics that have shown that most Scots would rather opt for the safe option of fiscal autonomy within the union as opposed to full independence.<sup>81</sup> This would allow Scotland to make considerable policy changes without running large risks.<sup>82</sup>

There is then the question of how the immediate economic climate has affected separatism and the success of the SNP. It seems counter-intuitive that though Westminster often grossly mismanaged the economy resulting in massive recession, the Scottish people seem to consider prolonging their contract to London as a safe option.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the credit crunch has resulted in a considerably higher shared UK debt and thus a considerably higher inherited debt for a prospective independent Scotland.<sup>84</sup> This is only worsened by the fact that the sovereign debt crisis has led to the EU imposing increasingly strict fiscal pacts which would limit a new-born Scotland's ability to invest in public spending quickly to get her economy a head-start. Furthermore, the recent failure of small European nations to repay their debts means that borrowing credit would also be a difficulty for Scotland.<sup>85</sup> Lastly general recession in Europe has created a slow export market, the last thing an independent Scotland would need after essentially severing her bonds with a country to which she previously exported 70% of her goods. It can thus be seen that the recent European crisis has created a far from welcoming world for a new state to enter.

All the other contributing factors mentioned in this essay have led to an independent and nationalist-mindedness amongst the Scottish people. However, economic factors, especially in the current climate have acted more as a limiting agent to separatism than a catalyst. In a state where genuine self-rule has been but a

<sup>78</sup> Craig, Carol. *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence*. Edinburgh: Big Thinking, 2003. Print. P.4

<sup>79</sup> "Scottish Government." *Economics of Independence*. Scottish Government, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2013: Still today Scotland has very little Economic control, as explained by John Swinney( Member of Scottish parliament and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth) "But while we have made progress - we are hampered by the fact that the vast majority of economic levers remain controlled by Westminster."

<sup>80</sup> (Maxwell) p.74

<sup>81</sup> "Scots Back Full Fiscal Powers but Not Independence." Ipsos MORI. Ipsos MORI, 6 Sept. 2011. Web. 4 Oct. 2013

<sup>82</sup> The risks would include putting her largest export market in jeopardy (England) and repaying a massive inherited budget deficit whilst maintaining the huge post-war welfare state.

<sup>83</sup> An example of gross economic mismanagement on behalf of Westminster would be the collapse of the Scottish banking system under English stewardship, and the failure of English ministers to offer real solutions to the problem. Explained on p. 60 of (Maxwell)

<sup>84</sup> (Maxwell) p.57

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid* ; p.62

dream for 300 years, a paucity of ambition and affinity for the status quo has flourished. The uncertain outcomes of the economic measures necessary for independence have presented Scotland with a proverbial economic “leap of faith”. A leap which due to a lack of self-faith and a proverbially very shaky diving board the Scots might not be willing to take.<sup>86 87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The current economic crisis and huge debt Scotland would inherit.

<sup>87</sup> Recent polls suggest the referendum will not pass.

## Conclusion

Through research it was made apparent that no single trend in separatism is universally transferrable, and thus the conclusions drawn from this essay are not applicable to all separatist movements in Europe. For example, in Catalunya economic reasoning as a whole has spearheaded the movement for separatism.<sup>88</sup> This creates a stark contrast with my research into Scotland, where I found that the emotional basis for the nationalist sentiments, the separatism of thoughts, has played a more important role than separatism based on practical issues such as the economy.<sup>89</sup>

The movement towards separatism was brought about by a series of inextricably linked factors, some long term, which formed a subconscious foundation for nationalist sentiment, and others short term which created incentives to being a separate entity to the United Kingdom.

These factors are interdependent and are all necessary for the emergence of a popular separatist movement. The political misrepresentation explained in chapter 3 has been the clearest short-term factor contributing to separatism. The need for change and to create opportunities and decide on the policy of their own country has been very appealing to Scots. However, political misrepresentation per se will never be enough for the creation of a separatist movement.<sup>90</sup> An intrinsic notion and feeling of national identity, completely different to that of the ruling power is needed first. In the particular case of Scotland, a long history of struggle and intrigue with England, reinforced by cultural outlets, has formed an imagined community whereby many people feel Scottish first, and British second - a psychological predisposition whose importance cannot be underestimated for the rise of separatism.<sup>91</sup>

Perhaps the only factor that has not contributed entirely to separatism is the one that most people would expect to be the driving force behind it: the economy. While Benedict Anderson explains that "the search for a community will usually belong more to a functional future than to a bowdlerised past", in Scotland, a country where a separatist party won the majority of the votes, the economic prospects seem to appeal the least to the people.<sup>92</sup> However it must be said that economic incentives and opportunities seem to appeal exclusively to existing separatists, but the fact these are economic opportunities, as opposed to certainties, seems to have had the opposite effect on those in the population who are not staunch nationalists.

<sup>88</sup> "Economic Grudge Fuels Catalan Independence Fight." *GlobalPost*. Global Post News Agency, 23 Sept. 2013. Web. 25 Oct. 2013.

<sup>89</sup> (Curtice et Ormston)

<sup>90</sup> If this were true, any region in a country which was politically misrepresented would seek independence, Greater Manchester or Durham have experienced just as much political misrepresentation as Scotland over the years but have no separatist ambitions, for they have no deep rooted cultural sentiment of being different to their parent state .

<sup>91</sup> (Ormston et Reid)

<sup>92</sup> (Anderson) p124

To conclude, in Scotland there has been a sufficiently high level of disillusionment both contemporary and historical with the ruling power, England, combined with an inherently different culture, to form the basis of a separatist movement. The latter two chapters of this essay explored short-term reasons to capitalise on the previously mentioned separatist sentiments and, though there have been some short-term prospects to push people towards independence, they have not been sufficiently certain of success to convince a majority of the population. Nevertheless the idea of an independent Scotland looms large in both the collective consciousness of the people and the political debate. This has arisen from the confluence of factors covered in this essay and their consequences will be seen in the June 2014 referendum.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Recent polls suggest that if the referendum was held today, a majority vote would not pass due to the lack of certain economic success as an independent nation.



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