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**THE REVIVAL OF SCOTTISH NATIONALISM AND THE
CHALLENGE POSED TO THE BRITISH NATIONAL
IDENTITY 1960S-1980S.**

**Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement of the Degree of Doctorat
LMD in British Civilisation.**

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DEDICATION

With the help of Allah and the support of my mother, I dedicate this to YOU

... Father

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Pros. Brahim Harouni for his continuous support through the process of academic research and writing of this thesis. I thank him for his patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. I could not have imagined having a better advisor for the fulfilment of my thesis. He further asked hard questions which helped me to widen my research from various perspectives.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EEC	European Economic Community
GUSNA	Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association
MLR	Minimum Lending Rate
NHS	National Health Services
NPS	The National Party of Scotland
SDA	Scottish Development Agency
SNP	The Scottish National Party

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Abstract

The present work examines the revival of the Scottish nationalist movement and the challenge it posed to the British national identity from 1960s to 1980s. It investigates Scots demands for independence and the emergence of the Scottish National Party as the voice of the movement. This study attempts to show the great efforts made by the SNP to end the 1707 union with England. With the decline of the British Empire and the British economy in the post Second World War era, the Scots looked for an alternative and both Labour and Conservative parties started to lose ground among the Scottish voters. The SNP gained great support within Scots and started to make a real threat to the unity of the United Kingdom. The success of the SNP in the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, pushed the main Westminster political parties to react to the rise of the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole. The Conservative party changed its attitudes towards devolution after showing great opposition to it. Labour also was present and established the Royal Commission on the Constitution. But the most controversial aspect was the creation of the Scottish Constitutional Convention during Thatcher's Conservative governments.

Résumé

Le présent travail examine la relance du mouvement nationaliste écossais et le défi qu'il posait à l'identité nationale britannique durant les années 1960 à 1980. Il étudie les revendications écossaises pour l'indépendance et l'émergence du Parti National Ecossais (SNP) comme une voix qui porte le mouvement. Cette étude tente de montrer les grands efforts déployés par le SNP pour mettre fin à l'union de 1707 avec l'Angleterre. Avec le déclin de l'empire britannique et de l'économie britannique durant la période d'après-guerre, les écossais cherchaient une alternative et les deux partis politiques britanniques commencèrent à perdre du terrain parmi les électeurs écossais. C'est ainsi que le SNP a gagné un grand soutien au sein des écossais et a commencé à constituer une menace réelle pour l'unité du Royaume-Uni. Le succès du SNP dans les années 1960 et 1980 a donc poussé les principaux partis politiques de Westminster à réagir à la montée du SNP et du mouvement nationaliste écossais dans son ensemble. Le parti conservateur a changé d'attitude à l'égard de la dévolution après s'être montré très opposé. Le parti travailliste s'était également manifesté en établissant une Commission Royale sur la Constitution. Mais l'aspect le plus controversé a été la création de la Convention Constitutionnelle Ecossaise pendant le règne du gouvernement de Thatcher.

ملخص

يدرس هذا البحث إلى إحياء الحركة القومية الاسكتلندية والتحدي الذي تفرضه على الهوية الوطنية البريطانية خلال الستينات و الثمانينات. و يحقق أيضا في مطالب الاسكتلنديين بالاستقلال مع ظهور الحزب الوطني الاسكتلندي كمثل لهذه الحركة. كما تحاول هذه الدراسة إظهار الجهود الكبيرة المبذولة من طرف الحزب الوطني الاسكتلندي لإنهاء الاتحاد الذي جمعها مع إنجلترا منذ 1707. مع سقوط الإمبراطورية البريطانية وتدهور اقتصادها في ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية، بدأ الاسكتلنديون البحث عن بديل عن الأحزاب السياسية البريطانية التي خسرت بين الناخبين الاسكتلنديين. وقد حصل الحزب الوطني الاسكتلندي على تأييد كبير داخل الاسكتلنديين وبدأوا يشكلون تهديدا حقيقيا لوحدة المملكة المتحدة. وبالتالي، فإن نجاح الحزب الوطني الاسكتلندي في الستينات و الثمانينات دفع الأحزاب السياسية البريطانية للرد على نجاح الحزب والحركة القومية الاسكتلندية ككل. هذا ما أدى بحزب المحافظين إلى تغيير مواقفه تجاه نقل السلطة بعد أن أبدى معارضة كبيرة له. وكان حزب العمال أيضا حاضرا في المشهد حيث أنشأ اللجنة الملكية المعنية بالدستور. ولكن الجانب الذي أثار الكثير من الجدل كان إنشاء الاتفاقية الدستورية الاسكتلندية خلال حكم حكومة تاتشر.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Overview

In Britain, the 1970s were marked by the rise of minority nationalists which tended to challenge the British national identity. In Scotland there were strong motives and growing demands for constitutional change and independence. These demands were influenced by the rise of nationalist party, the Scottish National Party (SNP). The founding of the Scottish National Party gave strength to the Scottish minority nationalists and posed a threat to the 300 years union that united two separate parliamentary systems: that of England and that of Scotland.

In 1707 Scotland and England joined in a union to form the United Kingdom. This union created one parliament based in London to cover the United Kingdom as a whole. But Scotland maintained its own identity in some administrative functions as its legal system, financial and educational affairs. This helped Scotland to maintain its national identity in the following centuries. The union was of more importance to Scotland than to England since the former lost its independence. But for England, the union was seen as an expansion of the British Empire.

In the late 19th century, tensions mounted through the United Kingdom calling for self-government from many people in Scotland, especially Celts. Furthermore, devolution had been raised in Scotland and Wales in the beginning of the 20th century and the First World War and many nationalist parties were founded. The foundation of the SNP, fuelled by the great depression and the Second World War, was sufficient for the Scots to call for self-government.

With the end of the Second World War and the decline of the British Empire, the British identity was challenged by many national identities within the UK itself and Scottish

Nationalism was one of them. The reasons behind the rise of these minority nationalists were the collapse of the British imperial system and the relative economic decline inherited from the war. These reasons helped the SNP gain an increased support. Scots tended to see themselves as a nation and as a distinct one in many ways from the rest of Britain.

In the 1960s, the Scots suffered from the downturn in the economy as some companies started to lay off workers and the post-war British Government failed to overcome the economic crises inherited from the war. As a result, there was a great sense of anger within Scots who started to call for self-government. At the same time, the SNP gained great support in Scotland and became a competitive political party. The party also became a political force that cannot be denied and started representing the whole nationalist movement in Scotland.

Since 1974, the SNP has emerged as a powerful force in Scottish politics and the political discourse of Britain has changed with this development. This became a source of contention between Scottish and British identities. Scots are identified as British but they identify themselves as members of an independent nation. With the weakening of the British identity, Scots were able to return to the pre- 1707 union idea of an independent Scottish nation, seeing themselves as a community of individuals linked to a territorial nation. Nationalism has become a force in modern times not to be ignored. This is the path followed by the Scottish nationalist movement in the decades following the Second World War and it had emerged as a political and economic nationalism. Scottish nationalism of the time gained more strength than before because it became an organised national movement under the leadership of a competitive political party, the SNP.

In the 1970s and 1980s, this nationalism emerged as a minority political nationalism with the agenda of dissolving the union of 1707 and gaining independence from the rest of Britain. But despite the fact that the majority were nationalists only a minority wanted

independence as promised by the SNP. So, political nationalism challenged the concept of the British national identity. As a response to the success of the SNP and the rise of nationalist sentiments, there was the idea of devolution which works on a plan for the shift of power from England to Scotland and Wales.

The 1980s was a new era for the United Kingdom as a whole by the election of a new Conservative leader, Margaret Thatcher who introduced new ideologies. The new Conservative Government came to power in 1979 and was faced by a damaged economy. Yet, the government primary concern was to recover the damaged economy and ignored other issues. This was the reason behind the fall of any government attempts to devolution as well as the collapse of the SNP performance in elections. Thatcher's government ignorance of minority nationalism was evidence for them to emphasis on pushing the Westminster Governments to deal with the Scottish case.

In this decade of the Conservative rule, the SNP's struggled to survive despite internal conflicts, electoral irrelevance and organizational decline. The party was rived by internal divisions. Support for self-government was also low following the 1979 devolution referendum, despite the efforts of the SNP to revive Home Rule as a political issue. Electorally, the SNP was a minor force in election contests as well as in opinion polls. Moreover, the years of Conservative Government under Thatcher had a substantial impact on the political environment in Scotland. A government of a radical right helped forge an anti-Conservative consensus which encouraged the SNP to move comfortably to the left and Labour to become more nationalist and supportive of self-government. The attitudes and policies of Mrs Thatcher's administration also breathed life into the demand for Scottish self-government, especially after 1987 general election when the Conservatives were heavily defeated in Scotland and were elected to UK Government on English votes and seats. Home Rule was back on the political agenda and the SNP was able to pressurize Labour over the

issue. In the light of these events, the Scottish Constitution Convention was created. However, despite the improvements in the nationalist position, the 1980s were a long and hard era for the Scottish National Party.

Purpose of the Study

The present research deals with the revival of Scottish nationalism and the challenge it posed to the post imperial British national identity from the 1960s to 1980s, more particularly by the rise of the Scottish National Party. More emphasis is given to the development of the SNP and its great efforts to achieve its main goal, devolution. Scotland was fighting for its independence from the rest of the United Kingdom through its political voice. Thus, challenging the unity of an established nation was not easy for the Scottish nationalist movement despite the fact that the SNP was making great and continuous efforts to gain independence. Reaching devolution pushed the party to do as much efforts as possible in order to challenge the two main British political parties which are the Labour and Conservative parties.

The study of this topic is meant to examine the issue of the British national identity in the years following the Second World War and the challenge posed to it by the emergence of Scottish nationalism represented by the SNP. The 1960s and 1980s were characterised by the growth of demands of British membership in the European Economic Community and then demands of Scottish membership as an independent nation. This was fuelled by many economic problems starting from the oil crisis caused by the oil embargoes by the OPEC countries targeted at nations which supported Israel during the October 1973 war; the discovery of oil in the North Sea of Scotland; and economic recession in addition to the great opposition to wars and nuclear weapons. This raise of awareness helped Scots, and many other minorities, to ask for their independence from the rest of Britain and challenge the

British national identity. So, how and why can minority nationalism within an established nation come to challenge the unity of that nation despite the government's desire to maintain that unity?

This study demonstrates that the concept of the British national identity was successfully challenged by the rise of the Scottish nationalism in the 1960s and 1980s. In this research, emphasis is given to the rise of the SNP as a political force. Scottish nationalist movement and the devolution debates of the 1970s confirmed that the British national identity was under threat by smaller national identities within Britain. In the 1970s, the rise of these nationalisms with the success of the SNP in this period, with the rise of political nationalism in Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK was under the threat of division into four nations which gained a great support within the minorities.

The questions which this study is to address are the following. First, does Scottish Nationalism of the 1960s and 1980s, led by the SNP, represent the Scots' national identity? Second, is there a cohesive British national identity emerging out of the events of this period of the British political history? To what extent is this issue a threat to the British national identity? And how can a minority nationalist movement make a real threat to the unity of the United Kingdom?

Methodological Concerns

Three main approaches are adopted to answer the questions of this research. These approaches are descriptive, analytical and interpretative. The descriptive approach is used in order to show the different thoughts of the Scottish political nationalism and to what extent it succeeded in challenging the British national identity after the collapse of the British Empire. The analytical approach is used to analyse the different aims and main interests of Scottish nationalism and if it is a real threat to the British national identity under the leadership of the

Scottish National Party. The interpretative approach is used to show the British response to the rise of the Scottish nationalist movement and if devolution for Scotland was the appropriate solution and how the SNP succeeded in becoming the voice of the whole movement.

Literature Review

This research relies mainly on primary sources which include official documents from the UK online National Archives which contain devolution referendums, government white papers on devolution, and royal commissions on the constitution. To provide the reader with important events and decisions taken by British governments responding to the rise of the nationalist party in Scotland along with party's conferences and recommendation of devolution referendums, more emphasis is given to the *Royal Commission on the Constitution: Minutes of Evidence*, known as the Kilbrandon commission, published in 1969. It recommended the examination of the structure of the system of government of the different nations of the United Kingdom. The commission reported later in 1973 and the paper entitled *Reports of the Royal Commission on the Constitution 1969-1973* was published. Additionally, different other government's papers are used for information which include the reactions of the British government towards the revival of Scottish nationalist movement.

The primary sources include also the memoir written by the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher under the title *The Downing Street Years*. In this work, she gave accounts of the moments of her premiership as a prime minister in three continuous election victories. It provides insights into the Conservatives great opposition to devolution and its ignorance to minority nationalism as the governments' great emphasis was on economy rather than on any other issue.

A variety of other primary sources including letters, speeches and government publications provide good documents which discuss the matter. Some long excerpts are used in order to keep the exact form, for example, of recommendations, speeches and conferences. The use of long quotes is necessary both to avoid altering the original meaning and give credibility to the original work.

The secondary sources are a variety of books and articles. An important work, which plays a significant role for the understanding of the history of the Scottish National Party and gives detailed information about the party's policies and election results, is *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. The book is written by Peter Lynch and published in 2002. Although the SNP has existed since 1934, no full detailed work was written until the publication of the first edition of this book. The work played an important role in the fulfilment of this research as it highlights the history of the Scottish National Party and the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole.

Another work which was of a great importance in achieving the goals of this research is *Modern Scotland 1914-2000* written by Richard Finlay. It provides a comprehensive narrative and analysis of major themes and events in Scotland from 1914 to 2000. Another book of the same importance is *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880* written by Ewan A Cameron and published in 2010. The author explores the political debates between unionism and nationalism and the changing relationship between Scotland and the United Kingdom in a period of rising tension of nationalism.

All these sources are important historical documents along with various other articles. The articles used are mainly taken from two electronic libraries: Questia and Jstor.

Structure

The research begins with an introductory chapter that describes Scotland and the United Kingdom since the 1707 Treaty of union. The study of the importance of the Treaty of union in the history of Britain and the minority Scottish nationalists since 1707 helps to understand the rise of Scottish nationalism in the 1960s and 1980s. The chapter shows how unitary was the UK in 1707 and how it was transferred to a federal state after the rise of minority nationalist. It deals with the rise of the SNP in 1934 and its major influence in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement in that time. Moreover, the chapter examines post Second World War British national identity and the challenge posed to it by the rise of many national identities within the United Kingdom. It ends with the decline of the British Empire and its impacts on Scotland and the UK as a whole. The description of the history of the UK since 1707 to the end of the Second World War shows the importance of this period in the development of minority nationalism within the UK. Furthermore, the chapter explains the different steps and obstacles that faced the Scottish Nationalist Movement and the SNP to emerge in the political discourse and challenge the British National identity.

The Study of the history of the Scottish nationalist movement since 1707 is important in the understanding of the 20th century minority nationalism. Yet, the period shows the development of the Scottish nationalist movement through time and the demand for devolution was not new for Scots. Although Scottish nationalism of the time was not considered as an organised movement, it paved the way for Scots to continue their struggle for independence from the rest of the UK.

The second chapter is concerned with the analysis of the development of the SNP from 1950 to 1970 and its long road to compete with the two major British political parties.

Furthermore, it deals with the importance of the SNP in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement and show its real importance in the emergence of an organised nationalist movement in Scotland. The chapter also examines how competitive was the SNP to other political parties in the UK and how it led the Scottish minority nationalism at that time. It contains the UK's government response to the development of the Scottish National Party and their policies and attitudes towards the Scottish minority nationalist and their fear of the success of the SNP.

Post-war era was characterised by rising national sentiments in Scotland. At the same period Scots suffered from the down turn in economy as British governments failed to overcome the economic crisis inherited from the war. As a result, there were great sense of anger within Scots and they started to call for self-government. In the light of this situation, the SNP was capable to gain support among Scottish electorates and become a competitive political party. The emergence of the SNP as a powerful force in the Scottish political scene and the political discourse of Britain gave it a chance to challenge the other political parties. Both political parties saw the need to respond positively to this development and put devolution in their agendas.

The third chapter explains the greatest challenge for the British national identity in the 1970s since many devolution referendums were introduced and the increased support for the SNP among Scots. It demonstrates the proposals of the Royal Commission on the Constitution for Scotland which was set up by Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1969 and its reports in 1973 delivered to Edward Heath's Conservative government. In addition, it analyses the importance of the discovery of North Sea oil, in 1969, in the development of the Scottish nationalism and the success of the SNP under its famous slogan: "It's Scotland's oil." Furthermore, the chapter deals with the Scotland Act of 1978, passed by the UK parliament to establish a Scottish Assembly, and the result of the 1979 devolution referendum as Scotland's

first chance for devolution. It also looks at the influence of 1979 crisis, known as the Winter of Discontent, on the Scottish economy and how these events pushed the Scots to call for devolution.

In the early 1970s, the discovery of North Sea Oil opened the door for the nationalist to react powerfully. Thus, the SNP started its oil campaign at a time of differences in the British governments' attitudes towards devolution. It was an opportunity for the SNP to gain votes as it started to take votes from both Labour and Conservatives. Consequently, British governments were pushed to take devolution to Scotland seriously and started to introduce devolution debates. The chance of discussing devolution was considered as a great victory for the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement.

The last chapter examines how the SNP had continued its struggle for devolution in the 1980s when the Conservative government, led by Margaret Thatcher, came to power. It analyses the government's strategies towards Scottish nationalism and the SNP. Then, the chapter deals with the Conservative government attitudes towards the Scottish nationalist movement and the SNP. Factions and factionalism which exist within the SNP members, known as 79 group, and the conflict about the party's strategies are also the concern here. Later, it explains how minority nationalism be a threat and challenges the unitary system in Britain. It is important also to mention that the SNP started to lose ground despite its great efforts to establish a devolved Scotland. At the end, the study interprets how the 1970s and 1980s events paved the way to establish the Scottish parliament in the coming years.

The 1980s represented an important decade for the Scottish Nationalist movement and the SNP though it did not begin well for them. Early in this period, the nationalists emphasised on reforming their party rather than fighting for independence because it suffered factionalism. Division within the SNP affected its electoral performance and a change of

policy was required. However, the nationalists started to recover their position in the late 1980s and Westminster governments responded to their revival. Consequently, many initiatives for devolution were held which resulted in the smooth transition of power to Scotland.

CHAPTER ONE

Scottish Nationalist Movement 1707-1950

Introduction

It is preferable to start this study with some insights on the development of the Scottish nationalist movement since the Treaty of Union in 1707. Therefore, this chapter provides a short description of Scotland's relations with England. It is from the Treaty of Union that the chapter begins to trace the history of Scottish nationalist movement till the end of the Second World War. Because from 1707 Scots started to call for their independence and also were influenced by many internal and external factors that gave them more strength.

The chapter sheds some light on the development of political nationalism and unionist Scotland since the Treaty of Union till the end of the Second World War. It also discusses some external factors that influenced the Scottish nationalist movement of the time. Furthermore, the chapter deals with the emergence of the Scottish National Party in the interwar period and its struggle for existence within the two dominant British political parties, Conservative and Labour. The SNP which played an important role in the development of a coherent Scottish nationalist movement is also the concern here.

In this chapter, the emphasis is on the creation of the SNP and its important role to fuel the nationalist movement in Scotland, especially after the end of the Second World War and the new emerging problems that damaged Britain as a whole. These problems were of great importance in the development of nationalist movements all over Britain in the decades following the war.

It is important to give a vision of Scotland's position within the union and also give a description for Scotland since the ratification of the Treaty of Union in 1707. This can help in

the understanding of the change of attitude towards the union with England and how a sense of nationalism arose within Scots when they started to consider themselves distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom. It is from 1707 that Scotland felt the need for a real division from the unitary state.

1.1 Political Nationalism and Unionist Scotland since the Treaty of Union

In 1707 came the Act of Union that abolished the separate parliaments of Scotland and England. From that date on, Scotland was governed by the parliament based in Westminster, England. Since then “Scotland retained many distinctive features, especially a separate legal and administrative system which reinforced the need for the Westminster Parliament to consider Scotland’s specific needs” (Ezzamzel et.al 23). In addition, Scottish nationalist’ feeling was influenced by Home Rule Settlement in Northern Ireland. Besides Scottish feelings and consciousness of having their separate national identity, a distinct culture and institutional heritage, geography, civil society, religion, sporting and media is strong. In this respect, the historian Bradbury stated that: “The historic nation of Scotland was not simply absorbed into the unitary UK state- it retained some key features of statehood.” (26)

Formally the union took the form of a treaty between the parliaments of England and Scotland and it was considered as a voluntary compact between equals; though there were no opinion polls in the eighteenth century, observers agreed about the hostility of the population. The union abolished both parliaments, but in reality left the English one with the addition of Scottish members and peers. The result was the creation of one constitution that can be seen from two different angles. For the English, it was an expansion of the existing state and constitution as shown by their continuing use of the words England and English with reference to the union. For the Scots, it was considered as a union of nations and the creation of a new British nation.

The joining of Scotland and England to form the United Kingdom through the Treaty of Union of 1707 matters more in Scotland than in England, because it is Scotland which lost its independence. But for Britain, the union was viewed as an expansion of the British Empire. So, for many this union of two parliaments was seen as a kind of internal colonisation within the UK. Since the Scottish parliament was dissolved and the act led to the creation of a single parliament based in London to govern the UK. However, Scotland benefited from this union economically speaking. This point can be demonstrated by viewing the progress of the leading industries in the Scottish economy such as extraction, manufacturing and overseas trade. As most economic historians argued, “annual output during the 1960s in Scotland was not of the order 475.000 tons, but the considerably lower figure of 225.000 tons, and that it fell further by the turn of the century. In addition, coal output in the eighteenth century rising to four times the 1700 level, the rate nearly double that for Britain as a whole” (Davidson 99).

The economic benefits of the union allowed Scots to access English overseas markets and the Scottish economy grew substantially through the Industrial Revolution. Up to the 1750s, Scotland had an agrarian-based economy which was transformed into industrial economy based on industries such as iron, steel, shipbuilding, coal-mining, tobacco manufacturing and textiles thanks to its union with England. To illustrate this growth in the first eight decades after the union the textile and tobacco industries grew rapidly. The output of linen cloth increased three times in volume and four times in value between 1736-1740 and 1768-1772 and during the latter period Scotland produced thirteen million yards of cloth (Mitchison 246). So, Scotland had benefited from its access to the union which opened its growing industries into a broader imperial market.

Despite some improvements in the Scottish economy, the Scottish nationalist movement was struggling for Scottish independence and thus ending the 1707 Union with England. This movement became sharper in the decades following the ratification of the

treaty and the tension mounted throughout the UK with a call for self-government from many people within the Celts especially in Ireland and Scotland. This latter had small home rule movement known as the Scottish Office that was established in 1885 and can be considered as a form of devolution. The main aim of this office is the supervision of Scotland's everyday life with a Secretary for Scotland. In addition, the Home Secretary was the person responsible for the Scottish affairs at Westminster. The Scottish Office also meant to take responsibility within Scotland for some aspects of social policy in some areas such as education, housing, health, economic development, social services, planning, transport, agriculture, fisheries and law and order. Historian Bradbury described the real role of the office:

In reality the Scottish Office is neither an example of devolution, which would involve a capacity to take authority decisions and responsibility to a Scottish constituency, nor merely a form of field administration for UK department. Rather it is an example of territorial division of administrative responsibilities, existing alongside the more familiar functional ones. (27)

The creation of such bodies paved the way for the growth of Scottish nationalist movement in the twentieth century with many other influential events that will be discussed later in this chapter starting from the Scottish Home Rule Association till the creation of the most influential body created in 1934, the Scottish National Party (SNP).

Many Scottish politicians saw that there was no time in Westminster for Scottish legislation. As a result, they argued that all four parts of the United Kingdom should have their own assemblies. This led to the creation of the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1886 which was a result of the introduction of the Irish Home Rule Bill by Gladstone. It was considered the first modern nationalist movement in Scotland and wanted a Scottish parliament with responsibility for Scottish domestic affairs but did not want to end the union

with England (Deacon and Sandray 51). Added to this, and by the very beginning of the 20th century, British politics was dominated by legislations passed for home rule and establishments of nationalist political parties. One of these legislations was the establishment of the Scottish Grand Committee set up in 1907 to consider the Committee Stage of the Scottish Bills. Its remit was expanded in 1948 to include consideration in relation to their principle and up to six days of Estimate debates.

Another legislation was the Scottish Home Rule Bill debated in 1913 but was interrupted by the beginning of the First World War. Meanwhile, after the war, other efforts were made by Scots and a second Scottish Home Rule Bill with the same objectives was created because the first one became inactive. Nationalists used to put pressure on the government and on the MP representing Scotland in Parliament. But there was no progress for Scotland at the parliamentary level, however, other organisations and political parties were created.

As a matter of fact, in 1920, the Scots National League was created. It was a radical organisation that wanted independence and worked for the promotion of the Gaelic culture and language. Yet, it was largely influenced by Sinn Féin and advocated the removal of elected Scottish MPs from Westminster Parliament to set up an independent Scottish Parliament; they however did not have a strategy to achieve their aims because they lacked unity. Furthermore, their failure helped in the establishment of the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association (GUSNA) in 1927 which was created by students and members of the Labour Party and its leader was John MacCormick. The main aim of the association was independence and the creation of nationalist parties. In addition, the GUSNA is important historically since it helped in the creation of the National Party of Scotland (NPS) and the Scottish National Party.

Actually, John MacCormick succeeded in convincing other nationalist organisations, like the Liberal Party and the Scottish Labour Party, to create a nationalist party. In 1928 the National Party of Scotland was created from the merger of GUSNA with the Scots National League, Scots National Movement and the Scottish Home Rule Movement. The NPS was a left wing party that aimed at home rule for Scotland. Similarly to the previous organisations, it failed also to achieve its goals. Its electoral results were poor because there were divisions within the party because it was formed by different organisations with different opinions.

Despite the fact that different movements in Scotland failed to achieve their aims and failed to gain home rule, Scots did not surrender and continued their fight for their rights by the creation of other nationalist parties.

In 1930, the Scottish Party was founded by a group of members of the unionist party. This right wing party favoured the establishment of a Scottish Parliament and disagreed with many other nationalist parties. The NPS's leader, John MacCormick, supported the Scottish Party despite their different interests. His aim with this support was also to merge the party with the NPS in order to unify the elements of the Scottish independence movement and create a stronger nationalist party that can achieve independence and strengthen the Scottish nationalist movement (Harvie 19). Actually, MacCormick's efforts were not in vain and the result was the merger of the National Party of Scotland (NPS) and the Scottish Party to form the Scottish National Party in 1934.

The National Party of Scotland rejected the old nationalist strategy of working within established parties to achieve nationalist aims. The independence of this party gave it more strength to achieve its goals. It preferred to be independent of the existing parties and contest elections by itself as expressed by the historian Christopher Harvie:

The most important aspect of this newly constituted program was the decision to contest elections with the expressed purpose of winning a popular mandate for self-government. In stating this aim, the National Party of Scotland signed a new era in nationalist political strategy. Co-operation with former Liberal and Labour allies was replaced by confrontation as the nationalists opted for complete self-reliance (14).

It is noticeable that the interwar period was characterised by the establishment of many nationalist parties in Scotland looking for home rule and the independence of Scotland from the rest of the UK. This special period played an important role in the development of nationalist sentiment within Scots and helped them to create nationalist parties. The most important and influential party in this period and throughout the following decades was the SNP.

1.2 The Rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP)

As mentioned before, Scots tended to create many nationalist parties in the interwar period. The creation of the SNP in 1934 was important because it was a result of the exclusion of various nationalist groups which resulted in the creation of a coherent party, the Scottish National Party that later became the main voice of the Scottish nationalist movement.

a) Origins of the SNP

The Scottish National Party was formed in 1934 and it had its roots in other political organisations that preceded its creation. These political organisations were the Scottish Home Rule Association, and most importantly the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party. Even though these organisations had different ideologies and opinions, they agreed at last to form one coherent nationalist party. Its creation was a result of the failure of several home

rule bills. The 1920s was a period which gave birth to the modern nationalist movement and to the SNP through various organisational failure and mergers (Lynch 26).

The nationalist movement of the 1920s lacked cohesion because of the existence of many small nationalist organisations that were weak in terms of their impact and strategy. For example the Scottish Home Rule Association failed to achieve home rule because of its failure to pass many home rule bills and because “most Liberal and Labour MPs said that they backed home rule, but they were never around long enough to do anything about it.” (Harvie 18). As a result, the association was unified with the National Party and the NPS to form the SNP.

In 1928, the National Party of Scotland was founded as an independent movement distinct from any British political party. It was paralleled by the founding of the Plaid Cymru¹ in Wales. Its creation was preceded by discussions between the Scottish National Movement, the Scots National League, Glasgow University Scottish National Association and members of the Scottish Home Rule Association (Lynch 35). The discussion aimed at opposing home rule strategies since there were different views from different political foundations. The party’s members were a mixture of students and a group of intellectuals who wanted liberation from imperialism because home rule was still important to those who prefer to create nationalist parties. The NPS ended earlier from the date of its creation because in the 1929 general election, it polled less than 5 per cent in two seats (Harvie 21). So, the NPS had little experience of election campaigning and limited membership.

Whilst the early 1930s saw the NPS more successful in elections, the party experienced a period of troubles and uncertainty within its members about the party’s

¹ A Welsh Social democratic political party advocating for Welsh independence from the rest of the United Kingdom within the European Union. It was formed in 1925 and won its first seat in the UK Parliament in 1966.

ideologies and directions. The historian Lynch, in this respect, explained that there was no unity within the party about Scottish self-government (27). If some of the party's members wanted limited devolution, dominion status within the Empire or complete independence from the rest of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, there was no agreement on how to achieve their political goals. The result was the formation of the Scottish Party in 1932. It came also to represent Scottish nationalism and home rule. Indeed, its emergence led to conflict within the NPS and to discussions to merge the two parties to establish a single nationalist party in what had become the SNP. The Scottish Party ended after few months from its creation because it was a small collection of individuals and its creation was a result of the crisis within the NPS. In this case, the best solution was the creation of the SNP.

The union of two parties in 1934 gave the home rule movement a considerable political situation. The party clearly abandoned independence and was in favour of home rule. Its leader Alexander MacEwan agreed on the main goals which were:

- the establishment of a Scottish Parliament which shall be the authority on all Scottish affairs including taxation;
- Scotland shall share with England the rights and responsibilities they, as mother nations, have jointly created and incurred within the British Empire; in a manner representing the will of her people, Scotland should set up jointly with England, machinery to deal with these responsibilities and in particular with such matters as defence, foreign policy and the creation of customs union. (qtd. in Lynch 41)

It is believed that these principles can be realized only by an independent political party which has no connection or alliance with an English controlled party. This set of goals

was a clear compromise which sought to appeal to both NPS and the Scottish Party supporters. Its main goal was to establish a Scottish Parliament that will be realized later.

Thus, in 1934, a single nationalist political organisation was finally established, containing mergers of preceding organisations from the Scottish Home Rule Association to the Scottish National League, the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party. Since this date, the SNP has existed as the primary and most influential nationalist organisation in Scotland. Moreover, the SNP continued its struggle in a difficult period of world wars and economic crises after the wars.

b) The SNP's Struggle for Existence 1934-1950

From its birth in 1934, the SNP faced very difficult political conditions. The party's main goal to establish a Scottish Parliament was not in any agenda of the two dominant British political parties. Indeed, the economic crisis of the 1930s and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 were very difficult conditions for the SNP and the whole country. Therefore, the SNP's early years were dominated by an unfavourable political climate and gained only eight seats and an average of 16 per cent in the 1935 general election (Harvie 22). So, the 1935 general election was the SNP's first electoral test as the party was determined to make an impact following the success of the merger. Similarly, the main issue of the day in the 'hungry thirties', international affairs and economic policy were not helpful to the SNP. Making progress in such circumstances was always going to be hard and the SNP did not expect such harsh situation. Under these conditions, MacCormick was making efforts to establish a constitutional convention to discuss home rule. Because of the SNP's weak performance at by-elections in the mid and late 1930s, there was pressure within the party to find other ways to achieve self-government.

Whilst the period from 1934-1939 had seen the SNP affected by the political environment, worst was to come in 1939 by the breakdown of the Second World War. Party policy towards war was adopted at its annual conference in May 1937 and involved opposition to conscription as well as to participation in the war until there was self-government (Finlay 113). The policy adopted by the SNP at the annual conference in May 1939 was a compromise position which contained the imprints of MacCormick's drafting skills. The resolution had already been passed at the party's National Council and stated that:

1. The party utterly condemns the present government for its departure from the principles of collective security, for its betrayal of democracy, and for its failure to uphold the authority of the League of Nations.
2. The party reaffirms its belief that the people of Scotland are prepared to play their full part in the defence of the country or in any real system of collective security, but expresses the strongest suspicious of the present government's intentions in foreign policy as being directed less to national defence or to collective security than to the maintenance of an Imperial Supremacy in the world.
3. ... the party expresses its uncompromising opposition to conscription and to any other form of compulsory service unless and until a clear pledge is given that conscript and all other forces are only to be used for the defence of Britain or to fulfil the moral obligations involved in a real system of collective security.
4. The party resolves to ask the present government as an earnest of its good faith in defending the principles of self-determination in other European countries, to make immediate arrangements for the holding of a national plebiscite on the questions of self-governments (qtd in Lynch 52).

Most within the party disagreed with this motion because it offered cautious support for Scotland's involvement in the war. Those who disagreed, like Douglas Young,² opposed Scotland's involvement in the war because there was no Scottish government to decide upon the involvement. Despite the party's active role in this period, its efforts were in vain and failed to decide about Scotland's position in the war and created a split within the party.

However, a problem emerged in early 1942 . The trial of Douglas Young, one of those who refused the SNP's policy in the war period and opposed conscription, attracted public attention. Young was trialled because of his refusal to be conscripted even though he did not have objection to conscription. As a result, the Scottish National Party was deeply unpopular in Scotland and their candidate "polled 5 per cent of the vote" (Finlay 195), but the party still in the fight for its existence.

Some Scottish nationalists of the early years of the century were concerned about cultural nationalism and the existence of the Gaelic language, but since 1945 the leaders of the SNP were modernisers rather than traditionalist, concerned with economic and social policies rather than with culture. Consequently, and with the war period, the SNP won its first parliamentary seat in April 1945 at Motherwell. The seat was for the candidate Robert McIntyre, who was a well-known public health specialist who had refused a safe Labour seat.

Despite the war, the Scottish National Party was working to develop its organisation. The party had active branches in many parts of Scotland and started to develop youth organisations such as the Scottish National Youth Association under the guidance of Robert

² Douglas Young was a Scottish poet, scholar, translator and politician. He led the Scottish National Party from 1942 to 1945. Young joined the party 1938 and served as chair of the SNP in Aberdeen during the 1940s. The SNP was pledged to oppose conscription, except by a Scottish government, and Young refused to register either for military service or as a conscientious objector during World War II.

McIntyre, and the Scottish Convention. The creation of this latter at the SNP conference in 1942 was not the end of the SNP as Douglas Young noted in his address to the special conference that the Scottish Convention had not significantly damaged the Scottish National Party (Lynch 57).

Moreover, the party started the internal reorganisation and rewrote its constitution in 1943 with the aim to improve its electoral capacity. The party's main aim was clarified as 'self-government for Scotland'. The restoration of Scottish national sovereignty, by the establishment of a democratic Scottish government, whose authority will be freely entered into with other nations in order to further international cooperation and world peace (Bradbury 26). This aim meant calls for independence though it does not state it clearly. It was an improvement compared to the party's aim in the 1930s, which called for devolution. From 1943, independence was the party's main goal. This change in goals helped the SNP to improve its electoral capacity and internal organisation and then be secured throughout the 1940s.

Actually, the SNP's first years were not positive. The clash about the party's ideologies and policy made splits within its members. Worse was to come to the party especially in the war years. The hard conditions of the war made it difficult for the party to gain electoral support. Despite this fact, the SNP was strong enough to fight for its existence as a political party and secured its position in the political scene. So, the Scottish National Party changed and developed the Scottish nationalist movement starting from its establishment in 1934 and became a representative party for Scottish nationalism.

1.3 The Development of Scottish Nationalism by 1934

The emergence of the Scottish National Party in 1934 as the voice of Scottish nationalism was one sign of the development of the Scottish nationalist movement and called

for constitutional change as described in the Richard Finlay's work, *Modern Scotland 1914-2000*:

We, the people of Scotland who subscribe this engagement, declare our belief that reform in the constitution of our country is necessary to secure good government in accordance with our Scottish traditions and to promote the spiritual and economic welfare of our nation.

We affirm that the desire for such reform is both deep and widespread throughout the whole community, transcending all political differences and sectional interests, and we undertake to continue united in purpose for its achievement. (198)

The creation of the SNP in 1934 was seen as the final stage of the creation of nationalist parties in Scotland. This period was marked by new problems resulting from the First World War. The depression affected the whole nation including Scotland. British efforts to solve the war crises were based on increasing state intervention in Scotland that led to a demand that Scots needed to play greater part in internal decision-making. Therefore, the Scots greater demands for independence of the Scottish legal system and gaining home rule were responses to British great interventions.

Thus, the Scottish nationalist movement was strengthened by the creation of the SNP. The SNP had limited impact in the first decades of its existence. It appeared as a weak, low financed and theoretical party with a small electoral base. The historian Richard Finlay concluded that "the SNP failed to produce a clear political strategy" and that its "main impact was to act as a watchdog for the national interest, drawing attention to injustices against Scotland" (194). Finlay's argument helps to explain that, despite the political failure of the

SNP, Scots had a sense of a separate Scottish identity, which is considered as its important success.

Moreover, the role of the SNP in developing Scottish nationalism was also fuelled by the economic crisis inherited from the First World War. The period from 1935 to the outbreak of the Second World War was characterised by many hard economic conditions such as unemployment, hunger marches and poverty. These conditions also resulted in the rise of Scottish nationalism. Despite the government's increasing intervention to solve these problems, Scotland was still suffering and one of the features that marks out Scottish unemployment in this period is that it was only much higher, but much persistent than the average for the United Kingdom (Deacan and Sandry 32). Scots felt that these problems could help them to govern themselves distinctively from Westminster and emphasised to gain home rule even if a Second World War initiated a change in the nationalist attitudes and the SNP developed a new strategy for this period.

Despite the divisions within the party about its position to the war, party members agreed on conscription and involvement in the war. With the SNP's nationalist programs on one hand, and the war against fascism on the other hand, there was greater demand for recognition of Scotland as a distinctive national entity within the UK. Consequently, the Scottish office was moved from its location in London to Edinburgh. Indeed, this move was seen as another success for the SNP and a devolved Scotland would be more powerful. Thus, there was a desire to reform a Scottish government that could govern Scotland from Scotland in a good way.

By April 1940, the Scottish National Party position started to improve in elections. It did well, winning 7.000 votes against the Conservatives, who won with 12.000 votes (Keating 19). This improvement was seen as the best nationalist electoral performance. But later, the

party's electoral support started to diminish because of splits within its members and the trial of Douglas Young, who favoured conscription during the war but refused to be conscripted. The split within party members was also because of the decision of MacCormick and his followers to form the Scottish National Convention which acted as a pressure group for home rule. This latter was in opposition to the left of the party led by Arthur Donaldson and Robert McIntyre in 1947, who preferred independence rather than home rule.

These events can summarise the SNP's efforts during the war and show the difference and the slight improvement in the nationalist movement in Scotland by the creation of the Scottish National Party. The rise of this nationalist movement was also due to the beginning of the economic decline of the world largest empire.

The wealth that was generated for Scotland through the years of empire began to diminish with the end of the empire in the mid-twentieth century. The relative economic decline by the end of the empire also shocked the British state and the overall impression was that Britain and the British national identity were falling.

1.4 The Decline of the British Empire and the British National Identity

As has been shown previously, Scotland benefited from the Treaty of Union passed in 1707 creating the United Kingdom. The union enabled Scots to take an active role in the development of Empire which led them to relative prosperity in the nineteenth century. As it has also been demonstrated, the collapse of this empire with the economic decay and centralisation of the British state at Westminster led Scots to question the role of Scotland as a part of the UK. As a response, Scottish political nationalism arose in this period and challenged the British unitary state.

During the war, many plans were made for the reconstruction of Scottish society after the war. After all, the problems of post-war society were the bigger challenge. The experience of war convinced the Scots that all problems could be solved by all means possible.

Planning and state intervention promised a way of the improvement in the Scottish society and the United Kingdom. Scots planned to develop all the damaged industries such as mining, fishing and housing. They also planned to fight the most serious problems that were high rates of unemployment and low wages which led to poverty. These plans during the war time gave ideological support to Keynesian economics³ based on government intervention in economy and society. So, war time was difficult for Britain and all its parts and had an impact on the nationalist parties.

The Second World War was an extremely difficult time for the SNP. As was noticed before, the party lacked internal organisation and many splits existed within its members about the strategies and aims. Most importantly, the party had benefited one thing from the war years and achieved electoral success. Contrary to the war time, the SNP started to lose its electoral support after the war because post war electoral politics settled into two parties Conservative and Labour. Despite these difficulties, the party struggled to survive in these years particularly by the fact that nationalism emerged as a popular force in Scotland after the war. Whilst the political conditions for nationalism were negative from the SNP's foundation in 1934 until the end of the Second World War, the election of the Labour government in

³ Keynesianism is an economic theory based on the ideas of the 20th century British economist John Maynard Keynes. It argued that private sector decision caused an economic inefficiency. It advocates a mixed economy with a large role of government. It is based on reduction in interest rates. This theory was accepted after the Second World War to solve the economic problems.

1945 and the beginning of post war consensus⁴ brought more positive political environment for the nationalist movement particularly that Labour tended to be more favourable to Scottish home rule than the Conservative. This made real threat to the whole British national identity because it was really challenged by minority nationalists.

In the post war era, the SNP was determined to maintain its electoral course, even when success appeared a very distant prospect. The party entered the fight to put its touch in the Scottish political scene. The 1940s was the first chance for the nationalist to test its electoral capacity as a political party rather than a small group demonstrating its opposition to the British central government. Despite the fact that the nationalists became face to face with the British main political parties, they were strong enough to compete with other parties. The SNP's chances to gain elections in its first years cost the party a long period. Additionally, the party was supposed to put strong plans to challenge other parties that were prepared to overcome the economic difficulties of the time. Actually, this period of the Scottish political history in particular and the British in general was not favourable for the Scottish nationalist movement to set its course in the British political scene. Consequently, the party needed a strong program with strong leaders to secure its position as the main voice of the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole. The table below shows the party's results in General elections and by-elections from 1944 to 1948.

⁴ Post war consensus is a policy that dominated the post war British political history from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the late 1970s. Both British political parties agreed upon it but was rejected by the Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher in 1979. The consensus politics encouraged nationalization, strong trade unions, high taxes and welfare state.

Table 1

SNP Election Result 1944-8

	Vote	%
1945 General Election		
2 Aberdeen North	2.021	5.3
3 Dundee	7.776	4.6
4 Edinburgh East	2.146	6.3
5 Glasgow Kelvingrove	1.314	4.9
6 Kirkcaldy Burghs	5.811	17.0
7 Motherwell	8.022	26.7
8 Perth	1.547	4.5
9 Renfrewshire Western	1.955	6.4
1946		
10 Glasgow Cathcart by-election	2.700	10.4
11 Kilmarnock by-election	2.932	7.8
1947		
12 Edinburgh East by-election	1.682	5.0
1948		
13 Stirling Falkirk Burghs by-election	2.831	8.2

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

The elections results show that the party's position was improving from one election to another despite the fact that post-war period was difficult for the nationalists. As seen in the table, from 1947 to 1948, the nationalists' votes jumped from 5 per cent to 8 per cent. Even though this slight jump was not a great deal, it was of a great importance for a new emerging nationalist party. The results are considered as a success for the party though the conditions under which the elections were fought were not easy.

Though the SNP was weakened by the general election campaign, it did not respond to the situation negatively and it started to put ambitious plan to improve its weak position. This was known as the four year program. The program sought to put plan for future elections concentrating on fighting by-elections and increasing the quantity of the SNP policy and publications. The party tried to achieve this policy of expansion by enlarging the different Area Councils within the party to ensure that each constituency contained one effective branch that was capable of mounting an election campaign (Birch 84). This was a real progress to the SNP even though it did not lead to electoral improvement especially in contesting seats in general elections.

Besides the expansion policy, the Scottish National Party put another policy development in 1946 and appointed F.R. Yeaman as convenor of the party's policy who produced an outline of SNP policies. The policies were about constitutional, international and domestic issues focusing on economy, health, housing, agriculture and fishing. But still, the party's policies were very weak since it did not have special policy making forums and it was doing well for the improvement of its policies and thus improving the party's performance in general and by-elections.

The SNP Four Year National Program was ambitious to increase its members, local organisation and fighting elections. However, the program was a failure and the post war expansion of the SNP was limited. Indeed, the reasons behind the failure of the Four Year

National Program were financial situation and weak organisation. Its financial weakness was due to lacking institutional sources of support and they relied mainly on its members for funds and no support from business and trade unions. Therefore, there was limited money available to the party. Though continually in deficit, the SNP was raising and spending larger amount of money in an effort to improve its position. For example, in 1944-5, total SNP spending was £1472. In 1945-6, this amount rose dramatically to £ 3661 (Mitchison 248). In this regard, and despite the party's failure in achieving its goals there was some development in the SNP's electoral support and it attracted Scots attention and, therefore, challenged the British national identity in post Second World War era. This threat became sharper because of the policies used by post war governments to overcome the war crises.

In post war period, the government adopted new policies based on nationalisation and the Welfare state. For Scots, nationalisation threatened the distinctiveness of the Scottish position within the United Kingdom. The growth of central economic planning seemed to lock Scotland into the British economy in a way that allowed little room for arranging special Scottish needs and Scottish control of its domestic affairs. Besides this threat, unemployment was twice higher in Scotland than in England (Walker 119). Consequently, such fears and doubts were easily exploited by those in favour of constitutional change. By 1947, this group had organised a Scottish National Assembly that discussed home rule for Scotland and protested about the centralisation practiced by the Labour government and called for a separate Scottish parliament.

Even though there was slight improvement in Scottish nationalist movement in the years following the Second World War, the British national identity was challenged by Scottish minority nationalist. This was due to new policies adopted by the British government to solve the war economic problems, on the one hand, and the SNP's efforts to compete in

elections on the other hand. The most serious problem inherited from the war was the decline of the British Empire.

After the war, the effects of the conflict were profound, both at home and abroad and a sense of decolonisation rose in many parts of the British Empire.⁵ As a result, nationalist sentiments arose in different parts of the UK with the decline of that empire, Scots turned to nationalism as the British national identity declined following the economic decay and dislocation. In such an atmosphere, Scots were able to revive an older Scottish national identity that existed before the ratification of the Treaty of Union in 1707.

This situation which permitted the rise of Scottish nationalism was described by the historian Louis Snyder as: "... the re-emergence of Welsh, Scottish and indeed English nationalism which has been so marked in recent decades can be seen not just as the natural outcome of cultural diversity, but as a response to a broader loss of national, in the sense of British identity" (283). It is because of the fact that the British state was dominated politically and economically by England that it was difficult for the British to deal with Scottish nationalism as threat. Its rise represented the decline of the coherent British identity. So, British national identity was successfully challenged by Scottish nationalism in the post imperial era.

By the mid twentieth century, the British Empire started to decline and economic problems emerged. Scotland's economy based on industry began to collapse in the years following 1945. As a result, unemployment rate was higher in Scotland than in the rest of Britain. As the main Scottish industries of engineering, shipbuilding, steel, coal and textiles

⁵ The collapse of the British imperial power can be traced to the impact of the Second World War. The British defeat in Europe and Asia between 1940 and 1942 destroyed its financial and economic independence which were the basis of the British imperial system. It also removed the old balance of power on which British security, at home and abroad, had largely depended. Britain had survived during the war, but its wealth, prestige and authority had been reduced.

on which the Scottish economy was heavily dependent began to diminish, unemployment rose to rates that were on average 30% to 50% higher than the British level (Begg and Stewart 139). Besides these problems, many other economic problems of Scotland were not successfully resolved by post war government. This is mainly why political nationalism in Scotland arose in the following decades.

In this period, Scottish nationalism challenged the foundation of Britain and the existing union between Scotland and England. Most Scots were not satisfied with laws which were put to solve Scotland's local problems and that English interests dominated in the Westminster Parliament. Therefore, they proposed Scottish control of the Scottish affairs to be better controlled as was done from British parliament based in England. Overall, the picture at the end of the war was a unionist Scotland but one in which a sense of nationalism existed fuelled by the inability of London to take account of Scottish distinctiveness.

Moreover, the period was characterised by great support for nationalists who were strengthened by the growing sense of distinctive Scottish national identity and were fuelled by the loss of many Commonwealth countries. Many British colonies got their independence and others became aware of the British internal economic difficulties. So, the concept of nationalism and the sense of having a separate national identity developed both in Britain and in its colonies. As a result, Scottish nationalists were fighting for their independence in an atmosphere of mounting feelings of distinctiveness as the British government was unable to solve its economic problems inherited from two World Wars.

Conclusion

As has been argued previously, Scotland did benefit from the Treaty of Union passed in 1707 forming the United Kingdom. Both Scotland and England had an important role in the development of the empire. But later this empire started to collapse as a result of economic decay and centralisation of the British government at Westminster. This led Scots to examine

their status within the United Kingdom. Scots also responded to the collapse of the Empire by rising nationalism and challenging the British national identity as a whole.

With the decline of the British Empire in which Scotland was a part, it turned to nationalism as a response. Furthermore, the constituent parts of the UK declined in the wake of economic decay and dislocation. In such an atmosphere, Scots were able to call for an older Scottish national identity and created many organisations and national parties to fight for this identity.

The most important nationalist party was the Scottish National Party that had a great influence on the development of a separate Scottish political identity and then nationalism. This latter became sharper and developed in the years following the decline of the British Empire and also by the development of the SNP in the 1950s to 1970 and its electoral success. The party really came to challenge Britain's main political parties and pushed them to look seriously at the Scottish nationalist movement in a time when the United Kingdom was in internal and external troubles.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Development of the SNP 1950-1970

We, the people of Scotland, who subscribe to this engagement, declare our belief that the reform in the constitution of our country is necessary to secure good government in accordance with our Scottish traditions and to promote the spiritual and economic welfare of our nation.

We affirm that the desire for such reform is both deep and widespread through the whole community, transcending all political differences and sectional interests and we undertake to continue united in purpose for its achievement. (Finlay 198)

Introduction

The treaty of union developed a British national identity but it does not lead to the decline of the Scottish national identity as it gives a new definition of a new identity that was developing in the post Second World War era. This development was due to the efforts made by the Scottish National Party which has come to present the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole.

The Scottish nationalist movement, therefore, was in continuous struggle for independence despite the fact that many initiatives for home rule were introduced and failed. However, in the post-war period, the primary concern of the British government was to overcome the economic crises inherited from the war rather than any other issue. So, minority nationalist movement in Scotland was ignored as a result.

The chapter examines the development of the Scottish National Party in the post war period till the 1970s. It focuses on the importance of the SNP in the improvement of the

Scottish nationalist movement. It gives brief description of Britain's declining image as a world power and the economic crises that played an important role in the decay of unitary Britain and also helped in the emergence of strong Scottish nationalist movement. Moreover, the chapter analyses the SNP's struggle for existence from 1950 to 1970 and its long road to become electorally competitive in an atmosphere of challenge within two dominating British political parties. It also describes the SNP's important role in the development of the Scottish organised political nationalism and how it came to challenge the British national identity in the 1960s. The real threat posed by the nationalists to the British national identity pushed both Conservative and Labour governments to respond to the development of the SNP and their policies towards minority nationalist. An interpretation of the governments' great fear of the SNP's guidance for the nationalist movement and its success are also discussed here. Additionally, the chapter tackles the post war economic crises and their importance in the development of a strong Scottish nationalist movement.

2.1 The SNP's Long Road to Electoral Competitiveness

The Second World War was a difficult time for the Scottish National Party as its organisation fell with a loss of members. The post war years also were hard times for the SNP to survive within an atmosphere of national economic crises and reforms to overcome these crises. The most serious aspect for the nationalist in this period was Westminster government ignorance for the nationalists under the condition that the well-being of the British people was more important than confronting minority nationalist movements. In this regard, the party's fortunes in gaining elections remained low throughout the 1950s as shown in the table below:

Table 2

The Nationalist vote at general Elections: 1945-1959

Elections	Candidates	Forfeited Deposits	Total Vote	Percentage of all Votes Cast in Scotland
1945	9	7	30.827	1.27
1950	9	9	13.301	0.49
1951	2	1	7.299	0.26
1955	2	1	12.112	0.48
1959	5	3	21.738	0.81

Source: Begg, H. M. and J. A. Stewart. "The Nationalist Movement in Scotland."

Journal of Contemporary History 6.1 (1971): 135-52. Web. 18 May 2013.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/259628>>

The 1950 general election was a real disappointment to the party and its failure to contest seats. Despite the SNP's efforts in increasing its members with the Four Year National Program, it contested fewer seats in 1950 than it had in 1945. And the coming years up to 1959 were worse for the nationalists as they continued to lose more votes in a time of fighting to contest more seats.

The 1951 general election came in a time of different important events such as the creation of the National Covenant by members of the SNP, and the disappearance of the stone of Destiny from Westminster.⁶ As will be demonstrated later in the chapter, these events had

⁶ The Stone of Destiny, the Stone of Scone or Coronation Stone is the ancient stone upon which Scottish monarchs had been crowned. It was stolen in the early hours of Christmas Day in 1950 from Westminster Abbey. Four Scottish Students from the University of Glasgow removed the Stone of Scone and took it back to Scotland. For the nationalists, this event represented the Government failure to save the stone which was considered a sign of Scottish history.

an important impact on the progress of Scottish nationalist movement in the early 1950s. But, though these political conditions seemed to be more favourable to nationalism, electoral opportunities for the SNP were still low. At the previous post war elections, the SNP was not able to contest seats as was expected. Despite this failure, the party's performance in Perth and East Perthshire in the share of the vote rose from 9.3 per cent in 1950 to 14.9 percent in 1951 (Fusaco 362). This was as a result of the party's famous candidate, McIntyre. The party also moved from contesting seats in urban areas to contesting rural areas such as Perth and East Perthshire. This change in direction continued until 1955 and it was done thanks to the efforts made by the SNP's candidate Robert McIntyre and the whole party members.

As usual, financing the party was a problem during the election campaign. In this regard, the historian Peter Lynch stated that:

the party had a central election fund of £ 470 for the 1950 election, an amount for three seats. Branches in each constituency were responsible for financing the campaign but party Headquarters also sent £150 to both Stirling and Falkirk Burghs and to Perth and East Perthshire and party membership had increased to 2460 in 1950 (75).

Despite poor financial support and poor general election performance, there were some signs of progress for the SNP since the party was fielding more candidates at local elections and the establishment of a large number of new branches and groups. For example, Stirling and Falkirk Burghs saw the formation of Falkirk Grahamston branch, Grangemouth group and Stirling ST Ninians group. But election results and party finances remained weak. Also, in spite of increased party membership in these years the SNP was in debt in 1950 and continued to lose money on its activities such as its publications and the production of the newspaper *Scots Independent*.

The SNP's campaigning efforts in the early 1950s were limited. The party campaigned strongly on the improvement of economic crisis particularly its efforts on Scottish industry. Another way of its strong effects was also on the decision of the new Queen to style herself Elizabeth II whereas Scotland did not have an Elizabeth I.⁷ In this period also, the Scottish National Party was granted its first Party Political Broadcast on the BBC on 13th August 1952. But the party's fight in elections remained a problem and it contested only one of the four by-elections between 1951 and 1955. The party was able to fight local elections rather than national elections since it lacked financial and ideological supports. The former allowed members and activists to gain experience but it did not prepare the party for future electoral growth and success in general elections. The previous events helped nationalists and the SNP to improve their position and the Covenant popularity rose particularly with the disappearance of the Stone of Destiny.

Another problem that faced the SNP was also internal and despite the SNP's members efforts to gain electoral support, there were internal dissents between the party members as many internal bodies were created within the party. The first body created in the early 1950s was known as the National Covenant. This latter had its origins in the split of 1942 which had seen MacCormick and other party members to form the Scottish Covenant that led the SNP to face organisational competition and influenced other members for the creation of other organisations. The Scottish Convention failed to design a cross-party scheme to gain home

⁷ John MacCormick, as a nationalist, sued the crown claiming that Elizabeth II had no right to call herself Elizabeth II in Scotland. The judge held that the styles of the monarch are a royal prerogative. That is she can decide to call herself whatever she likes. MacCormick idea is that the Queen was not able to use the numeral II in her title and use it in Scotland because there had never been an earlier Elizabeth reigning Scotland. He claimed that it was a break of the Act of Union in 1707 since Queen Elizabeth I was a queen of England but not of Scotland.

rule and therefore looked for other means to promote home rule and decided to create the National Covenant. This latter was a petition which individuals sign to present their support for a Scottish Parliament. Its leaders thought that if the covenant gained support from the Scottish public, political parties took the issue of home rule seriously. The covenant succeeded in generating signatures especially the signature of the former SNP president, the Duke of Montrose and the SNP's chairman, Robert McIntyre.

However, the impact of the covenant was limited and it did not result in the creation of a Scottish Parliament as its main goal. At the same time of the National Covenant, another important event gave strength to the nationalist movement in 1950. The stone of scone or the Stone of Destiny disappeared from Westminster Abbey in London generated publicity for the nationalist. The stone was a nationalist symbol for Scotland and its disappearance from Westminster was a major political event. Therefore, the covenant and the SNP as a whole used the event to gain more support as a nationalist movement in Scotland.

The second organisation led by Ronald Muirhead was founded in 1950. It was designed as a pressure group calling for self-government similar to the old Scottish Home Rule Association. The congress existed at the same time as the SNP and Muirhead remained a member of the party but the congress was a difficult challenge for the SNP. This split within the party had a great influence on the SNP, and its electoral performance was not good during the 1950s. But at least the Congress did not provide the same type of challenge as the Scottish Convention had in the 1940s (Lynch 84). Despite the failure of making splits within the party, other members continued to make internal troubles.

Another organisation formed in the 1950s was in a more organised level known as the 1955 Group. This group consisted of younger SNP members who were unsatisfied by the party's electoral performance and its slow electoral progress. These members were also

against their own limited role within the SNP and saw that forming a new organisation could improve their position in the party and be able to get elected to key positions in 1955. The group sought to challenge the party leadership in the 1955 conference but was rejected. Moreover, this group failed to damage the unity of the party because most of the party members emphasised on improving electoral position rather than responding to such small splits within a party that needed more time to compete in elections.

However, the general mood in the party was its preparation to improve its position in 1955 general election. Thus, the most important goal for the party members was not solving such small problems and forgetting their original aim of challenging other political parties. It was not an easy task for the SNP to emerge as a strong and competitive political party and secure its position in the political landscape. Moreover, improving the party's electoral position needed strong efforts and a well organised party far from any internal splits. The SNP's way for more electoral gains was long.

More and more, in 1955 general election, the SNP was ambitious to contest seats and its ambitions were greater than its abilities. It achieved as low as the previous election. Clearly, the party was unable to contest seats and was faced by the two party vote domination in Scotland, Scottish Unionist and Labour which gained a combined vote of 96.8 per cent (Mansbach 200). But later, the SNP's position began to improve and the 1959 general election was a clear evidence of the beginning of the party's later electoral success. The party wanted to contest as many seats as possible and actually there was a slight improvement in its position in the 1959 general election as shown in the previous table. This was the first increase in seats contested by the party.

This progress was the result of the party's internal organisation and its fight against any division within the SNP's members. The 1950s were an evident years for the party and its

organisation and leadership were very effective. The group around McIntyre in this period was united and cohesive: McIntyre as president, Jimmy Holliday as Chairman, John Smart as National Secretary and David Rollo as National Treasurer (Finlay 210). This active group had its own influence on the electoral growth of the SNP in 1959 and worked hard to prepare and to secure positive political conditions in the future.

In the light of these situations, the popularity of the previous events demonstrated that the 1950s were characterised by slight improvement for Scottish nationalism and the beginning of the SNP to represent the Scottish nationalist movement. Additionally, in this period the SNP was transformed from a small organisation to a political party due to altered political and economic conditions that were favourable for the Scottish National Party particularly when the Labour Party failed to gain the 1959 general election in Britain and the increased level of unemployment in Scotland in the late 1950s. Added to the economic condition, other development helped the party to rise in the 1950s such as internal organisation of the SNP, the party's efforts to increase its membership and improvements in its finance. The SNP put ambitious plans for its expansion and contesting seats and thus gain support in general and local elections.

Besides the SNP's efforts in the 1950s to become electorally competitive, its efforts flourished in the coming decades when the British elected government started to give their attention to Scotland's internal affairs. The government also took into account the rise of a new political party that emphasised Scottish home rule and the establishment of an independent Scottish parliament based in Scotland rather than governing Scotland from a parliament based in London. Consequently, the Scottish National Party played an important role in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement in the 1950s and become the voice of this movement. But this was the first step of the nationalists who had strong position in the British political system and had to continue their struggle for independence.

2.2 The Role of the SNP in the Development of the Scottish Nationalism in the 1960s

Nationalism was a global phenomenon of widespread interests especially since the 1960s. Since then, Britain as many other European countries has seen different waves of nationalist movements and most importantly the Scottish example that reflects the rise of nationalist sentiments throughout Britain. In this period, the Scottish nationalist movement started to be represented by a political party, the SNP. This latter gave strength and cohesion to the movement due to its organisation and political progress in 1960s. Yet, the development of the party was the consequence of a number of external and internal factors.

It was in the 1960s, with an economic downturn, rising unemployment and growing feeling of disenchantment towards the two main political parties which dominated Britain's political scene and the centralised UK government and economy, which the SNP opportunity for gaining elections began to rise. When external conditions improved for the party, its organisational and electoral prospects changed quickly, especially after it began campaigning on the oil issue in 1972. This issue will be examined in the next chapter. The concern here is given to the SNP's important role in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement in the 1960s in a period when a party was becoming a serious political player in British political scene capable of driving the issue of self-government in the 1960s and the coming decades.

The geographical territory of Scotland has made its people a distinctive in a nation different from the rest of the United Kingdom. Barring the addition of the northern isles from Norway and conquest of Berwick-upon-Tweed on the border with England, Scotland does not have areas of territory contested with other ethnic groups or nations. The following map showed the different parts of Scotland as a distinct entity from the rest of the UK.

The nation is therefore defined by Cowan and Finlay as:

A consistent territory, strong national institutions and a long sense of its own history. Institutions such as the Church of Scotland, a separate legal system and distinctive educational system have all assisted in giving Scotland a sense of itself as a separate entity from the rest of the United Kingdom.

And added in defining nationalism

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round.

Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing historically inherited proliferation of cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictions pristine purities restored (169).

In this way nationalism is defined as a sense of having distinct national entities such as: culture, territory, tradition, language and most importantly history. On the base of this idea, Scottish nationalist movement revived and emphasised on a separate national identity. Rather, the SNP represented a modern phenomenon in Scottish politics. The SNP was not concerned with history, language, culture or tradition as ways of nationalism. Rather, the SNP was concerned with the Scottish self-government and the desire of improving Scotland's economic situation. Consequently, Scottish people were motivated to join and vote for the SNP rather than other parties. Self-government and independence for Scotland were its main aims in addition to improving the Scottish economy and society rather than about anything else.

As a nationalist party, the Scottish National Party did not exist only on the political scene but also represented the national movement in Scotland. Certainly, from the 1960s, the SNP was the most dominating organisation within the national movement in Scotland. Of

course, it is in the 1960s that the SNP's situation started to improve in elections and contesting seats. The period also saw an increase in the party's membership and electoral success with the Scottish economy continuous decline in relation to England.

This improvement in membership was due to the strategies adopted by new members such as Ian Macdonald and Billy Wolf who had joined the party in 1959. MacDonald was a party organiser who had established branches for the party around Scotland and as stated by historians Begg and Stewart "He brought about a growth in membership from 2.000 in 1962 to 42.000 in 1966 having more than double in each intervening year" (140). An increase in membership and the joining of new influential members permitted the party for a great level of organisation and the table below shows clearly the increase in the party's membership in the 1960s:

Table 3

The Growth of the Organisation and Membership of the SNP, 1962-1968:

	Members of Organised Constituencies	Numbers of Organised Branches	Membership
1962	0	21	2.000
1966	16	110	42.000
1967	33	263	55.000
1968	62	472	120.000

Source: Schwarz, John E. "The Scottish National Party: Nonviolent Separatism and Theories of Violence." *World Politics* 22.4 (1970): 496-571. Web. 18 May 2013.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009648>>

The table indicates the quick increase in the party's membership from 1962 to 1968. It is clear that the Scottish people were attracted to join the party as its members jumped from 2000 in 1962 to 120000 in 1968. This increase in membership gave the party more strength to continue its fight to achieve self-government. This success therefore is considered as another improvement in the party's position and gave it more chances to compete with other parties. Thus, the SNP was on the right way to represent the whole Scottish nationalist movement.

Some of those who had joined the party in the 1960s played an important role in the development of the SNP's ideologies and organisational expansion, MacDonald became the SNP's National Organiser and the increase in the party's membership and branches in order to contest seats were the results of his efforts alongside with other active members. The by-election candidate Billy Wolfe was also another influential member and went on to become a senior office-bearer within the SNP, before becoming party leader in 1969. He substantially increased the SNP's policy development in the 1960s with the creation of bodies such as the Scottish Economic and Industrial Information Society, the Economics and Information Committee of the SNP and the SNP's National Assembly. Wolfe helped develop the SNP policy on economic, industry, coal, defence, etc. He was also part-time Director Research within the SNP, and helped to establish the research department. Both Wolfe and MacDonald worked together for the benefit of the party and to improve its position politically and most importantly to secure the party's position in elections.

The growth of the SNP in the 1960s demonstrates the efforts made by its members in this period and later on. The party's chances in gaining elections increased and its position started to be safe and it was aware of the need to make an electoral impact as the first available opportunity. The party sought to expand the number of seats fought in 1959 by adopting candidates in 11 constituencies in the 1960s to prepare the next general election and compete the Liberal revival which was a major barrier to its own prospects. However, as in

many previous cases, the party was too weak to contest all by-elections. Thus, it failed to field candidates at the Edinburg North by-election in May 1960, the Paisley by-election in April 1961 or the Five East by-election in November 1961. The way was left for the Liberals in each of these seats before the SNP was able to stand at Glasgow Bridgeton in November 1961 (Meadows 41). The SNP succeeded in contesting Bridgeton which was the first time for the party to contest this deposit. However, Bridgeton was the first chance for the party to spread its popularity to other new constituencies.

This was an example of the SNP's improvement as it had acquired many active members in the same period who had organised and motivated the party. Moreover, the party was determined to take this example into consideration to ensure that the future by-election would follow the same path. The following table illustrate clearly the slight improvement of the SNP in the Glasgow Bridgton by-election:

Table 4

Result of the Glasgow Bridgton by-election 10th November 1961:

	Vote	%
Labour	10.930	57.5 (- 5.9)
Scottish Unionist	3.935	20.7 (- 19)
SNP	3.549	18.7 (+ 18.7)
Independent Labour Party	586	3.1 (+ 3.1)

Source: Ezzamel, Mahmoud, Noel Hyndman, Age Johnson and Irvine Lapsley, eds.

Accounting in Politics: Devolution and Democratic Accountability. New York: Taylor and Francis Routledge, 2008.

The most significant factor here was not the Bridgeton by-election but the effects it had on the SNP candidate Ian MacDonald. He did great efforts and succeeded in becoming the SNP's National Organiser. Of course, MacDonald had his own impact on the party and his performance as party organiser helped the party to be revolutionary and build a mass membership and branches that spread across Scotland and helped the party to be a real political force.

MacDonald had a number of strengths as National Organiser which were of great benefit to the party. His main goal was to recruit members and create branches across Scotland in order to allow the SNP to contest more seats in the future. His success is evident from the transformation in the SNP's organisation and helped the party to become a movement as was stated before in the chapter. The reason behind his success was because of the Bridgeton experience which was considered by many as the take off for the party even if the party was in the third place but in terms of increase in performance it was the first. More important improvements were coming in the coming by-elections.

The start of the nationalist success came in the West-Lothian by-election in June 1962, a constituency which was not contested before by the SNP. The constituency was contested as a result of another active member in the party Billy Wolf. During the by-election he emphasised on local economic issues such as the decline of the shale industry which resulted in the layoff of many workers, rising unemployment in Scotland and the entry into the European Economic Community.⁸ All these issues were not the concern of Wolf only but

⁸ The attempts in the 1960s to join the EEC were disastrous as they raised great anger throughout the UK. There were expectations that the attempts failed. The decision of the Prime Minister MacMillan to negotiate British membership reversed the position shared by the governments of both major parties that the UK could not join European institutions of supranational character or those committed to a cumulative process of integration. The entry to the EC provoked reservations in several parts of the Conservative Party. The problem was that the

were featured in the local press also. His campaign also was the use of the slogan 'Put Scotland First' which became popular SNP slogan throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The SNP's performance in this constituency was a surprise for other parties, especially Labour which was expected to defend a safe seat. The party gained 23.3 per cent and came second (Lynch 102). As a result, Labour was to face a new challenger in the West Lothian constituency from this by-election onwards. Following the by-election, the party continued its program of increasing membership and creating new branches and a proper Constituency Association was formed in West Lothian along with a number of new branches.

Now, the nationalists became a political force that could not be denied. The West Lothian by-election was of great influence in the coming elections and paved the way for other victories to the party and its transformation into a nationalist party by Billy Wolfe whose attitude to nationalism was revealing during this period and indicative of the position of the SNP as he stated: "I foresee that the party will become less obviously nationalist as it increasingly realises that 90 per cent of the people of Scotland are already nationalist and do not require to be made particularly conscious of that fact" (qtd Finlay 220). For Wolfe, the real success for the party was to gain more public opinion and convince as many people as possible to join the party. This was as a preparation for the next elections. Though the West Lothian performance was good for the SNP, its performance at subsequent by-elections was poor.

The SNP was badly squeezed in by-elections such as Glasgow, Woodside in November 1962, Kinross and West Perthshire in November 1963, Dundee West in November 1963 and Dumfriesshire in December 1963. (Begg and Stewart 142). But this was not the case

domestic position of the government deteriorated during the course of 1961-63 and the talks were already in trouble before de Gaulle exercised his veto.

later on. The 1964 and 1966 general elections saw considerable progress for the SNP. The party was able to improve the number of seats contested at these two elections. An increase to 15 and then 23 seats at these elections (Lynch 111) was a real progress for the party especially when compared to the previous election. In 1967 came the by-election in Pollok and Hamilton. The results were significant as they demonstrated that the SNP was capable of contesting a lot of seats. It won in Glasgow-Pollok by-election 49.9 per cent of the vote and gained 46 seats of total (Harvie 16). In Hamilton, the result was more dramatic when the SNP candidate, Winifred Ewing, defeated the Labour candidate and gained 46 per cent of the popular vote (Lynch 115).

The party's gains in local election in 1967 gave it a chance for popularity and became a representor of the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole. The Hamilton by-election victory also represented the beginning of the electoral success for the party in the 1970s when it would become the voice of Scottish nationalism and make a real threat for the unity of the United Kingdom. Moreover, opinion polls after Hamilton by-election showed a strengthening of the SNP support. By winning an election, the nationalists seemed to cross the first gap for its long way in fighting for Scottish independence. The victory can be considered as the beginning of the growth of Scottish nationalism and symbolises the new challenge being posed to the British national identity.

A year later, in 1968 municipal election, the party gained 30 per cent of the total vote and 101 seats and the SNP registered 20 net gains in the 1969 municipal elections, its share of the total vote fell to 23 per cent (Begg and Stewart 143). This development was marked as a real victory for the party as never marked since its establishment in 1934 but its performance fell again till the by-election in Glasgow Gorbals in October 1969 which was the first opportunity for the party since the Hamilton by-election in 1967 to test its strength.

From the previous results of elections, the SNP had been transformed from a political movement to a force in Scottish electoral politics. The decline of the Scottish industry and the Scottish economy as a whole in post Second World War era encouraged the growth of Scottish nationalism and supports for its representative the SNP. So, economy was the most important factor in determining the prospect of the SNP. Nationalist viewed that Scotland would benefit economically by separating from the rest of the UK. Their argument is that Scotland's low rate of growth with high unemployment are the responsibility of the English parliament which had to take the Scottish question in to consideration. Rather, Labour and the Conservatives now had to look more seriously to the development of the SNP and took into account their strong call for independence from the UK.

The 1960s also saw the fundamental reorganisation of the SNP. The party had conducted a review of its decision-making and structures in 1963, led by the national Secretary Gordon Wilson. The review contained the organisational structure of the SNP that lasted for the next forty years. The main aim of reorganisation of the party was to reform some institutions such as the National Executive and National Council. The former meetings were passing hours on regular bases and much of the time spent of administrative matters. The latter meantime also examined administrative issues and therefore its policy-making role was damaged. Consequently, Wilson's reforms were intended to release the National Executive from administrative issues in order to enable it to put its emphasis on policy, strategy and co-ordinating the work of the whole party. Administrative matters were no longer the responsibility of the National Council and gave it an extended role and policy-making. This reorganisation aided the party's development and growth from 1964 onward and consequently gave cohesion to the nationalist movement of the time.

The reorganisation also brought the appointment of new office bearers and committees within the SNP. Two new Executive Vice Chairmen were established for the Organisation

and for Development and Publicity. The Vice Chairman became Senior vice Chairman convened the General Business Committee of the National Executive which further removed administrative functions from the Executive. As a result of the appointment of new office bearers, the SNP chairman Arthur Donaldson became party leader in 1963. Finally, the party's new office-bearers would be politically responsible for the party's National Council for their actions with providing written reports to each National Council.

Moreover, the 1963 onward structure was overwhelmed by the growth in party membership and branches. Soon, additional Executive Vice-Chairmen were added to the organisational structure because the organisation had to cope with rapid expansion. But this structure had not improved the party's policy making capacity as Wolfe himself stated that: "the SNP policy document which we had used in the 1962 by-election had been drafted in 1947" (qtd. in Birch 81). As a result of failing, the party's National Assembly was established in 1968 aiming at the structure of specialist policy committees. In spite of the fact that the party worked to compete in elections since its establishment in 1934, the SNP began to produce detailed policy statements to compete with other parties and its membership and branches were still in increase as shown in the table below:

Table 5

Number of SNP Branches 1960-1969

Number	Date
23	6 th May 1960
18	1962
140	12 th Nov. 1965
152	19 th Sep. 1966
205	Dec. 1966
333	2 nd Dec. 1967
484	30 th Nov. 1968

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

The consequence of the expansion and membership growth meant that more seats could be fought at general elections. As National Organiser Ian MacDonald stated in 1966:

in three years, we have come from being a tiny organisation to being a major party in Scotland, able to contest a third of Scottish seats. By October of this year we would already, with the consolidation of the organisation we now have been able to contest around 28 or 30 seats. There is a formal organisation of some form or another in virtually every Scottish seat now, and by 1968 I estimate that around 50 constituencies would be able to contest without assistance from HQ (qtd. in Lynch 109).

Ian MacDonalds was explaining the gains of the SNP and how it succeeded in transforming a small organisation into a political force in Scotland. He also demonstrated that the party was able to contest more seats and fight elections safely.

Indeed, the SNP position was secured and was able to contest more seats in the mid and late 1960s. This goal was achieved by the expansion of branches and also by the establishment of formal constituency associations (CAs). But surprisingly for the party, it was faced with another problem which was not expected and the party was not prepared for especially after the success in the Hamilton by-election. The party now came to face the two most dominating political parties in the UK. It had to prepare an organised strategy to be strong enough to resist both Conservative and Labour governments' responses to its emergence in the political landscape as a political force. Both Conservative and Labour governments made many responses and put Scottish Home Rule in their agendas. Therefore, a change of attitude towards nationalists was necessary.

2.3 The Conservative and Labour Governments' Responses to the Rise of the SNP

Labour and Conservatives now turned to attack the nationalist rather than ignore the SNP. The party was really not prepared for this attack because its focus was given particularly to its internal organisation and gaining seats and elections. Its emphasis was not yet put in challenging other political parties. The party found itself the focus of serious attention for the first time since its establishment.

As has been previously discussed in the paper, the decline of the Scottish industry and the Scottish economy as a whole in the post-war era, especially by the 1960s, gave strength to the growth of the Scottish nationalist movement and provided support for its political voice the SNP. Nationalists chose this period because the promises of material well-being offered by the post-war consensus began to fail. As a result, voters moved away from the two dominating British political parties, Labour and Conservative, and looked for an alternative, the Scottish National Party. In other words, Scots wanted improvements for their economic situation. Other factors also helped the nationalists to emerge in the post-war era. Deeper changes took place at the same time and the British national identity had less appeal than before.

The British Empire was disintegrating as many Commonwealth countries gained their independence such as India in 1947, and a decade later African possessions were winning freedom from British rule. Consequently, Britain was seen as a nation of declining influence on the world scene. The Suez Crisis in 1956⁹ showed the international dominance of the United States with Britain losing its influence as a world power.

⁹ The Suez crisis is often portrayed as Britain's last fling of the imperial dice. The sun had long since begun to sink over the British Empire. Its greatest possessions, the Indian subcontinent, had taken its freedom. Nationalist

Meanwhile, in 1963 the British government failed to become a member of the Common Market. All these events, added to internal economic problems, gave nationalists strong evidence to challenge and pose a real threat for the unity of the United Kingdom and break the consensus that had existed since the union of 1707. Additionally, both British main political parties started to lose their votes to the SNP and their share of the vote fell in Scotland in the 1960s.

As a matter of fact, Labour and Conservative parties felt the strong need to revive their parties in Scotland. The SNP represented a strong challenger to these parties and the competition became sharper between them. Therefore, the nationalists took the advantage of the opportunity and planned to secure their position in general and by-elections. The nationalists' efforts were fruitful. The table below shows that there has been a marked difference in the levels of support in Scotland. The selection of these years meant to emphasise on both parties' performances in England and Scotland and compare the results in an attempt to show that Scottish electorates tended to vote Labour. So, the Conservatives' general standing in Scotland was weak in comparison to that of Labour.

movements were flourishing in most of the rest. Britain was only beginning to emerge from post war austerity, its public finances crushed by an accumulation of war debts.

Table 6

Conservative and Labour Post-war General Elections Performance in Scotland and England:

Year: Gov.	Conservatives, as %		Labour, as %	
	England	Scotland	England	Scotland
1945:Lab.	40.2	41.1	48.5	47.6
1950:Lab.	43.8	44.8	46.2	46.2
1951:Con.	48.8	48.6	48.8	47.9
1955:Con.	50.4	50.1	46.8	46.7
1959:Con.	49.9	47.2	43.6	46.7
1964:Lab.	44.1	40.6	43.5	48.7
1966:Lab.	42.7	37.7	48.0	49.9
1970:Con.	48.3	38.0	43.4	44.5
Feb. 1974:Lab.	40.2	32.9	37.6	36.6
Oct. 1974:Lab.	38.9	24.7	40.1	36.3
1979:Con.	47.2	31.4	36.7	41.6
1983:Con.	46.0	28.4	26.9	35.1
1987:Con.	46.2	24.0	29.5	42.4

Source: Mitchell, James. *Conservatives and the Union: A Study of the Conservative Party*

Attitudes to Scotland. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1990.

Elections' results showed that Scottish voters became aware of the fact that both British main political parties were unable to meet their needs. From 1945 to 1959, Scots voted for both Labour and Conservative parties as means to solve the post war economic problem. By 1964 things changed and the votes for both parties reduced from 40.6 percent for the Conservatives to 24 per cent in 1987. Labour also suffered from votes lose as its share of the vote decreased from 48.7 per cent in the 1964 general election to 42.4 per cent in 1987. Consequently, the nationalists were the beneficiaries.

The table also indicates clearly that the Labour and the Conservative parties started to lose votes in Scotland by the mid 1960s. The decline of both parties fortunes in Scotland forces them to change their policies, organisation and strategies and especially preparing to fight the emergence of nationalism. On the other hand, the SNP had its own response, devolution which is a plan for the shifting of powers from England to Scotland. In this period, devolution emerged as an option to solve the United Kingdom's problems.

This section of the research examines British governments' responses to the rise of such nationalist movements and more particularly the emergence of the SNP as a political force and at the same time the voice of the Scottish nationalist movement. Primary focus is given to the Conservative and Labour governments' different attitudes towards the SNP's increasing support. Along with this examination, some attention is given to Heath's declaration of Perth, as Conservative response, and the introduction of a Royal Commission on the Constitution, as Labour response, with mentioning both parties' previous attitudes to Scottish question. Also, government's other attempts to calm down the situation in Scotland and their proposals for Scottish home role is discussed here.

The SNP's victory in the Hamilton by-election of November 1967 was considered as a watershed in Scottish politics and thus both British political parties started to loss their votes

to the nationalists. The Conservative reaction to this triumph was dramatic. Conservatives used to look at legislative devolution and constitutional reforms in general with hostility. They gave less support to devolution than the Labour party did. Apart from nationalists rise, other factors were to change things and help the nationalist movement for more advance. Edward Heath was elected leader of the Conservative party in 1965 in a time when the SNP's support rose in Scotland and the Conservatives started to lose their seats. Because of the party's poor performance in Scotland in the elections of 1959 and 1964, as shown in the previous table, the new party leader was forced to recognise that the party was in a strong need for revival.

Consequently, a commitment to legislative devolution was a major part of Heath's attempt to revive the party in Scotland. The party was not in a good position in Scotland to face the nationalist challenge in the 1960s and the party had to change its attitude towards devolution. As a result of Heath's position to devolution, the Scottish Party officially changed its name from the Scottish Unionist Party to the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party under the control of the British party.

Moreover, Heath's change in attitude and the recognition of serious problems in the Conservative Party that needed organisational reforms led to the launch of the Thistle Group in November 1967. The group consisted of young party members who were associated with pro-devolution wing. Their first pamphlet shows that:

A basic aim of the Thistle Group is to stir things up, we are convinced that a measure of devolution over her domestic affairs is essential. In the eyes of any Scotsman, Scotland is the priority; and it is only concentrating on parties that any political party can hope to gain the confidence of the electorate. This the Scottish Tory Party has failed to do. (Dorey 197).

The group also called for a Scottish parliament that could work for the well-being of Scots and control Scotland from Scotland, thus its main focus was devolution. Yet, Heath appealed for imaginative and electorally appealing policies for the party and he publicly supported the idea of devolution and his unionist position seemed to disappear in his Declaration of Perth in the party Conference in 1968. Heath had remarked at the Broadcasting Committee meeting that nationalism was the “biggest single factor in our policies today.” (qtd. In Mitchell 56). This remark came as a result of the rise of the SNP and that it could make a real threat for the British national identity and the unity of the UK.

In 1967, a committee under Sir William McEwen Younger had been established to review the role of the government in Scotland. The publication of the committee’s proposals was met by considerable controversy. In the early part of the 1968, Sir William and Esmond Wright met Heath and proposed the establishment of an Assembly which would be partly directly and partly indirectly elected with powers to consider legislation but leaving Westminster with the final decision and right of veto. At two shadow Cabinet meetings in May 1968 the report of the Younger committee was considered.

Later, after the second Shadow Cabinet meeting, Heath presented his proposals which were intended to be announced at the Scottish Conservative conference. His speech at the party’s annual Scottish conference in Perth included the party’s policymaking. For many, the reversal of policy came as a great surprise for the party members, because the Conservatives were in strong opposition to any measures of Home Rule for a whole century. Even supporters of his policy realised that Heath had foisted the policy on the Scottish party.

In his Perth speech in 1968, Heath noted the growing trend of unity and centralisation and fear of the emergence of a Scottish national identity to threaten the unitary state and proposed the creation of a constitutional committee to consider proposals for change. In

addition, he opposed a Royal Commission which would be too large and slow. The Conservative Party would prefer the proposals of Younger committee because Younger's proposals would always be in relation with the Parliament. Heath's position was regarded as a major reversal in the party policy because the Declaration of Perth upset many in the party. He wanted to portray his proposals as a major reform to the party. He also saw the strong need to revive the party in Scotland to meet the nationalist challenge.

In addition, the Conservative Leader set up a Constitutional Committee in July 1968 with Sir Alec Douglas Home as its Chairman and many other members were appointed to this body such as: Sir David Milne, Sir Charles Wilson, Sir Arthur Goodhart and Lord Avonside. The committee agreed to recommend on the details of establishing an Assembly but did not agree on the Assembly's policy. Many other bodies were created by the Conservative party as kind of giving Scotland the chance to have some role in Scotland's decision making in order to revive the party in Scotland and provide more chances in gaining elections. These bodies were put under the name of Scotland's Government which included many roles but rejected the nationalist main aim of independence and federalism. The latter was rejected because it required a written constitution.

This suggests that the conservatives were optimistic of recovery in Scotland. It was proposed that a 'Scottish convention' should be established. The powers and functions proposed for the convention were limited. Legislations declared by the Speaker or by a vote in parliament to apply only to Scotland would have their second reading, Committee and Reports stages taken in the Convention. Legislations then would return to Westminster for amendment and the third reading. So, legislations could not be initiated by the Convention and the whole power was given to the Parliament and thus the Conservative government in London should be subservient to Westminster.

These actions were seen by nationalists as diminishing their power and giving no chance to any power to challenge or confront Westminster. Considering Conservative efforts, they expected that such responses to the rise of nationalist movement in Scotland could help them to recover their position in Scotland. Despite the fact that the Conservatives' responses could not meet the need of nationalists, the party's position was not influenced in Scotland.

To sum up, part of conservatives' response to the rise of Scottish nationalist movement and its voice the SNP was to rename the party in Scotland as: The Scottish Conservative and Unionist party instead of the Scottish Unionist Party. The Conservative party was anxious about its position in Scotland and that nationalists attracted more voters than Conservative. This led Heath to make what became known as the Declaration of Perth at the Conservative's conference in 1968. In his declaration he advocated a moderate form of devolution with creating a body which would be partly directly elected and partly indirectly elected giving it powers to initiate and consider legislation but leaving the final decision to Westminster. His declaration also came as a surprise to most party members even those who supported devolution. As a result, the Thistle Group emerged within the Scottish party calling for devolution. Douglas Home was appointed the chairman of a Committee to look in the details of the idea of Scottish devolution. Conservative leader, Edward Heath, proposed the creation of a Scottish convention with limited powers whose members would be directly elected on the same day as the House of Commons.

All the previous responses took place in a time when the Conservatives were in opposition and under Heath's leadership. The main aim of these responses was to revive the Conservative party in Scotland.

Prior to Conservatives' initiatives, the Labour government had to respond to the rise of nationalist sentiments throughout Scotland and reorganise party policies to meet the

nationalists challenge. The Labour party relationship with the Scottish national movement was clear since it supported home rule and their tradition towards this phenomenon was carried to the inter-war period. On the other hand, there was little ambiguity in the amount of Scottish independence. But under Clement Attlee leadership, the party position had changed the direction because Attlee preferred centralisation:

Under Clement Attlee's leadership, Labour remained theoretically committed to home rule, but it was clearly a low priority, especially as experience of government, coupled with perceptions that socialism and equality required central demand management and central imposition of standards and policies, shifted the party ideological stance towards centralisation. (Dorey 194).

The significant development which pushed the Labour government to respond to Scottish nationalism was related to the modernisation policy adopted by the Conservative Party as it responded positively to the nationalists revival. The first dramatic signs that nationalism was rising came from Wales, where the leader of the Welsh nationalists Gwynfor Evan, Leader of Plaid Cymru;¹⁰ won Carmarthen in a by-election in July 1966, overturning a Labour majority of over 9,000 votes (Dorey 196). The SNP had a close relation with Plaid, and was influenced by the results in Wales. This helped the SNP to challenge Labour in a by-election in Glasgow and later the SNP had the ability to attract Labour voters. In the 1964 SNP's manifesto, they use the slogan: "put Scotland first" which remain its main slogan for a

¹⁰ The Carmarthen by-election was held in Carmarthen, Wales on 14 July 1966. The contest was significant as it resulted in the election of Gwynfor Evans, the first Plaid Cymru MP. Its victory in Carmarthen constituency, a seminal moment for Welsh nationalism, was part of wider process towards Welsh devolution which eventually led to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly in 1999. Gwynfor Evans' surprise win is credited with laying the foundations for Winnie Ewing's victory for the SNP at the Hamilton by-election in 1967, an event of equal significance for Scottish nationalism.

decade. By contrast, Labour came close to forget to mention Scotland in its 1964 manifesto. This action paved the way for the SNP to challenge the Labour party in Scotland and pushed voters to move away from supporting Labour. Moreover, the SNP saw an increase in membership and more support in election as discussed previously in this chapter. These were seen as signs of advance for the nationalists and the SNP.

At local elections in 1967, Scottish Nationalists succeeded in challenging the Labour and won Hamilton by-election which was considered as Labour safest seat. Another factor that gave strength to the party was the Government announcement to take the UK into the European Economic Community. Opinion polls in Scotland showed opposition to EEC membership because nationalists had argued that negotiations should recognise Scotland as an independent country and emphasised on its slogan 'put Scotland first.' Economic crises were also another important factor for nationalists that will be the concern of the last section in the chapter. Our concern here is the Labour government's response towards the rise of the Scottish nationalist movement. Labour Government tended to ignore the Scottish nationalist threat for the fear that focusing on it would provide it with publicity but in reality the threat was sufficiently serious.

In mid 1968, the Prime Minister called for a meeting to discuss devolution and agreed on a two stage approach. Plan A included proposals that could be implemented within the lifetime of the Parliament, and plan B, on the other hand, might be announced in a White paper after looking at the recommendations of the royal commission. This was known as the Royal Commission on Local Government. Plan A included three main elements: the education of the public; administrative devolution, and parliamentary devolution. The education matters would be assembled by the Treasury; administrative devolution included adding new responsibilities to those already held by the Scottish Office, parliamentary devolution included some reforms in parliamentary procedures at Westminster to

accommodate Scottish interests. The plan also gave some consideration to support either a national assembly for Scotland or a royal commission to Scottish government. But a royal commission was the main idea that emerged in 1968. The idea had been for a royal commission on Scottish affairs.

As Heath had set up a committee to look at Scotland's constitutional status, and it was felt as necessary for a Labour government to give an alternative of a higher status that would work for the nationalist interests. As a result, the idea of a royal commission on the constitution emerged. There was a debate within the Labour government on whether the alternative should be a Commonwealth constitutional commission or a royal commission. It was agreed that it should take evidence in public to "ensure that the Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Parties were compelled to submit specific proposals to scrutiny and public discussion." (Dorey 205). Therefore, the final decision was the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Constitution in April 1969 recommending devolution as the 1966-1970 parliament was marked by suggestions that Scottish nationalism was a growing threat.

The Royal Commission or the Kilbrandon Commission had been hotly debated, as explained previously, within the Labour Cabinet as there was opposition to devolution and a feeling that the commission would only encourage it. Scottish Labour and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Willie Ross, were both strongly opposed to devolution and ensured that the party's Scottish Executive and conference maintained its opposition to devolution until the mid 1970s. The commission's first Chairman was Lord Crowther, who had prepared a Memorandum of Dissent from the proposal of Professor A. T. Peacock and 11 other members of the commission. Its terms of reference demanded an examination of the system of government as a whole and the emphasis was on the different nations and regions of the UK. The Royal Commission on the Constitution's terms of reference were to be:

to examine the present functions of the central legislature and government in relation to the several countries, nations and regions of the United Kingdom; to consider, having regard to developments in local government organisation and in the administrative and other relationships between the various parts of the United Kingdom, and to the interests of the prosperity and good government of Our people under the Crown, whether any changes are desirable in those functions or otherwise in present constitutional and economic relationships; to consider, also, whether any changes are desirable in the constitutional and economic relationships between the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. (5)

But later, Lord Crowther died and Lord Kilbrandon was appointed Chairman of the Commission. The Commission reported later in 1973 under Conservative leadership and many details of the report are discussed in the next chapter.

The establishment of the Royal Commission on the Constitution was the result of the political developments which preceded the Commission's appointment. This was, of course, due to heightened degree of nationalist activity, both in Scotland and Wales. Of the two, Scottish developments were more significant as a factor in the commission's establishment because the SNP's electoral success was in advance both in central and local government elections.

To conclude, in such circumstances of electoral competitiveness between the two main parties and nationalist parties, both Labour and Conservative governments had to confront these minority nationalists and were obliged to make some changes in their attitudes to meet the nationalist needs. The 1964-1970 Labour governments engaged administrative changes in order to show to nationalists that they were their first interest. The most significant measure

was the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Constitution in 1969 and the 1973 report of the Kilbrandon Commission gave hope to the Scottish nationalist movement particularly that the SNP was more advancing and was fuelled by the discovery of North Sea Oil. Under Harold Wilson's government, Labour was still holding the idea that the United Kingdom required a high degree of central government. For them, equality and economic planning required centralism and devolution was seen as a threat to economic prosperity. But in the meanwhile, Labour had to change direction and look at their attitudes towards devolution.

This is also true for the Conservatives, when at the same time of Labour responses and while at opposition had to face this emerging problem. The Conservatives under the leadership of Edward Heath were anxious about their declining popularity in Scotland and were also the first to respond to the nationalist menace. Conservatives saw the strong need for reorganisation of the party and that home rule to Scotland had to be one of their main factors in their policies. Heath announced his support for home rule in his Declaration of Perth in 1968 and committed the Conservatives to a devolved Scottish Assembly. By doing so, Heath reversed the party's opposition to home rule for a whole century and pushed Labour to respond positively to the growing nationalist waves in Scotland. Nationalist position was secured because their success came in a time of economic problems and that the governments of the time failed to achieve any improvement to overcome the UK's economic difficulties. Consequently, these economic difficulties had a positive impact on the growth of Scottish nationalist movement and the SNP could find strong evidences to their fight for home rule.

2.4 The 1960s Economic Crisis Impact in the Development of the Scottish Nationalist Movement

Post war British economy was characterised by governments' efforts to overcome the economic problems inherited from two world wars. Both parties agreed in socialism to solve the time's problems and such policy was based on nationalisation of state owned utilities, full employment and equality of opportunity with great amount of state intervention in economy for the well-being of its citizens. Despite post-war governments' efforts to reverse the British economic decline, both governments failed to revive the economy. Britain really suffered from a relative economic decline. As a result, there was a great sense of anger throughout Britain especially north of the border.

Thus, minority nationalists started to rise since they saw that breaking the 1707 union with England would help their countries to improve their economic conditions and that the union provided less advantages. The focus here is narrowed down onto the economic crisis during the 1960s and their impact on the development of the Scottish nationalist movement. This is the period in which Britain was facing the threat of the emergence of political nationalism and the collapse of the British Empire.

Britain had less appeal than before since it started to lose control over the British Empire. As described by many historians, the sun set on the British Empire thus centralisation and the politics of Westminster started to lose ground. To avoid the struggle with minority nationalist movements in the 1960s, Britain turned to external colonies and had schedules a degree of self-government for many colonised countries. Between 1961 and 1963 Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika with many other colonies became independent. Moreover, many African colonies started their call for freedom starting from Southern Rhodesia when Britain failed to stop the white settlers' revolt in 1965. Britain also was not able to protect the new

federation of Malaysia against Indonesian aggression.¹¹ Meanwhile in November 1967 Britain decided to withdraw its military presence east of Suez. These previous events were just examples of the beginning of the collapse of the British Empire that had an impact on the rise of nationalist movements in Britain. This factor along with economic problems had influenced the unity of the British national identity and gave chance to minority nationalist to threaten the unitary state.

Discussing the decline of the British Empire here is important because it has a strong relation with the rise of nationalist waves and shows that Britain failed to keep control over its empire because of its economic difficulties. It is also important to mention Britain's economic situation in the 1960s for the ease of understanding its real impact on the development of the Scottish nationalist movement at the same period.

The 1960s are generally believed to be a decade of change in the British society. Yet, it was also a period related to national economic decline. Both Conservative and Labour governments attempted a variety of policies to overcome Britain's underlying growth rate and competitiveness. But both of their efforts were in vain because they had to fight a series of balance of payments and currency problems. MacMillan's Conservative government imposed a wage freeze in 1961¹² because of Britain's balance of payments problems along with tax

¹¹ Proposals to establish the federation of Malaysia in 1961 announced by the Malayan Prime Minister sought to merge Malaya, Singapore and the British colonies in Borneo, namely North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. Indonesia did not raise any objections, and its opposition to the proposal came only after the outbreak of the 1962 Brunei revolt. Indonesia also regarded the proposed Federation as having a neocolonial status contrary to that of revolutionary Indonesia, especially in light of the fact that Britain would continue to have military bases in Malaysia and Singapore.

¹² Britain's balance of payment problems led the Chancellor Selwyn Llwyn to impose a seven-month wage freeze in 1961, and amongst other factors, this caused the government to lose popularity and a series of by-

increases in an effort to curb home demand and avoid inflation. As a result, economic situation began to decline. In an attempt to solve the problem, Prime Minister Douglas Home continued the policies adopted by his predecessor and his efforts came to nothing. Contrary to the Conservative, Wilson's Labour Government gave more power to the trade unions because Conservatives left behind them a serious balance of payments crisis. This led the government to look for international loans. By 1965, Britain's balance of payments position became better than before. Despite government efforts to establish effective prices and incomes policy, the British post-war problems of maintaining full employment without creating inflation, remained. In addition to that, the housing shortage and the immigration issue were still pressing in 1966 and the Labour Party renewed its application to join the EEC because its opponent General de Gaul had resigned.

Actually, the economic situation improved in 1969 and surplus in the balance of payments was achieved for the first time in years. Wilson failed to change the economic planning and stop the devaluation of the pound. So, Britain was still suffering economic difficulties and there were signs of anger throughout Britain.

The benefits of the welfare state and the promises of a newer and fairer Britain were slow in coming to Scotland. Throughout the post war period, there existed a set of rules shared by both the British political parties referred to as consensus politics. The set of rules stated that the government took explicit responsibility for employment, prices, the balance of payments and economic growth. Government explicit intervention in Scotland's economic life was refused by most Scots. The relative economic decline of the whole of Britain in the post war years had worsened these economic problems.

elections in March 1962, of which the most famous was Orpington on 14 March. Butler leaked that a major reshuffle was imminent and MacMillan feared for his position as a result.

Moreover, the failure of such policies helped the nationalists to secure their position. At the same time, the government was still working for the delivery of economic benefits by means of economic management of the national economy. Thus, Scotland underwent its own version of economic planning. The Keynesian economic management had been applied to Scotland by the Scottish Office. After the collapse of its industry after the war, the Scottish Office played an important role in restructuring the economy by means of direct employment, and by offering inducements to foreign capital to locate in Scotland. Like other parts of the UK, it relied on public initiative than on private enterprise. Central government decided to devolve a significant part of its administrative resources to Scotland and in the absence of devolved government, the Scottish Office took the responsibility as described in the phrase of the historian David McCrone: “we are not arguing that Scotland can be seen as a separate political system, but that there is a degree of decision-making and administrative autonomy in certain sectors and over certain issues a Scottish interest emerges” (117).

As will be mentioned further down, the 1960s did have its economic problems especially when Scotland failed to maintain its position in a world of increasing international competitiveness. Yet, it was also a time of the redistribution of wealth and unparalleled rises in the standard of living for most Scots. Poor housing was the major blight on the social landscape, and a total of 382,530 new homes were completed at the beginning of the 1960s. But whatever we may think about the housing standards in that period, they represented some improvement since the number of new homes can talk about itself (Finlay 238). This was an example that represented a sign of prosperity in the Scottish society, but our emphasis here will be put on the economic problems in Scotland. This prosperity with economic difficulties made the 1960s a controversial era for many historians. But still, financial problems existed in Scotland.

The 1960s, then, saw the scale of the decline of Scottish economic powers and Scotland became economically uncompetitive. Nationalised industries removed economic competitiveness through the lack of restructuring and gave more importance to social rather than economic mission. As historian Murray Pittock argued: “in 1955-1965, the National Coal Board’s deficit in Scotland was £ 136, over 90 per cent of all the UK losses” (18), and added about attempting a corrective, regional industrial policy brought motor plants such as “Linwood and Bathgate and a steel strip mill to Ravenscraig under the 1959-1964 Tory government” (18) which could not offset the increasing decline in domestic industry. As a result, individual operations were expected to overcome such problems. Labour’s victory in 1964 was followed by disillusionment, as regional disparities within Scotland and rising unemployment were increasingly evident.

The previous factors along with more centralised planning for Scotland had worsened the situation. Additionally, the devaluation of the pound in 1967 affected the economic prestige of the British state itself in the same time when British troops withdrew from commitments east of Suez, the symbolic end of the Empire. Under this situation, nationalist led by the SNP won the Hamilton by-election in 1967 from Labour. At the same time, nationalists started to emerge in the political landscape under the reason that Scotland’s economic situation was worse than that of the UK and that Scotland was not benefiting from its union with England. The solution for nationalists was devolution to give Scotland the chance for self-government. Yet, Scottish economy continued to be controlled by a centralised government.

Government policy in the 1960s was dominated by the attempt to replace old industries with new ones in Scotland. This method can be achieved through building up the social infrastructure. By building houses, hospitals, roads and schools, many opportunities for work would be created which may work better than traditional industries. But all these were

just the government planning for Scotland which did not match the reality because it was relying on funds from central government. However, Scots rejected state interventionism in their internal life which, they believed, would strengthen the unwanted union with England. So, the consensus that existed in Britain in the post war era was rejected in Scotland.

The underlying economic problems can be defined as follows: first, there was a gap between national earning in Scotland and those in the rest of the United Kingdom, second, wages and incomes were falling behind those in the rest of the UK, and productivity levels and competitiveness were poor, and, third, industrial relations were worsening. Finally, British economy was dominated by state intervention as the principal mechanism to resolve these difficulties. Thus, Scotland's performance was poor when compared to the rest of the United Kingdom and at the same time the overall British economic performance was bad compared with that of other nations. For example, the economy of the United Kingdom failed to keep pace with the economies of West Germany, France, Japan and the United States (Finlay 257), that makes the Scottish performance even more dismal. This was the result of both British governments' failure to solve the bad economic problems. A number of reasons can be cited for this performance. First, employment did not grow as fast in Scotland as in the rest of the United Kingdom. Second, not only employment was not growing, average weekly earnings were not also growing as fast and "the Scottish figure was some 8 per cent lower than the British average by 1964 (Dorey 104). And as mentioned before, these were strong evidences for the Scottish nationalist movement to improve its performance and become a challenge to the British national identity.

Under such circumstances, nationalist demands for independence became sharper as all the conditions in Britain were working for their benefits. At that time, the SNP succeeded in securing its position in the British political spectrum and became a force which threatens

the English based government. So, Britain's growing economic problems fuelled the situation in Scotland and helped to revive the Scottish nationalist movement and the SNP.

Conclusion

The history of the SNP from 1950 to 1970 was marked by its continuous fight for survival and growth because it was suffering from weak organisation and limited finance. Such factors were of great influence on its failure as a political party in its first years. However, by the mid to late 1950s, the party's position was much more positive and secured in elections. The reason behind this improvement was because of some internal progress in the SNP. In the 1950s, party organisation was strong enough to stand against any split within the party members such as the 55 group that lasted at its beginning. It is also noticeable that membership was stable. So, the party leadership was united and effective.

The 1960s brought more chances for the SNP. The economic crisis throughout the UK gave the Scottish nationalist movement strength to challenge the unity of the UK and became electorally competitive to the British main political parties. It was only in the late 1960s that the SNP reached its goal and won by-elections from Labour and Conservative parties. In this way, the SNP came in the political scene and emerged as a political party. The party became also the voice of the whole Scottish nationalist movement and played an important role in its improvement. Thus, the SNP posed a real threat for the main British political parties. This was achieved through the great efforts made by the party members to organise it internally, contest more seats and become electorally competitive. The previous factors were fuelled by other external factors and pushed both Labour and Conservative governments to respond to the development of the Scottish nationalist movement. Both parties decided to respond differently to the rise of Scottish nationalism and a change of attitude towards devolution was necessary.

The economic situation played also an important role in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement. The relative economic decline in Britain, and specially Scotland, gave nationalists another reason to choose devolution. In such a period, nationalism was just in the very beginning of their fight for independence. The greatest challenge to the British national identity will come later in a period when many other factors emerge which paved the way for the progress of this movement. Economic developments along with government efforts to stop the nationalist' development remained the important reasons in the improvement of the Scottish nationalist movement and thus devolution.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Rise of Nationalism as the Greatest Challenge to the British National Identity in the 1970s

“The Scottish National Party is dedicated to the withdrawal of Scotland from the United Kingdom and the simultaneous establishment of a sovereign Scottish state.” (Schwarz 496)

Introduction:

The 1960s were of great importance in the development of the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement that is since the SNP started to gain more and more support. Moreover, the British main political parties chances started to decline among Scottish voters. This development paved the way for the nationalists to continue their fight for independence and gather Scots around the SNP as their voice. Thus, the SNP’s continuous struggle for devolution pushed the British governments to look seriously at this phenomenon and put devolution at the beginning of their agendas. As a result, the 1970s were characterised by many developments in the governments’ responses to nationalism.

During the 1970s Britain was suffering from both political and economic unease that allowed nationalists to take advantage of the opportunity and carry on their fight for devolution. Devolution now was taken into consideration from both British political parties which opened the debate about devolution in order not to aggravate the country’s situation under an atmosphere of crises. However, the 1970s witnessed a considerable rise of interest in the question of Scottish Home Rule, as Westminster governments were forced to address grievances grounded in national identity.

This chapter discusses the Scottish nationalist movement continuous fight for devolution and how it became the greatest challenge for the British national identity and the

unity of the United Kingdom. The chapter also analyses the devolution debates of the 1970s as government responses to the SNP's development. Moreover, it examines the importance of the discovery of North Sea Oil in the development of the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement as the SNP chose as its slogan "Its Scotland's Oil." It deals with the proposals of the Royal Commission on the Constitution for Scotland in 1973 and how the government saw the importance to respond to these proposals. The chapter also is concerned with discussing Wilson's government reports on the Royal Commission on the Constitution; Scotland's first chance for devolution as the government passed Scotland's Act in 1978 and the 1979 devolution Referendum and the Devolution Proposals of the Labour government responding to the SNP development. The concern here is given to the impact of the Winter of Discontent on the Scottish economy and the Scottish nationalist movement.

3.1 The Importance of the Discovery of North Sea Oil in the Development of the SNP and the Scottish Nationalism

The wider problems facing the British economy had a great impact on Scotland. Poor industrial relations and inflation were the two most significant British economic problems encountered north of the border. The reason behind this poor performance was because of the use of traditional industries such as coal, steel, shipbuilding, engineering and, of course, because of the workers high tendency to strikes. However, many of these strikes were initiated at a British level, but what emerges is that Scottish strike activity broadly follows the British pattern. Moreover, there was great fear of job losses in these industries. As a result, high unemployment rates dominated the Scottish economic scene and the Scottish figure is 40 percent above the UK average. (Finlay 325)

The other twin problem of British economic performance in this period was inflation. In spite of the government intervention to impose wage restraint and a 'social contract' with

the trade unions, it proved impossible to lower the inflation rate. The government started a policy of rising prices that led to demands for higher wages; the increased cost of production was passed on in higher prices, leading once more to demands for higher wages.

Consequently, inflation rates were still in increase. Once more, the government tried to cut public investment and decrease state intervention in economy as an effort to lower inflation; but its efforts were in vain. One thing that both management and workers agreed on, however, was that it was the government that was responsible for these economic crises.

The policy of state intervention and nationalisation was no longer used as an effort to overcome the economic crises. As a result, workers started strikes which pushed the government to lay off many of them. At the same time, there was a fuel shortage resulting from the Arab-Israeli War¹³ that forced the government to institute the three-day working week. The period was also marked by a number of highly publicised closures such as that of Plessey in Glasgow in 1971 (Finlay 336), though most jobs were lost as a result and Scottish unemployment rates were in climb. The threat of the unemployment was a constant fear that lurked in Scottish society.

¹³ There were a series of energy crises between 1967 and 1979 caused by problems in the Middle East but the most significant started when the Arab oil producing countries imposed an embargo. The decision to boycott America and punish the west in response to support for Israel in the October War against Egypt led the prices of crude to rise from \$ 3 per barrel to \$ 12 by 1974. The price of petrol rocketed, making all transports more expensive. There was talk in Britain of rationing using coupons left over from the Second World War Ted Heath's Conservative government was already struggling to cope with high food prices caused by global shortages. This caused high inflation rates. Furthermore, trade unions submitted claims for higher wages to keep up with rising prices, which led to the confrontation with miners, the introduction of three-day week work and ultimately the fall of the Tories in a general election in February 1974.

Added to the economic crises, there were political problems when striking miners challenged the Prime Minister Edward Heath to hold an early election. In the light of these events, the Conservatives lost the elections in February 1974 to Labour. The new Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, did not have problems to seek. A growing economic crisis, problems with industrial relations, balance of payments difficulties, rising unemployment meant that this government was added from the start. In addition, there were troubles in Northern Ireland as the Irish Republican Army¹⁴ began bombing campaign in England.

It was against this background of mounting crises in the British economic and political life that the SNP eventually made its electoral breakthrough. In many respects, the rise of nationalism was the Scottish response to the British crises as Britain seemed to replace Turkey as 'the sick man of Europe'. The rise of the SNP in the mid-seventies was the result of the discovery of oil and the emergence of the third-party politics as a response to the failure of the two main parties to deal with the problems of the British economy. In England this led to support for the Liberal party as an alternative to the two main parties. Similarly, in Scotland the SNP came across as an alternative.

Moreover, the discovery of oil in the North Sea had an impact on the political fortunes of the nationalist movement. Its discovery came at a time just before the crisis in 1973 when

¹⁴ The first Irish Republican Army attacks on England began in 1939. But it was more than 30 years later in the aftermath of the Bloody Sunday in 1972 that a new campaign began. The first bomb of the troubles in England detonated at the Aldershot headquarters of the Parachute Regiment, whose soldiers had opened fire and killed 13 nationalist protesters in Londonderry. The official IRA bomb killed seven people. A year later, the provisional IRA sent its first unit to London. Ten of the team were caught as they attempted to leave Heathrow and two bombs were defused. But the remaining two exploded killing one man and injuring some 180 other people. Several England bombing campaigns were held and the PIRA send a sharp message to Thatcher Government after Brighton bomb, 1984.

the OPEC cut back oil production, raising prices and triggering a downturn in the world economy. Oil could be presented as an economic saviour, after massive government intervention had failed to maintain the performance of the Scottish economy relative to that of the rest of the United Kingdom. Contemporary opinion held that the world's reserves were decreasing and that the oil would become more valuable than gold (Menzie's 221). Scotland's black gold was a natural endowment which would make the nation rich. This was the feature of the SNP's electoral campaign. The politician Richard Finlay described the situation by declaring that:

... the slogans 'it's Scotland's Oil' and 'Rich Scots or Poor Briton?' were used to good effect. Nationalist strategy centred simply on the basic principle that a Scotland which was independent from the rest of the United Kingdom could divorce itself from what appeared to be the endemic problems of poor productivity, bad industrial relations and the rest of the package of what was known as 'the British Disease' and lie back and enjoy the spoils of oil revenues.(329)

So, Scots had the idea that an independent Scotland could benefit more from the revenues of its black gold as the British government failed to deliver the social and economic problems. Actually, the emergence of oil into the debate on the fiscal relation between Scotland and England raised the feeling that Scotland was dependent on England for its well-being.

As was stated earlier, the discovery of oil had its impact on Scottish electoral behaviour. Undoubtedly, it was seen as an effective means to escape from the problems of the British economy. The historian and future nationalist Christopher Harvie believed that there was still enough virtue and merit in the union in 1977 to argue in his book *Scotland and Nationalism* that: "possibly the most promising option for Scottish politics is that the revenues

from oil go to Britain, but that the Scottish legislature be allocated power and cash adequate for a total recasting of Scottish society.” (131)

The idea of nationalism reached its top in the 1970s even if there were great efforts in the period from the Second World War. Nationalists were strong enough to challenge the unity of the UK in that period because of the economic and political crises that dominated Britain for a long time. Despite the great efforts made by the British government to improve the situation, Scots and the SNP saw the strong need for independence to be no longer dependent on England. So, a detailed discussion of the discovery of North Sea Oil and the electoral success of the SNP are as follows after tackling the British economic and political situations.

The SNP victory at Hamilton symbolised the new challenge posed to the British national identity. At the same time, the SNP was transformed from a political party representing the whole Scottish nationalist movement to a force challenging the unity of an established nation. As was previously discussed, the decline of the Scottish economy in the post imperial era encouraged the growth of Scottish nationalism and support for the SNP as its political voice. The victory at Hamilton shocked the British political parties. The party's success in Hamilton in 1967 and its growth in the years following were a real challenge to the British national identity and ending the consensus that had existed since the Union of 1707.

Westminster governments, therefore, saw the need to respond to these developments. That response was devolution; a plan for shifting of powers away from England to Scotland as a means to placate nationalists and others agitating for greater decentralisation (Walker 117). Thus, devolution emerged as a means of solving the problems of the UK. The focus here will be given to the importance of the discovery of North Sea Oil in the 1970s along with

the SNP's efforts to push the British governments to respond to the rise of Scottish nationalism.

The 1970s were an important era for the nationalists as they started to secure their position in the political landscape and engage in challenging British governments through their active voice the SNP. The party had struggled since its existence to become a part of the Scottish political mainstream. The Hamilton by-election in 1967 was an important event in the party's development. Despite the electoral disappointment of 1970 general election, in which the SNP gained 11.4 per cent but one seat (Lynch 123), the party had a considerable impact in both Scottish and British politics for the rest of the decade as its positions started to improve. The following figures, showing the SNP's performance in general election in Scotland since 1959, proved the improvement of the party:

Table 7

SNP's Performance in General Election in Scotland since 1959

Election	Total SNP Vote	% Share	Candidate	MPs
1959	21.738	0.8	5	0
1964	64.044	2.4	15	0
1966	128.474	5.0	23	0
1970	306.802	11.4	65	1
Feb. 1974	633.180	21.9	70	7
Oct. 1974	839.617	30.4	71	11

Source: Meadows, Martin. "Constitutional Crisis in the United Kingdom: Scotland and Devolution Controversy." *The Review of Politics* 39.1 (1977): 41-59. Web. 18 May 2013. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1406577>>

The table shows that the SNP's votes increased dramatically between 1959 and 1974 from 21,738 to 839,617 and its share of the vote jumped from 0.8 per cent to 30.4 per cent in the same period. It also shows the improvement in the number of candidates and MPs.

The results not only put the SNP on the map, but also pushed the British governments to take the issue of self-government seriously. From that time, devolution was a central issue in Scottish politics in the 1970s and Westminster governments saw the strong need to respond to the SNP's success.

The starting point in the SNP's success was its breakthrough in October 1974 and the appearance of four-party politics in that election. While the Liberals had only twenty-seven candidates, the SNP mustered fifty-nine, contributing to their 11.4 per cent share of the vote, their highest total yet, although they must have hoped for better results (Cameron 291). In addition, most of the votes for the SNP came from Labour and Conservatives because Scots voters were looking for an alternative and were responding to the decline of the British national identity alongside the Empire. This allowed the party to expand, to field more candidates and thereby to gain credibility by capturing more votes, winning by-elections and council seats. In the light of this development, the SNP saw the strong need to continue its fight to reach its main goal: devolution.

Home rule or devolution is not new but it was until the 1970s that the Scottish National Party became a significant political force and also represented a threat for the unity of the United Kingdom. In addition, a more intense feeling about the issue has developed, and more attention has been devoted to it in the British political scene. The major reason behind

this development in the devolution debate was growing Scottish discontent with existing political and economic conditions in the UK. In political terms, this dissatisfaction reflects a number of considerations. One was that Scots were not satisfied with the British based Parliament since it devoted less attention to Scottish affairs. Scots also feel the need for an effective voice within the government because they saw that parliament was dominated by English interests rather than theirs.

As a cause of Scottish discontent was the decline of the British economy as a whole. Also involved is something which received more attention from the SNP and the British government than any other factor: the discovery of oil reserves under the North Sea. This was the moment which changed Scottish politics for the rest of the 1970s. It occurred in the summer of 1969 when the drilling rig The Sea Quest discovered the Montrose oil field 100 miles east of Aberdeen. This would have surprised any political aware Scot in the early 1970s. Optimists predicted an annual gross revenue of £4,000 million, self-sufficiency by 1980 (Cameron 294).

The SNP had begun researching the oil issue in the 1970s. Some of the motives came from the party's research director and Executive Vice-Chairman Billy Wolfe. He made strong efforts in developing the party's policy and took great interest in economic and industrial matters. The other important figure in the oil issue was Donald Bain, the SNP's research officer, who has examined the development of oil in Canada and especially its role in fuelling political development in Alberta that derived from its status as an oil-rich province (Harvie 122). Both of these figures were responsible for researching the oil issue and providing the statistical back-up for the SNP's future arguments over oil.

The reaction of some Scottish nationalists to this discovery was based on the assumption that North Sea oil belongs to Scotland, so that an independent Scotland would

have full control of the oil reserves. For example, in June 1971, the SNP estimated that oil reserves were valued at £200 million, though reported that the oil industry was estimating that £1200 million of reserves would be uncovered each year by the end of the 1970s (Lynch 125).

The party declared that:

the discoveries could make a vast difference to our basic standard of living particularly in royalties, etc, are used to prime the pump of Scottish entrepreneurial potential, improve social conditions and protect the environment. It is equally certain that the resources are not sufficient to fulfil anything like as radical a transformation of the UK economy. And there lies the difficulty. If we remain in the UK the benefits of Scottish oil will be marginal (qtd. in Lynch 123).

The party stated clearly that the benefits of North Sea oil went directly to the other parts of the UK and Scotland remained in ignorance. Consequently, oil discoveries gave Scots a new sense of self-confidence and they increasingly started to call for control over their country's economy. Their call for self-government was also fuelled by the country's economic difficulties, higher unemployment and a higher cost of living. Thus, Scots saw their country as a victim both of English exploitation as well as of the damaged economy. These reasons gave strength to Scots to call for control of the North Sea oil. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that oil has played a vital role in the rapid growth of Scottish nationalism generally and of the SNP in particular.

The Scottish National Party launched the 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign in 1972. The political impact of the issue was aided by the fact that no one but Scots knew the value of this oil in the Scottish economy since Scotland was too poor to be independent, as described by Westminster governments. Now, oil seemed to offer prospects to employment, cheap petrol

and generous pensions in an independent Scotland. At the same time, the party became an electoral threat posed to other political parties. The party's campaign started to give its results in general elections in February and October 1974 in which the SNP achieved seven seats with 22 per cent and then eleven seats with 30 per cent (Cameron 292). The goal of launching the oil campaign was publicising the overall value of the oil reserves in the North Sea as well as the positive economic consequences of oil. The oil campaign ran in two phases. The initial one in 1972 sought to publicise the party's assessments of the value of North Sea oil in terms of Tax revenue to the UK or any future Scottish government. Second, the SNP was keen to confirm Scottish ownership of the oil and its revenues would come to Scotland to fund economic development. Furthermore, the party was predicting that oil would transform the Scottish economy and reduce unemployment.

However, the SNP had suffered from the absence of by-elections for a long time and thus no early opportunity to exploit the oil issue after the launch of the oil campaign. It was until March 1973 that the SNP got this opportunity. In this by-election the SNP gained 30.2 per cent of the vote, only 2.5 per cent behind Labour (Hassan 35). The party now started to take votes from Labour and the Conservatives as it reversed the two party politics in the country. Consequently, the party's victory in 1973 by-election paved the way for more victories in two successive by-elections in February and October 1974. Both elections featured SNP success as the party gained more votes which defeated Labour and Conservative simultaneously as historian Peter Lynch declared: "In February, the SNP gained six seats... The party gained Dundee East and Clackmannan and East Stirlingshire from Labour and Aberdeenshire East, Argyll, Banffshire and Moray and Nairnshire from the Conservatives." (128). The party's performance in February was a positive one not for the increase in its votes, but for the fact that it took votes from both of the main British political parties. These

results were extremely encouraging for the nationalist and pushed the main parties to consider their position on devolution.

Indeed, the SNP passed the October 1974 by-election with a constant expectation. The party's increased its votes and continued to take votes from Labour and the Conservatives and most particularly the Conservatives. The SNP gained a further 4 seats at the election in South Angus, Dunbartonshire East, Galloway and Perth and East Perthshire, all from the Conservatives (Cameron 291). The result gave the party a total of 11 MPs at Westminster as well as an unprecedented 30.4 per cent of the vote (Lynch 130). The victory of the party in two successive by-elections shows that the Scottish nationalist movements now had its own political voice and thus the British governments were pushed to respond to the development of the movement as well as the party. Now, nationalists came to pose a challenge to the British main political parties and make a real threat to the unity of the whole country.

Moreover, the success of the SNP in this period brought about the prospect of considerable constitutional change. The party now was a national movement rather than simply a political party that pushed the British governments to respond positively on the issue of devolution. At that time, both British political parties saw the strong need for tackling the rise of this minority nationalism and were convinced that this movement represented a real threat for the unity of the United Kingdom and they put devolution in their agendas from the 1970s onwards.

3.2 Devolution Debates in the 1970s

The Devolution debates of the 1970s came as a result to the rise of the Scottish National Party as well as the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole. The SNP's development was due to its great efforts and also was fuelled by the discovery of North Sea

oil which gave more strength to the party to campaign on oil. The devolution debates of the 1970s were of great importance in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement.

The focus here is given to the observations and the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Constitution established by Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1968. It was this commission's report that generated much of the discussion on devolution in the following years leading to the government White Paper of 1975 and the subsequent devolution bills of 1976-77 and 1977-78. Along with this discussion of the Kilbrandon Commission itself, some attention is put on the general nature of devolution, principally in its British context, and what level of devolution already existed in Scotland prior to 1973.

Although the challenge posed by the nationalists in Scotland and the debate over the idea of devolution dominated the Scottish political landscape from 1968 onwards, some consideration must be given to the overall political climate during these years. The period of 1968 to 1973 was one of changing fortunes for the nationalists as they sought to secure their position in the Scottish politics. In addition to Ewing's victory, the SNP's position improved in two other by-elections in the late 1960s which seemed to be a good achievement for the nationalists. On 9 March 1967, SNP candidate G.A. Leslie received 28.2% of the popular vote in a by-election in the constituency of Glasgow Pollok, eight months prior to the Hamilton victory. In October 1969, the SNP's T. Brady polled 3,671 votes at a by-election in the Gorbals riding in Glasgow which corresponded to 25% of the popular vote (Lynch 198).

The growth in nationalist support at parliamentary by-elections was not limited to Scotland. On 14 July 1966, Labour lost its seat at Carmarthen in a by-election to Gwynfor Evans, the president of the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru. Evans had successfully captured 39% of the vote in this first nationalist victory (Meadows 45). This event shocked

the Wilson government as Morgan notes: “it added materially to the feeling that the government was on the run.”(56)

Both British main political parties started to lose their votes to the nationalists. As Labour depended greatly upon its base in both Scotland and Wales the sense that it was losing seats to nationalist parties, and more importantly that these parties seemed to be increasing in electoral strength was particularly acute by 1968. This situation would change somewhat in the 1970s when the Conservatives began to lose additional seats to the SNP.

The pervading sense of unease in the Labour fortress necessitated some response to this perceived electoral threat. The response that came from Labour and more unexpectedly from the staunchly unionist Conservative Party of Edward Heath was a less than stirring endorsement of the principle of devolution. However, it must be noted that at this early stage of the devolution debate the main parties' reactions to nationalism and their toying with the idea of devolution were defensive.

Harold Wilson's Labour government took what seemed the natural step in reacting to the nationalists' demands and announced in December 1965 that a Royal Commission on the Constitution would be appointed. More will be said of the Royal Commission later. While Labour's approach towards devolution was to wait on the commission, the Conservatives were considerably more dynamic especially when Edward Heath rather changed attitude towards devolution in his declaration in Perth in 1968.

The SNP had struggled to become a part of the Scottish political mainstream for most of its existence. In addition, the economic background was also significant in the revival of the nationalist as well as the SNP in that period. The economic situation was harming the British government and the SNP was able to take advantage. As was mentioned before, the Heath government was having difficulties in projecting a credible Scottish policy since it

ignored calls from within its own rank to ensure that Scotland gained full benefits of the North Sea Oil and thus allowed devolution to be no longer in their agenda. The situation was fuelled by the rise in oil prices and the miners' strike that left no time for the government to think about devolution. Under these circumstances, and by the time of election in February 1974 the Conservatives position in Scotland was weak. It was the SNP and not Labour who benefited as shown in the following table:

Table 8

Result of the February 1974 General Election in Scotland

	% Votes	Seats
Conservative	32.9 (-5.1)	21 (-2)
Labour	36.6 (-7.9)	40 (-4)
Liberal	8.0 (+2.5)	3
SNP	21.9 (+10.5)	7 (+6)
Others	0.6	0

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

Thus, the SNP's victory in this election was due to two main problems, the economic crisis and the SNP's decision to campaign on oil. The party's decision in the early 1970s to campaign on oil as well as self government was to push the SNP to its greatest levels of electoral support in its history. Indeed, it was in the 1970s that devolution was a central issue in the British politics as the SNP pushed the British government to respond positively on devolution.

The 1970s saw attempts to provide the SNP with a more coherent ideology. The party's ideological position was attracted to centre-left nationalists as an effort to take the fight to Labour and gain its votes. Indeed, taking the Labour vote and winning seats held the key for the SNP's electoral growth and any hopes of gaining independence. Developing credible policies to attract and retain a centre-left electorate were an important aspect of this strategy. For the party, independence was the fundamental goal; the SNP was a national movement rather than simply a political party. This ideology gave more strength to the party and the whole movement in addition to its success in taking votes from Labour in the February 1974 general election. Now, the SNP got the opportunity to challenge the Westminster parties and threaten the unity of the United Kingdom.

The political atmosphere in Scotland in the 1970s was characterised by the responses of the Westminster parties on the issue of devolution that was brought about by increased SNP success. In the late 1960s there was evidence for the Conservative and Labour parties to see that the SNP was improving its chances to be elected at the expense of their parties. This can be considered as a push to the Westminster government to respond positively to the improvement of the SNP and put devolution in their agendas. With this background, a better understanding of the reasons for the government's stand on devolution is provided.

The government's first attempt to devolution came when the Royal Commission on the Constitution reported on 31 October 1973. The commission's recommendations challenged fundamentally the constitutional status quo of the United Kingdom and the two hundred and sixty years consensus based upon the Treaty of Union. The solutions which the commissioners proposed were a justification for those groups within the UK which were advocating devolution and re-organisation of the balance of power within the union. The significance of the Kilbrandon Commission is that it was the single greatest factor shaping the political events of the following years. Evidence presented to the commission was in favour

of both written submissions and oral evidence at series of public hearings organised throughout the UK. In an explanation for the terms of reference of the commission, it stated:

... that we should investigate the case for transferring or devolving responsibility for the exercise of government functions from parliament and the central government to new institutions of government in the various countries and regions of the United Kingdom. This involves looking at the arguments for and against Scottish and Welsh independence... (6).

The SNP supported the Kilbrandon Commission through its submission of a written evidence and by participating in public hearings held in Edinburgh. The nationalists advanced their position that Scottish self-government was the only means by which Scotland's political, economic and social problems might be solved. In submission to the commission the SNP maintained that "we are seeking to set up an independent parliament for Scotland, which shall be the authority in all matters pertaining to Scotland, on an equal basis with others countries."(73) Such claims show that Scotland was a nation which was damaged by the policies of centralisation and through the lack of its own government.

So, Scottish nationalism at that time came as a reaction to the economic decay since the language of nationalism existed within Scots who viewed Scotland as a distinct nation. The commission in its reports gave strength and legitimacy to this position by supporting the Scottish view that the United Kingdom was composed of many different nations and that Scots have "a separate identity of which they themselves are keenly conscious and proud" (102). An identity which encouraged the rise of nationalism and to which the SNP spoke clearly in its submission.

For the majority of the commissioners, the union with England represented a success. But this success did not come with no loses; the UK had to pay for such a success. The bill

was a combination of different economic and political problems. It was in the Kilbrandon Commission's observations that the growth of the United Kingdom was accompanied with such problems. Thus, for Scots, the union was no longer a success and that Westminster governments had to look again to its relation with the different parts of the UK. The commission described the UK status quo by:

the story of the United Kingdom has thus been, at least in the larger island, a success story. But this is not to say that the Union had brought unalloyed advantage to the constituent parts. It can be argued that in Scotland, Wales and parts of England, as well as in Ireland, a price in political, social and economic terms has had to be paid for progress; that the interests of the majority have been fostered partly at the expense of national and regional minorities; that traditional ways of life have been disrupted by the exploitation and then the abandonments of local resources; that the resultant social distress has not been adequately recognised by governments which have seemed physically and psychologically remote; and that the minorities most concerned with these problems have not been allowed the power or the means to alleviate them. (20)

The rise of nationalism put the unity of the UK into question and represented a challenge for the British national identity. The questioning of the status quo of post imperial Britain took the form of increased support for nationalism in Scotland. Therefore, nationalism became the language used in Scotland as a means of demonstrating the dissatisfaction with Westminster governments and showed their strong desire for change.

The commission's conclusion illustrated the situation and mentioned that the economic decline had a major impact on the growth of Scottish nationalism. The Royal

Commission on the Constitution's main recommendation was the creation of an assembly for Scotland and Wales. The proposal of the commission to create an assembly would remove the Scottish Office. While the assembly would be created, Westminster Parliament would retain ultimate sovereignty in all areas, even devolved ones. As a result, federalism was rejected, which the commission was opposed to in principle. Federalism was viewed as being outside the British constitutional experience. Moreover, the commission had established in its recommendation the basis for a new form of executive and representative government in Scotland. The Scottish Assembly represented an entirely new form of government within the United Kingdom. The Kilbrandon Commission set up the assembly's roles as follows:

The establishment of an Assembly of about 125 members, directly elected at the time of Parliamentary elections, which would sit in Edinburgh for about forty days each year. It would have an advisory, consultative and inquisitor function, and in this role it would co-ordinate the views of regions within Scotland, meet and question the Scottish Ministers, discuss government proposals at an early stage, comment on the Scottish estimates and debate matters of concern to Scotland. (300)

Consequently, the nationalist interpreted the roles of the Assembly as very limited since Scottish internal affairs would be always related to the sovereign government and thus Scotland was dependent on local government. For them, this limitation of power was considered as a kind of rejecting the idea of devolution. Then, the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Constitution have two different effects. On the one hand, it gave the nationalists more strength to continue their struggle for devolution as the publication of the reports provided the SNP with more opportunities for better performance in the coming elections. On the other hand, the reports rejection of devolution as the nationalists' main aim represented in an extent the failure of the nationalists to achieve their goal. The latter idea did

not represent an obstacle for the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement and the fight for devolution was always their main goal.

The release of the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Constitution in October 1973 opened the doors for Scottish nationalists to continue their work as minority nationalist movement which fight to reach its goal. The commission would have an effect on the coming decades in which the political foundation of Britain would be strongly challenged and a change would be necessary. Also the release of the Klibrandon Reports provided a motive for action by the British politicians on the issue of devolving powers to Scotland and, as a result, put the legitimacy of the status quo in question. The reports' influence of the coming decades brought devolution again to be the main concern of the British governments.

In February 1974, Labour under Harold Wilson was re-elected with a minority government. The decision of the Labour Government to support devolution in 1974 involved opportunities to the nationalists and the SNP. Positively for the SNP, devolution meant that the party's fundamental aim of self-government for Scotland was finally on the political agenda of a party of government. The SNP had the opportunity to use the devolution debates for more chances for self-government and thus paved the way for independence. The party's attitude to devolution after the commission reported had many aspects. First, the party was in favour of a Scottish Assembly set up by the commission, but was not satisfied with the offers of the Labour government. Thus, the SNP criticised the Labour's devolution plans in terms of the weak economic power, the strong role of the British government, the limited powers for the Assembly and the lack of any role in economic affairs. Though such critics were lost and the SNP had little impact over the details of devolution, it was able to set out its own alternative for self-government.

Second, the party sought to respond to the devolution debates by emphasising independence and devolution. For example, the 1975 conference slogan ‘On to Independence’ became ‘Independence Nothing Less’ in 1977. Such change permitted the SNP to become effectively a supporter of devolution in the House of Commons. Third, the advent of devolution required policy changes within the SNP. The most prominent example was the debates over devolution and independence at the party’s annual conference in Motherwell in 1976. Then, the party conference voted by 594 to accept devolution (Lynch 147). Of course, the party started resolutions on devolution.

Now, why devolution has become a political issue at this time? In general terms, the essence of controversy was reflected in the following statement: “devolution, the very word contains a threat. The English pronounce it to rhyme with evolution, the Scots with revolution. It goes with danger to the Union, the end of Westminster as we know it, the abandonment of everything we ever fought for” (Meadows 43). In other words, anti-devolutionists fear that devolution will bring the disintegration of the United Kingdom. Yet, home rule in Scotland is not new, it dates to the latter part of the 19th century but it was not until the 1970s that the Scottish National Party became a significant political force and that it represented strong voice to talk on behalf of all the Scottish nationalist movement. The debate over devolution has entered a new stage as the British government started a change of attitude towards this idea.

More and more, the SNP continued its campaign on oil because oil revenues were not evidence of a coherent strategy for economic development. Now, nationalism was fuelled by disappointment on issues of economic policy. The government response to the rise of nationalism on the base of economy was greater intervention. Consequently, the Scottish Development Agency was created and aimed at opposing proposals from the nationalists that revenue from North Sea oil should be channelled into a special fund for the regeneration of

the Scottish economy. The creation of the agency could be interpreted as an effort to calm down the nationalists. Whereas, the nationalists saw it as an effort to curb their campaigns on oil and thus reduce their chances in the next elections.

Moreover, Wilson's Labour government officially committed itself to devolution. And as a reaction to the SNP's gains in February 1974, the government set up on the 3rd of June a Green Paper entitled *Devolution within the United Kingdom: Some Alternatives for Discussion*. The Green Paper made some suggestions about executive devolution and gave no credence to ideas for legislative devolution. The general scope of proposals given in the paper were as follows:

... the Westminster Parliament would normally cease to legislate for Scotland and Wales (though existing United Kingdom legislation in these fields would continue to apply initially). But the United Kingdom Parliament and Government would continue to be responsible for the international aspects of transferred matters. It is also envisaged that the Scottish assemblies might have some limited powers in relation to consumer protection, road freight, civil aviation and broadcasting. ... All matters relating to the franchise and to elections to the assembly would be reserved to the United Kingdom Parliament. (8)

The proposals were again another way of rejecting devolution and giving limited powers for Scots to role themselves. This limitation of power, however, provided the nationalists with strength to reach devolution and then independence. The devolved powers did not gain the satisfaction of the nationalists along with the Liberal Party which continued to maintain the posture of advocating federal solution as the only appropriate one to Britain's constitutional situation.

The Liberals did, however, advocate the establishment of a Scottish Assembly with full legislative powers devolved to it. Both Labour and Liberal agreed to bring devolution to the agenda which led the Conservatives to lose ground in Scotland. The Conservative popular vote continued to slip in Scotland, from 50 percent in 1955 to 32.9 percent in February 1974 (Lynch 147). Likewise, the Westminster parties saw their bases in Scotland being threatened by increased support for nationalists. As the SNP saw in Kilbrandon a boost for their position, the other main parties saw in Kilbrandon a means by which nationalists might be cooled by offering an assembly to Scotland. Even though the proposals provided little power to the assembly, the SNP opportunities in elections were increasing as was explained earlier in this chapter. Yet, support for the SNP had continued to grow despite assumptions made by the main parties that the nationalists' chances in elections were limited. Now, the elections sounded the message loud and clear that devolution and nationalism were two central issues for British politicians and Westminster government.

Additionally, the Labour Party was forced to rethink its position of the devolution of power. By September 1974, the government published a White Paper entitled *Democracy and Devolution: Proposals for Scotland and Wales*. The White paper proposed a Scottish Assembly with limited legislative powers. The assembly would be elected by the traditional first past-the-post system and would be financed by an annual block grant from the Exchequer in Downing Street. The white paper, as many other attempts for devolution, rejected the idea of separatism and emphasised the unity of the UK as stated in the first page of the paper: "the Government agree wholeheartedly with Commission on the Constitution in rejecting separatism as a solution. The Government like the Royal Commission regard it as a vital and fundamental principle to maintain the economic and political unity of the United Kingdom." The dissatisfaction of the nationalists on the government's proposals was always present and

this limitation of power given to the assembly fuelled their desire for more control over their country's affairs.

The Government "have therefore concluded that the Scottish assembly should have a legislative role and have legislative powers within fields in which separate Scottish legislation already existed such as housing, health and education" (08). Thus, Scotland was provided with many chances for devolution, but the debates of devolution were disappointing for the nationalists. The Scottish nationalist movement and the SNP refused to surrender and their insistence to rule their own country was present whenever and wherever the chance permits them to challenge the central government. The Labour Party dusted off various proposals and ideas regarding devolution.

The 1974 general election created a new situation for the SNP: the election of a parliamentary group at Westminster. Before the general election of February 1974 the SNP had one MP at Westminster since Winie Ewing's victory at Hamilton in 1967. This was considered to be challenging for the SNP especially when this group was expanding its members. In the October 1974 general election, the group expanded from seven to eleven MPs after the election (Lynch 135). Even though there were divisions between the party members about the group's role, the creation of this parliamentary group permitted the nationalists to have a hand in the Westminster decision-making and also provided them with power to stand for their goal of achieving devolution to Scotland. As a result, the SNP felt that the parliamentary group was a triumph for their long road in challenging the UK government. The SNP's stand for devolution in Westminster pushed the British government to consider more debates about devolution to Scotland.

The nationalists' good performance in Scotland had already provoked a change in the attitudes of the main political parties especially with the Labour government's White Paper on

devolution. When Labour took power again, a second White Paper on devolution was produced. The paper entitled *Our Changing Democracy: Devolution to Scotland and Wales* was presented to Parliament on the 22nd November 1975. The paper stated in its first page that:

In the Government's view the proposals set out in this white paper are coherent and workable, and provide a sound basis for legislation. They envisage a massive handover to the new elected assemblies of responsibility for the domestic affairs of Scotland and Wales, within the firm continuing framework of the United Kingdom. They will give closer democratic control and will help foster the distinctive national traditions of Scotland and Wales, which are widely valued throughout the United Kingdom as part of our common heritage.

This document presented the greatest degree of devolution yet considered by the Labour Party while encouraging that the unity of the United Kingdom be maintained. Devolved powers to a Scottish Assembly “were local government, health, the environment, roads and transport, education, housing and physical planning (5). In addition, “the Scottish Executive would be based on a cabinet style system; Parliament would retain ultimate sovereignty” (10). The nationalists again were not satisfied with the White Paper's proposals as it gave little power to the Scottish assembly and ultimate sovereignty in all matters would remain with Westminster. From the proposals of the White Paper, it is noticeable that Scottish nationalism represented a real threat to the British government. There were further discussions over the way of financing the assembly whether through direct taxation or by revenues collected by the Treasury in London and transfer them to Edinburgh. Consequently, the Labour government produced an additional White Paper in July 1977 with an extended explanation of funding the assembly. The White Paper entitled *Devolution: Financing the*

Devolved Services. The paper addressed the two ways suggested by the Kilbrandon Commission by which the proposed assembly might be funded by: the revenue basis or the expenditure basis as it explains:

The revenue basis of funding means that the assembly itself had to levy taxes in order to fund the devolved government. This way of funding the assembly was rejected in the White Paper because they see that revenue based system would tend to lead to wide variations between standards of public services in different parts of the country. The poorer areas would come off worst. Moreover, it is not practicable, in the government's view, to identify in advance a group of taxes whose proceeds, at acceptable rates, would be likely, even for a short time ahead, to match changing expenditure. (03)

Thus, the government chose the expenditure basis of financing the Scottish assembly. This way of funding was chosen as government's efforts to keep its own control on the different parts of the UK and thus maintain unity within it. Financing the assembly was an example of many issues emerged during the devolution debates in order to keep the government's control over Scottish matters.

Furthermore, the Labour government introduced its first bill in 1976. The bill entitled *Scotland and Wales Bill, 1976* would create legislative assemblies to Scotland and Wales along the lines envisaged by the government in *Our Changing Democracy*. Also devolved powers for the assembly were limited. On the bill's first reading in Commons, the bill provoked furious debates and made internal divisions within the Labour Party. On 28 November 1976, the Scotland and Wales bill was published. A month later, second reading of the bill started and the emphasis was given to devolution. Yet, with the introduction of the Scotland and Wales bill the Callaghan Labour Government was challenging the unity of the

United Kingdom by proposing a radical change to the constitutional status quo of the union. The nationalists and the other parties got through the Second Reading debate smoothly; it was not until the Committee Stage of the bill that things began to change.

The Committee Stage created again divisions within the Labour party as well as the Conservatives on the devolution issue. Neil Kinnock and Tam Dalyell led attacks against the bill in the second reading (Deacon and Sandy 53). As a result of such divisions, the bill was rejected and the government was quick to respond and introduce on the 4th November 1977 a separate Scotland Bill similar to the previous bill. The government quick reaction shows that devolution was an important issue for the Westminster government and that nationalism was the primary threat for the government. Again, the process of the Scotland Bill through the various legislative stages highlighted the divisions within the Labour party in particular.

Labour failed to address a significant constitutional issue arising out of devolution that still served to motivate opposition to the idea of establishing an assembly in Edinburgh. There was a slight change in terms of the powers given to the new assembly. The major issue that dominated the debate in committee were referendums and the accompanying Cunningham amendments. The implementations of the Scotland Bill after it had received Royal Assent would be subjected to a referendum in Scotland. The idea that emerged in the debate was the Scottish votes were important in the referendums to implement the provisions of the act. More will be said about the referendum later.

The previous discussion dealt with the Labour response to the rise of the Scottish Nationalist movement and the devolution debates in the early and mid-seventies. However, Labour and Conservatives tended to respond simultaneously to the rise of minority nationalism. Conservatives, in opposition, were also provoked to respond to the rise of nationalism and the SNP.

3.3 Conservatives' Attitudes to Devolution and the Rise of the SNP:

The Parliament which sat between October 1974 and May 1979 was concerned more with constitutional issues than other issue in the post war period. Parliamentary sovereignty was debated to an extent which did not exist before. The referendum of European Community membership, the increasing intensity of the problem in Northern Ireland and Scotland's constitutional status were the most dominating issues to concern the Labour government. The 1973 October War and the quadrupling of oil prices with economical problem, high inflation levels, rising unemployment and poor labour relations were other factors which made keeping the unity of the United Kingdom hard.

In opposition, the Conservative Party underwent major changes during the period. In economic policy, the leadership of Margaret Thatcher returned the Tories to their old ideologies. The devolution policy of the party changed, too. As stated before in this study, the Conservatives in opposition under Edward Heath leadership in the late 1960s had viewed the nationalist as a real threat but his actions as Prime Minister suggested that he had adjusted his views following the 1970 election. Again, the elections of 1974 forced him to return to his earlier view. Mrs Thatcher seemed to have little interest in Scottish affairs and accepted the devolution policy she inherited from Heath. The Heath's Government failure to act on the Home Report and its other preoccupations left it in a weak position in Scotland in 1974. The February 1974 general election saw the Conservative swing behind the SNP which started to gain seats from the Conservatives. The Conservatives had approached the election promising to consider the Kilbrandon Commission's proposals and fought the October election with expectations of gaining Scots votes over nationalists. But the situation remained the same and the nationalists secured their position again.

Furthermore, the Conservative Party was fighting to improve its position in Scotland. As an effort from the party to gain support in Scotland, Alick Buchanan Smith, appointed shadow Scottish Secretary in February 1974, set up a committee to consider the issue. At the Scottish conference in Ayr in May, an indirectly elected Assembly made up of local government councillors was elected. But within the Conservatives, there were some divisions about the creation of an assembly. It was not the appropriate time for such divisions because the minority Labour Government could call an election at any time to avoid further losses to the nationalists.

The election in October 1974 brought more gains for the SNP. The nationalists won eleven seats and 30.4 percent of the vote and the Conservatives won 16 seats with 24.9 percent of the vote (Mitchell 70). As a result, devolution was reasserted to be in the agenda. Few days later, the Conservatives announced that their MPs would support the Labour Government's scheme for a directly elected assembly. The party's other initiative for devolution was the appointment of the Rifkind Committee to investigate in details the party's proposals for the creation of an assembly. Later, at the Scottish conference in May 1975 in Dundee, the party voted to consider some reform of the electoral system for elections of the assembly (Lynch 145). A most interesting dimension to the debate was the assumption that an assembly was now ensured and that debate should concentrate on the constitution and powers of the assembly. For the Conservatives, the mood of reform was evident. Malcolm Rifkind was appointed Devolution Spokesman in Scotland and argued the case for a 'new unionism'. For the Conservatives, a change in the party's policy was necessary to revive their position in Scotland, on the one hand, and to secure it from the nationalists' threat, on the other hand. The reactions of the Conservatives, as a unionist party, came as one way to manipulate the Scottish nationalist movement and gain more time to reorganise the party in an effort to

reduce the nationalists' threat. Consequently, the Conservative party changed its attitudes towards the idea of devolution. In an article in *Q* in November 1975, he echoed the view:

... which Esmond Wright had expressed in the late 1960s by arguing that Scottish Conservatism had to relate to the needs and aspirations of modern Scotland and that devolution was in complete sympathy with basic Conservative philosophy. Scottish devolution, according to Rifkind, must be the first step towards a federal constitutional structure (qtd in Mitchell 71).

Rifkind views ensured that party was really taking the Scottish devolution seriously and saw the need for more devolved powers to the minority nationalists as they began to represent a strong force.

The Rifkind Committee appointed by Buchanan Smith reported its findings three days before the publication of the Labour Government's devolution white paper *Our Changing Democracy* in November 1975. Simultaneously, two other committees were meeting; one under Willie Whitelaw and the other under Dundee Conservative John Berridge. The Whitelaw Committee fulfilled an advisory role and met infrequently. The Scottish Conservative Policy Group under John Berridge produced proposals early in 1975 which were published in a *Devolution Brief*. The proposals included an Assembly with certain revenue raising and taxation powers in addition to a block grant. The Assembly would be able to reform local government and would be elected by proportional representation with no reduction in the number of seats at Westminster. Third readings of bills would be taken in London with executive function given to the Secretary of State, who would be entitled to sit in the Assembly. The Conservatives proposals of an assembly, like that of Labour, did not reach the nationalists needs for devolution because each time the idea of an assembly was discussed nationalists were provided with limited powers and their control over their affairs

were always given to the central government. London based government was always rejected by the nationalists.

Furthermore, the Rifkind Committee's proposals were the last major pro-devolutionary statement of the Conservative Party. It was essentially concerned with minimizing between an Assembly and London. It was also as an effort to curb the power of the nationalist party: the SNP. The Assembly had no executive and no direct control over the block grant. The assembly proposed that the Secretary of State should select his Ministers of State and parliamentary under Secretaries of the State from the assembly's membership. This came as an effort to find solutions for the Scottish question and prevent more conflicts between the nationalists and the central government. More financial powers were also given to the assembly. It would be able to advise Secretary of State on the allocation of a block grant and the minister would negotiate with the Treasury.

Moreover, the Committee proposed that Scottish legislation should be considered by the Scottish body. The second committee and report stages would be taken in the assembly with the government in Westminster forced to withdraw or amend legislation rejected at the second reading. Consequently, these amounts of powers gave the Parliament the right to reject the assembly because more powers for the nationalist meant that their primary goal was on the horizon. Also, more powers meant that the sovereignty of the UK was successfully challenged by minority nationalist who would continue their struggle for independence.

For most part, 1975 was a year when the party gave support to devolution while opposition gradually built. Amongst English MPs, the issue of devolution was not considered until the SNP advances of 1974. The Conservatives commitment to devolution was not serious until the nationalists' presence in Parliament. As a result, divisions within the party members became sharper as far as devolution was concerned. Many members were opposed

to the idea of devolution to Scotland and the idea of English nationalism emerged. By the late 1975, the Conservatives were deeply divided and there were conflicts between those who were for and those who were against devolution.

Margaret Thatcher's first years as party leader were characterized by contradictions regarding devolution. The Iron Lady's determination to change the party's economic policy is the primary emphasis over anything else. Her interest in Scottish affairs was negligible. The issue of devolution played no part in Mrs Thatcher's election as leader. Her limited experience in government had not given her an understanding of Scottish affairs. Her period as Secretary of State for Education during the Heath's government left her with no experience of Scotland. Mrs. Thatcher inherited a pro-devolution policy and initially she accepted it. An evidence can be found in the opinion polls which suggested overwhelming support for devolution. This support included considerable support amongst Scottish Tory voters. Even as late as October 1975, an opinion poll showed that "65 percent of the electorate favored the Labour government's plans for an assembly with only 16 percent against" (Mitchell 75). In her visit to Scotland only few days after the election, she announced that the establishment of a Scottish assembly "must be a top priority to ensure that more decisions affecting Scotland are taken in Scotland by Scotsmen" (qtd in Mitchell 75).

Prime minister Thatcher's views on the economy were conflicting with a measure of legislative devolution or the creation of an assembly. Though the new Tory leader refused centralization, it would have proved very difficult for a government to have an economic strategy strictly controlling public expenditure while simultaneously giving spending powers to Scottish assembly and establishing a Scottish Oil Development Fund. Creating a new legislature did not square with rolling back the state. But party's strategy regarding devolution was not stable and from time to time there was a change of attitude and the Tories found

themselves forced to respond to Labour's debates on devolution. As a result, the idea of a referendum developed with the Conservative and Labour parties.

Without taking actions, the Conservatives moved away from devolution as Bunchanan-smith failed to convince the party of the need for a directly elected assembly despite his immense efforts. Thus, the anti-devolutionists led by Iain Sproat were highly active. In early May 1976 Sproat announced the creation of an anti-assembly group called 'keep Britain United' which intended to organize opposition amongst Conservative MPs.

On the opposite, there were others who were still supporting devolution. In the Scottish Conservative conference in May 1976, Sir William McEwan Younger spoke strongly in favour of an assembly and went so far as to warn the party that though the Scots did not want independence they were in need for devolution. Conservatives' attitudes were divided between anti and pro-devolutionist. As an opposition party, the Conservatives had to work with Labour's proposals for devolution. Whether by vote with or against the proposals, the Conservatives were forced to react to the rise of an organized Scottish nationalist movement.

3.4 Scotland's First Chance for Devolution: Scotland Act 1978 and 1979 Devolution Referendums

After the defeat of the Scotland and Wales Bill, a vote of confidence was secured by the Labour government by a majority of 24 with the help of the Liberals (Mitchell 84). Polls suggested that Mrs. Thatcher was set to become Britain's first female Prime Minister but the Lib Lab pact¹⁵ postponed her arrival to Downing Street. A condition of the pact was a second

¹⁵ Lib-Lab Pact is a working arrangement between the Liberal Party and the Labour Party. In March 1977, the Labour government left with no overall majority after a by-election defeat faced a motion of no confidence. In order to remain in office, Prime Minister James Callaghan approaches the Liberal party under David Steel leadership. Callaghan had been Prime minister for one year. An agreement was negotiated, under the terms of

attempt at legislating for devolution. Debates on devolution continued to be considered by Westminster government. The demise of the devolution bill saw the SNP gain in opinion polls to reach a peak of 36 percent in March 1977 whilst Labour's support slumped to 27 percent (Lynch 148). Such results were a further pressure on Labour to deliver on devolution.

Indeed, there was a general election to follow, Labour was expecting to lose seats to the SNP and to lose the election. However, an agreement between Labour and the Liberals, known as the Lib-Lab pact allowed the minority Labour government to survive with the two parties negotiating the program which included devolution. Though Labour avoided general election defeat, it had to face local elections in Scotland following the defeat of the Scotland and Wales bill. As a result, the SNP's performance was strong in May as the party's share of the vote "doubled to 24.2 per cent ... and Labour's vote fell from 38.4 per cent to 31.6 per cent. The SNP made 110 gains, 11 losses and won three local authorities from Labour: Clackmannanshire, East Kilbride and Falkirk. Labour was left in control of only 5 of the 34 district councils after this election (Lynch 149). Thus, Labour needed some encouragement to reintroduce devolution legislation.

Since the defeat of the Scotland and Wales bill in 1977, the amended Scotland bill was passed at its third reading in the Commons on 22nd February 1978. After four years of parliamentary debates, a Scottish assembly was finally on the statute books, though the need for referendum, combined with the 40 per cent rule was to prove crucial to the devolution issue. Whilst the passage of the Scotland Act was a positive outcome for the SNP, the party

which the Labour Party accepted a limited number of Liberal Party policy proposals and in exchange the Liberal Party agreed to vote with the government in any subsequent motion of no confidence. While this pact was the only official bi-party agreement since the Second World War, it was far short of coalition. The pact's end was confirmed on 7 September 1978, by which time Callaghan was expected to call a general election, but instead he decided to continue as leader of a majority government until 1979.

itself was in electoral downward in 1978. Support for the SNP in the 1974-1979 period was variable because of Labour's activism over devolution. The SNP's opportunity variation in election was expressed in the following table:

Table 9

Opinion Polls for Westminster October 1974 May 1979:

	Labour	SNP	Conservative	Liberal Democrats	SLP
Election October 1974	36	30	25	8	
October 1974	47	33	16	4	
November 1974	40	32	22	6	
January 1975	40	31	23	6	
January 1975	40	29	24	6	
February 1975	40	29	28	3	
March 1975	40	24	29	6	
April 1975	37	27	31	5	
May 1975	40	26	28	5	
July 1975	39	24	24	5	
July 1975	42	22	39	5	
August 1975	38	24	32	5	
September 1975	35	27	34	4	
October 1975	39	26	30	4	
November 1975	42	26	26	5	
January 1976	30	36	28	5	
January 1976	33	36	27	3	
August 1976	30	30	30	4	4
March 1977	27	36	27	5	3
May 1977	33	35	26	4	1
November 1977	35	30	27	5	3
March 1978	38	27	29	4	2

October 1978	53	21	23	3	2
January 1979	40	23	31	4	1
Election May 1979	42	17	31	9	1

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

For example, support for the SNP peaked in January 1976 after the publication of the government's White Paper on devolution, peaked again following the defeat of the Scotland and Wales bill in the House of Commons in March 1977. The SNP was performing strongly in opinion polls and its economic records were improving and devolution was being delivered at Westminster. Labour also had the benefit of fielding a strong experienced candidate in Donald Dewar, a Glasgow solicitor who was formerly MP for Aberdeen south, a supporter of devolution and an effective campaigner. None of these electoral reverses should have been surprising to the SNP given the decline in opinion poll support evident in 1978.

Indeed, private polling by the SNP at this time determined that Labour was regaining support from the nationalist because of their attitudes towards devolution. Contesting elections at this time was therefore challenging for the nationalist as its support was in downwards. However, despite evidence of electoral decline there was an awareness within the party members that there were some expectations over the party's electoral performance and anticipate an increase in the SNP vote at every election to win safe seats from Labour. These expectations came due to the SNP's increase support at successive general elections from 1959 to 1974.

Despite the electoral decline experienced in 1978, the SNP responded positively to the passage of the Scotland Act, in spite of the referendum provisions. However, the actual holding of the referendum was a problem as the lib lab pact came to an end in September

1978. The SNP was again experiencing electoral defeat in opinion polls. But Labour was still working with the idea of devolution in mind.

The Scotland bill appeared in November 1977; only few Conservatives members rebelled against Mrs. Thatcher's three-line whip at second reading and only 2 obtained on a guillotine motion (Mitchell 84). The devolutionists were either significantly reduced in strength or silence by the prospect of a convention, 500 of 638 amendments were not debated (Mitchell 84). A number of significant victories were scored against the government, since the usual clause which occurred in all the government's proposals for devolution was deleted; unity of the United Kingdom or the supreme authority of parliament to make law for the UK or any parts of it. The Grimond amendment and the 40 percent rule were very important. The 1st was moved by Jo Grimond, Liberal Member for Orkney. Though moved by Grimond, Conservative supported it. The '40 percent rule' or 'Cunningham amendment' was crucial in the final demise of Labour's devolution proposals, though it would not appear so important at the time. Once more, the Conservatives support was important though the amendment was moved by Labour member George Cunningham. The amendment stated that if it appeared to the Secretary of State that "less than forty percent of the persons entitled to vote in the referendum have voted yes ... he shall lay before of an Order-in Council for the repeal of this Act" (Mitchell 84).

The origins of the amendments are uncertain because of anti-devolutionist in both Labour and the Conservative parties. The major issues that did dominate the debate of the Scotland bill were not the roles and powers given to the new assembly but were the referendum and the Cunningham amendment. As stated before, the implementation of the Scotland Bill after it had received Royal Assent would be subjected to a referendum in Scotland. The question emerged in the debate as to what would be a significant enough majority of Scottish voters in the referendum to implement the provisions of the act.

Labour government was contemplating an election in the Autumn of 1978 with the Scotland Act on the statute books. As a result, the Scotland bill was left largely as it was when it returned from the Lords. Royal Assent was given on July 31, 1978. Simultaneously, the Conservatives were looking for an alternative to the Scotland bill. During 1977, the idea of the convention developed between the Conservatives. The idea came from the devolution spokesman Francis Pyp. The convention contained the preference for an assembly with an executive, financed by block grant but with discretionary powers to raise or lower taxes by a certain percentage, and a bill of right governing the relations between the assembly and the citizen with similar assemblies for Wales and Northern Ireland and eventually for England. The Conservative devolution spokesman declared that if forty percent of the electorate votes “yes” then the Tory government would certainly recommend to parliament that the assembly should go ahead. The Tories position on devolution came because they were eager for an election. Despite the efforts made by Labour to enact the Scotland Act, it represented great failure.

Moreover, the Yes or No campaigns were part of the political scene in 1979. They were designed to bring together people and organizations who strongly advocated one position in this debate. The Yes and No campaigns acted as umbrellas under which different groups and individuals could shelter. They had an impact on the devolution debates in Scotland.

By the time of the 1979 referendum, the ‘Yes for Scotland’ had been set up and served over a year. It was launched, before the 1979 referendum, in January 1978 and designed to embrace people from across the political spectrum. It quickly attracted support from political activists. The Labour party, however, did not climb on board as many of its members supported devolution. Labour and the trade unions, therefore, came up with the notion of a ‘Labour Movement Yes Campaign’ in 1979, the SNP was generally supportive of the ‘Yes for

Scotland' umbrella organization. Some SNP members also felt, however that they needed their own group to put across the SNP message on Scotland's future political status. Hence, the SNP supporters were able to work within both groups as they sought to achieve a devolved institution.

Contrary to the 'Yes Campaigns', the 'No Campaigns' was set up in the same period. The key 'No Campaigns' in 1979 was Tam Dalyell, 'Labour vote no' movement. The significance of the movement was that Dalyell rejected the devolution proposals by pushing his 'West Lothian question' the 'Labour vote no' organization was set up initially during a meeting of Labour MPs at the House of Commons. Another no campaign was created under the name 'Scotland says no' movement. It was formed on ST Andrew's day in 1978. The movement offered a broad anti-devolution front that saw it gain support from across the political spectrum. The majority of those interested in securing a no vote in any referendum were Conservative supporters.

The year 1979 saw devolution referendums in Scotland and Wales to decide whether the Labour government's devolution proposals should be put into practice. On the 1st march the people in Scotland voted in favour of devolution by a small majority 51.6 percent had voted 'yes' but this was only 32.8 of the total electorate (Deacon and Sandry 55). A figure of 40 percent of the total electorate voting was the only condition set before the proposals could be put into practice. Such condition for high level of electoral participation would put immense pressure on those advocating devolution to push the Scottish public to go out to vote for the devolution proposals. The results show that the 40 percent of the electorate had not been reached. Therefore, the devolution proposals for Scotland, that had been set out by the Labour government under Prime Minister James Callaghan, could not be put into effect, this was seen as a server blow for the nationalists.

The SNP wanted the Labour government to continue its commitment to implementing devolution in Scotland as the historians Deacon and Sandry declared:

when no such commitment was forthcoming, all eleven SNP MPs voted with other opposition parties during a 'no-confidence' debate in the House of Commons on 28 March 1979. The Labour government lost the vote by 311 votes to 310. The Labour government realized that its days were numbered. Labour SNP relationships were further damaged as Labour politicians gave the SNP the label to 'tortan Tories.(56)

It is clear that Labour government position on implementing devolution to Scotland was their primary concern, especially in a time of elections.

The only conclusion which can be draw from the referendum result is that it was inconclusive. The 40 percent rule caused confusion. Devolutionists had argued that abstentions would be counted as 'No' votes and their opponents maintained that this claim had diminished their potential vote. The 1978-1979 Winter of Discontent and the 40 percent rule all served to confuse the issue. For many, the referendum was a failure, given that no conclusions can be interpreted. But since there were no conclusions mean that the devolution issue would remain a serious phenomenon to be discussed by Westminster government. The referendum result left the Callaghan government in a difficult position. As the 'yes' side failed to receive the support of over 40 percent of the electorate , the secretary of state was obliged to move the repeal order on the act. Because of the opposition to the Scotland Act, Labour was confused about their position whether to vote with or against the repeal. Conservatives also stand with the "no" votes that led to the failure of the referendum.

Despite the failure of many devolution proposals for Scotland held by Labour government, the devolution issue did not go away. Even though the SNP started to lose votes

in the late 1970s, it represented a real and strong threat for both British Westminster government who were following the SNP's development since its victory in 1974 general election and its acquisition of Westminster parties' votes. In a period of devolution proposals and referendums on devolution, the SNP responded to the referendum defeat by turning on Labour which it blamed for the result, and on the unfairness of the 40 per cent rule and the referendum. The party's official position on the referendum was the demand that the government ignored the forty percent rule and implemented the Scotland Act. Moreover, the party's MPs would support a motion of no confidence at Westminster and helped bring about the fall of the Labour government.

For the SNP, 1979 was the worst of all the elections held. Scottish voters did not only fail to support the creation of a Scottish Assembly in the referendum of the 1st March, but the party was heavily defeated at general election which brought Conservative government to power. The new elected Government was completely opposed to legislative devolution. The defeat of the devolution referendum on the 1st March removed the issue from the political agenda, despite the SNP's best efforts at the election campaign. Both Labour and the Conservatives fought the election on UK issues such as unemployment, public services, trade unions and economy and ignored the devolution issue. These parties had little to fear from the SNP at general election, but were seeking to win the seats lost to the nationalists in 1974. This is an evidence to show that even if the SNP's performance was very weak, but Westminster parties had something to fear of the nationalists.

Furthermore, the SNP's election campaign was focused on Labour's position over devolution and sought to mobilize those Labour voters who had supported the Yes campaign at the devolution referendum. The SNP used the slogan 'Scotland Said Yes, Westminster Said No' as an effort to push the government to take oil and devolution issues seriously and asked voters to support the creation of the Scottish Assembly. The 1979 general election results

were disastrous for the SNP as it gained 17.3 per cent of the vote and lost 9 of the 11 seats (Lynch 156). It is noticed that the SNP losses went to the Conservatives not Labour which was suffering from the unpopularity of its government. Some in the party put the blame on the SNP's attitude to devolution. For Gordon Wilson, soon to be SNP leader, declared that:

The poor result is a direct consequence of the indecisive collective direction of the party which has wandered in only two years from full-brooded independence to an obsession with devolution. The NEC must bear responsibility for the dismantling of the oil campaign with its phase out as a priority issue and its further rejection of the electoral planning committee recommendation that we use economic material during the referendum in preparation for an early general election (qtd Lynch 156).

Explanations for the referendum and the party's defeat were to become a major preoccupation for the SNP after the May general election, a process which involved significant splits and factionalism into the early 1980s.

During the 1970s, nationalism was fueled by disappointed expectation on issues such as economic policy. Nationalists blamed Westminster government for the economic difficulties which dominated Scotland and the UK as whole for a long period of time. Economy played an important role in the rise of Scottish nationalism especially by the discovery of oil in the North Sea in the early 1970s and, than the winter of discontent late in the same decade.

3.5 Scottish Economic Problems and Scottish Nationalism

Post war British prime ministers had tried to rebuild their country from the damages of two World Wars and to stop British decline however, their effort were in vain. This decline was, as Mrs Thatcher saw it, because of the absolute powers given to the trade unions; the

government intervention in economic affairs; and the adoption of the welfare state and nationalization. Callaghan Labour government started to lose ground especially in 1978-1979 Winter of Discontent. This winter was characterized by a large increase in the balance of payments deficit, rising inflation and the miners' strikes. His government's decline cost Labour the next election. The new elected Conservative government was under Mrs Thatcher leadership who blamed her predecessors and described them as being responsible for the sharp decline in the British economy. She declared in her memories the *Downing Street Years* that:

...by 1979 and perhaps earlier, optimism about the beneficent of government intervention had largely disappeared. This change of attitude for which she had long worked and argued, meant that many people who had not previously been conservative supporters were now prepared to give our approach at least the benefit of the doubt. But I knew that this entirely justified lack of faith in the wisdom of the state must be matched by a renewed confidence in the creative capacity of enterprise (62).

Hence, more state intervention in economy was strong evidence for the nationalists to use economy in their fights for independence. To recover the economic problems, nationalists saw that an independent Scotland would have more chances to improve their bad economic situation especially with the discovery of oil in North Sea. Nationalists wanted to take complete control on oil revenues in order to secure the well being of the Scottish people. However, greater intervention was the first line of defense against the rise of nationalism, and with this in mind the Scottish Development Agency was set up in 1975 to manage Scottish economic development more actively than before. Nationalists criticized the past government policy for its failure to exploit the potential of the new oil fields. Other critics pointed out that the economy did not have the necessary expertise and skills to make best use of the new

opportunities which were opening up with the discovery of the 'black gold'. The dash for oil revenues was not evidence of a coherent strategy for economic devolution. The reason behind the creation of the SDA was to counteract proposals from the nationalists that revenue from the North Sea oil should be channeled into a special fund for the regeneration of the Scottish economy. In many ways the agency arrived too late, because the year after it was created Britain was in economic difficulties.

In October 1976, Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that the nation would borrow money from the international monetary fund because of the massive balance of payment deficit. It was the largest loan ever. To solve the balance of payment deficit meant more cutting in public expenditure, raising taxes, and imposing wage restraints in order to lower inflation. The result was mounting industrial disputes, which would culminate in the 'winter of discontent' in early 1979, when the NHS¹⁶ and local authority workers went on strike.

British winter of 1978-79, where there were widespread strikes by local authority trade unions and even grave diggers demanding larger pay rises for their members, and because the government of James Callaghan sought to hold a pay freeze to control inflation. The basis of Callaghan's Labour party was that it was supported by the unions financially but the government had a wider responsibility to the electorate as a whole and strikes were the only solution for many.

The strikes were a result of the attempted enforcement of the Labour government to control inflation by imposing rules on the public sector that pay rises be kept below 5 percent,

¹⁶ National Health Service is the public health services in Britain. They were established by the Labour Party as one of the major social reforms following the Second World War. The founding principles were being comprehensive, universal and free at the point of delivery.

as an example to the private sector. Whilst the strikes stopped in February 1979, the government's failure to contain strikes earlier led to Margaret Thatcher's victory in the 1979 general election and legislation to restrict unions was held. Additionally, the NHS workers formed picket lines to blockade hospitals entrances with the result that many hospitals were allowed to take emergency patient only Callaghan government had been forced to seek international monetary fund loan. The result was the fall in the value of pound. This was seen as a key moment in the country's post war economic decline and paved the way for Margaret Thatcher's 1979 general election victory.

Actually, the 'Winter of Discontent' put the last touches to the destruction of the post war settlements. But the efforts to stop British economic decline came in vain and inflation continued to rise. This decline was seen as the responsibility of the absolute power given to the trade unions and local government under Wilson's and Callaghan's Labour governments. As the historian Marwish declared: "inflation and high handed trade unions activism under Wilson and Callaghan government ... left a general legacy of mistrust for Labour policies among certain sections of the electorate" (398). So, the winter of discontent did have its effects on the British economy as inflation continued to raise, high unemployment rates and low wages.

For Scots, the Winter of Discontent did affect Scotland more than any other part in the UK. This was a strong argument for the nationalists to continue their fight for devolution. Furthermore, there was also mounting political unrest, the government had many problems as a result of the referendum on EEC membership in June 1975, before which there was a cabinet free for all, with ministers openly arguing against one another. The new Prime Minister, James Callaghan, who stepped in after the sudden resignation of Harold Wilson in early 1976, faced a challenge from the left of party, which was unhappy at the pursuit of the economic policies. There were a number of abstentions in a vote on proposed cuts in public

expenditure, resulting in the defeat for the government. As if this was not bad enough, the government could keep going only with Liberal support after it lost its majority in November 1976. Also, the troubles in Northern Ireland became worse.

It was under this background of economic and political turmoil that the debate on Scottish devolution took place. Under these circumstances, the Labour government saw the strong need to deal with the rise of Scottish nationalism as the SNP started to improve its position in elections. Two things helped put the issue on the political agenda. First, in a worsening economic climate, the scope for the traditional method of appeasing Scottish grievances and demonstrate that the union worked for the Scottish financial advantage was limited. Thus, the nationalists now ignored the idea of the unity of the UK and the consensus that existed since 1707 Treaty of Union. Additionally, nationalists came to challenge the British national identity and made a threat for the Westminster Governments by taking the advantage of economic and political troubles. The government failed to stop the SNP and nationalist development by means of economic improvement since there was no money to solve the problem.

Therefore, a political response was necessary to stop the advance of the nationalist movement. Thus, devolution emerged as the government's political response. It was argued that Scots did not want separatism but rather a greater degree of political autonomy. But this was not true for the SNP which was emphasizing on the idea of devolution and then independence. The emergence of devolution on the political agenda was not driven by a belief in the Constitutional reform but was rather the government's response to the rise of nationalism in the period.

To sum up, the 1970s were a contradictory decade for the SNP in which its status and impact altered markedly. In 1974, it was at the peak of its powers in terms of electoral

performance and the impact on the issue of self-government as the party's success resulted into Labour's proposals for Scottish devolution. Yet, by 1979, the SNP and the devolution issue were in decline. The party was facing membership, financial and organizational problems. Along with such conditions came many political and economic problems that pushed the British government to respond positively to the rise of the nationalists whose favorable performance during the 1970s represented the great efforts made by the SNP. Therefore, the party became a political force which got enough power to challenge the two main British political parties. The decade was also characterized by many devolution debates and referendum which represented strong evidence that the SNP represented a threat to the unity of the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

Devolution, if not independence, was raised as an option for Scotland and Wales at various times in the late nineteenth century. But this was mainly in connection with the need for a constitutional change. Scotland is the concern here with the rise of strong Scottish nationalist movement led by the Scottish National Party. The rise of this movement reached its peak in the 1970s when the SNP represented a challenge to the UK.

The 1970s was an important decade for the rise of the Scottish nationalist movement as well as the SNP. Nationalist victory in the late 1960s along with many other factors characterized the decade. First, early in the 1970s, the nationalists gained their strength from the discovery of oil fields in North Sea. The discovery of the black gold, as described by the nationalists, represented for the minority nationalist another starting point to achieve their goals and gain more support amongst voters under their famous slogan "It's Scotland's Oil." The SNP started its campaign on oil in the very beginning of the decade that helped them to secure their position for the rest of the decade. Furthermore, oil was considered as the

property of Scots and they had the right to benefit of its revenues without the control of the local government. Yet, the nationalists took the advantage of this opportunity to meet their needs concerning self-government and the idea of independence dominated the nationalist thoughts as Scotland would be rich and recover from its economic difficulties using oil revenues and, of course, without the intervention of Westminster Government.

Second, as a result of oil campaign, the SNP's performance in elections became challenging to the two dominating parties and an actual improvement was evident. Nationalist good performance in elections provoked the Westminster governments to respond to this improvement and pushed them to put devolution as the primary issue in their agendas. Challenging both Labour and Conservative parties in elections became an easy task for the SNP as both parties started to lose Scots votes to the nationalists. The government's popularity along with the unity of the UK were put under question. As a result, both parties realized that a change of attitude was important to stop the rise of nationalism. But the nationalists were strong enough to attract the government's attention to their development and, thus, continue their fight for devolution.

Actually, devolution dominated the political agenda of both parties and, therefore, many devolution debates were launched. As a matter of fact, the SNP, as the official voice of the nationalists, represented a political force that cannot be denied. Devolution debates and referendums were the government's response to the rise of nationalism. Even though devolution was not yet reached, nationalism was an emerging phenomenon that dominated the British political scene in the 1970s. More than that, the economic difficulties aided the nationalists in their way for independence.

The British economy was in trouble. Many efforts were made to calm down the crisis, but all the attempts were in vain and Scots were not satisfied with the government program.

This was another factor that helped the nationalists to secure their position among Scottish voters. Voting with the nationalists was the only alternative to a weak British government of the time. Economic difficulties led the nationalists to get up with the policies of Westminster governments and opted for separatism. Autonomy to Scotland would permit it to work for the well-being of its citizens far from the government complete control over Scotland's internal affairs.

The defeat of the devolution referendums and the resulting collapse of the SNP in the 1979 General election do not mean that the nationalists had failed to reach their goals, they rather represented a new start for the nationalists to continue their fight for independence. Thus, the idea of devolution was still alive. The victory of the nationalists is explained by their existence as a political force and the actual threat they put on the British government. The unity of an established nation and the sovereignty of the UK were brought into question by the rise of minority nationalism. Questioning such unity was the real triumph of the nationalists. Thus, other attempts for self-government and devolution were to be continued by the nationalists for a long time.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Scottish National Party Continuous Struggle for Devolution 1980s

Introduction

The repeal of the Scotland Act, the failure of the referendums to achieve devolution and the decline of the SNP in the 1979 general election did not mean the end of the Scottish nationalist movement fight for devolution, but represented a new start for the nationalists. The SNP succeeded in reaching its peak in the 1970s in terms of electoral success which gave them more strength to continue their fight for self-government. The 1980s represented a new era for the nationalists as well as for the Scottish National Party in order to continue their struggle to show that they are a serious political force.

In this chapter, the concern is given to the SNP's continuous struggle for existence as a political force and for devolution as their main goal during the 1980s. The 1980s was characterized by Thatcher's new conservatives and as well as the new emerging problems in the UK. So, the chapter starts with the introduction of Mrs Thatcher's new ideology and its effects on the British and the Scottish society on the one hand and on the SNP's strategy on the other hand. Furthermore, it deals with the Conservatives attitudes to the time's Scottish nationalist movement and the revival of the SNP in the late 1980s. Analyzing the Scottish minority nationalism and the threat it posed to the British national identity is also important to be mentioned here. The chapter ends with the discussion of the SNP's strong efforts to be back as a competing party and its important role to revive devolution to the Government's agenda.

4.1 The Effects of ‘Thatcherism’ on Scotland and the SNP’s Strategy

The 1980s was considered as a new era in the history of the United Kingdom. It brought new ideologies to the British society and at the same time new problems. The Conservative Government elected on the 4th May 1979 under Mrs Thatcher’s leadership rejected all what had existed before and introduced new policies. Thatcher’s radicalism had its own effects on Britain and Scotland in particular as the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had declared:

There was no Thatcherit Revolution in Scotland. That might seem strange for Scotland in the eighteenth century was the home of very same Scottish enlightenment which produced Adam Smith ... a country humming with science, inventions and enterprise – a theme which I used time and again to return to my Scottish speeches. But on top of decline in Scotland’s heavy industry came socialism – intended as a cure, but itself developing quite new strains of social and economic disease, not least militant trade unions. (618)

Thatcher’s ignorance for Scotland affected the Scottish society and economy rather than any other part in the UK. The Conservatives attitudes to Scotland in the 1980s caused their electoral failure in the decade. Before discussing the effects of Mrs Thatcher’s new ideologies on Scotland and the SNP’s electoral performance, it is better first to introduce her new economic ideologies as a background for the better understanding of the matter.

On the 4th of May 1979, Margaret Thatcher became Britain’s first female Prime Minister. She came to power defeating a deeply unpopular Labour government led by James Callaghan and was determined to reverse the British relative economic decline. To achieve this objective, she promised to make a break with the past and introduced her more right wing ideology. Thatcher’s government primary goal was not anything but economy. She rejected

the time's problems concerning constitutional change and the rise of minority nationalism and emphasized the damaged economy.

The first problem facing the new government was how to set its course quickly on the economy, given that the budget was only about a month or so away. Its strategy was based on a cut in direct taxation and a reduction of the money supply. Thus, the Government saw a great need for monetarism which became a synonymous to 'Thatcherism' and 'the New Right'. Monetarist ideology was based on increasing the interest rates to slow the growth of the money supply and thus lower inflation. Thatcher's politics and economic philosophy emphasized reducing state intervention, free market and privatization. She encouraged small businesses and enterprise. Monetarists basic believe was that inflation could be beaten by withdrawing the state from people's lives and thus rejecting socialism which had progressed steadily since the war. In practice, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, began with the cut in income tax at the top marginal rate from 83 per cent to 60 per cent and cut the basic cut from 33 per cent to 30 (Jenkins 54). Additionally, he announced increases in other indirect taxation and reduced public spending for the forthcoming year 1981. Several measures were introduced to increase incentives in the economy and various capital taxes were significantly lightened, while control on pay, prices and dividends were all abolished. The Chancellor made no announcements regarding wages policy and avoiding any mention of pay-norms and guidelines. These, instead, were pinned on setting a target for the money supply which was defined as M3 (cash plus current and deposit accounts in banks). In public sector, unions would find themselves bargaining within the constraints imposed by cash limits. The banks were also to take their cue from the M3 figure, but also to give them guidance the Government raised the minimum lending rate (MLR) from 12 to 14 per cent. The MLR was the rate at which banks would provide funds to the discount houses either by direct loans or by rediscounting Treasury bills. Commercial banks therefore set their interest

rates on the basis of the bank's rate. Banks were aiming to keep the market in need for funds in order to maintain control over interest rates.

Regarding the need for improving productivity, a number of measures were introduced. Cash limit was one way of keeping control over expenditure, although they could not be applied to social security spending. Another method to control civil service manpower was by privatizations which Thatcher viewed in the following manner: "the lesson has been that when you nationalize an industry not only do you pay higher prices for its product, but you pay twice to meet the even increasing deficit of the capital investment ... Labour believe in turning workers against owners; we believe in turning workers into owners" (80).

Another reform made by Thatcher government was decreasing state intervention in economy. It is argued that in many cases local authorities were not democratically controlled and thus encouragement for small businesses and enterprises were the appropriate solution. And privatization was designed to reduce the influence of state regulation and control. For many, state intervention was needless and must be reduced to save people's freedom called by the government. This change was followed by a need to reduce the power given to the trade unions. In her efforts to curb the power of the trade unions, Mrs Thatcher explained that the strikes affected union members as much as the rest of the population. Her strategy was to break down the closed shops and bring real democracy to these institutions so ordinary members could gain control.

Additionally, one of Mrs Thatcher's objectives was to reduce the high unemployment rates. The new government also faced high unemployment rates and tried to reduce unemployment by introducing many acts and bills such as: the Employment Bill presented by the Secretary of state for Employment Jim Prior to Parliament in December 1979. The Bill in high Stephenson words "proposed the minimum that was consistent with the manifesto,

perhaps even less” (Shed and Cook 344). It, thus, promised financial support for union ballots, proposed the rights of appeal to the High Court for those unfairly excluded from union membership, and contained provision for employers to be able to obtain injunction against secondary picketing by works not directly involved in a dispute. But still, Britain was suffering from high unemployment rates, cuts in expenditures to the National Health Services which harmed the well-being of the citizens, and created many other problems to the society.

As a result of her policies, Thatcher became deeply unpopular and was described to do more harm than good to Britain. Worse, her administration came in April 1988 when the government pushed through its legislation on what it called the ‘community charge’. This was the Prime Minister’s plan to abolish the rates and replace them with a tax on persons instead of property. Everyone would pay to make everyone pay towards the costs of local government and, not just householders. However, unemployed, students and so many other categories could claim exemption from the tax. Under the old taxation system the amount paid was fixed according to the size of dwelling. Approximately two thirds of the population paid no rates or had their rates paid by the welfare system. Mrs Thatcher felt to undertake a reform to the local government finance and got fed of the hated system of rates. As a result, early in 1988 a bill was introduced to replace the rates on homes with community charge (poll tax) on every person over eighteen years of age.

After a trial in Scotland, the poll tax was introduced in England and Wales in March 1990. It aroused a storm of protest when it was introduced. Taxing the rich and the poor equally was unfair and many Conservatives refused it since it required ‘a widow in her flat pay the same as a lord in his castle.’ As a result of this tax, Mrs Thatcher’s popularity weakened because the poll tax did affect the British people. The historian Marwick argued that “Margaret Thatcher’s general standing was seriously undermined by the unpopularity of the poll tax. Her position within the charmed circle cabinet policies suffered a blow when her

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, had the sense to resign while his spurious reputation as a financial wizard was still intact” (398). After such bad effects of her political policies and her unpopularity, she was pushed to resign from the premiership. She declared that: “if you just set out to be liked you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing. ... I think, well, if they attack one personally, it means they have not a single political argument left.” (845)

Britain had been affected by mass unemployment for much of the 1980s. The high interest rates hit industry as did the strengthening pound and rapidly growing unemployment followed. In reality, monetarist policies and reduction of some government spending brought an enormous rise in unemployment which the state had to pay for. New records were being broken as unemployment rose and production fell. Mrs Thatcher was determined to try out monetarism, an experiment which no major nation had attempted. To reduce the supply of money, interest rates were held high, thus caused low investment, the laying off of men from employment and the bankruptcy of firms. So, Britain was plunged into recession. The speed of job loss and bankruptcies were increased, and many in the Cabinet warned of a civil disorder if these stern measures were continued. Therefore, adult unemployment rose rapidly in 1980s than in any single year since 1930. The huge rise in unemployment was reducing workers’ bargaining power and reducing the rate of wage rises. Despite the government efforts to reduce expenditure, the latter continued to rise. An important reason for its growth was the huge increase in unemployment benefit payments. Moreover, the monetary policy seemed to have aggravated the twin problems of inflation and recession. High interest rates choked off domestic investment and encouraged foreign investment, creating strong pound that damaged exports. Many of the British industries in the Midlands and the North never did recover, and many who lost their jobs never regained employment. This was one of the results on the government’s policies related to economy.

Furthermore, there were many other important issues in the country that affected Thatcher's government especially in Wales and Scotland where there was a rise of nationalism. Devolution became a major issue in British politics in the late 1970s. In both Scotland and Wales there were cultural, economic and political motives for the growing demands of national identity being expressed in a constitutional way. These demands were fueled by the great efforts of the nationalist parties; the concern here is the Scottish National Party. A detailed discussion will be provided later in the chapter and here the debate is about the new emerging problems in Britain more precisely the Conservative Government creation of the two nations. The latter was to describe life under the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher. The Conservatives made much in the campaign of their claims to have restored national prosperity, and also to be reliable protectors of national security. But the regional divisions in Britain revealed when the election returns were very plain. The Conservative gains came in the south and in the Midlands. As a result, "there was much talk of a basic social divide in the land, between an increasingly prosperous and complacent south, and a decaying, declining north, with endemic unemployment, urban dereliction, and a collapsing public services." (Morgan 92)

Public instability was markedly reinforced by the government lurching into the disarray after the 1987 general election. For most of the decade, with its creed of monetarism, privatization and the primacy of market forces; with its challenge to institutions such as the Church, the university and the local government; with the invincible personal ascendancy of the Prime Minister herself, 'Thatcherism' seemed triumphed. However, over the next three years it ran into sever difficulties. At home, some of its more radical proposals met with major opposition. Attempts to introduce market forces into education and National Health Services aroused great public anger. A proposal to abolish the system of household rates with the community charge 'poll tax' led to great revolt across the nation. Most serious of all, the

apparent revival in the economy began to lose credibility. The tax cutting policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, was now seen to have led to huge balance of payment deficit. Unemployment rose sharply and the pound under pressure, so that "... Thatcherism produced an increasingly divided and polarized society, the forces of the pluralism and dissidence ... the supporters of a genuinely civilized and caring society lacked any effective political mechanism." (Marwick 398)

Moreover, class in Britain has been defined by material wealth, ownership of the means of production; education and job status; accent and dialect, and by life style. So, social class and divisions between North and South remained. The South was inhabited by new working class who were homeowners, work in private industry and were less likely to vote Labour on the basis of class in addition to less unemployment and improving economic conditions. Conversely, the North was characterized by declining economy, high rates of unemployment and poverty. This division allowed the minority nationalist groups to fight for their independence and gave them an evidence to get rid of the central government policies and control.

It was under this background that the Scottish nationalist movement and the SNP continued their struggle for self-government and pushed them to resist despite the fact that the Conservative government was in great opposition to the idea of devolution. And despite the deterrents that faced the nationalist in the period, devolution remained their major goal to achieve their long standing issue. Conservative Government of the 1980s, like Labour Government in the previous decade, had to face the Scottish nationalist growing demands for devolution and to see the real challenge of the Scottish National Party as a strong political force. The Scottish nationalist movement posed a real threat for the government and was strengthened by some economic issues that had worsened the situation. When devolution was raised, the word 'challenge' to both British government and the unity of the UK occurred. The

SNP was in its continuous fight for devolution and now had to face the government ignorance of the nationalist's demands on the one hand and its ignorance for the Scottish prosperity on the other hand.

Margaret Thatcher was elected on the same platform as Edward Heath. The rise of the Scottish nationalist movement played an important part in forcing Edward Heath to change the party's attitude to devolution in the early 1970s. But it was not the case for Mrs Thatcher as she was determined that she would not bring down and change her ideologies by the nationalist pressure. Mrs Thatcher got only one lesson from the Heath years which was that Heath's failure to stick to his policies was the reason behind his downfall. Thus, Thatcher's radicalism cannot be tested in her change towards nationalist but rather, her radicalism was in changing the UK's economic policies and rejecting what had existed before. A self-generating momentum had marked the Thatcher years. Scotland could not avoid the effects of this change even though its voting patterns indicated that it did not favor them.

The first matter that faced the new government was hesitation about who would become Secretary of State for Scotland because dealing with Scotland in a time of rising sense of independence was not an easy task for the Conservatives. Within the party members there were splits on the devolution issue between those who supported devolution and others who were totally against. Despite the increase in MPs, Mrs Thatcher would not decide on who could take this office. The obvious choice would have been Alick Buchanan-Smith, but he was ruled out because of his strong and continuing support for legislative devolution. Other MPs were not matured enough to take the office. As a result, George Younger became Scottish Secretary because there was no alternative.

Younger succeeded in being part of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet and at the same time apart from it. He portrayed himself as a supporter of interventionist and Keynesianism and as if the

Scottish Office was not part of the British central government. A major claim of the Conservatives was the relative freedom offered to the Scottish office to determine its expenditure priorities. But this power was severely limited as so much expenditure would already be tied up in ongoing programs, and the total amount was determined far from the Scottish Office. But, the changed political context particularly with the decline of the SNP in the early 1980s meant that the Scottish Office had less influence. Later, and after the Westland Affair,¹⁷ Younger had left the Scottish Office at a time when the Tories were under pressure on issues such as a cold climate allowance, rates evaluation, teachers' pay and Scottish steel. This was one example of the conflicts within the Conservatives to deal with Scotland and whether to give the Scottish Office more powers and control over Scottish affairs or to keep it with its limited powers under the control of the British central government.

The other problem that faced the new government was related to economy. Throughout the 1980s unemployment was a major source of discontent in Scotland. Though the Scottish Office had little direct responsibility, the Secretary of State could not avoid the issue. Mass unemployment did affect the Scottish society especially in the first part of the

¹⁷ The Westland affair in 1985–86 was an episode in which the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her Defence Minister Michael Heseltine went public over a complex cabinet dispute with questions raised about integrity and which senior official was not telling the truth. The argument was a result of differences of opinion as to the future of the British helicopter industry. Westland Helicopters, Britain's last helicopter manufacturer, was to be the subject of a rescue bid. While the Defence Secretary Heseltine favoured a European solution, integrating Westland and British Aerospace (BAe) with Italian (Agusta) and French companies, the Prime Minister and the Trade and Industry Secretary Leon Brittan wanted to see Westland merge with Sikorsky, an American company. Heseltine refused to accept Thatcher's choice and suggested she had lied about it. She had leaked a confidential letter, then tried to cover that up. It resulted in resignations in January 1986 by Heseltine and Brittan.

decade when “by 1983 unemployment had passed the 300.000 mark (14.6 per cent), and this did not take into account the number of young people who were hidden from the statistics on youth work schemes, nor those people who had been transferred from unemployment to invalidity benefit” (Finlay 344). The vulnerability of the Scottish economy meant that the rate of unemployment north of the border was usually between a quarter and a third higher than in the United Kingdom overall. Also, the territorial disparity in the levels of unemployment throughout the United Kingdom was a persistent feature of the Thatcher years. As the Bank of England declared in 1988 “the consistency with which the same regions have unemployment rates which are above the national average over time may be taken as evidence that the migration of employees or firms has been insufficient to reduce these disparities” (qtd. in Mitchell 102). Employees had failed to move because of the difference in Labour opportunities in the different parts of the UK. Firms also had failed to move because, according to the government, the wage rates for workers in areas of high unemployment were not low enough to make it economically attractive for businesses to set up in these areas. Free market policy would permit lower wages to be paid in areas of high unemployment. This was encouraged by the government. It meant that Scots should accept lower wages in exchange for lower unemployment.

But unemployment was still rising in other parts of Britain. The sharpest rise in unemployment in the early 1980s was in the West Midlands which was considered as a prosperous area. This meant that giving special aids to areas such as Scotland diminished in the eyes of the government. Moreover, the Midlands had supported the Conservatives in the election to reach its majority. Additionally, the reason behind diminishing the government’s aids was that the government adopted the ideology of withdrawing state support and intervention into economy that worsened the situation in such areas. The idea was pressed by Sir Keith Joseph the Secretary of State for Industry. Keith was a great advocate of free market

policy and was also influenced by Adam Smith's ideologies that pushed him to emphasis on removing the State from economy and thus refused any aids to be given to the damaged areas which suffered more from the rise of unemployment.

Another distinct change of the government emphasis in the period occurred with the decline of regional policy. The decline of nationalism in Scotland and Wales, the recognition of inner city problem, especially after the riots of 1981 and the more widespread nature of unemployment throughout the United Kingdom combined all to ensure the relegation of regional policy. This change of attitude also emphasized on ending the principle of automatic assistance of the state in many areas and helped the small businesses. Consequently, the decline in the regional policy during the Thatcher years was the number of major employers which closed that had been seen as regional policy successes. A list of closures included Singers in Clydebank, Goodyear nearby in Glasgow, Monsanto in Ayrshire, Massey Ferguson in Kilmarnock, BSR in East Kilbride, Wiggins Teape pulp mill in Fort William, Talbot's Linwood car in plant and many other employers (Cameron 101). The closure of employers as well as the loss of many jobs indicated the government's failure to solve the unemployment rise and many other economical problems of the decade.

As the Conservative's policies damaged Scotland, their electoral failure in Scotland in the 1980s was a source of consternation to the Prime Minister. Scots were in favour of voting for Labour as its attitudes for devolution were closer to that of the nationalists than that of the Conservatives. Scottish electorate became far away from the Conservatives under Mrs Thatcher leadership because of her strong opposition to devolution. As a result, in an opinion poll in 1989 only 10 per cent agreed with the statement that she had the best interest of Scotland at heart; 77 per cent agreed that she treated the Scots as second class citizens, and a poll in 1987 found that 75 per cent perceived her to be extreme (Cameron 322). Even at her

greatest moments resulting from the completion of the Falklands war in June 1982,¹⁸ there was little eagerness in Scotland. Throughout the conflict, Scots were against Britain's interventionism in the war and thought that it was an avoidable matter.

So, war did not seem to have a political impact in Scotland as it did in the other parts of the UK. Therefore, Labour party represented an alternative to the Conservatives as Scots moved to vote for Labour and the SNP. The distance between electoral performances of both parties showed the clear image of the great support for constitutional change and the desire to have a separate governing body in Scotland. Consequently, Labour did well in by-election and local government elections in 1982 and its Scottish performance in the general election of 1983 was better than in other areas as described in the following table:

¹⁸ The conflict came as a bitter surprise when, on 2nd April 1982, Argentine forces landed on the islands, despite earlier assurances from the Foreign Office and intelligence services that the Argentines "would prefer to pursue their sovereignty claim by peaceful means". After two days of stiff resistance from a small garrison of Royal Marines, Port Stanley fell on April 4, confronting Britain's first female prime minister with the dilemma of whether to sue for settlement, or embark on a war that there was no certainty of winning. The Prime Minister declared that: "We have to recover those islands," she said. "We have to recover them for the people on them are British and British stock and they still owe allegiance to the crown and want to be British." She had decided that if the Argentines could be removed by diplomacy, then that would be fine. If they could not, then it would be war. There then followed some difficult days during which Mrs Thatcher's resolve was tested. In overcoming the Argentines, she also overcame her political opponents at home and it was the war which set her up for an election win and many more years in power.

Table 10

General Election Results in Scotland, 1979-1997

Election	Lab.		Con.		Lib		SNP	
	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote
1979	44	41.5	22	31.4	3	9	2	17.3
1983	41	35.1	21	28.4	8	24.5	2	11.7
1987	50	42.5	10	24.0	9	19.4	3	14.0
1992	49	39.0	11	25.7	9	13.1	3	21.5
1997	56	46.0	0	18.0	10	13.0	6	22.0

Source: Cameron, Ewan A. *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010.

The table indicates that Labour's performance in Scotland from 1979 to 1997 was better than that of the Conservatives. Labour number of seats increased from 44 in 1979 to 50 in 1987 and to 56 in 1997. Its share of the vote also increased from 41.5 per cent to 46 per cent in the same period. Whereas, the Conservatives lost seats and votes as their number of seats decreased from 22 in 1979 to no seat in 1997 and their share of the vote diminished from 31.4 per cent in 1979 to 18 per cent in 1997. Therefore, the nationalists were the beneficiaries and an improvement in the SNP's number of seats and share of the vote is clearly shown in the election results. Scottish electorates voted for Labour because of its efforts to devolve more powers to Scotland. Conservatives attempts to ignore the nationalists and their goals cost the party to lose its popularity in Scotland as Westminster main party. The unpopularity

of Thatcher government in Scotland gave the nationalists another chance to continue the fight for self-government.

Added to the Falklands factor was Scottish reaction to the Conservative government attitudes to devolution. Other Scottish political debate in the 1980s can help to understand the great distance emerged between the government and Scottish people. Mrs Thatcher's policies affected more the Scottish society and one example of the government's policies that resulted in the party's poor performance was selling 'council houses.' This policy had a great impact on Scottish society compared to other parts of the United Kingdom. The average of public sector in Scotland was compared to that of England by the historian Ewen A. Cameron as follows:

by 1981 the public rented sector –with 45.6 per cent of Scottish housing (26 per cent in England)- dominated the Scottish housing market. In West central Scotland the figure was even higher: over 80 per cent in Clydebank, Monklands and Motherwell ... few Scots owned their own houses: only 34.7 per cent of Scottish households compared to 58 per cent of English and Welsh households in 1981. (324)

Another example of the effects of the Conservative government on Scotland was the 'poll tax'. Of course, its unpopularity was not confined to Scotland but it took different forms north of the border. The tactics of opposing the poll tax by non-payment was the occasion of a bitter argument between Labour, who deprecated it, and the SNP, who advocated it. Protest in Scotland was largely contained within the law and did not involve the violence which was seen in England. The poll tax affected more Scots than any other people in the UK as its first implementation was in Scotland. As a result, support for non-payment seems to be wider as the poll tax undermined its credibility in Scotland. The 1987 general election had shown that

the Conservatives could sustain severe losses in Scotland without seriously compromising their overall majority. This example and the one preceding it were to indicate Conservative governments' failure in Scotland and the extent to which their policies aggravated their position.

Another factor which worked against the spread of Thatcherism north of the border was the fact that the social class which made for the most eager Tory supporters, the independent skilled tradesmen and small business people who propped up party support in England was not as well developed in Scotland. The affluent service sector economy in which plumbers, electricians, builders and others did well in the south was lacking in Scotland. The British working class split along a national basis as the skilled and independent workers in the south turned to Thatcher, the Scots remaining loyal to Labour. Now, class and Scottish national identity became increasingly related from this period on. Scotland local politics were driven by a major social and economic transformation. It was also driven by divisions within other political parties.

The success of Mrs Thatcher to come to power came as a result of the other political parties divisions. The eighties were characterized by the weakness of the Labour Party. Divisions within the party about its ideological concerns rendered Labour unelectable. Much of the party's unfavorable image came from its failure to recover a damaged economy. The SNP also was one of those parties which were affected in the period. By 1980, splinter groups on the right and left were mounting sustained attacks on the SNP leadership, which was already damaged following the defeat of the Scotland Act and the devolution referendum. Popular representations of the nationalists highlighted the party as moving to the left because of the Conservatives attitude to nationalist.

However, the principal problem with politics north of the border in the eighties was that Scotland was ignored. The Conservatives electoral domination north of the border meant that Conservatives cared less about Scots interest. Indeed, notable part of Tory identity in Scotland during the 1980s was a sense of being a persecuted minority whose convictions were hardened by constant rejection at the polls. The fact that the Conservative failed to command a measure of popular support from the electorate became increasingly problematic especially after the election of 1987 which slashed the party's Scottish electoral representation.

Consequently, under such circumstances, a change in the SNP's strategy was necessary because the party's strategy after 1979 was unclear. The SNP was suffering from internal divisions within the leadership and conflicting interpretations of the party's failure to achieve devolution in the 1970s. Party leader, Gordon Wilson, was determined to revisit the successes of the oil campaigns of the early 1970s whilst also playing on the positive themes of Scottish self-government, yet the party was not ready to return to the 1970s election victories. Wilson was responsible for generating another SNP's oil campaign in 1980 which focused on the financial benefits that oil could generate under self-government to tackle unemployment and the economic problems evident in Scotland in this period. Whilst there was a clear difficulty in campaigning on self-government within a year of the unsuccessful devolution referendums, the oil issue was previously an SNP success story which positively linked economics to independence and allowed the party to take high ground against Mrs Thatcher's Conservatism.

Moreover, the establishment of a Scottish oil fund to finance economic development was a key component of 1980 oil campaign. However, whilst Wilson sought positive issues and stability for the party, there were more radical voices seeking to galvanize opposition to the Conservative government and involve the SNP in direct action campaigning. The party

members sought to convince the SNP to develop a campaign of civil disobedience in order to form a radical opposition to Thatcherism and the Conservatives.

This radical approach would have moved the SNP determinedly to the left during this period. The party's strategy was dominated by Gordon Wilson activism who "was particularly skeptical of the move to the left and the adoption of direct action tactics. He wanted the party to appeal to the center and center-left and commented that a few nights canvassing soon teaches that the Socialist Workers' party vote is negligible" (Lynch 166). As UK politics became polarized between the left and right, there was a political space opening up for the SNP between Mrs Thatcher's Conservatives and Labour under Mitchel Foot.

However, due to internal conflict over the party's ideological position, the SNP failed to take advantage of this promising political situation until the last part of the 1980s. Despite Wilson's efforts to plough a moderate course, those who supported a campaign of civil disobedience succeeded in their efforts to move the SNP to their position. Responsibility for the campaign was given to Jim Sillars who had joined the SNP in 1980 and been elected to the key post of Executive Vice chairman for Policy in May 1981, at the conference in which he successfully advocated a campaign of civil disobedience. The motion on civil disobedience stated:

This conference expresses its outrage at the destruction of Scotland's industrial base by the policies of an English Tory government. Conference notes the massive rise in unemployment, the lack despair now overwhelming our people. Conference recognizes that a real Scottish resistance and defense of jobs demands direct action up to including political strikes and civil disobedience on a mass scale; declares that the time has come to end British misrule; and calls upon the NEC to organize a campaign of effective civil disobedience and a timetable for its implementation as a matter of urgency. (qtd in Lynch 167)

This was an attempt to calm down the situation between party members to give them more strength to fight the period's elections with an overall agreed majority.

The SNP entered the 1983 general election after all the internal conflicts over the party's strategy. The election came as a light relief for the party and the nationalist. However, the election saw a further loss in support for the SNP, though no real surprises given the fractious nature of SNP politics at the time. The party had failed to recover in by-elections in the early 1980s because of its interests in its internal organization. At the same time, other parties took the advantage of the SNP's losses in the elections until the appropriate time came for the nationalists. Internal divisions of the SNP caused them a lot of harm as its performance in elections was not as successful as that of the 1970s when the SNP appeared to be a real challenger for both Labour and Conservative parties in Scotland. An instant of the SNP's victory in challenging Westminster parties was its important role in the emergence of other political parties into the political landscape even though the party itself was not well prepared in the early part of the decade to become electorally competitive.

During the eighties, the political scene was polarized between left and right with a nationalist movement trying to achieve independence, the center tended to be forgotten in discussion of Scottish political development. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that the first half of the eighties was the period of the center, in that the Liberals and Social Democrats had almost had an impressive electoral performance. In the results of 1983 general election "the Alliance increased the Liberal vote in Scotland from 9 per cent to 24.5 per cent, just four percentage points behind the Tories and ten percentage points behind Labour" (Finlay 354) and for the SNP, it continued its downward trend as "it dropped from 17.3 percent to 11.8 per cent of the vote. Although the Alliance did not do as well as in terms of seats, winning only eight, it was still a healthy showing" (Finlay 354). The success of the Alliance came as a

result of the Conservatives loss of votes despite the great efforts made by the Tories to make Scotland a Conservative zone.

Yet, for all the talk of the effects of Mrs Thatcher's radicalism and its influence in Scotland, the Conservatives had to face the nationalist call for independence even though the latter was not doing well in this period. Thanks to the SNP, the Scottish nationalist movement did not come to an end and the nationalists had two new emerging measures to deal with. First, they had to overcome the troubles between party members, and second, made more efforts to push the British government to look seriously to devolution.

4.2 Conservatives' Attitudes towards the Rise of the Scottish Nationalist Movement

Throughout history of the Conservative Party attitudes towards the rise of the Scottish nationalist movement, the party's position varies between accepting and opposing the idea of devolution. It was a Conservative government which created the Scottish Office in 1885 and upgraded the status of the Secretary of State for Scotland in 1926. It was a Conservative government which transferred the functions of the Scottish Office from London to Edinburgh in 1939. Additionally in May 1968 Prime Minister Edward Heath announced an initiative to the Scottish Conservative Conference, which became known as the Perth Declaration. Also, a Scottish Constitutional Committee was established under the chairmanship of Sir Alec Douglas-Home which suggested the creation of a directly elected Assembly which would form a third chamber of the United Kingdom Parliament. However, the Heath government of 1970-74 became busy by other matters and devolution was not one of its concerns.

Mrs Thatcher, who succeeded Heath in 1975, had different ideas. She had little sympathy for devolution as she was emphasising on economy rather than any other issue. Most English Conservative MPs were opposed to the idea. This did not mean that the party

would not consider the threatening Scottish Nationalist Movement but, rather, to think again about it. In fact, it is clear that the Conservative Party supported devolution in theory but opposed it in practice. Despite its opposition, the Conservatives were pushed to respond to the development of a strong nationalist movement in Scotland because of the efforts made by the SNP. This latter continued its fight for devolution and took the advantage of two main factors. First, the party was strengthened by the damaged economy caused by the Conservative government policies. Second, the party was working to push this government to take the issue of devolution seriously.

The introduction of the community charge or the poll tax can be considered as the worst decision made by the government especially its implementation in Scotland first. Many critics were made on the decision to introduce the poll tax in Scotland rather than any other part in the United Kingdom and it raised great anger among Scots and the opposition parties. In this respect, the historian Iain Macwhirter described the situation as follows:

The flat-rate 'community charge' --- in which 'a dustman paid the same as a duke'-- offended Scotland's ingrained egalitarianism. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland condemned it as morally indefensible, as did all opposition parties... the subsequent campaign of non-payment of the tax turned the Militant Tommy Sheridan into a national celebrity after he was imprisoned. Scots mounted huge peaceful demonstrations to no avail, and were outraged that the poll tax was finally repealed only after the London Street fighting of the 'Battle of Trafalgar Square' in 1990.(37)

This is a clear description of the great opposition to the poll tax both among Scottish citizens and politicians. In the same context, another critic added that "In Scotland, there is a belief that the poll tax was the policy that broke the unreformed Union's back and that, after

its introduction, things could never be the same” (Finlay 360). Here, also, is another indication that the poll tax weakened the Conservative government in Scotland and opened the doors for the nationalist to break the existing union.

Part of the Tory plan for the introduction of the poll tax was the belief that voters would be guided by their pockets and turn against the Labour Party. Moreover, the poll tax is taken as a symbol of the Thatcherite imposition of unpopular policies in a nation that rejected such measures at the ballot box. For the Scots, the imposition of the poll tax was a punishment and it was claimed that this was real evidence that Mrs Thatcher really did not care about Scotland. In a time of introducing the poll tax, there was a lot of noise from the opposition to the effect that the imposition of the tax first in Scotland by a government which had little support would cause a constitutional crisis. The collapse of the Scottish Tory Party in the general election of June 1987 confirmed this impression.

Others claimed that the early introduction of the tax was a violation of the 1707 Treaty of Union between Scotland and England. Furthermore, Labour MPs were opposed to the idea as Dennis Canavan, the Labour MP for Falkirk, promised that “fifty Scottish Labour MPs would make Scotland ungovernable if the poll tax was introduced.” (Finlay 365) For all that opposition to the poll tax, it remained unpopular. It was refused because it took no account of earning or of ability to pay and it represented evidence that the government policy was working for the interest of the rich at the expense of the poor as both being taxed equally. The introduction of the poll tax also highlighted the inflexible nature of the British government in Scotland and the effects of Thatcherism would drive Scotland to the arms of the nationalist because it was used as a testing ground for the government’s new policies.

Another factor that damaged the government position in Scotland was high unemployment rates. Throughout Thatcher years, unemployment has been a major source of

discontent in Scotland. The Thatcherite prescription for Scotland to solve the problem of high unemployment was described by Sir Keith Joseph as “the unemployed should be persuaded to retain or move if they are to have a steady job.” (qtd in Mitchell 102). But in reality, the number of the unemployed outweighed the number of jobs available and the government proposed lower wages being paid in exchange for lower unemployment. This was rejected by Scots and unemployment was still rising. As other previously prosperous areas like Midlands were affected, Scotland would have no chances for aid from the central government and “the justification for giving special aid to areas such as Scotland diminished in the eyes of the Government more to supply the government with its majority.” (Mitchell 102) So, unemployment did hit the Scottish society as did other problems caused by the Conservative government under Mrs Thatcher leadership. Some statistics of the high unemployment rates are provided previously in the chapter. The concern here is to give a clear image of the new problems damaging Scotland on the one hand and how the nationalists took advantage of such problems to put pressure on the British government to look again in their attitudes towards devolution as the nationalists primary goal.

Despite the failure to enact the Scotland Act of 1978, the devolution issue did not go away and the nationalists were still threatening the unity of the United Kingdom. The failure of the government policies in Scotland strengthened the devolution debates across Scotland. Of course, by the 1980s things were much worse. This caused political difficulties for the Thatcher administration whatever its policies. And perhaps there was little she could do about the nationalist sentiments. Nevertheless, it was the attitude towards the government of the UK which was important and not the electoral geography or nationalist sentiment alone. An indication of a change of the attitude is found in Thatcher’s appeal to the Conservative Philosophy Group as she declared: “we must have an ideology. The other side has got an ideology they can test their policies against. We must have one as well” (08). This was an

emphasis from the Prime Minister that a change of attitude towards nationalist movements was required.

Throughout the period leading to the 1979 election, Conservative spokesman declared that the constitutional status quo was not an option. On the eve of the referendum Mrs Thatcher stated that: “a No vote would not mean that the devolution question would be buried” and in the 1979 Scottish Conservative manifesto maintained that “there should be an all-party conference or committee to see if we can reach agreement in our system of government.” (qtd in Mitchell 106). The all-party conference led to minor changes in parliamentary procedure. The remit prevented discussions of the options which had been mentioned in the Tory manifesto and in speeches by Francis Pym; “the talks merely considered whether the present system of government in Scotland could be improved by changed in the procedure, powers and operational arrangements for dealing with Scottish Parliamentary business,” and

Four recommendations were made: that there would be a minimum of six estimates debates in the Scottish Grand Committee cash session; the Committee could devote up to six meeting to Matter Day debates, i.e., debates on topics of general or specific relevance to government policy, with the opposition able to insist on a minimum of four; the abandonment of the practice of having Added Members on the Committee- English MPs added to reflect the party balance in the Commons as a whole; consequent on the abolition of Added Members, it was recommended that the quorum of the Committee could be reduced from seventeen to ten. (qtd. in Mitchell 106)

The recommendations were accepted by the House of Commons. The possibility of the Scottish Grand Committee meeting in Edinburgh and permitting MPs to speak at meetings

were considered but not recommended. Even though the idea of taking the Report Stage of Scottish Bills and Adjournment Debates in the Scottish Grand Committee were rejected, the idea of holding the Committee meeting in Edinburgh was good decision since all the meetings and decisions were coming from the central government. The first meeting to discuss the inter-party talk took place in July 1979 and meetings were arranged in April 1980. The Parliamentary debate on the recommendations was held in June 1981. But many Tories opposed the idea of holding meetings in Edinburgh as it would give more strength to the nationalists.

Moreover, history seemed to repeat itself. As a Tory alternative for Home Rule, the party's refusal to held meeting in Edinburgh was not new. It has its roots in 1914 when in the debates on the second reading of the Government of Scotland Bill¹⁹ many MPs refused to attend the meeting in Edinburgh and very few of them were present. The great opposition to this idea shows that the MPs as well as the government were afraid that holding meeting in Edinburgh would give strength to the nationalist and then their success became imminent. Similarly to this, in 1982 Peter Fraser, MP for Angus South, proposed that the Scottish Grand Committee could not be held in Edinburgh. His idea was accepted and the first meeting was held on 15 February 1982 in the Royal High School. There were seventeen meetings up to the

¹⁹ In 1913, William Cowan presented a successful Scottish home rule bill to Westminster, but the outbreak of World War One prevented the creation of a strong Scottish parliament which could have completely changed Scotland's modern history. A change came with the establishment in 1900 of The Young Scots, an offshoot of the Liberal Party committed to social reform which strongly believed in Scottish home rule. By 1914, they had 10,000 members in 50 branches, with 30 of its members having been elected to Westminster. With increasing power, The Young Scots made home rule a central feature of national politics in the run up to the First World War. The culmination of these efforts resulted in the 1913 home rule bill, which was presented to parliament by William Cowan MP.

summer of 1988 but only one was held in the year following the 1987 general election (Mitchell 107). Fortunately for the nationalists, holding meeting in Edinburgh represented a success.

Another form of the government response to the rise of nationalism was the establishment of Scottish Affairs Select Committee along with the Departmental Select Committee in 1979. The Scottish Select Committee was not created under the original proposals of Norman St John Stevas, Leader of the House. But there was never any possibility that Scottish Affairs would fail while they were the subject of a Select Committee in 1979. There were many conflicts between Labour and Conservatives concerning the number of members. During its existence, Labour politicians more than Tories sang the praises of the Committee. Its first chairman, Donald Dewar argued that: “the case for a growing emphasis on properly investigating the system, and that information will be gathered, assumptions tested and Ministers pushed the account for their actions in a way that just does not happen on the floor of the House of Commons” (qtd. in Mitchell 108). So, the Select Committee sheds lights on what the Scottish Office does, that Scottish Affairs play a significant part in the Parliament of the UK. The Committee investigated a number of matters including: white fish authority levies, college of education closures, rural transport, inward investment policy, BBC cuts, civil service jobs dispersal, Prestwick Airport, housing finance and the steel industry. But later, the Committee was abolished since many members refused to attend its meetings and others refused to join it again. The abolition of the Committee provoke both the nationalist and the opposition parties. The latter established an alternative Select Committee, but could neither expect to call civil service witnesses nor be financed through the public purse.

The 1980s also was a period of many Campaigns for and against devolution. The aim of these campaigns was to bring together people and organisations who strongly advocated

the same position. By the time of 1979 referendum, the 'Yes for Scotland' campaign was launched in order to attract people from different political visions. It quickly attracted support from political activists as well as from different members of the Scottish personalities. However, Labour refused to join the campaign because the majority of its members supported devolution. Labour and the Trade unions, therefore, created the 'Labour Movement Yes Campaign.' In this regard, the Conservative Prime Minister declared that her principles were "not at the mercy of opinion polls. Neither, I am sure, are yours.' (Thatcher 350) In her declaration, she proved that she and her party members opposed devolution and that opinion polls had no influence on their position. The Tories isolation from majority opinion polls increased the demands for self-government and gave the nationalists more reasons to refuse the status quo.

Contrary to the Yes Campaign came the No Campaign. The key No Campaign in 1979 was Tam Dalyell's 'Labour Vote No' movement. It was significant because Dalyell advocated a rejection of the devolution proposals by pushing his 'West Lothian Question'.²⁰

²⁰ Most simply put, it asks why Scottish, Welsh or indeed Northern Irish MPs have the same right to vote at Westminster as any English MP now that large areas of policy are devolved to national parliaments and assemblies in areas such as health, housing, schools and policing. Often translated as "English votes for English laws", the question also comes up if non-English MPs become UK ministers and push through controversial England-only measures, even as their devolved government rejects them. The question itself is famously attributed to the then Labour MP for West Lothian, Tam Dalyell, who raised it in 1977 when Jim Callaghan's Labour government proposed a devolved assembly in Edinburgh. An anti-devolutionist, Dalyell argued it would be unfair for Scottish MPs to have equal rights to vote on English-only legislation. Callaghan's plan failed to win a large enough Scottish majority in a referendum, and collapsed.

The 'Labour Vote No' organisation was set up during a meeting of Labour MPs at the House of Commons. Despite the media attention given to Dalyell and his objections to devolution, the creation of the 'Scotland Says No' movement attracted more attention. The movement was formed on St Andrew's Day in 1978. It was an anti-devolution movement which was supported from the political spectrum that encouraged it to incorporate to other anti-devolution organisations. The movement was described by the historians Deacon and Sandry as "the 'Scotland Says No' movement had a forerunner in the 'Scotland is British' campaign which had played up the advantage to Scotland being part of the Union." (60) While both organisations opposed devolution, the majority who supported them to vote No in any referendum were Conservative supporters. But later, matters had changed and other organisations were formed as opposition to the No Campaign.

The issue of devolution refused to go away. The imposition of the Tories policies on Scotland encouraged support for legislative devolution. Immediately after the referendum, anti-devolutionists seemed to rise despite the majority voting 'Yes'. High expectations of the certain establishment of a Scottish Assembly in the late 1970s were shaken and that the pro-devolution had in fact won more support than their opponents in the referendum. The issue returned slowly onto the Scottish political agenda and following the 1987 general election devolution forced its place and became a primary issue in the British political agenda. A 'post mortem' on the 1987 Scottish results by the Tories concluded that devolution could no longer be ignored and that the party had to debate the issue.

Moreover, Scottish voters were in favour for constitutional change. Scots also supported the idea of an elected body to represent them at Westminster. In an opinion poll in 1979, Scottish voters showed little support to the creation of a Scottish Assembly related to Britain with limited powers as indicated in the following table:

Table 11

Scottish Constitutional Preferences, 1979

 March 1979:

A Completely Independent Scottish Assembly Separate from England	14 %
A Scottish Assembly as part of Britain but with Substantial Powers	42 %
No Change from the Present System	35 %
Don't Know	9 %

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

The results of the polls were not a great deal for the nationalist because of the Tories ignorance for devolution in that period. The Conservatives position between 1979 and 1987 was simply to deny devolution. No debate took place at party conferences for over a decade and the Tory devolutionist kept quiet because they felt that no gains would be achieved by discussing the matter.

By 1987, the Tories position had changed slightly as they started to look seriously to the issue. In the post-1987 debate, Straun Stevenson argued that: “for 104 seats Scottish Senate funded by a direct grant, elected by proportional representation and with reduction of up to 25 Scottish MPs at Westminster” and added that “the Tories could be reduced further to a decimated rump acting solely as a conduit for Westminster” (qtd in Mitchell 110). This would happen if they failed to act on devolution. So, devolution was inevitable whether it was achieved in that period or later. Yet, the Conservatives failed to seize the devolution initiatives and a paper advocating an Assembly was produced. The Campaign for a Scottish

Assembly decided to establish a Scottish Constitutional Convention to push for constitutional change. Other opinion polls showed that this was the right time to revive the devolution debate:

Table 12

Mori Opinion Polls on Constitutional Change 1979-1987

	Independence	Devolution	No Change	Don't Know
March 1979	14	42	35	9
November 1981	22	47	26	5
March 1983	23	48	26	2
March 1984	25	45	27	3
February 1986	33	47	14	6
March 1987	32	50	14	6

Source: Lynch, Peter. *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2002.

The results of the polls provide evidence for overwhelming support for devolution and independence. In less than ten years, there was an increase in the support for independence from 14 % in 1979 to 32% in 1987 and for devolution from 42% to 50% in the same period. The results also show the rise of consciousness among Scots for their distinct national identity. Consequently, this increase in support for devolution represented a great achievement for the nationalists because devolution was back into the political agenda of the British government after a long period of ignorance.

The creation of the Scottish Constitutional Convention represented also another triumph for the nationalists. The Convention was made up of Scottish and civil society. It

aimed at formulating plans for the smooth introduction of devolution to Scotland and putting pressure on the anti-devolution Conservative government which was in office. The Scottish local authorities played a significant role, as did many other organisations, from the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Scottish Churches, led by Canon Kenyon, to the Women's Forum Scotland and the Ethnic Minorities Communities, led by Pek Yeong Berry of the Racial Equality Council. Throughout its existence, the Scottish Constitutional Convention represented a symbol for constitutional reform. In the next decades, it also managed to function as a channel for the 'new politics, that was discussed at the time by the people, such as social policy-making, politicians and think tank, all of whom wanted to promote regionalism and devolution. The Convention found itself with series of allies which demanded social and political reforms. The fruits of the Convention's efforts were tasted in the next decades regarding its important role for the devolution proposals that were adopted by the Labour government while taking office.

In opposition, the Labour Party was also present in the matter. Historically, the question of devolution was not ignored by the party. Devolution appeared largely with Labour's strategic ambitions. Its position came in a time when the leadership of the party felt obliged to consider constitutional reform as its primary issue. It came as a response to the threat posed by the Scottish Nationalist Movement. Scottish Labour seemed to be in favour for devolution as long as there was a nationalist threat and the party continued to see itself as a great supporter for devolution. But later, after the electoral defeat of the 1979 general election, Labour's policy became incoherent.

On the one hand, in opposition to Mrs Thatcher's economic policies, the party committed itself to an Alternative Economic Strategy which involved strengthening centralised control of the economy. On the other hand, the emergence of a socialist strategy which sought to use local authorities as means of resistance to Thatcherism. As a result,

Labour secured its position in Scotland as did the Conservatives on Southern English constituencies. This encouraged the party to reconsider the value of devolution, not as a way to defeat the nationalist threat but as a way to strengthen its position in Scotland and push the Conservatives away.

In the 1980s, Labour had to face many new ideologies. After the 1983 general election, the party's position became closure to that of the Scottish National Party as it argued for a separate Scottish mandate. It was Gordon Brown, Scottish chairman, who organised an alternative approach to convince Labour MPs from England of the importance of devolution. The historian Arthur Aughey claimed that "by 1989, the idea of the Scottish mandate had become common currency in the Labour Party. By emphasising the negative consequences of Westminster government for Scotland, while rising expectations about the power of a Scottish Assembly to arrest or reverse them." (94) This view showed that the Labour Party became a great advocator for devolution. It was in favour of an ultimate power given to the Scottish Assembly and undermined the Westminster government. This view also indicated a triumph for the nationalist and gave them another chance to achieve their goals. Once more, Labour position had become closure to that of the SNP and the Scottish nationalist movement as a whole.

Despite the difficulties that faced the nationalist in this period, it continued to pose a threat to the British political parties, in the one hand, and to the British national identity in the other hand. By the end of the 1980s, a new consensus emerged which held that while the old Scottish nationalism was essentially related to the SNP, the new nationalism was wider and deeper than before. One of its characteristics was being eclectic. Scottish nationalism appeared to be socialist meaning that they were moving towards Labour politics. In such situation, both Labour and the nationalists were working to secure their votes in Scotland. The nationalists here had to emphasis on both Scottishness as their national identity and on

material prosperity of Scots in order to secure their position in the coming elections. In that case, Labour's idea of 'independence within the United Kingdom' might give the nationalists more power for their struggle for devolution.

Scotland's position in the UK had always involved negotiations and compromise. The Conservatives were always afraid from the nationalists' self government goal because if their goal was achieved, then, the unity of the United Kingdom would be under question. An example of the nationalist refusal of Westminster government control was the Scottish campaign against the poll tax. The refusal of payment was justified as the inequality between Scots and other citizens in the country. It was also justified on the basis that it was an imposition against the will of the Scottish people. This vision of Scotland pushed the Scottish people to support the nationalists' demands for devolution.

A Claim of Right for Scotland was the title of the report of the Constitutional Steering Committee presented to the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly in July 1988. The Claim concluded that Scotland faced a crisis of identity and even of survival: "It is now being governed without consent and subject to the declared intention of having imposed upon it a racial change of outlook and behaviour pattern which it shows no sign of wanting." (qtd. in Aughey 140) The Claim proposed the establishment of a Scottish Constitutional Convention which would draw on the resources of civil society. The first meeting of the Convention was held on 30 March 1989. It committed itself to agree a scheme for a Scottish Parliament, to mobilise Scottish opinion behind it and to "assert the right of the Scottish people to secure the implementation of that scheme" (Scottish Constitutional Convention 10).

The SNP decided to withdraw from the Convention because independence was not one of its recommendations. At the same time, the Conservatives refused to join it because they believed that independence would be discussed. But it was not the case for Labour which

supported the Convention because of many perspectives. On the one hand, the Labour party saw the Convention as the appropriate solution to calm down the nationalists opposition to Westminster government, and to develop proposals for devolution which would help the party to gain more votes on the other hand. Later, the Convention played an important role in the creation of the Scottish Parliament as its proposals helped to give more devolved powers to the Scottish people with the support of the Labour Party. The latter's attitudes towards any initiatives for devolution gave a clear image of the threat posed by the Scottish nationalist movement on the two dominating British political parties and the unity of the UK.

In the light of these events, the Scottish National Party found the appropriate atmosphere to continue its fight for devolution though the party was passing through hard times. The nationalists' attempts to revive the idea of devolution again saw a great opposition from Westminster Government. But with many proposals from both the Conservatives, as a leading party, and Labour in opposition, devolution would not go away. In a time of rejecting the governments' new policies, the SNP and the Scottish Nationalist Movement came to light and had another chance to achieve their long standing goal which is devolution.

4.3 The SNP Back into the Political Scene and the Challenge Posed to the British National Identity

The Scottish National Party continued its struggle both for existence in the political landscape and for devolution. As many initiatives for devolution failed and the success of other political parties in Scotland, the party was obliged first to solve its internal conflicts before moving forward for other goals. Passing through difficult times did not mean that the party would retreat from the political scene and therefore stop its fight for devolution. Other factors helped the party to survive in a time of Conservatives' complete control over the country. First, the Conservatives found it difficult to gain votes in Scotland under Mrs

Thatcher leadership. Scots electorates moved to vote for Labour and the SNP as alternatives. This came as a result of Westminster government radicalism which did more harm than good for Scotland. Second, economic hardship also played an important role in the change of electoral behaviour in Scotland under which Scottish people suffered from economic difficulties during Conservatives rule. These twin factors had their say in the revival of the SNP and paved the way for the nationalists to put the unity of the United Kingdom under question. It is worth mentioning here the reasons behind the troubles which faced the SNP both in its organisation on the one hand and in the Scottish political landscape on the other hand.

The destruction of the Devolution Bill in 1977 put the Conservatives under pressure. Mrs. Thatcher's, party leader, declaration that the Tory MPs had to defeat the bill provoked many members in the party and led to the resignation of the Tory spokesman on Scottish Affairs. Such divisions within the party members on devolution and its rejection of the idea of devolution caused the party's electoral decay in Scotland. It is also important to show the electoral behaviour in Scotland at general elections as in such time in the Scottish electoral performance, the Scots tended to vote for Conservatives. Discussing the Scottish electoral behaviour for a long period of time helps in the understanding of the change of attitude of the Scottish voters towards the Conservative Party and how Scots became conscious of their distinctive national identity. It is also important to mention and examine the Conservatives' performance in Scotland separately, because their low performance in Scotland was the result of the Conservatives attitudes towards the revival of the Scottish nationalist movement. The nationalists, then, were the beneficiaries and the conditions under which they continued their fight were favourable. The following table illustrates clearly the matter:

Table 13

Votes and Seats in Scotland at British Elections, 1935-1992

Year	Labour	Conservative	Liberal	SNP	Others	Total No of seats
1935	41.8(24)	42.0(35)	13.4 (10)	1.1	1.8(8)	71
1945	49.4(40)	41.1(27)	5.0	1.2	3.3(4)	71
1950	46.2(37)	44.8(32)	6.6(2)	0.4	2.0	71
1951	47.9(35)	48.6(35)	2.7(1)	0.3	0.5	71
1955	46.7(34)	50.1(36)	1.9(1)	0.5	0.8	71
1959	46.7(38)	47.2(31)	4.1(1)	0.8	1.2	71
1964	48.7(43)	40.6(24)	7.6(4)	2.4	0.7	71
1966	49.9(46)	37.7(20)	6.8(5)	5.0	0.6	71
1970	44.5(44)	38.0(23)	5.5(3)	11.4	0.6	71
1974(Feb)	36.6(40)	32.9(21)	8.0(3)	21.9(7)	0.6	71
1974(Oct)	36.3(41)	24.7(16)	8.3(3)	30.4(11)	0.3	71
1979	41.5(44)	31.4(22)	9.0(3)	17.3(2)	0.8	71
1983	35.1(41)	28.4(21)	24.5(8)	11.7(2)	0.3	72
1987	42.4(50)	24.0(10)	19.2(9)	14.0(3)	0.3	72
1992	39.0(49)	25.6(11)	13.1(0)	21.5(3)	0.8	72

Source: McCrone, David. *Understanding Scotland*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2005.

The selection of these years meant to show the presence of the SNP in elections. Between the years 1935 and 1959, for more than twenty years, the Conservative party was the most popular party in Scotland winning 36 of all the Scottish seats contested in 6 elections in that period. After 1959, the difference between voting for the two main British parties was

small. It was after this period that the Labour Party became the most dominant party in Scotland and was challenged by the emergence of the Scottish National Party. Also at the same period, there was a growing divergence between Conservative and Labour parties in the electoral performance.

Such reactions from Scots electorate indicate that there was a great awareness among Scottish people about their separate national identity. Voters support for the SNP and the Labour Party came as a response of their support for devolution and against Thatcherite strategy of cutting government expenditure and asserting free market economy. Labour's attractive strategy in this period was to support devolution and was described as: "Labour's attitude to the Scottish question was based upon the assumptions that the basis of any discontent was economic, and that the electorate was more concerned about economic goods it received than about the constitutional mechanism by which these goods were delivered." (McCrone 118). Certainly, the transition from voting Conservative to Labour and nationalists occurred in the right moment for the SNP as well as for many Scots. The SNP was in the right place at the right time.

Imposing new politics meant introducing new problems that gave the chance for the nationalists to provide a political alternative when the British government began to fail. Both Conservative and Labour paid the electoral price and particularly the former. As a result, the SNP was the beneficiary from the current situation and Labour in Scotland was in a much better position. Nevertheless, the SNP acted as a key electoral item for change and provided a political home for those who favour change and fight for political identity. It is in the swing away from Conservatives, however, that a coherent emerging Scottish political system occurred.

Mrs Thatcher's policies were the main resonance behind the fall of the Conservatives in Scotland as declared by the historian Iain Macwhirter in an article published in the *New Statesman* in 2009 that "the Conservatives are the only party to have won a majority of seats and a majority of votes in a general election in Scotland-back in 1955. But if 'Tory' has been a four-letter word in Scotland for the past 30 years, it is largely the legacy of 'That Bloody Woman' as she was called on the doorsteps." (37). Then losing ground in Scotland was to be blamed on the Prime Minister's attitudes towards Scotland but not for the party itself.

Macwhirter also added that:

No prime minister in history, Labour or Conservative, has generated so such hostility for so long from so many in Scotland. Almost from the moment that Thatcher entered No 10 in 1979, the Scottish Tories went into a tailspin from which they never recovered. They were wiped out in the 1997 general election and to this day there is still only one Scottish Tory MP in the whole of Scotland ... It was the poll tax, more than any other facet to Thatcherism, that ensured the disintegration of the old unitary British state. (37)

Once more, the poll tax is present in any discussion of the party's low electoral performance, but this time, it was presented as the main reason behind the serious Tory crisis in Scotland. Thus, damaging the economy of Scotland caused the Conservatives more losses.

In fact, the nationalists were the beneficiaries in such circumstances despite many difficulties that faced the SNP. The party itself suffered internal problems which it had first to solve. The SNP was in internal troubles over policy. Many splits and groups were created within the party each with its own policy and program. A team under Douglas Crawford, MP for Perthshire East, declared that: "a self-governing Scotland will not need to over-emphasise production for export." (qtd. in Harvie 138). This meant that exports of everything except oil

were going to be priced out of world markets by the appreciation of the Scots currency. He visualised an economy producing high-technology and luxury goods, largely serve for the home markets. Here is one example of the different ideas over the policy of the party for some who favoured to emphasis on economy. Another factor concerning splits over economy was that the party was directed by middle-class activists each working for his interests. Doctors prescribed for medicine, teachers for education and economic consultants for industry. There was no radical questioning of the role of doctors or teachers. The internal tension within the party was described by the historian Ian O. Bayne as follows:

in its initial impact on the SNP the total 1979 was tantamount to a death in the family-or even a nervous breakdown. As can happen in the best families faced with such trying circumstances, existing internal tensions and petty jealousies, coupled with mutual recrimination, rapidly surfaced; and the temptation to seek scapegoats-both in personal and specific policies and strategies- was inadequately resisted. (qtd. in Hassan 162)

So, 1979 was not fruitful time for the nationalists. Under these conditions, many other divisions were created within the party aided by the defeat of the devolution referendum in the 1st March 1979. The SNP's ideology came in a sharp criticism because of many disagreements about the party's policy and it started to move to the left of the centre and support socialism.

As a result, the 79 Group was founded. It was Roseanna Cunningham, in 1979 the SNP's assistant research officer, together with her brother Chris, who first brought the idea of what became the '79 Group'. The Group was named after the year of its formation and promoted to a left-wing stance. It contained many figures like: Alex Salmond, Roseanna Cunningham, Stephen Maxwell and Jim Sillars, after he abandoned his Scottish Labour party.

The aims and policies of the Group are described as: “the 79 Group was set up with three principles. It was Nationalist, Socialist and Republican” (Brand 7). There was no doubt about the first principle and it caused no problems within the Group members since the party is a nationalist party. For the second principle, the group argued that the base for the nationalist vote was the working class and as a matter of fact the SNP was the second choice of the majority of Labour voters rather than other voters. In order to attract Labour voters, the SNP had to become the workers’ party and socialism was the ideology of the workers’ party. Finally, the Group argued that there was no place for the Monarchy in a modern Scotland. The foundation of the 79 Group was factionalism. Although there existed many disagreements about the policy of the SNP, but no faction had been formed.

Moreover, the most important reason behind the creation of the Group was to show dissatisfaction with Mrs Thatcher’s government as public expenditure was cut off and the surviving heavy industries began to close down. Additionally, the cut in the welfare state benefits created more poverty. The Conservative government created a prosperous South England which was not the case for Scotland. Under these circumstances, the SNP found no way just to move to the left and chose the anti-Conservatives stance in order to attract working class voters. As a result, the 79 Group’s main concern became the protection of the Scottish jobs as the Scottish people should see how well the southern English working class was doing in comparison to them. The Group started to campaign on saving jobs in firms which were scheduled to close. This campaign was later adopted by the SNP after the abandonment of the Group. As a matter of fact, the policies of the Group were not related just to industry but also to support unilateral nuclear disarmaments. It is also opposed to the peaceful use of nuclear power and certainly to nuclear dumping.²¹

²¹ In 1977, there was an explosion in a 65-metre deep shaft used to dump a mixture of unrecorded waste. The shaft is believed to be the cause of widespread radioactive contamination of the Dounreay foreshore. The

Other change in the policy of the Group was the entry to the European Common Market. The party was against the idea of entering the European Common Market when debated in the sixties and seventies. The refusal came with the idea that Scotland should not exchange the dominance of London with other European countries. But now the SNP position was changed. The idea occurred when Jim Sillars joined the SNP. He supported the idea of entering the European Common Market. The Group decided that Scotland needed Europe and only in the EEC was there a large market.

Therefore, only in Europe could Scotland cooperate with other states and avoid the dominance of England. Finding new markets meant opening the door for Scotland for better exchange and thus improvement in the bad economic condition under Westminster governments. By 1984, the idea of Scotland within Europe became the policy of the whole party. Despite the influence of the 79 Group on the SNP's policies, it was abandoned in 1982 in the Ayr conference and of the members were proscribed in efforts to stop the split. One of these members, Alex Salmond, commented on the Group's abandonment and declared after he became party leader that: "I was always in trouble before I became leader. And then my troubles stopped! I got expelled from the SNP in 1982 as rather brash young man. I've often reflected that there was considerable of fault on my side." (qtd. in Hassan 162)

For many observers, the splits which occurred in the party over its policy caused many problems in its electoral performance. The damages caused for the party pushed the electorates to look again for their position as the Party's general image deteriorated. But, it was not the only reason behind the party's diminished support in Scotland. Other external

Scottish National Party (SNP) has accused the government of turning Scotland into a waste dump for the world. The SNP leader, Alex Salmond, accused the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, of "prostituting Scotland as a world nuclear dustbin to curry favour with the Clinton administration"

factors also played an important role in the loss of Scottish votes. With a declining Labour party in Scotland along with the decline in SNP votes, the doors were opened for other parties. The SNP was not only unable to offer an alternative to Labour in 1980s, it helped also the Scottish Democratic Party to rise. The SDP was formed by four former Labour cabinet ministers in 1981. The party entered into a successful electoral alliance with the Liberals and came to challenge the SNP in Scotland and there was a substantial change of fortunes for this centre party. The SDP electoral success came when Charels Kennedy, a student of 23 year-old, fought his first seat for the SDP and won against a sitting Tory in a constituency. (Pittock 74) The alliance also helped to win more seats even from the SNP which expected to be the major winner.

Electoral, the SNP became a minor force in electoral contests as well as opinion polls. Indeed, “its opinion poll rating only 20 per cent on two occasions from 1979 general election until 1988: with 22 per cent in March 1981 and 21 per cent in October 1981.” (Lynch 161) The results show the real swing in the SNP’s votes due to internal conflicts. The party became electorally uncompetitive and easy to be defeated especially with the presence of the alliance. At the 1983 general election, “the Liberal-SDP Alliance gained 24.5 per cent of the vote” and “the SNP 11.8 percent” (Lynch 161). The alliance became a serious third force in Scotland after Labour and Conservatives. The only explanation for the SNP’s weak performance was the result of its damaged public image by the internal divisions.

Nonetheless, the decline in the SNP’s vote did not mean the end of the party’s struggle for existence along with its call for independence. The SNP started to recover in elections when by the mid-1980s it moved towards its former moderate position. However, support for constitutional change grew steadily in the same period. At the 1987 general election, “the number of the Conservative MPs was reduced to 10 from 21, although securing 24 per cent of the total vote cast in Scotland. The SNP’s share of the vote increased to 14 per cent which

translated the three seats.” (Ichijo 47) The results are a clear indication that the SNP was in secured position in comparison to the early eighties. Thus, the level of the support for constitutional change increased.

By the implementation of the poll tax by the Conservative government, the SNP launched the ‘Can’t Pay, Won’t Pay’ Campaign to show opposition to the government’s policies. The aim of the campaign was to unite the poor to the essence of social solidarity in civil disobedience against the same unpopular issue. Campaigning against the poll tax gave the nationalist another opportunity to improve their position and challenge both Labour and Tories in elections. The nationalist again succeeded to pose a threat to an unconvincing Labour party and unpopular Conservative Party. The campaign against the poll tax also proved a success for the SNP. As a result, “Alex Salmond won Banff and Buchan in 1987 ... in the 1988 local elections, the SNP secured 21 per cent of the vote, and in the autumn Jim Sillars won Govan from Labour” (Pittock 76). In any case, the nationalists were the beneficiaries from the public dissatisfaction from both British political parties. Labour was alarmed and responded by supporting a devolution campaign. The campaign is discussed previously in the chapter but in relation to both Labour and Conservatives attitudes towards devolution. But the discussion now is related to SNP and nationalists response to such initiatives. The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly was formed in the aftermath of the defeat of the 1979 devolution referendum which failed to establish a devolved Scottish Assembly. Despite the fact that many nationalist supported the all-party campaign for a Scottish Assembly, the official policy of the SNP was completely opposed. Within the 79 Group there was recognition that “Independence was not going to be won at a single swoop and the majority of the Scottish people were not ready to support it” (Brand 10). The success of the legislative devolution could not be achieved just under one condition which is gaining support from other parties. The refusal of the nationalists to accept this idea was due to the Party’s

refusal to cooperate with any other group. The SNP's position came as a result of feelings of betrayal from the Labour Party which failed to save Scotland from the Tories.

In Edinburgh in July 1988 the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly launched the *A Claim of Right for Scotland* which was the title of the report of the Constitutional Steering Committee set up by the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. The claim called for an all-party constitutional convention to press the Conservative government to rethink on the issue of devolution. Moreover, under the prevailing dispensation "the Scots are a minority which cannot ever feel secure under a constitution which, in effect, renders the Treaty of Union a contradiction in term." (The Claim of Right 19) this is a clear message that the Scots could no longer live with the British constitution which did not work for the benefits of Scotland.

The Claim proposed the establishment of a cross-party Scottish Constitutional Convention to represent the democratic will of the Scottish people. The idea of the creation of the convention was driven by the Labour Party which implemented the smooth creation of the Scottish Parliament. The nationalist refused the idea because it worked against their principle as it did not recommend independence. The SNP was given representation in the Convention but it was refused. Later, the Party withdrew from the convention in the autumn of 1989. The decision to withdraw from the convention was "a brave decision and some Nationalists left the party because of it, but in strategic terms it was surely the right move." (Pittock 76) The decision to withdraw from the convention had its roots in the period from 1974-1979, when the SNP was associated with the policy of the Labour Party from which the nationalist expected to deliver devolution while the Labour government made no moves to prevent the establishment of a 'Labour Says No Campaign.'

The Constitutional Convention, which did not consider either federalism or independence, would place the SNP again in a position of providing the activists to deliver the

policy which was a long way from what they wanted. But for any failure, the nationalists were those who would be blamed. Furthermore, the nationalists would be blamed also for any marches or rallies for a Scottish Parliament. Labour and the Liberal Democrats agreed to take part in the convention discussions, and in November 1990 the Convention published its report. The publication of the convention's report in this period was meant to push the Conservatives to refuse it to insure the dominance of both participating parties to gain more elections in Scotland. Moreover, two factors worked to the convention's advantage. First, the Conservatives were becoming more unpopular and second, the support for nationalism was growing. The convention proposed many issues given the limits set by the acceptance of the British state. The problem of the 'one-party state'²² was to be addressed by the use of the additional member system or proportional representation.²³ The idea was to provide the basis for Labour and Liberal Democrat coalition politics in the Holyrood Parliament that eventually developed from it. This system "made it unlikely that Labour could secure an overall majority, it would also have an equal effect on the prospects of the SNP. Some have suggested that this was the purpose of the PR" (Aughey 141) The Liberal Democrats gained the principle that any new Scottish Assembly or Parliament would be elected on the basis of the PR which would more diminish Labour dominance in terms of seats and at the same time

²² One-party state: or single party state, one party system, single party system is a type of state in which one political party has the right to form the government based on the existing constitution. Other parties are allowed to take only a limited and controlled participation in elections.

²³ Additional member system or proportional representation is a mixed electoral system in which voters get two votes: one to decide the representative for their single-seat constituency, and one for a political party. Seats in the legislature are filled firstly, by the successful constituency candidates and secondly, by party candidates based on the percentage of nationwide or region-wide votes that each party received. The constituency representors are elected using first-past-the-post system.

it would prevent the SNP from forming a government. It also proposed that there should be equal representations of men and women. Both these objectives were set out in an electoral agreement signed by Labour and Liberal Democrats. With such proposals, the withdrawal of the SNP from the convention proved the right decision and the nationalist had to develop their own policy to achieve their goals.

It is also important for the SNP to look for an alternative policy to be far from the Labour Party. Then, in 1988 the SNP returned to the pro-European stance and called for independence for Scotland with respect to Europe. The 'Independence in Europe' policy was the idea of Jim Sillars who showed great opposition to the idea before. He campaigned against Britain's EEC membership at the 1975 referendum because he believed that entry to the European Economic Community would bring capitalist ideas to which socialist Scotland should be opposed. However, in the 1980s he began campaigning for the 'Independence in Europe' policy. He proposed independence in Europe as a means to protect the economy and industry of an independent Scotland and it was important for Scotland to gain its sovereignty so that it could negotiate any agreement directly with European countries. Sillars clearly favoured "an intergovernmental structure of the European Community to that of a federal one, since the former would allow a small state to exercise more influence in real terms than it could outside such structure." (Ichijo 48) The policy was adopted at the 1988 annual conference and was a realistic and pragmatist strategy.

Sillars seemed to have succeeded to change the mood in the SNP. For the two previous decades, the SNP showed great opposition towards the EEC because of its capitalist policies.²⁴ Despite the fact that the SNP campaigned for a No vote at the 1975 referendum,

²⁴ Capitalist policies refers to an economic system based on public ownership of the means of production. In a capitalist market economy, decision-making and investment are determined by every owner of wealth, property

Britain became a member in the EEC. The SNP began to re-examine its policy towards the EEC and wanted Scottish representation in the European institution. After the defeat of the 1979 referendum and in the general election the same year, the first direct election to the European Parliament was held. The nationalist, Winifred Ewing, was elected for the Highland and Islands seat. She played an important role in drawing the SNP attention to the potential economic gain from the European community. The SNP changed its position at the 1983 annual conference and recommended Scottish membership pending a post-independence referendum. (Mitchell 233) It was until the shift in the direction of the SNP that Sillars decided to enter the debate on Europe.

The change in the policy of the SNP was influenced by the changes which underwent the European Community itself in the 1980s. The appointment of Jacques Delors and the president of the European Commission²⁵ in 1985 was regarded as key element for change because his name was associated with the revival of the EC which moved to establish a single market. The result was the creation of the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986. Although “the SEA was not presented as a move towards federalisation of the European Community, the establishment of a single market inevitably touched almost all aspects of the Community’s functions.” (Ichijo 49) Therefore, without the revival of the idea of further integration in Europe, the EC would not have occupied such an important place in the SNP’s policy.

Furthermore, the SNP’s adoption of the ‘Independence in Europe’ worked for the advantage of the party even though it did not an immediate increase in support for the party.

or production ability in financial and capital market, whereas prices and the distribution of goods and services are mainly determined by competition in goods and services.

²⁵European Commission is an institution of the European Union, responsible for legislation implementing decisions, upholding EU treaties and managing its business.

The level of support for the policy remained higher than the level of support for the SNP itself. In 1989 “the SNP gained 26 per cent of the vote (though still only one seat out of eight) at the European elections and the policy remained successful.” (Pittock 77) Although the policy did not prove to be a decisive vote winner for the SNP, the policy set the context in which the debate on the constitutional change for Scotland was taking place. Other parties used the issue in their Scottish policies like Labour and the Liberal Democrats whereas the Tories emphasised the role of the Scottish Office in negotiations with the EC. Civic organisations, which were working for a Scottish Parliament, also started to pay attention to the EC membership. The change of attitude towards EEC membership both within the SNP and within other parties and organisations indicates the success of the nationalists’ policy ‘Independence in Europe’ and that the Scottish nationalist movement continued to pose a threat to the unity of the UK.

The SNP’s newly adopted policy is the most notable aspect of the development of the Scottish nationalist movement since the defeat of the 1979 devolution referendum. The SNP viewed Europe as means of achieving independence since many other European countries which were members of the EEC benefited from their membership. Therefore, the SNP’s policy in the late 1980s represented a success both for the party and the whole movement and the issue of devolution refused to go away.

Conclusion

The 1980s saw the election of the Conservative Government under Mrs Thatcher leadership. The Prime minister was known for her great opposition to any constitutional change as she advocated the union. The government emphasised on overcoming the economic problems and ignored any other issue. Its ignorance for the nationalists gave them more strength to challenge the government and push it to respond to the revival of the movement.

As a result, many initiatives for devolution were represented to the government which gave the nationalists more powers to secure their position and adopt new policies to achieve their goals.

The new elected government adopted new policies to solve the economic problems. Those new policies based on monetarism and free market in their turn introduced new problems to the country. With high unemployment rates and cut in public expenditures the Conservative government was deeply unpopular in Scotland. Worse was to come by the implementation of the poll tax. This latter caused many troubles in the UK as a whole and most particularly Scotland as its first implementation was there. In the light of these events, the nationalists took the advantage of the government's unpopularity and gave new image to their movement and became a serious political force.

Despite the fact that the SNP's share of the vote was decreasing in the early 1980s, the Scottish nationalist movement continued its fight for existence and independence. After the defeat of the 1979 referendum, the devolution issue did not disappear from the political agenda. However, the failure of the government policies in Scotland gave the nationalist another chance to challenge the British national identity and put the unity of the UK under question. Whilst the party suffered from internal conflict, the Labour Party was under pressure to bolder commitments to a Scottish Assembly. Following the SNP's by-election victory in Glasgow Govan in 1988, Labour was again put under pressure to promote devolution. As a result, the party participated in the Scottish Constitutional Convention. With such reactions from Labour, the SNP saw the need to adopt the 'Independence in Europe' policy which gave the chance for the nationalist to fight for their independence abroad. The policy gave them more strength to challenge the Westminster government opposition for devolution. Thus, the 1980s had a significant impact in the development of the Scottish

nationalist movement in the future and paved the way for other achievements for the nationalists.

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GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study is concluded by a brief recapitulation of the main arguments and events which were raised earlier in its chapters. The aim was to identify, explore and evaluate the different ideas about the revival of the Scottish Nationalist Movement in the 1960s and 1980s and explain the real threat posed by this minority nationalist movement to the unity of the United Kingdom. More emphasis also was given to the significant role the Scottish National Party played in the development of a coherent and strong nationalist movement. The choice of this period meant to show that calls for an independent Scotland were present for along continuous period but not only with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Therefore, it is important to shed light on the Scottish Nationalist Movement since the ratification of the Treaty of Union in 1707 for a better understanding of the issue.

Despite the signing of Treaty of Union with England, Scotland has always retained a sense of distinctiveness from the rest of the UK. Scotland's distinct institution, geography, culture and language are related to the Scottish consciousness of a separate national identity. This Act of Union ended the two separate parliamentary systems of England and Scotland and created a single parliament in London which would cover the United Kingdom. Under this union, Scotland maintained some of its administrative functions such as legal, financial and educational institutions. This is, therefore, a clear sign that Scotland wanted its separate identity earlier in its union with England. Such sense of distinctiveness makes the study of the Scottish nationalist movement important and different at the same time. When the question of independence is raised, all the discussions should be about colonisations. But in the Scottish case, colonisation is not the appropriate description of the situation and that is what makes the study of nationalism in Scotland important. Yet, what makes it different is that Scotland was

independent for many centuries and, therefore, accepting the idea of being under the control of a London based parliament was not easy for free Scots.

The rise of nationalist sentiments since then ensured the existence of political and social instability between the two nations and tension mounted within the nationalists to call for self-government. As a response, the Scottish Office was established in 1885 with some powers to supervise some administrations in Scotland. Over time, the powers given to the Scottish Office and the Secretary of State were extended and included other areas. Despite the fact that Scotland was given some powers to control its domestic matters, the restrictions allowed by the Westminster government gave the nationalist more chances to shine. Added to this, a separate Scottish Grand Committee at Westminster was introduced in 1907 in an attempt by the British government to make the Scottish people feel that their concerns were taken seriously. This is another sign that the British government was working to frustrate any efforts by the nationalist to achieve independence.

More and more, actions from the nationalists and reactions from the government can describe the relation between two different sides. The nationalists were taking actions both to achieve their goals and to push the government to look seriously to their demands. On the other side, the government was having reactions to calm down the mounting feeling of independence within the nationalists and to have more time to curb their efforts and look for an alternative. Furthermore, each side knew the intentions of the other and worked for its benefits. However, this relation gave time to the nationalists to organise their interests and put the guidelines for a strong continuous struggle for independence.

Hence, devolution, if not independence, was raised as an option for Scotland at various times since the Treaty of Union. But this time a radical change in the direction of the nationalist movement occurred. Just after the First World War, the founding of the Scottish

National Party in 1934, in a time when the Scottish economy was damaged by the depression in the inter-war period, helped further to motivate the nationalists to take the advantage of the situation. Even though the Westminster government acknowledged that Scotland was a distinct geographical entity, the government failed to diminish enthusiasm of those seeking independence. Thus, the nationalists succeeded to place more pressure on the unitary nature of the British constitution. More pressure means more challenge to the unity of the United Kingdom as well as Britishness as a national identity.

From the very beginning of its existence, the SNP sought a totally independent Scotland contrary to the earlier associations which permitted to the Scottish government to look after Scottish domestic affairs and left defence and foreign affairs to London. The presence of the SNP, therefore, makes the difference in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement because before the creation of the SNP, the nationalist emphasised on some devolved powers to Scotland. Now, the party was working to be a powerful force which would challenge both dominant British political parties, Labour and Conservative. Furthermore, the party's primary aim was to be a political force that could not be denied.

To achieve the party's goals, the SNP passed through different stages and difficult periods. The Scottish National Party had first to form an organised strong party in order to step out to the political landscape. Politically speaking, entering a challenge with two powerful political parties is not an easy task and needs serious planning and strong programs. First, the party had to work in its internal organisation and develop a coherent policy which could give it a good reputation. This cost the SNP a long period of time but, fortunately for the party, it was the appropriate time to enter the fight. By the 1960s, the general mood in the UK raised optimism in the party which became ready to be the main voice of the whole Scottish nationalist movement. The downturn in the British economy that aroused anger across Scotland about the hard situation paved the way for the SNP to compete other parties.

In the light of these events, came the Hamilton by-election of November 1967 in which the SNP succeeded to challenge the other British political parties. The victory of Winfred Ewing in this election over Labour represents a clear warning for the London based parties that Scotland was increasingly unsatisfied with government's failure to solve its problems. This victory also indicates that the issue of Scottish independence or Scottish devolution remained a primary issue in the political agenda. Therefore, both Conservatives and Labour saw the strong need to respond positively to the rise of nationalist movement and the success of the SNP.

For the Conservatives, a change of attitude towards devolution was required as the party opposed the idea of devolution and was described as the most unitary party in Britain. In an effort for both reviving the Conservative Party in Scotland and responding to the SNP's victory in Hamilton by-election, the party committed legislative devolution as an option. As a result's Edward Heath proposed the establishment of a Scottish Assembly in his speech in Perth in 1968. The creation of the assembly is one example of many other responses from the Conservatives. Their response and the dramatic change towards devolution can be considered as a significant victory for the nationalists. Also, this response comes as a result of the great efforts made by the SNP. Hence, the party now was transferred from a small organization to a powerful competing political force.

Similarly to the Conservatives' reaction to the rise of nationalism in Scotland came Labour response at the same way. A Royal Commission on the Constitution was proposed by Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1969 recommending devolution. The idea of reconsidering devolution by the government ensures that the Scottish Nationalist movement as well as the SNP represented a growing threat to the unity of the United Kingdom. The idea of a Royal Commission on the Constitution and its reports in 1973 shows the triumph of the nationalist and their real challenge to a party that was greatly supported in Scotland.

Consequently, the responses of both Conservative and Labour parties denote that a minority Scottish nationalist movement was able to challenge the unity of an established nation. The real threat of the nationalists can be tasted in the quick and positive response from both British political parties. Moreover, the SNP succeeded to emerge as a political force and to lead the whole Scottish nationalist movement. This was a successful start of a small and new formed nationalist organisation in comparison to other old British political parties which were taking control over the political scene. More important events were to follow this victory most particularly in the 1970s and 1980s.

Added to all the above important events for the nationalists, the discovery of oil and gas in the Scottish waters gave the nationalists strong evidence to continue their fight for independence. As a result, the SNP launched the 'Its Scotland Oil' campaign under the fact that an independent Scotland would benefit more from oil revenues. This discovery gave the nationalists a sense of self-confidence to push the British government to reconsider devolution and to give Scots the opportunity to control their own economy far from any pressure. This was the appropriate time for the nationalists to emerge as a political force in order to achieve their goals. Under this condition, the SNP was able to unite all the Scots under one umbrella and started to gain more Scottish votes.

The first consequence of the nationalists' campaign on oil was the victory of the SNP in most of the elections held in the 1970s. It was from Labour and the Conservatives that the SNP started to take votes and benefited from the both parties unpopularity. As a result, the SNP reached its greatest levels of electoral support thanks to its policy. As a matter of fact, the party's increased electoral support was the result of its internal organisation in addition to the economic background of the period. It was in this time that the SNP was transferred from being a simple political party to a nationalist movement representing the will of the Scots.

The second consequence was that the British main political parties started to rethink on their position on devolution under the nationalists' pressure. Indeed, devolution became the central issue of the British government which responded by many initiatives for devolution. Starting from the publication of a *White Paper on Devolution* in 1974 to the *Devolution Referendum* in 1979. Both British political parties participated in any attempt to devolution and provided the Scots with limited powers to control their own affairs. But all the initiatives were not welcomed by the nationalists because their proposals for devolution did not reach the nationalists' needs. The nationalists' primary goal was devolution and then independence, but responses from the British government were based on limited powers given to the Scottish assembly.

Therefore, these reactions from the two main British political parties can be interpreted from two different angles. First, many devolution initiatives represent a victory for the nationalists because due to their efforts and pressure the British government was obliged to reconsider its position to the idea of devolution. Furthermore, giving limited devolved powers to the Scots is itself positive for the nationalists who showed great dissatisfaction to the British central government. In this way the SNP also succeeded to develop a coherent Scottish nationalist movement which was able to fight for independence. Second, the government responses are considered as a way of manipulating the nationalists under the idea that the government would take control over the spread of national sentiments in Scotland. However, such claim was inappropriate for Scots who had great sense of their distinctive Scottish identity. Consequently, in the 1970s, the SNP grew in strength and support and became the party that could give voice to the Scottish national identity.

This study also showed that more pressure for constitutional change was increased in the 1980s with the election of a Conservative government under Mrs Thatcher's leadership. The new elected government was a great opponent to the idea of devolution as it emphasised

on recovering the damaged economy rather than any other issue. The government's opposition to nationalist movement did not prevent them to continue their fight for independence. But this time, a U-turn is the word to describe the SNP's policies of the time. A change in the party's direction characterises the nationalists' position. The SNP moved to support Scotland membership in the European Economic Community after showing great opposition to the idea in the mid-1970s. This change in direction was the result of the growing debate in Europe about the idea of political integration. The SNP, therefore, launched the 'Independence in Europe' campaign because Europe was seen as a means of achieving independence. For Scots, the British central government represented an obstacle for their economic development and the European Union would provide economic and security assurances for an independent Scotland.

Thus, in 1989 the Scottish Constitutional Convention was established in order to put a detailed plan for devolution. This plan included the smooth transformation of power to a directly elected Scottish Parliament by Scottish electorate. The convention is different from the previous proposals for devolution to Scotland. The difference is that this convention gave wide legislative powers to the Scots rather than providing them with limited ones. This exemplifies the success of the nationalists to achieve their goals even though independence remains a dream for them. To reach this stage in the development of the Scottish nationalist movement represents the great efforts made by the SNP and shows its long road to achieve independence.

Indeed, it is worth noting that the Scottish National Party has done an incredible role in the emergence of an organised coherent nationalist movement to fit the needs of the Scottish people. In fact, a single nationalist political party, SNP, succeeded to represent the Scottish national identity as whole and became the only voice for the Scottish nationalist movement. Thus, nationalism in Scotland put the unity of the United Kingdom under

question. Rather than permitting another party to be a successful nationalist party, the SNP remained the defender of the Scottish interests against the domination of the British government. It is with this organised nationalist movement that the British national identity was threatened. Also, the enormous debates about the issue of devolution and its transition to the central option of the British government are clear indications that minority nationalism is able to make a real threat to an established nation. They are aided by their glorious past as an independent nation.

While conducting this research, there are many other issues of great interest for further research. This research sheds some light on the revival of the Scottish nationalist movement in the 1970s and 1980s and the challenge it posed to the British national identity. There are many other important trends about the Scottish nationalist movement and the Scottish National Party. The significant role of the Scottish nationalist movement of the 1970s and 1980s in the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 will be a topic which needs more research. Other trends are related to the long road of the Scottish National Party to emerge in the political landscape, is the present Scottish Nationalist movement able to achieve its long standing goal of independence and to what extent the European Union helped the Scottish nationalist movement to create a Scottish Parliament completely independent from that of the UK. Further studies can be done on the amount of autonomy given to the Scottish parliament.

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