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Post-Thatcherism Scotland: The Fight for Independence

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Dedication

To those who believed in me

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Abstract

This study scrutinizes the story of the Scotland's call for independence. It explores and examines the impacts of Margaret Thatcher premiership on Scotland. As a distinct nation from the UK, Scotland's recorded history reveals significant facts about its national identity. For that, it was important to check what influences Thatcherite conservatism particularly had on the Scottish society. The present dissertation provides an overview on Scotland's main historical events, emphasizes the era of Thatcher as well as her political vision, and refers to the effects of Thatcherism on Scottish society. The Scottish nationalism brought them a strong party and parliament that did trace devolution. Post-Thatcherism was a period that inspired the Scottish to build a government that would plan for the Scottish independence from the United Kingdom.

Keywords: Scotland, Scottish Devolution, Margaret Thatcher, Post-Thatcherism, Scottish Nationalism.

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General Introduction

The disappointing outcome of the 18th September 2014 independence referendum marked a new era in Scottish history. Strangely enough, this result denied the fact that the Scots are very proud of being Scottish rather than British, that is, it ignored their national belonging and their deep affection for their national heroes, William Wallace and Robert Bruce.

In fact, research related to Scotland and its national distinctiveness from that of England has been abundant. It has been obvious that most, if not all, literature about Scotland scrutinize the evidence that led to its devolution upon England in 1997 and/or the Scottish willing for independence.

Within this context, a focus on Scotland under and after the governments of Margaret Thatcher has been taken into consideration in this study due to the fact that all the previous attempts for Scottish devolution before her premiership had suspended as well as the pre-1979 spirit of nationalism had diminished. Since our interest is based on the impact of Thatcher's premiership on Scotland, we will attempt to answer some key questions like:

Thus, this study attempts to revisit the mutual scepticism between Scotland and former British PM, Margaret Thatcher. It aims at examining the impact of Thatcherism on Scotland. The latter, as a distinct nation from the UK, reveals significant facts about Thatcherite conservatism particularly on its national identity. Briefly, It attempts to reveal the reason why Thatcher was unpopular among the Scots due to mainly her political-economic policies.

In order to reach the research objectives, the following questions have been raised:

- 1- To what extent and in what ways did Thatcher's policies affect Scotland?
- 2- How was Scotland's issue evolving after Thatcher's premiership?

It is hypothesized that:

- 1- Margaret Thatcher's policy in Scotland affected the Scottish nation economically and that raised the sense of nationalism among the Scots to call for independence.
- 2- The National Scottish Party worked for gaining referendums, and the Scottish nationalism arose to call for independence.

The current dissertation has been split into three chapters, puts forward the organizational framework of our study. The first chapter provides a historical overview of Scotland via accounting the key events as well as referring to the outstanding figures in its recorded history. The chapter focuses on the Scottish profile under the United Kingdom. The second chapter is devoted to the 20th century Scotland. First, it introduces Margaret Thatcher and presents the key events in her leadership. Moreover, the second chapter provides how Thatcher's policies affected the Scottish society.

Finally, the third chapter focuses on the post-Thatcherism period. It outlines the rise of the Scottish nationalism starting from the 1980s till the 2020s. It starts with the Scottish identity, moves to the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Parliament. The chapter also discusses the Scottish roads to devolution as well as the implications of independence.

CHAPTER ONE

SCOTLAND: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation attempts to provide a clear picture about the context of the current study, Scotland. In view of that, it focuses mainly on the historical development of Scotland through accounting the key events as well as referring to the important figures in its recorded history that led to its foundation starting from the unification of its diverse tribes into a kingdom (separate nation) until the unification of Crown 1603 and then Parliaments in 1707. Moreover, the chapter presents the way the Industrial Revolution transformed Scotland from a rural agricultural society to an urban manufacturing nation with huge factories and heavy industries.

1. Scotland's Profile

For the clarity of our dissertation, it seems important to portray the historical background of the context of the current research, Scotland. Here, we attempt to highlight Scotland's social hierarchy and cultural heritage, including its geographical location, ethnic composition, social and demographic changes. Moreover, we try to take a closer look at its recorded history, as well as referring to its political system of governance.

In its geographical features, Scotland is one of the four British Isles that comprise the UK. It is the second most extensive country in the UK with a total area of 78,789 Km², which equals approximately 31,510 sq miles including, of course, its islands. It is 274 miles long from North to South and varies in wideness between 24 and 154 miles. It has some 790 islands; 130 of which are inhabited. Scotland and its islands comprise the northernmost part of the United Kingdom. The Scottish peninsula is bounded to the north and west by the Atlantic Ocean. To the east, it is bordered by the North Sea. Also, it shares plain borders with England to the south. (see Map 1)

Map 1: Map of Great Britain highlighting Scotland and its neighbouring countries¹

The capital city of Scotland is Edinburgh. It contains important Monuments and castles such as Edinburgh castle and Holy-rod palace. Scotland includes many other important cities; among which one can cite Glasgow, its largest city, which is known as the commercial and formerly heavy-industry area besides Aberdeen, the third-largest city in Scotland known as Europe's oil capital and Dundee.

¹ Source: Maps of World Current, Credible, Consistent available online at: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/united-kingdom/britain/britain-outline-map.html>(accessed on 20th Jan 2019).

Scotland is an ethnically-diverse country. The largest majority ethnic groups are Scottish, British and Irish respectively. The largest minority group is Pakistani followed by other south Asian groups such as: Chinese, Indians, Bangladeshi, and those from any mixed backgrounds (Africans including Arabs, Caribbean or Black), (See table 1).

Table 1: Ethnic groups in Scotland (2017)²

	Number	percentage
All people	5,815,000	100.0
White	5,582,400	96.0
Scottish	4,689,212	84.0
Other British	465,200	8.0
Irish	58,150	1.0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	23,260	0.4
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	151,190	2.6
African	29,075	0.5
Caribbean or Black	11,630	0.2
Other ethnic groups	15,555	0.3

Scotland has the smallest portion of the United Kingdom's population, which is about 5,815,000; however, the population density differs from one region to another. Like many other developed countries, the demographics of Scotland have been fairly slow since centuries. The Scottish population stability may in turn to the fact that low birth rates approximate somehow death rate together with the steady rates of emigration to destinations overseas and to neighbouring England.

2. A Brief History of Scotland

Although Scotland has a long history, the first documented facts about it begin in the 1st century AD, when the Romans invaded Britain, “the region comprising present-day Scotland was known after the Roman invasion of Britain as Caledonia.” (Oakland 29)

2.1 Early Scottish Kingdom

The ancient Caledonians were called the Picts (from the Latin *pictus*, meaning ‘painted’) because they painted their bodies (McDowall 20). They were warriors and skilful

² Statistics from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/367842/scotland-ethnicity-of-population/> accessed on 20th Jan 2019

craftsmen in sophisticated metalwork. They seem to be the earliest dwellers of the north and north-eastern Scotland. They spoke Celtic as well as a dead Pictish language.

The second group of inhabitants of Scotland were the Scots Celtic settlers (also called Gaels), originating from Northern Ireland, who invaded the western Highlands in the 5th century³. At that time, the spread of Christianity in the region helped to unite both the Scots and Picts. The frequent defeats by the Norse raiders forced the Picts and Scots to end their long-term hostility towards each other and unite in the 9th century to form the Kingdom of Scotland “under a Scottish King, who could also probably claim the Pictish throne through his mother, in this way obeying both Scottish and Pictish rules of Kingship.” (McDowall 20)

From about the 5th century, a third group of people, who arrived in family groups, were known as Angles (Germanic people) from Northumbria conquered the Scottish Lowlands. They were totally different from the Celts due to their way of life. They used to farm their own individual fields. In fact, the lands there were distributed for farming by the local lord. Such distinguishing lifestyle increased the Angles’ feeling to develop a non-tribal system of control. The fourth group were the Britons, who inhabited the Lowland. The name of their Kingdom was ‘Strathclyde’.

2.2 The Unification of the Kingdom in the 10th Century

Actually, the unification of Scotland dated back to the late centuries of the first millennium and passed through several steps. First, the unification of the early Scottish kingdom, i.e., between the Celtic tribes of the Irish Scots, Picts and Britons, took place in 843 AD, when the Scots king, Kenneth MacAlpin, was crowned at the Stone of Destiny⁴. The new kingdom became known as Alba in Gaelic and in about the 10th century the land became known as Scotland.

The union was based on numerous reasons. Importantly, “the spread of Christianity within the region was one of the main causes in bringing all the tribes together. Moreover, they all shared a common Celtic culture, language and background” (McDowall 21). Such feeling among the tribes (known as ‘clans’) increased mixed marriages and alliances against the threat of the Vikings raiders, or “Norsemen”, from Scandinavia from about the end of the

³“The Official Gateway to Scotland”. Available online at: <http://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/scottish-history/> (accessed on 20th Jan 2019).

⁴ Also known as ‘Stone of Scone’, a powerful symbol of Scottish national identity to the present day.

8th century. The fact that they were all Christians while the invader was not and they were united under a single king, made it easier for them to face him.

By the end of the 9th century, the Viking attacked the coastal areas of Scotland, and they settled on many of the islands, Shetland, the Orkneys, the Hebrides, and the Isle of Man southwest of Scotland. The Scots managed to restore their captured territories but that was impossible. In 934, the Scots could not resist and were defeated by a Wessex army. Therefore, they demanded the English support since England was stronger than Scotland at that time. (Rollason 212)

2.3 Scotland from the Wars of Independence to the Reformation

King Malcolm III (1058-93) seemed to renew the Scots' ancient Celtic culture. His main concern was the internal reunion of Scotland to secure his throne from the Vikings' threat. During his early years in reign, the Scottish relations with the Anglo-Saxon were good, but after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, things had changed and Malcolm III attempted but unsuccessfully to invade England several times (Mackie 43). Moreover, the Scottish received cultural influences from England, that is, "the Scots gradually adopted English ways. Feudalism was established, and the chiefs of the clans became nobles. Towns grew, trade increased, and Scotland prospered".⁵

In addition to the reform process of the church, David I introduced a number of political reforms at the level of the executive, judicial and legislative branches as well as he brought lots of administrative changes, all based on English model. David's administrative reorganization and changes in government reshaped the Scottish life. This became known as Anglicization of Scotland. To come to the point, David's reign had a strong impact in bringing close links between Scotland and England. Although these changes helped Scotland to be a strong independent kingdom, they encourage the Scots to proclaim their independence from Great Britain later. (Webster 23)

From the reign of David I to William III, issues among the two countries remained unchanged. During Alexander III's reign (1249–86), Scotland witnessed a period of peace, prosperity and economical growth. By 1286, Alexander III died with no male heir. His successor was his three years old granddaughter Margaret⁶. The unexpected death of

⁵ History of Scotland. Available at: <https://www.scottishtours.co.uk/about-scotland.asp?id=29> (accessed on Jan 23rd 2019).

⁶ The daughter of King Eric of Norway whose mother died in childbirth.

Margaret in 1290 caused great concerns about the future of the kingdom of Scotland as well as put an end to the Celtic Kings. Therefore, the English king, Edward I (1272-1307), took this chance to intervene in Scottish affairs, even claiming the Scottish throne. Thus, he designed John Balliol; however, John Balliol's submission to Edward was temporal since he refused to supply him with military help against the French in 1294. (Mitchison 37)

Therefore, Edward I soon found a reason to cross the border and proclaim his kingship over Scotland after defeating Balliol's army in a decisive battle at Dunbar on April 1296. In fact, The Battle of Dunbar put an end to nearly two centuries of friendly relations between the two countries and led them to a long-lasting conflict. In other words, Edward's invasion of Scotland marked the beginning of the Scottish Wars of Independence (Mitchison 40). The Scottish definitely rejected to be ruled by the English king. The first recorded revolt was led by William Wallace, who was made "Guardian of Scotland" after his success at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297. A year later, he was defeated by Edward at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298. In 1305, William Wallace was captured and executed. (Tuck 31-32)

By Wallace's execution, the leadership of the Scots shifted to Robert the Bruce, who established himself as the new Scots' King in 1306. Edward I died in 1307 without subduing the northern kingdom. His son, Edward II (1307-1327), a weak king as compared with his father, was disastrously defeated by Robert the Bruce. By the coming of Edward III (1327-1377), the Treaty of Edinburgh of 1328 brought peace to both counties. Eventually, by King Robert's death in 1329, Scotland had become a battlefield among the weak kings, the Crown, and powerful nobles. The struggle for supremacy had continued for two centuries. (Keen 86-88)

By the early 16th century, the hostility among England and Scotland broke out again. Although a decade of peace was re-established in James IV's reign (1488-1513), declaring war on France in 1512 by Henry VIII renewed their opposition since Scotland had still been France's ally. Later, James IV was decisively defeated then killed by the English in the battle of Flodden Field in 1513. His son, James V (1513-1542), also supported France and was opposed by nobles. (Menziess 179)

At that time, England was in the process of Reformation (Protestantism); while, Scotland remained under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church (Catholic Restoration) due to its French connections. For that reason, Henry VIII of

England tried to convince James V to adopt the Protestant Reformation, but he refused. In 1561, James V's daughter, Mary Stuart (1542-1567), grew up in France then returned to Scotland. She had many confrontations with Protestant nobles, protestant reformer John Knox and even with half-brother James Stuart, 1st Earl of Moray. (Dawson 208)

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant nobles revolted against her. In 1568, her husband fled to Denmark while she was forced to abdicate. Therefore, she escaped and asked her cousin, whom never met, Elizabeth I (1558-1603) for help. Elizabeth I, who did not have an heir, ignored her since she felt in danger of losing her throne since Mary was a rightful heir to the English throne through her grandmother Margaret Tudor. Queen Elizabeth I soon captured Mary and finally executed her in 1587. (Mason 160-162)

James VI (1567-1625) began his personal rule in 1582. There was still growing clashes among the Catholic ruling class and the Protestant nobles. In 1586, James VI formed an alliance with his cousin, Elizabeth of England, which enabled him to reduce the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Such decision was reinforced by his marriage to Anne of Denmark in 1589 and he declared Scotland a Protestant country and instituted the supremacy of the state over the church. (Mason 169)

The death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 was considered as a turning point in the English history since she was succeeded by James VI, the first Protestant King of Scots, who became James I, King of England and Ireland. James I (1603-1625) became the first Stuart king of England, who united the thrones of England and Scotland. Thus, the Scottish link with France was slowly interchanged for connections with England. James' strong beliefs in the Divine Right of Kings⁷ as well as his inspiration from the governance style of the French monarchs led to frequent interruptions among him and the English Parliament. Such interruptions even in his son's reign and then influenced the Scots. (Young 73-74)

To sum up, one should bear in mind that profound changes in the development of Scotland took place at the time of James and despite the fact that the two countries were connected by a single king; Scotland remained a separate state with its own parliament and government.

⁷ An ancient doctrine that sovereigns are representatives of God and derive their right to rule directly from God. It gives the authority of church over the parliament.

2.4 Scotland in the 17th and the early 18th Centuries

Charles I (1625-1649) grew up in England and had no idea about Scotland and its institutions. He also believed in the Divine Right of Kings. This led into continual conflicts with Parliament, which was dissolved three times. Accordingly, the third Parliament met and presented the Petition of Right⁸, which he accepted for the reason that he was in need for money. In the next year, he dissolved that Parliament. In 1637, Charles I tried to impose Anglican forms of worship, known as *Liturgy*, in Scotland. Such Anglican forms did not satisfy the Scottish Presbyterians. (Mackie, Lenman and Parker 203)

Eventually, in 1638 they started to collect signatures, known as “National Covenant”, as a national support for opposing Charles project. The “National Covenant” led to two wars⁹, in which they tried to invade northern England (Mackie, Lenman and Parker 205). The defeat of the Scots cost too much money. Therefore, he was obliged to call the so-called Long Parliament in 1641, in which he ensured his non-kept promises in dissolving it again. He again called Parliament to end the rebellion starting in Scotland, but his demand was refused. Such rejection was the spark for the English Civil War (1642-1649), when both sides raised armies. (Mackie, Lenman and Parker 209)

Another opportunity for Scotland to be detached again from England was in the reign of Charles II (1660-1685). The political scene during his reign witnessed the appearance of the two main political parties in England, namely the Whigs (Liberals), who were anti-Catholicism and the Tories (Conservatives), who favoured the monarchy. Few years later, there were many crises between the Scots and William who passed English Bill of Rights in 1689, which necessitated the English monarch to be always Protestant and governed by the laws made by Parliament. The supporters of King James II, most of whom were Irish Catholics and Scottish Catholic Highland minorities, were against the English monarchs. (Mackie, Lenman and Parker 279-280)

In the late 17th century, at the commercial and economic levels, the Darien Scheme, also known as the Darien (Ad) venture, was an attempt to form a Scottish colony on the isthmus of Darien, Panama. It established a trading post of exchanging products (Richards 79). Therefore, the Darien Company was founded to raise Scottish investments. However, the consequences were disastrous since more than two thousand Scotsmen died and more than the

⁸ A statement demanding that Charles should make certain reforms in exchange for war funds.

⁹ Bishops' Wars (1639-1640)

quarter of the country's capital lost. The failure of the Darien Company was the main factors leading to the Act of Union of 1707.

2.5 Scotland in the United Kingdom

In about a century after the unification of the Scottish and the British crown under the first Stuart king James I, it was under the reign of the last Stuart monarch, Anne (1702-1714), the United Kingdoms of Scotland, England and Wales were combined as being Great Britain through passing the Act of Union of 1707. The latter is meant to incorporate the Scottish Parliament under a united Parliament of Great Britain at Westminster. The Scots would be represented by 45 commoners and 16 peers. At first the Act seemed to bring political stability, provide social welfare for countries, and supply free and equal trade throughout Great Britain and its colonies.

Definitely, although Scotland was in need to economic security and material support and was able to preserve its church, juridical and educational institutions, this event meant the loss of Scottish identity as well as certainly the destruction the Scottish traditional life (Hamilton 112). Such claims were clearly seen in the repeated Jacobite rebellions of 1708, 1715, and 1745 to 1746. This can be linked to the rise of Scottish nationalism in the 1970s and then in the end 1990s. Quite clearly, the latter was the main cause behind the so-called Scottish devolution (as it will be clarified in the following parts of the dissertation).

Furthermore, from the early 1800s till the early 20th century, the Industrial Revolution completely transformed the Scottish way of life in view of the fact that Scotland witnessed a gradual growth of industry that changed it from a rural agricultural society to an urban manufacturing nation with huge factories and heavy industries. While the minority of the Scots were craftsmen and/or still worked in farming, textile or fishing, the large majority moved to urban centres to work in the heavy industries of shipbuilding, cotton, iron and steel production, and coal mining. These industries made Scotland as one of the largest industrialised places on Earth. (Hamilton 119-120).

Also, coal mines were beneficial for both the Scots and Scotland although they cost them millions of lives. This was due to the bad working conditions and the long working hours with low wages. Children were sometimes beaten to work faster in unsafe conditions. Therefore, in 1842, Scotland issued the Miners Act that banned the employment of women

and girls underground. It also decreed that the legal minimum age of work for children had to be over ten; besides many mine inspectors were appointed. (Buchan 67)

In a few words, the Industrial Revolution was a two-edged sword for Scotland and the Scottish. On the one hand, the Scottish economy developed and became recognised inside the UK and also in the international level as well the level of employment increased. However, on the other hand, many other social problems appeared including: considerable housing and health problems together with some environmental threats such as air and water/rivers pollution resulting from the heavy industries.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has presented Scotland as being a distinct country. It has provided an overview about the major events that took place in Scotland since 9th till the 20th century. Thus, it is obviously seen that the Scottish spirit of nationalism, which dated back to the first century AD would continue. Despite all the efforts the British had made, the future Scottish generations will keep claiming their independence. Therefore, in the next chapter, a focus will be on 20th century Scotland, particularly when Margaret Thatcher became a Prime Minister. The way her style of governance impeded the Scots about looking for their devolution upon the UK will be highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO

THATCHERISM'S IMPACTS ON SCOTLAND

Introduction

After reviewing the brief history of Scotland, the 20th century Scotland has witnessed the first female prime minister in the UK. That had its effect on all Britain. Since the early 1980's, there has been worldwide extensive literature about Thatcherism and Thatcherite Conservatism and their impact on the political scene and mainly on the economic performance of the UK. More to the point, this chapter hopes to look at how the policy of Margaret Thatcher had impacts on the Scottish social, political and particularly economic life. The implication of the economic experiments of Thatcher's politics will be reviewed including: privatization, monetarism, and the Poll Tax that affected the social mood in UK as a whole and Scottish society in particular.

1. Introducing Thatcher

The nicknamed the “Iron Lady”¹, Margaret Hilda Thatcher, was born on October 13th, 1925, a British Conservative politician and the only woman to have held the office in the United Kingdom. She was the longest-serving British Prime Minister of the 20th century for eleven years, passing through winning three consecutive general elections, from May 4th, 1979 to November 28th, 1990. She was the longest-serving British prime minister of the 20th century and the first woman to hold that office. She died on April 8th, 2013.

2. Thatcherism in Scotland

By 1989, Thatcher started to lose popularity even within its party due to her authoritarian leadership style, which led to conflict with her ministers. She struggled for keeping the leadership over the Conservative Party. “Among the most controversial of Thatcher’s policies were the notorious Community Charge “Poll Tax” a flat tax paid by all adult citizens. The tax first introduced in Scotland in 1989 and in England and Wales in 1990”². Thatcher fully believed that the new tax would be popular, but such tax introduction led to a sharp decline in the popularity of the Conservative party in Scotland.

By 1990 opposition to Thatcher's policies on local government taxation, her perceived pride and her unwillingness toward European integration³ made her politically powerless. Accordingly, her membership was open to challenge in November 1990. On 22 November, Mrs. Thatcher announced that she would not be a candidate in the second ballot⁴ and therefore her term of office would come to an end. She resigned as party leader and Prime Minister and John Major was her successor.

Thatcher’s significant political decisions as well economical changes constituted the core elements of Thatcherism in Britain as a whole and in Scotland in particular from 1979 until 1990, and remains influential even in recent times.

with Thatcherism, she set out to save the soul of the nation and ended up selling it off to the cheapest bidder. . . . People who didn’t agree with Mrs. Thatcher were just not ‘one of us,’ they deserved no empathy, had to be beaten, and Britain for a while found her drama of certainty addictive. . . . Spite came to live in Britain during her time and we became partisan to the point of psychosis. . . . Margaret

A name given by a Soviet journalist for her uncompromising politics and leadership style¹

² "Margaret Thatcher." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

³ Britain would never abolish the pound and adopt a common European currency.

⁴ In the first ballot, Thatcher was two votes short of winning re-election, but on consulting with cabinet colleagues found a vast majority thought that she could not win on the second ballot.

Thatcher's greatest legacy will be to have made Britain a place more out of love with the idea of tolerance.⁵

So far, the term Thatcherism has been used in a broad sense. For that reason, it seems to a certain extent useful to discuss the concept in much supplementary details. Many researchers and intellectuals associated Thatcherism with Conservatism and its traditional values; however, a lot opposed such a connection.

As its name indicates, the word Thatcherism is closely associated with Margaret Thatcher's leadership of the Conservative party, which she made the dominant party in the British political scene for almost sixteen years, as well as her premiership for eleven years, after winning three successive general elections. Precisely, Thatcherism refers to Margaret Thatcher's style of governance, her decisive political policies and her adopted economical changes including privatization, monetarism, and hostility to labour unions.

2.1 Scotland at the Socio-Political Level

In 1975, in the election manifesto of Thatcher's party, Scots were promised a devolution reform. In that year was her first visit to Scotland as the new party leader. Czapiewski states that she was "met with mass interest and enthusiastic response, but that never happened again during her next visits." (88). As a leader, she started her claims about Scotland by "an Assembly must be a top priority to ensure that more decisions affecting Scotland are taken in Scotland by Scotsmen" (quoted in Bale 238). The case of devolution was the prominent event that shows Thatcherism in Scotland.

Czapiewski adds that Scottish advisors like Betty Harvie Anderson and Teddy Taylor clarified that devolution was a slippery slope to the independence of Scotland. Thatcher would change the party policy gradually, and the Labour Party was "hopelessly divided over devolution" (Bale 238). Yet, in the late 1980s, the latter took part in the Constitutional Convention when John Smith was the leader. (McCormick 103). Thatcher's public statements demonstrated at that time the slow departure from the postulate of devolution. The Scotland Bill was in the House of Commons when her statement showed opposition and devolution's deficiencies. Therefore, a small rebellion started in the Conservative Party. There were important Scottish politicians as a group of five Tory MPs voting with the Labour

⁵ O'Hagan, A. "Maggie: The New York Review of Books",_March 29th 2019. Available on line at: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/may/23/maggie/?pagination=false> (accessed on April 12, 2015).

Government for the Scotland Bill (that defined the conditions of devolution) and twenty-seven more abstained (Bale 238).

Thatcher encouraged the votes of “no, but”. Lord Home, very popular in Scotland, gave a speech stating “the vote against is not disloyalty towards devolution” because “the new Conservative government will propose a better designed devolution” (Torrance 30). Thatcher replied that rejecting the referendum “will open the way for all parties to a common search for a sustainable alternative,” and promised “real devolution”. That is, public authorities would be taken and citizens’ independence would be given. The final result of the referendum⁶ was, to Thatcher, a great victory and proof that the Scots in reality did not want devolution.

During eleven years as Prime Minister, Thatcher had been a vocal opponent of any type of devolution for Scotland. Torrance claims that she did not see noble motives in the Scottish independence, and she was always critical of the Scottish National Party. In an interview in 1975 she spitefully called them Snap, Crackle and Pop (Torrance 7). Thatcher wanted the Scots to save the troubles on their own. Her role was to support them yet complaining the dependency culture that was established, namely in Scotland. Thatcher herself declared after years that her policy towards Scotland was based on determination in the implementation of policies necessary for the development of the UK and throughout the country. (Czapiewski 99)

The fact that Scotland was the throbbing heart of the British economy at that time is noticeably confirmed by Thatcher in her memoirs that “the balance sheet of Thatcherism in Scotland is a lopsided one: economically positive but politically negative.” (Thatcher 623) For that, Thatcher era seemed to be politically disastrous for the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party since she intentionally diminished the number of the Scottish MPs from twenty-two to ten without a clear reason.

2.2 Thatcherism and Scotland at the Economic Level

From the late 1940's to the early 1960's, Scotland's economy still had difficulties and many industries declined such as shipbuilding, which also faced recession after nearly fifteen years of standing, and coal industries since the demands fell when oil became more important to run other industries; however, since the mid 1960's the industrial economy of Scotland had

⁶ The referendum was held on the 1st of March, 1979. 52% of the valid votes were in support of devolution. Yet, devolution failed because only 32.9% of eligible voters supported devolution, and the required support must be at least 40% of all eligible voters.

started to improve when the North Sea oil and natural gas reserves of the Montrose oil field and the Forties field, which are about 180 km east of Aberdeen, were discovered in December 1969 and in October 1970 respectively. Therefore, oil production and exploration has become among the most important industries that raise the Scottish government's revenue as well as has constituted the largest employer field in Scotland since the late 1970s.

At this point, we would like to refer to Thatcher's economic policies in the UK, of course, with a particular reference to their effects on Scotland including: Privatisation experiment, which began from the late 1970s, Monetarism and Community charge (or Poll Tax) instituted in 1989.

2.2.1 Privatization

The term privatization is defined in The Hutchinson Illustrated Encyclopedia of British History as:

Privatization policy or process of selling or transferring state-owned or public assets and services to private investors, in Britain particularly associated with the Conservative administration of Margaret Thatcher. Privatization of services involves the government contracting private firms to supply services previously supplied by public authorities. (207)

So, privatization can be defined as the process whereby a government alternates the ownership of its businesses and/or sells its enterprises to private patrons, who afford all the services that had been financed by government.

In reality, privatization used to be called denationalization. The idea of privatization in the UK originated long years before Thatcher's premiership, that is, it was dated back to the Labour Government of 1974-1979 that managed to sell some of the state's shareholding of the British Petroleum Company. Such decision was strongly opposed by many MPs as well as many intellectuals at that time. The Conservative Party did not announce its intention to what became known later as privatization during the election campaigns of 1979, but simply criticized Labour Government's desire to sell the two industries to private sectors. They strongly claimed their restoration to the state.

However, the election of a Conservative Government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher in May 4, 1979 made her government's intentions clear against state ownership of industries and state intervention in public services during the 1970's, mainly in the housing policy when the working class and the unemployed were offered living in the council houses,

which were managed by the local governments. Thatcher clearly states her intentions to promote privatization in her memoirs:

Privatisation ...was fundamental to improving Britain's economic performance. But for me it was also far more than that: it was one of the central means of reversing the corrosive and corrupting effects of socialism. Just as nationalization was at the heart of the collectivist programme by which Labour Governments sought to remodel British society, so privatisation is at the centre of any programme of reclaiming territory for freedom. (Thatcher 676)

Through this, Thatcher was blaming the previous governments' interference in all economic, political, and social problems and managed to change this situation by selling much of the state property to the private sector. Thatcher's aim, thus, was to limit the role of the state since she was in favour of individualism over collectivism. Thatcher believed that economy should rely more on a free market.

Thatcher's second term was characterized by the acceleration of the privatization programme, which provided sufficient income to continue reducing public expenditure whereas delivering income tax cuts. British Telecom (BT) in 1984, British Gas (BG) in 1986, and British Airways (BA) in 1987 constituted the most important privatized industries. By February 1987, 600,000 employees had been transferred to the private sector, and around 90% of them had become shareholders in the companies they worked for. (Parker 6)

The central criticism of the privatization programme was that it favoured individual shareholders, who made a huge profit at the expense of those workers who had been made unnecessary by the Government. This expanded unemployment and failed to reduce public expenditure. In other words, the government through the privatisation programme broadened the gap between the owners of the private industries and working class. That's why, "in 1983 only 25% of Scots favoured more privatisation compared to the British figure of 44%." (Seawright 79)

Another negative fact pointed out that Thatcher's second phase of reformation had widened the economic divide between northern (Scotland) and southern Britain (England), and had resulted in the continued erosion of Scottish manufacturing industry, of course by selling it to private patrons. In other words, Scotland was marginalized in comparison to England during Thatcher second term. This reality is referred by Hutchison that:

There was not the surge in consumer- and service generated wealth and growth experienced in England ... With lower per capita income, spending in the high

streets was lower, so service sector job formation, so significant in England, was much less pronounced in Scotland. (140)

Although many of Scotland's heavy industries moved towards extinction because of the privatization programme, which she made unpopular, during her second term, her strong leadership skills brought her and the Conservative Party the third victory in the election in May 1987. After her landslide victory, she thanked those who trusted her but menaced her opponents. She said that "today Scotland votes for its future ... but for the Scots who have no jobs there is no future. For them there is no future with Mrs. Thatcher" (Thatcher 275). In view of that, she made her third-term parliamentary programme clear towards initializing other strict policies during the following four years.

2.2.2 Monetarism: Thatcher's New Economic Approach

The notion monetarism is usually referred to by the politicians' adoption of ideas from the philosophy of economists that lead most of the time to political policies. Thatcher's early years represented her influence by economic ideas in promoting monetarism. The UK was anti-Communists and strong supporter of free market economies including capitalism and privatization. It is commonly believed that the economic policies of Thatcher and Regan had very much in common and were seen as representing a similar point of view in promoting free markets and limiting the total government intervention in economy. (Hutchison 154)

Thatcher strongly believed that the theory of monetarism would be the most adequate economic approach for the British economic development. Thatcher's monetary reforms were expected to reduce inflation. Darby states that "simple extrapolation of the deteriorating trend from the mid-1970's on suggested the inflation on a five-years average basis would be roughly 12-14% per year from 1976 to 1980, real growth 1.5-2%." (159)

During the early months of her first term, Thatcher concentrated on trying to sell some nationalized industries, which no one would buy. For instance,

In 1979/80 the British Steel Corporation (BSC) made the largest loss in its history of £1.8 billion, and £96 million of this figure was attributable to Scottish plants... In the wake of the 1980 steel strike, 20,000 British steelworkers lost their jobs. (Stewart 66)

Therefore, Thatcher's monetarism became so necessary to recover Britain's economy. In addition to funding the nationalized industries and its influence on increasing the rate of unemployment, Thatcher in her second term focused mainly on satisfying the trade unions,

which were the most powerful in the world at that time. The most prominent one was that of the miners - a year-long strike in 1984-1985. Thatcher planned to diminish their power and she succeeded in doing so by the two Trade Union Acts. Thus, unions lost their primary function that was protecting employers and their jobs. (Hutchison 162-163)

Scotland was considered an important supply in boosting Britain's economy since it provided most of the government's revenue from its oil industry (North Sea oil). Moreover, the profits of oil prevented Thatcher's economic strategy from breaking between 1980 and 1982 since "by 1980 the UK was self-sufficient in oil, and by 1983 it was producing 50% above its requirements" and that "the value of oil soared from £5.69 billion in 1979 to £14.43 billion in 1982, and by 1981 the UK trade surplus was £6,628 million" (Lee 103) However, Scotland was badly affected by Thatcher's economic policies especially during her first and second term in office.

Since the largest majority of workforce in Scotland was devoted to manufacturing, it was more reliant than the rest of the UK on public sector employment. For that reason, there were widespread fears that the closure of these industries due to her monetary reforms would increase Scotland's high rate of unemployment. Thatcher's monetarism displayed her carelessness about Scotland's industrial heritage, which was well-established in the heavy industries of steel, shipbuilding and coal. Therefore,

between 1979 and 1981 Scottish manufacturing lost 11 % of its output and 20% of its jobs, and in October 1980, 246,000 Scots were registered as unemployed... By May 1981 total Scottish unemployment had risen to 288,200, while the UK quota had struck 2.13 million by December 1980. (Stewart 68-69)

The rise of unemployment was surely in turn that the private sectors failed in creating employment without financial assistance from the state. By summer of 1982, the government attempted to compensate for the closure of its aluminum smelter by establishing an enterprise zone at Invergordon. By May 1983, 120 firms had been attracted to Clydebank creating job opportunities for only 1,300 people. However, none of the solution satisfied the Scottish. For them, such small reconstructions would not recover their economy. Although in 1983 around 43,000 people were employed in the electronics industry and North Sea oil continued to play an important role in the economy and revenues from the industry reached over £20 billion in 1984, Scotland remained a critical source of employment.

2.2.3 The Poll Tax (The Community Charge)

Thatcher's third term in office was characterized by public disagreement with the government due to introducing a new tax system for local government, known as the Poll Tax or the Community Charge as called by its opponents. (Hutchison 172)

The community charge meant that all adults living in one property paid the same tax. That is, the poll tax aimed at funding local government in the UK, instituted in 1989. It replaced the 'rates' which were based on the estimated rental value of a house or other property. The abolition of rates was in the electoral campaign of Thatcher's Conservative Party in the 1979. The replacement was proposed in the Green Paper of 1986. It was a fixed tax per adult resident, but there was a reduction for those with lower household income. Each person was to pay for the services provided in their community. (Stewart 77)

People felt it was not fair and it was estimated that hundreds of thousands of people did not include their names in the electorate register in order to be hidden or unknown. The new tax replaced the rates in Scotland from the start of the 1989/1990 financial year, and in England and Wales from the start of the 1990/1991 financial year. It was unpopular since it was based on the number of people living in a house rather than its estimated price. Many tax rates set by local councils proved to be much higher than earlier predictions leading to frustration and anger even among people who had supported it.

There were massive protests, called by the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation⁷ to which the vast majority of local Anti-Poll Tax Unions (APTUs) were united. In Scotland, the APTUs called for immense non-payment and these calls rapidly gathered widespread support which spread to England and Wales, even though non-payment meant that people could be put on trial or even jailed. In some areas, 30% of former ratepayers defaulted. (Reynolds 32)

The cost of collecting the tax rose suddenly while the returns from it fell. Therefore, a number of Poll Tax Riots emerged. The most serious was in a protest at Trafalgar Square, London, on 31 March 1990, of more than 200,000 protesters. A Labour MP, Terry Fields, was jailed for 60 days for refusing to pay his poll tax. This instability was helpful in bringing Margaret Thatcher down in 1991. (Hutchison 181-182)

⁷ Also known as "the Fed", an organisation in Great Britain coordinating with Anti-Poll Tax Unions campaigning against the Poll tax.

Conclusion

To go over the main points, this chapter portrays the way Thatcher's policy had impacts on the UK, namely on Scotland. Her political and economic vision was the most critical one in the history of the UK. Although Thatcher's political (as monetarism and privatization) expanded overseas, they failed at home. In the Scottish context, her economic strategy had led to a decline in manufacturing industry, and greatly increased levels of unemployment and reduced public expenditure during both the first and the second phases of her premiership. However, Scotland's economy began to recover in the final phase, and unemployment gradually fell.

The recovery that occurred in Scotland after 1987 failed to alter the Scots' attitudes towards Thatcher's style of governance and she remained unpopular because of other political developments, such as the implementation of the Poll Tax in 1990 that led her to a point of departure. It is obvious that Thatcher's policies served to highlight the unfair treatment between the English and Scottish, whose spirit of nationalism tended to rise towards claiming their devolution upon the UK as it shall be seen in the following part of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SCOTTISH NATIONALISM

IN POST-THATCHERISM

Introduction

The present chapter tries to show how the Scottish nationalism reappeared for more almost two centuries. It shows the role and the impact the Scottish National Party (SNP) played in adopting the Scots' desire for devolution since Winnie Ewing had won the 1967 Hamilton seat for SNP. Light will also be shed on the Scots' feeling of inequality and their demand for devolution through the 1970's. Such decade was a critical point in the Scottish history because it witnessed several attempts on devolution in which many White Papers were presented, but all unfortunately rejected by the Government.

As a core subject matter, this chapter hopes to examine the process the Scottish Parliament, after an eighteen-year delay -the whole Thatcher-Major governments, has evolved since the 11 September 1997 referendum to the modern Parliament that exists today. Besides, it attempts to go back to the disappointing outcome of the roads to Scottish independence and lessons should be drawn from the experience of preparing for independence to promote a better future change.

1. The Scottish Nationalism and Identity

It is believed that the Scottish national identity differs from that of the British. Specifically, even the two nations constitute the same country, the Scottish tend to reveal their feeling of belonging to the individual nation rather than to the whole unit. This reality is reinforced by McCrone David (2000), who states that:

People living in Scotland give much higher priority to being Scottish over being British. This holds broadly true for gender, social class, religion and region. Nevertheless, most people claim dual identity, and that Scots still remain 'British' in significant numbers. Compared with Wales and England, people in Scotland are much more likely to emphasise their Scottishness over their Britishness than either the Welsh or the English. (2)

In view of that and as piece of evidence, the pride of being Scottish rather than British can be seen and/or read in both their cinema and literary heritage, in which they profit from showing off their nationhood by means of glorifying their national heroes— William Wallace and Robert Bruce- as well as presenting satisfaction to their famous poets and novelists such as Robert Burns or Walter Scott.

As a core subject matter, the spirit of nationalism in Scotland was dated back to the years that followed the Act of Union of 1707, which is always referred to as being the spark that exploded the barrel between Scotland and its larger neighbour. To say it differently, such act resulted in successive rebellions led by the Jacobite in 1708, 1715, and 1745 to 1746. Even though the Scots reached as far as Derby in the south, their rebellion was easily crushed at Culloden in 1746. Through this battle, the British government succeeded to put an end to any of the Scottish attempts for independence for almost two centuries.

From the earliest days of the 1960s to around the late of the 1970s, the discovery and exploitation of North Sea oil was the main reason to revive the Scottish nationalism. Such claim was clearly stated by the Scottish National Party's slogan *'It's Scotland's oil'* during the 1974 general election. However, during the 1997's referendum, *"when people were asked to choose between being Scottish and being British, 56% of people said the former and 38% the latter"* (Crowther, Martin and Shaw 12). This, then, was a significant starting point for the Scottish to publicly revealing their national identity and belonging. By retelling the same idea in other terms, in this referendum the Scots clearly made the distinction between whom really deserves to be called a Scottish and what is really meant by being British.

2. The Scottish National Party

Historically, no one dared to counter the British government and claim Scottish independence publicly except the Scottish National Party (SNP) in the 1974 general election since the Jacobite rebellion's defeat in 1746. The SNP is a descendant party of two united parties in Scotland namely; the National Party of Scotland (NPS) –founded in 23 June 1928 - and the smaller Scottish Party (SP) established in 1932. The birth of the SNP was on Saturday, 7 April 1934. (Crowther, Martin and Shaw 14).

The SNP's first conference took place in the main auditorium of Glasgow's St. Andrew's Hall. The organizers intended to make their meeting in private and by invitations only. Therefore, only few people witnessed the historic initiation ceremony. Surprisingly enough, there were no mass media to cover the event. This might be in turn to the fact that the British government attempted to exclude any challenging efforts to improve the government of Scotland. The constitutional change was the SNP's ultimate objective. They look mainly for "Scotland's self-government" and not only a form of "home rule" within the UK.

During the early 1960s, there had been an incessantly considerable support for the political views of the SNP, especially about their independence upon Britain. Such trust led the SNP to a significant electoral gain when Winnie Ewing won the 1967 Hamilton seat. Unexpectedly, the SNP's popularity tended to rise in which they gained 23 seats at the May 1967 municipal elections and wished to win around 100 seats at the next year's local council elections. The growing popularity of the SNP frightened both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party, who were obliged to change their minds towards the issue of Scottish devolution. (Duclos 3)

The UK government felt the urge to think of alternative options for its future structure. However, by the early 1970s, the exploitation of oil fields and gas production in the North Sea of Scottish coast awoke up again the Scottish nationalism. Accordingly, the Scots started to think about an expected election for independence. McCrone claimed that the way was then to the SNP to adopt the Scottish willing through opposing the fact that the Scottish economy benefitted a lot from the union as claimed by the British government (14). The SNP declared that an independent Scotland could be economically successful. Therefore, in the general election in February 1974, the SNP won 7 seats in parliament for the first time in its history in a general election. This was a chance for the SNP to go through the October 1974 general

election campaign using the well-known catchy slogan “*It’s Scotland’s oil*”. It was a successful tactical strategy that enabled the party to win 11 seats. (McCrone 17)

The rise of Scottish nationalism was no more a wider tide of political energy that supported the SNP rather than a revival of self-government. In other words, the Scottish devolution in the 1970’s was simply a response to the rise in political popularity of the SNP. Undeniably, the most significant factor is that the SNP initiated the next generations’ maintenance of their devolution through getting involved in the following referenda and/or elections either at a local or regional level. (Hassan 29)

3. The Scottish Devolution

By September 1974, the Labour Government had intentionally deviated from providing an acceptance to the proposal for legislative devolution to Scotland and executive devolution to Wales. The Labour Party did not say a word about Scottish nationalism or devolution in the October 1974 general election campaign. The election results revealed the fact that Labours would have lost the election without the seats of the SNP.

In the wake of these events, Margaret Thatcher strongly rejected the Labour’s devolution plans. Therefore, the government suggested a Second Reading. The Second Reading is usually a time for examination of the specific clauses in a Bill, but the same basic arguments were repeated again.

On 22 February 1978, the Scotland Bill¹ received an agreement for its Third Reading. The Labour Government managed to take the Scotland Act, which was too detailed to be clear enough, into consideration. Since the Act included a requirement for a “post-legislative” referendum before its coming into force, it was an opportunity for the government to repeal the Act through its anti-devolutionist MP, George Cunningham, who introduced an amendment that decreed that the devolution referendum should reach at least 40% of Scotland's total registered voters, rather than by a simple majority (Hassan 113). The Act received Royal Assent on July 31, 1978 and the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales in 22 November declared that the referendum would occur on March 1, 1979.

¹ The Scotland Act suggested the establishment of a Scottish Assembly elected by first past the post consisting of 145-150 members. The existing parliamentary constituencies would form the basis of the election system, with two or three members for each constituency. A separate Scottish Executive would be established, headed by a First Secretary chosen by the Assembly.

However, the referendum results were disappointing for both the Scottish and Welsh. In the Scottish context, only 32.9% of the registered electorate as a whole who voted “Yes”. The referendum failed to obtain the required percentage which is 40% and that was insufficient and could not keep the Scotland Act alive. The 40% seemed to be unfair and many expressed their regret about it and its effect on Scotland’s future. This was clearly stated by Tam Dalyell (2011), an anti-devolutionist Scottish MP, that:

With the benefit of hindsight, I have come to believe that imposing a 40% hurdle was a mistake. People in Scotland had been used to abiding by simple majorities. Unfortunately, from my point of view, but alas, understandably, the 40% condition was seen as “not quite right” and “downright cheating” by others. Undoubtedly it cost the “no” campaign votes. How many votes, none of us will ever know. But, in my opinion, it was enough to have given the “no” campaign outright victory in the popular vote....Had there been an outright “no”, the issue of a Scottish Assembly might have been put to bed for a generation (Dalyell 185)

Immediately after the Act failed to achieve its purpose, the government faced the dilemma of originating an order against the repealed the Act or looking for another strategy to survive it. This order hoped of retaining support from the Scottish nationalists. Nevertheless, the Liberals declared that they would support neither the repeal nor the government in a vote of confidence because they desired an early election.

Margaret Thatcher became the new prime minister in 4 may, 1979. This victory brought the Conservatives to four successive governments later for almost eighteen years until the Labours would return in 1997, led by Tony Blair. Margaret Thatcher’s first task as Prime Minister was to repeal the Scotland Act. (Marr 23)

Indeed, during the eighteen years of Thatcher-Major rule, no real action was assumed by the government on the issue of devolution to Scotland. This does not mean that the hopes towards the Scottish devolution disappeared, but the concern of the devolutionists changed to social and public demands for new constitutional resolutions. For instance, there were huge demonstrations resulting from the introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland before the rest of the UK, and negotiations about how to proceed against it led to an extreme division among the Scottish parties. Throughout the conservative governments, there was a decline in number of the Scottish MPs, and devolution was led by Labours and Liberals, to develop a plan that might be effectively implemented after the change of government. (Marr 25-27)

After the defeat of devolution in the 1979 referendum, no one was able to call another referendum publicly except Tony Blair, Labour Party leader of the opposition, in the summer

of 1996 in the controversy over tax-varying powers. There, he included an important question, which was whether Scotland should have a parliament. Blair's decision met the Conservative criticism.

In the 1997 general election campaign, Tony Blair took into his consideration the issue of devolution as well as the establishment of the Scottish parliament. Despite the fact that Blair was not convinced on devolution, he expected that it would happen one day. He described Scottish devolution a 'dangerous game', he stated that:

I was never a passionate devolutionist. It is a dangerous game to play. You can never be sure where nationalist sentiment ends and separatist sentiment begins. I supported the UK, distrusted nationalism as a concept, and looked at the history books and worried whether we could get it right. However, though not passionate about it, I thought it was inevitable. (Blair 251)

At the general election on 1 May 1997, Tony Blair led Labour to win by a landslide. As promised in its electoral campaign, the new Labour Government's first public bill would be a White Paper for both Scotland and Wales, which would be introduced before 15 May and with its Second Reading only a week later. On 24 July the Government published a White Paper, outlining the content of the Bill that would follow the referendum, as a foundation for the vote. The referendum was scheduled to be held in Scotland on 11 September.

The SNP agreed to join the new campaign organisation, adopting the slogan of '*Scotland Forward*', to fight for a Yes-Yes result in the referendum as a reaction to the 'no' organisation '*Think Twice*' launched by the Conservatives. (Hassan 131) As not expected, the three-week electoral campaign was shortened due to Princess Diana's death in August 1997.

Fortunately, the referendum results were in favour of devolution as well the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, with an amount of 74.3% (The proportion of the electorate voting 'yes' was 44.7%). The Scotland Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 17 December 1997 (Torrance 68). The Bill took almost a year before it became the Scotland Act by Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. The UK Parliament subsequently approved the Act creating an elected Scottish Parliament with control over most domestic policy. On 1 July 1999, the British Queen opened the new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. (Torrance 71)

3.1 The Scottish Parliament

For a devolved parliament, Scotland held its first election in May 1999. Holding the first session in the Scottish Parliament was in July 1999 since the previous parliament had been adjourned in 1707. Donald Dewar became the First Minister of Scotland, while the SNP became the main opposition party.

In July 1999, the new Scottish Parliament was opened by the British Queen stating the fact that power to make own laws was relocated from Westminster to Edinburgh. This reality was referred to by the Scottish First Minister at the opening day of the Scottish Parliament that “Today, we look forward to the time when this moment will be seen as a turning point: the day when democracy was renewed in Scotland, when we revitalised our place in this our United Kingdom.”²

In view of that, from that date onwards, the Scottish Parliament has been ready to use its legislative, judiciary and executive powers for almost devolved matters in the local government exactly the same way the UK Government does. However, it also has limited authority over taxation. Moreover, the majority of the Scottish public funds are the national government grant. The UK Government retains control over foreign affairs, defence, welfare, and employment policies for itself. (Torrance 86)

3.2 The Scottish Government

The devolved government of Scotland constitutes an important part of the United Kingdom because it has 59 members in the House of Commons. Since 1999, the British Parliament transferred many of its responsibilities in Scotland to a new Scottish Parliament. Moreover, It is said that “the Scottish Government is the executive arm of the Parliament”³ but one may notice that the ‘government of Scotland’ does not have a full control of all its public services since much of them are retained by the British government. Therefore, one may claim that the Scottish Executive is not the complete ‘government of Scotland’ and if it were it would have power on all devolved matters.

² Speech of the First Minister Donald Dewar at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/donald-dewar-1999-speech-at-opening-of-the-scottish-parliament/>. Accessed on 10 August 2019.

³ The Official Gateway to Scotland. Available at: <http://www.scotland.org/about-scotland/scottish-history/>. Accessed on 10 August 2019.

However. McTaggart claimed that “since the election victory by the SNP in May 2007, the Executive of the Scottish Parliament has been renamed the Scottish Government. Both terms – Executive and Government – are used in this resource.” (6)

The SNP thought of pledging to hold an independence referendum after the 2007 Scottish Parliament election. Yet, the government passed the white paper of "Choosing Scotland's Future" outlining the independence as an option. The independence option was publicly attacked by Prime Minister Gordon Brown. The Scottish Labour, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats opposed a referendum offering independence as an option. Instead, they formed a Commission on Scottish Devolution This reviewed devolution and considered all constitutional options apart from independence. However, the Scottish Government announced that no referendum would occur before the 2011 elections. (Torrance 91)

The Scottish Parliament was provided with the power to hold a referendum by the UK Government. After negotiations between the two governments, The Scottish Independence Referendum Act was passed on 27 June 2013 by the Scottish Parliament and received Royal Assent on 7 August 2013.

4. The Implications of Independence

It is quite clear that the declaration of David Cameron to *The Telegraph* (April 2007), which was in favour of the devolution of the Scottish Parliament reappeared as being an inspiration to the Scots’ desire for independence. In fact, Cameron’s statement was the earliest motivation for the Scotland’s independence when he stated that:

Supporters of independence will always be able to cite examples of small, independent and thriving economies across Europe such as Finland, Switzerland and Norway. It would be wrong to suggest that Scotland could not be another such successful, independent country. ⁴

Accordingly, for the first time in the Scottish history, the roads to Scottish independence formally appeared in February 2010, when the Scottish Parliament attempted to debate a draft bill on a referendum on independence. The bill suggested a full independence from the UK. This draft seemed to be an earlier SNP’s electoral campaign for the 2011 Scottish Parliament general election. Surprisingly enough, the third general election witnessed

⁴ *The Telegraph*, 11 April 2007. Available at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3639114/Scots-and-English-flourish-in-the-Union.html> Accessed on 10 August 2019

a landslide victory of the SNP and that might interpret the Scots' willingness to be independent from the British government.

Five months later, the SNP government officially initiated its drive for independence announcing details about an expected winning of a forthcoming referendum on independence. On January 8th, 2012, in interview with the BBC, Prime Minister David Cameron once again reinforced his earlier point of view over the independence referendum, which he strongly believed that "it should be held sooner rather than later."⁵ It was an opportunity, there, for Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, to intervene and ask whether there would be a referendum and if so he proposed the possibility for the 16 to 17 aged Scotsmen to vote if the referendum would be held after 2014.

On 10 January 2012, Michael Kevin Moore, Secretary of State for Scotland, in an appearance on the BBC's *Question Time* programme, announced that the Scottish government did not have legal power for a referendum. Therefore, Alex Salmond was obliged later to reply that he planned to hold the referendum in the autumn of 2014. Later, Michael Kevin Moore regretted stating that "You'll never hear me suggest that Scotland could not go its own way."⁶ By May 2012, the 'Yes Scotland' campaign for independent Scotland was launched.

On October 15, 2012, David Cameron and Alex Salmond signed the historic Edinburgh agreement, which emphasized on a single yes/no independence referendum in autumn 2014. It also allowed 16 and 17-years-old to take part in the vote. In January 2013, the expression "Should Scotland be an independent country?" was used by the Electoral Commission instead of the yes/no question. And in 12 March 2013, Alex Salmond announced that the independence referendum would take place on Thursday, September 18, 2014.

In November 2013, Mr. Salmond published a White Paper entitled "Scotland's Future: Your guide to an independent Scotland", which he described as the "most comprehensive blueprint for an independent country ever published"⁷

⁵The Telegraph, 09 Jan 2012. Available at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9000629/David-Cameron-Scottish-independent-vote-must-be-legal-and-binding.html> Accessed on 10 August 2019

⁶"Of course Scotland can be independent", Available at: <http://www.businessforscotland.co.uk/independence-if-we-can-why-wouldnt-we/> Accessed on 10 August 2019.

⁷ Andrew, Black, BBC Scotland, *Scottish independence: Referendum White Paper unveiled*, Available online at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-25088251> Accessed on 10 August 2019.

As planned, the Scottish independence referendum took place on 18 September 2014, when of about four million Scots were exposed the dilemma of choosing Scotland's future through either leaving the United Kingdom to a new era where Scotland can take its own decisions mainly about its people and natural resources or retaining Westminster's control over key decisions that may perhaps affect life in Scotland. Moreover, Gordon Brown promised to draft laws set out a "modern form of Scottish Home Rule" on January 2015 if Scots vote No. (Craig 86)

As not expected, the outcomes of the vote were disappointing at least for those who were certain about the very positive response to the referendum campaign. Briefly, the 2014 independence referendum was another lesson that the Scots should learn from and teach for the next generation. This lesson would be well-grasped on 24 March 2016 on which the destiny of Scottish independence would be shaped hoping to bring Scotland to end more than 300 years of Union. (Bulmer 107)

After the UK announcing to hold a referendum to leave the European Union, the supportive leaders of Scottish independence suggested not to vote for leaving. Thus, a second Scottish independence referendum should be precipitated. As the Brexit referendum of 23 June 2016 was done, 62% of Scottish voters opted for remaining in the EU. Eventually, Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish First Minister, emphasized to "secure our place in the EU", and that a second referendum was "highly likely"⁸. As a reply, A spokesperson for British Prime Minister Theresa May said that

The prime minister and the government does not believe that there is a mandate for a second referendum. There was one only two years ago. There was an extremely high turnout and there was a resounding result in favour of Scotland remaining in the UK.⁹

For that, any British constituent country' legality that tends to gain or declare unilateral independence out of the British constitutional and conventional frameworks is debatable. The parliament did not argue for a unilateral act, yet a referendum's victory would have

⁸ Scotland Politics. BBC News. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-36621030> Accessed on 10 August 2019.

⁹ Scotland Politics. BBC News. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-37708545> Accessed on 10 August 2019.

"enormous moral and political force... impossible for a future Westminster government to ignore"¹⁰

Conclusion

To sum up, the reappearance of the Scottish nationalism towards claiming the issue of devolution to Scottish Parliament had fought its way through the Westminster's Parliament many times over during the 1970's and even if it failed and stumbled over the eighteen years of the Thatcher-Major governments, the opening of the Scottish Parliament was a moment of recognition that the Scottish has hoped for since 300 years. Moreover, irrespective of the disastrous outcome of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, it is such powerful Parliament that will highlight the path of Scotland's future towards pushing the future Scottish generations about keeping claiming their right for independence.

¹⁰ The Scottish Government. Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/a-national-conversation/Your-Questions-Answered> Accessed on 10 August 2019.

General Conclusion

To go over the main points, then, the recorded history of Scotland reveals the fact that it has totally a distinct social structure from that England. Even though the crowns were united in 1603 and the two parliaments were combined in 1707, the Scottish nationalism reappeared for almost two centuries and a half to claim mainly the Scots' national identity via their devolution upon the UK.

More to the point, one should bear in mind that albeit Thatcher's economic policies harshly affected the Scottish society (higher unemployment, reduction of public expenditure and the first country within the UK to experience the Community Charge system that made her deeply unpopular) along with her style of governance that had suspended their devolution for eighteen years (Thatcher-Major governments);

Thatcherism was an inspiration to devolution as well as the establishment of the Scottish parliament since the subsequent governments could not simply manage the UK's economy as she did. In other term, the 1997 Labour government led by Tony Blair felt the urge to devolve the Scottish Parliament for it was unable to provide tax cuts. In fact, the Labour's decision was wise since that government knew well that the Scots would revolt and claim their devolution because taxes were unpopular.

At long last, it is such devolved parliament that must continue the implications of independence. Although the 18th September 2014 referendum failed to achieve its purpose, and the second one as well on 24 March 2016, Brexit came to bring new debates on the Scottish issue. Prime Minister Theresa May came to stress working together for Brexit negotiations. For that, many questions can be raised at this point. Will the Scottish keep calling for their independence? Will independence be granted by force? Will Brexit be worth Scotland's independence?

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