Memory Politics and Scottish Exceptionalism in the Referenda of 1979, 1997, 2014, and 2016.

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Abstract

Historical narratives play a vital role in the construction of national identity. But national narratives vary depending on who is telling the story and under what circumstances. National narratives therefore contain rival strands that compete for dominance within a discursive space. Duncan Bell describes this discursive space as the 'mythscape'. According to Bell, the mythscape typically contains a 'governing myth' and 'subaltern myths', which interact in complex ways.

This thesis applies Bell's theory to Scottish memory discourse to evaluate the degree to which it conforms to his predictions. To this end, the thesis examines in detail the deployment by rival political actors of historical arguments during the course of four sequential referenda, all of which involved questions about Scotland's place within the United Kingdom. These referenda were the Devolution Referendum of 1979, the Devolution Referendum of 1997, the Independence Referendum of 2014, and the Referendum on the United Kingdom's Membership in the European Union of 2016. The thesis analyses and explains the changes and continuities of Scottish memory politics over five decades. Above all, it investigates the concept of Scottish exceptionality within the context of Scotland's mythscape.

Thesis Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Acknowledgments

Introduction

In 2003, sociologist, Duncan Bell published a seminal article entitled 'Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity'. This article questions the use of existing frameworks of collective memory in the analysis of national identity, and posits that they should be rethought and clarified.[1] Bell argues that we should replace the term 'collective memory' with the term 'mythology'.[2] This alteration makes room for Bell to introduce what he terms the 'mythscape' or 'the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written'.[3]

Bell argues that, although there are many ways in which the mythscape manifests itself, all mythscapes have certain features in common. Two of these features are the 'governing myth' and the 'subaltern myth'. According to Bell, the governing myth is the attempt to impose a singular, definitive meaning on the past.[4] However, the governing myth is in constant conversation with subaltern myths.[5] In addition to the fact that national mythscapes always have both governing and subaltern myths, Bell argues that these myths interact in certain ways. In particular, Bell claims that subaltern myths deal with oppression and suffering, whereas governing myths are frequently tales of national glory.[6] However, within the mythscape, the subaltern and governing myths are in constant competition for dominance. This competition often results, particularly in circumstances where nations gain independence or sovereignty, in a subaltern myth becoming the governing myth.

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[1] Duncan S.A. Bell, 'Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology and National Identity', *British Journal of Sociology,* Vol.54, No.1 (2003), 63.
[2] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 66.
[3] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 66.
[4] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.
[5] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.
[6] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.

Some theorists of nationalism note that Scottish nationalism is exceptional and does not properly conform to existing structures used to understand nationalism.[7] This thesis uses Bell's concept of 'mythscapes' to determine if this exceptionality carries into Scottish memory politics. In so doing, the thesis addresses the question: is the Scottish mythscape exceptional? This question is explored through the examination of historical narratives within the political discourse surrounding four case studies. These are the 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda, the 2014 Independence Referendum, and the 2016 United Kingdom European Union Membership ('Brexit') Referendum.

The thesis consists of four chapters, the first of which analyses the existing literature on Scottish nationalism, memory, and identity. This chapter examines the idea of Scottish exceptionality expressed both in theories of nationalism and in studies of Scottish nationalism. The second chapter examines the campaign for a Scottish Assembly and then Parliament, which began in the 1970s, and concluded in 1997 with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood. It investigates how the lack of a Scottish governing party, separate from a British governing party, impacted the interaction between competing myths. Chapter three assesses the Scottish Independence Campaign, which commenced in May 2012 and ended in September 2014. It examines the impact of the addition of a national parliamentary body which returned Scottish politics to a two-party system. The fourth chapter looks at the aftermath of the Brexit Referendum, which has been used a launch pad for a future Second Independence Referendum. This chapter asks whether political polarisation impacts the dynamics of the governing and subaltern narratives. The thesis concludes by determining whether, in light of Bell's theory, the exceptionality of Scottish nationalism extends to the Scottish mythscape.

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[7] Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 43-6; James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 28.

Chapter 1. History and Historiography of Scottish Memory Politics

As Michael Billig argued in his 1995 work *Banal Nationalism*, nationalism exists in all countries.[1] Although he acknowledged that it was most obvious in movements which seek to achieve independence, he argued that it everywhere serves to maintain a sense of nationhood. Billig claimed that there are several devices which reinforce national identity, one of which is collective memory.[2] Along with other theorists of nationalism, such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Terrence Ranger, Billig argued that historical narratives underpin a people's sense of nationhood. Although many of these narratives are produced socially, politics also plays a significant role.

This chapter examines the main political parties in Scotland and their political influence prior to the 1979 Devolution campaign. It explores the main theories of nationalism and collective memory, and explains why Scottish nationalism is often seen as exceptional. Finally, the chapter analyses the scholarship on Scottish collective memory to determine how the existing literature deals with this issue.

Historical Background

The devolution debate of the 1970s centred on the nature of the political union between Scotland and England. Before the union of the Scottish and English Parliaments in 1707, Scotland and England had spent much of their previous history in violent conflict with each other. Eminent Scottish historian, Tom Devine, argues that 'Scotland's emergence as a nation out of miscellaneous tribal groupings in the medieval period was in large part the result of a

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[1] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995), 6.
[2] Billig, *Banal Nationalism,* 39.

centuries-old struggle to defend the kingdom from English aggression'.[3] The union of the two kingdoms under James I (of England) and VI (of Scotland) in 1603 had brought the two countries closer. However, Scottish and English political structures remained distinct. This made the decision to merge the two parliaments controversial. Following the union, the political landscape was centralised through the Westminster Parliament, eventually becoming the two-party system that exists today.

Scottish Home Rule became a significant political issue in the 1870s. At this time, Home Rule was seen as a solution to the increasing congestion of Westminster Parliament through the establishment of local systems of government.[4] Moreover, Home Rule was perceived as a way of preserving the unity of the UK. Scottish Home Rule became official policy of the Scottish Liberals from 1888.[5] The rise of Irish radicalism in connection with Home Rule complicated the Scottish cause and resulted in intensified Conservative opposition.[6] It was during this time that the phrase 'unionism' was first associated with the Conservative Party.[7] The result was increased polarisation of the Home Rule debate across party lines.[8]

The Labour Party was formed in 1900 and, by the 1920s, it had replaced the Liberals as the primary opponents of the Conservative Party. Like the Liberals, Labour had shown support for Home Rule. Political scientists Michael Keating and David Bleiman argued that 'support for Home Rule in the early days was an integral part of the character of the Scottish Labour Party'.[9] However, due to political developments in the 1920s, specifically World War I and the Irish War of Independence, Labour's commitment to Scottish Home Rule declined.[10]

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[3] T.M. Devine, 'Three Hundred Years of the Anglo-Scottish Union' in T.M. Devine (ed.), *Scotland and the Union, 1707-2007* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 3.
[4] Michael Keating & David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism,* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 30.
[5] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour,* 31.
[6] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour,* 31.
[7] E. Cameron, 'The Political Histories of Modern Scotland', *Scottish Affairs*, Vol.85, No.1 (2013).
[8] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour,* 31.
[9] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour,* 52.
[10] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour*, 84.

This was not because the party was oblivious to the benefits of devolving power. Rather, the early twentieth century had exposed the challenges associated with changing constitutional arrangements. Nonetheless, at the 1945 General Election, Labour's Scottish manifesto had two main objectives: Japanese defeat and Home Rule for Scotland.[11] Although the election of 1945 led to Labour's first overall majority at Westminster, what followed was a period of centralisation.[12] The party's time in power was characterised by the nationalisation of the railways, mining, and heavy industries, as well as the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) and the introduction of a National Insurance scheme. These changes across British society were not conducive to devolution, so the manifesto pledge was abandoned. The 1951 General Election saw the Conservatives return to power, which they held for 13 years.[13] The Conservatives did not support devolution, although the Unionist Party in Scotland, which was associated with the Conservatives, did.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed in 1934 with the explicit goal of achieving Scottish independence. The party was the result of a merger between the centre-left, National Party of Scotland (NPS) and the centre-right Scottish Party, which had broken away from the Scottish Unionist Party in 1932.[14] During its early years, the party achieved minimal success, in part due to its independence-or-nothing approach, which was seen as too extreme by many Scots. It was during the 1960s that hostility between Labour and the SNP intensified.[15] Literary scholar, Murray Pittock notes: 'In the 1960s, [the SNP] started to win and—arguably more importantly—to drive the agenda of the Unionist parties.'[16] The SNP, which had been a marginal party for much of its existence, achieved a breakthrough in the general election of

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[11] Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence? Scotland in the Balance* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 40.
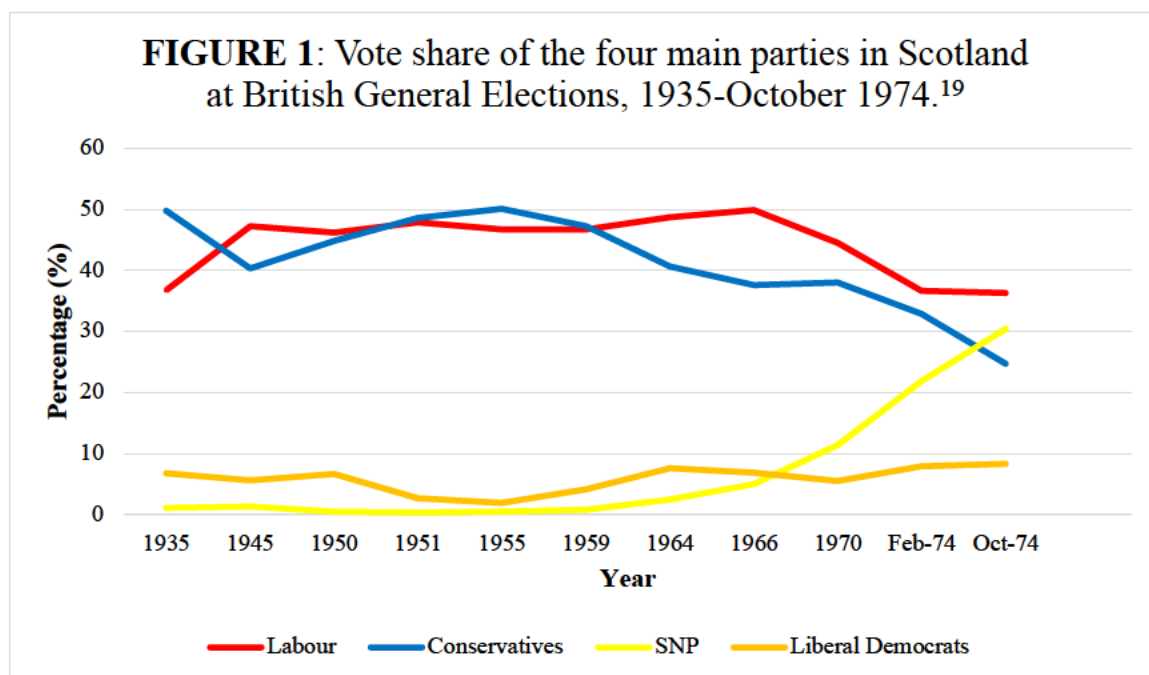[12] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 40-1.
[13] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 42.
[14] David Broughton, 'Scottish National Party', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 30 August 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Scottish-National-Party (accessed 30/9/2022).
[15] Cameron, 'Political Histories'.
[16] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 23.

1966, when it won 5 percent of the Scottish vote.[17] This, paired with the victory of Winnie Ewing in the Hamilton by-election of November 1967, ushered in a new age of Scottish politics.[18] As Figure 1 indicates, 1966 was a turning point for the SNP. After this election, the SNP share of the vote continued to grow in Scotland and the party became an electoral threat to both Labour and the Conservatives. By October 1974, the SNP had a greater share of the Scottish vote than the Conservative Party.

FIGURE 1: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at British General Elections, 1935-October 1974.[19]

Approaches to the Study of the Nation

The study of Scottish nationalism must be placed in the context of the wider study of nations and nationalism. Over the last two centuries, opinions about the nature of nationalism have

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[17] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 74.
[18] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 27.
[19] Sam Pilling & Richard Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2021: A Century of Elections', *Commons Library Research Briefing,* 18 August 2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7529/CBP-7529.pdf (accessed 24/5/2022), 24.

undergone dramatic transformations. As political theorist Tom Nairn argued 'the theory of nationalism has been influenced by nationalism itself'.[20]

Early conceptions of 'the nation' emerged in political discourse and philosophy during the Enlightenment.[21] It was viewed by contemporaries as the natural integration of peoples of similar language and culture.[22] This view was not shared by monarchists who believed in the divine right of kings. Nonetheless, this positive perception of nationalism remained prevalent during the nineteenth century, with attitudes towards nationalism further influenced by Romanticism. The ideas of German philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte were particularly influential. During this time, the nation was seen as an organic community, based on a common language and culture, and shared historical experiences. It was believed that in the course of time a people achieved national consciousness or 'national awakening'. This had a cultural aspect, as seen in music and literature etc., but also, an increasingly political dimension, which saw nation-statehood as the full expression of national identity.

Major developments in the conceptualisation of nationalism occurred following World War I. The four-year conflict had displayed the full extent of nationalism's destructive capacities. A desire to prevent future wars prompted investigation into why nationalism had become so dangerous.[23] Historian, Carlton Hayes, for example, argued that nationalism 'signifies a more or less purposeful effort to revive primitive tribalism on an enlarged and more artificial scale'.[24] It was this artificial tribalism, he reasoned, which led to World War I. Historian, Hans Kohn, meanwhile, defined nationalism as 'a state of mind, in which supreme

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[20] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), 94.
[21] **SEE:** Carlton J.H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948).
[22] Hayes, *Evolution of Nationalism*, 6.
[23] Nairn, *Break-up of Britain,* 103, footnote 11.
[24] Hayes, *Evolution of Nationalism*, 12.

loyalty of the individual was felt to be due to the nation-state'.[25] It was this supreme loyalty which prevented objective thought and led to violent conflict.

By the 1980s, a consensus had emerged that nationalism was not a natural aspect of society, but a product of modernity. A seminal work to assess this connection was philosopher, Ernst Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). Gellner argued that the Industrial Revolution had necessitated a restructuring of society, which had created the ideal conditions for the growth of nationalism.[26] In particular, Gellner focused on the connection between the creation of an organised workforce and the establishment of new vernacular languages, which displaced regional languages and dialects.

The 1990s saw a boom in nationalist literature. One significant example was political scientist, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991). Like Gellner, Anderson argued that nationalism and modernity were closely connected. To an even greater degree than Gellner, however, Anderson emphasised the importance of language.[27] In particular, Anderson argued that the printing press, and above all the newspaper, created the means by which individuals could imagine a community that extended beyond their immediate localities.[28]

Another important contribution to nationalism theory was made by sociologist, Liah Greenfeld. Unlike many of her peers, Greenfeld argued that nationalism was not simply a product of modernity. Instead, she pinpointed the origins of nationalism in the rise of democracy in sixteenth-century England.[29] According to Greenfeld, the origins of nationalism were connected to the decline of autocracy and the emergence of popular politics. From this

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[25] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1944), 9.
[26] Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
[27] Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 35-45.
[28] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 6.
[29] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: The Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 6, 10.

perspective, nationalism represented a shift away from love of monarch towards a patriotic love of country. The linking of nationalism and democracy led Greenfeld to categorise the various manifestations of nationalism in modern society. In particular, she was concerned with identifying the differences between ethnic and civic nationalism.[30] For Greenfeld, civic nationalism was inclusive, open, and voluntary, whereas ethnic nationalism was inherent and selective.[31] Whereas ethnic nationalism located the nation in language, culture, territory, and physical characteristics, civic nationalism focused on citizenship and a shared membership of a political community.[32] The dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism is an important element of this thesis.

Another text of significance is Billig's *Banal Nationalism* (1995) which, as noted above, argued that nationalism is an omnipresent force in all nations which is constantly reinforced by the (mostly unnoticed) discourse and symbolism of nationality. Billig diverged from his predecessors by focusing on the less overt manifestations of nationalism. He argued that nationalism not only facilitated the creation or breakdown of nations but existed in everyday life as a means of reinforcing the validity of the national community.[33] Furthermore, he argued that the existence of nationalism in everyday life was so omnipresent that it was barely noticed. Billig proposed the term 'banal nationalism' to distinguish this kind of nationalism from the overt forms of nationalism that preoccupied other theorists.

The Question of Scottish Exceptionalism

Theorists of the 1980s and 1990s typically used case studies to assert the validity of their frameworks. The political situation of Scotland in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, made Scottish

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[30] Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 10-11.
[31] Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 11.
[32] Greenfeld, *Nationalism*,11-12
[33] Billig, *Banal Nationalism* 5-6.

nationalism a popular example. However, theorists often struggled to fit the Scottish case into their theories. In his 1983 work, Gellner acknowledged that his model cannot easily be applied to the case of Scottish nationalism.[34] This is because, instead of promoting Scottish nationalism, the process of industrialisation in Scotland had been accompanied by a growing sense of 'Britishness', rather than of 'Scottishness'. Additionally, Scotland has two languages that distinguish the country from the rest of Great Britain: Scots and Scottish Gaelic. However, Scottish nationalists, while advocating for the perseveration of Scottish languages, also accept the dominant place of the English language.

From the early 1970s, a literature emerged that focused specifically on Scottish nationalism. This trend coincided with a surge in the popularity of the SNP. Early works on Scottish nationalism argued that Scottish nationalism possessed the characteristics of ethnic nationalism.[35] By comparison, works published over the last 20 years, particularly those focused on political nationalism, argue that a shift had occurred, and that the 'inclusive' elements of civic nationalism are now dominant.[36]

An early contribution to the discussion was *Scottish Nationalism since 1918* (1970) by Arthur Marwick. In contrast to many of his contemporaries, Marwick proposed the existence of two distinct, but coexisting nationalisms in Scotland. According to Marwick:

> Modern nationalism in Scotland is made up of two basic ingredients, one best described by the […] 19th-century term, 'Home Rule', and the other nationalist in the fullest sense of the term. Home Rulers stressed administrative efficiency,

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[34] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* 43-6.
[35] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1977); Keating & Bleiman, *Labour;* John M. MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* Vol.8, No.1 (1998), 215-231; Nairn, *Break-up of Britain.*
[36] Murray Stewart Leith, 'Scottish National Party Representations of Scottishness and Scotland', *Politics,* Vol.28, No.2 (2008), 87-89.

decentralisation, and the supreme virtue of self-government […]: their aim was a local Scottish parliament within a federal United Kingdom. [Whereas] nationalism proper is the deep and real fear that Scotland as a separate nation, with a distinct and valuable cultural tradition, is doomed to extinction through emigration and the invasion of alien values.[37]

Although, Marwick was discussing the distinction between home rule and independence and not ethnic and civic nationalisms, he acknowledged that these forms of nationalism can, and indeed do, coexist.

The influential works of political theorist, Tom Nairn were also published in the 1970s. In his article 'Three dreams of Scottish Nationalism' (1970), Nairn argued that:

Modern Scottish Nationalism has led a fluctuating, intermittent existence since 1853. Now, quite suddenly, it has become a more serious political reality. In the past it has gone through many renaissances, followed by even more impressive and longer-lasting collapses into inertia.[38]

In Nairn's view, it is the inconsistent existence of Scottish nationalism that makes it distinct. Nairn developed this idea in *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (1977), in which he argued that 'between 1800 and 1870 […] there simply was no Scottish nationalist movement of the usual sort'.[39] By 'usual sort' Nairn was referring to political nationalism, which sees nationalist ideas infiltrate popular politics. However, Nairn argued that it is

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[37] Arthur Marwick, 'Scottish Nationalism since 1918', in Karl Miller (ed.) *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), 14.
[38] Tom Nairn, 'Three dreams of Scottish Nationalism', in Karl Miller (ed.) *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), 34.
[39] Nairn, *Break-up of Britain,* 95.

important in the case of Scotland to distinguish between the social and political spheres of nationalism. In Nairn's view, the two spheres were frequently connected, yet most discussion of Scottish nationalism focused too heavily on political movements. This frequently led scholars to discount the existence of Scottish nationalism altogether in periods where Scottish nationalism was not present in Westminster politics.

Nairn and Marwick located the origins of Scottish nationalism in the 1920s and the 1850s respectively, whereas historian, Christopher Harvie traced it back much further. In his monograph, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977* (1977), Harvie argued that Scottish political nationalism began with the 1707 Act of Union.[40] According to Harvie, however, the development of Scottish nationalism had not maintained a consistent trajectory, and for this reason it was 'out of step with nationalist movements elsewhere in the world'.[41] Whereas other nationalist movements had evolved according to a fairly predictable pattern, the path taken by Scottish nationalism had been winding and unpredictable. Harvie posited that Scottish exceptionalism was perhaps related to its state of 'semi-independence'.[42] Despite the Union, Scotland had retained a distinct civil society as well as an independent legal and education system.

The link between Scottish exceptionalism and its abnormal constitutional status was developed further by historian, Graeme Morton in his monograph *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (1999). In Morton's view, nationalism in Scotland in the mid nineteenth century was concerned with perfecting the Union to best accommodate Scottish needs. He termed this manifestation 'Unionist-nationalism'.[43] Additionally, Morton highlighted the Scottish state as a reason for the lack of anti-Unionist sentiment during this

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[40] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism.*
[41] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism,* 58.
[42] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism,* 67.
[43] Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 10.

time.[44] Although Westminster governed Scotland during this time, it did so indirectly and did not interfere with the Scottish state. Morton concluded:

> The 'problem' of nineteenth-century Scotland for theorists of nationalism is that Scottish parliamentary political nationalism did not become relevant until the 1930s with the formation of the Scottish National Party.[45]

Another work that engages with the ongoing debate about the origins of Scottish nationalism is *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (2011), by political scientists, Murray Stewart Leith and Daniel P.J. Soule. Leith and Soule argue 'that an explicit age of nationalist and mass engaged politics in Scotland did not begin until the end of the Second World War'.[46] They claim that it was only in the post-war period that a political nationalism emerged that was recognisable to a modern audience. Leith and Soule, like many of their predecessors, make the important distinction between nationalism as a social and political movement.

In the 1970s, the political landscape of the UK and Scotland changed dramatically. One of these changes was the growth of political nationalism. This shift was reflected in *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (1978), by Michael Keating and David Bleiman. According to Keating and Bleiman, Scottish nationalism underwent a transition after World War I from Home Rule nationalism to modern nationalism.[47] The foundation of the SNP was part of this transition, but not the culminating point. Keating and Bleiman argued that, in the early decades

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[44] Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism,* 22.
[45] Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism,* 53.
[46] Murray Stewart Leith & Daniel P.J. Soule, *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 15.
[47] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour,* 30.

of the party, SNP nationalism existed on the fringes of politics and was 'divided between moderate Home Rulers and extreme separatists, with several shades in between'.[48]

The failure of the 1979 Devolution Referendum led, in the 1980s and early 1990s, to something of a decline in the level of scholarly interest in Scottish nationalism. Historian, Richard J. Finlay argued that after 1979 'historians were no longer needed to explain why Scottish nationalism might emerge triumphant'.[49] Nonetheless, during the 1980s, prominent historians T.C. Smout and Tom Devine, produced a number of works that focused on events which had previously been ignored in the Scottish historical narrative such as the Highland Clearances.[50] This was significant because these events were recycled by Scottish nationalists in the following decades to construct a narrative of Scottish victimhood.

The 1997 Devolution Referendum placed Scottish nationalism back on the academic agenda. In particular, the success of the 1997 referendum posed important questions about the development of Scottish nationalism in the intervening decades. The decolonisation movements of the second half of the twentieth century led to increased attention to the relationship between nationalism and empire. This was reflected in the 1998 article by historian, John M. MacKenzie, entitled 'Empire and National Identities the Case of Scotland'. The article tracked the acceleration of support for Scottish nationalism in the post-war period and connected it to the decline of the British Empire.[51] MacKenzie argued that 'Scotland has long required a European or global connection to set over against the dominance of its English neighbour' and that the breakdown of the British Empire tested the relationship between the two nations.[52]

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[48] Keating & Bleiman, *Labour*, 118.

[49] Richard J. Finlay, 'Controlling the Past: Scottish Historiography and Scottish Identity in the 19th and 20th centuries' *Scottish Affairs*, Vol.9, No.1 (1994), 139-40.

[50] T.M. Devine & Willie Orr, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, Emigration, and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1988); T.C. Smout, 'Scotland and England: Is Dependency a Symptom or a Cause of Underdevelopment?' *Review-Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations,* Vol.3, No.4 (1980), 601–30.

[51] MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities', 230.

[52] MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities', 229.

The lack of consensus about the origins of Scottish nationalism was one of the reasons why many scholars struggled to accommodate Scotland in their theories. In *Scottish Nationality* (2001), historian, Murray G.H. Pittock examines the theories of Anderson and Gellner in relation to Scotland.[53] In Pittock's view, the Anderson/Gellner model, which equates nationalism with modernity and language, is too rigid and cannot easily be applied to Scotland.[54] Pittock argues that the model relies upon the assumption 'that Scotland had no nineteenth-century nationalism' and, because this argument can easily be disproven, the approach taken by Anderson and Geller is not applicable to the Scottish case.

The idea of Scottish exceptionalism is examined most directly by Pittock in *The Road to Independence? Scotland in the Balance* (2013). Pittock poses the question: 'do the trajectories of other comparable nationalisms in Europe parallel the Scottish case, or does it remain truly distinctive?'[55] To answer this question, Pittock first discusses the role of Scottish nationalism in the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745.[56] However, Pittock notes that 'the great era of modern nationalism in European terms came in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the destabilizing impact the Napoleonic Wars had on the great empires of the early modern period'.[57] Pittock argues that, whereas many of the great European Empires experienced instability in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, Scotland's ties to the British Empire actually strengthened.[58] Because of the differences between the Scottish case and the Empires of Europe, Pittock argues that another way to assess Scotland's exceptionalism is to look at the British Empire, and especially at Ireland. This analysis led Pittock to the conclusion that there were defining differences between the Scottish and the Irish cases. In particular, he highlights

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[53] Murray G.H. Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 2-3.
SEE: Alex Law, 'Near and Far: Banal National Identity and the Press in Scotland', *Media, Culture and Society,* Vol.23, No.1 (2001); Ben Jackson, 'The Political Thought of Scottish Nationalism', *The Political Quarterly,* Vol.85, No.1 (2014).
[54] Pittock, *Scottish Nationality*, 2-3.
[55] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 28.
[56] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 29.
[57] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 29.
[58] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 29.

how the respective civil societies were dealt with in the Union for the dormancy of Scottish nationalism in the eighteenth century.[59]

It can be seen from the assessment of the literature on Scottish nationalism that scholars have invoked the idea of Scottish exceptionalism for decades. The consensus in the literature is that Scottish nationalism is at the very least unusual, and perhaps exceptional.

The Role of Historical Narratives

An important aspect of the discussion of Scottish nationalism is the role of historical narratives. Devine, for instance, claims that Scotland's national narratives are central to Scottish identity.[60] Similarly, Nairn argued that nationalism involves 'the reanimation of one's history'.[61] This process of reanimation involves the use of 'raw material' such as old-traditions and folk-heroes, of which Scotland has an abundance. Pittock outlines the specific examples which are central to Scottish nationality. He notes that: 'Scottish nationality itself depends on the interpretation of events such as the Wars of Independence, the Reformation and so on, as well as on the social contexts and processes which surround them.'[62] Leith and Soule extend this list and argue that Scottish historical memory is:

> not merely limited to the modernist period and the time since the Union, one rich with heroes and heroines, ancient monarchical blood lines and 'golden ages'–the reigns of Alexander and Robert I, the Enlightenment, the age of improvement–as well as the myths of the 'Red Clyde' and militant socialism.[63]

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[59] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 30-1.
[60] Devine, 'Anglo-Scottish Union', 11.
[61] Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain,* 144
[62] Pittock, *Scottish Nationality,* 4
[63] Leith & Soule, *Political Discourse*, 8.

The process of incorporating historical narratives within the political realm is outlined by historian, Ewen Cameron. He argues that memory politics is the process of 'campaigners seek[ing] historical justification for their points of view'.[64] Leith and Soule agree and add: 'Each major political party in Scotland can choose to discount aspects of history, or even adapt them to its own political ends.'[65] They argue that this often manifests in the Labour and Conservative Parties focusing on 'British' events to connect Scotland with the rest of the UK, meanwhile the SNP uses a Scottish-centric projection.[66]

The Scottish past is central to Scottish identity and subsequently the Scottish nationalism movement. For this reason, analysis of historical narratives is necessary to understanding how Scottish identity is constructed. Allan Mikaelian, in the rationale for his project examining historical narratives in US politics, argues: 'History matters because our political class uses it like currency; their perception of the past inform their policies, colour their rhetoric, and inform their world views.'[67] This rationale is not just applicable to the US. Additionally, as Anna Clark argues in 'Politicians Using History' (2010), 'political use of the past is inherently selective and conditional' to serve specific purposes.[68] These purposes are not stagnant, which makes the analysis of political narratives over time vital to understanding the development of national identity.

Overview of Memory Theory

Historical narratives are highlighted by scholars, Devine, Nairn, Leith and Soule as vital to Scottish national identity. Additionally, the terminology 'historical narratives' and 'historical

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[64] Cameron, 'Political Histories', 1.
[65] Leith & Soule, *Political Discourse,* 150.
[66] Leith & Soule, *Political Discourse,* 150.
[67] Allen Mikaelian, 'Political Uses of the Past', *History News Network*, 1 June 2017, https://historynewsnetwork.org/blog/153936 (accessed 17/5/2022).
[68] Anna Clark, 'Politicians Using History', *The Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol.56, No.2 (2010), 120-131.

memory' are often used interchangeably. For this reason, memory is a central theme of this thesis. The theory of collective memory was first articulated in Maurice Halbwachs' monograph *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* (1925). The work sparked widespread interest in the study of memory beyond the individual. Halbwachs argued that memory is constructed in a social context and that, although individuals do possess their own memories, these memories are not free from influence from the memory community.[69] According to Halbwachs: 'Most of the time, when I remember, it is others who spur me on; their memory comes to the aid of mine and mine relies on theirs.'[70] It is in this collective memory that 'the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present'.[71] The idea of collective memory has undergone many transformations since Halbwachs' intervention, although his statements about social frameworks continue to resonate.

Another important contribution was the three-volume work, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992) edited by historian, Pierre Nora. The series focused on the idea of 'sites of memory', where historical narratives are constructed.[72] In the work, Nora distinguished between memory and history. He argued that memory was life, whilst history was reproduction.[73] This directly contradicted Halbwachs, who argued that memory is a social construct that cannot be preserved but is constantly reconstructed.

These first two works by Halbwachs and Nora remain significant in the field of memory studies, but also demonstrate that there are competing analytical paradigms. Although an understanding of Halbwachs and Nora is necessary, as they remain popular theoretical frameworks for many studies on collective memory, they are not the best suited to this thesis.

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[69] Maurice Halbwachs & Lewis A. Coser (ed.), *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.
[70] Halbwachs & Coser, *Collective Memory,* 38.
[71] Halbwachs & Coser, *Collective Memory*, 40.
[72] Pierre Nora & Marc Roudebush (trans) 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memorie', *Representations,* Vol.1, No.26 (1989), 12.
[73] Nora & Roudebush, 'Memory and History', 8.

Halbwachs' work focused on the evolution of memory in a social context, whereby the memory of the collective body is influenced by changes in recollection. Although this thesis does look at changes in the collective narrative, it is interested in the purposeful manipulation of collective memory by political actors. Furthermore, Nora's contribution examined how places and objects are instilled with historical significance, whereas this thesis is wholly concerned with narratives.

The 2000s and 2010s saw a boom of collective memory theory, with several significant interventions over the two decades.[74] These works are useful in furthering understanding of collective memory; however, they are not compatible with the framework that has been chosen for this project. This framework is built upon the contribution of Duncan Bell. In 2003, Bell published an article in which he builds on but critiques the theories of Halbwachs and Nora by questioning the validity of the term 'collective memory'. Bell argues that memory, both individual and social, is anchored in actual lived experiences.[75] Because there can be no memory without direct personal experience, Bell reasons that the overall concept of collective memory is problematic and needs to be revised.[76] Furthermore, he argues that no two experiences of a single event could possibly be the same. To address these problems, Bell proposes the replacement of the concept of collective memory with an alternative concept, which he terms the 'mythscape'.[77] He defines the mythscape as: 'The temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly.'[78]

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[74] **SEE:** The works of Stefan Berger and James V. Werstch.
[75] Duncan S.A. Bell, 'Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology and National Identity', *British Journal of Sociology* Vol.54, No.1 (2003), 65.
[76] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.
[77] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.
[78] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 66.

Thus, instead of a homogenous collective memory, Bell posits the existence of a discursive mythscape within which narratives compete and interact. This change in terminology addresses the two problems that Bell identifies in the work of Halbwachs and Nora. By removing the term 'memory', Bell bypasses the problem of memory requiring lived experience. Additionally, Bell's theory acknowledges the existence of what he terms the 'governing myth' as well as secondary 'subaltern myths'.[79] Bell's theory of the mythscape not only permits the existence of both governing and subaltern myths but acknowledges that they exist in conversation with each other. Within the mythscape, the governing narrative and subaltern narrative/s interact and frequently take on elements of opposing narrative strands. Furthermore, the dominant governing narrative can be displaced by a subaltern narrative. In these situations, the previously dominant narrative is either removed from existence, or takes on the status of a subaltern narrative.

This theory neatly explains how national stories fit within the larger picture of nationalism. Bell argues that:

> We should understand a nationalist myth as a story that simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation's past. […] Myth serves to flatten the complexity, the nuance, the performative contradictions of human history; it presents instead a simplistic and often univocal story.[80]

As was established in the introduction, Bell's theory of mythscapes will be the primary theoretical framework for this thesis. Bell's conception of how mythscapes behave will be examined through the case study of the Scottish political mythscape. In particular, this thesis

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[79] Bell, 'Mythscapes', 74.
[80] Bell, 'Mythscapes'. 75.

attempts to identify the governing narrative of Scottish politics, and to track how it changes over time. It places these changes within the wider social and political climate of Scotland and explores how the governing and subaltern narratives interact.

Literature on Scottish Collective Memory

In Bell's article he notes that in scholarly literature, the term memory is used to represent a variety of 'different social practices, cognitive processes and representation strategies'.[81] Additionally, in the case of Scotland, further complications arise because of an additional strand of literature which does not use the word 'memory', but which nonetheless deals with elements of collective memory theory. In particular, some authors use the terms 'identity' and 'culture' interchangeably with memory to refer to the same concept.

Within the scholarship on Scottish collective memory, irrespective of if the term 'memory' is used, there are four different theoretical approaches. The first builds on Nora's theory of 'sites of memory' in relation to museums, monuments, literature, and photographs. In his work, sociologist, Andrew Blaikie argues that places and artefacts create a 'shared lens of nationhood' and that both are imbued with meaning.[82] Blaikie's approach is significant because he evaluates the ways in which photographs were used to distort the image of life in the Scottish Isles to align with life in the lowlands. This contributes to the discussion of how memory can be manipulated and distorted to fit a narrative. Although Blaikie's approach and that undertaken in the thesis are very different, both the article and this thesis explore how narratives are manipulated to serve a specific purpose.

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[81] Bell, 'Mythscapes' 71.

[82] Andrew Blaikie, *The Scots Imagination and Modern Memory,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 247 & 'Photographs in the Cultural Account: Contested Narrative and Collective Memory in the Scottish Islands', *The Sociological Review*, Vol.49, No.3 (2001), 345-67.

Geographer, Charles W.J. Withers, meanwhile, stressed the importance of geography in Scottish memory culture. According to Withers: 'The historiography of Scottish identity may be cast as a series of dialectic tensions between a metropolitan core and a backward (usually Highland) periphery.'[83] In particular, Withers examined the role of monuments in the Scottish Highlands in memorialising the Clearances.[84] He noted that some of the monuments commemorated the devastation caused by the clearances, whereas others celebrated the individuals who cleared the land. Withers used the two kinds of monuments to explore the complex discourse of memory. This approach is significant because it demonstrates why it is important to examine different sides of the discourse to understand the larger picture.

Both Withers and Blaikie examine how individuals contribute to a distorted image of the past through the construction of false narratives. However, this is not the only example of selective narration. Historian Laurence Gourievidis examines the role of museums in the creation of governing narratives.[85] He analyses representations of the Highland Clearances in museums within Scotland and beyond and explores how this contributes to the construction of the Highland narrative. Anthropologist Paul Basu attempts something similar in his book on Scottish heritage tourism but uses the lens of the Scottish diaspora.[86] Although both Gourievidis and Basu deal with the construction of collective memory in museums, Basu focuses on how the diaspora accesses and evaluates narratives from a place of geographical disconnect. Basu claims, that the diaspora reacts to the Scottish governing narrative presented

[83] Charles W.J. Withers, 'Place, Memory, Monument: Memorialising the Past in Highland Scotland', *Ecumene,* Vol.3, No.3 (1996), 328.
[84] Withers, 'Place, Memory, Monument'.
[85] Laurence Gourievdis, 'Representing the Disputed Past of Northern Scotland: The Highland Clearances in Museums', *History and Memory,* Vol.12, No.2 (2000) & *The Dynamics of Heritage: History, Memory and the Highland Clearances* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
[86] Paul Basu, *Highland Homecomings: Genealogy and Heritage Tourism in the Scottish Highland Diaspora* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007) & 'Sites of Memory-Sources of Identity: Landscape-Narratives of the Sutherland Clearances', in J.A. Atkinson & G. MacGregor (eds.), *Townships to Farmsteads: Rural Settlement Studies in Scotland, England and Wales* (Oxford: BAR British Series 193, 2000), 225-236.

by the tourism industry differently because they have less exposure to competing narratives through the media or education system.

This body of literature identifies different narrative strands within the Scottish mythscape and explores how these strands interact. This is a key element of Bell's theory, and a key component of this thesis. The primary difference between the approach of the above authors, and the approach taken in this thesis, is that they use a cultural framework, whereas this thesis is focused on politics.

The second stream in the literature on Scottish memory centres on the evolution of collective narratives. This approach also uses Nora's concept of 'sites of memory', but incorporates Halbwachs' thesis about the malleability of memory. Historian, James Coleman's *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (2014) is an example of this approach.[87] In the work, Coleman examines the meaning of specific monuments to the people who raised them and the Scottish nation at that time.[88] Furthermore, Coleman analyses the different ways monuments, and the figures and events they commemorate, have been understood throughout history.[89] The primary idea of Coleman's work is that historical understanding evolves over time as society changes. These changes involve the removal of previous governing narratives and their replacement by subaltern narratives. A similar approach is used in this thesis, with attention given to the different way events are framed based on their target audience. Furthermore, Coleman focuses on wider Scottish society and the role that commemoration plays in maintaining the significance of narratives, whereas this thesis examines how political parties create and evolve narratives to serve political ends.

The third approach examines how memory, myth, and narrative interact. One example is historian, M. Ash's chapter on William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, published in an edited

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[87] James J. Coleman, *Remembering the Past in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Commemoration, Nationality and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
[88] Coleman, *Remembering the Past,* 4.
[89] Coleman, *Remembering the Past,* 4.

volume on myths (1990). This chapter discussed the mythologisation of historical figures during their lifetimes, and the secondary mythologisation that occurs with oral storytelling. Ash argued that oral historians are faced with the problem of 'the relationship between historical truth and literary art, and the limited span of human memory'.[90] Although the focus of this chapter was the social and cultural sphere of Scottish nationalism, it has clear relevance to the narratives of Scottish politics.

Finlay adopted a similar stance in his article 'Controlling the Past: Scottish Historiography and Scottish Identity in the 19th and 20th centuries' (1994). He examined the way historical figures and events shape identity, and how this has changed over time. He argued that, during the 'mid-nineteenth century, Scottish nationalists rarely used history, although they appropriated Scottish heroes such as Wallace and Bruce as symbolic representations of the movement'.[91] He further noted that history 'was not used in a scientific way, but rather as a romantic appendage to the creation of a new cultural identity'.[92] Finlay acknowledged the significance of Scotland's national history in periods when Scotland's national identity was challenged. He argued: 'For many history was all Scotland had left to prove her nationality and it had to be readapted to suit the changed circumstances.'[93]

Historian, Laura S. Harrison did something similar in her 2017 article. The article examines the changing discourse surrounding the Declaration of Arbroath and how this connects to the political motivations of those narrating the event. A particularly interesting argument that Harrison makes concerns the different naming practices across academia and politics. She argues that academics prefer the term 'Declaration of Arbroath' because it is more

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[90] M. Ash, 'William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of National Myth' in Raphael Samuel & Paul Richard Thompson (eds) *The Myths We Live by* (Oxford: Routledge, 1990), 87.
[91] Finlay, 'Controlling the Past, 129.
[92] Finlay, 'Controlling the Past', 129.
[93] Finlay, 'Controlling the Past', 137.

neutral and historically accurate.[94] By comparison, nationalist politicians and the heritage industry prefer the term 'Scottish Declaration of Independence' because it is more emotive.[95] Through her analysis, Harrison identifies the clash between emotion and accuracy in Scottish memory culture. This discussion is significant for understanding the thematic framing of key events discussed in the thesis.

The fourth approach in the literature on Scottish memory connects memory and politics. Although the first three currents are concerned with cultural narratives, the fourth examines how narratives are created and used for political purposes. Elizabeth Reams' international relations thesis, *'Scotland's future in Scotland's Hands': Identity, Memory, and Grievance in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum* (2017)*, is an important example of this approach.[96] Reams' thesis examines Scottish nationalism during the 2014 Independence Referendum campaign through the lens of identity, memory, and grievance. Although Reams attempts to examine collective memory, her scope is limited to just the SNP. The problem with this approach is that Ream's singular focus on the SNP disregards the interaction between the opposing sides of the debate. As is outlined in the discussion of the theoretical framework of collective memory above, the way that different narrative strands in the mythscape interact with each other is key to understanding the way a mythscape behaves. Furthermore, as Leith and Soule argue, 'nationalism is not, and has never been the sole preserve of one political organisation or party in Scotland'.[97] Although the SNP is most overtly aligned with Scottish nationalism, all the political parties in Scotland are influenced by it and have a role in maintaining it.

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[94] Laura S. Harrison, '"That Famous Manifesto": The Declaration of Arbroath, Declaration of Independence, and the Power of Language', *Scottish Affairs*, Vol.26, No.4 (2017), 442.
[95] Harrison, 'That Famous Manifesto', 442.
[96] Elizabeth Reams, et al. *'Scotland's Future in Scotland's Hands': Identity, Memory, and Grievance in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2017).
[97] Leith & Soule, *Political Discourse,* 37.

A recent contribution to the field is museum curator, Calum Robertson's article 'Celebrating a Scottish Past: Construction, Contestation and the Role of Government' (2018). Of all the authors discussed, Robertson's approach is most like the one adopted in this thesis because he examines the role of politics in collective myth. However, he focuses solely on the role of governments.[98] In the article, Robertson analyses how the Scottish Government uses the past in commemorative and celebratory events. Additionally, the article looks at the competing narratives of the Scottish and UK governments during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.[99] An important element of this article is the examination of how rival strands of the Scottish mythscape interact, which is built on in this thesis.

For the thesis, there is one body of literature which is most relevant from both a theoretical and historiographical perspective. These works use discourse analysis to examine Scottish political campaigns. One such example is *Self and Nation* (2000) by social psychologists, Stephen D. Reicher and Nick Hopkins. Although Reicher and Hopkins only employ discourse analysis in a small portion of their work, their focus on how historical narratives and tropes reinforce identity is relevant to this thesis. Additionally, the study analyses the 1992 General Election and 1993 SNP Annual Conference which provides insight into the discourse of Scottish memory politics in the years between the 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda.[100]

Another example is political scientists, Stuart McAnulla's and Andrew Crines' article 'The Rhetoric of Alex Salmond at the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum' (2017). As the title suggests, this article is a detailed analysis of the political material produced by leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond during the Independence campaign. This article is extremely significant for the thesis, although it has a more defined focus. By comparison, the third chapter

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[98] Calum Robertson, 'Celebrating a Scottish Past: Construction, Contestation and the Role of Government', *World Archaeology*, Vol.50, No.2 (2018), 338.
[99] Robertson, 'Celebrating a Scottish Past', 338.
[100] Stephen D. Reicher & Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation* (London: SAGE, 2000), 84-87.

of this thesis examines a multitude of political figures from across the political spectrum during the referendum.

The most recent contribution to this thread is Amy Clarke's article, 'Should Old Acquaintance Be Forgot? The Uses of History in Scottish Nationalist Politics, 2007-Present' (2020).[101] This article examines the use of 'historic themes or motifs to bolster the political agenda' of the Scottish Government from 2007 to 2020.[102] This article has many similarities with the thesis, specifically its discourse analysis methodology and its focus on the evolution of memory narratives.[103] There is a major difference between Clarke's study and the thesis, beyond the clear difference in scope. This is that Clarke examines both the discourse of the referenda and how the discourse was maintained in the intervening years through government involvement in the heritage industry. This thesis does not examine the years between the referenda examined in the thesis unless it specifically relates to the events of the referenda.

It is evident that a substantial body of work exists which explores the role of historical narratives in the Scottish political sphere. This poses the question: why is the discourse of Scottish politics important to understand? The answer to this question has two parts. Firstly, nationalism is an important ideology to understand, and national stories are a vital aspect of nationalism. Secondly, in the case of Scotland, the future of Scotland and by extension the UK, is dependent on which narrative strand establishes itself as the governing narrative. For this reason, there is substantial scholarly interest in tracking the development of these strands and using these findings to predict the outcome.

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[101] Amy Clarke, 'Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot? The Uses of History in Scottish Nationalist Politics, 2007-Present', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol.66, No.3 (2020), 396-414.
[102] Clarke, 'Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot? 396.
[103] Clarke, 'Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot? 198.

Sources and Methodology

As has been discussed in the introduction and at greater length in this chapter, this thesis applies the concept of Scottish exceptionalism, which emerged in the literature on Scottish nationalism, to the field of memory politics. To this end, the thesis adopts a case-study approach. The four referenda at the heart of this project were moments when the discourse of memory politics was most salient. By looking at four referenda campaigns over a period of 50 years, I can make substantial arguments about the development of Scottish memory politics. During the referenda, all important political actors contributed to the memory discourse at the same time, in a similar set of circumstances, often in direct response to what other actors were saying. Moreover, because of the set timeframe of referenda campaigns, the various narrative streams are in direct conversation, which allows for exploration of the interactions of the strands. Examining referenda rather than general elections is also useful because of the higher levels of political engagement they provide, and because the discourse of these referenda is more specific. General election campaigns must address a variety of concerns, whereas referenda focus on single questions. The thesis will examine the opposing sides of each referendum, their narratives, and how these narratives evolved.

Qualitative methods form the basis of the study, with most of the research being textual and media analysis. This thesis examines the statements of political actors to reveal how they crafted their narratives and how they responded to the narratives of other political actors. This analysis will uncover hidden assumptions and agendas about how the different sides of the Scottish and British political spectrum view Scottish history. The process of evaluating the sources for this project began with collating material produced by political parties, and campaigns for the referenda. These sources were then siphoned for references to historical events. Note was given to what events were included in the narratives, who articulated the narrative, how much detail was given, and the thematic framing of the event. This process was

done for each referendum. The key events articulated by the opposing sides of the debate were compared. Attention was given to instances where interaction between the strands of the mythscape was most evident. This process revealed whether the Scottish mythscape behaves as Bell describes in his work or if it is exceptional.

As the project focuses on official policies of memory politics, the material represents the official position of parties and campaigns. This includes official campaign videos and posters, government publications such as pamphlets, leaflets and magazines, speeches by politicians and other public figures, and other archived material. This material was filtered for references to Scotland and the UK's past. Attention was given to the tone, perspective, and purposeful exclusion of major events in the wider narrative of Scottish history. All three of these factors were significant in determining, not only what the official narratives were, but why these narratives were dominant.

When dealing with any source, it is important to evaluate the sources strengths and weaknesses, as well as any potential problems they may pose. One advantage of focusing on political narratives is that the documents exist in the public domain and do not have intellectual property claims. Although this makes using these documents easy, it does not ensure access. This is because not all documents have been archived, especially those from the 1979 and 1997 devolution referenda. Although some documents have been archived at the Scottish Political Archive (SPA), many have been lost. These referenda were conducted before the age of the internet, so many sources only existed in paper form and have since been destroyed. Additionally, as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the SPA was forced to close for extended periods of time on multiple occasions. This made accessing documents difficult as many documents relating to the 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda only exist in paper form at the archive. Although some of the documents from the 1997 Referendum were digitised and

sent to me for analysis, I was unable to access any documents from the archive from the 1979 Referendum.

This project focuses only on official events in which party members or outside speakers are conforming to the official stance of the party or campaign in which they represent. However, a couple of texts that could be perceived as the personal opinion of elected officials are also examined. These texts are included because these individuals were elevated to the position of an official spokesperson for the campaign that they discussed in their personal texts. This suggests that the events which they discussed in these texts were accepted as part of the narrative conveyed by their campaign. For this reason, they are considered part of the 'official narrative' rather than a 'personal opinion'. This distinction is important in maintaining the clear limits of the project: the examination of official narratives articulated by political parties. Furthermore, if this project engaged in social narratives of collective memory, a different theoretical framework would be required, such as an ethno-symbolist approach. Additionally, this project examines political statements purposefully constructed for referenda. These statements were all carefully crafted to convey the desired message of the campaign or party which the view was intended to represent. Furthermore, because the narratives expressed in the political discourse were so carefully constructed, they were crafted in awareness of what other political actors were arguing. This allows for clear interactions between the strands of the mythscape to be examined.

Conclusion

Nationalism undoubtably exists in Scotland, although there is a lack of consensus in the literature about when it originated, and how it manifests itself. On the other hand, theorists of nationalism and scholars of Scottish nationalism agree that Scottish nationalism is something of an outlier. Although there are many different accepted models for nationalist development,

it is difficult to fit Scotland into any of them. The goal of this thesis is to apply the concept of Scottish exceptionalism, which emerged in nationalism studies, to Scottish memory politics. Although there is a significant body of work that looks at the role of collective memory in aspects of Scottish society, the role of collective memory in Scottish politics is understudied. In particular, the thesis will take the idea of Scottish exceptionalism and the framework of Bell's mythscapes to test the theory that Scottish exceptionalism extends beyond theories of nationalism.

Chapter 2. From Perfect Union to Evolving Union: The 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda

The rise of SNP in the 1970s indicated increasing support for Scottish nationalism in the political sphere. However, the SNP was still a marginal party and did not pose a significant threat to the power of the Conservative or Labour parties in Westminster. In Scotland, where the SNP achieved 30 percent of the vote in October 1974, it was a different story. This election result changed Scottish politics from a two-party system to a three-party system.

This chapter examines the changing political conditions in Scotland during the 1970s and the resulting Devolution Referendum of 1979. It analyses the main strands in the mythscape during the 1970s in order to identify the key events of each party's narrative, how these narratives differed, and how they interacted. The chapter then explores the aftermath of the 1979 referendum, with particular attention given to the impact of the 1995 film *Braveheart* in mobilising nationalist sentiment. Finally, the narrative strands of the 1997 referendum are analysed to determine how the narrative developed between 1970 and 1997. The chapter concludes by determining if the Scottish mythscape was exceptional according to Duncan Bell's theory during this period.

Scottish Politics circa 1970s

The SNP victory in the Hamilton by-election of 1967 was a turning point both for the party and for Scottish politics. Although the event did not change the SNP's position as a marginal party in UK politics, it did force Westminster to pay more attention to Scotland. In 1969, the government established the Royal Commission on the Constitution. The goal of the commission was to examine the constitutional structure of the UK and determine if changes

should be made. The report, published in 1973, made a number of recommendations, the most significant of which was the creation of a devolved Scottish Assembly.[1]

In February 1974, the Labour Party under Harold Wilson formed a minority government.[2] In order to govern, Labour had to rely on support from the Liberals, the SNP, and Plaid Cymru, all of which were in favour of devolution.[3] In September of that year, the government published a white paper entitled *Democracy and Devolution: Proposals for Scotland and Wales*.[4] The contents of the white paper suggested that the Labour Party supported the transfer of some responsibilities to devolved governments. However, in October 1974, Labour won a three-seat majority and no longer needed the parliamentary support of the nationalist parties. This majority was short lived and by 1976 the party, now led by James Callaghan, had lost its majority as a result of by-election defeats. To maintain power in the House of Commons, Labour made an agreement with the SNP and Plaid Cymru that the party would legislate devolution in exchange for Commons votes. This led to the introduction of the *Scotland and Wales Bill* in November 1976. Although Labour had agreed upon the legislature to appease the nationalists, it struggled to get it through parliament in the face of Conservative opposition.[5] This led the government to withdraw the bill.

In November 1977, devolution was again on the agenda, this time with support from the Liberals.[6] Unlike the previous year, two bills were brought to parliament: one for Scotland and one for Wales. Despite continued Conservative opposition, the bills passed. The Scottish bill became the *Scotland Act 1978.* During the legislative process, in part because of the mixed levels of support, an amendment called the Cunningham Agreement was introduced. The

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[1] Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 297.
[2] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle*, 296.
[3] Jeremy Thorpe, 'October 1974 Liberal Party General Election Manifesto: Why Britain Needs Liberal Government' *Political Stuff,* 2001, http://www.libdemmanifesto.com/1974/oct/october-1974-liberal-manifesto.shtml (accessed 12/7/2022).
[4] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle,* 300-1.
[5] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle,* 305.
[6] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle* 305.

alteration stipulated that 40 percent of the Scottish electorate would need to vote in favour of devolution.[7] It was this amendment that prevented devolution in 1979. Although 51.6 percent of participants voted Yes, this only represented 32.9 percent of the Scottish electorate.[8]

Although devolution was opposed by many Conservative and Labour politicians, the SNP also voiced reservations. It was seen by many within the party, who preferred independence, as a 'unionist distraction'.[9] Opposition within Labour and the SNP to the *Scotland Act 1978* was reflected in the devolution referendum campaign, which historians Colin Kidd and Malcolm Petrie describe as 'fractured'.[10]

The campaign for the 1979 Devolution Referendum was long and arduous. Substantial campaigning took place long before the official announcement of a referendum, and historical arguments were used to justify political positions on the issue. In order to explore rival narratives of Scottish history in the 1970s in depth, it is useful to compare two books that were published during this time by prominent figures on either side: William 'Billy' Wolfe, who was leader of the SNP between 1969 and 1979, and Labour MP Tam Dalyell, who was an outspoken opponent of devolution. Both Wolfe and Dalyell contested the Scottish seat of West Lothian during this period, which meant that the two men were direct political rivals. Wolfe's book, entitled *Scotland Lives: The Quest for Independence* (1973), and Dalyell's *Devolution: The End of Britain* (1977), represent two sides of the political spectrum in the lead-up to the 1979 referendum. Frequent references to Dalyell in Wolfe's text, and references to SNP discourse in Dalyell's text, demonstrate the degree to which the two narrative strands were in conversation with each other.

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[7] Murray Stewart Leith & Daniel P.J. Soule, *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 32.
[8] Leith & Soule, *Political Discourse,* 33.
[9] Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle* 298.
[10] Colin Kidd & Malcolm Petrie, 'The Independence Referendum in Historical and Political Context', in Aileen McHarg, Tom Mullen, Alan Page & Neil Walker (eds) *The Scottish Independence Referendum: Constitutional and Political Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 38.

Wolfe's Narrative of Scottish History

Wolfe's *Scotland Lives* focused on eight events or developments in Scottish history which, in his view, define Scotland's 'national character'. The events that Wolfe focused on construct a narrative of Scotland's foundation, golden age, and decline. These are all typical features of a national narrative which dictate how a narrative interacts with competing narratives in the mythscape. Additionally, Wolfe's construction of Scotland's decline was typical of a subaltern myth.

The first historical point of reference in Wolfe's narrative was the legacy of Scotland's ancient Celtic past. According to Wolfe, 'the Scots are essentially a fraternal people' and 'the threads of this [fraternal] outlook […] go back to pre-Scottish Caledonia and […] were strengthened by Celtic influences from both Eire and Wales'.[11] Wolfe's reference to 'Caledonia' (the Roman name for the unoccupied region of northern Britain) is significant because it underlined the alleged antiquity of Scottish distinctiveness. His reference to the ancient links between Scotland and the other Celtic nations likewise emphasised that Scotland is not like England.

Wolfe's discussion of the ancient roots of Scottish identity reflects a typical feature of national narratives—the idea of a 'national essence' that is unchanging throughout time. According to cultural theorist Stuart Hall, national narratives, like all genres of writing, are defined by certain key features. One of these is an emphasis on the 'origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness' of the nation.[12] Wolfe's text clearly conformed to this part of Hall's theory because he constructed a narrative on the roots of Scottishness based on specific characteristics (here, fraternalism and a sense of connectedness to other Celtic nations). Furthermore, he pinpointed the origins of these connections as far back in the past as possible.

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[11] Billy Wolfe, *Scotland Lives: The Quest for Independence* (Edinburgh: Reprographia, 1973)*,* 34.
[12] Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity' in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert & Kenneth Thompson (eds) *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies,* (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 614.

The second episode was the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, which Wolfe connected to the modern concept of democracy. Wolfe used this event to contrast the democratic spirit of Scottish nationalism with undemocratic and xenophobic variants of nationalism, such as fascism. According to Wolfe:

> There is surely no sign of [xenophobic nationalism] in Scotland. The best defence against such dangers is the attitude of the Scottish people, the descendants of those who founded Western European democracy's first home.[13]

In his text, Wolfe also noted that the 650th anniversary of the 'Declaration of Independence' in April 1970 had also doubled as a SNP party rally.[14] Wolfe emphasised the significance of the SNP's decision to hold a party rally at the location and on the anniversary of such an emotive event in Scottish history. A direct line was thus drawn between the historical event and the values of the SNP. Additionally, Wolfe used the emotive term 'Declaration of Independence' instead of the more accurate term 'Declaration of Arbroath'. However, he did use the more accurate terminology later in his text.[15] This makes his earlier use of 'Declaration of Independence' more significant because it was a clear appeal to the sentimentality of his audience. Emotive language, defined by Fabrizio Macagno and Douglas Walton as language that 'triggers our emotions', is a common tool in the construction of national narratives.[16] Macagno and Walton expand on this concept, noting that emotive language is used 'to conceal reality instead of representing it, to distort the facts instead of describing them, and omit

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[13] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 12.
[14] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 139.
[15] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 147.
[16] Fabrizio Macagno, & Douglas N. Walton, *Emotive Language in Argumentation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5.

qualities and particulars instead of depicting them'.[17] This is precisely what Wolfe did by using the word 'Independence' rather than 'Arbroath'.

The third event in Wolfe's narrative was the Battle of Bannockburn of 1314. The battle, in which the Scottish King, Robert the Bruce was victorious over King Edward II of England, continues to play a central role in Scottish national consciousness. In Wolfe's view, the significance of the battle was that it established 'the right of the people of Scotland to run their own affairs independent of England'.[18] Wolfe also referred to the Scottish heroes William Wallace and Bruce.[19] The incorporation of 'heroes' in national narratives is a common feature and there is a significant body of literature which examines this.[20] Wolfe's invocation of Bruce and Wallace is typical of how nationalists craft their narratives of the past around heroes. As Stefan Berger notes, national heroes are constructed to align with the values of the nation.[21] The connection of the figures of Bruce and Wallace with freedom-loving and conquest-resisting Scotland indicates which values Wolfe wanted to highlight in his narrative.

The fourth event in Wolfe's narrative was the Union of Crowns of 1603. This event, according to Wolfe, marked the beginning of Scotland's subjugation by the English state. Wolfe explicitly connected the relocation of the Scottish court to London by James VI with the dominant role of the Westminster Government in Scotland in the 1960s and 1970s. In Wolfe's view: 'London government had the power and English interests came first. Has it ever been different since James VI took the Scottish court to London in 1603?'[22] In his description of the event, Wolfe provided minimal context. This suggests that the strength of his argument relied upon the narrative being simplistic and therefore harder to refute. This is an example of a

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[17] Macagno & Walton, *Emotive Language, 5.*
[18] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 139.
[19] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 9, 144.
[20] **SEE:** Linas Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway and Lithuania* (Brussels: P.I.E Peter Lang, 2004); James V. Wertsch, 'National Narratives and the Conservative Nature of Collective Memory', *Neohelicon*, Vol.34, No.2 (2007), 23–33.
[21] Stefan Berger, 'On the Role of Myths in History and the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe' *European History Quarterly,* Vol.39, No.3 (2009), 493-4.
[22] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 52.

characteristic of national narratives known as 'silences' or 'blind spots'. The way in which silences are utilized in historical narratives has been examined at length by historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot. In his monograph, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), Trouillot argued that history involves inclusion and exclusion, and this process is purposeful.[23]

The fifth event in Wolfe's narrative was the Act of Union of 1707. Like the Union of Crowns, the narrative of this event was not developed in any detail. Rather, the event was used to confirm the contemporary role of Scotland within the UK. Wolfe wrote of 'the place and rights of Scotland in the UK as established by the Act of Union of 1707'.[24] This was the only reference to the Union in the text. The narrative of the event did not focus on the circumstances which brought about the Union, nor the reaction to, or success of the event. The focus was purely on the status the Union provided to Scotland. This is significant because this event was pivotal to the devolution discussion. Devolution would have altered the existing union between Scotland and the rest of the UK as established by the Act of Union, yet Wolfe's narrative ignored this.

The sixth episode in Wolfe's narrative was the Scottish Enlightenment, which was used to emphasise Scottish contributions to the world. Wolfe argued that 'Scotland played a leading role in the European Enlightenment. Adam Smith instituted the modern discipline of economics. David Hume brought empirical methods to bear on the study of men and society.'[25] Wolfe's narrative of the intellectual history of Scotland in the eighteenth-century contradicted Tom Nairn's argument about Scottish nationalists' perception of the Enlightenment. According to Nairn: 'if Scottish nationalists have ever been really united on one thing, it is their constant

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[23] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 48.
[24] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 111.
[25] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 147.

execration and denunciation of Enlightenment culture'.[26] Murray Pittock provides an explanation as to why the Enlightenment period fits uneasily into the Scottish nationalist narrative:

> David Hume […] and Adam Smith subscribed to the rhetoric that: English society represented a higher norm to which Scotland should aspire, and that Scotland's place in the Union would be secure and the opportunities and status of her intelligentsia improved, to the extent that her 'civility' resembled that of England.[27]

It is ironic that the very figures who were used in Wolfe's rhetoric to argue for Scotland's right to self-govern were ardent supporters of the Union. The inconvenient fact that both Hume and Smith were unionists was glossed over in Wolfe's text. For narrative purposes, Smith and Hume were discussed separately from their political beliefs. This is another example of silences or blind spots.

The seventh episode in Wolfe's narrative revolved around the Radical Rising of 1820. Wolfe had more to say about this event than any of the others. Perhaps this was because, unlike events such as Bannockburn or the Declaration of Arbroath, the history of the Radical Rising is not well known. Historical figures, such as Wallace, and documents, like the Declaration of Arbroath, are cornerstones of the Scottish narrative. This means that even passing references to them are sufficient to reinforce the nationalist message. By contrast, lesser-known events require further articulation. Additionally, the overall message of this episode of Scottish history is easier to align with the narrative that Wolfe was trying to craft.

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[26] Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (NLB, London, 1977), 112
[27] Murray G.H. Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 74-5.

The Radical Rising was a week of civil unrest which culminated in the trial of 88 individuals, primarily artisans, for treason.[28] The intention of the Rising was to bring about electoral reform as a precondition for social and economic reforms.[29] Even though the leaders of the Rising referred to themselves as 'Britons', rather than as Scots, and based their claim for reform on the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights, Wolfe was at pains to emphasise the fact that they were distinctly Scottish: 'The three martyrs of 1820—Wilson, Hardie and Baird—were devout Christians, typically representative of the Scottish working classes of the period.'[30]

Wolfe's narrative was not restricted to the martyrs of the rising. He gave significant attention to the perpetrators of the events which prompted the rising. Wolfe noted that 'the source of the oppression against which they fought was English imperialism, aided and abetted by the Scottish land-owning and capitalist classes'.[31] The significance of Wolfe's inclusion of Scottish perpetrators cannot be understated. A frequent criticism of the SNP narrative was their categorisation of Scots as the oppressed and the English as the oppressors. Although Wolfe does not absolve the English from all wrongdoing, he included the upper classes of Scottish society in his condemnation. This can be interpreted as a condemnation of those within Scottish society whom he perceived as acting against the interests of the Scottish people.

This is an example of the traitor trope which is another feature of national narratives. This trope is discussed by Gelinada Grinchenko and Eleonora Narvselius in *Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics of Memory (2018)*. In the work, Grinchenko and Narvselius explore the concept of treachery and betrayal in the context

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[28] N.a., 'The Radical Risings of 1820', *ScotlandsPeople,* n.d. https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/research-guides/radical-rising-1820 (accessed 14/12/2021).
[29] N.a., 'Radical Risings'.
[30] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 150.
[31] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 150.

of memory studies.[32] They argue that a society's perception of what is considered traitorous is not stagnant and that 'betrayal is […] a flexible construction'.[33] The takeaway message of the book is that betrayal is a concept which is dependent on 'the nature of *loyalty* to the nation'.[34] This is significant because what Wolfe considered treacherous likely differed from his unionist rivals. This leads to multiple readings of history which attribute treachery to different figures.

The eighth and final episode of Wolfe's narrative focused on the Clydeside MPs of the 1920s and 1930s. In this episode, Wolfe focused most of his attention on John Maclean, a revolutionary socialist of the Red Clydeside era. Wolfe wrote:

> John Maclean, who, in his call for the formation of a Scottish socialist republic, declared his belief in self-government for the people of Scotland as well as his belief in socialism. In his time, he was rejected by the Labour Party and spurned by the Communist Party. He was hounded by the British Government and imprisoned because of his opposition to the war. He was a saintly, dedicated, non-violent man whose self-sacrifice for the people of Scotland should be an example to Scots of all political creeds.[35]

This narrative is interesting because it presented Maclean as both a hero for the Scottish, but also a victim of the British Government. Wolfe's framing of Maclean resembles the portrayal of heroes in national narratives. However, unlike the earlier examples of Wallace and Bruce, Maclean is a more modern historical figure and was not a military figure.

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[32] Gelinada Grinchenko & Eleonora Narvselius (eds), *Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics of Memory: Formulas of Betrayal* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[33] Grinchenko & Narvselius, *Traitors, 2.*
[34] Grinchenko & Narvselius, *Traitors, 5.*
[35] Wolfe, *Scotland Lives,* 124.

Overall Wolfe's narrative of Scottish history contained numerous archetypal features of national narratives. His narrative was reliant on the concept of Scotland's ancient origins, and timeless national character, as well as the invocation of military heroes who fought against historic enemies, and the use of silences to remove inconvenient facts that would otherwise disrupt the narrative. Although these features are typical of national narratives in general, different manifestations of national narratives tend to use them in conflicting ways. For example, Wolfe's narrative of the golden age of Scotland, followed by gradual decline, is typical of subaltern narratives. However, for the Scottish mythscape to align with Bell's theory, the competing myth, in this case Dalyell's narrative, needs to align with the governing narrative. This will be explored in the following section.

Dalyell's Narrative of Scottish History

In 1977, Dalyell published a book in response to *Scotland Lives*, entitled *Devolution: The End of Britain*. Like Wolfe, Dalyell structured his book around events in Scottish history, three of which were shared with Wolfe's text. However, Dalyell created a different narrative arc, which resituated what Wolfe had described as Scotland's decline in a more positive light. This suggests that Dalyell's narrative aligns with what Bell considers to be the governing myth.

The first thread of Dalyell's anti-devolution narrative focused on the Battle of Bannockburn, which was also a plot point in Wolfe's narrative. Dalyell conceded that it was 'natural' for Scots to take 'pride in Bannockburn' but also argued that the inflammation of old antagonisms for political gain was irresponsible.[36] This was a regular theme in Dalyell's text. On several occasions, Dalyell asserted that the SNP's interpretation of Scottish history was 'unforgivably irresponsible'.[37] Dalyell condemned the 'myths about the way in which Scotland

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[36] Tam Dalyell, *Devolution: The End of Britain* (London: Cape, 1977)*,* 280.
[37] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 280.

has been maltreated by the English', which persevered in the public discourse.[38] As illustrated above in the discussion of Wolfe's narrative, victimhood is a common theme of national narratives. However, Dalyell attacked the political weaponisation of victimhood. Adam B. Lerner argues that victimhood is a feature of national narratives that 'claim unjustified suffering at the hands of other nations'.[39] He notes that in narratives of victimhood 'the narration of trauma is constitutive of national identity' and used to 'legitimate group sentiment'.[40] Lerner outlines the process which is undertaken to achieve this goal. First, collective trauma is politically narrated, and then the resultant grievances are projected onto third parties (usually a nation).[41] It was this process that Dalyell criticised in his text.

The second event in Dalyell's narrative was the Act of Union. Dalyell's narration of the event focused on the closing of the Scottish Parliament on 25 March 1707, and the unification of the parliaments of England and Scotland on 1 May 1707, to form the Parliament of Great Britain.[42] For Dalyell, the Union was a positive development for both the English and Scottish peoples. He wrote: 'Those who were responsible for the Act of Union rightly realised that, after centuries of futile feuding, this could only be to the benefit of both countries.'[43] Although Dalyell was correct that those responsible for unifying Scotland and England believed it would benefit the two nations, there is ongoing debate about how much the union benefited the respective countries.[44] Within the confines of Hayden White's theory of emplotment, Dalyell's narrative of the Act of Union is constructed as a romantic chapter in

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[38] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 280.
[39] Adam B. Lerner, 'The Uses and Abuses of Victimhood Nationalism in International Politics', *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol.26, No.1 (2019), 63.
[40] Lerner, 'Victimhood Nationalism', 64.
[41] Lerner, 'Victimhood Nationalism', 64.
[42] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 1.
[43] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 1.
[44] **SEE:** Tom Devine, 'Tom Devine: Why I Now Say Yes to Independence for Scotland', *The Conversation,* 21 August 2014, https://theconversation.com/tom-devine-why-i-now-say-yes-to-independence-for-scotland-30733 (accessed 5/5/2020) & Christopher A. Whatley, 'Chris Whatley: Why Tom Devine Switch to Yes is Confusing and Short Sighted', *The Conversation,* 25 August 2014, https://theconversation.com/chris-whatley-why-tom-devine-switch-to-yes-is-confusing-and-short-sighted-30850 (accessed 5/5/2020).

both Scottish and British history.[45] For Dalyell, the Union was a 'victorious' and 'triumphant' event.

His argument is furnished by his examination of the preservation of a distinctive Scottish civil society within the Union. For Dalyell, this was undoubtably a good thing for Scotland. He stressed the fact that Scotland retained its legal system. He noted that: 'Under the Act of Union, Scotland retained her own system of law, which is derived from Roman Law, and is more akin to Continental than Anglo-Saxon Law.'[46] This argument was reiterated later in the text.[47] The narrative function of his point about Scottish law and civil society was to establish that Scottish distinctiveness was not threatened by the Union.

Another aspect of Dalyell's narrative was that Scotland voluntarily entered into the Union. In this regard, Dalyell made a direct comparison between the experiences of Ireland and Scotland:

> Unlike the Irish the Scots have never been forcibly conquered and settled by an alien people; even the Roman legions were birds of passage here. The union between the two countries was a gradual and voluntary process, entered into by both England and Scotland for their mutual benefit.[48]

Dalyell persisted with this comparison and argued that 'the relationship between England and Scotland has essentially been one of partnership […], whereas that between England and Ireland was that of a colonial power and a conquered people.'[49] Dalyell continued: 'there has been no history of oppression by the English remotely comparable to Ireland (and episodes like

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[45] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press: 1973), 8-9.
[46] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 17.
[47] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 210-11.
[48] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 280.
[49] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 287.

the Highland Clearances were […] the work of fellow-Scots.'[50] This aspect of Dalyell's argument can be contrasted with Wolfe's statements about the Radical Rising. In Wolfe's narrative of the Rising, the Scottish land-owning class was responsible for suppressing the insurrection. However, Wolfe noted that this was part of a wider movement to protect the interests of 'English' imperialism. In Wolfe's narrative, the 'traitorous' Scottish elites were subservient to the English state. This contrasted with Dalyell's narrative, which portrayed the negative chapters of Scottish history as the result of Scots oppressing other Scots. Additionally, both narratives incorporated a discussion of class. In Wolfe's account, poor Scots were repressed by rich English people. In Dalyell's narrative, poor Scots were oppressed by rich Scottish people. For Wolfe, class lines and national lines coincided, whereas Dalyell interpreted class as cutting across national lines. This discussion of social class in conjunction with nationalism has long been a feature of the literature.[51] This has been particularly true when theories of socialism and nationalism intersect.

Dalyell's narrative additionally focused on the conditions that brought Scotland into the Union. He argued:

> By the early 1700s Scotland's economy was in critical condition. The Darien Scheme […] had failed miserably. England was becoming increasingly important as the principal market for Scottish goods, so what could be more natural than for the Scots to suggest the unity of the two countries? Provided they could keep their legal system and their Church they were quite happy to lose their Parliament in the process.[52]

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[50] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 288.
[51] **SEE:** J. J. Schwarzmantel, 'Class and Nation: Problems of Socialist Nationalism', *Political Studies,* Vol.35, No.2 (1987), 239-255.
[52] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 282.

Dalyell's narrative here is in some ways an oversimplification. Firstly, he made the mistake of equating the political elite of Scotland with the entirety of Scottish society. The 'Scots' to whom Dalyell was referring were not Scottish people in general, but rather a section of Scottish elites. Secondly, Dalyell ignored the fact that there was substantial opposition to the Union. Whereas the political elite saw the Union as an easy solution to Scotland's financial problems, many Scots were hostile to Union with England.[53] Overall, Dalyell's argument is not, strictly speaking, incorrect. However, he used language in a way that presented the interests of Scottish and English elites as if they were the same as the interests of all Scottish and English people. The use of broad terms is common in all kinds of discourse. However, it is particularly contentious when connected to nationality.

Dalyell's narrative of the Act of Union incorporated many features of what Rudolf De Cilla, Martin Reisel and Ruth Wodak define as features of 'the narrative of a collective political history'.[54] Among a number of other features, De Cilla, Reisel and Wodak argued that national narratives include a period of 'decline, defeat and crisis' and 'times of flourishing and prosperity'.[55] These features are evident in Dalyell's narrative. For Dalyell, the period directly preceding the Union saw Scotland decline into financial crisis, and the Union subsequently led to prosperity.

The third event in Dalyell's narrative were the Jacobite Uprisings of 1715 and 1745, which he examined in some depth. Dalyell's goal was to undermine the iconic place of Jacobitism in the Scottish nationalist narrative. Dalyell noted:

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[53] **SEE:** Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699-1707* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 2007).

[54] Rudolf De Cilla, Martin Reisel, & Ruth Wodak, 'The Discursive Construction of National Narratives', *Discourse and Societ,* Vol.10, No.2 (1999), 158.

[55] De Cilla, Reisel, & Wodak, 'Discursive Construction', 158.

The early years of the union were disrupted by the Jacobite revolts of 1715 and 1745, and the '45 in particular has been viewed through rose-tinted—and sadly distorting—spectacles by romantic enthusiasts for Scottish nationalism.[56]

In particular, Dalyell highlighted the heroisation of Bonnie Prince Charlie in the nationalist narrative. 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' Dalyell argued 'was only interested in Scotland as a means of recapturing the British Crown for the Stuarts; he wanted to be King of Britain in London, and not the King of Scotland in Edinburgh.'[57] Although Bonnie Prince Charlie did not feature in Wolfe's text, he remains a prominent figure in Scottish history. Dalyell's argument thus attempted to undermine romantic images of what Scotland might have been had the Jacobites been successful. According to Dalyell, very little would have changed besides the ruling house.

In his analysis of the Jacobite Rebellion, Dalyell also highlighted the fact that, although Bonnie Prince Charlie's army was made up of Scots, a large portion of Cumberland's army was also Scottish.[58] He built on this argument:

The truth of the matter is that we Scots have always been more divided among ourselves than pitted against the English. Scottish history before the union of the parliaments is a gloomy, violent tale of murders, feuds and tribal revenge.[59]

According to Dalyell, it was the Union with England that laid the foundation for a more united and less violent Scotland. He argued: 'Only after the Act of Union did Highlanders and Lowlanders, Picts and Celts begin to recognise one another as fellow-citizens.'[60] Dalyell's

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[56] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 283.
[57] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 283.
[58] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 283.
[59] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 283.
[60] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 283.

narrative was evidently an attack on the narrative of victimhood used in the Scottish nationalist narrative. It is worth noting that, in his eagerness to portray the Union as a positive development for Scotland, Dalyell was keen to paint a gloomy picture of pre-Union Scotland. His narrative of Scotland's violent past connected the violence to ethnic differences, as indicated by his reference to Picts and Celts. Such negative views of Scottish history have been condemned by Pittock, who argues that 'the idea that Scotland is a land with a violent history, rife by turbulent and bloodthirsty internal strife, is one losing ground'.[61]

From Dalyell's perspective, the failure of the Jacobite Uprisings led to a long period during which many Scots abandoned any desire for national independence. Dalyell wrote:

> Ever since the Union of Parliaments in 1707, a minority—small in some periods, larger in others—have continued to believe that Scotland should be a separate nation and not simply another part of the United Kingdom. […] For the century after the fiasco of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the '45, this tradition was muted even in the Highlands; it fell almost silent in the central belt of Scotland, one of the centres of the Industrial Revolution. There is some evidence, albeit flimsy, that a sense of Scottishness was rekindled in the 1840s and 1850s.[62]

Dalyell's argument is interesting within the context of Hall's theory which identifies continuity as a feature of national narratives. Dalyell's narrative denies the continuity of the Scottish nationalist tradition. In Dalyell's view, the nationalist tradition disappeared in the aftermath of the 1745 uprising. Additionally, he questioned the validity of the Jacobite Uprising as a true

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[61] Pittock, *Scottish Nationality,* 76.
[62] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 64-5.

manifestation of Scottish nationalism because the Jacobite's were seeking to place Bonnie Prince Charlie on the British throne in London, not the Scottish throne in Edinburgh.

The fourth episode of Dalyell's narrative was the life of SNP 'hero', Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun. Fletcher was a Scottish writer and politician who supported the Darien Scheme and vocally opposed the Act of Union.[63] The Darien Scheme was the establishment of a colony on the Gulf of Darien in Panama, Central America, by investors from the Kingdom of Scotland.[64] The scheme was a failure and led to the economic decline of Scotland, which in turn precipitated the Act of Union. In his book, Dalyell focused on the SNP's selective narration of Saltoun which ignored aspects of his character and biography. Dalyell noted:

> The legendary Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun […] advocated for the use of domestic slaves in order to bolster the sagging Scottish economy, patriotically suggesting that the Highlands should be conquered and their clans reduced to slavery.[65]

The image of Fletcher presented by Dalyell clashed with core aspects of the traditional Scottish national narrative. The romantic image of the Scottish clans informs a substantial part of contemporary national consciousness, whether this be clan tartans or the idea of kinship. Therefore, in Dalyell's view, the fact that Fletcher supported the destruction of the Scottish clan system, was symptomatic of the contradictions of the nationalists' version of Scottish history. However, in so doing, Dalyell also fell victim to this. Although scholars agree that Fletcher had some questionable ideas about the reinstitution of slavery in Scotland, he did not argue for the destruction of the clan system as Dalyell suggested. Colin Kidd, in his review of

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[63] John Gray Centre, *Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun—The Patriot (1655–1716),* n.d., https://www.johngraycentre.org/people/movers-and-shakers/andrew-fletcher-of-saltoun-the-patriot-1655-1716/ (accessed 11/4/2022).
[64] John Gray Centre, *Panama—The Darien Scheme,* n.d., https://www.johngraycentre.org/archive-exhibitions/around-the-world/panama-the-darien-scheme/ (accessed 11/4/2022).
[65] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 281.

a monograph on Fletcher and the Union, noted that Fletcher had proposed the 'reinstitution of classical slavery as a solution to the problem of vagrancy'.[66] Evidently, Fletcher was indeed a supporter of slavery, however, his proposals had not been directly targeted at the clan system.

The final element of Dalyell's narrative was the Enlightenment, which he depicted as the 'golden age' of Scotland. The Enlightenment also featured in Wolfe's narrative, which depicted the period in a positive light. The main difference between the two authors was that Wolfe attributed the Scottish Enlightenment to the distinct Scottish character, whereas Dalyell emphasised the role of the Union. According to Dalyell:

> It is hardly surprising that the real golden age of Scotland should have followed the Act of Union. The eighteenth century saw a remarkable and unprecedented flowering of Scottish talent in the arts, learning, science and commerce.[67]

Therefore, according to Dalyell, without the Union, the great minds of Scotland would not have flourished as they did. This directly contradicted Wolfe's narrative, which tied Scottish contributions during the Enlightenment with the Scottish national character. Dalyell's portrayal of this episode of Scottish history also aligns with White's conception of romantic narratives. For White, a narrative following a romantic plot structure has triumph, virtue and transcendence as key features.[68] Although Dalyell did not use this language, his portrayal of the Enlightenment aligns with this idea.

In conclusion, the narrative strands presented by Wolfe and Dalyell in the 1970s were mostly distinct. On multiple occasions the narratives directly contradicted each other in their interpretation of certain key events in Scottish history, namely the Battle of Bannockburn, the

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[66] Colin Kidd, 'Review of *Andrew Fletcher and the Treaty of Union*, by P. H. Scott', *History of Political Thought*, Vol.15, No.1 (1994), 143–145.
[67] Dalyell, *Devolution,* 282.
[68] White, *Metahistory,* 9.

Act of Union, and the Enlightenment. Additionally, the strands emplotted events that the rival strand did not even mention. However, underlying both strands was a common understanding of what constitutes a national narrative, for example the tropes of continuity and victimhood. The difference is that, in Wolfe's version, these narrative features exist in the narrative of the Scottish nation, whereas Dalyell disputed this.

During this period the UK was governed by the Conservative Party (1970-1974) and the Labour Party (1974-1979). As the governing parliamentary parties, the Conservatives and then the Labour Party established the dominant governing narrative. However, neither party constructed narratives that focused on Scottish events. Instead, their narratives focused on a unified narrative of British history which ignored the distinct histories of the constituent nations of the UK. Whether these narratives can be considered the governing narrative within the Scottish mythscape is debateable. This thesis does not consider them the governing narrative because it would not have been the accepted narrative in Scotland. A narrative which entirely ignores Scotland's history would not have been considered acceptable by Scots of any political creed. Therefore, the Scottish mythscape at the time consisted of two narratives that did not conform to the criteria of a governing narratives. However, because neither narrative constitutes the governing narrative, there can be no subaltern narrative. This means that the Scottish mythscape did not align with a key element of Bell's theory.

The 'People and Politics' Debate of 1977

Despite key politicians producing histories of Scotland to support their positions, the debates leading up to the 1979 referendum showed relatively little engagement with these ideas. A good example of this is the Thames Television debate entitled 'People and Politics'. The hour-long debate was broadcast on 21 February 1977, the night before a guillotine motion which saw the government withdraw *The Scotland and Wales Bill.* The significance of the guillotine

motion was that the Labour Party's White Paper of October 1974, which preceded the party forming a majority government, had promised elected assemblies in Scotland and Wales.[69] The debate was composed of three panellists and 31 audience participants. Of these audience participants, 20 spoke in support of devolution, and 11 spoke out against devolution. Those opposed to devolution belonged entirely to the political and business spheres. By comparison, those in support of devolution included academics, trade unionists, poets, actors, and individuals from the religious sphere.

On the panel of the debate was Margo MacDonald, MP for Glasgow Govan (1973-1974) and Deputy Leader of the SNP (1974-1979), Norman Buchan, Labour MP for West Renfrewshire (1964-1983), and Teddy Taylor, Conservative MP for Glasgow Cathart (1964-1979). In the debate, MacDonald argued for devolution as a necessary step towards independence, Buchan argued that devolution was necessary to maintain the Union, and Taylor argued that devolution was the first step towards separation. The structure of the debate saw discussion move continuously between the audience and the panel. Overall, the debate was focused on the logistics of Scotland having its own assembly. This saw discussion focused on the financial requirements of establishing the assembly, and the sharing of power between the assembly and Westminster.[70] These concerns dominated the debate and were rarely paired with historical events. Throughout the debate, historical events or themes were referenced only seven times, six times by devolutionists, and only once by an anti-devolutionist.

Two of the historical references included in the debate revolved around the question of identity. Anti-devolutionist, Labour MP for Motherwell (1954-1974), and member of the 'Scottish is British' campaign, George Lawson, argued that Scottish identity was intrinsically linked to British identity: 'Over the past 270 years, the Scottish, the English, and the Welsh

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[69] Harold Wilson, 'October 1974 Labour Party Manifesto—Britain Will Win with Labour', *Political News.co.uk*, 2001, http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1974/oct/1974-oct-labour-manifesto.shtml (accessed 18/7/2022).
[70] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution', https://youtu.be/LOZocGxL23s (accessed 14/10/2021).

people have become one people'.[71] This argument contradicted that of Reverend Fleming of the Scottish Free Church, who argued that that Scottish national consciousness had gradually eroded through centralisation since World War II.[72]

An additional two speakers focused on the history of nationalism in Scotland. Geoff Shaw of the Scottish Free Church focused on the origins of Scottish political nationalism as a grassroots movement aimed at decentralisation which he argued is at odds with SNP nationalism.[73] Dr George, also of the Scottish Free Church, noted the Church of Scotland's connections to the post-war nationalist movement through their committee on Church and Nation in 1946.[74]

The three final contributions were by speakers from the arts: poets, Alexander Scott, and Hugh MacDiarmid, and actor, Andrew Keir. Scott's contribution focused on the reactionary violence which followed the failure of Gladstone's Irish Bills for Home Rule in the 1880s, which he argued would be replicated in Scotland if the Bill failed.[75] This example is different from the other historical events or themes mentioned in the debate for two reasons. The first is that the event did not occur in Scotland, and secondly, the event does not reference Scottish identity or nationalism in any way. This contrasted with the contributions by both MacDiarmid and Keir who focused their arguments on a distinct Scottish psyche and spirit respectively. MacDiarmid's argument emphasised Scotland's impact on mankind which he contended was only possible because of the Scottish psyche.[76] By comparison, Keir argued that Scotland's spirit had been diminished and would rise again after the death of both the British Empire and the Union.[77]

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[71] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[72] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[73] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[74] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[75] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[76] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.
[77] ThamesTv, 'Scottish Devolution'.

The above paragraphs have illustrated that although historical narratives did feature in the debate, they were not at the forefront of the discussion. There are two explanations as to why this was the case. The first being that the speakers did not think historical narratives were important. Alternatively, at this time there was no accepted master narrative which could be employed for the benefit of either argument, therefore historical narratives were avoided. The second explanation is much more convincing because, as the sections analysing the texts by Wolfe and Dalyell have established, historical narratives were central to Scottish nationhood. Although, the analysis of the two narratives by Wolfe and Dalyell have already shown that the Scottish situation was more complex, the debate constructs an even more complicated image of the Scottish mythscape.

The overall lack of historical narratives or tropes means that, according to Yehudith Auerbach's theory, the devolution debate of 1977 was a material conflict, not an identity conflict. Auerbach defines national conflicts as either material, over land and resources, or identity, in which one side views the identity of the other side as a threat to their own identity.[78] Auerbach argues that material conflicts are more easily resolved because the continuation of the conflict is based on an assessment of the costs versus the benefits of maintaining the conflict.[79] However, in the case of identity conflicts, there can be no compromise, because the narrative of one side is a threat to the other side.[80] Using this criterion, it is clear that participants in the Thames television debate were engaged in a material conflict. The outcome of the conflict was concerned with material factors such as the state of democracy and the economy. Although some speakers argued that Scottish identity was eroding within the Union, this was attributed to the political system, not the existence of an English identity or even a British identity.

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[78] Yehudith Auerbach, 'National Narratives in a Conflict of Identity', in Yaacov Bar-Simon (ed) *Barriers to Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Jerusalem: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010), 99.
[79] Auerbach, 'National Narratives', 100.
[80] Auerbach, 'National Narratives', 101.

The Devolution Referendum of 1979

The discussion of the two texts by Wolfe and Dalyell, as well as the debate of 1977 have situated the state of Scottish memory politics in the lead up to the official referendum campaign. The *Scotland Act 1978* received Royal Assent on 31 July 1978, and the referendum was held on 1 March 1979. This meant that the referendum campaign lasted just six months. Additionally, no public funding was allocated for the Yes or No campaigns.[81] Instead, two leaflets were circulated to each household in Scotland outlining the case for both the Yes and No vote.[82] However, the Labour Government did circulate an additional document that outlined their case for a Yes vote.[83] Not many of the flyers or pamphlets that were produced during the campaign have survived. Those that are still available could not be accessed during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the research for this thesis was conducted. However, one of the major events in the campaign was a debate entitled 'The Devolution Debate', which was broadcast on the BBC on 28 February 1979—the night before the referendum.

Margo MacDonald, who was the spokesperson for the SNP at the debate, argued that a 'Yes' vote would demonstrate Scottish self-respect, and a 'No' vote would mean that Scots 'would no longer be able to think of (Scotland) as a nation'.[84] The question of: 'Is Scotland a nation?' was particularly significant during this time. For the SNP the answer to this question was a resounding yes. However, other speakers, including Conservative candidate Paul Burns, insisted that the UK was a nation, and that Scotland was a region within the UK. As at the previous debate, MacDonald's arguments revolved around material concerns with elements of identity politics thrown in.

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[81] Oonagh Gay, 'Scotland and Devolution: Research Paper 97/92', *House of Commons Library* 29 July 1997, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP97-92/RP97-92.pdf (accessed 20/3/2023), 21.

[82] Gay, 'Scotland and Devolution', 21.

[83] Gay, 'Scotland and Devolution', 21.

[84] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Devolution 79—Margo MacDonald', 17 September 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-29147148 (accessed 19/7/2022).

Representing the pro-devolution portion of the Labour Party were Jim Sillars, MP for South Ayrshire (1970-1979) and founder of the Scottish Labour Party (1976-1981), and John Smith, Secretary of State for Trade (1978-1979). Sillars argued that the devolution debate was about 'those who believe in centralisation and those who believe in a decentralist system of government'.[85] Additionally, he argued that 'those who refused to yield on the Irish Home Rule Bill are the people who were responsible for that part of the United Kingdom peeling off in 1916 and 1922'.[86] Although Sillars did incorporate a historical narrative into his argument, the event was not directly linked to Scotland or Scottish identity. His colleague, John Smith, however, incorporated historical narratives in a more traditional way. Smith noted that 'since 1885 there has been a territorial minister for Scotland. A Secretary for Scotland then, becoming a Secretary for State in 1926.'[87] Therefore, in his view, the creation of a devolved parliament was simply a step towards amending the British establishment so that it was more effective.[88] This narrative was constructed, according to Hall's theory, to create a sense of continuity.

Teddy Taylor and Leon Brittan, MP for Cleveland and Whitby (1974-1983), represented the Conservative opposition to devolution. Taylor argued that devolution was a 'scheme which won't work, which can't last, and which will bring non-stop conflict and lead to the break-up of Britain'.[89] This argument did not incorporate historical narratives in any form. It was purely focused on the material concerns of devolution. Brittan agreed with Taylor and argued that devolution threatened 'the unity of the United Kingdom without actually giving compensating advantages to the people of Scotland'.[90]

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[85] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Devolution 79—Jim Sillars', 17 September 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-29147145 (accessed 19/7/2022).
[86] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Jim Sillars'.
[87] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Devolution 79—John Smith', 17 September 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-29147146 (accessed 19/7/2022).
[88] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: John Smith'.
[89] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Devolution 79—Teddy Taylor', 17 September 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-29147149 (accessed 19/7/2022).
[90] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Devolution 79—Leon Brittan', 17 September 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-29147147 (accessed 19/7/2022).

The official devolution campaign followed the same trend as the debate of 1977, with historical narratives avoided in favour for discussion of political, social and economic concerns. This makes the Scottish mythscape at this time abnormal, because it is unusual for a discourse to focus on historical narratives and then evolve to avoid them altogether.

'Braveheartism' and Scotland Between 1979 and 1997

The aftermath of the 1979 Devolution Referendum led to radical changes within Scottish politics that impacted the mythscape. The failure of the SNP to deliver a Scottish Parliament to their supporters resulted in electoral decline. The party dropped from 30.4 percent of the Scottish vote in October 1974, to 17.3 percent in May 1979.[91] In the following years, the SNP attempted a rebrand.[92] The party interpreted Scottish support for Labour to mean that the Scottish electorate preferred socialist values.[93] However, this assumption proved incorrect. As Figure 1 demonstrates, support for the party continued to decline in 1983 and had not returned to pre-1979 levels by 1997. Instead, Scottish support for Labour was linked with their perceived ability to hold off the Conservatives.[94] Despite the continued decline of support for the Conservative Party in Scotland from 1979 to 1997, the party was able to hold power in Westminster throughout this period. [95] During this time, there were two Prime Ministers, Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) and John Major (1990-1997). Thatcher's time as Prime Minster has been outlined as significant to the development of Scottish nationalism. Colin Kidd and Murray Petrie argued that unionist politics had historically been sensitive to Scottish distinctiveness within the Union, but Thatcherism disturbed the balance.[96]

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[91] Pilling & Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics', 24.
[92] Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence? Scotland in the Balance* (Reaktion Books, 2003), 91.
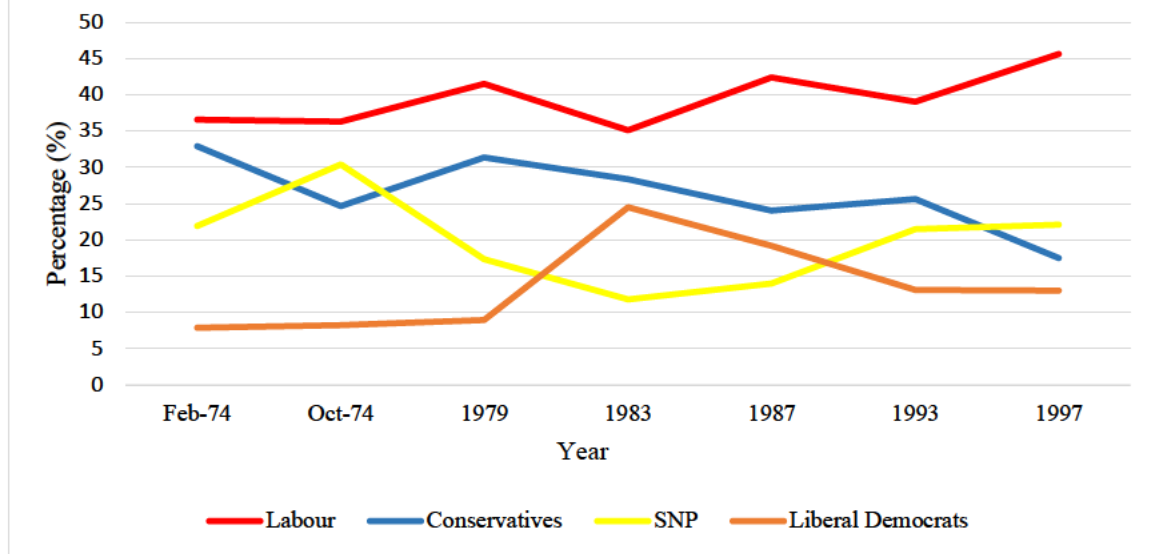[93] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 91.
[94] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 93.
[95] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 96.
[96] Kidd & Petrie, 'Independence Referendum', 38-39.

FIGURE 1: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at British General Elections, 1979-1997.[97]

Continued support for devolution was evident during the 1980s in the form of the 'Campaign for a Scottish Assembly'. The most significant document produced by the campaign was entitled 'A Claim of Right for Scotland' (1988). A noteworthy part of the Claim was the assertion that the Scottish people possess the sovereign right to determine how they are governed.[98] Although the Claim did not acknowledge the document from which it drew inspiration, it is clear both from its name and its contents that it was influenced by the 'Claim of Right Act 1689'. The 1689 document was produced during the Glorious Revolution, when James VII and II was deposed by William of Orange. King James belonged to the House of Stuart, which had reigned over Scotland since the fourteenth century. At the time of the Glorious Revolution, the crowns of Scotland and England were separate. Therefore, the removal of King James from the English throne was not interpreted to equate with his removal

[97] Sam Pilling & Richard Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2021: A Century of Elections', *Commons Library Research Briefing,* 18 August 2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7529/CBP-7529.pdf (accessed 24/5/2022), 24.

[98] House of Commons Library, 'Claim of Right for Scotland', *UK Parliament,* 3 July 2018 https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2018-0171/ (accessed 24/3/2022).

from the Scottish throne. To deal with the issue of the Scottish crown, a Convention of the Scottish Estates met on 16 March 1689 to consider the claims of the two contenders for the throne.[99] The Convention voted on 4 April 1689 to remove James VII on the premise of contractual monarchy.[100] On 30 March 1989, the document was signed by all Scottish Liberal Democrat and Labour MPs (except for Tam Dalyell).[101] This signified an overall acceptance of the narrative of Scottish sovereignty by the parties involved.

The release of the Hollywood blockbuster *Braveheart* (1995) marked another important shift in the devolution narrative. The film depicted the Scottish warrior, William Wallace, who led the Scots during the 'First War of Scottish Independence' in the thirteenth century. Prior to the film's release, Wallace was already an established figure in Scottish historical consciousness. But a high budget theatrical depiction of the mythic hero greatly contributed to Wallace's popularity. Pittock notes that:

Braveheart was a huge hit in Scotland, though many voices were raised, critical of its historical accuracy which had been strangely silent over *Rob Roy,* a film which took even more liberties with the known facts but was not explicitly nationalist.[102]

Pittock's comparison of *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* is important. *Rob Roy* (1995) depicted the life of eighteenth-century clan leader, Rob Roy McGregor. Although both films took liberties in their depiction of historical figures and events, the overt Scottish nationalism of *Braveheart*, along with its hostile depiction of the English, made it the more controversial film. In particular, the Scottish narrative of grievance was fuelled by *Braveheart*'s depiction of the brutality of the English.

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[99] Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 302.
[100] Lynch, *Scotland,* 302.
[101] House of Commons Library, 'Claim of Right'.
[102] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 146.

Finlay also examined the role of *Braveheart* in the development of Scottish national consciousness. He noted that 'the enduring power of historical myth lies in its ability to adapt and reflect the changing aspirations of society'.[103] This argument directly relates to one of the key inaccuracies of the film: the portrayal of Wallace's family and background. In the film, Wallace was portrayed as a highlander of humble means. In reality, Wallace came from a noble lowland background. The portrayal of Wallace as a mistreated highlander is significant because it reflects a dominant myth, which casts lowlanders as English collaborators, and highlanders as victims of English brutality. An additional criticism of the film was the physical appearance of Wallace, in particular the woad face paint and tartan kilt. The costuming of the Highlanders in kilts proved to be one of the most contentious inaccuracies of the film.[104] Despite the inaccuracies, the film became a cultural phenomenon both in Scotland and internationally. The physical image of Mel Gibson as Wallace has become illustrative of the mythic figure, and the fictional 'Freedom' speech has become demonstrative of the Scottish independence movement.

Tim Edensor outlined the impact of the film in his article 'Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity' (1997). Edensor noted that the film was the fifth largest grossing movie in the UK in 1995, with the Scottish market making up 28% of the British audience for the film.[105] He contextualised this figure by noting that Scottish audiences typically make up 8% of the market.[106] These figures show just how successful the film was in Scotland. Edensor also examined the film's political importance. In particular, he noted the eagerness with which the SNP exploited the film's themes.[107] Edensor quoted SNP leader, Alex Salmond's claim that 'the message is relevant today in that it is the Scots who are fighting for

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[103] Richard J. Finlay, 'Heroes, Myths and Anniversaries in Modern Scotland', *Scottish Affairs*, Vol.18, No.1 (1997), 118.
[104] **SEE:** Peter Traquair, *Freedom's Sword: Scotland's Wars of Independence* (London: HarperCollins, 2000).
[105] Tim Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs*, Vol.21, No.1 (1997), 135.
[106] Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 135
[107] Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 146.

their independence the same way they are at the moment'.[108] He also noted that, although the SNP were exploiting a film with an explicitly ethnic nationalist message, the party was adamant that their nationalism was civic: '[the] idea of the "common weal", the common good, is a Scottish spirit that has lasted for centuries; it is that spirit that the modern civic nationalism of Scotland retains'.[109] Despite this, Edensor noted that Salmond acknowledged that 'the real power [is] in the emotional appeal'.[110] These contrasting statements illustrate the odd place that Braveheart nationalism occupied in SNP nationalism. The most interesting statement made by Salmond was his casting of devolution period politicians into the roles of soldiers during the First War of Scottish Independence. Edensor quoted Salmond:

At the Battle of Stirling Bridge I would have been on Wallace's side and at least (Michael) Forsyth would know he wanted to be on the other side. But Labour would have been in a quandary. I can safely say Wallace wouldn't have been in favour of devolution.[111]

The significance of Braveheart to the 1997 Devolution campaign dominates scholarly literature. However, references to Wallace or the film were surprisingly absent from the campaign. Although the SNP did not refer to Wallace during the 1997 campaign, Stephen D. Reicher and Nick Hopkins note the party's implicit endorsement of the film's message in the years prior.[112] They argue that 'the SNP took advantage of Braveheart and its portrait of Wallace' through the distribution of pro-devolution flyers at screenings.[113] This tactic, like the

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[108] G. Dinwoodie, 'SNP Rides High on the Back of Braveheart', *Glasgow Herald,* 2 October 1995, 1, in Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 146

[109] *Observer,* 10 September 1995, 6, in Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 146.

[110] *The Herald,* 11 September 1995, in Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 147.

[111] I. Martin, 'Facing up to a Bright Past', *Sunday Times,* 3 September 1995, 14, in Edensor, 'Reading Braveheart', 148.

[112] Stephen D. Reicher & Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation* (London: SAGE, 2000), 135.

[113] Reicher & Hopkins, *Self and Nation,* 135.

annual SNP rallies at Bannockburn, allowed the SNP to draw a connection between contemporary politics and iconic moments in Scottish history. The SNP was criticised in the press for handing out leaflets after the screenings. However, this criticism was minor given the anti-English message of the film.

An example of the scrutiny the SNP faced in response to its support of the film's message was demonstrated in an article of 1 September 1995 in *The Herald Scotland*. The article, entitled 'Braveheart star given role for SNP too', described the content of the flyers distributed by the SNP at *Braveheart* screenings. *The Herald Scotland* reported that the leaflets included a picture of William Wallace actor, Mel Gibson and the title 'independence isn't just history'.[114] The existence of SNP flyers with this message, in conjunction with Salmond's above comments, indicate that for the SNP, devolution was just the beginning of their agenda. The *Braveheart* film was credited with increasing interest in Scottish nationalism. This allowed the SNP to push more emotive narratives, which would usually only appeal to nationalists, to more moderate voters.

In the UK General Election of 1 May 1997, Labour won a landslide victory. It also won 56 of Scotland's 72 parliamentary seats (the SNP won just six seats). Just 25 days after the election, a second Devolution Referendum was announced by the new Labour government.[115] The Referendum was held on 18 September 1997, making the official campaign period less than four months.

The Discourse of the 1997 Referendum

The political dialogue of the 1997 referendum was worlds apart from that of the 1979 referendum. The historical narratives which existed in the political discourse in the lead-up to

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[114] *The Herald Scotland,* 'Braveheart star given role for SNP too', 1 September 1995, https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12089430.braveheart-star-given-role-for-snp-too/ (accessed 6/4/2022).
[115] Pittock, *Road to Independence,* 185.

the referendum were limited to the 'Scotland FORward' campaign and the anti-devolution 'Think Twice' and 'Just say NO' campaigns. Kidd argues 'there was very little in the way of a serious "unionist" campaign in 1997, for devolution already appeared to be the "settled will" of the Scottish electorate'.[116] Although factions within the Labour Party still opposed devolution, the official party stance was that the union was no longer functioning to the benefit of all nations. Kidd argues that the referendum was a:

> straightforward battle between a cross-party popular front which favoured devolution (Labour, Liberals, and—more ambivalently—the SNP) and a rump anti-devolutionist campaign centred on the Conservative Party which had just lost all its seats in Scotland at the 1997 general election.[117]

The 'Scotland FORward' campaign, composed of the SNP and Labour Party, focused on one overarching narrative in their discourse, namely, that Scotland's history as a nation with its own independent parliament predated the union with England. The preservation of distinct Scottish institutions was used in the pro-devolution narrative to present the creation of a Scottish Parliament as the final step in the realisation of Scottish nationhood. For example, a newsletter published by Scotland FORward in 1997 emphasised the historic character of the Scottish parliament. The newsletter read: 'A parliament reconvened. St Andrews last hosted the Scottish Parliament in 1645.'[118] While this leaflet referenced a specific site that had held the Scottish Parliament over 350 years prior, it nonetheless emphasised the continuity of the Scottish parliamentary tradition. The use of the word 'reconvened' suggested that, despite plans for a new site for the proposed Scottish Parliament, its establishment was interpretated as the

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[116] Colin Kidd, 'The Defence of the Union: Ironies and Ambiguities' in G. Hassan and J. Mitchell, *After Independence: The State of the Scottish Nation Debate* (New York: Luath Press, 2013) 42.
[117] Kidd, 'Defence of the Union', 41.
[118] Scotland FORward, 'Newsletter Two', 1997.

continuation of Scotland's self-governance. Scottish Labour also referenced the historic foundation of the Scottish parliament in their campaign material. One Labour leaflet noted that the referendum was a chance to 'decide whether Scotland gets its own Parliament for the first time in 300 years'.[119] Both of these narratives emphasised continuity which is a common feature of national narratives and has been explored at length by Hall.

The anti-devolution campaign of 1997 also focused on one simple narrative: 300 years of a prosperous union. This narrative was presented at the 'Panorama Special: Devolution Debate', which aired on the BBC on 10 September 1997. This debate was screened across the UK and focused on both Scottish and Welsh devolution. The debate featured figures from both sides of the political spectrum. Those in support of devolution were Des Browne, Labour MP for Kilmarnock and Loudon (1997-2010), actress Elaine C. Smith, and Jim Wallace, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats (1992-2005). Those who spoke out against devolution were Donald Findlay, Queens Council (1988-) Michael Ancram, MP for Edinburgh South (1979-1987) and Chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (1980-1983), Malcolm Rifkind, MP for Edinburgh Pentlands (1974-1997), and Dr Tim Williams of the Labour 'Just say NO' campaign.

Of these speakers, only two, both of whom were unionists, deployed historical narratives. Both Findlay and Williams emphasised the success of the Union. Findlay noted: 'This country (Scotland) has for nigh on three hundred years, prospered as part of a strong United Kingdom.'[120] A similar, albeit more controversial, argument was presented by Williams, who argued: 'The Celts have had a tremendously successful experience within Britain. Britain is defensible as one of the most successful multinational entities that has ever been created.'[121] Williams's argument focused on the union as a solution to ethnic tensions.

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[119] Scottish Labour, 'On September 11th Vote for Scotland', 1997.
[120] David Boothroyd, 'Panorama Special: Devolution Debate', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofUbAKbTeCE (accessed 14/10/2021)
[121] Boothroyd, 'Panorama Special'.

This made William's argument an outlier because it situated the debate over the establishment of a Scottish parliament as an ethnic issue rather than a civic issue. As illustrated in the above discussion of Braveheart nationalism, there was a deliberate avoidance of narratives of this kind by Scottish nationalists. However, Williams's argument shows that this was not always true of the Unionist campaign.

Another reason the 1997 campaign lacked historical narratives was that the debate was centred, not on the question of whether Scotland should have its own parliament, but rather on the powers that the parliament should possess. In particular, the discussion was concerned with the taxation powers of the parliament. This indicates that the devolution referendum of 1997 was, to an even greater extent that the referendum of 1979, a material conflict rather than an identity conflict.

The 1997 campaign, unlike that of 1979, presented two distinct narrative strands which focused on different events. This means that the Scottish mythscape was conforming to this aspect of Bell's theory. However, the events utilised by both strands belonged to the accepted narrative of Scottish history meaning that neither strand constituted the governing or subaltern narrative. A continuing feature of the discourse was that historical narratives were, for the most part, made subordinate to material concerns.

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1970s, the devolution debate dominated Scottish political discourse for almost three decades. During this time, both the public and political perception of devolution within Scotland evolved. In the 1970s, devolution was opposed by most political actors, with unionists firmly believing that the union was best for Scotland, nationalists wanting independence, and a small minority believing devolution was a suitable middle ground. This resulted in texts by Dalyell and Wolfe in the 1970s which presented two distinct accounts of Scottish history, one

which viewed the union positively, and one which did not. These accounts mostly relied on different events in their narrative of Scottish history and incorporated a variety of tropes common of national narratives. Analysis of these tropes alone would suggest that Wolfe's narrative was subordinate to Dalyell's. However, there is nothing that suggests that Dalyell's narrative better conformed to the dominant Scottish historical narrative. This means that, unusually, the Scottish mythscape had neither subaltern nor governing narratives.

The narratives of Wolfe and Dalyell were distinct from the narratives presented in the 'People and Politics' debate of 1977, which focused on material concerns rather than identity politics. This was evident by the focus on economic and social concerns rather than discussions of national identity and historical events. This debate marked a change in the Scottish mythscape going forward, with identity being made subordinate to material concerns.

By 1997, the Scottish political sphere had overwhelmingly accepted the need for devolution. This consensus was the result of the acceptance of devolution as a pragmatic necessity rather than an emotional identity conflict. As a result, neither side of the debate had to rely on historical narratives to appeal to voters. Instead, the discussion was focused on the logistics of how a Scottish parliament would co-exist with the Westminster Parliament.

Chapter 3. Unionism and Welfare Statism: The 2014 Independence Referendum

The establishment of a Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in 1998 altered the conditions of Scottish politics. At Westminster, Scottish issues were often subsumed in wider UK politics. The Scottish Parliament provided a political space in which Scottish issues took centre stage. Although the SNP had accepted devolution as a necessary step towards independence, separation from the UK remained the party's primary goal. Within the confines of the Westminster Parliament, the SNP had been limited to the role of a minor party, but the situation in the Scottish Parliament was very different. Since the 1920s, Westminster had been a battleground between the Conservatives and Labour. However, the Scottish General Elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, illustrated that the Scottish political situation was a battle between Labour and the SNP. This power struggle created the conditions that led to the Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014.

The SNP emerged victorious at the Scottish General Election of 2011, gaining their first majority government. This government then entered negotiations with the UK Conservative government of David Cameron. These negotiations resulted in the Edinburgh Agreement (2012), which established the terms for a referendum on Scottish Independence. The Referendum was held on 18 September 2014. Of the 85 percent of eligible voters who participated, 55.3 percent rejected Scottish Independence and 44.7 percent supported it.[1]

This chapter examines the changing political conditions in Scotland from the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1998 to the Independence Referendum of 2014. The chapter then provides a discussion of the memory politics of the various political parties

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[1] BBC News, 'Scotland Decides', https://www.bbc.com/news/events/scotland-decides/results (accessed 5/5/2020).

and umbrella campaigns that were involved in the referendum. What follows is analysis of the different narratives of each party and campaign, in order to identify their commonalities and differences. Finally, the chapter addresses the question of whether the Scottish mythscape during this period behaved in a manner consistent with Duncan Bell's theory. I argue that the Scottish mythscape during the independence campaign was exceptional because all the strands focused on the same key events, chosen because of their relevance to larger issues in British political discourse.

Westminster and Holyrood — Scottish Politics from 1997 to 2014

The Devolution Referendum of 1997 secured the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. The rules governing the election of the parliament were designed to ensure the political parties would have to work together by reducing the possibility of a majority government.[2] This was because the electoral system in Scotland includes a measure of proportional representation, which is supposed to prevent one-party rule.[3] At the Scottish General Elections of 1999 and 2003 (see Figure 1), the results mirrored Scottish voting patterns at British General elections over the preceding decades, with Labour gaining the most votes. In 2003, the SNP experienced a slight decline in electoral support but, at the 2007 election, the party overtook Labour as the dominant party in Scotland and formed a minority government.[4] The SNP made further gains in the election of 2011 and was able to form a majority government with a manifesto commitment to holding a referendum on independence.[5]
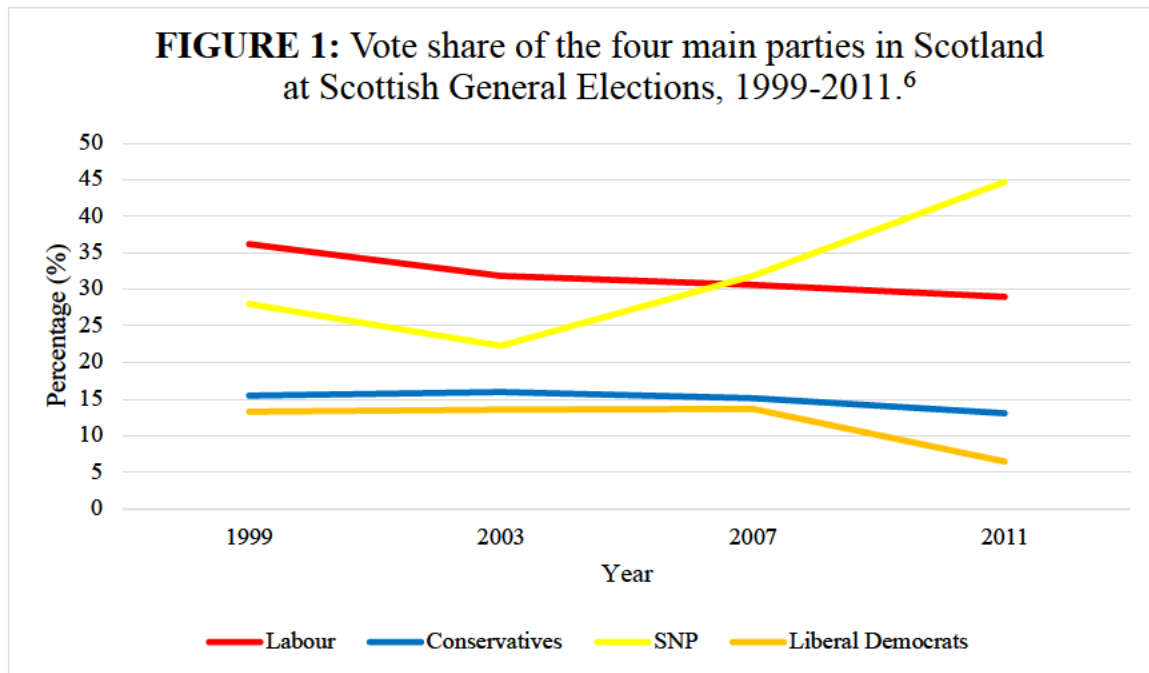
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[2] Kevin Adamson & Peter Lynch, 'Yes Scotland and Better Together: Mobilizing and Neutralising National Identity for the 2014 Independence Referendum' (25-27 March 2013), https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/95_164.pdf (accessed 31/7/2020).

[3] M.K. Thompson, 'Brexit, Scotland, and the Continuing Divergence of Politics', *Midwest Quarterly*, Vol.20, No.2 (2019), 150.
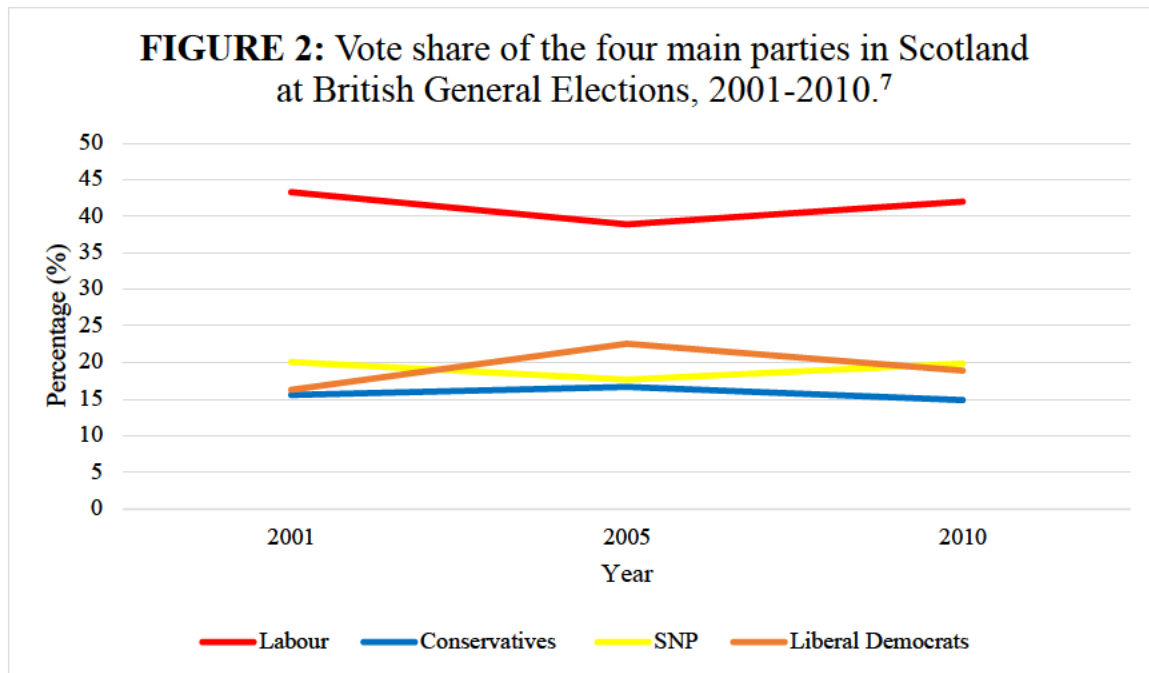
[4] Thompson, 'Brexit', 149.

[5] Thompson, 'Brexit', 150.

FIGURE 1: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at Scottish General Elections, 1999-2011.[6]

The Scottish Labour Party had experienced a decline in support at the 2007 and 2011 Scottish General Elections, but had remained the dominant Scottish party at Westminster (see Figure 2). This was because, the Labour Party was perceived in Scotland as the only party capable of countering the power of the Conservatives in Westminster.

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[6] Sam Pilling & Richard Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2021: A Century of Elections', *Commons Library Research Briefing,* 18 August 2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7529/CBP-7529.pdf (accessed 24/5/2022), 71.

FIGURE 2: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at British General Elections, 2001-2010.[7]

The devolved Scottish Parliament had some power over decision making, but still required permission from the UK Government on constitutional issues such as referenda. This meant that the Scottish Government first needed to seek permission to hold a referendum, and secondly ascertain assurance that the referendum result would be honoured. This led to the signing of the Edinburgh Agreement on 15 October 2012.[8]

Political Breakdown of the Referendum

As in the 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda, each political party launched their own campaigns, but there were also two umbrella campaigns. Those opposed to Scottish independence formed under the 'Better Together' banner. Officially launched in Edinburgh on 25 June 2012, the campaign was later renamed 'No Thanks'. The main contributors to the campaign were the Conservatives, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats. The temporary alliance of Labour and the Conservatives was an uneasy one, for the two parties were united solely on

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[7] Pilling & Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics', 24.
[8] Adamson & Lynch, 'Yes Scotland and Better Together', 2.

their opposition to independence.[9] This in turn created problems in terms of presenting the campaign's message to the public. Because of Labour's greater appeal to the Scottish electorate, the figurehead leaders of the pro-union campaign came from the ranks of the Labour Party.[10] A particularly important figure in the pro-union campaign was Labour MP for Edinburgh Central (1987-2015), and former Secretary of State for Scotland (2003-2006), Alistair Darling. In the view of Peter Lynch and Kevin Adamson, the pro-union campaign relied on 'broad, fairly vague and general statements on Scotland's role in the UK'.[11] This was because the diverging ideologies and agendas of the coalition of parties made it impossible to agree on a more specific message.[12]

In direct opposition to Better Together was the pro-independence campaign, 'Yes Scotland', which was founded in Edinburgh on 25 May 2012. The main parties of the coalition were the SNP and the Greens. Yes Scotland suffered many of the same problems as the Better Together campaign. James Mitchell argues that: 'There was agreement within Yes Scotland in favour of independence but a range of different visions of the kind of Scotland desired.'[13]

On both sides, the diverging agendas of the various parties led to a considerable amount of campaigning independent of the two umbrella campaigns. The party-specific campaigns illustrated the small differences between each party's interpretation of Scotland's history.

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[9] James Mitchell, 'The Referendum Campaign', in Aileen McHarg, Tom Mullen, Alan Page, and Neil Walker (eds), *The Scottish Independence Referendum: Constitutional and Political Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 87.
[10] Mitchell, 'Referendum Campaign', 87.
[11] Adamson & Lynch, 'Yes Scotland and Better Together', 14.
[12] Adamson & Lynch, 'Yes Scotland and Better Together', 14.
[13] Mitchell, 'Referendum Campaign', 87.

Better Together Narrative

Analysis of the campaign material produced by Better Together reveals a combination of vague as well as specific plot points. Significantly, the specificity increased as the campaign progressed. In late 2012, the campaign's message was restricted to references to '300 years of shared history'.[14] Although these references did not disappear from the discourse after this time, more fleshed-out narratives emerged.

This was evident in a lecture delivered by Darling on 9 November 2012. In the lecture, Darling acknowledged the 300-year union and the achievements he believed that it had brought:

> We have achieved so much together in times of peace and war. We built the Welfare State together. The Bank of England was founded by a Scot. The Bank of Scotland was actually founded by an Englishman. The NHS was founded by a Welshman and the Welfare State by another Englishman.[15]

Darling thus noted that the credit for these significant institutions were shared by representatives of the constituent nations of the UK.

In 2013, narratives of Scotland's intellectual contributions emerged in the Better Together discourse. These story arcs were vague, with no explicit reference to Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. A Better Together leaflet of February 2013 quoted Scottish scientist, Professor Hugh Pennington, who argued that: 'Scots have always been great inventors'.[16] Darling used a similar argument in an opinion piece published by *Scotland on Sunday* on 17

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[14] Better Together UK, 'Why we are better together', 30 October 2012, https://youtu.be/RxbAu3LphYM (accessed 5 May 2020); Alistair Darling, 'Better Together: John P. Mackintosh Memorial Lecture 2012', 9 November 2012, https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/jpmlecturealastairdarling_000.pdf (accessed 4/5/2021).
[15] Darling, 'Better Together Lecture 2012'.
[16] Better Together, 'It's Your Decision: Stronger Together or go it Alone?' February 2013.

March 2013.[17] As in his lecture of November 2012, Darling emphasised the role of the Union in Scottish achievements. Darling noted that Scottish 'explorers, scientists, inventors, engineers […] used their talents as part of the UK, as well as in Scotland'.[18] Although Darling thus acknowledged the intellectual contributions of Scots, he emphasised that it was Scotland's membership of the UK that had facilitated these contributions. This argument utilised the idea of a 'national essence' within the context of a subnational state. According to Stuart Hall, a 'national essence' is rooted in symbolic national differences or characteristics.[19] Darling's narrative was carefully constructed to acknowledge the existence of these national characteristics, to avoid any accusation that he is not a patriotic Scot. However, he also tried to weave the idea of a Scottish identity into a wider British identity.

Darling explored the theme of the unity of the UK in a pamphlet of July 2013 entitled: 'We Belong Together: The Case for a United Kingdom.' The pamphlet relied on historical narratives to bolster most arguments about Scotland's contemporary role in the UK. Darling continued to use the longevity of the Union as an argument against independence, but also gave substantial attention to the preservation of a distinct Scottish identity within the union. According to Darling:

> Throughout the centuries of union between Scotland and England, there have always been important Scottish institutions reflecting our distinctiveness. […] [R]emember what mattered most to Scots over three hundred years ago when the union was first formed […]. Not the medieval Scottish Parliament, in which few had a voice. In those

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[17] Alistair Darling, 'UK Forged over Three Centuries', *Scotland on Sunday,* 17 March 2013. https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/alistair-darling-uk-forged-over-three-centuries-1585030 (accessed 4/5/2021).
[18] Darling, 'UK Forged over Three Centuries'.
[19] Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert & Kenneth Thompson (eds) *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 615.

days it was the Scottish church, in which many had a place. […] Similarly […] the English and Scottish legal jurisdictions remained just about as distinct from one another as before the union. There is a good reason, therefore, why 1707 is referred to as the Union of Parliaments.[20]

The above excerpt is representative of the way that Darling incorporated historical narratives. He situated the loss of the Scottish Parliament in its historical context, arguing that the lack of universal suffrage at the time of the union, meant that its closure mattered little to the average Scot. Additionally, Darling used the word 'medieval' not in reference to the period of history in which the parliament existed but to imply that the institution was antiquated and archaic. Instead, Darling noted the significance of the Scottish Kirk and legal system. This argument was identified by Richard J. Finlay as representing one of two potential Scottish interpretations of the Union.[21] Finlay argued that the first is the assimilationist view, which reasons that Scotland was absorbed into England following the union.[22] By contrast, the second claims that Scotland retained a distinct national character within Britain.[23] Darling's argument aligns with the second interpretation.

Significantly, Darling not only outlined his own narrative, but also countered the assimilationist narrative. He noted: 'Of course there is an alternative nationalist narrative to this—a romantic fable of how a small nation was first absorbed by its larger neighbour, and struggled to retain its identity.'[24] Darling's acknowledgement of the existence of a rival interpretation of history is an example of how competing narrative strands interact in the

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[20] Alistair Darling, 'We Belong Together: The Case for a United Kingdom', *Better Together,* July 2013, https://b.3cdn.net/better/8e048b7c5f09e96602_jem6bc28d.pdf (accessed 7/5/2021), 4.
[21] Richard J. Finlay, 'Controlling the Past: Scottish Historiography and Scottish Identity in the 19th and 20th Centuries', *Scottish Affairs,* Vol.9, No.1 (1994), 131.
[22] Finlay, 'Controlling the Past', 132-3.
[23] Finlay, 'Controlling the Past', 132-3.
[24] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 5.

mythscape. In order to be persuasive, one narrative strand must either absorb, adjust to, or discount alternative accounts. In Darling's case, he attempted to dismiss the nationalist narrative, not just as a 'romantic fable', but as a puerile distortion of history:

> But just as nationalist sentiment ignores the reality of how we as Scots belong to the UK, so this childish tale ignores the reality that, for Scotland, union has always meant the preservation of a distinct Scottish identity. Historical scholars have long understood that the union of 1707 was not to be contrasted with independence. Rather there were two extremes: independence, which was no longer sustainable in Scotland's interest, and assimilation, which would have destroyed Scotland's identity.[25]

An interesting aspect of Darling's argument was his reference to 'historical scholars'. This reference was an appeal to a credible authority on the subject, in this case historians. Significantly, Darling did not name historians who have taken a similar stance in their work. This is not because they do not exist, but rather because the scholarly discourse surrounding the Act of Union is complicated. Although many historians agree that the union was inevitable given the economic condition of Scotland, they don't see this as a hindrance to the present-day independence movement.[26]

The integration of historical narratives in Darling's pamphlet continued in the section entitled: 'The economic case for the union.' The main narrative of this section was that the desire for Scottish involvement in the English market predated the Union. Darling argued that

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[25] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 5.
[26] **SEE:** Tom Devine, 'Tom Devine: Why I Now Say Yes to Independence for Scotland', *The Conversation,* 21 August 2014, https://theconversation.com/tom-devine-why-i-now-say-yes-to-independence-for-scotland-30733 (accessed 5/5/2020).

participation in the English market 'was a Scottish objective as long ago as 1700'.[27] To further strengthen his argument, Darling invoked the teachings of Scottish Enlightenment figure, Adam Smith:

> We should have no difficulty in understanding the benefits that free trade inside Britain brought to Scotland. [Adam Smith] certainly didn't as he said in a letter to his publisher in 1760: '… The Union was a measure from which infinite Good has been derived to the country.' After the union, and once the Jacobite wars were over, Scotland's trade grew, Scotland's industry multiplied, and Scotland led the world in economic and industrial development. The union created the conditions for the Scottish Enlightenment, and for the flourishing of culture and literature that David Hume noted. It's no exaggeration to say that the union also made possible the breakneck Scottish commercial and then industrial developments of the 18th and 19th century.[28]

The argument that Darling makes in this paragraph is a popular unionist narrative: the union created the conditions which allowed Scotland to thrive. This argument, much like Dalyell's in the 1970s, presents the period following the union as the 'golden age' for Scotland. This is a common trope in national narratives.

Reference to Enlightenment figures was a frequent part of both nationalist and unionist rhetoric in the independence campaign. This was significant because the way these figures were discussed in the discourse aligns with the way that national narratives frequently invoke the memory of national heroes. In archetypal national narratives, these figures tend to

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[27] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 7.
[28] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 7.

be military personnel, although poets, scientists, and religious figures also possess the potential for heroisation. This is because, as Sára Bigazzi, Fanni Csernus and Anna Siegler argue, the figures who are elevated to the status of national hero represent the 'social values, norms, and morality of the present, creating a bridge between the past and a potential future'.[29] Darling's use of Enlightenment figures indicates that he perceived Scottish society to value knowledge and progress.

In his discussion of 'Defence and security' Darling acknowledged the emotional draw of the military history of the UK. He argued that Scotland and the UK have 'a shared military history from the 19th century to the Second World War [that] appeals to the heart'.[30] Although Darling's analysis of Scottish institutions and the Enlightenment period was detailed, his narrative of British military history was vague. The reasons for this vagueness are examined later in this chapter in conjunction with the more detailed narratives employed by other parties and campaigns.

The thin line between ambiguity and specificity was also illustrated in the section, 'Making the world a better place', in which Darling explored Scotland's history of humanitarianism. In Darling's view, Scotland has a 'fine record of interventions to make the world a better place'.[31] On the following page, Darling elaborated by citing the work of 'David Livingstone in Africa [and] John Boyd-Orr, who won a Nobel peace prize for his work on international food aid'.[32] This reference purposefully avoids delving into what Livingstone's humanitarian actions in Africa were. This is because, in order to acknowledge the severing of Britain's ties with the slave trade, there must first be an acknowledgement of Britain's involvement. The negotiation between celebrating positive chapters while simultaneously

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[29] Sára Bigazzi, Fanni Csernus, Anna Siegler, *et al.,* 'Social Representations of Heroes: Triggers from the Past, Values in the Present, Patterns for the Future', *Human Arenas,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00248-5 (accessed 2/11/2021).
[30] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 20.
[31] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 21.
[32] Darling, 'We Belong Together', 21.

acknowledging negative chapters, was a key feature of the independence discourse. However, approaches like Darling's which relied on blind spots to create a palatable narrative were still present.

The Better Together narrative focused on seven events from the Scottish past. These events focused on Scotland's integration into the UK which began with the Act of Union, to the events of the twentieth century which bound the values of the nations of the UK together. Within the Better Together narrative were a number of archetypal features of national narratives. The campaign's narratives were particularly reliant on the idea of a shared national essence, national heroes, and purposeful exclusions or 'silences'. These features reinforced the idea of a British national character and a set of shared values.

Conservative Narrative

Although Darling of British Labour dominated the Better Together discourse, the Conservatives made contributions outside of the umbrella campaign. The narratives deployed by Better Together and the Conservative campaign were quite similar. However, Conservative politicians tended to place greater emphasis on the economic benefits that the Union had brought to Scotland, along with the intellectual contributions that Scotland had made to the UK.

In a speech of 9 October 2012, Liam Fox, MP for North Somerset (previously Woodspring, 1992-present) but of Scottish origin, argued that it was appropriate 'to reflect on the strength we have drawn together from our shared history'.[33] He noted that 'the United Kingdom is not an English construct. It is something that for hundreds of years we have built together.'[34] This argument was a direct rebuttal of claims made by critics of the Union, who

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[33] Liam Fox, 'Stronger Together, Better Together, Safer Together', *Liam Fox MP,* 9 October 2012, https://www.liamfox.co.uk/news/stronger-together-better-together-safer-together (accessed 3/5/2021).
[34] Fox, 'Stronger together'.

argued that it was created by the English to serve English interests. This argument was also used by Scottish Conservative leader (2011-2019), Ruth Davidson, in a speech of 16 March 2014. Davidson claimed: 'We have a history to be proud of […]. The UK's successes are Scotland's successes too, because we built this nation.'[35] Where Fox and Davidson differed was their level of detail. Davidson's argument was vague, whereas Fox elaborated:

> In many ways the United Kingdom was able to achieve a historic synergy. The intellectual vibrancy of the Scottish Enlightenment combined with the economic energy of the industrial revolution in England enabled our respective populations to achieve hitherto unimaginable global influence.[36]

This idea of transnational co-operation was echoed by British Prime Minister (2010-2016), David Cameron, in his speech of 7 February 2014. In the speech Cameron acknowledged 'the power of collaboration' and recognised what 'the constituent parts of the United Kingdom, can achieve together'.[37] Cameron expanded on these achievements, noting: 'When the Scottish enlightenment met the industrial revolution, intellectual endeavour and commercial might combined to shape global economic ideas.'[38]

The connection between the Union, the Scottish Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, was also stressed by British Foreign Secretary (2010-2014), William Hague, in a speech of 20 June 2013. Hague's argument focused on the role of the Scottish economist, Adam Smith:

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[35] Ruth Davidson, 'Keynote Speech to Conference', *Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party,* 16 March 2014, http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2014/03/ruths-keynote-speech-conference/ (accessed 4/5/2021).
[36] Fox, 'Stronger Together'.
[37] David Cameron, 'The Importance of Scotland to the UK', *UK Government,* 7 February 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-importance-of-scotland-to-the-uk-david-camerons-speech (accessed 4/5/2021).
[38] Cameron, 'Importance of Scotland'.

Global trade, a philosophy rooted in the teachings of Adam Smith has become one of the defining characteristics of our state and the basis of our foreign policy. […] Many people will be now asking themselves if the country of Adam Smith is about to place an international border between itself and its greatest trading partner and market.[39]

Hague's reference to Smith has a double meaning. He invoked Smith's name both to celebrate the contribution of a Scot, and to challenge those who used Smith's name but who disregarded an essential part of his free-market ideology.

Smith was not the only historical figure mentioned by Hague in his speech. According to Hague: 'For centuries, the ideas of our scientists, engineers and philosophers have transformed the world, from Isambard Kingdom Brunel to Alexander Graham Bell; from Edward Jenner to Alexander Fleming; from Isaac Newton to David Hume.'[40] These examples were very carefully selected: An English engineer/inventor and a Scottish one; an English scientist and a Scottish one; an English thinker and a Scottish one. There is a clear implication behind Hague's rhetoric: the contribution of these individuals would not have been possible outside of the Union.

In his discussion of the rise of the British Empire, Fox elaborated on his argument that the skills of the people of the UK worked in harmony. He noted that:

The role that Scotland and the Scots were able to play in Empire, both material and intellectual, was only possible because of the tremendous foresight of our forefathers

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[39] William Hague, 'The United Kingdom; Stronger Together', *UK Government,* 20 June 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-speech-the-united-kingdom-stronger-together (accessed 3/5/2021).
[40] Hague, 'United Kingdom'.

who recognised that we brought complementary skills and who gave birth to the union that is the United Kingdom.[41]

An additional element of Fox's argument was the inclusion of the British Empire. This is important because of the vastly different images of empire constructed throughout the discourse of the independence debate. Whereas Fox constructed a positive image of the British Empire, the Liberal Democrat narrative did not. A similar sentiment was present in Hague's speech of 20 June 2013. According to Hague, the 'enterprising Scots [were] of the mould that forged the British Empire and made such an impact on our international standing'.[42] Hague continued:

> They used their British identity as a means to achieve their greater ambitions, but they were no less Scottish as a result, in fact they were ambassadors for Scottish values, and their courage, wisdom and sheer grit helped to shape the image of Britain as it is today.[43]

This idea of dual identity exists in both political discourse and academia. However, there is no consensus on the question of how they coexist.[44] Nonetheless, scholars acknowledge that for the constituent nations of the UK the distinction between national and state identity is important because it permits dual loyalty. Scots can thereby remain loyal both to their national and state identities.

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[41] Fox, 'Stronger Together'
[42] Hague, 'United Kingdom'.
[43] Hague, 'United Kingdom'.
[44] **SEE:** Richard Kiely, Frank Bechhofer, Robert Stewart & David McCrone, 'The Markers and Rules of Scottish National Identity', *The Sociological Review,* Vol.49, No.1 (2001), 33-55; & Murray Stewart Leith & P.J. Soule, *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

In the Better Together campaign, references to the military relationship between the nations of the UK were used to argue for the existence of strong bonds of kinship between Britons. These arguments were also evident in the Conservative campaign. One such example was Ruth Davidson's speech of 8 June 2013. Davidson argued: 'Scottish soldiers, sailors and airmen have fought side by side—shoulder to shoulder—with their English, Welsh and Northern Irish brethren for generations.'[45] However, unlike the Better Together campaign, the Conservative narrative was much more specific. This was evident in Liam Fox's argument:

> For 300 years we have recruited soldiers, sailors, marines and, more recently, airmen in all parts of the United Kingdom. These men and women have stood shoulder to shoulder on battlefields across the globe against our nation's enemies. Under Marlborough, Wellington and Nelson; in India, and the Crimea; in two World Wars, Korea, the Falklands, the Gulf and Afghanistan.[46]

The first two sentences of Fox's argument mirror the stance taken by Better Together and Davidson. Where Fox differed was his reference to specific wars and the role of specific individuals. This approach was also used by Hague who mentioned the period from 'the Battle of Waterloo to the Battle of Britain, [where] we have fought side by side against tyranny and oppression'.[47] Although Hague referenced battles rather than wars, the effect was the same. Fox's speech is significant because it used the concept of national heroes but focused on British rather than Scottish heroes.

A striking similarity between the Better Together campaign and the Conservative campaign was their invocation of the legacy of David Livingstone. In his speech of 20 June

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[45] Ruth Davidson, 'A Scotland that Succeeds', *Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party,* 8 June 2013, http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2013/06/ruth-davidson-a-scotland-that-succeeds/ (accessed 3/5/2021).
[46] Fox, 'Stronger Together'.
[47] Hague, 'United Kingdom'.

2013, Hague noted that 2013 'marks the 200th year since the birth of David Livingstone. Were it not for great campaigners like Livingstone and William Wilberforce, backed by the might of the Royal Navy, slavery might never have been abolished'.[48] Although Livingstone's name was invoked by the Better Together campaign, no explicit connection was made between his work and the abolition of the East African Arab-Swahili slave trade. Great Britain's connections to slavery and the slave trade have long been an emotive subject, but this was particularly true during the Independence campaign.

In February 2013, the University College London launched a website called 'Legacies of the British Slave Trade'. The launch of the site was covered by *Wired UK*, who noted that the purpose of the project was to track the investment of the money that was paid to slave owners by the British Government after the abolition of slavery.[49] The study revealed that much of the money was invested in industrial endeavours such as railways, but also noted that a substantial quantity was invested in the Royal Bank of Scotland.[50] This study illustrates how the legacy of slavery persists in the UK and prompted substantial discussion in the British press. Because of the contemporary relevance of the discussion, it is unsurprising that the topic permeated the discourse of the Scottish independence debate. Although the study constructed a negative image of Britain's legacy of slavery, Hague attempted to counter this image, while simultaneously creating an overall positive image of the British Empire and its pursuits.

Another similarity between the Better Together and Conservative narratives was the discussion of the role of the state in society. Whereas Better Together emphasised the insignificance of the old Scottish parliament to Scottish citizens, Cameron highlighted the evolution of the state. According to Cameron:

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[48] Hague, 'United Kingdom'.
[49] Ian Steadman, 'Site Traces Huge Payouts Slave Owners Received After Abolition', *Wired UK*, 27 February 2013, https://www.wired.co.uk/article/slavery-database-goes-live (accessed 15/8/2022).
[50] Steadman, 'Site Traces Huge Payouts'.

When the Acts of Union were passed, the role of the state was limited to things like defence, taxes and property rights. Since then the state has transformed beyond recognition and our institutions—they have grown together like the roots of great trees, fusing together under the foundations of our daily lives.[51]

In some ways Cameron's argument was a continuation of the argument introduced by the Better Together campaign which emphasised that the Scottish Parliament was insignificant prior to its dissolution. Cameron's argument not only acknowledged the minor role of the Scottish Parliament prior to the Union, but argued that the British Parliament had subsequently developed into an institution central to the lives of British citizens.

The entire Conservative narrative can be summarised in a single paragraph from Cameron's address of 16 September 2014. In this speech Cameron argued that Scottish independence and the subsequent breakup of the UK would signify:

The end of a country that launched the Enlightenment, that abolished slavery, that drove the industrial revolution, that defeated fascism. […] It's only become Great Britain because of the greatness of Scotland. Because of thinkers, writers, artists, leaders, soldiers, inventors who have made this country what it is. It's Alexander Fleming and David Hume […] the Scots who led the charge on pensions and the NHS and on social justice.[52]

This short excerpt from Cameron's speech, delivered two days before the referendum, incorporated all the main events of the Conservative narrative. This narrative was designed to

[51] Cameron, 'Importance of Scotland'.
[52] David Cameron, 'No Going Back', *The Independent,* 16 September 2014, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/scottish-independence/scottish-independence-full-text-david-cameron-s-no-going-back-speech-9735902.html (accessed 4/5/2021).

emphasise the co-existence of both a national and a state identity. It purposefully elevated Scottish identity but subsumed it within a wider British identity. This narrative shared many similarities with the Better Together narrative, with the inclusion of many common events. This is unusual in the context of Bell's theory of the mythscape.

Labour Narrative

The Labour narrative reflected the specific values of the Labour Party. In particular, the campaign emphasised the role of the Scottish labour movement within the history of the British labour movement. This was evident in a speech given on 1 March 2013 by Douglas Alexander, MP for Paisley and Renfrewshire (1997-2015), and Secretary of State for Scotland (2006-2007). The speech focused on the history of the trade union movement in Scotland, which, he claimed, 'saw its role over the past two centuries as not simply building better conditions in Scotland, but building better conditions in Britain and beyond'.[53] In a similar vein, ex-Prime Minister (2007-2010) and Scot, Gordon Brown argued in 2012 that:

> The organiser of the first trade union in the 1790s, the London Corresponding society, was a Scot who came down from Stirlingshire. The organiser of the National Union of Mineworkers, when it was formed in England in the 1860s, was a Scot from Lanarkshire. And, of course, the organiser of the British Labour Party, when it was formed in 1900 was a Scot, James Keir Hardie.[54]

The words of both Alexander and Brown share the same core sentiment: the solidarity of the British working class transcends barriers of geography and nationality. Additionally, this

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[53] Douglas Alexander, 'Douglas Alexander's Speech on Scotland', *New Statesman,* 4 March 2013, https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/03/douglas-alexanders-speech-scottish-independence-full-text (accessed 22/7/2020).
[54] Alexander, 'Douglas Alexander's Speech'.

argument suggests that those which identify with the values of the labour movement should oppose the idea of Scottish independence. The discussion of whether Labour values are pro- or anti-independence was a recurrent feature of the independence discourse. This suggests that Labour voters were considered a vital battleground in the independence debate.

A significant aspect of Alexander's speech was his discussion of the contradictions of historical narratives. He articulated a narrative of slavery and empire that contrasted with that of the Conservatives. According to Alexander:

> Glasgow's Jamaica Street and St Vincent Street still bear witness to our shared Imperial past with all its glories and pain and we played our part in those glories just as we played our part in that pain. Yet the Kirk Session records of South Leith Church here in Edinburgh, also note a free black family in the 17th century port.[55]

This argument has more depth and detail than the Conservative argument, which merely noted the flourishing of Scots throughout the British Empire and the abolition movement. However, the Labour narrative observed that this narrative is simplistic, with purposeful silences. Although Alexander did not openly condemn the British Empire, he acknowledged the pain that the Empire had caused. According to Murray Pittock, narratives such as that articulated by Alexander are an important aspect of the negotiation of Scotland's modern identity. Alexander's acknowledgement of coexisting realities of both triumph and misery are an example of what Pittock described as 'a continuing problem in coming to terms with the real historicity of Scottish complicity in the British Empire'.[56] Although there are purely anti- or

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[55] Alexander, 'Douglas Alexander's Speech'.
[56] Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 136.

pro-empire narratives across the discourse, few focus on the complexities of these narratives as well as Alexander's.

The Better Together and Conservative campaigns focused their narratives on the early years of the Union in the eighteenth century. By contrast, the Labour Party concentrated on the twentieth century. Alexander noted that, in the twentieth century, the nations of the UK survived:

> two world wars and the threat of nuclear Armageddon, [yet] they still built the National Health Service, the welfare state and education and pensions for all—not to mention securing unprecedented advances in technology, science and medicine.[57]

British Labour leader (2010-2015), Ed Milliband also highlighted the NHS and workers' rights in his 21 March 2014 speech. Milliband argued:

> The history of our country and our Party is mobilising people in great causes. Workers' rights at the start of the 20th century. The Suffragettes demanding the vote. The NHS after 1945. A Scottish Parliament. A minimum wage in the 1990s. We can do so again. Let's be inspired by the example of all or our pioneers from Keir Hardie to John Smith.[58]

Johann Lamont, Scottish Labour leader (2011-2014) and MSP for Glasgow Pollock (1999-2016), likewise argued that 'the creation of the Welfare State after the Second World War

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[57] Alexander, 'Douglas Alexander's Speech'.
[58] Ed Milliband, '"Let's Win for the People of Scotland" —Ed Miliband's Speech to Scottish Conference', *LabourList,* 21 March 2014, https://labourlist.org/2014/03/lets-win-for-the-people-of-scotland-ed-milibands-speech-to-scottish-conference/ (accessed 2/3/2021).

bound the UK—social classes, not just nations—together'.[59] It is unsurprising that Labour chose to focus on the twentieth century given this was when the party was established. Furthermore, the development of the NHS and Welfare State is attributed to Labour governments. Within the context of the Union, these institutions are frequently credited with providing stability to the UK following the wars. However, these were not the only reasons that the welfare state featured in the discourse. The welfare state had become a key political issue in the early 2010s after the election of David Cameron and the introduction of a Conservative austerity government. To reduce the national debt, Cameron introduced welfare cuts and tax hikes. These policies were wildly unpopular in Scotland.[60] The political relevance of the welfare state at this time made it central to the Scottish independence debate.

Although Conservative politicians did mention the wars, they did so in conjunction with various other conflicts involving the British Empire since the Union. Labour discourse, by contrast, specifically focused on the two world wars, and especially on World War II. For example, in March 2014, Milliband noted that it was '70 years since the D-Day landings. Where would we be without that great generation that worked together for a common cause: fighting Fascism?'[61] Gordon Brown also spoke of the wars on the eve of the referendum:

> We fought two World Wars together and there is not a cemetery in Europe that does
> not have Scots, English, Welsh and Irish, lying side by side. And when young men
> were injured in these world wars, they didn't look to each other and ask whether you

[59] Johann Lamont, 'Scottish Labour—Scotland's Party: Johann Lamont's Speech for Scottish Labour Conference', *LabourList,* 22 March 2014, https://labourlist.org/2014/03/scottish-labour-scotlands-party-johann-lamonts-speech-for-scottish-labour-conference/ (accessed 2/3/2021).
[60] National Housing Federation, 'Bedroom Tax' 17 July 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20140717031348/http://www.housing.org.uk/policy/welfare-reform/bedroom-tax (accessed 15/8/2022).
[61] Milliband 'Let's Win''.

were Scots or English, they came to each other's aid because we were part of a common cause.[62]

It is unsurprising that World War II featured most distinctly in the discourse as it remains pivotal to British identity.[63] In particular, the Blitz is cited as an event which led to heightened solidarity in Britain.[64]

The events which have been discussed so far within the Labour narrative have been consistent in message and tone. This is not true for statements about the significance of the Scottish parliament after 1707. In particular, statements by Alexander on 1 March 2013 and Lamont on 22 March 2014 contradict each other. Alexander quoted Scottish historian Tom Devine to draw a straight line from the pre-union Scottish parliament to the devolved Scottish parliament. On this subject Devine wrote: 'Thus, when the first Scottish Parliament since 1707 met in Edinburgh in July of 1999, the Scottish nation undeniably embarked on another exciting stage in its long history.'[65] This is an example of national narratives emphasising both continuity and tradition as outlined by Hall.[66] By contrast, Lamont referred to the pre-Union Scottish Parliament as a means of criticising the SNP. Lamont noted:

The SNP often tells us to look at our history, but it is too often guilty of rewriting our history. […] The Nationalists look at the Parliament of 1707 and say, 'This Parliament is reconvened.' The Scottish Parliament which the Labour Party delivered, with a democratic suffrage, has nothing to do with that of 1707.[67]

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[62] Gordon Brown, 'Gordon Brown's Better Together Speech the Day Before the Scottish Referendum', *LabourList,* 17 September 2014, https://youtu.be/J39bBV7CBJk (accessed 5/5/2020).
[63] Wendy Ugolini, 'Britain and the Second World War: Identity and Remembrance', *British Online Archives,* 8 May 2018, https://microform.digital/boa/posts/category/articles/84/britain-and-the-second-world-war-identity-and-remembrance (accessed 26/4/2022).
[64] Ugolini, 'Britain and the Second World War'.
[65] Tom Devine, *The Scottish Nation* in Alexander, 'Douglas Alexander's speech on Scotland'.
[66] Hall, 'Question of Cultural Identity', 614.
[67] Lamont, 'Scottish Labour—Scotland's party'.

Even though Lamont's own party connected the two events in their discourse, criticism of the SNP was evidently not her only intention. Two other aspects of Lamont's argument were the attribution of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood to the Labour Party, and the reference to democratic suffrage. By including these elements in her narrative, Lamont not only discredited the SNP's argument, but constructed a positive image of the achievements of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party narrative had fewer similarities with the Better Together and Conservative narratives. Although there were shared events, namely the Act of Union and the world wars, the narrative was focused on more recent history. Interestingly, the two events which were most overt in their interaction with the archetypal features of national narratives, predated the twentieth century. In particular, the Labour narrative engaged with the idea of purposeful silences that ignore inconvenient facts that would otherwise disrupt the narrative, and the idea of a national essence derived from continuity and tradition.

Liberal Democrats Narrative

The Liberal Democrats, in their current form, were established in 1988, and did not feature prominently in the discourse of the Devolution Referenda of 1979 or 1997. However, the party emerged as a dominant player in the discourse of the Independence Referendum, despite being only a marginal party. In the run-up to the independence referendum, the discourse of the Liberal Democrats included elements from both Labour and Conservative narratives.

Like Labour, the Liberal Democrats were critical of the nationalist tendency to overstate the significance of 1707. MP for Orkney and Shetland (2001-present), Deputy Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats (2012-2021), and Scottish Secretary (2013-2015), Alistair Carmichael, noted in his 13 November 2013 address:

The nationalists like to take us right back to 1707 and even further to Bannockburn. Don't get me wrong—history is important: but our recent history is just as important

as the more distant. That recent history has been one of collaboration, or partnership, of working together.[68]

This stance, like Lamont's, is significant because it challenged the nationalists' attempt to establish continuity and timelessness by diminishing the significance of Scotland's distant past.

Furthermore, like Labour, the Liberal Democrats highlighted the role of the whole UK in the establishment of institutions like the NHS and welfare state. In his speech of 13 January 2014, Carmichael acknowledged that the four nations of the UK built the NHS together:

> When William Beveridge identified the five 'Giant Evils' facing post-war Britain—squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease—these evils blighted every nation of our United Kingdom. And when the UK parliament established the NHS, it did so to fight those evils within the entirety of our borders.[69]

This reference paralleled Alexander's speech on the history of the trade-union movement. Whereas Alexander connected the people of the UK through their struggles for workers' rights, Carmichael emphasised the NHS. The argument in both cases was the same: the campaign for social justice unites the four nations of the UK in a common struggle.

Another similarity between Labour and Liberal Democrat discourse was their use of Britain's history of slavery. According to Labour, Scotland's narrative of the slave trade cannot be confined to the abolitionist movement. This sentiment was comparable to that of Scottish

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[68] Alistair Carmichael, 'Scottish Secretary Speech on the Scottish Independence Debate', *UK Government,* 13 November 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/scottish-secretary-speech-on-the-scottish-independence-debate (accessed 4/5/2021).
[69] Alistair Carmichael, '2014 Speech on Scottish Independence', *UKPol,* 26 November 2015, https://www.ukpol.co.uk/alistair-carmichael-2014-speech-on-scottish-independence/ (accessed 4/5/2021).

Liberal Democrats leader (2011-2021), Willie Rennie, who argued in a speech of 14 August 2014:

> Some nationalists would like you to think that Britain is why we are not perfect—the root of all our ills. Of course, Britain has made some mistakes. Some I bitterly regret. But we have made those mistakes together—Scotland, together with the rest of the United Kingdom […] The slave trade was here too.[70]

Although this argument is very similar to Labour's, it is more obvious in its critique. Particularly, the nationalist tendency to treat Scots as passive actors in Britain's imperial past. According to Rennie, it is inaccurate to blame the English alone for the negative chapters of Britain's past.

One specific feature of the discourse of the Liberal Democrats was their scepticism towards Conservative nostalgia for the British Empire. This was evident in a speech by British Liberal Democrat leader (2007-2015) and Deputy Prime Minister (2010-2015), Nick Clegg, of 9 March 2013. Clegg argued that the 'great liberal qualities of the UK is what makes it great. Not some sepia-tinted memory of Empire. Not some stuffy parochialism dressed up as patriotism.'[71] This example is significant because it demonstrates that the accusation of misty-

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[70] Willie Rennie, 'Staying with the UK will Help Scotland Achieve our Ambitions', *Scottish Liberal Democrats*, 13 August 2014, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/staying_with_uk_will_help_scotland (accessed 12/3/2021).
[71] Nick Clegg, 'Speech to the Lib Dem Spring Conference', *Liberal Democrat Voice,* 9 March 2014, https://www.libdemvoice.org/nick-clegg-speech-2014-38488.html?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=368f5162bf362b1069d58fd79980fbb36a31f74f-1620094338-0-AUQOS_6JNhKBadLx_Pqr9hkvTQPHupu2YWdTryoyEGNX2o8xUF4UIiyOIBc4PUB0TyO3OqLTMkoGVM8e8aPAVXAkEhbnbgEWpQvXWxrfvwCHMRNZKcYnD5lapcXaYunp1YPBGPw-GueN4huyP6h1paZ9EyJDYW1d26sPRp1QX12H8h10h9Rj76VlwUzq3Y7vd-mpkX6ubhtMI1n96jHUQzDOSgaddu7GS0txRhy3nTvZGytQYoJ4LyH3YXbIMc2AT3eo3FNPJSZyBbkCo2TRWVb-WXVPnzewmo80H9qed6wIhvy0dcbDbNeWJvCq7XO9bblGpMkrYf8_NTLysO21QEz7lf2XQaGdiHvwbmGwHoNd5SG6m4-KjC8zofYjjiX3qH8JC_nZy2MzXSSTaG3MZ1KB5IwddMzPPhnARhc_FwlaqnSI32Me31atgDWgttaq1C3hmdZgvl8v0QxlQtQd-9WpxW4857ofZm__ESjrk4nuliAWMgaFGEk-vhDTAyMuQg (accessed 4/5/2021).

eyed romanticism is not confined to just the SNP and their view of Scotland's past, but also the Conservative version of British history.

The Liberal Democrats, like the Labour Party, openly attacked oversimplified narratives of Scottish and British history which relied on archetypal features to strengthen their narratives. In particular, the Liberal Democrat narrative criticised narratives which relied on the distant past to establish a sense of continuity.

Yes Scotland Narrative

It is striking that the Yes Scotland campaign made less frequent use of overt historical references than the Better Together campaign. This was perhaps because the Yes Scotland campaign wanted to avoid accusations of ethnic nationalism, and to construct a case for independence that relied instead on civic nationalism. Nonetheless, prominent members of the Yes Scotland team did sometimes refer to Scotland's past.

On 18 June 2012, actor Brian Cox, who starred in both *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*, gave a speech at the official launch of the Yes Scotland campaign. Cox, a known Labour supporter, focused on the history of Britain in the twentieth century. According to Cox:

> Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, Scotland's sense of itself was dominated by world conflict, defined by its position as part of an empire at war, a land of severs to the […] United Kingdom. Its cultural, social and national identity was very much on the backburner.[72]

Unlike Brown of Labour and Alexander of the Liberal Democrats, who argued that the wars were an example of unity, Cox and the Yes campaign contended that the wars brought about

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[72] Brian Cox, 'Brian Cox Keynote Speech at YES Campaign Launch on Scottish Independence', 18 June 2012, https://youtu.be/26252xabJeY (accessed 5/5/2020).

uniformity. For Cox, the people of Scotland were no longer just Scots, they were soldiers of the British Army sent to fight for the British Empire. The language used by Cox in his speech is also significant, particularly the word 'server' which carries connotations of subservience and domination. Although the men of Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, and Wales had indeed fought and died together, as the No campaign argued, the Yes campaign suggested that this was less of a choice than an expectation.

Cox's comment must be understood in the context of the wider discourse surrounding the world wars. Scottish nationalists do not argue that Scots were forced to fight in these wars against their will. Nonetheless, a persistent trope in the Scottish historical narrative is that Scotland was disproportionately affected by the wars. Devine, for example, argues that 'despite the final victory, the First World War was a human catastrophe on an enormous scale for Scotland.'[73] Christopher Harvie, who is both a historian and a member of the SNP, claimed that, at the outbreak of World War II, 'memories of a disproportionately high Scottish death-rate were revived'.[74] These examples illustrate how narrative framing is used to provide alternative meaning to events. Hayden White described this process as emplotment, or the way that storytellers, be they historians or politicians, provide 'meaning' to a story.[75] Although both sides of the independence debate used the conflicts in their discourse, the narratives had very different themes. In the discourse of the No campaign, Hague and Brown used romance and nostalgia to construct a positive image. By contrast, Cox of the Yes campaign used the theme of tragedy.

Like the Better Together campaign and the Conservatives, Cox explored the Scottish Enlightenment. Cox noted the 'lasting vision of profound political and philosophical thinking.

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[73] T.M. Devine, 'Three Hundred Years of the Anglo-Scottish Union', in T.M. Devine (ed.) *Scotland and the Union, 1707-2007* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 13.
[74] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1977* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1977), 53.
[75] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 7.

The period of the Scottish Enlightenment, the magnificent David Hume and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century.'[76] Hume and Smith also featured as the figureheads of the Scottish Enlightenment in the Better Together and Conservative discourse. However, Smith received a great deal of attention in the pro-union discourse, whereas Cox brushed over him in his narrative. This is an example of silences, or purposeful exclusions to remove aspects which could discredit an argument. As the Better Together and Conservative construction of Hume and Smith illustrated, these figures fit somewhat uneasily into the nationalist narrative. Instead, Cox examined Scotland's socialist history, noting:

> The visionary socialism of Robert Cunninghame-Graham and James Keir Hardie, of the 19th century which led directly to the revolutionary fervour of the Independent Labour Party in the early part of the 20th century, personified by the infamous Clydeside Five, Maxton, Shinwell, Johnston, Kirkwood and Wheatley.[77]

In his discussion of the origins of the British and Scottish Labour Party, Cox's Labour ties become evident. Cox referenced Robert Cunninghame-Graham, founder of the Scottish Labour Party and the National Party of Scotland (a predecessor of the SNP), and later president of the SNP. This is significant because it connects the founding values of Scottish Labour to the Independence movement. Cox also mentioned James Keir Hardie, a Scot, who founded the British Labour Party; along with the Clydeside Five, a group of men involved in the Scottish political movement now known as Red Clydeside. The movement began during World War I and persisted into the early 1930s.[78] Red Clydeside was not only a significant part of Scottish political history, but an important chapter of the Scottish labour movement. Throughout the

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[76] Cox, 'Brian Cox Keynote Speech'.
[77] Cox, 'Brian Cox Keynote Speech'.
[78] 'Red Clydeside–Glasgow After the Great War', *Travel Scotland,* 2019, https://www.scotland.org.uk/history/red-clydeside (accessed 3/6/2021).

nearly 26-year history of the movement, Red Clydeside advocated for many causes. The most relevant to the Independence debate was support for home rule.[79]

The Yes Scotland narrative focused on three events or periods of Scottish history: Scotland's post-war identity crisis, the Enlightenment Period, and Scotland's socialist history. A significant aspect of this narrative was the use of emplotment, with thematic framing being the defining feature of the campaign. Thematic framing enabled the same events to be used by opposing sides to push contradictory agendas. The appropriation of the same events for different sides of the debate is one way that the Scottish mythscape does not conform to Bell's theory.

The SNP Narrative

The SNP was the only major party which campaigned for independence. Although the party was heavily involved in the Yes Scotland campaign, it still produced campaign material under the party banner. Although the SNP was campaigning on the opposite side of the political spectrum than the other major parties, it focused on the same events.

One such example was the focus on Scotland's intellectual heritage. In his speech of 7 April 2014, First Minister (2007-2014), Alex Salmond, argued that 'the international reputation of Scots is not our hard-won reputation for being bravehearts in battle, but our hard-won reputation for invention which generated prosperity'.[80] Salmond listed: 'James Watt's condensing steam engine, the bicycle, the television, the telephone, the fax machine, the MRI scanner, [and] penicillin.'[81] These inventions, he argued, 'defined modernity'.[82] The significance of Salmond's argument rests upon his characterisation of Scotland's national

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[79] N.a., 'Red Clydeside'.
[80] Alex Salmond, 'Glasgow Caledonian University Speech', *Open Democracy.net,* 7 April 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/good-global-citizen-alex-salmonds-speech-on-scotlands-role-in-world/ (accessed 22/3/2021).
[81] Salmond, 'Glasgow Caledonian University Speech'.
[82] Salmond, 'Glasgow Caledonian University Speech'.

character. To Salmond, Scotland's character is intellectual. This contrasted with his claim that Scotland is not defined by its military history.

Salmond's passing reference to 'bravehearts in battle' is one of the few occasions that a prominent SNP speaker invoked the memory of William Wallace. According to Richard Marsden, supporters of independence purposefully avoid Braveheart nostalgia.[83] Marsden argues that this means that they rarely make explicit references to Wallace. However, '"Braveheart history" lie[s] in the popular consciousness as a powerful but largely unarticulated argument for independence.'[84] This is because, although the Braveheart myth remains an emotive part of Scottish national consciousness, the myth is reliant on elements of exclusive ethnic nationalism. These exclusive elements include Anglophobia rooted in perceived historic wrongdoings. Modern SNP nationalism is left leaning, with an emphasis on civic nationalism. Therefore, references like Salmond's, function as an appeal to the strong emotional undercurrents of traditional nationalism, whilst appeasing civic nationalists who would be repelled by more overt ethnic nationalism. In their study of Salmond's rhetoric during the 2014 Independence Referendum, Stuart McAnulla and Andrew Crines note that although Salmond does occasionally reference 'well-known cultural memories or myths [he] makes them subordinate to a more progressive historical impact made by Scottish innovation'.[85] The above example clearly demonstrates what McAnnula and Crines refer to in their work.

The SNP narrative of post-war Britain was positive. In a lecture of 25 January 2012, Salmond argued: 'For much of the post-war period, people in Scotland largely embraced the great social reforms which were implemented by Clement Atlee's government and sustained

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[83] Richard Marsden, 'The Real Reason Yes Scotland Avoids Braveheart Nostalgia,' *The Conversation,* 5 September 2014, https://theconversation.com/the-real-reason-yes-scotland-avoids-braveheart-nostalgia-31328 (accessed 21/1/2021).

[84] Marsden, 'Yes Scotland Avoids Braveheart Nostalgia'.

[85] Stuart McAnulla & Andrew Crines, 'The Rhetoric of Alex Salmond and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum', *British Politics*, Vol.12, No.4 (2017), 480.

through much of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.'[86] Salmond, like Alexander, used the authority of historian, Tom Devine, to add weight to his argument. Salmond noted that 'Professor Tom Devine, for example, has expressed the view that in the post-war period the welfare state became "the real anchor of the union state".'[87] MSP for Glasgow Southside (previously Glasgow Govan, 2007-present), Nicola Sturgeon likewise discussed the history of the British welfare state. She argued that:

> In the mid-20th century, the creation of the welfare state played an overwhelming role in giving the union a new purpose. Britain lost the colony of India, but we all gained a new territory in the shape of free health care and social protection from cradle to grave.[88]

This discussion of the British welfare state by the SNP had a clear objective: an appeal to Labour voters and constituents who occupied the space between unionists and nationalists. This narrative also functioned to undermine the governing Westminster Party, the Conservatives, who were cutting funding for these services.

A similar approach was evident in the reference to Labour MP Tom Johnston, who also featured in the Yes Scotland campaign. The purpose of this reference was surmised by Sturgeon's assessment that 'a yes vote is much more in keeping with the home rule traditions of Scottish Labour than a no vote'.[89] This was because Johnston, who was involved in the Red Clydeside movement, had also been a vocal supporter of home rule. Sturgeon elaborated on

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[86] Alex Salmond, 'Hugo Young Lecture, 2012', *The Guardian*, 25 January 2012, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jan/25/alex-salmond-hugo-young-lecture (accessed 22/7/2020).
[87] Salmond, 'Hugo Young Lecture'.
[88] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Building a Better Nation', Scottish Government, 3 December 2012, https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive /20150218175021/http://www.gov.scot/News/Speeches/better-nation-031212 (accessed 3/5/2021)
[89] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Independence Can Transform Scotland Speech', *Scottish Government,* 10 January 2014, https://youtu.be/_hXSNSd85DE (accessed 5/5/2020).

the proposed conditions of the home rule bill of 1927, in which Johnston was heavily involved. She argued that the bill:

> Proposed a Scottish parliament with powers over pensions, unemployment benefits, the post office, and all taxes. It would have resulted in responsibility for the armed forces being shared between a Scottish parliament and Westminster, and it involved the withdrawal of all Scottish MPs from the House of Commons.[90]

Sturgeon noted that Johnston's reason for supporting the bill was because: 'The governors would be nearer the governed.'[91] This argument directly countered that of Lamont who had argued that Labour values did not align with Scottish independence. Additionally, Sturgeon's reference to Johnston served to provide a sense of continuity to the SNP's fight for independence. Sturgeon noted that Scottish independence had been an objective of Johnston in the early twentieth century for the same reasons that it was an objective for the SNP in 2014.

The topic of the pre-Union Scottish Parliament was also a feature of SNP discourse. On 25 January 2012, Salmond recalled:

> Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun addressed the Scottish Parliament in 1706, before it was adjourned—for some three hundred years. He observed that: 'All nations are dependent; the one upon the many. This much we know.' But he also warned that if 'the greater must always swallow the lesser', we are all diminished.[92]

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[90] Sturgeon, 'Independence Can Transform Scotland'.
[91] Sturgeon, 'Independence Can Transform Scotland'.
[92] Salmond, 'Hugo Young Lecture'.

This was Fletcher's first appearance in the SNP discourse at the 1979, 1997 or 2014 Referenda. However, he had featured in Labour MP Tam Dalyell's text published in 1977. Although Fletcher's name had allegedly frequented the discourse of the SNP in the past, his ideals are difficult to reconcile with the SNP brand. As discussed in the previous chapter, Fletcher proposed slavery to deal with the issue of vagrancy that plagued Scotland following the failed Darien Scheme. However, in this instance, Fletcher was used by the SNP because of his vocal opposition to the Act of Union. This is another example of the use of silences and blind spots to bolster arguments.

A similar argument was repeated by Salmond on 7 April 2014. Salmond noted: 'When the Scots Parliament was adjourned in 1707, the speaker, Lord Seafield, described it as "the end of an auld sang". The Parliament reconvened in 1999.'[93] By using the word 'reconvened', Salmond was trying to establish continuity between the Scottish Parliament that existed prior to 1707, and the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood from 1999. The use of such language by the SNP was criticised by those opposed to independence.

A feature unique to SNP discourse was analysis of the origins of the Union between Scotland and England. In her speech of 25 January 2012, Sturgeon argued: 'Back in 1707, the Union was formed out of the self-interest of the elites of both nations—and it could never be said to have been the democratic choice of Scotland.'[94] Sturgeon thus divided the blame for the Union among the elites of both Scotland and England. This was significant because Sturgeon's narrative did not entirely conform to the anti-English narrative that the SNP was accused of disseminating. However, as the analysis of the SNP rhetoric during the 1979 Referendum campaign revealed, this narrative of shared blame was common. It is clear that Sturgeon, and

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[93] Salmond, 'Glasgow Caledonian University'.
[94] Sturgeon, 'Building a Better Nation'.

by extension the SNP, acknowledged that, although the Union was not the 'democratic choice' of the Scottish people, it was more than just an English plot.

Another recurring feature of the SNP discourse were references to Adam Smith and Robert Burns. Whereas Smith also featured in the Unionist narrative, references to Burns were unique to the SNP. In a letter to voters published in *The Independent* on 16 September 2014, Salmond wrote: 'We are the land of Adam Smith who said that no society can flourish and be happy if too many of its people do not benefit from its wealth. We are the land of Robert Burns who loved Scotland dearly and also celebrated humanity the world o'er.'[95] Salmond made a similar argument in his speech on the night before the referendum:

> [W]e have Westminster politicians who actually believe that they can tell the nation of Adam Smith that we are not able to run our finances as a country, who can tell the nation who produced Robert Burns that we don't understand the importance of internationalism.[96]

Both the Enlightenment and Adam Smith were mentioned in the Conservative and Better Together discourse but were used differently than in SNP discourse. Pro-union discussion of the Enlightenment illustrated the benefits of the Union. By contrast, the SNP used Enlightenment figures to point to Scotland's ability to go it alone.

Salmond also used Robert Burns as an example of the capacity to be both 'nationalist and internationalist'.[97] This carried through to the SNP's most distinctive narrative about Scotland's historic place in Europe. An example of this was Salmond's speech of 28 April

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[95] Alex Salmond, 'Scottish Independence: First Minister Alex Salmond's Letter to Voters', *The Independent,* 16 September 2014, https://www.independent.co.uk/incoming/scottish-independence-first-minister-alex-salmond-s-letter-voters-9736617 html (accessed 4/5/2021).
[96] Alex Salmond, 'Campaign Speech of Destiny', 17 September 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Kj3D5Fit2o (accessed 23/7/2020).
[97] Salmond, 'Hugo Young Lecture'.

2014, delivered at the College of Europe in Bruges, entitled 'Scotland's Place in Europe'. In the speech, Salmond noted Scotland's centuries-long connection to the Belgian city:

> As one of the great commercial centres of Europe in the Middle Ages, Brugge was at times the staple of entry point for wool being exported from Scotland to the rest of Europe. A community of Scottish merchants settled here more than 700 years ago.[98]

This argument had two purposes. The first related to Scotland's foreign policy which prioritises maintaining good relationships with its neighbours. The second aspect of the argument was the emphasis on the 700-year-old relationship between Scotland and Belgium which contrasted with the mere 300-year-old union between Scotland and England. This argument fits into a wider discussion occurring in the discourse of the Scottish independence debate which focused on whether an independent Scotland would be granted membership in the European Union.

Another key feature of the SNP campaign was the negotiation of the confines of historical romanticism. As shown earlier in the chapter, opponents of Scottish independence were critical of romantic narratives of Scottish nationhood. The SNP was also eager to frame independence as a manifestation of civic nationhood. This was evident in Salmond's speech of 12 April 2014, in which he noted that the SNP's 'cause is about more than the landscape, the history and the legends, no matter how romantic or moving'.[99] Salmond thereby illustrated the fine line he was traversing in his appeal to voters. Although he claimed that the SNP cause was about more than 'romantic' ideas of nationalism, he did not condemn the romantic stories which appeal to the core demographic of Scottish nationalists.

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[98] Salmond, 'Scotland's Place in Europe', 28 April 2014, https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files_force/speech-files/first_minister_speech_-_20140428_-_bruges_speech_final.pdf?download=1 (accessed 22/3/2021).
[99] Alex Salmond, 'First Minister Alex Salmond's SNP Conference Address', *Herald Scotland,* 12 April 2014, https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/13155308.alex-salmond-snp-conference-speech/ (accessed 22/3/2021)

The negotiation between civic and ethnic nationalism in SNP discourse was also present in Salmond's speech of 17 February 2014. In the speech, Salmond stated:

> Bannockburn secured the emergence of the modern Scottish nation. The battle was immediately deemed iconic; a colossal victory despite overwhelming odds and it was fought for the most noble of causes—the defence of king, country and community of the realm. […] All battles have to be mythologised to some extent if their memory is to survive and many much more recent than Bannockburn have undergone this process.[100]

Salmond's words are vital to understanding the ongoing negotiation between myth and fact in Scottish memory politics. He acknowledged the importance of Bannockburn in the consciousness of Scots, but also recognised that many of the features of the battle are fictionalised.

The real negotiation between 'myth' and 'truth' was present in Salmond's discussion on freedom and independence. In the discussion, Salmond argued that 'the inspirational central myth of Bannockburn, and indeed the essential truth of the event, lies in its preservation of Scottish freedom and independence'.[101] It is this 'freedom and independence' which, according to Salmond, enabled the Declaration of Arbroath six years later.[102] Although Salmond was hesitant to connect the Independence campaign to Bannockburn, he was steadfast about the significance of the Declaration of Arbroath. The declaration, which he described as 'Scotland's Declaration of Independence', was 'the first ever European articulation of the contractual

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[100] Alex Salmond, 'First Minister Speech at Bannockburn Visitor's Centre', *Scottish Government,* 17 February 2014, https://scottishgov-newsroom.prgloo.com/speeches-and-briefings/first-minister-speech-at-bannockburn-visitor-centre (accessed 22/3/2021).
[101] Salmond, 'First Minister Speech at Bannockburn'.
[102] Salmond, 'First Minister Speech at Bannockburn'.

theory of monarchy, better known today as the sovereignty of the people'.[103] Salmond continued this analysis, connecting the idea of contractual monarchy articulated 700 years ago to contemporary 'ideals of liberty and elective government'.[104] This narrative is interesting because it attempted to appeal to two distinct audiences: the core SNP demographic, who appreciate 'Braveheart nationalism', and former unionists now tempted to support independence.

The SNP campaign focused on seven events and three figures from Scottish history. These events ranged from historic battles to key pieces of legislation which have become definitive of Scottish values. Within the SNP narrative were a number of archetypal features of national narratives. In particular, the narrative emphasised the origins, continuity, and timelessness of the Scottish nation and parliament. However, the narrative also used silences to avoid inconvenient facts that would otherwise disrupt the narrative. Although the SNP was the governing party in Scotland during this period, the commonalities between their narrative and that of the other parties means that their narrative does not constitute a governing myth.

Conclusion

The Scottish mythscape during the Independence Referendum campaign behaved very differently than it had during the period of the Devolution Referenda. In particular, the mythscape became more uniform, with many commonalities between the rival strands. Although they were not identical, they shared key events and historical figures. This indicates that the Scottish mythscape during this time had diverged from Bell's conception, although in a different way than it had in the 1970s and 1990s. Bell's theory stipulates that, within the mythscape, two or more distinct strands battle for dominance. Although there were some minor

[103] Salmond, 'First Minister Speech at Bannockburn'.
[104] Salmond, 'Glasgow Caledonian University Speech'.

differences between the memory politics of the parties and campaigns, there was also a great deal of unspoken agreement between the narratives.

Although some narrative elements were distinct, particular figures, events, and periods appeared in different strands within the discourse. These strands agreed that Enlightenment figures Adam Smith and David Hume, and British Labour founder James Keir Hardie epitomised contemporary conceptions of Scottishness. Additionally, the post-war welfare state, the military history of the UK, the Enlightenment period, the British Empire, and the Act of Union, featured across the narrative strands. Despite the narrative strands sharing plot points, each narrative instilled these events with different meanings. These variances are best understood within the theory of emplotment, or the way thematic framing is employed to provide meaning. Key examples of this include the two world wars and Britain's imperial past, in particular British involvement in the slave trade.

Chapter 4. Unionism and Europeanism: The Aftermath of Brexit in Scotland

Political integration between the UK and Europe became a goal of the British Government in the post-World War II period. This was evident by the emphasis then British opposition leader, Winston Churchill, placed on political integration in his 'Speech to the academic youth' delivered in Zurich in 1946.[1] However, this goal was not realised until the UK joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973.[2] From the outset, EEC membership was controversial. This controversy culminated in the 1975 United Kingdom European Communities Membership Referendum, in which 67.23 percent of voters supported continued UK membership in the EEC.[3] However, the nature of the relationship of the UK with Europe continued to be contested, especially following the absorption of the EEC into the European Union (EU) in 1993.[4] Whereas the EEC had been, first-and-foremost, a free-trade area, the EU became increasingly involved in a wide range of social and judicial matters. Amongst the so-called 'Eurosceptics', there was a growing belief that both UK citizens and the British government were losing control of their own affairs.[5]

The 2016 Brexit Referendum is the most divisive of the four referenda discussed in the thesis. The campaign was significant, but it was the result of the referendum that was a turning point for Scottish politics. For this reason, this chapter mainly focuses on the discourse that followed the result, rather than the campaign itself.

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[1] European Commission, 'Winston Churchill: Calling for a United States of Europe', *European Union,* https://european-union.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/eu-pioneers-winston-churchill_en.pdf (accessed 16/3/2023).

[2] N.a. 'Into Europe', *UK Parliament,* 2021, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/tradeindustry/importexport/overview/europe/ (accessed 9/4/2021).

[3] Richard Nelsson, 'Archive: How the Guardian Reported the 1975 EEC Referendum', *The Guardian,* 5 June 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/from-the-archive-blog/2015/jun/05/referendum-eec-europe-1975 (accessed 9/4/2021).

[4] N.a. 'Into Europe'.

[5] John Curtice, 'How Deeply Does Britain's Euroscepticism Run?' *British Social Attitudes,* N.d., https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39024/euroscepticism.pdf (accessed 31/8/2022).

This chapter addresses the question of whether the Scottish mythscape during and following the Brexit referendum conformed to Duncan Bell's theory. It demonstrates that, although the Independence Referendum of 2014 had produced a cohesive narrative of Scottish history that was utilised by all political narrators, this changed following the Brexit referendum. Some narrative strands in the Scottish mythscape remained the same, but new ones emerged alongside them. However, despite the existence of distinct narrative strands, none of these strands conform to Bell's conception of a governing or subaltern narrative.

Main Political Developments, 2015-2020

A referendum on the UK's membership in the EU was placed on the agenda in the lead-up to the General Election of May 2015. In the preceding years, English nationalism had been on the rise, as evident from growing support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Although UKIP campaigned throughout the UK, much of its success had been in England. The rise of UKIP, and pressure from Conservative MPs, led Prime Minister David Cameron to promise a referendum on EU membership in the event of a Conservative victory.[6] This was a gamble for Cameron, who personally opposed leaving the EU, but who needed to placate the Eurosceptic wing of his party.[7] The Conservative victory on 7 May 2015 led to the announcement that a referendum on EU membership would be held on 23 June 2016.

The result of the referendum shook British politics to its core. Nearly 52 percent of participants voted to leave the EU. Cameron, who had urged the electorate to vote to remain in the EU, announced his resignation on 24 June 2016.[8] Within a month, he had been succeeded

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[6] N.a. 'David Cameron Promises In/Out Referendum on EU', *BBC News*, 23 January 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-21148282 (accessed 18/3/2021).

[7] Nicholas Ross Smith & Maximillian Mayer, 'Brexit and the Trap of History', *Global Affairs,* Vol.5, No.4-5 (2019), 446.

[8] Michael Wilkinson, 'EU Referendum Live: David Cameron Resigns as UK Shocks the World by Voting for Brexit', *The Telegraph,* 24 June 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20160624072940/http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/24/eu-referendum-results-live-brexit-wins-as-britain-votes-to-leave/ (accessed 18/3/2021).

as Prime Minister by the former Home Secretary, Theresa May.[9] In April 2017, May called for a snap general election in the hope of strengthening her parliamentary majority. A General Election was held on 8 June 2017 but, far from strengthening her position, she lost her parliamentary majority and was henceforth the leader of a minority government.[10] In the following months, her inability to push Brexit legislation through parliament led to her eventual downfall. On 7 June 2019, May resigned as Conservative Party leader.[11] The subsequent leadership contest resulted in Brexit heavyweight, Boris Johnson, becoming Prime Minister. Unable to get his Brexit legislation passed by a hung parliament, Johnson called another snap election, which was held on 12 December 2019. The result was a decisive Conservative victory on a platform of 'getting Brexit done'. After a transitional period, the UK finally withdrew from the EU on 31 January 2020.

This was also a turbulent period for the Labour Party. Labour's defeat in the 2015 General Election was followed by the resignation of its leader, Ed Milliband,[12] and the election of Jeremy Corbyn as the new leader.[13] Although Corbyn was popular with sections of the party membership, he was disliked by many of his own MPs, and excoriated by much of the British media.[14] The result was bitter faction fighting within Labour's own ranks.[15] In the wake of

[9] N.a. 'PM-in-waiting Theresa May Promises "A Better Britain"', *BBC News,* 11 July 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36768148 (accessed 18/3/2021).

[10] N.a. 'Election 2017', *BBC News,* n.d., https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results (accessed 2/4/2021).

[11] N.a. 'Theresa May Resigns Over Brexit: What Happened?' *BBC News,* 24 May 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48379730 (accessed 18/3/2021).

[12] N.a. 'Labour Election Results: Ed Miliband Resigns as Leader', *BBC News,* 8 May 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/health-32633388 (accessed 6/4/2021).

[13] Rowena Mason, 'Labour Leadership: Jeremy Corbyn Elected with Huge Mandate', *The Guardian,* 12 September 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/sep/12/jeremy-corbyn-wins-labour-party-leadership-election (accessed 6/4/2021).

[14] Mobeen Azhar, 'Where is Labour's "Jeremy Corbyn Mania" Coming From?' *BBC News,* 13 August 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33881104 (accessed 6/4/2021).

[15] Heather Stewart, 'Labour: Dysfunctional "Toxic Culture" Led to Defeat, Major Report Finds', *The Guardian,* 19 June 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jun/18/dysfunctional-toxic-culture-led-to-labour-defeat-major-report-finds (accessed 6/4/2021).

Labour's humiliating defeat in the 2019 General Election, Corbyn stood down as Labour leader,[16] and was replaced by a new, more moderate leader, Sir Keir Starmer.[17]

The turmoil in British politics was accompanied by radical changes in the political landscape of Scotland. In the General Election of 2015, a massive swing from Labour to the SNP enabled the Scottish nationalists to win 56 of Scotland's 59 parliamentary seats.[18] As the previous chapter argued, Labour voters were considered a vital battleground at the 2014 Independence Referendum. Significantly, the regions that had voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence were considered Labour strongholds.[19] The support for independence among previously Labour voters led many of these voters to support the SNP following the 2014 referendum. The SNP was henceforth the dominant Scottish party in both Holyrood and in Westminster.[20] In the subsequent general elections of 2017 and 2019, as well as the Scottish Parliamentary Election of May 2016, a modest Conservative revival in Scotland pushed Labour into third place (see Figures 1 and 2).
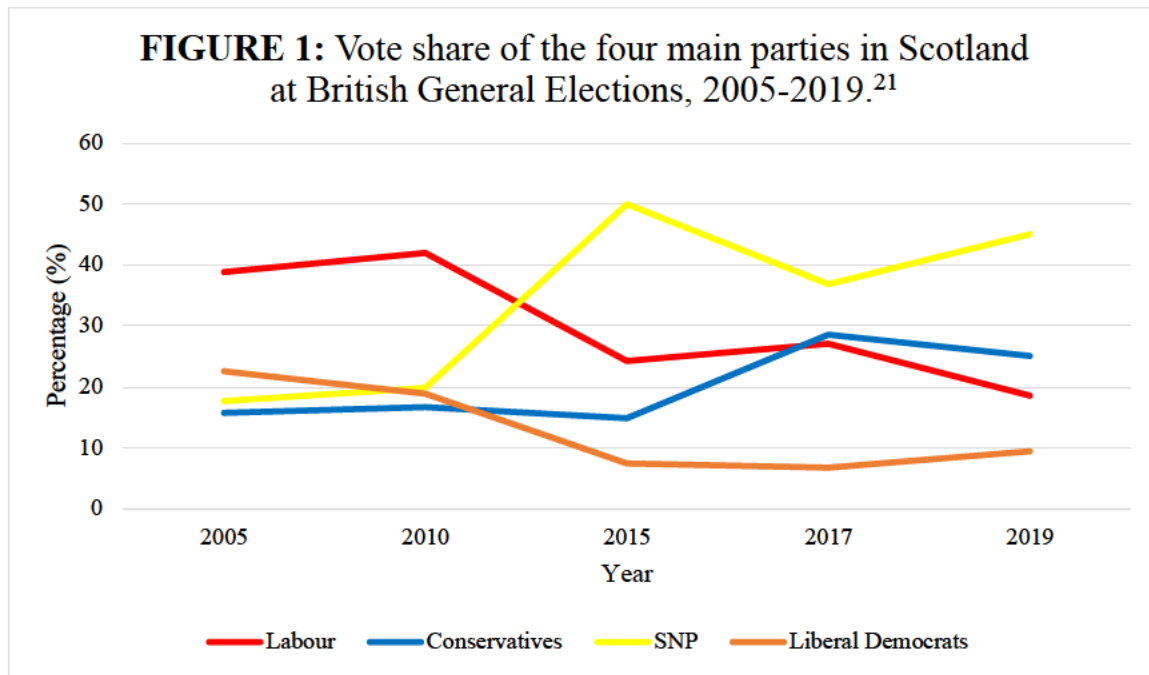
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[16] Iain Watson, 'Jeremy Corbyn: "I Did Everything I Could to Lead Labour"', *BBC News,* 13 December 2019 https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50784811 (accessed 6/4/2021).
[17] N.a. 'New Labour Leader Keir Starmer Vows to Lead Party into "New Era"', 4 April 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-52164589 (accessed 6/4/2021).
[18] M.K. Thompson, 'Brexit, Scotland, and the Continuing Divergence of Politics', *Midwest Quarterly,* Vol.20, No.2 (2019), 150.
[19] Gerry Mooney, 'The 2015 General Election in Scotland: The Rise of the SNP', *The Open University,* 2 July 2015, https://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/politics/the-2015-general-election-scotland-the-rise-the-snp (accessed 17/3/2023).
[20] Thompson, 'Brexit', 150.

FIGURE 1: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at British General Elections, 2005-2019.[21]

Although, the Brexit referendum was a UK referendum, parties of devolved parliaments were also involved in the campaign. In Scotland, however, Brexit took a back seat to domestic politics. The Scottish General Election was held on 5 May 2016, a mere six weeks before the Brexit Referendum (see Figure 2 for results). Consequently, Brexit and the EU were only one of many items on the political agenda in the months preceding the referendum. Furthermore, despite clear divisions along party lines in the previous referenda, all five of the main Scottish political parties advocated for a remain vote. Because all parties agreed on the benefits of EU membership to Scotland, there was less need to rely on nostalgic narratives of memory. The only party in Scotland that backed the Leave campaign was UKIP, which was a marginal force in Scottish politics.

[21] Sam Pilling & Richard Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics: 1918-2021: A Century of Elections', *Commons Library Research Briefing,* 18 August 2021, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7529/CBP-7529.pdf (accessed 24/5/2022), 24.

FIGURE 2: Vote share of the four main parties in Scotland at 2016 Scottish Parliamentary Election.[22]
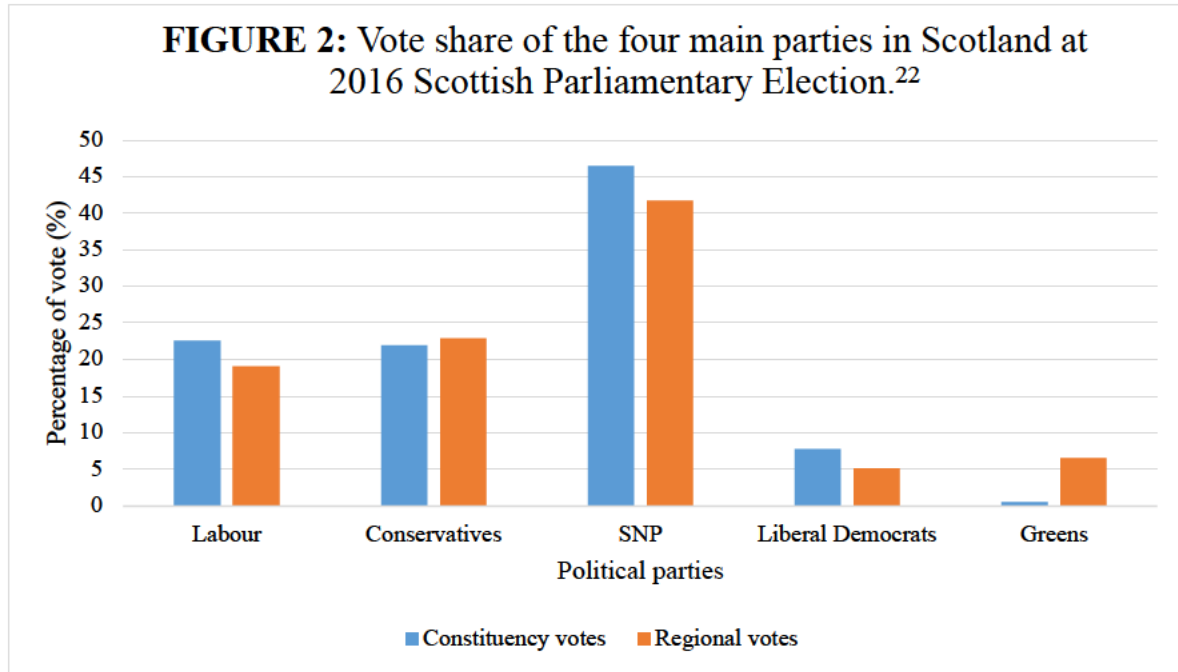
Although memory politics did not play a significant role in the Brexit referendum in Scotland, the result of the referendum was a turning point in Scottish politics and consequently for Scottish memory politics. This is especially significant because memory politics did play an important role in the Brexit campaign in England. Additionally, narratives which were well received in England were poorly received in Scotland. These narratives included nostalgia for the imperial past, and another focused on the 'Dunkirk spirit'.[23] As the previous chapter illustrated, narratives related to imperialism were contentious in Scotland and were not well received. This indicates that Scottish and English memory politics were pulling in different directions.

Voters in the UK voted marginally to leave the EU by 51.9 percent to 48.1 percent.[24] However, as Figure 3 illustrates, there were significant variations between the four constituent

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[22] Pilling & Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics', 68.

[23] Edoardo Campanella & Marta Dassù, 'Brexit and Nostalgia', *Survival: Global Politics and* Strategy, Vol.61, No.3 (2019), 103-111; Rachel Chin, 'Selective Memory: The Brexit Campaign and Historical Nostalgia', *Imperial and Global Forum*, 7 June 2016, https://imperialglobalexeter.com/2016/06/07/selective-memory-the-brexit-campaign-and-historical-nostalgia/ (accessed 26/9/2022).

[24] N.a., 'EU Referendum Results', *BBC News,* n.d. https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results (accessed 1/4/2020).

nations of the UK. In England and Wales respectively, the referendum resulted in 53.4 and 52.5 percent of voters opting to leave the EU.[25] In Scotland and Northern Ireland, by contrast, 62.0 and 55.8 percent of voters respectively wanted to remain in the EU.[26] Scottish voters were thus the most opposed to leaving the EU. Indeed, every council in Scotland produced a majority for Remain.[27] In the wake of the referendum, and against the will of the majority of Scottish voters, the UK Government triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, thereby initiating negotiations to remove the UK from the EU.

Figure 3: Results of the 2016 European Union Referendum.[28]
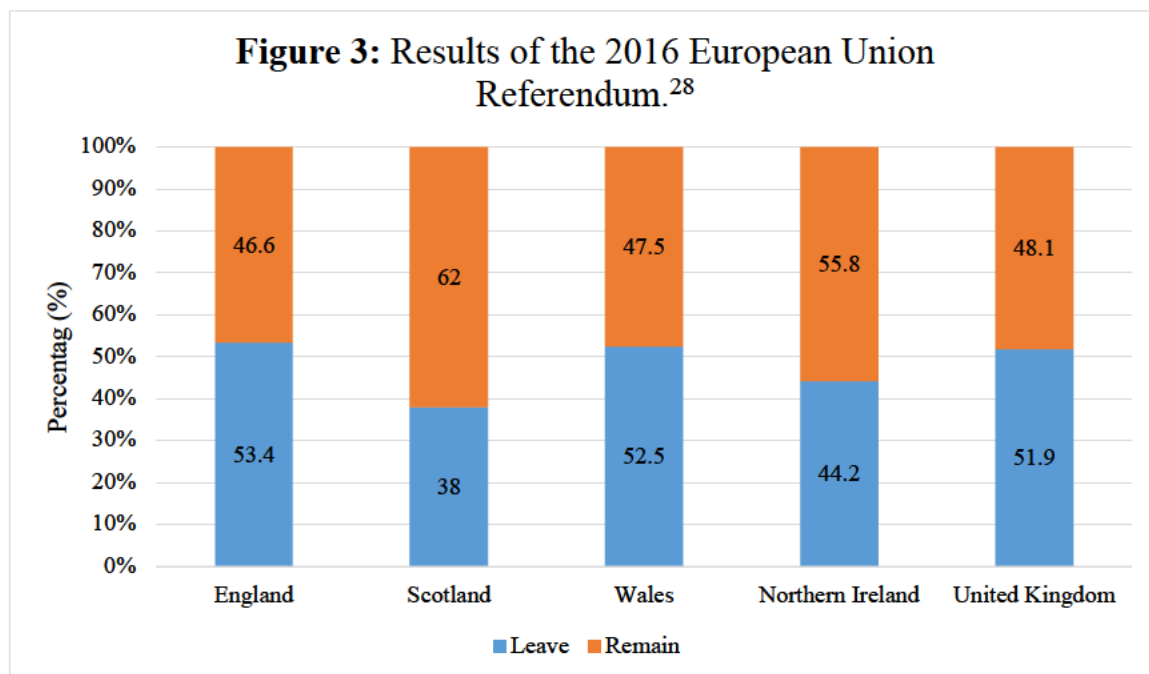
For the purposes of this study, what matters is not Brexit itself but its impact on Scottish memory discourse. Immediately following the Brexit result, Scottish independence returned to the political agenda. This was because of the emphasis placed upon EU membership during the Scottish Independence debate. The No campaign had stressed that an independent

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[25] N.a., 'EU Referendum'.
[26] N.a., 'EU Referendum'.
[27] N.a., 'EU Referendum'.
[28] Pilling & Cracknell, 'UK Election Statistics', 105.

Scotland would not be granted membership to the EU.[29] This fear influenced 'yes' voters' to vote 'no'.[30] Unsurprisingly, the result of the Brexit Referendum just two years later angered these voters and brought about renewed debate about Scotland's place within the UK. The referendum also marked a turning point in Scottish memory politics because it brought the issue of Scotland's place in Europe to the forefront. Although the five main political parties in Scotland had agreed about the importance of the EU to Scotland, old tensions flared up when Scotland's bonds to the rest of the UK were questioned. The remainder of this chapter examines the development of Scottish memory politics by looking at the narratives used by the Unionist parties, and by comparing them to the narratives of the pro-independence Greens and SNP.

Developments in Unionist Memory Politics.

In the wake of the Brexit Referendum, the various Unionist parties had to respond to the upsurge of pro-independence discourse. The Conservative Party, Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats, had been the key political actors in the anti-independence campaign of 2012 to 2014. However, in just a couple of years their memory agendas had changed substantially.

Although both the British and Scottish branches of the Conservative Party use the official names 'Conservative and Unionist Party' they exist as two distinct parties. Thompson notes: 'The same general polarisation between left and right in Scotland and England is evident within the Conservative party itself.'[31] This was particularly evident during the Brexit Referendum, when Scottish Conservative leader (2011-2019), and MSP for Edinburgh Central (2016-2021), Ruth Davidson, openly campaigned against Brexit.[32] Following the referendum

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[29] BBC News, 'Scottish Independence: Better Together Boss Sets out Union Case', 1 February 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21293490 (accessed 12/12/2022).
[30] Thompson, 'Brexit', 142.
[31] Thompson, 'Brexit', 155.
[32] Thompson, 'Brexit', 156.

result, Davidson was required to align her party stance with the British Conservative Party, but still campaigned for a 'soft Brexit'.[33]

The Labour and Liberal Democratic narratives after Brexit were quite similar to those produced during the 2014 Independence Referendum. For example, Labour continued to emphasise the importance of the Welfare State as something that binds the Union together. However, there was an interesting change in Labour discourse, namely, the renewed emphasis on the significance of the Act of Union and the Enlightenment. These changes brought the Labour narrative more closely into line with those of the other Unionist parties. The Liberal Democrats, like the Labour Party and Scottish Conservatives, vehemently opposed both leaving the EU and Scottish Independence. These political alignments were mirrored by commonalities in their memory policies.

During the independence campaign, the anti-independence parties had focused on a wide variety of events and individuals. Although there had been some minor differences between the parties, the overall narrative of the Scottish past consisted of the same events and figures: the Act of Union, the abolition of the slave trade, the creation of the NHS, the world wars, etc. In the aftermath of the Brexit Referendum, however, the narrative was simplified. The main events which featured in the post-Brexit discourse were the Act of Union, which was mentioned by all narrators, the world wars, which featured in most narratives, and the Enlightenment, which was mentioned by some narrators. There were some minor variations in the Unionist narrative, which reflected the varied perspectives of different parties.

The Act of Union had been a key event in strands of both unionist and pro-independence rhetoric during the independence debate. Following Brexit, however, the event became even more central to the Unionist narrative. Although the duration of the Union between Scotland and England had long been part of political discourse, the Brexit referendum

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[33] Thompson, 'Brexit', 156.

added a new element to the discussion, namely, the historical connection of the UK with Europe. The European dimension was used to explain why the termination of Britain's 47-year membership of the EU should not lead to the termination of Scotland's even deeper relationship with the UK.

A good example of the 'Europeanism' of pro-Union memory politics in the wake of Brexit is furnished by a number of speeches by Conservative politicians. In September 2016, Davidson compared the relative length of the Union between Scotland and England, and the Union between Britain and the EU:

> For Scotland, the EU was a 40-year-old, relatively loose economic union with social and legal implications. The UK is a 300-year-old, deeply embedded, economic, social, political and emotional Union.[34]

According to Davidson, Scotland's relationship with Europe was confined to the official union (EU), whereas Scotland's relationship with the rest of the UK was much deeper. The trauma of breaking the UK would therefore be even greater than that of exiting the EU.

Douglas Ross, Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party (2020-present) and MP for Moray (2017-present), also addressed the longevity of the relationship between Scotland and the UK, relative to the relationship with the EU in a speech of 2 November 2020. His discussion on the Union began with the assessment that:

> Our Union is not just one single relationship. Yes, there was an Act of Union in 1707 that brought Scotland and England together and created the United Kingdom. But

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[34] Ruth Davidson, 'Ruth's Speech to the European Council on Foreign Relations', *Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party,* 12 September 2016, https://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/09/9073/ (accessed 3/3/2021).

before that event there was already a tight web of connections, tying together our four nations.[35]

Ross's argument utilises what Stuart Hall considers a vital element of national narratives, an emphasis on 'origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness'.[36] Although Unionist narratives often begin with the Act of Union, Ross took this narrative further back in time by arguing that, even before 1707, there was already a strong connection. In Ross's view, the relationship deepened in the 300 years following the Act of Union: 'our Union has created a common history, culture and identity that is shared across our four nations'.[37] Although the first section of Ross's narrative was entirely devoted to the UK, he used his argument about the strength of the connection established by the Act of Union to downplay the importance of the relationship with the EU. He argued that the UK 'has the weight of history and of a social as well as economic and political partnership that the EU lacks'.[38] Ross's account was thus somewhat less 'Europhile' than that of Davidson, which reflects their different stances on the question of Brexit.

May provided the most distinct narrative of the Union in a speech of 2 July 2019, in which she encouraged her audience to 'appreciate the historical complexity and intricacy of our United Kingdom'.[39] She provided a detailed timeline, not just of Scotland's journey towards political union with the UK, but also those of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

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[35] Douglas Ross, 'Why is Our Union Special?' *Policy Exchange,* 2 November 2020, https://policyexchange.org.uk/pxevents/why-is-our-union-special/ (accessed 1/9/2022).
[36] Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert & Kenneth Thompson (eds) *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies* (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 615.
[37] Ross, 'Why is Our Union Special?'.
[38] Ross, 'Why is Our Union Special?'.
[39] Theresa May, 'PM Speech on the Union: 4 July 2019', *UK Government,* 4 July 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-the-union-4-july-2019 (accessed 1/9/2022).

She argued that the Union had evolved over centuries through a series of events.[40] According to May:

> Legal union between England and Wales was implemented by the Tudors—a royal house with Welsh roots. England and Wales were united in personal union with Scotland in 1603 by a Scottish royal house, the Stuarts. Political Union was achieved under the last Stuart monarch, Queen Anne, with the creation of the Kingdom of Great Britain. A century later, another Act of Union created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. And following the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921, the United Kingdom took on the form we know today.[41]

Unlike her colleagues within both the British and Scottish branches of the Conservative Party, May did not compare the UK to the EU. This is because the running theme of speeches which mention both the EU and UK was that, if leaving the EU had been difficult, Scotland's departure from the UK would be even harder. May, as the Prime Minister tasked with delivering Brexit, did not want to draw attention to the difficulties of achieving this task.

Senior Liberal Democrat politicians also made the comparison between the relationship of Scotland and the UK on the one hand, and the relationship of Scotland and the EU on the other. Unlike the Conservatives, however, the Liberal Democrats were united in staunch opposition to Brexit. In the wake of the referendum, the Liberal Democrats even endorsed the slogan 'Bollocks to Brexit!'.[42] Their position on Brexit had a significant impact on their historical justification of the Union. Willie Rennie, leader of the Scottish Liberal

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[40] May, 'PM Speech on the Union'.
[41] May, 'PM Speech on the Union'.
[42] Stefan Stern, 'The Lib Dems' "Bollocks to Brexit" is Crass, but it Might Just Work', *The Guardian,* 10 May 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/09/liberal-democrats-bollocks-to-brexit-party-slogan (accessed 26/9/2022).

Democrats (2011-2021) and MSP for North East Fife (2016-present), for example, used a similar approach to Davidson in a speech of September 2018. According to Rennie:' [A]fter forty years: The ties that bind us are strong. […] After three hundred years: The ties that bind us are strong.'[43] This argument was paraphrased and repeated on numerous occasions by many speakers from the party.[44]

The development of the Liberal Democrats discourse following Brexit directly correlated with the significance the party had placed upon the EU during the Independence referendum. From 2012 to 2014, the Liberal Democrats had relied heavily on the premise that, if the Scots were to leave the UK, they would also be leaving the EU. This argument was nullified with the Brexit result and the party was forced to find a new one. This new narrative emphasised the importance of the longevity of the 300-year union to underscore how difficult the breakup of the UK would be within the context of the difficulties of implementing Brexit.

Both the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats used narratives of the Act of Union to emphasise that, if Brexit had been hard, breaking the Union would be much worse. By contrast, the Labour Party highlighted the modern-day significance of the Act of Union. In a speech addressing the impact of Brexit delivered in December 2016, Scottish Labour leader

[43] Willie Rennie, 'Rennie: Brexit Proves Breaking Up is Hard to Do', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 20 September 2018, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/rennie_brexit_proves_breaking_up_is_hard_to_do (accessed 12/3/2021).
[44] **SEE:**
Jo Swinson, 'Swinson: SNP Have Learnt Nothing From Watching Theresa May', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 22 February 2019, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/swinson_snp_have_learnt_nothing_from_watching_theresa_may (accessed 9/3/2021); Willie Rennie, 'Health and Education Neglected Due to SNP Independence Obsession', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 29 January 2020, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/health_and_education_neglected_due_to_snp_independence_obsession (accessed 9/3/2021); Willie Rennie, 'Andrew Wilson Admits Scotland and UK are Tightly Bound Together', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 8 April 2019, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/andrew_wilson_admits_scotland_and_uk_are_tightly_bound_together (accessed 9/3/2021); Willie Rennie, 'Rennie: FM should Use Tomorrow's Statement to Take Independence Off the Table', *Scottish liberal Democrats,* 23 April 2019, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/rennie_fm_should_use_tomorrow_s_statement_to_take_independence_off_the_table (accessed 9/3/2021); Jo Swinson, 'Swinson to Warn of Imminent Independence Threat at Edinburgh Rally', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 5 December 2019, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/swinson_to_warn_of_imminent_independence_threat_at_edinburgh_rally (accessed 9/3/2021).

(2015-2017), and MSP for Lothian (2011-2019), Kezia Dugdale, highlighted the Act of Union as a vital aspect of present-day relations in the UK. Dugdale argued that 'the Act of Union still underpins the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the UK'.[45] Dugdale reasoned that the longevity of the Union was a strength, but that it also needed to be revised to bring it up to date: 'After more than 300 years, it is time for a new Act of Union to safeguard our family of nations for years to come.'[46] Dugdale did not specify what she regarded as the strengths of the Union, nor the weaknesses that now need to be rectified. The vagueness of her argument was likely deliberate in order to maximise its appeal. On the same day Dugdale published an opinion piece in *The Guardian* which reiterated her argument.[47] As in her speech, Dugdale argued that, even without Brexit, the Union required modification to ensure its continuation. This argument is interesting because much of the discussion around the Union at this time concentrated on Brexit as the singular problem, whereas Dugdale argued that Brexit was part of wider constitutional problems within the UK.

The two world wars also featured in Unionist discourse. Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats referred to the conflicts. However, the British and Scottish versions of the Conservative Party took very different approaches in their narratives. The British Conservatives used a British lens whereas the Scottish Conservatives adopted a wider European lens. May, for example, emphasised how the UK had successfully endured times of adversity. According to May, the UK had 'fought against and defeated tyranny'.[48] By

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[45] Keiza Dugdale, 'Kezia Dugdale: Tory Brexit Gamble has Not Paid Off—and it Has Held Back Healing the Divisions of the Scotland Referendum', *LabourList,* 7 December 2016, https://labourlist.org/2016/12/kezia-dugdale-tory-brexit-gamble-has-not-paid-off-and-for-scotland-it-has-prevented-any-healing-of-the-independence-referendum-divides/ (accessed 2/3/2021).
[46] Dugdale, 'Tory Brexit Gamble'.
[47] Keiza Dugdale, 'The UK Needs a New Act of Union to Prevent it Breaking Once and For All', *The Guardian,* 7 December 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/07/uk-needs-new-act-union-stop-break-brexit-scotland (accessed 17/10/2022).
[48] Theresa May, 'Theresa May Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference', *Scottish Conservative and Unionist,* 3 May 2017, https://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/03/theresa-may-speech-to-scottish-conservative-conference/ (accessed 3/3/2020).

comparison, Davidson used a conversation with a European diplomat about the European perception of the Brexit vote to build her argument for the necessity of EU membership:

> This was a man who had served at the time Britain joined the EEC in the 70s. Whose country is scarred by battlefields from the two world wars. Who saw the formation of formalised European structures and co-operation as a way to end that history of bloodshed and war.[49]

Although the world wars had long been a feature of Unionist discourse, Brexit complicated the narrative by placing Europe at the centre of the discussion. The response of Unionist narrators was to introduce a new element, namely, the argument that the project of European integration had been birthed by the historical experience of the two world wars. Unionist discourse had always framed the world wars as a unifying force for the peoples of the UK, but now they expanded the scope of their argument to include the whole of Europe. This argument was also used by the Scottish Liberal Democrats, and the Scottish Greens. In a speech calling for unity on the EU Referendum, Rennie of the Liberal Democrats argued: 'The European Union is one of the greatest creations in modern history. It is not perfect but it has brought peace to a continent torn apart by two world wars.'[50] In a speech following the referendum result, Rennie again spoke of the EU as a peacemaker:

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[49] Ruth Davidson, 'Ruth Delivers the Rhondda Lecture at the Institute of Directors', *Scottish and Unionist Party,* 5 December 2016 https://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/12/ruth-delivers-the-rhondda-lecture-at-the-institute-of-directors/ (accessed 3/32021).

[50] Willie Rennie, 'Rennie: Scottish Party Leaders Must Stand Together on EU Vote', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 22 February 2016, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/rennie_scottish_party_leaders_must_stand_together_on_eu_vote (accessed 12/3/2021).

What does it say to those who fought bravely to deliver peace on our continent? I am angry that all the good work to bring the peoples of Europe closer together over decades has been consigned to the dustbin of history in one ugly moment.[51]

In both of Rennie's speeches, the emphasis was placed upon the 'continent' and the 'peoples of Europe'. This is significant because, during the 2014 Independence Referendum, both pro-Union and pro-independence campaigners limited their narratives to UK- and Scotland-centric narratives, despite the fact that Scotland's EU membership had been a dominant campaign topic.

The Enlightenment also featured in the post-Brexit discourse of the Conservative and Labour Parties. The Conservatives had frequently deployed narratives about the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution during the Independence Referendum. These narratives persisted in the aftermath of the Brexit result. May provided the most in-depth examination of Scotland's role in the UK in a speech of 3 May 2017. In her speech, she highlighted the evolution of the UK and its 'proud history'.[52] May argued that 'the real story of our Union is not to be found in Treaties or Acts of Parliament. It is written in our collective achievements, both at home and in the world.'[53] One of these achievements, May argued, was the Industrial Revolution. She maintained that, together, the constituent nations of the UK had

led the world into the industrial age. From the Derbyshire dales, to the south Wales Valleys and the workshops of Clydeside, British industrialists, inventors and workers […] made the United Kingdom the world's engine-room.[54]

[51] Willie Rennie, 'Rennie: Lib Dems Will Stand for Re-Entry to Europe', *Scottish Liberal Democrats,* 26 June 2016, https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/rennie_lib_dems_will_stand_for_re_entry_to_europe (accessed 12/3/2021).
[52] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.
[53] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.
[54] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.

By connecting the industrial regions of Scotland, England, and Wales, she linked the working people of each region together in shared history. Interestingly, this argument incorporates elements typical of the Labour narrative. In her speech, May also emphasised the importance of the Enlightenment. She noted: 'The Union enabled the social, scientific and economic developments which powered our collective achievement.'[55] May cited the example of the steam engine, which saw the partnership of 'an engineer from Greenock, James Watt, and a manufacturer from Birmingham, Matthew Boulton'.[56] May concluded 'that co-operation— economic, social, and cultural—has been the bedrock of our success as a Union of nations and people'.[57]

In a speech delivered in December 2020, Starmer deployed arguments that were very similar to those of May. In Starmer's view: 'Britain's great achievements in Science, innovation and discovery are all the greater because they drew on all our talents.'[58] Although Starmer's approach was less specific, there were striking similarities between his statement and those of May. Both leaders structured their arguments to appeal to a sense of Scottish pride, while also highlighting the role of the Union in establishing stability.

Even though there was a great deal of overlap between the post-Brexit memory discourse of the three unionist parties, there were also some defining differences. For example, only the Labour Party mentioned the welfare state as a source of British unity. This was evident in a speech by Alex Rowley, Deputy Leader of the Scottish Labour Party (2015-2017) and MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (2016-present). In a speech of 25 September 2017, Rowley detailed the various institutions that the Labour Party had delivered to the UK while serving as the governing party:

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[55] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.
[56] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.
[57] May, 'Speech to Scottish Conservative Conference'.
[58] Keir Starmer, 'A Socially Just Scotland in a Modern United Kingdom—Starmer's Full Speech', *LabourList,* 21 December 2020, https://labourlist.org/2020/12/a-socially-just-scotland-in-a-modern-united-kingdom-starmers-full-speech/ (accessed 2/3/2021).

In 1945, Labour under Clement Attlee gave us the vision of the NHS and the Welfare State. […] And in this century, Gordon Brown, a son of Fife church minister and a son of Scotland, ended the scandal of pensioner poverty, made Keir Hardie's vision of a minimum wage a reality, and lifted a million children out of poverty.[59]

Rowley was thereby attempting to re-establish the welfare state as the unifier that it had served as over the previous century.

By contrast, Starmer's narrative of the welfare state was a direct appeal to Scottish values. This was evident by his assessment that the welfare state was the achievement of all the peoples of Britain, including the 'early Scottish activists who fought against the Scottish Poor Law'.[60] This narrative is distinct from Labour's previous narratives of the event. Although the origins of the welfare state predate the twentieth century, Labour's previous narratives focused on the radical development of the welfare state in the post-war period. Additionally, Starmer emphasised the Scottish contribution to the welfare state. During the 2014 Independence campaign, the creation of the welfare state was attributed to an Englishman, not 'Scottish activists'. The prominence of the welfare state across the discourse of both unionist and pro-independence parties during the Independence Referendum indicated the significance of the event to the Scottish electorate. It was constructed in multiple narratives as a unifying institution representative of the essence and values of Scots. It is still being used in this way in Starmer's argument with the additional appeal to a Scottish audience.

The Unionist narrative during and following the Brexit campaign was simplistic in comparison to the independence campaign. The narrative was streamlined with a reduced number of events that were discussed in much less detail. Although there were different

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[59] Alex Rowley, 'Alex Rowley MSP Speech to the Labour Party Conference', *LabourList*, 23 September 2017, https://labour.org.uk/press/alex-rowley-msp-speech-to-the-labour-party/?bsearch_highlight=welfare%20state (accessed 28/10/2020).
[60] Starmer, 'A Socially Just Scotland'.

approaches to the construction of events both within and across party lines, the Unionist parties agreed that the narrative of Scottish history must include the Act of Union, and should include the world wars and the Enlightenment. A potential explanation as to why the Unionist Parties unanimously adopted memory agendas which were streamlined despite their different responses to the Brexit result was their view on Scottish independence. Each party saw dealing with the UK's process of withdrawing from the EU as a larger issue than Scottish independence. Although they could not ignore renewed discussion of Scottish independence altogether, their main priority was to tailor their Brexit policy in a way that was palatable to the Scottish people.

Developments in Pro-Independence Memory Politics.

Of the five main political parties in Scotland, only the SNP and the Greens supported independence. Both parties had accepted the 'No' result in 2014 but believed that the conditions created by the Brexit result in 2016 opened the door for a second independence referendum.

The Scottish Greens were established in 1990 and were represented as a minor party in the Scottish parliament since its creation in 1999. However, the Greens did not feature in the chapters on the 1997 Devolution or 2014 Independence Referenda because their involvement in narratives of Scottish history during this period were negligible. However, in the aftermath of the Brexit Referendum the Greens began to play a more prominent role in Scottish memory politics. In a similar fashion to the Unionist Parties, the Greens used Scotland-centric narratives. They also incorporated the world wars into their narrative. By contrast, the SNP narrative in the post-referendum period was almost entirely Eurocentric. This makes the SNP strand wholly distinct, not just from the Unionist strands, but also from that of the Greens. For this reason, the Greens narrative is examined separately from that of the SNP.

The Scottish Greens' Narratives

The narrative constructed by the Greens about the importance of the EU was very similar to that of the Liberal Democrats, even though the two parties took different positions on the question of independence. A statement released shortly before the referendum read: 'The EU has brought more than 70 years of peace to a continent scarred by centuries of war.'[61] On the day of the referendum, MSP for the West Scotland region (2016-present), Ross Greer, fleshed out this narrative:

> It's hard to appreciate just what an achievement seventy years of peace in Europe actually is, particularly when you're separated by at least three generations from the last time our continent was devastated by war. […] After hundreds of years of near-constant war we have achieved decades of not just peace but cooperation across our continent.[62]

Greer's argument, like Rennie's of the Liberal Democrats, adopted a Eurocentric narrative of the wars. For Greer, the Brexit debate was not just concerned with what is best for the UK or Scotland, but what is best for Europe.

Where the Greens and Liberal Democrats diverged was on the issue of independence. The Greens' narrative of sovereignty made this evident. A recurring theme in the discourse both of the Greens and of the SNP was that sovereignty lies with the Scottish people. This narrative was articulated by co-leader of the Scottish Greens (2008-present) and MSP for Glasgow (2003-present), Patrick Harvie, on 2 December 2016. In particular, Harvie noted the

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[61] N.a. 'Benefits of Staying IN the EU', *Scottish Greens,* 7 June 2016, https://greens.scot/benefits-of-staying-in-the-eu (accessed 12/3/2021).

[62] Ross Greer, 'Young People in Scotland Must be Part of Building a Better Europe', *Scottish Greens,* 23 June 2016, https://greens.scot/blog/young-people-in-scotland-must-be-part-of-building-a-better-europe (accessed 12/3/2021).

'democratic deficit' within the UK Government, and contrasted this with 'the constitutional history of Scotland, which understands that sovereignty lies with the people'.[63] The event which established 'popular sovereignty' was the Declaration of Arbroath, which was discussed by Maggie Chapman, co-convenor of the Scottish Greens (2013-2019), at the Scottish Greens' 2019 spring conference. The conference, which was held on 6 April, coincided with the 699th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. As a result, the Declaration was a significant feature of Chapman's speech. Chapman discussed issues ranging from the climate crisis to the rise of fascism, but these discussion points were underpinned by the argument that an independently governed Scotland could better tackle these issues. Chapman used a direct quote from the Declaration to summarise her argument: 'It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom.'[64] Following this quote, Chapman returned to the problems caused by Brexit, namely the loss of freedom of movement, which she equated with the freedom for which her party was fighting.

The Greens' depiction of the EU, like that of the Liberal Democrats, was consistently positive, even though the two parties used different events in their narratives. The two main events in the Greens' discourse served to reinforce the importance of the EU to European peace, whilst simultaneously questioning the right of Westminster to govern Scotland without electoral support. These tropes were not common across the discourse of Scottish memory politics at this time, which is why the Greens' strand is somewhat distinctive.

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[63] Patrick Harvie, 'Nicola Sturgeon Meets Green family Helping Scotland to Stay in EU', *Scottish Greens,* 2 December 2016, https://greens.scot/news/nicola-sturgeon-meets-green-family-helping-scotland-to-stay-in-eu (accessed 12/3/2021).
[64] Maggie Chapman, 'Spring Conference Speech', *Scottish Greens,* 6 April 2019, https://greens.scot/blog/spring-conference-speech (accessed 17/10/2022).

The SNP Narrative

Eurocentric plot points began to emerge in the SNP narrative during the Independence Referendum. Following the Brexit result, this part of the narrative developed to incorporate even more European elements. Although all the five main political parties used historical narratives in their discourse, the SNP was the most reliant.

First Minister and SNP leader (2014-present), Nicola Sturgeon, in a speech of 20 November 2019, linked the origins of Scotland's ideas of sovereignty with the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath:

> Everyone here will be familiar with the Declaration of Arbroath—one of the most famous statements of self-determination ever written. […] Next year will be the 700th anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath […] Wouldn't it be fitting for modern Scotland to declare our wish to join the independent countries of the world during that 700th anniversary.[65]

The Declaration of Arbroath is important because it is considered by many Scots to be the first declaration of Scottish nationhood.[66] This interpretation is endorsed by the Scottish Government.[67] Furthermore, the Declaration introduced the idea that the legitimacy of a monarch rests on the consent of the governed, and not the principle of divine right.

Unlike the discourse focused on Scotland's role in the UK, analysis of Scotland's shared past with its European neighbours revealed clear double meanings. Both the UK and

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[65] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Nicola Sturgeon's Speech on St Andrew's Day', *SNP,* 20 November 2019, https://www.snp.org/nicola-sturgeons-speech-on-st-andrews-day/ (accessed 12/3/2021).

[66] 'The Declaration of Arbroath: 700th Anniversary Display, 1320-2020', *National Records of Scotland,* 2020, https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//research/NRS_DoA_English_booklet_700_Spreads_WEB.pdf (accessed 14/10/2022).

[67] External Affairs Directorate, 'Scotland: A European Nation', *Scottish Government,* 21 November 2016, https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2016/11/scotland-european-nation/documents/00510265-pdf/00510265-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00510265.pdf (accessed 28/10/2022), 12.

Eurocentric discourses were aimed at potential voters in a Second Independence Referendum. However, the Eurocentric discourse was also an appeal to politicians of EU nations whose agreement would be necessary for the acceptance into the EU of an independent Scotland. In this area, the SNP was appealing to Europeanism or a common sense of values shared among Europeans, irrespective of nationality.[68] In the discourse discussing Scotland's historic links to Europe, SNP narrators referred to three historic partners: The Republic of Ireland, France, and Scandinavia. Although the SNP's emphasis on Scotland's connections with other European countries was politically motivated, it was also factually correct. According to Murray Pittock: 'Scotland's core relations until the seventeenth century were with continental Europe, however much the new British history would like to project the M6 back to the middle ages.'[69] Pittock's point reinforces the fact that, although these plot points were utilised during this time for a specific political purpose, they were not invented.

Republic of Ireland

Discussion of Scotland's connection to Ireland was the only Eurocentric argument that was carried over from the previous referenda. Ireland's previous status as a nation of the UK, and an EU member nation, provided additional significance to Scotland's arguments for independence.

The strong relationship between the peoples of Scotland and Ireland has long existed in the discourse of Scottish memory politics. However, the events used following Brexit were distinct from the narratives constructed during the previous referenda. One of the earliest examples was from the Scottish Government publication, *Scotland: A European Nation* (2016). In a section entitled 'Scotland's heritage: a nation embedded in Europe' the document read:

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[68] John McCormick, *Europeanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8.
[69] Murray G.H. Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 36.

Scotland's early history is defined by exchanges with our European neighbours. The missionary work of the Irish born Saint Columbia in the 6th century has been credited with the conversion of much of Scotland to the Christian faith.[70]

Although this narrative is focused on Scotland's shared history with Ireland, this example is used to represent Scotland's historic connection to many of its European neighbours.

In her Address to the Seanad of 29 November 2016, Sturgeon used the example of the Book of Kells. Sturgeon argued that the book:

is a truly moving reminder of how deeply and inextricably linked the peoples and cultures of Ireland and Scotland have always been. Indeed, when Colmcille travelled from Ireland to Iona in 563, he helped shape Scotland forever. And then, more than two hundred years later, when monks made the corresponding journey from Iona back to Ireland, they bequeathed to this country in the Book of Kells one of the great masterpieces of European civilisation.[71]

Through this example, Sturgeon invoked the connections of each nation's history and culture to the other. Sturgeon also noted the longevity of the relationship and pointed to the 'more than a thousand years of history' shared between the nations.[72] This argument utilised the idea of a 'national essence'. According to Sturgeon, the essences of Ireland and of Scotland were connected because of their shared history. Of particular significance was Sturgeon's use of the word 'always' when referring to the connection between the two countries. This word indicated

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[70] External Affairs Directorate, 'Scotland', 9.
[71] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Speech: First Minister Address to Seanad, Leinster House, Dublin', *Scottish Government,* 29 November 2016, https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-minister-address-to-seanad / (accessed 1/3/2021).
[72] Sturgeon, 'First Minister Address to Seanad'.

that this 'essence' was perceived as timeless and continuous by Sturgeon. This is an integral part of narrating the story of a nation according to Hall.[73] Although, in this example, Sturgeon was not describing a national essence, but a friendship between two nations.

These general references to the connection between Ireland and Scotland were evident in many SNP speeches during the post-Brexit period, including Sturgeon's address of 5 October 2017 to the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Most of the historical accounts in this speech were specific to Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement. However, Sturgeon did note the 'geographical proximity, [as well as the] historic and cultural ties' between Scotland and Ireland.[74] Additionally, Sturgeon acknowledged Scotland and Ireland's shared experiences of emigration. She argued that 'much of the modern history of both Scotland and Ireland has been shaped by our experiences of emigration beyond these islands'.[75] This aspect of her argument also related the underlying spirits of the two nations. Sturgeon argued:

> There are two points […] that I want to make today about our shared history and experiences. Europe, now, is facing its greatest refugee crisis since the end of World War II. Scotland and Ireland both know that, in other times and in very different circumstances, the peoples of our nations were also driven by the instinct for self-preservation and the desire for a better life to seek a future far away from the lands of their birth.[76]

Here, Sturgeon argued that Scotland and Ireland were connected by their experiences of suffering, which led to a culture of compassion. Sturgeon surmised that 'Given our own

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[73] Hall, 'Question of Cultural Identity'*,* 614.
[74] Nicola Sturgeon, 'First Minister's Speech at Dublin Chamber of Commerce', *Scottish Government,* 5 October 2017, https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-speech-dublin-chamber-of-commerce/ (accessed 1/3/2021).
[75] Sturgeon, 'First Minister's Speech at Dublin Chamber of Commerce'.
[76] Sturgeon, 'First Minister Address to Seanad'.

national experiences, for Scotland and Ireland to turn away from this crisis wouldn't simply be a failure of compassion, it would be a denial of our own identity.'[77] Sturgeon thereby connected historical experience with identity politics. She linked the Scottish and Irish identities to their individual experiences of suffering at the hands of the ruling class.

The strong connections between the two nations were also explored in a joint op-ed penned by SNP Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (2009-2020), and MSP for Linlithgow (2011-present), Fiona Hyslop and her Irish colleague, Simon Coveney, that was published jointly in *The Examiner* and *The Scotsman* on 1 November 2019. The article explored the historic Celtic roots of the nations as well as their contemporary connections. In particular, it highlighted two neolithic sites: Newgrange, in Ireland, and Maeshowe, in Scotland, which are testament to the cultural similarities between Ireland and the Orkney Islands.[78] These sites are thousands of years old and were used by Hyslop and Coveney to convey the length of the connection between the islands.

The depiction of the historic relationship between Ireland and Scotland was used to convey a vital part of Hall's theory, the emphasis on origins, continuity, and timelessness. This aspect was emphasised both through language choices, but also through a series of events which depict a longstanding and long-lasting relationship between the two nations.

France

The inclusion of France in the narrative of Scotland's historical connection to Europe was missing from the previous three campaigns. However, its inclusion in the discourse following Brexit was unsurprising. Scotland's relationship with France is both a prominent feature of Scottish historiography, but also pivotal to Scottish-English relations in the Middle Ages.

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[77] Sturgeon, 'First Minister Address to Seanad'.
[78] Simon Coveney & Fiona Hyslop, 'Strategic Review of Irish Scottish Relations', *Government of Ireland,* 1 November 2019, https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/our-work/casestudiesarchive/2019/november/strategic-review-of-irish-scottish-relations.php (accessed 28/10/2022).

At the Foreign Affairs Committee held at the French National Assembly on 19 February 2019, Sturgeon addressed the long-standing alliance between the two countries. In her speech, Sturgeon discussed the opening of the French Consulate in Scotland:

> It was opened by General de Gaulle in 1942. A quote from General de Gaulle's speech on that occasion is inscribed on the outside wall of the Consul-General's residence in Edinburgh—it says simply 'the oldest alliance in the world'. That of course reflects the fact that our countries enjoy ties of trade, commerce and friendship which go back more than seven hundred years.[79]

The alliance Sturgeon mentioned was the 'Auld Alliance', which joined the two nations in the late thirteenth century. Although Sturgeon did not refer to the alliance by name in her speech, its historical significance made it implicit. However, the alliance was mentioned by name in the Scottish Government publication *Scotland: A European Nation*.[80]

Additionally, Sturgeon's use of General de Gaulle's words was an appeal to the emotional connection of the French people to a unifying figure. In the French national narrative, de Gaulle is constructed as a national hero who led the Free French movement during World War II. This thesis has explored the role of national heroes in national narratives, but this example differs substantially. In the Scottish context, de Gaulle is insignificant. This suggests that Sturgeon's invocation of his name was an appeal to French nationalism for the benefit of her party's political cause. In addition to de Gaulle's significance as a patriotic figure for the French, he was famously connected to Quebecois nationalism. One of the most controversial events in de Gaulle's career was when he proudly proclaimed 'Vive le Québec

[79] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Speech: Foreign Affairs Committee, French National Assembly', *Scottish Government,* 19 February 2019, https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-speech-at-french-national-assembly/ (accessed 1/1/2021).
[80] External Affairs Directorate, 'Scotland', 9.

libre' or 'Long live *free* Québec' when visiting the Canadian province in 1967.[81] Although de Gaulle's support of Québecois nationalism does not equate with support of Scottish nationalism, the cases are frequently connected.[82] It is likely that Sturgeon knew this when she delivered her speech and was invoking de Gaulle's support for the Québecois cause to encourage support for her own. Furthermore, Sturgeon's acknowledgment of the alliance between Scotland and France as 'the oldest alliance in the world' contradicted the dominant unionist argument which focused on the longevity of the union between Scotland and England.

Scandinavia

Ireland and France were given individual attention, but Scandinavia was mostly addressed as a single unit. Scotland's links to Iceland and Norway were given the most attention. Significantly, neither Iceland or Norway are members of the EU, but Scotland has a stronger connection to these nations than to Sweden and Denmark, which are EU countries. This is important because, if Scotland had stronger historical ties to Sweden or Denmark, these would have been highlighted in the discourse because they are more relevant to Scotland joining the EU.

The Icelandic Sagas were used by Sturgeon and Hyslop on multiple occasions to denote the deep historic and cultural ties between Scotland and Iceland. In her 2016 speech at the Arctic Circle Assembly, Sturgeon noted that 'the early history of the Orkney Islands, in the north of Scotland, was chronicled in the Icelandic sagas more than 800 years ago'.[83] This

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[81] CBC, 'Vive le Québec libre!' *CBC Digital Archives,* 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20120501220930/http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/language-culture/language-culture-general/vive-le-quebec-libre.html (accessed 6/4/2021).

[82] **SEE:** Ailsa Henderson, *Hierarchies of Belonging: National Identity and Political Culture in Scotland and Quebec* (Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland* (New York: Macmillan, 1996); James Kennedy, *Liberal Nationalisms Empire, State, and Civil Society in Scotland and Quebec* (Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

[83] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Speech: Arctic Circle Assembly, Reykjavik, *Scottish Government,* 7 October 2016, https://www.gov.scot/publications/arctic-circle-assembly-2016-fm-speech/ (accessed 1/3/2021).

narrative was repeated by Sturgeon at the Arctic Circle Forum in 2017. She claimed: 'We share ties of history, friendship and culture which in many cases go back centuries. For example, the Icelandic sages of the 13th century chronicle the early history of our Orkney Islands'.[84] In her speech of October 2018 to the Arctic Circle Assembly, Hyslop referenced the 'cross fertilisation [of Scottish and Norse] arts and culture, for example the Orkneyinga saga, from the thirteenth century captured the history of the Norse earls of Orkney during the preceding centuries'.[85] References to the Icelandic Sagas and their connection to the Scottish Isle of Orkney were frequent and comparable across multiple speeches delivered by different members of the SNP. This suggests that this plot point was highlighted as significant to the campaign.

A different approach was taken by Hyslop in October 2018. Although the previous examples were all historical narratives, Hyslop examined the Viking connections to Scotland from a scientific perspective. Her speech utilized a scientific study which examined the links between national groups at the level of genetics:

Scotland's social and cultural ties with Iceland and the Arctic date back hundreds of years. Indeed as a recent University of Iceland DNA mapping study has revealed although male mitochondria DNA of settlers to Iceland were Norse, 62% of female DNA was from Scottish and Irish women taken en route to Iceland.[86]

Although this reference noted the volatile nature of the past relationship between the British Isles and Scandinavia, it also showed the deep connection Scotland has to Iceland.

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[84] Nicola Sturgeon, 'Arctic Circle Forum Scotland: Speech', *Scottish Government,* 21 November 2017, https://www.gov.scot/publications/arctic-circle-forum-scotland-speech/ (accessed 9/3/2021).
[85] Fiona Hyslop, 'Speech: Arctic Circle Assembly, Reykjavik', *Scottish Government,* October 2018, https://www.gov.scot/publications/arctic-circle-assembly-2018-ministers-speech/ (accessed 1/3/2021).
[86] Hyslop, 'Speech: Arctic Circle Assembly'.

The Orkneyinga Saga and Viking DNA were used to illustrate the lengthy relationship between the peoples of Scotland and Scandinavia, but they were only part of the discourse. The more recent cooperation between the nations during World War II was also noted. Sturgeon, in her speech of November 2017 to the Arctic Forum, noted the support shared between Scotland and Norway during the war years. During the German occupation of Norway, Scotland served as the base for the Free Norwegian Army Units. Sturgeon noted this in her speech:

Last night saw the lighting of Edinburgh's Christmas Tree. The tree is a gift from the community of Hordaland, in Norway. It recognises the fact that during the Second World War, Free Norwegian Army Units found a home here in Scotland.[87]

Further reference to the war was made by Hyslop in her September 2019 speech on Arctic Connections. In this speech, she noted the Scottish convoys which:

transported food and other crucial supplies to the North and Russia during World War II. Similarly, the Shetland bus ferried agents, refugees, ammunition and radios between Shetland and German-occupied Norway.[88]

This quotation is significant because it indicated that not only does Scotland share a centuries-long history with the Nordic region, but this relationship has remained important to all parties.

The SNP narrative underwent the most substantial development between the Independence and Brexit Referenda. Although narratives pertaining to the significance of

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[87] Sturgeon, 'Arctic Circle Forum Scotland'.
[88] Fiona Hyslop, 'Speech: Arctic connections: Scotland's arctic policy framework', *Scottish Government,* 24 September 2019, https://www.gov.scot/publications/arctic-connections-scotlands-arctic-policy-framework-2/ (accessed 1/3/2021).

Europe already existed, they radically developed over a short period. Some narrative strands did persist, for example those that related to the Declaration of Arbroath. However, their framing continued to be refined. Additionally, the SNP strand was the most reliant on the common features of national narratives. In particular, the strand relied upon a construction of Scottish victimhood, timelessness and continuity, a distinct national essence, and national heroes.

Conclusion

Within the context of Bell's theory, the Scottish mythscape underwent further evolution between the Independence and Brexit Referenda. During the Independence Referendum there was an almost singular narrative to which all parties conformed. But, after the Brexit Referendum the strands had evolved in two distinct ways.

The Unionist narrative became narrower, with fewer events featured. The narrowing of the Unionist narrative can be explained by changes to the overall messages of the campaigns. During the Independence Referendum of 2014, the singular message of the Unionist campaign was that Scotland is distinct and that Scottish distinctiveness is protected by the Union. This message was developed in response to the pro-independence message that Scottish distinctiveness is threatened by the undemocratic union. This is clear by the focus on the preservation of Scottish institutions and the contributions of Enlightenment figures in the Unionist discourse. Both sides, however, based their narratives around the theme that Scotland has a distinct national history and national identity.

Following the Brexit result, the campaign for Scottish independence was no longer focused on Scotland within the UK. The pro-independence parties subsequently shifted their focus to the origins of the EU and Scotland's historic relationship with its European neighbours, Ireland, France, and Scandinavia. This meant that, in order to counter the arguments being

made for independence, Unionist narrators had to reframe their position. Narratives emerged which focused on the harmony and peace provided by the Union, the accomplishments of the Enlightenment, and the unity shown during the world wars.

Although there were slight variations between the strands of the Unionist narrative, the strands converged more than the independence strands. The Greens and SNP agreed that Scotland would benefit from independence from the UK, but their narratives were quite different. This is likely because there were substantially more events which could be framed in support of independence or, more accurately, in support of continued relations between Scotland and other European nations. The Unionist parties were restricted to events which either presented Scotland's relationship to the UK or the benefits of the Union positively.

The Independence Referendum of 2014 illustrated that almost all events which belong to the accepted narrative of Scottish history could be presented to support either side of the debate. For this reason, it is likely that the Unionist parties were more selective about which events they incorporated, in order to avoid counter-narratives that would contradict their arguments. Additionally, the SNP could be less selective about their Euro-centric narratives because the importance of maintaining good foreign relationships meant that they were less susceptible to counterattack. Although the Unionist parties had accepted the inevitability of leaving the EU following the Brexit debate, the relationships between Scotland and its foreign neighbours remained important.

Renewed discussion of Scottish independence fractured the Scottish political sphere which had been unified over Brexit. What emerged were three strands within the Scottish mythscape: the unionist strand, the Scottish-centric Greens' strand, and the Eurocentric SNP strand. None of these strands constitutes what Bell terms the 'governing myth' because all the events included in the different narratives are part of the accepted narrative of Scottish history. For this reason, it can be concluded that the Scottish mythscape following the Brexit

referendum of 2016 in some ways conformed to and in other ways defied Bell's conception of the Mythscape.

Conclusion

A mythscape is described by Duncan Bell as the discursive sphere within which narratives of a nation's past compete for dominance. This was evident in the Scottish political discourse during the 1979 and 1997 Devolution Referenda, the 2014 Independence Referendum, and following the 2016 Brexit Referendum. Within Bell's conception of the mythscape there are typically governing and subaltern myths, which exhibit particular behaviours based on their position within the mythscape. It is this part of Bell's theory that cannot be easily applied to Scotland. While this thesis has shown that the common tropes of both governing and subaltern narratives are present in the Scottish mythscape, competing strands cannot be categorised using these criteria alone.

Bell also argues that the mythscape is in constant evolution. In particular, he notes that this evolution sometimes results in subaltern strands becoming the governing strand by discrediting the arguments of the previously governing strand. Although this thesis has shown the rapid evolution of the competing strands of the Scottish mythscape, at no point during the referenda of 1979, 1997, 2014, or 2016 was there a clear dominant strand. It is therefore impossible to view the power dynamics of the Scottish mythscape as a battle between governing and subaltern myths. Additionally, during the 2014 referendum, all the strands of the Scottish mythscape adhered to an overarching narrative of Scottish history.

The complicated nature of the Scottish mythscape could potentially be a result of the complex political space that Scotland occupies. Until 1998, Scotland was a nation within a subnational entity without its own government. This undoubtably impacted the memory agendas used by both supporters and critics of this system. The discourse of the mid-1970s was focused on the issue of Scottish distinctiveness and the place of Scotland within the UK. However, by the time of the referendum of 1979, the discourse was not focused on these issues

in a historical sense. Instead, it focused on these considerations from a material or civic perspective. The political developments of the 1980s and 1990s, namely the consecutive Conservative governments, led to dissatisfaction within Scotland and UK politics more generally. These developments resulted in renewed political and popular support for devolution. The increase in support for devolution across the board (barring the Conservative Party) meant that the debate was mainly focused on material concerns, not identity politics.

Following the creation of the Scottish parliament, the main actors in the Scottish mythscape were parties from the Scottish political sphere. Within Scottish politics, the main competition was between the pro-independence SNP and the unionist Labour Party. Despite the political division over the issue of independence, by 2014, the political parties were in agreement about the main events in the Scottish historical narrative, although they interpreted them differently. The dramatic changes to the Scottish historical narrative which followed the Brexit result were likely the result of political upheaval. Although independence was still the goal for nationalists, devolution had been successful at mitigating existing tensions. Prior to 2016, the Scottish and UK parliaments had co-existed in relative harmony with few disputes over the sharing of power. However, the Brexit result illustrated that Scotland was not on equal political footing with its larger neighbour, despite devolution. This revelation led to a divergence in the narrative of the Scottish past with Unionists continuing to develop narratives articulated previously, whereas new narratives were constructed by pro-independence parties.

This thesis had a limited scope. This means that there are some gaps within the thesis, especially related to the period between the first and second devolution referenda. It would have been beneficial to examine the transition from identity to material concerns in more detail and pinpoint how and why this occurred. However, this was not possible because this thesis is specifically focused on referenda. Regarding the later referenda, it would be particularly interesting to investigate the role that social networks played in the development of narrative

strands. This is because social media provides a platform for the general public to interact with the narratives articulated by political actors. This means that political parties and campaigns can rapidly assess the reception of their narratives and develop their narratives in relation to this response. This would, perhaps, clarify why the campaign of 2014 was focused on a singular narrative of Scottish history, and additionally why the narratives after 2016 evolved in the way that they did.

This thesis has shown that the irregular behaviour of Scottish nationalism does extend into memory politics. Additionally, this thesis has shown that the evolution of the Scottish mythscape, just like the evolution of Scottish nationalism more generally, refuses to align itself with theoretical conceptions.

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