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# Degrees of Independence: SNP Thinking in an International Context

## Degrees of independence: SNP demands in an international context

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### Introduction

Independence is something of a minority preference amongst nationalist parties in Europe and beyond. Far from demanding sovereign statehood and a complete separation of powers from the host state, the vast majority of nationalist parties have opted for creative forms of shared sovereignty within larger state and supranational structures. This makes the Scottish National Party's constitutional goals quite distinctive within the nationalist party family (Lynch 1996; De Winter and Türsan 1998; Hepburn 2009a). For the SNP, independence is the only way to make Scotland a 'normal nation' (SNP 2009). Yet the SNP have refrained from advocating a nineteenth-century notion of statehood, based on the doctrine of indivisible, unitary internal sovereignty. Nor has the SNP been dogmatically committed to only one form of self-government for Scotland. Rather, the SNP since its inception has supported *degrees* of independence for Scotland within various larger political frameworks, including dominion status within the British Empire, self-government within a confederal British Isles, and independence in an integrating Europe. The SNP has regularly revised its understanding of independence, and its goals for achieving this, in response to changing processes of spatial rescaling at the state, supranational and international levels. This fluid understanding of independence has been important in enabling the SNP to exploit opportunities resulting from state restructuring. Moreover, the SNP's support for varying degrees of independence has allowed it to endear itself to a Scottish electorate that is generally unfavourable to separation from the UK (McCrone 2009).

This chapter will consider how the SNP has interpreted the meaning of independence over the years. The first part begins with an examination of the SNP's early demands for self-government, before exploring in depth the idea of 'independence in Europe' (which became official party policy in 1988). In particular, it considers the paradox that although European integration has offered the SNP an external framework for supporting Scottish sovereignty, it has also undermined that very sovereignty by concentrating certain powers at the supranational level. The second section considers how the existence of a devolved Scottish Parliament has altered the context for pursuing independence, whereby the SNP's strategies have shifted to support for 'softer' forms of independence and 'devolution-max'. Following this, the SNP's understanding of independence is placed in an international context, through comparison with nationalist party demands in Wales, Catalonia, Quebec, and Sardinia. Finally, the concluding section reflects on how the meaning of independence has been irrevocably changed in a postsovereign world, considering the challenges small nations face from (in particular, economic) globalisation.

### Changing notions of Scottish self-government

The Scottish National Party, which was established in 1934, is one of the oldest existing nationalist parties in the world, and it support for independence is very much of an historic nature. However, independence has not always been the main demand of the SNP. In its early years, the SNP's constitutional goals were of a vague and

underdeveloped nature, lying 'somewhere between devolution and independence within the Empire' (Lynch 2002: 10). This to an extent reflected the uneasy confluence of demands for Scottish self-government during the party's formation. The merger of the pro-independence National Party of Scotland and the pro-Home Rule Scottish Party to form the SNP forced a compromise on the constitutional question. The end result satisfied neither party, and produced a fault line that would plague the SNP for decades to come, between those members wishing to remain within the UK and those wishing to leave it. The newly formed SNP's goals were to establish a Scottish Parliament within the UK, whereby 'Scotland shall share with England the rights and responsibilities they, as mother nations, have jointly created and incurred within the British Empire' (Finlay 1994: 153). A partnership of 'mother nations' would include joint machinery to deal with foreign policy, defence and the creation of a customs union (which the SNP would later propose sharing within Europe). Clearly, the SNP's first constitutional aims were marked by interdependence with, rather than independence from, England within the larger ambit of the British Empire.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, the divisions between 'independentist' and 'home rule' factions became more sharpened, and the home rulers left the SNP to set up their own rival political organisation in 1942. The Scottish Convention (and later the Scottish Covenant Association), headed by John MacCormick, sought to build a cross-party consensus as well as mass popular support for Scottish devolution. The departure of MacCormick's group allowed the SNP to develop a clearer position on the constitutional question. In 1943, the party re-wrote its constitution to focus on 'the restoration of Scottish national sovereignty, by the establishment of a democratic Scottish government, whose authority will be limited only by such agreements as well be freely entered into with other nations' (cited in Lynch 2002: 58). In the following decades, the SNP would develop a much stronger commitment to separating Scotland from the UK and establishing it as an independent sovereign state with full powers over its affairs. But even then, there were still 'unifying' aspects of the party's independence line. In particular, Scotland was to remain a member of the Commonwealth, and the Queen would continue to be the (unelected) Head of State for Scotland. Moreover, the SNP was never able to completely purge itself of pro-devolution sentiment. Some party members continued to support greater powers for Scotland within the UK, and with the demise of the Scottish Covenant Association (SCA) and the death of MacCormick in 1961, the arrival of new SCA members into the party further diversified the SNP's base and consolidated the home rule and independence wings of the party (Brand 1978). These days, this is referred to as the division between 'fundamentalists' and 'gradualists'. The former see independence as a zero-sum game, whilst the latter see sovereign statehood arriving in stages.

In the following decades, the SNP's position on independence was fundamentally altered by two processes of state restructuring. The first of these was the possibility of gaining devolution for Scotland in the 1970s. In response to the rise of the SNP and Plaid Cymru, the Labour Governments of 1974-79 sought to implement devolutionary measures for Scotland and Wales. Although the SNP believed that Labour's plans did not go far enough to satisfy demands for self-government, it did offer tentative support for the Scotland and Wales Bill 1977 in the House of Commons. But the party's campaign on the streets was of a more fundamentalist nature. The SNP demanded 'Independence Nothing Less' in an attempt to reassure grass-roots supporters that it hadn't abandoned its ultimate goal. Support for devolution also had important policy implications for the party. At its

annual conference in 1976, 58% of SNP members voted to accept an Assembly with limited powers. Lynch (2002: 148) describes the outcome as 'a classic gradualist-fundamentalist compromise over devolution'. Yet whilst the SNP became active in a 'Yes' campaign for a Scottish Assembly, it refused to join a cross-party umbrella group with Labour and Scotland's other parties. Such divisions within the 'Yes' camp did not bode well for a favourable vote for a Scottish Assembly and the referendum failed. SNP Leader Gordon Wilson blamed the poor result on 'the indecisive collective direction of the party, which has wandered in only two years from full-blooded independence to an obsession with devolution' (Wilson 1979; cited in Lynch 2002: 156). In the aftermath of 1979, the SNP moved once more to a more fundamentalist position.

   During the same period, debates on UK membership of the European Economic Community forced a re-evaluation of the SNP's goal of independence. The SNP was during the post-war era highly suspicious of European integration. The EEC was viewed as centralist and elitist, and it was unclear how Scottish interests would be represented if the EC operated on an inter-governmental basis – with the UK Government taking important decisions over Scottish affairs. During the referendum on continued British membership of the EEC in 1975, the SNP argued that UK membership of the European Community conflicted with the 1707 Treaty of Union and campaigned on the theme 'No voice, no entry' (Lynch 1996: 31). However, it misjudged the mood of the public, and with a turnout of 61.7%, Scotland voted 'Yes' by 58.4%. The referendum result forced the SNP to re-think its attitude towards the EEC and from 1979, the SNP's first elected representative in the European Parliament, Winnie Ewing, 'imported a more positive European dimension into the party' (Lynch 1996: 37). The SNP also began arguing for a stronger role for Scotland in Europe, and with the enlistment of Jim Sillars, a former Labour politician, the SNP began to develop positive linkages between EEC membership and Scottish self-government (Lynch 1996; Hepburn 2006).

**Independence in an integrating Europe**
The SNP adopted a policy of 'independence in Europe' in 1988 in response to accusations of trying to 'divorce' Scotland from the rest of the UK. The justifications for this policy appeared to be largely pragmatic: not only would the European context provide an external political support system for a small country such as Scotland, but also an economic one, by removing the threat of economic dislocation from England through the European common market, and providing potential security safeguards without the need to join organisations such as NATO. The SNP became an avid supporter of economic and monetary integration, and high-ranking members of the Party, such as Roseanna Cunningham, indicated that the SNP would be happy to grant the EU powers over defence and foreign policy.[1] Membership of the EU therefore appears to lessen many of the transition costs of independence through access to the common market, structural funds for underperforming areas, and a ready-made institutional system in which small states have a disproportionate voice. As former party leader Gordon Wilson stated, 'within the common trading umbrella, the move to independence can take place smoothly and easily' (cited in Lynch 2002: 6). Support for such integrationist measures, however, raise questions about how independent Scotland would actually be as a full EU member state, and to what extent

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[1] Interview with Roseanna Cunningham, former Deputy Leader of the SNP, 14 January 2004.

independence would actually give Scotland the territorial capacity to manage processes of social and economic change, given that economic and social policy in European member states is now largely impinged upon by EU regulations.

There has been significant contestation within the SNP about how the goal of independence in Europe should be achieved, and what kind of Europe the SNP would like to see being developed. For instance, when the policy was adopted in the late 1980s, there was ambiguity as to whether the Party supported centralisation or decentralisation, or federalism versus confederalism in the EU. Those within the 'supranationalist' camp advocated closer European unification, in which a central authority would have control over foreign policy, defence and a single currency. Contrarily, those who positioned themselves within the intergovernmentalist camp argued for the primacy of states, whereby powers would only be transferred to the EU if the members states so decided. Alan Macartney MEP (1990) made an attempt to clarify where the SNP stood in these issues. He argued that the goal would entail the creation of a European confederation, that is, an association of member states which pool sovereignty in certain areas but do not surrender total control to an authoritative body. This would allow Scotland to exert equal influence over decision-making as other small member states. This view is reflected in *Scotland – A European Nation* (SNP 1992: 5), where it is stated that 'many decisions affecting the lives of every European will continue to be taken in Brussels. And…those decisions will be reached by representatives of independent member states in the Council of Ministers'.

However, despite aiming for a confederal Europe with power concentrated at the member-state level in the Council of Ministers, the SNP also became active in debates about the regionalisation of Europe. For instance, it favoured the creation of a Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 1993, an issue which split the party when SNP leaders made a secret 'deal' with the Conservative government to win more seats on the Committee for Scotland (*The Scotsman*, 9 April 1993). The SNP was also supportive of the establishment of Scotland House, the creation of a Scottish Minister for European and External Affairs, the development of stronger links between the Scottish Parliament and other substate governments in Europe, and has talked at length about the need to implement the principles of 'subsidiarity' within the EU's member states. Since taking office in 2007, the SNP has furthermore argued that Scottish Ministers in the devolved Parliament should be given the right to participate in the EU Council of Ministers' meetings, and to take the lead in UK delegations on matters of relevance to Scotland. This strategy represents the triumph of the 'gradualist' wing over the fundamentalists. By seeking to gradually expand the powers of the Scottish Parliament, in particular in its European relations, the SNP has realized how much a devolved parliament could do in Europe – something that other nationalist parties in Europe have long played towards. But SNP demands for a stronger Scottish presence in Europe also put into question the fundamentalist position of how much sovereignty the SNP really wants for Scotland. In particular, gaining Scottish representation on the Council of Ministers (albeit through the UK delegation) would arguably meet one of the main aims of independence in Europe.

So what could an independent Scotland in Europe actually do? Keating (2002) argues that the three main functions that Scotland would seek to repatriate from Westminster (defence and foreign affairs, fiscal and monetary policy and social security) would be highly constrained by European integration, globalisation and ties to the rest of the UK. On defence and foreign affairs, an independent Scotland would not be able to defend itself from foreign attack, and would rely on a future European

defence and security system (given the party's hostility to joining NATO). However, as a small member state in the EU, it may not have much control over the direction of security policy. On fiscal and monetary affairs, there is a risk that Scotland becomes too dependent on oil revenues (which is dangerous given volatile prices), or international markets (so Scotland would be fearful of doing anything to detract investors). The SNP also proposes to give up an independent currency in favour of the European currency (Euro), though it would be vulnerable to fluctuations in the pound if the rest of the UK does not join. And on social security, an independent Scotland would no longer be able to pool economic shocks resulting from recession with the UK, though it could use social integration to adapt to change, as the Nordic countries have done (Keating 2002: 292).

From a different perspective, the SNP's principled support for integrationist measures, such as the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the process of Eastern enlargement, have masked a subtle protectionist edge to SNP discourse. Since the early 2000s, the SNP has taken a strong stand on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and has even threatened at times to opt out of these policies altogether in order to protect Scotland's fishing and agricultural sectors. This indicates that the SNP is unsure whether certain integrationist measures actually benefit Scotland's interests, or whether they may even threaten Scotland. For instance, the SNP has argued that although it supported the European currency, it also held a 'rigorously critical view of excessive Euro-enthusiasm, and creeping integrationism. We have a robust view of the need to set clear limits to what can properly be done at the all-Europe level and what must be retained by the states and their regions in accordance with subsidiarity' (SNP 2001: 1-2). Therefore, a number of contradictions exist within the SNP's policy programme, whose support of further European integration in matters of monetary and economic policy, defence and security, sits awkwardly with the party's demands for an intergovernmental Europe with power residing among the states. As Keating (2002: 294) sums up, 'independence in Europe involves swapping classic sovereignty for influence within a complex system of decision-making'. The EU is not only an association of states; it can also be seen a normative order that profoundly affects the sovereignty of its members, undermining its claim to claim a monopoly of authority over its territory, and eroded its functional powers (MacCormick 1999; Keating 2002). In the context of closer European integration, many important legislative decisions regarding defence, security and monetary policy are being increasingly centralised at the European level, leaving both independent and devolved parliaments with the same competences over social policy. This means that the difference between devolution and independence is not quite as clear-cut as the SNP (and Labour) suggests.

**Devolution and Degrees of Independence**
In many ways, devolution has benefited the Scottish National Party by giving it a new platform for its demands. Cross-national evidence demonstrates that nationalist parties perform better in regional than statewide elections, and the SNP is no exception as we saw in May 2007. When taking office in Holyrood, one of the SNP's first actions was to publish a white paper setting out Scotland's constitutional options in August 2007, entitled *Choosing Scotland's Future* and to launch a consultative 'national conversation' on these options. As party of government, the SNP is in a position to influence public opinion on the merits of independence, and has a range of mechanisms at its disposal to do so. Furthermore, with a range of new institutions

including a Scottish Government and a Scottish Parliament, devolution has *de facto* lowered the institutional barriers to independence.

However, devolution has also created new barriers to independence. In the additional-member system (AMS) electoral system of the Scottish Parliament, governments will most likely be of a minority or a coalition nature. The SNP was forced into the former scenario in May 2007, when the Liberal Democrats refused to enter a coalition. Minority government presents significant challenges for the party, requiring it to compromise on policy issues and seek consensus with others. It also means that the unionist opposition – which represents a majority in the Parliament – can veto any legislation to hold an independence referendum. Yet perhaps a greater problem is that devolution appears to have lessened popular demand for independence. Even though the SNP won the Scottish Parliament election in 2007, it was not on the back of popular demand for independence. Indeed, support for independence at that moment was 25% (less than half the support for devolution) (McCrone 2009: 93). So for the time being, it appears that devolution has managed to constrain demands for independence.

Furthermore, the transformation of the SNP from opposition movement to party of government does not come without its problems. Governing at the regional level puts any independence-seeking party in a difficult position. The SNP's main demand is for an independent Scotland, but at the same time it must demonstrate that it can effectively implement its policies in a devolved Scotland in order to win the next election. To do so, the SNP has sought to downplay its main goal by delivering independence 'by stealth'. This means seeking to gradually build upon the 1998 devolved settlement to the point where independence seems the next natural step. This strategy of accelerationism might allow the party to make more 'constitutional progress through arguing for 'more' independence for Scotland rather than absolute independence' (Lynch 2000: 253). Yet there is also the danger that expanding the powers of the Scottish Parliament (so many of the general aims of self-government are achieved), undermines the actual need for independence. In this context, independence and devolution would become increasingly difficult to distinguish.

Given low public support for independence, Lynch (2005: 511) argues that the SNP must either somehow convert voters to the merits of independence, or to offer a new constitutional option, like the *Parti Québécois* did in the 1995 referendum on Quebec's 'sovereignty-partnership' with Canada. The SNP has opted for the latter strategy, by demanding more powers for the Scottish Parliament (especially on Europe), fiscal autonomy and 'devolution max'. On the first issue, the SNP has advocated the expansion of the Scottish Parliament's powers on European matters, as well granting the Executive a representative role in European institutions on a par with the German Länder or Belgian regions. Furthermore, the party wishes to expand the Scottish Parliament's control and influence over areas like energy, welfare, transport, defence and immigration – powers that are currently exercised by Westminster, but which the SNP believes a devolved Scotland should have. On the issue of fiscal autonomy, the SNP has proposed gaining the right to set tax rates, define tax bases and raise the money that the Parliament spends through borrowing. This would improve the devolved Parliament's accountability to the electorate, and the responsibility of MSPs by forcing more discipline into spending decisions.

In 2008, the SNP repackaged these proposals as 'devolution-max'. At the time, Finance Secretary John Swinney declared that he was to consider a watered-down form of independence, whereby full financial powers would be devolved to

Scotland, giving the parliament control over everything except monetary policy. Cynics might argue that that this strategy was only to gain Liberal Democratic or Conservative support for an independence referendum, to pass the legislation through the Scottish Parliament.[2] Others could reason that the SNP was merely responding to public opinion, whereby the majority of support was for increased powers for the Scottish Parliament and not independence (McCrone 2009). But another argument could also be made that devolution-max represented a 'softer' form of independence that recognized the extensive interdependencies between Scotland and the rest of the UK and Europe, which was part of a long tradition of SNP accommodation of various forms of shared sovereignty in its constitutional goals.

Recently, the SNP has highlighted its commitment to continuing partnership with England and other parts of the UK were Scotland to secede. SNP Minister Bruce Crawford speaks of a 'Kingdom of United Countries' of the British Isles, whereby it is necessary for 'governments across the UK and Europe to work together to face today's problems'.[3] This reiterates SNP leader Alex Salmond's proposal to create a 'Council of the Isles' with joint decision-making machinery that brings Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Northern Ireland together to discuss issues of relevance (see Wright's contribution to this book). It is clear that, owing to the deep unpopularity of the EU following the failed draft Constitution, the SNP has focussed once again on the 'UK partnership' dimension of its self-determination claims rather than the European dimension. This is noticeable in its paper *Choosing Scotland's Future* (Scottish Executive 2007). The SNP highlight the extensive linkages and interdependencies between Scotland and the rest of the UK, including cross-border public services, policy initiatives and the unifying presence of the British monarchy. This softer position on independence may be indicate that party members are following in the footsteps of the late Neil MacCormick MEP (son of John MacCormick) – an 'unrepentant gradualist' – in accepting more flexible interpretations of independence. As MacCormick (1999) argued: 'independence, freedom, sovereignty. All names, all labels. The SNP is part of a long, wide movement for self-government, autonomy. Now that in my definition would mean autonomy in whatever overall context of governance is sensible, constructive, forward-looking and also expressive of solidarity'.

**SNP demands in an international context**
Whilst the SNP has focussed its constitutional demands on independence, nationalist parties elsewhere have tended to seek unique forms of autonomy within state and supranational structures that fall short of full sovereign statehood. With the exception of the independence platforms of the ETA-associated *Herri Batasuna* and left-wing *Eusko Alkartasuna*, most nationalist parties have repeatedly rejected outright independence in response to the changing opportunities for self-determination resulting from globalisation and supranational integration. The *Union Démocratique Bretonne* (UDB) in Breton, the *Unione di u Popule Corsu* (UPC) in Corsica, the *Union Valdotaine* in Val d'Aosta, and the *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* (BNG) in

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[2] This argument was made in the Scottish media. See http://www.theherald.co.uk/politics/news/display.var.2491536.0.Swinney_pushes_devolution_max_as_the_best_way_forward.php [accessed 10 May 2009]
[3] Bruce Crawford, Scottish Minister for Parliamentary Business, Keynote Speech to the conference on 'Ten Years of the Scottish Parliament: Achievements and Futures', Edinburgh, 12 May 2009.

Galicia have all developed autonomy goals that amount to something less than secession, where state sovereignty is no longer the issue.

To take some relevant examples, the Convergence and Union Party (CiU) in Catalonia does not believe that Catalonia must be independent to be self-determining. Instead, it frames Catalan nationalism within the Spanish and European contexts, emphasising the linkages and interdependencies that Catalan can take advantage of by operating in multiple spheres of influence. The CiU believes that Catalan nationalism has prospered with its integration into Europe, and to that end it is an avid supporter of a Europe of the Regions. Likewise, the constitutional aims of the nationalist Sardinian Action Party (Psd'Az) are more subtle than simply demanding independence (Hepburn 2009b). The party wishes to construct a federal Italy as part of a federalised Europe, in which Sardinia can exercise maximum autonomy. It supports the creation of a 'European Federation of the Peoples', in which the Italian federal state would have limited competences over currency, justice and defence, and the regions and nations would be responsible for everything else (Psd'Az 2003). But sooner or later the Psd'Az claims that these powers over defence, justice and monetary policy will be transferred to the European level in a federalising structure, so the Italian state is rendered obsolete and the regions obtain primary status in Europe. As a result, Sardinia would be freed of its ties to the Italian state without formally separating from it. Similarly, Plaid Cymru has also rejected full independence for Wales in an integrating Europe. Instead, the party has sought to secure Welsh self-determination first within a Britannic Confederation and then within a Europe of the Peoples. In each of the manifestations of Welsh nationalism, the 'principled rejection of sovereign statehood continued to inform Plaid Cymru's long-term constitutional thinking' (Elias 2009). Finally, what many scholars would argue is the closest comparator to the SNP, the *Parti Québécois*, has also taken heed of the realities of economic and political interdependence in a globalising world, and its need to maintain formal links with the rest of Canada. The party moved from supporting a form of 'sovereignty-association' in 1980, to 'partnership with Canada' in 1995, to support for a 'confederal Union' with a common Quebec-Canadian parliament in 2003 (Sorens 2004). The party presented these linkages to Canada as a form of insurance policy against the risks of full independence. Moreover, it believed that institutionalised interdependence in the form of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would provide the necessary external support for an independent Quebec (Keating 2001). Clearly, the CiU, Psd'Az, Plaid Cymru, *Parti Québécois* and others have been able to successfully integrate the notions of shared sovereignty in an integrating Europe and a globalising world into their core constitutional objectives – a trend that the SNP has not fully incorporated into its self-determination goals, but not fully rejected either.

**Conclusion: Independence in a Post-Sovereign World**
The last few decades have witnessed enormous changes to the structure, competences, legislative framework, economy and political systems of states (Keating 2001; MacCormick 1999; Bartolini 2005). The twin processes of supranational integration and decentralisation have resulted in a far-reaching process of spatial rescaling. This transformation of the state has radically altered the meaning of independence, whereby the state is no longer the only source of ultimate authority (Keating 2001; Tierney 2005). Instead, scholars have begun to examine the implications of 'variegated' or shared sovereignty, whereby states are not so much independent as

'interdependent' (MacCormick 1999; Keating 2002; Walker 2002). This is part of the shift away from conventional understandings of sovereignty focused on the nation-state and the (consequent) re-discovery that sovereignty was never as fully focused on the nation-state as the conventions of postwar social science would have us think.

As a result, some scholars have asked why substate actors continue to demand independence when the very concept of state sovereignty is losing its meaning (Tierney 2005: 161). For instance, if we define sovereignty as consisting of 'a *plausible claim to ultimate authority* made on behalf of a particular polity' (Walker 2002: 345), how much sovereignty can a state in the EU now claim, when many of its competences have been shifted upwards? Tierney (2005) argues that in response to these developments, nationalist parties have developed a more nuanced approach, seeking complex constitutional arrangements within and beyond the state. Such aspirations are evident in the self-determination goals of nationalist parties in Catalonia, Quebec, Sardinia, Wales and elsewhere, who have not only responded to global interdependencies, but have further sought to radically transform the nature of the state itself. Seeking self-determination within larger political and economic structures is especially important if the territory possesses a small population and few resources, and its chances of 'survival', or being able to maintain pre-independence standards of living, seem small. This issue has become more pressing in the light of the current economic downturn, where small countries such as Iceland and Ireland have been rocked by collapsed banks and deep recession. Critics argued that an independent Scotland would not have been able to afford bailing out its two major financial institutions – the Royal Bank of Scotland and HBOS (Halifax Bank of Scotland). This puts the SNP's economic case for independence into question, despite the probability that if an independent Scotland were part of the Eurozone, it would have received financial help from European institutions. But this fact in itself serves to highlight the dependent nature of an independent Scotland on Europe.

Because of these issues, the SNP has been forced to revise its notions of absolute Scottish sovereignty. It has moved to supporting 'degrees of independence' for Scotland, which have been affected by considerations of state partnership, European integration and globalisation. This has been evident in its reformulation of the goal of independence in Europe, its emphasis on the gradual accumulation of powers within larger political structures, and its commitment to maintaining close economic, public services and symbolic ties to the UK. This move to an 'accelerationist' strategy places the SNP more firmly within the nationalist party family camp, which has predominantly sought to achieve self-determination within larger networks of decentred sovereignty. However, contradictions still remain within the SNP's interpretation of independence, in particular the implications of an integrating Europe. Whilst the SNP has expressed a principled commitment to European integration, in recent years it has articulated several reservations about the scope and direction of future integration. In particular, it has criticised the European agriculture and fisheries policy, threatened to oppose the draft Constitution in a national referendum, and opposed the encroachment of certain European regulations on current devolved competences and a future independent Scotland's powers (Hepburn 2008). One wonders: how feasible is independence in Europe, when the party does not support aspects of Europe? This is another tension in the party, alongside the gradualist-fundamentalist divide, that has historically plagued the party, and is set to continue to do so in the aftermath of the failed European Constitution and a notable rise in hostility to the European project amongst the British electorate.

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