Imagining Independence

An Ethnographic Study of Values and Actions in Scottish Nationalism and the Scottish Independence Movement

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Abstract

Based on an 8-month ethnographic fieldwork in Edinburgh, this thesis explores the relationship between ideas, values, actions and social practices in the Scottish independence movement, as a component part of Scottish nationalism. The recent proliferation and rejuvenation of Scottish nationalism has contributed to an emergence of a public discourse on Scottish sovereignty which manifested most tangibly in the referendum on Scottish independence in September 2014, but also greatly affected the outcome of the General Election the subsequent year. Advocating Scottish autonomy, the Scottish independence movement directly challenges the hegemony of the UK state by providing an alternative to the union of Scotland and England. The success of the independence movement is largely due to its dynamic interplay between values and actions. By invoking and evoking deeply-rooted egalitarian values in Scottish society, the Scottish independence movement, reproduces an image of and a perception of Scotland as more egalitarian than the rest of the UK. In this view, independence is connected to egalitarian values and a social democratic future, which provides a sense of hope to its participants. The aspirational aspects of the independence movement, I assess as a larger purpose that concerns political realties and engages people's aspirations and desires for a better society and future. A significant point, is that people's aspirations concern collective goods, and thus transcend the self-interest of the individual. I argue that the Scottish independence movement is first and foremost a public, social and collective movement that aims at transforming the society for the benefit of the public. Performed by a myriad of different social practices, people's efforts towards social change and transformation, is hence intimately connected to their values, views, aspirations and desires. The valuable lessons we may draw from the Scottish independence movement, is that people are deeply concerned with the notion of the good life, and as such are both able and willing to act in favour of what they perceive as the common good. Ordinary people's ability to directly influence and change their societies, is an insight which is increasingly important to acknowledge. People involved in the Scottish independence movement thus demonstrate that once hope is prevalent, people directly and actively strive to better their worlds by concrete social practices. The Scottish independence movement illustrates that, with hope and a realisation of their own abilities, ordinary people have the creativity and agency to influence and transform their societies in significant ways.

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[1] http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/disourses-of-the-nation/

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Figure 1. A giant "Yes" sign outside a residential house in the Scottish Highlands. Photo by author.

Macduff: Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross: Alas, poor country, almost afraid to know itself. (Shakespeare 1962 [1606]: Act four, Scene three 164-65)

The 8-month long fieldwork I conducted in Edinburgh, Scotland, would prove that the question raised in Macbeth, is still being posed and eagerly debated. The topic of "where Scotland stands", or rather, "where it *should* stand" has achieved new salience and purpose by the renewed discourse on Scottish independence as part and expression of Scottish nationalism. This has manifested in a public mobilisation into a social movement which I refer to as "the independence movement", and in the referendum on Scottish independence in September 2014. It has further affected the outcome of the General Election in May 2015.

Research questions and topic

In this thesis I seek to understand how people relate to Scottish nationalism, their national identity and to questions of independence. I view Scottish independence as both an ideology which postulates "an imagined community" (Anderson 1991 [1983]) and a praxis performed in everyday life (Löfgren 1989, Billig 1995). As such, the focus is on everyday expressions of the nation, and people's actions and social practices that not only reproduce Scottish nationalism, but also involve a meaningful engagement with values and aspirations (Escobar 1992, Graeber 2001, 2011, 2013, Fischer 2014). The central claim in this thesis is that people understand their world, and act in it, in relation to certain values. Hence, values and actions affect one another in intricate and interconnected ways. People's active and direct involvement in the independence movement, is further seen as their concrete efforts at transforming their society in accordance with their visions and imaginings of the good life and a desired future.

This thesis builds on ethnographic material derived from my active involvement and participation with my informants and the field site at large. In my project proposal, I vaguely stated that I wanted to study "the dynamics of identity". Needless to say, the presented thesis differs from my initial concerns prior to fieldwork. The complex reality of the field, has revealed aspects of Scottish nationalism and the independence movement, such as people's agency, values and aspirations, that required an extensive engagement in the actual field, and could hence not be foretold without participant observation.

Research motivation

I chose to conduct fieldwork on and in Scotland for two cardinal reasons. Firstly, my interest was propelled by the social change which the independence movement represented, and how this social change related to nationalism. Secondly, I found in anthropology a contradiction in the choice of field sites which both troubled and provoked me; anthropologists often emphasise that no place is too distant for the anthropologist to study. Paradoxically, some places seem *too near* to study. This hierarchy in the discipline conceptually and spatially separates what is deemed as "the field" and what is referred to as "home" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson argue that this distinction leads to "a hierarchy of purity of field sites" (1997: 12-13). The practice of differentiating places on the grounds of their

nearness or distance to what is referred to as "home", which in most cases refers to Europe and North America, produces and reproduces a radical otherness, and thus a distinction between "us the anthropologists" and "them, the far-away natives" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 14-17). Although things have improved on this point, the hierarchical valuation of place still exists within the discipline.

Signe Howell (2010) represents such a presence when she suggests an end of anthropology due to a "lack of adventure" which she attributes to, among other things, the choice of "home" as a field site and the diminishing openness of the method used in the field. What she means by "adventure" is never clearly defined in her article, although it points to what she considers to be particular to anthropology as a discipline. Which, according to Howell, is the method of open-ended participant observation conducted in "remote and unknown parts of the world" where the anthropologist aims at understanding "local knowledge from the native's point of view", by acquiring "an alien gaze", all the while being "totally immersed in the field site" (2010: 189, 194).

I am sympathetic to Howell's disapproval of the trend of "narrowly problem-focused fieldwork" which for Howell attests to a lack of adventure in the project proposed. With that said, I find her connection between this disinterest with conducting fieldwork at "home" highly problematic (2010: 202). In my own fieldwork, as will be clarified shortly, I have valued and emphasised precisely the open-ended approach which Howell propagates, but which she seems to withhold to anthropologists of urban European contexts. Moreover, although I find Howell's reminder of the importance of immersion in the field and particularly, "[…] the realisation that 'the field' can never be just a physical site, but is a social and a moral one too" (2010: 194) valid in the respect that it resonates with my own experiences of my field site. I am left feeling discouraged because of the inherent moral evaluation and judgement of "proper field sites" and "proper anthropology" which underscores Howell's arguments (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

I agree with Gupta and Ferguson in their rejection of a natural correlation between cultural differences and "the world of peoples" (1992: 16). In so doing, I view the dichotomies between "home" and "away", "us" and "them" as products of a specific knowledge production that is historically situated, and itself embedded in power relations (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Anthropology, as a discipline that strives to understand different peoples and their worlds by taking them seriously, should hence aim at revealing and scrutinising existing

and historically laden conceptions of cultural differences and similarities, rather than reify and maintain them.

I take the view that "[…] 'home' is a conceptual category with shifting reference" (Hastrup 1995: 152). Certainly my own experience of my field site, Edinburgh, was one of unfamiliarity rather than the sense of "being at home". Much of the data I gathered was due to the fact that I was not "home", as my informants were curious and interested in revealing to me what they considered to be distinctive about their society and culture. The unity assumed in the term "us" and the corresponding spatial category of "home" is vague and problematic because it reduces significant cultural differences amongst the many places covered by the broad category of "home". These assumed similarities could further maintain and enforce an image of social and cultural stability and a false coherence and balance, and in so doing conceal actual inequalities and differences (Gullestad 2002). I argue that "a sense of adventure", "immersion" in the field as well as open-endedness are compatible with fieldwork conducted in "familiar" contexts. This thesis thus challenges the notion of adventure as linked to remote places, and argues instead that differences are relational, and adventure, surely, highly subjective, can be found wherever people dwell.

Methodology

My fieldwork lasted from the beginning of January until the end of August 2015. The method used was open-ended participant observation in the respect that I participated in a whole range of activities that my informants performed, and inevitably I observed both my informants, myself and the situation in which we found ourselves during our mutual participation. In this section, I would like to account as precisely as possible what I participated in and what I observed.

The first few weeks were characterised by chance and serendipity (Okeley 2012). The anthropological method of participant observation is indeed a *practice*, which in my case, is inherently linked to the activity of walking, observing and absorbing the hustle and bustle of the city of Edinburgh. I thus met some of my informants purely by chance; for instance, by walking past a sign which I found interesting or finding a lonely antique shop in the middle of an industrial area I would probably not notice had I not walked past it. This is how I met my informants Charlie and Luke, who worked as the shop assistants of a music shop and Elias, the shop manager of a whiskey and tobacco shop.

Although an increasing number of new acquaintances suggested I should pay attention to "something more substantial or serious" as they would say, I embraced the open-ended approach which characterises the ethnographic method. This openness introduced me to very finely-grained cultural and social variation, which would help me navigate through the landscape of the many different people I encountered.

In February, I signed up as a volunteer at three different arenas; a charity shop, a charity book shop and a volunteer-run "alternative" café. I chose those particular shops and the café because they were all located in different areas, and I assumed that they might attract different social groups. I volunteered at the charity shop from February to April, the charity book shop from February to July, and the café throughout February.

In both charity shops, I spent a lot of time speaking with the other volunteers and the respective managers of each shop, James and Karolina. My tasks were primarily working the *till*, the cash register machine, sorting out stock and *culling*, i.e. collecting unsold stock that has been out on display on the shop floor for a specific period of time, and replacing it with new stock.

Despite my time in the volunteer-run café being brief, it was a crucial place for the development of my research as I met Frank, an architect in his 60s. Frank was involved in Radical Independence Campaign (RIC), a socialist organisation advocating independence and socialist political views. Frank introduced me to Debra, who would become one of my key informants.

In-mid February, I contacted a central branch of the Scottish National Party (SNP), who had posted a notification on Facebook stating that they needed more volunteers in the campaign in the General Election of 2015. I sent a text message to the number which was provided in the notification, explaining that I was an anthropology student studying the independence movement and Scottish nationalism. The reply was a welcome to join the SNP branch and "observe as much as you please![2]". I would meet the members of this central SNP branch the same week which initiated a four-month commitment to that SNP branch and its members. Throughout this thesis, I interchangeably call the people involved in this branch; "SNP members" and "SNP canvassers".

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[2] In my text message, I explicitly asked if I could "participate and observe" the branch, as part of my research in Scottish nationalism and the independence movement.

The four months spent with the SNP members of the central branch can be organised into four main activities; 1) canvassing, 2) holding street-stalls, 3) gathering in a local pub to exchange experience and converse, and finally 4) attending public meetings or events arranged by the SNP.

The two charity shops, the café, RIC and the SNP branch constitute the largest part of my fieldwork and material derived from time spent with people from those contexts, is the foundation on which this thesis is built. With that said, my fieldwork is not limited to these contexts, as some of my informants are not active in any of the organisations mentioned. These informants are my former roommate Michael and the shop manager Elias, and the music shop assistants Charlie and Luke.

My main strategy throughout the fieldwork has been to have an open mind and an openness which I believe was appreciated and reciprocated by the people I have met. Apart from the end of my fieldwork in which I conducted semi-structured recorded interviews with five of my informants, most of the material derived during this research is based on informal conversations, and the insights gained from participating and observing the different activities I performed with my informants. Most of my interaction with my informants was conducted in public areas such as cafes, restaurants, parks and public meeting points such as libraries and public halls. With some of my informants, I was also invited to their homes for tea or dinner.

The main methodological challenge I encountered in the field was – as already inspected in my project proposal – narrowing the field. I had not made the easiest of choices, having firstly chosen Europe as my field site, and secondly a city in Europe which has a population of 486,120 inhabitants, approximately the size of Oslo. My main challenges, and hence main objectives have been to narrow the field and to gain access to informants. In the following, I will shortly account for how I dealt with these challenges.

Because my research topic and research questions cannot be reduced to a specific locale, I had to actively seek out arenas, events and organisations which could be of relevance. This active effort was influenced by a search for the sort of organisations which I believed, or I was told by people I had met, were closest connected to my research topic. The contexts of RIC and the SNP branch constitute an obvious choice for the collection of empirical material on the topic of Scottish nationalism and the independence movement. The charity shops and the volunteer-run café were not as obvious a choice, but became apparent as good approaches

when I realised how widespread charity shops and volunteer-run organisations are in Edinburgh. By the end of February, I had already engaged with the SNP branch, regularly met Debra from RIC, and volunteered three days a week in two different charity shops, as well as meeting informants whenever they wanted or could.

My informants constitute a diverse group of people who differ from one another in terms of age, regional and national identity, education, career situation and life-histories. An interesting commonality between them was the almost complete lack of reference to religion[3]. Age-wise, they constitute two main groups: young-adults in their 20s and early 30s and middle-aged individuals. Most are employed, but only a few can be described as "affluent". The majority of my informants are born in Scotland to either one or two Scottish parents. The rest are either English or European. My informants represent a very small fraction of the Scottish population, and hence it is difficult to draw conclusions based on them. With that said, my informants' political stance and opinions reflect the larger Scottish population's voting pattern in the General Election 2015. Most of my informants supported independence and the SNP and displayed an overt disapproval of the Conservative Party. This is reflected in the Scottish voting results in the General Election in 2015 as 50 % of all Scottish votes went to the SNP, whilst only 14.9 % went to the Conservative Party. Scotland is divided into 59 parliament constituencies, of which the SNP won 56[4]. The majority of my informants' support of the SNP is hence, to an extent, representative of the wider Scottish population, both rural and urban.

Ethical considerations

Throughout this thesis, I often use the terms "Scots", "the Scottish people" and "the Scottish nation", as well as "the English" and "the British". I do this first and foremost because they are emic categories which my informants used to either self-identify or identify others. These terms are hence to be understood as local categories of ascription and self-ascription and belonging. However, I am aware that by using these terms, I am "naming people", thus contributing to upholding a notion of groups of people belonging to the same culture and/or ethnicity (Hastrup 1995: 147).

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[3] My informant Michael is the only exception. See chapter 2.
[4] The remaining three constituencies not won by the SNP, were Orkney and Shetland (Liberal Democrats), Edinburgh South (Labour) and Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale (the Conservative Party) (Hawkins, Keen and Nakatudde 2015).

My aim is far from enforcing an image of the people I have encountered during my ethnographic study, as belonging to an objective ethnic or cultural group. I am fully aware about the lack of such objective categories, indeed a lack of an "absolute, objective world to be reported" (Hastrup 1995: 149). Following the advice of Kirsten Hastrup (1995), I do not intend to bypass native categories and knowledge, but to transcend them in the quest for anthropological knowledge about the people studied and their culture. Hastrup distinguishes between *knowing* and *understanding*, placing the former with the "natives' point of view" and the latter with the anthropologists; "[...] for natives, their culture is referentially transparent. It is not 'seen' but 'seen with'" (1995: 149). In the following chapters, I attempt to "see" what my informants "see with". I will do this by combining my informants' emic categories with analytical categories that to a degree transcends the specificity of the context of Scotland.

In this thesis, all persons (informants) are anonymised. I have done so because I believe anthropologists have a strong responsibility for the people they study. What was shared with me of personal information, thoughts, life histories etc., I regard as sensitive information that I need to guard and handle carefully. Throughout my fieldwork, I have explained my objectives and the nature of my project to all of my informants as explicitly and informatively as possible. I told them that I was an anthropology student from the University of Oslo, Norway, who had come to Edinburgh to study Scottish nationalism and the independence movement. Furthermore, I explained that I was enrolled on the Master's programme which required fieldwork in a self-chosen location and topic, and that I had chosen Scotland and Edinburgh as my field. The information I receive, I expanded, will be used in the thesis which I will write the following year after I have completed my fieldwork.

All of the informants used in this thesis have given their consent for me to use information they gave me. Persons who did not give their consent, are entirely removed from this work.

The anthropology of Scotland

The anthropological study of Scotland has been rather scant, compared to the proliferated engagement with Scotland by other disciplines, such as history, sociology and geography (McCrone, Kendrick and Shaw 1989, Rappaport 2001). The first, and the most extensive, ethnographic study of Scotland, is conducted by Anthony Cohen in his monograph *Whalsay Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community* (1987). Cohen's is a monograph of thick description of a small island community in Shetland which focuses on

the creation of group identity and a sense of community. This creation of identity and community is made by reference to place and by the construction of symbolic boundaries (Cohen 1987). Cohen stresses the importance of place as a means for people in Whalsay to differentiate themselves from the rest of Scotland, and the rest of the UK (Cohen 1987). This process of self-ascription and boundary-making is then placed within a wider context of modernisation.

Whereas Cohen provided the first extensive ethnography of the British Isles, Susan Parman's *Scottish Crofters: A historical Ethnography of a Celtic Village* (1990) is the first ethnographic study of a Gaelic-speaking Highland community. Like Cohen, Parman is concerned with how her informants construct their identities, which she also understands within the framework of modernisation and the outside-community, represented by Lowland-Scotland, the UK and the global society at large. In so doing, Parman draws extensively on history, and argues that people construct their identities and sense of community by referring back to a specific version of historic accounts and events. History, according to Parman, is not only a cultural construction, but is actively "[...] forgotten, reinvented, interpreted and reinterpreted" by people's social practices and their creation of meaning (Parman 1990: 21).

Although using a slightly different term, namely "reimagining", Sharon Macdonald, in her monograph *Reimagining Culture. Histories, Identities and the Gaelic Renaissance* (1997) also focuses on how people in a Highland community create their identities by interpreting and reinterpreting history. According to Macdonald, Scottish national identity draws a lot of its content from the Highland culture, and the history which Macdonald is concerned with is thus highly contested and appropriated by different actors. In line with both Cohen and Parman, Macdonald similarly claims that outside actors (Scotland, the UK and the international community) are involved in producing certain ideas about the Highland culture and identity. Macdonald argues that her informants do not simply comply with these external images ascribed to them from the outside, but rather negotiate and confront them, thus revealing a self-reflexivity about their position and culture, and the awareness of its use in the wider world. My own experience of the use of and reference to Highland culture by my "Lowland" informants, was that it was made less significant than other aspects such as cultural values.

John Gray's monograph, *At Home in the Hills: A Sense of Place in the Scottish Borders* (2000), is in contrast to the above studies, located in the south of Scotland, in a non-Celtic

and a non-Norse area. Nevertheless, Gray argues, much in line with Cohen, Macdonald and Parman, that the people of Teviothead are "marginalised" in regards to their position within Scotland and the UK. In Gray's ethnographic study, place is of utmost importance as it here too provides a means for people to create their identities and their sense of belonging, which differentiates them from other Scottish regions.

Despite the fact that these monographs are conducted in disparate places, Shetland in the case of Cohen, the Highlands in the case of Parman and Macdonald, and the Scottish Borders in the case of Gray, they share significant commonalities. What these studies reveal, are two prominent and mutually re-enforcing tendencies in the study of Scotland; 1) the favouring of *the rural* in ethnographic choice of field sites, and 2) the topical emphasis on tensions between the local and the national/global. All of these excellent studies attempt to show how "rural" and "marginalised" people meaningfully create and understand their own identities and communities within wider national and international contexts. However, their analyses reveal a certain tendency to dichotomise the anthropological subjects as somehow "local", "peripheral" and "marginal" to powerful centres. This marginality is thus placed in direct opposition to "the centres", which in all of the above examples are represented firstly by the Central Belt of Edinburgh and Glasgow, secondly by the rest of the UK (particularly London), and lastly by the international community represented by notions of globalisation and modernisation. The relationship between the communities studied and the "centres", are further assessed as ones of oppositional conflict and tension.

In contrast to the above ethnographic studies, mine is situated in the centre of Scotland. My hope is to broaden the anthropology of Scotland by extending the attention to urban contexts and communities. In so doing, I hope to nuance the anthropological study of Scotland. I commend the mentioned works, and agree of the homogeneity of Scotland and the Scottish people. Nevertheless, I argue that in portraying the Scottish people as inherently belonging to completely different communities, one overlooks the national imagined community of the Scots in which ideas and imaginings of the nation are dominant and pervasive. In other words, I argue that Scottish nationalism is precisely a pervasive collective belief in the imagined unity, comradeship and communion of the Scottish people as a whole (Anderson 1991 [1983]). This, in turn, does not mean that all Scots believe in such a union, rather it implies that ideologies of collectivity meaningfully co-exist with other loyalties, whether regional or in other respects. Furthermore, in favouring the rural Scottish communities, anthropology contributes to an image of Scotland as a whole as "Highland", "crofter",

"island" and "rural". My hope is to balance this image of Scotland by providing an ethnography of an urban Scotland, one which has been described as the "centre" and an opposition to rural communities. In the following thesis, I will show how Edinburgh is *both* centre and periphery, and that these concepts are relational.

Scotland's "peculiarity"

The notions of peripherality, marginality and rurality are also predominant in other disciplines' study of Scotland. Academic as well as popular depictions, analyses and descriptions of Scotland have all obsessed over the alleged "peculiarity" of Scotland, which apparently stems from its "dubious" position as a nation, but not a state (McCrone, Kendrick and Straw 1989:1, see also McCrone 1989, Nairn 2003 [1977], Gellner 2006 [1983]). "Diagnoses" of Scotland have ranged from "marginal" to "deformed and distorted" and "schizophrenic" (McCrone 1989: 162, Macdonald 1992: 4). Ernest Gellner viewed Scottish nationalism as a possible threat to his model of nationalism, arguing that it lacks the linguistic element to unite it, because in his reasoning, Gaelic would reduce Scotland to Irish nationalism, and English would in fact be counterproductive as it is the language of its opponent (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 43). Whilst Tom Nairn, one of the most influential academic of Scotland, has in a most assertive manner, denoted Scottish culture as "a strange sort of sub-national culture" (Nairn 2003[1977]: 143). His argument being:

> It was cultural, because of course it could not be political; on the other hand this culture could not be straightforwardly nationalist either – a direct substitute for political action […]. It could only be 'sub-nationalist', in the sense of venting its national content in various crooked ways – neurotically so to speak, rather than directly. (Nairn 2003[1977]: 143-44).

Nairn's claim rests on a particular view of the history of Scotland, one which casts the relation of Scotland and England in colonialist terms. The assumed self-evidence underlying Nairn's arguments portrays Scotland as being an oppressed English colony, thus inhibiting Scotland in developing "a normal culture" (Nairn 2003 [1977]: 143). This view is in line with a predominant tendency within the Scottish intelligentsia to portray Scotland, Scottish nationalism and culture in Marxist terms (Hearn 2002: 754-55). As David McCrone argues, himself including Nairn in his criticism of dominant depictions of Scotland:

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> "[..] this view has been so predominant among Scottish intellectuals that their contribution to the development of neo-nationalism in Scotland has been negative and critical, that their very analysis represents a dominant discourse which itself has to be examined critically" (McCrone 1989: 161).

Interestingly, whilst McCrone condemns depictions of Scotland as "deformed and distorted", he goes on to denounce Scottish nationalism of the late 1980s (the time of his writing) of having any "heavy cultural baggage" (McCrone 1989: 172). Presumably, McCrone claims that "It is as if, having looked to see what was on offer, the Scots have decided to travel light. […] It is almost a cultureless, post-industrial journey into the unknown" (1989: 172).

The underlying assumption of these analyses, is that Scotland because it is a nation, *requires* its own separate state. Although this is exactly what the independence movement is concerned with, in light of history, it is a rather recent concern for the Scottish *public*. These analyses have thus depicted Scotland as being abnormal, deformed, peculiar and distorted (McCrone 1989: 162). Those who themselves criticise such portrayals, have denied Scottish nationalism of any cultural content (McCrone 1989: 172-73). Thus, it seems that analyses of Scotland either overemphasise Scottish nationalism's cultural (depicted as negative) content, or simply reduce its significance.

Needless to say, I find these depictions highly problematic, partial and less grounded in the complexities of reality, than within specific theoretical traditions and arguments. In this thesis, my aim is to counter Nairn's argument of Scottish nationalism as lacking political action. My informants possessed both the desire and the ability to perform political action, which they most vividly have expressed in the Scottish referendum of 2014 and the General Election of 2015. The public participation and engagement in these political events in Scotland not only demonstrate a high degree of political prowess and performance, but also show active and direct efforts at claiming these rights, not only on behalf of their nation, but for their own agency. In regards of the "cultural baggage" of which McCrone speaks, in this thesis, I will attempt to show how cultural values and ideals are at the forefront of Scottish nationalism and the Scottish independence movement. As such, I will also show how these values and ideas affect political action, as expressed in the Scottish referendum in 2014 and the General Election of 2015.

Referendum of 2014

On the 18th of September 2014, a referendum on Scottish independence was held which asked residents of Scotland to answer the following question: *"Should Scotland be an independent country?"* to which the voters were provided with the options of "Yes" or "No". The results confirmed a meagre majority "No" vote by 55.25 %, whilst 44.65 % had voted "Yes" (the Electoral Commission [ELC] 2014: 7). The turnout in the referendum was exceptionally high, with 84.6 % of Scotland's population casting their votes (ELC 2014: 6). In contrast, there was a 63.8 % turnout in Scottish votes in the General Election in 2010 (ELC 2010: 5). Uniquely to this referendum, people aged 16 and 17 were allowed to vote in the referendum on Scottish independence.

The backdrop which allowed to referendum to take place, was the Edinburgh Agreement, which was signed on 15 October 2012 by the UK's prime minister David Cameron and Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond. The Agreement allowed a temporary transmission of legislative power exclusively held by the UK Parliament to the Scottish Government, for the sole purpose of holding the referendum.

The timeliness of the referendum was thus spacious, having been agreed upon in October 2012, with voting projected to be held in Autumn 2014. Two main campaigns were initiated, each advocating opposing views. The campaign advocating a "Yes" vote was named "Yes Scotland" and was largely driven by the Scottish National Party (SNP), organisations such as the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) and Women for Independence, and most importantly, engaged a large proportion of the Scottish public. The campaign in favour of a "No" vote was named "Better Together" and consisted of the largest political parties in the UK; The Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats.

Although there had already been two referendums concerned with Scotland's autonomy in recent history, one in 1979 (referendum on devolution[5]) and one in 1997 (referendum on the reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament), the referendum of 2014 is distinguishable by its high public participation both in the campaign period and as manifested in the turnout numbers. The public debate was highly energetic, and engaged ordinary people whose voices were heard not only in the streets during public talks and demonstrations, but also on social media and in everyday life. Many of my informants looked back at the referendum period with astonishment because they had never experienced so many people "talking politics". As

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[5] I.e. more self-governing power within the union.

is made evident throughout this thesis, there are several factors behind this popular involvement of the public in the independence movement.

The General Election 2015

The political activity and engagement in Scotland did not stagnate and retreat with the closure of the referendum. On the contrary, the General Election in May 2015 provided the means through which the public's engagement and enthusiastic involvement could continue in even greater force. This public mobilisation, which a year earlier was connected with the Yes Scotland campaign, had now transferred to campaigning on the behalf of the SNP. Canvassing, street stalls, political events, public talks and demonstrations were the main ways in which people supported the SNP during the General Election. The SNP activists were in absolute majority in the streets of Scottish cities and towns. This public support for the SNP was reflected in the vote results as SNP won 56 out of the total of 59 seats reserved for Scotland in the UK Parliament in the general election in May 2015. This was the largest victory in history for a single party, not just for the SNP or Scotland, but measured in percentage, in the whole of the UK (Hawkins, Keen and Nakatudde 2015: 10). As of May 2015, Scotland thus had 56 SNP MPs[6], 1 Conservative MP and 1 Liberal Democrat MP. The Labour Party, historically the most popular political party in Scotland, was now completely wiped out from the Scottish political landscape.

The Scottish National Party (SNP)

The SNP has, since its inception in 1934, been closely connected to the idea of an independent Scotland. In fact, one of the main criticisms of the SNP was its categorisation as a "single issue party" (Devine 2012: 577). According to this criticism, the SNP overemphasised the issue of independence, and consequently was deficient in all other matters, and hence appeared as an unviable choice for a governing party. Since their victory in the general election of 2015 however, this image is being transformed, and the SNP is increasingly viewed as being a viable governing party.

The SNP's political influence and its public popularity was scarce between the 1930s and 1960s. Beginning in the 1950s, in order to liberate itself from an exclusively nationalist label, the SNP began to adopt a social democratic political identity (Finlay 2009, Hassan 2009). As we shall see throughout this thesis, this strategic move resonated with the Scottish public,

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[6] MP is short for "Member of Parliament"

who held egalitarian values in high esteem. The new identity as social democratic also functioned to place the SNP in relation to both the Labour party and the Conservative Party, and in so doing distanced the party from both (Finlay 2009: 27-28). However, it was not until the 1970s that the SNP began to achieve considerable public support. The growing support for the SNP reflects important economic, political, social and cultural factors. The factors most evoked by my informants being the decline of heavy industry[7], which has long been a pillar of Scottish economy, and the consequent increase of unemployment in Scotland. This decline was further exacerbated by the New Right government, led by the prime minister Margaret Thatcher, who had enforced policies that continued the decline of industry with intensified force (Dickson 1989: 62, Devine 2012: 591-598).

The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher was in governance from 1979 to 1997. Replacing it was New Labour, led by Tony Blair, who prior to his victory in the General Election in 1997, had given a vow to re-establish the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Parliament was thus officially opened in 1999. From this point on, the SNP became a prominent party in Scottish politics. During the 1980s and 1990s the SNP, with Alex Salmond as leader, "became more professional" in aspects of strategy, internal structure and communication towards the public (Hassan 2009: 3-4). In the third Scottish Parliament election in 2007, the SNP won with 32.9 %[8] (Hassan 2009: 6-7). In the 2011 Scottish Parliament election, the SNP became the first majority government in Scotland. The following year, as we have seen, the SNP negotiated an agreement with the UK government to hold a referendum on Scottish independence.

Thesis outline

The aim of this introduction (chapter 1) has been to provide the framework by which to understand the following chapters of this thesis. I have outlined my research questions and topic, the motivation for this research, the methods used in data gathering, and the ethical considerations the fieldwork entailed. The last section of this chapter has given a brief overview of anthropological and other discipline's study of Scotland. I have also provided a condensed political and historical context in order to better understand Scottish nationalism and the independence movement.

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[7] Ship-building, coal, steel and iron manufacturing
[8] In the 1999 Scottish Parliament election the SNP received 28.7% of the votes, and 23.8 % in the second election in 2003 (Hassan 2009: 7).

Chapter 2 examines nationalism in Scotland and looks at how my informants relate to Scottish nationalism and their national identities. This relationship reveals ambiguities and tensions, at the same time as it conveys my informants' believes in, and ideas of, the content of the Scottish nation and nationalism.

In chapter 3, I look closer on the content my informants attribute to the Scottish nation, nationalism and national identity. This content is largely based on dominant values within the Scottish society, which I examine and problematize.

In chapter 3 I look at the relationship between values and people's actions. In this chapter, I focus the attention on people's aspirations and social practices in relation to Scottish nationalism and the independence movement.

In the final section (Conclusion) of this thesis, I provide a short summary of the main arguments made in each analytical chapter, and end my thesis with some conclusive remarks.

Chapter 2: Scottish Nationalism and National Identity in Everyday Life

Figure 2. Residential building in Edinburgh. Photo by author.

As I am standing at a bus stop, I hear an older woman say to another "Oh, there she is with her bonnet and scarf". The other woman replies "Where's your jacket? You're a better Scot than me that can do without". The bus arrives and I let the older women get on before me. As we approach the city, a man steps towards the exit and starts speaking to the bus driver. The topic is, as often in Scotland, about the weather. But interestingly enough, the forecasted rain in Scotland, is mitigated by the even worse weather forecast for England: "At least the English got the worst of it. Suits them well!" the older man, now sounding more cheerful, says to the bus driver. I get out of the bus and into Princes Street, one of the busiest streets in

Edinburgh. The first sound I hear is the unmistakable cry of a bagpipe. The man playing "Scotland the Brave" is covered in woollen tartan, with his kilt, jacket and hat. On his kilt he has a sporran[9] and wears kilt hose[10] from his feet up to just under his knees. The bagpipe-player is standing outside the Scott Monument, an impressive Gothic tower that is as narrow as it is long, and is thus strategically positioned so that people coming from the Old Town as well as the New Town spot him. I see tourists taking his picture, some are wearing red wigs with tartan hats that they bought in souvenir shops. Above me are the buildings of the city, and even higher above them are the many Saltire flags that wave at all the people below.

Introduction

The example above is far from exceptional, but points at and demonstrates quite bluntly that Scottish nationalism is being performed and reproduced on a daily basis by ordinary people. Many people wore apparel with images of the nation as well as visible signs of political affiliation that supported the cause of independence such as buttons that read "YES" in colours mirroring the Saltire flag. Not uncommonly, people wore buttons with an image of the Saltire flag, the national flag of Scotland and buttons or brooches of the thistle, the national flower of Scotland, as well as the Lion Rampant flag, the royal emblem of Scotland. Even more popular were the different buttons of the Scottish National Party (SNP), amongst which the most popular buttons read "I vote SNP" and "I'm with Nicola[11]", thus referring not only to the referendum in 2014, but the general election that was held in May 2015. By this "flagging" and "signalling" of the nation (Billig 1995: 39), people were openly identifying and reaffirming their "Scottishness". At the same time, what stood out to me during my interaction with my informants, was the sense of ambiguity and tension that followed my informants' conceptualisation and relation to Scottish nationalism and their national identities.

In the following chapter, I wish to dive into those ambiguities and tensions that accompany Scottish nationalism and national identity from a particular point of view of everyday life of my informants. Thus, I acknowledge Orvar Löfgren's (1989) encouragement to study nationalism not only as an ideology, but also as praxis that is being performed, shaped and

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[9] A pouch worn over the kilt
[10] Long socks worn with kilt
[11] Nicola Sturgeon is the current leader of the SNP

reshaped in everyday life. Scottish nationalism is both overt and verbal, as the mobilisation in the independence movement proves, but at the same time it is being performed and reproduced in more tacit and subtle ways. As Michael Billig argues: "[...] the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times." (1995: 6). Billig thus provides the term "banal nationalism" to account for the subtle, mundane and common-sense ways in which nationalism is produced and reproduced in everyday life by practices such as "flagging, or reminding, of nationhood" (Billig 1995: 8).

This continuous everyday performance and construction of the nation, and nationalism, affects and shapes people's collective identities. A specific type of such collective identity is the national identity which I view as partly resulting from the continuous process of people's actions and practices relating to questions of the national. To understand how people, accept and take on national identities as one of their supreme groups of belonging, I find Anthony Cohen's (1996, 2000) concept of "personal nationalism" useful. In Cohen's view, people connect to the nation by resonating their personal identities and life experiences to collective identities, thus drawing aspects from the nation that directly relates to their personal and particular identities and life-histories (Cohen 1996: 808, 2000: 163). Personal nationalism is hence a useful tool in the understanding of how my informants, who were widely diverse, all related to Scottish nationalism and aligned with a single issue movement that propagated Scottish independence.

Although I am particularly interested in the everyday aspects of nationalism, I am aligned with Löfgren in the view that nationalism is indeed an ideology as well a system of practices. The ideological aspects have direct implications for the ways in which people meaningfully understand their lives and relate themselves to larger collectives or communities, amongst which the nation is seen as the superordinate category of belonging (Löfgren 1989). In so doing, I wish to complement the mundane, everyday aspects of nationalism, as is represented by Billig, with Benedict Anderson's assessment of nationalism by its ideological aspects. I believe the two perspectives on nationalism, the everyday focus represented by Billig (1995) and Löfgren (1989) and the emphasis on the ideological aspects of nationalism as assessed by Anderson (1991 [1983]), to complete each other and together provide a holistic understanding of nationalism as both a broad ideology and the everyday praxis it enables whence applied to a specific cultural, historic and social context.

It is in the combination of the ideological aspects and practices deriving thereof, that nationalism, as Cohen argues, manages to link diverse people together in a superordinate category of belonging that, which, as Löfgren (1989) also points at, supersedes other loyalties. The ideology of nationalism is precisely the background for the everyday practices that reinforce and reproduce nationalism. The ideological background for my discussion of the praxis of nationalism, I understand through Anderson's (1991 [1983]) definition of the nation as an imagined community:

> It is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 15).

The distinctiveness and strength of Anderson's theory of nationalism, that he defines nationalism not as political at core, but religious and sacred. It is these "cultural roots" of nationalism, that conclude in its "imagined" aspect (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 9-12). The specific historic background of the decline of religious hegemony as a system of truth in Western Europe in the 18th century facilitated its secular substitution by nationalism. Hereby transferring the concerns with mankind's fatality, which was up until the 18th century apprehended and thought of in religious terms, to nationalism, which subsequently became "the bearer of continuity" (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 11).

This continuity inexorably ties nationalism with a concern for history and immortality. The nation is made meaningful in relation to an invented history and thus linked to a pre-modern past; "the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future" (Anderson 1991 [1983]: 11-12). Religion's concern with death and immortality provided not only a conceptualisation of inevitable human conditions, but it made death and the unknown future continuous by providing a framework in which the human condition could transcend and become immortal. Religion and its management of death is nationalism's "cultural roots" (Anderson 1991 [1983]:10).

The world order

In line with Anderson's analysis of nationalism as an ideology that has attained utmost significance and widespread, Billig argues that nationalism is endemic to the current world order, defining it as: "[…] a way of thinking or an ideological consciousness" 1995: 10). Similarly, Löfgren calls nationalism "a gigantic do-it-yourself kit" that he describes as "[...] an international ideology which is imported for national ends", revealing its inherent paradox (Löfgren 1989: 8). The nation is thus thought of (Billig 1995) and imagined (Anderson 1991 [1983]) by applying the international or supranational ideology of nationalism to specific cultural, political, social, economic and territorial contexts (Löfgren 1989). In Pierre Bourdieu's terms, nationalism as the ideology in established (Western) nation-states is doxic in the sense that it has achieved complete hegemony over the truth of, and about, the world (Bourdieu 1977). In this view, doxic nationalism is taken for granted and unquestioned because it is perceived as truth and the natural order of things: "[...] what is essential *goes without saying because it comes without saying*: the tradition is silent, not least about itself as tradition" (Bourdieu 1977: 167, original emphasis).

Nationalism as an international ideology which is indiscriminately appropriated by different nations (Löfgren 1989), is thus perceived not as an international ideology, but as the particular truth in each context where it applies. According to Bourdieu, the only way in which to reveal the doxic nature of an ideology is by providing alternatives, and thus illuminating the arbitrariness of the (previously) doxic ideology: "The truth of doxa is only ever fully revealed when negatively constituted by the constitution of a field of opinion" (Bourdieu 1977: 168). I view the Scottish independence movement as an alternative opinion which questions the legitimacy and hegemony of the present condition of the UK.

In the same light, I view Billig's explication of banal, everyday nationalism as precisely the exposure of the doxic state of nationalism in established (Western nation-states). Thus, when Billig points at the explicit ways in which the doxic nationalisms are reproduced and created on a daily and mundane basis, he reveals their arbitrariness and their constructiveness. In so doing, Billig challenges not only the popular view of nationalism as located in peripheries and appropriated by "fundamentalists" or "separatists" (Billig 1995: 5-6), but also the very self-evidence, essentialness, naturalness and legitimacy of nationalism. Billig provides an alternative opinion when he argues that "[…] nationalism cannot be confined to the

peripheries [...]", but is created, manifested, demonstrated and reformed in all contexts where people live in well-defined political and territorial, social and cultural places.

Confined to the periphery

With that said, I believe that the popular view of nationalism as located in peripheries and associated with fundamentalists and separatists (Billig 1995: 5), was significant and influential in my informants' understandings of Scottish nationalism. This, I argue, might explain my informants' carefulness, bordering concealment when confronted with questions of nationalism and their national identity. I believe this tendency to conceal nationalist sentiments and to de-associate with nationalism stems partly from the popular view of nationalism as belonging to marginal places and appropriated by marginal groups. Being placed on the fringes of societies, deemed fundamentalist or separatist, carries a load of negative connotations which could result in not only conflicted feelings towards one's national identity, but also in partial denial of it. The result of these ambiguous understandings and attitudes towards Scottish nationalism and national identity was a constant negotiation between expressions of national pride and feelings of inadequacy regarding the nation of Scotland.

I believe Ernest Gellner's quote illustrates this relationship quite well: "I am a patriot, he is a nationalist and *they* are tribalists" (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 84, original emphasis). In implicit, taken for granted and naturalised nationalisms people rarely view themselves as nationalists, but instead understand themselves as "patriots". Gellner's argument condenses the complicated relations, sentiments and ideas about how nationalism operates and is perceived in different ideological climates, and in so doing points to degrees of hegemony. I believe his quote captures some of the reasons my informants were reluctant to associate with nationalism. Because to do so, would be to accept the definition of a nationalist as someone fundamental, separatist, or someone who's world lies at the margins of the centres of power. Quite understandably, my informants do not wish to be regarded in this light, their beliefs to be de-legitimised and de-authorised, and their wish for independence be ridiculed or belittled.

"Politics is secret and sacred!"

At the start of my fieldwork while I was rather aimlessly looking for informants, I stumbled across a music shop not far from where I lived. The day I came into the shop, it was hailing and I needed to find shelter. Inside, were three men all working in the shop, the 40-year old

manager Ian, and his shop assistants the 30-year-old Charlie and the 60-year-old Luke. As I told them about my research, I was met with mixed responses. The manager Ian, whom I only spoke with once, was jolly and said that I should speak with "that one", pointing at Luke who sat in his regular spot by the window. Sitting in his chair, Luke resembled a murky cloud with a big stomach and thin, straw-like arms, all held intact by dark saggy clothes with a black woollen hat covering only a small fraction of his head. In clothes that did not quite correspond with his mature age, Luke glanced over his glasses and looked at me with small, beady eyes that to me, seemed to bare a great degree of scepticism: "Aye, Scotland did have a referendum" he said and began to sort out vinyl records.

To this, I noticed both Ian and Charlie to look surprised and amused at each other. "You're the one always talking about the referendum, Luke, give the girl some of your famous opinion" Ian said. Charlie, an art-student who played in a music band and had a passion for music, later told me that "Luke is a great guy, but he's quite made up in his ways". I spent a week in this record shop, speaking mostly with Charlie and Luke. After the first initial conversation, Luke seemed to warm to me, and whispered in his suspicious manner: "Oh lass, be careful! The vote is a private thing!" When I asked him why voting was considered private, he replied: "to prevent people arguing and to keep peace. Families were splitting because of conflict in the referendum. Politics is sacred and secret".

The discourse on independence that emerged during the recent years in Scotland, was and still is highly vocal, diverse and widespread. I was therefore taken aback by Luke's remark. I asked him and Charlie "but do you think Scotland should be independent?", and whilst Charlie said "Yeah!" in a straightaway manner, Luke nearly fell off his expendable chair by the window in the tiny shop. He seemed shocked and nervous, and said again "Be careful!". The next day, Luke told me about his upbringing in Glasgow and conveyed strong feelings of pride in both his Scottish and local identity. In hindsight, although people in Scotland do not go around asking strangers about their political stance and voting history, Luke was more anxious and secretive than the majority of my informants. With that said, a necessary change in my approach from almost confrontational questioning to more natural conversation facilitated a willingness on the part of my informants to share their thoughts and actions with this "nosy anthropologist".

An ambiguous stance

My informants expressed their beliefs in an imagined community of the Scots, but were nevertheless reluctant to initially associate with nationalism. Some of whom often explicitly stated that "I am not a nationalist!" shortly after having expressed a sense of community of the Scots, thereby demonstrating the ambiguity and tension which I believe are significant features of their relation to the Scottish nation and Scottish nationalism. They were even more anxious of being categorised as nationalists by others, myself included as the case with Luke most poignantly illustrates. At the same time, most of them would evoke nationalist argumentations, images, symbols and narratives in their articulation of the independence movement, Scotland's relation to the UK and their general renderings of the nation of Scotland and its national subjects.

Interestingly enough, it was Luke, rather than Charlie, who portrayed such nationalist arguments and sentiments, but in a rather charismatic manner:

> Scotland is the only country where Coca Cola isn't the most sold drink. Irn Bru is the most sold drink in Scotland. Irn Bru is a family run company that would never sell to the Coca Cola company! Scots will not want to give money to the Coca Cola company because it's not controlled. We're like Irn Bru, we're definitely not Coca Cola!

Luke was particularly concerned with being identified as a nationalist because the connotations of the term seemed problematic to him. Although Luke did not want to give out the impression that he was a nationalist, his statements point to the fact that he believes in the distinctiveness of the Scottish people and the nation of Scotland. The analogy between Irn Bru and the Scottish people seem to point at a shared collective community which separates and distinguishes the Scots from their neighbour in the south, England, as well as other nations. The fact that Irn Bru is "a family run company", may also indicate Luke's belief in the shared origin or heritage of the Scots, pointing at clear nationalistic ideas of common origin and the view of the nationals as a distinct people.

Thus underlying many of my informants' arguments and attitudes, was a latent feeling of national distinctiveness which for them legitimised their stance to independence. As already implied, people seemed concerned with carefully managing such nationalist expressions in front of people they did not know. Consequently, the more time I spent with my informants and the more we got to know each other, the more they seemed to become comfortable with

explicitly associating with Scottish nationalism and identifying with Scottish national identity. In fact, it proved to be the case that most of my informants regarded their national identity as the superordinate category of belonging that took precedence over other loyalties (Löfgren 1989: 9-10).

"I am not a nationalist!" and "We, the Scottish"

My key informant Debra is interesting because while she was most concerned with depicting herself as "not a nationalist!", she also best articulated deep-held beliefs in the imagined community of the Scots (Anderson 1991 [1983]). I was first introduced to Debra by a customer I had met whilst working in a volunteer run café on Lothian Road. As we began to speak about my research questions, the man said "I know someone you should meet" and soon after arranged a meeting between Debra and myself. Since then, Debra and I met regularly throughout the duration of my fieldwork.

Debra is a woman in her mid-60s, although she looks younger and has a youthful energy about her. She has short and shiny blond hair which is cut quite stylishly and contemporary. She always wore nice clothes, tasteful and youthful, but not improper for someone her age. The first thing I noticed about Debra, was that she was quite talkative and that she could drift off topic fairly quickly. Debra's flow of conversation reflected her life in other ways. She presented herself as a person who is "always in a rush" and who always has a lot to do, "that's how I like it" she would say about the many activities in her life. She is now retired, but she used to work as a drama teacher in secondary schools and in an art centre. She now holds a small job as a nanny for a family she has known for years.

Debra is one of the most active members of the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC), which is "a Scotland-wide non-party-political campaigning organisation" with a far left political orientation (RIC 2016). She has been active in politics since 1988 and considers herself to be a "modern Marxist and internationalist". Debra makes a point of self-categorising as "an internationalist" and has made great efforts to engage herself in socialist political organisations that convey a strong sense of global solidarity. On one of our meetings, Debra expressed what she believed Scottish nationalism was about:

> We have a sense of who we are in Scotland and a distinction not in a nationalistic way. It's not about kilts and bagpipes, but about the mentality. The values and opinion of people in Scotland which differs from that of England. Or in any case it is not being

represented by the UK parliament and government. People do not mean kilts and bagpipes when they take pride in their Scottish identity. Kilts and bagpipes and the like have symbolically little to do with everyday life.

The ambivalent and ambiguous characterisation of and relation to Scottish nationalism and national identity is evident in Debra's renderings. As already pointed out, and as we shall see with other cases, Debra's ambivalence expresses a pattern, rather than an exception, in the conceptualisation of the Scottish identity. First of all, Debra contradicts herself by rejecting any link to nationalism and choosing to solely self-identify with Marxist ideology. This was most clearly expressed in her statement "I am an internationalist, *not* a nationalist!". Traditionally, the Marxist term "internationalism" is often used about universals, rather than particulars. Debra, on the other hand, defines Scotland and the Scottish people precisely by particular cultural traits.

This is evident in her elaboration of the character of Scots and Scotland, as opposed to England. Her statement above is quite clear; Debra believes there is a significant difference between the Scottish people and the English, between Scotland and England. According to her conceptualisation of these differences, the Scots have a different "mentality" which is expressed in values and opinions (see next chapter), that are significantly different from those of "the English". On another occasion, this time in a lonely café on Fountainbridge, she elaborates on her own earlier remark of the shared mentality of the Scots, and expands the argument in claiming a unity of "the mind" of the Scottish people. This unity illustrates well the imagined community of which Anderson speaks. The anthropologist Anthony Cohen also similarly asserts that in order for nationalism to function, it requires the idea of "some common content" which can unite diverse individuals together (Cohen 2000: 146). Debra's remarks reveal what she believes is part of this shared common content and hence an ingredient in the imagined community of the Scots:

> Everybody has a valid point of view. No one is 100 % right nor do we know everything. I'm good with redirecting people. Even fascists in Scotland, in a way, *we are of one mind*. The fact that there is only one Tory (the Conservative Party) MP, one LibDem (the Liberal Democrat Party) MP in Scotland proves this. Broadly speaking, *we Scottish people are of one mind* which means we need some kind of change and that change is left of centre. It's a mood. (my emphasis).

Debra attributes the poor representation and popularity of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats' Party in Scotland to her belief that "we Scottish people are of one mind". This "mind", moreover, is more social democratic and egalitarian, as we shall see more closely in the next chapter. By drawing on significant commonalities of the Scots "as being of one mind", Debra invokes the imagined community of the Scots; claiming that despite differences in opinions, such as those between fascists and leftists, the Scots share something significant with each other, which no differences in opinion and political affiliation can break. The unbreakable bond between the Scots agrees with Anderson's placement of nationalism as religious at core rather than political. As Anderson argues: "[...] the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991 [1983]: 7).

Personal nationalism

Consequently, despite differences, the Scots are, according to Debra, "of one mind". The bond despite the differences, or rather the fact that the differences are not taken as threats to the imagined community, points at the way in which people relate to the nation. As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, Cohen, with his theory of personal nationalism, views the relationship of the individual with the nation as one of "the mutual implication and embeddedness" (Cohen 1996: 804). Personal nationalism thus postulates that "[…] people construct the nation through the medium of their own experience, and in ways which are heavily influenced by their own circumstances" (Cohen 2000: 146). I find personal nationalism to be a useful term in the context of Scotland, because it accords the diversity both between my informants, but also, in those aspects of the Scottish nation which they evoked and found significant and relevant to their lives. In agreement with the notion of personal nationalism, my informants drew on, and associated with, different aspects of the nation and what they perceived as distinctively Scottish.

As we recently saw, for Debra, it was the notion of a shared mentality which received particular attention. For my informant Michael, it was the coldness of the people. Michael was my roommate, and a man in his early 30s, from a small town not far from Edinburgh. He was not actively involved in any political parties, but was of the opinion that Scotland should be independent. Michael voted "yes" in the referendum and planned to vote for the SNP in the general election held in May 2015. He considered himself a nationalist in the sense that he perceived Scotland to be a distinct country, inhabited by a distinct people. On other occasions, Michael would self-identify as "a proud Scot" and "a patriot". Like my other

informants, Michael portrayed conflicted feelings both to his national identity as Scottish, and to Scottish nationalism at large. Having lived in Spain for some years and thus been exposed to a different way of life, Michael became particularly concerned with what he regarded as "Scottish coldness": "We're not open with our feelings. That's the Scottish protestant way. You never talk about your feelings, even in your family". There was a palpable contempt with which he uttered these words. "It can get miserable here [in Scotland], and it affects the people. People in Spain are smiling, here everyone hastens to get out of the rain". Michael was the only one of my informants to speak about religion, indeed religion was a "roaring silence" during my fieldwork.

For Michael, there was no contradiction between being a proud Scot and wanting to move out of Scotland. As he pointed out: "I'll still be a proud Scot wherever I am. And honestly, I'll always come back home, even if it is for a couple of months. This will always be my home, even if I don't want to live here". He thus seemed to both admire his Scottish identity and deride it at the same time. Michael works part-time at a language school where he is the social organiser. Because of his work, he meets a lot of foreigners with different attitudes to a whole range of things, which confronts him with his own cultural identity. He would often admirably speak of his students from Southern Europe as open-minded and relaxed. He regarded himself as more closed off and anxious. Michael was also interested in Norway, and would often ask me about the people and the life there. Once, in such a conversation about Norway, or as he would put it "Scandinavia", Michael said that the Scottish are more culturally related to the Scandinavians than the English. When I asked him what he meant, he said: "We have always been more social democratic, and well, we have never agreed with Thatcher's policies, because it is not in our nature". Interestingly, both Debra and Michael linked what they perceived as Scottish commonalities with political orientations. Debra expressed this by denoting Scots as "pragmatic" and "internationalists", while Michael portrayed the Scots as social democratic.

Conflicted feelings

The ambiguities and tensions which I argue are a significant feature of how my informants articulated, expressed and related to Scottish nationalism and the independence movement resulted in expressions of conflicted feelings and attitudes, as the aforementioned cases with Debra, Michael and Luke illustrate. Similar conflicted feelings were expressed by my other informants. One of the SNP canvassers, Gordon, had often expressed similar ambiguities in

his conceptualisations of Scottish nationalism and national identity. Gordon was the first of my informants to express his national identity and do so with pride. He has been a member of the SNP since the 1970s, and before that had been brought up with tales of Scottish history and achievements by his father, who was an active SNP member during his own lifetime. Gordon is in his early 60s, and has worked in construction and other heavy industries ever since adolescence. Although he has lived in Edinburgh for quite a few years, he still considers himself "a working class Glaswegian", Glasgow being his birthplace. In a broad Glaswegian accent, he would often say that the "Scottish people are proud and brave", but would shortly after diminish what he considered to be positive characteristics of the Scots by expressing Scotland's weaknesses. Often, this was done by stating that Scotland is a small country, and admittedly weaker in economic and political terms than England.

Such mixed emotions about the nation and national identity were also expressed by Elias. Elias is a Scotsman in his early 20s originally from the north-eastern Highlands with a university degree in political science. I met Elias in a shop where he works as the manager, and as we began to speak about my research, he exclaimed "You should interview me! I am a proud Scotsman!". I accepted his invitation, and we met shortly after in a pub, in the affluent area of Newtown. Elias was not a member of any political party and had not been politically involved in the referendum or in the general election of 2015, although he was very interested in politics and followed the political debate by reading newspapers and watching political programmes. Sometime into the conversation, I asked Elias if he could tell me about the people in Scotland, and what he considered to be Scottish. I was quite surprised at his emotional reply: "Scots are stubborn, they are warriors and inventors. Enigmatic and pragmatic. Creative, bold and cowardly. To be a Scotsman is to be a dichotomy. As well as being creative and progressive, the Scottish are prone to alcoholism and drugs".

In his statement, Elias expresses conflicted feelings towards the Scottish national identity and Scottishness, and renders it full of contradictions and ambiguities. A moment later, Elias would express great national pride by saying: "This country has produced some of the greatest thinkers of the world! Why shouldn't we be able to run our own country? We have practically helped to build all the others". During our conversation, such tensions were exacerbated by other customers in the pub, joining in our conversation. I noticed that whilst alone, Elias seemed confident and spoke from a position of authority, but in interaction with the other customers, Elias appeared to shrink in confidence and stature. Those other

customers were two older, retired men, one from Glasgow and one from Edinburgh. As already implied, the pub in which this interaction took place, was located in an affluent area of the city, and housed people of some wealth. At first, the man from Glasgow came out alone to smoke a cigarette. He overheard our conversation, and Elias' assertive statements, and shook his head. Both Elias and I noticed this, and Elias said "Please join us, sir". Elias made sure to address this man, and later his friend, by the honorific address of "sir". The men did not reciprocate this gesture of respect, although they accepted the invitation to join our conversation. The man from Glasgow did not say much at first, except that "I think Scotland is just fine in the union". When he left to join his friends inside the pub, Elias confined to me: "That guy is bloody rich, of course he voted no! These types own *land*!".

After a short while, the man from Glasgow came out again, but now accompanied by one of his friends, the man from Edinburgh. His friend was even less sympathetic towards independence and Scottish nationalism than the man from Glasgow. After listening to Elias speaking about Scotland being capable of running its own affairs, as he said, the man from Edinburgh seemed both provoked and agitated. He interrupted Elias in mid-sentence, saying: "Scotland *needs* England. Scotland cannot possibly run its country; it would ruin itself!", thereafter uttering the emotional remark of: "The SNP are revolting nationalists with no idea of what they are talking about. They are mere filth!".

Although I suspected Elias, based on everything he had said earlier that evening, to strongly disagree with these statements, and not unlikely, to be insulted by them, he simply shrugged and replied to the man; "Everyone's entitled to their opinion, sir". The interaction style of this conversation may be seen as pointing at the different fractions in the Scottish society and their disputes over the issues of independence and Scottish nationalism. Elias, who up until the moment the two men joined our conversation, seemed utterly confident, and even slightly demeaning towards people who voted "no", changed noticeably, and did not show his confidence in his interaction with these two particular "no" voters. Elias made a point of their wealth to me several times while they had retreated back inside the pub, saying "these guys own Scotland!", which I believe reveals power relations amongst individuals in Scotland.

While I watched Elias symbolically and physically "bow down" to the older men, I could not help but think that this was not out of respect, but out of embodied power structures. Here, I believe Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theory of discourse and symbolic power may provide a

means to understand the interaction in the pub. Bourdieu distinguishes between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy", which are placed in "the universe of discourse", as opposed to "the universe of the undiscussed" or "*doxa*" (1977: 168). I argue that the discourse on Scottish independence, and with it the political and territorial structure and configuration of the UK, might be assessed as operating within the different fields of opinion. In this light, the Scottish independence movement has challenged the legitimacy of the doxic view of the union between Scotland and England, and with that, power relations within the entire UK. As such, the independence movement represents heterodoxy, or alternative opinion(s) to the view that Scotland's legitimate place is in union with England. The independence movement thus challenges the belief that the union is beneficial to Scotland, thus challenging the union's legitimacy.

The strong reaction Elias provoked in the man from Edinburgh, when speaking in favour of independence, might be seen as the man's reaction to the threat which the independence movement poses to the (previously doxic) dominant view of the union as legitimate. The man from Edinburgh, I believe, represents the view of those whom the union and the configuration of the UK benefits, namely people of symbolic, cultural and economic wealth. His view can be assessed as orthodoxy representing the established order which argues in favour of the status quo of the UK and its configuration. The interaction style, and the implicit relations which the pub interaction revealed, I believe can be understood by the following quote:

> Orthodoxy, straight, or rather *straightened*, opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa, exists only in the objective relationship which opposes it to heterodoxy, that is, by reference to choice – hairesis, heresy – made possible by the existence of *competing possibles* and to the explicit critique of the sum total of the alternatives not chosen that the established order implies. (Bourdieu 1977: 169, original emphasis).

Using Bourdieu's terms, I believe the independence movement and Scottish nationalism is understood by its opponents as the "wrong opinion", which by its very articulation, challenges the hegemony of the UK (Bourdieu 1977: 169). The interaction between Elias and the two older men in the pub were thus a discussion and an exhibition of opposing views, that not only have implications for what is said, but the ways in which words are uttered and the behaviour of each speaker. Elias, as we saw, showed utmost respect for the two men, whom

he politically and ideologically disagreed with. This respect, I believe, at least points at the existing power structures and relations between different groups in Scotland, and also reveals different stances to Scottish independence. With that said, the "right opinion" (orthodoxy) which the older men represent, although it is being challenged by the independence movement, still holds dominance and legitimacy, which might have influenced the interaction style and behaviour of the people involved in the pub discussion (1977: 169). As Bourdieu claims: "The self-evidence of the world is reduplicated by the instituted discourses about the world in which the whole group's adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed" (1977: 167). This, I believe can partially explain Elias' reaction and behaviour, which diverged greatly from his initial behaviour.

The making of self through "the Other"

The opposition between Scotland and England was a reoccurring theme amongst my informants. As the case with Elias illustrates, this relation expresses structures and relations of power that can be viewed as partially responsible for the sense of inferiority which my informants at times attributed to Scottish nationalism and national identity. For instance, the 60-year old SNP canvasser, Gordon, often lamented Scotland's size, which he believed explained its "weaknesses": "Scotland's a small country, there's so much we can do". However, these negative depictions of Scotland paled in comparison to those my informants attached to England and the English. The typical way of dichotomising the Scots and the English was by morally deeming the English as "corrupt" and "warmongering", as opposed to the "egalitarian" and "peaceful" Scots, granted their weaknesses in size and power.

The inferiority my informants expressed in regards to Scottish nationalism were thus often derived from relation and opposition between Scotland and England. In nationalisms of well-established nation-states, as Billig (1995) has argued, the nationalisms are accepted and understood as the legitimate order of things, and are thus not questioned, and hence taken for granted. In Bourdieu's (1977) words, these nationalisms are placed in the universe of the undisputed, or doxa. That is why there is less need to inquire "what the English consists of" than it could be said about the case of Scotland (Löfgren 1989: 9).

The case in Scotland is indeed different. Here, questions of Scottishness are endlessly provoked. In contrast to English national identity, the Scottish national identity and nationalism has a need to be vocal. Scottishness was for instance provoked and reproduced by national events such as Burn's Night. Burn's Night is held on the 25th of January and is a

commemoration of Scotland's national poet Robert Burns. Essentially, Burn's night is a supper where people gather together to eat haggis over Burn's poem "Address to a Haggis". According to custom, everyone present stand up when the haggis is brought into the dining room by the cook. The cook then reads aloud Burn's poem which includes detailed instructions of how to properly disassemble the haggis. Every one of my informants had on one occasion or another mentioned the poet Robert Burns, likewise the national Scottish dish of haggis was evoked whenever questions of "Scottishness" were brought up. I believe Burn's Night to be a collective practice of both imagining and reproducing ideas of Scottishness by "flagging" and "signalling" the nation (Billig 1995). As such, Burn's Night creates a sense of coherence and collectivity which connects individuals to the nation and their co-nationals.

On the 25 of January during my fieldwork, my roommate Michael insisted that we eat haggis on Burn's night, which he agreed to prepare for me and our Italian roommate Luca. After he prepared the store-bought haggis with "neeps and tatties" (mashed turnips and mashed potatoes), he recited the poem eagerly and proudly to us. The following days, whenever I met my other informants, they would all ask me whether I ate haggis on Burn's night. The SNP members all tuned in excitedly to hear my verdict of the national dish. Such events were understood as "tradition", and were not associated with Scottish nationalism, but as we have seen "[...] the tradition is silent, not least about itself as tradition" (Bourdieu 1977: 167). Instead, these social practices are part of banal nationalism, and are what Billig calls "[...] ideological habits (including habits of practice and belief) [...]" which reproduce the nation in everyday life (Billig 1995: 6).

Such ideological habits of practice and belief, and thus a signalling and flagging of the nation, can be found all around the city of Edinburgh. There is an almost endless amount of shops all claiming to possess and sell "authentic, "traditional" and "truly Scottish" items such as Whiskey, tartan apparel, music, food and art etc. Similarly, there is no lack of travel companies aimed at both tourists and locals to discover "the real Scotland" (Scottish Tours 2016) and experience Scotland's "unchanged traditions" and "unedited history" (Haggis Adventures 2016). Having said that, and as we already have seen, the emphasis on Scottishness is far from being an exclusive concern of the commercial sector. People I have met, have all in their own ways, articulated and provoked questions of Scottishness. This explicit and at times demanding articulation of Scottish nationalism demonstrates both its aspiration and its fragility. As Löfgren points out, the need to express Scottish nation derives

partly from a need to be validated, not only by the nations nationals, but also by other nations (1989: 11-12).

Top-dog/Underdog relations

The expression of the Scottish nation and nationalism was often made in reference and opposition to the UK, and England. During a street stall with the SNP canvassers, for instance, a woman came up to us with a stern look, and simply cried out "Warminster!" and walked away. Although this was highly unusual behaviour which surprised not only me, but all the present SNP canvassers, similar sentiments were uttered in more common ways. Often, my informants would condemn the nuclear weapon station, Trident, which the UK state has placed in an area not far from Glasgow. On this basis, they would then describe the UK state as "corrupt and warmongering". Trident, along with the UK state's involvement in recent wars in the Middle-east, would evoke strong emotion among most of my informants, who unanimously would state that "this does not represent Scotland!"

The use of an "other" in the creation of an inside-group or an "us", is a well-recognised technique in group identity creation. According to Fredrik Barth (1969), *ethnic* group identity relies on contact with other ethnic groups which can then function as a mirror against which the groups self-identify. Although Barth is concerned with ethnicity, the fundamental idea that boundaries and contact between different groups provides a means of the creation of identities, can be applied to national identities. The wide use of the opposition between Scotland and England, which many of my informants evoked, demonstrate that England and Englishness is a significant component or rather referent, in images and beliefs of Scotland and Scottishness.

The emphasis on contact between groups as a source of the creation of identity, is also articulated by Orvar Löfgren. He argues that "national identity is always defined in contrast or a complement to other nations" and that this often runs along some reoccurring themes (1989: 11). Amongst these, is the top-dog/underdog argumentation in which the less established and powerful nations invent and emphasise those features that best set them apart from their more established and powerful neighbour(s). As an example, Löfgren argues that Norwegian nationalism uses Denmark as its counterpart, whilst Danish nationalism distinguishes itself from Germany (1989: 11). If this logic has anything to it, then it would seem that Scottish nationalism would inevitably contrast itself against England.

For many of my informants, and particularly amongst the SNP canvassers, the "other" which served as a referent with which they would constitute their own inside-group was "the English, "the British" and "the Westminster elite". When I asked them to explain to me who and what exactly they referred to when they said "the English", they did not give any straightforward answers. Instead, I would get responses such as "the ones in charge, the ones making a pig's ear of things!" an answer Sherry gave me during one of the branch's weekly pub meetings. These kind of answers only reified their feelings and attitudes towards the group which they imprecisely termed "the English". I would like to point out here that Sherry, the one who described the English as the ones in charge, is English herself. I picked up on her accent one of the first times we met and asked her quite bluntly "Are you from England?". To this she shook her head and said "I am from Yorkshire!". For Sherry, Yorkshire was a place entirely different than what she and the other SNP members as well as some of my other informants imagined when hearing the term "the English". In the next chapter, we shall look at the reasons behind this.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with looking at the subtle ways in which Scottish nationalism is expressed, produced and reproduced in everyday life. By so doing, I have thus focused on what Billig (1995) calls "banal nationalism"; the mundane and common-sense way in which nationalism is reproduced by ordinary people by practices which are not conceived as nationalist per se. Amongst such practices, were the habitual expressions of national distinctiveness made by my informants. These expressed, moreover, conveyed their belief in the existence, and their membership to, the imagined community of the Scots (Anderson 1991 [1983]). I have attempted to show the diversity amongst my informants in the ways in which they relate to Scottish nationalism and national identity. The aspects which they drew from the nation, in their relation to it, differed to some extent. To capture this negotiable technique in people's relation to the nation, I have found Cohen's concept of personal nationalism useful. However, despite the strong beliefs in Scottish distinctiveness both in terms of the nation and its nationals, my informants exhibited ambiguity and tensions, as particularly expressed through conflicted depictions of Scotland and the Scots as both proud and strong, and weak and small. This sense of inferiority, I have attributed to three main phenomena; the popular view of nationalism that locates it in peripheries (Billig 1995), the power relations and the hegemony of the union (Bourdieu 1977), and lastly to the oppositional character of Scottish nationalism which opposes Scotland and Scottishness to

the UK state, England and Englishness (Löfgren 1989).

In the next chapter, I will follow some of the statements made by my informants about what they perceived as Scottish distinctiveness and the ways in which they make them. This, as I have shown, is largely done by reference to England and Englishness. As we have already seen, several of my informants conceptualised Scotland as being "social democratic" and the Scottish people as being more "pragmatic", "internationalists", whilst the UK state was perceived as "corrupt" and "warmongering", and the English rendered as "elitists". I believe these oppositions can be coined down to two main concepts or *values* of egalitarianism and hierarchy. According to this logic, Scotland and the Scottish people are perceived as more egalitarian than the UK state and the English, who are often depicted in terms (e.g. corrupt, warmongering, elitist) that point to the opposite of egalitarianism; namely hierarchy. Thus, the next chapter will examine some of the dominant values that my informants have expressed.

Chapter 3: "We have a right to a nation"

Scottish values and nationalism

Figure 3. A crowd gathered to hear Nicola Sturgeon's election speech. Photo taken by author.

On the 7th of May, the day before the opening of polls in the general election of 2015, a considerable number of people have met at the Mound in Edinburgh to hear the SNP leader, Nicola Sturgeon's last election speech. In the early hours of the morning, people seem high spirited and enthusiastic about meeting the woman who later on was depicted as perhaps being "the most dangerous woman in Britain" (Morgan 2015). I found Sherry and Gordon by an SNP stall in the middle of the crowd. Sherry gave me a huge hug, saying "this is going to be great! Look at the turnout!". I notice many of the other SNP canvassers from our branch, walking around with collection tins for the SNP. The Mound did not resemble its usual state, as it now contained the bright colours of the SNP, alongside huge Saltire flags and groups of journalists with their camera-men ready to click once they got sight of Sturgeon. As the crowd was growing larger, we decided to move the stall to the edge and

near Princes Street. It was not until I noticed the security guards in black suits, sunglasses and what looked to be microphones, that I understood that someone "important" was about to arrive.

It was not difficult to notice when Nicola Sturgeon arrived, as people would cheer, clap and yell "Nicola!" to the equally deafening sounds of cameras clicking and journalists starting their reports. The SNP leader arrived in a bright pink dress suit and had her quintessential calm composure that seemed to reassure people of her ability to lead Scotland into a bright future. Her good reputation did not seem to be let down by her performance on this day either, as her speech evoked massive applause and enthusiastic cries. Nicola Sturgeon took a centre stage on a constructed plateau in the middle of the pool of people, and sternly said above the crowds' rhythmic yells of "SNP!", "SNP!":

> *Urban Scotland, Rural Scotland, Island Scotland, Highland Scotland; this is our chance to unite as one country! We (the SNP) will work together with all progressives in the UK. Together we can work to lock the Tories out and make sure the Tories are replaced with someone bolder. The SNP works better not just for the people in Scotland, but people in every corner of the UK. That is what the SNP promises in this election. We are within touching distance of winning a Westminster election. Scotland will be heard. Far too long Scotland has put their trust in Labour MPs not to hear from them again. The SNP MPs will not let people down. It's time to say no, a loud and proud no, to the weapons of mass destruction and instead invest that money in the next generation of children, not the next generation of nuclear weapons. (Nicola Sturgeon, 6th of May, speech on the Mound, Edinburgh, from authors notes).*

A few days later, the SNP manifesto for 2015 was launched. In it, the SNP states: "And we'll stand up for Scotland's best interests. We always do" (SNP Manifesto 2015: 07).

Introduction

Scottish nationalism has gained great public support that began to take off during the referendum, much due to the success of the Scottish National Party (SNP). Under Alex Salmond's leadership, the SNP and the independence movement established a state of unrest during the referendum, in other words the independence movement barked and the sounds were heard loud and clear by Westminster. The barking was annoying, unfortunate and needed to be addressed, but this is nothing compared to the state of alarm that Nicola

Sturgeon brought with her leadership. With Sturgeon, Scottish nationalism and the independence movement became dangerous; the dog had started to bite.

In this chapter, I will examine the underlying and structuring values of Scottish nationalism that have facilitated and contributed to the immense popularity of the independence movement in Scotland. Sturgeon's speech which I have briefly presented above, is packed with deeply held cultural values which portray Scotland as egalitarian in opposition to the UK state that is cast as hierarchical. The different actors within the independence movement, including the SNP and my informants have thus succeeded in giving Scottish nationalism, the independence movement and the SNP a social-democratic identity which assumedly is based on egalitarian values. The egalitarian values' power lies largely in their pervasiveness and permeation within the Scottish society. The dominance of these egalitarian values can thus be seen as partly enabling a highly diverse and homogenous group of people to mobilise into a single movement and perform a variety of social practices that for their performers are viewed to comply with the egalitarian logic.

As such, Scottish nationalism can be seen as a variation of the ideology of egalitarian individualism which postulates equality between individuals at the same time as it values the particularity of each individual (Gullestad 2002, Kapferer and Morris 2003). The tensions and ambiguities that I grappled with in the previous chapter, concerning the ways in which my informants conceptualise and relate to Scottish nationalism and their national identities, are thus carried on into this chapter. Here, these tensions are played out by competing values as well as by the conflict between individual and collective interests. In essence, the tensions in this chapter derive from tension between the value of equality on the one hand, and the value of the individual on the other.

The values which I present in this chapter rest on the values my informants conveyed and expressed about Scottish nationalism and independence. Besides my informants' use of these values, I have also attended to the dominant values within Scottish society at large, represented by the general public discourse on Scottish nationalism and independence. In this public discourse, and by my informants' expressions and relations to Scottish nationalism and independence, some values were dominant and reoccurring, which reveal a tendency to emphasise values that convey egalitarian ideals. The most evoked amongst which is the value of equality, followed by the values of "fairness", "social justice", "democracy", "rights", "interests" and "progress".

As we saw in the previous chapter, the dominant values in Scotland were often contrasted to the hierarchy and social inequality that my informants attached to the UK, and in particular to England, which as we shall soon see, implied first and foremost London and Westminster. Bruce Kapferer and Barry Morris (2003) have argued that within the egalitarian logic, egalitarianism is contrasted to hierarchy. As such, social inequality is seen as incompatible with egalitarian ideals because it represents hierarchy, a judgement that echoes many of my informants' opinions. I believe this view is useful in order to understand the reoccurring statement *"Scottish interests are not being represented by the UK"* which my informants frequently made.

My informants as well as the general public's use of the values of "rights" and "interests" corresponds well with Anthony Cohen's assertion of them as important components in "the national discourse in Scotland" (2000: 154). Recall from the previous chapter Cohen's theory of personal nationalism which argues that people relate to the nation by choosing aspects of it that correspond and resonate with their personal identities and life histories. This connection of the individual to the nation, is according to Cohen, made through the medium of the concepts of "rights" and "interests" (2000: 154). In this chapter, I will thus build on the previous chapter's engagement with Cohen's term of personal nationalism. However, I also introduce another of Cohen's concepts: "peripherality". Peripherality is concerned with the theme of centre/periphery, according to which each individual understands their worlds from a particular perspective (Cohen 2000). The centre/periphery theme was pervasive in the discourse of Scottish nationalism and independence, according to which Scotland was perceived as peripheral in relation to the UK's political centre of London.

Although I greatly appreciate Cohen's work, and find his discussion of the concepts of rights and interests, and peripherality under the frame of the theory of personal nationalism to correspond with my empirical material, there is one significant point in which I strongly disagree. I do not agree with Cohen's assessment of Scottish nationalism which he makes in his bold statement:

> "Other than at the eccentric extremes of the nationalist spectrum, we are not dealing with racial dogma or with an ideology of national destiny and its fulfilment. Insofar as it has a political philosophy, Scottish nationalism is about individual rights, among which the right to 'self-determination' is regarded as paramount" (Cohen 2000: 147).

The first thing I find problematic with this statement, is the overemphasis on individual rights. My informants argued on behalf of collective interests to a far greater extent than focusing on individual rights and interests. The dominant focus on the value of "equality" also points towards a concern with collective interests, which does not agree with Cohen's claim of Scottish nationalism essentially being about *individual* rights. Secondly, I find Cohen's assertive denial of any "racial dogma" or any aspects of "an ideology of national destiny and its fulfilment" simplifying the contextual complexity (2000: 147). As Marianne Gullestad (2002) has argued in her article "Invisible Fences: Egalitarianism, Nationalism and Racism", the deeply rooted belief in egalitarian ideals and values may conceal social practices that produce and reproduce social inequality, amongst which "racial dogma" may be a component.

The dominance of the value of equality, I argue, shows significant similarities between Gullestad's assessment of the use and meaning of the concept of "equality" in the Norwegian context and my own ethnography. Although Gullestad speaks of the particularity of the Norwegian meaning of equality as being both "of equal value" and "being the same", I argue that this can fruitfully be applied to the Scottish context. The time spent with the SNP branch provided ample examples of how the SNP canvassers emphasised things they had in common at the expense of their differences. Likewise, arguments emerging from the public discourse on Scottish nationalism and independence, emphasised collective commonalities, which consequently concealed significant differences.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will show which values were used by my different informants, how these values were deployed and what meaning they carried. I argue that the value of equality is the paramount and dominant value in Scottish nationalism and the independence movement. As already mentioned, the collective belief in the value of equality does not necessarily reflect actual equality within the Scottish society. In the last section of this chapter, I will therefore problematize the notion of equality by pointing at social practices that illustrate inequalities in the Scottish context.

"A man o' independent mind"[12]

Inside a Starbucks, sheltered from the rain outside, I sit with Patrick, a young man I have met through the SNP branch I participated in. Patrick is in his 30s, has a Master's Degree in

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[12] A line from Robert Burn's poem "Is There For Honest Poverty", also known as "A Man's a Man for a' that" (1795).

Computer Science and is the campaign leader of a smaller SNP branch in the southern area of Edinburgh. He had joined our central branch because he had completed canvassing in his own area. Patrick is from Aberdeen, the oil capital of Scotland in the northeast. Patrick believes it is important to vote in elections, but before the referendum, he had not been involved with any political parties. In this respect, Patrick is accord with most of my other informants, who actively engaged in politics only after the referendum. In the referendum, Patrick attended public meetings and had joined the SNP. In the general election he wanted to devote even more of his time by becoming the campaign leader of an SNP branch in Edinburgh. When I asked Patrick why he became involved in the SNP, and the reasons for his wish for independence, he tells me:

> It's very easy to go, and I have this debate with my dad quite often, "Scotland's natural state is being its own country". Which I don't think is the right way at looking at it. It was a long time ago, it was 308 years ago, and the Scotland that exists now is very different from Scotland that existed then. And it also ignores the fact that there's a lot of shared culture and shared history with the rest of the UK.

In this statement, Patrick assumedly diverges from other SNP canvassers by rejecting Scotland's historic statehood as a legitimate reason for independence now. In contrast, Gordon for instance, has stated and expressed on numerous occasions that Scottish independence is rightful precisely because of Scotland's history as an independent country. But as we have seen in the previous chapter, people's relation to Scottish nationalism is full of contradictions and ambiguities. Pragmatic reasons are therefore coupled with nationalistic sentiments, often in the very same conversation. Soon after Patrick dismisses historic arguments as the basis for independence, he claims that "Scotland has always been a bit different", and explains why:

> It goes back hundreds of years. For example, the monarchs in Scotland were always called queens and kings of Scots, and not the king of Scotland. Whereas it is the king or queen of England. The distinction was that (in Scotland) the monarchs served the people, and didn't own the land. In England, the monarchs own the land and were served by the people. This is an important distinction.
>
> And you see that in the writing of Robert Burns. He in 1700s, writing that "A man's a man an' a' that", meaning: everyone's the same. And these egalitarian ideals seem to have permeated in Scotland and to a greater extent than in the UK. There is a different idea of what's fair in Scotland and I think it permeates into political ideas as well. It

[idea of what's fair] has expanded throughout the centuries with the rising of not only the SNP, but also the labour movement. I don't think it's a coincidence that a lot of big thinkers in the labour movement who were fighting for social justice throughout the 20th century were Scots. The idea of social justice, the Scottish idea of fairness is at the heart of the independence movement.

In his remark, Patrick claims that egalitarian ideals seem to have permeated in Scotland, and by evoking Robert Burn's poem "A man's a man an' a' that", he indicates that this permeation of egalitarian ideals result in the idea of "everyone being the same". This is precisely the value of equality which I argue is dominant and widely applied by my informants and by Scottish nationalism. In this context, equality as Patrick uses the term here conveys the meaning of "equal value" (Gullestad 2002), which gives rise to the emphasis on social justice and fairness which Patrick sees as distinctive "Scottish ideas".

Patrick's girlfriend is from Liverpool in England, and although she does not agree with Scottish independence, Patrick tells me that she shares his ideals of equality and fairness. Whereas for Patrick, Scottish independence would entail a step towards a realisation of policies in accord with the values of equality, fairness and social justice, for his girlfriend, Scottish independence is perceived as a rupture in the commonalities she believes the north of England shares with Scotland:

I was having this conversation with my girlfriend. She is very uninterested in politics; she tolerates me talking about it. But she is not a big fan of the idea of independence in Scotland. Purely because to her it feels like her home being abandoned to the south of England. She sees Liverpool and Manchester, the north of England, to have far more in common with Scotland than they do with London. Scotland keeps the UK slightly balanced, so if Scotland is not there, the Conservatives will get total governance. She was brought up with the idea of the UK, and it was Britain.

What Patrick and his girlfriend, as well as most of my other informants agree upon, is the view of Scotland as egalitarian in contrast to the political centre of the UK which is conservative and hierarchical. This is amply conveyed in the phrase "Scotland keeps the UK slightly balanced". However, in contrast to his English girlfriend, Patrick argues that his own upbringing did not reinforce an idea of the UK as his home country. On the contrary, he expresses having had a sense of Scotland "being a little bit different from the rest of the UK" ever since childhood. For him, independence is far from alien, but rather quite reasonable:

Being brought up in Scotland, you always have a sense that Scotland is this thing and it's a little bit different from the rest of the UK. Being brought up in Aberdeen, you spoke about being Scottish 90 percent of the time and it was very rare to speak about being British. So there was very much a more Scottish focus. For me thinking about Scotland as a separate country comes more naturally than for my girlfriend. Whilst for her, it wouldn't even have crossed her mind as a possibility. Her country is the United Kingdom, she wouldn't think of it as Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland being a separate country is very alien to her.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, some of my informants were in fact English. Sherry, the campaign leader of the branch I participated in, answered that she was from Yorkshire when I asked her whether she was English. The way in which Sherry punctuated her answer clearly demonstrated that she did not associate the north of England with "England" as a whole. For Sherry, and indeed many of the other SNP canvassers, "Englishness" was first and foremost associated with London and the (UK) state. The north of England, Yorkshire in the case of Sherry and Liverpool in the case of Patrick's girlfriend were understood as having more in common with Scotland than with "England", namely London.

The concept of "peripherality" might be highly relevant in this regard. According to Cohen, peripherality is a significant feature of Scottish nationalism: "The advocate for nationalism can equate distance with neglect, geographical distance with political powerlessness; can contrast the authentic values of the peripheral stateless nation with the vacuity and the superficiality of the metropolitan centre" (Cohen 2000: 148). Although Cohen speaks exclusively about Scotland's political and geographical position, I believe the same principle can be applied to all of the localities within the UK. The North of England, as it is conveyed by my informants, is regarded as neglected by the "metropolitan centre" of London, precisely in the same manner as Scotland is perceived as peripheral to and neglected by the same centre. The further away from the political centre, the more I believe my non-Scottish informants were inclined to focus on similarities between Scotland and those British regions that were perceived as "peripheral" to London.

How people relate and understand the relations amongst the different regions of the UK, is indeed influenced by the centre/periphery configuration. Cohen argues that "The self's view of the world is perspectival as well as symbolic" (Cohen 2000: 164). Being English is therefore not in and of itself a hindrance to take a stance in favour of independence. In Sherry's perspective, her personal identity as an ordinary woman from Yorkshire, who holds

equality in the highest esteem, enables her to associate with Scottish nationalism and disassociate with London. Her focus on equality or egalitarianism, legitimises her involvement in the independence movement, which she relates to by focusing on the commonalities she shares with Scottish nationalism and the independence movement from her specific position.

Scottish Pragmatism and the meaning of Democracy

In addition to "fairness" and "social justice" which Patrick spoke of, the values of "pragmatism" and "democracy" were clearly expressed by some of my other informants. Recall Debra from the previous chapter. The highly politically active and engaged Scottish woman in her 60s, who despite her rejection of nationalist influences in her sole association with "internationalism", expresses strong beliefs in the imagined community of the Scots. When asked to explain why she thinks the Scottish people want independence, she answers that "Scots have always been pragmatic", further expanding:

> Scottish people have always been internationalists, they have populated the world. Everyone has relatives overseas. Scotland has inventors, engineers; we look for solutions to problems. This is also the thought behind the referendum: a pragmatic solution to a tangible problem, and not a romantic wish to a dream of sovereignty. That is why the mood of the referendum has not gone away.

What the statement points at is the belief that the Scottish people are less concerned with romantic wishes than with concrete and tangible opportunities. It is on par with Patrick's belief that Scots are concerned with fairness and social justice, a concern which for Debra manifests in social practices of pragmatic nature, or in her words "solutions to tangible problems". Whilst Patrick and the other SNP canvassers solve these tangible problems by campaigning on behalf of the SNP in order to help elect the party which they believe will respect Scottish values, Debra has chosen a slightly different path. She views the SNP as too populistic to realise the significant changes needed in Scotland, which she holds that the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) can manage. As we saw in the previous chapter, Debra considers herself a socialist, and beliefs in "radical change and revolutions". In practice though, during the referendum and the general election, Debra has been canvassing for the SNP.

My informants evaluated pragmatism in a positive manner, and contrasted it to their negative evaluation of "romanticism". Debra articulated this by stating that Scottish nationalism is "not about bagpipes and kilts". The SNP members and the many people I spoke to during canvassing, expressed similar views by conjuring up the value of democracy. Accordingly, independence was sought after because it implied democracy, as opposed to the political and governing system of the UK, which was thought of as "inherently undemocratic". Whereas democracy was positively associated with Scottish nationalism, and in fact Scottishness per se, the UK was perceived as "undemocratic" and hierarchical. This point was made to me on several different occasions and by different individuals. One of the few times I canvassed with Brenda, we knocked on a front door of a residential building at the foot of Arthur's seat[13]. We were welcomed in by a couple in their mid-50s who seemed pleased and eager to speak with us as soon as we introduced ourselves on the behalf of the SNP. Still in their morning robes on that Saturday morning, the husband said after hearing that I was a student from Norway;

> The UK political system and elections are not democratic! I would like to see a system where the majority of people vote and decide. I'm sick to death not to have an input. I used to be a Labour man, politically active, as my father before me. But Labour is Tories in disguise. I haven't left Labour, Labour's left me (..). There's only one conservative MP in Scotland. (..) When they're not happy with the results, they just change the borders[14] (..). I've been a Labour man all my life. My father was a labour man.

"Scottish rights and interests"

The feeling that "Scottish interests" were not being represented by the current UK government were widespread amongst the many people I met during canvassing with the SNP branch. Similar attitudes were also expressed by my other informants. The music shop assistant, art student and musician Charlie, for instance, gave the impression that he was very suspicious of politicians and conservative, neo-liberal policies of the UK government:

> I don't trust MPs. Tony Ben from Labour was left wing, stood up for the people. The Green Party should have more of a say. Spin doctors write speeches for politicians. It would be better with smaller parties. Green party has a different agency. Westminster is

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[13] Arthur's seat is the highest peak of a group of hills which lie in Holyrood Park, in central Edinburgh.
[14] Referring to the boundaries of constituencies in Edinburgh.

for rich people and is run by rich people. They all come from money. They don't stand for what we (the general public) stand for. The referendum, it just got really insane for a while. More people got interested in politics because of the referendum.

More often than not, my informants would evoke the concepts of rights and interest in their efforts to legitimise both their stance in favour of independence, and the choice on a collective level. This right was asserted as Scotland's right to nationhood and statehood, and was less used to denote my informants' personal rights. The emphasis on the notion and value of rights, as it is used by my informants, is thus in agreement with Cohen's claim that Scottish nationalism is largely articulated through "the language of rights" (Cohen 1996: 811). Independence, as well as the general SNP support was understood as first and foremost being in the best interests of the Scottish people. However, although most of my informants agreed upon what they understood as collective interests, in reality, and particularly amongst the SNP canvassers, their individual rights and interests would at times collide with those of the collective.

"I didn't sign up for this!"

In instances of disagreement, when the imagined community of the SNP members was not perceived as coherent, the tensions between collective rights and interests collided with individual rights and interests. These tensions were made clear to me during a pub meeting with the SNP members. One evening closer to the election day, Brenda entered the door flustered with two large bags of SNP pamphlets and posters. As the partner of the campaign leader (Sherry), Brenda experienced taking on more responsibilities than she wanted. On this particular day, Sherry was sick and bedridden, so everyone who usually called and texted Sherry for directions and advice, were now calling Brenda. Unlike Sherry, Brenda seemed shy and did not like to draw much attention to herself. On arrival at the pub after a round of canvassing, Brenda put the two heavy bags of pamphlets and leaflets down on the table and sighed.

Brenda expressed dissatisfaction with the situation in which she had been given more workload than anticipated. In terms of the concepts of rights and interests, Brenda's personal rights and interests to manage her own amount of work in the campaign, collided with the collective interests in which at times she needed to be able to overtake Sherry's responsibilities. The ability and freedom to choose to take part in social practices connected

to the independence movement were perceived as highly important by the SNP canvassers, who often made explicit their voluntary political contribution. This was often done by small statements that emphasised their voluntary status. Thus, the notion of "rights" is, as Cohen argues, not only applied in the context of Scottish nationalism, but also in people's rights to self-identity in other respects (Cohen 1996). In this light, I believe the reason why this episode threatened the integrity of the SNP canvassers and their branch, was that by Brenda clearly expressing a rejection of the responsibilities, she simultaneously presented the activities of the canvassers as something that *had* to be done, and thus as an activity without the element of choice and hence lacking the rights to self-determination (Cohen 2000).

Conflict of interests

This episode in which Brenda demonstrates a conflict between collective interests with her personal interests, simultaneously demonstrates the inherent tension between the value of equality and the importance of the value of the individual. Inherently, egalitarian individualism is prone to contradiction in its demand for equality and its strong valuation of the specificity of each individual (Gullestad 2002, Kapferer and Morris 2003). This tension is well described by Kapferer and Morris: "Egalitarian individualism insists on the fundamental equality of all human beings in nature, and represents social inequality (often described as hierarchy) as the contradiction of egalitarian ideals" (2003: 85). Brenda's articulation of her dissatisfaction with the situation in which her personal interests collided with the collective interests of the SNP branch, can be seen as an expression of the inherent tension between equality and individual rights and interests. These tensions between the values of equality and collective rights and interests on the one hand, and the value of the individual and individual rights and interests on the other hand, in extension also reveal an integral source for contradiction within Scottish nationalism.

Equality as sameness

Another significant tension within Scottish nationalism, can be found in the multiple meaning of the value and concept of equality itself. As we have already seen, many of my informants are concerned with the equality of all of their co-nationals. Patrick has conceptualised this concern by referring to the poet Robert Burns, whose poem he believes conveys the meaning of equality as "being of equal value". In the poem itself, the value of equality is indeed highly visible and particularly captured in the closing line: "That Man to Man the warld o'er/Shall

brithers be for a' that" (That man to man the world over/shall brothers be for all that, my translation) (Burns 2001 [1795]).

There is however, an adjacent or an alternative meaning of equality, which is also conveyed by Patrick's statement *"everyone is the same"*; namely equality as "sameness" or "likeness" (Gullestad 2002). As I have implied in the introduction, I find Gullestad's analysis of the concept of equality in the Norwegian context of immense significant for this thesis. According to Gullestad, equality denotes "being of equal value" and "being the same" in the Norwegian case, and although Gullestad explicitly claims of the Norwegian particularity of this twofold meaning of "equality", I argue that it is equally relevant in the Scottish context.

The first meaning itself, "being of equal value", already implies a relationship between individuals and their status as equal amongst each other. This is so because the meaning of "being equal" demands not only self-ascription, but the ascription of others to legitimise one's own self-definition (of being equal to others). Hence, to be deemed equal as another, the other must agree to the equality of each. As Gullestad argues: "In order to have their desired identities confirmed, people need relevant others who are able and willing to recognize and support them" (2002: 47). This, moreover, gives precipitates a specific interaction style.

Of equality as sameness, Gullestad further argues that this practice in which people must have their identities and qualities or values (of being of equal value and being deemed the same) confirmed by others, leads to "an interaction style in which commonalities are emphasized, while differences are played down" (2002: 47). During my fieldwork, I encountered various expressions which might point to the same process and situation as one described by Gullestad on the Norwegian meaning of equality. It became particularly clear within the SNP branch, where the members would constantly evoke things they had in common, and were reluctant to discuss significant differences which could potentially dispatch the sense of collectivity that they worked towards.

Equality as "sameness" and I add, "conformity", in Scotland, was clearly expressed by Brenda. Brenda comes from the Borders, an area in the South of Scotland. In many respects, Brenda would meet the requirements needed to be deemed more or less "the same" as her fellow nationals and locals in the Borders. In other respects, which I cannot recount here for privacy reasons, she stood out in the small community which she comes from. According to Brenda, there is a cultural norm in Scotland that postulates that no one should stick out and

think they are better than anyone else. On growing up in the Borders in the 1970s and 80s, Brenda said she felt she did not comply with the demands posed to her, and felt uneasy about what she considered to be a small town mentality: "Everyone always knows everything, I just couldn't stand it anymore". She moved to Edinburgh, and states that "there is more freedom here. People don't care that much here; you can be yourself". One such context where "you can be yourself", must be the local SNP branch in which Brenda actively participated.

The SNP members' negotiation of similarities and differences

The SNP members were actively involved in creating and maintaining the idea that they were in fact similar in the most crucial respects and that their goals, morals and values in life in general, and for the nation of Scotland in particular, converged. Except for the couple Sherry and Brenda, none of the canvassers knew each other prior to the general election campaign of 2015. In fact, apart from their shared values and political opinions, they had very little in common in terms of social, economic and sometimes national backgrounds. Although the majority considered themselves to be Scottish, and were as they proudly said "born and bred" in Scotland, some like Sherry, were not Scottish nationals. They all had different educational levels, some with Master's degrees such as Patrick and a few others, and some with no higher education such as Gordon. Most of them were somewhere in the middle, with undergraduate degrees. In terms of occupation, they differed greatly. Some were hand labourers, others worked in customer service, and others had office jobs.

The SNP members developed an implicit guideline for their mutual interaction in which they downplayed their differences and focused on their similarities, which I believe points at "equality" implying at least a degree of "sameness". In this respect, I argue that the efforts of the SNP members to establish similarities and common ground with each other, is relatable to what Gullestad (2002) has called "imagined sameness". Imagined sameness describes the interaction style in which commonalities are emphasised and differences downplayed, in the process the imagined sameness is not easily identified precisely because the interaction style leads to a rejection or denial of differences (2002: 46-47). The active avoidance or rejection of differences further reinforced the perception and view of "actual" sameness, because, as already stated; "sameness cannot always be observed but is, rather, a style that focuses on sameness" (2002: 47).

The specific ways in which similarities were emphasised and expressed, occurred through certain techniques and unfolded in the specific space of the pub. After finishing their

activities and practice of either canvassing or holding street stalls, the SNP members met in a local pub. The formal function of these pub meetings was to exchange experiences of the day's work. But the pub's significance for the SNP members exceeded this formal function because the pub meetings also functioned as a space whereby the members could create a social and moral bond between themselves. The regularity of the pub meetings after rounds or street stalls established a routine which became part of the canvassers' everyday lives.

The conversation topics reinforced their perceived similarities by revolving around topics of mutual interest and agreement. The topic of the SNP's progress and the opposing parties were at the core of the pub life amongst the SNP canvassers. "Did you see the Leaders' Debate last night?" and how "Nicola (Sturgeon) triumphed" in it. Often the opposing politicians were ridiculed by the SNP canvassers. An ongoing joke was the "egging of Jim Murphy (Leader of Labour in Scotland and MP during the referendum)"[15]. "The only time Murphy got any press was when he was egged" they would tell me and laugh. Jim Murphy seemed to be the main person of ridicule, as he was seen as highly incapable; "Jim Murphy never answers questions" Brenda once said. In contrast, Nicola Sturgeon, whom the SNP canvassers found very capable, was revered for her honesty and directedness: "She did not shy away from difficult questions", and "She always managed to keep her head cool", as was often remarked by several of the canvassers.

Of course, the differences which the SNP canvassers continuously downplayed, were not extinguished, but rather ignored in order to cultivate a perception and sense of connection. Nor were SNP canvassers unaware of their mutual differences. In fact, their awareness of them was the very reason they emphasised on commonalities, in their pursuit of coherence. The SNP canvassers' differences were strongest amongst two particular members. I would often hear them make remarks targeted at each other, but only in instances when each was absolutely certain of the other's absence. They would say something like "how can he be so unorganised?". In contrast, the "unorganised" canvasser would say, when the subject of his concern was not present: "you can't always plan things, I find it best to take things as they come". Whenever the community of the group was challenged by an emphasis on their differences, as in the instance of Brenda's complaint described earlier in this chapter or the

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[15] On a campaign tour in Kirkcaldy during the referendum, a man in support for independence asked Jim Murphy the question "What do you have against democracy?", and did not get an answer. The man then bought eggs which he threw at Murphy.

disagreements between the two canvassers, the group suffered a hit which they immediately had to heal in order to remain as a group.

So when Brenda said "I didn't sign up for this! I was just going to canvass, not administrate", the response was to immediately shift conversation over to something that was perceived as positive for all members of the group; "*Well,* I've had good results today" Patrick said. Then, Gordon said proudly "the people who we have spoken to, *make the move*". By not acknowledging Brenda's complaint and association of canvassing activity with something tedious, and by instead shifting the focus on the positive effects of canvassing, the group could remove the threat by simply not acknowledging it as legitimate. They thus managed a potential threat of overt differences of interests by turning it into a conversation which focused on their commonalities. In terms of the concept of interests, this re-configuration of the situation, moved the activity of canvassing back into the domain of free choice in which it was simultaneously perceived as in the interests of the individual SNP members. This performance by the SNP members thus maintained the imagined sameness of their group.

The dark side of equality?

As we have seen, Scottish nationalism rests upon and uses certain values which I argue derive from the egalitarian logic, as a constitutive part of Scottish nationalism. I have identified dominant values of "equality", "fairness", "social justice", "pragmatism", "democracy", "rights" and "interests". These values, as they are understood and used by my informants, contribute to a view of Scottish nationalism as egalitarian and inclusive, as opposed to a more traditionalist nationalism in which ethnicity and origin are important criteria for group entrance. As I have shown, the notion of equality has become insolubly tied to Scottish nationalism and national identity, to the extent to which, I argue, that it conceals practices of social inequality. However, the egalitarian language of Scottish nationalism should not be taken at face value as the actual lack of "traditional nationalist" influences, attitudes, morals and values. The egalitarian logic on which Scottish nationalism is based, by its focus on similarities and avoidance of differences, might conceal actual inequalities, whilst "equality" as a dominant concept that has become a popular characteristic of Scotland, might obscure diversity in opinion. In the case of Norway, this process is what Gullestad (2002) summarises in her title of "Invisible Fences". The title denotes the consequences of an interaction style based on imagined sameness which avoids differences, and in so doing, conceals differences and social inequality. The results of which, are "invisible fences" in the society that people

raise up in their mutual avoidance of each other, which furthermore are maintaining social inequalities (Gullestad 2002).

Such practices that create and maintain invisible fences, and hence reproduce social inequalities can also be found in the Scottish context. In light of this, I wish to highlight a tendency one SNP informant exhibited during canvassing. Sherry, with whom I most often canvassed, sometimes made remarks during our rounds that did not correspond with her overall presentation of Scottish nationalism as "inclusive". On our rounds in the central area of the city, we walked passed countless number of doors with name signs of the residents who lived there. Sometimes, but not always, when we passed a door with a non-English name, particularly names of assumedly non-Western origin, Sherry would say "Oh, they can't vote anyway" and "Let's be quick with them, don't need to waste leaflets on them, they're not interested". Meanwhile, she was quite determined to knock on every door that had English surnames. Another example is when I visited Gordon at his home to conduct a recorded interview. Gordon wanted to make tea, but had forgotten to buy the biscuits. When I offered to go and buy some, Gordon said "no worries, I'll just get it from the "Paki at the corner". Most likely, neither Sherry nor Gordon perceived their remarks as of any significance, which I find very interesting as it might point to the fact that making similar remarks are perhaps not uncommon or considered unaccepted. Such everyday remarks were expressed in a common-sense and taken for granted way, perhaps without an idea of their implications and indication. The common-sense way in which Sherry and Gordon expressed such attitudes, which could easily be denoted as having racist undertones or implications, are thus worth investigating.

Contrary to Cohen's assertion of Scottish nationalism as virtually devoid of "racial dogma" other than at "the eccentric extremes" (2000: 147), these remarks point at the existence of sentiments and views associated with "traditionalist nationalism" where ethnicity plays a role. The dominance of the value of equality in the Scottish society and nationalism, may have blurred such elements. In the last section of this chapter, I wish to give voice to a young Scottish man, who has expressed his opinion of Scottish nationalism and the SNP by the qualities that the popular view argues are absent in Scottish nationalism and the independence movement; namely exclusive and hostile sentiments, attitudes and practices.

A counter-narrative

James, a Scottish man in his early 30s, was the manager of a charity book shop in a busy

Edinburgh street where I volunteered. James is originally from Stirling, a city in central Scotland, and has a Master's degree in English literature. The impression I had of James, was that he was politically left-wing, this was purely based on my interpretation of him due to his interests and attitudes, and his appearance. James was the man in black; slim, dark-haired and dressed in smart black clothes, Doc Martens boots and thick framed glasses. He appeared clean, sleek and seamless, like a character from a film-noir. I prematurely judged him according to my own associations with his appearance. Another important quality James inhabited, was that he could hold good conversation and was neither too self-focused or indifferent. This composure in conversation, was perhaps due to his disinclination to reveal his own opinions too quickly, a tendency, which as we have seen, many of my informants exhibited. But one day in the book shop, when things were quiet and no customer had made their way in to the store, I asked him about the referendum, independence and the SNP. To this, James said:

> The SNP evokes distrust in me, they appeal to people's self-image and identity. Scottish people like to portray themselves as more tolerant, more left-wing, more socialist than the English, but that's rubbish. The SNP likes to present itself as progressive and future oriented, but it's unlikely to work on the Scottish people; they're just as intolerant and racist if not more than the rest of the UK. The SNP is very extrovert, which is a quality I don't appreciate. The flipside of the SNP is anti-English and anti-intellectual. The intellectual aspect or quality is connected with the English and social differences are connected to social class.

James's personal identity very much builds on "the intellectual" which according to him, the SNP rejects on account that "it is not considered Scottish", as he explained. In light of the double meaning of equality, James expressed a reluctance and unwillingness to comply with the meaning of equality as "sameness" (Gullestad 2002). Because he draws a substantial part of his identity from the aspect of "the intellectual" which he claims is associated with "the English", he does not express any sense of being "the same as" my other Scottish informants.

Furthermore, James feels denied the self-ascription to his own identity, in Cohen's terms, James' right to self-identify is threatened, which for him is *both Scottish and British*" (Cohen 2000). Expanding on this, James argues that he was raised in Britain, and is culturally as much British as he is Scottish, because for him there is a "continuity of identity", as he puts it, in which "the British and Scottish have shared touchstones". Recall Patrick's

statement where his upbringing in Aberdeen was expressed as a part of his belief in Scotland's distinctiveness, and partly explained his reasons for wanting independence. Both James and Patrick are about the same age and both are brought up in Scotland, albeit in different parts. Interestingly, the way they use their upbringing as an argument in relation to Scottish independence is completely opposite, as James views his upbringing as a reason to stay within the union. Although the case of James challenges certain claims of Scottish nationalism, it also complies with the concepts of personal nationalism and the concept of "rights (to)". What James is most strongly provoked by, is what he considers to be an attack and a limitation of his own identity. The rejection to accommodate British identity alongside Scottish identity by the SNP and the independence movement in general, is understood as a narrowing of James's freedom and right to self- identify as both.

Contrary to my other informants, James does not associate exclusively positive qualities with Scottishness and Scottish nationalism. On the contrary, James believes that Scottish values are, as he says "narrow-minded" compared with British values that he describes as "more inclusive". James explicitly criticises and challenges the common beliefs of the Scots as being more egalitarian and thus less hierarchical, tolerant (implicitly meaning less racist) and more progressive. This critique and the assertion that the Scots are in fact as "racist and intolerant" as the Scots assume the English to be, challenges Cohen's claim of Scottish nationalism being more civic and liberal than ethnic and racial (Cohen 2000). It also reveals contested opinions and views of the notions of "democracy" and "egalitarianism" which Cohen, along with many other scholars of Scotland, attach to Scottish nationalism in distinguishing it from other nationalisms elsewhere (McCrone 1989, Cohen 2000).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on dominant values within Scottish nationalism and the independence movement. I have argued that the value of equality is perceived as the most important. I have found Marianne Gullestad's analysis of the notion of equality in the Norwegian context as consisting of the double meaning of "being of equal value" and "being the same" to shed light unto the context of Scotland. I have argued that this double meaning of equality is present also in Scotland, where equality is perceived not only as equality between individuals, but is also based on a presumption of a fundamental similarity or likeness amongst these individuals. The dominance of the value and notion of equality, as it is understood by my informants and the society at large, results in the emphasis on similarities

at the expense of differences and diversity. The darker side of this process results in a demand for conformity and a concealment of actual inequalities, as well as practices and views that reinforce social inequalities.

This demand for conformity, or sameness is further condemned by a few of my informants, represented in this chapter by James. I believe the case with James clearly demonstrates that although the egalitarian image of Scottish nationalism is pervasive, it is by no means an absolute characteristic that is shared by all within the Scottish society, as my limited number of informants manage to illustrate. This chapter has thus followed up some of the arguments made in the preceding chapter about the character of Scottish nationalism and independence movement, but from the point of view of dominant Scottish values. In the next chapter, we shall continue the thread by looking at how the values discussed here affect people's social practices, and how they in sum, result in people's conceptualisations of the future.

Chapter 4: The Social Practice of Hope: Values and Action

Figure 4 The SNP canvassers holding a street stall. Photo by author.

One February morning I was running late for my first meeting with the local SNP branch that became one of my main field arenas. As I rushed from my home in the New Town, leaving the clean neo-classical and Georgian buildings of the late 18th century behind me, I stepped into a somewhat older world of narrow cobbled streets, cathedrals, closes and even a castle. Alongside these remnants of Edinburgh's past, were reminders, in the form of shops, cafes, restaurants, businesses, and the re-appearing image of the white and blue poster depicting the white cross on a crisp blue background; the Saltire flag with the giant letters spelling: "YES" which decorated the residential windows of the city, all confirmed that I was in fact in the post-referendum, 21st century Edinburgh.

The woman from the local SNP branch called me while I was on my way, asking if I was still planning to come, and said they would wait for me outside of Tesco Metro on Nicholson Street. When I finally arrived, the SNP members had begun to move towards their rounds to

canvass. The pathways on both sides of Nicholson Street are full to the brim at all times of the day, but despite this it was not difficult to detect who I was meeting. Like a small army, the SNP members were covered with SNP paraphernalia, and high-visibility vests in neon yellow with the black logo of the SNP on the back. I gently tapped the shoulder of the one furthest back in the group and asked her whether she was Sherry. She turned and said yes and that they were all going canvassing and that I could come along with her.

Introduction

People such as those I met on that February morning constituted a nation-wide movement in the general election of 2015; active, creative and engaged people out in the streets, performing social practices that are linked to their visions of, and aspirations for, the future of Scotland. Many of whom, had been active in the referendum campaign in favour of a "yes" vote. Although the SNP and its members represent a major part of the independence movement, it also engaged and involved a wide range of other individuals and factions in Scottish society, such as artists, political commentators and people not affiliated with the SNP. Thus, the independence movement is not so much a project of the SNP as it is a project of the people. In this chapter I draw on the work of Edward Fischer, who argues of the importance of "larger purposes" in people's pursuits of the "the good life" or "wellbeing": "Life satisfaction also depends on doing something meaningful with one's life – having aspirations and hope[...]" (2014: 209). I thus agree with David Graeber's similar assertion that "human fulfilment can be related to the satisfaction derived from working for the common good" (2011: 186). I argue that the independence movement represents such a "larger purpose" in the Scottish context, as a part of people's strife towards "the good life".

I contend that the independence movement's success was that it connected people's values and aspirations for the future into a concrete public movement and thus provided a larger purpose beyond individual's self-interests (Graeber 2011, Fischer 2014). This chapter concerns two central themes; actions and values, and their mutual interconnectedness. The premise on which these questions arise, is furthermore that people are concerned with notions of the good (Graeber 2001, 2011, Fischer 2014, Robbins 2015). In the Scottish context, the important value is the value of hope, which not only made people's aspirations imaginable in the foreseeable future, but also allowed people to express their agency and creativity. My central claim in this chapter is that the independence movement inspired people to act in

ways which are in accordance with their beliefs about the world they live in and the one they would like to live in, and more importantly, a world which they themselves can be part of creating.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, although many of my informants initially denied an association with Scottish nationalism, they strongly believed in Scottish distinctiveness. This distinctiveness, along with their arguments for independence were rooted in the ideology of egalitarianism and expressed through an emphasis on certain values. The dominant values being "equality", "fairness", "social justice", "pragmatism", "rights" and "interests", along with "democracy". This chapter looks at how values affect people's actions. In so doing I draw on the work of David Graeber (2001), who views values as "[…] the way in which actions become meaningful to the actor by being incorporated in some larger, social totality—even if in many cases the totality in question exists primarily in the actor's imagination" (2001: xii). I find Graeber's definition compelling as it acknowledges the intricate interplay and interconnectedness between values and actions. In so doing, people's creativity and agency is validated, and their values and aspirations towards the good life are taken seriously.

The social movement

The interplay between values and actions in the Scottish context, has led me to connect Graeber's assessment of values and Fischer's concept of larger purposes with Arturo Escobar's (1992) analysis of social movements. According to Escobar (1992) social movements are social practices which create meaning and are part of producing the worlds we live in. This meaning-creation is further enabled by the formation of spaces in which alternative discourses can challenge the dominant discourse/hegemony (Escobar 1992: 408). I view the independence movement itself as an emergent space where the alternative discourse on Scottish independence was articulated. By this discourse, people could express their dissatisfaction with the UK government and its policies, which my informants often termed "status quo". But as importantly, the independence movement (re)presented the value, and hence possibility, of *hope*, which I believe explains some of the movement's appeal and hence its successful mobilisation.

Many of my informants' perception of Scotland as egalitarian and social democratic, was contrasted with their renderings of the UK state as hierarchical. Whereas many of my informants understood independence a positive progress for Scotland because it was

perceived as a development towards social democracy and the (imagined) fulfilment of egalitarian values and ideals, the UK government and state was perceived as an opposition and threat to Scottish values and ideals[16]. The perception which condemned the perceived hierarchy represented by the UK state, and the view of Scotland as being more egalitarian existed prior to the independence movement. However, the space which the independence movement brought, connected together, permitted and facilitated a collective, reinforced articulation and demonstration of these views, which ultimately mobilised into a public, social movement, and gave its participants a larger life purpose (Fischer 2014).

Escobar links social movements to the state of crisis and struggle and argues that social movements "[...] orient themselves towards the constitution of new orders" which can replace the established world order (1992: 396). With the "new orders" comes "the formation of novel collective identities" (1992: 396). Undoubtedly, the Scottish independence movement attempted to reconfigure Scotland's political status, and with this attempt it can be argued that the movement constitutes a vision of a new order. I hesitate to extend this attempt to constitute the formation of "novel collective identities" (1992: 396). Rather I suggest that the independence movement builds on pre-existing and popular conceptions of Scottishness. My informants evoked and reproduced existing conceptions of Scottish identity in their own articulation of national distinctiveness, particularly by using egalitarian values such as "equality" and "democracy" in their depictions of the nation and its nationals. Social practices were similarly viewed through these dominant values. For instance, the SNP members performed their activities in accord with the value of "pragmatism". The novelty which Escobar links to social movements, is in the case of the Scottish independence movement, linked to people's ideas and practices of *hope*.

The practice of hope

Among the many different social practices within the independence movement, I argue that the social practice directly deriving from the value of hope was of immense importance. Hope is a source by which people may draw meaning to their individual lives and their particular futures. On a collective level and as a social practice, hope demonstrates the capacity to bring people together in a larger purpose with a collective view of an imagined future (Fischer 2014). Following Graeber's definition of values, I contend that the value of hope was directly involved in the meaningful performance of certain social practices. On this

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[16] This point is further developed in the upcoming section: "The legacy of Thatcherism"

collective level and as a larger purpose, the importance of hope in the independence movement lies in its capacity to transform emotion to social practice.

Hope's capacity to transform or affect social change, demonstrates its multifunctional powers and forms, hence it has the ability to be a value, a practice, and "a mode of existence" (Pedersen and Liisberg 2015: 1). According to Mattingly and Jensen; "Hope is a *practice* rather than merely an emotion, belief, or cultural model that members of a community simply enact, feel, or espouse." (2015: 38, original emphasis). Viewed this way, hope concerns imaginings of the future, but in ways which are embedded in particular cultural value-systems and moral judgements, which in and of themselves are part of influencing social actions and practices in that particular culture (Pedersen and Liisberg 2015). In the Scottish context, as we have seen, the cultural value-system on which moral judgements are largely based, derives from the ideology of egalitarianism.

A contribution to the "Anthropology of the Good"

This chapter's focus on people's sense of hope and their aspirations, actions and social practices is an answer to the call made by Joel Robbins (2015) to move beyond a one-sided focus on human suffering, and "towards an anthropology of the good". The aim of such an anthropology of the good, as Robbins clarifies, is not to find and define "the universally good", but rather to present the different ways people in different places "[…] organize their personal and collective lives in order to foster what they think of as good" (2015: 457). I believe Robbins' preposition to be on par with Graeber's view of values, Fischer's concept of larger purposes and Escobar's assessment of social movements. The consensus of these different works, is the argument that people's actions and social practices are directly affected by people's values and aspirations. As such, the social change which people are striving for, is intimately connected to people's ideas about the good life and their aspirations for the future.

The backdrop to Robbins' (2015) plea, is his understanding of anthropology as working within certain frameworks, the current being what he terms "the suffering slot" in which the anthropological subject is largely depicted and understood as "suffering". The suffering slot tends to focus on the "universal quality of trauma" by the depiction of people "[…] in pain, in poverty, or under conditions of violence or oppression" (Robbins 2015: 448, 453). The emphasis on cross-cultural commonalities, Robbins argues, results in a neglect of cultural diversity, and a failure to acknowledge people's agency and their efforts at bettering their

conditions (2015: 447-48). Escobar's emphasis on struggle as a condition for the creation of social movements, might, at first glance, appear as following what Robbins has termed "the suffering slot". However, I view Escobar's work as compatible within a potential anthropology of the good because, despite his focus on struggle, his crucial point and emphasis is on social movements' creative and transformative capacities. Escobar (1992), along with Graeber (2001, 2011, 2013) and Fischer (2014), critically attend to people's concrete social practices which are seen as able to change and transform conditions of struggle into more desirable states. This power which people possess as part of social movements, is both enabled by the use of, and beliefs in, values as part of collective, larger purposes.

I am inclined to agree with Robbins' on the majority of his points. Likewise, I am of the conviction that people's perceptions and imaginings of what they deem as good have real effects in and on their lives. The Scottish independence movement, as I view it, is an ample example of how people's imaginings of the good manifest in concrete social practices on behalf of a larger purpose. A different approach in the study of the Scottish independence movement is, of course, possible. One which is in line with the suffering slot, and thus renders the situation in Scotland as one of struggle and despair. This however, does not do justice to the creative and active engagement of people in the independence movement, and their active efforts at changing their society.

The hopeful SNP canvassers

Come rain or sunshine, or not infrequently; hail, the SNP members would gather to canvass and hold street stalls in order to help the SNP get the most votes possible in the general election of 2015. During the many pub meetings I attended, the SNP members would frequently express their sense of hope in the recent political events in Scotland. Gordon for instance, once said "these are hopeful times", to which I noticed several of the other canvassers to affirm his remark by nodding and saying "aye, it is different times!". The sense of hope that the SNP canvassers expressed are linked to their imaginings of the good, both in the present and in the unknown future. These imaginings are about "a democratic Scotland" as several of the SNP canvassers stated. Their social practices become meaningful once connected to their imaginings and aspirations for the future, as part of a commitment to the larger purpose of independence (Graeber 2001, Fischer 2014). This meaningful connection

between values and social practices, enable and encourage people to actively make up their worlds, change them and meaningfully understand and act in them (Escobar 1992).

"Making the rounds"

Amongst my informants, it is particularly the SNP members that provide the most tangible examples of social practices, directly linked to the independence movement. Since meeting the SNP members for the first time in February, I was allowed to participate in their main activity of canvassing and was conveniently paired up with the campaign leader Sherry, the woman from Yorkshire. Canvassing was executed by pairing up two and two and being given a list over a specific residential area, called a *round*, within the central branch's jurisdiction. The rounds included names of all eligible voters who had not voted for the SNP in the previous election, or who simply were not SNP members. Next to the name of each resident, were three rubrics devoted to fill the following questions; 1) *"Which political party do you most identify with*, 2) *"What did you vote in the previous general election*, and 3) a blank space for *"other information"* such as whether the canvassers had managed to persuade the residents, and if so, they would write "yes" or "SNP". If the residents gave the impression of being undecided or "switherers[17]" as the SNP members called them, they would write "s" for "switherer". If the residents gave clear impression of not wanting to vote for the SNP, a "no" would denote this. Lastly, if the residents were not home at the time of canvassing, the SNP canvassers would write "away".

Canvassing was done quite effectively and had clearly defined goals. The aim was to speak with undecided voters or people who usually vote for other parties[18]. The speed of the canvassing was surprising. I had imagined that the SNP canvassers would appreciate speaking with the residents if they expressed a wish to learn more about the SNP and their local candidate. On the contrary, after the residents had answered the two questions on the list, Sherry either thanked them for their support in case they said they would be voting for the SNP, or thanked them for their time if they expressed a rejection of the SNP. Only in cases where the residents seemed unsure, would Sherry speak just a little longer, but even so, she was quick to grab a pamphlet we had with us with some information and give it to the undecided voters. Sherry always demonstrated this quality as she moved quickly from door to door. Many buildings in Edinburgh have a buzzer to let visitors into the building. Sherry

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[17] "Switherer" is a Scots word denoting "undecided", and hence "able to be persuaded".
[18] The SNP administration had a database over voting history of almost all eligible voters, which they would give to each SNP branch. I was never explained how the SNP got hold of this information in the first place.

asked me for the names of some people on the list, and as I gave it to her, she would call them. If they answered, she would say "Good morning, I'm here on the behalf of your local SNP candidate. Can you please let me in?". Usually Sherry used this approach at the beginning of a round, and as time went by she became inpatient, saying instead "Delivery". The first approach worked more often than not, while the latter always worked.

I once asked Sherry and the other SNP canvassers why they moved so quickly, and they unanimously said that they wanted to "cover as many streets as possible before the election day". Thus, the immense motivation and sense of hope which the canvassers expressed during pub meetings, was accompanied by their efficient and pragmatic execution of their main task of canvassing. As we have seen in the previous chapter, a collective emphasis on pragmatism was widespread, and rather than illustrating a "lack of passion" in their political beliefs and desires, I argue that the SNP canvassers' effectiveness and efficiency comes from their desire to effectively achieve their aspirations. These aspirations, are further intricately connected to the value of hope as a vision and image of the desired future (Mattingly and Jensen 2015).

The SNP canvassers' answer can also be understood in light of the general sense of urgency which the SNP canvassers attached to the general election. Patrick, the young computer scientist from Aberdeen, once said that "we have the momentum in our favour". Patrick was referring to the high support for independence during the referendum, which subsequently transcended into a support for the SNP in the general election of 2015. The SNP canvassers often expressed the opinion that the support for the SNP was larger now, post-referendum, than it was during it, a view that Debra (as we shall shortly see) also shares. Thus, the SNP canvassers' efficiency is largely due to their view that in order to realise their desired goal of an SNP victory, no time could be wasted. The sense of urgency, I believe is directly linked to the value of hope and the visions of the future which it represents. As Mattingly and Jensen write: "Hope concerns imagined futures. Its direction is toward what may come to pass. This is not a future one can simply predict, but a future of "what if."" (2015: 38). I believe it is this unpredictability of the future that fuels efficient solutions to the SNP canvassers' tasks.

The social practices which the SNP members performed are their concrete efforts at transforming their society, which can be viewed as a direct response to what they consider to be the UK state's incapacity and unwillingness to accommodate their aspirations for a future of Scotland that upholds egalitarian values of equality, social justice and democracy. The

SNP canvassers' social practices, not only as enacted on the behalf of the SNP, but also within the wider framework of the independence movement, are examples of people's direct participation in politics. As such, the SNP canvassers were "creatively refusing" (Graeber 2013) to accept the political order in Scotland, by performing social practices that directly provided an alternative discourse to the dominant structure of their social and political world (Escobar 1992). The SNP members' direct involvement in politics, fuelled by their aspirations for a better future and as a rejection of the present political condition, was shared by many of my other informants.

"A positive change"

Although not all of my informants were politically active as the SNP canvassers, they all performed social practices which were in accordance with their views of collective interests and goods. One of the first things I noticed in Edinburgh, was the many charity shops and organisations. I soon realised that voluntary work was widespread and popular in Edinburgh. James, the daily manager of the charity book shop, once told me that he had consciously chosen to work in charities, even though he "could easily have got a corporate job" as he said. James was a skilled manager, and always attended to the many volunteers in the book shop. Some of the volunteers were people in difficult life situations. On several occasions, James expressed the sense of gratitude his job provided him, which outweighed any financial benefits a "corporate job" would give him. Working in an environment where James could make a positive impact on people's lives, made his job gratifying and meaningful for him. Whereas the SNP canvassers perceive their social practices on behalf of the SNP as efforts towards a positive change of the society, for James his job provided and represented his personal non-party-political contribution to collective interests.

Another example of people's active efforts at contributing to collective goods, is provided by Debra. On one of our regular meetings in different cafes in the city, Debra leaned over the table and said with great enthusiasm: "Look, you can make a difference in the world, a change for the positive". The topic of our conversation was social change. I believe Debra's high involvement and work in the Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) exemplifies her own contribution to what she considers as "a difference in the world" and a "positive change". As we remember from the previous chapters, Debra considers herself a socialist and an internationalist, and has worked with politically socialist organisations since the 1980s. The activities which Debra currently performs, are mostly organisational. She arranges a

monthly RIC meeting with topics varying each time. Generally, these topics are globally oriented and discuss social inequalities around the world, sometimes with guest speakers from the country on topic. Debra has also been interviewed by the world media during the referendum because of her high political participation in the independence movement, where she would arrange public meetings and hold public speeches.

But as I came to find out, it was not only on the political scene that Debra exceeded in making "positive changes". Debra is educated as a drama teacher, and has worked with teenagers in different schools and after-school institutions. She often spoke fondly of her teaching days, and had once said "It was nice being able to reassure kids in those awkward years, that their worries will subside. I think many found an outlet for their teenage angst in the drama course, where they could be silly and relax". Debra has retired from her job, but has kept a small employment with a family she has known for years, as the nanny for their children, who by now are in their 20s. I once asked Debra why she is still working as a nanny now that the children have grown up, and correspondingly, do not need a nanny. To this Debra gave her reoccurring remark "I like to be of use". Her position as a nanny is more symbolic and sentimental than it is of actual need. She knows the family in question well, and has herself become a member of it.

Whilst Debra does not wish to part with the family she works for, she most certainly wants Scotland to part from the UK. For Debra, the independence movement represented a possibility for the "radical" change she has been a believer in for 40 years. But this enthusiasm and belief that social change is in fact achievable and feasible in Scotland, was not always something Debra possessed. During the 1970s and 1980s, what Debra called "the Thatcher years", she said the political situation seemed "hopeless". But instead of resigning due to her dissatisfaction with the political system, Debra chose to engage in political organisations that she believed could change the political condition. Being a socialist further strengthened Debra's emphasis on the need to actively pursue those desired changes. She would express the view that no matter the situation in which one finds oneself: "the power is always in the people to critically change societies" as she once said. In a similar vein, albeit on another occasion, Debra said: "I am a revolutionary socialist, so naturally I do believe that it is through radical changes that societies are changed".

I ask her whether she considered the referendum of 2014 to be such a "radical change", and without hesitation, she says "Yes". Her answer is firm and loaded with the feeling of

empowerment, I sit amazed opposite her. After a little while, she breaks the silence by saying:

> In England, young as well as older people do not feel they are being represented and they do not believe in their candidates and political parties, so they don't vote. They do not see the point in voting, because things never change anyway. In Scotland, people have understood that they are capable of making the change themselves.

Many of my informants shared Debra's view that change was within the grasp of ordinary Scots. Both Debra and the SNP canvassers worked towards changing the political situation in Scotland, and although Debra identifies with socialism, and the SNP members deem themselves as "social democrats", their commonality is their renewed belief that it lies within their own abilities to contribute to substantial and critical changes of their society. As the end of the referendum showed, people did not simply give up acting and working towards social change, even if the results showed a majority "no" vote. Instead, people continued to act in accordance with their beliefs and aspirations, and hence continued to strive towards transforming their society for what they imagined to be better. As Ciavolella and Boni (2015) argue, of contemporary social movements:

> The belief that once institutional power is conquered – through elections or revolutions – society will be transformed at will by implementing alternative policies is largely replaced by the idea, resonating with anthropological holism, that only if there is a radical cultural shift in everyday practices can political transformation be achieved. (Ciavolella and Boni 2015: 5).

What the above quote stresses, is that contemporary social movements are no longer envisioned as an absolute means to an end, but rather are seen as tools in the continuous process of transforming the society according to people's ideals. The engagement of the SNP canvassers and Debra's active involvement in RIC, all point towards a view of social change as something not only achievable by ordinary people, but as a process that exceeds the timeliness of political events. This continuing engagement towards transforming the society for what is perceived as "better", is activating a sense of hope not only in the future, but also to the validity of one's actions. This argument is well captured by Debra's statement:

> Most people in Scotland now, do not think of a new referendum, but of how to make the necessary changes to stop austerity and the Far-Right movement[19]. Even though the result of the referendum was a no, people are still engaged, and this is almost more remarkable and better than if the vote was yes and people stopped being engaged.

I agree with Debra's view of the independence movement as something more than the political and social mobilisation and articulation by political parties and the civic society involved in the two respective campaigns. Instead I argue that it is a renewed, or energised, way of thinking and acting which concerns the lives of the current generation of Scots, as well as those of generations to come. Hope is thus not only linked to aspirations for the future, but also point at "a mode of existence" and "creative resistance" that continues beyond the limits of political events (Graeber 2013: 4, Pedersen and Liisberg 2015:1).

Hope and Despair

Debra's statements share significant similarities, but also crucial differences, with those of Elias, the young Scotsman who had studied Political Science and now works as the manager of a tobacco shop. During one of our conversations in the pub, Elias lamented the referendum outcome, and said: *"It was revolution, what we were doing. The whole world watched"*. Elias, and as we shall shortly see, Michael, expressed their despondence when speaking of the referendum results, and in so doing contrasted Debra's continuing optimism in people's efforts to transform their societies post-referendum. This lack of optimism could be viewed in light of Graeber's assessment of values as that which makes people's world meaningful, but also that which people desire (Graeber 2001: ix, 3). As Graeber argues: "Values, then, are ideas if not necessarily about the meaning of life, then at least about what one could justifiably want from it" (2001: 3). Interestingly, Graeber's addition of justifiability to what people want from life, is in perfect accord with the Scottish value of "rights" as we have seen in the previous chapter. Elias for instance, rendered his arguments for independence through the concept of right, stating that: "We vote yes to become a member of the world. We have a right to a nation". The aspiration and desire for independence, the strong sense of hope which it evoked and carried, was hence coupled with the dominant value of rights by my informants. The dejection which both Elias and Michael conveyed could hence be viewed as

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[19] By "the Far-Right movement" Debra was referring to the UK government's programmes to reduce public spending. Frequently described by the public as "austerity"or "austerity policies". As Debra condemned the far-right, anti-immigration political party United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), it is possible she also included UKIP in her term "the Far-Right movement".

a rejection of their "right" to nationhood, and equally a refusal of their desired condition and aspiration for Scottish independence.

Free milk

My roommate Michael, the 33-year-old who works part time as a social organiser in an English language school, introduced me to a song which captured his own feelings and attitudes about the possibility of Scottish independence. We were sitting in our kitchen drinking tea when Michael pulled out his laptop to find the song and the lyrics. A young man's voice in a distinct Scottish accent would cry out: *"Son I just wrote this/ I thought you might like to know/That I chose to vote yes/Cos a yes vote provided hope/What the future's holding/No-one can rightly know/We're tired of the same old script/And what's next only time will show"*, later followed by the following lyrics:

> When I was your age, we had some discontent winters
> Like in the fairy tales there was a Witch of Westminster
> With the power and the contrast of a comic book villain
> She's passed away now but we didn't say good riddance
> 'Cause by the time she passed she was a feeble old lady
> Who forgot what she was doing when she was going places
> You should always treat people how you'd like to be treated
> 'Cause the hurt and anger she left is deep seated
> In school they stopped our free milk
> It could be said in a wider context they stopped our free will (Stanley Odd 2014).

When the song got to the line *"In school they stopped our free milk/It could be said in a wider context they stopped our free will"*, Michael smiled in agreement and remembered fondly the free milk he had in primary school, but which he told me was retracted under Margaret Thatcher's prime ministership. The look on Michael's face as he travelled in childhood memory, was one of both fond nostalgia and bitter injustice. Michael viewed all that was positive about Scottish society, as directly opposed to the policies of Margaret Thatcher. The dual feeling evoked by this song, one in which feelings of hope are placed side by side feelings of lament of past events, resonated with Michael's own interpretation and remembrance of his past. I find this song an apt example of the sense of hope which is attached to the independence movement. The song's statement "*Cause a Yes vote provided hope*" was widely expressed by many of my informants. The song is also a good example of the creative ways in which different people engaged in the movement.

The legacy of Thatcherism

Michael's reference to Margaret Thatcher and her policies was far from unusual, as many of my informants would prove to me. Recall for instance the middle-aged couple whom I briefly spoke to during canvassing with Brenda (see chapter 3). The former Labour-voter had expressed condemnation of the political system in the UK as being "inherently undemocratic". What he also said, which I have not included in his statements in chapter 3, was the following: "There's strong Anti-Thatcherism in Scotland. We have already educated our kids, and they will do the same with theirs, so the hate towards Thatcher will live on for more than one generation".

Above all other politicians, or in fact public figures, Margaret Thatcher was portrayed by most of my informants, as the personification of a political system which was understood as directly opposed to Scottish values and ideals. The way many of my informants spoke about Thatcher and her policies revealed not only resentment, but expressed a sense of despair looking back at the years of her prime ministership. Debra, for instance, described the years under Thatcher's governance as "hopeless", whilst Sherry and Gordon often referred to Thatcher as "the wicked witch of the West". This sense of despair is interesting compared to the sense of hope connected to the independence movement. I contend that hope is intimately tied to despair, and as such the persuasive sense of hope in the independence movement, can be rightfully appreciated only within a situated, historic context. This is particularly important because the strong sense of hope which my informants attached to the independence movement, builds on past experiences, clearly illustrated by my informants' frequent reference to Margaret Thatcher and her years as prime minister. This argument is in line with Pedersen's and Liisberg's view of hope as a "conjectural mode of existence", which relates to "factual understanding of past experiences" and at the same time "a move toward the future that depends on the imaginary anticipation of the imminent" (Pedersen and Liisberg 2015: 1). The past is thus not only carried unto and affects the present, but it also situates and contextualises the sense of hope in the independence movement, which inevitably engages the future.

The Scotland of the 1970s and 1980s was thus a past that lived on in the present, in my informants' memories, opinions and actions. During these decades, a mass de-industrialisation and an economic modernisation of the market took place. The effects of which, were rises in unemployment and economic instability. Although de-industrialisation

began before Thatcher was elected as prime minister in 1979, both the processes and their effects intensified under her government (Dickson 1989: 62, Devine 2012: 591-598). The politics of Thatcher, or *Thatcherism*, advocated and installed a type of economic liberalism which essentially promoted the free market, and a "small state" (Dorey 2014). Thus the welfare state of the immediate post-war period was extensively weakened, resulting in greater inequality throughout UK (Dorey 2014). The policies of the Conservative government of the 1970s and 1980s, with its specific form of monetary liberalism has led to a substantial popular dislike and disapproval of Margaret Thatcher in Scotland (Dickson 1989). This is reflected in Scottish voting results in General Elections between 1979 and 2015. In 1979, 31.4% of the Scottish voters voted for the Conservative Party, the number declined steadily throughout the decades and in 2015, only 14.9% of Scottish votes went to the Conservative Party. Nearly four decades later, this dislike is still palpable amongst many of my informants. As Tony Dickson argues: "The public persona of Margaret Thatcher appears to many Scots to capture all the worst elements of their caricature of the detested English: uncaring, arrogant, always convinced of her own rightness[...]" (1989: 64).

Many of my informants saw the referendum as a unique possibility to change the political and governing system of Scotland, and thus break from the bitter past of the 1970s and 1980s. This prospect carried hope for Michael, as he held Scottish egalitarian values in esteem and felt they were ignored within the union. Many of my informants' rejection of the contemporary Conservative government, is a continued "creative resistance" (Graeber 2013) against the politics and ideology of Thatcherism. Thus, despite the referendum results, the sense of hope achieved in and by the independence movement is passed on to other social practices concerned with the transformation of society in accordance with my informants' perceptions and imaginings of the good. Despite Michael's view of the referendum as a missed opportunity, he retained the sense of hope in that he did not think the independence movement had ended: "Yeah, we will get independence. I mean eventually, it's just a matter of time. Now that people understand that the media was purposely trying to sabotage the SNP, they're not going to take it a second time around". Scottish independence and the sense of hope it provides, is not only meaningful, but highly desirable. As Graeber argues, value, or meaning, "turns into desire", which can lead, as it did in the Scottish context, to social practices that directly attempt to reach the desired goal (Graeber 2001: ix).

"Project Hope" and Project "Fear"

When I asked Michael why he thought more people had voted "no" than "yes" to Scottish independence, he replied "out of fear". Elaborating on this, Michael continued: "People were afraid of voting yes, not because they didn't want to, but because a yes vote carried a lot of uncertainty. Had the media not scared half of the population, we would have had independence today". Similarly, Elias said: "The media was almost without exception anti-independence. The majority of the media is London-based and pro-Union". My informants' view of the media as a major factor contributing to the "no" results in the referendum, is not simply due to their political preferences, but reflects actual media behaviour. During the referendum, all UK based newspapers supported the Better Together Campaign. The only exception was the weekly Sunday Herald[20], which on the 4th of May 2014 publicly aligned itself with the independence movement by stating that "The Sunday Herald says Yes"[21].

The common view among many pro-independence supporters during the referendum was that the media, and particularly the national broadcaster BBC, was biased in its depiction of the referendum campaign. This collective view was solidified on 20 June 2014, when around 1000 people protested against the "BBC bias" outside BBC Scotland's headquarters in Glasgow[22]. The prevalent view of the media as biased, the Better Together Campaign's rhetoric during the referendum which focused on economic issues aimed at "scaring the public" as my informants would say, as well as an overall lack of media support for the Yes Scotland Campaign, are all factors which resulted in the dichotomised depiction of the two campaigns as "Project Fear" (Better Together Campaign) and "Project Hope" (Yes Scotland Campaign).

The Better Together Campaign's emphasis on economic issues is neither uncommon nor unintelligible. However, it derives from and represents the economic definition and view of value, as "[…] the degree to which objects are desired" (Graeber 2001: 2). I argue that the Better Together Campaign (partially) failed at its aim of disparaging the Yes Scotland Campaign because it failed to acknowledge the non-economic aspects of values in the Scottish independence movement. As Graeber argues: "This is why economic models, which see those actions as aimed primarily at individual gratification, fall so obviously short: they fail to see that in any society – even within a market system – solitary pleasures are relatively

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[20] Glasgow-based, Scottish weekly newspaper, an affiliate of the daily "The Herald".
[21]http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13158718.Sunday_Herald_is_first_paper_to_back_Scottish_independence/
[22] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29196912

few." (2001: 76). Similarly, Fischer argues that the values which people hold in esteem and their visions of the good life, "[...] cannot be reduced to material conditions alone", because "People are more than self-interested agents concerned only with material gains […]" (2014: 2). The strength of the independence movement lies precisely in the non-economic values of hope and its connection to social practice, striving towards social change. Thus, the Better Together Campaign's overemphasis on economy, failed to realise that people's desires and aspirations cannot be reduced to economic self-interest, but concern collective imaginings of the good (Graeber 2001, Fischer 2014, Robbins 2015).

"A democratic revolution"

The respective nicknames of the two referendum campaigns, "Project Hope" and "Project Fear", worked in favour of the Yes Scotland Campaign, because it contributed to a positive image of the independence movement as consisting of energy, creativity and hope. These characteristics further contributed to the depiction of the independence movement at large as a "revolution". As we remember both Debra and Elias evoked the term, and it is particularly grippingly captured by Elias's statement "It was revolution what we were doing". The term "revolution" was also evident within the public discourse. The political commentator Ian Macwhirter, has termed the referendum and the general election of 2015 "Scotland's democratic revolution" (Macwhirter 2015). Needless to say, the term "revolution" carries a significant force, which not only renders the political events in Scotland of great importance, but also reinforces a sense of hope. This again, I argue fuels people with energy by acknowledging that their efforts have had substantial and significant effects. The term "democratic revolution" also illustrates the high public participation in the independence movement, by non-party actors. Organisations such as Radical Independence Campaign (RIC) which Debra was a part of, Women for Independence, Common Weal and National Collective are all organisations that supported independence, but from a non-SNP standpoint.

Social Media

During the referendum itself, the sense of energy and significance was apparent in people's communication on, and use of, social media. In lack of virtual any media support, the Yes Scotland Campaign and its supporters came to rely immensely on social media and the internet as a space in which to perform social practice of debate. Different pro-independence websites such as "Bella Caledonia", "Wings Over Scotland", "Newsnet Scotland" and "Indy

Blog"[23] were formed by ordinary people. What all of the persons behind these websites and blogs have in common is the view that the existing media in the UK is biased and that, consequently, the Scottish public lacks alternative sources of information that provide news in favour of independence. Many of my informants were eagerly following these websites, and personally debating, commenting and expressing their opinions and desires on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. During the general election, all of the SNP branches, including the one I participated in, had formed Facebook pages, where they would write information of the campaign, but also post photos of themselves and their SNP candidates.

The high public participation and activity on social media, as well as in the public space, was however not attested by the press. According to Silver, the media had purposely shifted focus away from "the streets" of Scotland (Silver 2015: 7, 40), (where hundreds of people were engaged in "a democratic and peaceful revolution" (Macwhirter 2015: 134)), to favour reports on political leaders and political debates (Silver 2015:40). The political debates were favourable for the media for two particular reasons. Firstly, it became much easier for the press to cast the referendum in terms of political argumentation by politicians because this was manageable and confined formats which the media was accustomed to (Silver 2015). Secondly, by casting the referendum as a political debate between especially Alex Salmond and David Cameron etc., it became easier to reject the fact that the independence movement engaged a large proportion of the Scottish population (Silver 2015).

Consequently, the independence movement became inexplicably personified by Alex Salmond, who was much easier to condemn than thousands of people who were actively engaged in the social movement. As Silver argues; "It is inherently easier for news organisations to focus on leaders and media personalities rather than a diverse range of voices and perspectives that support a certain position" (Silver 2015:41). Alex Salmond himself, addressed the role of the media, and summarised the entire referendum in the following: "The Scottish referendum was not just a battle between Yes and No. It was not even just a struggle between hope and fear, although it certainly was that. It was a contest between two types of media. The old established order against the new upstart army" (2015: 238).

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[23] http://www.scottishindependencereferendum.info/yesblogs.html

A Scottish "Dream"?

As a figure of authority, and the "personification of the Yes Campaign", Salmond had a considerable influence on people (Silver 2015). In his resignation speech after the referendum results were out, he stated "For me as leader my time is nearly over. But for Scotland the campaign continues and the *dream* shall never die" (Salmond 2015: 5, my emphasis). Many of my informants would resonate with Salmond's terminology of the Scottish referendum as a dream. As we have seen, the SNP canvassers, and Debra, Elias, Michael, Charlie and Luke all express the aspect of the independence movement which is directly linked to a sense of hope. This sense of hope, is compatible with Salmond's term of a dream. Both are aspirational, and both appeal to people's conceptions of the good life, and a good future.

However, as we have also seen in the previous chapters, some of my informants challenge such positive connotations to Scottish independence. James, the charity book shop manager, expressed his distaste for the SNP and the notion of Scottish independence. For James, Scottish independence did not inspire imaginings of equality and democracy, but rather economic instability and a one-party state. As we have seen, one of the important issues for James, is his personal right to self-ascription as both British and Scottish. In his view, if Scotland did achieve independence, a major part of his identity and his life-history would be denied him.

Another one of my informants, Karolina shares similar views as James. I met Karolina at the charity shop in Stockbridge, where I volunteered. Karolina is in her early thirties, is originally from Poland and has a Master's degree in nutrition. She is the daily manager of the charity shop and lives with her English boyfriend Liam. One afternoon in March, in the small confines of the backroom of the shop, we are having our lunch. While Karolina slices a piece of lemon to have in her tea, "the Polish way" as she puts it, she tells me; "The referendum is beautiful, but it's a dream. People talk about Braveheart. People who talk about Braveheart do not know history. People believe in Braveheart. The dream of being free."

In her version of the recent political and social events in Scotland, Karolina claims a communal "panic" had spread over the country:

> It was a mess, a panic all over Scotland. There was a lot of insecurity and nobody could answer: you will be ok. People don't have the money anymore, and people dislike insecurity. It is difficult to separate the two countries. Will they need passport if Scotland becomes independent? If Scotland became independent, it would need to

apply for EU membership, and would probably be on a trial period for some time. And as a consequence the market might stop for a moment. A moment can be a year. Nothing takes 3 months in politics. Everything takes long. The world wouldn't stop for Scotland. But life wouldn't stop either.

As her remarks demonstrate, Karolina was not convinced by the Yes Scotland Campaign that independence would entail a better condition for Scotland. On the contrary, she believed the economic situation would be unstable, and that Scotland would go through a difficult transitional period in its realisation of sovereignty, or the "dream of being *free*" (my emphasis). With that said, by denoting independence as "a beautiful dream", she implicitly acknowledges the allure of independence, although she never explained it further. When I asked her "why is it beautiful", she would simply reply in her usual rather hurried manner: "Laila, it's a *dream*".

Whilst Karolina views independence as unrealistic and hence inconceivable, most of my informants would strongly disagree. The SNP canvassers, as well as Debra, Michael and Elias all believed and still believe that independence is within reach, and that it is in their power to realise their aspirations for the future, as part of their visions of "the good life" (Fischer 2014). As Fischer writes: "Notions of the good life orient aspirations of agency and provide a dynamic framework with which to interpret one's own actions and those of others, all the while bound by the realm of what is seen as *possible*" (2014: 6, my emphasis). Indeed, independence is conceived of as possible by most of my informants, but not through wishful thinking. Rather, independence is perceived as possible by their own tangible efforts, through social practices, to gradually transform the society they currently live in, into something good. As Debra told me, when we talked about the referendum results: *"There is no feeling of having lost. Things have already begun to change, and we want even more changes"*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how my informant's actions are made meaningful through the value of hope (Graeber 2001). My informants, as part of the social movement of independence, have performed a variety of different social practices, which collectively aim at transforming and changing their society (Escobar 1992). This transformation is a larger purpose; navigated by their aspirations and imaginings of a better life, a better future and a better society (Fischer 2014). As we have seen from the previous chapters, this desired

society is one which complies with egalitarian ideals of equality, democracy and social justice. It is a society, where truly "A Man's a Man for A' That"[24] as Robert Burns (2001 [1795]) so passionately put it.

What I believe is particularly important to acknowledge, is the *collective* effort and the *collective* imagining which my informants express. Thus, I agree with David Graeber (2001) and Edward Fischer (2014) in their claims that people's conceptions and imaginings of the good supersede self-interests. People's participation in the independence movement, not only gave hope in the future and a way to imagine different realities, but it also gave people a "larger life purpose" and a sense of being something more than what one is (Fischer 2014). In other words, it connected people together in an imagined community, with a collective cause, striving towards a collective good.

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[24] This poem is evoked by my informant Ian, as seen in chapter 3.

Conclusive Remarks

This thesis opened with a quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1962 [1606]), where the Scottish noblemen, Macduff and Ross, discuss the condition and state of Scotland. This thesis has been an attempt to examine, yet again, where Scotland currently stands. I have looked at the current state of Scottish nationalism, and examined its recent manifestation; namely the Scottish independence movement, from the particular viewpoint of everyday life.

The attention has thus throughout this thesis been on everyday expressions, productions and reproductions of Scottish nationalism. Likewise, I have assessed the independence movement as first and foremost a social movement that contains within it nationalist and aspirational values and ideals. These in turn, have given rise to, and affected, people's social practices. Together, these aspects and the social practices stemming from them, are what I have termed, borrowing Edward Fischer's (2014) concept, a "larger purpose".

I have argued that Scottish nationalism is both overt and tacit, manifest and dormant. Chapter 2 has shown how the Scottish nation and Scottish nationalism are perpetually produced and reproduced in everyday life by people' social practices and their imaginings of the nation. In chapter 3, I followed this imagining, and argued that it revealed dominant values which reproduce the popular images and understandings of the Scottish nation and nationalism as egalitarian. The identification of Scotland and Scottish nationalism as egalitarian, does not however reflect actual social conditions in Scotland. Neither does it represent unison opinions and views. I have shown how some of my informants distance themselves from Scottish nationalism, and challenge the view of nationalism in Scotland and the Scottish nation and its people as egalitarian.

This has led me to assess the value of equality in Scotland as consisting of two meanings. Borrowing the insights of Marianne Gullestad (2002), I thus argued that equality in Scotland means both "being equal" and "being the same". I have shown how this double-meaning of equality conceals actual social inequalities and divergence in the public opinion. However, most of my informants held Scotland and Scottish nationalism to be egalitarian, and I have shown how these egalitarian values and ideals have affected my informants' own self-identification and their conceptualisations of Scottish nationalism as "democratic" and "pragmatic". These emic characteristics of Scotland were contrasted with their views of the

UK state as hierarchical and "inherently undemocratic". A prevalent theme has thus been the opposition between two sets of values; the egalitarian values and the hierarchal values, which conceptually corresponded with most of my informants' ideas of Scotland and the (rest of the) UK.

Chapter 4 has looked at the interplay between values and people's actions and social practices. I have argued that the immense popularity of the Scottish independence movement is not only due to its usage of, and appeal to, people's sense of national distinctiveness, but is in fact driven by people's aspirations and desires for the future. The central value which I have given attention to here, is the value of hope. I have argued that hope not only encouraged people to act in accordance with their desires and aspirations, but in and of itself, hope motivated people to believe that their actions were meaningful and significant. Whereas chapter 2 engaged with the past, in the sense of my informants' frequent reference to the history of Scotland, chapter 3 has focused on people's imaginings of the future. With that said, all the three analytical chapters show that the past is frequently evoked, reinterpreted and meaningfully applied unto the present.

The attention on people's agency, creativity and aspirations in chapter 4, is my effort to acknowledge and show people's collective efforts at transforming their society and lives, in light of what they deem as good and desirable. As such, this thesis as a whole and chapter 4 in particular, is a direct response to Joel Robbins' plea to move beyond a focus on people's suffering, and towards "an anthropology of the good" (2015: 448). In so doing, I have relied on different anthropological works, which have, in their own ways, concerned people's ideas of the good life, wellbeing, values, desires and aspirations (Graeber 2001, 2011, 2013, Fischer 2014, Mattingly and Jensen 2015, Pedersen and Liisberg 2015, Robbins 2015,).

The independence movement, I have argued, has not only awakened a sense of hope in people, but it has contributed to a view that social change is achievable by people's own efforts and social practices. As such, the independence movement represents a larger purpose which gives meaning to people's lives and transcends the self-interest of the individual. The Scottish independence movement is thus a collective effort at social change that is consistent with dominant and deeply rooted egalitarian values and ideals and aspirations and imaginings of the future.

I have argued that the Scottish independence movement provides an alternative discourse on the legitimacy of the configuration and the statehood of the UK (Bourdieu 1977, Escobar

1992). Indeed, I have argued that the independence movement created a space in which this alternative discourse could meaningfully be expressed. The Scottish independence movement thus challenged the hegemony of the UK.

Currently, a year after I conducted my fieldwork, much points to the fact that the UK as a state and as a meaningful formation, is being contested by an increasing number of political processes. In June 2016 there will be a national referendum on the UK's membership in the European Union (EU). Meanwhile, the SNP has stated that if the UK chooses to leave the EU, there will be a new referendum on Scottish independence (BBC News 2016). The future of Scotland remains uncertain, and the question of Scottish independence is never far away. However, as many of my informants contend, it is likely to be answered in the near future. Whether my informants are right, is for time to show and for them to actively strive for if they so desire.

Whether or not Scotland achieves independence, I believe the case of Scotland has significance beyond its national borders. Most of us live in a world where it is increasingly difficult to believe that individual persons have the power to influence the direction in which we are heading. This world is one of large transnational and international corporations and alliances, and global capitalism, where political and social structures appear unbreakable and uncompromisable. In this world, we often assume the powerlessness of ordinary people. My fieldwork in Scotland has been an eye-opening journey into the seemingly banal realisation that this world is made up of individuals with agencies, hopes and aspirations. The Scottish independence movement has proved and shown that once people come together in a joint, collective effort at transforming their society, they are indeed capable of changing it.

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