MEANINGS OF EUROPE IN THE SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AFTER THE 2016 EU REFERENDUM

BREXIT, (DIS)INTEGRATION AND VALUES

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Abstract

This thesis asks what the meaning of Europe is to the argument, purpose, and continuation of the Scottish independence movement, to the everyday lives of independence supporters, and to the narrative of what Scotland is today, and in the future. The theoretical framework of the research is formed around the study of identity and small state theory. Data has been collected by means of ethnographic fieldwork with members of the Scottish independence movement.

I argue that there were mixed reactions to the EU referendum within the independence movement. Many participants were frustrated, but there was also an awareness of opportunities Brexit may bring to the movement. Some respondents who voted for Brexit felt their opinion was not valued.

Brexit resulted in a growing awareness of European integration and has led to the formation of trans-national narrative structures of European identity. The detriments of disintegration present an opportunity to blame Westminster and to provide a potential alternative. But Brexit also highlights Scotland's vulnerabilities and dependency on a shelter relationship. I examine participants' understanding of vulnerability and how it is incorporated into a form of trans-border nationalism.

Finally, I argue that a narrative is formed in which a myth of European values supports a myth of Scottish values, while at the same time being contrasted to a myth of British values. Thus, European values contribute to the formation of and differentiation with Britain as the other. What appears is a supra-national European identity structure in which European *values* have strategic *value* and are used to support the argument for independence.

There are only two types of state in Europe: small states, and small states that have not yet realised they are small.

Paul-Henri Spaak, 40th Prime Minister of Belgium

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I must apologise to my son Mikkel for spending the first year-and-a-half of his life bent over this document, which must have seemed like such an obscurity. Thank you for your patience, and for scratching my office door to remind me of my priorities.

Liebe Zoe, ohne deine Unterstützung, deine Geduld, dein Verständnis und deine Liebe hätte ich es nie geschafft. Ich bin dir unendlich dankbar.

Declaration Statement

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List of Abbreviations

- AUOB: All Under One Banner (pro-Scottish independence group)

- CAP: Common Agricultural Policy

- CF: Cohesion Fund

- CFP: Common Fisheries Policy

- EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

- EC: European Communities

- EEA: European Economic Area

- EEC: European Economic Community

- EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone

- EFTA: European Free Trade Association

- EMEC: European Marine Energy Centre

- EMFF: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

- ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

- ESF: European Social Fund

- ESI: European Structural and Investment Funds

- EU: European Union

- EUSS: EU Settlement Scheme

- GDP: Gross domestic product

- IGO: International Governmental Organisation

- MEP: Member of the European Parliament

- MP: Member of Parliament (UK)

- MSP: Member of the Scottish Parliament

- NHS: National Health Service

- PM: Prime Minister

- UACES: Academic Association for Contemporary European Studies

- rUK: Rest of the UK (the UK without Scotland)

- SCC: Scottish Constitutional Convention

- SNP: Scottish National Party

- UK: United Kingdom

- UKIP: UK Independence Party

- USA: United States of America

- USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

- WTO: World Trade Organisation

- WW1 / 2:   World War 1 / 2

- YEI: Youth Employment Initiative

Conventions

All fieldwork excerpts in this thesis are accompanied by a code. For example:

O-3-SFG 13:22

The first part of the code, a letter, refers to where the fieldwork took place. It can be one of the following:

- B: Borders

- E: Edinburgh

- G: Glasgow

- O: Orkney

- S: Skye

Or occasionally:

- PS: Pilot Study (which took place in Edinburgh)

The second part of the code is the number of the session in that location.

The third part of the code refers to the type of fieldwork session. It can be one of the following:

- FG: Focus Group

- I: Interview

- SFG: Small Focus Group

The difference between these types is explained in chapter 4.

Finally, the last part of the code is the time of the excerpt in the session. This is noted in (hours:)minutes:seconds.

Within the excerpts, the following conventions have been used:

- …   Indicates a pause

- […]   Indicates the transcript has been edited

- [square brackets]   My additions and clarifications

- [*italics*]   Action or gesture

Chapter 1: Introduction

On 23 June 2016 voters across the United Kingdom (henceforth UK) were asked in a referendum whether the country should remain a member of the European Union (henceforth EU); 51.89% of voters chose to leave. The referendum and the ensuing negotiations on Britain's departure from the EU (henceforth Brexit) resulted in Britain entering a liminal phase of change, which was only partly resolved after Brexit finally happened on 31 January 2021. In Scotland, this period of change had an additional context: in the referendum, 62.00% of Scottish voters chose to remain within the EU - a large majority, but not enough to sway the UK result. Thus, the referendum not only highlighted the differences between the UK and the rest of Europe, but also those within the UK. Within this transformational time, the meaning of Europe, and what it means to be European in contemporary Scotland, was widely debated and (re)negotiated.

Less than two years before the EU referendum, on 18 September 2014, Scottish voters had been asked in another referendum whether Scotland should become an independent country. Here, 55.30% of voters chose for Scotland to remain part of the UK. Following this referendum, the Scottish independence movement, a loose collection of different activist groups with a joint purpose of campaigning for an independent Scotland, did not cease to exist. Its members were disheartened, and there was uncertainty about when another opportunity for obtaining independence would arrive, but many of the groups formed in the run-up to the referendum continued to meet. When the EU referendum resulted in the constitutional organisation of the island of Great Britain being reconsidered, the argument for Scottish independence was given new life. Brexit thus provided new opportunities for the independence movement to make its case, but also raised new questions about Scotland's vulnerability and what form its independence would take.

It is within this setting I undertook this PhD research. The field in which I conducted it consisted of different pro-independence groups across Scotland. Within these groups, as a result of the political chaos described above, the connections between the local (the lifeworlds of independence supporters), the national (the argument for Scottish independence) and the European (Brexit and its consequences) were brought to the forefront. I asked participants about what Europe meant to them and to the independence movement following the EU referendum. Of course, this is a very broad question, and I approached it from several angles which formed the guiding questions of this research. The first was what

the meaning of Europe is to *the argument, purpose, and continuation of the Scottish independence movement.* My interests here are with the practical consequences of Brexit to the independence movement: on its members and their experiences of the movement, as well as how the movement makes its arguments. The second angle was what the meaning of Europe is to *the everyday lives of independence supporters, and their envisioned everyday lives in an independent Scotland.* My intention here was to explore the everyday lived experiences of members of the independence movement following Brexit, and how these might influence their vision of and for independence. The third and final angle was what the meaning of Europe is to *the narrative of what Scotland is today, and what an independent Scotland should be in the future.* This line of inquiry was largely focused on the ideological, exploring how the vision of independence was influenced by the idea(s) of Europe following Brexit.

The remainder of this introduction will discuss the motivations for undertaking this research as well as the larger context in which this research took place: both the spatial and the historical context. In chapter 2 I will present a review of the relevant literature, with a particular focus on the two main starting points of the theoretical framework: the study of European identity and the study of small states. In chapter 3 I will discuss the discipline in which I work, my philosophical assumptions and my positionality towards my research. In chapter 4 I will present a methodology. This will include a description of the field in which I did research, as well as the methods I used to extract data from it. It will also cover the ethics approval process.

The chapters 5-7 will reflect the three lines of inquiry detailed above. Chapter 5 will discuss how the Scottish independence movement reacted to Brexit. It will be explained how Brexit frustrated many in the movement but was also seen as an opportunity. This will be elaborated on, with an aim of understanding how Brexit might be beneficial for the independence movement. But Brexit also presents particular challenges to the movement: not all members of the movement support EU membership. Their opinions and the resulting tensions within the movement will be explored as well. Chapter 6 will focus on the lived experiences of Brexit. It will build on the concepts of 'Euroland' (Johler, 2002) and 'everyday Brexits' (Anderson and Wilson, 2018) and explore the consequences of European disintegration. I will argue that many participants only became aware of the extent of European integration once everyday structures started to fall apart. This will be connected back to Scottish independence by discussing the meaning of the national, and the perception of state size and

vulnerability in the movement. Chapter 7 will focus on the narrative of European values, which frequently came up during the fieldwork. Following different interpretations of value, the meaning of this narrative will be deconstructed, and I will explore how these fit with the ideologies of Scottish independence. Finally, in chapter 8 I will present a conclusion of my findings and suggest how this research could be taken further.

1.1 Motivation

In the months leading up to the 2014 independence referendum I was coming to the end of an undergraduate degree in Scottish ethnology at the School of Scottish Studies of Edinburgh University. During this programme, I became absorbed in a variety of topics ranging from traditional music to intangible cultural heritage, but it was the first tutorial I attended in my first year which really caught my interest. It was on identity, and the tutor started the class by asking about our own identities. Most students spoke of a clear national identity, most of them Scottish but also others. When it was my turn, I was unsure about what to say. My accent made it clear that I was different from the other Scots in the room. I had just moved from Belgium where I grew up, but I had no Belgian nationality or family history, so I did not feel I could I say that I was Belgian. I hesitated and answered: 'I am European.'[1] While the tutor found this reply interesting, I remember some other students in the class reacting irritated or dismissive. This early tutorial sparked an interest in my own European identity, which I would explore further throughout my studies. In that sense I followed the advice given to students of ethnology at the School of Scottish Studies: to 'dig where you stand' (Lindqvist, 1978; Byrne, 2012; Campbell, 2013; McFadyen, 2018a). I finished my degree with a dissertation on the potential of European ethnology in cultural mediation, with a case study on European identity in *Balfolk*, a recent folk dancing community and tradition found in several European states.

Several fellow students at the School of Scottish Studies were involved in the pro-independence campaign, and through them I got involved with it as well. I had not always supported Scottish independence but had become convinced of its benefits during my undergraduate degree.[2] I was particularly excited by the potential of a new state: the possibilities and opportunities for creativity the prospect of independence provides. This thinking quickly led to considerations of Scotland's size; because an independent Scotland

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[1] I will discuss my personal background further in chapter 3.
[2] I will discuss my political background further in chapter 3.

would be a considerably smaller state than it currently is as part of the UK, it would not be able to do certain things it is able to do as part of the UK. This issue caught my interest and having come to the end of my undergraduate degree I decided to explore it further in a postgraduate diploma on small state studies and European integration at the University of Iceland, which I did during the autumn semester of 2014.

During my studies at the University of Iceland I learnt about the difficulties small states face in international politics, but also about the opportunities they have as opposed to larger states. I learnt that smallness is closely related to a state's vulnerability, and a state can be vulnerable in numerous ways (Thorhallsson, 2006).[3] One possible perspective on size and vulnerability is perceived size (*ibid.*, see p. 60): how people (for example, but not limited to, the citizens of the state) perceive the size or vulnerability of the state. I realised this was closely related to my interest in national identity, in which the perception of the state is crucial; but it was also central to the question of Scottish independence. The main aim of the independence movement was to convince people that an independent Scotland would be able to survive on its own, indeed, a slogan often used was that of Scotland being 'big enough' to be independent.

The course on small state studies also covered how small states attempt to alleviate their vulnerability. One possible strategy is to seek shelter with a larger state or international organisation. Both Scotland being a part of the UK as well as the UK's membership of the EU are examples of this. I presumed such an inter-state relationship would influence the perceptions of vulnerability and identity as well, and thus my focus returned to perceptions of European identity. I developed an interest in European identity in small states, and I wondered whether and how a state's size, and by extension its need for external shelter, might influence the perception of identity within it. Although links between state size and identity appeared occasionally within small state theories, to my knowledge this has not been studied explicitly. I therefore slowly began to form an idea for a research project which might fill this gap. When in 2016 the UK voted to leave the EU, the liminal period described above formed an ideal setting to study these topics. Soon afterwards I started applying for grants to do a PhD.

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[3] I will discuss state size further in chapter 2.

In the original proposal for this project, I planned to do case studies and fieldwork in different small states in Europe, summarising them in a comparative thesis. During the first year of the project, I decided to just focus on Scotland for several reasons: first, I believe doing one detailed study of a place I am familiar with will give stronger results than focusing on a variety of places, some of which I might be less familiar with. Second, constrained by budget and time, focusing on the location I am based in would be easier.[4] Third, if I were to study several small states, I would have to choose which ones. As I will discuss in section 2.3 (see p. 55), most states in Europe count as small states, meaning that I would have to pick a few to study. Defending this choice would always be a weak part of the argumentation, in particular regarding Scotland. This was made clear to me during an early presentation of my work at a conference for PhD students organised by UACES, when a professor at the Catholic University of Leuven asked me why one of the states I chose was Scotland, which is a stateless nation (McCrone, 2001), and whether it would not be better to focus on small states which are undeniably states. While I agree with his argument, I did not want to give up studying Scotland, for practical reasons but also because of the political climate in Scotland as well as my background. I therefore decided to only focus on Scotland instead, thus removing the element of choice altogether. As I will argue (see section 2.3.1.2), small state theory can still be applied to Scotland, and the project still aims to contribute to small state studies.

Besides the practicality of studying the country I was physically based in, another reason I also wanted to study Scotland is my personal beliefs and ideologies. As can already be made clear from what is written above, I do not attempt to take on the role of a neutral observer. I support Scottish independence and oppose Brexit, and the latter has negative consequences for me and my family. This research thus has an activist undertone, which I will explore further when discussing my positionality to it (see section 3.4). This does not mean I attempt to convince either the participants of the research or the reader of this text of my particular opinion; but I do acknowledge that by writing ethnographic research about the period following the EU referendum I am contributing to the understanding of Brexit and its consequences, and that this in itself is a political act which my own political convictions cannot be removed from.

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[4] This was even more the case when the COVID-19 pandemic started during my research. I will discuss its effects on the project in chapter 4.

1.2   Setting the scene, part 1: spatial context

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will consider the wider context in which the field of the research is situated. This will be done from two angles. First, the spatial situation of Scotland will be explored. The majority of Scotland is situated on the northern half of the island of Great Britain, which is the largest island in Europe as well as the largest of the British Isles. England and Wales are also on the island, but the United Kingdom extends beyond Great Britain, also including Northern Ireland on the island of Ireland, as well as numerous small islands dotted along its coastline and overseas territories across the globe. Great Britain is separated from mainland Europe by the North Sea. In the Strait of Dover, Great Britain is only 34km removed from the rest of the continent, and on a clear day France can be seen from England and vice versa.

Is the sea only a place of separation? Hill and Nic Craith have argued that ethnographers often understand an island as 'the field', enforcing a sense of isolation on the communities they are studying. And while some form of limitation to the connection with the 'mainland' is likely to be part of island communities' lives, their interaction with the rest of the world does not end at the coast (Hill and Nic Craith, 2015:16–7). Similarly with Great Britain, although geographically it appears separated from mainland Europe, this may not be the same from the perspective from other disciplines. For example, we can re-examine Great Britain's insularity from an economic perspective: like other countries with a coastline, Great Britain has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends 200 nautical miles from the coastline (not to be confused with territorial waters, which only extend 12 miles from the coastline). If we look at a map of Europe in which states are portrayed not only by their territories but also by their EEZ's (figure 1.1, p. 20), the North Sea disappears and Great Britain borders directly with mainland Europe. In fact, Great Britain is hardly any longer on the edge of Europe, being almost completely surrounded by other European states.[5]

The point I want to make is that it is not necessary to view the North Sea as a space which divides. It is as much a European space as can be found on mainland Europe, with negotiated rules and regulations. However, the space is not as accessible as other spaces in the continent. Some natural borders are harder to cross than others, and such natural borders can make

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[5] Less relevant to this discussion, it is also interesting to note that on the map the Faroe Islands have become almost as big as Germany and that Iceland, the UK and Norway are some of the biggest states in the continent (this reveals a lot about their attitude to European integration).

political borders more pronounced (Espejo, 2020:104). For example, the North Sea is more difficult to cross than the Rhine, and this difficulty emphasizes Great Britain's separation.
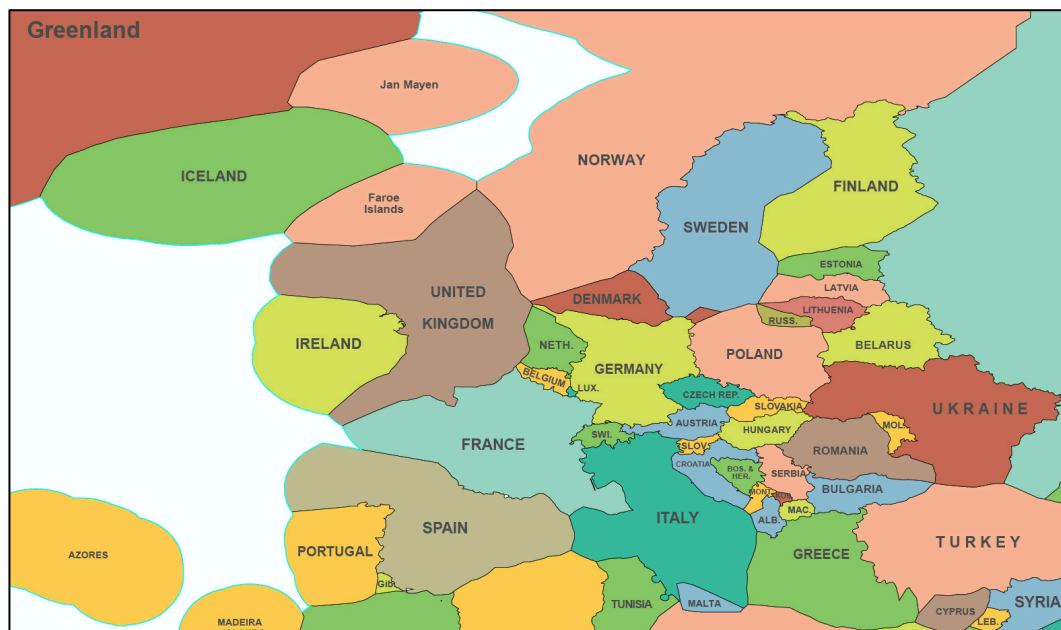
Figure 1.1: A map of Europe by state territory, which is portrayed as a combination of their land territories and EEZ's. The North Sea has disappeared, and Great Britain is no longer an island (Segal, 2013).

But the traversing of the natural border separating Britain from continental Europe has become more porous over time. During the 20th century, people have found increasingly fast and easy ways to cross or even circumvent the North Sea: from Louis Blériot, the first person to fly an airplane over the English Channel in 1909, and finally to the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994. With each of these new methods of bypassing Britain's natural boundaries, Britain's insularity has been questioned. After Blériot successfully landed his plane in Kent, the Daily Mail published an article in which it claimed that 'British insularity has vanished' (The Daily Mail, 1909). Similarly, after the channel tunnel was opened in 1994, it was reported that this was 'the end of British insularity' (Bremner, 1994). Thus, the concept of British insularity can and has been challenged repeatedly, but at the same time it appears to be stubbornly persistent.

The idea of digging a tunnel under the English Channel has been discussed at least since the 19th century and has been met with criticism since early on (Redford, 2014). Arguing against the creation of a tunnel, Lord Randolph Churchill said in 1888 that 'the reputation of England has hitherto depended upon her being, as it were, *virgo intacta*' (Pick, 1993:131, in Küng,

2020). Note that Churchill talks about 'the reputation of England', but that he was probably referring to Britain, as 'the boundary between the two is often discursively blurred' (Küng, 2020:202, see also Burnett, 2013:234). The concept of Britain being a *virgo intacta* consists of two characteristics: first, the creation of a land-link with continental Europe would make Britain more vulnerable to invasion, thereby spoiling its 'virginity' (*ibid.*:203). Second, it portrays Britain as a space which is whole, *intact*, as opposed to a multitude of states and borders on the European mainland. Islands are frequently interpreted as absolute spaces (Baldacchino, 2013), as is done here. Thus, a link can be made between the narrative of Britain as an island which is separated from the rest of Europe (*virgo*), by extension the narrative of British exceptionalism; and the narrative of Britain being one whole, and therefore an 'easily-imaginable', 'non-arbitrary' (*ibid.*:3) whole on which the British state is built (*intacta*), by extension the narrative of British unionism. The sea does not only separate Great Britain from the rest of Europe, at the same time it binds the island together.

The link between these characteristics is problematic because it assumes a correspondence between natural boundaries (Great Britain's coast) and political boundaries (the border of the UK). That political boundaries are organic evolutions of natural boundaries was a favoured theory during the enlightenment but has since declined in popularity and is generally rejected amongst geographers today (Sahlins, 1990:1436; Fall, 2010; Espejo, 2020:102–4). The theory makes an essentialist assumption: that states are formed by nature (and therefore, depending on beliefs, by God). The idea of Great Britain being a *virgo intacta* thus has an essentialist fundament. In the context of identity, the link between the natural borders and political border of Britain is made even more problematic because Britain's insularity has also played an important role in the formation of British identity(s) (Baldacchino, 2013:3), whereby the natural border has emphasized the separation between the self and the other (Peckham, 2003; Colls, 2004:225–244; Lunn and Day, 2004; Readman, 2014; Redford, 2014:103).

That being said, the natural border of Great Britain continues to influence British politics to this day. Symbols of British geographic islandness have played a role in campaigns promoting Euroscepticism and Brexit. The white cliffs of Dover, symbolic of the natural border between Britain and the rest of Europe (Readman, 2014; Küng, 2020), were often used in anti-EU political campaigns. For example, in reference to the EU's migration policies, the UK Independence Party (henceforth UKIP) published a picture of cliffs with an escalator ascending them, effectively removing the cliffs' 'natural' function as a border wall. Nigel

Farage, the former leader of the party, refers to the poster as 'most powerful' image of the political campaign (see figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Nigel Farage posts a campaign poster from UKIP, displaying the cliffs of Dover as a clear natural border between Great Britain and Europe, but their function de-activated by an escalator: a metaphor of European integration (Farage, 2014).

The politics of Brexit, and campaigns such as the one in the example above, may be criticised for being *insular*. *Insularity* has two meanings: 1, 'the state of being on an island'; and 2, 'ignorance of or lack of interest in cultures, ideas, or peoples outside one's own experience' (Oxford Dictionaries). When combining both meanings, as is frequently done when referring to 'British insularity' (Küng, 2020), insularity becomes a form of *islandness* 'in the mind' (Oliver, 2021): it is a (particularly limited) idea of what an island is or should be but should not be interpreted as a necessary feature of an island community. Nor should it be interpreted as an unquestionably accurate reflection of lived experiences on the island, which would be islandness 'on the ground' (*ibid.*). British insularity is, in other words, an imagined (island) community (Andersen, 1983). Brexit, then, can be understood as a process of insularisation: the creation of boundaries between an island and a larger landmass with an aim of cutting it off, a drawing of political borders which correspond to natural borders and indeed, a confirmation of the island *as one whole*. From this follows that if this whole would be broken

up, as would happen politically if Scotland became independent, we might speak of de-insularisation. This will be discussed further in chapter 5 (see p. 133).

1.2.1   Going to *and* taken out of *Europe*

Even though geographically Scotland is in Europe, from the above it is clear that Scotland's place in Europe can be challenged. This is something I have often experienced in day-to-day conversation. While living in the UK, I have become accustomed to people talking about 'Europe' being a different place from the UK, often said subconsciously. A common example would be acquaintances telling me how they plan to 'go to' Europe for their holidays. This also happened regularly in the fieldwork. During a focus group in Glasgow, there was a long discussion on how Scotland connected to Europe. One participant had kept silent throughout, and I was curious to know what his opinion was, so I asked him. Smiling, he told me:

G-4-FG 24:50

P: Most people, when they think of Europe, they think of their holidays. They think of the sun.

The other participants laughed, and we quickly returned to discussing 'more serious' topics. The participant did not speak much anymore during the rest of the focus group. Although his comment seemed to be interpreted as somewhat humorous by the other participants, I think he made an important point. He is probably right to state that for many in Scotland, Europe is a destination, somewhere one travels *to* from home. Löfgren has argued that although mass-tourism might present an opportunity for the continent to integrate further, it also results in 'othering' between tourists and locals (Löfgren, 2012:348). He further argues that the modern European tourist industry uses 'an international grammar toolbox […], with the paradoxical goal of producing local atmosphere by borrowing concepts across borders', in what he calls 'the European experience' (*ibid.*:350). Going *to* Europe can thus be interpreted literally - Europe becomes a destination in itself.

Travelling *to* Europe was mentioned at other points in the fieldwork as well. In the following extract from a small focus group in Orkney, the participant goes into detail of what he experiences when travelling through the continent:

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O-1-SFG 43:28

P: I think we've traditionally, maybe particularly as Scots, we've actually been quite poor at making any real effort to integrate. […] There's almost a trepidation about travelling, and part of that's a language barrier. A lot of the folk I came in contact with, particularly in my younger years, did the traditional thing and would go on holiday to Spain where, if you couldn't make yourself understood, you just shouted more loudly: "For God's sake, you don't speak English!" We definitely, you know, *go* to Europe [*spoken emphasis*]. The thing that struck me the first time I travelled, I went to Belgium, […] was just how sophisticated people were in comparison, because they were multicultural, multilingual. I guess that was all being driven because of the advent of the common market, the EU, Brussels, so on. But I still find that, with some exceptions, that when you go to Europe the whole atmosphere changes.

The participant also uses the terms 'going to' Europe and describes Europe as having 'a different atmosphere'. He suggests that part of the reason for this is linguistic: not particularly a difference in languages spoken, but a difference in the number of languages spoken. Although from a very different perspective, this has similarities to the idea of Britain being a *virgo intacta*: a singularity compared to a collection of multiples. But the participant connects multilingualism to multiculturalism and sophistication. He was not the only one who focused on linguistic differences when comparing Scotland to Europe. During the focus group in Glasgow, one of the participants said the following:

G-4-FG 11:21

P: Like [fellow focus group participant], I don't feel European, I was brought up… *I think it's a language thing* [emphasis added]. You know, I was brought up, more to think about Australia and New Zealand and all the Commonwealth countries. It's very tough to get rid of that, when you've been brought up with that concept when you're young.

Overall, this participant makes the same argument: that a linguistic difference between the UK and mainland Europe plays an important role in differentiating the two places. But this participant then also says that this is why she does feel more of connection to the other Commonwealth countries (the only Commonwealth states she mentions are those in which

English is the main spoken language). Thus, the Commonwealth is presented as an alternative international space, one in which Scotland, at least linguistically, fits better.

These extracts portray Britain as a monolingual place. This is of course not the case, and I do not think that either of these participants would have denied the presence of other languages in the UK. But what becomes clear in the extracts is that even though there are several states in Europe, each of these with their own language(s), Europe is regarded as one space. Multilingualism then becomes a particularly European characteristic, thereby further othering Great Britain. This is not completely unfounded, research has suggested there are links between multilingualism and the perception of European identity (Kuhn, 2015; Díez-Medrano, 2018; on Brexit in particular: Kappe, 2020), and that diversity itself is seen by many as the key characteristic of Europeanness (for a critical discussion of this, see Clopot and Strani (2019:159)). Keeping this in mind, the following chart (figure 1.3) might present another reason for the perceived distance between Britain and other European countries:
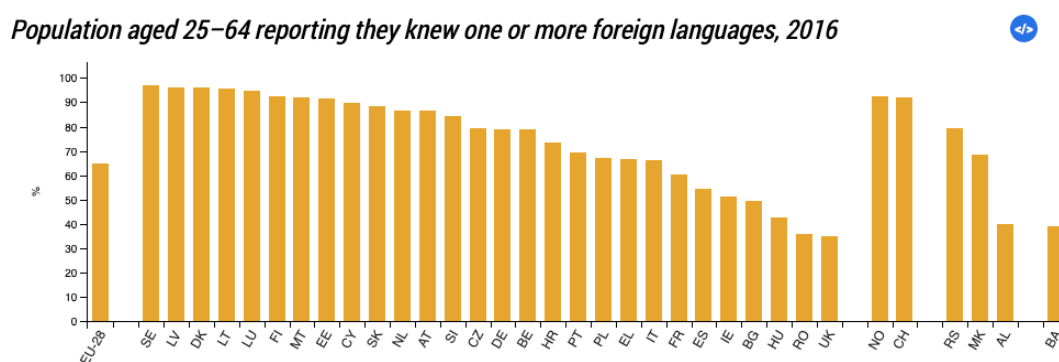
Figure 1.3: Population aged 25-64 reporting they know one or more foreign languages, 2016 (Eurostat, 2019). The UK has the lowest amount.

If Europe is seen as a different place, saying one is *going to* Europe, as the first participant (O-1-SFG, see p. 24) mentioned, makes a lot of sense. But when I hear it, I find it an unusual thing to say. I perceive Great Britain to be part of Europe, and one cannot go to where one already is. Somewhat to my surprise, I encountered a similar sentiment a few times during the fieldwork. The first happened during the focus group in Glasgow:

G-4-FG 42:17

P: One of my dearest and oldest friends is French, and I went to Edinburgh with her, and I said to her […]: you know, to me Edinburgh feels much more European. And she looks at me as if I'm daft and says: "but it is European, and so is Glasgow!". And

I'm thinking; aye, right enough; but when we say European, we do tend to think of continental Europe, you know.

In this extract, there are two very different experiences of Scotland in Europe: one of Edinburgh *as being similar to* Europe, the other of Edinburgh *as being part of* Europe. The participant suggests that Europe equates to continental Europe, whereas her friend's perception of Europe includes Scotland. The second extract, which was more confrontational, happened during a small focus group in Orkney. One participant (P2), who is an EU citizen who grew up on mainland Europe, interrupted another participant when she spoke of Scotland being *close to* Europe:

O-12-SFG 57:21

P1: […] Europe's obviously the closest culture to us. So that's the culture that we know the best because it's where we go, you know, go to France for holidays.

P2: [*interrupts P1*] You did it again: 'the culture closest to us.' You didn't say: 'we are part of it'.

The first participant appeared to be a bit taken aback by the interruption and gave an unsure reply:

P1: Well, we are part [of Europe], yeah, but […] we as a country have demonstrated quite clearly that we don't wish to be part of it. But I want to be part of that. I feel it is part of me being European, I don't feel it is a separate thing. I mean, Scottish, European, and a citizen of the world if you like.

P1 wants to emphasize that she does not experience Europe as a separate place herself. The participant who interrupted her went on to describe the frustration of the exceptionalism towards the rest of Europe she experienced in the UK (including Scotland). But what I found particularly interesting here was the first sentence of P1's reply, in which she suggests that the UK and Scotland have a choice on whether they want to be in Europe, and that the country has indicated that it does not want to be part of Europe. Theresa May, the former British Prime Minister, had a different vision of the connection between the UK and Europe. One of her infamous statements on Brexit was that the UK had voted "to leave the EU, but not Europe" (May, 2017). Not only did this statement suggest that the UK was already in Europe, but she also implied that geography alone is enough for the UK to remain in Europe. But her sentiment was not shared by everyone. Expressions of disagreement with this

statement were subtle but appeared throughout the fieldwork. Occasionally during interviews, participants would refer to Brexit as 'leaving Europe', or 'Scotland *being taken out of Europe* against its will'. Contrary to what Theresa May said, these extracts suggest that Scotland and the UK's position in Europe is not confirmed by its geographical location, and that Brexit had resulted in Scotland *leaving* Europe.

I would like to compare this to one of the earliest interviews of my fieldwork, which I did with two Catalans. They were supporters of both Scottish and Catalan independence.[6] I asked them about European identity, the EU, and the Catalonian independence movement. Soon after explaining my topic and starting the interview, one of the participants said the following:

PS-1-I 02:50

P1: I am Catalan, and I am European. […] I cannot conceive Catalonia outside of Europe, like geographically.

P2: But [Catalonia as a member of] the EU?

P1: Well, that's another thing…

This carried on throughout the interview, during which the participants made a distinct separation between Europe and membership of the EU. P1 clearly suggested that he perceives being European as being linked to geography more than to membership of the EU. As such, he argued Catalonia will always be in Europe and European. As I decided to focus just on Scotland, I do not have more interviews with Catalan participants to compare this with. But I never encountered a similar confidence when talking to Scottish or British members of the Scottish independence movement. Subconsciously, there seemed to be an awareness that Scotland's location on an island makes its participation in the European space more tenuous, and thus links such as those formed by EU membership more important to confirm its place.

What becomes clear from these first extracts of the fieldwork is that the relation between Scotland and Europe is anything but fixed. Europe is seen as a different place, yet at the same time Brexit is described as being taken out of Europe. It does appear that because there is no physical connection between Scotland and mainland Europe, a greater distance is perceived between the two, and therefore more emphasis is put onto connections alternative to

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[6] This interview happened before I limited my field to the Scottish independence movement.

geographical ones, such as EU membership. Brexit then becomes more than the dissolution of a political and economic union, but also the removal of an important way of confirming Scotland's place in Europe. Although beyond the scope of this research, it would be interesting to find out how much Britain's geography played a role in the UK's eventual decision to leave the EU.

1.3   Setting the scene, part 2: historical context

The uncertain link between Great Britain and Europe has unsurprisingly influenced British politics. The most recent political development of this tenuous relationship is, of course, Brexit. But since long before British voters decided the UK should leave the EU in July 2016 there was already a history of scepticism towards European integration in British politics. I will briefly explore this history in this section. Before doing so, it is useful to elaborate on this scepticism, or Euroscepticism, as it is usually referred to. In 1998, Taggart defined Euroscepticism as 'the idea of contingent or qualified opposition' as well as 'outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (Taggart, 1998:366). Since then, the term has been expanded to include more nuances. Following Bijsmans and Fitzgibbon, we can distinguish different 'levels' of Euroscepticism: hard Euroscepticism, soft Euroscepticism and Euroalternativism (Fitzgibbon, 2013; Bijsmans, 2017). Further, Guerra suggests adding Euroneutrality (Guerra, 2017:31). What emerges is a spectrum of euro-isms:

- Hard Euroscepticism: 'principled opposition to [European] integration and aiming for withdrawal from the EU' (Bijsmans, 2017:80).

- Soft Euroscepticism: opposition to 'one or more [EU-] policies' (Guerra, 2017:27).

- Euroalternativism: opposition to current EU-policy(s) but overall supportive of European integration ('pro-systemic opposition') and suggesting 'alternative policies and institutional reforms, while arguing that 'another Europe is possible'' (Fitzgibbon, 2013; Guerra, 2017:23).

- Euroneutrality: 'apathetic and not interested, without opposing the EU and its policies' (Guerra, 2017:31). Guerra argues that a reason for Euroneutrality might be 'due to the distance between citizens and the EU system of governance and low interest towards its institutions' (*ibid.*).

- Euroenthusiasm: support for European integration in its current form, or support for deeper integration.

These different attitudes towards European integration are not necessarily linked to political party affiliation. Indeed, in the UK, the Conservative Party, the Labour Party as well as the Scottish National Party (henceforth SNP) have members from across the spectrum of Euro-isms (Forster, 2002; Ichijo, 2004:103–6). All these different attitudes to European integration appeared during my fieldwork in some form.

Alongside the history of Euroscepticism, I will explore the history of Scottish nationalism during the same period. To do this I will focus on the history of the SNP, which is closely linked to the history of the independence movement, and the party line of the SNP on Scotland's place in European integration can teach us a lot about the meaning of Europe and European integration to the argument for Scottish independence. These two phenomena are not unrelated to each other, in fact, the overview below will show that they have had a reactive relationship over the past 70 years.

1.3.1 1945-1961

> Europe, which once had the monopoly of manufacturing industries and obtained important resources from its overseas possessions, today sees its external position weakened, its influence declining and its capacity to progress lost in its divisions (Spaak, 1956:9).

From this excerpt from Paul-Henri Spaak's report, which would form the basis for the Treaty of Rome, we can learn three main reasons behind European post-WW2 European integration: first, removing international divisions and enmities on the continent by making the European states interdependent on each other.[7] The most prominent example of this is neutralising the old rivalry between France and Germany by integrating their economies. Second, working together to gain influence on the world stage and to become an equal world power to the USA and, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union. Finally, to provide an alternative market to the colonies which several European states lost in the years following the war. This last reason is perhaps most overlooked in European memory, as it requires a moral confrontation between the myth of a peaceful Europe which overcame the crimes of WW2 to become a beacon of democracy and the reality of European states' action in their colonies (Pasture, 2015).

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[7] It is worth emphasizing that creating interdependence between states thus lies at the core of the EU. I will revisit this concept in chapter 6.

Britain had a somewhat different experience of these three reasons. First, its experiences during WW2 were substantially different to those of many states in Mainland Europe. It was never occupied (and therefore never liberated), the amount of warfare on the British Isles was minimal compared to other European states and the percentage of deaths of the total population was one of the lowest in Europe. Being an island, there were also never any border situations where simple geography meant that there was direct interaction with former wartimes enemies, such as in border areas on mainland Europe. Additionally, at the end of the war there was an atmosphere in Britain of being a victor and a liberator, having saved continental Europe from Nazism. For many in the UK, this also confirmed it already had the status of a world power, being one of the 'big three' together with the USA and the USSR.

Although Britain was supportive of European integration in the immediate aftermath of the war, it did not see itself as part of that group of countries. As a result, it did not take part in the earliest formation of what would later become the European Union. It has been argued that this was a critical mistake. If Britain would have influenced these early processes more, the EEC and later the EU would have been more in line with its own political structures and preferences, making it less difficult for the British political culture to take part in the project (Adam, 2020:7).

In these early days of European integration, the SNP was still very young. It had been formed in 1934 following the merger of the National Party for Scotland and the Scottish Party. In the 1940s and 1950s, the SNP had a positive attitude towards to Pan-European movement: they tried (but did not succeed) to attend the 1948 Hague conference of the United Europe Movement and participated in the Congress of European communities and regions (Saunders, 2018:351). Saunders notes this as being the start of the SNP's strategy to argue that Scotland is being held back from participating fully in Europe (*ibid.*:351). Indeed, this could be understood as an early example of the SNP 'mirroring' (*ibid.*), i.e., doing the opposite of the British government in its reluctance to partake in European integration, a pattern which would remain visible throughout the history of the SNP.

1.3.2   1961-1979

One of three reasons for European integration where Britain did not differ from other European states was decolonisation. The Labour government of 1945-51 had started this process, and the conservatives stopped opposing following Harold Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech in 1960. By 1970, Britain had 'reverted to being a predominantly European

power' for the first time in 400 years (Adam, 2020:10). At the same time, Britain's ageing economy lagged behind the growth experienced by members of the European Economic Community (henceforth EEC). The economic success of the EEC became too attractive not to partake in, even though many in the UK did not understand how it had come into existence or how it worked, and the British political elite did not agree with the ultimate aim of forming a European federation (*ibid.*:11-2). Adam (2020:15) has argued that this moment was another missed opportunity in which Harold Macmillan, the British PM at the time, could have tried to convince the British populace of the EEC by explaining its aims and the importance of compromise within it, which he never did. Instead, 'public attitudes toward the EEC in the UK remained characterised by ignorance, prejudice and condescending brush-off' (*ibid.*:15).

Regardless, the UK first applied to join the EEC in 1961. The application was made more out of necessity than out of conviction in the European project (Adam, 2020:12). Although the decision to apply to the EEC was not put to a referendum, it was met by commentary from those who disagreed with the decision, in particular the Labour Party. Arguments against joining the EEC included a loss of sovereignty, in particular the sovereignty of the parliament, and being subordinated to foreign-made laws, themes which would stick to Euroscepticism in the UK for years to come (*ibid.*:14). The SNP also became more Eurosceptic during the 1960s, for similar reasons relating to the loss of sovereignty but also, as mentioned before, in protest against the ruling Conservative party in Westminster (Saunders, 2018:351). In the end, the UK's application to the EEC failed not because of internal protest from the UK, but because Charles de Gaulle vetoed the application, fearing a loss of power for France if the UK joined. The UK's only option was to try again in 1967, when it also failed.

It took until after a change in leadership both in the UK and France before the UK would apply to the EEC successfully. The conservative Edward Heath became PM in 1970, and George Pompidou replaced de Gaulle after his retirement in 1969. By this time, France wanted another large economy in EEC as an alternative to Germany, it also wanted the UK to limit its transatlantic relationship with the USA and focus more on cooperating with continental Europe (Adam, 2020:19). At the same time, the British economy was suffering. The accession treaty was done swiftly, and the UK became a member of the EEC on 1 January 1973. By this time, the EEC laws, known as the *acquis communautaire*, were already set in stone, and the UK was not able to adjust them to its own liking. Ireland, Denmark, and Norway applied at the same time as the UK. Together with the UK, these states controlled

80% of fishing stocks in the North and Irish seas. On the eve of the formal start of their application, the EEC agreed on the Common Fisheries Policy (henceforth CFP), which effectively made fishing stocks within the EEC a common resource amongst members (*ibid.*:19-20). The CFP would remain an issue of contention throughout the UK's membership and resulted in Norway voting against EEC membership in a referendum.

The UK became a member of the EEC without holding a referendum on the matter. However, in its manifesto for the 1974 general election, the Labour Party promised a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the EEC. Soon after the Labour Party won the election, Harold Wilson, the new PM, put the issue of remaining a member of the EEC to a referendum. This was held on 5 June 1975. It was the first time the British public had been given opportunity to directly express their opinion on the UK's participation in European integration.[8] As discussed above, Euroscepticism went beyond party lines and members of the main parties campaigned and voted both to remain and to leave. The SNP campaigned to leave the EEC.

The SNP had several reasons why it opposed EEC membership: first, to demonstrate a different political mindset between Scotland and England. Second, in a continuation from its attitude in the 1940s and 50s, to oppose entering the EEC 'on London's terms' and demanded direct representation in European institutions (Saunders, 2018:347). Third, for ideological reasons. The EEC was seen as a centralised and capitalist institution, which jarred with the SNP's ideals (Ichijo, 2004:103). For some in the SNP, the customs union appeared similar to the single market of the United Kingdom they were trying to leave but on a continental scale (Saunders, 2018:352). Finally, following the recent discovery of oil in the North Sea, the SNP was planning for a social-democratic independent state with a welfare state based on the income from oil. There was a fear that membership of the EEC would result in losing the final say of how oil revenues were invested, despite there being little evidence this would be the case (Ichijo, 2004:104; Saunders, 2018:357).

The referendum resulted in a 67.23% vote for the UK to remain in the EEC. In Scotland, 58.4% voted to remain, as opposed to 68.7% in England. The result of the referendum was interesting for two reasons: first, a majority of Scotland voted to remain in the EEC, thereby

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[8] In fact, the whole principle of holding referenda in the UK was at that time still very new. This first referendum in the UK was held in Northern Ireland on 8 March 1973. See Adam (2017:23) for more information.

becoming a first defeat for the SNP after a number of consecutive wins. Second, the majority for Remain in Scotland was noticeably smaller than in England. The distinction between England and Scotland was therefore demonstrated, albeit not as clearly as some in the SNP had hoped for (Saunders, 2018:363). Still, the difference was visible enough to contribute to the proposal of the Scotland act in 1978, which intended to establish a Scottish Assembly. However, the required approval of 40% of the Scottish electorate was not reached at a referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979, even though a majority of 51.6% voted for devolution. The question of Scottish devolution was therefore put to rest for the time being.

1.3.3 1979-2010

The 1980s in British politics were marked by the tenure of Margaret Thatcher. When she started her term as Prime Minister in 1979, and beforehand at the time of the 1975 EEC referendum, she supported Britain's participation in European integration. In particular, she supported the European common market, which was in line with her own ideologies on free trade. But during her term she increasingly felt that economic integration would lead to political integration, thus she became more apprehensive of the EEC (Wall, 2008:1–17).

Following defeat both in the 1975 and 1979 referenda as well as the 1979 general election, it first appeared that Scottish devolution and the SNP had lost their importance in British politics. However, throughout the 1980s, support for devolution started to grow, most likely in response to the Thatcher government in London (Ichijo, 2004:47). The campaign for a Scottish Assembly was formed following the 1979 devolution referendum, which later became the Scottish Constitutional Convention (henceforth SCC). The Labour Party supported the SCC and included the establishment of a Scottish parliament in their manifesto for the 1997 general elections. After a landslide victory, they organised another referendum on Scottish devolution in 1997.

While Thatcher and the Conservative party became increasingly Eurosceptic, the SNP and the Scottish independence movement became increasingly Euroenthusiastic in the period between the two devolution referendums. Jim Sillars, previously a member of the Labour Party but a member of the SNP since 1980, started campaigning for an 'independence in Europe' policy (Sillars, 1989). He argued that in a modern globalised economy, absolute state sovereignty was impossible and that the main argument against Scottish independence was 'the fear of isolation and separation' (*ibid.*:48), and therefore it would be beneficial for an independent Scotland to become a member of the EEC. This appears to be the first time in

Scottish politics an argument was made for European integration as a form of (societal) shelter for an independent Scotland.[9] Another important development at the same time was the election of Winifred (Winnie) Ewing of the SNP to the European Parliament in 1979. Ewing would become known as 'Madame Écosse' in the parliament for her strong voice on Scottish interests in Europe. Her election provided a direct connection between Scotland and the EEC and resulted in an increasing understanding and appreciation for the European institutions in Scotland (Hepburn, 2010:73). Additionally, the social policies of the EEC, such as workers' rights, as well as development funding to deprived regions such as Highlands and Islands, increased popularity of the European project in Scotland (*ibid.*).

Thus, what emerges in the UK is increasingly visible Euroscepticism in Westminster[10], and increasingly visible Euroenthusiasm in Scotland. Hepburn argues that it is in the period between the devolution referendums that the idea of Scotland being more pro-European than England was first used and encouraged by the SNP and Scottish Labour (Hepburn, 2010:74). This narrative has stuck and become increasingly prominent around the time of the 2016 EU referendum; it will be referred to regularly by research participants throughout this thesis.

On 11 September 1997, 74.29% of the Scottish electorate voted to establish a Scottish Parliament with devolved powers. As a result, the UK Parliament passed the Scotland Act in 1998, which enabled the reconvening of a Scottish Parliament for the first time since 1707; as well as the establishment of the Scottish Executive, which would later become the Scottish Government. The Scottish Parliament and Government was given control over devolved matters, while certain issues remained reserved to Westminster.[11] At the first elections of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, Labour won 56 seats, followed by the SNP with 35 seats. Labour and the Liberal Democrats formed the first Scottish Executive. Labour would remain in power in Scotland for the first two parliaments. At the elections of the 3rd parliament in 2007, the SNP narrowly beat Labour by one seat and formed a minority government. Since then, the SNP has continuously been the largest party in Holyrood.

Following the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the SNP became increasingly more cautious with its optimism for participation in European integration. Its support for an

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[9] It is worth noting that Sillars actively campaigned against the UK's continued membership of the EEC in 1975 and has reverted to oppose an independent Scotland's membership of the EU in 2016 (Sillars, 2016).

[10] Euroscepticism was particularly present in the Conservative party (Hepburn, 2010:74), Blair's New Labour was supportive of British participation in the EEC/EU.

[11] A complete list of reserved and devolved powers can be found in Appendix I.

independent Scotland joining the euro decreased, in particular following the start of the European debt crisis in 2009, and it became vocally critical of the CFP (Hepburn, 2010:92). The SNP's position was not, however, to leave the EU; instead, they demanded an increase in Scotland's European powers (*ibid.*). Thus, the SNP argued the best solution to Scotland's European problems was to increase its influence in the EU and then to change it (Euroalternativism). Of course, the most effective way to increase Scotland's influence in the UK would be to be an independent member state with its own representatives. Independence could thus be presented as a possible solution to Scotland's issues with EU.

1.3.4   2011 onwards

The SNP won a landslide victory at the Scottish Parliament election on 5 May 2011 which allowed them to form a majority government, becoming the first single-party majority government in the history of the devolved Scottish parliament. In its manifesto, the SNP promised to legislate for a referendum on Scottish independence. This was followed by an agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a referendum on independence for Scotland, which was signed by Alex Salmond and David Cameron in October 2012. Following further legislation from both governments, a referendum on Scottish independence was agreed to be held on 18 September 2014.

1.3.4.1   The 2014 Scottish independence referendum

In the run-up to the referendum, the SNP-majority Scottish government campaigned for independence. As part of their campaign, they published a white paper entitled 'Scotland's future: your guide to an independent Scotland' (commonly referred to as the white paper). The 649-page document provided a clear and referenced argument as to why the Scottish government believed Scotland should become independent (The Scottish Government, 2013). There are several interesting sections in the white paper on an independent Scotland's relationship to the EU. First it is made clear that it is the opinion of the (SNP) government that an independent Scotland should be a member of the EU (*ibid.*:216). However, it is also clearly stated that the choice of whether to join will lie with the Scottish voters and that Scotland would not be taken out of the EU against its will (*ibid.*:217). This demonstrates that in 2013 there were already signs of what would happen three years later. The white paper argues that an independent Scotland would be able to represent itself and its own interests in the EU instead of being represented by the UK, whose interests are argued to not always be in line with Scotland's (*ibid.*:217-9). Further, the white paper argues that an independent

Scotland within the EU would aim to reform the EU to 'bring it closer to its citizens and address their concerns' as well as 'to deliver sustained economic recovery across all member states' (*ibid.*:218). The latter Euroalternative policy is clearly aimed at the more Eurosceptic voters, acknowledging that the main concerns about the EU in Scotland lie with democratic accountability as well as its neoliberal and capitalist nature, as opposed to immigration in the rest of the UK (henceforth rUK) (Hepburn and McLoughlin, 2011; Hepburn, 2015; Adam, 2020:240).

The official campaign for independence was called Yes Scotland. It was launched on 25 May 2012 and was an umbrella organisation for all pro-independence groups. Besides the SNP and other pro-independence political parties (such as the Scottish Green Party or the Scottish Socialist Party), this included a large number of autonomous grassroots pro-independence groups. Many of the pro-independence groups which are active participants of the independence movement today were formed during this period, including Common Weal, Women for Independence as well as many of the local Yes groups.

In the referendum, 55.3% of Scottish voters chose to remain part of the UK, 44.7% chose independence (figure 1.4, p. 37). There was a very high voter turnout of 84.6%. Following the referendum Alex Salmond resigned as First Minister and leader of the SNP and Nicola Sturgeon took his place. Even though the Yes campaign lost the vote for independence, it succeeded in convincing a large number of Scottish voters to change their minds.[12] Additionally, Kockel has argued it left a legacy of 'cultural confidence' (Kockel and McFadyen, 2019:195). This confidence was reflected in the independence movement. As one of the contributors said:

> **O-10-SFG - 08:27**
>
> P: Supporting independence, it's not seen as an off-the-wall, out-there, odd thing to do now though, whereas probably 10-15 [years ago] it would have been a bit renegade, you know, you'd always be embarrassed or quiet about saying that's how you felt. I think it's changed. It's seen as a […] mainstream view to have now.

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[12] An overview of opinion polls on the question, taken between the signing of the Edinburgh agreement in 2012 and the referendum in 2014, show an overall increase of support for independence from as low as 29% to 45% (Wikipedia, 2021). Wikipedia article includes clear sources to primary polling data.

Although the referendum resulted in a No vote, the Scottish government got additional powers which were previously reserved to Westminster (proposed by the Smith Commission and made official in the Scotland Act 2016[13]), and there was a significant increase in support for the SNP at the 2015 UK general election.
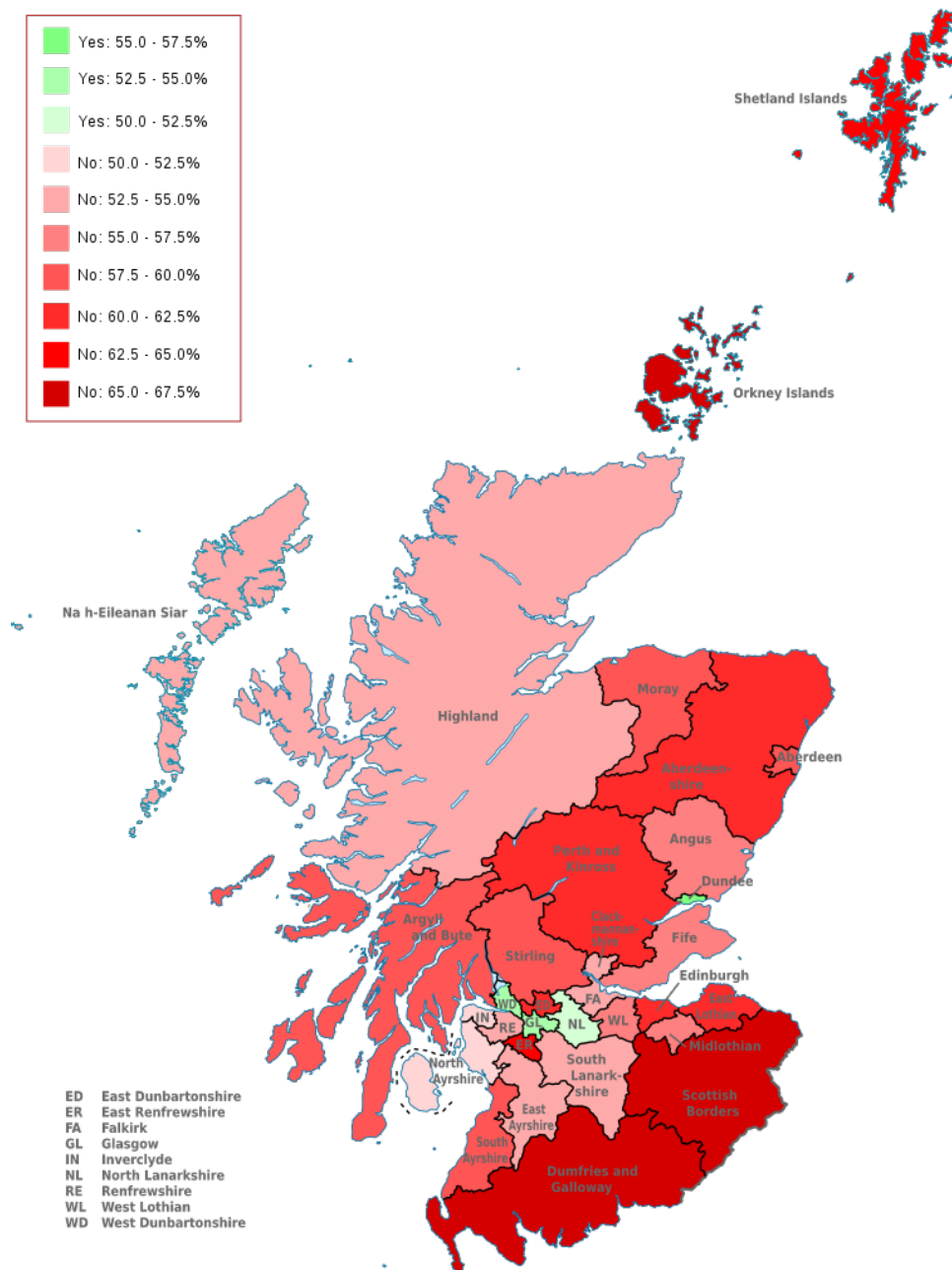
Figure 1.4: The results of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum (Brythones, 2014).

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[13] For a list of powers devolved to the Scottish Government in the Scotland Act 2016, see Appendix I.

1.3.4.2 The 2016 EU membership referendum

David Cameron had gained confidence from the Scottish independence referendum and concluded that 'taking the bull aggressively by the horns was tactically better than seeking passive shelter' (Adam, 2020:61). He decided to wager a similar gamble to tackle the continuous problem of Euroscepticism within his Conservative Party in a bid to silence UKIP, which was convincing an increasing number of Conservative Party politicians to join its ranks (Bort, 2016). As a result, he organised a UK-wide referendum on whether the UK should remain a member of the EU to be held on 23 July 2016.

The campaigns for and against Brexit were organised by several grassroots and official campaign groups, which were collectively referred to as the Leave and Remain campaigns. These terms would be used in both formal and informal conversation throughout the campaign and beyond. Also, in fieldwork presented throughout this thesis, those who support Britain's EU membership are often called 'Remainers' (or 'Remoaners'), and those who support Brexit 'Leavers' (or 'Brexiteers'). Although the UK Conservative party officially remained neutral on the question of the UK's EU membership, David Cameron favoured and campaigned for Remain (Hope, 2015). Other Conservative Party politicians, including future Prime Minister Boris Johnson campaigned for Leave. The only party with representation in the House of Commons to officially campaign for Leave was UKIP. In Scotland all major parties, including the Scottish Conservative Party, supported Remain (The Newsroom, 2016).

Figure 1.5: The Scottish National Party, the Scottish Conservatives, Scottish Labour, and the Scottish Green Party all supported Remain (BBC News, 2019).

On 23 July 2016, 52% of British voters voted for Britain to leave the European Union, a result which Adam has argued to be mainly representative of England (Adam, 2020:115). In Scotland, 62% of voters chose to remain in the EU, and every voting area voted to remain. In Northern Ireland 55.78% voted to remain. Following the referendum, negotiations on Brexit between the British government and the EU began on 29 March 2017, when the British government delivered Article 50 to the EU (its official notice of intention to leave the Union); and concluded on 31 January 2020, when the UK left the EU.

During its history since the end of Second World War, the SNP has had a varied stance towards Scotland's participation in European integration. Although there usually was a clear party line, it has not been a secret that opinions on the matter are also diverse within the party. This is perhaps emblematic for the SNP; it has proven that it is more than a party with a single aim, but independence remains the main aim of the SNP. Their stance on Scotland's participation in European integration is strongly influenced by this aim: often it has been used to emphasize a difference between Scotland and the rUK by marking Scotland as being more pro- or anti-European than the rest of the country. The 2016 EU referendum result can be seen as a culmination of this process. The marked difference between Scotland and the rUK, which was already aspired to in 1975, albeit from a reversed perspective, finally happened. The ensuing result, visualised in a map which unmistakably separates Scotland from the rUK (figure 1.6, see p. 40), formed a strong argument that compared to its southern neighbour, Scotland lies elsewhere on the spectrum of euro-isms.

1.4 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter I presented the research questions, the structure of the thesis and explained my motivation for undertaking this project. I followed this by giving a broad overview of the spatial and historical context in which I am doing the research. From this first look it already became clear that Scotland and Britain's place in Europe can and has been challenged in different ways over the years, finally resulting in Brexit and its ensuing political difficulties. This presents us with an uncertain, but undeniably interesting time to undertake this research in. The research questions explained at the start of this chapter will be addressed in chapters 5-7, but before doing so the framework and methodology of the research need to be developed further. I will do this in the following chapters.
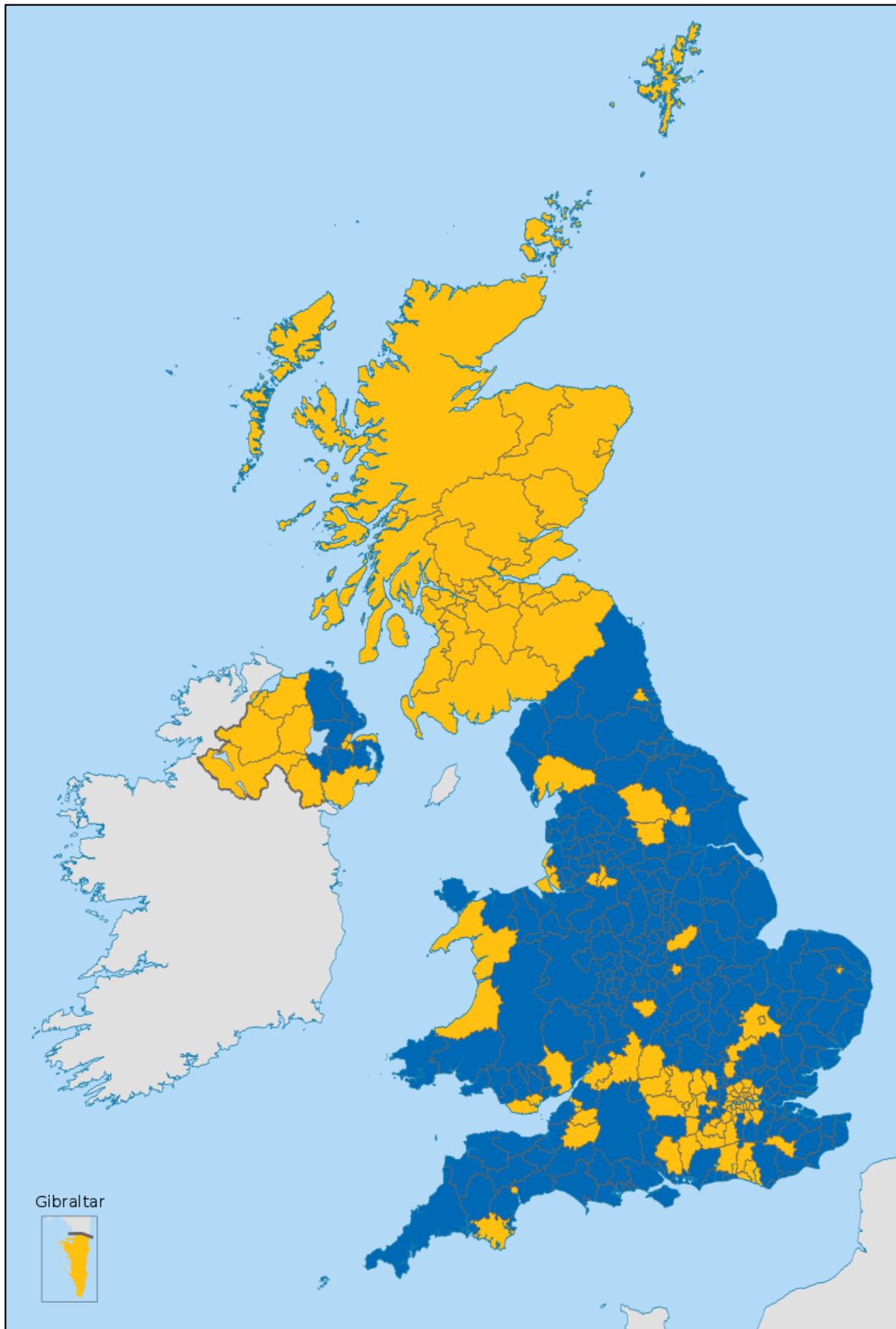
Figure 1.6: The result of the referendum on whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union, held on 23 July 2016. Yellow areas voted Remain, blue areas voted Leave. All of Scotland is yellow (Mirrorme22, 2016).

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter has two aims. First, I will explore the literature published on the topics I will address in this research. I will start by examining the literature on Scotland, Europe, and Brexit, followed by sections on identity and small state studies. Second, while examining the literature on those respective topics, in the latter two sections I will also form the theoretical framework of this research. As detailed in the introduction, this framework is based on the two disciplines I studied during previous degrees: ethnology (with a particular interest in identity) and small state studies.

2.1   Literature on Scotland, Europe, and Brexit

This thesis will continue the history of Scottish nationalism and British Euroscepticism presented in the introduction (see section 1.3) by providing an insight into both in Scotland following the EU referendum. Thus, it will build on the literature presented in the previous chapter. The history of Scottish nationalism and the SNP has been covered by multiple authors (Lynch, 2002; Devine, 2006; Hassan, 2009). It is remarkable that within these, Scotland's relation to Europe is usually mentioned as a side note or not at all. An exception is formed by Ichijo, whose book 'Scottish nationalism and the idea of Europe: concepts of Europe and the nation' (2004) covers many of the themes I also address in this research. Her work, however, was published in 2004. At this time Scotland had recently got its own parliament, and the EU was quite popular (Mak, 2019). It was an optimistic period: before the start of the multiple crises in the EU, including Brexit, but also before Scotland's rejection of independence in 2014. Thus, I believe the questions asked by Ichijo can be asked again in this new context. Comparing my findings with those of Ichijo almost two decades earlier is interesting, as I will do at points throughout the thesis.

More recently, Hepburn (2010; 2011), and later Sijstermans (2016), have written about the SNP's stance towards European integration, and how it has used the concept of Europe strategically. This work provides a fascinating insight into the meaning of Europe in the context of Scottish nationalism but does so from a party-political perspective. Issues of identity and meaning of Europe to the broader independence movement are not touched upon. Dardanelli (2013) has also presented work on the changing attitudes towards Europe with supporters of Scottish nationalism. He asks whether Europeanisation raises demand for self-government at sub-state level and uses Scotland as a case study. Thus, he focuses on the period from the 1970s until the 1990s in Scotland, during which the attitude towards Europe

changed (see section 1.3.3). A focus on a similar period is provided by Saunders (2018). Once more, these do not cover the most recent significant developments. Additionally, Dardanelli uses large-scale quantitative data and does not elaborate on the qualitative meaning of identities (*ibid.*:62-74:120-130). This does not compromise his work, but I do believe further insight can be brought to these questions by using a qualitative perspective.

Around the time of the 2014 independence referendum, more research was published on how an independent Scotland would integrate with EU; whether, why and how it would remain or become a member (Keating, McEwen and Harvey, 2014; Kenealy, 2014). As before, this research was usually focused on the burgeoning political questions of the moment and did not deeply consider questions of identity. One of these, by Bailes *et al.* (2013), although also from a political perspective, focuses on an independent Scotland's vulnerabilities and how European integration might support it. I will explore this article further later in this chapter (see section 2.3.1.2). Similarly, since the EU referendum a flurry of research has been published on Scotland's departure and its possible futures in relation to Europe. Most of these provide further research on future political options (Bort, 2016; Keating, 2017; Hughes, 2020a, 2021), and others on economic prospects (Figus *et al.*, 2018; McCullough, 2018). A broad collection of essays on Scotland and Europe following the EU referendum is presented by Hassan and Gunson (Hassan and Gunson, 2017). This includes work which provides an introductory glance at some of the topics elaborated on in this thesis, for example on values and morality (Cram, 2017), soft power (Edward, 2017) and post-Brexit economic development (Cumbers, 2017). The strength in this work lies in its correct acknowledgement of the breadth of topics affected by Brexit in the Scottish context worth exploring. But it feels very much like a collection of starting points for future research. When read now, it even feels a bit premature at times, with the possibility of a second referendum on the UK's EU membership still being discussed (Hughes, 2017). A similar volume discussing political futures of Scottish independence after Brexit was published by the Centre on Constitutional Change in 2021, edited by Hepburn, Keating and McEwen (2021).

Although there is an increasing amount of literature on Scotland, Europe and Brexit, the majority of it is focused on political issues. Identity is mentioned at times, but usually in a party-political context or with the use of large-scale quantitive data. There are some exceptions. First, in a blog post published soon after Brexit; McCrone, critically addresses the question of whether Scots feel more European than others in the UK, and points to the importance of what Europe *means* to Scots (McCrone, 2016). Knight (2017) also provides an

anthropological perspective on the situation in Scotland, correctly noting the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty at the time and discussing how it affects people's perception of independence. Along similar lines, Volume 29, Issue 3 of the journal Scottish Affairs (2020) focused on 'Scotland and Brexit: Citizenship, Identity and Belonging' (McCollum, 2020; Pietka-Nykaza, Leith and Clark, 2020). These articles, written at the same time as I was working on this project, cover issues closely related to my research but from different perspectives. They mainly focus on perceptions of Scottish exceptionalism (Gawlewicz, 2020; Kay, 2020) and the experience of EU citizens in post-Brexit Scotland (Botterill *et al.*, 2020; Pietka-Nykaza and McGhee, 2020; Sime, 2020). Although the topic of independence is brought up in these articles (it is difficult to avoid in this context), the Scottish independence movement is not their main focus. Thus, it appears that after the initial quick reaction to the EU referendum result, research is slowly starting to focus more in-depth on Brexit's consequences in Scotland. This research project contributes to this trend and addresses a gap in previous research by particularly focussing on the meanings of Europe in the Scottish independence movement. To do this critically, the next section will elaborate on what is meant by identity and meaning.

2.2　Framework, part 1: identity and European identity

As detailed in the introduction, during my undergraduate studies in ethnology I gained an interest in the study of identity. Relating these studies to myself, I became particularly interested in European identity, which formed an important starting point for this research project. As I will explain in this section, it did not remain the primary focus throughout the duration of the project. That being said, it is still necessary to form a theoretical understanding of the term, as it still underpins much of the thesis' thinking. While doing so, the aim of the section is to move towards an understanding of European identity.

Broadly, identity may be interpreted as 'the creation of boundaries to define the self and the other in time and space' (van Meijl, 2010:71) and 'in the most basic social psychological sense, identity is a place in the social world' (Simon and Klandermans, 2001:320). But the term may be used differently across different disciplines, and some of these understandings may conflict with each other (Hermann and Brewer, 2004:4; Kaina and Karolewski, 2009). Indeed, identity is one of the most commonly studied topics in the social sciences (Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2011:1), with a vast and increasing body of literature on the subject (Côté, 2006). It is beyond the scope of this research to even attempt to cover all of these

different interpretations, instead I will focus particularly on how I will use identity in the context of this research. Therefore, I will consciously not mention certain understandings of identity which do not apply to this research. However, I do not mean to argue that such other conceptualisations are invalid or wrong.

2.2.1   On the presence and deep-essentialism of identity

Before explaining how I understand identity, it is beneficial to discuss the *presence* of identity. The history of thought on identity has taken a well-documented shift from essentialist to constructivist interpretation (Tilley, 2006; van Meijl, 2010). Before the middle of the previous century, identity was widely thought of as being essential, meaning that it was formed by primordial features, being 'relatively fixed in space–time, stable and immutable, a precipitate of the past experiences and expressions of previous generations, picked up in childhood' (Tilley, 2006:9). The second half of the 20th century saw the development of constructivist thinking on identity, meaning that identities are continuously (re)constructed and changed over time by different actors. As Tilley writes, a constructivist understanding of identity entails that it 'is transient, a reflection on where you are now, a fleeting moment in a biography of the self or the group, only partially connected to where you might have come from, and where you might be going' (Tilley, 2006:9). He further sums up some of the main constructivist arguments of the eighties and nineties: nations are 'imagined communities' (Andersen, 1983), people are 'migrants of identity' in which home becomes movement (Rapport and Dawson, 1998), the 'routes, rather than the roots, of identity become key frameworks of analysis' (Clifford, 1997 in Tilley, 2006:9).

In their seminal article critiquing the concept of identity, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that the presumption of the presence of identity means that some form of essentialism will always be part of conceptualisations of identity, even if it is done from a constructivist perspective. Kockel agrees, arguing that 'it actually proves impossible even to think about certain issues without resorting to some kind of essentialism. Identity is one such issue' (Kockel, 2012b:67). As an example, even the constructivist idea that identity is constantly changing means that constant change is an essential attribute of identity. But Kockel does not imply this is necessarily a bad thing, which Eder agrees with (2009:429–30). These essentialist features are what Kockel refers to as *deep*-essentialism (2012b:67).

The ensuing question is then whether *having* an identity is (deep-)essential. I will follow the argumentation of Kantner (2006), who has developed a system of categorising different emic

perceptions of identity. This system will be discussed further below, but for now it suffices to mention that her highest level of identity is the universal We1. This is the identity of every human being, as opposed to animals and the dead material world (Kantner, 2006:507), implying that everyone has at least one basic identity. Others agree with her, as Greenfeld writes having an identity is 'psychological imperative' as well as a 'sociological constant' (Greenfeld, 1999:38). The recognition of being human is in itself an emic conceptualisation of identity, which is a deep-essentialist attribute of identity. In other words, having an identity is part of being human. My interpretation of the presence of identity is thus as follows: that the content of identity is constructed, but the act of construction is essential.

This is already a theory-heavy conceptualisation. Tilley notes that although anthropologists and sociologists like to take a constructivist approach to identity, people who do not interact with identity from a professional or academic perspective often understand it as something which is essential (Tilley, 2006:15). This is an important observation: there is a distinction between identity as it is experienced and identity as an analytical concept (Bausinger *et al.*, 1978:204). These can be understood respectively as conceptualising identity from an *emic* or from an *etic* perspective. The criteria used in etic analysis of (an) identity may have no relevance to those experiencing it, which follows Durkheim's argument that a 'social fact' is not necessarily connected or related to an empirical fact (Durkheim, 1950; Kantner, 2006:507). Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between the ontological study of the etic analysis of identity and the hermeneutic study of the emic experience of identity (Kantner, 2006:507). I will return to this difference later in this section.

A variation of the debate on the essentialism of identity is also present in the discourse on European identity. Scalise notes that there is a strand which argues that there is no such thing as a European identity (Scalise, 2015:596). This argument does not necessarily question the presence of identity as a whole but suggests that there is such a large variety of local identities in Europe that finding one overarching European identity is impossible (Scalise, 2015:596). This argument presumes a universalist approach to European identity, meaning that it is not possible to find one interpretation of European identity which is similar across the continent (for example: White, 2012).

While I agree with this argument, I disagree that this is enough reason to halt the use of the concept. A similar identity can be perceived differently by different people. As Bruter argues: 'when two individuals claim to 'feel European', they might mean totally different things in

terms of both the intensity of the feeling they describe and the imagined political community they refer to' (Bruter, 2003:1154). As long as there are people who identify with Europe, we can speak of a European identity. That there are such people has been proven by quantitative research, such as Eurobarometers (European Commission, 2013). But the tendency of these type of studies to generalise do result in the impression that there is *one* European identity, leading to the critique above. Thus, their usefulness is limited: while such studies might confirm the presence of a European identity, they give us little understanding on *how* these identities are understood or expressed. The aim of this research is emphatically to understand the latter. Thus, within this project I make the following presumptions: identity itself is deep-essential, and the concept of Europe *may* be woven into the construction of its content. My interest lies with the meaning of Europe in this construction, on a non-universalist, qualitative basis.

2.2.2   *What is identity?*

The constructivist approach to identity enhances its ambiguity. This has led some academics to question its effectiveness. Brubaker and Cooper argued that identity is used with so many different, sometimes non-compatible, meanings that it has lost its usefulness and become obscure. They add to this that the use of identity within literature is often unnecessary, and that other terms can be used instead (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Several authors agree with their stance as well; but add that the solution proposed by Brubaker and Cooper, to abandon the term, is unhelpful. Instead, a clearer definition and understanding of identity is necessary (Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Eder, 2009; Kaina and Karolewski, 2009; Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2011). This definition should recognise the inherent multidimensionality of the concept (Côté, 2006; Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2011), which includes at least three levels of analysis: 'the subjectivity of the individual, behaviour patterns specific to the individual, and the individual's membership in societal groups' (Côté, 2006:8). Elsewhere, these have also been described as individual, relational, and collective identities (Smith, 1992; Sedikides and Brewer, 2001). Following Eder (2009), the second and third are respectively a psychological and a sociological analysis of identity. It must be noted here that these different levels of identity continuously interact with each other and can therefore never truly be studied separately.

2.2.2.1 Individual identity

I understand individual identity as the emic perception of our own identity. Vignoles *et al.* describe identity foremost as the 'explicit or implicit response to the question: "who are you?"' (Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx, 2011:2). By asking and answering such a question, we emphatically construct identity from an emic perspective. To be able to answer "who are you?" we need to have an idea about who (or what) we are. Therefore, simply the fact of being (someone or something) is not enough, a certain awareness of being is required (Kaina and Karolewski, 2009:14). Trying to answer "who am I?" reflexively shines a light on just how big the scope of identity can become. I am certain anyone would have a long and unique list of answers to the question. Following the constructivist perspective, emic perceptions of identity might also evolve over time. As a result, from an etic perspective, answers to the questions posed above will 'never be more than a snapshot, a freezing of the frame of a continuously moving process' (Nic Craith, 2003:3). However, from an emic perspective identity might not be perceived as continuously evolving, instead as a continuity in an ever-changing environment (Bausinger *et al.*, 1978:15, 204). This continuity connects our past to our present and our future, making identity 'an aspiration as much as an inheritance' (Kockel, 2017:348). It is therefore possible for us to have different identities at the same time, which evolve, dissolve and (re)appear over time. Although emically we are aware of some form of identity, we might not be aware of this evolving process.

To better understand different forms of emic perception of identity, I follow Kantner's (2006) division of qualitative identities. To clarify the term, Kantner breaks down identity into different categories. First, she distinguishes between numerical identity and qualitative identity, which she argues is necessary following Durkheim's argument of 'social fact' mentioned above (Durkheim, 1950). Numerical identity is what can be understood from the perspective of a neutral observer; objective criteria, for example: citizenship, ethnic origin, language, etc. In other words, numerical identity is the etic analysis of identity. Qualitative identity may include 'value judgements and the ethical self-understanding of the individuals concerned' (Kantner, 2006:507), in other words emic experiences of identity. Kantner further divides qualitative identity hierarchically into three different categories. At the top is We1, the universal we of being human, which I mentioned above. Every living human being is part of We1. The universal We1 consists of many particularistic We2 identities which are no longer universal. Kantner notes two sorts of We2 identities: first, the We2/commercium or a 'weak' collective identity. Those who identify as being part of We2/commercium recognise

that they share an interpretation of their situation with others, but do not share common ethical convictions (Kantner, 2006:511). A similar concept of identity to the *commercium* has been suggested by Billig in the form of banal nationalism: 'the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building' (Billig, 1995:8). An example would be citizenship of a state, the difference with numerical identity being that the *commercium* is recognised by the individual whereas numerical identity is observed by a neutral outsider. Another form of We2 identity is the We2/communio (Kantner, 2006:513). It is different from the commercium because it goes beyond a shared interpretation of situation/environment and includes shared ethical convictions. Examples of such would be shared values or groups which form for a shared purpose. The distinction between *commercium* and *communio* identities is useful because it allows for identities where one feels connected to it but not strongly emotionally or morally involved with it.

Following Kantner's model of categorisation, European identity is a We/2 identity. But is it *commercium* or *communio*? Kantner writes that 'in everyday life, political communities generally resemble a We/2commercium' (2006:515). But as mentioned above, individuals may interpret European identity in different ways. Based on my own perspective (which I will elaborate on further in sections 3.4.1 and 4.3.2), I would assume there are some who perceive Europe beyond the *commercio*. The variety of interpretations of European identity has been noted by Delanty (2002), who presented 5 different models of European identity based on observations in the literature. Each of these could be what an individual understands as European identity:

The first is what Delanty refers to as moral universalism. In this interpretation of European identity there is a particular emphasis on presumed fundamental values linked to the concept of Europe: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law, etc. Although there is no clearly defined list of these values, there appears to be an overall shared knowledge of what they are, I would therefore interpret this model as being part of the We/2communio. Several European institutions and states frequently mention variations of these values when discussing their aims and ambitions, and also in the fieldwork this was a common topic (this will be explored further in chapter 7). Etically, this model faces two common criticisms: first, what makes these values particularly European? (Delanty, 2002:347–8). Second, it is questionable whether the European institutions, states and individuals really adhere to such values (Ivic, 2016:216–27).

The second model is what Delanty refers to as European post-national universalism, and is formed around Jürgen Habermas' constitutional patriotism (Habermas, 2000, 2001; Biró-Kaszás, 2010). It addresses the divergence between ideal European values and contrasting actions by suggesting Europe should have a constitution. This would include the values mentioned in the previous model, effectively turning them into law. By doing so, these would also be legitimised as European values and an identity could be built around that. In other words, this is similar to the previous model with added legal weight. Thus, it is a We/2commercium using a European constitution as a starting point which might evolve into a We2/communio in due course. Delanty notes the difficulty of creating a European constitution as 'constitutional tradition has been based on the nation-state and the EU is neither a state nor a nation, or even a nation-state' (2002:348). If such a constitution would be successfully formed and a sense of European identity could be formed on its foundation, it would strongly imply that participating in the European integration process, for example by means of EU membership, is a necessity for a European identity, a question which came into focus during the debate on Brexit (May, 2017).

Delanty's third model is cultural particularism. This bases European identity on an ideal of shared European cultural heritage. Common examples of this shared heritage are Christianity or the classical Roman and Greek cultures. This model is similar to the first model, using an imagined culture as opposed to an ideal of values. Therefore, I would also understand this as a being We2/communio. Etically, this model's flaws quickly become apparent as it is impossible to find one common culture or heritage at the root of Europe (Ivic, 2016:209). It also quickly becomes apparent that such an interpretation of European identity may lead to prejudice towards those deemed as not being part of this 'European' culture.

The fourth model, European Pragmatism, uses the recent successes and results of the European project as a basis for identity. The European institutions and practices of life are central to it, for example the Euro or 'the growth of international tourism within Europe, the common market [and] the absence of border controls' (Delanty, 2002:351). However, Delanty argues that this model is largely based on consumer capitalism which leads us to a similar criticism as for the first model; that this could also be seen as a general attribute of Western culture. Within this model, the European has become interwoven in the everyday, in ways which are similar to Billig's banal nationalism (Billig, 1995). Indeed, Cram (2009) has referred to this as banal Europeanism. As such, it can clearly be connected to Kantner's We2/commercium.

As an alternative to all previous models, which, as we have seen, all have their flaws, Delanty presents a fifth model, which he calls European cosmopolitanism. Instead of looking for shared European values, cultural heritage, or economic structure; Delanty suggests 'to define European identity in terms of its conflicts, traumas and fears' (2002:353–6) and the successful living together of the European people since the end of the Second World War. This would include elements of all previous models: the pursuit of common values, a common heritage (that of conflict and overcoming it) and the emerging of a cosmopolitan European space. As such, identities shaped around this model could have elements of both We2 identities.

By theorising on different interpretations of European identity, it quickly becomes clear that the term can be understood in many ways. These models present some possible interpretations but should definitely not be seen as a definite list. As such, in this work I will not be attempting to see whether and how the contributions from the field fit into these models, but reflections of all of these models are visible throughout the fieldwork I present in this thesis. Additionally, although some models can easily be criticised from an etic perspective, that does not affect their emic legitimacy.

2.2.2.2   *Psychological identity*

Eder understands a psychological conceptualisation of identity as 'a phenomenon of the human mind' and psychological study of identity as focusing on 'human needs or motivations *for* collective identities' (Eder, 2009:431). The psychological level of identity can therefore be understood to focus on *why* people identify. Focussing on European identity, Kaina suggests that whether people will develop a particular identity will depend on the predisposition of individuals (which includes the attitudes, experiences, and resources available to them) and contextual factors (which might be exogenous or endogenous) (Kaina and Karolewski, 2009:16–8). The needs and motivations for the formation of identities is therefore highly context dependent, which emphasizes the importance of the local environment in the development of identity. This also applies to European identity, as Scalise argues that understandings of Europe are based on local experiences (Scalise, 2015:594). Therefore, studies of European identity cannot ignore perceptions of the local, and the meaning of Europe within them.

The importance of the local also suggests that changes in the environment in which people live will affect their sense of identity. Considering the context of the research, the obvious

change in the environment concerning the relation between the local and Europe is Brexit. This implies that Brexit might influence the perception of European identity, which leads me to Mercer, who wrote that 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty' (Mercer, 1990:43). This further implicates that some identities might always be present, but people only become aware of it once they are threatened in some form. If connected to Kantner's model, this could suggest that *commercium* identities might become *communio* identities under particular circumstances.

2.2.2.3 Collective identity: narrative networks

Finally, collective identities expand from the understanding of the self, and its relationship to its direct environment, to include others in the formation of a group. These groups are, of course, constructed. In particular, Eder defines collective identities as being narrative constructions that control the boundaries of a network of actors (2009:427). Eder thus takes a narrative approach to identity, which assumes that we form identities based on the stories we tell, to each other and to ourselves (Somers, 1994:624). I find this to be a good approach, as it is these stories ethnologists are looking for in fieldwork. Indeed, although we think of narratives predominantly as orally transmitted stories, an ethnological interpretation of narrative can also include other forms of expression we use to convey our traditions and sense of belonging, for example music, material culture, play, etc. (Masoni, 2013). Following our starting definition that identity is 'the creation of boundaries to define the self and the other in time and space' (van Meijl, 2010:71), these narratives can be understood as the tools which are used to form boundaries of the different spaces we live in.

Narratives can be found throughout the different levels of identity mentioned so far. They are emically experienced and created by individuals, influenced by the person's relationship to their environment and, following Eder's aforementioned definition, they construct collective identities. Eder suggests that many different narratives of Europe are told and shared across the European space, which is in line with Delanty's variety above. By sharing these narratives, people state how their personal and local narratives fit (or do not fit) within the larger European space, resulting in boundaries and a sense of belonging being formed.

Instead of trying to find a universal definition of European identity, Eder proposes to base our understanding of European identity by studying *how* narrative networks are formed and what roles the actors play within them. For this he presents three models: (1) the supra-national

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model, where different national actors link to each other through a central point: a representation of Europe, for example the European Union; (2) the post-national model, where agents are linked to each other directly within a larger European space which results in the national dissolving, and local stories become shared stories; (3) the trans-national model, in which different localities connect with localities in other states independently of states in which they are based (Eder, 2009:438–41). In each of these models, Europe becomes an actor in itself, and plays a different role in relation to the local and national actors. Therefore, by exploring these models, we also learn how Europe interplays with the other identity narratives of the actors: the personal, local, regional, national, and more. The merit of these models of European identity lies in their adaptability: they do not attempt to create a universal understanding of Europe, instead they imply Europe plays different roles in different contexts. They also allow for the incorporation of multiple actors at different levels, including the individual and their localities, into the networks. Crucially for this project, they enable qualitative analysis of emic perspectives. By exploring these networks in the field, we can gain an understanding of the larger role the idea of Europe plays in the informants' lives.

2.2.3 Confrontations and reflection: from identity to meaning

From what is written in the previous section, it becomes apparent that Brubaker and Cooper's criticisms of identity (2000) are justified: first, even though I merely scratched the surface of theory on identity, it is clear that a multitude of interpretations of the term exist, and this creates a sense of ambivalence surrounding the term. This has its benefits, it allows the theory to be easily adapted to a variety of different research projects, but it also enables a form of theoretical cherry-picking: because the term is so ambiguous, and so many people have written about it, it is possible to (uncritically) pick and choose the bits of theory applicable to the research. Second, as demonstrated by my frequent use of words such as meaning, narratives and roles, it appears that what we mean with identity is perhaps best explained using alternative terms. Looking back, I must admit my focus on identity at the start of this research was accompanied by some stubbornness. I *wanted* to use the term, because it was what I had always focused my studies on. But throughout the duration of the research, I became increasingly sceptical of its benefits. Although the literature had suggested these doubts may appear, I only started to take them seriously following three confrontations.

First, during a conversation with a friend whom I studied with during my undergraduate degree, he told me that he always thought I had taken a very personal approach during the

studies; seeing how I fitted myself within the theories we discussed. This was not meant as a criticism, on the contrary he told me he was impressed by it (reflection being an important part of ethnology). But his comment did confront me with how personally I had been taking my research interests. This had continued to my PhD: my interest in European identity came from identifying as European myself and wanting to understand this identity better. This is not inherently bad, but it does warrant caution; in particular in a subject area where subjectivity is celebrated. His comment filled me with doubt. Was I just looking for others who also felt European, and had I become obsessed[14] with the term? What about those who did not identify as European, was Europe not important to them? Would they be excluded from my research, or was there another way of studying their relation to Europe?

The second confrontation came during a non-research related encounter with a relative while explaining my work. She asked me *why* identity should be studied and made the point that identity only seems to divide groups of people; that it amplifies the creation of distinctions between 'us' and 'them', rhetoric which is used detrimentally in exclusionary politics around the world. This is an important ethical question which needs to addressed. Vignoles *et al.* write that identity is 'a powerful concept' (2011:2), and that it can and has been used to cause harm. This includes a justification for political actions meant 'to persuade certain people that they are (for certain purposes) "identical" with one another and at the same time different from others' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:5). When taken to extremes, such a divisional use of the concept of identity has had tragic consequences (Moshman, 2007; 2011). My relative asked whether it would not be better 'if we just forgot about it'. She had a point: if the term is not of much analytical use anyway, but also has the potential to cause harm, would it not be better to give it up?

The third confrontation happened during the fieldwork. It is worth noting that so far in this literature review, regardless of my awareness of the emic and the etic, I have been theorising from a purely etic perspective. It was not until I took these ideas in to the field that I came to understand how they would translate into an emic context. And I quickly realised they did not translate well. The complexity of identity requires the researcher's understanding of it to be explained, also in the field. As I would explain my research, usually before beginning a session, I would inevitably mention identity and have to explain it to a certain extent. I got

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[14] I am aware a certain amount of obsession is beneficial for a PhD.

several reactions: a nod of understanding, a frown; but more often than not I got a feeling that I was confusing the person sitting in front of me.

While I was stumbling over an explanation of identity during a small focus group, one participant said: 'So, what you are researching is meanings of Europe in the Scottish independence movement'? I laughed, partly because I was relieved she had helped me out of the corner I had worked my way into; but also because, of course, she was right. When following Eder's approach to identity, we study the roles of each actor within the narrative network. In the end, role refers to meaning: the meaning of Europe, or any other actor, within the network. I quickly found that, within an emic context, meaning is a lot easier to use than identity, or even role. Meaning cuts to the point - the other terms first require a detour into theory. When the aim during fieldwork is to create an atmosphere in which the participant feels at ease (further discussed in chapter 4), such a diversion is not beneficial.

This is the main reason why the word identity is not present in the research questions, despite it forming a fundamental part of the research framework. If the research questions are not easily understood by those participating in the research, I believe there to be a problem. After having been faced with the realities of the field I must admit that identity was too abstract, and indeed other terms more appropriate[15] (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). That being said, I do not interpret the theorising in the section above as pointless. As mentioned, identity was a starting point, and it formed an essential part of the journey of this research. And from an etic perspective, these theories provide an essential framework for understanding these topics, as will be demonstrated by their frequent reappearance throughout this thesis. But what I learnt from this is to keep the framework where it belongs: in the frame, on the side, and not to attempt to blur its boundaries.

2.3   Framework, part 2: small state studies

Although I noted in the first section of this chapter that this research would provide an alternative to the political science-based literature on Scotland and Brexit, the political cannot be ignored in the framework. The field of this research is a movement formed around a political aim, thus the relationship between politics and people must be examined. And Scotland is not being studied in isolation. The framework must thus also incorporate

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[15] It is not my intention here to question the abilities of my research participants, nor to create an impression of academic superiority. If anything, this reflection confronted me with academia's occasional tendency to inflict harm on itself.

Scotland's relation to Europe, how this relationship is affected by Brexit and how it might be affected by the future potentiality of independence.

To cover all of these grounds, the second half of the framework is formed around small state studies. Smallness, explained further below, is inherently relational, therefore putting small states' relations to their international environment into focus. Thus, it is particularly suitable to examine Scotland's relationship to Europe. But before continuing, one immediately apparent problem must be addressed: that Scotland is not a state. According to McCrone, Scotland 'has a degree of statehood (a devolved parliament, a governing bureaucracy), but it is still best described as a stateless nation, an imagined community with considerable institutional autonomy' (2001:6). It is however possible to look at Scotland's status as a stateless nation in a temporary context: Scotland used to be an independent state (until the Treaty of Union was signed in 1707) and it remains a possibility that Scotland would vote to become an independent state again in the future. Thus, considering that the field of this research is formed by people who wish Scotland to become an independent state in the future, state theory may be applied to Scotland in a context of future potentiality.

2.3.1   Smallness and vulnerability

Although a whole body of literature is devoted to small states, there is no agreed definition of what small states are (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2006:8; Wivel, Bailes and Archer, 2014). In this research, I will follow the definition as noted by Wivel *et al.* (2014:9): small states are 'the weaker part of an asymmetric system which is unable to change the nature or function of this relationship on its own'. This definition leads to two important questions: first, what actually makes states the weaker part of an asymmetric relationship? Large (or powerful) states are able to influence asymmetric relationships because they have the capabilities to do so. The presence or lack of resources is what determines the capabilities of the state (Jervis, 1978:172–173). As will be expanded on below, there are many different types of resources, including economic, human, natural, military, etc. which may result in a lack of capabilities. Second, what is the result of being the weaker part of an asymmetric relationship? Small states are less able to influence their external environment, which makes them more dependent on other larger states and more *vulnerable* to said external environment (Atkins, Mazzi and Easter, 2000:30; Wivel and Thorhallsson, 2018). Vulnerability in some form is therefore a central attribute of all small states.

2.3.1.1   Measuring state size

As the framework focuses on the size of states, this leads to questions of how state size can be measured. I have made it clear that I aim to take a qualitative approach in this work but examining how state size is measured will help with the application of small state studies to this research. Within the categories of small and large states, varieties of different sizes remain because a state has several properties which can be measured. For example, Russia is often referred to as being the largest country in the world. It definitely has the largest area, but China has a larger population. It must therefore be understood which size-determining variables can be measured, and which of those are important to this research project. Due to a large number of different potential variables, it is useful to sort them by their different properties. Raimo Väyrynen (1971) divided them as such: (1) they are either objective or subjective, whereby subjective variables are formed on perception, (2) and they are either exogenous or endogenous. Exogenous variables relate to the external capacities of a state and endogenous variables relate to internal capacities. Using these divisions, the variables can be arranged in the following matrix:

	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
EXOGENOUS	eg.: size of the diplomatic corps	eg.: foreign government's view of a state's size and capability
ENDOGENOUS	eg.: size of GDP	eg.: domestic government's view of its own state's size and capability

(adapted from Väyrynen, 1971:93)

As mentioned, area and population are popular variables used to measure a state's size. These are part of what Thorhallsson (2006) considers to be the traditional variables, which also include gross domestic product (GDP) and military capacity. When applying these variables to Väyrynen's matrix, we quickly notice that these only account for its objective half:

	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
EXOGENOUS	Military capacity	
ENDOGENOUS	Area Population GDP	

But subjectivity cannot be ignored. I agree with Archer and Nugent (2002) that inevitably, an element of personal judgement plays a role in our division of size in small and large. The traditional variables are therefore not sufficient in giving us a thorough understanding of a state's size. Thorhallsson (2006) agrees and has developed an alternative conceptual framework to measure a state's size. This consists of six categories of size, each with several variables within them. By providing a large variety of categories and variables, the conceptual framework makes it possible to study a limited, detailed aspect of size which relates to the research purposes:

1. Fixed size
    a. Population
    b. Territory
2. Sovereignty size (whether the state can maintain effective sovereignty on its territory; its ability to maintain a minimum state structure and presence at an international level)
    a. [Maintenance of] territory
    b. State structure
    c. International presence
3. Political size (military and administrative capabilities and the degree of domestic cohesion, combined with the degree to which the state maintains an external united front)
    a. Military
    b. Administration
    c. Cohesion
4. Economic size
    a. GDP
    b. Market size

      c.   Development success

5.   Perceptual size (how domestic and external actors regard the state)

      a.   Domestic elite

      b.   Inhabitants

      c.   Other domestic actors

      d.   Elite in other states

      e.   IGOs

      f.   Other international actors

6.   Preference size (ambitions and prioritizations of the governing elite and its ideas about the international system)

      a.   Ambitions

      b.   Priorities

      c.   Ideas about the international system (adapted from Thorhallsson, 2006)

Instead of stating whether each of these variables are small or large, which depends on what they are relative to, Thorhallsson places each variable on an action competence continuum and a vulnerability continuum. The action competence continuum measures how a state can formulate and implement policies relating to the variable. The vulnerability continuum measures the vulnerability of the variable. In contrast to Väyrynen, who divided variables by being exogenous or endogenous, Thorhallsson measures both continuums from an internal and from an external perspective:
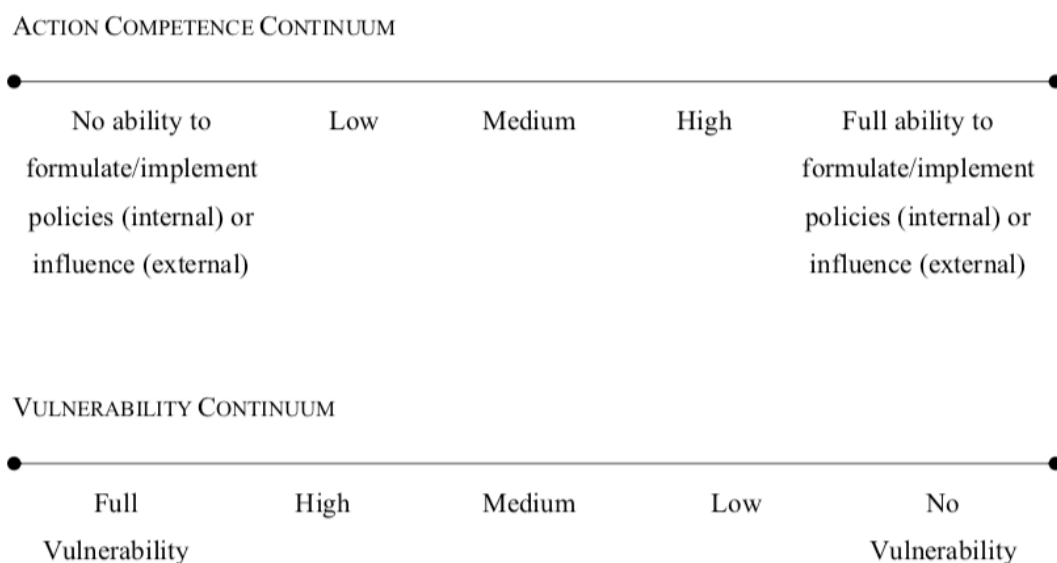
(Thorhallsson, 2006:15)

It is clear that by using these continuums, Thorhallsson agrees with the assumption that small states have limited capabilities and are more vulnerable than larger states (Jervis, 1978:172–173). But he immediately adds meaning to size by not stating whether a state is large or small, which is always a relative statement which often requires a certain amount of personal judgement, but by measuring the consequences of its size. In effect, he surpasses the abstract elements of size, making it a useful attribute which can be used to understand a state's behaviour. We can therefore extend Wivel *et al.*'s (2014:9) definition of small states as "the weaker part in an asymmetric relationship, which is unable to change the nature or function of the relationship on its own" *because of its higher vulnerability*.

Particularly interesting for this project is Thorhallsson's notion of 'perceived size' from the perspective of the inhabitants of a state as a variable. He was not the first to note the importance of perceived size. It also relates to the subjective element of Väyrynen's matrix and has also been highlighted by Hey: 'if states, people and institutions generally perceive themselves to be small, or if any other state, peoples or institutions perceive that state as small, it shall be so considered.' (Hey, 2003:3). Thorhallsson does not explore this concept in detail, although he gives the rejection of the Maastricht Treaty by the Danish electorate against the advice of the majority of political parties as an example of how the inhabitants' perception of size and capabilities of the state differed from how it was perceived by the political elite (Thorhallsson, 2006:25). From an ethnological perspective, I find this to be an essential, but underdeveloped feature of Thorhallsson's framework, as it allows for a disconnection between the rationality of political theory and the unpredictability of people. What is problematic is that neither Thorhallsson, Väyrynen or Hey tackle the question of *how* size is perceived by the people who are not politically involved with the state. In other words: what is the emic perception of size? To answer this question, focused qualitative research will be needed which appears to be missing from the small state studies literature. Thorhallsson's framework would still remain applicable in such research. Considering the abstract nature of size as a concept, it would be more useful to break it down into the continuums suggested by Thorhallsson: how the action capacity or capability of a state is perceived and how the vulnerability of a state is perceived.

2.3.1.2   *Scotland as a small state*

Before the union of parliaments, Scotland experienced significant vulnerability throughout its history. It has had to struggle to keep its sovereignty in a world of larger, more powerful

states since the high Middle Ages (Hanczewski, 2013:19). At that time, intense political and economic rivalries were present between several powers across Europe, including England and France, a conflict in which Scotland was no more than a pawn, unable to exert any influence over its external environment (*ibid.*:20). Scotland's struggles eventually ended after the Treaty of Union in 1707, when the old Scottish parliament was abolished, and the British state was created (Wormald, 2005; Wallerstein, 2011:242). Following this perspective, it could thus be argued that Scotland's vulnerability resulted in the Union of Parliaments[16] (Wallerstein, 2011:242).

Although not an independent state, Scotland's smallness within the Union is still visible. It is perhaps most pronounced by the difference in population between Scotland and England: in September 2021, Scotland is estimated to have a population of about 5.5 million, whereas England is estimated to have a population of about 56.5 million (Office for National Statistics, 2021). This difference increases Scotland's vulnerability to England within the Union: the result of the EU referendum could serve as an example of this imbalance[17], and arguably as a confirmation of Scotland's smallness. Even with a large majority voting to remain in the EU, those wanting to leave still won over the whole of the United Kingdom, demonstrating an asymmetric relationship (BBC News, 2016).

Looking to the (potential) future, Bailes *et al.* argue that an independent Scotland would once more experience vulnerability, particularly in issues ranging from hard security (e.g. military threat from Russia, potential future uncertainties in the Arctic), soft security (e.g. energy, crime and migration), economy (e.g. globe economic events such as crises), societal (e.g. communication and infrastructure) and politics (e.g. mediation and diplomacy) (Bailes, Thorhallsson and Johnstone, 2013). All of these examples further suggest an independent Scotland would be a small state, and therefore that studying Scotland through the lens of small state studies is not unfounded.

2.3.2   Resilience and shelter

A loose antonym of vulnerability is *resilience* (Adger, 2000:348), and much of small state studies focuses on how small states might create resilience as a reaction to their vulnerability

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[16] The failure of the Darien Scheme has also been attributed to Scotland's comparative lack of power (Lenman, 1977:51), in other words its smallness.
[17] In 2016, only 8.64% of total voters in the UK were registered in Scotland, compared to 83.96% in England (Office for National Statistics, 2018)

(Keohane, 1969; Riklin, 1975; Frei, 1977; Vogel, 1979; Katzenstein, 1985; Cooper and Shaw, 2009; Panke, 2012a, 2012b). Resilience has been used in several disciplines, and can therefore, similarly to identity and smallness, be understood in several ways. There are three definitions which I would like to present here, all of which are applicable to this project.

The first is the most commonly used definition (Rotarangi and Stephenson, 2014) which can be applied to several disciplines, developed by Walker *et al.* (2004): 'the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks.' The second is Adger's definition of *social* resilience: 'the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change' (Adger, 2000:348). The third is a definition of *cultural* resilience: 'the ability to maintain livelihoods that satisfy both material and moral (normative) needs in the face of major stresses and shocks; environmental, political, economic or otherwise' (Crane, 2010:2). These definitions all note that resilience involves 'disturbances', 'stresses' and 'shocks.' Small states are less able to influence their external environment and are therefore more prone to such shocks (Atkins, Mazzi and Easter, 2000:33), increasing resilience should therefore be understood as a preparatory measure for when such shocks happen.

Small states literature acknowledges two particular strategies small states may apply to increase their resilience: an internal strategy of creating a 'buffer from within' (Katzenstein, 1985) and an external strategy of creating an 'alliance shelter' (Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson, 2016). The internal strategy is primarily based on Peter Katzenstein's 'Small States in World Markets' (1985). He argued that because of their size, small states have fewer resources, a smaller domestic market and can exert less influence on international politics and economics. In other words, a heightened vulnerability. However, Katzenstein suggests that their size also provides small states with favourable circumstances to deal with this vulnerability: because of their smaller population, it is easier for these states to limit internal conflicts. The ability to make quicker decisions also allows them to be more flexible, a necessity when their influence on international politics and economics is limited and they are vulnerable to larger state's decisions. A perception of vulnerability and the ability to limit internal conflict led small states to build strong and flexible institutions which dealt with the challenges the state faced.

The external strategy is that of alliance shelter, which has been developed by Bailes *et al.* (2016) and Thorhallsson (2018). It argues that small states will seek shelter with larger states, neighbouring states, or international organisations; for example, by becoming a member of the European Union. Alliance shelter can be understood as a form of, but different from, alliance theory, the study of which has greatly contributed to understanding state behaviour (Liska, 1968; Schroeder, 1976; Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1987). In presenting their theory of alliance shelter, Bailes and Thorhallsson argue that 'there is an understandable, but nonetheless significant, bias towards great powers in the alliance theory literature', the main reason for this being that they are the major actors in international politics. Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson (2016:11–12) argue that because of the different capabilities and vulnerabilities of small states, they have different motivations from larger states to form alliances and that consequently, it is not possible to apply one alliance theory on all states. Whereas in alliance theory, an alliance can be understood as an agreement between equally weighted partners, alliance shelter theory can be understood as an asymmetric relationship, where one partner has more capabilities and serves as an enabler or 'protector' of the other. It therefore does not change the fundamental feature of small states.[18] However, alliance shelter might provide small states with opportunities to influence their alliance partners, if in a limited capacity (Panke, 2012a, 2012b). This has important implications for the study of international relations, as Keohane notes: 'If Lilliputians can tie up Gulliver, or make him do their fighting for them, they must be studied as carefully as the giant' (Keohane, 1969:310). Bailes *et al.* define six main points of how their theory of alliance shelter differs from traditional alliance theory:

1. Small states are fundamentally different political, economic, and social units than large states

2. The foundation of the alliance relationship is distinctly unique for domestic as well as international reasons

3. Small states benefit disproportionately from international cooperation

4. Small states need political, economic, and societal shelter to thrive

5. Social and cultural relationships with the outside world are especially important for a small society

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[18] Even within the European Union, asymmetric relationships remain (Griglio and Lupo, 2014). Small states which are independent EU members still need to find strategies to accommodate for their weaker position.

6.   Shelter may come at a significant cost for the small state

Particularly interesting for this project are point four and five, as they extend alliance shelter to small states' cultural and societal needs. Bailes *et al.* argue that 'external shelter enables small societies to reach their maximum potential by connecting them socially and diplomatically to the outside world' and that small states rely on 'cultural relations to avoid isolation and social stagnation' and to 'make up for their lack of indigenous knowledge' (Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson, 2016:14). Thorhallsson's had previously argued that small states, particularly isolated states, need the cultural connections which shelter may provide to keep up with the social standards and level of education present in the more powerful states (Thorhallsson, 2012:31). Bailes and Thorhallsson note (2013:6) that their theory of societal shelter is in line with Rokkan and Urwin's (1983) centre-periphery relations model. This adds an important element to the idea of societal shelter: Rokkan and Urwin note that people in peripheral[19] territories might resist the sharing of culture across borders for fear of a dominant external culture, arguing that maintaining distinctiveness is critical for peripheral territories. They therefore stress a distinction needs to be made between 'boundary-opening and boundary-strengthening groups or agencies in peripheries' (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983:2–18). Combining both approaches, a balance needs to be found between allowing a local culture to maintain its distinctiveness while at the same time averting its isolation, which might increase its vulnerability.

Shelter theory is crucial to this research because I understand both Scotland's position within the UK, as well as the UK's membership of the EU, to be a form of shelter: Scotland joined the Union to counteract its vulnerabilities and the UK started applied to join the EEC when it faced economic vulnerability. These vulnerabilities were, to a certain extent, removed when Scotland and the UK joined their respective Unions, in other words they received shelter. But this means that questions of leaving said Unions, be it through Brexit or independence, appears to result from people believing the shelter is no longer necessary. This brings us back to perceived size, but also back to the question on the meaning of Europe.

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[19] Rokkan and Urwin define peripheries as 'one element in a spatial archetype in which the periphery is subordinate to the authority of the centre' (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983:2). This is a similar definition to that of small states used in this research project, the main similarity being dependency to a larger territory.

2.3.3   Gaps in small state studies

At several points in the aforementioned literature, there are gaps which suggest sociological study beyond the political sciences may make useful contributions to small state literature and its studies, in particular the study of identity and meaning. Returning to Walker *et al.*'s commonly used definition of resilience: 'the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, *identity*, and feedbacks' (Walker *et al.*, 2004, my italics); or alternatively that resilience is '*the ability of a system to maintain its identity* in the face of internal change and external shocks' (Cumming *et al.*, 2005:976, my italics). Both definitions imply the importance of 'retaining identity' to resilience. Rotarangi and Stephenson go as far to interpret from this that the 'retention of identity is the defining feature of a resilient system' (Rotarangi and Stephenson, 2014). Considering the fluid and ambiguous character of identity mentioned in the previous section, I understand the retention of identity as retaining the context in which constant creative transformation is possible instead of retaining a fixed, 'pure' and imagined object. This constant renegotiation can be understood as a creative process (McFadyen, 2018a), which is in line with resilience theory stating that creative transformation is a form of establishing heightened resilience after a crisis (Joakim, Mortsch and Oulahen, 2015:143). Maintaining an environment in which a continuous creative transformation of identity is possible is therefore an important part of a resilient system, suggesting the importance of identity to small state studies.

Second, Väyrynen (1971), Hey (2003) and Thorhallsson (2006) have pointed to the importance of subjective perception of state size. Neither of them have connected that to identity. Kristjánsson and Cela have suggested that perceptions of identity influence perceptions of size and that both together influence the creation of policies by the state (the overall direction of which they refer to as political identity). However, like the other authors, they do not back up their claims with emic perceptions of identity or meaning from the inhabitants of the state, instead relying on interpretations of identity by the political elite (Kristjánsson and Cela, 2011). I believe a study of perception of identity and size from the emic perspective of the inhabitants of a state would add a valuable element to these theories.

The perception of size leads to the third point: the perception of vulnerability. Recognising the link between smallness and vulnerability, it has been suggested by Campbell and Hall (2009, 2017) that perceptions of vulnerability by the citizens of a state may influence the

formation of identities within it: 'perceptions of vulnerability are more easily translated into a sense of solidarity or "we-ness" uniting people in small countries than in large ones; it is easier to energise and organise a few people in a small country than many, especially if they have diverse backgrounds, in a larger territory' (2017:5). With little emic perspectives of lay people to back them up and considering that 'members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members' (Andersen, 1983:6), I am not sure I agree about their argument of the ease of formation of national identity in small states. But what I think is important here is the link between the perception of vulnerability and the formation of identity, and it would be worthwhile to test this idea in ethnological research. In particular, in a context of a shelter alliance, this could provide interesting results.

This brings us to the fourth gap in the literature on small states: The role of identity in shelter theory. The societal aspect of alliance shelter requires small states to remain culturally connected with other states to avoid isolation (Bailes, Thayer and Thorhallsson, 2016:14). Connectivity can therefore lead to enhanced resilience of a small state. However, it needs to be considered that this connectivity happens within the context of an asymmetric relationship of small and large states. Cumming et al. have argued that 'resilience may be highest at *intermediate* levels of connectivity that break social isolation, without imposing outside interests on local groups' (Cumming *et al.*, 2005:979, my italics). This is in line with Rokkan and (1983) centre-periphery model. The problem with this model is that it currently concentrates on (and is limited by) national identity in the centre and periphery territories (McCrone, 1984). Little attention is given to meanings of the shelter giving state or institution in the formation of local identities.

2.4 Conclusion

The first section of this review presented an overview of literature on Scotland, Europe, and Brexit. The academic interest in Scotland's connection to Europe has grown over time, reflected in an increasing number of publications on the topic. Of these, there remains a lack of qualitative studies from emic perspective on identity and meaning. In the second section I start constructing the framework by examining the term identity. I discuss the deep-essentialism of identity and argue that using Eder's model of collective identities as narrative constructions which sets the boundaries of a network of actors, the multidimensional and fluid character of identity can be studied in a way which is appropriate for this research. Using these models, the meaning of actors within the formed identity networks becomes the

main focus. Thus, I explain why over the course of my research I increasingly used 'meaning' instead of 'identity'. The third section provided a framework for studying small states, with a particular focus on their vulnerability and resilience. I focused on the gaps in the literature pertaining to the study of identity: the literature clearly suggests that the perception of vulnerability, identity, and the formation of resilience in small states are all connected, but further study on these themes is required. In the following two chapters, I will explain how I intend to address these gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3: Discipline and philosophical assumptions

Having established the research questions and the philosophical framework, I will now explain how I will approach this research project. But before discussing the methodology, it is important to form an understanding of the discipline in which I am working, the paradigm and philosophical assumptions which accompany it and my positionality to the research. In this chapter, I will first elaborate on my understanding of ethnology, and how it has evolved towards a creative ethnology of Europe. Second, I will describe the paradigm of ethnology, and elaborate on the ontology and epistemology. This will then lead to my positionality in the field, which I will then describe further by exploring my personal background.

3.1 Discipline: towards a Creative Ethnology of Europe

Gary West, the Chair in Scottish Ethnology at the School of Scottish Studies, where I did my undergraduate studies, used to joke that an ethnologist's most feared question at a job interview is 'what actually *is* ethnology?'. As I am writing this at postgraduate level, I feel I should have a clear definition, a quick answer to that question, but I do not. My understanding of ethnology seems to be constantly evolving and developing. This appears to be in line with the discipline itself; the wider understanding of ethnology and its variants have also changed over time, reflecting changes in society (Fenton, 2013:20).

The problem here is partly that ethnology encapsulates elements of many different disciplines. Kockel wrote that 'ethnology is what ethnologists do', but that this does not help us much further because ethnologists may do 'history, sociology, geography, political economy, literature, art, architecture' and more (Kockel, 2008:9). Instead, he argues that when trying to understand ethnology, the focus should perhaps not be on what ethnologists *do*, but on *how* ethnologists do things (*ibid.*). This may encourage us to define ethnology by its methods, but there we are also faced with pluralism, and this is not what is meant. Instead, Kockel's description refers to how ethnologists approach their work. I interpret this as an adaptability to the field, as well as a flexibility with the expectations associated to contemporary academia. From the perspective of other academic disciplines, this may appear to 'lack the "proper" disciplinary rigour' (*ibid.*). Although he does not describe this as something which needs to be fixed, Kockel does admit that to a certain extent, ethnologists are 'undisciplined academics' (*ibid.*).

To write in the second paragraph of a section on discipline that ethnology is undisciplined may seem counterintuitive, but as I would come to learn, it forms an important part of what ethnology *can be*. This is something I will return to later in this section. So far, my description of ethnology has made it sound like it can be anything at all, and this is not the case. Returning to Kockel, we can use his description as a starting point:

> A scientific approach to the Local that promotes a comparative understanding of the "own" and the "other" (and hence of encounters and conflicts) both among humans and between human and non-human subjects (Kockel, 2009:148).

Ethnology, therefore, is the study of people within the context of their locality *as well as* the (human and non-human) environment around it. Neither the 'own' or the 'other' are studied in isolation, the interest lies in how they relate to each other (Kockel, 2009:151). There are clear similarities between this and the understanding of identity used in the theoretical framework (see section 2.2), thus, ethnology is particularly well suited to study it. It is critical to note that ethnology goes beyond merely the study of the 'self' or 'own' and the 'other'. The focus is these categories *within* the Local and its environment. The Local here refers not to the parochial, but to the lifeworlds of those participating in the research. Everyone has a locality, and this locality does not necessarily correspond to typical political-geographic spatial boundaries such as towns, regions, countries. As already suggested by Kockel, the environment may also take different forms; the inclusion of the non-human making it particularly fitting for research during the Anthropocene. In this work then, I focus on the relationship between the locality of participants (independence supporters) and Europe, in its various (social, political, geographic, etc.) forms.

The focus on the local, and the assertion that we should be wary of connecting locality to a particular geographic unit, suggests we should have a similar wariness of connecting the discipline in which the work is situated. Yet, as mentioned, my undergraduate degree was in *Scottish* ethnology, and I would argue my work is situated in *European* ethnology. This requires some elaboration. Broadly, Scottish ethnology as I studied at the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University is related to the discipline of social studies of societies 'at home'.[20] It is similar to folklore, *Volkskunde* in German-speaking countries or

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[20] As opposed to what in the anglosphere is referred to as social anthropology, which refers to the study of societies 'overseas' (non-European). In German this may be referred to as *Völkerkunde*. Over the years, both disciplines have evolved and become increasingly similar and interested in the same fields (Frykman, 2012).

folkeminendevidenskab/folklivsforkning in Scandinavia. All of these different fields may be referred to as European ethnology, which was proposed by Sigurd Erixson in the 1930s; whereby the key word is ethnology and Europe refers to *within* Europe (Kockel, Nic Craith and Frykman, 2012b). European ethnology is therefore a bit misleading and may 'cause confusion outside the immediate field (and often enough within it)' (*ibid.*:3). I too was for a long time confused by the term.

As the research conducted in the School of Scottish Studies was focused on fields *in* Scotland, while I was studying there, I always thought Scottish ethnology was ethnology with a focus on Scotland, and therefore European ethnology would be ethnology with a focus on Europe, as a whole. This is not (necessarily) the case; overall, European ethnology refers to ethnology *in* Europe, and is often limited to nations or fields within nations (thus including Scottish ethnology), with little mention of Europe at all. When I learnt about my misinterpretation, I must admit I was a bit disappointed: because we were taught to 'dig where you stand' (Lindqvist, 1978; Byrne, 2012; Campbell, 2013; McFadyen, 2018a) in the School of Scottish Studies, and I never really felt that I 'stood' in Scotland, I was hoping European ethnology would be a discipline with a particular focus on multi-European localities or processes of European integration.

Although European ethnology does not necessarily mean such a discipline, it definitely can. Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in interest amongst European ethnologists on the experience of Europe and European integration in the everyday (Schriewer, 2014:284). For example, the output of the SAXO Institute at the University of Copenhagen (*ibid.*); the work of Johler (2001, 2002, 2006), Kaschuba (2008) and Welz (2009); and notably the edited volume *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe* by Kockel *et al.* (2012a), which includes several studies which address these topics from different angles. Building on this, Schriewer (2014:296–320) argues for a further development of ethnology *of* Europe, alongside ethnology *in* Europe. This would focus particularly on how the processes of European integration and politics influence the life worlds of informants. In other words, it would study the connection between the local and Europe.

It is within this interpretation of European ethnology that I place this work. This may seem counterintuitive because the field of the research is situated completely within Scotland. Is it then not just another form of Scottish ethnology (or an ethnology *in* Europe)? In this research I am studying the effects of European integration, or indeed disintegration, in Scotland.

Therefore, although the local is situated in Scotland, the research focuses on the connection between this locality and Europe. In other words, it is an ethnology (a study of the local) *of* Europe (the influence of Europe on the local) *in* Scotland (a geographical limitation of the field). Brexit has demonstrated that the nation is (currently still) an essential link between the local and the European. Thus, when studying how the local is affected by the European, it is necessary for the national, or imaginations of what the national *could be*, to be included. The focus on the Scottish independence movement in the larger context of post-Brexit Scotland therefore puts a particular focus on this relationship and forms an unusually appropriate field for an ethnology *of* Europe.

The focus on both the independence movement and Brexit makes it hard for this work not to consider the political sciences, and these also form a significant part of the theoretical framework. The political sciences are not incompatible with ethnology, as already suggested above interdisciplinarity is one of ethnology's strengths. In fact, Kockel argues that ethnology 'can act as mediator and filter – between the local-specific level of the applied and the universal-generalising level of theory – and thus become a kind of locally grounded conscience of research endeavours' (Kockel, 2009:152). Ethnology thus is an ideal discipline to test theories such as small state theory, in particular because within said theory there is already an insinuation to the importance of people's perception (perceived size, see p. 59). This also applies to the part of the theoretical framework which discusses identity, several of theories presented there have been taken from sociology. Again, ethnology enables the testing and grounding of theories in the local.

In addition to linking the local and political theory, ethnology enables and allows research (and researchers) to become political. While working on this project I have been involved with a growing group of ethnologists with an interest in *creative* ethnology, a term which gained in popularity in the field in Scotland following Gary West's inaugural lecture as Professor of Scottish ethnology at the University of Edinburgh (West, 2016; Kockel and McFadyen, 2019). Central to creative ethnology appears to be the willingness to 'recognise and consciously abandon inherited concepts, philosophical assumptions, cultural baggage, language and discourse' (McFadyen, 2018b), to become *undisciplined*, and to readapt (re*create*) it with an eye to future potentialities. Thus, creative ethnology can mean different things to different people. It may be interpreted as an encouragement to discover new ways to collect, create and disseminate data to new publics. Alternatively, it could mean promoting dialogue between ethnologists and experts of other disciplines (or none) (Kockel and

McFadyen, 2019:191). McFadyen describes it as 'an attempt to hold the global and the local, thinking and action in *engaged praxis* that looks towards the future' (McFadyen, 2022, emphasis added).

Creative ethnology thus remains rooted in understanding the local's relationship to its environment, but it adds an element of 'engaged practice'. Thinking creatively about ethnology (or *liberating the ethnological imagination* (Kockel, 2008)), has encouraged me to consider deeply what I am trying to achieve with this research. Of course, doing a PhD is a necessary step in an academic career, and I would be dishonest if I did not admit that one reason for doing this work is to progress on that path. But I do want to achieve more than just producing another document which is disseminated in academic circles (inaccessible to many). As I am also taking an activist approach to this research topic, and do not hide my own political opinion, I agree with McFadyen that creative ethnology is an opportunity for research activism which is unavoidably (and unashamedly) political (McFadyen, 2018b).

If the researcher becomes comfortable that s/he is and can be actively political, the potential of a creative ethnology opens up. I would like to elaborate on one possible use of this. As mentioned above, Kockel suggests ethnology might act as a mediator between theory and lived experience. I would add that it can also have a mediating function between different lived experiences. A seminal example of this is Lindahl's work with (poor and largely black) communities in New Orleans affected by hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. These communities were unjustly depicted as criminal in the media, which as a result discouraged much needed rescue attempts from their flooded neighbourhoods. In turn, the affected communities had their own narratives of government conspiracy and local heroes, a narrative which was not accepted by the media. Therefore, in 'divided narrative communities', only one side of the debate was given 'the right to be wrong' (Lindahl, 2012). As part of his ethnological research, Lindahl gave survivors the opportunity to tell their stories 'on their own personal and cultural terms'. By bypassing depictions and assertions of truth in the media, this telling and sharing of lived experiences became an opportunity for mediation between different perceptions of the event and for healing from a trauma.

The possibility of mediating between lived experiences can also be applied in non-traumatic contexts. The 'potential of emotion and the facts of lived experiences [can be] a route to reason' (Bowell, 2018:170), meaning the ethnologist can make 'epistemic use of lived experiences to shift and transform our imaginations by offering insights in the lives of others'

(*ibid.*). In a political context in which differences of opinion are more often than not ignored, such an approach, to me, appears hopeful. I thus intended to apply this in my own fieldwork. But in practice, this is something which I had to learn. The first time I entered the field, I did so with a precise but narrow idea of what an interview should be. Although I did attempt to do semi-structured interviews, upon reflection I felt I did not allow the contributors to lead the conversation enough. By the end of my fieldwork, I had become more relaxed in these situations, leading to fruitful results. By then, the main research question, *what is the meaning of Europe*, was often not only answered, but answers to it were actively, and collaboratively, formed. To me, creative ethnology is thus very much a learning process, a process of learning to let go. When successful, the research pushes the researcher, the participants, and the participants amongst themselves, to work on a 'social sculpture' (Walters, 2012) together.

My understanding of what ethnology is has evolved during this project, both in the sense of European ethnology and creative ethnology. I am certain that I am only scratching the surface of the discipline, and that my understanding of it will grow further with future research. But I am also confident that a creative ethnology of Europe forms a particularly appropriate discipline from which to explore the topics of this thesis.

3.2   Paradigm

Having just promoted an undisciplined discipline, it may appear counterproductive to describe philosophical assumptions. But this does not mean entering a research project with a complete disregard for the theory and philosophy which underpins it. Instead, it means learning rules and then learning a willingness to break them (and knowing when to do so). defined and explored the discipline of ethnology, I will continue by exploring the philosophical assumptions which accompany it. I will first explore the paradigm in which I will be working, which must of course be consistent with the ecologically-aware, collaborative and creative attributes of the discipline described above.

Guba and Lincoln suggest that each paradigm can be understood by exploring its ontology, epistemology, and methodology, which they describe as their fundamental questions. They present an overview of four major paradigms - positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism - with understandings of their respective fundamental questions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:109). Of these, their description of constructivism appears closest to the ethnology described above: a relativist ontology which acknowledges multiple realities in the

field; a transactional epistemology which understands knowledge as being created 'in interaction among investigator and respondents' (*ibid.*:111); a hermeneutic methodology which focuses on the interpretation of experience. In other words, reality is subjective and multiple, and as inquirers we are exploring these different realities, aware that we will never be able to understand all of them.

This is largely in line with the ethnology described above, but not completely. Heron and Reason argue that constructivism as described by Guba and Lincoln rightly acknowledges the multiple realities in the world but does not sufficiently acknowledge the given reality of the cosmos, our participation with it and the knowledge or realities we create from this experiential participation: 'The mind's conceptual articulation of the world is grounded in its experiential participation in what is present, in what there is' (Heron and Reason, 1997). Our interactions with each other are also interactions with the world around us, and our knowing is therefore relative to the knower and to the cosmos. To avoid the potential relativism of a constructivist paradigm, it is therefore essential to ground lived experiences in the cosmos, or a communal 'being in the world'. Heron and Reason call this the participatory inquiry paradigm, which I believe is more in line with an ecological ethnology as described above, and with an interpretation of identity which recognizes its constructivist as well as its deep-essentialist nature as described in the previous chapter.

3.3 Ontology: grounded subjectivity

Our encounters with the world cannot be disconnected from the relationship between ourselves and what we are perceiving. We partake in the cosmos, and it forms us at the same time. Our ontology is therefore both subjective and objective:

> 'It is subjective because it is only known through the form the mind gives it, and it is objective because the mind interpenetrates the given cosmos which it shapes. […] Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a co-creative dance, so that what emerges as reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way the mind engages with it' (Heron and Reason, 1997).

This is in line with a creative ethnology which is aware of participants' ability to be creative as well as the wider ecology of the space in which they *are,* and which influences their creative practices.

It follows from this that there is an ontological recognition of multiple realities in the field, that each collaborator is an expert of their own personal field and that their realities are uniquely co-created with their experiences of the cosmos. This also applies to identity: as stated in the literature review, identity is a social fact (Durkheim, 1950) and does not necessarily need be in accordance with empirical facts. As a result, different people who feel connected to or represented by the same identities might have different understandings of what those identities mean. Each of these different identities are of course grounded in a perceived reality, one which has been formed by a creative interpretation of their respective surrounding environments.

What this means practically is that participants have 'the right to be wrong' (Lindahl, 2012), 'wrong' meaning an incompatibility between expressed opinion and empirical fact or the perceived reality of the researcher or another collaborator. The interest lies with the veracity of the subjective truth of the participants, more so than their accordance with an empirical, or dominant, truth. If there is discordance between the two, it is not my task to judge or change this. Instead, I am aiming to make visible and compare these multiple realities, each being within, and thus representations of the lifeworlds of participants. This is fundamental to qualitative inquiry: I am not trying to determine one reality by means of majority or statistical prevalence but am attempting to demonstrate the multitude of realities.

At this point, it is necessary to discuss the currently widely debated phenomenon of 'post-truth'. Oxford Dictionaries named it 'the word of the year' in 2016 and described it as 'circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.' Post-truth is of course not new, although it is being 'newly discussed' (Ball, 2017:7), the reason therefore being the ease of sharing misinformation online and the clear impact of this in recent political events, notably the election of U.S. President Donald Trump and the EU referendum in the UK (Marshall and Drieschova, 2018). It is the latter which suggests the importance of post-truth to the ontology of this project. Considering the clear impact post-truth has had on recent political events such as Brexit, and therefore on the field of this project, it is necessary to ask whether it is acceptable to enter said field with an ontology open to subjective realities. Should I not, as an academic, defend the rigour of empirically proven theory?

It is important to understand that post-truth is not the same as falsehood or unreality. It is the defending of an opinion, be it based on empirical data or subjective reality (or no reality at

all), and then not being willing to consider or even listen to opposing opinions (Ball, 2017; Sim, 2019). Therefore, while striving for objectivity could be seen as a remedy against post-truth, it is unlikely to be effective. Behind opinions which may appear as falsehood, there might still be veracity, and thus it becomes more productive to understand the basis for this veracity. As Latour argues: 'it is not a matter of learning how to repair cognitive deficiencies, but rather of how to live in the same world, share the same culture, face up to the same stakes, perceive a landscape that can be explored in concert' (Latour, 2018:17). This needs to be reciprocal, as researchers we cannot expect others to blindly accept our perspective without us being willing to accept theirs. Thus, we return to the importance in creative ethnology to become 'unlettered', and to 'decolonise the mind' (McFadyen, 2018b), which must include the recognition of the social position created by academic structures, and its relation (and relevance) to lived experiences. Bowell argues that 'argument that is disconnected from the reality of lived experiences, where social position and power relations are neglected, ignored or obscured, lacks the nuance that is the hallmark of deeper comprehension' (Bowell, 2018:176). She continues by suggesting that instead of trying to disprove lived realities, it is more productive to *show* alternative realities and thereby enabling a continuing discourse. A crucial element of this is to seek understanding of other lived experiences instead of dismissing them.

As already stated, I am not attempting to argue against the participants or convince them of alternative opinions. However, by showing the multiple lived realities of the participants and myself, I am undertaking political action which will contribute to a continuation of the discourse. As Marshall and Drieschova conclude in their paper on the role of post-truth in the EU referendum, there is a 'need for scholars to study the daily activities of the population, and thus to focus on its role as an active regime shaper' (Marshall and Drieschova, 2018:92). I have also been made aware of this in the field, when collaborators told me after interviews that our conversation (and importantly, their conversation with other participants) had made them think more deeply about things which they had not considered as much before. Ethnology, as a mediator between theory (based on objective reality) and the local(s) (based on subjective reality), is therefore in a prime position to counteract post-truth.

3.4   Epistemology and positionality

As part of Guba and Lincoln's constructivism they describe a 'transactional epistemology' (1994:111) where knowledge is created by means of interaction between researcher and

participants. The participatory role of the researcher thus cannot be ignored. As is inherent in its name, Heron and Reason's participatory paradigm (1997) also implies the importance of everyone who influences the research: the participants, the researcher, and the world in which they live. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the researcher influencing and being influenced by the field, and the product of the research being co-created and co-imagined by all stakeholders, including the research (Manning, 2001:157).

I therefore recognise that when entering the field, I am biased by previous influences of my life experiences and will be further influenced in the field. The removal of these biases is impossible (Van Maanen, 2011). Because, as a creative ethnologist, I am undertaking 'engaged praxis', I do so aware that I am shaping the field, but that the field is shaping me as well (McFadyen, 2018b). Although this might appear to be 'utterly anathema to the scientific paradigm' (Kockel, 2011:198), such an approach is refreshingly humane. Pentikäinen (1978, preface) suggests that anthropologists have 'the right to be human'. In other words, during research I am not trying to be someone I am not, instead I am reflecting on my inherent bias throughout the research process. Of course, Lindahl's 'right to be wrong' and Pentikäinen's 'right to be human' are actually very similar and both point to the humanist attribute of ethnological research.

Being reflective about the researcher's position in the field is an essential part of ethnological research. The field of this project is the Scottish independence movement. The larger discipline however, as described above, is European ethnology. Although the spatial boundaries of the field do not extend beyond Scotland, the research explores how people in Scotland relate to Europe. It is therefore necessary for me to explore my own connection to Europe and indeed my own European identity.

3.4.1   Becoming European

I grew up in Leuven, Belgium, a small town about 25 km east of Brussels, and a mere 9 km north of the language border between Flanders and Wallonia. No one in my family was Belgian when I grew up, my father is Scottish, and my mother is Dutch. That being said, we moved to Belgium two months after I was born, so my whole childhood was spent there. My parents made a choice not to live in Tervuren, a district of Brussels where many British

migrants live,[21] because they wanted me and my brother to experience a 'local' childhood in Belgium. As such, my Dutch, which I spoke with my mother at home, was moulded into Flemish in the school playgrounds.

For someone who did not know me it would have been hard to tell the difference between myself and any other Belgian child. Still, at school and amongst my friends I was known for being Scottish. There are two main reasons for this: first, my name, which is undeniably Scottish. Names are of course a crucial part of our identities. They mark us as who we are, but also our connection to society (Spitzer, 2010:22). Although many people in Belgium would not know the origins of Alastair it was clear that it was not 'from here'. Regardless of how Flemish I sounded when speaking, the pause or request to repeat when my name was called was almost always there. The second reason was more within my own control. I *liked* being Scottish when I was young, it was something I actively told people. I have thought a lot about this, and I am not sure yet why this was so important to me. Most likely is that having a Scottish identity was something that distinguished me from my peers. I was never one of the most popular children in school, and I did not feel I had many of the usual attributes which helps obtain popularity in the schoolgrounds. Being Scottish was therefore something which made me special and different.

I also had a certain fondness of Scotland, in particular of its landscape and its music. During my childhood and adolescence, we would spend long summer holidays in Scotland. While most of my friends' families would drive to the Mediterranean, we would travel North and stay in Scotland for several weeks. Most of this time was spent in Muldrew, a small log cabin my family owns close to Dunkeld in Perthshire. When there, my parents (and later my brother) would frequently take me on walks in the highlands. Although I never was as fond of hillwalking as my brother, I did enjoy being in and going into the mountains and they became an important part of my conceptualisation of Scotland. Once while staying in Muldrew, my father played a tape of The Corries, a Scottish folk duo who were active in the 60s and 70s. Their repertoire included many Jacobite songs which had portrayed a very romantic, heroic and tartanised vision of Scotland which I would eschew today. But as a child I found these songs and their stories fascinating. I became a big fan and collected their albums. As a result,

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[21] Whom some may refer to as expats, a term I refuse to use unless it is also widely used for migrants in the United Kingdom.

their songs contributed to my understanding of Scotland and inevitably of my romanticisation of Scotland.

When I later moved to Scotland to study, this imagining of Scotland quickly fell apart. I was introduced to the darker, grittier sides of the country which our summer holidays were never faced with. My Scottish identity, which I had so carefully created and curated during my youth also did not last very long. There was a reverse situation to Belgium: my name was undoubtably Scottish, but my accent quickly gave away that I grew up elsewhere. It was then that it became difficult to answer that almost inevitable question: where are you from? I did not want to reply Belgium, because I never felt Belgian when I was growing up there and did not have any Belgian nationality. Saying I was Scottish became increasingly hard to defend. I could say I was Dutch, I do have Dutch nationality, but never lived there and felt little connection to the country. Indeed, heritage sometimes became 'not only a burden but a herculean task' (Strani, 2020:235). This problem is not unique to me at all. There are many people who come from diverse backgrounds who find personal ways to deal with it (I am fond of Kockel's reply to where are you from: 'nowhere in particular' (2012a)) or decide to simply ignore the issue altogether. My solution to the issue was to slowly build a new identity for myself, one that was present all along: I started to tell others that I am a bit Belgian, a bit Scottish, a bit Dutch; but completely European.

3.4.2   Being European

But what does being European mean? Of course, this is a question I would ask many throughout the duration of this research. It sometimes happened that a participant would ask me the same question in return. I always felt a bit like an imposter when this happened, because I did not have a clear answer.

I was born at the end of history. That is to say, in the same year that Fukuyama published 'The End of History and the last Man', in which he famously argued that 'what we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such. That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government' (Fukuyama, 1992). This has since been debated back and forth, with critics arguing that particular events which have happened since (9/11, the 2008 global financial crisis, Brexit, etc.) have proven his theory wrong, and Fukuyama arguing that these critics misinterpreted his original argument (Fukuyama, 2018:xii–xiii).

This is not a debate I want to delve into in this section. Instead, I want to think back to the sentiments of the early 1990s. My mother often tells the story of how she, like so many others, was glued to the television on the 9th of November 1989, watching the Berlin Wall being torn down. She was at the time expecting my brother, her first child, and was elated that he and later myself would be able to grow up in a non-divided Europe. It was the end of the short 20th century in Europe, which started with Gavrilo Princip's fatal (and fateful) shot on the 28th of June 1914 in Sarajevo. The wars were finally over, we could finally move on, and my brother and I were born into a peaceful and united Europe.

Geert Mak (2019:23–52) has argued the period from the fall of the Soviet Union until the mid-2000s to be marked with a feeling of European triumphalism. This triumphalism had several manifestations within the EU-political dimension: the treaty of Maastricht, the introduction of the euro, the 2004 eastward expansion of the EU, the general welfare of the European economy and its citizens. As Mak notes (*ibid.*), with several of these events a blind eye was turned to possible negative consequences, the repercussions of which were felt later in the 21st century. The triumphalism was therefore also a form of hubris and naivety. But still it was a sentiment which was felt beyond the EU institutions and which I remember.

This needs to be elaborated on. I do not remember much of the machinations of European integration during my childhood, apart from the introduction of the euro. We thought it was exciting. I remember going to the bakers on the morning of 1 January 2002 and paying with euros for the first time (the baker herself just seemed confused and a bit overwhelmed). And of course, I remember collecting all the different coins from all the countries which had joined the euro, much like we would collect trading cards on the playground. We had a special display board in which all the coins fitted, an excellent object to present the mentality of the time (figure 3.1,).

Figure 3.1: Our Euro Collector Board. Photo by author.

Apart from the euro, I was not really aware of Europe in my daily life. I of course profited from European integration every day, my father was Scottish, my mother Dutch and we were living in Belgium. We would regularly visit my grandparents in the Netherlands, crossing the Dutch-Belgian border without a blink. I first fully appreciated the ease of travel in the Schengen zone around my eighteenth birthday, when I did an InterRail trip with friends. Freedom of movement is to me one of the most important aspects of being European: not only being able to travel but also to work and to settle in other European countries. I have benefited from this privilege throughout my life: growing up in Belgium without Belgian nationality and later living and working in Germany. Because I have benefited from the European Union, the European triumphalism has become part of my 'deeply held beliefs' (Bowell, 2018) and indeed also my European identity. Using the models described in the literature review, I would argue European post-nationalism (Eder, 2009) resembles my European identity most closely. In other words, I feel more connected to the product of European integration than to any of the countries which form it.

Before continuing, a point needs to be made about the privileges this background gives me. Within the field, Brexit and its consequences form concerns for many of the participants of this project. These will be explored further in the analysis. My background however grants

me the option to leave the UK and live in other EU countries. I have both Dutch and British nationality and can therefore live in the UK as well as any EU member state after Brexit. I also speak English, Dutch and German and therefore have far more possibilities to find work and settle in other EU countries. Despite Brexit, I am able to move elsewhere or to stay in the UK, an option not many people have.

3.4.3   *My journey to Yes*

Within the independence movement people often speak about their 'journey to Yes', the process of them being convinced by Scottish independence. I was asked several times what my journey to Yes was. Indeed, coming from my background, supporting a nationalist movement was not evident. I had benefited from and celebrated European integration, making more borders within the continent did not fit these ideals.

In Flanders there is also a nationalist movement. The main parties supporting Flemish independence were on the right of the political spectrum. The most vocal of these is the Vlaams Belang, a relatively small but significant populist far-right party which is anti-immigration and has at times been openly Islamophobic (Erk, 2005:495). Being of a left-wing political persuasion, the Vlaams Belang was to me always the exact opposite of my beliefs, and I linked regional nationalism with far-right ideologies. When I then moved to Scotland to study and came into contact with the SNP, I at first believed it was a Scottish version of the Vlaams Belang. Independence was its main political argument and with a yellow and black logo it even had the same colours as the Vlaams Belang.

Only once realising that many of my friends, whom I knew were similarly left-wing, supported Scottish independence or the SNP did I engage myself more with Scottish nationalism. I came to believe that the civic nationalism in Scotland was more compatible with the ideals of my European identity than British Unionism. In such a way I also came to believe that an independent Scotland would work together with the rest of the EU more productively than the United Kingdom as a whole. This feeling was of course put into a new context during the run-up to the 2016 EU referendum and the Brexit negotiations afterwards.

When entering the field, I therefore do so as someone who identifies as European and supports Scottish independence. As mentioned before, I do not intend to convince others in the field of this opinion but in doing this research I am taking an activist approach against

Brexit and for Scottish independence. When others in the field have asked me about my own journey to Yes, I have replied with a description of the above.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I situated this research project within the discipline of ethnology. I elaborated on ethnology by explaining my understanding of creative ethnology and an ethnology of Europe, which I related back to this research. Then, I presented the philosophical assumptions accompanying my interpretation of ethnology. I explained how I situate the work within a constructivist paradigm with an awareness of a shared *being in the world*, elaborating on an ontology which is mindful of multiple interpretations of this shared world and a reflective epistemology in which the boundaries between researcher and participant are blurred. Finally, I explained my positionality in the field by giving a background to my own European identity. In the next chapter, I will build on this by further defining the field of the research and explaining the methods I used to gather data from it.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In the previous chapter I wrote about my positionality in the field, in this chapter I will continue by defining its boundaries and explain how I found and accessed it. I will also explain how the ethics of the project were approached and approved. Afterwards, having already situated this research within ethnology, I will address the methods I use. This primarily consists of ethnography, but as I will elaborate on later in this chapter, I am hesitant of over-hastily embracing ethnography as the single approach to this research.

For the aims of this chapter it will be useful to reiterate the research questions: what is the meaning of Europe to members of the independence movement following the 2016 EU referendum (1) to the argument, purpose and continuation of the Scottish independence movement, (2) to the everyday lives of independence supporters, and their envisioned everyday lives in an independent Scotland, and (3) to the narrative of what Scotland is today, and what an independent Scotland should be in the future. When starting the fieldwork of the research, I entered this phase with a vague intuitionalism (Glaser, 1992; Flick, 2019), using the concept of European identity as a starting point: I believed the meaning of Europe had changed or been emphasized since the EU referendum amongst supporters of Scottish independence, and that this can be related to small state shelter theory.

4.1 Muddy lands: an ideology as the field

This is not a Scottish independence movement; it is a Scottish independence slob!

Member of Yes Marchmont and Morningside, January 2020

A member of Yes Marchmont and Morningside said this at one of the group's monthly meetings, referring to the disorganisation of the Yes movement. While I understood the sentiment he described by *slob*, I did not know the actual meaning of the word. Later I discovered that in Irish, and he spoke with an Irish accent, it is a noun for *muddy land*. Although he was not referring to the movement in an ethnographic context, I find it is also a good descriptor for the Scottish independence movement as an ethnographic field. The field of course forms a central part of any ethnological research. It has a somewhat mystical status, and even though it can and has been interpreted in many different ways, the concept of the field is often taken for granted in ethnographic research (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997:2). In this section I will describe how the field evolved during the project, how I understand the field

now and where it is, how I approach the field from my own background, and how I accessed it.

4.1.1   Finding and focusing the field

Although having limited the focus of my research to Scotland (see section 1.1), I still needed to limit the size of the field to make it more manageable. The decision to focus on the independence movement had several reasons. First, the debate of Scottish independence indirectly focuses on a central question of small state studies: whether Scotland would be able to manage on its own. It is therefore fundamentally a question about vulnerability and resilience. By making the independence movement my field I could focus on these quite theoretical concepts in my fieldwork without having to use abstract theory or terminology. Second, I did not want the research to be about whether Scotland should become an independent country but the role of European identity in the case that Scotland does become an independent country (or in the journey towards that point). By focusing on the Scottish independence movement, I entered the field with the assumption that all of the participants want Scotland to be independent. This allowed me to bypass that debate and focus on themes which are more directly related to the research questions. The field of this research, the Scottish independence movement, is therefore built around an ideology as opposed to a spatially defined field. That being said, Scotland does form the boundary of the space within the field I focus on. There are also independence supporting groups outside Scotland (for example Netherlands for Scottish Independence) which are outside the scope of this research.

A distinction needs to be made between supporters of Scottish independence, the Scottish independence movement, and the SNP. I understand supporters of Scottish independence as anyone who wants Scotland to be an independent country. As with any ideology, it is impossible to put a fixed number on this group, although we can estimate it by means of opinion polls. Following those, the number of independence supporters has changed during the duration of this project (figure 4.1, see p. 85). Based on these polls, there was an almost continuous rise in support between the summer of 2017 and the summer of 2020. It has been suggested that the number of people in Scotland supporting independence has increased with the progress of Brexit (Carrell, 2020a). The Scottish independence movement, or the Yes movement, consists of 'active' supporters of Scottish independence. This means those who actively participate in the cause of independence either directly, for example by campaigning, or indirectly, for example by becoming members of independence supporting groups. The

movement can therefore be better understood as a loose collection of unofficial activist groups supporting Scottish independence.
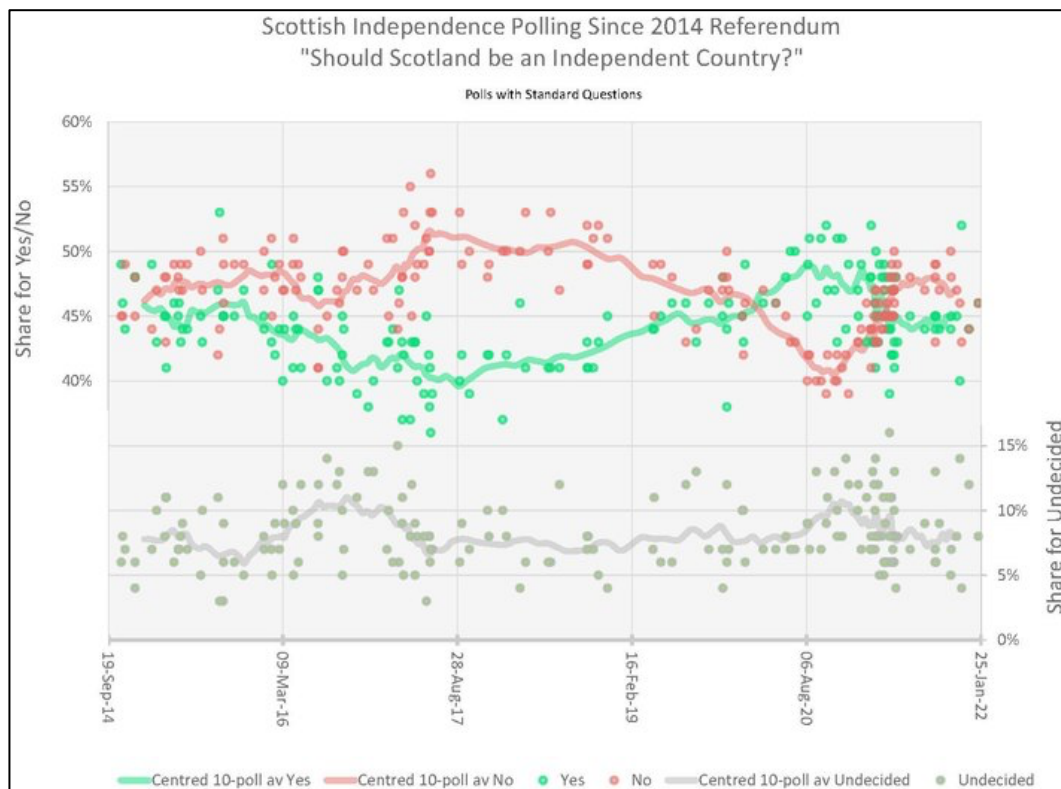
Figure 4.1: Evolution of polling data on whether Scotland should become an independent country since the 2014 independence referendum (RERTwiki, 2022). At the time of writing, a continuously updated page with polling data on the question, on which this graph is based, can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_on_Scottish_independence

To facilitate access to particular independence supporting communities, I have focused the field on the independence movement. This means I have contacted independence supporting groups to gain access to the field. However, there have been several participants who have said they are not particularly active supporters. The field is therefore made up of defined groups in the movement and independent individuals who also support independence.

There are at least 135 active groups supporting Scottish independence spread around the country (see Appendix II). These groups all support Scottish independence but distinguish themselves from each other by factors such as location (for example Yes Clydesdale, Yes Inverness), political orientation (for example Labour for independence, Scottish Socialists for Independence), occupation (for example Artists for Yes, Farming4Yes), gender (for example
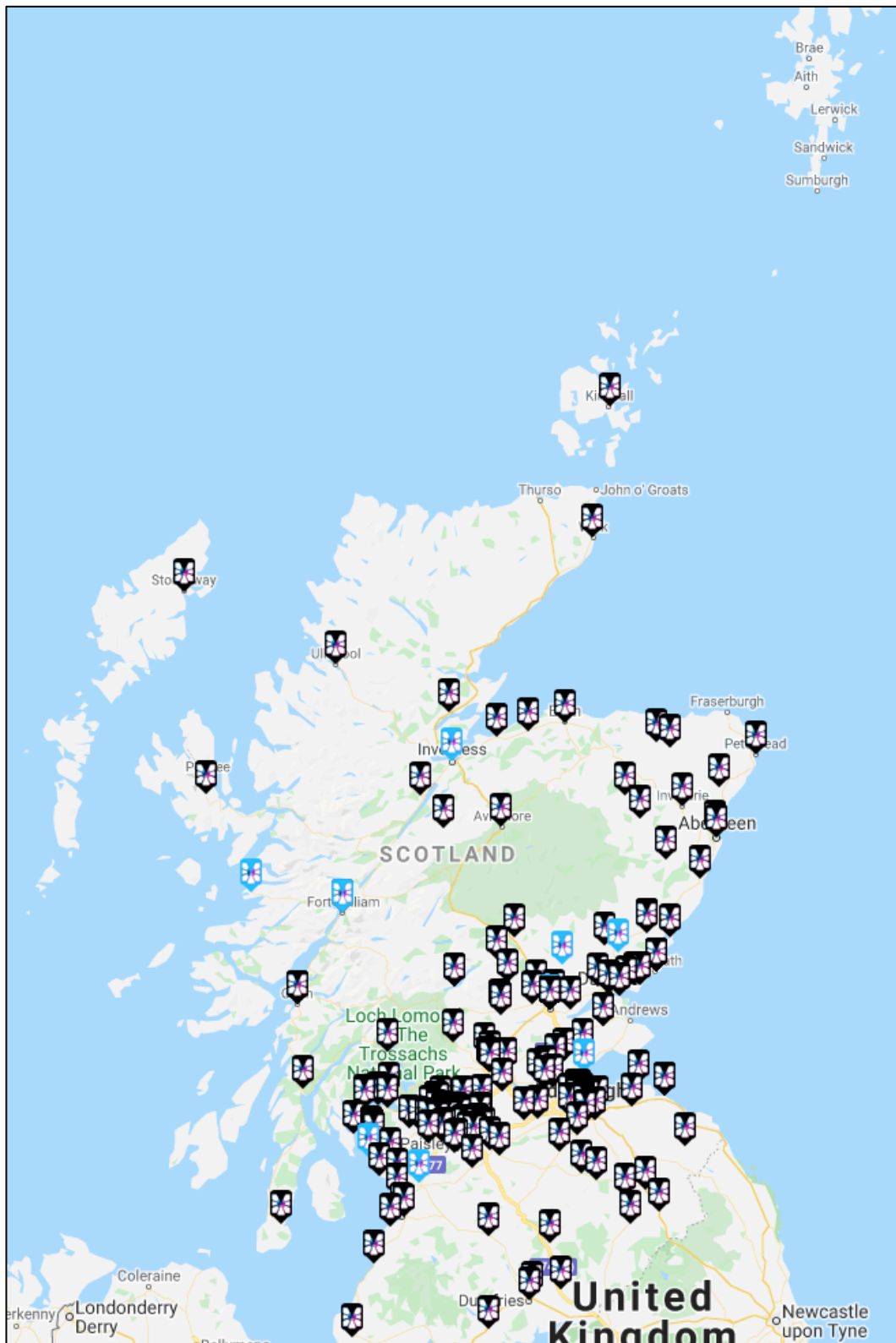
Figure 4.2: Map of independence supporting groups which have registered with the National Yes Registry. There are other groups which have not registered and can therefore not be seen on this map, for example Yes Shetland (National Yes Registry, 2019).

Women for Independence) and other factors (for example Yes Bikers for Scottish Independence). It needs to be noted that even though it is a political ideology which unifies the movement, there is a large diversity of political opinions within it. Broadly speaking, I have observed two main divides within the movement: the first is party political. Many of the members of the Scottish independence movement support the SNP, but not all of them. Other parties which officially support independence are the Scottish Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party. Several of the participants I interviewed also identified as Labour supporters. None of the participants I interviewed identified as Conservatives, although some did express views which are similar to Conservative ideologies (in this case a difference was often made between being Conservative with a capital C, referring to the political party, or conservative with a small c, referring to personal conviction). The second divide is more recent: Remain versus Leave, referring to the two voting options of the 2016 EU referendum.

Due to the large number of independence supporting groups in Scotland it is of course not possible to do fieldwork with all of them. To get an impression from across the country I have selected a few groups and did multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus, 2012; Hirvi and Snellman, 2012) in those. The selection of the groups was done based on two determining factors: first, I wanted to get a spread from across the country. Second, each of the selected groups has a particular relation to the independence and Brexit questions and the European Union. The locations are the following:

- The Central Belt. For practical reasons I selected a group in Edinburgh, enabling me to regularly attend the meetings of a local Yes Group. This group was *Yes Marchmont and Morningside*. I did not live in either Marchmont or Morningside while working on the PhD, but I did live in Marchmont at the time of the 2014 independence referendum and still received their emails.

- A local authority in which a majority voted for Yes in the 2014 independence referendum, either Dundee, Glasgow or East Dumbartonshire (BBC News, 2014), sometimes referred to as a Yes-City. I wanted to focus on Dundee as I already did fieldwork in the central Belt in Edinburgh. However, I was unable to get in touch with any groups in Dundee and therefore selected Glasgow. My fieldwork was done with members of *Yes Glasgow West*, which included a supporter who is based in Kilmarnock and is also a member of Yes East Ayrshire.

- The Northern Isles. Orkney and Shetland have a particular Nordic historical relation to Europe via Scandinavia.[22] The Northern isles have received significant financial investment from European structural funds (The Scottish Government, 2015). Orkney was also the local authority with the strongest vote against independence in the 2014 referendum, with 67.2% of voters choosing 'No' (BBC News, 2014). My fieldwork was done with *Yes Orkney*, which is predominantly based in Kirkwall.

- The Western Isles. I felt it was important to include Gaelic-speaking communities in this research, in part because the European Union has been supportive of Scottish Gaelic and Brexit might have a significant impact on its development (European Language Equality Network, 2018). The Western Isles have also received considerable funding from European structural funds (The Scottish Government, 2015). I tried contacting Yes Outer Hebrides but was unsuccessful. Instead, I did fieldwork with *Yes Skye and Lochalsh*.

- The Scottish Borders. Being beside the border between England and Scotland, this area would be strongly affected by Scotland becoming an independent country, a situation put into the spotlight in Northern Ireland during the Brexit negotiations. I was unable to find anyone who wanted to participate in Yes Borders and Yes Galashiels. Instead, I interviewed three supporters of independence who live in the Borders, one who is a member of EU Citizens for an Independent Scotland, and the others are not members of a Yes Group.

- The Moray Firth. This area is known for its large presence of supporters of the Conservative party. It is also where many fishing companies are based, a number of which oppose the EU's CFP and were in favour of Brexit (Harvey, 2016).

I covered all these areas in the fieldwork except the Moray Firth. Just as I was doing the fieldwork with Yes Orkney in February 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had reached mainland Europe, and eventually hit Scotland. This resulted in a series of national lockdowns, during which public meetings such as the ones I was organising for this fieldwork would be deemed as 'non-essential'. As I had already collected quite a lot of material at that stage in the research, I decided to stop the fieldwork. The CFP, one of the main reasons for

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[22] For more information on the historical connection of Northern Scotland to Scandinavia, see Crawford (1987).

covering the Moray Firth, had also already been discussed frequently during the fieldwork sessions in Orkney.

Between the different Yes groups there is little communication and organisation. There are attempts to coordinate more between them. For example, the group All Under One Banner (henceforth AUOB) is an umbrella organisation of Scottish independence groups which regularly organises marches across Scotland in which any supporters of independence are welcome to participate. I took part in a number of these throughout the duration of the project, in Edinburgh and in Aberdeen. The National Yes Registry is a register of independence groups around the country (figure 4.2, see p. 86), and the IndyApp which is connected to it enables communication between registered groups. During meetings of Yes Marchmont and Morningside the IndyApp was regularly promoted, but members seemed unenthusiastic to use it or frustrated with how it works. I observed similar sentiments with members of Yes Orkney. Overall, while it is described as a movement, my fieldwork left me with the impression that there is little central organisation to it, instead being a loose collection of local community groups with a similar ideology. This is what the member of Yes Marchmont and Morningside was referring to in the quote at the start of this section. There are some who are trying to change this but so far have not managed yet.

4.1.2 Accessing the field

Sampling was therefore started on a basis of largely pragmatic reasons whereby participants were chosen based on their 'experience of the research topic, [having] time to participate, [being] willing to reflect and talk about the experience' (Morse and Clark, 2019:146). I would like to emphasize here that this being a qualitative study, I made use of qualitative sampling. In *quantitive* sampling the aim is to provide a statistical representation of a group of people, in *qualitative* sampling the aim is to represent 'a phenomenon of interest' (*ibid.*:145-6). When entering the field, I therefore set out to find participants based on their connection to the research topic (being supporters of Scottish independence, having an opinion about Europe and European identity), and on their willingness and ability to participate.

My main form of gaining access to the field was by sending an inquiry to the main email address of the groups listed above. These contact details were found via the group's website, their social media pages, or the National Yes Registry, which lists many Yes groups (figure 4.2, see p. 86). If I did not find an email address, I tried to make contact via private

messaging on social media. In my message I explained the project and asked whether any members would be interested in being interviewed. To attract participants who might not feel comfortable doing interviews I emphasized the casual and reciprocal nature of the interviews, which I will elaborate on further later.

I found throughout the project that the success of these emails depended on the network and enthusiasm of those in the group who read and replied to emails, as well as to the current organisation of the group. Some of the groups I contacted were very active and large, whereas others were either very small or had become inactive since the 2014 referendum. Therefore, the responses I received were varied. Sometimes I received none and other times I was told that there was no-one in the group who was interested or able to participate. In several cases however, I received an enthusiastic response from an organising member of the group, who then forwarded my email to the whole group, thereby functioning as gatekeepers (O'Reilly, 2009). This happened in Yes Marchmont and Morningside and in Yes Glasgow West. I found that once my email had been forwarded to the whole group, I would quickly receive a large number of replies from people who were willing to participate.

After contacting Yes Skye and Lochalsh, which happened via social media, I also met a member who became a gatekeeper. She contacted members of the group on my behalf and arranged a focus group for me, instead of me being in contact with individual members directly. This was particularly useful in Skye due to my limited time there. During the focus group I was able to organise two more individual interviews with members directly. In the case of Orkney, I was put in touch with a key local contact via mutual acquaintances, who is a member of Yes Orkney and also offered to organise interviews and focus groups for me during my stay in Kirkwall, for which I was very grateful. He was very much a key informant as described by O'Reilly: 'someone who becomes particularly central. They enjoy sharing the ethnographic enterprise with us and relationships with them can lead to long-lasting friendships' (O'Reilly, 2009:133–4).

4.1.3 Building rapport

Considering that the field is formed by the ideology of Scottish independence, becoming an insider in the field could be as simple as supporting Scottish independence. While I do support Scottish independence myself, which I will discuss further below, I did not feel an insider. I would explain this by returning to the difference between supporters of Scottish independence and being part of the Scottish independence movement: I consider myself

being part of the former but not the latter, as I did not partake in 'active activism' for independence before I started this research project.

That being said, merely supporting independence was often a useful tool for building rapport in the field. I experimented with this early on in my research: I attended an AUOB-march for the pilot study. During the march I quickly realised that asking people questions about their identity at such a march created an atmosphere of distrust. The people I was interviewing felt that they needed to defend their position and convince me of it. The solution to this was easy: by wearing a clearly visible pro-independence badge on my jacket I managed to signal that I agreed with them, and that there was no need to defend their viewpoints. This resulted in people becoming a lot more willing to talk to me.

It was later suggested to me that people's defence of their positions might form an interesting contribution to the research in itself. There would be two ways of doing this: first, I could lie about my opinion and suggest that I disagreed with Scottish independence. My main argument against this is that I believe that it would be unjust to lie in what is supposed to be an environment of mutual trust. I also found this to be a particularly risky strategy which might damage my access to the field at a later stage. Although there is little central organisation to the movement, members of different groups are in touch with each other over social media. In this environment news spreads quickly, and a negative experience might quickly become a negative reputation, which might inhibit further interviews. A second possibility would be to approach the field with a neutral opinion. I did try this on a few occasions. It never lasted throughout interviews, almost always I would be asked by the participants at some point what my opinion on all these topics is, to which I also answered truthfully. I find this strategy problematic because I do not believe it is in line with the paradigm described earlier. In particular, the assumption that neutrality is utopian anyway. I therefore opted for another strategy: to be open about my opinion when asked but not unnecessarily emphasising it in the field as I did on the march. This proved to be quite successful and helped me build rapport and, in some cases, truly collaborative conversations in the field.

Another element which contributed to the building of rapport was my age. The majority of people I spoke to were middle-aged or older. I was told by several participants that they thought it was good that I, a young person, had an interest in the topic and was researching it. How to convince young people of independence was a regular topic at meetings. There

seemed to be an overall opinion that not enough young people were getting involved or confusion about how best to motivate them. This resulted in many wanting to involve me and help me with my research.

4.1.4   Ethics in and around the field

Before entering the field, I applied for the approval of Heriot-Watt University's Ethics Committee. I received this approval on 27 August 2019. In the application I said I would not be working with any vulnerable groups. At a few points in my research, I was asked whether underage would be allowed to participate. I did consider this but decided that I would not allow it for two reasons: first, having to redo the application to include underage participants required a considerable amount of extra administrative work. Second, I decided that for this amount of work it would not give a significant enough extra benefit to answer my research questions. At one interview a participant did bring her underage son along without informing me first. I decided to allow this but to write a clear parental approval on the consent form.

Before each interview and focus groups, the participants were asked to read and fill in a consent form, which was examined by the ethics committee in advance and included in their overall approval. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix III. In the form the participants were asked whether they wanted to remain anonymous in the research. I received a wide variety of replies to this question. To remain consistent throughout the work, and to protect the identity of those who chose to remain anonymous, I decided to refer to all participants as P in the fieldwork transcripts (or P1, P2, etc. in case of more than one participant).

4.2   Methods: ethnography

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned my hesitation of jumping to use ethnography. This is mainly due to a perceived hierarchy of methods in ethnography. Participant observation has long had the reputation of being the central method of ethnography: the Malinowskian idea of spending a long period immersed in the field, observing its intricacies while at the same time participating to fully understand its workings. Crang and Cook have described ethnography as 'participant observation *plus* any other appropriate methods' (Crang and Cook, 2007:35; in Forsey, 2010:566). Clearly, participant observation is still high up the methodological ladder, higher than other methods such as interviews (Hockey and Forsey, 2012:70). This makes me a little uncomfortable. From the moment I started doing

ethnology in my undergraduate degree, my main method of data collection has always primarily been focused on interviews and it is the main form of data collection I have used in this research. As such, this is the method I am most familiar with, and I agree with Hockey and Forsey that it is 'a primary research tool in anthropological research' (*ibid.*), or even with Martin that it is 'the basis of modern ethnographic enquiry' (2013:298).

I am not arguing for the exclusive use of interviews in ethnological research. Throughout my ethnological journey, I have also used participant observation regularly. Usually this has happened for short periods of time, focused on particular events. This leads to another hesitation for using ethnography: it has been argued by some that ethnography requires 'a prolonged stay at the research site' (Wolcott, 1999; in Creswell, 2007:18). I have already described the multi-sited nature of my fieldwork, but it was also yo-yo fieldwork (Wulff, 2012): after short research periods in the field, I would return home and spend time there before returning to (another location in) the field. The reasons for this are predominantly practical. Spending extended periods of time in the field is simply not possible in certain cases because the field does not permit it, the financial limitations of the research or the personal and professional academic situation of the researcher. For example, I had a limited research budget with which I would not have been able to sustain several months in the field and I had teaching commitments for which I needed to be in Edinburgh during teaching semesters. As a result, I would frequently find myself back at my desk in-between fieldwork periods. This time in-between field trips was used to reflect on the fieldwork already done and attend to other matters of academic life such as teaching or preparing for and attending conferences.

In this research I use interviews, focus groups and participant observation. I will describe each of these in more detail below. Discussing their spot on the methodological ladder of ethnography goes beyond the scope of this thesis, as does the discussion of which alternative names can be given to different hierarchies of similar methods (Creswell, 2007:78–80). Although the application of these methods might not fit with a Malinowskian ethnography, it is in line other contemporary applications of ethnography described above (Hockey and Forsey, 2012; Marcus, 2012; Wulff, 2012; Martin, 2013).

4.2.1   Data collection

When in the field, I collected data by means of three methods. During interviews and focus groups I recorded the sessions with a phone application called Otter. Besides making an

audio recording of the conversation, it also does its best at transcribing it and presenting me with key words of what was discussed. This allowed to take little or no written notes during interviews and focus groups, something which I find distracting to do while also listening and participating at the same time (Lareau and Schultz, 1996:37). The quality of the transcription varied depending on background noises and the accents of the speakers, so with some transcriptions I would have to make corrections before being able to use them. Overall, I found this to be less work-intensive than writing the transcriptions completely by myself.

Having a recording device lying on a table during an interview has been noted to be potentially intimidating to the interviewee (Martin, 2013:296). Even though the interviewee is still aware that the phone is recording, I believe it is far less intimidating than a recording device of old, with a large microphone. Having a phone on a table during a conversation is a very common contemporary occurrence outside the interview context (I found that many participants did this themselves anyway), so the sight is familiar and somewhat more reassuring.

I also took photographs, predominantly of particular events but also of the larger environment of the field. In particular, I tried to make a habit of photographing people, things and symbols which related to my research topic. These have been useful in providing context for the other forms of data collection.

Finally, I wrote fieldnotes of what I observed in the field. Fieldnotes are known to be a central element of ethnography (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995; Lareau and Schultz, 1996:2; Ugolini, 2013:72–3). That being said, there are no clear guides or rules about how they should be written, which is highly dependent on personal style (Walford, 2009). I have always found taking fieldnotes one of the most challenging parts of doing an ethnography. I find I am overly self-critical of the validity and importance of what I observe and write down. In particular, writing fieldnotes of participant observation sessions at which I did not speak to anyone in the form of an interview confronted me with the 'uncertainty and risk' of myself and my own intuition as the primary research tool (Ball, 1990:157). Taking fieldnotes has therefore very much been a learning experience for me during the project, whereby 'the only way to get better at it is to do more of it' (*ibid.*:158).

Practically, I take very short notes while actually in the field. These are usually in the form of scribbles and rough sketches which would make little sense to anyone but myself. After the fieldwork I then expand on these on the computer. For my workflow I found it important to

convert any handwritten notes to a digital format as quickly as possible, which then makes it compatible with the rest of my data. At times I also took digital fieldnotes on my phone, as other ethnographers are also starting to do (Safronov *et al.*, 2020). While I attempted to capture impressions, key events, and reaction in the field (Lareau and Schultz, 1996:26–30), I found that many of my fieldnotes are about my own feelings in the field and how I react to what is happening around me. They are therefore particularly helpful for gaining insight into my own place in the field, which is important for the research paradigm.

4.2.2   In-depth interviews

My aim in the interviews was to get a thick description (Geertz, 1973; Rapley, 2004:15) of the participant's personal perspective on my research topic. However, I am aware that the interview does not produce an isolated account of the interviewee's reality. Fitting with the paradigm of this research, I understand the interview as an 'inherently interactional' (Rapley, 2004:16) experience in which reality is co-produced between the interviewer and interviewee (Dingwall, 1997:56; Montgomery, 2012:144–5). I attempted to put this into practice by nudging the interviewee to consider topics (s)he might not have deeply considered before. While doing so I did not talk about my own opinions, but if the interviewee asked about them, I responded truthfully.

Even though I do believe the interview to be a crucial tool for ethnography, when contacting potential participants, I wrote that what I was seeking was more a conversation than an interview. What I really meant was that I was seeking an informal instead of a formal interview. In the academic context we can of course debate the difference between an interview and a conversation (Rapport, 2012), but outside this context there is a significant difference between the two. My aim was then to put the participants at ease rather than to suggest a completely reciprocal conversation whereby we each spoke a similar amount. I did aim to have the participant doing most of the speaking and even influence the direction of the interview, taking a semi-structured approach.

I started the interviews by explaining my research and my research aims, including a brief description of the main principles of the paradigm: that I was not here to judge the participants on their replies and that there were no right or wrong answers. I always explained the time frame of the research. This is important to me because I wanted participants to be aware that it will probably take several months before they would see a finished result. I would then explain that even though I called these sessions interviews, I was not aiming to

have an interview in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, I was hoping to have a conversation. I told them I did not have a fixed series of questions which I needed to get through in a particular order, instead I had a list of themes which I wanted to talk about but how and when we reached them did not matter. Crucially, I informed them that if they would rather not answer a particular question they did not have to and that they could add topics if they felt I was missing something. I followed this by telling them I would like to make an audio recording of the conversation and for which I purposes I would use the recording. Afterwards I would ask them to fill in the participant consent form and whether they had any further questions. Only once all questions were cleared and the forms had been filled in and signed, I would start the recording and the conversation. In some cases, the participant would be very enthusiastic to begin talking and I would have to interrupt them to explain all the above as well as allow them to fill in the form. This was always understood. Because of these particular participants' enthusiasm, it usually was not a problem to return to the flow of the interview.

The questions asked during the interviews evolved over the course of the research (Rapley, 2004:17–8), although the overall themes and semi-structure remained similar. Although described as separate themes here, practically they would often blend with each other, with certain questions triggering follow-up questions from other themes. I tried to let this happen as naturally as possible, simply aiming to cover all themes regardless of the order. I gave the participant time to talk at length about each question (*ibid.*:22) and interrupted them as little as possible. Also, during silences, I would wait a while before interrupting them, as I found that doing so would often lead to extra responses or naturally move the interview to following topics (Poland and Pederson, 1998).

In almost all interviews I started by asking the participants about their background to the Scottish independence movement: how and when they had come to support it and how they engage with it. As all participants support Scottish independence, this is a good introductory question, in particular when interviewing several people at the same time. It demonstrates to the participant their connection to and expertise of the field, which I found to be reassuring for many. In many interviews, the replies to this question would also turn out to be quite long and already touch upon many of the topics I wanted to cover during the session.

The interview would then have three large themes: first, the personal connection to Europe and the interviewee's experience of Brexit. I tried not to start immediately with the question

'would you describe yourself as European, why?', because of its obviousness and finality regarding the research topic. Instead, talking about Brexit and how it affected the interviewees and their communities proved more effective. This usually led to the topic of Europeanness anyway, enabling me to return to topic of what makes someone European and whether the participants would describe themselves as European. I would finish this theme by asking whether Brexit had influenced the interviewee's opinion on Scottish independence, which would push the conversation well to the second theme.

Second, I wanted to hear the participants' opinion on the Scottish independence movement and its reactions to Brexit. This included questions such as 'how has Brexit influenced the Scottish independence movement' and 'how has the external perception of the Scottish independence movement changed since Brexit'. Within the research, small state vulnerability is directly related to Scottish independence, and I wanted to incorporate this topic in the interview. It is however somewhat theoretical, and I was afraid it would interrupt the natural flow of the interview. To reach the topic indirectly, I confronted the interviewee with a common pro-Union argument suggesting that Scotland would be 'too small' to be an independent country and asked them how they would convince someone who thought this. This was not as successful as I had hoped, with many interviewees turning to widely used stock answers to the question instead of reflectively elaborating on Scotland's vulnerability. Instead, I found this topic was often covered inadvertently through responses to other questions.

The third section included more imaginative questions on hopes for an independent Scotland or the future of Europe. A particularly useful question here was 'If you were on a citizens' assembly tasked with informing the creation of a constitution for an independent Scotland or for the EU, what would you suggest to be included in it'. This was inspired by Jemma Neville's book *Constitution Street* (2019), in which she asked inhabitants of said street what they would want included in a (Scottish or British) constitution. This question allows the interviewees to focus on their ideals and values for a state, making the question less abstract. I found this worked quite well with a number of participants. Another future-focused question I sometimes asked was 'what could Europe learn from Scotland and vice-versa?' This led to quite reflective replies which rested on ideologies, values and hopes for the future.

To finish the interview, I reiterated the introduction by asking participants whether I missed something or whether there is something they would like to add. In many cases this proved

very fruitful, with the sessions sometimes being extended by over half an hour after the actual ending of the interview and providing further useful information. The first time this happened I had already switched off the recording device. Therefore, at later interviews, I only switched off the device when the conversation had clearly ended and myself and the interviewee were getting ready to leave.

As mentioned earlier, to enable me to participate or observe freely in the interviews I wrote little or no notes during the interview. Instead, data collection was done by means of recording audio on my phone. For the comfort of the interviewees and for the phone application's transcription to work optimally, which required a quiet environment with little background noise, I tried to meet participants in private environments. For most interviews this was not a problem, I conducted interviews in their homes, in libraries, in quiet cafes, etc. In almost all interviews the seating was arranged in such a way that I was sitting opposite the interviewee. Although some have argued this to be confrontational (Rapport, 2012:66), I did not feel this was ever the case. Any unease with the interview situation tended to fade during the progress of the conversation. I found that the more interviews I did, the more comfortable I became with the interview situation. In turn, I felt this allowed the interview to run more smoothly and it to become more productive for my research purposes.

4.2.3   Focus groups

During my major review I proposed just to do interviews and participant observation, and it was suggested to me to add focus groups as a means of triangulation. I did two 'full-size' focus groups, one with members of Yes Glasgow West and one with member of Yes Skye and Lochalsh. With members of Yes Orkney, I did thirteen small focus groups. As opposed to interviews and participant observation, I had no previous experience with conducting focus groups. As I only implemented them after the major review, I also did not try them out during the pilot study. This meant that conducting the groups was very much a learning experience for me, with later ones feeling considerably more comfortable than the first.

The biggest difference between an interview and a focus group of course lies in the number of participants, and them being able to respond to each other instead of just to me as a researcher. This might result in a more egalitarian research environment whereby 'the power of the researcher is challenged, simply by virtue of the numbers involved in the research encounter, when the researcher is generally outnumbered by a margin of around 10 to one' (Wilkinson, 1998:114; in Jowett and O'Toole, 2006:455). Hopefully, the focus group thus

becomes a conversation between, in the case of this research project, likeminded participants whereby the researcher is an observer witnessing 'the co-construction of realities between people' (Wilkinson, 1998:112). This of course fits well with the paradigm of the research. It also blurs the line between focus groups and participant observation. However, although the focus group is a social situation, it remains an artificial meeting created by the researcher for the research purposes (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006:458). It must therefore be kept in mind that although 'focus groups may approximate to participant observation the focus groups are artificially set up situations' (Kitzinger, 1994:106) and therefore significantly different from doing participant observation in a situation organised unconnected to the research.

Focus groups are recommended to include 5-12 participants, with 6-10 being noted as an ideal number (Krueger, 2002:1; Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2007:58). The focus group in Glasgow had 8 participants, the one in Skye had 10. Conducting focus groups is therefore an economical way of doing research. It is possible to reach a large amount of people in a short amount of time, which is useful in research limited by time and budget (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006:454). This was the case during my fieldwork trip to Skye, where I hosted a focus group just before the local independence group's meeting. As distances across the island are large and some places are difficult to get to, being able to see a large number of people just before a planned meeting of the group was convenient for myself and for the participants.

During the focus groups I took on a role as moderator and providing guidance to the direction of the conversation. I attempted to take part in the conversation as little as possible, instead observing participants react to each other. This was largely successful. I had a list of topics I wanted to discuss which was similar to those of the interviews. These were formulated as questions but did not need to be asked in such a way, as long as the topics were covered in the conversation. If it became clear to me that 'experts, dominant talkers or ramblers' (Krueger, 2002:2) were taking over the conversation, or that 'shy participants' (*ibid.*) were getting lost in it, I would attempt to subtly moderate it. I found this particularly challenging in the first focus groups I did but grew more confident over time.

In Glasgow the conversation was difficult to handle. There were several participants who were dominant speakers and frequently interrupted others. The discussion also became heated at several points, meaning I had to be quite strict as a moderator. This was detrimental to the flow of the group, as it became less a conversation amongst participants and more a

conversation between me and the participant who was allowed to speak at the time. After the session several participants spoke to me personally and indicated that they were not able to say all they wanted to say because they felt unable to amongst some of the louder participants.

The group in Skye had a completely different atmosphere. I believe this was because all the participants were members of the same Yes group, knew each other previously and clearly had experience discussing similar topics in group. The discussion was therefore civilised and self-moderated. Almost everyone took part equally in the discussion and participants allowed others to speak. As a result, there was a lot more flow to the discussion than the one in Glasgow. The conversation naturally led to almost all topics I wanted to cover, and I only had to steer the discussion three times. There was one participant who did not speak at all during the focus group. I spoke to him afterwards, when he told me he did not think he had anything useful to contribute. I asked him whether we would be willing to do a personal interview with me which he accepted. This was also a very useful and productive interview; he clearly did have a lot to share but perhaps did not feel comfortable doing so in a group session.

The number of participants in a focus group has both advantages and disadvantages towards doing one-on-one interviews. Simply put: in an interview the participant has the chance to fully express her or himself but is not challenged by others. In a focus group the participants challenge or build upon each other's views but might not get the opportunity to fully express themselves. In Orkney I hosted several 'small focus groups' consisting of 2-5 (usually 3-4) participants. This was not planned as part of my methods but was so organised by my contact in Orkney for practical reasons and I decided to try it. I was pleasantly surprised. Stewart *et al.* write that 'fewer than 6 participants makes for a rather dull discussion' (2007:58) but I did not find this to be the case at all. Instead, the small number of participants meant that in most cases everyone managed to contribute a lot to the conversation while at same time still being challenged by others. It also made my job as a moderator easier because a smaller group is easier to manage.

All focus groups took place in private locations. In Glasgow I hired a room at Hillhead library, which was easily accessible for all participants. As mentioned, the session in Skye took place directly before the local Yes Group's meeting and was therefore in the same location. This was the bar of the Sconser Hotel. As it was off season, the hotel was technically closed so there were no other guests. In Orkney, my contact organised a room for

me at the Orkney Club, the building of local social club in Kirkwall of which he was a member. This was an ideal space, not only was it private and quiet, but it was also a very comfortable environment, with arm chairs and a fireplace (see figure 4.3). At all focus group I organised tea, coffee, and snacks for the participants.

Figure 4.3: The room in the Orkney Club in which I held almost all the small focus groups during my fieldwork in Orkney.

As mentioned at the start of this section, the original reason to include focus groups was to provide triangulation. Looking back, I felt that the difference between interviews and focus groups was sometimes minimal. In particular the small focus groups, even though I found them a very useful format, could be called group interviews. I therefore believe the focus groups do not really provide a strong support for *methodological* triangulation (Flick, 2019:139–40). There is therefore a need to point to different kinds of triangulation in the research; there are also two forms of *data* triangulation in the research. By providing a variety of data from a variety of sources, the data is being triangulated (*ibid.*:137). As the data collection in this project covers 76 people from different age groups across several locations in Scotland, the data triangulates itself besides the different methods used.

4.2.4   Participant observation

In having described the previous methods, participant observation has already been mentioned a few times. I participated in interviews and observed focus groups and found myself doing both in small focus groups. Indeed, 'there is a sense in which all social research takes the form of participant observation: it involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and reflecting on the products of that participation' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:19). Considering this universality, one could therefore presume it to be relatively straightforward. However, participant observation has also been referred to as 'the least well understood, most feared and most abused of all the contemporary methods' (Ball, 1990:157). Much like taking fieldnotes, I believe that participant observation is a very personal and field-dependent method which will differ between researchers and research projects. In an attempt to create some guidelines for it, I would point to three key elements of participant observation listed by Guest *et al.*: (1) getting into the location of whatever aspect of the human experience you wish to study, (2) building rapport with the participants and (3) spending enough time interacting to get needed data (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013:76–7). I would argue that all these elements apply to fieldwork as a whole but participant observation forms an important support to achieve them. For example, I found that building rapport was particularly successful when participation was done around interviews and focus groups. In this section I want to focus on participant observation outside the context of interviews and focus groups: when I entered the field without having planned an interview or focus group, instead attending a meeting or event organised by a Yes Group.

There are two types of meetings of the Yes moment at which I have done participant observation. The first are external meetings, such as marches or leafleting events, whereby the Yes movement members try to inform or convince members of the public on independence. The second are internal meetings, for example monthly meetings of local Yes groups, at which independence and the future of the group are discussed and are also used as social events. While not private, these meetings are usually only advertised to members of the group. However, in most cases anyone with an interest in the topic would be welcome to join.

Both venues offer different insights into European identity in the Scottish independence movement. At the external meetings, symbols of identity (flags, slogans, clothing, etc.) are widely and visibly displayed. It is, for example, a common occurrence to attend a pro-Scottish independence march and see people waving European flags. One could presume

these to be an indicator of identity within the movement, but they say little of more intricate meanings of Europe to those waving the flags (or those not waving flags). Therefore, I found such events are good for observing the tips of the icebergs of identity, but to discover what lies beneath the waves support from alternative methods is required. At internal events such symbols are not made as visible (but still present - for example worn badges indicate political affiliations). Instead, these meetings were useful for me to gain an insight into how the Yes groups are organised and in particular the tensions between different ideologies of independence present within the movement.

I attended two marches organised by All Under One Banner, one in Edinburgh in October 2018 and one in Aberdeen in August 2019. These were large scale events at which Yes groups from across the country as well as independence supporters not affiliated to any group, would gather and march through a town and finish with speeches and performances in a central spot. For example, the march I attended in Edinburgh went from Edinburgh Castle, along the Royal Mile to the Scottish Parliament and finished on the Parade Ground behind Holyrood Palace where a stage was set up.

Instead of marching with the group from beginning to end, I preferred staying in one spot early in the walk and then watch the march go by, so I could get an overall impression of the different groups taking part. Once the march would near its end I would join in and follow it until the end, where I would walk around the space where the marchers were collected and observe the different speeches from different spots.
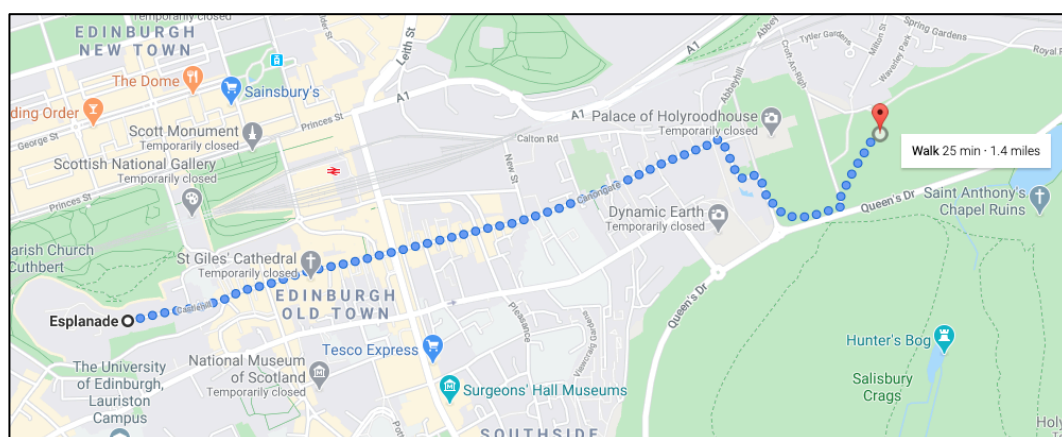
Figure 4.4: The route of the AUOB march in Edinburgh, starting at Edinburgh Castle's esplanade and finishing on the Parade Ground behind Holyrood Palace.

Figure 4.5: A scene from the AUOB March in Aberdeen, August 2019. Photo by author.

I also regularly attended meetings of *Yes Marchmont and Morningside* and participated in their local events. Although I do not live in either Marchmont or Morningside, instead in Craigmillar which has its own Yes group, my presence at their meetings was never put into question. During the meetings I tended to observe discussions more than actively participate. Occasionally the group would organise activities during meetings, for example during one meeting we did a role-playing game to practice convincing no-supporters on independence. I also took part in leafleting with the group, on the Meadows in Edinburgh as well in front of Murrayfield stadium before a rugby match.

During the fieldwork in Skye, my participation took a different turn. As mentioned earlier, the focus group I attended was immediately followed by a meeting of the local SNP branch.[23] My contact in Skye asked me whether I would be willing to give a presentation on the

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[23] The Yes group and the SNP group in Skye significantly overlapped.

research I had done so far at the meeting, to which I agreed. I did so primarily to build rapport with the group, but also to fulfil the aim of giving something back to the studied community. The attendees were interested in how my research could help them with their campaigning, so the presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session. I found this to be a very positive experience which I believe was as useful for myself as it was for those attending.

In Orkney I contributed to the reorganisation of Yes Orkney. Since the campaign for the 2014 referendum, the regular meetings of the group had died down. When I asked my contact whether he could put me in touch with local independence supporters, he saw that as an opportunity to get in touch with all the members of the group and to restart it. Just before each of the sessions he explained these intentions to the participants and asked them for their contact details. At the end of my week of fieldwork in Orkney I gave him an overview of different opinions (without divulging any personal details) and suggestions on how these topics might be taken further in the group. After my fieldwork was complete, he intended to organise a meeting to thank all the participants for their contribution to my research and use this as a first group meeting to restart *Yes Orkney*. I did not hear from him whether this actually happened, but it is likely to have been affected by lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which started soon after I finished my fieldwork in Orkney.

4.3   Conclusion

I started this chapter by defining the field of the research project as the Scottish independence movement. I explained how the movement consists of several local groups, and which groups I would be doing fieldwork with based on several characteristics. I discussed how I got access to the field, using qualitative sampling and with the help of key informants; and how I built rapport within it. In the second part of the chapter, I presented my thoughts on using ethnography as a method, highlighting my reliance on interviews and focus groups over the use of participant observation.

I have explained the research questions, my motivation, a spatial and historical context to the project, the theoretical framework, the discipline and philosophical assumptions I am making, the field and finally the methods I used within it. This concludes the first part of the thesis. In the second part, I will present an analysis of the data I collected. I will start where I finished the historical overview: the EU referendum, where to the surprise of many including members of the Scottish independence movement, British voters chose to leave the EU.

Chapter 5: Betwixt and between Brexit: the independence movement after the EU referendum

Following the EU referendum, Britain entered an uncertain period. The country had voted for Brexit, but the Leave campaign had not actually proposed a clear plan of how Brexit would be organised or indeed, what kind of Brexit Britain should undertake. One thing was clear: 'Brexit means Brexit', as Theresa May famously said (Allen, 2018), Britain would leave the European Union. But would it remain in the single market, or join EFTA? Would it make a special trade deal with the EU or trade on World Trade Organisation (henceforth WTO) rules? What would happen to EU citizens living in the UK, and UK citizens living in the EU? Would UK driving licenses and medical insurances still work in the EU? And crucially although often overlooked in the run-up to the referendum, what would happen to the Northern Irish Border? All these questions and many more, as well as financial and legal settlements would be discussed for three years.

Several scholars have argued that Britain during this period was in a liminal state (Popham, 2017; Reeves, 2017; Laurie, 2018; Reed-Danahay, 2020). Turner describes liminal entities as being 'neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial' (Turner, 1967:95). The first academic use of liminality by van Gennep described it as an attribute of a transitional phase between boyhood and manhood (van Gennep, 1909). Both understandings of liminality refer to a temporary phase with a clear ending. If applied to Brexit, we could understand this phase as the negotiating period between the EU referendum (or the delivery of Article 50 to the EU) and the end of the implementation phase in December 2020. But it is important to emphasize that while I was doing the fieldwork, the Brexit negotiations did not yet have a clear outcome. It was also not clear when (or even whether) such an outcome would be achieved, and what shape Britain's new relationship with the European Union would take. Therefore, Britain was at the time in a state of seemingly perpetual liminality, whereby it was clear that it was in a transitional phase, but it was unclear what the next phase would be or when it would be achieved. In an analysis of liminality in organisational studies, Ybema, Beech and Ellis make a distinction between transitional liminality, a sense of being 'not-X-anymore-and-not-Y-yet', and perpetual liminality, a sense of being 'neither-X-nor-Y' or 'both-X-and-Y' (Ybema, Beech and Ellis, 2011:28).

In the confusion of this period, there was an idea which appeared persistent: that Brexit would lead to Scottish independence. In the media, it often appeared as a question ('Will Brexit lead to Scottish independence?') or an increased possibility ('Brexit has made Scottish independence more likely') or as a cartoon in which Scotland manages to separate itself from the UK following Brexit (for example, see figures 5.1-5.3). It is worth deconstructing this assumption, which I will do in this chapter. To do this, I will focus on the independence movement's reaction to Brexit. Indeed, the connection between the cause of Scottish independence and Brexit was not limited to the media. Following the referendum, symbols and references to Europe became commonplace both in the independence movement as well as in the SNP, the meaning of which I will be exploring in this chapter. But the prominence of Europe in the movement was not always the case. In fact, right before the result of the referendum was known, the attitude to the issue was quite different.

Figure 5.1: The front page of the Guardian on 25 June 2016. Note the third point: "Scotland: we'll go it alone" (Nelsson, 2018).

Figure 5.2: The international media also noticed the potential of Scottish independence following Brexit, here an article from the American CNBC (Reid, 2017).

Figure 5.3: A common theme in cartoons on the issue was Brexit being portrayed as an impending disaster: a sinking ship, a fall or in this case, a bus driving over a cliff edge. Scottish independence is portrayed as Nicola Sturgeon leaving the bus of the UK before it is too late (Stephens, 2017).

5.1 'They said Remain was going to win': the silence before the storm

The result of the EU referendum came as a surprise to many, including myself. Indeed, I went to bed on 22 June 2016 thinking that although it would be a close call, Britain would remain a member of the EU. The shock at reading the news the next morning is not something I will forget. Soon, Brexit became an unmissable part of British politics. It felt a bit as if it came from nowhere, although looking back one can spot the tell-tale signs it was about to happen (Adam, 2020). During an interview with a member of Yes Glasgow, the participant told me about what it was like for her, the day before the EU referendum:

> **G-2-I 14:37**
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> P: The day before the [EU] referendum, I thought I must see where this campaign is and do something for it. I mean, for years there's not been a political campaign I haven't taken part in. […] So I went up and down Byres Road, and the only sign I saw of any campaign was a Lib-Dem stall, where a man was giving out wee stickers which said Remain. *But they also said vote Lib-Dem and I wasn't going to wear one of them* [emphasis added]. So that was it, and then our own SNP-branch said: "let's have a meeting", and they had the meeting on the day of the referendum. So, nobody standing outside schools, giving out stuff, nothing like that. They were a wee bit guilty about it they said, I think the word complacent here, *they said Remain was going to win anyway. They all said that* [emphasis added].

Clearly, I was not alone in assuming Remain would win, what the participant rightfully describes as being complacent. She also admits to only looking how she could contribute to the campaign 'a day before the referendum' herself. This is perhaps surprising, considering that this participant told me how she has been an active campaigner for independence and other political issues since she was young. But her local SNP-branch, around which much of her political activity is centred, had the same attitude. In her own words, 'nobody [was] standing outside schools giving out stuff': the EU referendum never resulted in a similar country-wide political engagement as happened with the Scottish independence referendum.

The participant also hints at the political context in Scotland in which the issue of EU membership was being (or not being) debated in. She came across a Liberal-Democrats stall handing out pro-Remain campaign material, but did not accept any because she did not want to support the Lib-Dems. She does not elaborate on why she does not agree with the Lib-

Dems, but one can assume that as an independence supporter, she does not agree with the Lib-Dem's opposition to independence. From the participant's description it sounds like people were still debating how the issue of European integration would fit into the local political divides, and that there was uncertainty about where this would lead to in the future of the movement.

What is described in the rest of this chapter then should be seen as a recent phenomenon within the movement, a direct reaction to the EU referendum. Of course, as with the result of the referendum itself, the underlying reasons for what will be discussed have been present in the independence movement for many years. But on 23 June 2016, these issues were brought to the forefront.

5.2 'We were taken out of Europe against our will': reactions to Brexit

Considering the almost neglectful approach to the EU referendum described above, and the uncertainty as to how it would fit in the independence movement's campaigning, it is surprising how prominent the issue became. At the pro-independence marches I attended during the fieldwork, there have always been a considerable number of symbols of Europe: EU flags, saltires merged with EU flags, blue stickers and T-shirts with 12 stars on them, and more. When asking participants why Europe has become so prominent in the movement, the reply was usually a variation of this:

> **O-1-SFG 38:24**

> P: The primary reason is Brexit; that we were taken out of Europe against our will.

In other words, following the EU referendum Europe became a further argument against Westminster and the Union, one which demonstrates the unfairness of its structure. It is argued by supporters that Scotland did not want this, yet it still happened.

Figure 5.4: A Scottish-European flag at a pro-independence march in Edinburgh on 10 June 2018. Photo by author.

Figure 5.5: Another flag at the same pro-independence march on 10/06/2018 in Edinburgh. This also includes a Catalan flag. Photo by author.

Figure 5.6: A supporter of independence draped in a similar Scottish European flag at a pro-independence march in Aberdeen on 17/08/2019. Photo by author.

5.2.1   A confirmation of an old argument

The idea that Scotland was taken out of Europe against its will requires some elaboration. The result of the EU referendum, visualised by a now infamous map (figure 1.6, p. 40), is very symbolic. It is remarkable because on the map Scotland is completely yellow (Remain) and the rest of Great Britain is predominantly blue (Leave). In appearance, it almost looks like a conventional political map which marks different political territories or states in different colours. The colours used therefore emphasize the difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK, but also the unity of Scotland itself. This apparent unity is of course not accurate; it is a side-effect of how the map has been designed. The voting areas only represent the winning majorities, thereby giving the impression that whole areas (in this case, the whole of Scotland) voted one way. It neglects the 38% of voters in Scotland who chose to leave the EU, an issue I will return to later in this chapter. And it supports the argument that *the whole of* Scotland was 'taken out of Europe against its will'.

The strategic power of such symbolism has not gone unnoticed in the independence movement (as demonstrated by several participants referring, in some form, to *Scotland's* will being ignored), but also by the SNP. It is no coincidence that Alyn Smith, a former MEP who is also a member of the SNP, held up a copy of the map while giving a passionate speech in the European Parliament in Brussels five days after the EU referendum (figure 5.7, p. 113), during which he said the following:

> Mr President, I represent Scotland within this House, and whilst I am proudly Scottish, I am also proudly European. I want my country to be internationalist, cooperative, ecological, fair, European (Smith, 2016).

Note the correlation he makes between being Scottish and being European, and his use of this correlation in the differentiation between Scotland and the rest of the UK. His speech marks out Scotland as being different to the rest of the UK, partly because of its 'Europeanness'.[24] He confirms this attribute by making it clear that Scotland, as a whole, did not vote for Brexit, demonstrated by the map he shows the parliament.

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[24] In doing so, he gives an insight into what the SNP understands as 'European values', which I will return to in chapter 7.

Figure 5.7: MEP Alyn Smith holds up a copy of the map showing the results of the EU referendum. Scotland's difference to the rUK is emphasized (Sanderson, 2016).

Thus, one reason for the use of European symbols in the independence movement, and the SNP, is that since the EU referendum result, Europe symbolises Scotland's difference from the rest of the UK as well as its unity. As discussed in section 1.3, it is not new for the SNP to use Scotland's different opinion on European integration as an argument for independence. In 2016 however, this strategy finally prevailed.

5.2.2 An outdated promise and a new opportunity

There is more to the prevalence of EU symbolism in the independence movement than a strategic argument. During interviews I asked participants not only why Europe had become such an important issue to the independence movement, but also how they reacted to the EU referendum and Brexit themselves. Although the responses to this question were varied, they were almost always highly emotional. This becomes particularly clear in the following excerpt from an interview with a young couple in Orkney. The frustration the participants speak of could be felt clearly; I remember how one of them appeared to be on the verge of tears during this segment of the conversation:

O-10-SFG 34:47

P1: The whole Gordon Brown thing that 'if you want to stay in Europe you have to vote to stay in Britain, otherwise you go out of Europe.' The blatant unfairness of

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that, three years later that then, despite Scotland [saying] 'well we want to stay [in the UK] because we want to stay [in Europe], and this is possibly what took people away from independence before.

P2: For people to have the audacity to say, 'well, you voted to stay in Britain so this is what you're getting now', doesn't matter the whole of Scotland voted to stay in Europe. […]

P1: Surely no one, on their own thinks that there has not been a material change. Can somebody not see the unfairness that we're speaking about? 'Vote no, to stay part of Britain, to stay in the EU.' And then splitting off as a country and Scotland is taken out of the EU.

P2: I think the problem that we have a lot of the times is exactly what me and you have just done. And as soon as you touch that nerve, you get hit up and you get angry about it. And that's when people get annoyed by independence voters and the drive for independence because we're angry and upset.

P1: We're actually frustrated and upset because it's just…

P2: It's unfair.

P1: How can this be done to Scotland?

P2: And it's so blatant, and you can see it […]. And people still choose to say that we're wrong. You know, and fair enough, you don't have to agree with me, you don't have to want Scotland to be independent, but you have to see that on paper, what happened is really unfair. Because we were promised something, not given it, and then dragged out of Europe anyway. It just doesn't make any sense.

The anger of the participants at Brexit is obvious, but as they mention themselves, there is a lot more to their reaction than just anger. They are frustrated at the unfairness of the situation, which they explain as being 'promised something, not given it, and then dragged out of Europe anyway'. This is primarily a reference to the 2014 independence referendum, in the run-up to which one frequently recurring issue was whether Scotland would be able to remain a member of the EU if it became independent. In their published white paper, the Scottish Government argued that Scotland would be able to remain a member after becoming independent, although they recognise that Scotland's case would be a first and that the

decision on Scotland's EU membership would ultimately lie with the EU institutions (The Scottish Government, 2013:220–2). Using this uncertainty to their benefit, the pro-Union Better Together campaign argued that Scotland would lose its EU-membership once it became independent and that the only way Scotland would remain in the EU is if it voted to remain part of the UK. Condensing this argument into a slogan-like sentence, the following was tweeted by the Better Together campaign shortly before the independence referendum:

Figure 5.8: Tweet by the Better Together campaign on Scotland's EU membership, posted on 2 September 2014 (Better Together, 2014).

Gordon Brown, a Scottish Labour politician and former Prime Minister, also made the same argument, which the participants refer to. But this argument was not limited to the Better Together campaign. In February 2014 José Manuel Barroso, who at the time was the president of the European Commission, said in an interview on the BBC that Scotland would have to reapply for EU-membership and that it would be 'difficult, if not impossible' for it to join the EU after it became independent (Syal, 2014; Saunders, 2018:345). He based this argument on the presumption that some other EU member states would veto Scotland's admission in fear of it encouraging their own secessionist movements to pursue independence. In particular it was thought that Spain would veto an independent Scotland's admission in order to discourage separatists in Catalonia (Anderson, 2016).[25]

What we can learn from both the pro- and anti-independence campaigns in 2014 trying to reassure the Scottish public that their stance would not threaten Scotland's EU membership, is that there was an awareness that for many Scots this was an important issue. The frustration the participants express is then also a reference to this awareness: the impression

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[25] Following Barroso's comments, the Spanish government confirmed it would not oppose Scottish membership of the EU if Scotland became independent within the legal constitutional framework of the UK (Palmer, 2014).

that those in power were aware of the importance of EU membership, used it as an argument, but then neglected its significance a mere two years later. It needs to be kept in mind that those who campaigned against Scottish independence did not necessarily also campaign for Brexit, but they did campaign for the UK, and that same UK chose to leave the EU. Thus, the tweet above (figure 5.8, see p. 115) leaves a particularly bad taste to independence supporters.

The participants quoted in the segment above also mention a 'material change' in Scotland's situation. This refers to the continuation of the contentious argument on Scotland's post-independence EU membership described above. Following the 2014 referendum, the question was soon raised about whether and when there could be another referendum on Scottish independence. Before the referendum, the Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond said the referendum would be a 'once in a generation' opportunity (Dalyell, 2016:94). For many, this might have sounded like the issue would be left to rest for several years, as between the first and second devolution referendums. This was perhaps a relief to those who oppose independence, but it did not last very long. On 5 May 2016, less than two months before the EU referendum, there were Scottish parliamentary elections. Crucially, and with an apparent premonition of what was to come, the SNP's manifesto for the election included the following:

> We believe that the Scottish Parliament should have the right to hold another referendum if there is clear and sustained evidence that independence has become the preferred option of a majority of the Scottish people - *or if there is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014, such as Scotland being taken out of the EU against our will* (Scottish National Party, 2016:23, emphasis added).

Although having lost its majority in the Scottish Parliament, the SNP was still by far the largest party and was able to form a minority government. When their prophetic line in the manifesto became true, they argued that Scottish voters gave them a mandate to hold another referendum on independence (The Scottish Government, 2019:12–7), reviving the issue a lot earlier than was first expected. This strategy has of course benefited the independence movement. Indeed, the participants in the segment above already appear to be using it in their argumentation. But the responses of the participants to this strategy were not as clear-cut as

one might expect. A participant in Glasgow recalled watching the results of the EU referendum come in:

G-1-I 38:57

> There was somebody who made a comment online as I was watching the results [of the EU referendum] coming in, in 2016. And it became apparent that the overall result was going to be Leave and Scotland's was going to be at the very least a majority for Remain […]. And somebody said: "Nicola [Sturgeon] must be whooping!" And I thought: no, she won't, she will be devastated because she genuinely believes that it is best for the entire UK to be in Europe, she will be really upset. But she is still going to take the opportunity, because it is something that she thought of, and she put it in the manifesto, and it has happened. So, it is a paradox. It is something that people do not want to happen, but you cannot ignore the fact that it is beneficial… maybe. It depends how it works out, whether we will actually get the referendum. But it looks as if it could be giving us something that otherwise there was no real prospect of. So, in some ways it is… Not a necessary evil, but it has changed the independence status from just chugging along to being something that might actually turn into a campaign.

As the participant explains, the EU referendum and Brexit have provided a new opportunity to the independence movement, enabling a renewal of the campaign long before it would otherwise have been revived. But note how the participant is sceptical whether this opportunity will hold up. She is not sure yet whether it really will lead to another referendum. I would agree with her caution on the matter, currently whether Brexit will lead to an earlier referendum on independence is still an assumption, and only time will tell. Within this whole situation there are few certainties, and it is a good reminder that what is being discussed here are future potentialities, whereby interpretations of the contemporary are strongly influenced by hopes.

What strikes me from the SNP strategy to describe Brexit as a 'material change' in Scotland's situation is that the issue of Scotland's membership of the EU has a similar function as it did in the run-up to the 2014 referendum: a means to a political end. This is very different from the emotional response to Brexit described by the young couple (O-10-SFG, see p. 113), a difference in approach noted by the participant in Glasgow who reacted to the online comment that 'Nicola must be whooping'. Despite this participant's rejection of this sentiment, I came across similar reactions elsewhere in the fieldwork:

O-12-SFG 36:37

> P: Well, I was like, thank goodness we got Brexit through because now we've got an even bigger chance of getting independence.

This straightforward response removes all the emotion surrounding Brexit and reduces it to its functionality: an additional tool in the toolbox of the independence movement. Thus, for some in the movement, their reaction to Brexit is similar to how Nicola Sturgeon's reaction is described above (G-1-I, see p. 117): unhappy with the result, but still aware of the potential it provides to the independence movement. For others, the emphasis lies on this strategic benefit. Either way, Brexit has become a catalyst for the Scottish independence movement, reinvigorating a debate which had only recently been paused after the 2014 referendum. Whether or not this development means that another referendum on independence will happen sooner is up for debate, but if it does happen, it can be understood as a reaction to Brexit. For better or worse, this makes Scotland's participation in European integration a central part of the independence debate, more so than it was in the run-up to the 2014 referendum. The complacency described by the participant in the previous section will be a thing of the past.

5.3 'Now I wish I had voted the other way': increasing support for independence

The potential benefit of Brexit to the independence movement does not only come from the renewed opportunity. Within the fieldwork, I also frequently encountered the belief that because of Brexit more people would be convinced to support independence. Indeed, the independence movement is not only faced with the challenge of getting a new referendum, in order to prevent a repeat of the 2014 referendum they also need to convince a significant amount of people of their arguments. Whether or not Brexit has actually had a large impact on increasing support for independence remained unclear during the fieldwork. A quick look at quantitative analysis shows that there has been a slow increase in support for Scottish independence since the EU referendum (figure 4.1, see p. 85), but this has mainly become evident in 2020 (Hughes, 2021:172). There was not a sudden jump in support following June 2016. But several participants had anecdotal evidence of more people supporting independence within their communities:

O-2-SFG 43:08

P1: I would say two thirds of the folk that I socialise with in a broad sense, have gone from being No-voters to Yes-voters only because of Brexit.

P2: One of my colleagues […] had been very Unionist. One Sunday morning all of sudden we're chatting, and he says: "That's it now John, come the next independence referendum my X is on independence."

And:

O-4-SFG 21:04

P: The support for independence has dramatically increased since the Brexit process started. Both because people wanted to stay, most people wanted to stay in the EU, but also because it has revealed the attitude of the Tory government. That is, Scotland doesn't matter at all.

We need to be cautious here to not assume that this increase of support is because Scotland's rejection of Brexit was 'ignored'. I agree with the participant above that there are several reasons why this might be the case, although I would add some more. I will explore these in the following sections.

5.3.1   Reason 1: anger and frustration at the status quo

The anger and frustration described in the previous section are not limited to members of the independence movement. Some participants expressed the hope that similar feelings would result in people who oppose independence being convinced of independence as an alternative. Although not everyone might have been as frustrated at the strategic use of EU membership in the 2014 referendum, there are other reasons why Brexit might cause anger and frustration. Brexit will have significant consequences on people's everyday lives, and for many these changes will be detrimental[26]. The independence movement then has an opportunity to use these consequences to their advantage, by blaming Westminster. For this to work, there are three requirements. First, there needs to be an awareness of the consequences of Brexit. Throughout the fieldwork, participants mentioned that the majority

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[26] I will elaborate on the effect of Brexit on the everyday in chapter 6.

of people within their communities had not yet realised how Brexit could or would affect them:

O-8-SFG 40:07

Q: Do you think people in Orkney are aware of the effect Brexit will have on their lives?

P1: It hasn't kicked in yet.

P2: It will only kick in after December.

P1: After it actually happens, yeah.

P2: We're still in the transition phase, so really nothing much has changed.

And:

O-10-SFS 14:09

P1: What we will see is things like new causeways, new piers, new flood protection works, the capital projects that were funded through the ERDF, and through other European funds, […], *people over time* […] *will suddenly be aware, in a few years, there's less things being done* [emphasis added].

And:

O-5-SFG 17:31

P: I kind of believe that societies, usually don't change radically until there's a sort of hardship, if you know what I mean. I think what would really get Orkney going is when the farmers suddenly discover that they don't have the subsidies that there used to be, or that there isn't money for a cause, or there's not money for a new ferry. I mean many people don't actually realise that that's an issue here.

As indicated in the first segment above (O-8-SFG 40:07, see p. 120), at the time the interviews were conducted the Brexit process was still in the transition phase. The UK had actually left the EU already on 31 January 2020, three weeks before the interviews in Orkney took place. But the UK was still part of the EU Customs Union and the European Single Market during the transition phase, which ended on 31 December 2020. The liminal phase described at the start of this chapter was therefore still ongoing. The impacts of Brexit

mentioned during the fieldwork were therefore partly speculative.[27] Thus, amongst participants there was a feeling that when the awareness of the consequences of Brexit would increase, support for independence would grow.

Is it then too early to ask how Brexit has influenced the independence movement? Certainly, this is a topic which will need to be revisited repeatedly over the coming years, as the consequences of the UK's departure become more evident. But amongst participants there was clearly a concern for the consequences of Brexit present, visible throughout the fieldwork. Even though they argued that others in their communities had not yet realised the consequences of Brexit, none of them denied that there would be consequences, and many had specific examples of how their own lives would or could be affected. This made me wonder: were the participants I spoke to just particularly aware of the political situation, or were others in their community perhaps more knowledgeable than they thought? Probably a bit of both: most participants I spoke to were active members of a political movement, suggesting an interest in, or at least an awareness of, the political situation. It is likely that this development of awareness also happened with those who were not involved with a political organisation or movement, albeit perhaps at a different pace and from a different (political) perspective. Based on the participants own experiences, and their anecdotal evidence of their communities, I believe there is a growing awareness of the consequences of Brexit. Indeed, several participants admitted to not knowing much about Scotland's relationship with the EU until the political upheaval of the previous years, and that their awareness has increased since. For example:

O-1-SFG 39:00

P1: I think we were sleeping, because Europe wasn't really seen as a key issue really until the Indyref, I would have thought. Because before then it was very much, well, getting the Scottish Parliament […], and Westminster faded away a little bit […]. But Europe was just third or fourth down the line […], it just wasn't an everyday thing, you know?

P2: But Europe was used to get funds in.

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[27] The political environment left little room for anything but speculation: in December 2020, less than a month before the end of the transition period, it was still unclear whether the UK and EU would have a trade deal once the transition period ended.

P1: Yeah, of course I didn't mean it that way, I mean the politicians were working away, *but the people didn't see Europe as having anything to do with their everyday lives* [emphasis added].

Exactly what Europe has to do with independence supporters' daily lives, and how it relates to Brexit and independence, will be elaborated on in the next chapter. But before continuing with the second requirement, it must be noted that the majority of examples of the consequences of Brexit in the next chapter are from the fieldwork in Orkney. This is illustrative of how many subsidies Orkney, and other regions within the Highlands and Islands, has received from the European Union, and how effective their implementation has been (McCullough, 2018). But it also demonstrates the closeness of the community in Orkney. The effects of someone leaving a small closely knit community will be felt a lot harder than in large cities, where life is lot more anonymous and gaps in the labour market are filled more easily. So, this leads us to ask whether awareness of these effects will be stronger in some areas than in others? If so, this suggests that the strategic effectiveness of Brexit to the independence movement will be differential across Scottish regions and communities.

The second requirement is that the negative consequences of Brexit will also need to be connected to Brexit. This is not a given, as one participant explained:

O-10-SFS 14:09

P2: I think a lot of the time people blame local authorities before they blame anything else. So, it will be the council that gets the blame, and then it will be the Scottish Government that gets the blame, and then it will be the Westminster government. […] By the time these things come around, people are not going to go: 'Well that's because of Brexit! That's because we're not in the EU', it'll be the council's fault for not spending the money or the government's fault for not helping out.

It has also been suggested by some that groups within the UK will blame the negative consequences of Brexit on the EU, arguing that the EU is punishing the UK for Brexit (Johns, 2019). This will also need to be re-examined in the future, I did not encounter anyone of this opinion during the fieldwork. The challenge for the independence movement then is to ensure that the negative consequences of Brexit are connected to its cause. Some groups I spoke to

did indicate they were aware of this, for example a meeting Yes Orkney organised for farmers (O-8-SFG 42:14, see p. 145), or the following tweet by Yes Skye and Lochalsh:
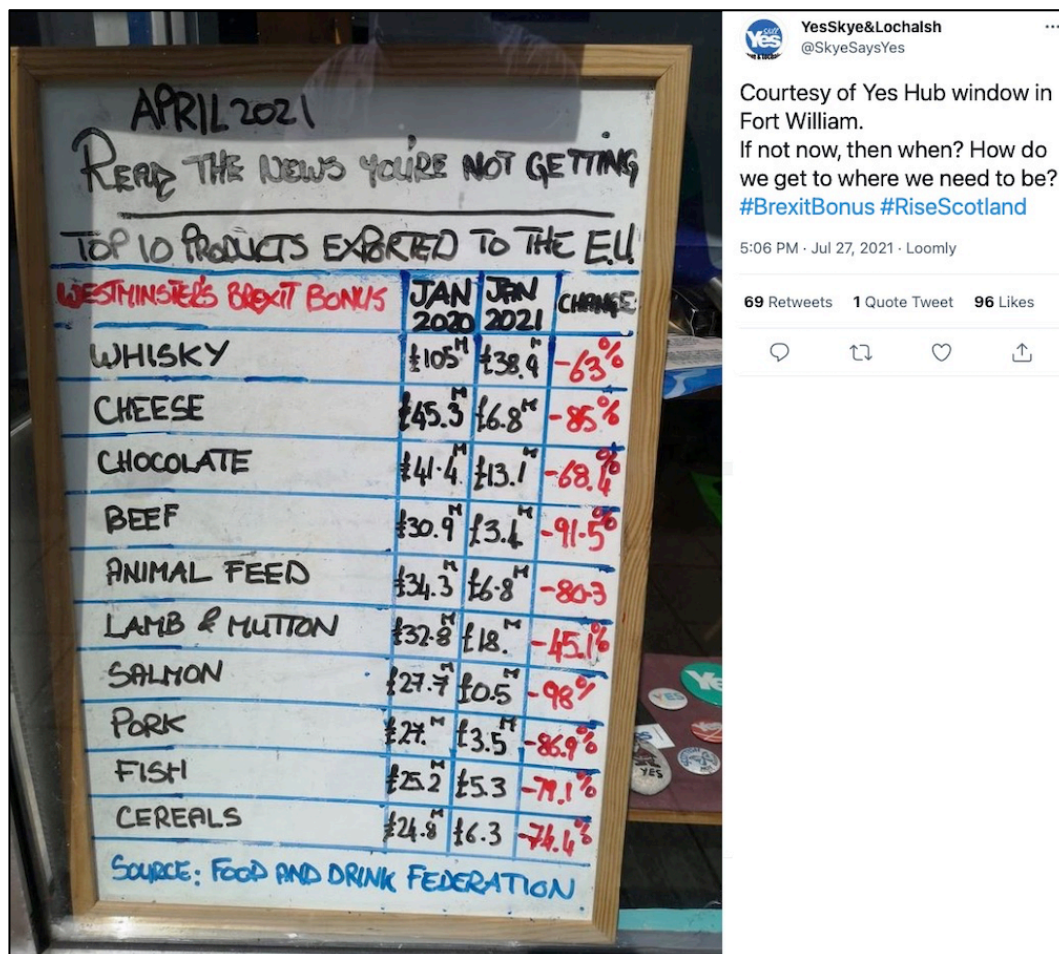
Figure 5.9: Tweet by Yes Skye and Lochalsh showing the window of the Yes Hub in Fort William. Pre- and post-Brexit export prices of common food items are compared to argue for independence (Yes Skye & Lochalsh, 2021).

Finally, the independence movement needs to emphasize who is to blame for Brexit. This is aided, of course, by the argument that Scotland rejected Brexit. The referendum result makes it quite clear that if it had been up to Scotland, or if Scotland's opinion had more weight in the constitutional organisation of the UK, Brexit would not have happened. The blame for Brexit can thus be given to Westminster. The symbolic map (figure 1.6, p. 40) itself might thus convince people to change their mind on independence, not only to demonstrate who is to blame for Brexit, as was suggested by a participant:

O-4-SFG 15:40

P: I was in one of our local supermarkets and a lady said to me: 'I spoke to you during the [run-up to the 2014 independence] referendum.' […] She said that one of the points I had made to her was that simply in numbers, if England and Wales all disagree with Scotland about how we should be […] run or what our political party should be, that Scotland simply won't get the way that they voted because of numbers. They're simply bigger countries. […] And she didn't really believe me. […] But she said that in the most recent [vote], where you saw the map, and it was just England and Wales were pretty much entirely blue, and Scotland was pretty much entirely yellow and we still [did not get what we voted for]. She said it was a very visual impact of something that I had made a point about, but she had never really given it a lot of consideration until she saw that […]. And she said: 'and now I wish I had voted the other way.'

Here, the map not only serves as a symbol of Scottish unity or the difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK, but also to demonstrate an old argument of the independence movement: that in UK-wide votes including general elections, Scotland's majority-vote has often been out-voted by other parts of the UK (also known as the democratic deficit, see Gardiner (2013)). As such, the negative consequences of Brexit can be directly connected to the democratic imbalance of the UK, or indeed Scotland's smallness.

5.3.2   Reason 2: the desire to remain in the EU

There are those who simply want to remain in the EU and will see Scottish independence as an alternative possibility for achieving that. The attempts of both the Yes and No campaigns in the run-up to the 2014 referendum to convince people that an independent Scotland would be able to, or not able to, remain in the EU, strongly implies that it is an issue which will influence people's vote on independence. Brexit, of course, removed the question of whether an independent Scotland would be able to *remain* a member, and Better Together's argument (figure 5.8, see p. 115) backfired. For those who wish to be in the EU then, independence may become more attractive.

This attraction is not unfounded. Since Brexit, it is likely that the quickest way for Scotland to re-join the EU would be to apply for membership as an independent state. Even if Britain would decide it would want to re-join the EU, which seems very unlikely at the time of

writing, it would be difficult for it to do so any time soon (Salamone, 2020). After Britain's un-cooperative attitude during the Brexit negotiations, the other EU member states would be reluctant to accept it as a member before a clear change in its attitude. Additionally, Britain (and an independent Scotland for that matter) would be highly unlikely to receive similar opt-outs from particular EU policies that it had when it was a member (Hughes, 2021:174–5), making it even more difficult to convince the British public of membership.

Thus, if it is the aim of voters to live in an EU-member state, independence would be the quickest way to achieve that. But it needs to be emphasized that independence will not necessarily lead to EU-membership. Although Nicola Sturgeon has indicated it would be her policy to start negotiating EU membership immediately after Scotland would become independent, without first holding another referendum on the matter (Davidson, 2021), public opinion on EU membership may change until that time. The large majority voting in support of EU membership Scotland in the EU referendum suggests that there would be support for it as well following independence, but this cannot be assumed. And even if voters would choose to re-join the EU, their application would still need to be approved by the other EU member states. Although analysts believe it to be likely that they would do so (Hughes, 2021:174), this is also not guaranteed. On that issue, some participants believed that having clear assurances from the EU on Scotland's eventual membership would be a beneficial support:

> **O-10-SFG 52:53**
>
> P1: I think having something of a European assurance that we would be welcomed [in the EU], that would be fundamental to what happens, more than currency or anything. I think knowing that that is going to be an outcome [of achieving independence]. I think that would be as big a selling point…
>
> P2: It would be *the* selling point.
>
> P1: …for an independence campaign, more than anything else.

As noted in the previous section, the official EU attitude to Scottish independence has been lukewarm at best, even explicitly discouraging at the time of the 2014 independence referendum. But since the EU referendum, this approach appears to be changing. Several EU politicians have spoken positively about an independent Scotland applying for EU membership, including Guy Verhofstadt (The Scotsman, 2018) and Donald Tusk (Carrell,

2020b),[28] thereby inadvertently speaking positively about Scottish independence. This was frequently mentioned during the fieldwork. Although some participants felt that a clearer positive sign from the EU would be welcome (O-10-SFG, see p. 125), some felt it was clear the EU 'wants' Scotland:

O-7-SFG 1:20:24

P: [In 2014] I still had nagging doubts if Europe would really want us, […] I was not convinced we would be accepted. That has completely changed now as a result of Brexit. […] I think Europe definitely wants us in there.

Thus, many independence supporters believe Brexit might result in an increased support for independence because this positive attitude from the EU will become visible to those who are unsure about or against independence. They hope it might convince them that an independent Scotland would be welcome in the EU and that its application to re-join would be supported, thereby becoming an alternative to Brexit.

5.3.3   Reason 3: re-evaluation of Scottish nationalism

The changing attitudes of EU-politicians suggest Scottish independence is being re-evaluated since Brexit. This re-evaluation has not been limited to EU-politicians. As one participant said:

O-8-SFG 1:04:30

P: I know from our German correspondent that people in Germany used to view [the Scottish independence movement] with suspicion because it was seen as a nationalist thing […]. And so, I think there was a problem there about what our movement was actually about: civic nationalism. *So, I don't think that message got out beyond Scotland* [emphasis added]. It didn't even get into England, actually, and I think because of Brexit, people have become more understanding of that.

Earlier in the focus group, the same participant said:

O-8-SFG 38:21

P: We also had people, English voters, saying they were really upset [with the result of the EU referendum] and looking at moving north to come to Scotland, *and maybe now understanding as well what the 2014 debate was about* [emphasis added].

This participant argues that Brexit has made it easier to explain the civic nature of Scottish nationalism, in particular to those who do not live in Scotland and might not be well informed on Scottish politics. As many Remain-voters saw the Leave campaign and Brexit as being ethnic nationalist (Mintchev, 2021), Remain-voting Scotland, and by extension the Scottish independence movement, started to be seen as an opposition to that. There is a link here to the perception of 'European values', which I will explore further in chapter 7. But to some, the result of the EU referendum became a demonstration of the difference between the ethnic nationalism of Brexit and civic (inter)nationalism of the Scottish independence movement. As the participant suggests, this external re-evaluation of Scottish independence has not been limited to other European countries but has also happened in other nations within the UK. Amongst independence supporters, there is therefore a hope that voters who were unsure or against independence for ideological reasons will now have a better understanding of the values of the independence movement, and that this results in them changing their opinion.

5.4 'Nobody respected my reasons for that': Euroscepticism and new questions for the independence movement

All the reasons noted in the previous sections rely on an opposition to Brexit. They further establish Scottish participation in European integration as a central theme for the independence movement, and by extension EU-membership as an underlying aim of independence. Not all supporters of the movement are pleased with this. I encountered several participants who believed Brexit was distracting from the main objective: obtaining independence. The strategic effectiveness of linking Brexit to the independence movement was also doubted. There were some who either did not have anecdotal evidence of Brexit increasing the support for independence or did not trust it because it was not reflected in the polls. The following excerpt is from an interview with a participant who did not support EU membership and voted Leave:

G-1-I 44:26

P: Tying [the campaign for Scottish independence] to [Brexit], when it hasn't actually produced a massive, noticeable change in public opinion, worries me. […] I'm going to vote Yes regardless of whether that leads to remain in the EU or not.

The participant questioned whether linking the argument for Scottish independence to the European question was a good idea. She is worried it would overshadow the overall aim of achieving independence. During the fieldwork it was often uncertain whether Brexit would happen at all, therefore the participant is concerned that those who support independence because of Brexit might stop supporting it if Brexit fell through.

G-1-I 44:26 (continued)

P: I think [Brexit] shouldn't [be] the main focus, because it's not the only reason why Scotland ought to be independent. And if you tie it too closely, and then article 50 does get revoked, then what do you do? [Would people say:] "We're not going to leave the EU after all, I don't need to vote Yes!"? And so, I think some people have made the connection too close.

I encountered this opinion a few times during the fieldwork, mainly from participants who did not support EU membership themselves. But beside doubt about the effectiveness of pro-EU argumentation to the cause of independence, Leave-voting members also expressed an increasing uncomfortableness in the independence movement.

5.4.1 Remain-Leave polarisation in the independence movement

The questions of whether or not the UK, or an independent Scotland, should be a member of the EU is complicated and multi-layered. People have different reasons for why they support it or not, and the choice will inevitably have a wide range of direct consequences to their lives. However, the EU referendum distilled this complex question into a binary choice, which resulted in a deep and lasting divide between 'Leavers' and 'Remainers' (Mintchev, 2021:125). From my observations it quickly became clear that Leave-supporting members of the independence movement were in an uncomfortable position since the EU referendum. As argued above, the reinvigoration of the independence debate was a direct result of the EU referendum, in particular to Scotland voting in opposition to the rUK and being taken out of

the EU 'against its will'. Therefore, those who did actually want to leave found themselves at odds with one of the main arguments supporting the reopening of the independence debate. From the fieldwork it could be observed how these supporters felt uncertain about expressing their opinion in the movement. As one participant told me:

G-2-I 01:42:24

P: [A fellow member of the participant's local pro-independence group] is quite annoyed actually, because she says [in the independence movement], she feels she's in a minority situation. Although she's not scared at all, I mean she's actually quite a bold, assertive person, but she says she feels she has to keep quiet with whatever company she's in that she voted Leave. And she doesn't think that's right. She feels that […] if she says something about, you know, supporting Leave they all kind of look at her as if, you know, next thing she'll be doing fascist salutes or something you know, and she feels that that's wrong.

The generalisations of the Leave and Remain categories transcended onto the ideas associated with them. Throughout the Brexit process, Brexit and the Leave campaign have been linked to and often accused of racism (Clarke and Newman, 2017; Mintchev, 2021). This link came about for several reasons, most prominently the Leave-campaign's desire to limit immigration into the UK, as well as 'a sharp rise in xenophobic narratives, harassment and physical violence, targeting primarily East Europeans but also other ethnic minorities' following the vote (Mintchev, 2021:125). As a result, Leave-voters often faced accusations of racism, regardless of their actual opinions or behaviour. This accusation was often experienced as a form of censorship (or as Gest describes it, a 'mute button' (2016:72–3)) for what are for them legitimate opinions (Clarke and Newman, 2017; Mintchev, 2021).

I could observe this accusation, or the fear of being accused in such a way, during the fieldwork. Often participants who supported Leave were particularly careful in the way they told me or gave the impression they felt they had to justify their opinion. When I asked about Brexit (but I did not directly ask how she voted in the EU referendum), one participant paused and then told me 'You are not going to like this, but I voted Leave'. She did not apologise for her opinion, but she was clearly careful in how she formulated it. By that point in the interview, we had not spoken about my opinion on the matter, but she presumed I supported Remain. I expect this presumption was made based on my background and interests. The feeling of needing to be careful about how support for Leave was expressed, or

having to be defensive about it, was also experienced internally within the independence movement. Another participant who voted Leave said the following:

G-4-FG 11:21

P: I feel myself that the 30 odd percent who voted [Leave] in Scotland have totally been ignored by the Scottish Government, totally ignored. I couldn't say at an SNP meeting or anywhere I went to that I voted [Leave]. Nobody respected my reasons for that. Nobody respected that at all. And that's very hurtful.

The same participant who told me about the Leave-voting member of her local pro-independence group (G-2-I 01:42:24,) told me another story of a similar situation:

G-2-I 14:37

P: There was only one person in our whole SNP group at that meeting who volunteered that he was going to vote Leave, and he said it in a very defensive way. He was a taxi driver. And he said the taxi drivers are all […] going to vote Leave. And he burbled something about Turkish taxi drivers coming in, and [they] were all criminals and they were bribing the councillors to get taxi licenses and they were undercutting all the black cab drivers and that's why he was voting Leave. Although you would think, Turkey is not in the EU anyway so what has this got to do with anything? And one of the branch committee said: "Well, taxi drivers are all racist anyway." After he said that, [the taxi driver] actually […] resigned from the SNP. He says he's still in favour of independence, but he resigned from the SNP.

This excerpt is typical of debates during the run-up to the EU referendum. The participant is right to say that Turkey is not a member of the EU and therefore Brexit will not have an impact on immigration from Turkey. But the possible accession of Turkey to the European Union was a theme which was frequently mentioned by the Leave campaign (Ker-Lindsay, 2018), thereby encouraging narratives such as the one told by the taxi driver. Indeed, the accuracy of the knowledge on the EU does not undermine the legitimacy of the worries of the taxi driver. By calling the taxi driver out as racist, the group effectively dismissed his opinion. The participant was quick to add that the taxi driver still supports independence, suggesting that it had crossed her mind that after this had happened, the taxi driver (or others with similar experiences) might have changed his opinion on independence.

The debate on the EU-referendum within the independence movement therefore clearly had similarities to the debate outside it. A fracture between those who voted Leave and those who voted Remain also appeared. Because the Remain argument has been linked to the argument for Scottish independence, there have been cases of Leave-voters feeling alienated from the independence movement. Observations from the fieldwork suggest that this rift remains an unsolved issue in the independence movement, even several years after the EU referendum. This difference in opinion also points to fundamentally different understandings of what it means to be independent, Scotland's vulnerability and the need for shelter. I will elaborate further on these issues in chapter 6.

5.4.2 New questions for the independence movement

The previous section focused on how Brexit may support the argument for independence. But there are also a few reasons why Brexit may make the argument for independence more difficult. These are new questions which have arisen from the contemporary situation which the independence movement will need to provide an answer to. First, the Brexit negotiations, which took place during the time I was doing fieldwork, were seen as being difficult and chaotic. This situation put the difficulty of breaking up a political union into focus. As two participants argued:

S-FG 00:54

P4: But speaking to friends of mine that were No voters and remainers for Europe, a lot of them said they're looking at the mess of Brexit, and they're worried that if we became independent it would be even messier.

And:

G-1-I 29:11

P: One of the arguments they are going to use against us if it ever comes to another independence referendum, they're going to say: 'Look at the chaos we had [with] Brexit, leaving Europe and so on.'

To reassure the voters these participants refer to, the independence movement will need to provide a convincing plan not only for an independent Scotland, but also for how the transition to independence will be done. Additionally, the independence movement will also need to convince people that the situation in an independent Scotland would be any better

than in post-Brexit Britain, which requires an honest discourse which is reflective not only of Scotland's strengths, but also of its weaknesses. It also leads to the second question Brexit presents to the independence movement, which is explaining the difference between the British and European unions:

O-13-SFG 09:12

I can definitely see where some people are coming from: 'Why do you want independence from *there*, but you don't want independence from *there* [*spoken emphasis*]?' […] And I find that very hard to come up with an argument, strong enough to persuade them, that sort of people, other than I believe that coming out of Europe has closed our doors. And that we have become a much smaller country because of it.

There is a certain paradox to campaigning for independence from a political union, while at the same time using the wish to become a member of another political union as an argument for it. Participants frequently mentioned this issue as something which people had confronted them with. Explaining this difference can be difficult, as admitted by the participant above. He defends EU membership by arguing that 'coming out of Europe has closed our doors.' But a similar thing could be said of leaving the UK. Instead, I believe the independence movement will need to emphasize what it means by independence,[29] as one participant suggested:

G-1-I 29:11

'Why do you want to stay with them and let them run your life rather than staying with the UK letting them run your life?' Well, the way I look at it is you've got a wolf pack, which was the EU, every wolf has got its own boat, and we are there as a voluntary member. When, if, the UK leaves Europe, what we will be is the tail on a lone wolf.

Lastly, there is one pressing consequence of Brexit to the question of Scottish independence, which I was surprised to hardly encounter at all in the fieldwork: the border between Scotland and the rest of the UK (McEwen, 2018:12; Hughes, 2021:176–7). If Scotland became independent, it would share a land border with the rest of the UK. If Scotland then also

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[29] I will elaborate on this in chapter 6.

became a member of the European Union, this might lead to similar difficult situations as happened with regards to the Northern Irish border following Brexit. The border will need to be negotiated and regulated, as others have been across Europe. For those who frequently cross the border, of whom there are many, it is unlikely to remain as frictionless as it is today. Perhaps ironically, if the UK had remained in the EU and Scotland had become independent and joined the EU as a new member state, the border would have remained largely unnoticeable. To many, Great Britain would have appeared to remain intact. Thus, the Scottish independence movement is faced with reassuring people that the border between Scotland and the UK would remain open enough in case of independence. It is unclear to me why this issue was hardly discussed in the fieldwork. Perhaps its significance simply has not occurred to the movement yet, and this will change with time.

On this last issue, there are a few thoughts of future potentialities worth mentioning. First, I believe it may change the attitudes to European integration across Great Britain: if we understand European integration as an ongoing process of negotiating borders, then the presence of a border on the island of Great Britain might influence people's appreciation of its value. This happened in Northern Ireland, one of the main reasons people voted for Remain there was the possibility of reintroducing a hard border in the case of Brexit (McCann and Hainsworth, 2017). In other words, it would no longer be possible for Britain to seclude itself from European integration on an island, it would no longer be a *virgo intacta* (see p. 20). Second, if the insularization of Great Britain not only refers to its separation from mainland Europe but also to the confirmation of Britain's territory within its natural boundaries, then Scottish independence challenges this. If Scotland would become independent, the British state would share Great Britain with another state, and its political borders would no longer overlap with its natural borders. Scottish independence thus challenges an essentialist fundament of British exceptionalism. The UK would de-insularize: although it would remain on an island, it would no longer *be* an island. Instead, the island of Great Britain would contain both the United Kingdom as well as Scotland, thereby joining a surprisingly short list of islands with a national boundary within them (Baldacchino, 2013).

5.5   Conclusion

In this chapter I elaborated on how the independence movement and its members reacted to Brexit. The result of the EU referendum came as a surprise to many in the independence movement, it was described how even on the day of the referendum its importance to the

movement was dismissed. But after the result became clear, symbols of Europe became a frequent sight at pro-independence events, and references to Europe were used in pro-independence arguments. The referendum result symbolized Scottish unity as well as its difference from the rest of the UK. Despite the frustration of many with Brexit, there was also hope amongst members of the movement that it would lead to having another referendum on independence a lot sooner than first expected, and that it would convince more people to support independence. However, there are also Leave-supporters in the movement who are cautious of overemphasizing the importance of Europe to the cause of independence and feel that their opinion on Scottish participation in European integration is being ignored. Additionally, there are some consequences of Brexit which present new challenges to the independence movement. These consequences relate to argumentation, the next chapter will explore the consequences of Brexit to the everyday.

Chapter 6: Finding Euroland: experiencing European (dis)integration

The failure to understand that we are a connected society is going to have big
repercussions.

(Fieldwork participant, O-6-SFG)

For most of the time I spent working on this research, including during all the fieldwork, Brexit hadn't happened yet. It was something which was set to happen in the future, but exactly when, and what shape it would take, were uncertain until right before it actually happened. During this period, much of the discourse on Brexit was on the eventual form it would take, as well as its future consequences, instead of experiences of Brexit already happening during this liminal period. Anderson and Wilson have argued that 'since the referendum […] there has been a failure to understand the multiple, disjunctive ways, that the European Union (or the act of exiting) was felt as part of the UK's affective present' (Anderson and Wilson, 2018:292), or what they call 'everyday Brexits'. In this chapter, I will explore these experiences of Brexit in the everyday.

At its core, Brexit is a form of, or contributing factor to, European disintegration (Figus *et al.*, 2018). Although in the contemporary discourse on Europe, disintegration does not appear as frequently as integration,[30] it is something which has been present throughout European history and is likely to be a part of its future as well (Bideleux and Taylor, 1996:5). What is significant about Brexit is that it is the first clear reversal of the continuously integrating EU, which has accomplished more far-reaching integration in Europe than any other union of states on the continent (*ibid.*:4). Brexit therefore not only kick-starts a process of disintegration different from what has previously happened on the continent, it also puts those deep levels of integration into focus.

This chapter does not aim to give an overview of all the different ways the UK integrated with the EU during its membership. Instead, by means of fieldwork data I will present an overview of how the research participants experience this (dis)integration, and how it affects their perception of Europe, Scotland, and independence. For this it is useful to have a term which refers to the integrated European space which the UK is leaving. Johler has called this space Euroland, in which the local and the European directly interact with each other and, in

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[30] To give an example: a quick search found several university courses with 'European integration' in the title on offer around the continent. I could not find any on European disintegration.

some cases, overlap and become indistinguishable (Johler, 2002). I understand Euroland not as the European Union itself, instead as the product of European integration: the Europeanized lifeworld. The experience of Euroland is subjective and situational; in this chapter I will explore it from the perspectives of the fieldwork participants.

To find 'Euroland' I will be taking two approaches: those who perceive Euroland in the form of limited experiences from a context which they understand as local; and those who perceive Euroland as a fundamental and all-encompassing element of their lifeworld. This distinction is adapted from Fligstein *et al.*, who argue that those who participate in Europe are more likely to develop a European identity, whereas those who have 'essentially local experiences' are more likely to develop national identities (Fligstein, Polyakova and Sandholtz, 2012). While I understand the distinction they are trying to make, I believe it requires some elaboration. Both groups may participate with Euroland in some form, and both have 'essentially local experiences' - although the geo-political scope of the local may be larger in the case of the 'participatory' group. Additionally, a European identity may be experienced in some form by both groups, although it may be constructed differently between the groups. Still, the fieldwork extracts in this chapter will demonstrate two distinctively different experiences of Euroland, which I believe largely correspond to Fligstein *et al.* categories. Thus, I propose an alternative: as both groups experience both Euroland and the local, I made the distinction based on perspective. Those who experience Euroland from the perspective of the local, and those who experience the local from the perspective of Euroland. I will discuss experiences from both perspectives in this chapter.

Based on the perception of the consequences of Brexit on the everyday, I will also revisit the hypothesis explored in the previous chapter (see section 5.3): that Brexit would increase the support for Scottish independence. This hypothesis depends on a realization of the consequences of Brexit, or a connection being made between the consequences of Brexit and Brexit itself, which participants believe has not yet happened. But another problem emerges: the locality of Europe uncovered by Brexit highlights the dependency of the UK, and Scotland. Finding Euroland thus pushes the independence movement to elaborate on what is meant by independence and its often-used slogan: that Scotland is 'big enough' to be independent. Thus, in the final part of the chapter I will discuss the perception of Scotland's smallness and vulnerability and how it influences the understanding of independence.

6.1 Finding Euroland in the local

Throughout the interviews, a topic which was brought up frequently was European investment in local infrastructure. My questions did not ask about this in particular, but it was often mentioned when asking about what connects Scotland to Europe. The referred to investment was usually part of the European Cohesion Policy, which aims to improve the economy of the European regions and to progressively remove the economic disparity between them (European Commission, 2020a). Almost a third of the EU's 2014-2020 budget was put towards it. The funds used to support the Cohesion Policy are part of the EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESI, sometimes referred to as simply *the structural fund(s)*). The ESI consists of six separate funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the cohesion fund (CF, not to be confused with the cohesion policy), the European social fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) (European Commission, 2020c). Exactly which fund was used to support the projects the participants referred to is not always clear, but it most cases in the fieldwork it was likely to be the ERDF, the EAFRD or the EMFF.

6.1.1 'We benefit from the EU because we are a priority, not an afterthought': regional policy and the ERDF

How the ERDF is divided is based on regional indicators. During the 2014-2020 funding period, all European regions were divided into three categories depending on their GDP: developed regions (in which the GDP/head is 90% or more of the EU average), transition regions (GDP/head is between 75% and 90% of the EU average) and less developed regions (GDP/head is less than 75% of the EU average). The less developed and transition regions were eligible to more funding than the developed regions (European Commission, 2020c). Although national governments do have an influence on how the funds are invested, this system ensures that a particular amount of the overall fund is secured for less developed regions, regardless of the investment priorities of the nation state. It can therefore be understood as a direct link between the local and the supranational.
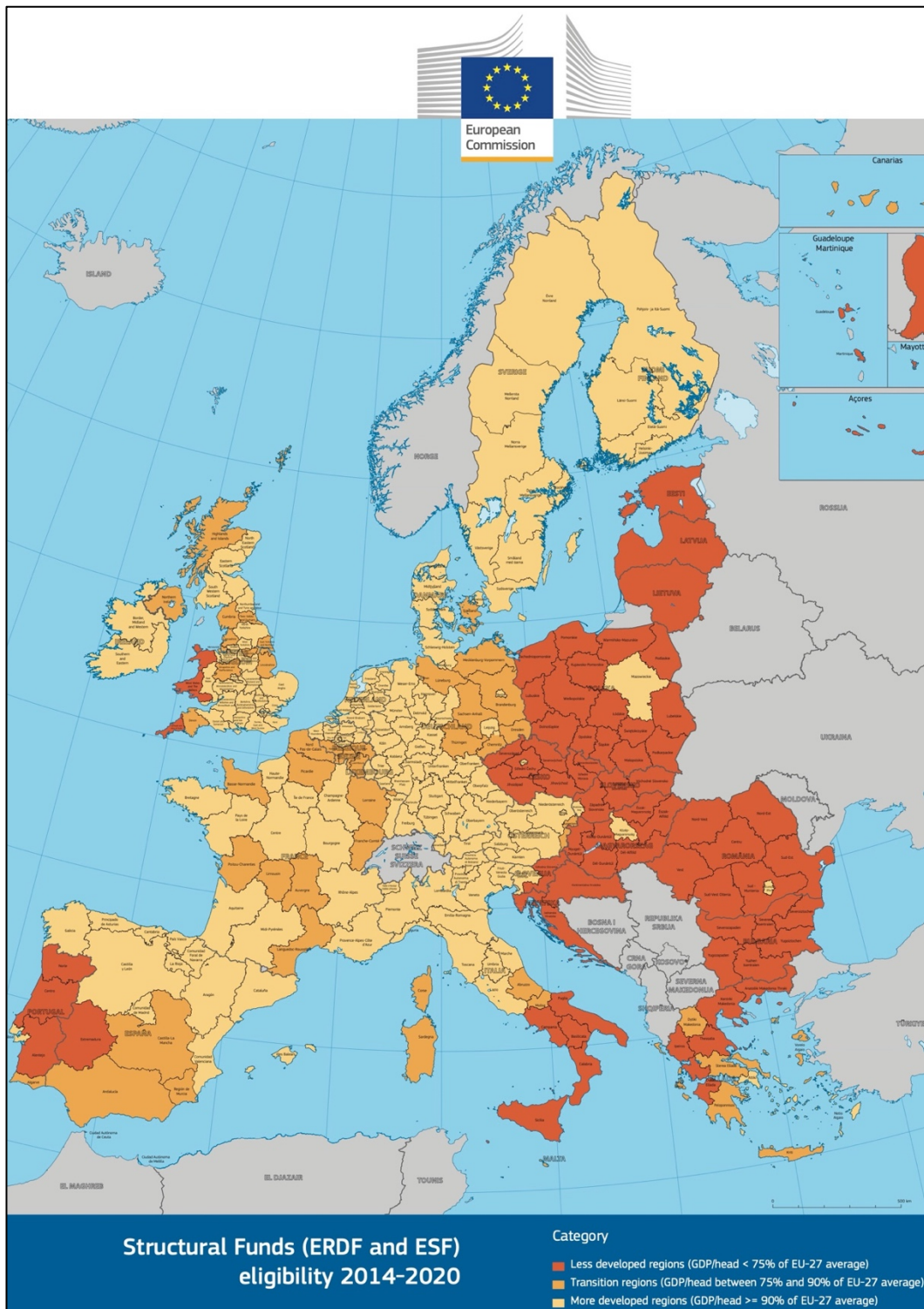
Figure 6.1: The European regions categorised by their GDP/head compared to the EU average (European Commission, 2013a).

As can be seen in figure 6.1, per the Cohesion Policy's 2014-2020 budget, most of Scotland has been categorised as a developed region. However, the Highland and Islands are a transition region, meaning projects within them were more eligible to funding than projects

elsewhere in Scotland. This was reflected in the fieldwork. Participants in Skye and Orkney (the two regions I did fieldwork within the Highlands and Islands) mentioned European funding more frequently than those in other locations, they also knew more examples of EU-funded projects. This is not surprising: anthropological EU studies have previously focused on more deprived areas exactly because EU influence is more visible there (Johler, 2002:9). That being said, EU-funding was recognised in fieldwork outside the Highlands and Islands as well, but in the context of it being elsewhere. The following comment was made during the focus group in Glasgow:

G-4-FG 33:58

P: I think we have to remember that we are part of Europe. I agree with [other participant] that there's a lot of bad stuff about the EU, and we have seen that. But I think we can't forget all it has done for us in terms of workers' rights [*other participants murmur in agreement*]. And if you go to some of the regions in Scotland, you know like up in the Highlands, there's a lot of infrastructure there, bridges and roads that have been provided by EU funding. And I'm not confident that Westminster would have provided those if the pressure had not been put on them.

The participant gives EU investment as an example of why Scotland is part of Europe, the other being the EU's contribution to workers' rights. Some people within this focus group were quite critical of the EU and questioned the benefits of EU membership. They did not disagree when this participant mentioned funding in the Highlands and Islands, but I do not think it convinced them of the European Union. It was perhaps a benefit they had not experienced themselves. The following comment was made during an interview in Edinburgh:

E-7-I 25:53

P: On Lewis we came across a stretch of completely newly done road under a big sign saying 'this has been funded by the European Union'. Which you see everywhere else in Europe. If you go to Spain the acknowledgment is there that this road has been funded by the European Union. […] You will never find that in England. There's a sort of reluctance to acknowledge anything positive coming from Europe.

In both examples the participants refer to public infrastructure projects, which are the most visible to visitors to the region. European flags are frequently found accompanying road

signs, marking that the road (or its renovation) were funded by the European Union (see figure 6.2). There are numerous other EU-funded projects in the region as well, but these are less visible to visitors.

Figure 6.2: In the Western Isles, EU-funded infrastructure is quite visible. This sign is at the start of the road to the Sleat peninsula in Skye, taken during my fieldwork there in November 2019. Photo by author.

Both participants also mentioned the role of the UK; the first participant by suggesting the UK government would not make similar investments (an opinion shared by participants throughout the fieldwork) and the second participant by suggesting the UK government would not be as willing to recognise the EU's support. Thus, already in these examples from outsiders to the regions, the investments have been incorporated into the argument for independence: the discussions on EU funding were accompanied by suggestions that the UK neglects Scotland, therefore funding needs to come from elsewhere instead.

The fieldwork location in which European funding was mentioned most frequently was Orkney. Investment from the European structural funds in Orkney has been extensive and has included 'ferries, harbours, Kirkwall Airport terminal, The Orkney College and community facilities such as the Pickaquoy centre, the Pier Arts Centre, the Skara Brae Visitor Centre and the Orkney Theatre' (Orkney Islands Council, 2018:3). Although some of these examples will be visible to tourists, such as the Skara Brae Visitor Centre, some are only visible to locals who use the particular services.

O-5-SFG 17:31

You can't go very far in Orkney without seeing those stars on a placard, saying that this was, you know, the European Development Fund. The sports centre that we use has got one of those very prominently displayed. And I think perhaps people don't realise just how much money has come into this place that keeps it going, from Europe.

The structural funds thus play a substantial role in remote communities such as Orkney, likely more than is visible to visitors. The following question is then whether these investments have influenced the European identity or the perception of Europe within these communities. Research has shown that overall, the Cohesion Policy, in particular the ERDF, contributes positively to the identification with Europe in the areas where it is implemented (Borz, Brandenburg and Mendez, 2018:22). Capello has highlighted different attributes of the European Cohesion Policy which may support the formation of a European identity. First, they are a clear and direct involvement of the EU in citizens' everyday lives. Second, because the Cohesion Policy forms a large part of the overall budget of the EU, it is able to make a visible impact. Third, because investments are made equally across European nations and regions on a per-need basis, they represent a sense of pan-European solidarity. Fourth, by providing monetary investment, the policy outcomes are tangible to the receiving communities. Fifth, the Cohesion Policies are catered to solve local needs (when implemented correctly). Thus, the EU contributes directly to solving local projects. Finally, the bottom-up nature of their design means decisions on investments are done closely to where they are needed and implemented (Capello, 2018:496–7).

However, it cannot be assumed that structural funds will necessarily result in an increased appreciation of and identification with Europe. Research has indicated that this is also influenced by local political awareness, the local political culture, funding decisions and decision structure and the already present perception of Europe and the European Union (Chalmers and Dellmuth, 2015; Capello and Perucca, 2017; Capello, 2018). In other words, the economic benefits of EU membership influence the local narratives of Europe but are not the sole contributors to it.

The observations I made during the fieldwork are in line with this. I will focus on two perspectives of EU funding from two different participants with quite varying opinions on EU-membership. The first was from a younger participant who was positive about European

integration. Although he identifies as Scottish first, he also identifies as being European. The second participant was older and quite sceptical about the EU. He identified as Orcadian first and Scottish second. He did not identify as European and questioned the concept of European identity in its entirety. Concerning EU funding, the first participant said the following:

O-10-SFG 19:38

P1: Europe is set up so that it prioritises the places at the edge, the peripheral. You know, some random wee bit at the edge of Malta needs some funding for a bridge and a pontoon, [or] something in Orkney. […] You know you take the big governments at the heart of Europe, the big powerhouses of finance and you take the money out of them, and that money is spread evenly. Because that's how it's set up […], so everyone's an equal. I think the UK government will do the exact opposite. […] What'll happen is the money will be centred on London, HS2 and big infrastructure projects in England. And Orkney is going to be the last thing, the last place that somebody thinks about. In terms of [EU] values, *in Orkney we benefit from the EU because we are a priority, not an afterthought* [emphasis added].

I found the final sentence of this statement (emphasized) to be quite powerful. The participant recognises the benefits of the EU's structure to Orkney. In fact, he links it to EU values, and indeed it could be argued that the way in which structural funds are divided across the continent are a practical example of the 'protection of minorities' value, which I will discuss further in the next chapter. Although the participant refers to being a priority, the essence of his statement means equality between remote regions and those which are not. Funding to local infrastructure can thus support a sense of belonging to Europe by confirming an equality between regions. The second participant mentioned EU funding in a different tone:

O-2-SFG 40:09

P1: I don't think a lot of Orcadians appreciate… when you go back to what was said earlier. Before really that European aid came in, Orkney just didn't matter to the UK government. The European community has… you see it when you go around […]. There's stickers up saying this has been European funded or aided. And I think folk now are beginning to [ask]: "Well, who's going to replace that?"

P2: Did people in Orkney always realise that they were being helped a lot by Europe or…

P1: Not as much as they should have done.

P2: They just start to realise it now it's being withdrawn?

P1: Well, I'm not even sure that they understand it totally at the moment. They will in time, because you know, ferries are now funded even by the European Union. There's been so much aided.

Similar to the previous excerpt, this participant also notes the lack of UK support for Orkney. The participant clearly also has an awareness of how substantial EU funding has been in the region, noting that even ferries, of course a crucial part of the infrastructure in Orkney, are funded by the EU. But what really caught my attention in this interview was the use of the word 'aid'. It has a different connotation to it than funding. State funding suggests an internal circulation of money, a reinvestment of citizens' paid taxes. Aid, on the other hand, indicates an external fund, which is given because of a necessity for help. MacLachlan *et al.* write that the term aid suggests there is a power relationship (and therefore a relationship in which one side is dominant) between the giver and the receiver (MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe, 2010:3). It also suggests a dependency from the receiver towards the giver, and that dependency might influence identity: 'Aid systems can work to undermine [a strong sense of identity]. They can foster dependency, sapping individuals' confidence in who they are and what they stand for, their uniqueness. Every gift, it seems, takes something away' (*ibid.*:80). Whether or not the region in question is actually dependent on the giver of the funds then loses its relevance, the mere perception of dependency might influence identities.

If European funding is perceived as external aid, this might influence the perception of the symbols which accompany it as well. For example, European flags, as referred to positively in the interview earlier in this section (E-7-I 25:53, see p. 139), may also not be perceived in a positive light, instead becoming a symbol of a local government's failure or an external government undermining a local government (MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe (2010):115). To an observer from this perspective, aid may thus confirm a region's dependency as well as the undermining of the regions authorities and might therefore not be compatible with a person's desire for independence. Indeed, the older participant gave me the impression that while he appreciated the financial support from Europe, he would prefer it if the dependency on external aid was not there at all.

By viewing the difference between funding and aid as a difference between internal and external money, it becomes a difference between belonging (the state takes cares of its citizens) and non-belonging (the state/region receives help at the benevolence of others). Financial contributions from the European Union were thus interpreted from two very different perspectives: the perspective of those who see themselves as being part of the European Union, for whom European funding is a reinvestment of their contribution to the European project, and the perspective of those who see the European Union as an external body, which aids regions in need. This is reflected in how both participants view Orkney's relationship to Europe: the younger participant as a relationship in which Orkney is an equal, the older participant as a power relationship in which Orkney is a beneficiary.

6.1.2 'Those sectors will be crippled potentially': farming, fishing, and the NHS

In research on the post-Brexit lived experiences of farmers across the UK, Maye *et al.* argued there were 4 different themes of Brexit consequences: finance and subsidies, mainly focusing on the removal of CAP funding; trade and production, how changing trade-agreements with European and other states will affect agriculture; farm regulation, pertaining to the relaxation of farming rules once the UK has left the EU; and migrant labour and the labour gap, focusing on the post-Brexit lack of foreign workers supporting UK agriculture (Maye *et al.*, 2018:272–5). Although here applied to farming, the fieldwork in this section will demonstrate that these four themes, subsidies, regulation, trade agreements and workforce, can be applied to other industries as well and provide a useful guideline when analysing them.

6.1.2.1 Farming

The potential economic impact of Brexit goes beyond community facilities and local infrastructure no longer receiving funds via the Cohesion Policy. Particular industries will be affected as well, one of those being agriculture. Via the Common Agricultural Policy (henceforth CAP), the European Union invests substantial amounts in European farming. In 2018, €58.82 billion was subsidised by the CAP across Europe (European Commission, 2020b). In Scotland, the CAP invested over £3.3 billion during the funding period 2014-2020 (The Scottish Government, 2020). A House of Commons report from 2018 claims that while the UK was an EU member, 50-80% of its farmers' income was provided by CAP subsidies (Downing and Coe, 2018:3). Scottish farmers are more reliant on these subsidies than English farmers because of the more challenging farming conditions in Scotland (Smith and Marks,

2017:53). As agriculture is a large industry in Orkney, the CAP was frequently mentioned in the interviews:

O-1-SFG 18:04

Q: How did people in Orkney react to Brexit?

P: They were pissed off in the extreme. [*other participants murmur in agreement*] Because all of remote Scotland has received massive injections of EU funding over the years. […] I can't believe it, I mean I work in two sectors, I work in tourism, that's my main job, and I also have a small farm. So, both those sectors will be crippled potentially by the departure. Tourism because we simply will not be able to get the hospitality staff in the sector, which are virtually run across Scotland by European staff, and secondly the farming situation. I mean, you would not trust the UK Government to support farming quite the same way that the European Union has, and I don't think nihilism is a good word because I don't think that Orkney farmers and that Scottish farmers have clocked this. They will soon.

This participant, as well as several others I spoke to during my fieldwork in Orkney, were of the opinion that the majority of farmers had not realised yet how Brexit would affect them. Thus, discussions on this topic often mentioned the frustration of communicating the potential effects of Brexit. One participant, who is a particularly active member of Yes Orkney, told of when she attended a meeting of the National Farmers Union in Orkney:

O-8-SFG 42:14

P1: The farmers were completely blinkered about what would happen [after Brexit]. They had no knowledge at all. And we would say what we had found out about what will happen if you leave Europe, and the subsidies they are getting just now. […] They just weren't listening; it was like it was not going to happen. They lacked any knowledge about their own industry. They didn't understand how tariffs worked…

P2: And we at Yes Orkney did a meeting especially for farmers. Alan Ross came up to speak. [The farmers] didn't come!

That Yes Orkney organised a meeting specially to discuss the consequences of Brexit to local farming demonstrates that they thought these consequences might result in more farmers supporting Yes. Within such a meeting, Scotland's vulnerability and dependency on external

support is used to argue for independence. This approach might seem contradictory but is used to demonstrate the argument that the UK does not (or will not) provide this support in the same way the EU did - the EU is portrayed to care about Scotland, or more crucially, the UK is portrayed as not caring about Scotland.

Not all participants believed the farming community was unaware of the consequences of Brexit. While in the extract above P1 suggests that farmers had 'no knowledge at all' on the issue, another participant in the same group continued with a more elaborate view:

> **O-8-SFG 42:14 (continued)**
>
> P3: Recently I have been doing various things in the farming community, and I have spoken to them one-on-one, just privately. [And I have asked them]: how is Brexit going to affect you? And they're actually really worried, because the whole industry is actually not sustainable without handouts from the government. […] That money was really coming from Europe, getting diverted through various Westminster governments into farming, and that's going to disappear. They are now aware of that. […] They are now waking up to the fact that a lot of them might be out of business because they just can't afford it.
>
> P1: The small farm will not be able to survive [Brexit].

In this extract, the participant suggests that having 'one-on-one', 'private' conversations with farmers has provided him with a deeper insight into how they are thinking about Brexit. This might well be true: other extracts from the fieldwork have suggested that people in small communities do not like discussing their political opinion publicly, or that there was a 'sectoral' vote in the EU referendum, which might mean people are afraid of discussing their opinion if they fear it differs from others in the industry. Further, the participants say farmers do worry about the consequences of Brexit but adds that 'they are *now* aware of that' and that 'they are *now* waking up to the fact' (emphasis added), suggesting that this awareness has grown recently, presumably during the Brexit negotiations.

The participant concludes that many farms might lose their business after Brexit, which another participant then elaborates on by saying that in particular small farms will not be able to survive. Based on the figures noted at the start of this section (see p. 144), that does not seem unrealistic: considering the high dependency on external funding (up to 80% (Downing and Coe, 2018:3)), those with a smaller business are at particular risk of folding when that

funding stops. As demonstrated in these extracts, when the consequences of Brexit for farming were discussed, it was usually done so with reference to the removal of funding. The focus on subsidies in the fieldwork in Orkney may be exactly because Orcadian farms are relatively small, and therefore particularly vulnerable to removal of funding. But I did come across other themes in the context of other industries and services, in particular fishing.

6.1.2.2 Fishing

EU fishing regulation, in particular the CFP has been a contentious issue throughout the Brexit debate. The CFP has since long been criticised for being managed top-down by people who do not understand fishers' needs, for threatening fishers' livelihoods and for damaging the environment (Carpenter, 2017). Further grievances from UK fishers were the presence of EU fishers in British waters (Billiet, 2019:612), and the amount of catches from within British waters being landed in EU harbours: 'in 2014 over two thirds (68%) of fish and shellfish by weight, and over half (54%) by value, landed from within the UK EEZ (exclusive economic zone) was taken by non-UK boats from the rest of the EU, Norway or the Faeroes' (Phillipson and Symes, 2018:169). During the run up to the EU referendum, the issue of fishing rights was also entangled with (perceptions of) sovereignty, as demonstrated by one of the Leave campaign's slogans: 'reclaiming our waters'. At the time of writing, fishing rights remain an unresolved issue within the Brexit debate and is proving to be extremely difficult to solve (van Rijn and Wakefield, 2020).

Regarding the heated context which surrounds it, it is surprising that fisheries actually do not form a large part of the British economy at all. In 2019, there were a total of 12,043 fishers in the UK, and 4,847 in Scotland (Marine Management Organisation and National Statistics, 2020), and in 2016, fisheries contributed 0.04% to the UK's GDP. Thus, within the Brexit debate the importance of fishing 'punched above its weight' (Billiet, 2019). In politics however, fishing, and the romantic ideal which accompanies it, has a lot more value. As Sir Con O'Neill, the UK's chief negotiator during the accession talks with the European community, noted in 1980 already that fisheries were 'economic peanuts but political dynamite' (Rankin, 2020). This has been apparent to me when talking to people about the EU, both within and outside the context of this research. I have found that the CFP is one of the recurring criticisms many have of the EU. I was therefore not surprised when I encountered it in the fieldwork, for example:

G-1-I 1:01:06

P: [In an independent Scotland] we could protect our seas, do something different than the Common Fisheries Policy, that's one of my objections to the EU I'm afraid, and I really don't like that, and I'm not that keen on the Common Agricultural Policy. But it would be possible to change those, I hope, I think, even in the context of being a member state of the EU.

This participant is not involved with the fishing industry herself, thus I was expecting this criticism to be even more present in fieldwork in Orkney, the only location I did research in with a particular maritime community. Also, there participants spoke of the local frustrations with the CFP:

O-13-SFG 12:53

P: I know some fisher people who are frustrated with the stock situation. They speak very aggressively about Europe.

However, this was not the only opinion on fishing and EU-membership I came across in Orkney. I was quickly made aware that the majority of fishers in Orkney are inshore fishers: small-scale fishers who often fish for species which the quotas of the CFP do not apply to (Billiet, 2019:616–7), such as shellfish.

O-5-SFG 21:41

P: The people who are strongly European, who I know, are the ones in the shellfish [industry]. You know, who have very strong personal and working relationships [with others in Europe].

It was made clear to me that the shellfish catches are sold in France and Spain, and need to reach these countries alive for the catches to retain their value:

O-1-SFG 23:00

P: [The crab catches] get shipped live to Spain and need to arrive there [alive] the next day. And this is now all in jeopardy. So, I think the shell-fishers… the one I speak to when I walk the dog, he's certainly alert of the situation and not happy with it.

The importance of these trade routes running smoothly was made clear by this and other participants. The shellfish caught by the Orcadian fishers is transported to mainland Europe (in particular Spain), where they need to arrive alive to be of value (Billiet, 2019:616–7). After Brexit the trade routes will still exist but will no longer be able to provide frictionless trade: import checks into the common market will delay transit. Even if the route from Orkney to the mainland European markets is delayed by a few hours, the catch might no longer survive the trip, and will lose its value.

Note that for this participant, what makes the shell-fishers European are their 'strong personal and working relationships' with Europe. We could understand this as their participation in 'Transit Europe' (Johler, 2002:11). This is the Europe which is constantly moving, through trade routes (as in this case), but also commuter and labour movements, etc. As Schlögel writes: 'Europe grows on the routes used by the haulage contractors reconnecting [it]' (Schlögel, 2002, in Johler, 2002:11). As is made clear by this example, there are livelihoods which depend on access to Transit Europe. For them, Brexit forms a serious challenge.

I soon realised that the fishing issue is not as simple as it is portrayed in the media, or indeed by the Leave-campaign. As with farming, a difference emerges between small- and large-scale fisheries. When I asked participants in Orkney about frustration with the CFP and quotas, they told me that those concerns mainly came from open-sea fishers, and that these fisheries were controlled by only a handful of wealthy families:

O-9-SFG 13:51

Q: What do you think has been causing the recent change in opinion on independence [in Orkney]?

P1: [The media] make a great deal of fuss about fishing. The fishing that they're talking about is five families with big trawlers, and that's not the kind of fishing that's here in Orkney. The kind of fishing that's mainly here in Orkney is inshore fishing, is shellfish. Ruined, right, ruined because these are live catches. They have to be live on the point of delivery.

I later found these participants to be referring to the results of an investigation by Greenpeace, which found that 'more than two-thirds of the UK's fishing quota is controlled by just 25 businesses' (Greenpeace, 2018). Additionally, several of these businesses have been connected to dubious practices: '13 of the top 25 quota holders have directors,

shareholders, or vessel partners who were convicted of offences in Scotland's £63m "black fish" scam – a huge, sophisticated fraud that saw trawlermen and fish processors working together to evade quota limits and land 170,000 tonnes of undeclared herring and mackerel' (*ibid.*). The participants in Orkney gave me the impression they felt their fishers' needs were underrepresented in a narrative which was controlled by these businesses.

The issue of restricted access to the European market was the most prominent when discussing fishing in Orkney. But participants also mentioned the importance of EU citizens to supporting the local fishing industry, for example:

O-3-SFG 21:54

P1: I do think we need *some* people coming in [*spoken emphasis*]. There has got to be a line drawn to how many, you can't just drag everybody in. But I know a friend that works at the fish farm, he said that without the Polish workers, they would not work. Because they could not get locals to do it, they don't want to.

And:

O-5-SFG 22:45

P1: In Westray where there's a crab processing factory, a lot of the people there are Polish. We moved to Westray 30 years ago, you'd never see a Polish person even on the island, let alone working in the crab factory.

Beside Polish workers, another participant also mentioned a significant number of Spanish workers at a fish factory in Stromness. From these statements we learn that the influx of foreign workers has been recent - as the participant says, 30 years ago, it would be rare to meet a Pole in Westray. In that time, these people have taken up key functions in the local industry, functions which the locals no longer want to do. This leads to the question of whether these workers will stay following Brexit, whether new migrant workers would take their place and if not, whether locals would take their place. The alternatives seem uncertain, and there appears to be an awareness of this: in O-3-SFG (above), the participant who mentions that immigration should be limited, then uses the example of the fish farm to justify why it should not be cut off completely.

Clearly, fishing in the context of Brexit is an issue with several different, and at times opposing, storylines deserving of their own investigative research, which goes beyond the

aim of this thesis. I do have a few concluding thoughts, however: first, as with farmers, even a quick look at the situation suggests that small fisheries are more vulnerable to Brexit than large fisheries. This opposes the Leave-campaign's narrative of small domestic British fishers benefiting from Brexit (Davies, 2020). Second, the issue of fish in the UK/European discourse has taken on nationalist and exceptionalist attributes: 'reclaiming *our* waters!' (Millar, 2018), 'save *Britain's* fish' (Bradley, 2020 see figure 6.3), etc. These fitted well with the Leave-campaign's discourse and were thus given disproportionate attention. Third, the focus on the CFP meant that only one aspect of the EU-membership was discussed. As a result, the debate seems to have largely ignored the fact that EU citizens contribute to the fishing industry and that the UK exports much of its catch, and that EU-membership provided easy access to a market interested in buying it. As a result, an EU-sceptic member of the independence movement gave the CFP as an example of the EU's wrongs (G-1-I 1:01:06, see p. 148), but did not mention the plight of inshore fishers.

Figure 6.3: A banner of the pro-Leave group Fishing for Leave mentions 'Britain's' fish (Bradley, 2020).

To clarify, I am not trying to justify the CFP, or argue for any particular stance in this debate. I agree with Carpenter (2017) that the CFP has been organised by people who appear to be removed from fishers and have little understanding of their needs. But from the quick dip into the topic during my fieldwork, it appears to me that some of the critics of the EU in the context of fishing are also largely unaware of fishers' multiple and various needs. These

multiple needs got lost in the narrative, both to those observing the narrative from an external position, but also to those within the fishing sector. As one participant said:

O-6-SFG 17:35

P: I think what happened was that people were sectorally kind of invited to support [Brexit] or otherwise. Because I [work in][31] the fishing industry, sectorally it was pro-Brexit, although even that wasn't simple.

In other words, because the narrative that the whole fishing industry was pro-Brexit was so pertinent, other views on the matter became underrepresented.

6.1.2.3 The NHS

Much like fishing, the NHS was a 'hot topic' during the EU referendum debate. This interest in the NHS is not limited to the particular debate on the UK's EU-membership but has always played an important role in British politics and has been referred to as 'the Holy Grail of British politics' (Kettell and Kerr, 2021). The role of the NHS in the narrative surrounding Brexit were made particularly clear in the now infamous slogan the Leave campaign put on the side of a big red bus: 'We send the EU **£350 million** a week. Let's fund our NHS instead. Vote Leave' [*emphasis in original*] (Asthana, 2017). The statement effectively links the vulnerability of the NHS to the UK's EU membership. It has been widely disputed (*ibid*.), but its message stuck and is now often referred to in debates on Brexit.

Within the fieldwork the importance of the NHS was noticeable as well. When it was mentioned, it was generally also in the context of the NHS being affected by Brexit. But the narrative was different from that in the Leave campaign. Here, the focus was on how the NHS is reliant on foreign workers, and those may leave after Brexit:

E-2-I 08:25

Q: Why is EU membership important for Scotland?

P: Oh, where do I start? We need immigration, badly. That's an established fact, right. We are losing population. We badly need people: skilled and unskilled. You only have to look at the NHS to see the number of skilled workers from the EU, [working] in the NHS.

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[31] Changed to ensure anonymity.

Note that the participant gives migrant workers as a reason why *Scotland* needs to be an EU-member, but the issue of migrant workers supporting the NHS is relevant across the UK (Appleby and Dayan, 2018). But Scotland's overall small population perhaps makes the issue more visible. This was particularly the case in Orkney, where a participant who worked at the local NHS told me the following:

O-4-SFG 22:21

P: In Orkney, we do not have Scottish or English consultants, there is not one, except our anaesthetist. All our surgeons are Hungarian, Polish, German; and our medical consultants are, we've got a couple from India, we've got one that's lived in England but he's originally from Denmark, and then another one that is [from the] Republic of Ireland.

Once more, it is the small communities in which the effects of Brexit are most visible. There, when a crucial part of the system, be it an industry, service, or something else, is removed there are few alternatives, or none at all. Such testaments put the 'Britishness' of the NHS into question - if it is reliant on migrant workers, many of whom are EU citizens, can it then really be understood as a completely British institution?

6.1.3   The European local: trans-national identity

The stories explored so far are experiences of Europe within the local, whereby in this case the local is situated within Scotland. These are stories of how the relationship with Europe is felt in local contexts which at first might not have been experienced as European. Thus, the perception of Europe is embedded in local experiences (Scalise, 2015). What has become clear to me throughout the fieldwork is the large variety of ways in which people believe they will be affected by Brexit. All of these different perspectives are individual interactions with Europe, some made via funds, others via laws and trading regulations. Some have clearly benefited from EU membership, others less so. When seen from this perspective, the meaning of Europe becomes multidimensional: a 'plurality of ways of belonging' which 'is neither comprehensive nor uniform, primal nor changeless, but nonetheless real' (Geertz, 2001:163). Returning to Eder's models, we can understand this as a trans-national formation of European identity. Individual interactions between the local and 'Europe' (either representations of Europe as a whole, such as the EU, or other European localities, such as interactions with EU

nationals) create narrative networks in which European identities take shape (Eder, 2009:441–2).
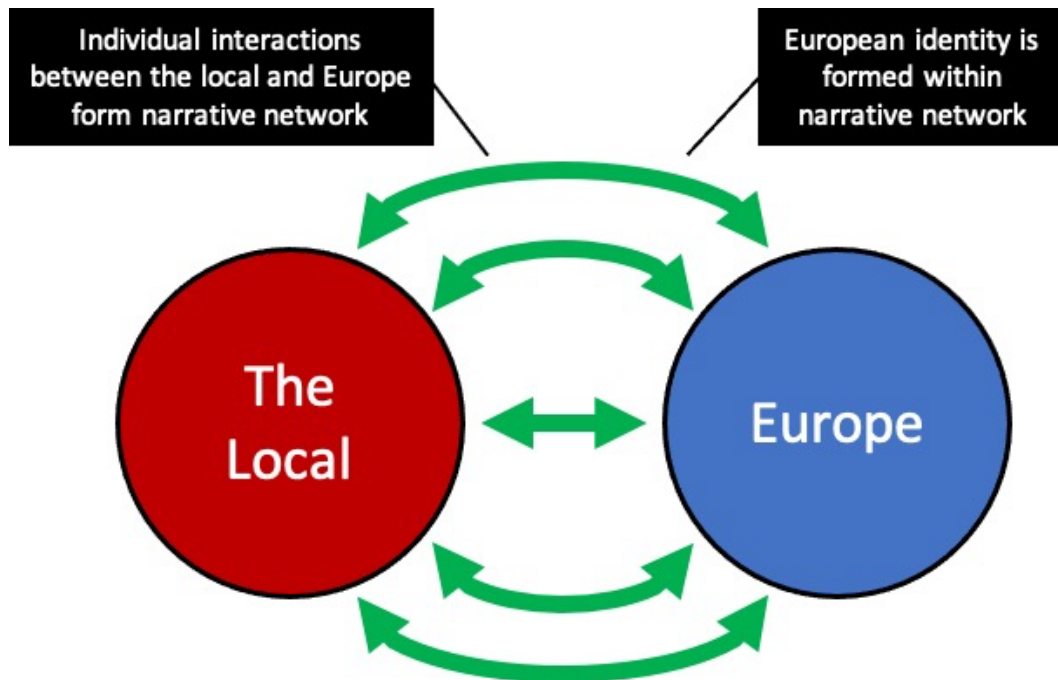
Figure 6.4: Visual representation of Eder's transnational identity (Eder, 2009:441-2). European identities are formed within individual interactions between the local and 'Europe' (either representations of Europe as a whole, such as the EU, or other European localities, such as EU nationals).

This results in a collective identity in which different stories of Europe exist parallel to each other. If this multidimensional character of collective identity is ignored, and one fixed understanding of the collective identity is promoted, this will eventually lead to tension between the different experiences of the identity (*ibid.*:441-2). This seems to have happened during the Brexit debate, where being European, British, or Scottish (or other identities, including those based on professions) was pigeonholed into one or a limited number of narratives about Europe, leaving little space to elaborate on personal conditions.

Within the fieldwork, no participant tried to argue that their personal experience of Europe was the only 'real' experience of Europe. Nevertheless, many of the participants were unaware of or unsure about how others might be affected by Brexit, and many based their awareness of this on what they had heard in the community or in the media, which was not always representative of others' experiences. This was particularly apparent with the fisheries, whereby the effect of Brexit on Orcadian shellfisheries will be substantially

different from the media's representations of fisheries and Brexit. One participant who works in the fisheries sector elaborated further on this:

O-6-SFG 17:35

P: We all live in a connected community, you know, if we have a Polish plumber or an Italian barista or a Latvian person in an old people's home. That's all part of the network, it's one thing. Doesn't matter if you know there's going to be a few tonnes more fish for somebody if you have nobody to look after your mum in her old people's home. So, the failure to understand that we're a connected society is going to have big repercussions.

Later during the same small focus group, the other participant said:

O-6-SFG 21:12

P2: If the European money was not to continue to come in here, then we would lose key industries. A good example of course is Stromness, you know EMEC [the European Marine Energy Centre] would be under threat, the University of the Highlands and Islands would be under threat, if the farming subsidies didn't come and farming was to start… not collapsing but if fewer and fewer people were farming in this community. What would the consequences of that be for our communities? Well, why [would we still have] a doctor, and a pharmacy and a nurse in Dounby? The farms get fewer in number and bigger. And then you don't need shops, you don't need a pharmacy, you don't need a doctor. And then the teachers would not be required because the bairns would all be moving away or what have ye. And slowly but surely you would see our society changing.

This larger, ecological view of the community was quite rare in the fieldwork. That being said, I believe there is growing awareness of it. Ironically, it is the disruption Brexit has or will cause which now connects all these narratives. This disruption will be negligible for some, annoying for others, and damaging for others still (see figure 6.5). By halting certain experiences which were perceived as local, Brexit emphasizes the connection between the local and Europe.
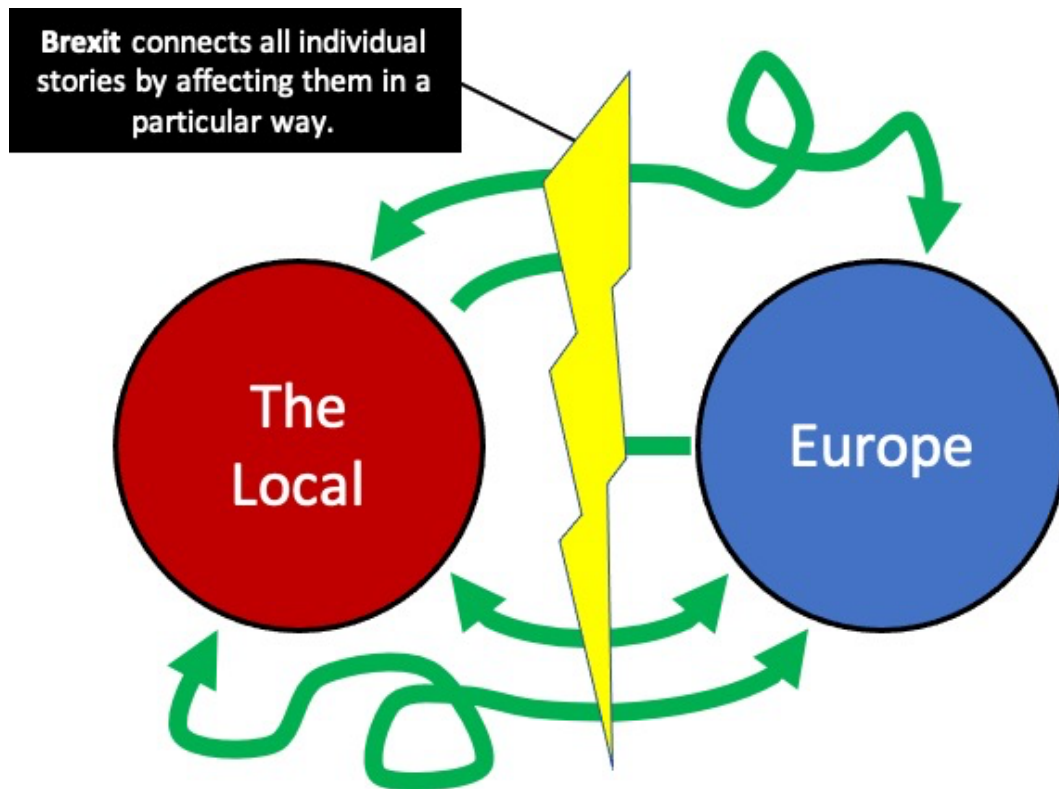
Figure 6.5: Brexit connects individual stories of Europe, in some cases by disruption.

This trans-national narrative structure allows us to better understand the perception of Europe from within the local, and how a European identity may be formed within it. The next section will explore this connection from the other side: the perception of the local from within Europe.

6.2   Finding the local in Euroland

Whereas the trans-national experiences of Euroland discussed in the previous section were often limited experiences within the local, extracts presented in this section discuss more conscious feelings of belonging to Euroland. These are stories from people for whom European integration plays a crucial part in sustaining their lifeworld, or who actively seek out and use the possibilities European integration offers them. Disintegration, then, poses a serious challenge to the continuation of the everyday.

6.2.1   *'They're redefining us as something worthless': EU citizens and Brexit*

A theme of Brexit in the everyday which was recurring in the fieldwork was the loss of freedom of movement. This was already touched upon in the previous section: the

interruption of trade routes threatening local businesses and local services such as the NHS becoming vulnerable because key workers might leave. Those were in the context of how the end of freedom of movement would affect businesses and services, but there is also a very human side to these stories: the loss of community and family members, or the fear of being unsure whether one is allowed to remain in the country. I will explore these perspectives in this section.

The idea that EU citizens might leave after Brexit is based on two possible scenarios, which are closely related: that EU citizens lose the right to stay, or that they no longer want to stay. The EU citizens I refer to in this research are those who have EU, EEA or Swiss nationality but do not have British nationality. As a result of the freedom of movement within the European Union, they were able to resettle in the UK without having to apply for any form of residency permit. Since the EU referendum, these rights have been upturned and EU nationals have experienced a 'dramatic loss of rights' (Mindus, 2017:29). Exactly what this 'loss of rights' entails remained unclear for a long period following the EU referendum. Out of this uncertainty grew fear, which I encountered several times when talking to EU nationals. During an early interview (held in 2018) with an EU citizen, I was told the following:

E-4-I 08:20

P: There was [a] woman from Germany, who's been living in Scotland for several years. She said that since the referendum, she can't sleep, she has to take sleeping pills, and you hear these stories all around.

I asked the participant whether she could elaborate on the stories she mentions, to which she replied:

E-4-I 09:01

P: Like, for example, I haven't registered with GP's or dentists for a couple of years now, because I heard that they screen […] the NHS information. […] Most of the horrible things you hear [about] happened in England, but it happens here too because this is the Home Office. There was a woman and they wanted to deport her, she was not an EU national, she came from somewhere else. And she was pregnant and in a really serious condition. So […] she was in danger and her child too. […] And at the hospital she didn't get treatment because they had that information from the Home

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Office that they would deport her and that she shouldn't get any free treatment anymore, she would have to pay. So, for weeks this woman was in a serious condition, and they didn't treat her until the GP's finally said, you know, it's such a serious situation, we just do it.

The assumption which is made here is that because the Home Office has treated foreign nationals in a particularly bad way, it may start to treat EU nationals in a similar fashion after Brexit when the EU rights that distinguish EU nationals from other foreign nationals disappear. The uncertainty of the situation was thus compounded by the stories of what the Home Office was capable of doing in a worst-case scenario.

It took until 2019 for the Home Office to unveil the scheme to register EU citizens, and to confirm the protection of their residency rights. The purpose of the EU settlement scheme (henceforth EUSS) is to register all EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK at the time of Brexit, and depending on their application, to provide them with a right to remain in the country. Based on the amount of time they had been living in the UK at the time of the application, applicants were awarded *settled status* or *pre-settled status*. If a settled status was awarded, the applicant may live in the UK indefinitely. If the applicant was awarded pre-settled status, they may remain in the UK up to 5 years, after which they may apply for settled status. The application may also be refused, in the rare case the applicant is not deemed to be 'eligible' or 'suitable', for example if the applicant has a serious criminal record (Home Office, 2021b). As of 30 June 2021, there have been a total of 5.45 million concluded EUSS applications, of which 291,200 were made from Scotland. UK-wide, 52% were awarded settled status, 43% pre-settled status, 2% were refused, and another 2% were withdrawn, void or invalid (Home Office, 2021a).

The rights the EUSS offers are not equivalent to the rights offered by EU citizenship within the EU. Without getting into the legal details of (pre-)settled status, there is the simple difference that settled status needs to be applied for, it is not a set of rights which is automatically given with citizenship. It may also be removed, for example if the applicant leaves the UK for a particular time[32] (the3million, 2021). Additionally, no physical proof of (pre-)settled status was given to those awarded it, the confirmation happened entirely in the digital domain (the3million, 2020). In other words, no tangible proof of rights of residence

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[32] 2 years for pre-settled status, 5 years for settled status.

were given, no official document which could be locked away in a safe place. Symbolically, the rights were thus only safeguarded by the administrative systems of the UK government. As already demonstrated in the fieldwork extract above (E-4-I, see p. 157) and again in others below, the Home Office simply is not trusted. Therefore, the launch of the EUSS did not completely dissipate the fear surrounding the situation before it was introduced. By the time I did fieldwork in Orkney, the EUSS had been running for a year. But, similarly to the interview above (E-4-I), uncertainty and fear were clearly still expressed by an EU citizen participating in the fieldwork:

O-12-SFG 22:22

P2: I'm a bit scared to speak at public meetings because we don't trust the Home Office. I don't know if you've heard the latest thing that's just happened. I'm in a group of EU citizens online and one of the other families […]: EU mother, British father and they wanted the passports for their children extended. And by accident [the] passports were returned and one of the passports had a note attached to it: 'one foreign parent'.

P3: Jesus.

P2: So, we've now found out that apparently the Home Office has lists of children, of UK citizens, with one foreign parent. And we think that the reason for that is that they're changing the law. […] You can lose your British citizenship if you have a foreign parent.

P1: Really?

P2: Yeah.

P3: Ah so if you do something bad here, they can [send you back] to wherever you come from?

P2: They're doing that to non-EU citizens already.

P3: Yeah.

P2: Now they're apparently establishing lists of those 'bastard children'.

P1: [*shocked*] Shit…

P2: So, they can get rid of them if anything should happen. And I told my son yesterday: 'do you know that you're a second-class UK citizen?'

This excerpt is from a focus group in which the other participants were British citizens. When the EU national participant was telling these stories, the other participants were visibly surprised and uncomfortable to hear them. When the British participants spoke about EU nationals, it was often about how they filled important roles in the community and how their departure would be detrimental. It was also mentioned that they did not want Scotland to appear to be unwelcoming to foreigners (O-10-SFG, see p. 163). But details of how the new immigration rules affected EU nationals were usually limited to those who felt threatened by them. Later in the same focus group, the participant also compared the current rights of EU citizens to those of other foreign nationals:

O-12-SFG 37:11

P2: I'm so glad I'm in Scotland. I feel safe in Scotland. But the abuse EU citizens are now experiencing in England is just unbelievable. And I have to say for the first time in my life I'm getting a very small, a very, very small idea, of what it must have been like to be Jewish in Germany in the 1930s. […] Just to give you an example: one of the health boards in England after Brexit. When you fill in forms, who you are, they changed it from EU citizen to EU economic migrant. You have no other option anymore, but to tick that box. […] *It's not an insult in the sense that I feel superior to economic migrants. What they're doing is they're redefining us as something worthless* [emphasis added]. And it doesn't matter where you've come from, the fact that you suddenly…

P1: Have a value attached to you, an economic value attached.

P2: Yes, that's exactly it. You're only worth whatever you produce. […] When they first introduced [the] rules for what they now call settled status, as a carer you have no value. I would not have qualified, and I would have had to leave the UK and leave my disabled daughter behind.

Although it might seem extreme, this was not the first time I had heard the comparison between the situation of EU citizens in the UK post Brexit and the treatment of Jews in Germany in the 1930s. A family member who is an EU national living in the UK told me that the problem with the settled status scheme is not that they have to register; indeed, it is

common in other EU states to have to register with the local council; but that only a particular group of people need to register, in this case foreign nationals. When applied in a limited manner like this, registration becomes a form of official inequality.

From a personal perspective, I found these moments in the fieldwork to be quite difficult. My first reaction to many of these stories, such as the comparison to the Holocaust in the previous excerpt, was to think that they were a bit extreme or unrealistic. But this reaction is a result of the privileged position I am in: a dual-national with both British and EU nationality. Whatever the outcome is of this situation, it will most likely not apply to me personally. If it did apply to me, I would probably also consider the worst-case scenario, even if it seemed unrealistic. Indeed, whether such stories are true or realistic is not relevant here. The point is that the uncertain situation caused by Brexit has allowed such stories to spread and to contribute to people's anxieties. The European Union provided certainty for all its citizens regardless of the countries they were living in, when Brexit was announced these certainties were removed, and what previously might have seemed unimaginable suddenly became a possibility.

Following Brexit, the rights of EU citizens living in the UK have become uncertain. Although the EUSS offers some promises, these do not appear to have been reassuring enough: the atmosphere of fear which was present immediately after the EU referendum has remained.

6.2.2   *'People actually didn't care about my nationality': New Scots after Brexit*

Beyond the legal rights of EU citizens in Scotland, the atmosphere surrounding them in the society they are settled in also needs to be examined. The participant in the previous section mentioned that she 'feels safe in Scotland' (O-12-SFG 37:11, see p. 160), and compares the situation there favourably to the situation in England. This was not unique amongst EU citizens in the fieldwork. When referring to his first job interview in Scotland after having lived in England, where he experienced racist abuse following the EU referendum, one participant said the following:

> **B-1-I 22:40**
>
> P: I brought with me my passport and everything. And he asked me: 'why are you showing your passport? We know you are French. You don't have to prove it to us.' That was a completely different attitude [than in England]. But I think that if you are

living in a small cocoon of prejudice, you think that the rest of the country is like that, and you forget that the UK is actually four countries on one island. […] *I felt that people [in Scotland] actually didn't care about my nationality* [emphasis added], didn't care where I'm from. […] The difference between here and south of the border… it is a thousand light years from England to here.

The participant gave the impression of being relieved that 'people [in Scotland] actually didn't care about my nationality'. During the interview, he expressed that a European identity was something which set him apart in England, whereas in Scotland he did not experience this, and thus he felt more at ease. Another participant who was an EU citizen made a similar remark:

E-7-I 08:29

P1: I've never actually thought of myself as a European until I came to Scotland. It was a very strange eye-opening. I've never felt British, and I still don't, certainly not English, not really Irish because although my parents came from Ireland, I have never lived there. I felt partly French but increasingly less so because although I was brought up there, moving away and living in England means that those ties gradually recede. So, I never thought did I have any particular national identity. And coming to Scotland, I sort of gradually acquired the sense that I could become, I suppose, a New Scot. I mean, I still wouldn't call myself Scottish. I think the label New Scot is a convenient one, but it's a sort of identity through choice really, but with a strong connection to that European dimension.

What I found interesting about this statement is that the participant says he did not feel any particular European identity, until he came to Scotland. Not only does he feel there is a tenuous accessibility to Scottish identity, by means of the concept of New Scots (further discussed below), but that it is compatible with 'the European dimension'. Thus, 'when he says I've never actually thought of myself as a European until I came to Scotland', I would interpret this as that he felt that being European was more compatible with his perception of Scottish identity than with other national identities. Both participants thus expressed an atmosphere in Scotland in which their European backgrounds or identities were challenged less than in other places. This welcoming atmosphere was not only expressed by EU citizens, also by British participants:

O-10-SFG 18:23

P2: We don't want to be seen as people who aren't welcoming to other people in Europe. You know, the whole free movement of people is something that I think people are really worried about.

Here, *being seen as* 'welcoming to other people in Europe' is connected to being European. We could understand this as the 'European dimension' of the concept of New Scots, as the participant suggested in E-7-I (see p. 162). This label may refer to any person who moved to Scotland from abroad. Recently, the Scottish government has used it to refer to refugees settling in Scotland (The Scottish Government, 2017), but the term is not limited to a particular reason for migration or country of origin (Skilling, 2007; Devine and McCarthy, 2018). Within the fieldwork, some participants who have migrated to Scotland from other parts of the UK have also referred to themselves as New Scots. For example:

S-FG 18:38

P: I'm a firm believer that Scotland does have a social awareness. […] Nothing made me more pleased when Alex Salmond said [that] if you're living and working here, you are Scottish. […] So now on every form I write it's New Scot, I'm not English. […] Very subtle differences but my goodness me, fundamental differences.

Within the Scottish independence movement, the concept appears to be quite accepted, with several participants mentioning they either identify as a New Scot, or they saw the concept as one of the merits of Scottish society and identity, or indeed as one of the ways in which Scottish society differs from Britain. My own experiences with the concept of New Scots have been mixed. For example, I have experienced people challenging my Scottish identity because of my accent and the location of my upbringing. This has been confirmed in research by McCrone, which demonstrated that less than half of his Scottish participants 'were prepared to accept a national identity claim based on residency alone', with 80% accepting it if the person in question had a Scottish accent or parentage (McCrone, 2017:341). Recent research by Sime suggests that New Scots teenagers have increasingly felt challenged about

their belonging to Scotland (Sime, 2020). Thus, although the concept of New Scots is well-meant and has political benefits,[33] practically gatekeepers to Scottish identity remain.

The concept of New Scots supports the popular assumption that people in Scotland are more positive towards immigration than the rest of the UK. However, research has indicated that while overall this is the case, the difference between Scotland and the rUK is perhaps not as big as is sometimes suggested (McCollum, Nowok and Tindal, 2014; Hepburn, 2015; Curtice and Montagu, 2018). The following elaboration by Hepburn (2015) is particularly revealing:

> *While more Scots want to reduce migration than to increase it*, there is less opposition to immigration in Scotland than in the rest of the UK (*58% in Scotland support reduced immigration* compared to 75% in England/Wales). *More people in Scotland think immigration is good for Scotland (41%) than say it is bad for Scotland (31%), while 20% of Scots would support the number of immigrants being increased by 'a lot'*, compared to only 2% in favour of increased flows in the south of England (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

From these statistics it becomes clear that even though there is a more positive attitude towards migration in Scotland compared to England, there are still a large number of people living in Scotland who believe immigration is detrimental and/or that it should be reduced.[34] It may thus also be expected that some EU citizens also experienced negative situations following the EU referendum. Indeed, I did also come across EU citizens living in Scotland who felt unwelcome, albeit indirectly:

O-8-SFG 40:29

P: EU nationals have left. Because I heard from a friend of mine who's from Slovakia. […] The day after the Brexit vote, and he worked in care work, somebody said to him: "oh, you'll be going then." Now, he'd been living and working in Orkney doing care work for […] years, paying taxes and everything like that, and he felt really at home and people were friendly. And from that moment on, he felt unwelcome, right, because somebody had said that. And that was the feeling he got

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[33] The strategically beneficial soft power from appearing as a welcoming society, further discussed in the next chapter.

[34] Reflecting this, the Scottish Government's White Paper on independence both recognised the importance of immigration to Scotland, but also suggested the implementation of a points-based immigration system, similar to that being used by the UK government post-Brexit (The Scottish Government, 2013:270).

and [now] he's gone. And, you know, […] the Czech Republic is benefitting from him now. And I think there were people that just thought: "no, that's it, I'm going." Because the atmosphere changed.

This extract implies there are also EU citizens who felt uncomfortable enough following the EU referendum to move elsewhere. It further suggests that it is necessary to take a critical approach to the idea that Scotland is exclusively or particularly positive towards immigration. That being said, the difference between Scotland and England is significant and should not be ignored. The Scottish government argues that the reason for this difference is that Scotland's demographic needs are different to those from England, crucially that Scotland's population does not grow as rapidly as that of the rest of the UK (The Scottish Government, 2013:268). Immigration is thus required to boost Scotland's population - and to fill the gaps in the economy. Fieldwork extracts in the previous section suggest an awareness of this amongst the participants, even those who are of the opinion immigration should be limited (O-3-SFG 21:54,). This does raise a question about the underlying meaning of Scotland's open stance towards immigration: as a participant mentioned the post-Brexit immigration rules made her feel like she 'is worth only what she produces' (O-12-SFG 37:11,), does this then not also apply to the Scottish approach to immigration? The difference with the rUK being that the Scottish Government acknowledges the gaps in the economy which need to be to filled. If Scotland, independent or not, would reach a point where it no longer 'needed' migrant labour, would the attitude towards immigration then change?

6.2.3 *'That has been taken away from me without my permission': becoming citizens of nowhere*

So far, this chapter has discussed experiences of Euroland *within* Scotland, in both economic and societal forms. But Brexit also affects British participation in Euroland across the continent. These interactions are also both economic (for example financial contributions Scotland/the UK makes to the EU budget or trade provided to the single market) and societal (for example, the loss of freedom of movement to and from the other 27 EU member states). Being European was also connected to the ability to participate in Euroland outside the UK:

O-10-SFG 18:23

P: I think when we say that we feel more European, there's a tie to that in the fact that we can be part of Europe and travel and work anywhere we like and in the same sense have people over here.

As Brexit impedes this participation, it could thus be presumed that leaving the European Union may strongly affect those who have formed such an identity. The ability to partake in the community which formed the identity was removed, or at least severely limited. This led to anger, which I encountered in the fieldwork:

S-1-FG 13:13

P: I think in identity terms, I feel very strongly that I don't want to stop being a European citizen, I am a European. [*other participants murmur agreement*] *And I feel very strongly that that has been taken away from me without my permission.* [emphasis added] And it's not just about the rights I have as a citizen it's also identities you're talking about, which is that I feel we all are part of something larger. […] But what really reminds me of this was when, I think Theresa May, said that we are citizens of nowhere. And I thought, that is so insulting to people.

Theresa May made the statement the participant refers to during a speech she gave at the annual conference of the Conservative party, shortly after becoming Prime Minister. Her full statement was: 'if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what the very word 'citizenship' means' (May, 2016). It suggests, quite bluntly, that identities which represent a larger category than the state do not exist, or at the very least that they are incompatible with the ideals of Brexit and the modern British state. It also pours salt on the wound for those who feel deprived of being able to participate in the European space, because it suggests that the British government is fully aware that there are people who identify as 'citizens of the world' but that it does not agree with nor care about their perspective. To them it is made clear that they do not fit within the post-Brexit narrative of Britain.[35] As the participant said: 'that has been taken away from me without my permission'. Unsurprisingly, one of the main reasons this participant supports Scottish

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[35] Thus, the statement reveals a lot about 'Global Britain'.

independence is to regain access to that space: she does not only want to gain Scottish citizenship (by means of independence), but also regain EU citizenship.

EU citizenship was first introduced in 1992 as part of the Maastricht Treaty. It is to be understood in addition to the national citizenship of EU nationals, and allows them to work, study, live or retire in any other EU state (Neveu and Filippova, 2012). Therefore, having EU citizenship is the closest thing there is to a formal acknowledgment of having access to the European space. It could thus also be understood as a post-national form of citizenship, but this would not be entirely accurate. Nic Craith has argued that although the 'EU citizenship agenda might appear to herald the development of a post-national form of citizenship, […] this is not the case as nationality of an EU member state is a precondition of EU citizenship' (Nic Craith, 2004:294). In other words, national citizenship functions as a gatekeeper to post-national citizenship, therefore it is not truly *post*-national. But this gatekeeping role has changed the meaning of national citizenship, as has become clear following Brexit.

At one of the pro-independence marches I attended, I spoke to a couple about their reaction to Brexit. Jokingly, the man told me their son had called them up soon after the referendum to ask whether his grandfather had Irish nationality. He did, and at the time of the march several members of the family were in the process of applying for Irish citizenship. There has been a significant increase in applications for Irish citizenship from British citizens since Brexit. A large reason for this has been the convenience of having European citizenship: being able to travel unobtrusively into and through the European space (Wood and Gilmartin, 2018). As one columnist of the Belfast Telegraph wrote: 'it's all about convenience and has nothing to do with allegiance' (Edwards, 2017). Thus, to some, the convenience of European citizenship is more important than its national identity aspect. Citizenship of an EU state remains a requirement to gain European citizenship, but the willingness of many to immediately apply for Irish (or another EU state) citizenship following Brexit suggests that the national element of this dual citizenship has lost its significance. Instead, the convenience European citizenship offers appears to be of more importance. This citizenship is very much based on a banal (post-)nationalism (Billig, 1995), whereby its expression is not found in 'allegiance' to a state - or in this case, an intergovernmental organisation (henceforth IGO) - but in everyday bureaucratic structures.

Although many Brits are, via family history, eligible for Irish (or other EU states) citizenship (Wood and Gilmartin, 2018), not everyone is. For those members of the Scottish

independence movement, who want to but cannot regain access to the European space by means of alternative citizenship, gaining independence becomes another route to achieving that. What the meaning is of Europe to members of the Scottish independence movement is then perhaps the wrong question. Instead, for some, it should be reversed: what is the meaning of Scottish independence for those who wish to partake in Euroland? Whatever their method of obtaining it, those who want to regain EU citizenship seem to have, contrary to what Theresa May said, a good understanding of the practical benefits of being a citizen of 'nowhere'.

6.2.4   *The local European: trans-border nationalism* en-route *to a post-national constellation*

The stories told in this section are of experiences and lifeworlds which cross borders, or the disintegration of structures which support them. Here, Euroland forms the fundaments of the space in which these experiences take place, as opposed to glimpses of Euroland in a local or national context. The trans-national model explored in the previous section is therefore not suitable in this case. The way these participants navigate around Euroland across multiple European nations suggests that within the structure we are looking for, national boundaries are losing their significance. Should we then take a post-national approach?

In his theory of narrative structures of collective identity, Eder also describes a post-national structure. He writes that this is a structure in which national stories are 'merged into shared stories. The distances between the national stories in Europe vary, yet their interaction forces them to position themselves in relation to other national stories without ending up in isolation from some or all of these other stories' and that 'national actors try to relate their proper stories to those of the others by looking for a position in a post-national plot in Europe' (Eder, 2009:439).[36] Such a structure, as the name suggests, seems to be a logical reaction to an appearing post-national constellation (Habermas, 2000) in which the territorial sovereignty of states disintegrates. Habermas suggests that amongst others, two features of this constellation are transnational mobility and emigration; and cosmopolitan solidarity, both of which are central elements of the stories discussed in this section.

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[36] As an example, Eder cites is the collective memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust, not as a tale of winners and losers but as a collective European tragedy (Eder, 2009:440). I will discuss collective memory of Europe in the next chapter.

Should we then see these stories as a clash between the post-national constellation of the European Union and Brexit, which could be interpreted as a reaction to this constellation: an 'uncritical demonisation' (Habermas, 2000:81) of a form globalisation. By doing so, it would be assumed that contemporary European integration has already reached a post-national constellation. And if so, was Britain part of it before Brexit? Britain's unease with partaking in European integration in the same capacity as other European states suggests a similar unease with the constellation. That being said, perhaps a post-national constellation should be sought within Britain itself. The United Kingdom is, after all, a collection of four nations. Kearney argued in 2006 that with the Belfast Agreement, the post-national constellation 'need no longer be considered a utopian dream' (Kearney, 2006:180) and that 'the zero-sum game of mutually exclusive 'national identities' was over' (*ibid.*:169). But the UK's disregard for Northern Ireland in the run-up to Brexit and its ensuing negotiations suggest otherwise. And of course, the potential prospect of Scottish independence further points to the continued importance of the nation. At the most, the UK as well as the EU are post-national constellations *in progress*.

Thus, considering the contemporary situation of Britain, I find it hard to envisage a post-national constellation in the context of Brexit and Scottish independence. As Brexit demonstrates, even if we understand Euroland as a post-national constellation, the national remains a requirement to access it. The same goes for Scottish independence - even those supporting Scottish independence with the main aim to re-join the European Union, to get access to the post-national constellation, the nation(al) remains a crucial link in the chain. Thus, the nation-state remains 'particularly consequential' (Brubaker, 2010:64), and it becomes difficult to talk of a truly *post*-national structure. That being said, both Brexit and Scottish independence also suggest that such a constellation is emerging and increasingly being perceived: Brexit suggesting a reaction against it, and an increase in support for Scottish independence following Brexit suggesting a desire for it.

Therefore, a structure is needed which both accounts for the diminishing importance of nations and their territories, but at the same time recognises them as remaining a crucial anchor point through which people negotiate the connection between their locality and the emerging post-national constellation. Providing an alternative to both trans-nationalism and post-nationalism, Brubaker suggests the following:

The literatures of trans-nationalism and post-nationalism are correct to stress the diminished significance of territoriality. The point should not be overstated; the nation-state remains fundamentally a territorial organisation. But it is also a membership association, and the frontiers of membership increasingly extend beyond the territorial borders of the state. These new forms of external membership, however, are neither trans-state nor transnational; as forms of trans-border nationalism, they represent an extension and adaptation of the nation-state model, not its transcendence (Brubaker, 2010:78).

Following this, Euroland becomes a trans-border extension of national territories. Membership of a territory then becomes more flexible, allowing people from beyond its borders to be local within it. The concept of New Scots is a good example of this: it is clearly not post-national, for New Scots are still Scots, but it is a trans-border extension of what it means to be Scottish. Brexit, on the other hand, can be seen as a retraction, a removal of the extension EU membership provided to the UK's territory. This removal has serious consequences, in particular for those who constructed their locality upon this extended territory. For them, Scottish independence provides an alternative. Even though independence might at first appear as a limiting of territory, for them it becomes a way of re-extending Scotland's territory across borders.

Within a trans-border nationalist narrative structure, the storyteller places a locality somewhere within the post-national constellation: the connection between the local and the post-national is then done by means of the national, which becomes an interface connecting the two. Because the national remains, differentiation to other nations which are represented as a rejection of the post-national constellation are straightforward within this structure, as was frequently done throughout the excerpts presented in this section.

Although Kearney spoke of witnessing a post-national constellation in the context of the Belfast agreement, he also wrote that overall, in Europe, such a constellation is still a work in progress (Kearney, 2006:168). Clearly, this continues to be the case today. A trans-border nationalism does not impede this transition, in fact, from the fieldwork extracts in this section it could be deducted that such a nationalist structure is partly a reaction against the rejection of the post-national constellation. It is, in other words a half-way situation: trans-border nationalism suggests an understanding of the nation *en-route* to the post-national constellation.

6.3 'We would be too small to be anything else but connected': perceptions of smallness, vulnerability and in(ter)dependence

Fundamentally, the problems described in this chapter point to forms of small state vulnerability, by extension the need for external shelter or in other words: dependency. This brings us back to the topic of small state studies, in particular small state vulnerability. How much awareness of this vulnerability is integrated into the independence movement's arguments?

A recurring theme within the debate on Scottish independence is that Scotland is 'too wee, too poor, too stupid' to become independent (Russell, 2020; Wee Ginger Dug, 2020). Although the exact origins of this slogan are unclear, a similar expression ('too stupid and too poor') was already used by John Swinney in 2001 (BBC News, 2001). Swinney is a member of the SNP, and it is now generally accepted that the phrase did originate from independence supporters themselves. However, independence supporters argue it reflects general anti-independence arguments they have been faced with (Howell, 2017). In reaction, the independence movement has not argued that Scotland is big, but that it is *big enough* to become independent. For example, the phrase has been inverted on the following banner, which was displayed at one of the pro-independence marches I attended:

Figure 6.6: Banner displayed at a pro-independence march in Aberdeen on 17/08/2019. Photo by author.

Or in the following example of a diagram published on Twitter, in which Scotland's GDP is compared to that of other small but independent European states:

Figure 6.7: Promotional diagram exemplifying the 'too wee' phrase (Dunn, 2020).

This comparison is not unjust. It is fair to say that other nations which are smaller (in the narrow use of the term: population or area) or less wealthy (measured by GDP) survive being independent. Whether a nation is 'smart enough' to be independent is, in my opinion, not worth discussing. In discussion with independence supporters the phrase is therefore quickly dismissed, as happened a few times during the fieldwork:

O-1-SFG 53:44

P: Yeah, we can survive [as an independent state], other areas smaller than us can survive. And it's just a case of having faith and believing in ourselves, I think there's an element in Scotland that sometimes we don't believe in ourselves and if we believed that we could do it, we could do it.

This was not the only participant who mentioned that Scots have difficulties believing in Scotland's potential:

G-3-I 28:06

P: This whole too wee, too poor, too daft… it does [align with] the Scottish psyche of being risk averse. And that's something that's so frustrating. But I think once people

start to see actually how much we do have, they [will become] more open to an independent Scotland, and an independent Scotland in Europe.

Q: What do you mean with the Scottish psyche?

P: […] So I think Scots can be quite risk averse. There's very much an image of Scots being hardy, don't mess with us, we'll kick your backside sort of thing. But I think that when it comes to something big and risky, then we can be a little bit more risk averse and a bit more, just [wanting to] keep things as they are. […] From my opinion that's kind of the Scottish psyche. But as I said, we're starting to see a lot more of [opinions] breaking open.

Regardless of how well-prepared Scotland and its voters could be, voting for independence will, to a certain extent, always be a leap in the dark. To make this decision there needs to be some willingness to accept risk, and a belief in the potential of Scotland. Being risk-averse is not immediately supportive of that. But I would like to link this participant's idea of 'the Scottish psyche' to perceptual size from the perspective of the inhabitant of a state, which is an element of Thorhallsson's theoretical framework for understanding the size of states (2006:24–5, see p. 57). Each element of this framework can be placed on a 'action competence' and 'vulnerability' continuum, both in the context of internal and external capacity. Where we place Scotland's inhabitants' perceptual size on the continuums depends on how the inhabitants perceive Scotland's ability to independently undertake actions (action competence) and its vulnerability.

Making this distinction is useful because it enables elaboration on the infamous 'too wee' phrase. When supporters of independence are confronted with 'the Scottish psyche' as described above, they will need to convince the other of both Scotland's ability to undertake actions independently as well as its ability to counteract its small state vulnerabilities. Comparing GDP or population size to other European small states perhaps demonstrates Scotland's high place on the action competence continuum, but it says relatively little about how these other states counteract their vulnerability. Indeed, it is worth pointing out that all the states from figure 6.7 receive substantial economic, political, and societal shelter via their EU membership.

I am not trying to argue that an independent Scotland would need to join the EU to survive independence. But within the debate on whether Scotland is 'too wee', it is worth discussing

what independence really means. The stories written in this chapter, uncertainty about business or community subsidies, fears about rights of residence, are all results of a form of shelter being removed and suggests that there are many in Scotland who are in some form dependent on Scotland's pre-Brexit shelter relationship. These stories suggest that Scotland *is* too small to cut itself off completely from the rest of the world. I do not think any of the participants I spoke to were trying to achieve an independent Scotland cut off from the rest of the world. They imagined an independent Scotland to be an open, internationalist country which would be willing to cooperate with the international community. Is *independence* then the correct term?

> "Dependence" has two negations in English, both of them implicit in the idea of self-reliance: independence and interdependence. The meaning of independence is autonomy, that invaluable combination of self-confidence, a high level of self-sufficiency and fearlessness out of which invulnerability is forged. The meaning of interdependence is equity, which means a style of cooperation that does not engender new patterns of dependence. Very often this can best be done by cooperating with one's geographical neighbour – but there may be social neighbours further out in space (Galtung, 1976:1–2).

Following Galtung, then, interdependence becomes a form of self-reliance which recognises internal vulnerability but forges resilience through cooperative equity. Independence, on the other hand, has little place for vulnerability, and creates self-reliance on 'self-sufficiency and fearlessness'. Thus, we could consider Brexit as a form of independence as well. But considering the current state of Brexit and its consequences highlighted in the fieldwork, I cannot help but think of the following quote from Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgium's 40th prime minister and one of the founding fathers of the European Union:

> There are only two types of states in Europe: small states, and small states that have not yet realised they are small (Spaak, in: Maas, 2020).

Indeed, the self-sufficiency and fearlessness accompanying Brexit are based on a myth, which I will explore further in the next chapter. Returning to the issue of Scottish independence, perhaps Scottish interdependence would be a more applicable name. I am under no illusion that this term will be used broadly - but there does seem to be some awareness of what it entails in the movement:

S-1-FG 12:23

P: Even if we were four times the size that we are as Scotland, I would still say we would be too small to be anything else but connected in that new age.

And:

E-7-I 51:53

P: For us Scottish independence really only makes sense within the EU or closely aligned to the EU. We can't kid ourselves that a small nation on its own completely without any sort of very strong political alliances is going to find it easy, and the EU provides the obvious sort of home from that point of view.

And:

O-12-SFG 1:02:45

P: If you come from a little country, you have to be outward looking. So, if you come from Denmark or from Finland you have to be outward looking, there's only 5 million people. And certainly for Scotland, we're already quite outward looking because there are only 5 million of us. And if we're independent we would be even more because you have to cooperate. Some of the things I'm involved in, in aviation and in medicine, you know, we need to have EASA, the European Aviation Authority, we need to be part of that because we can't administer the technical aspects of running aircraft in Scotland because we're too small. And then certainly for medicine we're definitely too small to run that. So, I think whether we like it or not, I think even if there's people who are anti being part of the EU, in [the] Scottish independence [movement] there's quite a lot of them, I think that is actually naive. They don't really know what they're saying, they like the idea of kind of proper Scottish independence, they don't realise that we can't run all these complex things of a modern state without help from a bigger state. […] A small country has to be outward looking, whereas the bigger the country is, the less outward looking it needs to be. And that's why I think in France and in Britain to some extent […] there's this kind of 'well we don't really need Europe' [-attitude].

The latter participant demonstrates a detailed knowledge of Scotland's action capacity in particular fields and observes that it would be necessary for Scotland to seek shelter

elsewhere. He points to a tension within the independence movement about perceptions of Scotland's smallness: between those who believe Scotland could be completely independent and those who recognise Scotland's need for shelter. Finally, the participant also makes an important point about linking European identity to perceived state size and vulnerability: that larger European states are more sceptical of Europe because they do not believe they 'need Europe', and that they might seek independence for that reason.

To fully benefit from the consequences of Brexit, the Scottish independence movement must not only point a finger at Westminster, but also be fair about how an independent Scotland plans to counteract these consequences. There needs to be a reflective discourse about Scotland's smallness - indeed, that it is 'big enough' to be independent, but at the same time so small that interdependence might be more suitable. Smallness here should not be seen as derogatory - early results of Brexit suggest that the UK might be too small for independence as well.

6.4   Conclusion

This chapter explored different forms of European integration at a time when their future was uncertain. The first were from the perspective of the local, in which Euroland was 'found'. These included funding to local infrastructure, fishing and farming subsidies, crucial trade routes, an EU workforce and more. What emerged from these stories was a trans-national identity narrative structure, in which people experienced Europe in different, limited ways. This resulted in a multidimensional narrative connected by community and the disruption caused by Brexit. Second was the experience of the local from the perspective of Euroland. Here, stories were marked by the uncertainty of losing the fundamental right of residence EU citizens had before Brexit. Additionally, it explored the experiences of British citizens losing their EU citizenship and looking for alternative means to regain it. For these participants, a Scottish trans-border nationalism offered a way to remain connected to an in-progress post-national constellation in the EU - and independence a way to take this a step further.

In particular during the small focus groups in Orkney, it was interesting to see how participants shared their thoughts and uncertainties when discussing these topics, and how they learnt from each other. Several times, after having concluded a small focus group, I was told by the participants that they found it interesting and learnt a lot. This learning mainly happened between the participants of the groups, I only answered questions when I was asked directly. I am not trying to argue that the sessions I organised as part of the fieldwork will

result in a shared multidimensional sense of European identity. However, I do think that ethnological fieldwork which enables participants to share their stories with each other can be a beneficial learning or healing experience, as elaborated on by Lindahl (2012). What became evident in the fieldwork is that, beyond the clearly marked examples of European funding in the community, European integration has substantially influenced the lives and livelihoods of many people in a variety of ways which are not always visible.

As much as these everyday Brexits are in progress, so is the reaction to Brexit from the independence movement. There is clearly a potential there to benefit from it strategically, these will become even more apparent if/when the consequences of Brexit become more apparent in the everyday. It will be particularly interesting to see how the theme of smallness and vulnerability evolve, and how they are incorporated into the argument for independence. Clearly, there are some in the movement who are aware of the need for interdependence: that Scotland's Europeanness is not only an alternative to the UK and its Brexit rhetoric, but also a way of actually gaining and sustaining independence.

Chapter 7: Values, value, and validity: narratives of Scotland and Europe

In this chapter I will focus on the presence and meaning of European values in the Scottish independence movement. Values, in particular those based on egalitarianism, have played a part in Scottish nationalism since long before the Brexit debate (Cohen, 1999; Hepburn, 2015; Berg, 2016). These have been used to differentiate the self (Scotland) from the other (England/the rUK). This chapter will explore whether European values are evoked, how they are perceived in the Scottish independence movement and how they fit into the larger pro-independence narrative.

The first half of this chapter will explore European values in the Scottish independence movement from three different understandings of value separately. It will become clear that it is difficult to truly separate them from each other. Indeed, Graeber argues that they are all ultimately different versions of the same thing (*ibid.*:439). Thus, he suggests an all-encompassing understanding of values: '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' (Graeber, 2001:xii). Taking this definition as a starting point, the second half of the chapter will explore how these different perspectives interact with each other.

7.1   Different interpretations of European values in the Scottish independence movement

To begin, it is necessary to elaborate on values. Considering the nature of this thesis, I base my understanding on an anthropological theory of values instead of economic theories of value, in particular the theory developed by David Graeber (2001, 2005). His theory has previously been used to explain values in the Scottish independence movement (Berg, 2016), and I believe this application can be extended to understand European values in the movement. Graeber states there are three common 'streams of thought' concerning values:

1.   'values' in the sociological or philosophical sense, also known as moral values. This is the sense in which an anthropologist might say 'seventeenth-century Hurons placed a high value on individual autonomy', or a politician might speak of 'family values';

2.   'value' in the classic economic sense, in which one might speak of the market value of a house, food processor or ton of pig-iron;

3. 'value' in a more specific linguistic usage, particularly the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. He argued that the meaning of a word was essentially a 'negative value', a contrast with other words in the same lexicon, as the colour 'red' is defined in contrast to 'yellow', 'blue', 'brown', 'pink'. One might call this 'value as contrast' or 'value as meaningful difference' (Graeber, 2005:439).

Although Graeber suggests an anthropological theory of value may include all of these interpretations and more, I will start this section by examining European values in the independence through each of these perspectives. This will emphasize the multidimensionality of European values in the movement. Afterwards I will return to Graeber's anthropological theory and connect it to Eder's narrative networks of identity.

7.1.1   'That's a very European way to think': the moral values of Scotland and Europe and their validity

When fieldwork participants spoke of European values or ideals, in most contexts they were referring to what Graeber describes as sociological values: 'conceptions of what is ultimately good, proper or desirable in human life' (Graeber, 2001:1). He further argues that these values refer to 'all those domains of human action that are not governed by the laws of the market' (Graeber, 2005:444), such as family values, religious values, the values of a person or an organisation. Countries or continents can also be perceived to have values. Indeed, both Scotland and Europe are surrounded by a myth of democratic values (Maclean, 1994; Morton, 2011; Pasture, 2015; McCrone, 2017:239–240; Meijen, 2020). These myths 'are usually a selective interpretation of the past and present, that expresses the shared values and purposes of a society' (Maclean, 1994:38). In other words, they are not, and should be interpreted as an accurate reflection of how people experience(d) society. That being said, in this context, myth 'does not refer to something which is manifestly false, but to a perspective, a guide for helping make sense of social reality' (McCrone, 2017:239). Throughout this chapter the perceived accuracy of these myths will be discussed on several occasions, which can thus be understood as how experienced or perceived actions correspond to the 'guide' (*ibid.*) the myth provides.

The Scottish egalitarian myth (McCrone, 2017:239–40), or the myth of Scottish democracy (Maxwell, 1976:5), suggests that Scotland is a relatively classless society, or that within Scottish society there is opportunity for class mobility. The roots of this myth can largely be traced to the influence of two institutions: the Church of Scotland and the Scottish education

system.[37] It can be interpreted from both a conservative perspective: everyone is born equal so therefore we do not need to make society more equal; or an activist perspective: even though everyone is equal, society does not enable equality, therefore it must be made more equal for everyone (Morton, 2011:83; McCrone, 2017:239). Morton argues that contemporarily, 'it is commonly understood in the activist sense' (2011:83). This is in line with much of the pro-independence movement's argumentation, in which achieving independence is a means of gaining a more equal society (Scottish National Party, 2022).

McCrone suggests that the Scottish egalitarian myth is kept alive because people's societal and institutional experiences are sufficient to serve as an 'affirmation of validity' (McCrone, 2017:240). Morton presents a further analysis and argues that the myth supports itself: because an activist interpretation of the myth results in social, political, and economic change, and this societal change leads to positive (egalitarian) experiences, the belief that Scotland is egalitarian is further supported (Morton, 2011:95). She then argues that 'Scottish egalitarianism is perceived as an agent but is actually an effect of social change' (*ibid.*), although my interpretation of her theory would be that it is both. Regardless, the validity of the myth is not sought in historical accurateness, instead in contemporary actions.

Values and myths of values are also connected to the idea of Europe. Research on European identity has highlighted and criticised the idea of so-called European values as a potential feature around which all Europeans could unite, thereby forming the basis for a shared identity (Delanty, 2002; Stråth, 2002; Pasture, 2015; Castiñeira, 2017; Meijen, 2020). Whereas in the Scotland the democratic myth appears to be centred around egalitarianism, these European values are more diverse. There is not a definite list of these: European values which are regularly mentioned are progress, reason, and democracy (Stråth, 2002:388); or diversity, respect for human rights and peacebuilding (Meijen, 2020). Some of these values have also made it into the Treaty of European Union, following the 2007 Lisbon amendments:

> The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom,
> democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights
> of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in

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[37] The origins of the egalitarian myth go beyond the scope of this chapter, but I recommend Hearn (2000:141–6) for more information on how the Church of Scotland influenced it, Anderson (1985) for a discussion on the myth and the Scottish education, and Morton (2011) for an overview of both.

a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail (The European Union, 2007:11).

This is the closest one can get to an 'official' list of European values, at least from the perspective of the European institutions. These values are very broad and quite fundamental, for which they have been criticised. Delanty has argued that these values are so broad they are not unique to Europe at all, thereby questioning their distinctive relation to European identity (Delanty, 2002:347–8). On the other hand, exactly because they are so broad, they can easily be adopted by people from a large variety of different societal backgrounds and political persuasions.

If we continue down this line of thought, we might be inclined to scrutinise each so-called European value in its own right. I do not believe this would be a valuable exercise for the purpose of this thesis: just like identity, the (in)accuracy (how they are perceived to correspond to people's or organisation's actions) of European values does not mean they are not believed in or used.[38] However, I do want to expand a bit on the value of pluralism, and by extension diversity, as it will be important later on in this section. In his book on the history of European unity, Pasture notes that throughout European history, diversity was seen as a detriment to European unification (Pasture, 2015:202–3). It was only in the 1950s that diversity started being promoted as an asset which could be recognized and respected by the newly created European institutions. Then, the Council of Europe imagined Europe as a mosaic, 'giving a positive twist on what for centuries had mostly been seen as a source of conflict and weakness' (*ibid.*:203). The burgeoning European institutions included it in their efforts to promote a common European identity from the 1970s, and the by now well-known motto of the European Union, 'unity in diversity', was only officially adopted in 2000 (The European Union, 2016). Thus, one could read into this that converting diversity into an essential element of the continent, and fetishizing it as a value, played a role in the creation of a successful political and economic union.

The adoption of values by the European institutions perhaps shows good intentions, but it does not confirm their validity: whether they are an accurate representation of the EU's actions, or that EU actions are values-led (Ivic, 2016:216–27). It must be emphasized that several of the values listed are not part of EU law, even though they appear in the treaty of

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[38] For those interested in a more comparative and quantitative approach to European values, I would suggest the work of the European Values Survey (Bréchon and Gonthier, 2017).

European Union. There is of course no constitution of the European Union in which these values are enshrined, and it has been argued that Europe's shared values need to be put in a constitution to gain legitimacy (Habermas, 2001).

Scotland and Europe, thus, both have a myth of values. Broadly, these myths suggest that Scotland is egalitarian and democratic, and that Europe is pluralist, democratic, tolerant, and more. Although not exactly the same, and having been created in different circumstances, there is a clear overlap between both myths. In particular, pluralism and egalitarianism are similar: both oppose a concentration of power in single place, person or organisation. Therefore, there is potential for both myths to be linked, which is further supported by the abstract and broad nature of European values. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that when questioning participants about their European identity, including European values into the narrative of Scottish independence happened frequently:

E-5-I 35:18

P: I think [Europeanness] is partly about the values of cooperation and where we see ourselves. […] Winnie Ewing had this famous phrase: 'stop the world, we want to get on'; in '67, and I think that resonates with an awful lot of people who are in favour of Scottish independence. They feel that Scotland can play a positive role in Europe and the world.

In this example, the participant makes a link between European values and Winnie Ewing's famous speech from 1967, which she made after she won the Hamilton by-election.[39] With 'stop the world, we want to get on', Ewing emphatically asked for Scotland to be able to take part in world politics as its own entity. Indeed, the value of cooperation referred to by the participant is not only about being inclusive *of* others, perhaps more importantly it also points to a desire to be included *by* others and the ability to participate as an equal. In other words, the participant makes a link between the egalitarianism emphasized in Scottish nationalism and the values of equality and pluralism connected to Europe in the Lisbon treaty (above). Another participant made the following statement:

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[39] This by-election result was of significant importance to the development of the SNP. For more information, see Mitchell (2017).

O-12-SFG 57:20

P: I suppose being European is a cultural thing, well, for me, it's sort of part of that not being adversarial, being cooperative, being interested in other cultures and expecting that there are other cultures that are different from my culture and understanding that there's lots of positives about those things. I think that's a very European way to think. Understanding other cultures and enjoying other cultures.

In this case, the participant also notes cooperation to be a European value but emphasizes cross-cultural cooperation. As stated in chapter 5, multiculturalism and internationalism can also be regarded as ideals of Scottish nationalism, at the very least as part of the SNP campaigning (The Scottish Government, 2013:207; Hepburn, 2015). Therefore, both of these participants have a similar interpretation of European values, with an emphasis on international cooperation. The validity of these values is found in the international cooperation inherent in the organisation of the EU. But several participants focused more on the EU's actions than on its structure and organisation, which influenced the perceived validity of European values.

As argued above, the validity of the Scottish myth is affirmed by its visibility in contemporary actions. In a similar fashion, the validity of the myth of European values is sought in actions of perceived representations of Europe, for example the European Union. Several fieldwork participants discussed the correspondence between the actions of the European Union and European values. The predominant issues which were mentioned were related to the EU's reactions to the multi-crises it has faced in past years: the financial crisis (in particular the handling of the situation in Greece); the 2015 European migrant crisis; and the increasing number of far-right governments gaining power in the EU's member states (in particular in Poland and Hungary):

E-4-I 26:43

P: Things like in Poland and Hungary, in Romania, in Bulgaria, in Malta, in Italy, things should never have been allowed to develop so far. […] And what was done to Greece… I don't say 'all the innocent…', certainly in the state of Greece there was a lot that was wrong. But knowing more about the background, and especially how Germany was seriously involved, this is just a crime against humanity, you know, and

nobody talks about the suicides and how this society has been destroyed. You know, how most young people have left.

Another participant said:

G-1-I 11:10

P: I'm uneasy about the European Union, because […] I can't do anything to stop people in Hungary voting for Victor Orbán. And I'm just upset about the way they're treating the situation in Catalonia. And I know they can't interfere in other countries' business, but Guy Verhofstadt is going on and on about Hong Kong and other parts of the world about democracy and so on, but right on his doorstep, Spain has got political prisoners!

As the latter example already illustrates, one issue which was also frequently mentioned was Spain and the EU's reaction to the 2017 Catalan independence referendum. Participants often implied that the EU's response to Spain's actions during this referendum were insufficient or inappropriate. As comparisons between the Scottish and Catalonian independence movements are frequently made, this hit particularly close to home. As one participant noted:

E-7-I 37:05

P1: I think [the situation in] Catalonia has it has tested people's sense of the European Union, you know, people wondering: how did they let this happen? People getting sent to prison for organising an election for goodness' sake.

I do not think that any of the participants I spoke to thought that the EU is a perfect organisation. Some were more vocally critical about its faults than others, and the criticisms mentioned were often in line with the examples above (they also often focused on the bureaucracy of the EU). Beside contemporary events and policies, the narrative of the EU as being responsible for upholding peace in post-war Europe was also mentioned frequently in the fieldwork. On this topic, participants had differing opinions.

O-2-SFG 38:02

P: I admitted right at the start when the [EU] referendum was coming up that I knew very little about what the EU did for us. The one thing I did know was I've never had to put on a uniform and shoot a Frenchman or a German.

This first excerpt demonstrates the resilience of the EU/peace-building narrative. Even though the participant admits he knows little about the EU or how it works, he believes that because of the EU's European integration wars have been avoided amongst its member states. However, this perception of the EU as crucial to peacebuilding was not omnipresent. An extract from another interview demonstrates a more cautious perspective:

O-10-SFS 17:23

P1: I remember speaking to a man, and he was 90, was he 96? And this was like three years ago or something. And he said to me that he'd fought to put the world back together again, and he hopes that he wasn't here to see it fall apart. And I just thought, that is so tragic! He is so part of that, he remembers everyone coming together. And he was so frightened of it falling apart again because he knew how fragile it was. Whereas people of our generation and our parent's generation just don't… it's almost as if we've lost sight of what's happened before us.

Here, the participant also alludes to the peace-making of the EU, although indirectly ('putting the world back together again'). But in this case, it is not described as something which is obvious. Instead, the narrative is described as something which might be forgotten over time, in particular if those who lived during the war pass away. This suggests the narrative is not as resilient as it might appear. Indeed, one participant directly questioned the peace-building narrative of the EU:

G-1-I 1:10:07

P: One of the things that I'm dubious about is that the EU has maintained peace. This is non-testable hypothesis. To believe that you have to think that without it, the French and the Germans would have been straight back at each other's throats, which seems to me farfetched after the traumas that they went through. […] And there hasn't been a war, but there's been plenty of wars elsewhere, proxy wars formed by European powers, unfortunately killing Africans and so on. So, I think it's a self-congratulatory thing that is misplaced. […] Obviously it's a good thing that there's not been a war, I don't think the EU should be taking the credit for it.

As these extracts demonstrate, there appears to be a range of opinions within the independence movement regarding the peace-building narrative of the EU. Overall then, when the EU's actions were discussed in detail, the ideal of European values was quickly

challenged. What was interesting that when such criticism appeared, it was often accompanied by the argument that this behaviour could change. Indeed, one narrative which arose frequently was that Scotland may be able to encourage this change if it became an independent member of the EU:

E-7-I 37:56

P2: I think there's no illusions about the EU and that's quite right, there shouldn't be because it's not a perfect organisation. I think one of the problems, as [P1] implies, is that the EU is a union of independent states. […] you know, if all the nation states in Europe are right-wing, then the EU will have right-wing policies and you can't blame the EU. The whole argument about solidarity must be to try and influence the attitudes within these other nation states. And that's how you might eventually change the attitudes in the EU.

And:

E-4-I 06:03

P: The Remain campaign was pathetic. It was totally disingenuous, this talk about [the EU], is not perfect, you know, it should have been honest. They should not just have said we should stay in. I came around to that opinion, that of the SNP actually, to say we want to stay and reform the EU from inside as a full member with a voice and a veto and everything. I think that's sensible; you can still look for an alternative if that doesn't work out, but I think, you know, they should have been more constructively critical [of the EU].

And:

S-3-I 23:25

P: With independence, Scotland will be a standalone nation, alongside all the other 27 and will be able to have influence in what goes on there, as opposed to being outside. […] So, it seems to me such obvious, common sense. Compare that to being tied into Westminster and, and the whole history of what's been going on in recent times, it speaks for itself.

The recognition of the EU's faults is accompanied by the possibility of it being able to change, and that Scotland could influence this change if it becomes an independent member

state. The argument that an independent Scotland could push for reformation of the EU's policies once it is an independent member state is commonly used within the independence movement when discussing the EU's faults. Already before Brexit, the (SNP) Scottish government suggested the same (The Scottish Government, 2013:218). This is theoretically possible, although difficult: small state studies have previously demonstrated that because of the way the EU is structured, small states are able to punch above their weight and influence EU-wide change (Panke, 2012a, 2012b). But for this to be possible, Scotland is of course required to be an independent country first. Thus, a narrative is created in which the solution to the EU's non-adherence to its own values is Scottish independence. Central to this narrative are the European values of pluralism and diversity because these are the values which will enable Scotland to influence change.

A link is made between Scottish and European values because of their similarity. Both sets of values are myths which function as guiding ideals. Contemporary actions are used to reach these ideals, and these actions themselves further confirm the myths. Within the Scottish independence movement, there is an awareness that the EU's actions do not always fit within the ideal projected by European values. However, there is a belief that Scotland would be able to influence the EU's policies to fit better within the myth of European values. To be able to achieve this, Scotland would first need to be an independent state, further entrenching the narrative within the narrative of Scottish independence. The idea that Scotland would be able to influence the EU in itself points to a belief in egalitarianism and pluralism, because it would require a political union which is organised in such a way that small states such as Scotland can have an influence. This inevitably leads us to comparing the values of the European Union to the values of the British Union, which I will do in the following section.

7.1.2   *'We feel more European': the value of meaningful difference*

Graeber explains the value of meaningful difference as a value of contrast or a 'negative' value. For example: a colour can be defined by *not being* another colour (Graeber, 2005:439). When considering European values in the Scottish independence movement, two approaches are possible within this interpretation of values. First, the contrast can be made between the values of the European and British unions themselves, which came into particular focus around the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections. Second, the contrast can be made between the values of Scotland/Europe, as opposed to the values of England/Britain/Westminster. As

such, the perception of British values in the independence movement needs to be explored. I will discuss both.

7.1.2.1 *'It is a partnership of equals': consent, equality, and the value of recognition*

At the heart of both the debates on Brexit and Scottish independence is the question of political union, and how such a union should be formed. When interpreting values as a meaningful difference in the context of this context, it is therefore possible to compare the values of the European vs. British *unions*, as opposed to the values of the European/Scottish vs. British/English states or political organisations. This interpretation also appeared in the fieldwork several times, as is illustrated in the following examples:

S-3-I 00:52

P: One tends to hear people [talk] about the dependency on Westminster being substituted for the dependency on Europe. You have probably come across that many times. And that's a big challenge: to get folk to understand the huge difference there is between the two structures, and how it is that we will be […] one of equals if we were in the European Union, compared to being subservient and treated like dirt by 'Westmonster' as I call it [*laughs*].

And:

O-6-SFG 33:06

P: A lot of people found it strange that we might want an independent Scotland, and yet we want it to be part of Europe. So, we don't want to be part of one partnership but we do want to be part of another. But I think there's a huge difference between being part of a *United Kingdom* [*spoken emphasis*] and being part of Europe. As part of Europe, everybody has got a say, an equal say. […] You [other participant] were talking about the disparity between the number of MP's that we are allowed [compared to the number of MP's representing England], and that we don't have enough MP's. But in Europe it is a partnership of equals, whereas in Britain it's not a partnership, and it's not equal.

And:

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O-7-SFG 57:47

P: The Union with Scotland was never intended by England to be a union of equals. […] This is the last bit of the English Empire, and I wonder, almost subconsciously, how many Scots, Welsh, Irish remember this.

These excerpts address the value of equality within the actual organisation of the British and European Unions, in other words, they address the equality between different parts of a political organisation. This brings us to Scotland's size. As the participant mentioned in the second example (O-6-SFG), the inequality of Scotland within the United Kingdom can, for example, be explained by the difference in numbers of MPs in Westminster representing Scotland (59) compared to those representing England (533). Scotland's size therefore puts it in a minority position in the House of Commons. In the European Parliament, the number of MEPs of each state are also calculated on the population size of that state, leading to a similar unbalanced composition between smaller and larger states. Similar to the British parliament, the European Parliament does not represent the member states of the European Union, it represents the citizens of the member states. But there are other institutions of the European Union which do represent the member states and have one representative per state, such as the European Council and the Council of the European Union. There are no equivalents of these in the British state. As the third participant suggests (O-7-SFG), the way the British Union is organised does not enable it to be a true union of equals.

7.1.2.1.1 Consent in the unions

The argument that Scotland is not equal to England within the structure of the United Kingdom was put into particular focus during the run-up to the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections, when a new issue facing the process of Scotland becoming independent was raised. If parties supporting Scottish independence in their manifesto would gain a majority in the elections, they would legislate to hold a new referendum on independence within the parliamentary term. However, by this time the Conservative government in Westminster, under the leadership of Boris Johnson, had already said that they would not allow a new referendum to be held (Johnson, 2020). This would have serious consequences for how we understand the values of the Union. In this case, the UK would no longer be a union of consent, as it currently has been referred to (Burnett, 2013:242), instead becoming a union based on force and/or the law (Martin, 2021).

If we understand the basis of a relationship between equals to be the ability of any party to remove consent to the relationship at any time, then a clear difference in values between the European Union and the British Union appears. Brexit has demonstrated that it is possible for a state to leave the EU if that is the wish of its people. Although EU officials expressed discontent with the UK's decision to leave, they did not dispute or interfere with the UK's referendum on EU membership, nor did they ever argue that UK is not permitted to leave the union (European Parliament, 2017). The issue at the heart of this problem is that the UK does not have a codified constitution which includes a mechanism for leaving the union, leaving such a question open to interpretation.[40] The EU does not have a constitution either, but it does have the Treaty on European Union, article 50 of which states that 'any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements' (The European Union, 2007). Martin argues that the 'British Union has been based on an assumption of the separate and collective consent of four constituent parts, each of which is free to withdraw its consent if it wants to' (Martin, 2021:7).

Thus, the key values of these issues are equality and consent. Both are closely related to each other: a relationship is not between equals if one party cannot withdraw consent without permission of the other. Within the context of the UK, this further emphasizes Scotland's smallness: 'a union is not a union of equal partners if the bigger partner does not allow the smaller one the option to leave' (Martin, 2021:7). At the time of writing, it is not yet known what the official reaction of the UK government will be to a request from the Scottish government to hold another referendum. If they refuse a referendum, it is possible the question will be taken to the Supreme Court. If that happens, and the court is in favour of the UK government, 'UK law officers will have to say out loud that, although they like to describe Scotland as a nation in its own right in a great multinational partnership, the country has, in fact, no legal right to self-determination' (*ibid.*:6). There would then be an indisputable difference in values between the British and European Unions.

7.1.2.1.2 *The value of recognition*

As discussed in chapter 5, participants were often faced with the question of why they wanted to leave one political union, only to become a member of another. Returning to the examples

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[40] This is different, for example, in Spain, where article 2 of the constitution clearly states that the Kingdom of Spain is indivisible, which 'renders what Catalan nationalists have attempted to do unlawful under Spanish law' (Martin, 2021:7).

above, in particular the first two demonstrate that this difference in values is used by independence supporters to illustrate the difference between the two unions, and to justify EU membership as opposed to being part of the UK. But beyond political equality, the issue of equality and consent within the unions was also touched upon when participants discussed their identity. Here, the link was drawn between the consequences of political union on local culture and traditions:

S-1-FG 14:51

P: What seems to be the case in Europe as well, is that they are very positive about keeping people's individual cultures, like Gaelic […]. Whereas the British kind of just homogenised everybody, and you know as far back as 1740-whatever they were not allowing Gaelic to be spoken any more, the music and the plays, you know all of that was suffocating because they knew that if they could just sort of subsume the culture, then that would be it, they would be defeated.

In this extract, the participant establishes a difference between Europe and the UK based on the feeling of being assimilated into a British identity, or in other words based on the value of recognition. The key word is homogenisation: the participant tells of how Gaelic language and culture were undermined by the British state, whereas Europe is described as 'positive about keeping people's individual cultures.' Examples of this were also given in the fieldwork: participants spoke of how European funds were used to support Gaelic learning. When staying at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig[41] while doing my fieldwork in Skye, this financial support was also made clear in numerous signs of sponsorship (figure 7.1, see p. 192).

Much as the sentiment expressed by participant in chapter 6 ('we are a priority, not an afterthought', O-10-SFG 19:38, see p. 142), this funding gives small communities a sign that they are recognised and *valued* by the EU, a sentiment which both this participant in Skye as well as the one in Orkney appear not to perceive from the British state. But not only participants in small communities expressed this. One participant from Glasgow said the following:

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[41] A Gaelic-medium college on the Sleat peninsula.

G-3-I 7:05

P: For me, it really boils down to a sense of you can be Scottish, but you can also be part of a bigger unity. So, it's that sense of Europe, *it recognises individual nations, and protects individual nations* [emphasis added].

Figure 7.1: A sign at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig displays all of the sponsors of the building. Note the presence of a European flag and the lack of a British flag. Photo by author.

Although the units the participant speaks of are bigger, the sentiment is similar, that 'you can be Scottish, but you can also be part of a bigger unity'. This fits within the moral narrative of an internationalist Scotland, but it also refers to the perception of Europe and European identity: that it is perceived to allow for local identities not to be assimilated into it. Taking this sentiment further, the participant then makes a link between *recognition* and *protection*. This, again, is similar to the participant who mentioned the EU's support of Gaelic: because by supporting a vulnerable language, the EU also contributes to its protection.

7.1.2.1.3 Identity shelter

The perceived need for protection also suggests an awareness of vulnerability, and thus parallels can be drawn between this process and that of small states seeking shelter. Political unions may also be perceived to protect local ways of life, by means of recognition and support. Can a form of European identity built around a narrative of recognition and support for local identities then also be interpreted as a form of shelter?

The examples of other forms of shelter given in chapter 2 demonstrate tangible vulnerabilities which the shelter compensates for. For example, gaining the military protection of NATO provides a clear benefit to a nation with a small military force. When considering the benefits identity may provide, they are not as tangible. Can it even be suggested that an identity is vulnerable or has vulnerabilities? Fukuyama explains contemporary identity politics as the 'struggle for recognition', in which 'individuals demand public recognition of their worth' (Fukuyama, 2018:10).[42] Following this line of thought, if identity is an understanding of the self and the other, then vulnerable identities are those which are not even recognised as a potential other. They are, in a sense, subaltern: not even within the narrative network. Recognising and supporting people, places and their cultures then becomes a way in which this vulnerability may be reduced.

Of course, states may not need external shelter to provide this support: as can be seen in the picture above (figure 7.1, see p. 192), the Scottish Government, as well as regional organisations, also fund Gaelic education. But external shelter enables small communities to punch above their weight: recognition from an organisation like the EU equates the value of a community and its culture to others across the continent and provides an additional route for local communities to get support in case they do not receive any (or not enough) from local or national organisations. When there is a danger of the continuation of a community or its culture being threatened due to lack of recognition or support, or in the worst-case forms of active assimilation from other parties, such a form of shelter may increase its resilience.

This form of shelter can be understood as *identity shelter*. It is connected to societal shelter, which can be understood as the cultural dimension of shelter theory. But whereas societal shelter focuses on the availability of small states' access to new people, ideas, and technologies (to avoid societal stagnation, or indeed depletion) (Thorhallsson, 2018:40–3), *identity shelter* as described above is more intangible: that identities of small communities may be linked to larger ones without a threat or feeling of assimilation, thus reducing their vulnerability. This is done by means of recognition and support and requires a sense of equality within a shelter alliance to be present. If successful, and for example applied to Europe, then shelter is not only provided by a political union, but also by the idea and identity associated with it. From participants I spoke, this appears to be lacking in the British union.

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[42] Note the use of 'worth', a synonym of value. So, in other words: recognising someone's identity equates to giving them value.

7.1.2.2 'The alternative is to be part of a little British Empire': nostalgia, the British Empire, and the value of regret

Even though the values of the unions were frequently mentioned, the clearest examples of values of meaningful difference in the fieldwork was the comparison of Scottish/European values to British/English values. To illustrate this perspective, I will start by presenting the following extracts from the fieldwork:

O-4-SFG 44:25

P: One of the reasons I've become more and more Scottish and pro-European is that sense of values. For me, Scotland and Europe is about shared community experience whereas Westminster, especially the Tories, is an elitist, exclusive club that wants to promote itself.

O-10-SFS 16:26

P: I think we feel more European in the ideals of the EU and for what the European project should be. I think we're closer aligned to that than England has become. I think when you hear some of the people in England who… They've lost sight of what the EU is there to do.

E-7-I 32:06

P: [Brexit] offered the opportunity for Scotland to assert a whole set of different values. In particular, it's the attitude towards migration, migrants and how they're welcome here. And I think that […] marks out Scotland as a very different kind of place from the rest of the UK.

One participant made the link to the Nordic states instead of Europe as a whole. The overall statement remains similar:

O-9-SFG 05:54

P: It just seems to me that since devolution, Westminster and Holyrood have gone down two very different avenues. And speaking as an academic with an interest in things Nordic, it's a very Nordic community that we have in Scotland, very Nordic values, the kind of social democracy, the community welfare, all of these things that we have that are different. You know in many ways you can see there's kind of two

different kinds of voters, there's a scale: there's the kind of tough paterfamilias, [who are] only interested in their own requirements and […] somebody who's all for the community, and people are somewhere along that line. In Scotland we're more towards that side of things, generally speaking. And Westminster of course has become polarised now with things like Brexit, with things like the rise of what we can only call far-right racism […]. Which throws into stark relief the differences, *which I always knew where there* [emphasis added].

In these comments, Scottish values are clearly linked to European/Nordic values and contrasted to Westminster/English/British values. The Scottish values the participants refer to are similar to the egalitarianism discussed in the previous section, although they focus more on said values in an international context, such as internationalism and being pro-immigration. The so-called British values referred to are polar opposites of these: elitism, exclusivity, individualism, being unwelcoming towards immigration, patriarchal and only caring about their own interests. Overall, almost all of the examples of British values mentioned in the fieldwork were negative in some form: for example, conservative, self-centred or immoral.

When contrasting these two opposing sets of values, European values have a clear twofold function. First, they are used to support the values of Scotland (as discussed in the previous section of this chapter), second, they are used to support the argument that Scotland is an ideologically different place from the rUK. The fieldwork extract above (O-9-SFG) further suggests the belief that people in Scotland adhere to different values than people in England was already present before the Brexit debate. Because many voters across the UK based their choice in the EU referendum on emotions and values instead of rational arguments on the benefits or detriments of EU membership (Rosa and Ruiz, 2020), the clearly divided result of the EU referendum then affirmed this belief. Therefore, I believe that for many of the participants I spoke to, the drastically different outcome of the referendum in Scotland compared to the rUK further confirmed this perceived difference in values between the nations.

Within the formed narrative structure, European values are opposed to English/Westminster/British values, or using Graeber's terminology, they become a negative value. Thereby, European values not only help to understand the 'self', but also contribute to the understanding of the 'other': the EU referendum affirmed Scotland as being 'European', at

the very least more so than its Southern neighbour. Instead of understanding European values as an indefinite collection of abstract values, in this narrative 'Europeanness' becomes a value of Scotland in itself. This allows the narrative to skip the tricky question of what European values are, and how accurately they represent Europe. Instead, the understanding of European values is built on what they are *not* perceived to be: British values.

7.1.2.2.1 *Collective memory of the British Empire*

Of course, this does then require us to form an understanding of how British values are perceived in the independence movement. Much like the Scottish and European values discussed earlier in this chapter, it can be presumed that these British values are also based on myths and that these myths, while not a completely accurate representation of historical or contemporary society, do include some truths. Based on the results of the fieldwork, I believe that the perception of British values was deeply rooted in the narrative of the British Empire and the Second World War.

It has been widely argued that nostalgia for the British Empire had a significant role in the EU referendum discourse (El-Enany, 2017; Franklin, 2019; Booth, 2020; Clini, 2020). Taking this a step further, El-Enany has argued that 'Brexit is not only an expression of nostalgia for empire, it is also the fruit of empire' (El-Enany, 2017). She suggests that the nostalgia for the Empire has been an ongoing theme since the actual days of the Empire (*ibid.*). It is therefore not surprising that the British Empire and its memory was a frequent theme throughout the fieldwork. In most cases, this was linked to Brexit and the British government's contemporary attitude to the Brexit negotiations. For example:

G-1-I 25:37

[The UK Government's] attitude to leaving is: [*mocking tone*] 'the EU is trying to prevent us from doing this!' Well, no they're not! The UK Government asked to leave, and the EU is defending its interests, which is exactly what it ought to be doing. And: 'They're being obstructionist in Ireland!' *No, they're not!* [*spoken emphasis*] They're defending a member state, they're upholding an international agreement. They're doing exactly what they should be doing. And the fact that that makes it difficult for the UK Government is just tough. But it's all part of this empire… they even called the bloody thing Empire 2.0, didn't they? The trade deals with Hong

Kong or somewhere. They're stuck in the mindset of the 1950's, or before. And so, they don't understand this: it isn't like that [anymore].

Effectively, the narrative of the British Empire exemplifies Fukuyama's concepts of *megalothymia*: the demand to be respected as superior; and *isothymia*: the demand to be respected as an equal (Fukuyama, 2018:xiii). The (re-imagined) Empire and EU-membership are both overarching strategies of foreign policy (ways of interacting with the world), but with polar opposite attitudes towards other nations. Within the structure of empire there is a clear hierarchical order: the coloniser and the colonies, whereby Great Britain is at the top of the order (megalothymia). The EU is organised in such a way to create a level playing field, wherein no member state is the leader, thus each member is equal (isothymia). As we know from small state studies, this equality is not always manifested, but there are several opportunities small states have to punch above their weight. As achieving equality through independence is the core aim of the movement, the nostalgic narrative of the British Empire is incompatible with the narrative of independence. These contrasting ways of interacting with the world, fortified by myths of contrasting moral extremes, result in an overall narrative network in which the British Empire and the EU/Europe represent two very different actors. Europe was then often portrayed as an alternative to a perception of Britain formed by the nostalgic memory of empire, as in the following example:

O-7-SFG 39:15

P2: The idea that we promote ourselves as a little empire through leaving Europe […] is horrific to me. I just don't want to be part of *that* Great Britain [*spoken emphasis*]. […] So, yeah, I've always felt that we should be part, that we are part of Europe, and it horrifies me if the alternative is to be part of a little British Empire.

As implied in both examples from the fieldwork above, the Empire was usually described as something outdated, but with the British establishment believing it still exists, or being fixated on reliving it. This attempted revival of the Empire is portrayed as being out-of-touch with the present, and by extension the rejection of the Empire as being progressive. The connection between Brexit and the nostalgia for the Empire is therefore complementary to the overall narrative of a progressive value-based independent Scotland, which was portrayed as being actively post-imperial. By focusing on the nostalgia for the Empire, and describing Brexit as its consequence, the perception of Britain as the other is supported.

In addition to the British Empire being described as outdated, the colonial rule of Britain was also usually described as being particularly brutal and cruel. These actions contrast starkly to the sociological values and moral high ground the independence movement is trying to promote, further supporting the perception of Britain as the other. Like how myths support the conception of both Scotland and Europe as morally *good* places, the perception of the British Empire as a particularly *bad* place is also based on a myth. With a history spanning several centuries and an area covering, at its peak, 35,500,000 km^2, a discussion on the morality of the British Empire (or lack thereof) requires a separate, detailed study; and attempting to do one is beyond the scope of this research. But suffice to say that during this time actions were committed by or in name of the Empire which may justify its bad reputation visible in the fieldwork. For example, Tharoor writes the following about the consequences of British rule in India:

> While comparisons of human deaths are always invidious, the 35 million who died of famine and epidemics during the Raj does remind one of the 25 million who died in Stalin's collectivisation drive and political purges, the 45 million who died during Mao's cultural revolution, and the 55 million who died worldwide during World War II. The death toll from the colonial holocausts is right up there with some of the most harrowing examples of man's inhumanity to man in modern times (Tharoor, 2017:151).

The prevalence of the narrative of the British Empire is not new within the discourse on Scottish independence, Ichijo already encountered it during her research on the Scottish independence movement in 2004 (Ichijo, 2004:100–3). Interestingly, Ichijo's fieldwork results do not paint as a negative picture of the Empire as was predominant in my results. Instead, her respondents describe how Scots' contemporary enthusiasm to partake in the European project derives from their historical willingness to partake in the Empire, from which Ichijo concludes that the 'vision of the Scoto-European relationship is powerfully backed by historical memory centred on *the glorious days* of Scotland in the age of the British Empire' (*ibid.*:102, emphasis added). I do not think any of the participants of my fieldwork would have described the days of the Empire as glorious, and if any of them did think so then they might have been afraid of how others in the focus groups would have reacted to such an opinion. But this description of the time of the Empire is similar to the nostalgic narrative of the Empire surrounding the Leave campaign. Thus, it appears that Brexit has provided a new context for the narrative of the Empire: whereas in the past the

Empire was remembered as something in which Scotland actively, and proudly, participated, Scotland's rejection of Brexit is linked to Scotland's rejection of the Empire. Or alternatively, Scotland's rejection of Brexit is imposed on the memory of Scotland's participation in the Empire.

7.1.2.2.2 Collective memory of the Second World War

Tharoor's use of the word Holocaust to describe the crimes committed by the British Empire puts them in the same category as the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis during the Second World War. In the context of Brexit, the memory of the British Empire and that of the Second World War were also frequently connected, although from a very different perspective. Instead of comparing the crimes of the Empire to the crimes committed during the Second World War, a nostalgic narrative of the war was formed in which Britain is portrayed as a victor over the Axis forces and a saviour of occupied Europe (Franklin, 2019; Stratton, 2019). Thus, both are nostalgic narratives built around a theme of British megalothymia, the war effectively becoming an example of the might of the Empire. The connection between the narratives of the British Empire and the Second World War were also noticed by participants of the fieldwork. As the following participant explains:

S-2-I 15:33

P: After the [EU referendum] was over I seemed to notice in the media, in film and television and everything, there seemed to be a sudden [increase in] nostalgic material. Films, documentaries, drama, about essentially England's past. […] Good heavens, films about the Second World War… All right yes, you have Remembrance Day and things like that, but these are all that much more than that. This was 75 years ago, you know, get over it. And you still have people now, the Brexiteers, saying: 'oh, my father was on the beaches of Normandy and no German is going to intimidate me!' […] The UK, particularly England, is now reduced to […] dreaming about the Empire and dreaming about how great it was. It doesn't have any sort of sensible modern outlook apparently. Or at the least half of the population is not […] looking towards a new future which doesn't encompass the views of the past and the Empire and things like that. […] Good heavens, the Germans got over their nightmare of the Nazis, they moved forward, but there is still some idea that England is great.

Although the participant does not make as a direct comparison between the British Empire's actions and the Holocaust, as Tharoor wrote (2017:151, see p. 198), by saying that England should 'get over it' like Germany did, he still implies some similarity between the two: a narrative of national superiority which Germany moved on from, but is still present in England. The participant thereby makes a clear connection between the memory of the Empire and the memory of the war. A participant in Orkney said the following:

O-9-SFG 16:45

P: One of the issues with Orkney is that it was a major military base, in World War 1 and in World War 2. And people identify with this. We've had the Battle of Jutland commemoration, 1916-2016, there's a lot of fuss made about this kind of thing. And it basically reinforces the British colonial project.

Here, the participant also makes a connection between the memory of the war and the British 'colonial project'. The military base the participant refers to is a site of memory of both the World Wars and the Empire - but also of interaction with Europe, albeit a violent interaction. Indeed, how the war is remembered has implications for the meaning of Europe and European identity. Several academics have described a European identity forming from a narrative structure in which the war is remembered not as a conflict with clear (national) winners and losers, but as a collective European trauma, which lead to the death of millions of *Europeans* (Delanty, 2002; Eder, 2009; Judt, 2010a). The process of European integration after the war is then described as a communal overcoming of this trauma.[43] Needless to say, such a retelling of the Second World War is completely different to the British nostalgic narrative, central to which is the portrayal of Britain as a victor and saviour. The latter is what the participant describes as 'a lot of fuss', rejecting said narrative.

The nostalgic narratives of both the British Empire and Britain in the Second World War were widely visible in British society during the period before and after the EU referendum and Brexit. These themes did not go unnoticed to members of the independence movement. To them, they supported the formation of a perception of British values which is incompatible with those the independence movement wants to promote (perceived as Scottish values), thereby supporting the understanding not only of the other, but also of the self. These

[43] As discussed in section 7.1.1, the narrative of the EU being responsible for upholding peace in Europe following the wars garnered different opinions in the independence movement.

nostalgic narratives are inherently incompatible with the ideals of European integration and sharing power, and their proliferation in the context of Brexit further cemented this idea of Britain as different to Europe. What results is two opposing sets of values: on one side, British values, supported by the nostalgic narratives of the British Empire and the Second World War; on the other side, a set of morally good values connected to both Scotland and Europe.

7.1.2.2.3   The memory of Scotland's participation in the Empire

The narrative of Scotland's rejection of the Empire was quite noticeable in the fieldwork. In multiple sessions, the nostalgia for the Empire was described as something limited to England. But on several occasions, not only the nostalgia for the Empire was distanced from Scotland, also the Empire itself. Some participants insinuated that the Empire was English, some even referring to it as the *English Empire* (O-7-SFG 57:47, see p. 202; and O-3-SFG 30:25, see p. 203). For example, in the following extract the participant describes the Empire as a (South-Eastern) English problem, and argues that the benefits from the Empire gave them 'a mental outlook which is different from other normal countries':

> **S-3-I 25:31**
>
> P: *The affluent South-Eastern part of England* [has] got problems which *they've* got to sort out themselves, which up to now *they've* not had to think about because *they've had an empire* to wallow in [emphasis added]. […] [They had] a slave supply, and assets that have gone on through the years. And so that's produced a mental outlook which is so different from most other normal countries.

During the discussions, this connection between England and the narrative of the British Empire seemed obvious and was not really questioned. Admittedly, I did not think to question it during the interviews myself: to me as well, the discourse on Brexit had made the nostalgia for the Empire a distinctively *British* narrative, which excluded Scotland. But while the result of the EU referendum tentatively suggests that that may be so in a contemporary setting, historically Scots actively partook in and benefited from the Empire (Devine, 2006:249–72 & p. 366-9; MacKenzie and Devine, 2011; Burnett, 2013:230–1; McCrone, 2017:618–620). Recognition of Scotland's role in the Empire, and how Scots actively benefited from it, was a lot rarer in the fieldwork. It was directly mentioned only once. This was in a passing comment, and was not discussed further:

O-7-SFG 01:14:21

P1: The British Empire, you can call it the English Empire, but it was administered by the Scots, largely. [*other participants murmur agreement*]

This participant was very knowledgeable of Scotland's history, as were many of the others. Although most of the conversations focused on positives of Scotland's historical global connections, I am convinced that few of the participants, if any at all, would have denied the role Scotland played in the Empire. But during the conversations the Empire was usually connected to Britain, if subconsciously. Within the narratives this was done by making a moral contrast between the ideals of an independent Scotland (formed around the sociological values discussed earlier in this chapter) and the actions of the Empire. As such, by selectively mixing contemporary ideals and historic narratives, Scotland was often distanced from the actions of the Empire.

7.1.2.2.4   The value of regret

We can compare this to what Henry Rousso called the 'Vichy syndrome': the 'difficulty of acknowledging what had really happened during the war and the overwhelming desire to block the memory or else recast it in a usable way that would not corrode […] post-war society' (Rousso, 1991 in Judt, 2010b:808). As Judt writes, this 'Vichy syndrome' is hardly limited to France, something similar developed in every country in Europe which was occupied during the war (Judt, 2010b:808–20). Neither is it limited to experiences during the war: the admission of colonial responsibility and guilt is hardly common amongst European ex-colonial powers. Although debates on crimes committed by states during the world wars are increasingly common across Europe (*ibid.*), similar discourses on the crimes committed by colonial powers are less frequent (Pasture, 2015, in particular p. 185-95). This results in a moral selectivity which makes it hard to defend the European Union's own moral myth. For example: the French president Emmanuel Macron admitted to and apologised for France's contribution to the transportation of French Jews to concentration and extermination camps during the Second World War[44] (Associated Press, 2017), but has also stated that there will be 'no repentance nor apologies' for French colonial abuses in Algeria (News Wire, 2021). As this example demonstrates, the topic of historic crimes of the state inevitably turns to

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[44] The recognition of the actions of Vichy France as the actions of France has been a longstanding debate. The first president to admit France's responsibility in the Holocaust was Jaques Chirac in 1995 (Judt, 2010b:819).

discussions on blame, responsibility, and regret. This also happened occasionally in the fieldwork, as in the following extract:

O-3-SFG 30:25

> P1: I was in Ireland, […] but I chose a bad time. It was the 100th anniversary of when they rebelled against the British rule. And I went to visit a jail. And it was really interesting, and the lady said: 'is anybody here English?' And I never said a word. I was so ashamed of what had happened there. And [when] I was leaving, I went to the post office where the rebellion started, […] and the man said: 'Where are you from?', and I was handing over my postcards I thought I can hardly hide my accent. I said: 'I'm from England but it's kind of…, I don't like admitting it.' He said: 'But it wasn't…, you didn't do any of this.' I said: 'I know, but it's still the British, the *English* [*spoken emphasis*] Empire, you know, and the things they did is just…' I'm just so ashamed, even though it wasn't me.

Here, the participant displays a feeling of responsibility for past actions. The Empire is still described as something English; in this case, the participant identified as English herself. But by expressing responsibility and shame for her state's past actions, the participant marks herself as different from those who are nostalgic for the Empire. In the focus group it sounded almost like a confession, demonstrating a moral awareness and an affinity to the moral high ground the movement wants to create. Thus, within this example, recognition and regret is used as a navigational aid in a narrative network in which certain links and boundaries are formed by morality.

Links can be drawn between this recognition and regret of the actions of the Empire, and theories on how collective memory of past trauma may form the basis for a post-national European identity. Literature on the topic frequently gives the example of the narrative of World War II and the Holocaust in particular, retold as a story of collective European tragedy instead of a story of winners and losers, or of perpetrators and victims connected to particular states (Eder, 2009:440; Judt, 2010a; Nienass, 2012; Assmann, 2020:83). Importantly, this narrative includes the recognition and regret of the crimes of the past, and the shared overcoming of said tragedy by building an integrated Europe afterwards. Nienass (2012, 2013) elaborates on this post-national narrative of Europe, and writes that it is not the content of the memory which is important, instead the memory practices: the key to partaking in the post-national European memory is through the postheroic 'politics of regret' (Olick, 2007).

Judt has gone so far to argue that this recognition of past actions has become the 'price of admission' (2010a:803) to contemporary Europe. As an example, he argues that one of the key reasons that Turkey's accession to the European Union is not progressing is its refusal to admit the Ottoman Empire's responsibility for the Armenian genocide (*ibid.*:803-804).[45]

An idea I find particularly interesting here is that of postheroics. It is the complete opposite to the nostalgic memory of a victorious Britain during the Second World War. At the same time, it is closely linked to the 'European ethics of memory' and the politics of regret which are currently popular in Europe (and beyond) (Nienass, 2013). It could thus be presumed that this postheroic ethic of collective memory might easily be incorporated into a narrative which is supportive of Scottish independence - but from the fieldwork this does not appear to be the case (yet). The moral high ground for Scotland is constructed around the comparison to the UK, not around a critical reflection on Scotland's moral past, or its present. Within this narrative, a certain form of heroism surrounds Scotland - a place which is morally better than other places.

Considering the ultimate aim of the independence movement - achieving Scottish independence - this is perhaps not surprising. Already in 1882, Renan argued that forgetting was crucial to the creation of a nation:

> Forgetting, I would even say historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation and it is for this reason that the progress of historical studies often poses a threat to nationality. Historical inquiry, in effect, throws light on the violent acts that have taken place at the origin of every political formation, even those that have been the most benevolent in their consequences. […] The essence of a nation is that all of its individual members have a great deal in common and also that they have forgotten many things (Renan, 1882).

If one of the strategies of achieving independence is to portray Scotland as being morally good, then forgetting or ignoring Scotland's contributions to the Empire may support this. But I wonder how this will be perceived by other European states if Scotland does become independent. On the one hand, in this context it might support the differentiation between Scotland and the rUK. In particular if Scotland decides that it wants to join the EU, it will need to demonstrate that it is different to the UK, and willing to do things differently

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[45] Also discussed in Nienass, 2012:190.

(Hughes, 2020b). A clear rejection of the nostalgia for the British Empire, and the exceptionalism which accompanies it, will support this. But if the recognition of past wrongs is the key to participation in Europe (Judt, 2010a:803, see above), then the idea that Scotland is morally superior might be detrimental. Additionally, states recognising historical responsibility or even apologising for past crimes is currently popular and increasingly frequent around the world (Olick, 2007:139). This suggests that the value of regret also *has* value, a line of thought I will explore further in the next section.

I am not trying to argue that Scotland is required to express regret for Scots' contributions to the British Empire to be able to partake in European integration. But I do believe the narrative of Scotland's rejection of the nostalgia for the Empire should be connected to the larger context of Scotland's own contributions to the Empire, and the benefits it received from making them. Recognising its participation in crimes of the British Empire would not be necessary for it to join the EU, but it would be a moral act which both politicians and citizens of other European states would recognise - and recognise as something which is markedly different from the historical nostalgia surrounding Brexit.

There does appear to be some awareness of this issue in the independence movement. Notably, the SNP manifesto for the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections included the following paragraph:

> The Black Lives Matter movement has shone a powerful spotlight on continuing racial injustice and race-based violence, and the need for countries to face their colonial history. We will fund the development of an online programme on Scotland and the UK's colonial history throughout the world that can be delivered to schools, and we will encourage Local Authorities to adopt the programme in all schools (Scottish National Party, 2021:64).

Considering the potential value of the politics of regret, a pessimistic interpretation of this statement might call it strategic virtue signalling. But even if the reason to include such a statement in the manifesto is politically strategic, the effects remain the same: the encouragement of a public discourse on Scotland's contributions to the British Empire. Enthusiasm for such a debate also appeared in the fieldwork, albeit only once:

O-7-SFG 39:15

P2: It has always appalled me, the idea of Great Britain as an empire. It just didn't really mean anything to me, and I felt really quite critical about it. *I think we ought to know more about it, through education, to understand why we are as we are* [*emphasis added*].

Keeping in mind the replies of other participants, I think more participants would have shared this view if it had been discussed directly during the fieldwork. I believe the differentiation between Scotland and the British Empire should be understood as a contemporary event (that of Brexit and the nostalgia for the British Empire) being mixed with a historical narrative. That being said, considering the increasing importance of the politics of regret within Europe, the Scottish independence movement may benefit from incorporating this into the narratives of independence. Early signs suggest this is starting to happen.

7.1.3 'That's just clever marketing': the economic value of European values

Both interpretations of values discussed so far can form a narrative which is supportive of Scottish independence. In the case of sociological values, European values support the validity of the Scottish egalitarian myth. In the case of the values of meaningful difference, Scotland's European values reinforce its differentiation from the rUK. I also discussed the potential value of the value of regret. All of this suggests that European *values* may also be *of value* to a political argument, and that they could be used to support the argument for Scottish independence.

When discussing the three different interpretations of value, Graeber does not mention political value. However, in this context political value can best be understood as what he calls economic value: 'the degree to which objects are desired, particularly, as measured by how much others are willing to give up to get them' (Graeber, 2001:1). The value Graeber is referring to is most easily understood as the value of objects or services which are exchanged in a market economy. Their value is, in other words, how effective these products are in convincing consumers to pay for them. In political discourse, the value of an argument can be understood in how effective it is in convincing others to support it or its political cause. Thus, whereas economic value might convince people to pay for something, political value may

convince people to support something, for example by voting. The two are therefore similar, and to remain in line with Graeber's theory I will refer to this as economic value.

Regardless of whether we understand European values in the Scottish independence movement from a sociological perspective or from the perspective of meaningful difference, they always refer to something which is morally good: either by linking them to abstract but universally 'good' values or by contrasting them to British values which are inherently bad in the Scottish nationalist discourse. From either perspective, Scotland's European character is linked to being on a moral high ground compared to the rest of the United Kingdom, and this high ground is supportive of the argument for Scottish independence. Indeed, for some of the participants I spoke to, Scotland's link to European values appeared to be no more than a tool by which independence could be achieved:

O-12-SFG 1:16:30

P1: I think [people in England] see us as being pro-European and [being more] democratic.

P2: People in Europe see that as well. I think Scottish people see that too. They, in some ways are buying into the meme that Scotland is a European country.

P3: And a democratic country.

P2: And a democratic country. *And whether that's just clever marketing or not, it doesn't really matter as far I'm concerned, if it gets us Scottish independence* [emphasis added].

The participant's use of 'marketing' to describe European values is revealing. By doing so, he demonstrates to be fully aware of their economic value. The Scottish independence movement are not alone in using Scottish/European values as marketing. To illustrate this, I would like to digress from the field of the independence movement. For three months in 2019 I did an internship at the Department for External Affairs of the Scottish Government, where I was asked to research soft power. During my time there I was made aware of the Scotland Is Now campaign, which gives a fine example of how Scotland's European values are used to promote Scotland abroad.

7.1.3.1 The Scotland Is Now campaign

Like many other countries, the Scottish Government has invested in a national marketing campaign to promote Scotland abroad. In April 2018, they, in conjunction with VisitScotland and Scottish Development International launched Scotland is Now (#ScotlandIsNow). The aim of the campaign is to attract 'migrant talent, international students, expanding overseas businesses and high-spend tourists' (Electronic News Publishing, 2018). Marketing campaigns for states are common, and it makes sense they attempt to shine a light on the state's attributes. What is interesting about the Scotland Is Now campaign is that one of the attributes it emphasizes is Scotland's enduring connection to Europe:

Figure 7.2: This image (Scotland Is Now, 2018) is a still from a short video clip which is part of the Scotland is Now campaign.[46]

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[46] During the video, the following is narrated: *'hey Europe! Scotland has a message for you. From our people, our universities, and our businesses, from the bottom of our hearts: our beautiful country is open to you. Our arms are open, our minds are open and yeah, sometimes our clouds are open too. But don't let that put you off. Europe, let's continue our love affair. Scotland is open, Scotland is now.'* The video can be watched here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiYmRBEtdU8 (last accessed 02/11/2020).
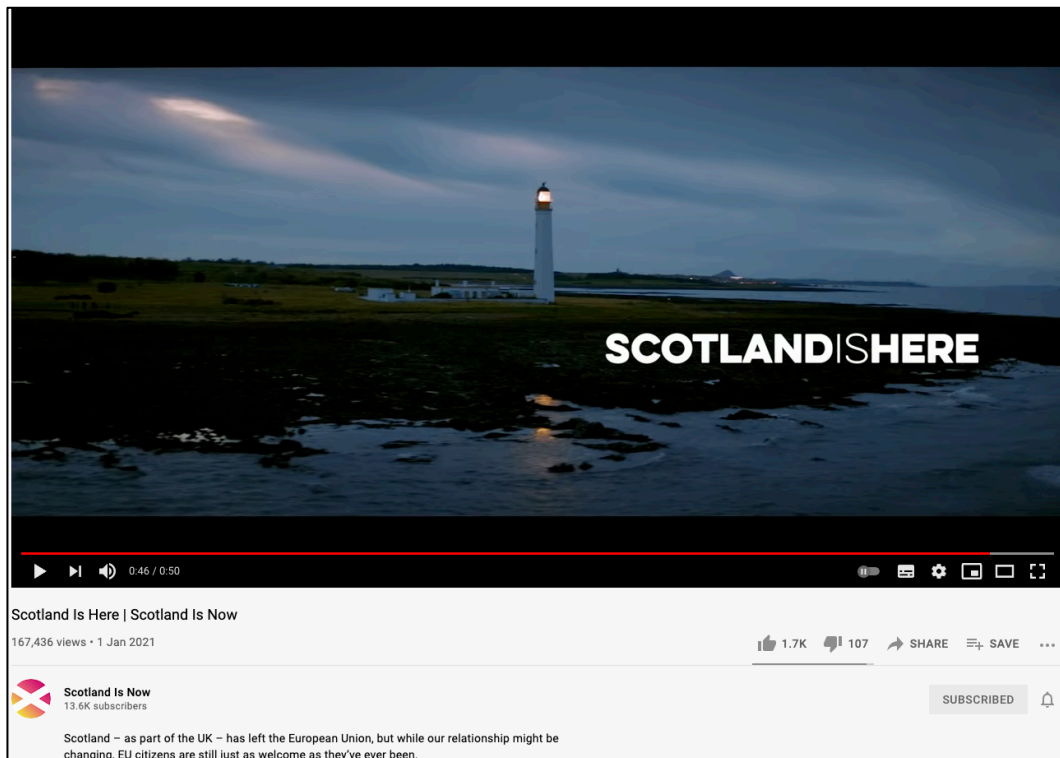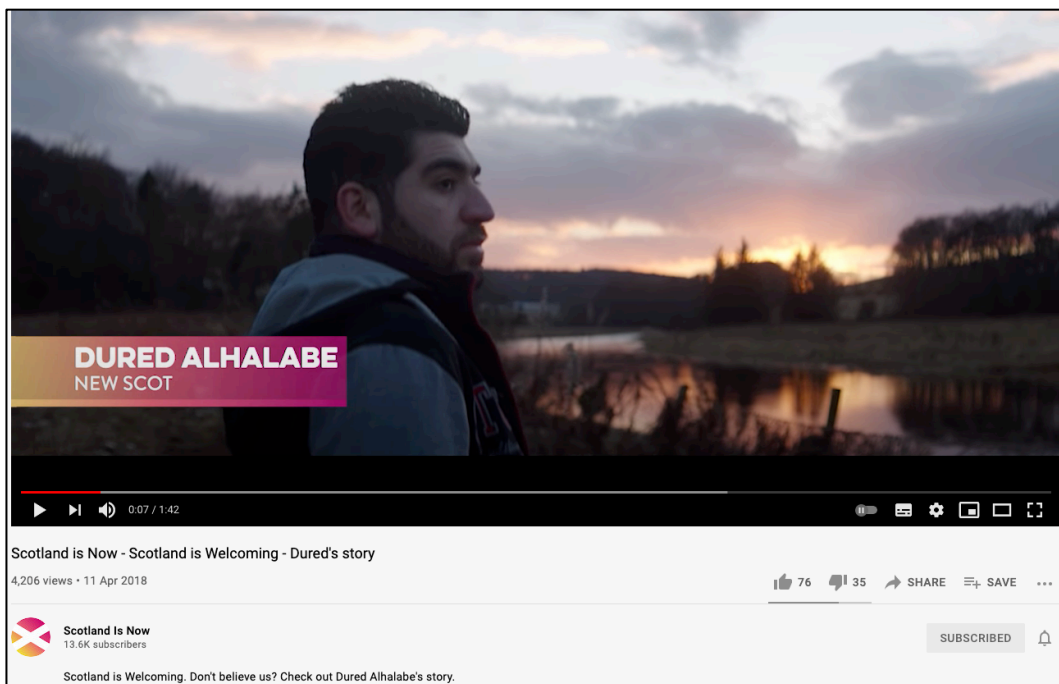
Figure 7.3: Still from a promotional video aimed at EU citizens (see the description below the video) (Scotland Is Now, 2021). It was published on 1 January 2021, the first day after the end of the transition period of Brexit. The message is that despite Brexit, Scotland is (still) here, and that EU citizens are welcome. The lighthouse is of course symbolic for finding one's way in darkness but could also be linked to Alyn Smith's MEP request for Europe to 'leave a light on for Scotland' (Smith, 2019).

On the Scotland Is Now website, the image above (figure 7.2, see p. 208) has been tagged with the keyword 'Brexit'. Indeed, the posters do not only advertise Scotland, but they also appear to be making a political statement. The Brexit debate is not the only contemporary political issue the campaign touches. Recent promotional videos published by Scotland is Now display Scotland's egalitarian policies towards gender equality, immigration, and overall diversity in society:
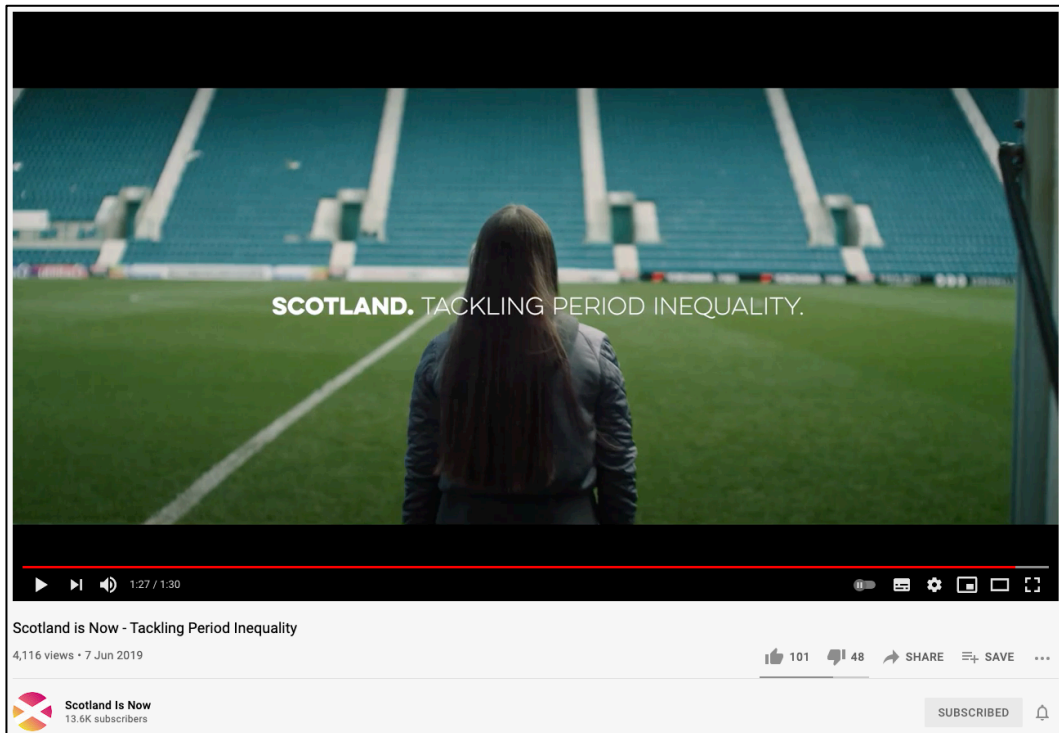
Figure 7.4: Still from a promotional video focused on gender equality in Scotland (Scotland Is Now, 2019).

Figure 7.5: Still from a promotional video focused on Scotland's openness to immigrants. Note the title of 'New Scot' given to Mr Alhalabe, as well as the description of video which clearly uses his story as a validation of Scotland's values (Scotland Is Now, 2018c).

Figure 7.6: Still from a promotional video focused on overall diversity in Scotland (Scotland Is Now, 2018a).

All of these posters and videos have a common message: that Scotland is progressive and has progressive values,[47] one of which being Scotland's Europeanness. Examples of progressive policies or societal environments are used to affirm these. Thus, the cycle of the Scottish egalitarian myth can also be found in Scotland's national branding campaign.

More context is added to this when comparing Scotland Is Now to the UK's recent marketing campaign: the GREAT Britain campaign. This was started in 2011 for similar purposes as the Scotland is Now campaign (Pamment, 2016:172–7). The similarities and differences between the campaigns are clear: both use the same formula for the slogan, but instead of 'now', the British campaign writes *X is GREAT Britain*, whereby X is replaced by the topic of the particular poster (see figure 7.7). GREAT is emphasized by a red background and a Union Jack adorns the top of the poster.

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[47] One of the promotional videos has the literal title 'Scotland is progressive' (Scotland Is Now, 2018b).

Figure 7.7: Example of three posters from the GREAT Britain Campaign (VisitBritain, 2020).

As with the Scottish campaign, the British campaign aims to promote the country by shining a light on its diverse attributes. But the choice of attributes and how they are portrayed are significantly different. Whereas the Scottish campaign actively promotes Scotland's values, the British campaign focuses on more tangible attributes. The British posters seem to celebrate the supposed greatness of a country at a time when Brexit has made it appear isolationist to many abroad (MacDonald, 2016). Some have suggested that, considering the context of Brexit, it would be more useful to portray Britain as a country which is willing to be cooperative:

> A tenacious unit at Downing Street has coordinated the country's international self-presentation under a small number of categories: "heritage is Great Britain," "Creativity is Great Britain," "Culture is Great Britain" and so forth. Sadly, there was no "Cooperation is Great Britain." […] Maybe [David Cameron's] successors will be able to claim: "democracy is Great Britain," even though the reality seems to be "Xenophobia is Great Britain" (Cull, 2016).

Against this backdrop, it would seem the Scottish campaign aims to clearly contrast the British campaign. Whereas Britain is depicted to be great, Scotland is depicted to be 'now': in the present and progressive. The egalitarianism of Scotland is contrasted to a narrative of 'greatness' from the UK; Scotland is portrayed as an open country which welcomes visitors, in contrast to an isolationist UK.

Figure 7.8: Like in the Britain is GREAT campaign; Scotland's heritage is also used to promote the country. But the message which accompanies it focuses on Scotland's values (Scotland Is Now, 2018d). Note the castle in this picture is the same as the one in the 'Countryside is Great' poster of figure 7.7, but the message is different.

The Scottish campaign wants to emphasize that Scotland did not vote to leave the European Union. The 'love affair' (figure 7.2, see p. 208) between Scotland and Europe is connected to progressive ideals of open borders, pluralism, and international cooperation. It is used to further illustrate Scotland's progressive nature, and indeed its differences with the rUK. A narrative which is similar to that of European values in the Scottish independence movement can thus also be found in the official narrative of the Scottish government. In doing so, what is this official narrative trying to achieve?

7.1.3.2   *European values as a form of soft power*

National brand campaigns such as Scotland is Now are often considered to contribute to a state's soft power (Dinnie, 2007; van Ham, 2008). Simplified, soft power can be understood as power gained through attraction, as opposed to hard power, which is power gained through coercion (Ohnesorge, 2020:28–30). What makes a state powerful in a soft power context is very different from the classic power resources such as military power or wealth. Joseph Nye Jr., who first introduced the term, writes that 'a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries - admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness - want to follow it' (Nye, 2004:5). Thus, soft power is

particularly attractive to small states with few resources for exerting hard power (Chong, 2010; Stokke, 2017).

It helps to understand soft power as a process, whereby particular attributes function as resources which support a reputation, and this reputation can result in attraction or influence. Examples of soft power attributes which contribute to a state's reputation are an attractive business environment, successful universities, good living conditions, etc., but also cultural attributes or a favourable ethical reputation (Chitty, 2017a:2). Examples of the desired outcomes are more people coming to visit, live or study somewhere, bringing investment with them. As suggested by Nye in the quote above, values can also be a soft power attribute.

Since its first appearance in the late 1980s, soft power theory has been widely used in academia but has also faced considerable criticism (Mattern, 2005; Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2018; Seong-Hun, 2018). Exploring this debate in detail is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, there are three points which are important to note. (1) Many of the problems surrounding the soft power concept, in particular measuring soft power, stem from mixing it up with hard power. There is a fundamental difference between the two: hard power is usually objective and quantifiable (GDP, military power, diplomatic ability, etc.) whereas soft power is based on attraction (Nye, 2004:6) and attraction is subjective. What is attractive to some might not be attractive to others (Chitty, 2017b; Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2018:1152), and therefore the effectiveness of soft power is highly dependent on the context in which it is deployed and perceived (Ohnesorge, 2020:31–3). Indeed, it needs to be stressed that soft power should be understood as a 'fundamentally relational concept' which is 'co-created by agents and subjects in a pattern of evolving transnational relationships' (Melissen, 2011:252). (2) Attraction and reputation can also be damaged. Therefore, when considering soft power, we also need to consider the possibility of soft disempowerment (Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2018). (3) For soft power to be effective, it needs to be credible (d'Hooghe, 2010:30–2; Barr, 2012; Melissen and d'Hooghe, 2014; Hocking and Melissen, 2015; Arifon, 2019). If there is inconsistency between the image portrayed in a state's soft power and the domestic reality of the receiver, the soft power may not be effective (Arifon, 2019:45). Brannagan and Giulianotti have created a model to represent the soft power process (figure 7.9, see p. 215), in which the soft power resources need to pass through a 'credible attraction filter' before they can become effective (Brannagan and Giulianotti, 2018:1144). This filter, which is influenced by states' or IGO's actions, the media, the corporate sector, and civil society, will determine whether soft power assets are converted into the desired outcome.
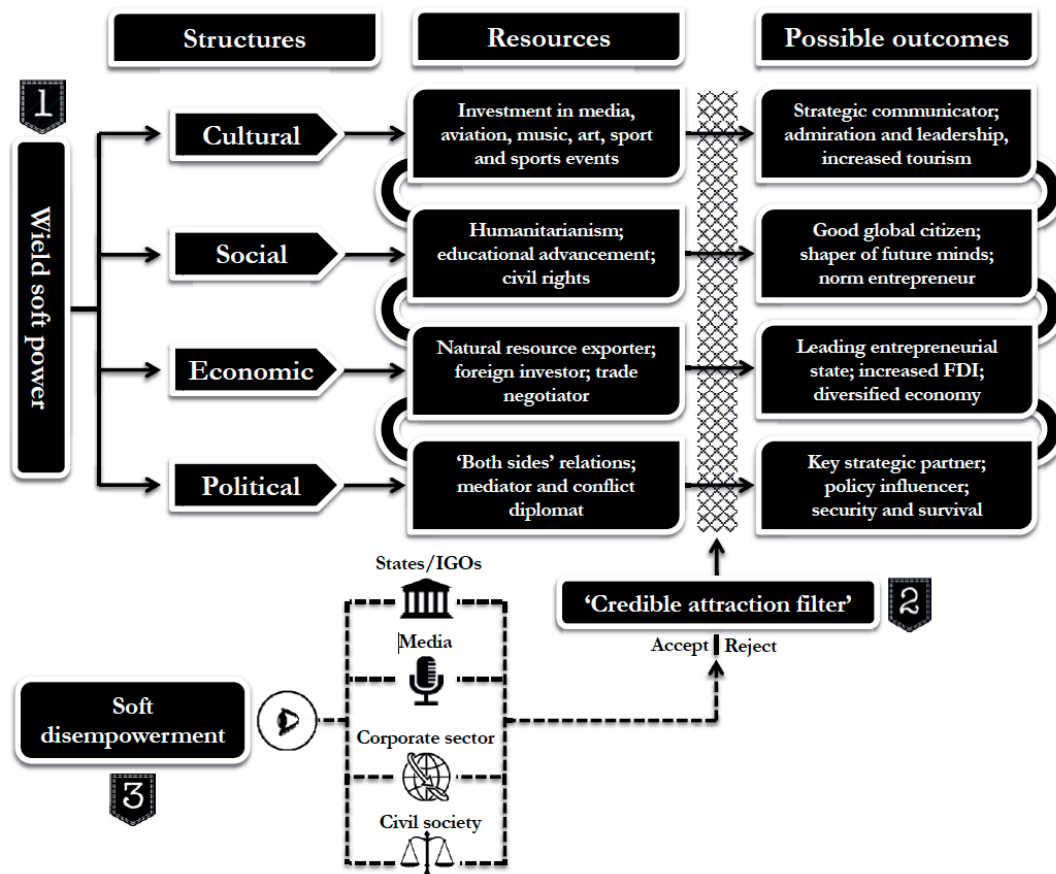
Figure 7.9: The credible attraction filter, as applied to Qatar's soft power. From Brannagan and Giulianotti (2018:1144).

Within the Scotland is Now campaign, Scotland's Europeanness is one of several progressive values it is using to create soft power. The validation of this value is provided by the political context: the EU referendum, and Scotland's clear vote to remain in the EU. This validation appears to suffice for the aim of the campaign: the deeper meaning of European values, and their connection to Scotland, are not questioned. Instead, European values are portrayed in a way which can be understood as an internationalisation of the Scottish egalitarian myth. This is particularly clear in figure 7.10 (see p. 216): 'your people are part of our story'.

The soft power is derived from the portrayal of Scotland as a welcoming place, in which Europeans are regarded as equals. This campaign is not the only example whereby European values are directly used by a state or IGO to contribute to its soft power. Fanoulis has written that the foreign policy of the EU promotes European democratic values in less democratic countries (from a European perspective) (Fanoulis, 2018). In this sense, the promotion of European values is used to enhance the EU's soft power: the aim is that the reputation of these values will result in states changing their local practice.

Figure 7.10: Another example of the Scotland is Now campaign. This poster emphasizes the importance of EU migration to Scotland. (Scotland Is Now, 2018d).

Returning to the Scottish independence movement, the meaning of European values is both similar and different. Of course, the Scotland is Now campaign does not aim to achieve Scottish independence. But as any marketing campaign it also attempts to set Scotland apart from other states, including Britain. There are a few clear differences between the two: first, the perception of European values in the independence movement has grown more organically than in the Scotland is Now campaign. In the campaign, the use of European values is clearly strategic and planned, whereas in the independence movement it appears to be more a grassroots reaction to the political situation of the past years. As demonstrated in the fieldwork excerpt in chapter 5 (O-12-SFG 36:37, see p. 118), the strategic value of the values is still recognised, but it is not planned. Second, if European values can create soft power, the intended outcome of said power is different in the Scottish independence movement. In the Scotland is Now campaign, the aim of the soft power is to attract people to come to Scotland. To achieve this, it distinguishes Scotland from other countries, including the UK. But the soft power of European values in the independence movement is specifically focused on differentiating Scotland from the rUK. Finally, the validity of European values is questioned further in the independence movement. As discussed earlier in this chapter, several participants in the fieldwork were critical of the EU's actions which are incompatible with their understanding of European values. In the Scotland is Now campaign, questioning the validity of these values would damage their economic value.

What the Scotland Is Now campaign clearly illustrates is the economic side to European values. The aim of such a campaign is to attract visitors and businesses, ultimately to attract investment. But this campaign cannot be removed from the political context: in particular when comparing it to the GREAT Britain campaign, it presents Scotland as a very different place. This further demonstrates the fluidity between political and economic value. At the same time, elements of sociological and negative values also appear in the portrayal of Europe within the campaign: progressive values associated with Scotland, which are perhaps best defined by their contrast to the British campaign. Therefore, we find that the three different understandings of value(s) all interact with each other. I will elaborate on this in the following section.

7.2   The meaning of European values in the narrative network

It is clear that the three different interpretations of value discussed so far interact with each other. Sociological value and the value of meaningful difference both lean on the Scottish egalitarian myth. And both of these interpretations of value are also the backbone of economic value, whereby their moral high ground provides soft power to a political argument. This is not surprising. Graeber (2001, 2005) argues that the three common interpretations of value really refer to the same thing. His overarching, anthropological definition of value is then: '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' (Graeber, 2001:xii). Following this definition, values only gain meaning if combined with actions: actions are given meaning by values; and alternatively, values are given meaning (validated) by actions. This is in line with the self-affirming cycle of the Scottish egalitarian myth discussed earlier, whereby the myth is validated by the actions which were based on the myth, and so forth. Keeping this cycle in mind, I will now apply what I have discussed in this chapter to the narrative network of European identity in the Scottish independence movement.

When European values were mentioned in the fieldwork, the similarities between them and Scottish values, or the difference between them and British values, were emphasized. Thus, a narrative network emerges in which national stories (those of Scottish or British values) are connected to a centre with its own set of values, in this case Europe. It is important to note that these are connections, not incorporations. European values did not replace the role of Scottish values in the narratives. Scotland and Europe remained two distinct entities, with the

common values linking the two. In other words: Scotland connects to Europe by means of perceived common values but remains itself, distinguishable from the rest of Europe. Similarly, British values are explained by their difference to European values. Therefore, a network is formed in which Scottish and British values are compared by means of their similarity to European values. Returning to Eder's models of European identity, this can be understood as a supra-national narrative network, whereby 'national stories are linked to a centre which constitutes the connection between national stories via this centre' (Eder, 2009:438). As already shown in chapter 2, this network may be illustrated as follows:
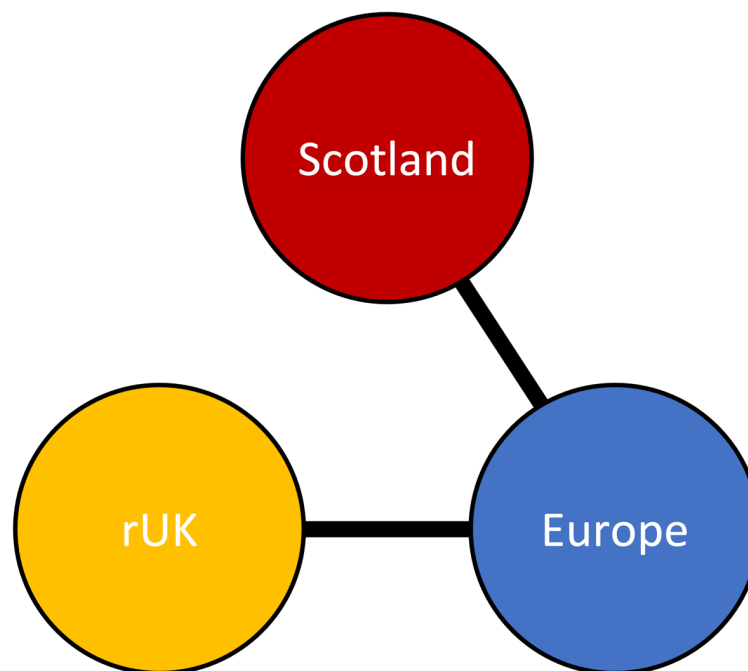
Figure 7.11: Diagram of a post-national narrative structure, in which 'national stories are linked to a [European] centre which constitutes the connection between national stories via this centre' (Eder, 2009:438).

These connections are enabled by a perceived similarity or difference in values, but their formation is also motivated by actions in the current context. The importance of actions became particularly clear when participants discussed the validity of European values based on the actions of the EU, although overall there appeared to be enough confidence in them to support the narrative network. But particularly crucial for this network are the actions of Scotland and Britain: the EU referendum, Britain's vote for Brexit and Scotland's rejection of it. There is a clear link between the referendum and narratives of values. It followed a debate in which values played an important role, and values also influenced the choice of many who voted in the referendum. To a certain extent then, the EU referendum provides an almost

tangible confirmation of the narrative network. It affirms a connection between Scotland and Europe and a disconnection between the rUK and Europe, and thus by extension supports the differentiation between Scotland and the rUK.
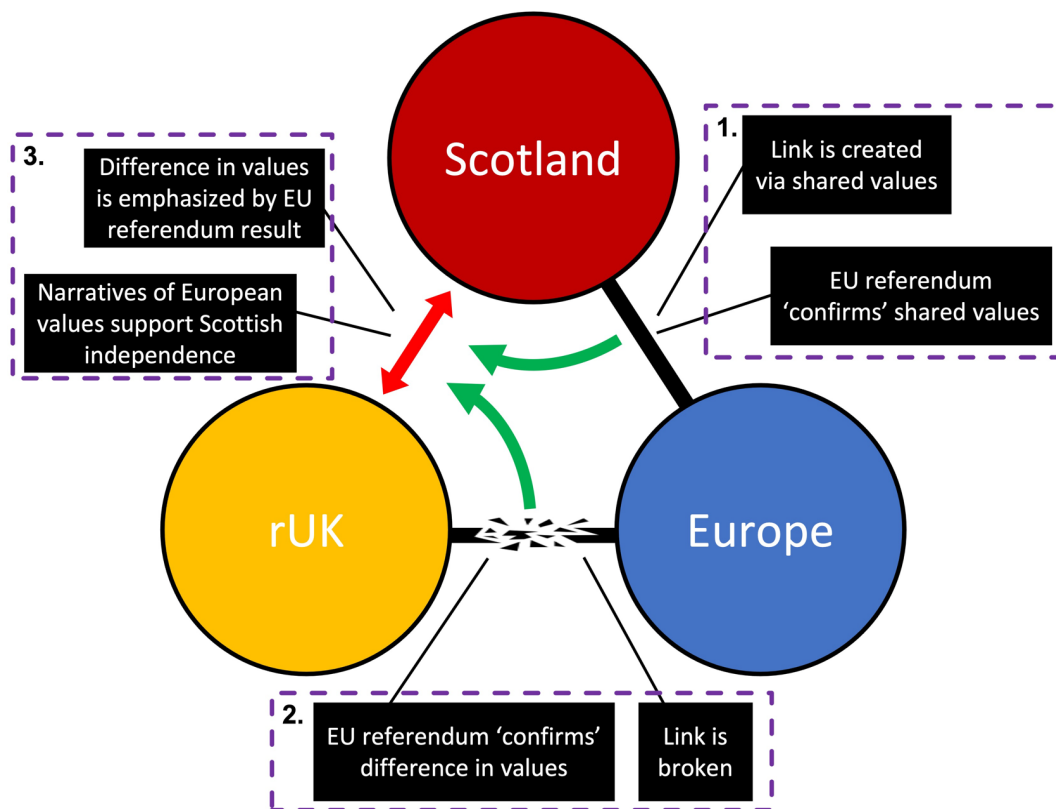

Figure 7.12: Similar to figure 7.11, but now with the narratives resulting from the EU referendum result. The perceived difference in Scottish and British similarity to European values supports the differentiation between Scotland and the rUK.

Eder argues that within the supra-national narrative network links between national stories happens via a central entity (in this case Europe) and not directly between each other (Eder, 2009:438). I would argue that within this application of the narrative network, direct connections between national stories *are* formed, but that they are heavily influenced by the connections between the national stories and the centre. Of course, there is still a form of direct connection between the Scottish and British national stories, albeit one which emphasizes difference and is heavily influenced by the nature of the national stories' individual relationships with Europe. These are so different to each other that they put pressure on the connection between Scotland and the rUK, thus forming a narrative supportive of Scottish independence. The meaning of Europe and its values within the narrative network then becomes quite significant within the larger narrative the independence movement is promoting: Europe and the values associated with it gain a form of soft power.

It will be interesting to see how this narrative network evolves, in particular if Scotland does become independent. In chapter 2 (see p. 49) I mentioned Habermas' idea of constitutional patriotism and a European identity forming itself around a value-based European constitution (Habermas, 2001). The formulation of a constitution of the EU was stopped after both France and the Netherlands voted against it in 2005, after the Treaty of European Union was further developed instead (resulting in the Lisbon Treaty). Currently, neither the UK nor the EU have a codified constitution, and Scotland is not (yet) an independent country with a constitution. But if Scotland becomes independent, questions on its constitution will inevitably arise, and this will present a creative opportunity to enshrine values within it.

During the fieldwork, I often ended interviews by asking participants what, if they were to have a say in the constitution of a future independent Scotland (or in a possible future constitution of the EU), would they add to it.[48] In most cases, the answers I got to these questions would refer to the moral values discussed in the first section of this chapter. Although this chapter has pointed to the diverse uses of the narratives formed around these values, they are still underpinned by a belief in what these *good* values are, and that a country or political organisation can be built around them. Perhaps, in case of independence, Scotland will develop a form of what Habermas would understand as constitutional patriotism. If so, this will hopefully inspire new value-based narrative networks across Europe.

7.3 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I wrote about the Scottish egalitarian myth and the European democratic myth. When discussing these myths with others, I have regularly been asked about their validity, or lack thereof. This remains a fair question to ask: is Scotland really an egalitarian place for all members in its society? Hardly (Hill, 2017:298–313). Is Europe truly a beacon of human rights? Not really (Pasture, 2015), the horrors happening in its border areas being but one example. But myths are not, and are not supposed to be, accurate descriptors of society. Instead, they should be interpreted as guides, reflecting our aspirations for society. Surely then, progressive values having emanated from the myths are a good thing if they inform society's decisions. *If* Scotland becomes independent and writes a new constitution, it will be interesting to see how these values permeate it (Neville, 2019).

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[48] This question was inspired by Jemma Neville's *Constitution Street* (2019).

In this chapter I have explored the presence and meaning of European values in the Scottish independence movement. I have approached these values from three different perspectives: first, sociologically, whereby I argued that within the movement, the European democratic myth is used to contribute to the validation of the Scottish egalitarian myth. The formed narrative connects both myths with each other. Second, I explored European values as values of meaningful difference, whereby European values are understood as the opposite of British values within the identity narrative. Thus, European values contribute to the formation of and differentiation with Britain as the other. Third, economically, whereby the link between Scottish and European values and the contrast between British and European values are used to support the argument for Scottish independence. I illustrated this with the Scotland is Now campaign, which is largely based on similar values as those used in the Scottish independence movement.

What appears is the formation of a narrative of supra-national European identity, whereby shared values are used to connect Scotland to Europe, and the difference between Scotland the rUK is emphasized. Thus, we return to the values of pluralism, diversity, and egalitarianism, all of which can be argued to be a variation on the recognition of individuality. Of all the different values discussed in this chapter, this is the key value. This is not surprising: in the end, the aim of the Scottish independence movement is for Scotland to be recognised as an equal to other independent nations, be it the UK or others in Europe. To repeat one of the participants and Winnie Ewing: 'stop the world, Scotland wants to get on' (Mitchell, 2017).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In May 2021 there was a Scottish parliamentary election. For over a year, the world had been gripped by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and just as everywhere else this was one of the main themes of the election. But in April 2021 I received a campaign poster in my letterbox which left beyond doubt that despite the current health situation, the themes I started studying over 3 years earlier were also still as important as ever:

Figure 8.1: A promotional poster for Catriona MacDonald, who represented the SNP in Edinburgh South in the 2021 Scottish Parliament Elections. She did not win. Photo by author.

For a few weeks, people who walked by our flat would read that we identify as being European. Some passers-by will have sympathized with the statement, others less so, but I doubt anyone would have thought it was strange to see this poster. Politicized symbols of Europe had become common across Scotland, and this poster will not have looked out of

place. I could not help but think back to that first tutorial of my undergraduate degree, in which I said that I am European, which some of the other students dismissed. Now, only ten years later, we appeared to be declaring our Europeanness from our windows; how times had changed. But ironically, by the time I received this poster, my partner (who is an EU citizen) and I had started to plan our departure from Scotland. This was due to better future prospects on mainland Europe, but also because Brexit had made us feel increasingly uncomfortable in the UK. For some, these open declarations of Europeanness were too little, too late.

This campaign poster reflects several elements of my research. That someone standing for the SNP would use a European flag as the main symbol on a poster demonstrates the strategic advantage of the idea of Europe to the SNP and indeed the wider independence movement. This poster is as much a rallying cry for independence as it is a protest against Brexit, and it is clear these two aims are mutually beneficial. Catriona MacDonald, who stood for the SNP in my constituency and designed the poster, put a lot of effort in her campaign to connect with EU citizens, even speaking other EU languages in some of her campaign videos. She appeared to be aware of the European structures supporting the everyday, and presented the SNP, and thus independence, as a possible solution to maintain them. But the statement 'we are European' was not only aimed at EU citizens, but British citizens will also have felt represented by it. Many of them will link being European to a particular set of values, which is perhaps best explained as being opposite to the values expressed by Brexit.

8.1   Reflecting on the research

When I started this research, I set out to explore European identity within small states. Basing myself on small state theory, I believed that European identity and its meaning would play a particular role in small states, relating to the state's vulnerability and resilience. As explained in chapter 1, soon after starting I limited the focus of my research to the Scottish independence movement. Following Brexit and with the opportunity of a second referendum on independence, I explained that the independence movement formed a particular appropriate setting to explore these themes. I elaborated on both the spatial and political-historical context of Scotland's connection to Europe, from which it became clear that this relationship is fluid and can (and has) been interpreted in different ways by different people in different times.

In the second chapter I created a theoretical framework by presenting a literature review in three parts. The first part examined previous literature on Scotland's political relationship to

Europe and Brexit. I concluded that although the literature on Scotland and Brexit is increasing, it is still at an early stage and needs to be developed further. In particular, studies on Scottish identity in the aftermath of Brexit appear to be lacking. In the second part I elaborated on identity and European identity. I discuss the deep-essentialism of identity and present Eder's model of collective identities as appropriate understanding of identity for this research. Basing myself on these structures, I argue that my main interest lies in the meaning of European identity. The third part explored small state theory. I point to gaps in the literature on small states, which clearly suggest that the perception of vulnerability and smallness are connected to identity but do not elaborate adequately on how.

In chapters 3 and 4, I set out the discipline, philosophical assumptions, epistemology, and methodology of the thesis. I made a case for a creative ethnology in Europe, which is aware of European spaces but remains grounded in the local. I argued that creative ethnology encourages the researcher to be involved in their research, and this encourages the researcher to take an activist approach. Thus, moving on to my positionality, I identified myself as being European, and explained my background to this. I acknowledged that this background does provide me with particular privileges in the field. I also explained that I support Scottish independence and oppose Brexit. In the methodology, I outlined the boundaries of the field and explained how I gained access to it. I also discussed my use of ethnography as a method, and my use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations to collect data.

Returning to the question I asked at the beginning of this thesis, following the 2016 EU referendum, for members of the Scottish independence movement, what *is* the meaning of Europe? There is, of course, not one answer to this question. Within this liminal time, Europe remains a deeply multidimensional, abstract, and flexible concept. It means many things to different people. But considering this thesis, what I think can be said is that within the field of the research, the meaning(s) of Europe have *changed* and *increased*. This was reflected in all aspects of the original research question.

In response to the first aspect of the research question (*What is the meaning of Europe to the argument, purpose, and continuation of the Scottish independence movement?*), in chapter 5 I argued that there were multiple reactions to Brexit within the movement. Some were angry and frustrated, other were more hopeful; overall, there was awareness of the opportunity Brexit may bring. Members recognised that it might result in another referendum on

independence being held a lot earlier than thought after the 2014 referendum, and also that it may result in more people supporting Scottish independence.

Building on this strategic potential, some in the movement started to emphasize how 'Scotland' voted to remain. But not all members were pleased with this development. Those who oppose EU membership and voted for Brexit felt their opinion was not given enough attention, and in some cases no longer felt comfortable in the movement. But whether they like it or not, and regardless of whether supporters of independence approve or disapprove of EU membership, Brexit cemented European integration as a central issue for the independence movement. Whereas it may have been given comparatively little attention in the run-up to the 2014 referendum, and even right up until the EU referendum, I do not believe this will be possible anymore in future campaigns for independence.

In response to the second aspect of the research question (*What is the meaning of Europe to the everyday lives of independence supporters, and their envisioned everyday lives in an independent Scotland?*), chapter 6 explained how the effects of Brexit became increasingly visible to the daily lives of members of the independence movement. Participants spoke of how their lives and livelihoods would be affected by the departure, with a particular focus on crucial contributors to local communities, such as funders of infrastructure, fishing and farming, and local healthcare. Particularly interesting were the several respondents who said that others in their communities were not yet aware of the consequences but would become so over time. There appeared to be a lack of clarity within communities on how they benefited from European integration, only to realise it once it was starting to disintegrate. I argued this was a process of realising the embedded locality of Europe, and that realising the full extent of European integration would be difficult for most people living in the EU - until, of course, these structures supporting the everyday start to collapse. This disintegration thus challenged the idea that Europe was somewhere else, as elaborated on in chapter 1 (see section 1.2).

For EU-citizens living in Scotland, Brexit shook the very fundaments of their lifeworlds, because their ability to live in Scotland was originally provided by European integration. Their responses were marked by fear-filled stories and rumours which had grown out of the unclarity of their situation. These participants found refuge in the idea of New Scots, which was positively compared to the attitude they faced from Westminster and its Brexit-rhetoric. This supported the idea that Scotland is different and more European than its Southern

neighbour. British citizens also felt deprived by Brexit, in particular those who rely on free movement across Europe for their working or family lives.

To those who felt negatively affected by Brexit for any reason, independence often appeared as a possible solution to these problems. Perhaps more so than what the meaning of Europe is to these participants, the interesting question becomes what the meaning of the nation, and by extension independence, is. I argued that Europe had not yet reached a post-national constellation, but instead a form of trans-border nationalism. The national forms a bridge between the local and the European, and the European becomes an extension to the national. Even though some participants lamented the fact that there were members in the independence movement whose main reason for their support was re-integration with the EU (see chapter 5), for those whose lifeworlds were built around this integration this becomes an understandable motive. But the effect of disintegration on local lifeworlds also put into focus Scotland's reliance on its external environment, and thus further questioned the nature of independence. Whether Scotland was 'big enough' to be independent then became a central question - revealing an underlying tension between those who want Scotland to be (completely) independent, and those who want Scotland to be *inter*dependent. This different interpretation of independence is similar to the difference in opinion revealed in chapter 5. The question of Europe thus puts pressure on underlying tensions in the movement, which will need to be addressed as it progresses post-Brexit.

Finally, in response to the third aspect of the question (*What is the meaning of Europe to the narrative of what Scotland is today, and what an independent Scotland should be in the future*), in chapter 7 I discussed the narrative of European values and their meaning, which I found to recur frequently during the fieldwork. There is a clear threefold meaning to this narrative. First, it is connected to the moral high ground created in the narrative of Scottish values. This narrative is not new to the movement, but the interconnection of the narrative of European values, and Scotland's majority vote during the EU referendum, result in a bi-directional 'confirmation' of both narratives. Europe thus confirms Scotland's moral high ground.

Second, the narrative of European values is used to differentiate Scotland from the rest of the UK, in particular England and Westminster. In this telling of the narrative, Brexit not only confirms Scotland's moral superiority, but by implication it also emphasizes Westminster's 'immorality', with a particular focus on its attitude to participating in political unions (both

European and British), and its colonial history. Concerning the former, the nature of equality, consent and recognition was frequently mentioned when participants compared both political unions. Participants argued that Scotland is not an equal within the British Union, whereas it would be in the EU. Further, the EU was perceived not to attempt to encourage assimilation, but instead recognises and supports local cultures and traditions. I connected this to theories of soft power and small state shelter and suggested that we can understand the processes which are happening within this narrative as a form of identity shelter: shelter is provided by recognising the identity of the shelter seeker. Concerning the latter, participants frequently connected Brexit to narratives of the British Empire. This is not unfounded, as a particular nostalgia for Britain's past was a frequent part of pro-Brexit narratives. But Scotland's contribution to (and benefits from) Britain's colonial history were less frequently mentioned during the fieldwork. A contemporary narrative formed around Brexit was therefore, at times, put into a historical context, and Scotland's contemporary connection to Europe played a role in Scotland's historical narrative, as well as being used to support the differentiation with British values. There did appear to be some change in this, with some in the movement recognising that values of remembrance and regret of Scotland's actions as part of the British Empire may further support the narrative of Scotland's moral high ground, an attitude favoured by other European states as well.

Third, both the confirmation of Scotland's moral high ground as well as the moral differentiation between Scotland and the rest of the UK support the narrative of Scottish independence. Thus, European values have *value* - a form of soft power which supports the argument for Scottish independence. This is recognised by some participants and may also be connected to prevalence of European symbols in pro-Scottish independence events. It is also recognised by both the SNP and the Scottish government. To demonstrate this, I discussed a case study on the Scotland is Now campaign, in which Scotland's European values are clearly presented as soft power attributes. Thus, it becomes a practical example of European values being used as soft power.

The narrative of European values within the context of the Scottish independence movement can therefore be understood in three different ways. I argue this is a supra-national narrative network, in which both Scotland and the UK have a particular link to Europe. Within this network, the relationship between Scotland and the UK is then affected by their respective relationships to Europe: the similarity between narratives of Scottish and European values, as well as the difference between narratives of British and European values which enhances the

differentiation between Scotland and the UK. Crucial support for this narrative structure, and therefore also to the validation of these value narratives, is found in the result of the EU referendum, where Scotland 'in its entirety' demonstrated its different connection to Europe. The meaning of Europe created by this structure is incorporated into the independence movement, where it has a clear soft power. But the moral element of these values cannot be ignored: the presence of this narrative structure also points to the hope of a better future for Scotland and Europe, which may be enshrined within a constitution one day.

8.2   Contributions to the literature and opportunities for further research

This PhD research will be of interest to those studying ethnology or anthropology, in particular studies focused on Scotland or Europe, but also to scholars of the political sciences, history, and sociology. The data presented in this thesis, having been collected using ethnographic methods during a period which is and will remain historically significant, is also useful to a broad range of disciplines.

First, the ethnographic fieldwork presented in this thesis shines a light on the Scottish independence movement during an important period of its development. The political context in which the research took place quickly and constantly developed while I worked on this project. Even though this presented challenges at times, it also resulted in data which was contemporary during a period of significant political change. This is not a historical study, but because of its contemporary data it will be of interest not only to ethnologists, but also to those studying Brexit and its consequences in the future. In the first chapter I presented a concise history of Scottish nationalism and Britain's participation in European integration. This research is the next step in this history. What this also means is that the topics explored in this thesis will need to be returned to as Brexit and the debate on Scottish nationalism continue to evolve. This work presents a snapshot in this story, the beginning of which has been told before, and the continuation of which still needs to be told.

As discussed in chapter 2, research on Scotland and Europe; and in particular research on the relationship between Scottish nationalism and Europe; is limited. A clear exception of this is Ichijo's 'Scottish nationalism and the idea of Europe: concepts of Europe and the nation' (2004), which tackled similar topics as I did in this thesis. But with almost 20 turbulent years since its publication, this thesis presents a necessary update, and will thus be of interest to those studying Scottish nationalism.

This thesis makes an important contribution to the research on Brexit, which is still in its infancy and is quickly developing. At the time of writing, and as discussed in chapter 2, Scotland remains a limited theme in the literature on Brexit, and I hope this work will help to fill that gap to a certain extent. It elaborates on the widely spread assumption that Brexit will result in Scottish independence, giving insight on how Brexit and the question of European integration have influenced the Scottish independence movement. In particular, it shines some light on the divisions over the question of European integration present within the movement, which are often dismissed or ignored within the movement itself or in the media (see p. 107). As the fieldwork for the research was done during the transitory phase before Brexit actually happened, this is only an introductory look and will need to be examined further in future research.

The theoretical framework of the research was built on the study of identity as well as on small state studies. Regarding the former, the research presents new and interesting angles on the research of European identity. First, by contributing to the slowly developing but important research on the effects of Brexit on the daily life of people living in the UK, the thesis connects European disintegration to the awareness of Euroland and the relationship between the local and the European. I believe this ethnology of European disintegration is an interesting topic with significant potential for further research. Although I examined how these consequences affected the Scottish independence movement, this research can and should be extended to other groups and communities across the UK, or indeed British citizens living in the EU. Having moved back to the EU myself, I hope to do more research on the effects of Brexit on the everyday of people living in EU states. The topic of European disintegration could also be extended beyond Brexit. Other nations in Europe could be focused on, albeit in a historic sense: the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, etc. And if Scotland does become an independent country in the future, the disintegration of the United Kingdom could also be examined.

Second, the discussion presented in chapter 7 on the role of European values in the narratives of the movement is a new contribution to the literature on Scottish nationalism as well as on European values. On the former, the data builds on the work done by Berg (2016), who wrote about values in the movement, by focusing on European values and their meaning in particular. Concerning the latter, this research presents a new angle on European values outside of their use by the European institutions. It would surprise me if the Scottish independence movement were unique in having incorporated European values into its

narrative, and a comparison of their use in other political movements would make an interesting study.

The case study of European values as a source of soft power also makes important contributions to the theory on soft power. First, it explores the use of progressive values as a form of soft power. This has been referred to by others (for example: Meijen, 2020), but not yet adequately researched. Second, soft power is currently predominantly studied from the perspective of the political sciences (for a good overview, see Chitty *et al.* (eds), 2017). Approaching it from an ethnological perspective is not only new, but also necessary considering the cultural implications of the concept. I believe further studies on soft power using an ethnological or anthropological framework are both possible and necessary. To start this process, based on the case study presented in this thesis, together with Dr. Katerina Strani I have written a chapter for the Routledge Handbook of Soft Power (2nd Edition, forthcoming).

Regarding small state studies, the research provides an ethnological perspective on the concepts of smallness and vulnerability and how they are perceived in the everyday. In chapter 6, the concept of perceived size and the awareness of vulnerability was examined. The data suggested that an increase of this awareness did influence participants' ideas of what form independence should take, and thus indirectly on the importance of a shelter alliance with Europe. In chapter 7, I applied the idea of shelter to the concept of identity, suggesting a form of *shelter identity*, whereby participants felt their local identities was protected by being linked to another, larger identity, suggesting that concepts of small state theory can be applied to, and have consequences in, the everyday. I believe this data points into encouraging directions, but to be able to make a strong contribution to small state theory further research on the topic will be required, notably in other European small states. As explained in chapter 1 as well as in the previous section, when I started this research, I intended to do a comparative study of the perception of European identity in different small European states. Although for this research it made sense to just focus on the Scottish independence movement, the next step will be to revisit that original idea. I do still intend to examine the link between the perception of vulnerability and European identity in other small states, for example in the Baltic states.

8.3   Final thoughts

This research has shone a light on the complexity of Scotland's relationship with Europe. Although the independence movement is particular to Scotland, many of the problems discussed in this thesis have been experienced in other parts of the UK as well. What made Brexit problematic, was that such an incredibly complex and multidimensional issue was condensed into a binary question. If another referendum on Scottish independence is to be held, Scotland will be faced with such a problem again. Brexit has put many of the consequences of disintegration in the spotlight, and the Scottish independence movement will need to be prepared for facing similar issues in the case of Scottish independence. Keeping in mind the enthusiasm, creativity, and the will to do good of the people I spoke to during this research, I am confident that this will not be a problem.

But this project has not only been about the future of Scotland, it is also about the future of Europe. It is clear from this research that to many people, Europe is deeply meaningful, and that the idea of Europe is still associated with particular values and hopes for a positive future. Even though Brexit will most likely be remembered as a setback for European integration, it must be noted that for many in Scotland, the UK, and beyond, it was a rallying call for the European dream. Despite the multi-crises which it has faced over the past years, the EU is still believed in by many. To avoid events like Brexit from happening again, the EU will need to continue to develop awareness of its functions amongst its citizens and aim to inspire more of them. It can learn from the Scottish independence movement what inspired people to wave a European flag at a march. But in doing so it must also recognise the willingness of those in the independence movement to think outside the box, and to make big changes for a better future.

Finally, then, I would like to look to the future. The question of Scottish independence is ultimately a very creative question: if we could create a new state, what would it be like? This creative spirit with which the independence movement addresses the variety of potential answers to this question, is something I hope will be applied to Europe as well. The EU is also still relatively young, and the future of Europe is by no means fixed (to which Brexit is a testament, or indeed Putin's invasion of Ukraine). To borrow a phrase often used in the independence movement: live like we are in the early days of a better Europe. This better Europe will only come to be if Europeans continue to work together, and that includes the willingness to make compromises and concessions. If we do so, the results then can be of

enormous potential, allowing small states (and there truly are only small states in Europe) to punch above their weight. I sincerely hope that soon, Scotland will be able to contribute to the EU once again, but this time on its own terms and values.

Appendix I: List of powers devolved to Scotland and those reserved to the UK

Powers devolved to Scotland:

- Abortion
- Agriculture, forestry and fisheries
- Consumer advocacy and advice
- Drink-drive limit
- Economic development
- Education, training and skills
- Environment and planning
- Equal Opportunities in relation to public bodies in Scotland
- Fire and rescue services
- Health and social services
- Housing
- Justice and policing Charity law
- Landfill tax
- Licensing of onshore oil and gas extraction
- Local government
- Management of Crown Estate assets in Scotland
- Policing of railways in Scotland
- Regulate air weapons
- Road signs and speed limits
- Scottish Parliament and local government elections
- Some income tax (incl. ability to set rates and thresholds)
- Some social security elements
- Stamp duty
- Tax on carriage of passengers by air (Air Passenger Duty due 2018)
- Tourism, sport, culture and heritage
- Transport
- Water and flood defence

Powers reserved to the UK (in Scotland):

- Competition Intellectual property Honours
- Defence and national security
- Elections to UK and European Parliaments
- Employment law Cross-border rail
- Energy
- Equal opportunities[49]
- Financial services and pensions regulation
- Foreign affairs
- Genetics, surrogacy, medicines, embryology
- International development
- International trade and financial markets
- Macroeconomic and fiscal matters
- National Minimum Wage
- Nationality, immigration and asylum
- Regulation of air services and international shipping Broadcasting
- Social security[49]
- Telecommunications and wireless services Foreshore and seabed
- The Civil Service Postal services
- The constitution

(The British Government, 2019)

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[49] Except elements devolved by Scotland Act 2016.

Appendix II: List of groups supporting Scottish independence

This list is based on the database of the National Yes Registry. Considering the grassroots nature of these groups, it is likely some are no longer active and that there are other active groups which are not included. It should therefore only be viewed as an approximation.

AIM for YES GV&WK

Alba Propaganda Resistance

All Under One Banner

Artists for YES

Aye Fyne

Australians for Scottish Independence

Ayrshire Independence Movement

Blether-In Hub, Forfar

English Scots for Independence

EU Citizens for an Independent Scotland

Farming4Yes

Forces For Independent Scotland

Forward Stenhousemuir

Freedom Convoy Group

Freedom Scotland

I am voting For Indy Scotland

It just has to be a YES vote

Labour for Independence

Lanarkshire Forum for Independence

Lomond North

Montrose Blether-in Hub

Navy Not Nuclear

National YES Registry

NHS for YES

Oil of Scotland

Over 60's for Scottish Independence.

Scotland for independence

Scotland Scottish

Scotland - The Way Forward

Scots in Awe that

Scottish Farming+Fisheries for YES

Scottish Freedom

Scottish Independence Group

Scottish Pensioners for Independence

Scottish Socialists for Independence

SNP Supporters Independence Page

Tayport Yes Social

The Indy Girls

The YES Movement

Unleash the Unicorn to Independence

Women for Independence

YES 2 Aberdeenshire West

YES 2 INDY 2

YES 2 Scottish Independence

YES Aberdeen 2

YES Alliance Hub

YES Alloa

YES Argyll

YES AYR for Scottish Independence

YES Bearsden, Milngavie & Westerton

YES Berwickshire

YES Bikers for Scottish Independence

YES Blairgowrie

YES Boness

YES Borders

YES Bute

YES Carluke

YES Carnoustie

YES Clackmannanshire

YES Clydebank

YES Clydesdale

YES Cowal Argyll

YES Cumbernauld

YES Cumnock

YES Drymen and Buchanan

YES Dumbarton

YES Dumfries

YES Dumfries and Galloway

YES Dundee

YES Dunfermline

YES Dunfermline & West Fife

YES East Ayrshire

YES East Dunbartonshire

YES Earlston

YES East Kilbride

YES Edinburgh North and Leith

YES Edinburgh South

YES Edinburgh West

YES Elgin

YES Eyemouth

YES Falkirk

YES Falkirk Bairns

YES For Caithness

YES Forfar

YES Garnock Valley and West Kilbride

YES Glasgow

YES Glenrothes

YES Grangemouth

YES Hawick

YES Helensburgh & Lomond

YES Highland

YES Insch 2

YES Inverness

YES Inverness Movement

YES Islay

YES Jedburgh

YES Kelty

YES Kilmarnock

YES Kilwinning

YES Kinross

YES Kirkcaldy

YES Kirkintilloch Lenzie & the Villages

YES Kirriemuir

YES Lanark

YES Largs

YES Linlithgow

YES Loanhead & Bonnyrigg

YES Lockerbie

YES Mallaig

YES Marchmont and Morningside

YES Mid Argyll

YES Monifieth

YES Moray

YES Motherwell & Wishaw

YES NEF (North east Fife)

YES Oban

YES Orkney

YES Paisley

YES Pathhead

YES Penicuik

YES Pentlands

YES Perth & Kinross

YES Renfrew

YES Sanquhar

YES Shetland

YES Skye & Lochalsh

YES Stirling

YES Strathdon

YES TOO

YES Troon

YES Tweeddale

YES West Dunbartonshire

YES2 Stonehaven & Mearns

YES St Andrews

YesWeCan

Appendix III: Participant consent form

Each participant in the research filled in two copies of this form, one for me and one for them to keep. The form was approved by the Heriot-Watt University Ethics Committee.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY

(Preliminary) **Research Title:** European Identity in the Scottish Independence Movement

Researcher: Alastair Mackie

What is the purpose of this research?

This research project explores the narratives of European identity within the Scottish independence movement, with a particular focus on the relation between the perception of European identity and the imagining of Scotland as an independent small state.

Please read the following questions thoroughly and tick yes or no as appropriate:

		Yes	No
1.	I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any of the details of the research project.		
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without receiving a penalty for doing so.		
3.	I agree to allow the interview to be audio recorded and photographed. I understand that all recordings will **only** be used for analysis while writing the thesis or any publications.		
4.	I request to remain anonymous in the PhD thesis and any other publications.		
5A.	I agree to the use of extracts from the interviews as quotes in the PhD thesis and any other publications. *If No, skip to question 6.*		
5B.	I agree that my initials will be used with quotes from this interview in the PhD thesis and any other publications. I understand that my full name will never be used in any publication. *I understand that if No, or in case of having selected No to question 4, alternative (anonymous) initials will be used.*		
6.	I agree to take part in this study on the above terms.		

_____   _____   _____
Participant   Signature   Date

ALASTAIR MACKIE_____   _____   _____
Researcher   Signature   Date

Should you have any further questions, please contact Alastair at: am279@hw.ac.uk

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