

Candidate 2 evidence

Topic: Scottish Governance

Framing the issue:

It has been a debate for many years whether Scotland should be independently governed separate from the United Kingdom (Wales, England, and Northern Ireland). The Scottish National Party also known as the SNP which was formed in 1934 is pro-independence for Scotland and that is their main aim in their manifesto. In 2014 a referendum was held about Scottish Independence, results showed that 55% of Scottish people wish to remain part of the United Kingdom and 45% of Scottish people would rather be independently governed. Even though the majority of the Scottish population did not wish for Scottish independence, it has not stopped the SNP campaigning for it. Statistics show that in 2024 if a second referendum was held 47% of Scottish people would wish for Scottish independence, this clearly highlights that there has been an increase in support over the decade. A recent YouGov poll shows that many people feel that there has been a change in the Scottish constitution, this means that it is arguably necessary for a second referendum about Scottish independence, this has caused issues in Scottish politics as there are only two main political parties in Scotland that are pro-independence, SNP and The Greens. The SNP are unable to enter into coalitions so this leaves the option of forming minority governments. There are other options apart from Scotland leaving the United Kingdom that are devo-max and revoking devolution and re-joining a central UK government. Devo-max isn't Scottish independence however it allows Scotland to gain more independence with how they are run as a country and revoking devolution and re-joining a central UK government means Scotland would not get any say with how they are operated as a country and would get less political freedom.

Options

Option one: Scotland should be independent

Option two: Devo-max

Option three: Revoke devolution and re-join a central UK government

Recommendations:

This assignment recommends option one: Scotland should be independent.

Option one: Scotland should be independent

Scotland also benefits from many UK services such as the BBC and if Scotland were to be governed independently they would need to rebuilding all of these services and public sector organisations from scratch which would be costly and not time efficient. For example, source five entails, "Scotland benefits from over 200 United Kingdom institution and services, including the BBC". This shows that Scotland do rely on the United Kingdom for a lot of their services and rebuilding that back up would take a while therefore meaning the Scottish population would need to go without these specific services until Scotland eventually make their own.

However, Scotland being apart of the UK allows them to have really strong trade connections, this means without the rest of the UK some could argue that Scotland's economy wouldn't be as strong. For example, according to source four, "Scotland's exports to the rest of the UK valued an estimated £48.6 billion in 2021 and accounted for over half (61%) of all Scotland's exports." This highlights that Scotland

being a part of the UK clearly benefits their trade and economy as if they were to become independent the other three countries of the United Kingdom may choose that they can get whatever Scotland is exporting from another country. This would lead to Scotland losing revenue and trading relationships.

Scottish independence means that if Scotland were to completely leave the United Kingdom and be independently governed separate from the UK. Scotland have lots of different industry's which the UK rely on Scotland for such as the North Sea for fishing, oil and gas. According to source two, "In 2021, Scotland accounted for 90% of the UK's sales and value of oil and gas." This then clearly shows that if Scotland were to become independent they could still trade internationally for their economy. Meaning Scotland would still have an industry for trade and imports.

Since the last referendum there has been a growing increase for Scottish independence due to decisions affecting Scotland are being made by British Parliament (Westminster) such as Brexit, overall Scotland did not want Brexit but due to size of England and Wales, Scotland is now having to suffer from their decisions.

Option two: Devo-max

My second option I will be discussing is devo-max. Devo-max is constitutional alternative to Scottish independence by which Scotland would be given economic independence from the rest of the UK but would still be governed by the British Parliament in certain aspects such as defence and foreign policy. Devo-max is a popular second option of the Scottish population who wish for Scottish independence as devo-max gives Scotland independence but is still a part of the UK.

If Scotland were to get devo-max, they would be permitted full fiscal autonomy. This means that Scotland would get many powers which they currently do not have, these powers would be devolved straight to Holyrood (Scottish Parliament) excluding three as they will still be controlled by the British Parliament. For example, Scotland would get the powers to control tax and welfare budget if they were to get FFA. Scotland would not gain power over three matters: defence, foreign policy and welfare tax even though Scotland and Westminster disagree with one another on these issues.

Source seven entails that Westminster is strongly for foreign policy (Brexit) whereas Scotland is largely against some key issues such as Brexit, Trident and bedroom tax. Even if devo-max was implemented, there would still be issues involving the Scottish and UK government, this shows that devo-max isn't the most effective option for how Scotland should be governed. The Scottish parliament would gain the powers to make decisions in health, education, and policing. For example, Scotland dealt with high smoking rates which contributed to thousands of deaths by banning smoking in public areas, this shows how Scotland would benefit from devo-max as they're able to dictate what happens in their own country.

Scottish government and the UK government strongly disagree about Brexit. Since Brexit took place, it has made Scotland a poorer nation. This means that Brexit has had a detrimental effect on Scotland by bringing their economy down, even though Scotland didn't even want Brexit in the first place. This then shows that if devo-max

was brought forward there still would be major constitutional issues between both governments as they may disagree. Even if Scotland were presented with devo-max it would come with limitations, however, Scotland would gain full economic independence. For example, only 30% of people think that devo-max would improve Scotland's economy therefore demonstration that devo-max isn't a popular matter according to source ten, it can also be argued that Scotland benefits from being a part of a larger UK economic strength, this highlights a significant benefit of Scotland not having full independence over their economy as it shows that the UK helps with their economic strength.

Option three: Revoke devolution and re-join a central UK government

my third and final option that will be discussed is allow the option of re-joining a central UK government and revoke devolution. This means that Scotland would no longer have devolved powers and would be strictly controlled by Westminster.

Many people argue that devolution was created in a different political lifetime, therefore isn't what the UK needs anymore. A lot of the powers which migrated over to Scotland were at an EU level and couldn't actually be practiced. According to source eleven "devolution was about enabling powers to be exercised closer to the people in a more practical and accountable way. Instead, it has resulted in the creation of closed-shop fiefdoms, effective one-party." This suggests that rather than enhancing democracy, devolution has helped create a "one-party state" with prolonged period of control being handed to the SNP, however, Westminster has seen prolonged periods of one-party domination with the conservative party being in power since 2010 until earlier this year. Therefore, it seems unclear if getting rid of devolution would help encourage more balanced political control in Scotland.

YouGov conducted a poll which asked if the Scottish people wanted to abolish devolution which 63% of people voted against it. This shows that the majority of Scottish people still support and continue to want devolution. This then highlights that a significant amount of people do not wish to revoke devolution and re-join a central UK government, for example according to source 12, a petition was created that said "hold a referendum on ending devolution in Scotland." Out of the over five million people in Scotland only 16,529 people signed this petition. This clearly shows that Scottish people do not want to abolish devolution.

I asked the question to the public of Scotland if they want to re-join a central UK government and revoke devolution. From my survey (source 3) I conducted that 98% of respondents said they wouldn't want to re-join a central UK government and revoke devolution, this clearly highlights a lack of public support- this is bad as if this was in a political party's manifesto they could lose support.

Evaluating sources

Source one was a website news article written by Craig Paton, a conservative supporter, an advantage of using an online article is that I was able to find and collate my information and efficiently as I have already been published. However, a disadvantage of using this specific website is that it was about Scottish independence yet it was written by a conservative party supporter, the conservative

party do not support Scottish independence at all therefore making this article bias about Scottish Independence.

Source three was a survey which was conducted by myself and I asked the question: "Do you want Scotland to re-join a central UK government and revoke devolution?" an advantage of using a survey is that it was reliable as I collect the information so I know that none of the information is untrue or contain bias. However, a disadvantage of using a survey is that I was unable to ask a large scale of people as I only interviewed 20 people, this makes it not a fair representation of what the Scottish population truly thinks about how Scotland should be governed.

Conclusion

After vigilant consideration that option that I am choosing is option one: Scotland should be independent. Therefore, I am rejecting option two: Devo-max and I'm rejecting option three: Revoke devolution and re-join a central UK government. I am choosing option one because Scotland would be a strong independent country by themselves and not as a central UK government due to their strong fishing and oil establishments. But, also because in the rise of support of Scottish independence in recent years, independence would allow Scottish people to fully exploit and make use of their natural resources which would benefit the population greatly. This has increase public backing. I am rejecting option two because source nine highlights that although it gives Scotland more freedom than option three it still doesn't allow Scottish people to be governed how they would like to be, this means if Scotland were to revoke and re-join a central UK government they would essentially have no say or dictation to what happens to Scotland. This is because the UK government would get to control any issues, powers or matters which Scotland would've previously had.

Higher Modern Studies Assignment Resource sheet

Source one: 'Tory peer's suggestion of rolling back devolution condemned by party colleagues', "Scotland does not need to be an independent actor on the world stage; it should not be able to legislate to disrupt free trade within the UK" Accessed: 5th June 2024, published, 20th April 2023 by Craig Paton.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/devolution-scotland-snp-scottish-government-conservative-party-b2323348.html>

Source two: Accessed: 27th August 2024, published by believe in Scotland "In 2021, Scotland accounted for 90% of the UK's sales value of oil and gas"

<https://www.believeinscotland.org/is-it-true-that-scotlands-economy-is-dependent-on-oil#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20Scotland%20accounted%20for,is%20diverse%20and%20broad%2Dbased.>

Source three: survey

- Question: Do you want Scotland to rejoin a central UK government and revoke devolution?
- Respondents: 20
- Results: No-98%, Yes- 2%
- Date taken: 26th August 2024

Source four: Accessed 23rd September 2024, published 29th November 2023 by Scottish government, "Scotland's exports to the rest of the UK valued an estimated £48.6 billion in 2021 and accounted for over half (61%) of all Scotland's exports"

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/exports-statistics-scotland-2021/pages/exports-to-the-rest-of-the-uk-accounted-for-over-half-of-scotlands-total-exports/>

Source five: 'What staying in the United Kingdom means for Scotland.' Accessed 24th August 2024, published 2nd September 2024 by UK government, "Scotland benefits from over 200 United Kingdom institutions and services, including: the BBC"

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7eaf02e5274a2e87db13f0/FINAL_door_drop_leaflet.PDF

Source six: 'Devolved and Reserved Powers', "resolved matters include: benefits, foreign policy" accessed 3rd June 2023, published 23rd June 2023 by Scottish parliament

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/how-parliament-works/devolved-and-reserved-powers>

Source seven: "entails that Westminster is strongly for foreign policy (Brexit) whereas Scotland is against Brexit same with defence (trident) and bedroom tax (benefits)." Accessed 20th September 2024, published: 17th November 2023 by Angus Robertson MSP, title: "Building a New Scotland: an independent Scotland in the EU" <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-new-scotland-independent-scotland-eu/pages/9/>

Source eight: Accessed 6th September 2024, published 6th March 2024, 'Brexit and Scotland', "The Office for Budget Responsibility expects the UK's GDP to decrease by 4% annually in the long run which equates to roughly £3 billion." <https://www.gov.scot/publications/brexit-and-scotland-june-2023-update/>

Source nine: Accessed 8th September 2024, 'What is devo max, and could it be in a second Scottish independence referendum?' Published: January 2022 by Justin Bowie. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/politics/2955360/devo-max-scottish-independence-vote/>

Source ten: accessed 23rd September 2024, published by UK government. "The Scottish Parliament has the power to take decisions on issues like health, education and policing, to address Scottish needs. For example, to deal with high smoking rates in Scotland, which contributed to 13,000 deaths a year, the Scottish Parliament was the first in the UK to ban smoking in public places." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f018340f0b62305b8489b/Devolution_and_legal_implications_summary.pdf

Source eleven: Accessed 23rd September, published 19th April 2023 by George Frost. "Devolution was about enabling powers to be exercised closer to the people in a more practical and accountable way. Instead, it has resulted in the creation of closed-shop fiefdoms, effective one-party" <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/04/19/snp-implosion-is-a-chance-to-put-devolution-in-reverse/>

Source twelve: accessed 23rd September 2024, published by UK Parliament. "Hold a referendum on ending devolution in Scotland, 16,529 signatures out of 100,000" <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/634090>