

Abstract

The Scottish National Party (SNP) is the party supporting Scottish secession and also Scotland's dominant party, having won every election since 2007. In a situation where the SNP and a significant number of Scots hope for an early repeat of the Scottish independence referendum, this thesis seeks to explore the main themes and definitions of nationalism as conceived by the SNP by applying the method of thematic analysis to SNP election manifestos from the period between 2007 and 2021. Based on this analysis, the thesis identifies three main themes through which the SNP shapes Scottish nationalism. Scottish nationalism as represented by the SNP is reflected in the construction of national identity, the notion of Scottish citizenship based on territory and belonging to the Scottish nation. Scotland defines itself through egalitarianism and community values. The SNP's vision is then of a just society following the party's social democratic ideology, sharing a sense of Scottish culture and global issues. The party's overall political strategy can be seen as a deepening departure from the economic and social status quo within the Union, with independence being a gradual process whereby the Scottish Parliament would continue to grow in power through devolution from Westminster, but at the same time Scotland would share sovereignty within the EU.