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GRADUATE COLLEGE

QUESTIONS TO THE FIRST MINISTER OF SCOTLAND

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

BY

JEFFERY J. GENTRY

Norman, Oklahoma

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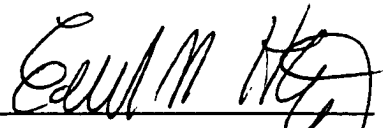
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QUESTIONS TO THE FIRST MINISTER OF SCOTLAND

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

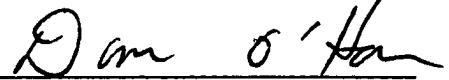
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Questions to the First Minister of Scotland

Abstract

Political communication research traditionally has focussed on media coverage of politics. At the same time, a rhetorical perspective has informed most scholarship on the subject of direct politician discourse. The present study crosses the epistemological divide by applying quantitative content analysis to the subject of parliamentary discourse: specifically the Scottish Parliament's weekly forum known as First Minister's Questions. The study begins by outlining a history of Scottish political history and Nationalism. Then a review of the salient literature is provided, including points of justification and a survey of the methods, studies, and theories that have been applied to British parliamentary communication. The present research is grounded in opposition theory and argumentation theory, resulting in 17 hypotheses concerning the communication of Parliament.

Three independent coders applied a quantitative content analysis to the first 96 sessions of First Minister's Questions, from July 1999 to March 2002. Results suggested, among other inferences, that: (1) coalition membership explains more variation in communication content than does political party, (2) the Labour-Liberal Democratic coalition remained relatively cohesive, despite the ambivalent communication of regional-list members, (3) while argumentative, Opposition questions took few

opportunities to advance its own policies, question the Scottish Executive's future proposals, or drive a wedge between the coalition members, (4) First Ministers were more open about discussing the topic of independence than was the Scottish National Party, (5) negative communication was arbitrary rather than merely reciprocated, suggesting a vigorous but collegial argument environment, (6) First Ministers took more care when answering questions from Opposition constituency members than either party leaders or list members, and (7) the tone of communication became more amiable over the passage of time.

Results suggest that despite the efforts of the Parliament's framers, communication by both the Coalition and Opposition may have reflected a resigned acceptance of the historically-limited role of the Opposition in debating the merits of future government policies. Taken as a whole, these patterns of communication infer an inadvertent arrogance by the Government and a lack of argument sophistication by the Opposition. The study concludes that: (1) opposition theory should be expanded to account for factors of parliamentary communication that may reveal an opposition's functionality, (2) the present study's system of coding the content of parliamentary discourse provides scholars an empirical method with which to test the communication implications of their theories, and (3) content analysis itself is recommended as a valuable tool in unlocking patterns of political discourse that would remain inaccessible via qualitative methods of research.

Questions to the First Minister of Scotland

Chapter I

Introduction

On 1 May 2003 voters across Scotland entered polling stations in only the second general election in the nation's 1160-year history. The election results likely meant that the Labour Party's coalition government with their Liberal Democratic partners will resume for a second four-year term. Thus despite a sluggish economy, public frustration with the limited powers of Parliament, and a politically-polarizing war in the Middle East, the Labour Party's long reign over Scottish politics continues. The political spectrum in Scotland counts among its factions a group of strict Unionists, who prefer unitary rule from the British Parliament, as well as a number of strident Nationalists, who believe in the resumption of a sovereign Scottish state. The centrist Labour Party has dominated Scottish politics by plying the ground between strict Unionism on the one side, and breakaway Nationalism on the other.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) is Labour's only legitimate threat to parliamentary supremacy. The SNP's signature policy of independence from the United Kingdom has earned it a firm but limited electoral appeal, as most polls since the 1980s have found a ceiling of about 30% support for full sovereignty (Keating, 2001). Labour had a fairly easy task in 1999 because their U.K. Leader, Tony Blair, delivered the new

devolved Parliament via the Scotland Act. This law provided for a referendum, approved by voters in 1997, that gave Scots control over many legislative issues. They could even raise or lower taxes by up to three percent. It was believed that such a devolved regional parliament could overcome the “democratic deficit” resulting from being represented by only 73 seats out of 659 in the British Parliament (Pittock, 2001, p. 120).

Naturally, voters rewarded the Labour Party in 1999 with a controlling plurality in the new Parliament. But how long would this loyalty last? Fortunately for the SNP, support for independence increased to 44% by January 2003, prompting Leader John Swinney to reverse his previous reticence about such talk and announce that independence was the next big idea in Scotland (e-Politics.com, 2003). More telling was the fact that 42% of Labour supporters now favored independence, as well as a majority of all demographic groups under age 55. Even two years ago Brown (2001) predicted that 2003 would promise a more hotly-contested election than was the predictable outcome of 1999. This is because the Parliament remains weakest where demand for change is the greatest, such as funding the National Health Service and spending on education (Keating, 2001). Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) have to be listening to the two-thirds of the public who say the powers of Parliament are insufficient (McCrone, 2002). The resulting potential for conflict between Great Britain’s two parliaments may lead Scots to demand greater control over their nation’s affairs, and thus throw support to the Nationalists (Keating, 2001).

Against the backdrop of the 2003 campaign is the fresh memory of the just-adjourned inaugural parliamentary term. The first democratically-elected Scottish Parliament in history was sworn in during May 1999 after nearly three centuries of singular rule by the British Houses of Parliament at Westminster, London. As approved by voters in the 1997 referendum, Britain now had two parliaments for the first time since the Treaty of Union adjourned the Edinburgh chamber in 1707. The Westminster Parliament would continue to rule on broader issues such as foreign policy and the National Health Service, but the Scottish Parliament would control many of the issues affecting everyday life, such as health care administration, education, and criminal justice. The Parliament convened amidst great expectations and excitement. With the permanent building under construction over the entire term, Members of the Scottish Parliament met at Edinburgh's Church of Scotland General Assembly Hall. The present study seeks to bring greater understanding about the communication that took place there.

Framers of the Scottish Parliament attempted to respond to public concerns about the lack of Executive accountability and the flouting of minority rights in the British Parliament. The Consultative Steering Group (GSG), chaired by future First Minister Henry McLeish, literally wrote the book on how the Parliament would operate. Featured aims included power sharing, accountability, access and participation, and equal opportunities (Paterson, et al., 2001). These goals resulted in substantial differences at Holyrood, such as the use of additional-member proportional representation (PR). Unlike

Westminster's first-past-the-post system, which is likewise used in American elections, PR ensures that a political party's representation in the legislature will more nearly match its overall electoral strength. Under first-past-the post, for example, Scottish Labour would have controlled 73% of the seats in the inaugural Parliament with only 43% of the ballots cast. Instead they led the Parliament with the same proportion as their share of the vote: 43%. Despite PR and other reforms, however, several elements of the Westminster Parliament were retained. One of these was the long-standing institution of Question Time, in which Government ministers are required to respond to the questions of other members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The official purpose of such questions, asked by members of both the leading party(s) and the Opposition, is to hold the Government to account (Watson, 2001; Official Report, 2003).

First Minister's Questions

The best-known segment of Question Time, as well as the highlight of all debate in the Scottish Parliament, is FMQs: First Minister's Questions (Alderman, 1992). FMQs are broadcast live on Thursday afternoons, are replayed in their entirety during the evening, and are closely covered in all of the Scottish national media (McLeish, 2002). The incumbent First Minister is Jack McConnell of the Labour Party. Each Thursday that Parliament is in session he spends twenty minutes fielding questions from Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The Leader of the Opposition is the SNP's John Swinney. For the first few minutes of each session, these two debaters match wits on the

leading controversies of the parliamentary week. After their four questions and answers, the Leader of the next largest party asks the First Minister three questions. This man is David McLetchie of the Conservative Party. About eight more MSPs will have an opportunity to engage the First Minister. Most of these are randomly selected by computer from all the members who wish to ask a question that week. Questions from coalition members often serve to flatter the First Minister, while those from the loyal Opposition are sometimes ruthless.

Thus far nearly all scholarship on the subject of Question Time has focussed on the British Parliament, and there is little of that. Jones (1973) and Alderman (1992) completed the most detailed studies of Prime Minister's questions, but both of these are highly conjectural and are based mainly on anecdotal observations. The paucity of rigorous scholarship on Question Time should not be interpreted to mean that it lacks importance as an artifact of British political communication. According to Alderman (1992), success during Question Time is vital to a Leader of Government and even more so to his counterpart, the Leader of the Opposition. Numerous scholars such as Watts (1997) criticize the histrionic tone of the British style of Question Time, yet they acknowledge that it is the one forum in Parliament that receives a committed level of attention by members, the news media, and the public.

Question Time is also important as a stage for the Leader of the Opposition. Because the Scottish Parliament has no second chamber such as a House of Lords, and no

separate executive branch, MSPs are the first and last architects of legislation in Scotland.

This unitary system of government, similar to that at Westminster, means that the Opposition has few Constitutionally-guaranteed avenues to press its rights (Borthwick, 1984). Question Time permits the Leader of the Opposition to bring his own ideas into the Parliament's dialogue and fulfill his role under the Scotland Act to hold the Executive to account (Official Report, 2003).

Previous research on Scottish politics and political communication has suffered from an over-reliance on conjectural analysis and polemics (Mitchell, 2001), as well as a general lack of attention to communication (Norris, 2001). The content of Question Time, for example, appears to have been ignored thus far by researchers trained in empirical methods. The sum of these handicaps has led to superficial and even reactionary conclusions about the Scottish Parliament, informed only by the results of opinion polls or anecdotal observations. According to Mitchell (2001) and Paterson, et al. (2001), a greater understanding of Scottish politics can only come from new methods of understanding and the gathering of hard evidence. The present study attempts to begin fulfilling the challenge posed by Mitchell and Paterson, et al. by applying quantitative content analysis to a large data set of First Minister's Questions. In so doing it attempts to cross an epistemological divide, under which content analysis has generally been restricted to media-filtered politics and direct politician discourse is only tested via qualitative methods.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter II provides the reader unfamiliar with Scottish political history a brief sketch of the events leading up to 1999, when the first Scottish Parliament in 292 years was sworn in. Mainly the focus is on issues related to Scottish Nationalism and the SNP, as the Parliament itself was principally established to address Nationalist concerns (McLeish, 2002). Then Chapter III offers a review of the salient literature in political communication, utilizing a focus that moves from general-to-specific. Included are sections on research methods and studies of British political communication, scholarship directly applicable to Question Time, and a nine-point justification for studying First Minister's Questions.

The fourth chapter provides the theoretical grounding of the present study. Although no fully-formed theory of parliamentary discourse has been put forward, Dahl's (1966) theory of opposition can be applied to the Scottish Parliament through a communication lens. Relevant principles include whether parliamentary discourse indicates an institutional respect for the principle of political opposition, the Opposition's effectiveness in holding the Government to account, the Opposition's credibility as a government-in-waiting, and the its level of constructiveness-versus-intractability. Providing a nomenclature for coding parliamentary discourse is the stock issues theory of argumentation (Hill and Leeman, 1997; Weiss, 1995). These stock issues, which are used to judge the merits of future courses of legislative action, are known as harm, blame,

cure, and cost. Such a mingling of political science and communication theories is consistent with the inherently interdisciplinary nature of political communication studies. Moreover, the lack of an existing fully-formed theory is no justification to ignore an entire genre of political communication.

Chapters V details the study's research method and hypotheses. Categories of methods elaborated include the content analysis code book and coding sheet created for this study, tests of intercoder reliability, the general design of the study, content areas of analysis, and methods of data analysis. Data analysis is facilitated by analysis of variance (ANOVA), chi-square tests, and Spearman correlation data. The sixth chapter presents the results of the study, which covered 96 sessions, 1477 questions, and 1477 answers over 1000 days. General descriptive results on topic use and participation are followed by detailed statistical findings.

Finally, Chapter VII discusses the implications of these results on First Minister's Questions, as the hypotheses are reexamined through an inferential lens. Discussion includes analysis of what the results say about communication during FMQs, as well as their implications on opposition theory. Finally, conclusions are drawn about general patterns of communication during FMQs, the contributions of the study to political communication theory and research, and recommendations for further study.

In summary, the present study investigates how government and opposition are communicated via First Minister's Questions. Though not a comparative study, the

content of these sessions is one window through which one may discern whether Holyrood has escaped the long shadow cast by its mother Parliament. Understanding such issues requires a sketch of the nation's political history and the unique dimensions of Scottish Nationalism. Chapter II provides such an outline.

Chapter II

Scottish Political History and Nationalism

For Americans, political communication in the United Kingdom is both alien and strangely familiar—alien in the unique institutions and traditions there, and familiar in its historic role in our common democratic tradition. In 1999 the advent of home rule in Scotland, known as “devolution,” gave the island of Great Britain two parliaments for the first time in nearly 300 years. A fundamental institution of British parliamentary democracy involves “Question Time,” in which members are permitted to ask questions of the leader of government and her cabinet members regarding their ministerial responsibilities. Before addressing Question Time itself, however, the American reader may desire a greater familiarity with Scotland’s political history, including the phenomenon of nationalism. The present chapter (1) sketches a brief outline of Scottish national history to 1999, (2) describes and critiques the Scottish National Party’s 1999 parliamentary campaign, and (3) reports the general makeup of Scotland’s first ever democratically-elected Parliament.

Even today, Scotland’s history as an independent state far exceeds its years as an administrative unit of the United Kingdom. Unlike England, the kingdoms of Scotland were never fully subdued by the Roman Empire (Harvey, 1998). The whole of Scotland was first unified under King Kenneth MacAlpin in 843 C.E. For a brief period, 1296-

1314, Kings Edward I and Edward II of England subjugated the country—until the Scots expelled the younger Edward’s army at Bannockburn under King Robert I. Scotland would then enjoy another four-hundred years of continuous autonomy until the Act of Union with England. Procured under charges of bribery among Scottish officials, the treaty dissolved the Scottish Parliament in 1707. After initial waves of rioting and a few failed rebellions, no serious attempts to restore Scottish independence would occur after mid-century.

Scottish Nationalism

The story of the Scottish nation would seem to have ended with the defeat of “Bonnie Prince Charlie” at the disastrous battle of Culloden in 1746. Scotland was now part of the world’s greatest military and industrial superpower under the flag of the United Kingdom. Despite the loss of the American colonies in 1783, the British star was still on the rise, its power peaking only at the turn of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, Scotland actually maintained a relatively high level of self-determination until the mid-nineteenth century (McCrone, 2002). Ironically, the increasing democratization of the Constitution at this time shifted political power over Scotland to the English majority. With organized Scottish nationalism appearing after World War I, and the deterioration of industrial preeminence after World War II, the call for increased Scottish autonomy gathered pace. At the forefront of the debate over home rule was the Scottish National Party (SNP). Founded in 1934, the SNP’s *raison d’être* would be to petition for the re-

establishment of an independent Scotland, including its own Parliament, tax-raising powers, foreign treaty power, and armed forces.

The Nationalists' chief argument for independence is that Scotland is consistently outvoted in the British Parliament. England is one of the most densely populated nations in the world, outpacing India and most other Third World countries. Its population of fifty million overwhelms Scotland's five million inhabitants when it comes to electing Members of Parliament. This electoral supremacy provides independent justification for a separate Scottish state, according to Nationalists (Harvie, 1998).

Scotland's brand of nationalism contains two uncommon characteristics. The first is that, unlike most secessionist movements, it has always been peaceful and civic (Keating, 2001). Civic nationalism places geography over family origin, distinguishing it from ethnic nationalism. Irish republicanism is an example of ethnic nationalism, which resulted in widespread violence across the island leading up to independence in 1921. And strife continues to this day in the six Ulster counties still belonging to the U.K. Scotland's history is different. To distance itself from any appearance of ethnic prejudice, the SNP has even stopped blaming the English for Scotland's troubles, casting fault instead on the more abstract notion of Unionism itself (Salmond, 1998). The SNP thus asserts that it represents a civic, not ethnic nationalism—a claim accepted even by political opponents such as former Scottish Labour Leader Henry McLeish (2002). A recent rock music release by SNP supporters Craig Reid and Charlie Reid (2001), the

twin-brother stars of “The Proclaimers,” illustrates the point. The song “Scotland’s Story” embraces 13 different immigrant groups, underscoring the civic tone of contemporary Scottish nationalism. The first chorus mentions seven ethnicities:

In Scotland’s story I read that they came
The Gael and the Pict, the Angle and Dane.
But so did the Irishman, Jew and Ukraine.
They’re all Scotland’s story and they’re all worth the same (n.p.)

The other lands producing Scots immigrants whom Reid and Reid tout as being “worth the same” include China, India, Pakistan, and significantly, England. The predominantly civic nature of Scotland’s nationalism prompted Gentry (2001) to describe it as the “patient revolution” (p. 2).

The second remarkable feature of Scottish nationalism is the struggle for argument presumption between Nationalists and Unionists. Presumption means that one position holds primacy over the other until proven otherwise (Hill and Leeman, 1997). Both Unionists and Nationalists claim argument presumption, and both hold a sensible claim. The Unionists assert that separatism bears the burden of proof based on 296 consecutive years of British union. A Scottish divorce would throw the small country into the unknown, with complicated transitions on monetary policy, defense, and foreign trade (Brogan, 1999).

Nationalists are just as firm in their insistence that Scotland is and always has been a separate nation. Even considering its status after 1707, Scotland has maintained its

independence for eighty-five percent of the Common Era. Even strict Unionists refer to Scotland as a nation (McLeish, 2002). The Scottish National Party (SNP) claims that home rule, with the external protection of the European Monetary Union and NATO, would leave nothing for the union to do (Wallace, 1996). Unionists and Nationalists both portray bewilderment at their rivals' reasoning. Their worldviews are fundamentally opposed, each side haranguing undecideds to jump off the fence.

Unfortunately for the SNP, all other major Scottish parties are Unionist, who frequently team up to "hammer the Nats" (Milne, 1998, p. 20). According to McLeod (1999), the SNP is "pounded from every quarter," yet maintains "astonishingly solid support for a party denied the support of a single newspaper or any significant Scottish institution" (n.p.).

Despite early electoral futility, the SNP has increased its credibility in the past two decades, garnering as much as thirty percent in popular-opinion polls (Wallace, 1996). Support for independence has been measured as high as 45 percent (Harvie, 1998). These gains have made the SNP the chief opposition party in Scotland, well ahead of the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Party. But being second to the Labour Party was no cause for hope during the Margaret Thatcher-John Major era (1979-1997), due to the lack of any regional government. The U.K. majority Conservatives (a.k.a. "Tories") steadfastly refused any move toward the idea of "devolution," or limited home-rule. Local town councils were weak, and could face fines if their ordinances conflicted with

national policy. Thus the Parliament at Westminster, sitting at the south end of the island of Great Britain, was the only governing body with real power in the U.K. Although the SNP would continue to represent a politically-impotent movement, the party gained increasing legitimacy after the mid-1970s (Harvie, 1998).

As the 1970s drew to a close, three argument positions vied for favor in Scotland (Harvey, 1998). Obviously the SNP promoted the notion of full independence from Britain. The Conservative Party staunchly supported the union, defending the status quo of absolute rule from Westminster. In the middle was the Labour Party's middle ground of devolution, in which Scotland would control its internal affairs, and the union would continue to deal with larger issues such as defense and foreign policy. Despite overall party support, however, a substantial minority in Scottish Labour expressed mistrust at any program that might threaten the union and bolster the hated "nats" (Mitchell, et al., 1998).

A 1979 referendum on home rule, held in the final days of the outgoing Labour government, was approved by a majority of voters. But it failed to win the required forty-percent of the entire Scots electorate. The result left a sour taste with those Scottish Labour activists who not already wary of devolution, and the party would abandon the notion of home rule for more than a decade (Mitchell, et al., 1998). Labour's defeat in the 1979 general election began 18 consecutive years of Conservative rule, with Labor a weak opposition in England but predominant in the Scottish delegation. With only a

handful of SNP representatives at Westminster, the Conservatives and Labour were the only power players in Scotland. This reality seemed incongruous because popular support for the Tories north of the border was minimal, especially after Margaret Thatcher's hated "poll tax" initiative of the late 1980's was imposed on Scotland a year before the rest of the U.K. (Brown, 1998).

SNP influence at Westminster was further weakened by the electoral system itself. All members of Parliament (MPs) are elected in a system of "first past the post," similar to United States elections, in which only the single most popular candidate in a constituency wins a seat. In such a system, parties with strong minority support across the nation can be denied any representation whatsoever. In contrast, a system of proportional representation (PR) would reward strong minorities by awarding additional member seats based on the proportion of votes the party receives (Mitchell, et al., 1998). Lacking PR, used in several European countries, has frustrated SNP efforts to influence policy, as it has elected fewer MPs than other parties despite more total votes.

Then everything changed. A series of circumstances after 1992 thrust the home-rule movement to the forefront. Even some opponents of devolution in Scottish Labour were converted by four consecutive electoral defeats at Westminster. This was because Labour would likely be the leading party in any Scottish Parliament. Second came "Braveheart" in 1995, the story of Scots patriot William Wallace's fight against English domination in the late thirteenth century. Winning five Academy Awards, the Mel

Gibson film boosted Scottish pride, electrified tourism, and advanced the cause for Scottish self-determination (Wallace, 1996). The third episode boosting the case for home rule came out of London. Tony Blair's general election campaign of 1997 shrewdly moved "New Labour" to the right, reversing its socialist image and making it suddenly electable. To make victory more certain, Blair promised Scots a referendum on a regional parliament if Labour won the election. If English poll results were to be trusted, however, the move seemed unnecessary to gain Labour a parliamentary majority. But according to Mitchell, et al. (1998), "Tony Blair was determined that nothing would stand in his way of entering Downing Street, even at the cost of causing disquiet within his own party in Scotland" (p. 181). With Conservatives unpopular in England and loathed in Scotland, Labour swept to power, ending a generation in exile. With a ruling majority, Blair fulfilled his pledge to address the widely criticized "democratic deficit" (Pittock, 2001, p. 120), giving the Scots their referendum on devolution.

The 1997 plebiscite included two measures. The first was on the resumption of the Scottish Parliament. If approved the chamber would be empowered to pass laws on everything except certain "reserved matters," such as national defense, foreign treaties, and U.K. energy policy. The second vote addressed whether the new parliament could vary taxes plus or minus three percent, which would permit entirely new programs or the alternative power to cut taxes. Thus a "Yes-Yes" vote would give Scots sweeping new

powers over internal matters. If approved, the body would be seated no later than summer 2000.

The 1997 referendum enjoyed a far greater likelihood of passage than the failed effort of 1979. First, both planks would require only a simple majority of those ballots cast, not the super-plurality of forty percent of the eligible electorate. Second, the SNP reversed its position on devolution. In 1979 it had boycotted the limited home rule vote, opposing anything short of independence (Mitchell, et al., 1998). This time it joined Labour and the Liberal Democrats, leaving only the Conservatives opposed. Although disappointed that independence was not an option on the ballot, the SNP now touted devolution as a stepping stone to a fully independent Scotland (Lennon, 1999). According to party Leader Alex Salmond, "If the Scots get a devolved parliament and see how constitutional change works for them, they'll obviously want more of it" (Ritchie, 1999, n.p.). Thus the only organized opposition to devolution in 1997 came from the Scottish Conservative Party, which had just been stripped of all its Westminster seats. With shifts in policy from both directions, the SNP and Labour were suddenly in agreement.

The result of the 1997 referendum was a decisive "Yes-Yes," with 74.3% supporting the parliament, and 63.3% approving tax-varying powers (Mitchell, et al., 1998). The next step in Scotland's new politics was to elect the membership of its first parliament in 292 years. After passage, observers expected Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to be seated just before the deadline of July 2000 (Harvey, 1998). But

the Scots people were more impatient and ambitious. The election would be set for May 6, 1999, with powers in force on the first of July. The sea change in Scottish politics was stunning. Kellas (2001) trumpeted, "Scotland can now pass its own laws, freed from the log-jam and English domination of Westminster" (p. 552).

Although a hard-won and climactic process, the devolution referendum did not end Scottish politics. They were only beginning. No longer electorally overwhelmed by England, Scots would control devolved issues, with the new parliament to be built in the Holyrood section of Edinburgh, Scotland's historic capital. Matters devolved to the Scottish Parliament include 1) Health, 2) Education & training, 3) Local government, social work & housing, 4) Economic development & transport, 5) Law & home affairs (prisons, criminal justice, police, fire services, liquor, protecting animals), 6) Environment, 7) Agriculture, forestry & fishing, and 8) Sport & the arts.

Issues reserved to the United Kingdom government include: 1) U.K. constitution, 2) Foreign policy, illicit drugs policy & immigration, 3) Defence, weapons, national security & border security, 4) Monetary system & foreign trade, 5) Employment, 6) Social security, pensions, child support, & prescription drugs, 7) Energy, and 8) Broadcasting. Committee work would take place on Mondays and Tuesdays, with the whole Parliament meeting in plenary sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

SNP Campaign 1999

Once the Scottish Parliament was approved, Labour politician George Robertson boasted that "devolution will kill the Nationalists stone dead" (Salmond, 1998, n.p.) This conclusion was based on Labour strategists' prediction that the delivery of home rule would obviate the rationale for independence. McLeish (2003) refers to such a strategy as "stealing the Nationalists clothes" and "occupying their space" (n.p.). As devolution was largely a response to Scottish nationalism (Brown, 2000), a description and critique of the arguments presented in the SNP's initial Holyrood campaign is offered to set the stage for the parliamentary discourse to follow.

Preparations for Scotland's first parliament since 1707 began with the Fall 1998 party conferences, then peaked in the spring with the free broadcast of five-minute party commercials on BBC1. The Labour Party's chief rival for supremacy was the Scottish National Party, with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats pursuing the role of spoiler. The SNP's run-up to the first ever democratically-elected Scottish Parliament began with the sixty-fourth annual Scottish National Party Conference, called to order on September 23-26, 1998 in the northern city of Inverness. The Conference would nominate candidates for the 1999 general election and draft the party's election manifesto. Parliamentary Leader Margaret Ewing, SNP President Dr. Winifred Ewing, and party Leader Alex Salmond were tapped to deliver the major speeches of the conference.

Margaret Ewing, SNP Parliamentary Leader at Westminster, spoke on September 24, 1998. Born in 1945, Mrs. Ewing is the daughter-in-law of party President Dr. Winifred Ewing, as well as the wife of fellow SNP politician Fergus Ewing. Having held seats in the British Parliament off-and-on for several decades, the Ewing family freely refers to itself as a political “dynasty” in Scotland (W. Ewing, 1998, n.p.). Winifred, Fergus, and Margaret Ewing would each emerge from the Inverness conference as SNP candidates for the new Scottish Parliament. At the time of her speech, Margaret Ewing was a Member of Parliament representing Moray. I will refer to her as “Mrs. Ewing” to distinguish her from “Dr. (Winifred) Ewing.”

Mrs. Ewing declared the theme of her speech immediately: “Pioneers, Ambassadors and Inheritors” (1998, n.p.), as she praised both living and deceased SNP activists. These leaders, including Dr. Winifred Ewing, had kept the faith during frequent periods of humbling electoral defeat. This ceremonial emphasis, especially in speech introductions, seems common in SNP discourse, as several other conference speakers would make similar references to leaders of old.

The other major theme in Margaret Ewing’s speech was Scottish national confidence. Nationalists claim that the primary obstacle preventing Scots from choosing independence is a lack of faith in the country’s self-sufficiency. Most admit to an emotional bond to Scottish nationhood, but their “heads don’t match their hearts” (n.p.). Mrs. Ewing used the word “confidence” six times during her fourteen-minute speech. For

example: “I see [the Parliament] as a stepping stone to greater confidence, not just to the birth but to the re-birth of our nation, the re-birth of democratic priorities, and the re-birth of international and domestic responsibilities” (n.p.). Her use of the term “re-birth” recalls the battle for argument presumption noted above. Mrs. Ewing reminded the audience that a younger Scotland was confident enough to choose independence. Later she said, “The ice-age of Thatcherism is receding, the fog of Unionism is lifting. There is a huge upsurge in Scottish confidence” (n.p.). Thus she employed both present and future tense: Scotland is more confident today, and will be even more confident under the new Parliament.

Margaret Ewing’s boldest use of the confidence appeal came in the conclusion, where she used visualization to paint a picture of an idyllic country: “As we embark on our renewed crusade for Scottish hope and self-confidence the prize to win is there for the taking. Our country can be gently moved forward. We can develop a democratic Parliament elected by the sovereign will of the people of Scotland” (n.p.). Note the phrase “gently move forward,” which reinforced the Nationalists’ commitment to words rather than might. Mrs. Ewing expressed this desire to seek a peaceful, independent Scotland several times in her address.

Margaret Ewing’s speech also set the tone for the entire SNP campaign, as she unveiled the party’s election slogan: “Enterprise, Compassion, and Democracy.” Like a textbook speech preview, the three themes sought to separate the SNP from the other

major Scottish parties: Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat. Enterprise was a fairly new theme for the SNP, solidified only under the leadership of Alex Salmond. Having previously adopted a more socialist stance due to its grievances against multi-national control of Scottish industry, the SNP changed tactics in the 1990's to place itself more to the political center. Pro-business and anti-nuclear, Mrs. Ewing argued that tax money spent harboring Trident missiles in Scotland would be better spent on homes, hospitals, and schools.

Compassion was an issue the SNP viewed as its own in the General Election of 1999. Scotland has always seen itself politically to the left of England, with the Conservative Party often finding itself with only single-digit support. But Tony Blair and "New Labour" had now rejected many social welfare planks characteristic of old Labour—themes still highly popular in Scotland. Thus Mrs. Ewing attacked Labour as right-wing and greedy, including complaints of patronage at the lavish new Millennium Dome exhibition in London, as well as Labour's abandonment of free higher education:

[Scots] have the opportunity to address the concerns of the most needy in our society. How obscene it is that £400,000 bonuses are to be paid to the Millennium Dome Directors when our nurses and doctors are yet again faced with staged pay rises... Whilst New Labour paints the smiles on the faces of the fat cats, all around us factories are closing, students are

expected to run up debts for tuition fees, and pensioners are afraid of the winter heating bills (M. Ewing, 1998, n.p.).

Words such as “obscene” and “fat cats” reveal the bold language indicative of Margaret Ewing’s discourse. Six times she used the words “free” or “freedom,” in the sense of Scottish self-determination. Borrowing language from William Wallace, Braveheart himself, she concluded with candor and passion: “Next year, who knows? But I know that the door to freedom will open. Beyond that door we can build the path that takes us to the stage when we will know what it feels and tastes like to be fully free” (M. Ewing, 1998, n.p.). Mrs. Ewing’s address clearly sought to galvanize and energize nationalist sentiment.

On Democracy, Margaret Ewing supported proportional representation (PR): the electoral system that permits shared power according to overall electoral strength. The Scottish Parliament would be elected under PR, and the SNP supports the same system for Westminster (Salmond, 1998). The Conservatives and many in Labour oppose PR, ostensibly because the greater likelihood of minority or coalition governments might lead to legislative gridlock. Mrs. Ewing also denounced the alleged top-down control of the London-dominated parties, asserting that SNP candidate lists were based on merit and openness, not favoritism and secrecy.

On the following day, September 25, Dr. Winifred Ewing addressed the SNP Conference as a candidate to represent the Highlands and Islands in the new Scottish

Parliament. A long-time Member of the European Parliament (MEP) at Brussels, the sixty-eight-year-old SNP President stressed the economic feasibility of Scottish independence in her address. In fact, her purpose seemed primarily refutational—condemning Unionist opposition to Scottish independence.

Unlike Margaret Ewing, Dr. Winifred Ewing did not follow an overt three-point structure. In fact, her language was highly personal and informal, as she rebutted the purported “myths” used to malign the SNP and nationalism. Attacks identified by Dr. Ewing included: (1) the SNP are wreckers who wish to see the new Parliament fail; (2) Scotland is too poor to fund its own government services; (3) nervous companies would relocate under independence, causing widespread unemployment; (4) separation would create complicated trade barriers, curtailing commerce with England.

One of Dr. Ewing’s most vociferous rebukes came against the first attack, which alleged that the SNP would sabotage the Parliament. The charge owned its basis in history, as the SNP had opposed the 1979 home-rule referendum. Prior to 1997, the Nationalists steadfastly opposed any Constitutional change that fell short of independence. In the months before the 1979 election the SNP delegation even decided to support a vote of no confidence in the Labour Government. Passed in the House of Commons by a single vote, the Executive’s bloodletting, and subsequent Labour defeat at the polls, ushered in eighteen-straight years of Conservative rule. The 1979 gambit was disastrous, as the SNP lost 11 of its 13 seats at Westminster in the election (Harvie,

1998). Angry with the Nationalists, Labour refused to support any level of Scottish home rule for more than a decade (Mitchell, et al., 1998). Now attempting to reverse the bitter memory of 1979, Dr. Ewing commended the SNP's faithful performance in the British and European parliaments:

They try to tame us by fearful warnings that we will be wreckers, but the conduct of our elected representatives shows a record of active and positive participation. It is totally against our interest to wreck our parliament. Only by making it work will the Scots want more (W. Ewing, 1998, n.p.).

The SNP had learned its lesson by 1997, giving crucial support to the successful devolution referendum. Pointing out this fact might have helped calm the suspicions of voters who remembered 1979.

Dr. Ewing's other detailed use of refutation was forged against the Unionist fear of unemployment caused by fleeing corporations. The argument carried weight, as a handful of Unionist CEO's had publicly stated that independence might convince them to relocate out of Scotland. Dr. Ewing, sounding nothing like a traditional elderly woman, fought back: "When companies threaten to leave, they stretch credulity. Companies making profits on a stable society don't leave" (n.p.).

Like Margaret Ewing before her, Dr. Winifred Ewing ended her conference address boldly. Condemning individuals committed to union as blind and schizophrenic,

she said, “Poor old Unionists. It must be very hard to argue a case devoid of logic now that the people have their eyes open” (n.p.). Throughout the speech, she used the “eyes open” metaphor four times, then concluded that the other parties should join the SNP for independence. It was strange, however, to spend fifteen minutes ridiculing her opponents, and then conclude by inviting them to join the SNP position. Dr. Ewing seemed to represent the old-guard Nationalists, who were passionately dedicated to the cause but may have lacked a sophisticated political acumen (Harvie, 1998).

Scottish National Party Leader and National Convener Alex Salmond spoke after Winifred Ewing on September 25. As SNP candidate for First Minister, Salmond was crucial to the success of the SNP campaign. An economist born in 1954, he had served as SNP Leader since 1990. A Member of Parliament for Banff and Buchan since 1987, he would run for the same constituency in the Scottish Parliament. In fact, Salmond (1998) boasted that all leading SNP representatives to Westminster and the European Parliament in Brussels were coming home to run as MSPs, whereas most Scottish Labor MPs stood for their old seats.

Salmond’s rise came from his talent for framing nationalist principles with logic, rather than mere emotion. Thus Salmond was regarded as the first SNP Leader with a sense of political savvy. Also known for his self-effacing wit and “cut and thrust skill” (The Herald, 1999, n.p.), his personality was a lightning rod for both admiration and scorn. Constantly testing language that borders on hyperbole, Mr. Salmond is a

fascinating study of rhetorical invention. Like Babe Ruth, both his hits and strikeouts are prodigious. Perhaps his greatest asset is his expertise in economics. Unionist economists have long been marshaled out to prove the folly of Scottish independence. Salmond was the first SNP Leader who could match them formula-for-formula, chart-for-chart. His mission: to convince the majority of Scots that they can be nationalist in their heads as well as their hearts.

Alex Salmond's address to the SNP Conference was, though under twenty-five minutes, the longest of the four-day event. Like his predecessors at the lectern, Salmond used far more overt structure than most American political speakers do. Like Margaret Ewing the day before, he even gave a preview statement: "Today I want to lay out the identity, the ideals and the vision that we will articulate, campaign on, and implement if the people choose the SNP" (n.p.). Also following the example of Mrs. Ewing, he outlined the three planks of enterprise, compassion, and democracy. And he prepared textbook transition sentences, such as: "I have set out our IDENTITY as Scotland's party our IDEALS of enterprise, compassion and democracy and our VISION of a free Scotland. Now I want to detail our approach to the new parliament and some of the specific policies which we will pursue" (capitalization in original).

Salmond's language style and selection of arguments were vivid. Avoiding the typical slow start of American speakers who open by thanking the audience for its applause, he began with a disciplined attention-getter:

I want to reflect on the least successful prediction of the last year. Now I'm not referring to my own conviction that Scotland would beat Morocco in St Etienne. I'm referring to George Robertson and his confident boast "devolution will kill the Nationalists stone dead." Poor old George. He goes around in a flak jacket - a Defence Secretary who conveys all the menace of the cuddly toy in the Generation game! (Salmond, 1998, n.p.).

In just a few words, the statement conveyed various stylistic devices: first suspense, then self-deprecating humor, and ultimately ridicule of the opposition—all within the context of an argumentative enthymeme (Copi, 1982) that would set the tone for the entire speech. The enthymeme, a deductive argument that permits the audience to fill in the missing implication, contained two stated premises: (1) Robertson's prediction that the SNP's support would crumble under the devolution compromise (major premise), and (2) that this prediction was flawed (argument claim). The audience was left to fill in the unstated proof: that the SNP now enjoyed unprecedented electoral popularity even after the delivery of devolution —polling up to 40 percent, which he later detailed.

Such imaginative prose made Alex Salmond a candidate for creative contributions to the upcoming campaign. He even paid attention to the verbal style choices of his adversaries, observing that Labour's Donald Dewar seemed threatened by the SNP's seeming monopoly on patriotism. To prove how Scottish he was during a speech, Dewar

had used the word “Scotland” five times in one sentence. The SNP Leader retorted, “His orders may come from London, but at least he knows where he is” (n.p.).

Alex Salmond used other vivid style choices throughout his conference address. But we will consider them within his selection of arguments. Primarily, Mr. Salmond used comparative claims, designed to portray the SNP positively at the expense of Scottish Labour. Damning the other parties with silence, he made seventeen separate indictments of Labour: the first ten on party character, the last seven on specific policy disagreements. In each comparison he incorporated one or two stylistic devices. As he did in his introduction, for example, Salmond engaged the audience in another moment of suspense. In order to assail Labour’s assumption that it would become the majority party at Edinburgh, Salmond struck back:

The only thing that is stone dead in Scottish politics today is the arrogant assumption that that the contest for First Minister and for the governance of our new Parliament was somehow an internal Labour party affair. Well let me tell you who will be First Minister next year. Let me tell you exactly who will govern Scotland. The First Minister, the Government itself, will be whoever the people of Scotland decide it to be. Because for the first time ever next May Scotland can choose its own government (n.p.).

Initially, the listener may anticipate that a brash Salmond is about to guarantee victory for the SNP, anointing himself as First Minister. But after teasing the audience, Salmond turned to populism, reminding everyone that Scotland would finally enjoy a level of popular self-determination. The effect was to congratulate voters on approving the home-rule referendum while admonishing Labour that a real race was underway. The device is similar to an argumentative enthymeme (defined above), or even a joke—engaging the audience’s imagination and then adding an unexpected twist.

A second notable comparison with Labour came in a point about democracy and effective organizational communication. Because the SNP answers to no British overseer, Labour headquarters in London is a ripe target. Consistent with the statement above on Donald Dewar’s subservience to Westminster, Salmond offered the following critique:

Every other party to a greater or lesser extent still takes its orders from London. What better illustration of that could there be than the contrast in choosing Euro Candidates. Yesterday we elected our team in an open, democratic procedure. The day before a London dominated committee selected the group for New Labour. If Labour in Scotland aren’t even trusted to choose their own candidates why should they be trusted by the Scottish people? (n.p.)

Continuing the communication theme, Salmond boasted: “we devise our programme for Scotland by discussion and debate. Labour’s idea of a Scottish policy is to take a London

instruction, divide it by ten, and call it Scottish. It's what journalists might call 'putting a kilt' on a policy (n.p.)" Later in the campaign, Salmond would invoke the pejorative phrase "London Labour," issuing the epithet at every opportunity. SNP campaigners also repeatedly used the phrase "control freaks" to refer to London's purported manipulation of the Scottish Labour platform.

Salmond speech often sounded highly American in its republican principles. In the statement above he assailed class and privilege in the selection of party candidates. Later he quoted Franklin D. Roosevelt's four freedoms, and called on Scots to create a written Constitution and Bill of Rights. In these passages and elsewhere in the speech, Salmond produced strategic arguments that could be used by other SNP candidates, as well as in national election communications.

At the Inverness conference the SNP amassed a sizeable collection of arguments for use in the general election campaign. With candidate lists completed, it was time to focus on the crucial television campaign.

Free Television

Funded almost entirely within Scotland, the SNP's resources are modest compared to the major union-wide parties: Labour, Conservatives, and Liberal Democrat. Fortunately for the Nationalists, British law guarantees free television time for party political announcements on Channel One. Naturally, the SNP depends more on free BBC1 time than the other parties, making these five-minute communications essential to

a successful campaign. Television is even more crucial considering that the official campaign season, according to statute, last only four weeks. The British system creates exciting races, but is also a harrowing test of political mettle. Even one misstep can throw a government out of power, or a party leader out of a job.

The SNP's first of two Party Election Broadcasts (PEBs) was unveiled on April 13, 1999 (SNP, 1999a). Party Leader Alex Salmond spoke for the entire commercial. His image augmented crowd scenes, factory buildings and workers, bridges, white-collar workers, and teachers with school children. It also showed an unflattering image of Prime Minister Tony Blair appearing literally as a "talking head" inside a teetering TV screen. In fact, the spot is primarily visual, with relatively little text.

The SNP chose the following issues for its Party Election Broadcast: Scottish independence, taxes, London control of Scottish Labour, the SNP's ten promises, natural resources, and education. However, no issue was discussed in any detail. For example, Salmond only mentioned the existence of the ten promises; he didn't name them. On education spending he simply stated, within a broader list: "by tackling the resource crisis in Scotland's schools." With the ruling Labour Party's policies closely covered in the Scottish media (Pittock, 2001), the SNP's lesser-known platform was still not clearly explained or justified.

A lack of detail, however, was not the chief shortcoming in the SNP's commercial. Early in the spot, Salmond blasted the Labour government's recent cut in

taxes by one penny on the pound (from 23% to 22%). Under devolution, the Scottish Parliament was now empowered to vary income taxes by up to three percent. The SNP stood alone in supporting a return to 1997 rates, and Salmond even gave the plan a name:

The 'Penny for Scotland' campaign I think will dominate the theme and direction of this election. As people realise that key public services require key public investment then they'll rally overwhelmingly to the 'Penny for Scotland' campaign. The contrast between investment in public services, education, health, housing and a penny tax bribe, is one that the SNP will win decisively (SNP, 1999a, n.p.).

The "Penny for Scotland" was not promoted in the Inverness conference speeches. The only hint Salmond gave there about spending was his statement that Scotland should give to "those in the world who have nothing" (1998, n.p.).

Unfortunately for the SNP, its tax strategy flew in the face of recent history.

Although most Scots sit politically to the left of England, Tony Blair had just overtaken the Conservatives by moving to the right, promising more efficient government and spending limits. Fiscal conservatism, or pejoratively, "turbo charged capitalism," was a winning issue throughout the union (Harvie, 1998, p. 200). And each of the three other major parties leapt at the chance to deride the SNP's "tartan tax." The "Penny for Scotland" did indeed dominate the direction of the campaign, but not in the way Salmond

would have preferred. To assert that voters would “rally overwhelmingly” for higher taxes, and declaring the SNP would win the point “decisively” proved inaccurate.

Instead, the Nationalists could have responded to Labour’s “tax bribe” more astutely: (1) by not giving its position a name, which hung like a target for ridicule, (2) by not making the issue the centerpiece of the SNP campaign, or (3) by merely dismissing the small tax cut as an election-year gimmick. Still another tack, borrowed from American liberal politicians, would be to slap Labour with the question, “How are you going to pay for this tax cut?” As it turned out, the SNP was left holding an out of fashion tax-and-spend yoke that would dog them for the length of the campaign.

Also problematic was the use of negative labels in the first SNP commercial. Despite the Opposition’s best efforts, the Labour Party enjoys a long history of respect in Scotland. Terms such as “a penny tax bribe” and “London Labour” were likely ineffective tactics in persuading independents and undecideds to vote SNP. Moreover, terming the Labour plan a bribe placed voters in the role of co-conspirators. “Fighting words” may galvanize and energize loyal supporters—and Salmond and others used liberal amounts of ridicule at the Inverness conference. But if the purpose was to persuade disaffected Labour traditionalists and independents, these labels were more likely to offend than entice.

The first SNP campaign commercial also seemed to over-rely on visuals at the expense of reasoned arguments. It even came across as organizationally choppy, lacking

the fluency and continuity of Alex Salmond's conference speech. Take, for example, the disembodied (and empty) phrase, "If we win the decisive issues in the campaign then we can win this election for Scotland." The facile text failed to gel with the vague pans and fades of the camera, producing no motivational link to the SNP. Nor did the viewer gain any sense of a guiding hand in the production. Rather, it suggested a mishmash of various creative visions. Overall, the first of two SNP television spots was handicapped both substantively and creatively. The second broadcast would be different.

The April 21 SNP party election broadcast was much more textual, with double the words of the April 13 spot. There was also less emphasis placed on providing a variety of visual images. Only young school children in a classroom were shown until the conclusion, when a hand holding a penny appeared. An anonymous narrator was the only speaker, perhaps to try to prevent the lightning rod Alex Salmond from being the issue in the campaign. There were fewer topics in the second broadcast. Whereas the first spot used just 321 words to cover six issues, the second spent 641 words on only four issues. This provided the second announcement with 160% more depth per issue.

Put simply, the second PEB should have aired first. Unlike the angry April 13 broadcast, the April 21 effort provided a sense of friendly introduction, as well as moderation. As the young children were shown on screen, the narrator established the SNP as the party of compassion:

If life is our most precious resource then we must take the greatest care and have the deepest love for its nurture. Life thrives where there is protection, it grows where there is nourishment. These young lives should be allowed to express themselves freely to develop and grow with dignity, able to fulfil the hope and the promise that is in each one of our children. Their future is created by us (SNP, 1999b, n.p.).

Unlike the first spot, this message fit within the Inverness campaign theme of “enterprise, compassion, and democracy.” Clearly, the SNP held the edge on New Labour on the issue of protecting Scotland’s social welfare institutions. This message reinforced the Nationalists’ claim to own the political left without offending voters with harsh labels.

The same moderate language permeated the rest of the text. Rather than glibly ridicule the still-new Labour government in London, the narrator rationally explained the trouble with externally-controlled parties:

So let’s bring an honesty and freshness to political life, not have a parliament that is controlled by any party that is in turn controlled by Westminster. Let’s not leave the real power in Westminster, we must bring our democracy home. That is why we voted for the existence of this parliament, so that we in Scotland can actually have a say on vital issues that affect our lives (SNP, 1999b, n.p.).

In fact, neither “London” nor “Labour” was uttered once in the five-minute broadcast.

Nor was the SNP’s proposed independence referendum mentioned. The second spot was clearly designed as a gentler approach, its nationalism less overt. And rather than accuse the government of a “penny tax bribe,” the PEB merely informed Scots that they could refuse to accept tax cuts “while hundreds of thousands of Scots live below the poverty line.” This subtler statement seemed a direct retreat from the bombastic claim of a “tax bribe.”

Perhaps the most eloquent argument in the commercial played on the nuclear issue. Disarmament has long been popular in left-leaning Scotland. Reversing the policy of old Labour, Tony Blair had renewed the previous Tory government’s commitment to maintain the U.K. as a nuclear arsenal. Its sparse population meant that Scotland was home to more than its share of Trident missiles. The SNP’s statement on the issue was both rational and passionate:

‘What goes around comes around’ is as true of nations as it is of people.

We can choose to rid our country of the nuclear missiles that sit on our waters and our soil. Why do we need the capability to wipe out the entire planet? It’s ridiculous. Scrap them and release billions of pounds into building a society based on hope and love, not fear and greed and violence and poverty (SNP, 1999b, n.p.).

During his Inverness speech, Alex Salmond had painted the Trident program as a money pit that sucked resources away from enterprise. This statement again reinforced established themes in the SNP campaign, rather than shoot from the hip.

Still, the “Penny for Scotland” remained the centerpiece of the SNP message. In fairness, it would have been untenable for the party to reverse itself eight days into a short four-week race. This time the inference was that Scots were wealthy enough to give back another one-percent to the treasury. In the closing statement, the narrator stated:

Scotland is still the seventh richest country in the world. So please don't sit on the fence in the creation of a new Scotland. Be decisive, make your choice, it's a moment of self determination, think about it, and follow your heart, for with a little bit of love and a penny we can create a new Scotland for ourselves and our children (SNP, 1999b, n.p.).

For this campaign commercial to utter the word “love” endowed the message with courage and vivacity. The phrase, “self-determination” invoked Scottish pride. But attaching these themes to the unpopular tax increase proposal, with the accompanying visual of the hand holding a penny, restricted their appeal. Still, the second SNP broadcast seemed a vast improvement over the first.

In a final April error, Alex Salmond made the courageous but politically-inexpedient choice to condemn the widely-supported NATO bombing of Serbia (McLeod, 1999). Together, these risky positions were reminiscent of SNP blunders in the

pre-Salmond era. On war and taxes, the otherwise savvy new SNP followed its heart rather than effective strategy. It seemed the party had wasted the rich harvest of ideas produced at Inverness, suffering stinging attacks from all Unionist parties and leading newspapers (McLeod, 1999).

Supporters of the SNP experienced a roller coaster of political prosperity between the devolution referendum in 1997 and the Scottish Parliamentary election of 1999. The initial exhilaration of the “Yes-Yes” vote was exceeded by 1998 polls suggesting the SNP was, for the first time in history, running neck-and-neck with Scottish Labour (Milne, 1998). But after a hopeful party conference, the spring campaign brought the Nationalists back to Earth. As Alex Salmond had predicted at Inverness, the Labour party fought tooth-and-nail to preserve its supremacy in Scotland. Attacks from Labour and the media, as well as the SNP’s missteps on the tax issue and NATO bombing, dropped the party’s poll numbers dangerously low by mid April (UPI, 1999). Editorialists speculated whether Alex Salmond, far from being elected First Minister, would be sacked by the SNP following the historic vote (The Herald, 1999).

In this tempestuous atmosphere 292 years in the making, voters went to the polls on May 6, 1999. Donald Dewar and Scottish Labour would indeed take the most seats in the new Scottish Parliament. But its polling advantage over the SNP shrank from 19 points on April 26 (47%-28%) to 8 points (36%-28%) on election day (UPI, 1999). Overcoming predictions of electoral oblivion, the SNP had accomplished two major

objectives: it established itself as the official Opposition in Scotland (Carrell, 1999), and Labour was denied a majority of the 129 seats. Labour took 56, leaving the SNP with 35, the Conservatives 18, the Liberal Democrats 17, the Scottish Socialists 1, the Green Party 1, and an independent (Scotsman, 1999). For the first time in Scotland, the Opposition's power would match its share of the popular vote (Paterson, et al., 2001).

All three SNP leaders: Margaret Ewing, Winifred Ewing, and Alex Salmond won their constituency seats, and the party benefited greatly from the regional list seats provided under proportional representation. Salmond was Leader of the Opposition, and Labour was forced to choose between a minority or coalition government. Unlike Westminster, Holyrood would have no supreme party dictating policy. Donald Dewar would have to broker an awkward coalition with the Liberal Democrats, who opposed Labour on several fundamental issues. Yet despite the SNP's late comeback and new parliamentary status, Labour and some publications (e.g., The Herald, 1999) asserted that the party had suffered an embarrassing defeat. The SNP dismissed this claim as nothing more than spin.

So was the 1999 election a debacle for the Nationalists, as critics claimed? On the contrary, it may be argued that outright victory was all but impossible for the SNP in the first Scottish election, due to intractable situational realities. This is because devolution itself was a compromise between absolute union and absolute separation. For the voters to place the SNP in power would have signaled an immediate rejection of the 1997

settlement. Alex Salmond had acknowledged that devolution could serve as a stepping stone to greater sovereignty. But it was illogical to give the SNP a majority before devolution was given a chance. During the campaign Salmond had tried to reconcile the contradiction, stating, “We cannot pretend the history of the last 300 years has not existed. I will go a very long way to work together with the government in London, and we will stay very good chums” (Lennon, 1999). But the awkwardness of the SNP’s 1999 campaign remained. Another issue in Labour’s favor was that the Parliament, after three centuries of struggle, was delivered by none other than their Leader Tony Blair. Voters in the first election naturally rewarded Donald Dewar, author of the devolution bill. Considering this handicap, as well as the shortcomings of its campaign, the SNP was right to be delighted with thirty-five seats.

Working in their favor was the fact that the Nationalists found themselves as Scotland’s official Opposition. As Alex Salmond cheerily stated in the aftermath, “We wanted to win the election, but oppositions have a habit of becoming governments” (Carrell, 1999, n.p.). Another headache facing Labour was the “West Lothian Question.” Under devolution, Scottish members at Westminster are still empowered to vote on all English matters, whereas English MPs have no comparable influence on Scottish internal affairs. There is as yet no English parliament to compensate for this imbalance. Therefore, both Labour and the SNP carried advantages and liabilities into the chamber as the Parliament’s members took their oaths in May 1999.

The Seated Parliament

The 1999-2003 Parliament was composed of the ruling Labour-Liberal Democrat Coalition and the Opposition. The Scottish Executive was comprised of a First Minister, a Deputy First Minister, and 10 other cabinet ministers: 9 from the Labour Party and 1 Liberal Democrat (Brown, 2000). The major departments were Justice, Education, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Development, Finance, and Executive Secretariat and Corporate Services. There were sixteen committees in all. No party held a majority on any committee, and committee chairs did not have to be members of the Coalition.

The Presiding Officer, similar to the Speaker of the House at Westminster, was David Steele. Steele is a former leader of the Liberal Democrats. The Presiding Officer is duty-bound to sever ties with his former party and maintain strict objectivity. This is because he exercises a great deal of control over the day-to-day conduct of the chamber (McLeish, 2002). Typically, a parliamentary speaker wins election based on her reputation for temperament and fairness. In Scotland the Presiding Officer makes all rulings over whether a speech, motion, or a ministerial question is in order.

Regardless of the how Parliament's initial legislative agenda is judged by historians, this monumental period in Scottish history is fertile ground for students of political communication. Like the post cold-war nations of Eastern Europe, Scotland's national renaissance is a laboratory where one may observe how communication patterns

evolve in a new democracy. Subsequent chapters outline a review of the literature, a theoretical basis of study, methods and procedures, results, and conclusions.

Chapter III

Literature Review

A survey of literature in British political communication unearths a variety of communication content and research approaches. Schlesinger (1998) defines political communication as “the purposive communication by political actors about politics” (n.p.). Studies focus mainly on the level of civic knowledge and participation associated with mass media coverage of politics. The wide variety of research in British political communication has examined newspaper and television news coverage and analysis of election campaigns (e.g., Norris, 2000), press conferences, interviews, and leaks by political insiders (e.g., Scammell, 1995), party election broadcasts (Scammell & Semetko, 1995), party election manifestos (Smith & Smith, 2000), and live public speaking by politicians (e.g., Watts, 1997).

The literature offers not only a range of topics, but also several different research methods. For example, Sanders and Norris (1997) employ social science procedures in an experimental design to assess voter attitude change resulting from viewing television news reports. In contrast, Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) offer a critical, qualitative analysis of media political coverage. Whereas Blumler and Gurevitch’s qualitative report concludes that a crisis of public communication exists, Sanders and Norris’ empirical study observes a virtuous circle of political knowledge and civic involvement. Therefore,

a given study's conclusions may be associated with one's choice of research method.

Like Blumler and Gurevitch, Scammell (1995) and Watts (1997) base their pessimistic conclusions about British political communication on qualitative analysis, whereas Norris' (2000) empirical study provides further support to the notion of a virtuous circle of campaign communication.

Scholars need not choose between only experimental research and narrative analysis. An increasingly common method of studying British political communication is content analysis. For example, Scammell and Semetko's (1995) content analysis of the 1992 British party election broadcasts (PEBs) gave a more realistic account of what was actually said than the popular media provided. The media had assumed that the Labour party had over-relied on the personality of Leader Neil Kinnock in their broadcasts. But the authors showed that, on the contrary, Kinnock was hardly seen, heard, or alluded to in the broadcasts. This is just one example of how the systematic analysis of communication content can test scholarly and media assumptions.

Finally, rhetorical criticism is the primary research method used by Smith & Smith (2000) to analyze the 1992 British party election manifestos. Smith and Smith's article bears the clear imprint of rhetorical scholarship, drawing on both classical and 20th century rhetorical theory. At the same time Smith and Smith (2000) show their rhetorical colors, however, they reveal an effort to adapt to the normative expectations of contemporary social science. This is done through the use of words like "results" (p.

457), “this study” (p. 472), a “method” section (p. 462), a statistical table (p. 465), and a figure (p. 471), none of which would be used in a typical rhetorical criticism. Their hybrid use of rhetorical criticism with rudimentary content analysis appears to be unique in the literature.

Scholarship in the British context is not a mirror image of studies common in America. For example, a surprising aspect of research in British political communication involves the open use of polemical statements, which appear to be absent in research on American political communication. For example, Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) use words like “disturbing” (p. i), “crisis” (p. 1), in the “ashes” (p. 203), “ever deeper trouble” (p. 203), and “charred communication process” (p. 216) to evaluate the media’s relationship to politics in the 1990s. Scammell (1995) directly likens 1990s political campaigning on both sides of the Atlantic to Nazi style propaganda, concluding: “Used in this way ‘political marketing’ lacks specificity and ultimately boils down to a new title for the modern version of long-standing propaganda and campaign activities” (p. 6).

Scammell (1995) feels free to condemn former President Ronald Reagan as “inept” and to say that his election represented a “depressingly downward trend” in politics (p. 15). Thus the media and political leaders are both targets of controversial statements by these scholars. Such claims seem to blur the line between traditional, detached scholarship and political speech itself. Frankly, a careful examination of

research in Scottish politics seems to reveal a general over-reliance on conjecture and pure narrative at the expense of more systematic and rigorous investigations.

Research on Question Time

Although ample research exists on British campaign communication (e.g., Norris, 2001) as well as the political process (e.g., Alderman, 1992), few studies have expressly addressed parliamentary discourse *per se*. The few studies that have been undertaken usually focus on the media's coverage of the proceedings (e.g., Negrine, 1996). This focus is understandable, considering Western society's traditional reliance on the mass media in disseminating political speech. Before 1975, the Hansard, Britain's counterpart to America's Congressional Record, was the only unmediated means for the public to observe the discourse of Parliament (Gunter, 1996). Presumably because sifting through hundreds of pages of text was beyond the interest of average citizens, most relied on journalistic interpretations of parliamentary proceedings. Through the press, and the later advents of radio and television news, the British media filtered nearly all day-to-day communication between Members of Parliament (MPs) and their constituents. In the late 20th century this situation would change with the advent of live broadcasting of parliaments in action.

Before addressing the phenomenon of questions to the Scottish First Minister, it serves to review the literature on its more established counterpart in the British Parliament. "Questions to the Prime Minister" have been a part of business in the House

of Commons for centuries, since even before an official report of the proceedings was kept (Jones, 1973). The Westminster chamber comprises a long rectangle, with the Prime Minister standing at the despatch box in the middle of his side's front bench. Exactly two sword-lengths across from the Prime Minister sits the Leader of the Opposition (McLeish, 2002). Question Time is one the few occasions each week when everyone is present in the chamber. Members fill the benches, their suits touching at the shoulders. With barely enough room for each member, a sense of crowded urgency is maintained during these major events.

Although Question Time once included a pair of fifteen-minute sessions per week, since the 1990s the Prime Minister takes oral questions for thirty minutes once each week. Members are randomly selected to ask a question. If there is insufficient time to get to all ten during the session, remaining questions are answered in writing during the next week.

Two members need not stick to the written rules, however. The leader of the largest opposition party is permitted to intervene for up to five questions at any time during the session. This usually takes the form of two interventions of 2-3 questions each. Follow-ups to the initial question are called supplementaries. Supplementaries make the Leader of the Opposition, along with the Prime Minister, a star of Question Time. The other most important questioner is the leader of the third-largest party, who is allowed one intervention each week, including an initial question and one supplementary. The

Speaker of the House keeps order, which can be a challenge with the loud heckling that greets many questions and answers.

In 1975 Question Time was broadcast on radio on an experimental basis (Watts, 1997). Then in 1983 the House of Lords, undoubtedly the lesser of two chambers in terms of power and relevance, permitted cameras to record its proceedings. Although not broadcast as independent programming, the BBC could now use sound-bites of the Lords in its news reporting. Later, cable television began broadcasting these parliamentary sessions in their entirety.

Watts (1997) notes that many MPs objected to the prospect of broadcasting Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs). The complaint was based on the notion that the lively session was untypical of the House at work, and that members could play to the cameras. Watts also cites the concern that telegenic and interesting speakers might overtake duller members in parliamentary status: "Would television thus trivialise proceedings, encourage people to think not in terms of issues and analysis, but of individuals? Rumbustious knockabout could be entertaining but detract from thoughtful coverage of the question" (p. 159).

Despite these objections, cameras were installed in the House of Commons in the fall of 1989. Strict rules were placed on United Artists, the winning production company: no shots of sleeping members, no perspective framing that might show the frequent emptiness of the chamber, no use of reaction shots. These rules have since been scaled

back, but even today one observes a mechanical technique of shot selection, with few deliberate reaction shots. This media phenomenon can be loosely compared with C-SPAN in the United States, which covers the House of Representatives, and C-SPAN2, which televises the U.S. Senate. However no live broadcast of either Congress or regular Commons debates can compare with the attention, interest, ratings, and news coverage that is devoted to Prime Minister's Questions (Watts, 1997). Part of the reason is that most Britons have far fewer television choices than Americans do, with cable and satellite TV-penetration far less ubiquitous.

Despite the research focus on media-related concerns, two prominent studies focus on Question Time as political process, and one addresses actual communication content. According to Alderman (1992), the best study up to that time was provided by Jones (1973), which is now three decades old. Jones' historical analysis, which focuses on the role of the Prime Minister, outlines various changes in Question Time practice after 1880. The major transformation leading to current practice came under the administration of M. Harold MacMillan, in office from 1957-1963. Jones notes that MacMillan's enthusiasm for Prime Minister's Questions increased the amount of parliamentary time devoted to it, as well as raising its stature in the public's interest. Subsequent prime ministers continued the trend, making Question Time the "highlight of the week" in the British Commons (Alderman, 1992, p. 66). Jones acknowledges its importance in the modern British system:

At these high-spots of the week the chamber is packed. The press gallery is alert for some of the best political copy of the week. Indeed the existence of the prime minister's question time is used as an argument against having regular prime ministerial press conferences (pp. 263-264).

Jones concludes by commenting on the rules and conventions of Question Time.

However, no theoretically-grounded or systematic analysis of the proceedings is made.

Nor is there any formal treatment of communication content. Jones' historical approach is limited to analytical observations without the use of discrete data.

Alderman (1992) offers a more recent essay devoted solely to Question Time.

Following Jones' (1973) example, Alderman analyzes the process of Question Time, but focuses on the Leader of the Opposition rather than the Prime Minister. Like Watts (1997), Alderman expresses his low opinion of Prime Minister's Questions from the outset: "Far from being used as an opportunity for genuinely seeking information, they are usually an occasion for political propaganda and point-scoring, not infrequently of the crudest kind" (p. 66).

Alderman (1992) suggests that the Opposition's primary purpose at Question Time is to raise the Opposition's general profile while causing embarrassment to the Prime Minister. Yet the Leader of the Opposition suffers a distinct disadvantage, as the Prime Minister is well briefed by staff members and gets the last word in every exchange.

On the other hand, the Opposition Leader can, with a well crafted question, raise the spirits of his or her entire party by catching the Prime Minister off-guard, according to Alderman. As an example, he asserts that Opposition Leader Neil Kinnock's well-timed questioning of Margaret Thatcher in 1990 played a key role in her subsequent leadership crisis and resignation. Thus Jones (1973) and Alderman (1997) present the most careful studies of the content of Prime Minister's Questions. But the overall paucity of academic attention to Question Time is revealed by Borthwick (1984) and Rasmussen (1986), as further discussed in the section on research-gaps below.

Observing Holyrood

Naturally, few rigorous treatments have yet been published on the Scottish Parliament in action (Mitchell, 2001), as the chamber on the Mound was only opened in 1999, and its permanent home at Holyrood is still under construction in 2003. Even before the new era, it was said, "the literature on Scottish politics itself was like the nation's teeth—'most notable for gaps'" (Mitchell, 2001, p. 217). However, the essential features of the Scottish parliament lay the groundwork for study. These consist of the bylaws of the chamber, including such factors as television rules and the proxemics of the parliament. Parliament has two purposes: to scrutinize the Scottish Executive, and to pass legislation (McLeish, 2002). In the interest of scrutiny, each Thursday from 3:10-3:30 p.m. the Scottish Parliament holds a 20-minute session known as "First Minister's

Questions” (FMQs), which is the focus of the present study. The following analysis is based on television observation of the Scottish Parliament on the British Broadcasting Company’s Channel 2 (BBC2, 2002).

After the 1997 devolution referendum was passed, the Consultative Steering Group (CSG) was formed, headed by Labour MP Henry McLeish. The committee’s purpose was to write the White Paper delineating the rules of the chamber. The principle officer charged with carrying out these rules is the Presiding Officer, who is comparable to the Speaker of the House at Westminster. David Steele, former Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party is the first Presiding Officer. By oath of office, Steele is duty-bound to sever ties with his former party and maintain strict objectivity in parliamentary affairs. This is because he exercises a great deal of control over the day-to-day conduct of the chamber (McLeish, 2002). Typically, this type of office is elected based on a reputation for fairness and calm. The Presiding Officer makes all rulings over whether a motion or a ministerial question is in order.

Regarding Question Time, the Consultative Steering Group stipulated that “Oral and written Parliamentary Questions (PQs) will provide an important means for individual members to obtain information from the Executive and to hold the Executive to account. The time provided ... should not be used for political points scoring. PQs should be used genuinely to elicit information” (Watson, 2001, p. 34). If these goals were

to be realized, the Scottish Parliament would be very different from the surly reputation of Westminster.

After his election by members, Glaswegian Donald Dewar, Leader of Scottish Labour, was appointed by Queen Elizabeth II as the inaugural First Minister of Scotland, with Liberal Democrat Jim Wallace serving as Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice. The rest of the Scottish Executive is comprised of 10 cabinet ministers: 9 from the Labour Party and 1 from the Liberal Democrats (Brown, 2000). The major departments are Justice, Education, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Development, Finance, and Executive Secretariat and Corporate Services. There are sixteen committees in all. No party holds a majority on any committee, and committee chairs do not have to be members of the Coalition.

Dewar and Wallace formed an awkward partnership, as the two men represented different political parties. Without a majority in the parliament, Labour formed a coalition government with Wallace's much-smaller contingent of Liberal Democrats (Lib-Dems). Whereas the Lib-Dems stand in opposition at the British Parliament in Westminster, they are part of the government at Holyrood. This partnership is sustainable, according to former First Minister Henry McLeish (2002), because the two parties agree on ninety percent of the vital issues in Scotland. The second largest party at Holyrood is the Scottish National Party (SNP), followed by the Conservative Party.

The initial Leader of the Opposition was Alex Salmond of the SNP, later followed by fellow SNP member John Swinney. The opposition Leader is usually permitted up to four questions per session, and Conservative Party Leader David McLetchie affords three. Out of 129 total Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), the Labour Party hold 55 seats, the Scottish National Party 35, the Conservative Party 19, and the Liberal-Democratic Party 16. The Socialist and Green parties each hold one seat, with another held by independent Dennis Canavan, formerly of Labour. The 129th member is the Presiding Officer, Sir David Steele.

The 129 MSPs are elected by a hybrid system: there are 73 constituency elections, with another 56 members elected by proportional representation (PR) across eight Scottish regions of seven members each. The constituency boundaries are the same as those used at Westminster, and the eight regions are coextensive with Scotland's representation in the European Parliament at Brussels. This election offers two ballots to each voter: a constituency ballot and a party ballot. The constituency vote, using "first past the post" criteria, is just like a U.S. congressional vote, in which only the candidate with the plurality of votes is elected. Constituency members represent a particular locality while the others, called list members, represent their broader region and are elected on the party ballot. The list members failed to win their constituency races, but were ranked high enough on their party's regional list to earn a seat according to the party's popularity in that region. List members are viewed as somewhat lower in prestige, although their

positions are statutorily identical to those of constituency members (Wishart, 2002). In the first Scottish Parliament, Labour holds 52 constituencies, 3 list seats; the SNP 7 constituencies, 28 list; the Liberal-Democrats 12 constituencies, 3 list; the Conservatives 1 constituency, 18 list. Independent Dennis Canavan holds the final constituency seat, with the Scottish Socialists and Green Party only represented by a single list seat each.

Although patterned after the British House of Commons, several noteworthy differences between Holyrood and Westminster exist, including the way their Question Times are carried out (McLeish, 2002). From its outset, the Scottish Parliament was designed to improve upon some of the arcane and burdensome practices at Westminster. For example, the Economist (2000) praises the chamber's communication environment: "The parties sit in a horseshoe, not glaring in serried ranks as if at an enemy army. They vote electronically at bright new desks, instead of shuffling like penned sheep into division lobbies. And they knock off in time to say goodnight to their children" (p. 55).

Each of the 129 MSPs also enjoys plenty of elbow room at Holyrood: about three times more room per member than the claustrophobic seating at Westminster. MSPs have their own desk, where they can vote from electronically. In contrast to the linear, confrontational architecture of Westminster, the chamber at Holyrood is shaped like a horseshoe. This design is assumed to encourage a less formal and more constructive atmosphere (Watson, 2001). According to McLeish (2002), the intimate setting at Holyrood forces greater civility in both language and volume during Question Time.

McLeish asserts that this environment contrasts starkly with the lusty barracking found at Westminster, including the constant braying and frequent obscenities lying just beneath the sensitivity of the BBC2 microphones.

The Labour-Liberal Democrat Coalition chooses to sit in the middle of the semi-circle, pushing the opposition parties toward the ends. The Scottish Parliament permits polite applause and tapping of desks when a speaker has made a good point. Hecklers are also tolerated, and usually are brief and clear enough to be quoted in the Official Report. Members may be much more direct at Holyrood than at Westminster: no need to refer to a colleague as “the right honourable member for Tweeddale.” Instead, they refer to each other by name.

Unlike other general sessions when the chamber is half-empty, First Minister’s Questions draws the entire membership of Parliament. McLeish (2002), who served as Chair of the Consultative Steering Group (CSG), describes the protocol for FMQs. The CSG authored the white paper that formed the Standing Orders of the Parliament (Scottish Parliament, 2003). At Westminster, the Leader of the Opposition intervenes only after another member begins Prime Minister’s Questions. At Holyrood, however, the first question is reserved for the Leader of the Opposition. This question must be prepared in writing and the First Minister given at least eight days notice. After the answer, the SNP Leader is permitted three self-supplementary questions. After the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the next largest party asks the First Minister a prepared

question, and is permitted two supplementaries. All initial questions must be in written form. In order to preserve surprise, party leaders always begin with a highly generic written question, such as “When will the First Minister next meet with the Prime Minister, and what matters will they discuss.” After the brief response, the opposition party Leader is free to ask the First Minister literally anything during his self-supplementary questions (McLeish, 2002).

After the top-two party leaders are finished, question numbers 3-6 must cover specifically devolved matters, be competent, and be non-argumentative (McLeish, 2002; Scottish Parliament, 2003). These backbencher questions also must be submitted in writing at least eight days prior to the session in which they will be answered. Questions are randomly selected by computer, screened by the parliamentary staff, and are ultimately chosen by the Presiding Officer. Once the First Minister’s responds, the member asking the numbered question asks a self-supplementary question. After their exchange, any other member may signal the Presiding Officer her desire to ask one follow-up question, which will be referred to as an interjection. Whether the question is permitted is at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. Sometimes the Presiding Officer permits two or three members to make an interjection on a single topic before moving on to the next prepared question.

Both types of supplementaries (self-supplementaries and interjections) are supposed to be brief. But unlike the initial written question, they may and typically are

argumentative. Often there is sufficient time during the twenty-minute session to get through all six numbered questions, plus both leaders' total of five self-supplementaries, the other members' six total self-supplementaries, and a few interjections. When questions and answers run rather long, or several interjections are made, the session may not reach question six or even number five. These questions then become written questions and are answered within a week (Scottish Parliament, 2003). About seventeen questions and answers are presented during a typical session.

BBC2 broadcasts FMQs live from 3:10-3:30 each Thursday that Parliament is in session. The television rules at Holyrood are more relaxed than at Westminster (SNP, 1999). The goal is to make television a surrogate public gallery. The director of the production freely chooses specific reaction shots of members who have been referenced by other speakers. Members have their own desk microphones, as opposed to the lower-quality hanging microphones of Westminster (Gravlee, 1981). Speaking in 1999, CSG Chair Henry McLeish stated that the telecast was "designed to provide an open and accessible Parliament" (Lewis, 1999, n.p.).

As in the House of Commons, BBC2 provides live commentary before, during, and after each session. Sound-bites from First Minister's Questions are also prominently featured in the day's television news packages, and the proceedings are replayed in their entirety at about midnight (McLeish, 2002). However, commentary is infrequent, whispered and rushed. This makes Question Time a largely unmediated communication

between Parliament and the citizens. As the second nation-wide broadcast network established in the U.K., BBC2 carries a much larger audience share than cable C-SPAN does in America, including a relatively high rating for First Minister's Questions (McLeish, 2002).

Only one known research study has thus far addressed discourse at the Scottish Parliament directly. Gentry (2001) conducted a pilot study that compared First Minister's Questions (FMQs) with Prime Minister's Questions at Westminster during June 2001. Content analysis identified descriptive contrasts between the two parliaments regarding topic selection, depth of coverage per topic, amount of disparaging language, and participation by women. Results also found that the opportunity for supplementary questions, enjoyed by all MSPs but only two MPs, was associated with the length of ministerial replies. The study was limited by its short time-frame as well as its focus only on questions, not the answers given by the minister.

Research Gaps

The present study grounds itself in the field of political communication. Shaped primarily by political science, social psychology, and mass communication, political communication has been recognized as a coherent field of study only during the last thirty years (Ryfe, 2001). Despite its inherently interdisciplinary nature, Ryfe suggests

that scholarship in political communication is constrained by the paradigm case of communication in election campaigns, as well as a preoccupation with media effects:

Interests that lie outside [these paradigms] are possible, but they are not rewarded, valued, or respected in nearly the same way as research that accepts the core terms of the field. That is why one finds so little research in the major journals that lies outside the research agendas defined by these boundaries (p. 410).

Any cursory or in-depth review of the research literature in America and Britain supports Ryfe's thesis, as a large proportion of political communication research is election or media-focussed. Although Ryfe's essay mainly promotes the consideration of history in political communication research, his conclusion applies to other prospective studies that delve outside the realm of political campaigns and the mass media, such as research on parliamentary Question Time.

As Ryfe (2001) asserts, the bulk of political communication research centers on media coverage of politics (e.g., Norris, 2000), with much of the remainder devoted to analysis of behind-the-scenes strategies of professional political marketing (e.g., Scammell, 1995). Although Watts (1997) devotes one chapter of his book to live public address—principally regarding television's effect on Prime Minister's Question Time—direct political speech appears to be the least-covered genre of communication

addressed in the political communication literature. Direct political speech, or discourse, can be defined as orally delivered persuasive communication that politicians and parties address to each other and the public, unedited by a third party. Thus media professionals are not the ones producing or filtering the discourse (as they do in interviews and news packages). Examples of direct political speech include parliamentary and campaign addresses, parliamentary Question Time, and party election broadcasts.

The literature in British political communication tends to skip over the intermediate step of politician discourse, dwelling only on the opposing anchors of political strategy (political science orientation) and media reaction (mass media orientation). Thus it may be argued that falling back on disciplinary traditions has created a vacuum of research on governance communication, that is, discourse employed by actual office holders while parliament is seated. This neglect is clearly outdated, as live television now provides a direct view of parliamentary discourse itself. Adopting a communication orientation, as opposed to choosing strictly a political science or mass media emphasis, can help overcome this oversight in the literature.

The scholarly dismissal of politician discourse *per se* may derive not only from disciplinary biases, but on one's definition of political communication itself. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Schlesinger (1998) defines political communication as "the purposive communication by political actors about politics" (n.p.). This conceptualization clearly invites a direct discourse orientation. Norris (2001), on the other hand, subsumes

the role of the media in her definition of political communication: "... an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media, and the public" (p. 7). This definition seems to exclude research and theory that runs afield of the usual treatment of opinion research and media effects. Mitchell (2001) criticizes the academy's continued reliance on such well-covered areas.

The research gap is exacerbated further by limitations in research specific to Scotland. According to Paterson, et al. (2001), "The year 1999 has no precedent in Scottish politics, and understanding the significance of the political landscape that is now unfolding requires new evidence, new analysis and new methods of understanding" (p. 1). Yet even the Paterson study fails to achieve this goal, according to Mitchell (2001), who judges the authors' contribution as "unimaginative," "rushed," and "glib" (p. 219). Moreover, the literature on Scotland is dominated by research on the political process, not communication. Norris (2001) concludes that, despite the large body of research in Scottish politics generally, there is a "not much from a comms [communication] perspective" (personal communication, May 23). Therefore, the "new methods" called for by Paterson, et al. (2001, p. 1) could rightly include a rigorous use of quantitative content analysis.

As defined above, scholarship in British political communication rarely attends to sustained public discourse. When it does, the result is not always rigorous. For example, Watts' (1997) chapter on political speech is titled "Politicians Selling Themselves."

Although a positive step, even Smith and Smith's (2000) rhetorical analysis of the 1992 party election manifestos covers written party communication only, not oral communication. And Scammell and Semetko's (1995) content analysis of party election broadcasts (PEBs) mainly covers general topics, with no consideration of argument genre or language.

Few studies have analyzed the content of ministerial Question Time despite the fact that it receives far more media coverage and public attention than any other aspect of parliament in Britain (Alderman, 1992; Negrine, 1996; Watts, 1997). The dearth of in-depth scholarly attention may be a result of a dismissal of any political speech that goes unedited. Such direct discourse is displayed to a much greater degree during Question Time than in media-controlled campaign stories and interviews. To some, the raw cut-and-thrust of Question Time seems intellectually irrelevant to the serious conduct of government. Borthwick (1984) goes so far as to claim that PMQs is among "the least productive parts of parliamentary activity" (p. 58). Rasmussen (1986) even bashes the exercise as "overrated" and "useless" (p. 21). These claims have no basis in actual research, however.

Other academicians similarly draw sweeping conclusions without the benefit of a research method. Borthwick (1984) discounts Question Time as merely an attempt to score favorable recognition, rather than as a constructive exercise of government. Watts (1997) focuses his analysis of Question Time on superficial qualities, such as how

statesmanlike one is seen, striking a “good image,” and “making a good impression” in order to “put on a good show” (p. 166).

A number of political leaders share the academician’s disdain for Question Time. Former Labour Opposition Leader Paddy Ashdown argues that these televised sessions lie “somewhere between farce and fantasy” (Watts, 1997, p. 166). Watts (1997) cites a litany of diatribes against Question Time made by various politicians, centering on its allegedly inferior statesmanship. Such attitudes, as expressed by scholars and leaders alike, may explain the lack of systematic or rigorous attention to Question Time in the political communication literature. Yet these statements must be regarded as anecdotal, as no known sustained study of Question Time has previously been undertaken. Therefore, this long-established session of politician-controlled discourse deserves at least one close examination. To continue to make untested assumptions about Question Time when objective research methods are available is untenable. A methodical analysis of content conducted over a large number of sessions would permit something new: an objective statement of what is actually being said during Question Time.

As indicated in earlier sections, research on British governance communication can be criticized generally as overly conjectural, not highly objective or grounded. Referring specifically to research on Scotland, Mitchell (2001) agrees: “High quality polemics has its place but we need to understand Scottish politics ... Scotland offers a fascinating social science laboratory but only if we have the tools to study what is going

on” (p. 222). The paucity of rigorous investigation, especially in Scotland, leaves a gap that systematic research can help to fill. Greater understanding may be reached by observing the communication of governance, such as found in the discourse of the Scottish Parliament.

Rationale for Study

As the research gaps noted above imply, the systematic study of Scottish parliamentary communication is justified on ten independent levels. First, the research literature in political communication is rich in campaign studies, but weak in the study of communication between campaigns, when elections are believed to be determined for all practical purposes (Scammell & Semetko, 1995). The paucity of scholarly attention to governance communication is exacerbated by the speculative and even dismissive nature of the studies that do exist. A more systematic treatment, as can be provided by quantitative content analysis, would enhance the methodological rigor of governance communication research. The high level of attention paid to Question Time by the public and the media (Alderman, 1992; Negrine, 1996; Watts, 1997) makes such careful analysis all the more exigent.

Question Time itself requires justification as a medium worthy of scholarly attention. Although one may question whether Question Time drives the political process, Alderman (1992) provides evidence that (1) Leaders of the Opposition attach a great deal of importance to the session, (2) that all members take great pains to avoid conflicts in

their schedules in order to attend, and (3) that the outcome of the session plays an important role in backbencher morale. Alderman further justifies the salience of

Questions to the Prime Minister:

They have become an important barometer of parliamentary politics. Premiers participate relatively rarely in other aspects of the business of the House. Question Time thus constitutes one of the very few opportunities for Opposition leaders to be seen in direct confrontation with them on apparently equal terms (p. 67).

Alderman concludes that success is vital to the Leader of Government and even more so to the Leader of the Opposition. In the Scottish context, former First Minister Henry McLeish (2002) concurs, acknowledging that Question Time fairly reflects the wider business of parliament. He also reveals that the leader of government spends the entire day preparing for it with his or her staff. And all observers cited by Watts (1997) admit to the high profile of Prime Minister's Questions in the British political dialogue.

The present study fills an additional void in the political communication literature: the increasingly one-way flow of transatlantic scholarship. Despite a strong earlier focus on British discourse, few studies by American scholars have been produced on the subject since the early 1980s. Compounding the problem is the emphasis that British scholars have placed on the political process and media studies, as opposed to

political discourse *per se*. Thus very little new research has emerged on British parliamentary communication. The present study would contribute to the literature by analyzing the starting point of political communication: direct debate by office-holders during times of governance.

Another major justification for the study of First Minister's Questions concerns its Constitutional role in holding the Executive to account. The unitary nature of British politics is well documented (e.g., Negrine, 1997). In the United States, bills must pass two houses of Congress and be approved by the Executive Branch to become law. Minority members of Congress are actually regarded as being part of the government. Not so in the British system. "The Government" only refers to the executive branch, not the Parliament itself. This difference from the American notion of government is implied in Macwhirter's (2002) relief that Scotland has "a parliament to hold the buggers to account" (n.p.).

Parliament is thus regarded as a separate entity from the Government, and a weak one if it fails to press its rights with the Executive. Macwhirter (2002b) reports that it is common for a British-style executive simply to issue decrees that bypass parliament completely—even being handed to the press before members can debate them. This is due to the strict party discipline that characterizes the British system (Cole, 1999). When asked by an American if there is a lot of whipping in the British system, former First Minister Henry McLeish (2002) replied, "Whipping? There is total whipping" (n.p.).

In the U.K. Parliament, the House of Commons is the first and last power player, the House of Lords serving mainly to advise and consent to legislation. The Scottish Parliament is even more unitary than the Commons, as it is the first and last architect of all legislation. If the leading party holds a majority at Holyrood, it forms the Scottish Executive, with minority parties seemingly serving as bystanders with negligible influence until the next election. This makes Question Time essential, as it is one of few settings in which members of the opposition can actually set the agenda rather than react to it (Borthwick, 1984). Question Time is also the most prominent forum for holding the head of government to account, which is one of only two charged duties of the Scottish Parliament (McLeish, 2002). Without this scrutiny, the First Minister would hold an even greater monopoly on power. This fact alone justifies a more careful and systematic study of Question Time than has been undertaken thus far.

Although the present study could be conducted on any parliamentary body that uses Question Time, the Scottish Parliament offers a rare opportunity to witness the nascent development of a Western democracy and the political communication that characterizes it. The focus of the present study begins in 1999, at the opening of the first-ever popularly-elected Scottish Parliament. The modern nature of this historical event permits the author to track the development of communication over Parliament's first 1000 days, which was commemorated on March 26, 2002. Moreover, the project offers substantial heuristic value because its research method can later be applied to other

parliaments that utilize Question Time. Researchers will thus be able to observe and compare the communication patterns in parliaments around the world.

The choice of communication environment should also be justified. Confined to a single time and place, a parliament offers scholars and the public a discrete, accessible locus of unfiltered political communication. Johnson (1997) attests to the natural public interest attracted by this singular weekly forum: "A lively debate is often good entertainment; the challenge and counter-challenge of opposing points of view hold the viewers' attention better than a less focused exchange of diverse opinions" (pp. 497-498). Prime Minister's Questions is so well known it has even been parodied on the American television comedy show "Saturday Night Live."

All observers agree that Question Time is a high-profile public forum in the British system of government, with viewer ratings to match (e.g., Negrine, 1996). According to Alderman (1992), this session receives disproportionately heavy media coverage compared to other aspects of government, and is the "single most frequently covered form of Commons event on the ITN News at Ten (38%), BBC Newsnight (25%) and Channel 4 News (23%)" (p. 67). The fact that oppositions receive far less attention than governments makes Question Time that much more important, according to Alderman. McLeish (2002) verifies the cognate importance of First Minister's Questions in Scotland, with likewise high relative viewer ratings and press attention.

This nexus of public attention is fortuitous, as the niche programming of the electronic age makes elusive such focal points of public attention. According to Smith and Smith (2000), “As the web expands, political messages are sure to proliferate in a way that will lead critics and voters alike to seek out overarching master documents that provide the nodal discourses needed to frame and anchor those individual message fragments” (p. 470). As the BBC news is dominated by London politics (Schlesinger, 1998, Pittock, 2001), First Minister’s Questions qualify as one of few master documents available to the Scots public. Viewers can count on it being telecast on Thursdays at 3:10 p.m., re-broadcast at night, and closely covered on the Scots’ two daily BBC television news programs.

Theoretical support for FMQs as a master document comes from the discipline of organizational communication. According to Karl Weick’s theory of organizing, any organization (such as a parliament) exists in both a physical environment and an informational environment (Miller, 1999). Meaning does not exist in an objective sense, but must be interpreted by individuals amidst a constant barrage of messages. This process of interpretation is called enactment. Weick’s model proposes that a message is often equivocal: liable to be enacted by different individuals to mean different things, which leads to miscommunication. A primary purpose of organizations, then, is to help members enact common meanings. This process, called organizing, is defined as “the resolving of equivocality in an enacted environment by means of interlocked behaviors

embedded in conditionally related processes” (Miller, 1999, p. 80). Organizing thus involves an institutional effort to crystallize a multitude of messages into meanings that are coherent.

Equivocality is potentially a common problem in an organization as complex as a parliament. For example, ministers sometimes make statements that contradict the First Minister. Without a prominent, regularly-scheduled forum attended by all members, it would be difficult to resolve these equivocalities. As the major goal of organizing is “the reduction of equivocality in the informational environment” (Miller, 1999, p. 81), FMQs permits the First Minister a weekly opportunity to clarify these mixed signals. An example of equivocality occurred on January 11, 2001, when John Swinney highlighted a clash between First Minister Henry McLeish and the Westminster government. McLeish had been blasted in newspapers by unnamed British Labour ministers for calling the Scottish Executive a government, when its official name was the Scottish Executive (Official Report, 2001). The perceived gaffe was played up in the press as treading on the sovereignty of Westminster and a direct affront to McLeish’s own party’s Leader, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Rather than back off from his use of the term in embarrassment, however, McLeish made clear to Swinney that the Executive certainly was a government, using the expression “Scottish government” three times in one answer (Official Report, 2001, n.p.). Later it was learned that Prime Minister Blair had assured McLeish earlier in the day that

he supported him in the dispute and not the Westminster ministers, which permitted his boldness during Question Time (McLeish, 2002).

Informed by the theoretical notions of the master document (Smith and Smith, 2000) and Weick's theory of organizing (Miller, 1999), the dismissal of Question Time by some academicians and politicians may discount the value of argument synthesis that such a forum can provide. The crystallization of Parliament's most prominent issues of the week into a twenty-minute dialogue may provide a level of argument coherence for the viewing public and media, as well as for MPs themselves. This makes the content of the session even worthier of objective study.

Still another factor needed to justify the present study concerns the sub-national nature of the Scottish Parliament. One may doubt the importance of communication at Holyrood compared to the Palace at Westminster because the Constitutional settlement devolves only certain matters to Edinburgh, with the rest retained at Westminster. However, Scotland's distinct national identity remains even after 296 years of union (Schlesinger, 1998). Moreover, Brown (2001) confirms the prominence and importance of the issues debated at Holyrood: "One of the ironies was, of course, that the issues of greatest interest to the public in Scotland as in the rest of Britain and which most dominated the [2001 British] campaign—health, education and crime—are all areas that are devolved and fall under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Parliament" (p. 702). In fact, many Scottish Members of the British Parliament (MPs) are reportedly disgusted at

having “slipped from the national radar screen,” with more news interviews and public interest now focussed on Edinburgh MSPs instead of them (Wishart, 2002, n.p.).

Finally, one may question the need for American scholars to pay attention to British political communication, period. The Anglo-American alliance now being tested in the Persian Gulf, as well as the growing interdependence of the global economy, may soon obviate such questions. Under Tony Blair, the nuclear-armed United Kingdom maintains its role as America’s leading security partner (Deans, 2001). Yet several important political players within and outside Blair’s Labour party, such as Liberal-Democratic Leader Charles Kennedy, are publicly critical of this cooperation (Hansard, 2002). Another Scot, Former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, resigned his post as Minister for Parliament on 18 March 2003 in protest over Blair’s action in the Second Persian Gulf War. Many Scots besides Kennedy and Cook oppose Britain’s historically pro-American policies.

One may conclude that besides increasing knowledge in political communication, studying the argument choices and communication styles of foreign parliaments may help American policy makers better understand the basis of international and intra-alliance disagreements. Considering the Liberal-Democrats’ gain in the 2001 British general election, the distinct possibility of left-leaning governments being elected in Scotland or Britain clearly exists. And the potential for Scotland to achieve full independence in the next decade (Nairn, 2000) makes the object of the present study even more meaningful.

Therefore, inward-looking American scholars can gain much by paying attention to the political communication now taking place beyond our own shores. The point is especially salient in the context of a nation that shares our language, religious and cultural heritage, and liberal tradition of democracy. With the review of the basic literature in mind, one may next turn attention to the particular theoretical basis of the present study.

Chapter IV

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in the interdisciplinary field of political communication. This section offers a theoretical introduction to British political communication and then describes an eclectic set of theories that combine to form the basis of study. According to Norris (2001), political communication scholars represent the varied research fields of legal theory, cultural history, sociology, economics, journalism, social psychology, media studies, and political science. Maarek (2001) uses the phrase political communication in two senses. Research on political communication is one level, and political communication artifacts the other (e.g., campaign advertisements, parliamentary speeches). Therefore, Maarek suggests a subject/object view, in which the phrase “political communication” refers both to a field of research and its artifacts of study.

Political communication as a field refers to theory and research on the subject. Norris, who has written extensively on British political communication, draws from mobilization theories, uses & gratifications, agenda setting, and limited effects in her research on campaigns and elections (2001). Via experimental research designs, she suggests the existence of a “virtuous circle” of campaign communication, in which media consumption leads to greater interest in politics in an upward spiral of civic engagement.

This research utilizes rigorous experimental designs to search for effects on the individual level, and takes particular aim at the “videomalaise” hypothesis suggested by scholars such as Robinson (1976), at least in the British context. However, Norris has thus far not made British politician discourse a focus of study.

For the most part, Scottish political communication fits easily within the British framework. The new government in Edinburgh is grounded in the British parliamentary model, and researchers face no inherent stumbling blocks by applying existing theories. However, the Scottish political communication environment does differ by degree. Scotland has been an independent state for most of the last millennium, only being absorbed into the U.K. in 1707. Cultural differences remain, including Scotland’s politics being to the political left of England (Paterson, et al., 2001). This reality is based on the heavy industrialization and historic success of trade unions in Scotland (McLeish, 2002), as well as a widely-held belief that Scots are simply more egalitarian than Englishmen (Hearn, 2000). Brown (2001) reports there is also a greater representation of women in government, with 37% of members compared to 17% at Westminster. The Scottish parliament also runs on a fixed four-year term, with a set election date. In contrast, the Prime Minister calls the next Westminster election anywhere between four and five years after a term begins. Finally, nationalism is far more pronounced in Scotland than in England or Wales, with independence on the minds of many.

Media differences between Scotland and the rest of the U.K. are not stark. London interests control most of the broadcast media, including the BBC, and regulations are uniform across Britain. However, the Scottish press is less deferential to the government than its counterpart in England (McLeish, 2002). English newspapers sell poorly north of the border, and BBC Scotland is allowed to opt out of some British shows in favor of Scottish ones (Schlesinger, 2000).

The paucity of scholarly attention to parliamentary discourse *per se* complicates the task of grounding the present study in a well-established theory. As of yet there is nothing approaching a fully-formed theory of parliamentary discourse. One could fall back on rhetorical theory, such as the neo-Aristotelian approach (Brock and Scott, 1982) or the narrative paradigm (Fisher, 1987). Unfortunately, the qualitative methods associated with these perspectives do not meet the tests of objectively-rigorous research called for by Schlesinger (1998), who criticizes the conjectural nature of non-empirical treatments of political communication. The lack of a singular social science theory upon which to ground research on the content of parliamentary discourse should not be considered a reason to abandon it in favor of yet another media effects study. On the contrary, the theoretical and research gap in parliamentary discourse makes this sort of project all the more exigent. Moreover, the inherently interdisciplinary nature of political communication scholarship invites an eclectic approach. By tapping certain elements of opposition theory and argumentation theory, the present study hopes to identify

communication patterns in a manner that could develop into the beginnings of an empirical theory of parliamentary discourse.

Opposition Theory

A primary theoretical tradition with the potential to inform research in parliamentary communication is known as opposition theory. Initially developed by Dahl (1965), the theory has helped political scientists describe the conditions that produce a strong or weak parliamentary opposition. As parliamentary governments tend to be highly unitary rather than permitting a greater diffusion of power, the leading party is in charge and oppositions sit on the outside looking in. This unitary system of government characteristic of parliamentary democracies contrasts sharply with the United States Constitution, which divides legislative power among two independent houses and an executive branch. Opposition is thus essential in the parliamentary system. Without a strong opposition that leads to alternation in office, governments are free to rule indefinitely.

The unitary nature of British politics has led more than one opposition leader to term it an “elective dictatorship,” or an oligarchy of two parties that monopolize power alternately (Cole, 1999, n.p.). However, opposition is a key element in the parliamentary system. The “British notion of opposition” is elaborated by Johnson (1997, p. 490), and similar treatments are given by Cole (1999), Parry (1997) and Blondel (1997). Five major theoretical principles of British opposition emerge: (1) there is no democracy without

opposition, and alternation in office is to be valued; (2) unlike government practice in less-democratic states, opposition is an accepted, inherent virtue of British politics; (3) oppositions are charged with holding the government to account via constant public confrontation; (4) oppositions stand as an alternate government-in-waiting; (5) oppositions must choose whether it is in their interest to be intractable or constructive.

Analysis of the Johnson's (1997) central features of British opposition implies several theoretical applications to Scottish political communication. It may be obvious that political opposition is accepted and structurally protected in the Scottish Parliament (principle one). This is because Scottish elections are free and fair, minority members seem to play substantial roles on all empowered committees (Watson, 2001), and committees are permitted to introduce legislation (McCrone, 2002). Principle one may thus be more concerned with the political process than with parliamentary communication. However, the other principles of British opposition relate fundamentally to communication and are thus applicable to the present study.

Opposition principle two suggests that opposition is an accepted and valued component of democracy. As the leading party has such a stronghold on power, one would expect that it would treat the official Opposition with a degree of respect in its parliamentary communication. However, evidence exists that governments are not always so respectful of opposition parties and their leaders, especially nationalists. As First Minister, Henry McLeish (2002) occasionally compared Scottish National Party

“separatism” to that of the Balkan states (n.p.). Milne (1998) asserts that in Scotland it is popular to “hammer the Nats” (p. 20), and McLeod (1999), comments that the SNP is “pounded from every quarter,” yet maintains “astonishingly solid support for a party denied the support of a single newspaper or any significant Scottish institution” (n.p.). These statements underscore the conclusions of Pittock (2001), who reports a three-part strategy that governments use in order to deal with proponents of nationalism: “strategies of neglect/ridicule,” accommodation of concerns, and constitutional foot-dragging (p. 119). Therefore, it would be theoretically constructive to observe differences in the level of criticism-versus-support and ridicule-versus-respect between the Coalition government and the opposition parties, including the SNP.

Researchers can further advance knowledge in parliamentary communication by describing the manner in which opposition parties at Holyrood hold the government to account in their parliamentary communications (principle three). The Scottish National Party stands as the official Opposition, with the Conservative Party also prominent. Applied to First Minister’s Question Time, a quantitative content analysis can describe the policy priorities of the opposition, their argumentative and verbal choices, and the content of the First Minister’s replies.

Opposition principle four suggests that British oppositions serve as a shadow government. This implies that the opposition is charged to do more than critique the policies of the executive, but should defend a legislative program of their own. Content

analysis can measure this principle empirically, as practiced during Question Time. For example, one can measure the rate of policy proposals, as opposed to merely identifying problems, touted by the Scottish National Party compared to those of the Conservative Party.

The fifth opposition principle noted by Johnson (1997) is that opposition strategy can vary from constructive to obstructive. The author suggests that constructive opposition means government policy is not opposed merely for the sake of opposing, which could offend many in the electorate. However, constructive opposition also brings risks, as it can make the party unelectable if it is seen as a carbon copy of government policy (Cole, 1999). The present study hopes to address this principle in the Scottish context. By analyzing the verbal content of Question Time, scholars can discern the level of constructiveness versus obstructiveness among opposition parties, as well as constructiveness among minority Coalition members in the case of Scotland. According to Jones (1973), members of the majority party or Coalition often ask ingratiating questions during Question Time. Therefore, individuals and parties can be tested for variation in their frequency of respectful versus insulting language, as done in Gentry's (2001) pilot study. In contrast, proportional representation frequently results in coalition governments (Blondel, 1997). Under this scenario, as it does apply to Scotland, means that oppositions can exploit weaknesses in Coalition unity by identifying policy differences between the partners. According to Alderman (1992), a prime purpose of

Opposition questions is to exploit embarrassing divisions within the Government. A content analysis could measure the use of such tactics during parliamentary Question Time.

A corollary to opposition principle five comes from nationalism theory. Keating (2001) suggests that nationalist movements, which are by nature opposition movements, vary between fundamentalism and gradualism. For the Scottish National Party, fundamentalism would entail the hard-line, uncompromising commitment to the goal of independence. Gradualism represents a more adaptive, moderate, and thus more realistic, movement for change. According to Keating, the SNP has oscillated historically between “parochialism” (fundamentalism) and “cosmopolitanism” (gradualism) in its drive for independence (p. 223). Clearly, the party indicated fundamentalism in standing opposed to the failed 1979 devolution referendum, condemning it for falling short of a call for full independence.

Deciding to support the devolution settlement in 1997 obviously marked a move toward gradualism by the Nationalists. But once the parliament was won, the SNP was free to return to fundamentalism. A content analysis of the SNP’s discourse on autonomy during First Minister’s Questions could objectively measure the party’s public commitment to independence. If SNP discussion of independence is seldom and subtle, gradualism would be seen to be its continued communicative preference. If, however,

the SNP raised independence frequently and explicitly during FMQs, the advent of the Parliament may have signaled a return to fundamentalism.

A sixth opposition principle, not described above, is also salient in Scottish politics. According to Blondel (1997), “the more power is concentrated in the government, the more opposition is also concentrated in one body and therefore cohesive” (p. 473). Applied to Holyrood, with its somewhat tenuous Coalition government and widely dispersed parties on both sides, principle six suggests that the Opposition at Holyrood may be greatly divided. Content analysis can test this assumption by measuring the opposition parties’ level of criticism of the executive with their criticism of each other. It can also be gauged by comparing the topic priorities among the different parties during First Minister’s Questions. If the SNP and Conservatives raise similar issues when they have the floor, they could be deemed a more cohesive Opposition than their claims to the contrary suggest. Clearly, opposition theory is a fruitful starting point for research in parliamentary communication. The crucial place of the Opposition in Britain is summarized by former SNP Leader Alex Salmond, who commented in The Herald (1999) that “oppositions have a habit of becoming governments” (n.p.).

Argumentation Theory

In addition to the contribution of opposition theory, a study of content at the Scottish Parliament requires a grounded system of classifying arguments. The language

of argumentation theory provides just such a nomenclature. The stock-issues model outlines a generic list of concerns that tend to arise in debates over policy (Hill and Leeman, 1997; Weiss, 1995). Similar to Monroe's motivated sequence of (1) attention, (2) need, (3) satisfaction, (4) visualization, and (5) action (O'Hair & Stewart, 1999), the model describes a set of criteria by which a legislative body can judge a future course of action. The first of the four stock issues asks, is there a significant problem that needs to be addressed? Second, is this problem inherent in society rather than merely ephemeral? Third, will the proposed bill solve or substantially alleviate the problem? And fourth, will the advantages of the proposal outweigh its disadvantages? In respective order, these are the stock issues of harm, blame, cure, and cost (see Figure 1: Stock Issues Analysis).

According to the stock-issues model, the advocate calling for change in the current system answers yes to these questions and is called the affirmative. The affirmative side bears the burden of proof in policy argumentation, whereas defenders of the *status quo* enjoy argument presumption. These advocates are called the negative side. Affirmative arguments support change, and negative arguments oppose the change. In a deliberative body such as a parliament, either the government or opposition can be affirmative or negative depending on the nature of the topic.

Figure 1: Stock Issues Analysis

Problem-oriented arguments: Harm, Blame (Affirmative indicts the current system, Negative defends)

Solution-oriented arguments: Cure, Cost (Negative attacks the proposal, Affirmative defends it)

Problem Stock Issues (Affirmative is on the attack, negative defends the *status quo*)

<u>Affirmative Side</u>	<u>Stock Issue</u>	<u>Negative Side</u>
A significant problem exists	Harm	No problem, or it isn't significant
Current measures fail	Blame	Current measures are adequate

Solution Stock Issues (Negative is on the attack, affirmative defends its plan)

<u>Affirmative Side</u>	<u>Stock Issue</u>	<u>Negative Side</u>
The plan will alleviate the harm	Cure	The plan will fail
The benefits outweigh the disadvantages	Cost	The plan will be counterproductive

Advocates raise stock issues as a means of either supporting or opposing a proposed policy change. The 2001 controversy over tuition fees in Scotland serves as an example (see Figure 2: The Stock Issues of Scrapping Scottish Tuition Fees). In this debate the affirmative side is represented by the Opposition's wish to scrap tuition fees. The Scottish Executive represents the negative, as it defends the U.K. government's recent decision to charge student tuition fees to boost university funding. The first two stock issues, harm and blame, place the current policy of student fees on the defensive (Hill and Leeman, 1997). An example of an affirmative-harm argument is that too few young Scots are enrolling in college, which restricts their future quality of life. A

negative response is that higher proportions of students are already in college than at any time in history.

The second stock issue is blame. On the blame issue, the affirmative side argues that tuition fees are preventing some students from attempting or completing college. To this the negative counters that tuition is already free for students who pass a means test.

Figure 2: The Stock Issues of Scrapping Scottish Tuition Fees (affirmative side only)

Problem at issue:	Harm	Blame
	Many deserving students lack educational attainment	Tuition fees keep students out of college
Solution at issue:	Cure	Cost
	Free tuition will raise enrollment and educational attainment	Educational investment pays off economically as well

The final two stock issues, cure and cost, turn the attention away from the *status quo* and onto the ramifications of the proposed law. Cure arguments paint the proposal as either promising or ineffective, depending on whether one is on the affirmative or negative. Arguing that the scrapping of tuition fees would significantly increase enrollment in higher education is an affirmative-cure argument. To this the negative may try to prove that any enrollment increases would be unsubstantial. Finally, an affirmative-cost argument is that by increasing educational attainment, the proposal would bolster

Scotland's economy. In contrast, the negative could argue that the plan requires a tax increase that would actually restrict economic growth.

The stock-issues model is a parsimonious means of classifying policy arguments. Applied to the Scottish Parliament, one could discern variation in argument-style choices among parties and individuals. For example, one leading MSP may be found to focus on societal harms in her questions, whereas another member reveals a tendency to highlight the disadvantages of others' proposals. In the case of the tuition fees debate, a compromise was reached that makes Scottish public universities tuition-free until after graduation.

An application of the stock-issues model can measure the overall frequency of each stock issue utilized by member questions and First Minister answers. As a new parliament, with many novices in public office, it is possible that the chamber as a whole will rely on some issues more than others. According to the personal observations of MSPs Mike Watson (2001) and Henry McLeish (2002), the large number of inexperienced politicians in the Scottish Parliament makes for unsophisticated debate. Likewise, the Economist simultaneously patronizes and complements the Parliament for being "Refreshing, amateurish, parochial" (p. 55). Macwhirter (2002) claims that an immature political culture exists in Scotland generally, and is reflected in the debates at Holyrood. But perhaps the Parliament grew in sophistication over time, which might be

reflected in an increased range of stock issues usage in year three compared to year one.

Content analysis permits a testing of these and other assumptions.

Besides stock issues theory, another salient construct of argumentation theory is derived from Aristotle's system of *topoi*, or topics (Roberts and Bywater, 1954). Like Smith and Smith's (2000) classification of topics in party election broadcasts, the content analyst can measure the frequency of individual issues that are raised during Question Time. For example, Gentry's (2001) pilot study counted thirteen topics covered at Holyrood during June 2000, with economics, devolution, and home affairs the most common issues raised. The most common topic choices of individuals and parties over time may shed insight into their policy priorities.

A final area of argumentation theory that can be applied to parliamentary communication is Bitzer's (1968) theory of the rhetorical situation. Bitzer's model entails that situational variables constrain any speaker's argument choices. For example, it is nearly political suicide for even the most conservative British politician to call for the elimination of the National Health Service due to the NHS's nearly universal support for the throughout the country. Bitzer asserts that such situational constraints are powerful and numerous:

Standard sources of constraint include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, his

discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints—for example his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style (p. 8).

Although the present study is not rhetorical in its epistemological orientation, an awareness of situational constraints may serve to inform the analysis of argument choices. Political communication scholar Johnson (1997) reinforces Bitzer's point by demonstrating that oppositions by nature must adapt to the political realities of the electorate. The far-left Labour Party of the 1980s is cited as a case of how unrelentingly-radical policies can make a party unelectable for many years on end, thus short-circuiting the British tradition of alternation in office.

Applied to Scottish parliamentary communication, situational-constraints theory can help discern the willingness of the Scottish National Party to maintain its arguably extreme view that Scotland should be separated from the United Kingdom. As observed in Chapter 2, it was difficult for the SNP to argue for independence in its campaign for Parliament, as the election came in the wake of the devolution agreement itself. It was the Labour Party that delivered regional government to Scotland as a compromise between separatism and no home rule at all. After the commencement of parliament, according to the Economist (2000), the SNP was likewise constrained:

As Leader of the opposition, it is [Alex Salmond's] job to show up what he considers the incompetence of Mr. Dewar's government. But the parliament itself is so untested, that when Mr. Salmond fires his big guns at Mr. Dewar's government, he is in danger of knocking holes in the reputation of the legislature itself... How will the Scots feel about risking independence if their newly repatriated political leaders cannot even make a success of the halfway-house of devolution? (p. 55).

However, as time passed from 1999 all the way into 2002, the SNP may have felt freer to firm up its call for independence during parliamentary debates. Quantitative content analysis can track the SNP's arguments for independence over time, thus measuring whether its original constraints held or attenuated with time.

Grounded in theories of both opposition and argumentation, the systematic study of First Minister's Questions may shed fresh insights into parliamentary communication in Scotland. It may even provide a starting point for building a theory of parliamentary discourse. Certainly, a rigorous content analysis of First Minister's Questions can add tangible evidence to the existing body of knowledge, which presently seems to over-rely on pure analysis and anecdotal observations.

Chapter V

Methods and Research Questions

Each of the 96 sessions of First Ministers Questions that took place during the first 1000 days of the new Scottish Parliament was coded for analysis. These parliamentary sessions began on 2 July 1999, which was day two of the modern Scottish parliamentary era. The final coded session took place on 21 March 2002, which was five days before the commemoration of the Parliament's 1000th day. During the summer of 2002, the author was one of three independent coders who each covered 32 sessions that had been randomly distributed among the three. The author prepared a detailed code book to guide coders, who were trained on the code book for a period of four weeks, including several group and individual practice sessions (see Appendix A: Content Analysis Code book). Coding began at a randomly-selected point that had been stratified to fall within the middle one-third of the sessions. Coders progressed chronologically through the end of the 1000 days, and then took up again at the beginning sessions and through to the original starting point. An example FMQs session can be found in Appendix B: Sample Session of First Minister's Questions.

Before the research coding commenced, the coders participated in tests of intercoder reliability (ICR). According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998), ICR is needed to control for human biases that may contaminate the research. Each coder was given the

same three randomly-selected sessions of FMQs to code. The author then subjected these data to Cohen's Kappa statistic (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico, 1998). After the group of coders met to analyze similarities and differences, another round of ICR was conducted, with another set of three randomly-selected sessions. These Kappa statistics are itemized in Table 1. Overall observed agreement in the second round of ICR was .891, with a mean Kappa of .823 (see Appendix C: Cohen's Kappa Results of Intercoder Reliability).

A few of the Kappa statistics fell lower than the author would have preferred. This may be due to the fact that a greater degree of human judgement is required to discern argument content, as opposed to content that is more easily observable at face value. According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998), "the more conceptually complex the categories and subcategories, the harder it will be to achieve acceptable reliability..." (p. 107). In the present study, for example, the stock-issues model is a relatively sophisticated system of classifying arguments. In order to compensate for the lower ratings on stock issue agreement ($K = .693$ in member questions and $K = .641$ in First Minister answers), the construct was narrowed by half in data analysis. Consistent with their pairing in stock issues theory, harm and blame arguments (which sometimes had been confused for each other in tests of intercoder reliability) were narrowed to "problem" arguments, and cure and cost arguments were reclassified as "solution" arguments. This change made for a more conservative construct.

Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998) are also forgiving of somewhat lower reliability in research “that is breaking new ground with concepts that are rich in analytical value...” (p. 131). The present study seems to fit these criteria, as it is the first known case of rigorous content analysis—traditionally associated with analyzing media messages—applied to direct discourse by political actors during times of governance.

A clear methodological strength of the present study is the benefit of a comprehensive sample. All 96 sessions, including 1477 questions and 1477 answers presented during the first 1000 days of Parliament were coded, permitting a complete census of content. Data did not constitute a sample of a study population, they *comprised* the population. Garson (2003) reports, “As with all significance tests, if you have population data, then any table differences are real and therefore significant” (n.p.). Population data are free from sampling error so they are not subject to biases resulting from non-response. Although Garson indicates that census data obviate the need for inferential statistical tests, they were conducted nonetheless. A full statement of methods follows.

Methods and Procedures

General Design

As noted above, a detailed content analysis was performed on all sessions of First Minister’s Questions conducted during the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament: July 1, 1999-March 26, 2002. Preliminary sample observations by the author, comparing

actual speech from the BBC2 broadcasts with the written text, indicated no discrepancies in content. A study by Gravlee (1981) supports this conclusion, reporting that the British style of documenting parliamentary discourse leaves the researcher with a high overall level of textual quality. This is due to careful reporting, qualified personnel, and the correction of initial errors, among other reasons. These official reports are painstakingly accurate, unlike America's Congressional Record, in which members are freely permitted to revise and extend their remarks. According to the editors of the Scottish Parliament's Official Report (2002), "The Official Report is the substantially verbatim report of meetings of the Parliament and its committees. It is prepared by the Parliament's Official Report staff" (n.p.). Thus the system of record-keeping at the Scottish Parliament can be judged adequately reliable for research purposes.

Study Population/Data Collection

The entirety of each twenty-minute session provided 32 total hours of speaking time and 284,566 words. Each initial written question, supplementary question, interjection (if used), and First Minister's answer to each, were coded by one of the three independent coders. The five types of possible question types are the initial (written) question, self-supplementary-1, self-supplementary-2, self-supplementary-3, and interjections. Six members are selected to read an initial question, all of whom also ask a self-supplementary-1. Only the leaders of the Conservative and Scottish National parties

ask a self-supplementary-2, and only the leader of the SNP asks a self-supplementary-3.

After the initial questioner is finished with her supplementary(s), any other member may signal the Presiding Officer his desire to ask an interjection question.

The content of all-1477 questions and answers was coded. Content areas of analysis included (1) the word count of questions and answers; (2) specific topics of questions and answers; (3) the scope of the question (local, Scottish region, national, union, international), (4) the argumentative stock issue presented, if any; (5) references to Scottish autonomy or independence; (6) the questioner's disposition in relation to the First Minister (critical, neutral, supportive), and vice versa; (7) language indicating ridicule-versus-respect; (8) wedge questions intended to divide the Labour-Liberal Democrat Coalition; and (9) criticism of third parties.

Transcripts of the Scottish Parliament were obtained from its Official Report (1999-2002). The content characteristics noted above were coded across the following independent variables: First Minister (Donald Dewar, Jim Wallace, Henry McLeish, Jack McConnell), major party leaders (Alex Salmond, John Swinney, David McLetchie), individual members (134 in all), Coalition-versus-Opposition members, political party of member, and member status (party leader, constituency member, list member). Content was also tracked chronologically, from the opening of parliament in July 1999 to the 1000th day in March 2002. As there is no precedent for a popularly-elected Scottish Parliament before July 1999, time was measured as ratio data: day 2 through day 995.

Data Analysis

All research questions were answered using descriptive and inferential statistical tests. Frequencies were assigned to numeric tables for descriptive analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-square cross-tabulations were applied in order to test for significant differences. When three or more independent variables were involved, significant differences were subjected to multiple comparison tests. Finally, estimates of effect size regarding significant differences were measured. For ANOVA, the effect size measure was partial eta-squared (η_p^2), and significant chi-square cross-tabulations were followed-up with either phi or Cramer's phi, depending on the number of cells.

Research Questions

Four research questions were investigated. For each research question, multiple hypotheses were tested. All variables are operationalized in Appendix A: Content Analysis Code book. The first research question concerned variation in communication content according to political group:

RQ₁: In what ways does the content of questions and answers vary according to the political affiliation of the questioner?

The two main political entities in the Scottish parliament are the Coalition and the Opposition. The Coalition includes the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. The opposition is comprised of the Scottish National Party, the Conservative Party, the

Scottish Socialist Party, and the Green Party. These two groups and different parties suggest the possibility of variation in the content of questions and answers. First, the questions and answers used in exchanges with members of the First Minister's own Coalition could be assumed to be briefer and more deferential (Jones, 1973). In contrast, exchanges involving Opposition members may tend to be longer and thus used more for political speech making. Opposition questions may also take advantage of the diffused Government resulting from proportional representation (Blondel, 1997). This objective can be served through the use of wedge questions that seek to divide the Government (Alderman, 1992). The present study is also interested in the communication of criticism-versus-support and ridicule-versus-respect, as expressed in theories of nationalism by Pittock (2001), Milne (1998) and McLeod (1999). Therefore, the first three hypotheses suggest:

H₁: Questions and answers among fellow Coalition members involve fewer words than those involving Opposition members.

H₂: Questions and answers among fellow Coalition members include more policy support and praise, with less criticism, than those involving Opposition members.

H₃: Opposition members utilize more wedge questions than do members of the Coalition.

If Coalition members are highly deferential to the First Minister, any criticism contained in their questions may be reserved for the Opposition. In contrast, criticism

from Opposition parties may be directed more to the government than to each other.

Therefore, the fourth hypothesis states:

H₄: Coalition questions contain more third-party criticism than Opposition Questions.

As the party of independence, the Scottish National Party may be presumed to raise issues of greater Scottish autonomy than all other major parties, which are unionist.

Therefore the fifth hypothesis states:

H₅: SNP questions raise issues of Scottish autonomy more than all unionist parties.

Despite the SNP's cause, only a minority of the public has traditionally supported independence (Watson, 2001). Thus McLeish (2002) states that he and other First Ministers have actually been more willing to use the "I" word than SNP members, whom he says use euphemistic "code" language in describing their main policy objective. This phenomenon may be explained theoretically by Johnson's (1997) and Keating's (2001) concept of fundamentalism-versus-gradualism, in which radical movements must be realistic in inching toward their policy objective. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis states:

H₆: SNP members are less explicit in their language on autonomy than other participants.

As any successful Opposition must establish itself as a government-in-waiting (Johnson, 1997), questions asked by the SNP and the Conservative Party can be compared on their selection of policy issues. The stock issues of harm and barrier invite the opposition to criticize the Executive's handling of a Scottish problem. But these stock

issues make no demand on the Opposition to solve the problem itself. To do that requires an affirmative use of cure and cost arguments, in which the advocate defends his or her own program of change. Thus the maturity of an Opposition can be gauged in part by its affirmative use of cure and cost arguments, rather than simply raising awareness about problems or impugning the proposals of others. The large number of novice members of parliament elected in 1999 makes this question highly salient (McLeish, 2002).

Therefore, the seventh hypothesis states:

H₇: Questions from SNP and Conservative members will vary in their proportion of problem arguments (harm/blame) versus solution arguments (cure/cost).

Stock issues as a whole can also be contrasted with non-argumentative utterances.

As Question Time ostensibly serves an informative function, to communicate the priorities and performance of the Scottish Executive (Scottish Parliament, 2003), the Coalition and opposition can be compared for their frequency of argumentative versus expository questions and answers. If the British parliamentary system is justified in being called an “elective dictatorship” (Cole, 1999, n.p.), then interactions involving Coalition members may be more expository than those initiated by opposition members. Moreover, the Economist asserts that during Question Time, ministers “aspire to impart actual information, instead of concentrating, as real politicians do, on the serious business of scoring debating points” (p. 55). Thus, hypothesis eight states:

H₈: Interactions that include opposition members indicate a greater use of stock issues, as opposed to purely expository utterances, than those involving Coalition members only.

Any Coalition agreement between political parties runs the risk of tension on matters in which the two camps disagree (McCrone, 2002). According to McLeish (2002), the Coalition Labour and Liberal Democrat parties agree on 90 percent of all issues. However, two early tests of Coalition cohesiveness centered on disagreements over whether college tuition and personal care for the elderly should be free (McCrone, 2002). A way to test cohesiveness is to compare the two parties for differences in their disposition (critical, neutral, supportive) in questions and answers of the First Minister. Although criticism between fellow Coalition members would be expected to be rare, it is possible that noticeable differences will appear in a large enough population. Therefore, hypothesis nine suggests:

H₉: Questions and answers involving Labour members will differ in their level of disposition from those featuring questions from Liberal Democrats.

The second research question narrows the focus from the entire range of participants to those with the greatest share of speaking time. Naturally, this includes the First Minister, who speaks roughly half the time; as well as the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third-largest party, who are permitted several questions each session. These participation customs suggest the second research question:

RQ2: In what ways does the content of questions and answers vary among principal participants?

The sub-categories for principal participants (RQ2) include (1) those who served as First Minister or Acting First Minister: Donald Dewar, Henry McLeish, Jack McConnell, and Jim Wallace of the Labour and Liberal-Democratic Coalition; (the two men who have led the Opposition: Alex Salmond and John Swinney of the Scottish National Party; and (3) Conservative Party Leader David McLetchie. As the SNP and Conservative leaders are regarded as the focal point of the Opposition (Alderman, 1992), the tenth hypothesis states:

H₁₀: Questions and answers involving major party leaders involve less support and more criticism than those involving other members.

Differences in communication content among the four acting First Ministers and the two Leaders of the Opposition during 1999-2002 are also worthy of study. Such differences could include length of First Minister answers, praise-versus-criticism, the purpose of questions, and stock issues emphasized. However, as no theoretical direction of variation is suggested in the literature or in preliminary observation, the eleventh hypothesis is bi-directional:

H₁₁: Levels of disposition and respect in questions and First Minister answers vary according to major Opposition party leader.

If Opposition leaders vary in the communication content of their questions, it may also be possible that variation exists among the four First Ministers. This possibility provides the basis of hypothesis twelve:

H₁₂: First Ministers indicate individual differences in mean word count, level of disposition, and level of respect.

The opportunity for multiple supplementary questions may predict content differences between the leader's initial question and his subsequent questions on the same topic. The Leader of the Opposition, who is the SNP Leader, is permitted three supplementary questions. The third-party leader, who represents the Conservative Party, may ask two supplementary questions. It is possible that these leaders tend to begin with a more factual question, then transform it into a pointed interrogation via supplementaries. This escalation could manifest itself in both criticism and the use of ridicule by both questioner and First Minister. Thus, the thirteenth hypothesis states:

H₁₃: In exchanges involving Opposition leaders, language becomes less respectful, with more criticism and ridicule, with each succeeding question and answer.

The third research question concerns the electoral status of the questioner, with members divided into party leader, constituent member, and list member. Party leaders have the highest status and list members the lowest. The fact that a majority of constituent members represent the Labour Party obviates the need to test for differences

there, especially as these are accounted for in Research Question 1. However, the electoral status of Opposition parties suggests the third research question:

RQ3: In what ways does the content of questions and answers vary according to the electoral status of the questioner?

Three levels of member status exist in the Scottish Parliament. In order of status they are major party leaders, constituency members, and party-list members. Questioners who served as leaders of major parties include Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and David McLetchie. Constituency members are all those who won election on the first past-the-post system. Party-list members lost their constituency races but were elevated according to the proportional representation system used at Holyrood. As an opposition-member's status may be correlated to his or her formidability, it is conceivable that the First Minister will spend more time answering the questions of high-status members than those of lower-status members will. Therefore, the fourteenth hypothesis states:

H₁₄: The length of answers to Opposition questions is directly proportional to the questioner's electoral status.

Within the Coalition, the possibility exists that list members are more deferential to the First Minister than constituent members. This is because list members owe their seats to their placement on the party's regional list. List members who are out of favor with the leadership can be placed at the bottom of the list in the next general election, making their retention unlikely. They could even be removed from the list entirely.

Conversely, favored party members can be rewarded with a spot at the top of the list, all but assuring them of election. Unlike list members, constituency MSPs earned their seats personally, via first-past-the-post voting. The potential of greater allegiance to the Scottish Executive among list members suggests the fifteenth hypothesis:

H₁₅: Within the Coalition, levels of policy support and praise are higher in questions from list members than from constituency members.

The fourth research question relates to variation in communication content over time, specifically the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament. First Ministers Questions began on day two of the parliament, with the final session of this period taking place on day 995. Therefore, the final research question asks:

RQ4: In what ways does the content of questions and answers vary across the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament?

By utilizing the stock-issues model of argumentation, it is possible to track the genre of arguments presented in questions and answers. As the identification of a problem usually precedes discussion about its solution, the sixteenth hypothesis states:

H₁₆: The ratio of harm and blame arguments decreases relative to the ratio of cure and cost arguments across the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament.

With its large price tag, the new Scottish Parliament would presumably need to prove its constructive civic value to the public, at least in its earliest days. According to McLeish (2002), it may be that members avoid cynical and overly-negative

argumentation in the early stages compared to later years, when Question Time becomes more of a “political knockabout” (n.p.). Whether the Scottish Parliament enjoyed a temporary age of innocence in its early period can be tested in the seventeenth hypothesis:

H₁₇: The ratio of support and respect in questions and answers decreases over time relative to the ratio of criticism and ridicule.

These research questions and their hypotheses were tested via analyses of the communication content of First Minister’s Question Time. Results of each hypothesis are described and discussed in Chapters VI and VII, respectively.

Chapter VI

Results

The present study coded all 96 sessions of First Minister's Questions held during the first 1000 days of the new Scottish Parliament. Coders analyzed 1477 questions and 1477 answers, which contained a total of 284,566 words during 32 hours of discourse. The research hypotheses were tested with descriptive frequency statistics, chi-square cross-tabulation tests, and analyses of variance (ANOVA). For most hypotheses, data analysis centered on two types of questions: self-supplementaries, in which members follow up on their own written question, and interjections, where members follow up another member's question. Tables indicate raw scores, whereas this chapter will use percentage weights. Before attending to the specific hypotheses, it is appropriate to provide a general summary of topics and participation at First Minister's Questions.

Participation in FMQs by political party is summarized descriptively in Table 1. The Scottish National Party engaged the First Minister the most, with 653 questions out of 1477 total. The next leading participants were the Conservatives with 387, Labour with 276, the Liberal Democrats with 121, Scottish Socialist Party member Tommy Sheridan with 23, Independent Dennis Canavan with 12, and the Green Party's Robin Harper with 5. The five types of questions are the initial (written) question, self-supplementary one, self-supplementary two, self-supplementary three, and interjections.

A total of 87 out of 134 MSPs asked an initial/self-supplementary, and 94 asked interjection questions. Most non-participants were Cabinet ministers or shadow Cabinet ministers, who participate more heavily in Open Question Time.

Each party's mean word count, tracked across all five types of questions, is also described in Table 1. In terms of length of utterance, the initial written question is the shortest, with a mean of 26 words. The progression of self-supplementaries one-through-three is 102 words, 143 words, and 112 words. Therefore, in interactions with the Leader of the Opposition, question length peaks during the second-to-last question. Interjections indicated a shorter mean of 73 words.

Mean word counts of First Ministers' answers across the five question types are summarized descriptively in Table 2. First Minister answers held a similar pattern to that of questions, peaking in length during the second supplementary. Answers to initial questions were the shortest, with a mean of 63 words. Then the progression was 144, 154, and 142. Answers to interjections averaged 114 words. In each case, the mean First Minister answer was longer than the question.

The frequency of topics by question type is listed in Table 3. Out of 18 topics, seven were the subject of at least one-hundred questions: health (256), devolution (246), the economy (156), Westminster (146), home affairs—such as crime and fire services (144), education (120), and agriculture (112). The most popular topics of self-supplementary questions according to political party are summarized in Table 4. The

SNP's leading topics were (1) health, (2) devolution, and (3) the economy. The Conservatives listed the same top-three except that education also tied for third. Labour's leading topic was home affairs, followed by a tie for second between the economy and education. The most popular topics for Liberal Democrats were the economy, agriculture, and home affairs/education, respectively.

Participation by leading individuals is summarized in Tables 5 and 6. Table 5 indicates participation frequencies among all fifteen members who asked at least five initial/self-supplementary questions. The top three were obviously the top party leaders David McLetchie of the Conservatives (89), and SNP leaders John Swinney (54) and Alex Salmond (41), who was Leader of the Opposition until his move to Westminster-only in September 2000. Regarding interjections, in which party leaders do not participate, nine members asked at least 11 questions. The top five were Alex Neil (SNP, 23), Margo MacDonald (SNP, 21), Andrew Wilson (SNP, 19), Tommy Sheridan (Scottish Socialist, 17), and Christine Grahame (SNP, 14). For each of the leading participants in FMQs, Tables 5 and 6 also list their mean length of question, their ratio of criticism-to-support (neutral disposition the remainder), and total number of personal and party insults combined.

Research Question 1: Variation by Political Affiliation

The first nine research hypotheses were organized into RQ₁, which asked: In what ways does the content of questions and answers vary according to political affiliation

among questioners? RQ₂ considered how content varied among principal participants in question time. RQ₃ asked whether content varied among members according to their electoral status. Finally, RQ₄ considered content as it varied across the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament.

Hypothesis 1

H₁ posited that questions and answers among fellow Coalition members involve fewer words than those involving Opposition members. As in most hypotheses, data analysis considered questions as well as answers in both self-supplementaries and interjections, for four total results. Self-supplementary questions indicated a mean of 110.49 words in opposition questions versus 81.71 words-per-question among Coalition members (see Table 7). ANOVA indicated that the difference in means was statistically significant: $F(1, 407) = 54.13, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$.

Individual political party differences in self-supplementary questions are provided in Table 8. ANOVA and Tukey HSD found that the Conservative Party indicated significantly higher word counts (mean = 120.54) than the Labour Party (mean = 79.90), Liberal Democrats (mean = 86.25), and Scottish Nationalists (mean = 104.60). No significant differences were found involving question length in interjections.

In terms of First Minister answers to self-supplementaries, the mean length of 148.78 words to opposition questions differed significantly from the mean of 132.71 to Coalition members: $F(1, 407) = 5.89, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .014$ (see Table 9). Individual

political party differences in self-supplementary answers are provided in Table 10. The length of First Minister answers also differed significantly between opposition and Coalition interjections, with an opposition mean of 106.54 words and a Coalition mean of 96.33: $F(1, 380) = 4.10, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .011$ (see Table 11). Therefore, in three out of four tests, significant differences were found.

Hypothesis 2

H₂ proposed that questions and answers among fellow Coalition members include more policy support and praise, with less criticism, than those involving Opposition members. Results on questioner disposition in self-supplementaries are seen in Table 12. Criticism of the First Minister or Government was found in 63% of Opposition questions, compared to 6% of questions from Coalition members. In terms of support, Coalition questions indicated favorability toward the First Minister or Government 37% of the time, compared to 2% in opposition questions. A chi-square cross-tabulation indicated a significant difference between the two groups: $df=2, \chi^2=149.19, p < .001, \phi = .605$. In interjections, opposition questioners criticized the First Minister or Government 40% of the time, compared to 6% criticism among Coalition members. Coalition members indicated favorability toward the First Minister or Government in 33% of interjections, compared to 2% of Opposition questioners. Chi square indicated that the two groups

manifested significant differences in disposition: $df=2$, $\chi^2=104.42$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .524$ (see Table 13).

The First Ministers' disposition toward members is shown in Tables 14 and 15. In answers to self-supplementaries, First Ministers criticized Opposition questioners 47% of the time, compared to 2% criticism of Coalition members. Favorability was indicated toward 37% of Coalition questioners and 5% of those in opposition. Chi square indicated a significant difference in disposition by Opposition versus Coalition: $df=2$, $\chi^2=114.23$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .530$. In interjections, First Ministers criticized Opposition members in 37% of questions, compared to less than one percent criticism of Coalition members: $df=2$, $\chi^2=89.48$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .485$. In terms of disposition overall, opposition versus Coalition differences were significant in all four cases.

H_2 predicted not only differences in disposition, but also in the degree of respect between members and the First Minister. Levels of respect included personal insults, party insults, and respect, in which no insults were made. Table 16 indicates that Opposition members insulted either the First Minister or Government in a total of 16% of all self-supplementaries, showing no disrespect in the other 84%. Coalition members resisted the use of ridicule in all questions. A chi-square cross-tabulation seems to confirm a significant difference in respect between the two groups: $df=2$, $\chi^2=22.51$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .235$.

In interjections, the Opposition indicated disrespect in 9% of questions, compared to one case of disrespect from a Coalition member (see Table 17). Thus Opposition members indicated respect 91% of the time, and Coalition members in 100% of interjections. Chi-square indicated a significant difference in respect: $df=2$, $\chi^2=12.21$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .179$.

Regarding answers to self-supplementaries, First Ministers indicated ridicule toward the Opposition 19% of the time, compared to zero times to Coalition members. The difference in respect toward Coalition versus Opposition members was significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2=26.84$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .257$ (see Table 17).

To interjections, First Ministers insulted the Opposition in 15% of answers, compared to one case of ridicule toward the Coalition (see Table 19). This difference in respect was found to be statistically significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2 = 21.26$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .237$. In all four cases, levels of respect were significantly greater in interactions between the First Minister and Coalition members. Data for H_2 are also summarized descriptively by political party in Tables 20 and 21.

Hypothesis 3

The use of wedge questions, which highlight policy or other disagreements between the two Coalition parties, formed the basis of H_3 . This hypothesis proposed that Opposition members utilize more wedge questions than do members of the Coalition.

Results on self-supplementaries found that members of the Opposition utilized 13 non-explicit wedge questions and 3 that named the parties explicitly, leaving 265 questions devoid of wedge language (94%, see Table 22). Coalition members utilized no wedge statements in their 126 self-supplementaries. Chi-square found the difference in use of wedge questions to be statistically significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2=7.47$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .055$. During interjections, Opposition members indicated 2 non-explicit and 10 explicit wedge questions out of 235 possible. This left 95% of Opposition interjections without reference to disagreements between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. None of the Coalition members' 145 interjections included a wedge question. The difference between Opposition and Coalition members was significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2=7.65$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .058$. Although no significant differences were found among Opposition parties, all 10 wedge questions from Conservatives came during self-supplementaries, whereas 11 out of the SNP's 17 wedge questions came during interjections. Scottish Socialist Tommy Sheridan offered the other wedge question. A descriptive summary of wedge questions in self-supplementaries and interjections combined based on political party is found in Table 22.

Hypothesis 4

H_4 predicted that Coalition questions are more likely to contain third-party criticism than questions from the Opposition. In self-supplementaries, Coalition members uttered third-party criticism 9% of the time, compared to 7% for the Opposition. This difference was not significant at the .05 level. In interjections, Coalition members utilized

third-party criticism at a rate of 19%, compared to 7% among the Opposition. Chi-square found this difference to be significant: $df=1$, $\chi^2=8.95$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .153$, $p < .01$ (see Table 23).

In answers to self-supplementaries, First Ministers used third-party criticism with Coalition members 8% of the time, compared to 4% in exchanges with opposition members. This difference was not statistically significant. In interjections, First Ministers uttered third-party criticism 22% of the time when answering Coalition questions, compared to 3% with the Opposition. Table 24 indicates that chi-square found this difference to be statistically significant: $df=1$, $\chi^2=27.50$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .269$.

The leading recipients of Coalition criticism in both types of questions and First Ministers' answers are described in Table 25. The Conservative Party received the most third-party criticism by both members and First Ministers. In member questions, the Westminster government was second in receiving criticism and the Scottish National Party third. In First Ministers' answers, the SNP was the second-leading recipient of criticism. No other group either received or uttered third-party criticism more than once. Differences were not found to be significant.

Hypothesis 5

On the subject of Scottish autonomy and independence, H_3 predicted that Scottish National Party members raise issues of autonomy more than all others. In self-supplementaries, SNP members raised issues of autonomy in 4.4 percent of all questions,

which was not significantly higher than the 3.6% rate among other parties. During interjections, SNP members discussed autonomy or independence in 10% of all questions, which chi-square found to be significantly higher than the 3% rate of the other parties: $df=1$, $\chi^2=8.57$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .150$ (see Table 26).

The SNP's rate of discussing autonomy was also compared to that of the First Ministers. Out of 653 total questions, the SNP made 30 references to autonomy, a rate of 4.6%. In answers to those 653 questions, First Ministers made 25 references to autonomy (3.8%). In neither type of question was the difference significant. Nor did the SNP's frequency of discussing autonomy increase significantly over time. In self-supplementaries and interjections combined, the party invoked the notion six times through day 333, eight times in days 334-666, and 8 times more in days 667-1000.

Hypothesis 6

H₆ posited that SNP members are more subtle, yet more favorable, in their statements on autonomy or independence than other participants. Results found that in all of its members' statements about autonomy, the SNP chose non-explicit language 73% of the time, compared to 64% for other parties. Differences were not found to be statistically significant. Chi-square also compared SNP explicitness on autonomy with statements in First Ministers' answers (see Table 27). The SNP's 73% ratio of subtle language was found to be significantly higher than the First Ministers' rate of 44%: $df=1$, $\chi^2=4.89$, $p <$

.05, $\phi = .298$. Of all participants, only the First Ministers used explicit language to describe the prospect of independence more than half the time.

Regarding favorability toward autonomy or independence, SNP members indicated a favorable view 87% of the time, with the remaining 13% neutral on the subject. Among other parties, 7% of statements on increased autonomy were opposed with derogatory language used. Another 50% were opposed without pejorative language, for a total of 57% opposed. Of the remaining statements by non-SNP members, 29% were neutral toward greater autonomy or independence and 43% were supportive.

The small number of cases (44 out of 1477 questions) prevented the use of inferential statistical analysis of differences between the SNP and other parties. This is because many of the cells would have contained zeros (see Table 28). However, it was appropriate to conduct a two-group test on those officially in support of independence compared to unionist parties. For this test the SNP was joined by the Scottish Socialist Party, which also favors independence. All other parties are officially Unionist. Chi-square found a significant difference between the two groups: $df=3$, $\chi^2=23.73$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .734$.

First Ministers' comments on increased autonomy were 15% opposed with derogatory language, 70% opposed without pejorative language, 6% neutral, and 9% favorable. Answers did not vary significantly according to the party of the questioner. A descriptive summary of all parties' characterizations of autonomy or independence can be

seen in Table 28. First Ministers' views on the subject of autonomy or independence are shown in Table 29.

Hypothesis 7

H₇ proposed that the leading opposition parties, SNP and Conservative, would vary in their proportion of problem-versus-solution arguments. In both types of questions tested, results were not significant. In self-supplementaries, the SNP's ratio of problem/solution arguments was 85%-15%, compared to the Conservatives' 82%-18%. In interjections the SNP favored problem rather than solution arguments 89% of the time, compared to the Conservatives' 87%. Among all 1477 questions asked by all parties, the ratio was 86%-14% in favor of problem arguments. In all 1477 First Minister answers, the problem/solution ratio was 84%-16% in favor of problem arguments.

Hypothesis 8

H₈ suggested that the Coalition and Opposition would vary in their rate of questions that were argumentative, as opposed to merely expository. Argumentative questions refer to those utilizing one of the four stock issues of argumentation theory: harm, blame, cure, and cost. In self-supplementaries, opposition questions were argumentative 86% of the time, compared to 69% for Coalition questions. Chi-square found this difference to be significant: $df=1$, $\chi^2=15.54$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .195$ (see Table 30). In interjections, Opposition questions were argumentative in 78% of all questions, compared to 61% of Coalition interjections. Chi-square found the difference between

policy argumentation and policy statements to be statistically significant: $df=1$, $\chi^2=12.94$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .185$ (see Table 31).

In answers to self-supplementaries and interjections combined, the First Ministers used stock-issues argumentation in answers to the Opposition a total of 69% of the time, compared to 64% in answers to Coalition members. In neither case was the difference significant, meaning that the First Minister's disposition toward both groups appeared to be similar. However, Table 32 indicates that the First Ministers' 77% rate of argumentativeness with the Opposition during their self-supplementary interactions was significantly lower than the Opposition's rate of 86%: $df=1$, $\chi^2=31.76$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .337$. In interjections from the Opposition, the First Ministers indicated argumentation 60% of the time, compared with the Opposition's rate of 78%. A chi-square found this difference to be significant, as well: $df=1$, $\chi^2=12.91$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .234$ (see Table 33).

A comparison of the leading opposition parties for argumentativeness revealed no significant differences in either self-supplementaries or interjections. Combined, the SNP indicated argumentativeness in 82% of these questions, compared to the Conservatives' rate of 84%. Considering the entirety of 1477 questions and answers, the rate of argumentativeness by all members' questions was nearly identical to that of First Ministers' answers: 58.5% to 58.7%, respectively.

Hypothesis 9

The final hypothesis pertaining to political affiliation was H_9 , which predicted that the two Coalition parties (Labour and Liberal Democrat) would indicate variation in disposition in both questions and answers. One significant result can be reported. During self-supplementaries, the minority-partner Liberal Democrats' percentage ratio of criticism-to-praise, was 14/25, a neutral disposition accounting for the remainder. The Labour Party indicated a ratio of 3/41. Chi-square indicated that Labour was significantly more favorable toward the First Minister: $df=2$, $\chi^2=6.48$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .227$ (see Table 34).

In answering these Coalition self-supplementaries, First Ministers indicated a criticism-to-praise ratio of 0/22 to Liberal Democrats and 2/42 toward Labour members. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the two groups ($p = .059$). Likewise, no other significant differences were found between the Coalition partners.

Research Question 2: Variation by Participants

Hypothesis 10

The second research question asked in what ways does the content of questions and answers vary among principal participants. H_{10} predicted that questions and answers involving major party leaders involve less support and more criticism than those initiated by other members. To test this hypothesis, another chi-square cross-tabulation was applied to the leaders of the Scottish National Party and Conservative Party compared to other members of these two major opposition parties. Comparisons on interjections were

not possible, as major opposition party leaders only made four interjections during the first 1000 days of Parliament. Therefore, only self-supplementaries were tested.

Party leaders Alex Salmond and John Swinney (SNP), and David McLetchie (Conservative) indicated criticism toward the First Minister or Government in 67% of their self-supplementaries, with 31% neutral and 1% supportive. These figures compared to 57% critical, 38% neutral, and 5% supportive among other Scottish Nationalists and Conservatives. As shown in Table 35, chi-square indicated that this difference in disposition was significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2=6.37$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .149$.

Regarding respect in self-supplementaries, a total of 5% of SNP and Tory backbencher questions indicated either a personal or party insult, compared to 22% among the party leaders. This difference was also found to be significant: $df=2$, $\chi^2=13.01$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .220$ (see Table 36).

In First Minister answers, criticism of party leaders appeared in 53% of answers, with 44% neutral and 3% supportive. These figures compare with 38% critical, 51% neutral, and 11% supportive toward backbenchers. Table 37 indicates that First Ministers were significantly more critical of party leaders than they were toward other members of the major opposition parties: $df=2$, $\chi^2=10.78$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .198$. In terms of respect, First Ministers indicated a personal or party insult in 20% of self-supplementary answers to

party leaders. This figure compares with a rate of 17% with other Nationalists and Conservatives. This difference was not found to be significant different.

Hypothesis 11

Among the major Opposition party leaders only, H_{11} posited that levels of disposition and respect would vary in questions and answers featuring leaders Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and David McLetchie. Disposition in initial self-supplementary questions is indicated in Table 38. As Leader of the Opposition, Alex Salmond criticized the First Minister or government in 54.1% of all initial self-supplementaries, with the remainder being neutral. His SNP colleague John Swinney indicated criticism 53.8% of the time as Leader of the Opposition, and Conservative leader David McLetchie was critical in 67% of self-supplementaries. Overall, chi-square indicated a significant difference among party leaders: $\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=14.46$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .280$. McLetchie's disposition was found to be significantly more negative than both Salmond ($\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=9.79$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .274$) and Swinney ($\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2= 10.06$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .265$). Salmond and Swinney's difference was not significant (see Table 38)

In 2nd self-supplementaries, in which only major party leaders participated, Swinney's disposition did not vary significantly from either Salmond's or McLetchie's. However, Salmond and McLetchie did vary significantly in these questions, with Salmond critical in 70% of cases and McLetchie 90%: $\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=11.47$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .297$

(see Table 39). Salmond and Swinney did not vary significantly during 3rd self-supplementaries, in which only the Leader of the Opposition participates.

In terms of respect, no significant differences among the party leaders was found in either self-supplementaries or 2nd self-supplementaries. Combining personal and party ridicule, Alex Salmond used insulting language 20% of the time, the remaining questions being respectful. John Swinney utilized ridicule in 24% of his questions, and David McLetchie 32%. A summary of disposition and respect among party leaders is found in Tables 40 and 41.

H₁₁ also considered variation in First Ministers' answers to the major party leaders. Regarding disposition, Alex Salmond received criticism in 39% of all self-supplementaries, compared to John Swinney's 44% and David McLetchie's 64% (see Table 42). Chi-square indicated a significant group difference: $df=2$, $\chi^2= 17.96$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .221$. Head-to-head, chi-square found a significant difference between Salmond and McLetchie ($df=2$, $\chi^2= 13.24$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .319$), as well as Swinney and McLetchie ($df=2$, $\chi^2= 12.31$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .293$). No significant difference in receiving criticism was observed between Salmond and Swinney.

In terms of respect, Table 43 describes that First Ministers uttered either personal or party ridicule to Alex Salmond in 10% of self-supplementaries. This figure compares to a rate of 13% for John Swinney and 28% for David McLetchie. Chi-square found no

significant differences among major party leaders, who were criticized in a total of 24% of FM answers. Overall no significant differences in respect occurred in First Ministers' answers to party leaders in any Self-supplementary. Levels of disposition and respect in First Ministers' answers to all 449 self-supplementaries from party leaders are summarized descriptively in Tables 44 and 45.

Hypothesis 12

Comparing the content of the four First Ministers was the subject of H_{12} . Variables included word counts, disposition and respect (see Tables 46 and 47). This hypothesis was tested by analyzing self-supplementary questions and answers, and interjection questions and answers. The four leaders of government were the late Donald Dewar, Henry McLeish, and Jack McConnell of the Labour Party, and Acting First Minister Jim Wallace of the Liberal Democrats. The mean word counts of questions to each First Minister, self-supplementaries and interjections combined, were Dewar 89.3, McConnell 89.2, McLeish 87.9, and Wallace 85.9. Means did not vary significantly in either type of question.

In their answers to questions, the overall mean word counts were Dewar, 136.98, McLeish 128.17, McConnell 123.93, and Wallace 108.36. Means did not vary significantly in self-supplementaries. However, in interjections the First Ministers varied significantly in word count: $F(3, 380) = 9.16, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .068$ (see Table 47). Tukey HSD identified differences between the means of Dewar (112.88) and Wallace (83.75, p

< .001), Wallace and McConnell (122.58, $p < .001$), and McConnell and McLeish (97.71, $p < .01$).

The First Ministers' percentage rate of receiving criticism-versus-praise, neutral disposition accounting for the remainder, was Dewar 43/12, McConnell 36/10, McLeish 34/15, and Wallace 31/16. In issuing criticism-versus-praise in these same exchanges, Dewar's rate was 32/12, McConnell 33/13, McLeish 27/21, and Wallace 20/12. These descriptive figures combine self-supplementaries and interjections, neither of which indicated significant differences.

A significant difference was found among the First Ministers in their disposition during interjection answers: $df=6$, $\chi^2=17.60$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .124$ (see Table 48).

Specifically, chi-square identified a significant differences between Donald Dewar and Jim Wallace: $df=6$, $\chi^2= 7.42$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .209$. Wallace's percentage ratio of critical/neutral/supportive disposition was 12/79/9, respectively. Dewar's comparative rate was 24/59/17, making Wallace's answers significantly more neutral rather than either supportive or critical.

Regarding respect, each First Minister was compared for insults, as opposed to respectful language, in self-supplementaries and interjections. The combined percentage rate of receiving-versus-issuing ridicule, including both personal and party insults, was Dewar 10/10, McConnell 6/11, McLeish 7/13, and Wallace 13/9. No significant

differences were found among the First Ministers in either self-supplementaries or interjections.

Post hoc analyses were conducted on the First Ministers' collective disposition and respect compared to members. In both self-supplementaries and interjections, First Ministers indicated a more supportive disposition than their questioners (see Table 49). Out of 787 such exchanges, the First Ministers' 221 critical and 127 favorable answers reflects a percentage ratio of 28/16 in favor of criticism, the remainder being neutral. In contrast, members indicated criticism in 284 questions versus 106 in support, a percentage ratio of 36/13. In both types of questions the First Ministers were significantly more supportive. In self-supplementaries, $df=4$, $\chi^2=212.56$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .724$. In interjections, $df=4$, $\chi^2=174.95$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .679$.

In terms of ridicule-versus-respect, members indicated significantly more respect than First Ministers did in both types of questions. Combining self-supplementaries and interjections, members indicated a percentage ratio of total insults-to-respect of 9/91, whereas the First Ministers' collective ratio was 11/89 (see Table 50). Thus First Minister's accounted for 57% of these insults, a significant difference. In self-supplementaries, $df=4$, $\chi^2=51.94$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .358$. In interjections, $df=4$, $\chi^2=75.38$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .445$.

Disposition was also subjected to tests for differences within the Labour-Liberal Democratic Coalition. Combining self-supplementaries and interjections, Coalition members were critical of the First Minister 15 times, neutral 161 times, and supportive in 95 cases. These respective ratios are 6%, 59%, and 35%. First Ministers indicated criticism of fellow Coalition questioners 3 times, were neutral 172 times, and indicated support 96 times. These ratios are 1%, 63%, and 35%, respectively. Coalition members were significantly more critical than the First Minister. In self-supplementaries, $df=4$, $\chi^2=55.45$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .663$. In interjections, $df=4$, $\chi^2=43.46$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .547$ (see Table 51).

Hypothesis 13

The progression of disposition and respect across multi-question exchanges was the subject of H_{13} . These interactions include the initial written question, self-supplementaries, second self-supplementaries, and in the case of the Leader of the Opposition, third self-supplementaries. These can also be referred to as questions one-through-four. Only Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and David McLetchie participated in more than one of these multi-question exchanges. Regarding disposition, the rate of criticism of the First Minister or Government in each of the four questions was 6%, 67%, 85%, and 41%, respectively. In answers, the respective rate of criticism was 13%, 53%, 71%, and 77% across the four interactions. Question one was significantly correlated to question two, question two correlated to question three, question three was correlated to

question four, and question two was correlated to question four. The same pattern significant correlations were present in answer disposition (see Table 52).

In terms of respect, the rate of issuing either personal or party insults during questions by leaders during questions one-through-four was 2%, 22%, 31%, and 18%, respectively. Among answers, the rate progressed as follows: 3%, 20%, 25%, and 30% (see Table 53). In questions, the same correlations held as they did in disposition: question 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 2-4. However, in answers the only significant correlations were 2-3 and 3-4. In disposition and respect by members, negative communication rose to a peak in question three before retreating in the final question. Answers did not hold to this pattern, and criticism and ridicule continued to escalate through question four.

Research Question 3: Variation by Status

Hypothesis 14

Regarding the electoral status of members asking questions, H_{14} predicted that question and answer length would be directly proportional to the status of the questioner. Electoral status involves whether the questioner is a party leader, constituency member, or regional list member, list members having the lowest status. The election resulted in Coalition seats being skewed toward the constituency level, and the Opposition is likewise skewed toward list seats. Therefore, straight comparisons would have served almost as much to compare the parties as the statuses. Therefore, only opposition questions were analyzed. Mean question and answer lengths are found in Table 54.

Opposition list members indicated a mean of 105 words per question, constituency members 104 words, and party leaders 110 words. These differences were not statistically significant.

In answers to self-supplementaries, First Ministers indicated a mean of 151 words with opposition list members, 195 words to constituency members, and 144 words to party leaders. ANOVA found these differences to be significant: $F(2, 281) = 4.20$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$ (See Table 54). In a post hoc analysis, Tukey HSD indicated significant differences between constituency members and list members ($p=.038$), and between constituency members and party leaders ($p=.012$). No significant differences in length of questions or answers were found in interjections.

Hypothesis 15

H_{15} suggested that within the Coalition, levels of support would be higher among questions from list members than constituency members. On self-supplementaries, results were both negative and significant. The percentage ratio of criticism compared to praise among list members, the remainder being a neutral disposition, was 29/21. Among constituency members the percentage ratio of criticism-to-praise was 4/38 in favor of a supportive disposition, the remainder being neutral. Chi-square seemed to confirm that constituency members were significantly more supportive than list members: $df=2$, $\chi^2=13.37$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .325$ (see Table 55). In answers, both types of Coalition members were criticized once by a First Minister. The rate of praise toward list members was 14%,

compared to 39% toward constituency members. Chi-square did not find a statistically significant difference between groups at the .05 level ($p = .052$). No significant differences in respect were found within the Coalition on either self-supplementaries or interjections.

Research Question 4: Variation Over Time

Hypothesis 16

The final two hypotheses examined variation in content over time. H_{16} predicted that the ratio of solution-oriented stock issues (cure and cost) would increase relative to the ratio of problem arguments (problem and blame) over the first 1000 days of parliament. Table 56 divides the 1000 days by three, indicating that the percentage share of solution arguments in self-supplementaries across the three periods was 25%, 18%, and 12%, respectively. This left the respective proportion of problem arguments at 75%, 82%, and 88%, with non-argumentative questions omitted. Chi-square found these proportions significantly different: $df=2$, $\chi^2=6.38$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .020$. The Spearman r statistic gave a level of confirmation of the inverse correlation between time and use of solution arguments in self-supplementaries: $r = -.114$, $p < .05$ (see Table 57). Therefore, results on self-supplementary questions were both negative and significant.

Answers to self-supplementaries were also tested. Again dividing the 1000 days into three units, the percentage share of solution arguments relative to problem arguments was 21%, 13%, and 17%, respectively. The resulting share of problem arguments was

79%, 87%, and 83%. Neither chi-square nor Spearman r proved significant. No significant differences or correlations were found among interjection questions or answers.

Hypothesis 17

H_{17} posited that, over time, disposition and respect during questions and answers would become more negative. Like H_{16} the 1000 days were divided into three units. Regarding disposition in self-supplementaries, the percentage proportion of criticism-versus-praise across time was 54/8, 45/15, 39/15, neutral disposition comprising the remainder. A Spearman correlation identified a direct association between time and a favorable disposition, with less criticism compared to support as time passed: Spearman $r = .120$, $p < .05$ (see Table 58).

H_{17} also considered respect as a dependent variable. Across the three time periods of the Parliament, the rate of total insults in self-supplementaries was 16%, 11%, and 7%, respectively (see Table 59). These figures represent a positive correlation between time and respectfulness: Spearman $r = .110$, $p < .05$. Using date as a ratio independent variable, a Spearman correlation supported the direct relationship: $r = .117$, $p < .05$ (see Table 60). Thus, in the case of self-supplementaries, results supported a reversal of H_{17} on both disposition and respect. No significant differences or correlations were found in member interjections or in either type of First Minister answers. The implications of all findings are discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter VII

Discussion

Numerous significant results were obtained in this first comprehensive study of the content of First Minister's Questions, with equally substantial effect size estimates. In this final chapter I will first discuss the findings associated with each of the 17 hypotheses, drawing inferences about characteristic patterns of communication and their implications on opposition theory. Second, I consider the study's contribution to the body of knowledge in political communication. To remind the reader of the magnitude of significant results, estimates of effect size will be listed via partial eta-squared (η_p^2), phi (ϕ), or Cramer's phi (ϕ_c). These statistics estimate the amount of variance accounted for by the given independent variable, with 1.0 being 100 percent and .10 meaning 10 percent. The study was primarily concerned with differences in patterns of parliamentary communication based on (1) political affiliation, (2) participation by leading individuals, (3) electoral status, and (4) the passage of time.

General Patterns of Communication

Before addressing the particular hypotheses, one may glean the broad view of content that was provided in Tables 1-6. In terms of party participation, the SNP asked the most questions of the First Minister, with 44% of the total of 1477. This rate is higher than the party's 27% share of seats. The Conservative Party issued 26% of the questions,

having garnered 14% of seats. These proportions owe to the SNP and the Conservatives being in charge of the largest two opposition delegations. The Leader of the Opposition's four questions per session and the Tory Leader's three accounted for all of the difference in share of questions. Liberal Democrats issued 19% of questions and comprise 13% of the parliamentary membership. Scottish Socialist Tommy Sheridan, the Green Party's Robin Harper, and independent Dennis Canavan combined for 3% of the questions based on 2% of the membership. This meant that the Coalition-leading Labour Party was the only one to ask fewer questions than its delegation's proportion of MSPs would indicate: 19% of the questions with 43% of the seats. Obviously, Labour members have less need to ask questions of the Executive, as their Leader is the head of it.

In terms of topic frequencies, health was the top priority of FMQs with 17.3% of all questions. Devolution was nearly as common a subject, comprising 16.7% of the questions. Clearly, some devolved areas received far more attention than others. For example, health was the subject of 23-times the number of questions than was sport and the arts. This variation in priorities seems to support Karl Weik's theory of organizing (Miller, 1999). Among the many potentially-equivocal messages that intrude on a given parliamentary week, FMQs is forced to crystallize them into twenty-minutes of discourse over the most exigent matters. Without this organizing function, each topic presumably would have received equal attention during Question Time.

Also related to topic choice, McLeish (2002) had predicted that SNP and Tory members would waste an excessive amount of time on issues reserved to the Westminster Parliament, such as U.K. energy policy or the Euro dollar, over which the Scottish Parliament holds no authority. On the contrary, members seldom strayed into Westminster-reserved areas, and no significant differences were found among either political parties or between the Coalition and Opposition. Therefore, data failed to support McLeish's prediction. In fairness to all groups, reserved issues *are* Constitutionally acceptable matters for discussion, as the Scottish Parliament is permitted to issue position statements on any subject (McCrone, 2002). This is because most of these governmental areas involve a necessary overlap of authority between Holyrood and Westminster (Brown, 2000).

Another notable feature of topic choice was the lack of time spent on political posturing or image. In Gentry's (2001) pilot study of the British and Scottish Parliaments, political strategy was the second-leading topic of Prime Minister's Questions, with 13% of the total. This came despite the fact that the study was conducted during the four weeks of June 2000, with the next election still a year away. These politics-driven questions focussed on statements such as whether the Prime Minister was in touch with the people, or which party was more likely to win the next election. In the first 1000 days of the Scottish Parliament, elections and image were the topic of only 2.4% of questions. As topics were tracked according to party in self-supplementaries, results found that the

Scottish Conservatives were responsible for 10 out of the 14 questions on who would fare best in a coming election (71%). At Westminster they had accounted for 81% of these questions.

The most frequent participants in First Minister's Questions are indexed in Table 5 and Table 6, along with their mean length of question, ratio of criticism-to-support, and total questions containing ridicule. Naturally, party leaders Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and David McLetchie asked the lion's share of FMQs. In self-supplementaries, SNP backbenchers comprised four of the next top-five participants. The only Coalition member to make the top-ten was Labour's Scott Barrie, who was also the most frequent issuer of praise to the First Minister or Government.

In interjections, the SNP was again the most active. The Nationalists had four out of the top-five participants, with the other being fellow independence supporter Tommy Sheridan of the Scottish Socialist Party. Alex Neil was the most frequent member to interject, followed by Margo MacDonald (who has since left the SNP to stand as an independent) and Andrew Wilson. Wilson was clearly the most pugnacious intervener, with 12 negative dispositions and 7 insults. No other leading participant leveled more than one case of ridicule. Liberal Democrat Jamie Stone was the only active Coalition member in interjections. Stone intervened 12 times, including 3 favorable questions. No other leading participant indicated favorability toward the First Minister or Government

more than once. As related to the research questions, participation is covered in detail in the following sections.

Research Question 1: Variation by Political Affiliation

The first research question concerned differences in content based on political affiliation. These affiliations center on political party, Opposition-versus-Coalition, or Nationalist-versus-Unionist. Hypothesis 1 predicted that fellow Coalition members have briefer exchanges than those involving the Opposition. In self-supplementaries this was certainly the case, as questions from the Opposition were 35% longer ($\eta_p^2 = .12$). The Conservatives stood apart from all other major parties, according to *post-hoc* tests. Their 51% longer questions than those from Labour were especially noteworthy. Although no claims of causation can be confirmed under the present research design, these longer questions may be inherent in the British Conservative Party itself (see Figure 3: Conservative-versus-Other Parties' Mean Word Counts). In Gentry's (2001) pilot study, the mean length of question to Prime Minister Tony Blair, not counting then-Leader of the Opposition William Hague, was 94 words. Mr. Hague's mean question was 114 words, or 21% longer. His mean was also 37% longer than that of fellow Opposition party leader Charles Kennedy of the Liberal Democrats. Party differences were not identified. Comparing the Scottish Parliament, if one factors out the Conservative Party from FMQs, self-supplementary questions indicated a mean word-length of 94. The Conservatives averaged 120, which is 28% longer. Thus Conservatives in Opposition

may use Question Time for speech making more than other members, regardless of the parliament.

Figure 3: Conservative-versus-Others' Mean Word Counts

<u>William Hague</u>	<u>Others at Westminster</u>	<u>Disparity</u>
114	94	21%
<u>Scottish Conservatives</u>	<u>Others at Holyrood</u>	<u>Disparity</u>
120	94	28%

The final comparison of word lengths at Holyrood was on First Minister's answers to Opposition the versus Coalition members. The First Minister's answers were observed to be significantly longer to the Opposition than to the Coalition in both self-supplementaries ($\eta_p^2 = .014$) and interjections ($\eta_p^2 = .011$), but the small estimates of effect size suggest that political affiliation did not account for much of the disparity.

Hypothesis 2 posited that interactions involving Coalition members would contain more amiable communication than those initiated by members of the Opposition.

Although this conclusion may appear obvious, the data contained nuance and results proved informative. As an example of both criticism and ridicule, Conservative Leader David McLetchie made the following statement in a question to First Minister Jack McConnell on 21 March 2002: "I am sure that the pensioners of Scotland will be staggered to find that the First Minister does not regard their future well-being as a matter of concern or interest. I have heard a perverse set of priorities from the First Minister

before, but that fairly takes the biscuit in terms of what he regards as important and whom we should be looking after” Official Report, 2002, n.p.).

In self-supplementaries and interjections combined, which collectively will now be referred to as “primary questions,” the Opposition indicated criticism of the First Minister or Government 53% of the time, compared to a rate of 6% by Coalition members ($\phi = .605/.524$, respectively). First Ministers issued criticism of Opposition questioners or their party in 43% of answers compared to 1% toward Coalition members ($\phi = .530/.485$). Clearly, membership in the Coalition accounted for a substantial amount of the differences in disposition.

Affiliation differences in respect were similarly significant. The total rate of insults of the First Minister or Government during primary questions by the Opposition was 13%, compared to zero cases by the Coalition ($\phi = .235/.195$). In answers, First Ministers insulted the Opposition at a rate of 17% compared to 0% with Coalition members ($\phi = .257/.237$). However, the use of ridicule overall was still a relative rarity compared to the frequency of criticism. To criticize the Government’s performance or the Opposition’s proposals would seem a natural and even healthy debate practice. Likewise encouraging is the Opposition’s 87% rate of respect to the First Minister, and his 83% respect shown in return. The relative lack of name-calling by both sides is a positive result if one is interested in constructive communication in Parliament.

Regarding question content, results on disposition and respect can be compared, at least tentatively, to party polemics at Westminster. There the Opposition criticized Tony Blair or his Government 78% of the time during June 2000 (Gentry, 2001), a rate 25% higher than that of Holyrood. His own Labour members criticized Blair at a rate of 3%, which compares to 6% criticism of the Scottish Executive among Coalition members.

The contrast between parliaments in the use of ridicule appears to be even more pronounced. At Westminster the Opposition issued a personal or party insult 47% of the time, compared to only 10% at Holyrood. The Conservatives accounted for 89% of these cases at Westminster and 38% at Holyrood, whereas its share of seats in the two chambers was 25% and 14%, respectively. The SNP provided another 56% of Holyrood's ridicule, based on a 27% share of seats. Relative to its share of questions, the SNP rate of personal or party insults was 12% and that of the Conservatives was 17%, a non-significant difference. Overall, one may infer that the tone at Holyrood may be substantially more constructive, in terms of both disposition and respect, than Westminster's. However, the Westminster results are based only on a four-week study.

The third hypothesis proposed that Opposition members would offer more wedge questions than would members of the Coalition. Wedge questions were those that highlighted policy or other disagreements between the two Coalition partners. As might be expected, the Opposition issued all 28 primary questions that included a wedge

statement, making for a significant difference in both self-supplementaries ($\phi = .055$) and interjections ($\phi = .058$). However, the low estimates of effect sizes reveal a paucity of wedge questions even by members of the Opposition. Only 28 out of their 600 primary questions included a wedge, a rate of 4.7%. Despite the inherent fragility of any coalition government, the Opposition seldom took the opportunity to exploit differences between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. This fact may partly explain the relative internal harmony within the Coalition during Question Time in Parliament's first 1000 days, as well as point to a possible lack of rhetorical opportunism by the Opposition.

One other noteworthy result was observed regarding wedge questions. All 10 that came from Conservatives occurred in self-supplementaries, whereas 11 of the SNP's 17 came during interjections. Therefore, the Tories were more calculating in their use of divisive questions and the Nationalists more spontaneous or reactive. Fellow independence supporter Tommy Sheridan of the Scottish Socialist Party added the only other wedge question, also during an interjection.

Another matter related to the cohesiveness of the Opposition and Coalition is the incidence of third-party criticism. It was assumed that, parliamentary debate being inherently adversarial, that both the Opposition and Coalition would issue criticism. But toward whom? Hypothesis 4 posited that Coalition interactions contain third-party criticism more often than those involving the Opposition. This hypothesis was made for two reasons. First, Opposition members would presumably spend more effort criticizing

their chief competitor for power, the First Minister, than they would fellow members of the Opposition. Conversely, Labour-Liberal Democrat members were thought more likely to criticize someone besides than their own leader. The same relationship was assumed for third-party criticism in First Minister answers. Self-supplementary results showed no significant difference between groups. In interjections, however, Coalition members utilized third-party criticism 19% of the time, more than double the rate of the Opposition 7% ($\phi = .153$). In primary questions overall, the Coalition's 34 indictments of third parties doubled their 16 total criticisms of the First Minister.

The Coalition members' choice of when to utilize third-party criticism is also worthy of note. More than two-thirds took place during interjections (68%) rather than self-supplementaries even though interjections only accounted for 46% of their questions. Coalition members thus used some of their interjection opportunities to come to the defense of the First Minister when an Opposition member had rebuked him. These interjections often included their own admonishment of the initial questioner, which registered as third-party criticism.

First Minister answers followed the same trend. To Coalition interjections, First Ministers were far more likely to issue third-party criticism than they did with the Opposition: 22% to 3%, respectively ($\phi = .269$). For example, a First Minister rarely condemned the SNP during a Conservative's question, instead focussing his criticism on

her directly. Instead he saved his third-party criticism for answers to his Coalition colleagues.

Overall, the Conservative Party received the most third-party criticism, as it was the top choice of the SNP, Coalition members, and the First Minister. As might be expected, Westminster was the common recipient of attacks by both Conservatives and the SNP. As the official Opposition in London, the Conservatives would naturally condemn Blairism, and the Nationalists oppose Westminster's sovereignty over Scotland, period. But while the SNP castigated the Conservatives eight times, the Tories only responded in kind once. Ignoring the SNP is thus consistent with Tory Leader David McLetchie's claim that the Conservative Party is the "real Opposition in Scotland," delegation totals notwithstanding (Official Report, December 7, 2000, n.p.). As Labour also tended to ignore the SNP, results support Pittock's (2001) thesis that governments deliberately ignore representatives of nationalist movements in order to play down their status, and thereby their threat. It could also be that the relative fixation between Labour and the Tories is a holdover from their official government-opposition status at Westminster.

The Scottish National Party's drive for independence was the subject of Hypotheses 5 and 6. As the Parliament was principally designed to meet the concerns of nationalism without resorting to separation, this issue is an important consideration in Scottish parliamentary communication. Hypotheses predicted that the SNP would raise

the issue of independence, would use subtler language, and be more favorable toward the notion than other political parties. Surprisingly, the SNP did not raise issues of Scottish autonomy or independence significantly more often in self-supplementaries than the other parties collectively: only 4.4% of their total versus 3.6%. Only during interjections did the Nationalists discuss the issue significantly more often than others, at a rate of 10.2% ($\phi = .150$) against 3.1%. These results suggest that the SNP backed away from its cornerstone policy when it was given the opportunity to set the agenda. Only when other parties or the First Minister bashed independence did SNP members make a point of coming to its defense. The Nationalists overall rate of mentioning autonomy or independence (4.6%) was not even significantly higher than that of First Ministers (3.8%). Only SNP member Andrew Wilson raised the subject of independence more than five times.

Neither was the SNP found to be significantly subtler in its language use on independence compared to other members, who were similarly non-explicit. However, Nationalists were significantly less overt than the First Minister ($\phi = .298$). Whereas the SNP used explicit independence language only 27% of the time, First Ministers did so in 56% of cases. For example, Henry McLeish told John Swinney, “We get all the lectures from the SNP about the quality of the Scottish Parliament and the drive towards the word that the SNP will not use—independence” (Official Report, January 11, 2001). Like other MSPs, members of the SNP were more likely to chose words like “fiscal

autonomy” and “self-determination.” The First Ministers, all of whom being Unionists, were more explicit and oftentimes pejorative, invoking words like “divorce” and “balkanization” in reference to Scottish independence. Overall, First Ministers expressed opposition to increased autonomy or independence 28 out of 33 times (85%), but did speak in support three times.

Scottish Socialist Tommy Sheridan was added to the SNP column to compare official supporters of independence with those opposed. SNP/SSP members spoke favorably of independence 87% of the time, which was significantly higher than the Unionist rate of 43% ($\phi = .734$). This result suggests that despite their reticence to raise the subject during planned questions, Nationalists remained true to the cause. In no cases did members of the SNP or SSP voice opposition to autonomy or independence.

It seems surprising that 43% of officially unionist-party members spoke favorably of the idea of increased autonomy for Scotland, although none called for outright independence. Only one member outside the Labour Party spoke against the prospect greater of self-determination, the rest of the opposition coming from the First Minister and Labour members. This 43% support is consistent with the fact that even many Unionists would like their Parliament to be given greater powers (Macwhirter, 2002a). The SNP’s bashfulness about calling for independence overtly, as well as the First Ministers’ opposite verbal tack, is explainable by the fact that only 30% of Scots supported independence rather than devolution after 1000 days of Parliament (McCrone,

2002). Yet it remains questionable how a party can move its signature policy forward by ignoring it during Parliament's most high profile forum for debate.

Problem-versus-solution arguments are based on the stock-issues model of argumentation. Because different parties may manifest different types of concerns within the same policy debate, Hypothesis 7 predicted that the Opposition SNP and Conservative parties would vary in their proportion of arguments that identify harms or barriers in society versus arguments for or against a new policy change. The author assumed that a roughly equal number of arguments during FMQs would take a problem or solution focus. This is because, according to the stock-issues model, no law should be passed unless it has passed all four stock-issue tests. This requires proof that the plan will solve the problem and that its disadvantages will not outweigh its benefits. However, the major parties in Opposition and the Parliament as a whole relied heavily on problem arguments to the exclusion of solution arguments. During all questions the ratio was 741-to-123, or 86% problem arguments. First Minister's answers were similar with an 84% emphasis on problem arguments.

The skewed emphasis in favor of problem arguments led to no significant differences among parties, yet it may reveal structural or functional limitations inherent in the Scottish Parliament. As noted in opposition theory, Parliament is not a government in itself, but a chamber in which representatives hold the Government to account. The abdication of solution arguments by Coalition and Opposition alike suggests that today's

Parliament, far from being empowered to debate Scottish solutions to Scottish problems, may be more a sounding board to bring problems to the attention of the Government.

This thesis reinforces the unitary nature of British government, as described in opposition theory. Under this scenario the strong Executive merely uses Parliament to validate its policies and suffer the concerns of the loyal Opposition.

A closer look at individual statements at Holyrood reinforces how parliamentary impotence is communicated. An example came in Henry McLeish's response to a question from fellow Labour member Johann Lamont on the subject of domestic violence. There is a sense of *fait accompli* as the First Minister simply announces what the Government is doing and will do:

On 29 November 2000, we announced our biggest ever funding package of £18.3 million to provide protection, prevention and provision for abused women. We will continue to fund the on-going publicity campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse. We are also funding the Zero Tolerance Trust's 'Respect' pilot in several schools and youth groups to educate young people about the issue (Official Report, February 1, 2001).

The answer lacks even a hint of conscious guile or heavy-handedness, yet it makes plain that policy is something merely to be announced, and action only undertaken by the

executive “we.” There is no cure or cost argument in this passage: no attempt to persuade MSPs of the plan’s merits. It simply informs. Even Lamont’s initial question implied parliamentary deference: “To ask the First Minister what initiatives the Scottish Executive is promoting with the aim of eradicating domestic violence.” Aside from perhaps being a planted question for the purpose of making a Government announcement, the use of present tense implies that subsequent parliamentary votes will be only perfunctory. In Lamont’s self-supplementary, she naturally “welcome[d] the minister’s reply,” and McLeish subsequently thanked her for her involvement on the issue (Official Report, n.p.). All of these statements inadvertently blur the difference between a bill and a law. They suggest an earnest but institutionally arrogant Executive.

Following the exchange above, the SNP’s Gil Paterson made the non-argumentative interjection, “Will the Executive consider the Canadian initiative of having domestic violence courts, with a view of setting them up in Scotland” (Official Report). Consistent with the reliance on problem and blame issues only, there is no argument here in support of the Canadian proposal and no expectation that the Executive is even obliged to “consider” it. Therefore, an analysis of parliamentary discourse reveals few questions and answers that actually judge the merits of contingent legislation.

The classical, or at least American notion of a legislature as a deliberative body empowered to debate the *merits* of *future* courses of action does not seem to apply in the Scottish context. Based on the interactions above, why bother discussing cure and cost

when the vote is not contingent at all, but a foregone conclusion? Opposition members instead spent their questions identifying societal problems that have yet to be solved, or they blamed the Government's performance. Their focus was on scrutinizing the past but not the future. An exclusively past-tense emphasis is more consistent with forensic speaking (the rhetoric of the law courts), not deliberative discourse. Problem-oriented arguments validate the need for change, but they say nothing about whether a new policy proposal will succeed. Therefore, bills often seem to be ratified in the Scottish Parliament whose actual merits have not been debated during FMQs. Although there is time for solution debates in committee and plenary sessions, it has been established that the British public and mass media pay far more attention to Question Time (Alderman, 1992, McLeish, 2002). Moreover, the passive tone of Johann Lamont and Gil Paterson's statements imply that no institution is a match for the Executive.

The lack of discussion about its own proposals during FMQs attenuates the Opposition's ostensible status as a "government-in-waiting" (Johnson, 1997, p. 490). According to Alderman (1992), Question Time is the only frequent opportunity for the Opposition to set the agenda and "demonstrate their prowess in face-to-face confrontation" (p. 67). To use the prominent forum of Question Time to raise cure and cost issues would permit the Opposition to place its priorities on an equal playing field with the Government's. Perhaps knowledge of this discrepancy in problem-versus-solution arguments would inspire MSPs to press their case for fully-developed policy

debates before laws were “announced.” On the other hand, an alternative to the impotent-parliament thesis is the inexperienced-parliament scenario. Perhaps the preponderance of first-term members means that MSPs are only still learning how to advance their rights and hold the Government to account. A combination of these two explanations may also be at work.

The above section criticized the Scottish Parliament’s lack of well-rounded policy debate during FMQs. But beyond serving as a deliberative body, Parliament also aspires to an expository purpose. As one of the most prominent communicative forums of civic society, Parliament can also be tested for its ratio of informative versus argumentative questions and answers. Results on Hypothesis 8 revealed that Coalition members sought more information gathering during their primary questions than the more argumentative members of the Opposition did. The Opposition’s rate of argumentation was 82% compared to the Coalition’s 65% ($\phi = .195/.185$). In interactions with the Opposition during primary questions, First Ministers were also significantly more likely to impart information only, with an overall rate of argumentativeness in primary questions of 69% ($\phi = .337/.234$). Despite the greater level of argumentation by Opposition MSPs, these results may actually reinforce the impotent parliament thesis, as Opposition questions identifying a problem or critiquing the Government’s performance were often met with simple announcements of what would be done next.

The final hypothesis related to political affiliation was Hypothesis 9, which addressed differences in disposition between Coalition partner Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Only one significant result was indicated, as both parties refrained from criticizing the Government more than a handful of times. However, in self-supplementaries, the Liberal Democrats were significantly more likely to remain neutral where Labour members were more supportive ($\phi = .227$). Liberal Democrats indicated a favorable disposition only 25% of the time, while Labour MSPs were supportive in 41% of their questions. Other questions indicated mainly a neutral disposition. Intra-Coalition content differences will be discussed in detail under Hypothesis 12.

Results on Research Question One contain implications for Opposition Theory. Disposition and respect indicated a clear division along Coalition and Opposition lines in both questions and answers. Yet no significant differences were found *among* the political parties on either side of the despatch box. Being a member of the Opposition accounted for more variation than political party in both disposition and respect. This suggests a relatively cohesive Opposition as well as a cohesive Coalition. McLeish's (2002) debatable claim that Labour and the Liberal Democrats share 90% of their policy priorities may thus ring true. Likewise, despite their protestations to the contrary, the Scottish National Party and the Conservative Party seem to provide a relatively united front. Their choice of most important issues is similar, as are their levels of disposition and respect toward the First Minister. The clincher may be the two parties' relative lack

of third-party criticism of each other when given the opportunity during FMQs.

Therefore, both the Coalition and Opposition can be judged to be relatively cohesive entities, at least in terms of their communication during First Minister's Questions.

Research Question 2: Variation by Leaders

Variation in content among principal participants was the subject of the second research question, consisting of Hypotheses 10-13. Major party leaders were predicted to give and receive less amiable messages than their backbenchers. This inference is not necessarily intuitive, as rank-and-file MSPs might have felt free to lob rhetorical grenades at the First Minister while party leaders felt obliged to maintain a more dignified verbal presence. The hypothesis was only based on anecdotal observation. Still, results on self-supplementaries supported Hypothesis 10. Leaders of the Opposition Alex Salmond (through September 20, 2000) and then John Swinney, along with Conservative Leader David McLetchie, criticized the First Minister or Government 67% of the time compared to a rate of 57% among their collective backbenchers ($\phi = .149$). In terms of respect, the 22% rate of leader insults was significantly and substantially higher than backbenchers' 5% ($\phi = .220$). In terms of disposition, the feeling appeared to be mutual. The First Ministers' 53% rate of criticism of Opposition leaders in self-supplementaries compares to 38% in answers to backbenchers ($\phi = .198$).

Alex Salmond, John Swinney, and David McLetchie were also compared for individual differences in disposition and respect. In self-supplementaries, interactions involving David McLetchie were found to contain significantly more criticism than the SNP leaders, with no differences between Salmond and Swinney. In first and second self-supplementaries combined, McLetchie indicated criticism at a rate of 85% compared to Salmond's 63% ($\phi = .274/.297$). His 80% rate of criticism in initial self-supplementaries was also significantly higher than Swinney's 54% ($\phi = .265$). There were no significant differences in respect toward the First Minister by the three leaders. Collectively they insulted the First Minister or the Government 29% of the time.

In initial self-supplementaries, First Ministers were likewise more critical of David McLetchie than they were the SNP leaders, with no significant difference between Alex Salmond and John Swinney. McLetchie was criticized 64% of the time, Salmond 39% ($\phi = .319$), and Swinney 44% ($\phi = .293$). No significant differences were observed among the First Ministers regarding respect. Together the First Ministers issued insults to these leaders in 24% of answers.

Party leaders on both sides of the despatch box tended to be highly confrontational with each other during Question Time compared to the First Minister's interactions with backbenchers of the same Opposition parties. They cannot match William Hague and Tony Blair's level of invective at Westminster, however. In the four

sessions of PMQs in June 2000, Hague was negative toward the Prime Minister 100% of the time, and issued ridicule in 86% of his questions. Thus communication at the Scottish Parliament may further be acknowledged as a relatively constructive chamber, as opposed to hostile. Whether this is due to the friendlier horseshoe-shaped design or increased personal space afforded to members is unknown. Cultural and geographic differences between Scotland and England may also account for some of the apparent variation, but this is only speculation short of a similarly-rigorous study of Westminster.

In Hypothesis 12 First Ministers Donald Dewar, Jim Wallace, Henry McLeish, and Jack McConnell were compared to determine if word counts, disposition and respect tended to be standardized or reveal individual differences. It was unusual to have four different leaders take a substantial number of questions during the first Parliament. Donald Dewar's illness and death, followed a year later by Henry McLeish's resignation, necessitated the high level of turnover. Word counts of questions did not vary significantly. All First Ministers collected tightly between means of 86 and 89 words-per-answer despite a wide range of lengths: one word all the way to 272. In answer length, the only significant differences occurred in interjections. For example, Donald Dewar's mean of 113 was significantly higher than Jim Wallace's 84, but the apparently low effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .07$) suggests a small proportion of disparity accounted for by individual First Minister.

No significant difference among First Ministers was observed in the disposition they were subjected to by members. In interjection answers, however, Donald Dewar was found to be significantly more polemical toward members than Jim Wallace ($\phi = .209$). Dewar either praised or criticized questioners 41% of the time compared to Wallace's 21%. As only an Acting First Minister's during Dewar's recuperation from heart surgery, and substituting at various other times, Wallace may have felt the need to be more stoic than the author of Scotland's devolution bill. Despite his junior status in the Coalition, however, the Liberal Democrat was not significantly more neutral than his successors McLeish and McConnell. No other statistically significant differences in disposition or respect were observed among individual First Ministers.

Hypothesis 12 also considered communication differences between First Ministers as a group and questioners as a group. Regarding disposition, results found that First Ministers collectively were significantly more supportive than questioners in both self-supplementaries ($\phi = .724$) and interjections ($\phi = .679$). These large effect size estimates may be interpreted to mean that First Ministers are expected to behave with greater tact and composure than ordinary members. However, this inference is contradicted by results on respectfulness. Ministers used disparaging language significantly more often than members did in both self-supplementaries ($\phi = .358$) and interjections ($\phi = .445$), accounting for 57% of all insults in these questions. Therefore,

members were more likely to criticize the performance of the First Minister or Government than vice versa, but did so without resorting to ridicule as often.

Opposition questions contained more criticism than Coalition questioners did in self-supplementaries ($\phi = .605$) and interjections alike ($\phi = .524$). First Ministers were likewise more critical of Opposition members than they were to members of the Coalition in both types of questions ($\phi = .530$ and $\phi = .485$, respectively). It is sensible that First Ministers were less likely to criticize the Opposition than they received in return. This is because under the unitary system of British government and opposition, they are not members of the Executive, hold no fundamental power, and thus are not held responsible for the success of government. The First Minister had little reason to criticize them in the same manner America's Senate Majority leader often criticizes the Opposition for gridlock or filibustering. This is because in the United States the majority party must own 60% of the seats to suspend debate. In contrast, the Labour Party wields both Executive and Legislative power in Scotland with only 43% of the seats. There is not even a House of Lords to stall the movement of bills. The First Minister's sense of control over Parliament is further demonstrated by considering the juxtaposition of disposition and respect. When the First Minister did choose to criticize, he more often resorted to insults than did his adversaries. Perhaps this is due to his executive power insulating him from concerns about how his remarks will be taken by the Opposition. It also supports

Pittock's (2001) theoretical premise that Governments use ridicule to keep nationalist movements at bay, although no differences between the SNP and Tories was observed.

Not only are overall differences in disposition and respect between ministers and questioners illuminating, however. The juxtaposition of these statements in relation to each other is also telling. An examination of statistical cell counts invites the question of whether levels of disposition and respect are reciprocated. One cannot assume that ministers are critical only when the questioner has been critical, and supportive when the questioner has been thus. Although disposition was highly reciprocal ($r = .625/.585$) FMQs witnessed many cases in which a member insulted the First Minister yet was shown respect in the subsequent answer. In fact, this turning the other cheek happened in 53% of all possible cases during primary questions (36 cases of 68). Likewise, First Ministers frequently slapped a member with ridicule when her question itself had contained no disparaging language. In total, 64% of cases of ministerial ridicule was unprovoked (57 cases of 89).

Even more unusual was the handful of cases that witnessed a member criticizing the Government, then actually receiving supportive communication in return. Henry McLeish accounted for three of these five cases of greeting criticism with conciliation. No examples of the opposite phenomenon took place, as First Ministers never criticized a member who had just praised him or the Government during her question.

Patterns of non-reciprocity in verbal tone show how the vigorous “cut and thrust” of Scottish debate appears to be accepted in the Parliament’s public dialogue. Members and the First Minister pick their moments to be pugnacious, with no lingering hard feelings apparent from session-to-session¹. This relative collegiality is salient to research on argumentativeness reported by Colbert (1994). Argumentativeness is defined as one’s willingness to speak out on controversial issues. Colbert cites a host of evidence suggesting that participation in debate activities increases an individual’s level of argumentativeness. Yet there is no empirical evidence that debate increases an individual’s verbal aggression, the tendency to attack another’s self-concept with statements such as “I hate you.” In fact, Colbert reports some evidence that debate reduces levels of verbal aggression, leaving a healthy environment of rigorous argumentation without harm to participants’ self-esteem.

¹This climate is reminiscent of a September 5, 2002 university-sponsored public debate in which the author was privileged to serve as moderator. Gregory E. Pence, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Nigel M. de S. Cameron, Senior Fellow and International Advisory Board member for The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity, clashed over the ethics of cloning research, with Pence on the pro-cloning side. Both speakers, who had debated each other before and would do so again, presented substantial evidence and cogent arguments. But Dr. Cameron, hailing from Edinburgh, Scotland, was acknowledged by all observers as the winner over the American Pence. Cameron’s passionate delivery and vivid, accessible word choices proved inescapable. Back-stage with the two speakers, Cameron had no qualms about boldly predicting he would “throttle” Pence, happily calling his opponent’s liberal position on cloning “utterly extreme.” Yet the Scot maintained a good-natured relationship with his adversary throughout the evening.

The occurrence of ridicule at Holyrood, often accompanied by a smile, must be viewed as falling short of verbal aggression. Rather, criticism and ridicule seem an accepted, non-escalating phenomenon of the Scottish Parliament. The possibility that any session might include some spirited jousting may even explain some of the high level of interest in FMQs among the media and public. It is conceivable, therefore, that the non-reciprocation of criticism and ridicule found in these results is an inherent feature of Scottish parliamentary debate. A similarly-detailed study on Westminster and other world parliaments that feature Question Time could test the broader generalizability of such a hypothesis. If cooperation could be obtained, members could even complete surveys testing for argumentativeness and verbal aggression to test the hypothesis further.

The Coalition members' disposition was also compared with that of the First Ministers. Results indicated that in both self-supplementaries ($\phi = .663$) and interjections ($\phi = .547$), Coalition members criticized their First Minister or his Government significantly more often than he did in return: 5.5% in primary questions compared to 1.1%. This may seem odd to the American reader, but the unitary nature of British-style government entails that even fellow-party backbenchers are not considered part of the Executive. Like the Opposition, these members are charged with holding the Government to account. The minority of traditional left-leaning Labour members at Westminster can attest to this, as recently they seem to issue nearly as much criticism of the Blair Government as the Tories during Prime Minister's Questions. Results from Holyrood

should not be taken to mean a negative climate between the First Minister and Coalition members overall, however, as total criticism remained low.

The difference in disposition between Coalition members and the Executive is not explainable by any inherent friction associated with Coalition governments. Sixty percent of the criticism of the First Minister by Coalition members came from the majority-partner Labour members (9 cases out of 15). Labour's rate of criticism, proportionate to share of questions asked, was only 2% lower than the Liberal Democrats (5% compared to 7%). This non-significant difference seems counter-intuitive. First of all, the Liberal Democrats are only a small minority partner (23% of the Coalition), hold but two Cabinet posts, and have had to defer several of their most important causes (e.g., Proportional Representation on town councils). It is obvious that Liberal Democrat support is essential to the continued existence of the Coalition, yet they remain only about as critical as Labour backbenchers. This harmony contrasts sharply with Westminster, where the Liberal Democrats are in Opposition to Labour. Gentry (2001) found their rate of criticizing Tony Blair's Government to be 64%, a far cry from their 7% rate at Holyrood. Clearly, being a party to government predicts noteworthy changes in disposition.

One wonders why the Liberal Democrats are so deferential to the Scottish Executive when their status as a separate party with separate policy aims gives them reason to criticize. The fact that Liberal Democrats were only about as critical of the Executive as Labour must mean that owning the status of membership in a ruling

Coalition holds strong appeal for a small party, even if it only brings two cabinet posts out of 12. This conclusion makes sense when one considers the Liberal Democrat's marginalization in Opposition as the number-three party at Westminster.

Comparing Labour with the Liberal-Democrats in First Minister's answers, Labour members, not Liberal Democrats, received the only three issuances of criticism. As the First Minister is likely not very interested in leading a minority government, he would naturally be reluctant to criticize the Liberal Democrats, choosing supportive language instead. Therefore, the verbal choices of both Liberal Democratic members and First Ministers seemed especially conscious of polite interaction.

It was demonstrated above that the tone of language between the First Minister and the Opposition is not highly reciprocal. A similar conclusion derives from *post hoc* observation of cell frequencies within Coalition interactions. Like exchanges with the Opposition, a substantially low level of reciprocity of disposition was observed within the Coalition. In primary questions Coalition members used favorable language toward the First Minister 95 times. In response to these questions, the First Minister was similarly supportive in 60 cases. This left 35 times when he withdrew to a neutral position having received ingratiating language from his Coalition colleague. For his part, the First Minister praised fellow Coalition questioners in his answers 96 times. Yet in 34 of these cases the questioner had adopted a neutral tone of language, and in 2 other cases had actually uttered criticism.

The relatively high levels of non-reciprocity of supportiveness between members and the First Minister (37%/35%), which holds with both Labour and Liberal-Democrat questioners, seems on its face counterintuitive. Yet out of 191 Coalition interactions in which at least one indicated supportiveness, both participants only did so 60 times (31%). Thus a ceiling of supportiveness seems to exist within Coalition exchanges, in which one or the other indicates favorability, but not both of them. One concludes that a saccharine disposition within the Coalition is a significant but not endemic predictor of reciprocity in primary questions: ($r = .489/388$). The absence of consistent reciprocity may be due to the fact that despite party discipline, leaders and members alike wish to be seen as serious and independent-minded. If the First Minister issued praise every time a Coalition member supported him, Question Time might be seen as a “love in” where patting each other on the back took precedence over doing the serious business of governing. In only 22% of all exchanges did the member and the First Minister both ingratiate each other.

Also salient to issues of reciprocity, Hypothesis 13 considered disposition and respect across multi-question exchanges, meaning those involving the Leader of the Opposition as well as questions from the Leader of the Conservative Party. These exchanges usually focus on a single major topic, resembling a debate going back and forth. Based on descriptive summaries and Spearman correlations, the leaders' disposition and respect toward the First Minister deteriorated in a linear fashion from questions one-through-three, then flattened in question four. In disposition, the

percentage rates of criticism progressed thus through the four questions: 6/67/85/82. The comparable percentage of total insults indicated a similar trend: 2/22/31/36.

It is difficult for the initial question to be critical or disrespectful, as it is prepared in writing and screened by the Scottish Parliament clerks and Presiding Officer. The 12 examples of criticism and 3 cases of support involved adlibs by the questioner. Therefore, it is logical that levels of criticism and ridicule would increase in the second question. And since the First Minister does not usually give a welcome answer to question two either, it may be natural for the leader to increase his level of criticism and ridicule further in question three. The fact that criticism fell by a marginal amount in question four may or may not be telling. Perhaps it is natural for a leader to escalate criticism only twice, after which there is nowhere left to go but to become more constructive. Or perhaps simply coming to understand the Government's position is a salient function of Question Time. In this scenario the First Minister is sometimes able to bring a satisfactory level of clarity in three answers, which would lead to a more amiable question four. This inference, implying a socially constructive view of leader interactions, is supported by Richards' (1965) definition of rhetoric as the study of misunderstanding and its remedies. It also reinforces Karl Weik's organizing principle (Miller, 1999), which states that a fundamental purpose of institutional structures is to help members enact common meanings from equivocal messages. In turn, it may corroborate Smith and Smith's (2000) claim about the value of "master documents" that bring coherence to a

plethora of individual message fragments (p. 470). But these conclusions are not strongly supported by the small difference in Opposition-leader criticism from questions three-to-four.

First Ministers continued to escalate their criticism and use of insults through answer four. Their progression of criticism by percent across the four answers was 13/53/71/77, and the comparable rate of total insults by percent was 3%, 20%, 25%, 30%. Because nearly all questions number-four came from the SNP, the First Minister's linear rise in negativity across the exchange may have been a response to the Nationalist's position as his greatest threat to holding power. Or it could mean that the First Minister was simply attempting to make up for the SNP's higher rate of negativity toward him in questions two and three. Despite answer four, however, the First Minister's answers to David McLetchie contained a higher rate of criticism and ridicule than those directed to the SNP leaders. Regardless of the questioner, Alderman (1992) notes that always getting the last word is a huge advantage to the Leader of Government.

Research Question 3: Variation by Status

Communication content by electoral status was the subject of the third research question, which considered differences among party leaders, constituency representatives, and regional list members. First was the surprising observation that Opposition constituency representatives received significantly longer First Minister answers than the other two groups despite the fact that their self-supplementaries were

the shortest (Hypothesis 14). The mean answer of 195 words issued to constituency members was 29% longer than that issued to list members (151 words) and 35% longer than answers to party leaders (144 words). These differences were statistically significant ($\eta_p^2 = .03$). The amount of variance accounted for seems small except when results are considered in relation to question length. Although differences were not inferentially significant, the population data revealed constituency members to ask the shortest mean question. Party leaders averaged 113.6 words, list members 105.0, and constituency members 104.1. The complete census of FMQs permits confidence that these small differences are real. Based on electoral status, the shorter the Opposition question, the longer the answer. However, the inverse correlation between question and answer length did not hold if status was removed from the equation. In fact, an overall direct correlation between self-supplementary question and answer length was observed (Spearman $r = .349$, $p < .01$).

So why do constituency members of the Opposition receive answers 33% longer than other statuses despite issuing questions of comparable or even shorter length? It may be that First Ministers see an advantage in giving shorter answers to opposition leaders such as John Swinney and David McLetchie. By not catering as long to their questions, the First Minister would thus communicate his position of Executive control against his chief adversaries. In an abstract but perhaps noticeable way, this relative brevity may contrast with the leaders' having issued the longest questions. At the other end of the

spectrum, the First Minister's briefer answers to Opposition list-MSPs may also communicate a dismissive message, as these lowest-status members are usually the least-experienced politicians, who only obtained seats due to Proportional Representation.

Unlike list representatives, Opposition constituency members personally won their seats, and thus may appear a force to be reckoned with. And unlike party leaders, who have already lost a campaign against the First Minister and whose debating skills may have already peaked, constituency MSPs are up-and-comers who may one day challenge the First Minister for parliamentary supremacy. They are also lesser-known quantities than their party leader, who may give the First Minister a confidence of familiarity by asking three or four questions each week. This contrasts with the individual constituency member, who only participates in FMQs every so often. It is possible, therefore, that constituency members tend to ask the most challenging or unpredictable questions, necessitating a more fully-reasoned response from the First Minister. This phenomenon is not linked to criticism or ridicule, as no significant differences by Opposition status were observed. This is not to say that constituency members were the only ones filibustered by the First Minister. First Ministers' answers were longer than the question against all statuses, with an overall mean 35% longer than the Opposition's in these self-supplementaries.

Status was also the subject of Hypothesis 15, which supposed that Coalition list members would provide more supportive communication toward of the First Minister

than constituency members would. The directional hypothesis was made because list members were regarded as owing their seats to the First Minister rather than having won election themselves. This is because the Executive exercises control over the placement of candidates on the regional list—registry at the top of the list nearly assures victory, but placement at the bottom always brings the opposite end. In contrast to list members, constituency representatives won their own seats outright, so they were expected to be less beholden to the First Minister for their positions and so would be less deferential during Question Time.

The assumption behind Hypothesis 15 proved not to be the case, and it was fortunate to have used a two-tailed test. As mentioned in the previous chapter, results were both negative and significant in self-supplementaries. Constituency members were actually found to be significantly more supportive, with a praise-to-criticism percentage of 38/4 compared to the list members' rate of 21/29 ($\phi = .325$). It is frankly shocking that list members of the Coalition issued more criticism of the Government than praise, letting constituency members shield the Executive against Opposition criticism. The difference in disposition cannot be explained by Labour-Liberal Democratic differences, as their rates of constituency-versus-list representation are comparable. Also missing was participation by Cabinet ministers at FMQs, as their stage is Open Question Time when they receive questions on their administrative portfolios. Therefore, party affiliation and loyalty as a member of the Executive cannot explain the disparity of disposition by status.

The phenomenon of less supportiveness among Coalition list members may be explained partly by the Scottish Executive's decision at the start of Parliament to provide greater perquisites to constituency members than list members. As regional list representatives are at-large members with no discrete constituency, they are more able to roam "freestyle" without being accountable to as many calls and letters from citizens (McLeish, 2002, n.p.). Thus they receive a smaller allowance for office supplies and the like. Although their seats are statutorily equal, list members may feel that constituency colleagues are treated a bit more equal.

Research Question 4: Variation Over Time

The final pair of hypotheses used time as an independent variable. By tracking Holyrood over its first 1000 days it was hypothesized that parliamentary communication, especially in a brand-new democracy, may be developmental. Hypothesis 16 presumed that the proportion of solution arguments would increase relative to problem arguments across the 1000 days (also see Hypothesis 5). This hypothesis was proposed because raising attention and describing a need usually precede the presentation of a solution. However, results revealed that the share of solution arguments remained infrequent throughout the period of study. In fact, an inverse correlation between solution arguments and time was observed in self-supplementaries, with fewer claims about the merits of future proposals as time went on ($r = -.114$, $p < .05$). In questions where a policy claim was issued, the share of problem arguments increased over time: 75%, 82%, and 88%, at

the expense of solution arguments: 25%, 18%, and 12% ($\phi_c = .020$). The effect size appears to be small, but the fact that solution arguments failed to increase over time is telling. It suggests that after three years the Scottish Parliament remained at least as deferential to the Executive, at least in regard to future courses of action, as it was at the beginning. The impotent parliament thesis is thus given further support (see Hypothesis 7).

The final research hypothesis, Hypothesis 17, proposed that the tone of parliamentary discourse would become more negative over time, the assumption being that members would take extra pains to prove constructive early on so that the new chamber seemed worth the expense. This factor was bolstered literally by the rising costs of constructing the permanent parliament building. After the devolution referendum was approved, the original price estimate of £40 million was repeatedly increased. The estimate rose nearly month-by-month as the first session went along, reaching more than £300 million by Spring 2003. The building will be complete sometime in 2004. The inexperience of many members and the excitement about participating in a new democracy further fueled the hypothesis of relative amicability in the early days of Parliament. Conversely, it was assumed that initially polite FMQ participants would coarsen over time, becoming more politically polarized and cynical.

But the age-of-innocence hypothesis was not supported by empirical results. A direct correlation between time and a positive disposition was observed during self-

supplementary questions ($r = .120$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .134$). The same trend was found in terms of respect ($r = .110$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .127$). Dividing the 1000 days by three reveals rates of criticism to be 54%, 45%, 39%, respectively, and rates of insults of 16%, 11%, and 7%. The First Minister's ratio of criticism in the three periods was 37%, 31%, and 32%. Disrespect was tracked at 15%, 14%, and 11%. These levels by First Ministers did not lighten significantly over time, but neither did they deteriorate.

The warming of MSP discourse during questions to the First Minister over the first 1000 days was puzzling. However, a glance south may help explain the surprise results. Rather than consider the Scottish Parliament a democracy drawn out of whole cloth, it obviously has its origin in the larger British political system. The mother Parliament at Westminster literally carries a thousand years of wear in its foundation. It would be difficult for the Scottish Parliament to adopt its own style of communication at its inception in 1999, especially when all of its top leadership, both Government and Opposition, were past and even continuing members of the House of Commons. Therefore, the Scottish example is not necessarily a northern exception to Cole's (1999) claim that the House of Commons is largely impotent due to the iron power of its Executive. McCrone (2002) explains: "Barriers to developing a new political culture and democratic system are not totally removed by establishing a new political institution" (n.p). Thus the improved communication climate as time went on suggests that Holyrood

is developing its own style. Perhaps the further passage of time will witness further distinctions from Westminster.

Based on tentative comparisons with Gentry's (2001) four-week pilot study shown above, the Scottish Parliament ultimately may be found to be inherently less polemical and partisan than the Palaces of Westminster. Moreover, results support the inference that Holyrood warmed further with time. The House of Commons' tradition of confrontation was something the Scottish Parliament could not completely escape from in 1999, but the improved climate of communication in FMQs suggests an increasingly constructive and informative forum of public debate. Although they lack the checks and balances of power that are afforded to legislators in American-style government, at least MSPs control twenty-minutes per week in which they can bring problems to the attention of the Scottish Executive.

Also related to time, the Scottish National Party did not issue more independence discourse as time passed, as no significant correlations or differences were observed (also see Hypothesis 5). In fact, the party's low frequency of independence discourse during FMQs remained descriptively static across time. Therefore, Bitzer's (1968) thesis of obstinate situational constraints was supported. Apparently, Scotland's "attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives" did not shift enough for the Nationalists to press the case for full independence even after nearly three years of devolution (p. 8). Based on nationalism theory, the SNP clearly chose gradualism over

fundamentalism (Keating, 2001). But even gradualism implies some increase in discourse aimed at securing the desired outcome. At FMQs, the Nationalists did not even go that far. However, opinion polling reported by Keating (2001), and Epolitix.com (2003) reveals that most Scots believe the nation will be independent within the next twenty years. This fact suggests that the SNP may be more interested in maintaining its status as official Opposition than risking its standing to go for the brass ring. This conclusion suggests that the Nationalists' communication was more party-centered than movement-centered (Hearn, 2000).

Conclusions

By studying the content of communication during First Minister's Questions, several coherent inferences have been reached. The parliamentary discourse that emerges is characterized by an Executive that is inadvertently guilty of an institutionalized arrogance that blurs the distinction between a bill and a law, announces future actions rather than justifies them, and flatters its Coalition partner while dismissing the criticism of disconnected list members. On the other side (or sides) is a diffident Opposition: reticent about raising its core issues openly, inattentive about exploiting weaknesses in the Coalition, and resigned to its legislative impotence. Favoring the chamber, however, is its relatively constructive disposition and level of respect among opposing factions. These claims are not issued to characterize Question Time in the polemical manner of

Alderman (1992) and Watts (1997). Instead they represent inferences derived empirically from the verbal communication of Parliament.

Proportional Representation (PR) clearly represented electoral progress for minority parties over the Westminster electoral system. Otherwise, Labour would have won a near Kremlin-like 73% of all seats in the first general election. Despite PR and cosmetic changes regarding committee majorities and member bills, however, the communication of government in Scotland largely implies an “elective dictatorship” similar to Westminster (Cole, 1999, n.p.). This reality should not be surprising. After all, the island of Great Britain only adopted democracy in the mid-nineteenth century, the principal broadcast media are state-run, and the First Minister is technically appointed by the Queen. Thus the political communication environment there should not necessarily be judged by strong republican principles.

Nevertheless, one may consider whether Holyrood remains more of a northern derivative of Westminster than was hoped. Based on the communication of Parliament, it is questionable whether it has fulfilled the Consultative Steering Group’s (GSG) aim of power sharing, accountability, access and participation, and equal opportunities (Paterson, et al., 2001). The source of this difference in goals is not surprising. Scottish society has always indicated greater resistance to oligarchy than England, and its cultural sense that things should be fair is well documented (Harvie, 1998). Commenting on Holyrood after 1000 days, McCrone (2002) notes: “There has been much speculation in

the press, frequently uninformed by hard evidence, that the Parliament has failed to live up to the high expectations invested in it by the people of Scotland” (n.p.). The present study provides a degree of evidence that Parliament’s communication has not matched the GSG’s objectives. However, the increase in the percentage of surveyed voters agreeing that the Parliament had achieved “a lot” doubled in 2001, from 11% to 25%. This result is consistent with the improved tone of discourse observed at Holyrood over time. Labour MSP Mike Watson (2001) cites colleagues who conclude that MSPs of all parties have improved in their legislative effectiveness, including communication abilities.

In the future, Scots may choose a more substantive statutory role for minority delegations than the current arrangement now permits. However, oppositions are already capable of considerable influence within the British system without any need of further *structural* change. This is because they enjoy *functional* powers if they choose to use them. This influence is derived from a constant public confrontation of the Executive and by building its credibility as a government-in-waiting (Johnson, 1997). To realize their potential in Opposition, SNP and Tory leaders will have to assert their rights—the Executive is not about to give them away. One way to exercise their authority is by abandoning the substantively passive communication style that was observed during First Minister’s Questions. It is not enough to blast the Administration for previous ineffectiveness. They must also scrutinize the future. Without naming and, more

importantly, supporting its own proposals during Scotland's biggest weekly forum of debate, the Opposition abdicates its communicative role in influencing future actions.

And rather than resign itself to being subject to Executive decrees, MSPs as a whole can use Question Time to challenge the institutional arrogance that, while inadvertent, infuses the communication of both Government and Opposition. Without adopting these more assertive tactics, the Opposition leaves the Scottish Parliament as something less than even a full-fledged debating society. So it appears that Holyrood has yet to fully escape the long shadow cast by its mother Parliament.

Also related to opposition theory, results are mixed regarding Blondel's (1991) principle that the more that power is concentrated in the government, the more unified it is, thereby facilitating a cohesive opposition. The Coalition arrangement obviously makes for a diffuse, not structurally-cohesive, Scottish Government. This would seem especially true considering some of the profound policy differences between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Yet the lack of significant Labour/Liberal Democrat variation on nearly all communication variables suggests a highly cohesive Coalition. In fact, the only intra-Coalition difference that was observed related to electoral status of members, not their political party. Within Labour, the high level of unity during question time is consistent with Keating's (2001) observation that Tony Blair's "central government sought to compensate for devolution by strengthening party control" (p. 258). Likewise, the SNP and Conservatives' ambivalence about criticizing each other very often suggests a

relatively cohesive Scottish Opposition. But the even less-frequent use of solution arguments and wedge questions supports Blondel's (1997) thesis that an electorally-diffuse government is typically met by a divided opposition.

Drawing encouragement for the communication environment in Scotland's nascent Parliament is the relatively low level of negativity during FMQs compared to pilot results from Westminster. Likewise is the broad pattern of non-reciprocity of both negative and ingratiating messages. First Ministers turned the other cheek more often than not when victimized by ridicule. In fact, personal and party insults on both sides were relatively rare and arbitrarily sprinkled, suggesting that ridicule is more a pastime than a ritual attack on the opponent's self-concept. Likewise, the Leader of the Opposition slightly reduced his rate of criticism in question four rather than continue the prior escalation. This seemingly philosophical outlook is reinforced by the fact that 50% of all primary questions at Holyrood were neutral in disposition toward the First Minister. This figure compares to only 27% in pilot results at Westminster, which featured more of both disparaging and obsequious questions. This equates to a more stoic and less polemical Holyrood, suggesting that its communication environment may be more constructive.

Finally, within Coalition exchanges, the low rate of reciprocal praise may indicate the backbenchers' desire to appear serious and independent of the First Minister. Or they may simply be compensating for their lack of independence when it comes time to vote.

This scenario is consistent with McLeish's (2002) observation that "total whipping" occurs in the Parliament.

In terms of final observations, it was learned that the SNP's brand of nationalism appeared neither ethnic nor civic, but languid; that First Ministers took greater care in answering questions from Opposition constituency representatives than either list members or even party leaders; that Conservative MSPs tended toward the most long-winded questions. Some of these patterns of communication should be tested elsewhere to ascertain their generalizability across parliaments.

Contributions to Theory and Research

The most salient aspects of Johnson's (1997) construct of British opposition are that opposition is an accepted virtue of British politics, oppositions are charged with holding the government to account via constant public confrontation, and oppositions stand as an alternate government-in-waiting. Results suggest that some of the planks of British opposition may not be fully functional in the Scottish experience. Rather, it could be argued that opposition is a "tolerated" virtue; that the burden of holding the government to account is only fulfilled if the opposition is versed in effective policy debate; that a "government-in-waiting" is a tenable notion only if the given opposition regularly advances its own policy agenda and critiques the *proposals* of the Executive. Previously, opposition theory has not accounted for parliamentary communication variables that may be related to an opposition's functionality. The theory has now been

expanded beyond its static form to include communication factors that may be associated with whether an opposition is an effective or marginalized component of representative democracy.

The analysis of descriptive and inferential results in this chapter attempts to identify patterns of communication during First Ministers Questions, as well as consider their theoretical implications. For example, based on Johnson's (1997) system of opposition, Scottish National Party communication was tracked for whether it held fast in its push for independence, or moderated toward a "pragmatic acceptance" of the union (Johnson, 1997, p. 505). And the Parliament's level of sophistication in policy argumentation was tested by applying the stock issues of argumentation theory.

Quantitative content analysis has been shown to be a valuable research tool for bringing coherence to a myriad of data fragments. In this study it would have been impossible for the coders to draw sensible conclusions simply by reading eight pounds of transcripts and 284,566 words. Empirical inferences could only be reached via quantitative content analysis, which drew coherence out of the 36,720 coding decisions that were made. The most important theoretical contribution of this work may thus be epistemological. The current research literature on the Scottish Parliament is dominated by conjecture and even polemics, and is thus lacking in useful tools for increasing understanding (Mitchell, 2001). At best, most of the current literature is based on anecdotal observation. Paterson, et al. (2001) reinforce the point, claiming that

advancement in knowledge about Scottish politics requires new evidence, analysis and methods.

Researchers often rely on the same research tools they have grown accustomed to, regardless of appropriateness to the artifact. However, Polkinghorne (1983) asserts that using a variety of procedures on the same subject can reap substantial methodological benefits. The choice of method should thus be based on reasonableness, trial-and-error, and pluralism. By adding quantitative content analysis to the stable of research methods used to study the Scottish Parliament, the present study invites further empirical treatments of political communication in parliamentary discourse. For example, Scottish party manifestos, conference keynote speeches, and party election broadcasts are ripe for analysis. The present research also developed a system for coding verbal content that hence can be applied to other parliaments, other proceedings.

Not only is the present study's research method novel in Scottish political communication research, so is the particular subject. As the first known substantive treatment of Question Time in Scotland, the study begins to fill a large gap in research on contemporary British discourse. In Chapter 3 political discourse was defined as orally delivered persuasive communication that politicians and parties address to each other and the public, unedited by a third party. This focus on politician messages *per se* appears to be absent in the Scottish context. Owing to the decline in the prevalence of studies in rhetorical criticism, such forms of direct political communication go largely ignored in

the contemporary literature. As observed in Chapter 4, political communication scholars choose to dwell either on political strategy and opinion-polling on the one hand (political-science orientation), or the opposite anchor of mediated political coverage and audience effects on the other (mass-media orientation). These choices often overlook the intermediate step of governance communication, that is, discourse employed by actual office holders while parliament is seated (see Figure 4: How Discourse is Overlooked in Political Communication Research). Thus an entire genre of communication goes fundamentally unexamined by all except news reporters and politicians themselves. This passive dismissal is unfortunate when the presence of such master documents can bring coherence to a multitude of individual message fragments (Smith and Smith 2000; Miller, 1999).

Figure 4: How Discourse is Overlooked in Political Communication Research

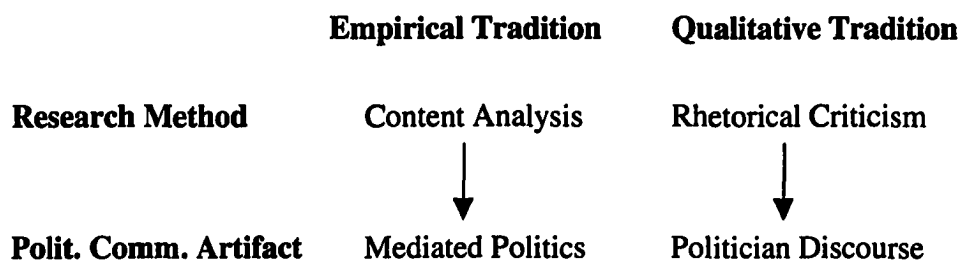


As argued by Polkinghorne (1983), appropriateness to the subject should drive one's choice of research method, not one's epistemological comfort zone. However, nearly all extant scholarship on governance communication consists of rhetorical criticism or, in the Scottish case, anecdotal observation and conjecture. Conversely, most studies of media and politics utilize empirical methods such as content analysis. These old habits are highlighted in Figure 5: Orthodoxy in Political Communication

Epistemology. Rather than hold on to comfortable epistemological assumptions, the model implies that innovation in methods brings a greater level of “understanding” the subject, a claim shared by Mitchell (2001, p. 222), Paterson, et al., (2001, p. 1) and Polkinghorne (1983, p. 247).

The implications of Figure 5 are: (1) that a better understanding of media messages might be achieved by adding the application of qualitative methods, e.g., rhetorical criticism; and (2) empirical methods such as content analysis can bring new insights into political discourse.

Figure 5: Orthodoxy in Political Communication Epistemology



The application of quantitative content analysis in contemporary studies of politician discourse thus far appears to be absent in the literature. However, Jamieson and Campbell (1988) have already crossed over diagonally from the qualitative side to study media and politics. Their rhetorical study cuts through the common disciplinary orthodoxy. As the authors state, “Our perspective is rhetorical, focussing on how news, advertising, and political uses of the mass media shape conceptions of reality and influence attitudes and

behavior” (p. 1). Conversely, the present study crosses over from the empirical side to study the increasingly neglected case of direct political discourse. The yield of this marriage of method and subject appears strong. By resisting the orthodoxy that restricts content analysis to studies of media-and-politics, the present research has unearthed conclusions that could not have been reached by anecdotal observation.

A final mark of progress in the present research is that it reports estimates of effect size. According to Schmidt (1996) many social scientists assume that a small p -value indicates a large effect when it only gives a high assurance that a Type-I error has not occurred. According to Frick (1996) “... just because a result is statistically significant does not mean that it is clinically significant” (p. 383). This means that estimates of effect size such as ϕ or eta-squared are needed. Schmidt (1996) asserts that most studies fail to report effect sizes either because of inadequate training in statistics or because the effect size is so small. However, the several effect size estimates higher than .30 suggest that Scottish parliamentary communication is indeed associated with factors of political affiliation, participation by individuals, electoral status, and the passage of time across a parliamentary term.

Although no claims are made about causality, this research produces several inferences based on coherent patterns of communication in the Scottish Parliament. As Scotland’s Parliament is only one communication environment, no attempt to generalize across parliaments internationally is made. Further research is needed to make more

broadly-generalizable claims about Question Time in other parliaments. The study is also limited by the transatlantic nature of the research, in which the three coders relied on official transcripts and television broadcasts of the proceedings. An extended physical observation of the Parliament, such as that provided in a handsome research grant, would alleviate some of the barriers inherent in such an effort.

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Table 1

Descriptive Summary of Participation and Mean Word Counts by Party in Initial Question, Self-supplementary 1, Self-supplementary 2, Self-supplementary 3, and Interjection

Mean Word Count of All Questions From:

Party	N	Initial	Self-supp 1	Self-supp 2	Self-supp 3	Interj	Total
SNP	653	24.98	80.27	134.93	114.19	80.22	84.03
Conser	387	29.59	120.54	154.36	79.00	61.00	90.11
Labour ¹	276	23.42	80.27	0	0	74.40	59.45
LibDem ¹	121	29.67	86.25	7.00	0	68.62	59.85
Sociali	23	29.00	82.67	86.00	0	71.13	67.78
Indep	12	19.00	77.00	0	0	67.25	54.42
Green	5	0	0	0	0	60.00	60.00
Total	1477	26.33	101.66	143.15	112.23	73.35	78.71

¹Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 2

Descriptive Summary of Participation and Mean Word Counts to Recipients in Answers to Initial Question, Self-supplementary 1, Self-supplementary 2, Self-supplementary 3, and Interjection

Mean Word Count of All Answers To:							
Party	N	Initial	Self-supp 1	Self-supp 2	Self-supp 3	Interj	Total
SNP	653	59.55	144.45	154.63	143.87	118.28	117.48
Conser	387	47.44	153.00	155.48	123.2	94.63	111.27
Labour ¹	276	75.79	127.38	0	0	124.03	109.55
LibDem ¹	121	95.61	146.81	51.00	0	111.63	116.83
Sociali	23	45.00	117.67	118	0	115.63	106.78
Indep	12	36.75	212.00	0	0	68.00	105.58
Green	5	0	0	0	0	88.60	88.60
Total	1477	62.54	143.80	154.27	142.72	114.04	113.96

¹Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 3

Descriptive Summary of Most Popular Topics of Questions by Initial Question, Self-supplementary 1, Self-supplementary 2, Self-supplementary 3, and Interjection

Devolved Matters						
Topic	Initial	Self-supp 1	Self-supp 2	Self-supp 3	Interj	Total
Health	38	81	49	24	64	256
Devolution	84	60	44	16	42	246
Economy	29	48	20	11	47	156
Home Affairs	34	44	11	7	48	144
Education	24	40	18	10	28	120
Agricult	22	31	8	6	46	112
Welfare	23	26	6	4	35	94
Elections	0	14	9	5	8	36
Environm	7	8	1	0	5	21
Sport/Art	5	6	1	1	7	20
Other	4	3	0	0	4	11
Total	270	361	167	84	334	1216
Reserved Matters						
Topic	Initial	Self-supp 1	Self-supp 2	Self-supp 3	Interj	Total
Westminster	120	11	6	2	7	146
Energy	5	7	2	3	9	26
Monetary	3	8	4	2	8	25
Foreign Aff	3	7	2	0	9	21
Defence	1	3	2	1	5	12
Social Sec	0	4	4	2	3	13
Broadcast	3	4	1	1	2	11
Employment	2	2	0	0	3	7
Total	137	46	21	11	46	261
Grand Total	407	407	188	95	380	1477

Table 4

Descriptive Summary of Topics of Self-supplementaries by Party¹

Devolved Matters							
Topic	Indep.	Sociali	LibDem	Cons	SNP	Lab	Total
Health	1	1	2	26	40	11	81
Devolution	1	1	0	23	26	9	60
Economy	0	0	7	11	15	15	48
Home Affairs	1	1	5	9	12	16	44
Education	0	0	5	11	9	15	40
Agricult	0	0	6	7	13	5	31
Welfare	0	0	3	4	11	8	26
Elec-politic	0	0	0	10	4	0	14
Environm	0	0	3	1	2	2	8
Sport/Art	0	0	0	1	3	2	6
Other	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
Total	4	3	31	103	136	83	361
Reserved Matters							
Topic	Indep.	Sociali	LibDem	Cons	SNP	Lab	Total
Westminster	0	0	0	3	7	1	11
Monetary	0	0	2	4	1	1	8
Foreign Aff	0	0	0	0	4	3	7
Energy	0	0	2	2	3	0	7
Social Sec	0	0	0	1	3	0	4
Broadcast	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Defence	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Employment	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Total	0	0	5	12	23	6	46
Grand Total	4	3	36	115	159	90	407

¹The Green Party did not ask an initial or self-supplementary question.

Table 5

Descriptive Summary of Leading Participants in initial Self-supplementaries: Number, Mean Length of Question, Criticism of Government versus Support of Government, Total Insults of Government

Member/Party	Self-supp.	MLQ	Critic/Support	Insults
David McLetchie/Cons	89	128.42	71/1	22
John Swinney/SNP	54	93.81	29/1	10
Alex Salmond/SNP	41	108.6	23/0	8
Nicola Sturgeon/SNP	7	121.57	4/2	0
Richard Lochhead/SNP	7	123.14	4/0	1
Scott Barrie/Lab	6	67.33	0/3	0
Kenneth Gibson/SNP	6	110.83	5/0	1
Dennis Canavan/Ind	5	75.60	2/0	0
Fergus Ewing/SNP	5	95.60	3/0	0
John Home Robertson/Lab	5	98.60	0/0	0
George Lyons/LibDem	5	107.80	0/0	0
Maureen Macmillan/Lab	5	76.60	1/1	0
Pauline McNeill/Lab	5	89.80	0/2	0
David Mundell/Cons	5	118.80	2/0	0
Andrew Wilson/SNP	5	118.60	4/0	0
Total	250 ¹	101.98	148/10	42

¹These fifteen leading participants made 250 out of the 407 total self-supplementaries.

Table 6

*Descriptive Summary of Leading Participants in Interjections:
Number of Interjections, Mean Length of Question, Criticism of
Government versus Support of Government, Total Insults of
Government*

Member/Party	Interj.	MLQ	Critic/Support	Insults
Alex Neil/SNP	23	60.04	9/1	0
Margo MacDonald/SNP	21	66.00	6/0	1
Andrew Wilson/SNP	19	75.68	12/0	7
Tommy Sheridan/Socialist	17	66.35	6/0	1
Christine Grahame/SNP	14	63.71	2/0	0
Jamie Stone/LibDem	12	44.92	0/3	0
J. Douglas-Hamilton/Cons	12	44.08	0/0	0
Phil Gallie/Cons	11	51.55	4/0	0
Dorothy-Grace Elder/SNP	11	70.18	5/0	1
Total	128 ¹	63.30	44/4	10

¹These nine leading participants made 128 of the 380 interjections.

Table 7

*ANOVA of Length of Self-supplementaries by Opposition versus
Coalition*

Entity	Mean Word Length	SD	N
From Opposition	110.49	39.87	281
From Coalition	81.71	27.42	126
Total	101.58	38.80	407

$F(1, 407) = 54.13, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .12$

Table 8

ANOVA of Length of Self-supplementaries by Party¹

Party	Mean Word Length	SD	N
From Labour ²	79.90	25.70	90
From Liberal Dem. ²	86.25	31.22	36
From Scot. National	104.60	38.15	159
From Conservative	120.54	40.34	115
From Scot. Socialist	82.67	31.94	3
From Independent	77.00	34.98	4
Total	101.58	38.80	407

$F(5, 407) = 15.14, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. Tukey HSD found 3 significant differences involving the Conservatives: With Labour ($p < .001$), Liberal Democrats ($p < .001$), and SNP ($p < .004$).

¹The Green Party did not ask a self-supplementary question

²Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 9

ANOVA of Length of Answers to Self-supplementaries by Opposition versus Coalition

Entity	Mean Word Length	SD	N
To Opposition	148.78	65.98	280
To Coalition	132.71	51.12	126
Total	143.80	62.14	407

$F(1, 407) = 5.89, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$

Table 10

ANOVA of Length of Answers to Self-supplementaries by Party

Party	Mean Answer Length	SD	N
To Labour ²	127.07	48.26	90
To Liberal Dem. ²	146.81	55.88	36
To Scot. National	144.72	61.87	159
To Conservative	153.00	69.95	115
to Scot. Socialist	117.67	43.06	3
To Independent	212.00	98.28	4
Total	143.80	62.14	407

$F(5, 407) = 2.97, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .036$. Tukey HSD found a significant difference between Labour and Conservative recipients ($p = .034$).

¹The Green Party did not ask a self-supplementary question

²Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 11

ANOVA of Length of Answers to Interjections by Opposition versus Coalition

Entity	Mean Word Length	SD	N
To Opposition	106.54	51.09	235
To Coalition	96.33	41.80	145
Total	102.65	47.96	380

$F(1, 380) = 4.10, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .011$

Table 12

Chi-square of Disposition of Self-supplementaries by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Opposition	177	97	7	281
From Coalition	8	72	46	126
Total	185	169	53	407

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=149.19$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .605$

Table 13

Chi-square of Disposition of Interjections by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Opposition	95	136	4	235
From Coalition	8	89	48	145
Total	103	225	52	380

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=104.42$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .524$

Table 14

*Chi-square of Disposition of Answers to Self-supplementaries by
Opposition versus Coalition*

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To Opposition	133	133	15	281
To Coalition	2	78	46	126
Total	135	211	61	407

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=114.23$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .530$

Table 15

*Chi-square of Disposition of Answers to Interjections by
Opposition versus Coalition*

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To Opposition	88	131	16	235
To Coalition	1	96	48	145
Total	89	227	64	380

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=89.48$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .485$

Table 16

Chi-square of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Self-supplementaries by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Personal Party		Respectful	Total
From Opposition	35	10	236	281
From Coalition	0	0	126	126
Total	35	10	362	407

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=22.51$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .235$

Table 17

Chi-square of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Interjections by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Personal	Party	Respectful	Total
From Opposition	15	7	213	235
From Coalition	0	0	145	145
Total	15	7	357	380

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=14.41$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .195$

Table 18

Chi-square of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Answers to Self-supplementaries: Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Personal	Party	Respectful	Total
To Opposition	34	19	228	281
To Coalition	0	0	126	126
Total	34	19	354	407

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=26.84$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .257$

Table 19

Chi-square of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Answers to Interjections, Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Personal	Party	Respectful	Total
To Opposition	21	14	200	235
To Coalition	0	1	144	145
Total	21	15	344	380

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=21.26$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .237$

Table 20

Descriptive Comparison of Disposition and Respect by Party in Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined

FM	Disposition			Insults vs. Respect		
	Critical	Neutral	Support	Personal	Party	Respect
From Lab ²	9	105	73	0	0	187
From LibDem ²	6	56	22	0	0	84
From SNP	155	145	7	29	9	269
From Cons	103	70	4	19	7	151
From SSP	8	11	0	1	0	18
From Green	1	4	0	0	0	5
From Indep	3	5	0	1	1	6
Total	285	396	106	50	17	720

¹Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 21

*Descriptive Comparison of Disposition and Respect by Party in
Answers to Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined*

FM	Disposition			Insults vs. Respect		
	Critical	Neutral	Support	Personal	Party	Respect
To Lab ²	3	110	74	0	1	186
To LibDem ²	0	62	22	0	1	83
To SNP	125	163	19	31	21	255
To Cons	83	84	10	22	10	145
To SSP	8	11	0	2	1	16
To Green	0	3	2	0	0	5
To Indep	3	5	0	0	0	8
Total	222	438	127	55	34	698

¹Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 22

Descriptive Use of Non-explicit and Explicit Wedge Questions by Party in Self-supplementaries and Interjections, Combined¹

Party	Non-explicit	Parties Named	No Wedge	Total
From Lab ²	0	0	187	187
From LibDem ²	0	0	84	84
From SNP	6	11	290	307
From Cons	9	1	167	177
From SSP	0	1	18	19
From Green	0	0	5	5
From Indep	0	0	8	8
Total	15	13	759	787

Self-supplementaries: $\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=7.47$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .055$

Interjections: $\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=7.65$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .058$

¹The difference between the Opposition versus coalition was significant in both types of questions, but differences among parties was not significant at the .05 level in either question

²Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 23

Chi-square of Third-party criticism in Interjections by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	No	Yes	Total
From Opposition	220	15	235
From Coalition	122	23	145
Total	342	38	380

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=8.95$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .153$

Table 24

*Chi-square of Third-party criticism in Answers to Interjections,
Opposition versus Coalition*

Group	No	Yes	Total
To Opposition	229	6	235
To Coalition	119	26	145
Total	348	32	380

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=27.50$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .269$

Table 25

*Descriptive Summary of Leading Recipients of Third-party
Criticism by Questioners and First Ministers, Self-
supplementaries and Interjections Combined*

Leading Recipient of 3 rd Party Criticism ¹				
Source of Criticism	SNP	Conserv	Westmin	Subtotal
Scot. National	0	8	12	20
Conservative	1	0	6	7
Coalition	13	17	0	30
FM Answers	20	28	0	48
Leaders subtotal	34	53	18	105

¹Other sources and recipients of 3rd-party criticism totaled no more than one case each.

Table 26

*Chi-square of Reference to Scottish Autonomy in Interjections,
Scottish National Party versus Other Parties*

Group	No	Yes	Total
From Others	226	7	233
From SNP	132	15	147
Total	358	22	380

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=8.57$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .150$

Table 27

*Chi-square of Explicitness of All Statements on Scottish
Independence/Autonomy, Scottish National Party Questions
Compared with First Ministers' Answers*

Group	Non-explicit Ref.	Explicit Ref.	Total
SNP Questions	22	8	30
FM Answers	11	14	25
Total	33	22	55

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=4.89$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .298$

Table 28

Summary of Favorability to Autonomy/Independence in All Questions by Party, including a Chi-square Comparison of Parties in Support of Independence with Unionist Parties

Party	Opposed-Derogatory	Opposed	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From SNP ¹	0	0	4	26	30
From Socialist ¹	0	0	0	1	1
From Labour	1	6	0	1	8
From LibDem	0	1	0	1	2
From Conserv	0	0	0	2	2
From Indepen	0	0	0	1	1
From Green	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	7	4	32	44

¹Parties standing in support of independence; all others unionist

Chi-square comparison of independence supporters versus unionists: $\underline{df}=3$, $\chi^2=23.73$, $\underline{p} < .001$, $\phi = .734$

Table 29

*Descriptive Summary of Favorability toward Autonomy/Independence
in All First Ministers' Answers, by Party*

Party	Opposed-Derogatory	Opposed	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To SNP	4	18	1	2	25
To Conserv	0	4	0	0	4
To Sociali	0	0	1	0	1
To Green	0	0	0	0	0
To Indepen	0	0	0	1	1
To Labour ¹	1	0	0	0	1
To LibDem ¹	0	1	0	0	1
Total	5	23	2	3	33

¹Partners in the coalition government; all others in opposition

Table 30

*Chi-square of Ratio of Expository to Argumentative Self-
supplementaries by Opposition versus Coalition*

Group	Expository	Argumentative	Total
From Opposition	40	241	281
From Coalition	39	87	126
Total	79	328	407

df=1, $\chi^2=15.54$, p < .001, $\phi = .195$

Table 31

Chi-square of Ratio of Expository to Argumentative Interjections by Opposition versus Coalition

Group	Expository	Argumentative	Total
From Opposition	52	183	235
From Coalition	57	88	145
Total	109	271	380

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=12.94$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .185$

Table 32

Chi-square of Ratio of Expository to Argumentative Self-Supplementaries, Opposition Questions versus First Ministers' Answers

Group	Expository	Argumentative	Total
Opposition	40	241	281
First Minister	64	217	281
Total	104	458	562

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=31.76$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .337$

Table 33

Chi-square of Ratio of Expository to Argumentative Interjections, Opposition Questions versus First Ministers' Answers

Group	Expository	Argumentative	Total
Opposition	52	183	235
First Minister	94	141	235
Total	146	324	470

$\underline{df}=1$, $\chi^2=12.91$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .234$

Table 34

Chi-square of Disposition in Self-supplementaries, Liberal Democrats versus Labour

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From LibDems	5	22	9	36
From Labour	3	50	37	90
Total	8	72	46	126

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=6.48$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .227$

Table 35

Chi-square of Disposition in Self-supplementaries, Opposition Party Leaders versus Their Backbenchers

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Backbenchers	53	35	5	93
From Party Leaders	122	57	2	181
Total	175	92	7	274

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=6.12$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .149$

Table 36

Chi-square of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Self-supplementaries, Opposition Party Leaders (SNP & Conservative) versus Their Backbenchers

Group	Personal	Party	Respectful	Total
From Backbenchers	5	0	88	93
From Party Leaders	30	10	141	181
Total	35	10	229	274

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=13.23$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .220$

Table 37

Chi-square of Disposition in First Minister Answers to Self-supplementaries, Opposition Parties Leaders (SNP & Conservative) versus Their Backbenchers

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To Backbenchers	36	47	10	93
To Party Leaders	96	80	5	181
Total	132	127	15	274

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=10.78$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .198$

Table 38

Chi-square of Disposition in Initial Self-supplementaries among Opposition Party Leaders¹

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Alex Salmond	23	18	0	41
From John Swinney	29	24	1	54
From David McLetchie	71	17	1	89
Total	123	59	2	184

$\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=14.46$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .280$

¹Head-to-head: Salmond-McLetchie $\chi^2= 9.79$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .274$;
Swinney-McLetchie $\chi^2= 10.06$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .265$

Table 39

*Chi-square of Disposition in Second Self-supplementaries by
Opposition Party Leaders Salmond and McLetchie*

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Alex Salmond	26	14	1	37
From David McLetchie	80	5	4	89
Total	106	19	5	130

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=11.47$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .297$

Table 40

*Descriptive Disposition in all Self-supplementaries among
Opposition Party Leaders Combined*

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Alex Salmond	73	35	2	110
From John Swinney	120	31	5	156
From David McLetchie	154	24	5	183
Total	347	90	12	449

Table 41

Descriptive Summary of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect, all Self-supplementaries among Opposition Party Leaders Combined

Leader	Personal	Party	Respect	Total
From Alex Salmond	21	6	83	110
From John Swinney	34	10	112	156
From David McLetchie	45	13	125	183
Total	100	29	320	449

Table 42

Chi-square of Disposition in First Ministers' Answers to Initial Self-supplementaries among Opposition Party Leaders¹

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To Alex Salmond	16	23	2	41
To John Swinney	24	28	2	54
To David McLetchie	57	30	2	89
Total	97	81	6	184

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=17.96$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .221$

¹Head-to-head: Salmond-McLetchie $\chi^2= 13.24$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .319$;
Swinney-McLetchie $\chi^2= 12.31$, $p < .01$, $\phi = .293$

Table 43

Descriptive Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in First Ministers' Answers to Initial Self-supplementaries among Opposition Party Leaders

Leader	Personal	Party	Respect	Total
To Alex Salmond	4	0	37	41
To John Swinney	4	3	47	54
To David McLetchie	18	7	64	89
Total	26	10	148	184

Table 44

Descriptive Disposition in First Ministers' Answers to All Self-supplementaries among Opposition Party Leaders

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
To Alex Salmond	62	44	4	110
To John Swinney	104	45	7	156
To David McLetchie	127	53	3	183
Total	293	142	14	449

Table 45

Descriptive Summary of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect by First Ministers to Opposition Party Leaders, all Self-supplementaries Combined

Leader	Personal	Party	Respect	Total
To Alex Salmond	19	4	87	110
To John Swinney	19	14	123	156
To David McLetchie	37	15	131	183
Total	75	33	341	449

Table 46

Descriptive Summary of Mean Word Count, Disposition, and Respect in Questions to Each First Minister, Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined

To:	Donald Dewar	Jim Wallace	Henry McLeish	Jack McConnell	Total
Mean Words	89.25	85.91	87.89	89.21	88.13
Critical	95	41	108	41	285
Neutral	100	70	165	61	396
Supportive	26	21	48	11	106
Total	221	132	321	113	787
Pers Insult	16	12	18	4	50
Party Insult	7	3	4	3	18
Respect	198	117	299	106	719
Total	221	132	320	113	787

Table 47

Summary of Mean Word Count, Disposition, and Respect in Answers by First Minister, Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined¹, including ANOVA of Mean Word Count in Interjections

From:	Donald Dewar	Jim Wallace	Henry McLeish	Jack McConnell	Total
Words	136.98	108.36	119.77	128.17	123.93
Critical	70	27	88	37	222
Neutral	124	89	164	61	438
Supportive	27	16	69	15	127
Total	221	132	321	113	787
Pers Insult	20	8	20	7	34
Party Insult	3	4	22	5	19
Respect	198	120	279	101	353
Total	221	132	321	113	787

¹Word counts in interjections indicated significant differences: $F(3, 380) = 9.16, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .068$. Tukey HSD identified differences between means of Dewar (112.88) and Wallace (83.75, $p < .001$), Wallace and McConnell (122.58, $p < .001$), and McConnell and McLeish (97.71, $p < .01$).

Table 48

Chi-square of Disposition of Each First Minister's Answers to Interjections¹

Leader	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Donald Dewar	24	60	17	101
From Jim Wallace	8	54	6	68
From Henry McLeish	38	85	36	159
From Jack McConnell	17	28	7	52
Total	87	227	66	380

$\underline{df}=6$, $\chi^2=17.60$, $p < .01$, $\phi_c = .124$

¹Head-to-head: Dewar-Wallace $\underline{df}=6$, $\chi^2= 7.42$, $p < .05$, $\phi_c = .209$

Table 49

Summary of Disposition in First Ministers' Answers Compared to that of All Questioners, Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined; with Chi-square results on Each

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
All Questioners	284	397	106	787
First Ministers	222	438	127	787
Total	506	835	233	1574

Self-supplementaries: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=212.56$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .724$

Interjections: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=174.95$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .679$

Table 50

Summary of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in First Ministers' Answers Compared to that of Opposition Questioners, Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined; with Chi-square results on Each

Group	Personal	Party	Respect	Total
Opposition Questioners	50	18	719	787
First Ministers	55	35	697	787
Total	105	53	1416	1574

Chi-square of self-supplementaries: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=51.94$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .358$

Chi-square of Interjections: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=75.38$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .445$

Table 51

Summary of Disposition in First Ministers' Answers Compared to that of Coalition Questioners, Self-supplementaries and Interjections Combined; with Chi-square results on Each

Group	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
From Coalition	15	161	95	271
From First Ministers	3	172	96	271
	18	333	191	542
Total				

Chi-square of self-supplementaries: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=55.45$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .663$

Chi-square of Interjections: $\underline{df}=4$, $\chi^2=43.46$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .547$

Table 52

Spearman Correlations of Disposition of Questions across Multi-question Exchanges

Question	Disposition ¹			Insults vs. Respect ²		
	Critical	Neutral	Support	Personal	Party	Respect
Question 1	12	174	3	3	1	185
Question 2	126	60	3	31	10	148
Question 3	160	23	6	47	12	130
Question 4	78	13	4	27	7	61
Total	376	270	16	108	30	524

¹A significant Spearman correlation was found between question 1 and question 2 (.267, $p < .001$), question 2 and question 3 (.354, $p < .001$), question 3 and question 4 (.597, $p < .001$), and question 2 and question 4 (.210, $p < .05$).

²A significant Spearman correlation was found between question 1 and question 3 (.225, $p < .05$), 2 and question 3 (.397, $p < .001$), question 3 and question 4 (.577, $p < .001$), and question 2 and question 4 (.346, $p = .001$).

Table 53

Spearman Correlations of Disposition of Answers across Multi-question Exchanges

Answer	Disposition ¹			Insults vs. Respect ²		
	Critical	Neutral	Support	Personal	Party	Respect
Answer 1	24	163	2	2	3	184
Answer 2	100	83	6	28	10	151
Answer 3	134	50	5	30	18	141
Answer 4	73	18	4	23	6	66
Total	331	314	17	83	37	542

¹Significant Spearman correlation between answer 1 and answer 2 (.206, $p < .01$), answer 2 and answer 3 (.315, $p < .01$), answer 3 and answer 4 (.567, $p < .001$), and answer 2 and answer 4 (.338, $p = .001$).

²Significant Spearman correlation between answer 2 and answer 3 (.269, $p < .001$), and answer 3 and answer 4 (.436, $p < .001$).

Table 54

ANOVA of Word Count of Answers to Opposition Self-supplementaries by Electoral Status¹ (With Comparison to Mean Question Length²)

Status	Mean Answer	SD	N	Mean Question
List Member	150.05	57.50	85	105.02
Constituency	195.00	74.13	15	104.13
Party Leader	144.035	67.70	181	113.59
Total	148.78	65.98	281	110.49

$F(2, 281) = 4.2, p < .05$ partial $\eta^2 = .03$

¹Tukey HSD indicated significant differences between constituency members and list members ($p=.038$), and between constituency members and party leaders ($p=.012$).

² Variation in mean question length was not statistically significant.

Table 55

Chi-square of Disposition in Self-supplementaries, Coalition List Members versus Constituency Members

Status	Critical	Neutral	Supportive	Total
List Member	4	7	3	14
Constituency	4	65	43	112
Total	8	72	46	126

$df=2, \chi^2=13.37, p < .001, \phi = .325$

Table 56

Dummy-coded Chi-square of the Ratio of Problem versus Solution Arguments in Self-supplementaries Across the First 1000 Days of Parliament

Arg. Type	Days 1-333	Days 334-666	Days 667-1000	Total
Problem	71	95	103	269
Solution	23	21	14	58
Total	94	116	117	327

$\underline{df}=2$, $\chi^2=6.38$, $p < .05$, $\phi = .140$

Table 57

Spearman Correlation of Problem versus Solution Arguments in Self-supplementaries Across the First 1000 Days of Parliament

	Mean	SD	N	Spearman r
Day of Question	546.20	262.925	328	
Problem/Solution	.18	.382	328	-.114, $p < .05$

Table 58

Spearman Correlation of Dummy-coded Disposition in Self-supplementaries Across the First 1000 Days of Parliament

Level	Days 1-333	Days 334-666	Days 667-1000	Total
Critical	61	65	59	185
Neutral	43	57	69	169
Supportive	9	22	22	53
Total	113	144	150	407

Spearman correlation = .120, $p < .05$

Table 59

Spearman Correlation of Dummy-coded Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Self-supplementaries Across the First 1000 Days of Parliament

Level	Days 1-333	Days 334-666	Days 667-1000	Total
Personal	14	14	7	35
Party	4	2	3	9
Respect	95	128	140	363
Total	113	144	150	407

Spearman correlation = .110, $p < .05$

Table 60

Spearman Correlation of Personal Insults, Party Insults, and Respect in Self-supplementaries Across the First 1000 Days of Parliament

	Mean	SD	N	Spearman r
Day of Question	551.23	264.94	407	
Level of Respect	2.80	.575	407	.117, $p < .05$

Appendix A: Content Analysis Code Book

“Questions to the First Minister of Scotland”

July 1, 1999-March 26, 2002

(1000 Days)

Copyright by Jeff Gentry

University of Oklahoma Department of Communication

Final Version: June 4, 2002

Dissertation Code Book, Part I

FORMAT CATEGORIES

1 “Coder”

Enter the coder identification number.

- 1 Jeff Gentry
- 2 Lexi Jones
- 3 Misty Williams

2 “Day” of Parliament (not date)

Enter the day according to the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament (see Appendix A: Scottish Parliament Calendar for its First 1000 Days. This makes July 1, 1999 the base point. As the first FMQs of the empowered Parliament was on July 2, 1999, it is coded as day 2. The last FMQs of the first 1000 days, held on March 21, 2002 is coded as day 995. This system permits the use of ratio data in real time.

3 “Page” Coding page number

Enter the coding sheet number of that given day. Use a new coding sheet for each new questioner of the First Minister.

4 “Minister”

Enter the First Minister or Acting First Minister’s code number. The First Minister is the one who answers each question.

- 1 Donald Dewar
- 2 Jim Wallace
- 3 Henry McLeish
- 4 Jack McConnell

5 “Member”

Enter the member’s code number. Members, the ones asking the questions, are numbered according to alphabetical order in Dissertation Code Book Part II: Complete list of Members of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2002).

6 “Memparty” Member’s Party

Enter the questioner’s party affiliation. Parties are listed here in increasing order of representation in the parliament.

- 1 Independent
- 2 Scottish Green
- 3 Scottish Socialist
- 4 Liberal Democrat (government coalition partner)
- 5 Conservative
- 6 Scottish National Party
- 7 Labour (government coalition partner)

7 “Status”

Enter the questioner’s status, scored in increasing order. Status is found in Dissertation Code Book Part II: Complete list of Members of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2002). (1) Regional-list members are listed in ordinary print, (2) constituency members are indicated in bold. (3) Party leaders who have asked questions include Alex Salmond and John Swinney (SNP), and David McLetchie (Conservative). Their individual identities are accounted for in number 6 (above).

1 regional-list member (lost constituency vote, elected via proportional representation).

2 constituency member (won constituency seat; indicated in member list in bold).

3 party leader.

8 “Sex”

Enter the sex of each questioner. See Dissertation Code Book Part II: Complete list of Members of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2002) for the sex of each member. Women are indicated in italics.

0 woman

1 man

9 “Qtype” Question Type

Enter the type of initial question. The first is a scheduled question by a member or a party-leader intervention. The second is a supplementary question prompted by a question raised by a previous speaker. Although scheduled questions and interventions often add supplementary questions, type 2 is reserved for questions that dovetail off a previous questioner.

0 Scheduled question

1 Intervention, which is a supplementary question by a different member from the original

10 “Numq” Total number of questions in the interaction

Enter the total number of substantive questions in this interaction between this questioner and the FM. Generic questions (and their answers) by the SNP and Conservative Party Leader do not count.

1 only an initial substantive question is asked

2 supplementary question is added by the same member, for a total of 2

3 another supplementary question is added by the same member, for a total of 3

4 another supplementary question is added by the same member, for a total of 4

CONTENT CATEGORIES

Content Part A: Member’s Question

1 “QIwords” Word Count of question 1

Enter the word count of the member’s question using Microsoft Word tools.

2 “Q1topic” Topic of question 1

Enter the primary topic of the question, derived from the Scottish Office list of devolved and reserved powers.

(Devolved powers)

- 1 Health
- 2 Education & training
- 3 Local government, social work & housing
- 4 Economic development & transport
- 5 Law & home affairs (prisons, criminal justice, police, fire services, liquor, protecting animals)
- 6 Environment
- 7 Agriculture, forestry & fishing
- 8 Sport & the arts
- 9 Parliament/devolution/general tax

(Reserved powers)

- 10 U.K. constitution/the union/Prime Minister/Chancellor/Secretary of State for Scotland
- 11 U.K. foreign policy, illicit drugs policy & immigration
- 12 Defence, weapons, national security & border security
- 13 Monetary system, & foreign trade
- 14 Employment
- 15 Social security, pensions, child support, & prescription drugs
- 16 Energy
- 17 Broadcasting
- 18 Electoral politics/public perceptions of parties/the next election
- 19 other

3 “Q1scope” Scope of question 1

Enter the geographic scope of the question.

- 1 Local/constituency level
- 2 Scottish-region level
- 3 National level (Scotland)
- 4 Union level
- 5 International

4 “Q1stock” Stock issue of question 1

According to the stock issues model of argumentation, enter the primary stock issue referred to in the question.

- 1 Harm-affirmative: alerting members to a current problem.
- 2 Harm-negative: refuting or minimizing a current problem identified by others.
- 3 Blame-affirmative: pointing out the government’s failure to address a problem.
- 4 Blame-negative: praising the government’s success on a problem or defending it against attack.
- 5 None: no stock issue is raised; simply information requested or a proposal without inference.
- 6 Cure-affirmative: asserting that one’s proposal will be effective.
- 7 Cure-negative: criticizing an opponent’s proposal as ineffective.
- 8 Cost-affirmative: defending one’s proposal against disadvantages raised by opponents.
- 9 Cost-negative: attacking an opponent’s proposal as counterproductive.

5 “Q1indep1” Independence referenced in question 1

Enter whether the question referred to the potential for a more autonomous *or* independent Scotland. Code 1 means a subtle reference: one that references “fiscal autonomy,” “control of Scotland’s resources,” “self-determination,” etc., but not “independence.” Code 2 is used only for the more explicit words such as “independence,” “independent,” “separation,” “divorce,” “breakup.”

- 0 No reference to increased Scottish autonomy or independence.
- 1 Reference to increased Scottish autonomy, but no use of the word “independence.”
- 2 The word “independence” is mentioned in the question.

6 “Q1indep2” Stance on Independence in question 1

If item 6 was coded a 1 or a 2, indicate the questioner’s position in regard to greater autonomy or independence. If item 6 is coded a 0, code item 7 as an 88. Code 1 refers to pejorative labels such as “separatist,” “Balkanization,” “narrow nationalism,” and “wreckers” used in reference to increased autonomy or independence.

- 1 Opposition to increased autonomy or independence is expressed using a pejorative label(s).
- 2 Opposed to the potential for increased autonomy or independence, no pejorative labels.
- 3 Neutral on the subject of increased autonomy or independence.
- 4 Favorable toward increased autonomy *or* independence.
- 88 Item 6 was coded a 0, therefore no information is given here.

7 “Q1dispos” Disposition of question 1

Based on the substantive content of the question, enter the overall disposition: the observed verbal stance of the member toward the First Minister.

- 1 Critical of the First Minister or government.
- 2 Neutral disposition toward the First Minister or government (including concern about a problem)
- 3 Favorable toward the First Minister or Scottish government (including defense against criticism).

8 “Q1Respec” Level of respect in question 1

Based on the language choices of the question, enter the level of respect of the member toward the FM. Ridicule involves disparaging remarks construed as intending embarrassment to the FM. Examples include words such as “pathetic,” “daft,” and “ignorance.” Ridicule is possible only when the verbal stance of the answer (above) is coded as critical. However, a critical verbal stance per se is not a basis for coding ridicule here.

- 1 Personal ridicule against the First Minister.
- 2 Ridicule of the coalition government.
- 3 Respect: an absence of any disparaging remarks that might have been construed as intending embarrassment to the First Minister or Government. The verbal stance (above) can be critical and still result in a tone of respect. Thus the absence of ridicule is automatically coded as respectful.

9 “Q1wedge” Wedge question

Enter whether the question is construed to raise disagreements between the two coalition parties. Under a Labour First Minister (Dewar, McLeish, McConnell), wedge questions would criticize the Liberal-Democratic Party or highlight policy differences between Labour and Lib-Dem members, such as the differences in their respective election manifestos. Under an Acting First Minister who is a Lib-Dem (Jim Wallace), wedge questions would criticize the Labour Party or highlight policy differences between the Liberal Democrat and Labour parties. Code 2 is more explicit than code 1.

- 0 Not a wedge question
- 1 wedge question, coalition parties are not specifically named (implied wedge)
- 2 wedge question, one or both coalition parties are explicitly named (overt wedge)

10 "Q1crit" Use of third-party criticism in question 1

Enter whether the questioner criticized someone or something other than (or in addition to) the First Minister or government.

0 no criticism of third parties

1 attack SNP

2 attack Conservative

3 attack other Scottish party

4 attack union

5 attack England

6 attack devolution

7 attack U.S.

8 attack EU

9 attack Blair/Westminster

10 attack local government

(88 previous criticism item was coded 0 or 88; only applicable on items 11 and 12)

Content Part B: First Minister's Answer (listed on the coding sheet in *italics*)

1 "*A1words*" Word Count in answer 1

Enter the word count of the First Minister's answer using Microsoft Word tools.

2 "*A1topic*" Topic of answer 1

Enter the primary topic of the answer. This topic may differ from that of the question.

(Devolved Powers)

- 1 Health
- 2 Education & training
- 3 Local government, social work & housing
- 4 Economic development & transport
- 5 Law & home affairs (prisons, criminal justice, police, fire services, liquor, protecting animals)
- 6 Environment
- 7 Agriculture, forestry & fishing
- 8 Sport & the arts
- 9 Parliament/devolution

(Reserved powers)

- 10 U.K. constitution/the union/Prime Minister/Chancellor/Secretary of State for Scotland
- 11 U.K. foreign policy, illicit drugs policy & immigration
- 12 Defence, weapons, national security & border security
- 13 Monetary system, & foreign trade
- 14 Employment
- 15 Social security, pensions, child support, & prescription drugs
- 16 Energy
- 17 Broadcasting
- 18 Electoral politics/public perceptions of parties/the next election
- 19 other

3 "*A1scope*" Scope of answer 1

Enter the geographic scope of the answer.

- 1 Local/constituency level
- 2 Scottish region level
- 3 National level (Scotland)
- 4 Union level
- 5 International

4 "*A1stock*" Stock issue used in answer 1

According to the stock issues model of argumentation, enter the primary stock issue referred to in the answer.

- 1 Harm-affirmative: alerting members to a current problem.
- 2 Harm-negative: refuting or minimizing a current problem identified by others.
- 3 Blame-affirmative: pointing out the government's failure to address a problem.
- 4 Blame-negative: praising the government's success on a problem or defending it against attack.
- 5 None: no stock issue is raised; simply information provided or a proposal without inference.
- 6 Cure-affirmative: asserting that one's proposal will be effective.
- 7 Cure-negative: criticizing an opponent's proposal as ineffective.
- 8 Cost-affirmative: defending one's proposal against disadvantages raised by opponents.
- 9 Cost-negative: attacking an opponent's proposal as counterproductive.

5 "Alindep1" Independence referenced in answer 1

Enter whether the answer referred to the potential for a more autonomous *or* independent Scotland. Code 1 means that the answer references "fiscal autonomy," "control of Scotland's resources," "self-determination," etc., but not "independence." Code 2 is used only for the explicit use of words such as "independence" or "separation."

- 0 No reference to increased Scottish independence.
- 1 Reference to increased Scottish autonomy, but no use of the word "independence."
- 2 The word "independence" is mentioned in the question.

6 "Alindep2" Stance on Independence in answer 1

If question 6 is coded a 1 or a 2, indicate the questioner's position in regard to greater autonomy or independence. If question 6 is coded a 0, leave 6b blank. Code 1 refers to pejorative labels such as "separatist," "Balkanization," "narrow nationalism," and "wreckers" used in reference to increased autonomy or independence.

- 1 Opposition to increased autonomy or independence is expressed using a pejorative label(s).
- 2 Opposed to the potential for increased autonomy or independence, no pejorative labels.
- 3 Neutral on the subject of increased autonomy or independence.
- 4 Favorable toward increased autonomy *or* independence.
- 88 Item 6 was coded a 0, therefore no information is given here.

7 "Aldisp" Disposition of answer 1

Based on the substantive content of the answer, enter the disposition, or observed verbal stance of the First Minister toward the member.

- 1 Critical of the member or member's party.
- 2 Concerned about a problem/neutral.
- 3 Favorable toward the member or member's party (including defense against criticism).

8 "Alrespec" Respect in answer 1

Based on the language choices of the answer, enter the level of respect, or verbal tone of the First Minister toward the member. Ridicule is the presence of disparaging remarks that could be construed as intending embarrassment to the member. Examples include words such as "pathetic," "daft," and "ignorance." Ridicule is possible only when the verbal stance of the answer (above) is coded as critical. However, a critical verbal stance per se is not a basis for coding ridicule in this section.

- 1 Personal ridicule against the member.
- 2 Ridicule of the member's leader or party.
- 3 Respect: an absence of any disparaging remarks that might have been construed as intending embarrassment to the member or his or her party. The verbal stance (above) can be critical and still result in a tone of respect. Thus the absence of ridicule is automatically coded as respectful.

9 “Alcrit” Use of third-party criticism in answer 1

Enter whether the First Minister criticized someone or something other than (or in addition to) the member or the member’s party.

- 0 no criticism of third parties
- 1 attack SNP
- 2 attack Conservative
- 3 attack other Scottish party
- 4 attack union
- 5 attack England,
- 6 attack devolution
- 7 attack U.S.
- 8 attack EU
- 9 attack Blair/Westminster
- 10 attack local government
- (88 previous criticism item was coded 0 or 88)

Now repeat the above content coding process for any **supplementary** question(s). There are usually three or four total questions for a party leader. When transferring to SPSS, code 999s for all items on completely skipped questions (such as questions 2-4 if no supplementaries at all).

Dissertation Code Book Part II: Complete list of Members of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2002). *Italics indicate female members; bold print indicates constituency members (for use above).*

- 1 Brian Adam MSP - SNP - North East Scotland
- 2 Bill Aitken MSP - Con - Glasgow
- 3 *Wendy Alexander MSP - Lab - Paisley North*
- 4 *Jackie Baillie MSP - Lab - Dumbarton*
- 5 Scott Barrie MSP - Lab - Dunfermline West
- 6 *Ms Sarah Boyack MSP - Lab - Edinburgh Central*
- 7 *Rhona Brankin MSP - Lab - Midlothian*
- 8 Robert Brown MSP - LD - Glasgow
- 9 Bill Butler MSP - Lab - Glasgow Anniesland
- 10 Colin Campbell MSP - SNP - West of Scotland
- 11 Dennis Canavan MSP - Indep - Falkirk West
- 12 Malcolm Chisholm MSP - Lab - Edinburgh North and Leith
- 13 *Cathie Craigie MSP - Lab - Cumbernauld and Kilsyth*
- 14 Bruce Crawford MSP - SNP - Mid Scotland and Fife
- Christine Creech—see Christine Grahame
- 15 *Roseanna Cunningham MSP - SNP - Perth*
- 16 *Ms Margaret Curran MSP - Lab - Glasgow Ballieston*
- 17 Mr David Davidson MSP - Con - North East Scotland
- 18 *Susan Deacon MSP - Lab - Edinburgh East and Musselburgh*
- 19 Rt Hon Donald Dewar MSP - Lab - Glasgow Anniesland [Died 11 October 2000; succeeded by Bill Butler MSP (Lab)]
- 20 Lord James Douglas-Hamilton QC MSP - Con - Lothians
- 21 *Helen Eadie MSP - Lab - Dunfermline East*
- 22 *Dorothy-Grace Elder MSP - SNP - Glasgow*

- 23 **Fergus Ewing MSP - SNP - Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber**
 24 **Mrs Margaret Ewing MSP - SNP - Moray**
 25 **Dr Winnie Ewing FRSA MSP - SNP - Highlands and Islands**
- 26 **Linda Fabiani MSP - SNP - Central Scotland**
 27 **Patricia Ferguson MSP - Lab - Glasgow Maryhill**
 28 **Alex Fergusson MSP - Con - South of Scotland**
 29 **Ross Finnie MSP - LD - West of Scotland**
 30 **Brian Fitzpatrick MSP - Lab - Strathkelvin & Bearsden**
 31 **Murdo Fraser MSP - Con - Mid-Scotland and Fife**
- 32 **Mr Sam Galbraith FRCS Glas MSP -Lab - Strathkelvin and Bearsden [Resigned 14May 2001; replaced by Brian Fitzpatrick MSP (Lab)]**
 33 **Phil Gallie MSP - Con - South of Scotland -**
 34 **Mr Kenneth Gibson MSP - SNP - Glasgow -**
 35 **Karen Gillon MSP - Lab - Clydesdale (elected as Karen Turnbull) -**
 36 **Trish Godman MSP - Lab - West Renfrewshire -**
 37 **Miss Annabel Goldie MSP - Con - West of Scotland -**
 38 **Donald Gorrie OBE MSP - LD - Central Scotland -**
 39 **Christine Graham MSP - SNP - South of Scotland (elected as Christine Creech)**
 40 **Rhoda Grant MSP - Lab - Highlands and Islands -**
 41 **Iain Gray MSP - Lab - Edinburgh Pentlands -**
- 42 **Mr Duncan Hamilton MSP - SNP - Highlands and Islands**
 43 **Mr Keith Harding MSP - Con - Mid-Scotland and Fife**
 44 **Robin Harper MSP - Green - Lothians**
 45 **Hugh Henry MSP - Lab - Paisley South**
 46 **Mr John Home Robertson MSP - Lab - East Lothian**
 47 **Janis Hughes MSP - Lab - Glasgow Rutherglen**
 48 **Fiona Hyslop MSP - SNP - Lothians**
- 49 **Mr Adam Ingram MSP - SNP - South of Scotland**
- 50 **Gordon Jackson MSP - Lab - Glasgow Govan**
 51 **Dr Sylvia Jackson MSP - Lab - Stirling**
 52 **Cathy Jamieson MSP - Lab - Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley**
 53 **Margaret Jamieson MSP - Lab - Kilmarnock and Loudoun**
 54 **Ian Jenkins MSP - LD - Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale**
 55 **Alex Johnstone MSP - Con - North East Scotland**
 56 **Nick Johnston MSP -Con - Mid Scotland and Fife- [Resigned 10 August 2001; replaced by Murdo Fraser MSP (Con)]**
- 57 **Mr Andy Kerr MSP - Lab - East Kilbride**
- 58 **Johann Lamont MSP - Lab - Glasgow Pollok**
 59 **Marilyn Livingstone MSP - Lab - Kirkcaldy**
 60 **Richard Lochhead MSP - SNP - North East Scotland**
 61 **George Lyon MSP - LD - Argyll and Bute**
- 62 **Mr John McAllion MSP - Lab - Dundee East**
 63 **Mr Kenny MacAskill MSP - SNP - Lothians**
 64 **Mr Frank McAveety MSP - Lab - Glasgow Shettleston**
 65 **Mr Tom McCabe MSP - Lab - Hamilton South**
 66 **Mr Jack McConnell MSP - Lab - Motherwell and Wishaw**
 67 **Lewis Macdonald MSP - Lab - Aberdeen Central**
 68 **Ms Margo MacDonald MSP - SNP - Lothians**

- 69 Mr Jamie McGrigor MSP - Con - Highlands and Islands
 70 Irene McGugan MSP - SNP - North East Scotland
 71 Mr Kenneth Macintosh MSP - Lab - Eastwood
 72 Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh MSP - Con - Central Scotland
 73 Angus Mackay MSP - Lab - Edinburgh South
 74 Kate Maclean MSP - Lab - Dundee West
 75 Henry McLeish MSP - Lab - Central Fife
 76 Fiona McLeod MSP - SNP - West of Scotland
 77 David McLetchie MSP - Con - Lothians
 78 Mr Michael McMahon MSP - Lab - Hamilton North and Bellshill
 79 Maureen Macmillan MSP - Lab - Highlands and Islands
 80 Duncan McNeil MSP - Lab - Greenock and Inverclyde
 81 Pauline McNeill MSP - Lab - Glasgow Kelvin
 82 Des McNulty MSP - Lab - Clydebank and Milngavie

 83 Paul Martin MSP - Lab - Glasgow Springburn
 84 Tricia Marwick MSP - SNP - Mid-Scotland and Fife
 85 Mr Michael Matheson MSP - SNP - Central Scotland
 86 Mr Brian Monteith MSP - Con - Mid-Scotland and Fife
 87 Alasdair Morgan MSP - SNP - Galloway and Upper Nithsdale
 88 Mr Alasdair Morrison MSP - Lab - Western Isles
 89 Bristow Muldoon MSP - Lab - Livingston
 90 Mrs Mary Mulligan MSP - Lab - Linlithgow
 91 David Mundell MSP - Con - South of Scotland
 92 Mr John Farquhar Munro MSP - LD - Ross, Skye and Inverness West
 93 Dr Elaine Murray MSP - Lab - Dumfries

 94 Alex Neil MSP - SNP - Central Scotland region

 95 Irene Oldfather MSP - Lab - Cunninghame South

 96 Mr Gil Paterson MSP - SNP - Central Scotland
 97 Peter Peacock MSP - Lab - Highlands and Islands
 98 Cathy Peattie MSP - Lab - Falkirk East

 99 Mr Lloyd Quinan MSP - SNP - West of Scotland

 100 Nora Radcliffe MSP - LD - Gordon
 101 Mr Keith Raffan MSP - LD - Mid-Scotland and Fife
 102 Mr George Reid MSP - SNP - Mid-Scotland and Fife
 103 Shona Robison MSP - SNP - North East Scotland
 104 Euan Robson MSP - LD - Roxburgh and Berwickshire
 105 Mr Mike Rumbles MSP - LD - West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine
 106 Michael Russell MSP - SNP - South of Scotland
 107 Mr Alex Salmond MSP - SNP - Banff and Buchan [Resigned 14 May 2001; replaced
 by Stewart Stevenson MSP (SNP)]
 108 Mary Scanlon MSP - Con - Highlands and Islands
 109 John Scott MSP - Con - Ayr
 110 Tavish Scott MSP - LD - Shetland
 111 Tommy Sheridan MSP - SSP - Glasgow
 112 Dr Richard Simpson MSP - Lab - Ochil
 113 Elaine Smith MSP - Lab - Coatbridge and Chryston
 114 Iain Smith MSP - LD - North East Fife
 115 Mrs Margaret Smith MSP - LD - Edinburgh West
 116 Rt Hon Sir David Steel KBE MSP - LD - Lothians
 117 Nicol Stephen MSP - LD - Aberdeen South

- 118 **Stewart Stevenson MSP - SNP - Banff and Buchan**
 119 **Mr Jamie Stone MSP - LD - Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross**
 120 *Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP - SNP - Glasgow*
 121 **Mr John Swinney MSP - SNP - North Tayside**
- 122 *Elaine Thomson MSP - Lab - Aberdeen North*
 123 **Mr Murray Tosh MSP - Con - South of Scotland**
 Karen Turnbull—see Karen Gillon
- 124 *Mrs Kay Ullrich MSP - SNP - West of Scotland*
- 125 **Ben Wallace MSP - Con - North East Scotland**
 126 **Mr Jim Wallace MSP - LD - Orkney**
 127 **Mike Watson MSP - Lab - Glasgow Cathcart**
 128 **Mr Andrew Welsh MSP - SNP – Angus**
 129 **Ian Welsh MSP -Lab - Ayr Resigned 21 December 1999; replaced by John Scott**
 MSP (Con)]
- 130 *Ms Sandra White MSP - SNP - Glasgow*
 131 *Karen Whitefield MSP - Lab - Airdrie and Shotts*
 132 **Allan Wilson MSP - Lab - Cunninghame North**
 133 **Andrew Wilson MSP - SNP - Central Scotland**
- 134 **John Young OBE MSP - Con - West of Scotland**

Scottish Parliament Coding Sheet © Jeff Gentry

1 Coder # _____; 2 Day (not date) _____; 3 Page _____; 4 Minister # _____; 5 Member _____;
6 Memparty _____; 7 Status _____; 8 Sex # _____; 9 Qtype _____; 10 Numq _____

1 Q1words _____; 2 Q1topic _____; 3 Q1scope _____; 4 Q1stock _____; 5 Q1indep1 _____;
6 Q1indep2 _____; 7 Q1dispos _____; 8 Q1respec _____; 9 Q1wedge _____; 10 Q1crit _____

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11 A1words _____; 12 A1topic _____; 13 A1scope _____; 14 A1stock _____;
15 A1indep1 _____; 16 A1indep2 _____; 17 A1dispos _____; 18 A1respec _____; 19 A1crit _____

1 Q2words _____; 2 Q2topic _____; 3 Q2scope _____; 4 Q2stock _____; 5 Q2indep1 _____;
6 Q2indep2 _____; 7 Q2dispos _____; 8 Q2respec _____; 9 Q2wedge _____; 10 Q2crit _____

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11 A2words _____; 12 A2topic _____; 13 A2scope _____; 14 A2stock _____;
15 A2indep1 _____; 16 A2indep2 _____; 17 A2dispos _____; 18 A2respec _____; 19 A2crit _____

1 Q3words _____; 2 Q3topic _____; 3 Q3scope _____; 4 Q3stock _____; 5 Q3indep1 _____;
6 Q3indep2 _____; 7 Q3dispos _____; 8 Q3respec _____; 9 Q3wedge _____; 10 Q3crit _____

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11 A3words _____; 12 A3topic _____; 13 A3scope _____; 14 A3stock _____;
15 A3indep1 _____; 16 A3indep2 _____; 17 A3dispos _____; 18 A3respec _____; 19 A3crit _____

1 Q4words _____; 2 Q4topic _____; 3 Q4scope _____; 4 Q4stock _____; 5 Q4indep1 _____;
6 Q4indep2 _____; 7 Q4dispos _____; 8 Q4respec _____; 9 Q4wedge _____; 10 Q4crit _____

- - - -
11 A4words _____; 12 A4topic _____; 13 A4scope _____; 14 A4stock _____;
15 A4indep1 _____; 16 A4indep2 _____; 17 A4dispos _____; 18 A4respec _____; 19 A4crit _____

**Appendix B: Sample Session of First Minister's Questions (May 3, 2001). From the
Official Report of Meetings of the Whole Parliament**

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE Cabinet (Meetings)

1. Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what issues were discussed at the last meeting of the Scottish Executive's Cabinet.

First Minister McLeish: The Cabinet last met on 1 May and discussed issues of importance to the people of Scotland.

Mr Swinney: Can the First Minister explain why, in the four years of this Labour Government, the number of home-grown businesses created in Scotland has plummeted by 30 per cent?

First Minister McLeish: When Labour came to power on 1 May 1997, we recognised that the creation of small businesses in Scotland would be a major priority. Under the Conservatives, there had been a reduction in the creation of small businesses. We have remained committed to the creation of small businesses and, as the figure is still lower than we would like, we will continue to give it a high priority in the next few years. We have made a commitment to create 100,000 small businesses over the decade.

Mr Swinney: I am sorry, but the First Minister does not appear to have listened to the question. Why has the business birth rate plummeted by 30 per cent since Labour came to power? The Conservatives had a dreadful record on small business creation, but under the Labour Government the number has gone through the floor.

It is widely acknowledged that the creation of a vibrant small business sector is the pathway to a country's long-term economic security. Why is the Labour record of failure worse than the Tory record of failure?

First Minister McLeish: As usual, John Swinney is selective in his use of economic statistics. I repeat: the creation of small businesses remains a priority for this Administration. After four years, we have the highest employment figures for 40 years, the lowest unemployment figures for 26 years, record cuts in youth unemployment, record cuts in long-term unemployment and growth in the first quarter of 2001 of over 2 per cent. We are witnessing a conspicuous economic success story, which has been

brought about by Labour at Westminster and has been continued by Labour and the Liberal Democrats working in Scotland.

Mr Swinney: I am not sure that the First Minister should boast about the lowest levels of Col 403 unemployment in 26 years when, in his constituency, male unemployment is at 12 per cent this month.

Is not the fact that Scotland has had a 30 per cent decline in new business start-up under the Labour Government to do with the fact that we have the highest business tax in the UK, the highest fuel tax in Europe and interest rates that render our businesses uncompetitive? It is time the First Minister had some ambition for the Scottish economy and got for the Scottish Parliament the powers to deliver the right economic conditions for Scotland.

First Minister McLeish: The weakness of Mr Swinney's argument is shown by how speedily he moves from one argument to talk about fuel tax and a myriad of other excuses for his party's position.

Let me make absolutely clear the problem that the SNP faces in terms of a poverty of ambition. Surfing the net earlier this week, I found on the YouGov website a declaration by John Swinney that Scotland does not have a clear sense of what the SNP believes in. That is a statement by the leader of the SNP. What are the people of Scotland to think? Against that, we can juxtapose Nicola Sturgeon's comment in the Sunday Herald:

"We are going to turn the tide on the 'still no policies' jibe, throw it back on the Labour Party and ram it firmly down their throats."

I ask John Swinney whether the case is that the SNP has a mass of policies or that there are still no policies.

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): As nationalism would inevitably lead to far greater burdens on businesses in Scotland, and as businesses in Scotland must have been tallying up all the costs of all the promises that have been made by nationalist spokespeople in recent months and years, has the First Minister had any representations from the business sector suggesting that businesses would be helped if Scotland were independent?

First Minister McLeish: I am sure that the business community views with horror the prospect of narrow nationalism on the part of the SNP, leading to separation. It is also important that today, as we approach the second anniversary of the establishment of this Parliament, we again put into sharp focus the fact that the SNP continues to talk Scotland down, while we—both in the Parliament and in the Executive—continue to work for Scotland. Whether on the McCrone report, on the Sutherland report or on the record number of police officers, we are succeeding. It is high time the SNP started to support Scotland rather than talk the nation down at every opportunity. Col 404

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister and what issues he plans to raise. (S1F-1032)

First Minister McLeish: I speak to the Prime Minister regularly. We have no immediate plans to meet.

David McLetchie: When the First Minister meets him, the Prime Minister will no doubt share and voice the concern of everyone in Scotland that the Scottish Executive's record on health seems to be getting worse by the day. Given today's revelation that 14,000 operations were cancelled last year—an increase of almost 40 per cent—will the First Minister apologise to the patients concerned for the anxiety and distress caused to them?

First Minister McLeish: I did not hear many apologies emanating from the Conservatives after 18 years of the previous Government's policies on the health service. Again we have an Opposition party that wants to be rather selective. Of course we want to ensure that cancellations of planned hospital admissions are reduced. Hospital services, the health boards and the Minister for Health and Community Care are working hard to achieve that.

As we are approaching two years of success in this Parliament, let us talk about the 100,000 more operations; let us talk about the 567 more bypass operations, the 861 more angioplasties and the 287 more hip replacements. Those are the success stories, not just for the Parliament, but for all individuals who have been admitted to hospital, who are getting better care and, in many instances, a speedier service.

David McLetchie: I think that the First Minister is once again being rather economical with the facts at his disposal. He has demonstrated again that his

Administration fails to take responsibility for any of its own failings. It is a rather bitter irony that the more ministers we have, the less accountable they become.

The facts speak for themselves. On top of the rising number of cancelled operations to which I have alluded, there are 2,000 more people on the waiting list than four years ago. The number of patients who are waiting more than 18 weeks for national health service treatment has risen by 70 per cent. Morale among general practitioners is at an all-time low. Labour has been running the NHS in Scotland for four years now. Perhaps the First Minister could explain why it is in such a mess.

First Minister McLeish: It has a lot of resonance when I hear such words as "mess" emanating from a Tory Opposition. And on the health service, too. Col 405 Can you believe it? Let us consider the fact that expenditure on the national health service in Scotland is growing from £5.9 billion to £6.7 billion. The best performance in the United Kingdom for median waiting times for in-patient and day cases is in NHS hospitals in Scotland: more than half of patients are treated immediately, without ever joining a waiting list. Of those who wait, almost half are treated within one month and more than 80 per cent are treated within three months.

Yes, let us have criticism, but let us not have selective criticism. There is a whole story to be told, and this Administration—Liberal Democrat and Labour—remains committed to improving the national health service over the next two years and beyond, after victory in 2003.

Licensing

3. Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what consideration has been given by the Scottish Executive to 24-hour licensing of public houses and clubs. (S1F-1036)

First Minister McLeish: Current licensing boards already have the power to consider applications from licensed premises to remain open for 24 hours. We have recently announced a review of all aspects of liquor licensing law and practice in Scotland. The review will make particular reference to the implications for public health and public order.

Pauline McNeill: I am sure that the First Minister will note my interest in the matter as I represent the city centre of Glasgow, which has more than 460 licensed

premises in a half-mile radius—the largest number outside London—and that he is aware of the impact that that has on front-line services such as the police and the NHS.

Does the First Minister share my view that the issue is not simply one of whether we should license premises for 24 hours and that we should also focus on marketing strategies that encourage heavy drinking, including happy hours and promotions such as "All you can drink for £10," which are offered in Glasgow and can be linked directly to negative behaviour?

Further, will the First Minister assure me that the review will consider laying duties on licensed premises and on the licence holder to be responsible in their approach?

First Minister McLeish: I agree entirely with Pauline McNeill's sentiments. That is why the remit of the committee is important. The remit is to review all aspects of liquor licensing law and practice in Scotland, with particular reference to the implications for public health and public order, which covers the national health service and the police service. The review will look at the correlation between excessive drinking and Col 406 behaviour, often after hours, and the violent crime that we still see in and around our towns and cities throughout Scotland. The committee will meet and have a wide remit, but this issue is not just about extending the hours for those who want to consume alcohol; it is about looking at every aspect of public health and public order. That is what the Parliament and the people of Scotland want.

Cancer Services (Funding)

4. **Nicola Sturgeon** (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the First Minister why national lottery money is being used to fund cancer treatment and care services. (S1F-1033)

First Minister McLeish: We have already pledged record levels of expenditure on health. Core Government spending is £5.9 billion this year and will rise to £6.7 billion in 2003-04. New opportunities funding is additional to that, as the new opportunities funding published criteria make clear.

Nicola Sturgeon: Given Scotland's appalling health record, I think everybody agrees that extra investment in cancer services is always welcome, but does the First Minister agree that services such as cancer screening and diagnosis are core health services and should be funded from general taxation, which we all pay, rather than depend on individuals purchasing lottery tickets? Does he agree that the fact that lottery

money is required for those services is proof that the Government is failing to fund such services properly?

First Minister McLeish: I totally disagree with Nicola Sturgeon's last point. I have outlined the record levels of public investment in the national health service. I agree that any lottery funding should be complementary. It is important to recognise that health boards are using that money to complement health care in a vital area. I do not think that there is anyone in the chamber who has not had someone close to them—in their family or in their community—who has suffered from cancer.

It is right to say on this sensitive question that we have extended breast screening to women aged up to 70; we have provided £13 million to replace radiotherapy equipment; we have given £16 million for imaging services to ensure faster and better diagnosis; we have funded six more cancer consultant places in Scottish hospitals; and we have £38 million in the pipeline to rebuild the Beatson cancer centre in Glasgow. Firm investment and complementary finance from the lottery can go forward together, but the core investment will continue to come from the Executive. Col 407

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): Will the First Minister congratulate Dumfries and Galloway Health Board on its successful application for £1.5 million of lottery funding towards a new oncology unit at Dumfries and Galloway royal infirmary? Does he agree that the patients in Dumfries and Galloway who will benefit from that service will not be unhappy that the money they spend on lottery tickets will be put to that purpose?

First Minister McLeish: I would not like this to become a political issue. Common sense should be applied. There is significant core funding from the Minister for Health and Community Care, and that will rise steadily. On the other hand, some excellent projects in every part of Scotland are being funded and delivered courtesy of the NOF. We should welcome that. We should always come back to the point that the health service is too valuable to be left to anything other than core funding from the taxpayer through the Executive in Edinburgh and the Government in Westminster. We are committed to that and I am sure that the Parliament is too.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): The cancer treatment to which the minister referred and initiatives on waiting times and lists are the declared priorities of the Executive. Is the First Minister aware that the delegation of managing those priorities is the responsibility of medical secretaries within the national health service and that medical secretaries' salaries are now a maximum of £12,800 and represent some of the

lowest wages in the whole national service? Will he declare his support for the Unison campaign on behalf of the medical secretaries to have an immediate upgrading of the salaries of those essential health care workers, or will he preside over a continuation of poverty pay in the health service?

First Minister McLeish: We recognise the issue to which Tommy Sheridan refers, which, I believe, has been the subject of continuing discussions within the NHS in Scotland and with health boards.

All I can say is that we want people who contribute to the health service to feel that they are both valued and getting decent pay for a decent day's work. I hope that those criteria will guide the discussions that are continuing to take place.

Factory Closure (Kintyre)

5. George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): To ask the First Minister in what ways the Scottish Executive has offered to assist Campbeltown and Kintyre following the closure of the Jaeger factory. (S1F-1029)

First Minister McLeish: Alasdair Morrison today met GMB union representatives and the Kintyre initiative working group to discuss Col 408 the impact of the Jaeger closure and how the Executive can help with the broader issues that face the Kintyre economy. The top priority is to create new employment opportunities. The Executive and Argyll and the Islands Enterprise are already in discussion with companies on a number of promising possibilities. The Kintyre peninsula is eligible for investment support at the maximum permitted rate and we shall continue to promote the area as vigorously as possible as an attractive location for new investment.

George Lyon: I thank the First Minister for that answer.

Will the First Minister confirm that the Executive is treating the workers' plight at Jaeger in Campbeltown as seriously as it is treating the crisis that faces the Motorola workers in Bathgate? The effects of the Jaeger closure on Campbeltown are just as severe as the effects of the Motorola closure on Bathgate.

Will the First Minister reassure the workers at Jaeger that ministers—both Liberal Democrat and Labour—are doing all in their power to secure new jobs for them? Will he confirm whether the Vestas project, in which ministers and I have been involved over the past 18 months, is close to a conclusion?

First Minister McLeish: The response to George Lyon's first question is that Wendy Alexander confirmed earlier that no matter where redundancies take place and no matter what their scale, every part of Scotland will be given priority as far as the rapid response service is concerned. That commitment, which I make and which Wendy Alexander made earlier, will be honoured.

In response to George Lyon's second question, it is important that I stress that Liberal Democrat and Labour ministers will continue to work hard for the peninsula to ensure that we are able to attract new jobs.

In response to George Lyon's third question, there are exciting prospects ahead for the peninsula on a variety of fronts, including the project that he mentioned. The discussions have not been concluded and it would be premature for me, or for anyone else, to say more than that. The area has an unemployment rate of 7.3 per cent, which is not good enough—we want to make it better. Suffice to say that Wendy Alexander, her department and the Executive are making an enormous effort and that every effort will be made to provide new jobs.

Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I express my disappointment with the vagueness of the First Minister's commitment. We need more than warm words and I ask him to give us a few more specifics. Col 409 The First Minister has said that he understands that the latest loss of 161 jobs is a hammer blow and that the Kintyre peninsula will be a priority, as it has been for Argyll and the Islands Enterprise for the past couple of years. This is a time for fresh thinking, and I will press him on two matters. First, will he redouble his efforts to ensure that the Campbeltown-Ballycastle ferry service is restored and marketed properly? Secondly, will he take up the challenge of completing the A83 to full trunk road status? That would reconnect Campbeltown to the rest of Scotland and provide a much-needed boost to the area's economy.

First Minister McLeish: I am disappointed that Duncan Hamilton does not appreciate the fact that we are giving the Kintyre economy massive priority. Anyone who listened to what I said about the exciting prospects that lie ahead could read between the lines. [MEMBERS: "What are they?"] Members may shout from a sedentary position, but in the real world in which we live with our Liberal Democrat colleagues, we must move forward sensibly, rather than use these occasions to say things that we might not want to say at the time.

Everyone knows that the Vestas project is active and live, and I suggest that we wait until the discussions are complete—[Interruption.] I hear members shouting about Ballycastle. Again, discussions are proceeding about that development. If the restoration of the service proceeds, it is clear that marketing will be required.

The rapid response service is in place, the Vestas project is being discussed, the Ballycastle issue is being discussed and we are trying to attract investment to the area with investment support at the maximum permitted rate. That shows urgency and commitment.

Schools (Teaching Standards)

6. Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): To ask the First Minister whether new action is being taken to raise the standards of teaching in Scotland's schools. (S1F-1045)

First Minister McLeish: The historic pay and conditions deal that was negotiated earlier this year—and agreed with the overwhelming support of the teaching profession—has paved the way for standards to continue to rise. Most significantly, at its heart is our recognition of the critical role played by the teaching profession. The deal rewards high standards of skill and expects high standards of achievement. It offers for the first time a practical opportunity for every teacher to develop their professional skills continuously throughout their teaching careers through the universal obligation of continuing professional development. **Col 410 Karen Gillon:** Will the First Minister acknowledge that it is important that we modernise a system that has been in place since 1916 and that placed teachers in the same framework as people in the local government sector? Will the First Minister acknowledge that fairness is the key to a new system of discipline in the teaching profession? Will he indicate that there will be minimum standards against which pupils and parents will be able to judge whether teachers meet the criteria that are set for them?

First Minister McLeish: I am pleased to confirm the points that have been made by the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs on other occasions. We want a new national system that is transparent, fair and equitable but capable of meeting local needs—that is crucial. We want a system that supports teachers to do the best job they can and, of course, we want an improved role for the professional body for teachers. Disciplinary procedures, continuous professional development and review of initial teacher education are included in a positive package to ensure that the respect that teachers should have is gained. Over the next two or three years, I am sure that we will see the benefits in the classroom.

Appendix C: Cohen's Kappa Results of Intercoder Reliability

Preliminary Phase: Sessions 23, 59, 81

Question	Pe	Observed	Kappa
Topic	.025	.719	.710
Scope	.301	.739	.626
Stock	.038	.719	.708
Indep1	1.000	1.000	1.000
Indep2	1.000	1.000	1.000
Dispos	.492	.889	.781
Respect	.589	.922	.809
Wedge	.961	.974	.327
3 rd Crit	.868	.948	.604

Answer

Topic	.027	.686	.678
Scope	.233	.686	.591
Stock	.052	.587	.545
Indep1	no observations of Indep1		
Indep2	no observations of Indep2		
Dispos	.368	.810	.700
Respect	.667	.869	.607
3 rd Crit	.961	.974	.327

Observed agreement: .835

Overall Kappa: .668

Retraining Phase: Sessions 36, 66, 90

Question	Pe	Observed	Kappa
Topic	.020	.851	.848
Scope	.465	.919	.849
Stock	.090	.721	.693
Indep1	1.000	1.000	1.000
Indep2	1.000	1.000	1.000
Dispos	.182	.824	.785
Respect	.446	.824	.682
Wedge	.826	.973	.845
3 rd Crit	.737	.919	.692

Answer

Topic	.025	.864	.861
Scope	.269	.926	.899
Stock	.148	.694	.641
Indep1	.940	1.000	1.000
Indep2	.940	1.000	1.000
Dispos	.278	.803	.727
Respect	.450	.849	.690
3 rd Crit	.882	.973	.771

Observed agreement: .891

Overall Kappa: .823

Sum of both tests:

Observed agreement: .860

Overall Kappa: .750