**Dominant Idea #2: Social justice & fairness**

The SNP claim to be a political party committed to reducing inequality through their socially progressive policies. The SNP believe that this dominant idea is a way to transform Scotland into a fairer nation that is recognised for its global responsibility, progressiveness and social conscience. Some of these policies include:

1. **Baby Box** – Giving every baby born in Scotland the best start in life by providing families with a Baby Box, filled with essential items needed in the first six months of a child’s life.
2. **Childcare** – 600 hours of early learning and childcare, saving families up to £2,500 per child per year. In August 2020, over 60% of funded children were accessing 1,140 hours, worth around £4,500 per child per year.
3. **Free Tuition** – Students in England face tuition fees up to £27,750 – Scottish students receive university tuition free.
4. **Period Poverty** – Scotland is the first in the world to make sanitary products available to all those who need them, free of charge.
5. **Record high health funding** – Our latest health and care portfolio spending will exceed £16 billion, with resource funding up by over 60% under the SNP.
6. **Free prescriptions** – Prescription charges abolished in Scotland – now £9.35 per item south of the border.
7. **Cheaper Council Tax** – Every Scottish household benefits from cheaper tax bills – on average £450 less than England, and we’re delivering a national council tax freeze.
8. **Care For All** – Free personal and nursing care extended to everyone who needs it, regardless of age.
9. **Free Bus Travel** – Over one million Scots now enjoy free bus travel across the country, including under-19s, over-60s and disabled people – and we’re now expanding it further to all under-22s.
10. **Scottish Child Payment** – New benefit for families, the only one of its kind in the UK, has been called “game-changing” by anti-poverty campaigners, and will help lift around 30,000 children out of poverty.

**The impact of this dominant idea on the support of and electoral performance of the SNP.**

2021 election results

In the May 2021 Scottish Parliament election, the SNP retained control of the nine Glasgow constituencies. 184,000 Glaswegians - 29% of the city’s population - reside in the most deprived 10% of areas in Scotland, and nearly half of Glasgow’s residents - 280,000 people (44%) - reside in the most deprived 20% of areas.

In contrast, 37,000 people (6% of the population) live in the least deprived 10% of areas in Scotland. Despite these stark figures, the level of relative deprivation in Glasgow compared to the rest of Scotland has reduced over recent years.

Politics.co.uk reported that the SNP’s secure grip on Glasgow is in large part due to a strong pro-independence sentiment, which is absent in Edinburgh.

Covid-19

The number of people claiming unemployment benefit in Scotland soared during the first full month of the coronavirus lockdown.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics have revealed that 188,185 people in the country were claiming unemployment benefit this April. In Glasgow, the number of people claiming unemployment benefit took a dramatic leap from 19,655 in January (4.4%) to 31,600 in April (7.1%).

(Nationally, there were 2.1 million people who were claiming unemployment benefit in April across the UK - up by 67% from 1.3 million in March.)

Anti-austerity

The term austerity refers to a set of economic policies that a government implements in order to control public sector debt. Governments put austerity measures in place when their public debt is so large that the risk of default or the inability to service the required payments on its obligations becomes a real possibility.

In short, austerity helps bring financial health back to governments.

The anti-austerity movement in the United Kingdom saw major demonstrations throughout 2010s in response to Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's austerity measures which saw significant reductions in local council budgets, increasing of university tuition fees and reduction of public spending on welfare, education, health and policing, among others.

A key factor in the successful electoral performance of the SNP in the May 2021 election may have been the party’s appeal to traditional Labour voters who were attracted by the SNPs anti-austerity message and desire to protect public services and the low-paid.

**TASKS**

1. Summarise the SNP’s dominant idea of social justice and fairness.
2. Give a detailed example of an SNP policy that relates to this dominant idea.
3. How significant was this dominant idea in the electoral performance of the SNP in the May 2021 Scottish Parliament election? You should use data to support your argument.
4. Are there other interpretations (excluding the dominant idea of social justice and fairness) of the reasons for the electoral success of the SNP?
5. Why is it complex to determine the reasons for the electoral success of the SNP in the 2021 election?