

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI  
Pedagogická fakulta  
Katedra anglického jazyka

**ANNA PECHÁČKOVÁ**  
III. ročník - prezenční studium

Obor: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání – Společenské vědy se zaměřením  
na vzdělávání

**THE INFLUENCE OF MARGARET THATCHER'S POLICY ON THE ECONOMY  
AND THE SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

**Bakalářská práce**

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OLOMOUC 2015

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V Olomouci dne 20. 4. 2015

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Vlastnoruční podpis

I would like to express my thanks to PhDr. Světlana Obenausová, MLitt, Ph.D. for her kind supervision, helpful cooperation, and beneficial comments concerning my project. I thank to my brother Ing. Jan Pecháček for the proofreading. I am grateful to my family who encouraged, advised and supported me through my whole studies.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to provide a critical view of the impact of Margaret Thatcher's policy on the British economy and society. Initially, a brief Thatcher's biography is presented. Subsequently, her political career as the Prime Minister is discussed in context of events taking place both in Britain and abroad. The particular policies including economy, industry, employment, housing policy and social services are analyzed in detail. Actions of her administration are discussed in order to demonstrate their impact on the country and lives of ordinary people with the special attention to Scotland. Polemics on her policy making are added to attain a balanced criticism of Margaret Thatcher's policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

My bachelor thesis covers Margaret Thatcher's legacy and her contribution to the British politics, economy, and society. Although it has been more than two decades since she left 10 Downing Street, this topic still raises discussion and controversy in Britain which is precisely why I chose to write about this issue. My personal motivation for the choice of this topic was to form my own opinion on Margaret Thatcher's policy through a deep study of this particular period of the British modern history. I intend to focus the thesis mainly on the effect of Margaret Thatcher's policy on lives of people in Britain. I also want to concentrate on the consequences of her policy in Scotland where she was hated because of her resentment towards the Scottish nation and because of her neglect to help the Scots overcome the impacts of her tough policy.

The first two chapters of the thesis cover Margaret Thatcher's life and her actions during her appointment as the Prime Minister in connection to important events of that time. Not only domestic affairs but also Margaret Thatcher's contribution to foreign policy is included because Margaret Thatcher acted as an intermediary between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev and therefore she helped to the restoration of democracy in the whole eastern world. I consider this section of the thesis as an important initial part which gives the reader background to the analyses that follow in the subsequent chapters.

The thesis continues with descriptions and analyses of particular governmental policies. Margaret Thatcher's policy was closely connected with economy and therefore the third chapter analyzes the approach of the government towards it. Changes in industrial structure and privatization of industry are also studied in this chapter due to the influence that these changes brought to many British regions. Lives of many people were affected by the change in structure of employment as well as by high rates of unemployment. Accordingly, these two topics are included in the fourth chapter. Because the thesis tries to find out what Thatcherism

brought to the lives of ordinary people, the fifth chapter covers the housing policy which enabled them to buy the houses they lived in. A deep study of the consequences of this policy is added. The last chapter provides a complex view on the social services including education, health and social benefits.

Different studies, statistic data, polemics and approaches are studied to try to illustrate the changes Britain went through during 1980s and on. The thesis aims to be a useful and objective assessment of Margaret Thatcher's legacy. It might serve as a source of information about the modern history of Britain. Additionally, it can be used for teaching social studies (namely economy and politics) and the British history.



## 1. MARGARET THATCHER'S BIOGRAPHY

This short initial chapter aims to cover life of Margaret Thatcher and her journey to the parliament and later to the post of the Prime Minister. Not only her political but also her personal life is outlined. The years of her service as the Prime Minister are only mentioned here because they are more thoroughly studied in the following chapter.

Margaret Thatcher (née Roberts) was born on 13 October, 1925 in Grantham (Fajmon 2010: 23). Her father was a grocery shop owner and a communal politician and his ideas of self-reliance influenced Margaret Thatcher's future political opinions (Harris 2014, 11-2). She also remembers that he used to say: "Never do things just because other people do them" (Thatcher 1995: 6). Margaret's relationship with her mother Beatrice is often a subject of discussions because Margaret rarely mentioned her (Fajmon 2010: 24). Robin Harris (2014: 13-14), her close colleague and friend, thinks that her mother was rather an inconspicuous woman and Margaret was used to judge people by their deeds. Margaret enrolled on the Oxford University to study chemistry (Fajmon 2010: 24). Even during her studies, she attended the Oxford University Conservative Association (Fajmon 2010: 25). After graduating she continued her political career as a candidate of the Conservative Party in general elections (Fajmon 2010: 25). The fact that she was the youngest woman to run for the election drew attention of media (Harris 2014: 38). However, she has not managed yet (Fajmon 2010: 25). In Dartford she met Denis Thatcher whom she married and they moved to London (Fajmon 2010: 27). Margaret's parents disapproved of the marriage and their relationship became rather cold (Harris 2014: 22). In 1950s Margaret gave birth to her twins Mark and Carol and in the same time she studied law to become an advocate (Fajmon 2010: 27). She continued to develop her political career and finally succeeded in general elections and became a Member of Parliament for Finchley, London in 1959 (Fajmon 2010: 28).

Between 1959 and 1970 Margaret Thatcher was a Member of Parliament and she was strengthening her position inside the Conservative Party and between 1967 and 1970 she became a shadow cabinet member (Fajmon 2010: 28-29). After the Conservative Party was elected to govern the country, Margaret Thatcher became the Education Secretary and she firstly experienced public hatred because she made an unpopular step of cutting the provision of milk for children in primary schools (Harris 2014: 76). Harris (2014:85) explains that although she was not particularly an important member of the cabinet, she proved herself capable of establishing herself in the harsh conditions of political scene. In 1975 she was elected leader of the party (Fajmon 2010: 35) and she proved to be powerful and unafraid of changes that she considered to be right (Harris 2014: 123).

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Fajmon 2010: 56-57). When she was elected, she quoted a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: “Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope” (Thatcher 1993: 19). She acknowledges that later her speech was often regarded with cynicism and bitterness (Thatcher 1993: 19). Harris (2014: 119) states that she was exceptional for her optimism. Margaret Thatcher governed the country until 1990 (*see the next chapter*). She resigned because she did not have support from her party colleagues and deeply moved she left 10 Downing Street on 28 November 1990, after more than ten years of service (Thatcher 1993: 833-862). Harris (2014:305) is in favour of the opinion that her colleagues betrayed her and she said about her colleagues: “It was treachery with a smile on its face. Perhaps, that was the worst thing of all” (BBC News 2013a).

After her resignation, she was given a title Baroness and became a member of the House of Lords (Harris 2014: 338). In 1990s she cooperated with the Conservative Party, commented

on foreign policy and supported Augusto Pinochet when he was arrested and tried (Harris 2014: 350, 357-358). She visited Czechoslovakia in 1990 (Thatcher 1993: 808) and on her second visit Václav Havel awarded her the highest Czech official honour (Fajmon 2010: 287). In 2003 her beloved husband Denis Thatcher died (Harris 2014: 381). Margaret suffered from dementia and other health problems, slowly departed from public eye and died of a stroke on 8 April 2013 (Harris, 2014: 375-387). Her death raised honour and praise on her personality as well as celebrations of her death (BBC News 2013b). Lady Thatcher's funeral was held with full military honours and a Mass took place in St Paul's Cathedral (BBC News: 2013c).

This chapter outlined the life of Margaret Thatcher, perhaps the most significant Prime Minister since the Second World War. Her professional as well as private life was briefly viewed with the accent on her political career. Evidently she was a remarkable and strong woman who was able to establish herself among men in the world of politics. She showed a great commitment to achieve her goals. For the same reason why people admire her, others may regard her as a career obsessed woman. Be that as it may, she was a distinguished and influential personality.

## 2. MARGARET THATCHER'S PREMIERSHIP

This chapter aims to summarize the three periods in which Margaret Thatcher governed Britain as the Prime Minister. The chapter is divided into three parts according to these three periods. Key events of that time are briefly analyzed and supported by figures and studies. Legislative reforms (housing reform, monetary reforms, education and health system reforms etc.), discrepancies inside the government, government budgets, privatization, IRA attacks, and the miners' strike are included. The foreign affairs are also outlined including the Falklands War, European affairs, and negotiations with the Soviet Union during 1980s.

### **2.1. The First Governmental Period, 1979 - 1983**

The Conservatives took over the government after the winter of discontent in 1979, during which trade unions planned a series of strikes and crippled the country (Fajmon 2010: 87-89). The Conservatives were in favour of monetary strategy aiming to cut down the money supply and therefore reduce inflation which could be done only by reducing public spending or imposing higher taxes (Gamble 1990: 148). However, in fact the public spending grew because of increased expenses on unemployment benefits, pensions, defence and law and order (Kavanagh 1990: 228). Because of the monetary policy the value of sterling rose rapidly which meant that British manufacturing lost its competitiveness by 20 per cent and as a result, the manufacturing industry substantially shrank (Gamble, 1990: 194). 12.000 companies bankrupted in 1982 (Gamble, 1990: 194). The unemployment grew sharply, reaching 3 million of people in 1982 (Ashley 1989: 12). In May 1980 Housing Act and Tenant's Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act changed housing policy and allowed people to buy council houses they lived in (Balchin, Rhoden 2004: 159-168).

The recession was continuing (Gamble 1990: 186). Ashley et al (1989) provides data assessing the inflation at 18 per cent in 1980, high above other industrial countries. Gross Domestic Product dropped and manufacturing fell by 14 per cent between 1979 and 1980. Margaret Thatcher had to face disloyalty of the Cabinet members leaking internal information to the press (Thatcher 1993: 122-155). Thatcherism was supported only by less than a third of MPs (Edgell and Duke 1991: 71). Consequently, she removed her critics and opponents from the government (Fajmon 2010: 152).

If the goals I had set out in Opposition were to be achieved they must be reaffirmed and fought for by a new Cabinet. So it was quite clear to me that a major reshuffle was needed if our economic policy were to continue, and perhaps if I were a minister. (Thatcher 1993: 150)

Margaret Thatcher (1993: 139-147) also had to prevent the coal miners' strike by granting one billion pounds to mining industry. Urban riots driven by left-wing extremism took place in London, Brixton, and Manchester. As the press wrote, she was "the most unpopular Prime Minister since polls began" (Thatcher 1993: 153).

On 2 April, 1982 Argentine troops invaded Falklands, islands in the South Atlantic Ocean which belonged to Great Britain (Fajmon 2010: 163). Thatcher assembled ministers and navy experts creating the Wartime Cabinet which decided to send naval troops there. In the same time, the diplomatic negotiations took place. (Fajmon 2010: 164). Margaret Thatcher (1993: 179) saw America as the main ally but they were not interested in direct support of British policy (Fajmon 2010: 165-166). The conflict escalated when the cruiser General Belgrano crossed the Exclusion Zone marked by the British (Fajmon 2010: 166). The Wartime Cabinet decided to sink it and two days later British HMS Sheffield was hit (Thatcher 1993: 216). In the night on 21 May, 1982 British military forces landed on Falklands, Britain captured Port Stanley and took over Falklands again on 15 June. (Fajmon 2010: 167-168).

Thatcher used the Falkland victory and called the general elections a year earlier. On 9 June, 1983 elections were won by the conservatives by 42 per cent. (Fajmon 2010: 170-173). The Falkland victory is usually seen as the main cause of the 1983 election success (Fajmon 2010). However Kempsey (2009) asserts that this opinion is too simplified. Although he cannot deny “*the Falkland factor*”, he acknowledges other causes such as Thatcher’s strong leadership, the weakness of the Labour Party and he chiefly stresses out the economic success of Thatcher’s policy, particularly the Housing Act, reduction of taxes and, not least, depletion of trade unions.

## **2.2. The Second Governmental Period, 1983-1987**

The Conservative Party won the general elections with the majority in the parliament (Wasson 2010: 354). Balanced budget for 1985 was approved increasing taxes on imported goods and decreasing income taxes for entrepreneurs (Fajmon 2010: 172, 179). Margaret Thatcher managed to privatize the major British companies such as British Petroleum, British Telecom, Jaguar and Westland (Kavanagh, 1990: 223). In this period the British economy began to recover (Kavanagh, 1990: 233). The inflation fell down to nearly 5 per cent and has been rising only slowly (Ashley et al 1989). Both Gross Domestic Product and manufacturing continued rising. The growth of unemployment was continuingly slowing down but still the unemployment rate was high above 3 million unemployed (Ashley et al 1989).

Ian MacGregor, the chairman in National Coal Board (a giant concern of coal mining industry) presented that 75 per cent of the mines are not profitable and he decided to cut 44 000 jobs in two years and proposed severance pay of 1000£ for every year the miner worked in colliery (Thatcher 1993: 343). Miners went on strike which began in March, 1984 and lasted for the whole year (Matthew and Morgan 1992: 138). Working miners were protected from the pickets by the police forces (Ewing 1990: 10). The pickets provoked violence (Gilmour 1992: 90) and faked votes for declaring strikes. Because of that and the fact that the miners were

divided, the strike was unsuccessful. By the end of February, 1985 more than 50 per cent of the National Union of Miners was back at work (Fajmon 2010: 185). As a result, the number of the Mining Union members dropped from 255 000 in 1974 to 5000 in 1990 and Margaret Thatcher imposed massive restrictions on trade unions, practically liquidating them (Wasson 2010: 355).

In this period, attacks of the terrorist organization IRA (Irish Republican Army) escalated and the British soldiers were sent to Northern Ireland to stabilize the situation between IRA and protestant terrorists (Fajmon 2010: 192). Already in 1979 the IRA has killed Margaret Thatcher's colleague and supporter Airey Neave (Fajmon 2010: 188). Three bombing attacks in London followed but the British-Irish negotiations continued (Fajmon 2010: 193). In 1984 IRA made an attempt on Thatcher's life in Brighton at the Conservative Conference and later on, in 1990s there was even an attack on the Cabinet sitting in 10 Downing Street (Wasson 2010: 366). 3700 people died in the conflict and the IRA has been taken under the control only in 1990s (Wasson 2010: 366-377).

In the meantime, Margaret Thatcher took important steps in international policy such as signing the Single European Act which created a single market inside the European Community by removing barriers among its members (Cameron 1996: 460) and she joined Reagan's plan for Strategic Defence Initiative and entered important negotiations with Mikhail Gorbachev (Fajmon 2010: 189-190).

### **2.3. The Third Governmental Period, 1987-1990**

The Conservative Party won the general elections for the third-time mainly because of the good state of British economy (Fajmon 2010: 204-205). Inflation was low, the Gross Domestic Product was increasing by 4 per cent a year and even the unemployment fell significantly

(Ashley 1989). This economic success was reflected in the budget: the income taxes were lowered at 25 per cent and the high income tax was unified at 40 per cent to boost economy once again (Fajmon 2010: 210). Reformation of education system in 1988 meant a significant change for students, teachers, and parents (Fajmon 2010: 212). The principles of market policy and privatization were incorporated within the National Health Service (Edgell, Duke 1991: 147-148) which “aroused great public anger” (Matthew and Morgan 1992: 143).

International affairs played a significant role in Margaret Thatcher’s policy during this period of time. Margaret Thatcher strongly opposed European Exchange Rate Mechanism that was created to keep exchanged rates of currencies at certain levels. Thatcher saw this as peril of the sovereignty of British sterling and it was in contradiction to her liberal ideas. Even her closest colleagues opposed her which has shaken her position inside the party and government. Although eventually Britain joined Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1990, it had to withdraw because of inability to keep the exchange rates without fluctuation. (Thatcher 1993: 691-726).

Margaret Thatcher continued in negotiations with USA and the Soviet Union (Fajmon 2010: 212). She has visited Poland and expressed her support of the restoration of democracy. In November 1989, the Berlin wall fell and new democracies emerged (Fajmon 2010: 213). This meant a great success for Margaret Thatcher (Fajmon 2010: 214). Great Britain also took part in the Gulf War in 1991 (Matthew and Morgan 1992: 144).

Very unpopular step in Margaret Thatcher’s policy was the community charge, also referred to as the poll tax. Although not truly supported by nearly anyone in the Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher introduced the tax that was the same for everyone, no matter how rich or poor he was. It was firstly introduced in Scotland and then in the rest of the country. It was paid by everyone above the age of 18 with some exceptions. Poll tax was criticised as unfair, expensive, difficult to collect and easy to avoid. People reacted by riots and demonstrations taking place in



cities thorough the country. Consequently, 1990 local election were crushingly won by the Labour Party. The poll tax was eventually abolished in spring 1991. (Matthew, Morgan 1992:144).

Thatcher's disapproving attitude towards the growing integrity of the European countries and her dismissal of Exchange Rate Mechanism lead to the resignation of her long-term colleague Geoffrey Howe who could no longer bear differences between them. Margaret Thatcher was then challenged by Michael Heseltine for the leadership of the party. Although originally convinced to "fight on", Margaret Thatcher decided to resign on her position of the Prime Minister because even her supporters did not believe she could have won or later on unified the party. She resigned in November 1990 being succeeded by her colleague John Major. (Thatcher 1993: 833-862).

In this chapter, it was found out that during the first period of Margaret Thatcher's government there was a persisting recession in Great Britain although in the second half of her appointment the country's economy restored. Margaret Thatcher proved to be a powerful and decisive leader though often opposed. Radical steps such as privatization of council housing and public corporations were made to liberalize the British economy. The miners' strike together with the bomb attacks of the Irish Republican Army brought violence to the country. After the victory in the Falklands War Margaret Thatcher's popularity grew in England and in even in the world. Britain was again considered a strong country. Not only did Margaret Thatcher prove to be a strong leader at home, she also mediated between the USA and the Soviet Union and helped to realize important negotiations and therefore the fall of the Soviet Union. She was a single-minded person who was not afraid to put her career at risk because her steps proved to be unpopular. On the other hand she was rarely prepared to make a compromise or concession which finally caused the end of her career as the Prime Minister.

### 3. BRITISH ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY UNDER MARGARET THATCHER

This initial chapter covering aspects of Margaret Thatcher's policy is very complex. In the beginning it summarizes the state of British Economy during Margaret Thatcher's appointment. It provides basic facts which are used and extended in other chapters. Subsequently this chapter covers the topic of British industry in detail. It is concerned mainly with industrial structure and performance of British industry during 1980s including a brief summary of the Scottish industry. Finally, the attention is moved to trade unions and their decline in 1980s.

#### **3.1. British Economy**

When the Conservatives came to power, their main aim was to reduce inflation by the restriction of money supply, support of free market, and withdrawal of the state role from economy (Edgell, Duke 1991: 4). They also boosted economy by increasing market competition, privatizing public sector and supporting private enterprise (Craft, Woodward 1991: 206). By these steps the government managed to reduce inflation from 10.3 per cent to only 3.4 per cent in 1986 which was a great success (Ashley et al 1989: 5). On the other hand unemployment grew steeply in the beginning of the decade and for three years the unemployment rate was above 3 million (Ashley et al 1989:12). Employment in manufacturing fell whereas employment in services grew (Flaud, McCloskey 1994:199). Import of manufactured products outpaced export in 1983 even with high North Sea oil export which created 6 per cent of GDP in 1988 (Ashley et al 1989: 6). Britain achieved a great performance in economic growth and in 1983 GDP exceeded its 1979 figures. From 1987 on GDP grew by 4 per cent a year (Ashley et al 1989: 8). Not only GDP but also productivity in manufacturing grew every year by 4 per cent which was the fastest growth among other industrial countries (Ashley et al 1989: 9). Gamble says that Thatcher's

measures brought the country not only to restoration but also to prosperity through making Britain a significant financial and trading centre (Gamble 1990: 216).

### **3.2. British Industry**

Industry during Margaret Thatcher's appointment changed its character. Agriculture remained roughly at the same level as before Thatcher, it contributed by 2 per cent to British Gross Domestic Product (The British Economy 1998). Coal mining industry declined sharply – 92 collieries were closed until 1992 (BBC 2004). Meanwhile, the high outputs of North Sea oil mining substantially helped British economy (Gamble 1990: 205).

Manufacturing industry was severely hit by world economy crisis, 'oil shocks' as well as strict monetary policy introduced by the Conservatives (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 215, Gamble 1990: 194, 196). Between 1979 and 1981 manufacturing fell by 14 per cent whereas in other industrial countries manufacturing grew (Ashley et al 1989: 8). However, the manufacturing output steeply grew and exceeded its 1979 level (Ashley et al 1989: 8). In the same time the service sector increased its proportion of Gross Domestic Product and traditional industries were replaced by the new ones (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 216). Financial services became an important part of the British economy (The British Economy 1998).

A distinctive feature of 1980s industry was privatization. By privatization, the government wanted to reduce public spending, increase market forces and competition, create a new space for free enterprise, and boost the number of shareholders (Edgell, Duke 1991: 10-13, 139). The government also aimed at reducing trade union power (Crafts and Woodward 1991:412-113). The money gained by privatization funded tax cutting as well as other expenses (Kavanagh 1990: 224). Newly created market forces put pressure on the usage of new technologies, growth of productivity, cheap raw materials, etc., and therefore enabled more

efficient production (Jupe 2012). Consequently, the prices fell in 1980s (In Remembrance of Margaret Thatcher 2013).

Between 1981 and 1987 nine large public corporations were privatized – British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless, National Freight Corporation, Britoil, Associated British Ports, British Telecom, Trust Ports (Great Britain), British Gas, and British Airways (Edgell, Duke: 1991: 10). The government gain for privatization was £33 billion (Floud, McCloskey, 1994: 182). Public sector privatization meant mainly privatization of industry, not the welfare services (Edgell, Duke: 1991: 141) and major part of workforce was moved from public to private sector (Floud, McCloskey, 1994: 182).

Privatization is seen as an ‘ideological success’ of the Conservative government and it is certainly a typical feature of Thatcherism (Edgell, Duke 1991: 141). Privatization in terms of private sector employment and consumption also contributed to the increase in votes for the Conservative Party (Edgell, Duke 1991: 69). Kavanagh (1990: 224) argues that privatization actually did not encourage competition because British Telecom and British gas remained monopolies. John Moore (1992) on the other hand expresses his opinion that privatization revived previously hopeless industries and the economy of Britain as a whole and taught the general public to be responsible for their private property and economy as such.

### **3.3. Scottish Industry**

Quick growth of North Sea oil price evaluated the British pound and together with the Conservative monetary policy it made Scottish industries which were dependent on exports uncompetitive and the destruction of the Scottish industry followed. Only between 1979 and 1981 the Scottish industrial output fell by 11 per cent and there was 25 per cent growth of unemployment. Between 1976 and 1987 Scotland lost 30 per cent of its manufacturing

and the most affected region was Western Scotland. As for mining industry, from 15 pits only two remained open in the late 1980s. Scottish ship building industry went on its knees and only a couple of factories persisted on the River Clyde and in Glasgow. The textile industry also stopped its production. Giant steel producing company Ravenscraig Works was slowly restricted until its closure in 1992. Large amounts of manufacturing plants closed including Goodyear in Glasgow, Singers in Clydebank and Talbot's Linwood car factory. Other companies like Timex and Hoover had to reduce their staff by thousands of workers. (Devine 2000: 591-594).

The result of the poor industrial performance was a general resentment against Thatcher's government (Devine 2000: 594). Devine (2000: 594) states that her policy mainly favoured south-east and the Midlands where the majority of her voters lived, and other areas where she was not supported did not concern her. MacLaren (2013) expresses the same opinion and says in addition that she "omitted to note the effect of [*her*] economic games on the lives of human beings". He also expresses his disapproval to the fact that Thatcher firstly applied the poll tax on Scotland. When Margaret Thatcher died in 2013, people in Scotland celebrated (MacLaren 2013).

### **3.4. Trade Unions and Margaret Thatcher**

Trade Unions were at its peak in 1970s and they became an influential power of British policy making because they were closely tied to the Labour Party (Kavanagh, Jones 1991: 192). More than 1 million trade union members and workers went on strike in winter 1978/79 (Edgell, Duke 1991:11). The strike led to the election of the Conservative Party which aimed at decreasing the power of trade unions (Edgell, Duke 1991: 11).

Not only the allowed means of strikes were changed, but what is more, trade union leaders were deprived from their political power during 1980s (Edgell, Duke 1991:11). Trade unions suffered

the greatest defeat during miners' strike in 1984-1985 which shattered the National Union of Mineworkers (Kavanagh, Jones 1991: 193). High rate of unemployment also did not favour trade unions because workers were worried about their jobs and did not picket (Kavanagh, Jones 1991: 194). In 1990s trade unions were fragmented and ill operated (Kavanagh, Jones 1991: 195). Between 1978 and 1990, the number of employees joined in trade unions declined to 38 per cent (Mason, Bain 1993), and it further declined to current 26 per cent (Trade Union Membership 2014). Scottish trade union membership also declined during 1980s but nearly half of unions increased its membership between 1986 and 1987 (Leopold 2014). Scottish trade union density is now the third highest among other British regions after Northern Ireland and Wales (Trade Union Membership 2014).

This chapter outlined the main characteristics of the British economy and industry during Margaret Thatcher's appointment. When she was elected to govern the country, Britain was in recession. She chose to restore it by introducing the monetary policy which reduced inflation but also increased unemployment. However, in the second half of the decade British economy showed great signs of recovery. The structure of industry changed significantly meaning mainly the fall of coal mining and manufacturing industries and the rise of service sector. The same trend appeared in Scotland which was traditionally an industrial country and therefore the impact on the Scottish economy was harsh. In the late 1980s profitable state corporations were privatized leaving more space for private sector. Although some critics say that privatization was not successful in terms of stimulating private competition, others argue that this step encouraged market forces and stimulated free enterprise. Trade unions were deprived of their power after the miners' strike and both their membership and significance declined dramatically.

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT UNDER MARGARET THATCHER

This chapter provides a complex view on the aspects of employment and unemployment in Britain 1980s. It is concerned with the shift of employment among sectors as well as regions. The causes of high unemployment rates in 1980s are also summarized and special attention is paid to the impact of high unemployment on the lives of ordinary people. The chapter ends with an outline of employment and unemployment in Scotland and their consequences.

##### **4.1. Employment**

After the Second World War, the governing Labour Party was in favour of the full employment unlike the Conservatives who concentrated on eliminating inflation (Edgell, Duke 1991: 4). Strict monetary policy was aimed to decrease inflation but it also decreased employment (Leslie, 1988). Employment fell by 2 million between 1979 and 1983 (Ashley 1989: 11). From 1983 on employment continuingly grew. During 1980s, the number of part time jobs has increased to 5.7 million and the vast majority of part-time workers were women (Ashley 1989: 11). During Thatcher's government, the number of self-employed people increased by 1 million (Floud and McCloskey 1994: 199).

Between 1979 and 1989, there was a 10 per cent decrease in employment in manufacturing (Floud, McCloskey 1994:199). This had a serious impact on industrial regions such as the West Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire/Humberside and other industrial areas (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 304). In the same time, the number of people employed in services (financial services, public, professional, scientific services) grew significantly (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 216). Floud and McCloskey (1994: 199) say that this shift was caused by growth of productivity in manufacturing but also by change in demand. Townsend (1992) presents that growth

of employment in services covered the loss of manufacturing jobs in the Southern semi-rural areas whereas the areas with the greatest decline in manufacturing gained the smallest profit of the increase in services.

1980s were also characterized by 'urban-rural shift'. Industry (mainly manufacturing) moved from large industrial conurbations such as London and Birmingham to rural areas and towns (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 304-307). As a consequence, employment in large cities fell sharply whereas employment in rural parts of Britain increased rapidly and regions such as the South-West, East Anglia, and the Midlands prospered (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 304-307). Crafts and Woodward (1991: 306) suggest that this shift was caused by growing expenses for labour force and rents for factory areas in cities. Townsend (1992) agrees with this approach emphasizing mainly the low costs of labour force in rural areas.

Because the Conservatives wanted to reduce public spending and bureaucracy, they aimed to reduce public sector employment (Edgell, Duke: 1991: 10) which decreased from 7.2 million in 1981 to 5.8 million in 1991 (Jackson 2014). Edgell and Duke (1991: 10) together with Crafts and Woodward (1991: 216) say this decrease was caused by privatization of huge public corporations.

In 1990s the number of small companies and part time jobs grew as well as the number of working women and self-employed people (Employment in Britain 1998). The trend of the shift of employment from manufacturing to service industries continued, reaching 84 per cent in December 2014 (UK Labour Market Statistics 2015). Employment in manufacturing and mining fell from 26 per cent in 1978 to only 8 per cent in 2014 (UK Labour Market Statistics 2015). The employment of women was continuously rising as well as the number of self employed people. Nowadays, around 65 per cent of work force is employed in



private sector and public sector employment accounts for 20 per cent of employment (UK Labour Market Statistics 2015).

## **4.2. Unemployment**

Floud and McCloskey (1994: 199) provide a definition of unemployment as “the difference between the labour force and employment”. Before concentrating on the rates of unemployment during Thatcher’s appointment, it is necessary to mention that there were many changes of the methods of calculating the measure of unemployment with a clear intention to reduce it (Ashley 1989: 12). After May 1982, to be counted as an unemployed one had to be a recipient of unemployment benefits (Edgell, Duke 1991: 9). These measures removed many job claimants (mainly women and young people, altogether ca. 800,000 people) from the official statistics (Edgell, Duke 1991: 9).

Ashley et al (1989: 12) provide data from the independent Unemployment Unit which calculated unemployment according to the methods used before 1982. Unemployment exceeded 3 million in 1982 and peaked only in 1986 at 13 per cent totalling 3,639,900 unemployed (Ashley et al 1989: 12). In 1988, unemployment was again below 3 million. Unemployment rates were highest in inner-city areas and regions dependent on the old manufacturing industries (Bromhead, 1991: 81).

Reasons for such a high unemployment rate in 1980s are various. Craft, Woodward (1991: 222) and Floud, McCloskey (1994: 215) connect high rates of unemployment with high benefits for unemployed stating that if benefits are high, workers tend to stay unemployed for longer periods. Thatcher’s government therefore decided to reduce unemployment benefits (Edgell, Duke: 1991: 7). Together with Gamble (1990: 194) they agree that the main cause of unemployment was a strict monetary policy causing the loss of competitiveness of the British

industry, bankruptcies and job losses. Government explained this trend as the aftermath of the world economic crisis as well as “the weakness, mistakes and extravagancies which had accumulated during thirty-five years of social democracy” (Gamble 1990: 196). Crafts and Woodward (1991: 228) regard the high unemployment rate as “the cost of the reduction of inflation”.

Unemployment as such is an undesirable phenomenon for every economy meaning a “forgone production” (Crafts and Woodward (1991: 213). Unemployment in Britain led to inequality of people in connection to attainment of health care (manifested in levels of mortality) and education (Scott-Samuel et al 2014). Unemployment also caused big differences among various regions in Britain as mentioned before. Cooper (2015) specifies that people with low income are more likely to have health problems sooner than those who are well off. He says that if equality of people and chances of good employment are supported, it improves health and prolongs life expectancy. Craft and Woodward (1991: 213) also mention that mass unemployment usually results in political extremism and a polarization of political life.

Craft and Woodward (1991: 213) say that involuntarily unemployed people may suffer from psychological problems that can end with pessimism and despair. They also say that high rate of unemployment leads to rising criminality, violence, alcoholism, drug addictions and suicide attempts. Scott-Samuel et al (2014) say that “Thatcher’s legacy includes the unnecessary and unjust premature death of many British citizens, together with a substantial and continuing burden of suffering and loss of well-being”. Clifford et al (1996) present a general study aimed at the impact of unemployment on family relationships discovering that people who faced loss of jobs had usually subsequent financial problems because of which their family relationships were often troubled involving arguments between parents as well as children.

British unemployment continued to fall in 1990s but it still remained higher in Merseyside, the North East, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales (Employment in Britain: 1998). Nowadays (in January 2015), the unemployment rate is quite low at 5.7 per cent and continues to fall down (UK Labour Market Statistics 2015). The highest unemployment rate is still in the North East at 7.7 per cent. The lowest unemployment rates are in the South East and the South West at 4.5 per cent (Regional Labour Market 2015).

### **4.3. Employment and Unemployment in Scotland**

The employment structure in Scotland substantially changed. In 1979, 28 per cent of people worked in manufacturing and 58 per cent in services (McCrone 1981). Figures from 2006 show the steep decline in manufacturing which fell to 9 per cent whereas the employment in services grew to 81 per cent (Scottish Economic Statistics 2008).

The unemployment rate was much above the UK average during Thatcher's appointment (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 202). Already in 1979, the unemployment rate reaching 6.8 per cent was higher than in most parts of Britain (Crafts, Woodward 1991:217). In some years, unemployment in Scotland was actually the highest or the second highest, even with North Sea oil providing many jobs (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 92) and wealth to the whole country from which only a small amount was returned to Scotland (Wasson 2010: 374). This affirmed the position of Scotland as an outsider within the United Kingdom (Wasson 2010: 374). The Government was able to affect high unemployment but it did so mainly by preventing migration from these areas to more prosperous ones (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 92). The most current data from December 2014 show only 5.4 per cent of unemployment which is generally considered a great success (Labour Market Briefing 2015).

This chapter described a major structural change of employment which occurred in Britain meaning mainly the shift of employment towards service sector. Public sector employment dropped due to privatization of large public corporations and many companies moved their plants to rural areas to reduce expenses for production. Unemployment struck mainly former manufacturing areas. High unemployment occurred among young people but it had severely affected the whole population of Great Britain. The problem of unemployment is associated with regional inequality, health and psychological problems of the unemployed, criminality and public disorder. In Scotland, the unemployment rates were higher than in other parts of Britain but the government did not take any measures to reduce it.

## 5. HOUSING POLICY OF MARGARET THATCHER

Housing is one of the main factors influencing lives of people and their contentment. Therefore it was recognized as relevant to provide an analysis of the life in Britain during and after Thatcher in terms of significant changes in housing conditions. Firstly, the housing policy is described in historical context and important figures are added to illustrate the number of people affected by the policy. The large part of the chapter concentrates on the discussion about the consequences of this policy because this topic still raises public interest in Britain. The impact of the policy on migration, homelessness, private tenancies, and changes in neighbourhood is analyzed. Finally, the effect of the housing policy on Scotland is summarized.

In Britain, there is a long tradition of so-called council houses which were built for the working class (Wheeler 2011). Original BBC article from 1979 informs that Margaret Thatcher's government offered tenants to buy their homes for 33 per cent or 50 per cent discount from the market price and offered 100 per cent mortgage. It enlightens that the Conservatives aimed to save public spending on subsidies for council house tenants. People were inclined to take this opportunity and more than 400,000 of them did so by November 1982 (BBC 1979).

Edgell and Duke (1991: 145) supposed that public interest in buying council houses is limited. In contrast, Jones and Murie (1998) reckon that 2.2 million residences were sold under Right to Buy and associated policies by 1998. Data published by Wilcox, Perry and Williams (2014) show that the amount of council house sales peaked once again in 2003/04 and then the sales dropped dramatically. In 2012/13, the council house sales started to rise again. They numbered that 2.5 million of properties were sold by 2014. Hawking (2011) says the decline was caused by Labour policy reducing the discount and the latter buoyancy came because of David Cameron's

reintroduction of Right to Buy. Housing privatization is said to be the core of Thatcherism (Edgel and Duke 1991: 141).

### **5.1. Consequences of Right to Buy**

Jones and Murie (1998) say that the bulk of people who took the opportunity profited from the policy. They are convinced that the majority of them were satisfied both with the quality of their houses and with the discounts they received from the government. The study also presents their residences being well maintained. Paradoxically, Steve Wilcox (2008) introduces figures showing that 16 years after council house purchase, less than 50 per cent of owners remain on the estate. On the other hand, Marten van Ham et al (2010) is in favour of the fact that right-to-buy policy did not have any significant influence on moving behaviour in Britain although right-to-buy owners tend to move to the areas with higher percentage of owner-occupied residences.

Ashley (1989) finds the connection between the housing policy and homelessness. She sets forth data showing the 800 per cent increase in repossessions between 1979 and 1988. According to her figures 100,000 of families were unable to pay their mortgages and lost homes. In 1987 there was twice as much families considered homeless as in 1979. She also says that there were 150,000 young homeless people but yet there was not any reference to homelessness in the 1988 Housing Act.

Buy to Let was also one of the housing policy consequences. Council houses or flats were bought by speculators who rented the houses themselves as a source of their income (Wheeler 2011). However Stone (2003) expresses apprehension that speculators are not willing to invest money in keeping the quality of housing, Mellish and Rhoden's research (2009) presents an attempt of landlords to maintain their property in order to grip more affluent tenants.

Kleinhans and van Ham (2013) draw attention to the influence of the right-to-buy policy on neighbourhood. They provide two negative aspects – concentration of low-income households in the socially rented sector and the depletion of council housing stock. They state that the most desired council houses were single-family homes in attractive areas. Consequently the council housing became a synonym for poor quality flats and deprived neighbourhoods. Jones and Murie (1998) add that there was often a small chance to get a job in these regions. From figures presented by Ashley et al (1989) it is clear that local councils lost the majority of means to build new council houses which Wheeler (2011) supports by stating that Right to Buy led to a problem of social housing shortage. However Kleinhans and van Ham (2013) say that right-to-buy policy meant stabilization of the neighbourhoods and that it brought social diversity to areas with high percentage of owner-occupied housing.

## **5.2. Right to Buy in Scotland**

In rural parts of the United Kingdom there was smaller council housing stock (Morgan and Satsangi 2010). During 1980s the subsidies were decreased and the prices of rents increased. Around 30 per cent of council houses were sold, the most of them were houses in well accessible villages. They state that although there was a growth in amount of local authority houses in 1990s, still the supply does not meet the demand (see also Gardner 2013). In 2008 affordable housing was allowed to be built (Morgan and Satsangi 2010).

455,000 residences were bought through Right to Buy (Nicolson 2012) and as Gardner (2013) presents, 76 per cent of housing is private. Nicolson (2012) sees positively the fact that people are able to keep their own property and the housing communities are more mixed. On the other hand she expresses the opinion of the Scottish Government which says that this should not be done at the cost of social housing stock because there is insufficiency of social housing and therefore there are long waiting lists. In the research carried out 87 per cent of respondents

(mainly social landlords) were in favour of further restrictions in Right to Buy policy in Scotland (Nicolson 2012). Vast majority of councils concurred with the idea to cease Right to Buy. A year later BBC (2013) revealed the news that Scottish government decided to cancel Right to Buy by 2017 explaining that this step will help to secure social housing stock. Even nowadays new tenants are not allowed to buy their council housing. The Scottish Government also promised that it will provide as much money as possible to increase affordable housing for people who need it (BBC News: Scotland 2013). Gardner (2013) estimates the future need for homes adjusted to the requisite of aging population (wheelchair accessible houses, houses with social services available, etc.). It is also assumed that there will be an increased need for smaller council housing due to the growing amount of single living people.

Thatcher's distinguished housing policy dramatically influenced the British society and therefore this issue still raises discussion. This policy favoured many people across the whole country who could eventually afford their own homes. It increased the responsibility for their private property and left the space for private renting. However, for many others this policy was painful experience because council housing subsidies were cut and only the low-quality council housing remained public. The conservative dream to provide everyone with affordable housing was achieved but others were left in poor social housing with little opportunity to get a job. Thus it is generally viewed that this policy favoured mainly the middle-class. Although the Right to Buy comes to life in Britain again, in Scotland the situation is completely different and the policy is soon to be abolished there. The influence of Thatcher's housing policy is still apparent in Britain and the opinion on it varies considerably, depending on different social classes, political ideas and particular parts of Britain.



## 6. SOCIAL SERVICES UNDER MARGARET THATCHER

The last chapter overviews changes related to social services, particularly education, health service, and social benefits. As for education, a major reform was introduced in 1988 considerably influencing the whole system of education. The description and analysis of this reform comprise the major part of this chapter because some of the aspects of this reform became distinctive features of the British education system. First steps to reform and privatize health service were introduced. Social benefits were cut and the system of providing them was also changed. All these changes are briefly viewed. Since there was not any significant difference between Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom, changes in Scotland are concisely overviewed in the text.

### **6.1. Education**

The Conservative government reduced expenditure on science and education by 10 per cent between 1982/83 and 1987/88 (Ashley et al 1989: 22). There was a lack of teachers and a shortage of school equipment, some school buildings needed repairs – this poor state of affairs was on half of the secondary schools and colleges (Ashley et al 1989: 22). From 1986 on, teachers started to be paid according to their student's results (Edwards 1989). This policy resulted in massive strikes of teachers (Edwards 1989). The 1988 Education Reform Act established a national curriculum for children from the age of 5 to the age of 16 in England and Wales (Walford 1990: 85). The curriculum specified the subjects children should study, the contents of these subject and it also set a benchmark for students to match (Education and Training 1998: 5). Regular testing at the age of 7, 11, 14, and 16 was set (Walford 1990: 85).

Before 1988 Education Reform Act there were two types of secondary schools – Local Education Authority schools and independent schools which were charging fees (Walford 1990:

3, 85). By the Reform Act grant-maintained schools were established by enabling Local Education Authority schools to withdraw from local-authority control and to receive money straight from the central government (Edgell, Duke 1991: 148-149). Additionally, schools were given responsibility for their budget planning and management (Walford 1990: 85). Over 300 schools turned to this scheme by 1993 (Aspect of Britain 1993: 16). In Scotland, so called self-governing schools were established on the same principle (Aspect of Britain 1993: 13). City technology colleges were founded to increase private education in technical sphere. These schools were directly supported by industries and funded by the government (Walford 1990: 87). In 1993 there were already 14 city technology colleges in Britain (Aspect of Britain 1993: 16).

The act also provided parents the right of choice for their children's school which was obliged to accept them if the capacity allowed it (Aspect of Britain 1993: 9). Each school had to publish its annual report, admission criteria and core information about itself (Aspect of Britain 1993: 9). In Scotland school boards consisting of staff members and parents were founded to decide about school administration and management (Aspect of Britain 1993: 13).

Ashley et al (1989) claims that university budgets were cut by 12 per cent. Edwards (1989) goes even further stating that universities lost 20 per cent of their funding and consequently 6,000 teachers lost their jobs. Universities strived to be granted academic intellectual freedom but they failed (Gilmour 1992: 162). Ashley et al (1989: 22) adds to it: "Most of the subsequent increase [of funding] is earmarked for redundancy and restricting costs, not for real employment. Academic freedom has been lost." The government aimed to double the amount of university students (Gilmour 1992: 164). Paradoxically the government replaced student grants with student loans which meant that unless their parents were rich, they started their working career

“deeply in debt” (Gilmour 1992: 164). What is more, the administration of loans proved to be a debacle (Gilmour 1992: 164).

Powell and Edwards (2005) say that Thatcher’s education policy brought the aspects of market mechanism into the education system and decreased public spending for education. Edwards (1989) emphasises that Margaret Thatcher needed to introduce some new policy for the fourth governmental period when privatization was done. He also criticises training schemes for young people because he thinks that the scheme was created to remove young people from unemployment figures.

Mattei (2012) finds regular testing useful because it brought assessment of teachers’ work and children’s results, and it also helped teachers in improving their work. Walford (1990: 107) is assessing the whole education reform stating that he is in favour of the national curriculum because it is good not only for the quality of education but also for children who change school. He also likes the idea of providing freedom from local educational authority because it implements more flexible and apt management of schools. Walford (1990: 107) is in favour of technical colleges because they broaden the spectrum of schools.

On the other hand Walford (1990: 107-108) says that the privatization scheme brought “selection and inequality of provision” in education favouring mainly middle-class children because they were capable of providing voluntarily funding and therefore they were more likely to be accepted. Gilmour (1992: 168) adds that in fact it was schools which were choosing their pupils rather than parents. Drury (1992) reports on the relationship between ethnicity and the 1988 Education Reform Act. She says that the national curriculum was mainly Eurocentric and there was not much space for multicultural education. She also stresses that free parental choice increased racial stratification.

Later, grant-maintained schools were abolished by Tony Blair's government and self-governed City Academies were introduced (Blair 2011: 575-280). By that scheme Tony Blair wanted to encourage education of the poorest children in deprived areas (Blair 2011: 581). The Conservative government established Academies working on the same principle as former grant-maintained schools in 2010 (Baker 2010). In May 2014, BBC released an article stating that the British education is the second best in Europe and the fifth in the world (Coughlan 2014). These facts are certainly the fruits of Thatcher's and Blair's education reforms.

## **6.2. Health**

National Health Service (NHS) financed by general tax was established after the Second World War with an idea of providing equal health care to everyone (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 307). However, Britain had to face the problem of the British aging population demanding health care and more expensive modern ways of treatment in 1980s (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 307). This meant that although the actual spending for health care grew, still it did not match the need of health care (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 307). Ashley et al (1989: 24) present data showing that 286 NHS Hospitals closed, the number of beds decreased by 14 per cent, and waiting lists for operations grew. Floud and McCloskey (1994: 308) say that together with administrative changes, this step increased the efficiency of the NHS. The inequalities in health care developed, particularly between manual and non-manual workers (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 309, Ashley et al. 1989: 24). Crafts and Woodward (1991: 476) point out that mortality rates for unskilled workers even worsened since the establishment of the NHS.

Although the public surveys showed continuous general agreement with the state of NHS, Thatcher aimed at its reform (Crafts, Woodward 1991: 480). Even before, other services connected with hospitals such as cleaning and laundry were transformed into private sector (Gaffney, 2014). The 1990 Community Care Act created a market space inside the NHS (NHS

History 2002) meaning that health service supply was embodied in “trusts” which reacted to the demand represented by health authorities (Gaffney 2014). Hospitals were supposed to be self-governed and general practitioners were supposed to manage their own accounts (Klein 2013). This policy met with public disapproval and discontent (Gaffney 2014, Klein 2013).

Private health insurance was also encouraged and it more than doubled in 1980s (Edgell, Duke 1991: 147). Private health insurance was already a significant participant in the British health care in the end of 1990s (Britain’s Healthcare Industry 1999). When the Labour Party came to power they abolished the inner market in the NHS and returned to the former idea of the NHS (Gaffney 2014). Nevertheless, in 1997 there were already 220 independent hospitals providing 10,000 beds. The private care increased by 200 per cent between 1983 and 1993 (Britain’s Healthcare Industry 1999). Another change in healthcare system came in 2012 when doctors were given power to decide about the local health services for their patients who were offered a choice about the way they are treated (Lansley 2012).

### **6.3. Poverty and Social Benefits**

The Conservatives believed that post-war labour period made people passively dependent on social benefits making them irresponsible for their own well-being (Page 2010). Conservatives therefore cut social benefits and put an emphasis on making people self-reliant (Page 2010). Poverty in the United Kingdom increased (Ashley et al 1989: 16). In 1986 when the unemployment rate was still high, the benefits were cut to encourage people in job seeking (Hickson 2010).

System of providing social benefits was altered creating bigger differences among unemployed people dependent on subsidies – the situation of families with children generally improved, although even inside this group there were families which lost their benefits (The Effects of the

1986 Social Security Act on Family Incomes 1994). Overall, this act did not alter the amount of people below poverty line (The Effects of the 1986 Social Security Act on Family Incomes 1994). If one needed support in basic needs he had to sign in a system through which he borrowed money that was repayable (Hickson 2010). In 1985, 28 per cent of people lived in poverty, including 5.6 million pensioners and 3.55 million children (Ashley et al 1989: 16). Rate of pensions stopped to correspond with earnings and even with inflation (Ashley et al 1989: 20). Subsidies for housing favoured mainly those who lived in their own house or flat because they received more money than tenants (Floud, McCloskey 1994: 311).

This chapter outlined the development of the social services in the United Kingdom during Margaret Thatcher's appointment. In the late 1980s a significant shift towards privatization of both health service and education appeared. In education parents' choice of schools for their children was stimulated which brought aspects of market mechanism to education system. Additionally the national curriculum was established to unify the requirements on children's knowledge which was then tested nationwide. Although this scheme was criticized for causing inequality in education, it was also praised as very effective, especially in context of the recent success of the British students in international comparisons. Market forces were also created inside the National Health Service but they were later abolished by Tony Blair's government and only partially reintroduced by David Cameron. Social benefits were significantly cut during 1980s and the system of providing them was also altered to increase the responsibility of individuals but the fact was that its changes did not actually help to fight poverty in Britain.

## CONCLUSION

The first part of the thesis summarized mainly Margaret Thatcher's life in relation to her political career and her performance during the years in service as the Prime Minister. Margaret Thatcher proved to be exceptionally determined. Her life and professional career can inspire not only politicians but also people who are struggling to achieve their aims. She was a hardworking, courageous, extremely firm and powerful leader. However, her strong attempts to enforce her opinions and the lack of willingness to make compromises caused the end of her political career as the head of the government. From what I have ascertained, her nickname 'the Iron Lady' quite well expresses her nature.

Margaret Thatcher changed the country according to what she believed was right. She was very successful in fighting with inflation and crisis in early 1980s but at the cost of high unemployment and loss of traditional industries. Many unprofitable mines, plants and companies were closed, profitable public corporations were privatized. Together with fighting trade unions this considerably changed Britain which instead of being an industrial country became a prosperous financial trading centre. The question whether this transformation was for Britain's good appeared during the slump in 2007 when the financial trading centres were hit by the crisis. Although the journey to this transformation was very difficult and painful for many people in Britain, I regard it as positive in the long term, especially considering the fact that cheap industrial producers from Asia would probably liquidate the British industry anyway.

Employment in Britain fell dramatically and then changed its structure towards employment in services and private employment. I find favour with the fact that the number of part-time jobs grew because suitable jobs for women with children were provided. This trend is impatiently anticipated even by the Czech today's society. Unemployment was seriously high in 1980s

but the government did not make much effort to fight it which I find quite shocking considering the fact that high unemployment left millions of people in poverty including children and elderly.

Providing people an option to purchase their homes from councils was generally a popular step but discussions about its consequences are still vivid. This policy enabled many people to become property owners, which is what the British value a lot. On the other hand the policy worsened conditions of the poorest people in Britain because they were left in low-quality housing where the opportunity to get a job was scarce. From my point of view, the concept of right-to-buy policy is good, but I tend to like David Cameron's approach more because he promises to keep council housing stock at the same levels by building new council houses unlike Margaret Thatcher who banned local authorities from building them.

Social services were not supported and particular actions were taken to economize on them. Significant steps towards privatization of education and health were made at the turn of the decade. School subjects and their contents were specified in the national curriculum and children's knowledge was tested on a regular basis. This brought an assessment of the quality of education being useful both for schools and parents. Education funding also changed which worsened the financial situation of many schools and especially the universities. I must admit that I was quite appalled by the policy concerning higher education but on the other hand I am impressed by the contribution of the national curriculum and regular testing towards good results of the British students. As for the health service, Market forces were also incorporated into it but this scheme was later abolished by Tony Blair's government and only partially restored by David Cameron. Poverty in Britain increased during 1980s but the social benefits were cut and many people were left below the poverty line. I find this policy in accordance with liberal ideas which shaped the government policy but I am not in favour of it.



I regard the situation in Scotland as very problematic and complex especially in context of the whole history of the Scottish nation which was often oppressed under the English rule. Scotland was rather a neglected region during Margaret Thatcher's government. Scottish pits, ship building plants and other industrial companies were closed and unemployment was higher than the British average but practically no attempt was made to alter the situation. I must oppose to Margaret Thatcher's insensitivity towards the Scots and her neglect to alter the state of affairs in Scotland which was a remarkable part of the country she governed. The Scottish nation was frustrated because social justice and solidarity which are part of the Scottish thinking were in direct contradiction to Margaret Thatcher's policy. Besides, although the Scottish people did not vote for the Conservative government, they were submitted to it and what is more, seriously affected by its policies. Imposition of the poll tax on Scotland a year before the rest of the country only affirmed loathing for Margaret Thatcher and her government.

It is generally acknowledged that Margaret Thatcher's policy favoured mainly the middle class but according to the facts presented in the thesis even their life during that turbulent era was not very easy. Her policy certainly meant worsening of living conditions of lower classes. On the other hand the period was stimulating for private sector and for small entrepreneurs. Although I cannot agree with all aspects of her policy, I regard Margaret Thatcher and her actions with great respect because of her endeavour, hard work, determination and courage to propose and establish ideas she believed to be right even at the risk of losing her popularity and power. I appreciate that her policy was not short of concept and continuity. I find her an exceptional politician and certainly the most distinctive British Prime Minister since the Second World War even though her policy was harsh and remains controversial. Finally, I cannot omit her intermediary role in the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States which contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union and to the subsequent restoration of democracy in our country.

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## RESUMÉ

Cílem bakalářské práce bylo kriticky zhodnotit dopad politických kroků Margaret Thatcherové na ekonomiku a společnost Velké Británie. V této práci byly analyzovány jednotlivé oblasti jejího politického působení. Statistická data a názory odborníků, kteří se zabývají danou problematikou, byly zpracovány tak, aby vytvořily co možná nejobjektivnější obraz společnosti ve Velké Británii nejen během vlády Margaret Thatcherové, ale i po ní.

ANOTACE

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Anna Pecháčková
<b>Katedra nebo ústav:</b>	Katedra anglického jazyka
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	PhDr. Světlana Obenausová, MLitt, Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2015

<b>Název práce:</b>	Vliv politických kroků Margaret Thatcherové na ekonomiku a společnost Velké Británie
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	The influence of Margaret Thatcher's policy on the economy and society of Great Britain
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zhodnocení vlivu politiky Margaret Thatcherové na společnost a ekonomii Velké Británie. Zabývá se nejen klíčovými událostmi během její vlády, ale především analýzou a evaluací jednotlivých oblastí jejího politického působení, zejména ekonomie, průmyslu, zaměstnanosti, politiky domů a bytů a sociálních služeb.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Margaret Thatcherová, Velká Británie, politika, ekonomie, společnost, průmysl, zaměstnanost, politika domů a bytů, sociální služby
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The bachelor thesis aims to evaluate the influence of Margaret Thatcher's policy on the economy and the society of Great Britain. It is concerned not only with key events of her appointment but mainly with the analysis and criticism of her policy in terms of economy, industry, employment, housing policy and social services.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Margaret Thatcher, Great Briain, politics, economy, society, industry, employment, housing policy, social services
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	54 s.
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	Angličtina