



## Scottish identity and British Nationalism (Post WWII)

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### Abstract

Scottish people are depriving of separate identity crisis which is independent from British identity. They believe in their separate identity and nationalism apart from Britain, Great Britain and United Kingdom. Scotland had been part of Great Britain since 1707 act of union and its self identity was compromised by Great Britain nationality and identity. It remained the part of expanding and establishing British Empire throughout the globe. Although Scottish national party was formed in 1934 but still Great Britain and UK politics remained under the influence of two party system Labour and Liberal parties and struggling for independent Scotland. Political and social changes are the key factors to determine the separation progress and act as methodology for this topic. This paper throws light on Scottish identity and the British nationality and identity turning into Scottish identity and nationality with the passage of time in four centuries especially the last three decades.

**Keywords:** Scottish Identity, Crisis, British Nationalism, Britain, Great Britain, United Kingdom

### 1. Introduction

United Kingdom is an island country located on the northern west coast of main land Europe with full name as United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These islands are called British Isles and have two major countries in it i.e. United Kingdom and republic of Ireland. United Kingdom consists of four major areas England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. England is major populous area of UK with almost 84% of total population, with major city London and major English speaking population. Wales is situated in the west of England with 4.7% population of total population, with major city Cardiff and English and Welsh as major languages. Both Wales and England collectively are called Britain (England+ Wales= Britian). Scotland is situated in north of England with Edinburg as major city and English and Scottish as major language. England, Wales and Scotland all three collectively are called Great Britain (England + Wales +Scotland = Great Britain). Northern Ireland is situated in island of Scotland with 2.8% population of UK, major city Belfast and Irish and English as major languages. England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland all four collectively are called United Kingdom (England+ Wales+ Scotland+ Northern Ireland= United Kingdom).

United Kingdom is a monarch democratic country with crown as head of state. Religiously, people of UK are Protestants. Island of Ireland was a part of United Kingdom but due to religious differences between Catholics and Protestants, island of Ireland was divided into two parts in 1921, catholic part became a separate country as Republic of Ireland. While protestant population portion of island of Ireland remained a part of UK as Northern Ireland.

England was initially a separate country since ninth century and became properly a country under Norman dynasty. In sixteenth century, Wales alliance with England under the crown Henry VIII and in Glorious revolution 1688, proper formation of Britain was done. In 1707, act of union Scotland joined the union and country submerged as Great Britain under the crown James VI. In 1801 act of union, Ireland merged with Great Britain and formation of United Kingdom was done. But still every portion of United Kingdom has a separate assembly and representation in United Kingdom.

Each constituent of United Kingdom had been a separate entity throughout history with a separate flag. England had a white flag with a red plus like cross called Saint George's cross which was adopted in fifteenth century by the country England. Scotland had a blue flag with a multiplication like white cross called Saint Andrew's cross which was adopted in sixteenth century by the country Scotland. Ireland had a white flag with a multiplication like Red Cross called Saint Patrick's cross which was adopted in sixteenth century by the country Ireland. Scotland and Britain united under Act of union 1707 and adopted a mixture of Saint George's cross England flag and Saint Andrew's cross Scotland flag called as Great Union Flag or King's colours. Great Britain and Ireland formally united under act of union i.e. United kingdom 1801 and adopted a mixture of Saint Patrick's cross Ireland flag and Great Union Flag called as Union flag or Union Jack.

### 2. Literature Review

Available literature including books, articles, news papers, pamphlet and face book pages of Scottish independent party are assessed to determine the Scottish identity and British nationalism. Many recent books and articles stress on British integrity and impact of Brexit on British identity and separation movements. Most authentic book on

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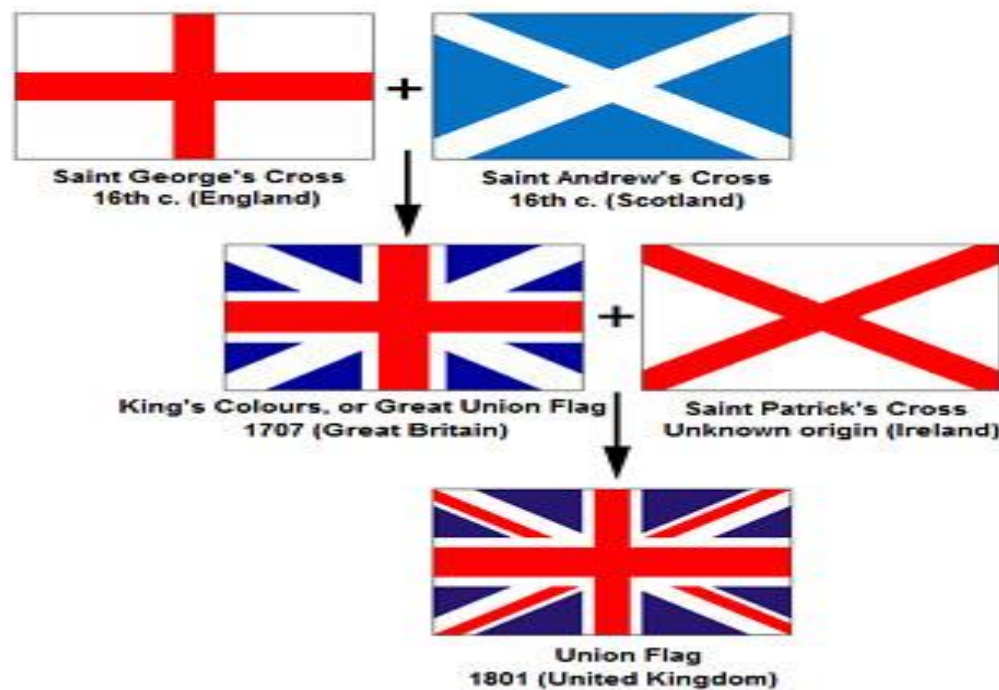
history of Scotland is Neil Oliver 's book entitled *A History of Scotland* (Oliver N. 2009) which gives history of Scotland from 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD and continues from Vikings to formation of great Britain and modern day. The same history was filmed by BBC as a history of Scotland which consists of 6 episodes on Scotland, 5 episodes on Britain and total 43 episodes are developed under Neil Oliver's book on history.

A recent work on Scottish identity was done by Ross bond entitled *National Identities and 2014 Independence Referendum in Scotland* (Ross. B. 2005) has discussed the results of referendum of 2014, nationalism in United Kingdom and British social union. But it has missed the historical background of separation movement in Scotland and post Brexit scenario of Great Britain.

David Mccrone has worked on Scottish identity, sociological and social behavior of f Scottish people published different articles on Scottish identity like 2010 article entitled *Claiming National Identity* (Mccrone. Bechhofer. 2010). the same authors had discussed the issues in 2001 entitled *Understanding Scotland: the Sociology of a Nation* (Mccrone. 2001) and article published in 2005 entitled *Cultural Capital in an Understated Nation: the Case of Scotland* (Mccrone, 2005). Same writer has discussed about British identity and discussed different separation movements especially Scotland referendum in his article entitled *The End of Being Britain* (Mccrone. 2005) in 2014. But the writer has left the Scottish referendum held in 2014 and 1979 which had a voting history. The writer has also left impact of European Union and Brexit on Scotland.

### Progress of United Kingdom's flag through times

#### Evolution of the Union Jack



Richard Kelly and Frank Bechhofer has discussed the identity of Scottish people in post devolution Scotland which gave Scottish parliament power of taxes and financial power in its areas in an article entitled *Birth, Blood and Belonging: identity claims in Post Devolution Scotland* (Richard. Bechhofer. 2005) published in 2005 and have discussed three types of identities in Scotland England migrants to Scotland making blood or birth claims, England migrants to Scotland with belongings and Scottish with belongings. But the writers have missed the referendums of Scotland in 1979 and 2014 and their results.

John M. Mackenzie has also discussed the British identity in his article entitled *Empire and National Identities: the case of Scotland* (Mackenzie.M. J. 1997) which he read in September 1997 at institute of historical research, gives contribution of Scottish people in building empire and controlling colonies along with England people. He has missed the formation of Great Britain and separation movement in Scotland.

Emma Combes, Sally Hibbert and Richard Varey have discussed the Scottish identity with symbols in their article entitled *Consuming Identity: the Case of Scotland* (Combes. Hibbert. Varey. 2001) published in 2001. They have given symbols like Tartan and Whiskey that unite and promote Scottish identity in Scotland people.

David McCollum has discussed Scottish and British identity under the influence of Brexit in an article entitled *Scotland and Brexit: identity, belonging and citizenship in uncertain times* (McCullum. D. 2020) and has discussed the impact of Covid 19, Brexit, European Union and world economy on Scottish people and its politics. He has discussed the Brexit results and expressed the people anxiety in leaving European Union. But he has not included Scottish referendum 2014 and future of Great Britain if Scotland becomes independent and neither discussed impact of devolution on Scotland since 1998.

Natalie Braber has discussed the Scottish identity under the article *local and National Identity in Glasgow* (Braber.N. 2008) and have discussed two kinds of groups in Scotland , one is Scottish and loves to live in Glasgow while other is England migrant , still not being Scottish, he/she still loves Glasgow more than cities of England and preferably loves to live in Glasgow.

Scotland government official websites are also a great source of information like the Scotland and history of Scotland. The sites provide ethnicity, population, religious, social and demographic values of Scottish people, their identity and their place in Great Britain.

Paul Ward and Richard J. Finlay has discussed the British identities since 1707 in his article *British identities since 1707*(Ward .P. Finlay. 2001) and have elaborated that British identities flourished since mid 1970's . There is an increase in national consciousness in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland since 1997 devolution. The writer has encouraged the identities as they are like fluid to sustain the body of United Kingdom. The writer has discussed the Great Britain colonies, common wealth, Gibraltar and Falkland islands as British identity and considered it a positive factor in Great Britain policies. The writer has missed the separation movement, impact of European Union and other factors in economics of United Kingdom.

Steve Murdoch and Andrew Mackillop have discussed Scottish and British identity in an article *fighting for identity: Scottish Military experiences c.1550-1900* (Murdoch. Mackillop. 2021) and explored the role of Scottish rural population participation in military for sake of wealth and success. The people from Scotland settled in different parts of world and United States of America. The writer has not discussed the union of states 1707 and 1801.

Sam Rohrer and James Gilley have discussed the Scottish independence movement in his article entitled *the Quest for Independent Scotland: the impact of Culture, Economics and International Relation Theory on Votes of Self Determination* (Rohrer. Gilley. 2020) and has discussed the impact of Scottish referendum 2014 and British Brexit referendum 2016 which had political and economical impact on Scottish people and their political parties demand another referendum for an independent Scotland with tied with European union.

Sundas Ali and Anthony Heath have discussed the problem of British identities in their article entitled *Future Identities: Changing Identities in the UK-the next 10 years* (Ali. S. Heath.A. 2013) and discussed the British identities, prides, symbols, belongings and impact of European Union policies on these identities and social contracts. This study was done with collaboration of UK government and future policy building. But the writers have missed the Scottish referendum, increased catholic population and Irish and Scottish independence movements on Britain integration and identities.

### 3. Scottish identity and British Nationalism

Scotland joined with England and Wales in 1603 due to not due to non availability of any heir from Queen Elizabeth. Thus one man inherited all three kingdoms that is known as James VI of Scotland and James I of England under same king. While Scotland politically joined Britain under Act of Union 1707 for being united under one crown and three kingdoms joined renamed as Great Britain where King James (VI) of Scotland became king of England and Wales as well and formation of Great Britain was done. This union enlarged in 1801 when Ireland was included in the union under act of union 1801 which passed on 1 Jan 1801 by both parliament of Ireland and parliament of great Britain by merging the two entities to form United Kingdom, abolishing the Irish Legislature and setting 100 MP for west minister lower house and 32 Lord upper house seats and country was called as United Kingdom. This kingdom reduced its size in 1921 when Catholic Irish country was formed as the Republic of Ireland while Protestant Irish remained part of United Kingdom as Northern Ireland. This divide was based on religion making Protestant Ireland and Catholic Ireland which rose unrest among people of Ireland and a period of trouble in Ireland especially in Belfast capital city of Ireland continued till 1998 as Good Friday Agreement was signed and people in both regions had soft borders and free movement across Island of Ireland.

In early 1973 UK joined European Economic Community (EEC) letting to trade with European Countries which boasted the economy of country specially areas in Scotland and Northern Ireland. As Scotland wanted its share in

this economical boast, the people demanded freedom from Great Britain, to join this new economical alliance. Thus separation identity crisis and separation movement started in Scotland.

In 1979 referendum in Scotland for independent Scotland happened but it miserably failed as polling ratio of electoral votes was less than 40%. While 51% voted for United Kingdom and 49% voted for devolution of powers for Scottish freedom. Although its result was in favor of independent Scotland with 84% votes but it was rejected by UK Govt. due to less turn out. Most of the Scottish historian and social scientists like David McCollum, Richard Kelly and others have ignored and not discussed its impacts due to its voidness.

In 1994 UK joined European Economic Area (EEA) which allowed Single market and free market trade among its member countries. England's capital London became business hub while Scotland and Northern Ireland economy and trade boomed. These trade agreements enhanced national identities in Scottish, Irish and English people. Although Great Britain was having trade with other European nations since centuries but those trades were with high taxes, complex trade agreement, specific trade goods and specific trade zones. But EEC and EEA gave equal trade opportunities to Europeans to trade, sell and buy without taxation in whole Europe trade zone. Now a Scottish person could sale and purchase with French person without consent of British identity and consent of UK and France Govt. these zones enhanced Scottish, British, Irish identities and suppressed British identity.

In 1997, Scottish Devolution Referendum was held with the question, "Do you Agree that there should be a Scottish Parliament as proposed by the government?" . The result was yes by 74.29% votes. In 1999 Scottish parliament was established with 60% turn out votes and this parliament had powers of Tax varying, tax implementing and tax collecting. Scottish social scientist and historian David McCrone have given wattage to this devolution and establishment of Scottish parliament as a step toward independent Scotland. The establishment of assemblies in both Ireland and Scotland under this 1997 act was a great leap toward their independence goal and their national identity. This act enhanced the Scottish identity and decreased the importance of British identity which was dominant since three centuries.

1997 devolution act gave Scottish people a major identity in form of their own parliament, members of Scottish parliament (MSP's) which can vote and make decision on Environment, agriculture, sports, housing, health, education, transport, law and order. While reserved matters are immigration, defense, foreign policy, benefits and social security, employment, broadcasting, trade and industry, nuclear energy, data protection and constitution.

Today there are 59 total members of Scottish parliament with 45 seats of Scottish National Party as majority party. This party was founded in 1934 and is working for independent Scotland with good ties and relation with European Union and independent from crown and British identity. This party came into powers since 2021 and is demanding for independent Scotland and working on Scottish identity. This devolution gave Scottish people hope and direction to their identity and this intern gave rise to local political parties instead of two political system i.e. liberal party, conservative party and labour party. Thus this act gave rise to Scottish identity which was suppressed in three centuries and in thirty years; people of Scotland rejected the traditional political parties system and elected people who are working for independent Scotland.

In 2014, Brexit referendum was held in United Kingdom in all of its components Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. The results of this referendum were in favour of leaving European Union with 51.89 % to 48.11 remaining with EU. But the results were astonishing that England and Wales being part of Britain voted in favour of leaving EU with 53.4% and 52.5% respectively. While Scotland being part of Great Britain was against leaving EU and voted for stay with EU with 68% stay votes. Similarly, Northern Ireland being part of United Kingdom was also against leaving EU and voted 55.8% stay votes.

These results show a breach in Britain and Great Britain political ideology. Scotland being part of Great Britain is parting the ways with people of Britain and joining hands with people of European Union. This shows that Scottish identity is overcoming the British identity. The Brexit result also enhanced the separate identity conflict in people of Scotland and Ireland that they demanded free Scotland and Ireland. The result also helped in emerging new political force and identity in form of Scottish national party and Irish Sinn Fein party. This Irish republican political party dedicated to Unification of Island of Ireland merging Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland as one country and ending British rule in Northern Ireland.

Brexit gave five years time to implement and leaving European Union and it enhanced a Scottish identity in people of Scotland and Scottish National Party emerged a new party which wanted an independent Scotland. In elections of 2016 and 2021, Scottish national party emerged a majority party while in 2011, 2007, 2003 and previous elections; Scottish labour party was ruling the region. This shows the dramatic change in term of British identity to Scottish identity having an inclination of favours from Great Britain to European Union.

On 24 December 2020, the Brexit happened with a trade deal between United Kingdom and European Union. But Scottish people rose voice against it, for being passed by Westminster parliament London instead of being passed by Scottish parliament. The people of Scotland and its parliament rejected the decision of Great Britain and United

Kingdom assemblies and demanded their own identity as Scottish parliament as their decision making body. Although UK is criticising that trade deal is good for Scotland and Northern Ireland and they can continue to trade with European Union as earlier without any change in their agreements. But Scottish people being a separate identity are demanding for their own freedom and nullification of Brexit.

After 2021 majority win, Scottish national party demanded cancel the Brexit or a referendum on independent Scotland. The Scottish parliament leader Nicola Sturgeon demanded a fresh referendum on Scotland's independence must be held, because things have changed with Brexit. But UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson rejected the demand as there should be a generation gap between two referendums like 1979 to 2014. Prime minister urged a gap of at least thirty five to forty years for next referendum and said that next referendum should be held in 2055.

#### 4. Conclusion

It is evident Scottish identity and British nationalism were together for three centuries since 1707 act of union and Scottish people helped in the glory of Great Britain. Scottish people have a separate language, symbols of glory, and national flag along with British symbols and flag. As trade and relations wide spread between Scotland and European Union after EEC and EU agreements, separation ideology got rooted in the minds of Scottish people.

This ideological shift gave rise to political parties whose basic agenda was separation, Scottish National party which was a minor since 1934-1998, became a major party after 1998 devolution act and gained majority in Scottish parliament after Brexit 2014. This party gained full majority in 2021 elections by 45/60 seats and demanded a renew referendum and separation of Scotland, ending British identity and United Kingdom federation. Although, UK prime Minister Boris Johnson has rejected their demand. But in upcoming years, this bubble can explode, ending United Kingdom fate and finishing British identity, turning into freedom of Scotland as independent Scotland.

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