

An Independent Scotland?:

Brexit's Impact on Scottish European Union and United Kingdom Membership

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Introduction

Research Question:

What is Brexit's impact on Scottish European Union and United Kingdom membership?

Why is this important?

- Experiment in modern history
- Test of sovereignty
- UK first state to leave the EU
- Seen as example for other states
- Scotland part of UK for centuries
 - No country has ever left such a huge political union
- Impacts millions of citizens
 - Living situations, social services, etc.

Thesis: Brexit imposed a situation on Scotland where it can no longer benefit from both memberships in the European Union and the United Kingdom.

History of the European Union, Brexit, and Scotland

European Union

- Post WWI, Europe lay in ruins (Dinan, 2014)
 - Feelings of unsettlement and fear among civilians; Solution: European Unity
 - "United States of Europe" movement catching momentum, but fell apart when Hitler rose to power
- Damaged aftermath one again; Europeans wanted change
 - Result: European Community (EC) (Dinan, 2014)
 - Reformed into the European Defense Community (EDC), but also failed due to German rearmament
 - Britain not accepted at first because of split interests and French opposition; accepted in 1970s
 - European Unity talks failed again when 70s oil crisis erupted
- Jacques Delors brought original EC members to a single market for economic cohesions, grew popularity
 - Maastricht Treaty established the European Union (EU) known today (Dinan, 2014)
- Member states joined in two large waves; EU grew quickly in size
 - Created the Lisbon Treaty (EU constitution)
- Today EU has 27 member states; deals with inflation, terrorism, immigration, and manages the European stage

Brexit

- Great Britain began seeing elemental membership issues in the EU
- Immigration in UK rose in 2004; 10 new member states joined the EU
 - 129,000 new immigrants to the UK; 120,000 additional came in 2007 ("Brexit", 2019)
- UK citizens believed this would threaten British national identity and heritage
- Prime Minister David Cameron starting to lose favor among his Conservative Party
 - Promised referendum on EU membership to appease his party
- June 2016: UK majority voted to leave the EU (52.4% England, 52.5% Wales Leave; but 62% Scotland, 55.8% in Northern Ireland Remain) ("Brexit", 2019)
- Cameron resigned; Theresa May new Prime Minister
 - May invoked Article 50 of the European Union, the formal process to withdraw membership
 - May also resigned, Boris Johnson new Prime Minister ("Brexit", 2019)
- Concerns: UK citizens living in EU and vice versa, border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, EU Divorce amount

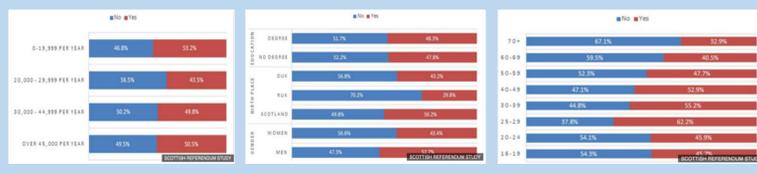
Anglo-Scottish Union

- Scotland originally established itself as an independent nation
- 1603: Queen Elizabeth died without an heir to the throne; James VI of Scotland inherited the throne (Mullen, 2016)
- Kingdoms of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland ruled now under one man
 - No formal process of unification enacted
- 18th Century Scotland poor, rural area, in need of economic help (Mullen, 2016)
- England saw opportunity to unite, in fear of France using Scottish land to attack
- 1707 Treaty of the Union brought full unity between the two nations
- Both kingdoms became the new United Kingdom of Great Britain (Mullen, 2016)
 - New parliament (considered continuation of England's, not Scotland's, could only send representatives)
- Scotland also keep its own laws, institutions, churches (Mullen, 2016).
- 1960s: Growing Scottish Nationalist Sentiments

The Rise of Scottish Nationalism

- 1960s: Nationalist parties beginning to form; winning seats in Parliament (Mullen, 2016)
 - Home rule now on political agendas
- Royal Commission formed; could not agree on any set of proposals, so turned into national referendums (Mullen, 2016)
- Scottish citizens vote 51.6% in favor for devolution (Mullen, 2016)
 - Did not reach the 60% majority needed; Sovereignty talks dwindled
- 1997 Labour Party adopted sovereignty ideas into its agenda
- 1998 draft for Scottish sovereignty created (Mullen, 2016)
 - Scotland was able to take some powers back from England for its own
- Nationalist sentiments continued to grow (Mullen, 2016)

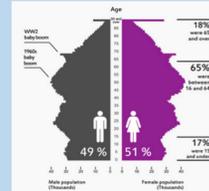
- **The Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014**
- 2008: UK government created the National Convention to discuss Scotland's future (Mullen, 2016)
 - Decided for further devolution of powers; Scottish government responded pushing for independence
- 2011: Scottish Nationalist Party wins majority of seats in Parliament (Mullen, 2016).
 - Promised referendum on independence
- 2012, October: Edinburgh Agreement of 2012 (Mullen, 2016)
 - Two terms on referendum ballot: 1. "Should Scotland be an independent country?" 2. Yes or No options for answer
 - Section 30 of the Scotland Act enacted formally for referendum
 - Needed majority vote and Westminster Parliament ratifies it
- 2014, May: Campaigning begins (Mullen, 2016)
 - Close margin between opposing sides
- 2014, September 18: People of Scotland vote : 86% turnout: 55.3% voted Remain 44.7% voted Leave (Mullen, 2016)
- Results Demographics:



Scottish Nationalist Sentiments Today

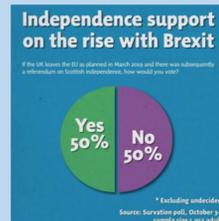
Demographics of Scotland: Who Can Vote?

- Scotland population mid-2015: 5.373 million (Dalzell, 2017)
- Scotland entering a declining birth rate phase and encourages migration to grow population
- Wants to keep EU policies of net migration (Dalzell, 2017)
- Legal age to vote: 16
- Possible turnout: 4.467 million
- Median voting age: 48
- Residency: 5.295403 million (Dalzell, 2017)
 - Scottish born: 4.411884 million
 - UK born, not Scotland: 514,235
 - EU born: 134,910
- Demographics important to know how different groups vote
 - Target specific populations if a next campaign happens



Recent Polling

- 2018: Scottish Nationalist Party commissioned survey ("Poll: Half of Scots would vote for Scottish independence after Brexit", 2018)
- Conclusions found half of Scots would now vote for Scottish independence post-Brexit
 - An increase from the formal 2014 referendum
- Brexit has increased support for Scottish independence
- Chris Deering, director of the Reform Scotland movement
- Was a firm "Remain" vote in the 2014 referendum (Leicester, 2019)
 - Post-Brexit, now open to the option of Scotland leaving the UK
 - Claims others who are thinking similarly to him and switching their previous opinions



The Benefits and Detriments of Membership in the European Union and United Kingdom

Benefits from Membership in the European Union

- Scotland receives significant funding from EU (Scottish Nationalist Party, 2019)
 - Improves lives of citizens, grows businesses, and promotes Scotland globally
- 2014-2020: Scotland received £410 million from the EU Regional Development Fund
 - Improves infrastructure, builds a low-carbon Scotland
- Funding from EU goes to local Scottish development projects (Scottish Nationalist Party, 2019)
 - Orkney Research Campus, the Rothesay Pavilion, and Highland's low carbon travel
- European Union Social Fund founded addition £400 million (Scottish Nationalist Party, 2019)
 - Funding towards impoverished sections and guiding people into employment
- European Union European Structural Fund (Scottish Nationalist Party, 2019)
 - Fund bolstered 100,000 people into employment, created over 40,000 new jobs in Scotland, and backed 80,000 Scottish enterprises, with 17,000 being new businesses. (Scottish Nationalist Party, 2019)

Detriments from Membership in the European Union

- Scottish taxpayers no longer net beneficiaries of EU
 - Now pay £64 per person more than they get back from Brussels (Johnson, 2016)
- Scots pay £1.4 billion towards the EU every year; Receive almost £1.1 billion (Johnson, 2016)
 - Net contribution to EU £337 million per year (Johnson, 2016)
 - EU budget growing at smaller rate and funding being moved around
- Scottish exports to EU also beginning to stagnate (Johnson, 2016)
 - Exports doubling towards rest of world
- Scottish taxpayers hold unelected bureaucrats accountable on how to spend their money
- Argument that Scotland can secure its own trade deals with the growing economies of US, China, and India (Johnson, 2016)
- Scotland control who can or cannot live instead of EU

Benefits from Membership in the United Kingdom

- By staying in the UK, Scotland's economy grows with the UK ("What Staying in the UK means for Scotland", 2014)
 - Thousands of Scottish jobs are connected to UK economy
- Scotland uses pound as currency ("What Staying in the UK means for Scotland, 2014")
 - One of the strongest and oldest currencies in the world
 - Backed by 31 million taxpayers and the Bank of England
- UK is Scotland's best trading partner ("What Staying in the UK means for Scotland, 2014")
 - 1/3 Scottish exports go to England, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- Public services more affordable ("What Staying in the UK means for Scotland, 2014")
 - Access to 200+ UK institutions
 - BBC, National Lottery, Her Majesty's Passport Office, etc.

Detriments of Membership in the United Kingdom

- England using Scotland for self-benefit (Daileda, 2014)
 - Resulting in Scotland having little say in own governance
- Scottish politics on the political scale are further Left (Liberal) (Daileda, 2014)
 - Opposite of England's political ideologies, leaning further Right (Conservative)
 - House of Commons in London is run by a Conservative majority
 - Governs Scotland, clashing political ideologies
 - Example: Scotland is anti-nuke, however England stores nuke supply in Scotland
- Oil reserves (Daileda, 2014)
 - The North Sea home to an extensive amounts of oil reserves
 - Brought 30-40 years of revenue to the UK
 - If Scotland become independent, the oil reserves would belong to them
 - Bringing economic independence to Scotland

Impact on Scottish Nationalism

- Brexit created a situation where Scotland can no longer enjoy both memberships in the EU and UK
 - Can only remain in one
- The people of Scotland, along with the government, must rethink the benefits and detriments of both memberships
- Surveys commissioned by political parties are not formal referendums, but are able to grasp an opinion of the people
 - Recent polling has shown that Brexit increased support for Scottish independence since the last 2014 referendum
 - 2014: 55.3 percent voted to Remain in the United Kingdom, 44.7 voted to Leave (Mullen, 2016)
 - 2016: Brexit votes for the UK to leave the EU
 - 2018: Split 50/50% to Remain and Leave in the UK ("Poll: Half of Scots would vote for Scottish independence after Brexit", 2018)
 - Shifting opinions

What the Future Holds for Scotland

- The people of Scotland have lived their days conventionally
 - Benefits of both EU and UK memberships
- Brexit shifted things
 - As a result, Brexit could possibly push Scotland towards becoming a sovereign nation
- January 2020, UK formally left the EU (Evans, 2020)
 - Currently in transition period allowing free movement in the EU and UK citizens
 - Still working out how post-transition period will look like
- If Scotland truly wants to leave the UK, it needs to gain as much popular support as soon as it can and act on it
 - Waiting too long again lose the people's interest
- International stage is watching every move

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