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## The Quest for an Independent Scotland: The Impact of Culture, Economics, and International Relations Theory on Votes of Self-Determination

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## **Introduction**

Scotland and England have always had an at best tenuous relationship with one another. Though they have been united for over 300 years, this union did not emerge without conflict. In the ensuing centuries, a new common British identity was formed, one centered around the growth of empire. Yet the politics, economics and culture of these two nations have remained distinct. In the decades following the end of the Collectivist Consensus, these differences have become ever more pronounced, leading to calls for renewed Scottish independence. These calls came to a head in September of 2014 with a failed referendum on Scottish independence. The British referendum to leave the European Union during the summer of 2016 further exposed and exacerbated the schism between the two nations with the English voting to “leave” while the Scottish voted to “remain.”

Traditionally the explanation for this call to independence has been based primarily on policy and cultural differences that have remained in the United Kingdom yet culture and policy are not enough to explain fully the timing of the independence referenda. A more robust analysis of these events can be provided employing a three-tiered approach. First, we explore the well-researched path of cultural arguments for independence, paying particular attention to the decline in a united ‘British’ identity. Second, we examine the economic principles which help drive the cause of independence. Finally, we examine the international situation, specifically the emergence of an interstate environment that resembles many of the structural elements advanced Kant’s theoretical Pacific Union. The emergence of these international, perhaps transnational, elements represent a new and unique opportunity for small nation-states to declare independence from their former co-nationals so long as they exist within a refereed Pacific Union as compared to a predominantly realist state system. With these three factors, we believe a more complete picture of referenda timing can be provided.

## **Referenda Motivations: Culture**

The tenuous relationship between England and Scotland is long standing. Across the millennia, Scotland developed into its own national culture distinct from that of England or Wales (Allan, 2014). Scottish history reveals customs, symbols, and institutions that unite a people into common Scottish national identity that is distinct from neighboring national identities. Connected by this sense of nationality, as well as the decline of the collectivist consensus, many politicians openly questioned why they shared a government with national

groups possessing a divergent identity, and increasingly foreign policy goals (Bond & Rosie, 2002; Paterson, 1997). Through many centuries of conflict, Scotland and England have had intertwining but separate cultural and political developments. Scotland and England united their thrones with the marriage of James IV of Scotland and Margaret Tudor, the true culmination of this trend toward unification occurred with the Acts of Union in 1707, formally uniting the thrones of Scotland and England. This union, though beneficial in the international system, would not abolish long standing separate civil and political cultures, leading to attempts at rebellion by the Scots.

While neither a Stuart restoration nor an independent Scotland emerged from the Jacobite uprisings, the Scottish identity continued to pursue a unique course. During the Scottish Enlightenment notable innovations such as the scientific method and notable advances were made in medicine, agriculture and economics (Allan, 2014). These reforms played a role in maintaining a unique sense of accomplishment that could be tied with 'Scottishness.' Especially as these academic accomplishments transformed Scotland into a center of study attracting students from across Europe (Davie, 1961). This time and place had massive impacts on the way humanity thinks about the universe. It is no wonder that the Scottish preserved a unique and distinct sense of their national identity. However, in addition to a unique cultural perspective there are notable policy differences that exist between Scotland and England.

Modern London recognizes Scotland as a political entity with a territorial boundary (Paterson, 1994). It has its own legal system, political institutions, and religious institutions—Church of Scotland. Like their American cousins, the Scottish have fundamental differences with London over taxation and how the government utilizes those taxes (Keating, 2005; Winetrobe, 2001). All too often the policy favored at Westminster is opposed in Holyrood. Premieres Thatcher, Major, and Cameron consistently challenged divergent political opinions employing poll taxes, limitations on self-government, and regressive austerity (Mooney & Scott, 2011, 2012; Paterson, 2002; Scott & Wright, 2012). This has led an increasing number of Scots to reconsider the fundamental role of government and Westminster to the South. The recent cuts to social services proposed by Conservative governments have troubled many in Scotland who felt that the government in London did not represent their values (Arnott, 2005; Keating, 2005; Paterson, 1997). This division over policy issues has also increased the sentiment that there may be value in dissolving the political structures put in place since the Act of Union of 1707. The unique factors that contribute to the history of Scotland have produced a strong identity that is clearly distinct from 'Englishness.' These differences lead to continued questions regarding a potential political separation (Bond & Rosie, 2002; Curtice, 2011, 2013). Support for this political separation is encouraged because, in fact, they always have been separate (Paterson, 1994).

A separation from England would allow a Scotland government to again make decisions in accordance with the will and values of the Scottish people (Bromley & Curtice, 2003). Edinburgh, not London, would control taxation, vast energy resources, and the government bureaucracy. Most importantly, they would control the macroeconomics of Scotland. With the economic engine firmly beneath their own feet they could invest in their future (Adam *et al.* 2014 (Adam, Johnson, & Roantree, 2014). London was perceived as being more concerned with the vestiges of Empire than well-being of the Scots, as was witnessed in the Thatcher era dismantling of the Collectivist Consensus (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2014). With full devolution, policies governing education, the environment, and social welfare would be the priority of a

Scottish government, as described below (Mooney & Scott, 2011, 2012; Paterson, 2002; Scott & Wright, 2012).

### **A Decline in a Common Sense of Britishness**

As the British Empire's decline began to strike home, there is also the implication that 'Britishness' is an insufficient identity to tie together the residents of Great Britain into a unified national identity. While the idea of being 'British' is a term frequently used it remains a surprisingly nebulous concept when compared to academic work regarding the French, German, Russian, or American identity (Braudel, 1990; Harold, 1990; Szamuely, 1974). As noted by Kumar (2000) the majority of research into 'Britishness' has produced numerous and thorough works on constitutional history, economic history, and political thought. What remains unclear is how Englishness, Scottishness, and Britishness overlap, if at all. If 'Britishness' is declining in relevance as a social construct, what are the implications?

The British identity, rooted in the success of the British Empire proved quite flexible. During the 18th Century the United Kingdom and 'Britishness' served as the defender of Protestantism against a Catholic Europe (Robbins, 2005). Early in its history the social construct of 'Britishness' was defined by an outside geopolitical threat. Identifying Britishness as a Protestant nationality became increasingly difficult with the incorporation of Ireland into the United Kingdom. Increasing secularism in Europe also reduced the role of religion as a defining trait.

Following the decline of religious struggles in Europe the idea of being 'British' became closely tied to the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of the British Empire. The industrial growth of the United Kingdom was something that all of the member nations of the United Kingdom played a role in facilitating. In this sense, 'Britishness' became closely tied with industrialism, as well as a strong respect for functional and symbolic governing bodies, Parliament and the Monarchy. From the 18th through to the 20th Century 'Britishness' was tied closely to 'the Empire,' and possessed a missionary quality. It involved spreading the benefits of industrial society and the rule of law to the far corners of the globe. These objectives continued to trump historical national identities. Again, the idea of the British identity was defined in opposition to the colonial styles of the Germans and French (Gellner, 2009; Judd, 1997; Tidrick, 2009). Rather than cementing an independent rational, Britishness continued to be a concept that manifested only when presented with a clear out-group or 'other'.

The 20th Century proved a clear challenge to the British identity. Early in the 20th Century the British identity continued to stand for the benefits of Empire and in opposition to the image of the more heavy-handed Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Empires. This pattern held through World War II where the British identity stood in opposition to Fascist Europe. However, with the end of World War II the United Kingdom found itself in a very different political world. With the loss of the British Empire and the United Kingdom's declining industrial supremacy, the two main pillars of the British identity in the 19th Century were now absent. Complicating the concept of 'Britishness' further the rise of the European Union and the United Kingdom's decision to join the organization made it more challenging to define the British identity as a political counterpoint to something occurring on 'the continent.' At the same time a major political realignment occurred within the United Kingdom. The Conservative Party increasing appealed to an English constituency, while Labour strongholds emerged in the 'Celtic Fringe.' King (2012) argues that Scotland's independence movement is postmodern in the sense that it is

grounded in ideological preferences rather than traditional national identities such as culture, language, or ethnicity.

Following the Labour Party's return to power in 1997 after 18 years of opposition, Prime Minister Tony Blair delivered on a key promise that Labour had long been making to Scottish voters: devolutionary legislation to transfer some powers away from Westminster to the newly-created Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, and Northern Ireland Assembly. For much of the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, social science scholarship on nationalism had typically focused primarily on state-level analysis. Deutsch (1966) conceptualized the diffusion of nationalism as entailing the extension of political, cultural, and economic processes from the core to the periphery. Hobsbawm (1992) heralded the end of regional nationalism altogether, arguing that globalization would render regional nationalism obsolete.

Nevertheless, the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have been characterized by a resurgence of nationalism on the European continent and in other parts of the world. Francis Fukuyama (2018) documented this trend in his important book *Identity: the Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Fukuyama traces this trend back to Plato's Republic in which Socrates described the notion of Thymos to two young, aristocratic Athenians. Socrates described Thymos as the seat of judgments of worth and the part of the soul that craves external recognition. Fukuyama argues that the modern concept of identity unites three phenomena: Thymos, the distinction between the inner vs. outer self, and an evolving conceptualization of dignity Fukuyama (2018, p. 37).

The notion that the Scottish feel looked down upon by the English is both prevalent in the literature and palpable when one visits and speaks with Scottish people. This notion is not unique to the Scottish people, and in fact exists among many groups that feel their worth is under recognized by the society writ large. Fukuyama defines these groups' "quests for equal recognition" as identity politics (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 22)." Fukuyama argues that disparate groups' demands for recognition are culminating in a period of pronounced identity politics in both Europe and the United States and on both the left and right.

Fukuyama argues against this trend, arguing that countries such as the United States need to work to create a larger sense of identity centered around commitment to liberal values and democracy (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 122). This resurgence of identity politics is essentially resurgent nationalism in a country such as the United Kingdom which essentially unites four different nations into one state. Aforementioned, the United Kingdom has built a sense of nationhood on the basis of shared goals such as the promulgation of empire. Nevertheless, the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have seen a shift toward a narrower conceptualization of nationhood linked closely to ethnicity, and thus a rejection of the shared or overlapping identity of Britishness.

In a 2012 speech at Strathclyde University Nicola Sturgeon, the Scottish Nationalist Party's leader (and current Scottish First Minister) traced the history of the Scottish independence movement. Sturgeon argued that the Scottish nation once had a sovereign, independent state and then gave their independence away. She argued that the subsequent 300 years had been characterized by a loss of self-determination as the Scottish sacrificed for the British Empire while losing their own way of life. Sturgeon opined that devolution had given Scotland a remarkable opportunity to reassert its independence. "A parliament that was intended to kill demand for independence stone dead, but is now governed by a pro-independence majority (Duerr, 2015, p. 1)."

Beland and Lecours (2010) argued that regional nationalist movements have not only survived the process of globalization, but have thrived. Scholars such as Lijphart (1977) have

long maintained that consociational or power sharing agreements can reduce tensions between majorities and minorities in states that have reinforcing cleavages. Nevertheless, a common criticism of consociational arrangements is that they can make national identities, which are fluid, and make them concrete (Beland & Lecours, 2010).

By the early 21st Century, the British identity is perhaps at its historical nadir. The British are no longer, ‘the Protestant nation,’ their identity is no longer tied to the triumphal spread of industrialization; the British Empire is gone, and Europe no longer serves as a psychological out-group to define what the British are not. As a result of the weakening of the British identity traditional national identities have reasserted themselves. In addition to the reassertion of the Scottish and Welsh national identities, the English have also become increasingly nationalistic. The presence of an English, but not a British, World Cup team is a clear illustration. In fact, the 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes survey identified football as a leading driving force of sectarianism in Scotland. The potential demise of the British identity is not entirely shocking. The Scottish, English, and Welsh have long and proud histories as distinct national groups. Without the emergence of a new mission for the British identity it seems plausible that it may fade into history. In this sense the rise of Welsh, Scottish, and English nationalism is no different than the emergence of a strong Hungarian, Romanian, Croatian, and German sense of nationality that inevitably trumped the idea of belonging to Hapsburg Austria-Hungary and the emergence of a cluster of nation-states in Central Europe.

Current polling reveals this trend towards an attitude of Scottishness and away from Britishness continues even after the referendum of 2014. As revealed by the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, from the period of December 2014 through March of 2015, a five percent decrease in self-identification as British is observed. In the same instrument, a four percent increase is witnessed in self-identification as Scottish, with a one percent increase in other identification occurring. Interestingly, over the previous three years, from 2011 through April of 2014, the general trend was towards some mixture of Scottish and British, with a slight decrease in the number of Scottish only respondents (ScotCen, 2015). While the question of Scotland as an independent nation has been settled, the electoral landslide by the Scottish National Party in the 2015 and 2019 UK parliamentary elections reveals that this question of being British or Scottish is not ultimately answered.

### **Referenda Motivations: Economic and Policy Divergence**

In the case of the Scottish Independence movement that came to a head in September of 2014, one of the largest factor in play was that of economics. Strong arguments were presented by both the pro-independence (or YES campaign) and pro-Union (or NO campaign) forces that were grounded in rational economic justifications. These arguments, and their impact on the timing of the referenda movement were predicated on four major notions, and a fifth has come to fruition. First is that an independent Scotland would be able to support itself due to strong oil prices for North Sea oil, oil which should be the sole property of the Scottish people. The second economic argument is based on an increase in national tourism and whisky exports, something the YES campaign believe will be buoyed by independence. Third, Scotland has a distinct political economic arrangement from the rest of the United Kingdom, and with independence would be able to allocate funds in a manner much more in tune with Scottish as opposed to English sentiments (Scottish National Government, 2014). Fourth, the independence movement is heavily predicated on the notion that Scotland, though politically independent from the United

Kingdom, would remain at the very least a heavy trading partner, or ideally would remain in monetary union with the remainder of the United Kingdom. It is interesting to note that the economic and financial reasoning for the independence referenda are perhaps the bulk of the argument put forth in the document “Scotland’s Future” as published by the YES campaign. The final argument, which has emerged solely in the aftermath of the 2014 referendum, is that the prospect of a hard or no deal Brexit will have particularly deleterious economic ramifications for Scotland. The rest of this section will focus on each of these economic reasons for the referenda, examining why September of 2014 was a key moment in the political economic history of Scotland to push for independence, and how the arguments about economics have shifted since the referendum.

Perhaps the largest burden of the choice of independence referenda timing rested with the price of North Sea Oil, and with the claims Scotland has on said oil deposits. In 2013, over £13.5 billion were being invested annually in the oil and gas sector, with a further investment of £100 billion already planned (Scottish National Government, 2014). The price of crude oil averaged well over \$100 per barrel for a period beginning in February of 2011 and remained in a pattern over \$100 for most of the next three years, a key time for the independence campaign. It appeared the trend of oil prices at the \$100 would continue for some time, though the subsequent collapse of North Sea oil prices has made the argument for resource rights much more complex (Investmine: Mining, 2016). This situation would allow Scotland to make a large profit from oil and gas royalties, which would allow for the governmental coffers to remain full. It is also predicted that Scotland would account for 98.8 percent of all UK offshore oil production during the period of 2011 through 2041 (Kemp & Stephen, 2011). Even with a transition away from oil production, Scottish independence from an economic perspective remains focused on the energy sector. Large investment in alternative energy sources, namely wind and tidal generation platforms replacing oil extraction infrastructure, saw Scotland poised in the early part of the 2010s and in the lead up to the independence referendum to remain a strong energy producing state that could use these energy revenues to invest in the welfare of their people (Scottish National Government, 2014). While these predictions for high oil prices were key to the initial push for independence, the subsequent collapse in oil prices in the latter half of 2015 and continuing through 2020 has led to a change in the balance of the economic argument. Scotland would still benefit from a more equitable distribution of oil revenues, even if the overall value of oil revenues continues to shrink.

Another key factor for the timing of Scottish independence is the idea that tourism and cultural export would be increase with a newly independent Scotland, further favoring a push towards independence. One of the major elements of this push for increased tourism comes from a reduction in taxes on air travel. This reduction is projected to increase both domestic and international tourism, creating new revenues for an independent Scotland (Scottish National Government, 2014). Scottish tourism as of 2013 already accounted for a £11.6 billion industry, a figure which is only predicted to increase going forward, and with independence should increase at an even higher rate (Visit Scotland, 2014). On top of this is to be added the £14.4 billion food and drink industry, inclusive of a £4.3 billion in whisky exports annually (BBC Scotland Business, 2016).

The primary economic argument as presented by the YES campaign rests on a comparison to other similar small European countries, especially the Nordic countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. As a region of the UK, the economy has been slowed due to financial decisions coming from London. Under independence, it is argued, Scotland would be

free to make its own financial decisions and could expect economic growth similar to these other small European countries. Much of the plan for independence relies on the idea that Scotland should be free to make its own decisions about public finances and investment. This push for independence on finances comes from the realization that Scotland's economy is more healthy than the United Kingdom as a whole (Scottish National Government, 2014). As opposed to the traditional image of Scotland as a net taker of public funds, according to the Scottish National Government, Scotland has produced more tax revenues per capita than the rest of the UK since the early 1980s. As the disparity between taxes paid and monies returned to Scotland has widened, so has the push for independence grown. Added to this, the manner in which Scotland would choose to allocate its public spending is significantly different than how England or a United Kingdom would choose to allocate spending.

Scottish cultural attitudes towards economics can be considered as much more egalitarian and concerned with inequality than the rest of the United Kingdom and England in particular. The Scottish National Government would prefer to allocate its resources in creating a low carbon economy, one which relies on innovation to spur the economy. Along with this shift in the overall economy, the Scottish Government would prefer to spend money on job training and placement into sustainable and fairly compensated employment. With the move towards some devolution that has occurred over the previous 15 years, Scotland has seen the ability to tailor policies to Scottish problems increase, but only to a limited degree. The Scottish Government and the YES campaign argue that by moving towards independence, this would allow the gains that have been made since devolution to be solidified and increased, especially into the areas that matter most where they currently do not have control, such as welfare, employment programs, workplace relations, economic and financial regulations, and consumer protections (Scottish National Government, 2014). This independence would allow Scotland to move into line with similar small European countries, who have seen major growth, even during times of global economic crisis due to their ability to adapt to local circumstances.

Additionally, one of the keys to the timing of Scottish Independence is the idea that Scotland could keep the Pound Sterling as its currency, but with other monetary options possible. During the run up to the referendum, the YES campaign believed that a monetary union with the remainder of the United Kingdom would not only be possible but also most beneficial to all parties (Scottish National Government, 2014). In the ideal situation, the YES campaign believed that they could exist in a true monetary union with the rest of the UK, based on an equitable shares situation. Alternatively, the YES campaign believed they could maintain the Pound Sterling as the currency of an independent Scotland without a monetary union. Though this plan would be less than ideal, Scotland would keep using the Pound Sterling in a similar fashion to how many nation-states use the American Dollar as their currency. This situation would remove much of the ability for Scotland to make their own fiscal decisions, but would still allow for a larger degree of fiscal decision-making than is currently available. Outside of the Pound Sterling, the YES campaign could also rely on the European Union and adopt the Euro as their currency, or Scotland could create their own. With the myriad of options available to Scotland, specifically with the Euro existing as a relatively strong international currency, the financial aspects of independence seem to have finally fallen into place to call the question of Scottish independence.

Finally, the uncertainty regarding the nature of a final Brexit deal, and in particular the short and long term implications for Scotland have entered into the equation since the 2014 referendum. A common refrain in Scotland following the United Kingdom's monumental vote to leave the European Union is that the Scottish are being dragged out of Europe against our will



(Reuters, 2019). The Scottish government submitted proposals as early as 2016 to the May government that would have allowed Scotland to remain in the single market, but the proposals were in effect ignored by Westminster. Since then, Theresa May's inability to get a deal through Parliament and her successor Boris Johnson's willingness to crash out of the bloc without a deal have generated several years of economic uncertainty for Scotland.

A series of economic reports compiled by the Scottish government have underscored the frustration the Scottish national government feels regarding the economic impacts of Brexit on Scotland. After a period of strong growth during the first quarter of 2019, the Scottish government reported that economic output contracted by 0.3% between April and June of 2019, giving the Scottish economy a growth rate of just 0.7% for 2019 while the overall U.K. economy grew by 1.2% for the same period (BBC, 2019). The report went on to highlight that construction lagged considerably, which several members of the Scottish Parliament blame on economic uncertainty in regard to Brexit.

Nevertheless, it was the reports' findings regarding the long-term effects of Brexit on the Scottish economy that raised true alarm. A February 2019 paper entitled, "No Deal Brexit-The Effects on Scotland" found that the Scottish economy could contract as much as 7% in the event of a no deal Brexit. The report included many other alarming projections, including a 10-20% decline in exports, a loss of foreign investment, a decline in net migration, and a loss of up to 100,000 jobs (Scottish National Government). Thus, the potential for a hard or no deal Brexit has emerged as yet another economic variable that could trigger a second referendum.

### **Referenda Motivations: European State System and a Supranational Referee**

While the timing of the Scottish Independence referendum can be partially explained based on the potential economic independence provided by the oil fields of the North Sea, as well as the increasingly divergent foreign policy goals of the English and Scottish residents of the United Kingdom. There are additional conditions that can address the timing of the referendum. While England and Scotland have a long, and at times contentious history, the concept of secession in 21st Century Western Europe is a fundamentally different concept than secession in the 13th or 14th Century Western Europe. This notable divergence can in part be explained through the application of Kantian theories of interdependence, constructivism and the impact of decades of supranational government culminating in the European Union. Shifting national attitudes and the creation of, an albeit weak but still present, level of government higher than Westminster have changed how citizens of Great Britain view themselves, interact with the world, and greatly reduced the likelihood that military force would be used to prevent a successful referendum supportive of secession.

### **Interdependence: Anarchy and a Supranational Referee**

The weakening of the British identity as a social construct, and the rise of a narrower conceptualization of nation-ness, has occurred at a time when geopolitical realities of Europe have fundamentally changed. The United Kingdom was created and defined through the lens of realist state survival in an anarchic world. The state system of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and early 20th Century offered little peace of mind for the English state. Whether their expansion throughout Britain, and later the world, was the result of Mearsheimer's offensive realism, or a Waltzian merging of firms in order to provide a greater sense of security, the absence of a supranational

referee and near constant threat of war encouraged state consolidation led by England (Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979). Operating in such a quasi-Hobbesian environment provided little, if any incentive, for Westminster to consider releasing Scotland from their union with England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In fact, in a realist world doing so would likely increase the level of existential risk that United Kingdom would be exposing herself to. However, as the European Union has increased in organization and authority it is possible that the interstate system in contemporary Western Europe is less anarchic than in previous centuries. The social and economic trade barriers that encouraged conflict in a realist state system are no longer as pronounced. If the potential loss of Scotland, or Wales, or North Ireland no longer proves a hindrance to trade, resources, or state security, new patterns of state sovereignty, as well as when coercive force is likely to be applied would be expected to emerge.

From a theoretically liberal perspective these changes in the interstate system are an arguably predicted outcome. The transition from states existing in an anarchic environment of self-help and a constant security dilemma, to an environment of self-interested cooperation with a lower risk of armed conflict bears a strong resemblance to the anticipated spread of Kant's Pacific Union (Kant, 2008 [1795]). The spread of liberal economic policies gradually encouraged a greater degree of interdependence, as well as raising the cost of conflict. The increasing presence of representative governments improved the bargaining and signaling ability of states in Western Europe. In combination, these changes encouraged an arguably rational attempt to mitigate anarchy through the construction of supranational organizations created a weak "transnational referee" that can assist in facilitating reiterated contact, enforcing interstate agreements, and, at times, substantively altering how a sovereign may view secessionist movements.

Separating Scotland's 21st century attempt at secession from earlier historical efforts, as well as why the English are less likely to use coercive force to keep Scotland in the Union, is also addressed by the evolution of the interstate system. In addition to facilitating interaction between member states, the EU has increased the power and visibility of sub-state regions that possess distinct languages and civil traditions, hallmarks of arguably distinct national identities (Bieri, 2014). The role of the EU has produced several key changes that encourage potential national referenda. First, the Maastricht Treaty's focus on maintaining a balance between local and centralized government may have encouraged sub-state regions such as Catalonia and Scotland to again think of themselves as unique regions rather than part of a larger whole. Second, the common market and Euro have reduced the likelihood that secession would threaten to remove economic access to a region. Unlike a realist world wrought with autarky the secession of Scotland in modern Europe, provided the United Kingdom maintains some form of substantive tie with the European Union, would not cut off England's access to the Scottish market, or prohibit it from continuing to acquire goods and resources controlled by an independent Scotland. Furthermore, there would be no currency exchange issues as the most recent plan for Scottish independence favored maintaining the pound. If this were to be abandoned the Euro would likely replace it. In economic terms, there would be very little change other than the flag flown, and national chagrin in England at the loss of another remnant of Empire. Third, the democratic nature of the parliaments in London and Edinburgh meant that a referendum was agreed upon through negotiation rather than force.

The support granted through this democratic process, and bolstered by the European Union has previously created legitimate criteria to grant secession, support for modernizing legal standards and establishing support for the rule of law (Sterio, 2010). The divorce of Kosovo and

Serbia highlight the multiple levels of dispute resolution that a Pacific Union can provide and they alter the rational choices made by a state. Serbia considered Kosovo to be an integral core of the state, and the initial intervention of the European Union was viewed as illegitimate. In a realist environment, this scenario sets the stage for a potential armed dispute. However, we see the presence of the European Union provided an additional layer of options that reduced the likelihood of conflict, and increased the likelihood of an arbitrated separation. The promise of a brighter economic future through eventually joining the European Union proved as a significant deterrent for Serbia. Rather than providing security through self-help and holding territory, Serbia is presented with a more secure, and potentially profitable, path provided they willingly accept moderation and arbitration.

As a result of the increased legitimacy of the European Union, reduced economic threat, as well as the presence of an interstate referee, the use of military force in Western Europe to preempt a secessionist movement incurs more cost than benefit. This results in a change in rational decision making as secession poses little, if any, existential security threat to the state, and it now offers a negligible economic cost. Increasingly peaceful separation facilitated through a Pacific Union offers the greatest reward, or at the very least, a lower cost than a realist military conflict to retain territory. As a result of coercive force being minimized as a policy tool it is now much more viable for small and militarily weaker regions in Western Europe to consider secession.

The cumulative impact of these conditions, create a scenario where secession in the 21st century no longer poses an economic threat prohibiting access to a market or natural resources controlled by the seceding state. When a potentially contentious divorce appears present the transnational referee can intervene to arbitrate the dispute. Rather than issuing a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) against London in the same manner as the United States of America or Rhodesia, a Scottish separation occurring within the European Union might resemble something more akin to the separation of Montenegro or Kosovo from Serbia.

While our primary focus in this work is Scotland, Catalonia emerges as an important topic to briefly address in this section given their efforts at a unilateral declaration independence from Spain. There are several clear differences between the Catalan and Scottish independence efforts. The Scottish referendum was granted legitimacy from the government in London to proceed, whereas the Commission noted in response to the Catalan attempted unilateral declaration of independence that their actions violated Spanish law (European Commission, 2017). The Catalans proceeded with their efforts without the consent of Madrid, and the Commission highlighted that acceptable secession had to be achieved within the legal boundaries of domestic law. While the EU provides for greater regional identity and representation, it remains an international organization that consists of sovereign states. While much power has been ceded to the EU, it has not transitioned from a supranational entity, to sovereign government. Hence, it can soften the hazards of secession. However, it cannot run roughshod over sovereign governments. The EU has encouraged greater regional autonomy within states, and made secession more viable for sub-regions, and less dangerous for sovereign states reducing conditions of anarchy and autarky that could lead to war in a realist state system. The EU has not created an environment that guarantees a right to hold secession votes solely based on the preferences of an aspiring state, or a guarantee that all of these efforts will be met with open arms. Furthermore, the Commission clearly stated that an independent Catalonia, much like an independent Scotland, would find itself outside the European Union.

Our theoretical discussion thus far has focused on the impact of interconnectedness and supranational mediation. However, when we look at European, and more specifically British, politics, over the past few years, we see two alternate paths are also available. The British decision to leave the EU as of June 23, 2016, created two additional theoretical paths that could influence Scottish secession in modern Europe. In one theoretical path we see a region that has seen and experienced the benefits of integration, as embodied in the single market, an aspiring unified foreign policy for Europe, as well as collaborative decision making across formerly contentious national boundaries. In this scenario, Scotland would experience a substantive loss, particularly in the event of a no deal or hard Brexit, if it were to be forced out of the European Union. This would impose real costs, not only in terms of political decision making, but in terms of economic barriers. This unique scenario that threatens to remove an integrated political entity could, theoretically, impact the timing of a secessionist vote or increase the intensity of a secessionist movement. While the presence of a supranational referee could not intervene as readily in a post Brexit Scottish vote, the threat of losing this entity and the benefits of a Pacific Union could serve as a strong reason for triggering a secessionist vote in Scotland.

The third theoretical path envisions states thrust into a realist political environment where the loss of territory, resources, and economic power would pose a tangible threat to the survival of the state. In such an environment, secessionist movements could be just as threatening as an interstate conflict. In previous historical examples where an UDI was leveled no referee was present and years of political, economic, and martial conflict ensued. Prominent examples include the American Revolution and the efforts of Rhodesia to separate itself from British influence. While a United Kingdom operating outside of the EU might see more incentives to result to a realist course of action, they would remain integrated into other Western Intergovernmental Organizations (IOs) such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). An independent Scotland would likely remain, or seek membership in NATO. As a result, an independent Scotland and the United Kingdom would continue to be linked. Granted, the level of NATO membership would involve lower levels of interconnectedness across sovereign states. However, it would remain substantive enough to resolve disputes between conflicting foreign policies and keep the United Kingdom and Scotland from reverting to a truly Hobbesian state.

While we have established three theoretical concepts that can influence a secessionist vote in the case of contemporary Scotland the two we believe to be the most applicable to future independence referendum timing, provided Scotland they remain capable of economic self-sufficiency and continue to view themselves as culturally distinct, are a vote which is softened by belonging to the EU or a vote that is triggered as a result of Scotland being removed from the EU. Further we theorize that a hard Brexit would increase the likelihood of a second referendum in the near future. Our realist path is valid to consider for future secessionist movements as the international system is fluid and can transition from a Kantian Peace to a truly anarchic state of war at a later date.

In an interstate system where the realist application of military force is increasingly rare, the EU may have reduced anarchy to a point that the likelihood that state boundaries will be redrawn without force appears increasingly likely. The promise of access to the common market, protection of local rights, and a near non-existent threat of military intervention make secessionist movements arguably rational for certain national movements.

### **Explaining Referenda Timing**

At this point a clearer picture on Scottish Referenda timing begins to coalesce. The three-pronged approach to independence timing relies heavily on the traditional cultural argument, leading to distinct policy differences that would cause Scotland develop a cultural grievance. By adding in an economic argument, we see that the balance sheet favors Scotland being able not only to support herself, but actually makes a case that if she were to become independent, she would be in a much more beneficial economic position, one which has been observed in other small Northern European countries, i.e. Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Yet to complete the picture we must also look to the international system, one which would not favor the British fighting to keep Scotland as part of the United Kingdom, and which sees other political unions as perhaps more beneficial to Scotland's national wellbeing.

Scotland and England have had significant cultural differences throughout history, and in the last several decades these have become exacerbated by a political system that places little emphasis on divergent policy positions held by a sizable minority population. With the death of the Collectivist Consensus and the Empire, the more egalitarian Scottish political and cultural identity has begun to reclaim its place of dominance in Scotland, supplanting the idea of being British. Additionally, the results of the Brexit referendum revealed divergent attitudes regarding economics, foreign policy, and if the future of the Scottish nation is European or British at a time when being British increasingly means being English. (Kumar, 2003)

During this period, the balance sheet has also begun to shift in a direction that favors independence. Scotland has become a net producer in the economy of the United Kingdom, producing more taxes than are taken back in from the nation budget. With projected higher oil prices from North Sea Oil, of which Scotland does not receive what they view to be a fair portion of revenues, the economic case is believed to be both sound and favorable for a push towards independence. An independent Scotland would now have a much higher degree of freedom to act economically, especially in the realm of fighting economic inequality, something that is culturally much more relevant to Scotland than it is to England (Scottish National Government, 2014). Scotland has also witnessed the economic growth that has occurred in what she views to be her peers, other small Northern European countries such as Norway and Denmark, and believes that with independence economic performance and growth could be on par with those nations.

Finally, the international situation favors a push for independence now as it has not done over the past several decades. With the lessons from the struggle in Northern Ireland still in the minds of British policy makers, a protracted military campaign to keep Scotland in Union would be highly unlikely. The international system has shifted very heavily in the direction of national self-determination. The relative success of the European Union also offers a potential shelter for Scotland should they find true independence to be too difficult. With the threat of the Cold War now over, any true geopolitical reason for Scotland to remain in Union has now disappeared. And the international relation situation has actually made remaining in Union a drawback for Scotland. The Scottish people have a great desire to remove nuclear weapons from their country, something that London does not agree to (Scottish National Government, 2014). With independence, these nuclear weapons would have to be removed with great expedience, and the military presence in Scotland would be greatly reduced, all outcomes that are favored heavily in Scotland.

On the prospect of extending this theory, by looking past simple cultural arguments we see a more complete picture of peaceful independence movements. The most obvious example for extending this model would be to view the Catalonian independence movement through this

lens. Perhaps the example of Kosovar independence is also a relevant and timely case. This model could also be applied to both past cases, such as the dissolution of Union between Sweden and Norway, and to any possible future cases. By looking beyond cultural arguments for independence, and including both the economic and foreign policy ramifications for independence, we believe a clearer look at peaceful independence movements is both possible and preferable.

### **What now? The Post-Brexit Perspective**

In a post-Brexit vote world, the case for Scottish independence is bolstered even further. With a clear preference of the Scottish people for a remain vote, the policy difference between Scotland and England has become even clearer (BBC News, 2016). Scotland views its economic future as part of the European Union, as described in the SNP document *Scotland's Future*, and a hard Brexit taking Scotland out of the EU is directly contrary to the aims and economic goals of Scotland. Nevertheless, public opinion polls have still not revealed a significant shift in support for Scottish independence since the Brexit result. In the fall of 2017, Nicola Sturgeon appealed for a wait and see approach, stating that they will review referendum timing when they have a better idea of what they face (O'Leary, 2017). Nevertheless, the final tenant of our approach to independence claims rests in an international system with supranational actors like the EU being able to negotiate peaceful separations. Scotland has clearly demonstrated a preference to be a part of the EU, and with a looming Brexit, and the potential for some economic chaos, is all the more likely to renew its push for independence. We believe that given current events in the EU and the UK, the case for Scotland seeking a second independence referendum is stronger than even before the September 2014 referendum. The three-pronged analysis is made robust on the backs of the second and third legs being directly impinged by Brexit.

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