



United Kingdom Parliamentary Committee (House of Commons)

The question of the electoral system

The question of the national migrant crisis

Scottish Independence Referendum: Terms and Implications of a Second

Scottish Independence Vote

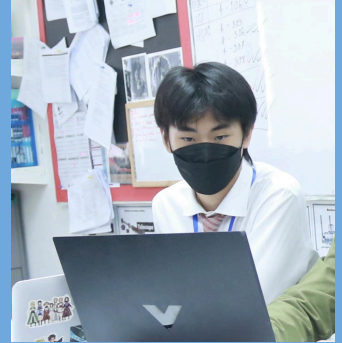


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Introductory Letters

Supawit (Kenji) Supabundit

Hello MPs and welcome to UKPC at THAIMUN XI! I hope that you will have a fun and memorable experience in this committee. I'm Kenji and I am currently a Junior at Concordian International School. THAIMUN XI will be the 10th conference that I have attended, I have chaired at ConcordianMUN II and ICSMUN II. I am also Co-head of Curriculum Development at the BarrierMUN initiative, where I help create MUN training materials for Thai schools that are new to MUN. Outside of MUN, you can find me playing guitar with my band, or sitting around and attempting to understand 20th century French philosophy.



If you have any questions or concerns about the content, committee, or ROP feel free to contact me by email (kenjisupabundit1654@gmail.com) or through instagram @cultleaderkenji. My Co-Chairs and I look forward to meeting you all and working with you at THAIMUN!

Navinda (Aimie) Prasan

Hello to all MPs of THAIMUN and welcome to the UKPC! I know this committee sounds really daunting at first but I can assure you it is one of the best committees in any conference :) My name is Aimie (pronounced eye-me) and I will be one of your two front room chairs for this committee. I am in Year 10 at Regent's International School Bangkok and by the time this intro is released, I would've participated in quite a handful of conferences. In school, I am a reading mentor for ESL and primary students, I run the Regent's MUN club and I also do British Parliamentary debate competitions on occasion. Other than doing academic-related activities, you'd probably find me thrifting, reading a lot of Rick Riordan, scrolling away on Pinterest, or travelling abroad.



If you have any questions at all about the Chair Report, the ROP, committee proceedings or any general questions, do not hesitate to contact me through my email 27yaimie@regents.ac.th or my instagram @aimiea_. My fellow co chairs- Kenji, Bill and I hope to see you all very very soon at THAIMUN and look forward to working alongside you and guiding you through the UKPC!

Heranh (Bill) CHHUN

Warm hellos!

I'm Heranh CHHUN or "Bill" and I'll be one of your beloved chairs for our special UKPC committee. UKPC to me, is an incredibly interesting committee and I believe that you will discover it to be just as intriguing! Although it may be different from your usual committee, Aimie, Kenji, and myself, will try to make it as enjoyable and fruitful for all of us as possible.

*Now, onto the personal introductions, THAIMUN XI will be one of numerous other conferences I've attended, and at the time of attendance it will be my ninth conference. Additionally, I have a feeling it will be one of the best ones so far. Much of my time is allocated to sleeping and *ahem* studying, but aside from that you'll see me reading, running, procrastinating, trying to learn French, and participating in various debating and public speaking competitions..*



If you have any questions regarding anything at all, be it the committee procedures or how to cook a mean plate of spaghetti (really anything) feel free to email me: chhunheranh578@gmail.com or send me a message on insta: @Heranh.Chhun

Excited for us all to meet, see you very soon!

Committee Overview

Welcome to the United Kingdom Parliamentary Committee - a realistic simulation of the ins and outs of the UK Parliament. The committee is divided into two: The House of Commons (represented by Delegates) and The House of Lords and the Queen (represented by the backroom).

The House of Commons is composed of 650 members of parliament (MPs) elected by the public to represent their interests. The role of MPs include proposing new legislation and audit government policies about current issues. The House of Commons is tasked with most legislative functions, and are often the primary initiator of bills.

In the UK there are over 400 political parties that exist, of them, only 10 are represented in the Parliament and the House of Commons. Below you will find a list of these parties and a short description of them and their core beliefs:

Political Party	Political Position	Description
Conservative and Unionist Party	Centre-right	<p>Led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the Conservative and Unionist Party holds an overall majority in the House of Commons.</p> <p>In terms of Economic Policy, the Conservative Party believes that free markets and individual achievement are the keys to economic success. They also advocate for reducing income taxes in hopes of higher GDP. The Party seeks to preserve a range of institutions such as religion, property rights and parliamentary government.</p>
Labour Party	Centre-Left	<p>Led by Keir Starmer, the Labour Party has been one of the UK's two main political parties since the 20th century. It holds a socially democratic stance</p>

		<p>and their core political beliefs advocate for the working population.</p> <p>They believe in increasing minimum wages, taxes on large corporations and the top 5% of earners, and spending on the NHS.</p>
Scottish National Party	Centre-Left	<p>Led by Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP is a social democratic party. It is the largest party in the Scottish Parliament. The main recent objective of the SNP has been its campaign for Scotland to leave the United Kingdom and become its own independent country.</p> <p>Other initiatives supported by the SNP include Britain getting rid of all of its nuclear weapons, and elections to the House of Lords.</p>
Liberal Democrats	Centre-Left	<p>Led by Ed Davey, the Liberal Democrats, is a centrist political party advocating for reformist, liberal policies. The Liberal Democrats are strong advocates of the UK staying in the European Union, introducing proportional representation in the elections to the British House of Commons, and pro-environmental policies.</p>
Democratic Unionist Party	Right Wing	<p>Led by Jeffrey Donaldson, the DUP is a conservative party based in Northern Ireland. They are strong supporters of the constitution and most often take conservative stances on social issues. They are also strong supporters of Northern Ireland staying a part of the United Kingdom.</p>
Sinn Féin	Centre-left - Left-wing	<p>Led by Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin is an Irish republican political party advocating for the reunification of Ireland as well as an end to British jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.</p>
Plaid Cymru	Centre-left - Left-wing	<p>Led by Adam Price, Plaid Cymru is the Welsh Nationalist Political Party in Wales. Plaid Cymru</p>

		advocates for the decentralization of power, and for Wales to have full national status. The Plaid Cymru seeks to preserve Welsh culture, language and traditions.
Social Democratic and Labour Party	Centre-left	Led by Colum Eastwood, the SDLP is an Irish nationalist social-democratic political party based in Northern Ireland. The main goal of the SDLP is to advocate for the reunification of Ireland and higher opportunity for self-government. The SDLP is in favour of Brexit.
Green Party of England and Wales	Left-wing	Led by Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay, the Green Party of England and Wales is a left-wing political party in England and Wales. The party puts special emphasis on incorporating environmentalism with left-wing economic policies, including increased funding on public welfare services. It also takes a progressive stance on social policies such as animal rights, LGBT rights, and drug policy reform.
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	Centre - Centre-left	Led by Naomi Long, the APNI is a centrist and liberal political party in Northern Ireland. The goal of the APNI is to create a Northern Irish society "Devoid of segregation, sectarianism and prejudice where everyone – Catholic or Protestant, black or white, local or immigrant, rich or poor, young or old – can live their life the way they want, free from fear". (Adapted from The Official APNI Website) The APNI also voted to remain in the EU.

Topic 1: The question of the electoral system

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Electoral System has been a topic of contention in the United Kingdom for many years. The main conflict revolves around the First Past the Post system for general elections and the proportional voting system for local elections. The first past the post system is characterised by the fact that people can only vote for one candidate, and the candidate with the most votes wins the election. This type of system is used in many former British colonies like India, Canada, and the United States. Critics of the First Past the Post system believe that the system leads to disproportionate representation and a mismatch between the percentage of votes a party receives nationally and the number of seats it secures in the House of Commons. Supporters of the First Past the Post system believe that it provides a groundwork for the creation of a decisive and stable government. This is because the system often leads to a clear majority for one party.

The discourse surrounding the electoral system in the United Kingdom includes dialogues over prospective modifications, such as the implementation of proportional representation in general elections, which may serve to mitigate perceived concerns regarding equity and representation. In the world of British politics, this subject is still important and of great interest. It has sparked debates about the democratic process and the best ways to ensure that the various points of view held by the public are accurately and fairly represented.

An alternative to the FPTP system is proportional representation, which is defined as any type of electoral system where the distribution of seats is proportional to percentage of total votes cast for each party. Under a perfectly proportional system, a political party that receives 30% of the vote would gain 30% of seats. Some advantages of proportional representation include the fact that a PR system would give smaller parties and independent candidates a higher chance of receiving seats in Parliament, this system also ensures that political parties will appeal to their core supporters instead of trying to win over swing-voters. Some disadvantages include the view that PR can provide a route for extremists to force their way into the political mainstream, something which would be unlikely to happen under a FPTP system.

KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
First Past the Post	An electoral system where people can only vote for one candidate, and the candidate with the most votes wins the election. This system is used in the UK, and some former UK colonies such as India, Canada, and the United States.
Proportional Representation	Any type of electoral system where the distribution of seats is proportional to percentage of total votes cast for each party.
Constituency	An area whose voters elect a representative to a legislative body.
Majoritarian System	An electoral system that allows the party with the most votes to achieve enough seats to form a government.
Minority Government	A government and cabinet formed by a political party that does not possess a majority in a legislative body
Swing Voters	Voters in a constituency who are undecided which party to vote for.
Coalition Government	A form of government where political parties cooperate to form one government.
Electoral Reform	A change in electoral system which affects how citizens are represented in a legislative body
Referendum	A direct vote by the electorate on a proposal, law, or political issue

History of The Topic

In the leadup to the Alternative Vote Referendum in 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron appealed to tradition to defend the FPTP voting system. Stating it was “enshrined in our constitution and integral to our history” and that the system was “an expression of our fairness as a country”. This commitment to the FPTP was echoed by Lord Reid of the Labour Party who stated that the system was “the British way”. It is important to note that Britain has adopted multiple different electoral systems before the current FPTP system.

The electoral system first adopted in 1800 when the Parliament of the United Kingdom was created was different from the more uniform system adopted nowadays. This voting system was characterised by limited franchise, meaning that the right to vote was not extended to the general population. Voters were limited to male property owners, with the criteria for suffrage varying across different constituencies. This led to the creation of Rotten Boroughs and Pocket Boroughs. Rotten Boroughs are sparsely populated areas with disproportionate representation, while pocket boroughs are small areas of land controlled by wealthy patrons who could essentially dictate the results of the election. Electoral practices during this period were marked by corruption and bribery. It was not uncommon for candidates and their supporters to engage in the exchange of money or favours to secure votes. Other characteristics included the fact that voting was not conducted in secret, meaning that electors had to declare their vote. There also were no fixed or regularly scheduled parliamentary elections, the monarch decided when the election was, and could dissolve parliament at any point.

During the 19th century, further changes were made to the electoral system. These included the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884, addressing issues of corruption, limited suffrage, and unequal representation. These acts expanded suffrage, expanding the right to vote to a larger percentage of the population. The disparities in representation between historically enfranchised rural communities and the fast-expanding cities of newly industrial England were the primary reason behind the first Reform Bill's necessity. Large industrial hubs like Birmingham and Manchester were left out of representation, and parliamentary representatives were still being elected from a variety of so-called "rotten boroughs," which were essentially deserted rural areas, and "pocket boroughs," where a powerful landowner could virtually control the entire electoral process. The Second Reform Act in 1867, expanded the right to vote to many working men in the towns and cities and increased the number of voters to 938,000, while the Third Reform Act of 1884–85 extended the vote to agricultural workers.

The 1918 Representation of the People Act marked a turning point, granting voting rights to a broader demographic and introducing the FPTP voting system. The Representation of the People Act in 1928 extended suffrage to all women over 21. Significant changes occurred in the mid-20th century, such as the 1945 general election's implementation of the Additional Member System (AMS). Throughout the second half of the 20th century, developments in political campaigning and the introduction of television had an impact on the electoral environment. Under Tony Blair's direction, the New Labour era began with the 1997 general election. Constitutional changes followed, including the creation of parliaments/assemblies with separate election systems in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and London. Many attempts towards change emerged in the twenty-first century, including the Alternative Vote (AV) referendum in 2011 (which was eventually rejected) and the Brexit vote in 2016.

Timeline

Date	Description
1800	Establishment of the Parliament of the United Kingdom with the Unification Act
1832	Implementation of the first Reform Act of 1832, transferred voting rights from the small boroughs controlled by the nobility and gentry to the more heavily populated industrial towns and cities.
1867	Implementation of the Second Reform Act of 1867, expanding the right to vote to many working men in the towns and cities.
1884	Implementation of the Third Reform Act, expanding the right to vote to agricultural workers.
1918	The Representation of the People Act 1918 granted voting rights to all men over 21 and women over 30 who met certain property qualifications. Also introduced the FPTP voting system.
1928	The Representation of the People Act 1928 extended voting rights to all women over the age of 21, achieving equal suffrage.
1945	Introduction of the Additional Member System (AMS) for a small group of university constituencies.
1998	The Scotland Act and the Government of Wales Act established the devolved parliaments/assemblies in Scotland and Wales.
2011	The UK held a referendum on the Alternative Vote (AV) system, which was ultimately rejected, and the FPTP system remained in place.
2016	The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum

Reform Efforts

The Scotland Act and the Government of Wales Act:

The Scotland Act of 1998 was the result of the 1997 Scottish devolution referendum, which demonstrated that the people of Scotland were in favour of creating a parliament for Scotland and secondly, that this parliament should have tax varying powers. The Act came into effect in 1999 and marked the re-establishment of a Scottish Parliament after a hiatus of almost 300 years. Key provisions of the Scotland Act include the devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament in areas such as education, health, justice, and transportation. While the UK Parliament retains authority over reserved matters like defence, foreign affairs, and immigration, the Scotland Act ensures that decisions on some domestic issues are made by the Scottish Parliament. The Act also introduced a system of proportional representation for Scottish Parliament elections, giving a more proportional reflection of the political preferences of the Scottish electorate.

The Scotland Act of 1998 is significant in the context of British electoral reform because it is moving toward a more proportional representation system within the United Kingdom. The introduction of proportional representation for Scottish Parliament elections was a departure from the traditional first-past-the-post system prevalent in the UK. This was done to ensure a fairer and more accurately representative political landscape in Scotland. By adopting a proportional representation model, the Scotland Act aimed to better reflect the diverse political preferences of the Scottish electorate, promoting a broader range of voices in the newly devolved Scottish Parliament. While this electoral reform specifically applied to Scotland, it sparked discussions and considerations for potential reforms in other parts of the UK, contributing to the broader discourse on electoral systems and representation within the British political landscape.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 is a piece of legislation that paved the way for the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales, providing a degree of self-government and devolved powers to Wales within the United Kingdom. Enacted in 1998 and implemented in 1999, this act was a significant step in the constitutional evolution of the UK. Key features of this Act include the creation of the National Assembly for Wales, which has the power to make decisions on certain matters such as education, health, and transportation. Similar to the Scotland Act 1998, the Act for Wales distinguishes between devolved and reserved matters, with the latter remaining under the control of the UK Parliament. The Act was intended to give the people of Wales a greater say in their domestic affairs and governance, contributing to a more decentralized power structure present in the governance of the United Kingdom.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 is significant in the context of British electoral

reform as it represents a crucial step towards devolution and the establishment of a distinct political identity for Wales within the United Kingdom. Electoral reform in Wales under the Act included the adoption of an additional member system (AMS) for the Welsh Assembly elections. The AMS system combines first-past-the-post with proportional representation, striking a balance between local representation and overall proportionality. Voters cast two votes—one for a constituency representative and another for a regional representative. The shift to the AMS in Wales was a departure from the electoral practices in other parts of the UK, like Scotland that implemented a PR system. This act, along with the Scotland Act 1998, played a crucial role in shaping the broader discussions about the constitutional future of the United Kingdom and the opened up potential for further electoral reforms in the devolved regions.

The Alternative Vote Referendum:

The Alternative Vote Referendum was conducted on May 5th 2011, the purpose of this referendum was to determine whether or not the current FPTP electoral system should be maintained or replaced with an Alternative Vote (AV) system. The referendum was a key initiative of the coalition government formed by the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats in 2010. In contrast to the FPTP system, the Alternative Vote system allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives more than 50% of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their second-preference votes are redistributed. This process continues until a candidate achieves a majority. Supporters of the Alternative Vote argued that it would lead to a more proportional representation of voters' preferences and reduce the number of "wasted votes." It was also suggested that this system could encourage a more consensual and moderate style of politics, as candidates would need to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters. With that being said, the majority of voters in the 2011 referendum opted to retain the FPTP system, Approximately 68% voted against adopting the Alternative Vote, while around 32% supported the change. The referendum result signalled a preference for the simplicity and familiarity of the existing electoral system, with concerns raised about the potential complexity and ambiguity associated with ranking candidates.

The AV referendum is a significant part of the British Electoral Reform effort, because it was one of the first times that such a radical change to the electoral system had been proposed to the general public. The outcome of the referendum illustrated the difficulty of electoral reform. The FPTP system remains popular for a variety of reasons, one of them being the fact that it was posited, by many prominent political figures as the "British Way" and as an integral part of the British democratic tradition. To many, the FPTP system was also convenient, simple, and familiar. The AV referendum also exposed divisions within the coalition government, as the

Liberal Democrats strongly supported AV, while many Conservatives were against the change. The failure to secure public approval for the proposed reform highlighted the challenges of implementing significant political changes when there is a lack of consensus among major political parties. The rejection of the AV system by the electorate demonstrated the difficulty of achieving consensus on electoral changes and led to increased skepticism about the viability of future reform initiatives. Leading to electoral reform receiving less emphasis in the national agenda.

Topics your Resolutions Should Address:

Strengths/Limitations of the FPTP system

Depending on the delegate's stance on the system, the delegate's resolution should address either the strengths or limitations of the current First Past the Post electoral system and why it should either be maintained or be replaced with a different system,

Alternatives to the FPTP system

If the delegate is opposed to the FPTP system, the delegate's resolution should address alternatives to the FPTP system and where such alternatives have been implemented. Delegates should highlight how these alternatives have succeeded in these examples and how they can be applied within a UK context. These alternatives can include the PR system or any other alternative electoral system.

Urgency of reform

Depending on the delegate's stance, the resolution should address either the urgency of reform or the unimportance of reform in the current political landscape. Delegates from Pro-Reform parties should highlight the urgency of electoral reform by emphasising the negative effect that the FPTP system has on the current political landscape of the UK. Anti-Reform delegates should address the downsides of reform and highlight the potential negative effects such changes can have on the UK.

Party Stances

The Conservative Party

Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister

Sunak is a member of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom since 2022. Sunak has not expressed any clear positions on the question of electoral reform recently or even in 2011 during the Alternative Vote referendum. The mainstream position inside the Conservative Party is strong support for the FPTP system. This position is adopted by many prominent figures such as Former PM and current Foreign Secretary David Cameron, who was a strong proponent of the FPTP system. In the run-up to the 2011 referendum, he defended the FPTP by appealing to tradition, describing the system as “The British Way”.



James Cleverly, Home Secretary

James Cleverly is the current Home Secretary of the United Kingdom, like Sunak, he has expressed no clear position on the question of the electoral system. Cleverly is a part of the Conservative Party, the party remains a strong supporter of the FPTP electoral system.



The Labor Party

Keir Starmer, Leader of The Opposition

Sir Keir Starmer is the Leader of the Labour Party, the UK's main opposition party. Historically, the Labour Party in the UK has supported the idea of electoral reform, supporting a switch from the FPTP system to a more proportional representation system. As of March 2023, Starmer's spokesperson has stated that he has a "longstanding view against proportional representation". This was a view that was kept relatively hidden during the 2020 Labour Leadership Election, where he stated that electoral reform was not a concern for him at the time, and advocated that the party focus on more pressing issues. Starmer's views on electoral reform differ greatly from many figures within the party who have strongly supported a shift towards a more proportional representation system.



Yvette Cooper, Shadow Home Secretary

Yvette Cooper is the current Shadow Home Secretary, and member of the Labour Party. The Labour Party consistently expressed concerns about the disproportionality and winner-takes-all nature of the FPTP system. As of now, the overwhelming majority of Labour Party members are in favour of proportional representation. Throughout the Labour government's tenure, she held various ministerial positions, including Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. In the opposition years, Cooper served as Shadow Foreign Secretary and Shadow Home Secretary. As a candidate in the 2015 Labour Party leadership election, she emerged as a leading voice in criticising the government's approach to Brexit and advocating for parliamentary involvement.



Liberal Democrats

Ed Davey, Party Leader

Sir Edward Jonathan Davey is the current leader of the Liberal Democrats, a party strongly opposed to the FPTP post system. The Liberal Democrats argue that a proportional representation system would better reflect the diversity of political opinions among voters and lead to a fairer distribution of seats in Parliament. In a 2022 panel on electoral reform, Davey stated that “I believe that reforming our voting system is the biggest and most important way to mend our broken politics, and I am determined to achieve it”. To Davey, electoral reform is a patriotic mission for him, framing electoral reform as a way to return Britain to its status as a “beacon of democracy”.



Daisy Cooper, Deputy Leader

Daisy Cooper has served as the MP for St Albans since 2019. She has served as the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats since 2020, and as the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care since 2021. Cooper is deeply critical of The Conservative Party, stating that “the Conservatives have broken so much in this country”. Cooper has spoken in support of electoral reform at numerous conferences and panels, most recently at the 2023 Liberal Democrat conference. The conference included talks from speakers on the successes of Proportional Representation in other countries such as New Zealand, and some states in the US.



Questions to Consider

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the FPTP system?
 - What alternative electoral systems exist, and how do they differ from the FPTP system?
 - How might a change in the electoral system impact the stability of government formation and decision-making processes?
 - What needs to change from previous electoral reform efforts for this one to succeed?
 - How do electoral systems vary globally, and what can be learned from the experiences of other countries that have implemented different systems?
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Recommended Websites to Use

[What is FPTP Voting](#) - Electoral Reform Society

[History of Electoral Reform in the UK](#) - Constitutional Law Society

[What is Proportional Representation](#) - Parliament

[2011 Alternative Vote Referendum](#) - Electoral Reform Society

[Constitutional Impact of Electoral Reform](#) (1) - Bennett Institute for Public Policy

[Constitutional Impact of Electoral Reform](#) (2) - Institute for Government

[The Politics of Electoral Reform in Britain](#) - International Political Science Review

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Topic 2: The question of the national migrant crisis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION:

In regard to the UK migrant policy, news of the country keeping asylum seekers aboard boats has spread like wildfire and is now a hugely controversial topic as there have been reports of the people aboard the barge accommodations along the UK coastline being treated in conditions similar to that of a prison's.¹ As of 2022, the net migration of the The United Kingdom was 606,000 which was the highest net migration ever recorded (Barton, 2023). However, migration is not a new concept in the UK because since the 1990s, migration has been on a gradual rise and has only increased drastically in the past few years due to several reasons which will be discussed below.

Immigrants account for 57.5% of the population in England and Wales alone which has led to a national migrant crisis (Hayes, 2023).

A migrant crisis refers to the difficulty, trouble, or danger situation in the receiving state caused by large groups of immigrants fleeing conditions (natural or man-made) that negatively affected their situation (security, economic, political, or societal) in their country of origin. The main passage used for illegal migration in the UK is the English Channel usually by boats; it proposes a serious issue to the UK and is now considered a “key political priority”.²

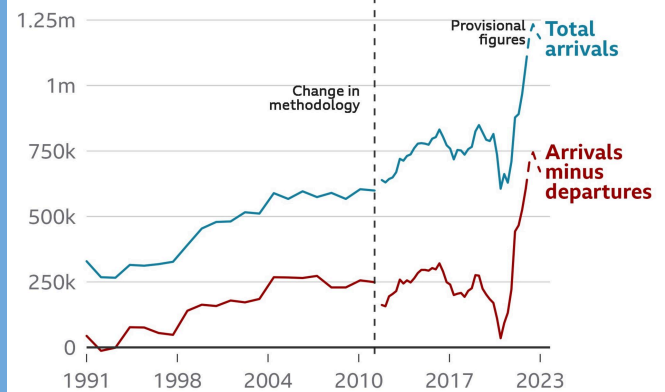
As mentioned above, net migration had a drastic increase in 2022 due to “several unique events” that occurred in the year which includes: the arrival of Ukrainian refugees displaced by the Ukraine-Russia War and BN(O) (British National (Overseas)) status holders namely from Hong Kong. In addition, a large percentage of net migration is due to an increase in people moving to the UK for study/scholarly purposes; migration of this reason makes up 39% of arrivals in 2022.

¹ Bicer, Aysu. “Floating prison: UK’s another controversial policy of keeping asylum seekers on floating barge.” Anadolu Ajansi, 21 July 2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/floating-prison-uks-another-controversial-policy-of-keeping-asylum-seekers-on-floating-bergs/2951114>. Accessed 24 December 2023.

² BBC News. “How is the UK stopping Channel crossings and what are the legal routes to the UK?” BBC, 13 December 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53734793>. Accessed 24 December 2023.

Migration adds 672,000 to UK population

Total (arrivals) and net (change in UK population) in the year to June 2023



Note: Figures prior to 2012 are shown by calendar year. After 2012, the figures are for the 12 months to the end of each quarter

Source: ONS

BBC

This has affected the UK greatly as migration is one of the big three economic challenges facing the UK along with tax and the state of the economy itself. Though it is debatable whether migration has a positive or negative affect on the economy, the UK has seen shortages of homes, rent prices rocketing, house prices rising, and evidence of exploitation of migrant labour through severe underpaying and dismal working conditions. Furthermore, Oxford University’s Migration Observatory has estimated that recent EEA (European Economic Area) migrants have had a net fiscal cost of 6.2 billion GBP (Vargas-Silva, 2022).

On the other hand, migration has also benefited the UK economy by increasing the labour supply and filling in the labour gap in the UK (9.7% of businesses have reported and/or are experiencing worker shortages) ergo contributing to the UK economy. Moreover, immigrants who are skilled professionals or entrepreneurs may contribute to the economy as shown in recent years by starting businesses; “39% of the UK’s 100 fastest growing companies have foreign-born founders or co-founders”.³

KEY TERMS:

Term	Definition
Migrant	An individual who moves from one place to another seeking better living conditions/work.
Net Migration	The amount which migration adds to the population (migration in subtracted by migration out).
Immigrant	An individual who comes to live permanently in a foreign nation.
Asylum seeker	Someone who is awaiting a decision for their asylum request.

³ The Entrepreneurs Network (TEN) Ltd. “Immigrant Founders — The Entrepreneurs Network.” Entrepreneurs Network, 2023, <https://www.tenentrepreneurs.org/immigrantfounders>. Accessed 24 December 2023.

Historical Context

After the end of World War II, the UK faced huge labour shortages subsequently leading to the recruitment of foreign workers across the Commonwealth countries, namely from the following countries/areas: the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, and Africa to fill the labour gap. This happened through initiatives like the 1948 British Nationality Act which gave citizens from British colonies the right to live and work in Britain, migrants from the 40s up until 1971 are known as the Windrush generation. The opportunity to live and work in the UK benefited the Caribbean people and their respective countries too because of the economic struggles at the time.⁴ Additionally in 2018, the government faced a scandal regarding the Windrush generation as news emerged that the UK Home Office had not kept any of the records of the Windrush generation and their permissions to live in the UK, had not issued any form of paperwork re-confirming those allowed to stay and destroyed landing cards belonging to Windrush migrants. This led to migrants of the Windrush generation not being granted healthcare, work and housing. An inquiry was made to the Home Office and all thirty recommendations were accepted in full but recently in January of 2023, the current Home Secretary, Suella Braveman has dropped three of the thirty recommendations which has resulted in heavy criticism.

Political Factors

The infamous barge accommodation for asylum seekers was first introduced in the UK by the government in 2023; the first vessel being called the Bibby Stockholm. This idea of housing asylum seekers was fully supported by Dominic Raab, the current (2023) deputy prime minister, who made a statement saying “nothing is off the table” to reduce the use of hotels as accommodation for asylum seekers. He was also quoted as saying: The idea that you can get on an illegal boat run by some gangster to get into this country and be housed in a hotel, that’s going to end. The government not only plans to house the asylum seekers in barge accommodation, they have also introduced the use of other vessels and military bases as accommodation as well. However, the introduction of barge accommodation has come with criticism in the House of Parliament too, many Conservative MPs have questioned the government’s use of barges. The former business minister Jackie Doyle-Price suggested that such proposals could harm port-based businesses. A Home Office spokesperson has stated: “The pressure on the asylum system has continued to grow and requires us to look at a range of accommodation options which

⁴ Williams, Wendy. “What is Windrush and who are the Windrush generation?” BBC, 27 July 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43782241>. Accessed 25 December 2023.

offer better value for money for taxpayers than hotels.” Below are past political factors affecting migration to the UK.⁵

1. Commonwealth Immigration Acts (1962, 1968, and 1971):

1962: The Act had two main goals: to limit the number of Commonwealth immigrants who may immigrate to the Kingdom and gave judges the authority to deport immigrants with less than five years of residency who had been found guilty of crimes and facing jail time.⁶

1968: The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 was passed by the then Labour government. It limited UK citizenship to people born in the UK and their offspring or grandchildren. Those living in ex-colonies were no longer allowed to enter the Kingdom.⁷

1971: An Act to update and replace present immigration laws, to make certain relevant changes in citizenship legislation, to allow assistance to persons seeking to return abroad. Also introduced the term ‘patrial’ meaning a person who has the right to reside permanently in the UK through connection with a British parent, grandparent or a British birth. The Act classed different people as ‘patrials and non-patrials’.⁸

2. European Union Membership (1973–2020):

The United Kingdom's participation in the European Union enabled free movement of persons within the EU. As a result, a large number of European residents have lived/lived and have worked/work in the United Kingdom.

3. Brexit (2016)

When The United Kingdom left the European Union, it stopped the free movement of EU citizens to and from the Kingdom.⁹ This also had implications for migration. Useful video for this: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/163686248?h=1f48e7610c>

⁵ Adu, Aletha. “Home Office to announce barge as accommodation for asylum seekers.” The Guardian, 3 April 2023.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/apr/03/home-office-to-announce-berge-as-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers>. Accessed 26 December 2023.

⁶ Panned, Norman. Commonwealth Immigration: Debated on Wednesday 29 July 1964. 29 July 1964. Hansard - UK Parliament,

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1964-07-29/debates/9a807cb9-e6b7-47e1-976d-41a5b60da522/CommonwealthImmigration#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Act,to%20a%20term%20of%20imprisonment>. Accessed 25 December 2023.

⁷ The National Archives. “Immigration Act 1968.” The National Archives, 21 May 1968,

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/commonwealth-migration-since-1945/immigration-act-1968/>. Accessed 25 December 2023.

⁸ Home Office. “Changes to British Nationality Act with Immigration Act 1971.” The National Archives, 1971,

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/commonwealth-migration-since-1945/changes-to-british-nationality-act-with-immigration-act-1971/>. Accessed 25 December 2023.

⁹ Dhingra, Swati. “Brexit and the impact of immigration on the UK.” Centre for Economic Performance, 11 May 2016, https://cep.lse.ac.uk/_new/publications/abstract.asp?index=5053. Accessed 26 December 2023.

Economic Factors

1. Labour Market Needs:

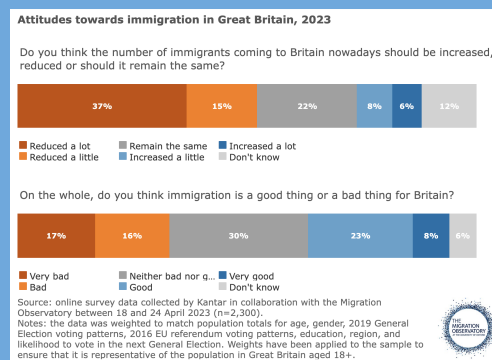
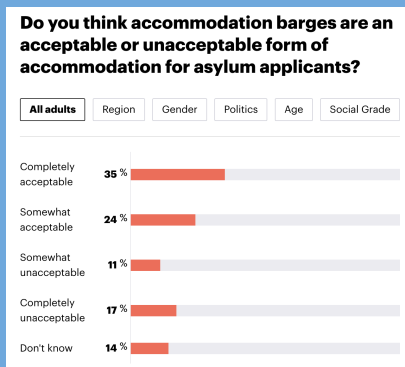
There is a lot of opportunity for both skilled and unskilled labour in the UK (and a high demand for it) thus have attracted migrants to the UK. Healthcare, technology, and agriculture for instance, have often relied on foreign workers.

2. Globalisation:

The United Kingdom's prominence in the global economy and international trade has promoted migration. People have come from all over the world to take advantage of business and employment opportunities.

Social Factors

In August of 2023, 4473 British adults were polled on the question, “Do you think accommodation barges are an acceptable or unacceptable form of accommodation for asylum applicants?”. Fifty-nine percent of respondents deemed the barge accommodation was acceptable to some degree whilst only twenty-eight percent deemed it was unacceptable to some extent. In general, the British population has quite a positive view towards immigration to the UK, a public opinion survey conducted by The Migration Observatory proves the statement.



Timeline

Date	Description
1948	Arrival of Empire Windrush marking the start of large-scale Caribbean migration.
1950-1960	The recruitment period of people around the Commonwealth to supply and aid post-war labour shortages.
1960s-1970s	Introduction of measures to control immigration and the Commonwealth Immigration Acts.
1980s	Increase in migration from Asia, Africa and the Middle East due to political and economic unrest.
1990-2000	Increase in migration from East European countries because of EU expansion.
2016	Brexit and the UK leaving the European Union.
2020	End of Brexit transition period, new system based on points.

Reform Efforts

The Illegal Migration Act of 2023

The Illegal Migration Act of 2023 alters the law so that anyone who arrives in the UK illegally will be detained and then removed to either: their country of origin or a safe third country (Rwanda). The goal of this act is to stop the illegal boats of immigrants from crossing the English channel by cutting off the incentive of being able to take refuge in the UK. In addition, this act also makes the removal of those who came to the UK by illegal means swifter than before. Furthermore, this act claims to prevent people from running the risk of falling victims to human trafficking schemes and modern-day slavery. The act also ensures that the UK government is continually supporting the most vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees by resettling them to safe places every year.¹⁰

¹⁰ Home Office. "Illegal Migration Act 2023." GOV.UK, 8 March 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-migration-bill>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

The Illegal Migration Act has now been passed by parliament and has faced its share of criticism from MPs, the general public and the United Nations alike. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi have both made statements. “For decades, the UK has provided refuge to those in need, in line with its international obligations – a tradition of which it has been rightly proud. This new legislation significantly erodes the legal framework that has protected so many, exposing refugees to grave risks in breach of international law,” says Grandi. High Commissioner Türk says, “Carrying out removals under these circumstances is contrary to prohibitions of refoulement and collective expulsions, rights to due process, to family and private life, and the principle of best interests of children concerned.”¹¹ This bill is sponsored by Suella Braveman and Lord Murray of Blidworth, both of the Conservative Party.¹²

The Rwanda Treaty

In April of 2022, the government announced that asylum seekers who were arriving on UK shores would be sent to Rwanda for processing and to “save countless lives” from human trafficking as stated by then PM, Boris Johnson.¹³ The government has said that the policy would discourage people arriving in the UK through “illegal, dangerous or unnecessary methods”, such as the infamous small boats across the Channel. As of 2023, no migrants have been redirected to Rwanda yet because of legal challenges the policy is facing. In November of the same year, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the Rwanda Asylum Plan was unlawful because asylum seekers might risk being sent to their home country after arriving on Rwandan land.

Not long after the ruling, concern over whether Rwanda was a safe-enough country to send asylum seekers emerged. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak then presented a bill declaring Rwanda indeed was a safe country that needed to be approved by parliament before the Rwanda Asylum Plan could take action. However, the bill the PM presented orders British judges and courts to ignore a few sections of the UK Human Rights Act. Asylum seekers still had the right to question and challenge their removal to Rwanda based on their circumstances but “ministers could ignore emergency orders from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to suspend a flight to Rwanda while an individual legal case was being heard”. Some politicians

¹¹ UNHCR GENEVA. “UK Illegal Migration Bill: UN Refugee Agency and UN Human Rights Office warn of profound impact on human rights and international refugee protection system.” UNHCR, 18 July 2023.

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/uk-illegal-migration-bill-un-refugee-agency-and-un-human-rights-office-warn>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

¹² UK Parliament. “Illegal Migration Act 2023 - Parliamentary Bills.” Parliamentary Bills, 19 October 2023, <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3429>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

¹³ BBC News. “One-way ticket to Rwanda for some UK asylum seekers.” BBC, 14 April 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-61097114>. Accessed 7 January 2024.

(Conservative) are opposed to the policy proposed because they fear the blocking of yet another bill by the courts whilst other politicians have expressed criticism of the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill because it breaks international law. In the end Parliament, passed the bill; although no Conservative MPs voted against the bill, some chose to abstain from voting as a whole. The bill is linked here: [Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill - GOV.UK](#)

As a response to the initial ruling by the Supreme Court, the government proceeded to sign a treaty in order to improve its current asylum process. The treaty addresses all safety concerns that have formerly been proposed and assurance that Rwanda has “a clear and unambiguous commitment to the safety of people who come here” as stated by current Home Secretary, James Cleverly. The treaty is linked here: [Agreement between UK and Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership to strengthen internal commitments on the protection.](#)

Not only have politicians opposed this bill and treaty, the United Nations International Development Minister Andrew Mitchell addressed French Press, AFP and gave the following statement: “I wish to express most extraordinary amazement that the UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, strongly opposes Britain's plan for sending people to Rwanda, on the grounds that Rwanda is not a safe country”. From the very start, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) was highly critical of what was originally Boris Johnson’s plan and had constantly expressed “deep concern about the 'externalisation' of asylum obligations and the serious risks it poses for refugees”.

Topics your Resolutions Should Address

Below there are several topics that resolutions can include, they are placed in this background guide to help delegates focus their research.

Illegal Crossings across the English Channel

Potential solutions include: a treaty with the French addressing safe and legal crossing routes, may have a cap on numbers and priority.¹⁴ The overhauling of the entire asylum system: because of processing delays of 6 months or in some cases more for a decision to be made.¹⁵

¹⁴ Manning, Alan. “The only way to substantially reduce the number of migrants crossing the Channel is through an agreement with France.” LSE Blogs, 26 November 2021, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/channel-crossings/>. Accessed 7 January 2024.

¹⁵ Taylor, Diane. “Stopping dangerous Channel crossings: what experts and campaigners say.” The Guardian, 25 November 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/25/solutions-to-the-channel-problem-what-experts-and-campaigners-say>. Accessed 7 January 2024.

The Safety of Migrants Once Granted Asylum

Potential solutions include: implementing regular check-ups on refugees ensuring that they are treated in accordance with internationally-recognised law standards. Promoting or implementing refugee conventions and/or laws to ensure a sense of community within refugee communities.¹⁶

The Rwanda Treaty

Delegates' resolutions should include the bloc's stance on the Rwanda treaty and whether you are/are not in support of the treaty, why or why not. Address the safety concerns, the human rights concerns and past court rulings and why you are/are not in support.

¹⁶ UNHCR. "Protecting Refugees." UNHCR, December 2017, https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/05/UNHCR_Brochure_EN.pdf. Accessed 7 January 2024.

Party Stances

Conservatives

Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister

Sunak is very adamant on reform regarding the migrant crisis. He has issued multiple ‘warnings’ saying that migrants threaten to “overwhelm” countries. He not only pursued former PM Boris Johnson’s Rwanda plan, the PM “vowed to push for reform of global refugee rules at a festival organised by a far-right Italian leader”. His plans for the future include the expansion and consolidation of the Rwanda plan and he has ensured that by constantly paying Rwanda tens of millions of pounds. He is under a lot of criticism from the British public which could jeopardise the upcoming election as the Labour party have made a stance on abolishing the Rwanda plan if they win the upcoming election.¹⁷

James Cleverly, Home Secretary

James Cleverly serves as the Home Secretary ergo responsible for immigration, the police force and issues concerning the safety of the UK. Like Sunak, Cleverly has made several advances concerning the national migrant crisis. Cleverly is very determined to cut down illegal boat crossings by any means whether it be the Rwanda treaty, the five point plan to reduce illegal immigration and countless others. In regards to the controversial barge accommodations, Cleverly has made several statements one of which being: “Of course, no-one would want a facility like that in their constituency ... but the point I’m saying is that the legislation we are putting through is to reduce the need for facilities like that”.¹⁸ Cleverly mainly supports Sunak’s policies and is very confident in the Rwanda plan and other initiatives introduced by his party.

¹⁷ TRT World. “Will repeal Rwanda policy if Labour Party voted to power: Starmer.” TRT World, 12 December 2023, <https://www.trtworld.com/europe/will-repeal-rwanda-policy-if-labour-party-voted-to-power-starmer-16205332>. Accessed 7 January 2024.

¹⁸ PA News Agency. “Cleverly: No MP would want large-scale asylum seeker accommodation in their area.” Bracknell News, 2 May 2023, <https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/national/23494143.cleverly-no-mp-want-large-scale-asylum-seeker-accommodation-area/>. Accessed 7 January 2024.

Labour

Keir Starmer, Leader of Opposition

Sir Keir Starmer is the Leader of the Labour Party- the main opposition party in the UK. Before becoming a politician, he was the chief prosecutor for England and Wales. Like the Conservatives, Starmer has consistently expressed the severity of needing to stop the boats. He believes the only way to stop the boats is to “smash the criminal gangs that are running this vile trade and putting people in the boats in the first place”. He does not support the barge accommodations to any extent even going so far as to say “use of barges and RAF sites to house migrants is evidence of failure”. In addition, he has clearly stated his and his party’s opposition to the Rwanda Plan.¹⁹

Yvette Cooper, Shadow Home Secretary

Yvette Cooper is the current Shadow Home Secretary working in the Shadow Cabinet; all working under Keir Starmer. She believes firmly that the boats are “deeply damaging”²⁰ and along with the rest of the Labour Party, she stands strong that the way to solve this is through eliminating the ‘criminal gangs’ that run the operation of smuggling people into England in the first place. She and her party stand against the Rwanda policy and she is quoted saying “unworkable, unethical and high fraud risk”. Though this particular statement by Cooper was made prior to that of Starmer’s and contrasts it, Cooper has stated “barges could still be used for asylum seekers under Labour”.

Scottish Nationalists

Stephen Mark Flynn, SNP Leader

Stephen Mark Flynn is the SNP Leader in the House of Commons. He represents the largest political party in Scotland. Concerning the Conservative five-point-plan, Flynn is greatly opposed to the policy which puts in place tougher visa rules for care worker’s families to minimise migration. In a debate in the House of Commons, he is quoted as saying, “Why does he think that it is acceptable to ask people to come to these shores to

¹⁹ McGrath, Dominic. “Labour considering Rwanda alternative for migrant plan.” The Independent, 25 December 2023, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-plan-labour-migrants-starmer-b2469385.html>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

²⁰ Policy Mogul. “Yvette Cooper Illegal Migration Bill statement and Labour’s five-point plan to reform the asylum system - Key updates.” PolicyMogul, 7 March 2023, <https://policymogul.com/key-updates/27360/yvette-cooper-illegal-migration-bill-statement-and-labour-s-five-point-plan-to-reform-the-asylum-system>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

care for our family members whilst we show complete disregard for theirs?” directly to the Prime Minister.²¹ Flynn has called the Conservative Rwanda Plan “despicable” and offers the solution of creating legal and safe routes into the UK instead. As of current, there is no information on his opinions on the barge accommodations.

Mhairi Black, MP Paisley

Mhairi Black serves as the Deputy Leader of the Scottish National Party in the House of Commons. She serves as the current youngest MP in the House of Commons and is a campaigner for LGBTQ+ rights. Black stands against the Illegal Migration Bill as the MP voted ‘no’ on the Illegal Migration Bill and in addition, voted ‘no’ on the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Migration) Bill too. Black has a rather positive outlook on immigration as the MP has shown support for migration into the UK on many occasions, one being a column she wrote on The National, a Scottish daily newspaper.²² It is yet that a statement in regards to the Bibby Stockholm accommodation is to be made by Black.

Questions to Consider

- How will the migrants' safety be ensured both in the UK and in the boats (human trafficking, human rights violations, etc.?)
- Is the system in the UK enough to sustain the current load of net migrants that arrive every year?
- How will the increase in migrants into the UK affect the general welfare of citizens?
- How will the increase in migrants into the UK affect the economy and is it a positive or negative effect?
- Are there any plans to minimise the illegal channel crossings other than the Rwanda plan?

²¹ PoliticsJOE. “SNP leader rips Tories to shreds for inhumane migration policies at PMQs.” Wikipedia, 6 December 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PavslpYygnY&ab_channel=PoliticsJOE. Accessed 9 January 2024.

²² Black, Mhairi. “Mhairi Black: Let's look at some cold, hard facts on migration.” The National, 2 December 2023, <https://www.thenational.scot/politics/23963486.mhairi-black-look-cold-hard-facts-migration/>. Accessed 9 January 2024.

Recommended Websites to Use

[Migration Observatory](#)

[UK immigration - BBC News](#)

[The Points Based system](#)

[Hansard Debates on Migration \(search for migration on the website\)](#)



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Topic 3: Scottish Independence Referendum: Terms and Implications of a Second Scottish Independence Vote

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The nation of Scotland is a UK constituent country bordering England, and covers nearly one-third of the United Kingdom's land area. Scotland holds a population of 5.51 million people, as per 2024 and is projected to reach 57 million in 2039. The First Minister of Scotland is Humza Yousaf, a member of the Scottish National Party

In 2014, a referendum on the question of Scottish Independence from the United Kingdom was held in Scotland on the 18th of September. The referendum question inquired, "Should Scotland be an independent country?" Voter turnout was 84.6%, the highest recorded for an election or referendum in the United Kingdom since the 1910 general election, with those against the referendum (The "No") side winning 55.3% of votes and those in favour (The "Yes" side) occupying 44.7%. These results meant that Scotland would remain a constituent of the United Kingdom until a second referendum is held, if ever it will.

Following the aftermath of the vote, the U.K. The Supreme Court ruled that Scotland does not have the power to hold an independence referendum without the consent of the British Government, therefore it seems that the independence movement has reached a stalemate. Westminster is tenacious on the fact that the Scots vote against independence was the final word on the matter. However, the SNP (Scottish National Party) refutes the scale of change in the United Kingdom since then, most crucially its decision to leave the European Union, entitled Scots to another vote.

KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
(Scottish) Independence Referendum	A direct vote in which the citizens of Scotland decide whether they want their country to remain part of the United Kingdom or become an independent sovereign state.
Devolution	The transfer of certain powers and responsibilities from a central government (in this case, the UK government) to a regional government, allowing Scotland to manage its own affairs in areas like education,

	health, and transportation.
Devo Max	A concept suggesting maximum devolution of powers to Scotland short of full independence. It represents a scenario where Scotland retains significant autonomy while remaining within the UK.
Nationalism	A political ideology emphasizing the importance of a shared national identity, culture, and interests, often leading to the pursuit of national sovereignty.
West Lothian Question	A constitutional issue that arises from the devolution of powers to Scotland, where Scottish MPs in the UK Parliament can vote on matters affecting England, but English MPs have limited influence over devolved matters in Scotland.
Currency Union:	An agreement between independent nations to share a common currency. The potential adoption of a shared currency is a consideration in discussions about an independent Scotland's economic policies.
Westminster	Refers to the Palace of Westminster in London, where the UK Parliament is located. Discussions about Scottish independence often involve negotiations with Westminster regarding the terms of separation.

History of The Topic

The persistent question of Scotland's independence possesses roots that trace back to the historical, political, and cultural context of Scotland's relationship with England and the United Kingdom. Scotland and England existed as separate kingdoms until 1707 until The Acts of Union merged the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland into a single political entity: The kingdom of Great Britain, or the United Kingdom. The process of unification began with the Treaty of Union, which was signed on July 22, 1706, and was ratified by both the English and Scottish Parliaments. The Act of Union was met with various subsequent reactions and events that had long-term implications for Scottish identity, politics, and aspirations for independence:

Jacobite Uprisings (1715 and 1745)

Supporters of the exiled Stuart monarchy, known as Jacobites, sought to restore the Stuarts to the throne. The 1715 and 1745 uprisings had strong Scottish participation and were driven, in part, by dissatisfaction with the Union. The defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 marked the end of the Jacobite challenges.

Economic Changes and the Scottish Enlightenment

The 18th century saw economic changes and the rise of the Scottish Enlightenment. Economic opportunities within the British Empire, coupled with intellectual advancements, led to a period of significant cultural and scientific progress in Scotland. While this did not directly advocate for independence, it contributed to a distinct Scottish identity.

Industrial Revolution and Economic Integration (18th-19th centuries)

Scotland played a crucial role in the Industrial Revolution. Economic integration within the United Kingdom increased, but there were also economic disparities, particularly in the impact of industrialization. Some Scots felt that their economic interests were not adequately represented, and hence perpetuated the feeling of a need for independence.

Emergence of Scottish Nationalism (19th-20th centuries)

The late 19th century and early 20th century saw the emergence of Scottish nationalism as a political force. Organizations like the National Party of Scotland (predecessor to the Scottish National Party - SNP) were formed, advocating for greater Scottish autonomy and, eventually, independence.

Devolution and the Scottish Parliament (20th century)

The latter part of the 20th century witnessed a paradigm shift in the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Propelled by growing demands for greater autonomy, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 was a significant milestone. Enacted through the Scotland Act of 1998, this devolved legislature granted Scotland decision-making powers over various domestic matters, including education, health, and transportation. Devolution aimed to address the perceived democratic deficit, granting Scots more control over policies directly affecting their lives. The introduction of the Scottish Parliament marked a nuanced approach to governance within the UK, providing a forum for regional decision-making while preserving the broader union.

Scottish Independence Referendum (2014)

In the lead-up to the referendum, dynamic political debates unfolded. Led by the Scottish National Party (SNP), the campaign for independence, under Alex Salmond's leadership, championed fiscal autonomy, control over natural resources, and the ability to shape Scotland's future. In contrast, the "Better Together" campaign, spearheaded by Alistair Darling, emphasized economic advantages, shared resources, and the strength of the United Kingdom.

As economic considerations took the center stage, with advocates for independence arguing for better management of Scotland's natural wealth, particularly oil, opponents raised

concerns about the sustainability of an independent Scotland's economy, including issues of currency stability, financial institutions, and EU membership.

The currency debate became a focal point, with the SNP proposing a currency union with the rest of the UK, a proposal met with skepticism by the "Better Together" campaign. This ignited a nuanced discussion on the feasibility and stability of such an arrangement in the event of Scottish independence. The question of EU membership added complexity to the narrative. The SNP asserted that an independent Scotland would automatically join the EU, citing the benefits of membership. However, uncertainties arose due to the EU's stance on newly independent states seeking membership.

Following the referendum on September 18, 2014, the outcome revealed that 55% of Scottish voters chose to remain in the United Kingdom, while 45% supported independence. The aftermath triggered a range of emotions, from cheers and sentiments of ecstasy among unionists to disappointment among independence advocates, highlighting profound divisions within the Scottish electorate. Pro-union perspectives celebrated the result as a triumph for stability, continuity, and the shared history of the UK. Meanwhile, proponents of independence, while acknowledging the outcome, underscored the significant support for their cause and the enduring demand for greater Scottish autonomy.

However, the referendum did not fully quell the appetite for constitutional change. The aftermath witnessed increased calls for additional devolution, leading to the establishment of the Smith Commission, which recommended enhanced powers for the Scottish Parliament. Nonetheless, lingering questions about the "vow" made by UK leaders and the scope of devolved powers remained contentious, contributing to ongoing debates about the effectiveness of the devolution settlement.

Brexit

The Brit's decision to leave the EU had profound implications on the question of Scottish Independence. The Brexit process, initiated by the 2016 referendum, exposed stark differences in voting patterns between Scotland and the rest of the UK, notably England. Scotland voted decisively to remain within the EU, with 62% choosing "Remain," in stark contrast to the overall UK result, where a narrow majority opted for "Leave." This divergence in voting preferences accentuated sentiments in Scotland that the democratic will of the country was not adequately respected within the UK system. Proponents of Scottish independence argued that the decision to leave the EU, despite Scotland's preference to remain, underscored a democratic deficit, adding momentum to the pre-existing desire for greater autonomy.

The Brexit-induced disparities played a pivotal role in reigniting calls for a second Scottish independence referendum. The Scottish National Party (SNP), led by Nicola Sturgeon, asserted that the significant changes brought about by Brexit, particularly those impacting Scotland's relationship with the EU, justified revisiting the independence question. The concept

of a "material change in circumstances" became a central argument, emphasizing the altered landscape and its consequences as a rationale for reassessing Scotland's constitutional future.

Simultaneously, discussions unfolded regarding the complexities of EU membership for an independent Scotland. Proponents argued that Scotland, as an EU member, could maintain close ties with the bloc. However, uncertainties surrounded the timing, terms, and conditions of EU membership for an independent Scotland, adding layers of complexity to the debate. Brexit heightened political tensions within the UK and intensified the debate on the union's future. The departure from the EU accentuated differences in political ideologies and visions for the country's trajectory. This backdrop influenced the broader narrative around Scottish independence, shaping the arguments made by both proponents and opponents.

Scotland's quest for greater self-determination, epitomized by the 2014 independence referendum and influenced by the UK's Brexit decision, reflects a deep yearning for democratic expression by a large fraction of Scots. The emotions surrounding the 2014 outcome, both celebratory and disappointed, highlight the intricate interplay of national identity within the larger UK framework. The question of a second independence referendum is nuanced and must be approached with consideration and caution of the many different contexts and perspectives within the issue, and the outcomes of a potential decision.

Timeline

Date	Description
May 1, 1707	<p>Acts of Union</p> <p>The acts of union merged the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland into a single political entity: The kingdom of Great Britain, or the United Kingdom. The process of unification began with the Treaty of Union, which was signed on July 22, 1706, and was ratified by both the English and Scottish Parliaments.</p>
May 11, 1999	<p>Reconvention of Scottish Parliament</p> <p>After a three century hiatus, the Scottish Parliament was re-established, marking a significant step towards devolution. This enabled Scotland to have more power and control over its national affairs, however still under the guidance of the Westminster government, operating under a devolved system of government.</p>

	<p>This means that the Scottish parliament possesses merely some degree of control over its internal affairs such as the power to make decisions on certain policy areas such as education, health, and justice. However, the United Kingdom Parliament in Westminster retains powers over reserved matters, including defence, foreign affairs, and some aspects of economic policy.</p>
September 18, 2014	<p>Scottish Independence Referendum</p> <p>The first Scottish Independence Referendum took place under the question “Should Scotland be an Independent Country?” 85% of voters turned out and 55.3% of voters chose “no” and 44.7% chose “yes”.</p>
June 23, 2016	<p>Brexit Referendum</p> <p>The United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum. Scotland, where a majority voted to remain, felt a sense of disconnection from the rest of the UK, leading to renewed discussions on independence, and the potentiality of Scotland becoming an independent nation</p>
March 28, 2017	<p>Request for Second Independence Referendum</p> <p>The Scottish Parliament voted in favor of a second independence referendum, but this request was later put on hold by the then-Prime Minister Theresa May, saying “Now is not the time”.</p>
January 31, 2020	<p>Brexit</p> <p>The United Kingdom officially left the European Union. Proponents of Scottish independence argued that this departure, against the wishes of the Scottish electorate, underscored the need for a reevaluation of Scotland's place within the United Kingdom.</p>
November 23, 2022	<p>United Kingdom Supreme Court judgement on second Independence Referendum.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has drafted – but not formally introduced</p>

	<p>– a Bill to hold a second referendum on independence. While it can legislate on devolved matters, for example health and education, it cannot pass bills relating to matters “reserved” to the UK Parliament. The UK Supreme Court ruled that the Scottish Parliament cannot legislate a second independence referendum without Westminster approval.</p>
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Global Reform Efforts

The question of a Second Scottish Independence Referendum lies within the responsibility and respective boundaries of the Scottish government, and the United Kingdom government, therefore other external parties have taken no hand within this issue so far. There has been no specific global reform efforts directly addressing the question of Scottish independence.

Topics your Resolutions Should Address:

Legal basis and framework of a Second Referendum

Delegates need to recognize the importance of Scotland's distinct legal system and the need to align the referendum within the existing constitutional framework. Consideration of whether a Section 30 order (permission from the UK government) is required and under what conditions, this needs to be clearly addressed within the resolution

The Referendum Question

Exploration of potential referendum questions, including variations that might account for different independence scenarios (e.g., full independence, enhanced devolution, federal structures). Ensuring linguistic clarity in both English and Scottish Gaelic.

Timing and Logistics

Addressing seasonal and historical factors that might influence the timing of the referendum. Establishing specific arrangements for postal voting, ensuring accessibility to remote and rural areas.

Voter Eligibility

Deliberation on the inclusion of 16 and 17-year-olds in the electorate, building on their participation in the 2014 independence referendum. Consideration of residency requirements and provisions for Scots living abroad.

Campaign Regulations

Implementing measures to prevent foreign interference in the campaign, ensuring unbiased or imbalanced reputation of perspectives within media. Making sure that campaigning stays within civil grounds and does not cross the threshold of violence.

Constitutional Implications

Addressing the potential impact on the monarchy and the role of the Crown in an independent Scotland. Define and characterise the process for drafting a Scottish constitution in the event of independence.

Economic Impact

Detailed economic modelling, taking into account sector-specific considerations (e.g., oil and gas, finance, agriculture). Planning for a transition period, including currency options and monetary policy. Note that the UK is one of Scotland's largest trading partners

Social and Cultural Aspects

Acknowledging the diversity within the Scottish population, the resolution emphasizes the protection of minority rights, including linguistic and cultural considerations. Discussions encompass potential impacts on immigration policies and citizenship criteria, ensuring that the rights of all individuals, regardless of background, are preserved and respected.

European Union membership and international relation

The resolution clarifies the process for Scotland's potential re-entry into the European Union, recognizing the varying positions of existing member states. Discussions extend to the implications for existing international agreements and partnerships, emphasizing diplomatic efforts to secure positive relations with the international community.

Party Stances:

Here is some baseline information on parties that have prominent stances on this issue, this research can be used to help guide delegates with the research process.

UK Conservative

Rishi Sunak, Prime minister

As a key figure within the Conservative Party and the current Prime minister, Rishi Sunak embodies a cautious approach towards Scottish independence. With a focus on economic stability and national interests, Sunak is likely to prioritize policies that strengthen the economic and political ties between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Rishi Sunak has blatantly rejected future proposals for a second Scottish independence referendum, prioritizing unity and conglomeration of the United Kingdom. He states his reasoning behind this, ““We were told it was a once-in-a-generation referendum. The people of Scotland had a chance to express their view and it did, so I don’t think anyone can deny they were given that chance. We’ve also delivered on all the commitments that were made to devolve greater power to Scotland, which is now, I think, the most powerful devolved assembly anywhere in the world.””

James Cleverly, Home Secretary

Hailing from Lewisham, London, England, and serving as home secretary for the British Parliament since November 2023, Cleverly’s views on the question of Scottish independence remains synonymous with that of Sunak’s and the goals and ideologies of the conservative party. Cleverly has openly expressed his opposition to the notion of a completely independent Scotland citing the benefits that Scotland will receive in union with the United Kingdom and the many harms and downfalls it will face if it were to be independent, such as the negative impact on the Scottish Economy. Additionally, Cleverly has been an active advocate of Brexit, participating in many debates and discussions and encouraging voters in the Brexit referendum

UK Labour

Keir Starmer, Leader

Starmer has served as the leader of the Labour Party since 2020. He has also served as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Holborn and St Pancras from 2015 until he became party leader. Starmer has been a prominent figure in British politics, known for his legal career and work as Director of Public Prosecutions. In terms of Scottish independence, Starmer

has stated that he does not support a second independence referendum for Scotland, emphasising the importance of maintaining the unity of the United Kingdom.

Angela Rayner, Deputy leader

Rayner has served in shadow cabinet positions, including Shadow Secretary of State for Education, and is currently shadow deputy Prime Minister of the UK. Rayner has openly expressed her opposition to the question of an independent Scotland, cautioning against going “anywhere near” another Scottish independence referendum as she claimed a Labour government would “make the changes we need”. Angela Rayner told a crowd in Edinburgh that having a Labour government after the next election would “make all the difference” in policies enacted in Scotland.

“I’m against us going anywhere near a second referendum, if I’m honest. I think the Brexit referendum was enough for me.” She stated.

Scottish National Party (SNP)

Humza Yousaf, First minister

Serving as First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party since March 2023, Yousaf strongly supports the independence of Scotland, as per his party’s cornerstone ideologies. Yousaf actively advocates and calls for the independence of Scotland, and has made similar promises to those who vote for the SNP. “Voters who believe in independence must vote for the Scottish National party in the coming general election”, Yousaf stated in a direct appeal to wavering supporters of the SNP.

“If you believe decisions about Scotland should be taken in Scotland – if you believe in independence – then you must vote SNP. If you want to see an independent Scotland, you have to get out and vote for it.”

Michael Russell, Interim Chief Executive Officer

Analogous to the stance of Yousaf Russel strongly supports the independence of Scotland and believes it is in an integral move to liberate Scotland from the Westminster government, providing Scotland with more autonomy and more freedom to legislate it’s own decisions, frameworks and country. Although Russel believes this, Russel has also said: Russell has also told delegates at an SNP conference in Glasgow, Scotland and England would work “better together” as neighbouring independent countries, but that the SNP should not be impatient to rush into a second independence referendum.” “It can only happen when we find the right moment and the right arguments to make it happen,”

Scottish Conservatives

Douglas Ross, Leader

As a Scottish Conservative politician, Ross opposes Scottish independence and has been vocal about his support for the United Kingdom. He has stated that he believes Scotland is stronger as part of the UK and has criticised the Scottish National Party's push for independence, dubbing Humza Yousaf's independence plan as "rash and irresponsible" and claimed the First Minister is more "reckless" than Nicola Sturgeon. "On independence, he is more rash, irresponsible and hasty than even Nicola Sturgeon at her worst." The Scottish Tory leader claimed that under Yousaf the SNP, on independence, is "willing to go further, act more erratically, do more damage."

Megan Gallacher, Deputy Leader

Gallacher has served as the deputy leader of the Scottish conservatives 2022, and possesses views similar to that of Ross on the question of Scottish independence. Gallacher believes that Scotland would be better off staying as a constitutional state of the United Kingdom, and her association with the conservative party reflects this belief. Furthermore, she has publicly bashed the SNP for their constant reference to the independence of Scotland in aim of acclaiming support in the elections, and not focusing on real national development, stating, "It pulls people apart talking about Scottish independence, it's so polarising and it just shows that that's the only thing the SNP have got left to use."

Questions to Consider

- How has the political landscape, both in Scotland and the UK, evolved since the previous referendum in 2014?
 - What legal mechanisms would be employed for authorising and conducting a second referendum? Is a Section 30 order necessary, and what conditions should be attached?
 - How have changes in the UK's constitutional framework, if any, impacted the legal basis for a second referendum?
 - How can the referendum process be made more inclusive, ensuring the participation of all eligible voters, including those living abroad?
 - What economic models and scenarios should be considered, taking into account changes in global and regional economic conditions?
 - What will be the social and economic impacts on Scotland, its citizens, companies and government if it departs from the United Kingdom?
 - How might the results of the referendum impact Scotland's relationship with the European Union, and what steps can be taken to navigate this process?
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- What lessons can be learned from the Brexit negotiation process, and how should they inform the approach to negotiations in the case of Scottish independence?
- How will security and defence arrangements be managed in the event of independence, including issues related to military assets and collaboration?
- What steps should be taken to address any potential security challenges arising from the change in political status?
- How can contingency plans be improved to address potential challenges and uncertainties, both in the case of a vote for independence and a vote to remain in the union?

Recommended Websites to Use

[2014 Scottish Independence Referendum -Wikipedia](#)

[Scottish Independence referendum -UK Parliament](#)

[Scottish independence: How did we get here and what happens next? -BBC](#)

[Supreme Court decision on the independence referendum: FOI release -Scottish](#)

[Scottish independence referendum: legal issues -UK Parliament](#)

[Scottish independence: could there be another referendum? -Reuters](#)

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