

## COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AS A TOOL OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: THE CASE OF BRITISHNESS

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**Abstract:** *The civic concept of identity pertains to the development of nations within states, which have geographical and political-national entities. The concept of nation is inherently linked to the notion of identity, reflecting an individual's attachment to their origin, traditions, culture, and language, which may not necessarily align with the state of their birth or residence.*

*Using the theoretical research method, the paper analysed available data and literature as well as targeted relevant theoretical sources. Data synthesis compilations brought together information from different sources to build a theoretical framework. The critical analysis includes an evaluation of existing research and theories on national identities specifically in the context of the United Kingdom. Using an empirical method through a statistical analysis of Britishness as a collective identity, it contributed to a better understanding of what British identity means in relation to the national identities of the countries that make up the UK.*

*This paper introduces the Theory of Collective Identity (TCI), through the lens of Britishness, which seeks to reinforce and promote Britishness as a collective identity. The United Kingdom (UK) embodies a shared (collective) identity, comprising English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish identities. Historical developments, societal actions, and core values such as religious freedom, tolerance, and personal and social responsibility have all shaped the construction of British identity. This paper explores which components are pivotal in defining Britishness, examining factors such as the English language, birthplace, British citizenship, residence, heritage, religious affiliation, or simply individual identification as British.*

**Keywords:** *The Theory of Collective Identity (TCI), Britishness, collective identity, cultural diplomacy, royal family*

## 1. Introduction

*We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.*

*Sir Winston Churchill*

States strategically leverage their heritage to advance foreign policy objectives, thereby shaping a positive national image that supports the achievement of these goals. The policy of preserving and promoting identity has increasingly significant impacts on both domestic and international dynamics. In contemporary international relations, historical and cultural heritage has become an indispensable component, while diplomacy has emerged as a key instrument in foreign policy strategies. Historical heritage serves as a framework that effectively communicates a nation's identity, its people and customs. It functions as a tool for fostering improved communication, enhancing mutual understanding, and cultivating a positive diplomatic environment between nations.

The concept of identity, initially associated primarily with the individual, has since evolved to encompass the collective identity of nations and peoples, particularly in the context of state communities. In contemporary discourse, the notion of supranational identity has emerged, particularly within the European Union, where the concept of a European identity is being promoted as a form of belonging to Europe. Despite this, national identity remains a crucial element in state promotion and provides a strong foundation for advocating national values. Some scholars highlight that identity can manifest in multiple forms, including individual, national, and collective identities (Korunić, 2003). Both nationhood and identity serve as critical mechanisms in advancing a state's foreign policy objectives. This is often realized through bilateral agreements, cooperative programs, and collaboration with cultural institutions, particularly those with international mandates. Cultural diplomacy, as a result, plays a pivotal role in regional cultural exchange and fosters multilateral cooperation in the cultural domain. In many cases, cultural diplomacy, alongside sports diplomacy, emerges as a prominent tool for promoting national identity and advancing broader state interests on the global stage.

The foreign policy of the United Kingdom today is predominantly shaped by the strategic use of soft power, which is often realized through cultural promotion, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and fostering international cultural cooperation. By aligning domestic and foreign policies with cultural heritage, the UK aims to strengthen its global reputation and

position (Johnson, 2021). The UN Charter, along with the United Kingdom's status as a permanent member of the Security Council, provides the UK with the opportunity to pursue its national interests on a global scale. Despite its historical legacy as a colonial power and its ongoing geopolitical ambitions, the UK has opted to present itself on the international stage through the promotion of a positive image. Diplomacy reflects the actions and interactions of various actors in international political life, each of whom, guided by their capabilities, needs, and the prevailing geopolitical context, aims to achieve optimal objectives on the global stage (Vukadinović, 2004). These diplomatic efforts are conducted through established channels of communication and action, which are governed by diplomatic law—a comprehensive framework of international legal provisions addressing the rights, duties, and immunities of states and diplomatic missions (Berković, 2006). This paper aims to further explore the role of the United Kingdom's cultural diplomacy, specifically examining how it contributes to the reinforcement of Britain's collective identity and make it an effective soft power as a key instrument of foreign policy.

## **2. Protection of National (Collective) Identity as an Important Aspect of Diplomatic Service**

Auden argued that while words may not be able to prevent war or alleviate immense suffering, it is nonetheless crucial to reach agreements and articulate clear messages (Auden, 1989). Historically, such messages were conveyed by various figures across different civilizations: in ancient Greece, *angelosi*; in Rome, *nuntius* or *legatii*; in Venice, *bailusi*; and in the Dubrovnik Republic, *dragomanis* - translators who, in addition to envoys, often carried substantial sums (such as 12,500 ducats) to ensure the freedom of trade. Just as in the past, without diplomatic action today, states would be deprived of the opportunity to establish and maintain amicable relations that facilitate cultural cooperation. Diplomacy is the art of negotiation, an ancient practice and essential human activity aimed at resolving conflicts and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes (Berridge, 2007). It is defined as the conduct of state affairs through official foreign policy contacts with other international actors. Furthermore, diplomacy functions as a crucial instrument of the state apparatus, representing a country on the global stage and maintaining official relations with foreign nations. It is both an ability and a profession—one that involves resolving conflicts and representing a country's interests in international relations (Nick, 2010). The title of British

ambassadors, as ambassadors of Her Royal Highness, carries a largely traditional significance, yet it also underscores their role as representatives of the government of the United Kingdom (Vukadinović, 2004). One of the key tasks of diplomats today is to develop a network of cultural relations that facilitates an understanding and appreciation of their country's cultural heritage. By promoting a positive image, diplomats can not only strengthen diplomatic ties but also attract tourists and business investments. Institutions such as the Goethe Institute and the British Council play a crucial role in promoting national heritage, contributing to the strengthening of their countries' global reputations through various cultural programs and language learning initiatives. Between the end of the Cold War and the advent of the new world order, a new dimension of diplomacy emerged. In addition to traditional forms of military and economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy as a form of soft power began to develop rapidly. (Vukadinović, 2005).

In recent times, diplomatic service does not only mean the classic term of representing a country and does not only mean improving political and economic relations between countries as the basis of diplomatic activity. A significant part of the diplomatic service refers to the activity of cultural diplomacy as a soft power that promotes national or collective identity with exceptional quality. Cultural diplomacy often develops various activities that stimulate the interest of a foreign observer in the identity of a nation and its cultural and historical heritage. It is a common example of how cultural diplomacy has a stronger influence on the observer than classic diplomatic tasks such as representation and negotiation. This does not only apply to peaceful times when we generally consider cultural diplomacy among the most active forms of diplomatic practice. Cultural diplomacy can also play an important role in promoting identity during unstable times when unfavourable circumstances do not provide optimal conditions for the cultural promotion of national and/or collective identity. The key reasons for strengthening the role and place of cultural diplomacy lie in the awareness of the modern diplomatic service that the cultural heritage of a country can be presented much better through its own history. One of the reasons why diplomatic representatives want to engage in cultural diplomacy is precisely the possibility of a broader view of diplomacy as a profession and career.

From the above, it is easy to conclude why states generally establish cultural centers on the territory of other states. This represents the best opportunity to promote their own values and identities. An additional explanation can be found in the fact that the average person

knows relatively little about the history and identity of other peoples and nations. Often, we ourselves do not know enough about ourselves and our history, culture and heritage. By strengthening the role of cultural diplomacy, we also strengthen our understanding of what we as a people essentially are. This leads us to the conclusion that cultural diplomacy is not only a mirror to the outside world, but also an aid in understanding our own history and cultural values.

Cultural centers therefore have a special place in the creation of foreign policy and diplomatic action as its instrument in international relations. Therefore, it should not be surprising if cultural centers sometimes perform the task of diplomatic representation more easily than political and economic cooperation, which is understandable given that culture almost always connects peoples better than politics.

### **3. The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Strengthening British (Collective) Identity**

English is currently one of the most widely spoken languages globally, with approximately 325 million speakers across Great Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Gibraltar, Malta, and Hong Kong. Additionally, around 150 million individuals speak English as a second language, particularly within Commonwealth countries, including approximately 40 million speakers in India. When presenting a country's image, it is essential to consider not only how others perceive it but also which aspects of the nation they view as most exemplary (Chay, 1990). National branding, therefore, involves a continual engagement with national identity, aiming to effectively position a country within the international community (Matica Hrvatska, 2011). UK literature, represented by figures such as William Shakespeare, Robert Burns, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, as well as British film, sport, language, music, cuisine, fashion, science, architecture, theatre, media, everyday life and cultural institutions, plays a significant role in shaping and enhancing the positive positioning of the UK brand (Anholt, 2009). The presentation of a nation's culture not only reflects its tangible heritage but also encapsulates the spirit of the country, offering a manifestation of its collective identity and fostering a deeper understanding. Culture, as a societal expression, serves as the "glue" that unites shared values, as stated on the official UK government website.

With fourteen national museums in England, four in Scotland, seven in Wales and four in Northern Ireland, and twenty-nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the UK occupies a prominent position in the global effort to shape and strengthen national identity. Sites such as the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, and the Forth Bridge are increasingly recognized as heritage sites, embodying national and collective identities that endure through time. Acquiring knowledge and experience in cultural activities at all levels of the education system significantly enhances the likelihood of future participation and fosters greater support for public cultural policy (Mulcahy, 2006). Furthermore, many nations deploy specialized diplomatic staff, such as cultural attachés or cultural affairs advisers, within their embassies, particularly in major global cities, to foster and promote cultural cooperation between their home country and the host nation (Nick, 2010). These roles play a crucial part in advancing cultural diplomacy, thereby strengthening the international standing of the nation and its cultural heritage (Nick, 2010).

#### **4. Protection and Promotion of British Collective Identity**

Identity can be understood as the identification of a specific segment of the population with its historical, cultural, and national heritage. From a sociological perspective, it encompasses a set of characteristics that distinguish an individual or group, highlighting both differences and a sense of belonging in relation to other groups or individuals. Identity is influenced by culture and shaped by historical transformations (Asari, 2008). Symbols play a crucial role in communicating these identities and fostering respect for them. A notable example is the small poppy flower worn by the British during November, which serves as a symbol of remembrance for the armistice marking the end of the First World War. In addition, Albanež discusses the tie as not merely an article of clothing, but as a symbol within Western culture. It represents fundamental societal values, denoting personal dignity, success, self-awareness, civilization, and celebration (Albanež, 2011). In the context of Croatia, the tie has evolved into an emblem of national identity and a key component of the country's historical heritage. It is widely acknowledged that Croatian soldiers in the 17th century were the first to wear the tie, and etymologically, the term "tie" is derived from the Croatian words *Croat*, *Harvat*, and *Karvat*.

A British survey conducted by YouGov, involving 20,081 respondents revealed that British identity is strongly felt across all generations, with 83 percentage of both individuals aged

18 to 24 and those between 50 and 64 reporting a connection to British identity (Tolley, 2020). This finding underscores the enduring significance of British identity as a collective construct. In England, 77 percentage of Conservative voters express pride in their English identity, while 45 percentage of Labour supporters, 42 percentage of Liberal Democrats, and 61 percentage of respondents in general also identify as proud of their English roots. Notably, English identity is perceived as more exclusive, whereas British identity is seen as more inclusive. The survey also indicates that a majority of respondents believe England was in a better state in the past, while individuals in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland tend to view the future more optimistically. Eight out of ten people regard calling themselves English as a significant part of their identity, with six out of ten affirming that their English identity is a source of pride. These responses suggest that English identity is not merely a factual distinction, but rather an attitudinal and mental stance. Among younger individuals, 45 percentage express pride in their English identity, whereas 72 percentage of the older population do so. In Wales, however, the strength of national identity appears to diminish with age. In contrast, over 80 percentage of respondents in Scotland identify strongly with being Scottish.

In the context of international cultural cooperation, which has become an integral aspect of foreign policy, the UK presents itself on the global stage with a unified set of positions and approaches. Montaigne emphasized the necessity of “polishing our brains” through engagement with others, advocating for authentic cultural exchanges that transcend civilizational and social divides and foster direct communication capable of mitigating political and religious intolerance (Thucydides, 2008).

We cultivate beauty without waste and intellect without diminishing vitality; wealth serves as the catalyst for action. Multilateral diplomacy has played a crucial role in representing national interests on the international stage. It encompasses enhanced openness, effective communication, the capacity to collaborate within both narrow and broader coalitions, and proficiency in multiple languages (Nick, 2010).

Public diplomacy, a term first introduced in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, an American diplomat and dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, has evolved to become a significant tool for strengthening and emphasizing collective identity. Gullion’s distinguished diplomatic career included missions in Congo, Marseilles, Finland, Greece, and Vietnam (Gullion, 2020). As an instrument of identity enhancement, public diplomacy involves

propaganda and journalistic activities aimed at shaping public sentiment in foreign nations. (Nick, 2010). Diplomacy from the era of Wilson through 1958, including the tenure of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, suggests that the value of public diplomacy hinges on the ability of diplomats and spokespeople to transcend national interests and represent the broader aspirations of humanity. In the 1990s, Prime Minister Tony Blair's government established the Strategic Committee for Public Diplomacy, reflecting the growing importance of public diplomacy as a tool for international influence. Distinct from coercive strategies, soft power emphasizes achieving objectives through attraction and persuasion rather than through the use of force. Van Ham highlighted that the United Kingdom exemplifies a blend of hard and soft power, integrating European identity with a cosmopolitan worldview (Van Ham, 2010). According to Rawnsley, effective government action should adhere to democratic principles, including respect for freedom of speech, human rights, and transparency. As a signatory to major human rights treaties and a staunch advocate for the protection of human rights, the UK continues to maintain significant global influence. Moreover, the soft power exerted by a nation is not solely a product of cultural exports but is also shaped by the political values and legitimacy of its foreign policies (Nye, 1990).

In a 2014 report, the House of Lords called for enhanced coordination between the UK's foreign affairs, cultural, and media sectors to improve the outcomes of public diplomacy and soft power. Culture plays a pivotal role in unifying nations through shared images, ideas, and values. The concept of soft power is particularly attractive to policymakers, who recognize its potential effectiveness. Today, the UK participates in over 80 multilateral organizations, solidifying its position as one of the most interconnected countries globally.

The Commonwealth reflects a complex historical interdependence, with each member state today possessing its own distinct voice. Collectively, these states form one of the largest economies in the world. This unique model of connection, through the gradual development of common interests and goals, particularly in post-colonial contexts at the state level, demonstrates that even in diverse situations, forces exist that can politically unite peoples, foster joint action, and create the conditions necessary for shared economic, political, and cultural life and development (Vukadinović, 2004). Currently, the Commonwealth comprises 56 independent and equal states that collaborate to promote prosperity, democracy, and peace. It advocates for the development of small states, supports youth



initiatives, contributes to environmental protection, and works to strengthen trade among member states. As a family of nations, the Commonwealth is home to approximately 2.5 billion people and is led by the British sovereign as its head. Member states convene biennially, while the Commonwealth Games occur every four years. The 1930 Games in Canada, which brought together 400 athletes competing in athletics, boxing, and rowing, marked a significant milestone. In 1966, Wales introduced the tradition of the Queen's Relay, a race that begins at Buckingham Palace in London and concludes at the Games venue. Over time, the identity of the Commonwealth Games has evolved from a competition for the united British Empire to one where independent states compete on equal terms, each expressing its own identity.

The Commonwealth, alongside entities such as Wilton Park, the British Council, and the BBC, stands as one of the foremost examples of international cultural cooperation, which is a vital component of foreign policy. This cooperation, a voluntary association driven by shared interests in areas such as production, housing, social protection, and international politics, fosters intercultural dialogue. Through the convergence of cultures and the pursuit of common values, the Commonwealth contributes to the promotion of peace.

Cultural diplomacy serves to bridge foreign and domestic policy with British heritage, ensuring that the objectives of foreign policy within the international community align with the capabilities and actions of individual states, thereby avoiding conflicts between stated goals and practical resources (Vukadinović, 2004). A notable example of this is *Pompei Live*, a British exhibition organized by the British Council in collaboration with the British Museum. In 2013, the exhibition was showcased in over 50 countries and screened in 1,000 cinemas globally.

The United Kingdom, as a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government, operates under a Parliament that holds legislative power, comprising both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. While the Scottish Parliament, Northern Ireland's Assembly (Stormont), and the Welsh Parliament (Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru) possess decision-making authority in certain areas, they remain accountable to the British Prime Minister and the UK monarch. Rishi Sunak, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, remarked at the London Tech Week conference that the British creative industries are expanding rapidly and serve as a unique strength for the country. He stated, "The creative

industries are a true British success story, from global music stars like Adele and Ed Sheeran to world-class cultural institutions like the National Theatre. These industries have a special place in our national life and make a unique contribution to how we feel about ourselves as a country.” (Sunak, 2023:6). The value of creative industries is underscored by their role in promoting national identity, attracting investment, and driving innovation. The UK Government’s strategy for the sector’s growth includes a £50 billion investment and the creation of one million new jobs by 2030, reflecting the pivotal role these industries play in the country’s economic and cultural development.

Cultural diplomacy, as an instrument of *soft power* in foreign policy, can be exemplified through the activities of the British Council, which plays a pivotal role in the promotion of British collective identity. The concepts of brilliance and competence foster admiration and respect, leading to a desire for cooperation with the United Kingdom. The British Council serves as a prime example of how the UK effectively navigated complex international circumstances, particularly during the Second World War. In response to global events, the British Council was established in 1936, marking the creation of the world’s oldest organization dedicated to cultural relations. The first overseas office of the British Council was inaugurated in 1938, a period marked by a decline in British influence and growing global instability. According to its 1940-1941 report, there was an urgent need to cultivate a foundation of mutual knowledge and understanding both at home and abroad, in a manner that would foster appreciation for British foreign policy, irrespective of the political ideology from which it emanated. The primary mission of the British Council, as outlined in its Royal Charter, is to promote broader knowledge of the UK and the English language worldwide while fostering closer cultural ties between the UK and other nations. From 1952 until her death, Queen Elizabeth II served as the patron of the British Council, visiting its offices across the globe, including in countries such as Australia, India, Ireland, Ethiopia, Chile, and Singapore.

The long-term estimated economic benefit of English to the UK is £405 billion, connecting with more than 553 million people worldwide according to a 2012 study. The British Council attracted 12.7 million people to exhibitions, fairs, festivals, and 2.37 million people were involved in its work, and 55.9 million people used its website. During the 2020-2021 Covid

pandemic, schools were closed, and 110 million people visited the British Council's English language learning sites, while seven million people visited the British Council website.

### **5. The Theory of Collective Identity (TCI), and the Promotion of Britishness**

The Theory of Collective Identity (TCI) posits that, in a multicultural world, the significance and role of a community's national identity are frequently scrutinized at both local and national levels. The paper inaugurates the Theory of Collective Identity, which advocates the opinion that national identity is not necessary the only thing that identifies a nation as a national community of a people. There are a number of countries in which there are several national communities that, in addition to their own national identity by birth, can also accept a collective identity as a broader concept of belonging to a community in a broader sense. Britain is a good example that supports TCI in its fundamental meaning. An Englishman is primarily a member of one nation, but he can also identify himself as an individual as part of a wider national affiliation, essentially British, and thereby cultivate Britishness as a common identity with Irish, Scots and Welsh.

All the complexity of the topic of Britishness is visible on the example of Amanda Keddie's research, where the majority of students "do not connect with some symbolic elements of British culture and tradition, but adopt important ways of connecting that are imperative for an inclusive version of Britishness" (Keddie, 2013:13).

Since the Peace of Westphalia in the mid-17th century, states have been established as national entities grounded in the principle of sovereignty and have remained acutely sensitive to their own identities. In today's multipolar and multicultural context, the very concept of the nation - and, by extension, national identity - faces considerable challenges, particularly regarding its relevance in the globalized landscape of international relations. The TCI seeks to promote the collectivization of identity as a means of safeguarding against the globalization-driven trends of denationalization or the erosion of national identities. Historically, nations and their identities have served as foundational elements for both national communities and state structures. This dynamic is particularly evident in multicultural and multinational states such as the United Kingdom. The concept of Britishness can be understood as an embodiment of collective identity, especially in a state

characterized by distinct national identities, including Scottish, English, Welsh, and Irish. Certain institutions, such as the British royal family, can be seen as advocates of TCI. While recognizing the historical and cultural significance of diverse national identities within the United Kingdom, they actively promote a sense of collective identity - Britishness. Although this emphasis on collective identity may be perceived by some as contributing to the denationalization of other identities, it does not necessarily imply a negative connotation.

TCI leverages diplomatic tools, particularly cultural and scientific diplomacy, to promote Britishness. These tools emphasize the exchange of individuals and ideas, which, while involving a relatively small number of participants, are pivotal in fostering mutual understanding between nations (Burgess, Peila, Wyszomirski, 2003). The BBC, under its current name, was established by Royal Charter in 1927. The royal wedding of 1981, watched by 750 million people, became the most broadcast program in television history. Winston Churchill delivered 33 speeches on the radio, showcasing the medium's importance in shaping public opinion during his time. Additionally, the cult television series *Life on Earth*, created in 1979, introduced audiences to David Attenborough through its exceptional quality and content. Sir David Attenborough has since become one of the longest-serving television presenters globally, having contributed extensively to the BBC. He was also featured in a BBC survey of the hundred most admired Britons, further highlighting his cultural significance. Identity refers to the continuity of an entity's essence across different circumstances, while also encompassing the full range of characteristics that distinguish one individual from another (Anić, 1991). The research conducted focused on identifying the responses that most strongly convey a sense of Britishness. According to studies conducted in England, English and British identities are often regarded as synonymous. In Scotland, however, the dynamic is more nuanced. In 2013, only one in ten Scots identified as both Scottish and British, while 25 percentage identified exclusively as Scottish. Meanwhile, 62 percentage of respondents expressed a hybrid identity, combining elements of both. Furthermore, 95 percentage of respondents across the UK emphasized the importance of speaking English, followed by British citizenship and respect for British institutions and laws, as key components of Britishness. The fact that today the English language is now spoken by approximately 1.35 billion people worldwide is indicative. That's 17 percentage of the world's population. Or, English is an official language in 75 different countries worldwide, meaning that 39 percentage of countries have English as one of their official

languages (Global English Language Statistics, 2022). One might ask what Britishness means today. Is Britishness a collective identity, a way of life, customs, history, culture? Michael Ignatieff is probably right when he says that Britishness is all of the above and more. For him, Britishness is "institutions. parliamentary democracy, rule of law, fairness and decency" (Cruse, 2008). It is also interesting to note that English people over the age of 65 are proud of their English identity (72 percent) than young English people aged 18 to 24 (45 percent). As many as one in ten young English people are ashamed of their English identity or 9 percent (Smith, 2018). Research shows that the fact that the percentage of people who feel "real British" has been falling over the past ten years cannot be ignored. This percentage fell from 74 percent in 2013 to 55 percent in 2025.

Keith Robbins believes that Britishness should be viewed from the historical perspective of the development of British society. In 2005, the Daily Telegraph published ten core values of British identity that were the basis for promoting the idea of Britishness: the rule of law, the sovereignty of the Crown in Parliament, a pluralistic state, personal freedom, private property, institutions, family, history, the English-speaking world, and the British character (Daily Telegraph, 2005). Democracy, the rule of law, respect and tolerance, individual freedoms are terms that are mostly repeated in research on British belonging and values, i.e., significance for society as a whole.

Britishness as a collective identity in the UK has not taken root in relation to national affiliation. For example, the 2011 Scottish census showed that 62 percent of Scots identified as Scottish, 18 percent as both Scottish and British, 8 percent as British only, and 14 percent as British. The 2021 census showed no significant differences in Scots identifying as Scottish only (65 percent), only 8 percent as both Scottish and British, and 14 percent as British only.

Similar results were shown by the Annual Population Survey for Wales. 63 percent of Welsh people self-identified as Welsh.

The feeling of Britishness has also been shaped by various events in recent history, including the Iraq War, the organization of the 2012 Olympic Games, immigration waves from Eastern Europe, the global financial crisis of 2007, and debates regarding the increasing foreign ownership of British organizations. Notable examples include Pfizer's bid to acquire the British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, as highlighted by the *British Social Attitudes*

report. All of the above supports the postulates underlying the Theory of Collective Identity, which likely cannot be confirmed in the case of the European Union. In this context, a Frenchman, a German, an Italian, and people from other nations would primarily identify with their national origins, and only secondarily as part of a supranational entity like the European Union, potentially identifying as Europeans.

The Theory of Collective Identity employs various policies to strengthen the reputation and position of the United Kingdom, leveraging tactics and strategies used by social groups to foster collective identity. Raymond argues that culture is not merely a function of political economy but is pivotal in creating the conditions for political and social change, which are often deeply intertwined (Raymond, 2007). Understanding cultural change requires paying close attention to the experiences and cultures of subordinate groups, as these are essential in shaping broader societal transformations. The policy of strengthening identity is one approach through which all members of society seek public recognition of their cultures and national identities. Multiculturalism plays a key role in this process, energizing society to undertake the journey of identification, self-determination, and ultimately belonging to a specific culture (Cooper, Heine, Thakur, 2013). Multiculturalism acts as a driving force behind The Theory of Collective Identity, as the increasing blending of different nations - particularly through the phenomenon of (often uncontrolled) migration - legitimizes the theory and garners growing support for the protection of distinct, autochthonous identities. Research by the British Council on the soft power of small nations highlights Scotland as an example of a strong international brand. This prominence is not unexpected, given Edinburgh's role as a global cultural hub. Scotland's emergence on the international stage, particularly in its ability to attract students and direct investment, stems from well-established factors, including its cultural and academic appeal. David Hume, a leading figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, profoundly influenced global thinkers despite Scotland's modest population of barely a million in the 18th century. This did not diminish Scotland's prominence as part of the leading intellectual world of the time. A testament to this is the publication of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, first released in Edinburgh between 1768 and 1771. Scotland's intellectual vitality during this period was further reflected in its five Enlightenment-era universities: Saint Andrews (where the current Prince and Princess of Wales studied), Glasgow, Edinburgh, King's College, and Marischal College. In comparison, England at the time had only two universities - Oxford and Cambridge. The

Institute for International Cultural Relations, based in Edinburgh, is committed to promoting culture and political ideals on the global stage, playing an important role in delivering strategic advantages. Research conducted between 2000. and 2012. concluded that soft power can manifest in various forms, including institutional strength, economic prosperity, internet connectivity, democratic governance, and cultural ranking. When these parameters are successfully met, they can significantly enhance a nation's international attractiveness and influence.

From a high level of literacy to contributions such as the poetry of Robert Burns and scientific breakthroughs like the invention of the telephone, television, penicillin, and the cloning of Dolly the sheep, Scotland has established itself as a nation of remarkable achievements. Today, statues of prominent Scottish figures, including Adam Smith, David Hume, and David Stevenson, proudly adorn the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh. Ordinary advertising, when carried out without a well-defined and long-term national strategy, often becomes an endless cycle that may fail to deliver sustained economic development. The Country Brand Index provides an analytical framework for understanding how ordinary individuals perceive the branding of specific nations. According to this index, the United Kingdom consistently ranks among the top five countries globally. The study highlights Great Britain's economic strength, with an economy exceeding one trillion dollars, and notes its ability to maintain a positive global image despite lingering resentment over its history of imperial expansion. Anholt (2009) attributes this success to the UK's strategic efforts in preserving and promoting its national brand. Similarly, the *City Brand Index* identifies London and Madrid as among the world's safest cities, evaluated based on six key factors: familiarity, location, potential, pulse, people, and prerequisites. Governments can invest significant resources to improve the image of their nation, particularly in cases where its reputation is weak. However, if that country is neither a significant trading partner nor influential over countries that are, and if it is not an important ally, a source of talent, or a cultural partner, then the motivation for improving its image is purely vanity or wounded pride. Restoring national pride is rarely a sufficient justification for using taxpayers' money (Anholt, 2009).

An illustrative example of the ideologization of collective identity is the case of former Yugoslavism, an effort to impose a shared identity within the former Yugoslavia.

Despite attempts by certain ruling structures to promote Yugoslavism as a collective identity, the majority of the population identified primarily with their national affiliations, such as Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and others. Only a smaller portion of the population identified as Yugoslavs or associated themselves with the Yugoslav community. This Yugoslav identity was widely regarded as an “artificial identity” and an aspiration toward supranational homogenization. Notably, there was an increase in the number of people declaring themselves as Yugoslavs in 1981, reaching approximately 1.2 million individuals, or 5.5 percentage of the total population of 23.5 million in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). This rise is largely attributed to the death of Josip Broz Tito, the state’s founder and lifelong president, as a sense of “duty” towards his legacy. Yugoslavism was often perceived as an anti-nationalist category. However, this percentage declined significantly by the 1991 census, falling to just over 700,000 individuals, or about 3 percentage of the population (Sekulić, 2003).

A successful example of collective identity is Americanism, which, unlike Yugoslavism, is broadly accepted as a shared identity among the majority of immigrants holding American citizenship. However, it is essential to define Americanism specifically as a sense of belonging to the United States of America, distinct from its geographical usage. While residents of Canada, Mexico, Argentina, and other nations in North, Central, and South America may be geographically considered Americans, they do not identify themselves as Americans in the context of identity. The form of collective identity can be applied to the question of who in Europe or the EU feels primarily as a European and who according to their own nationality. The answers would certainly not be the same.

## **6. The Influence of the Royal Family on Strengthening TCI and Britishness**

The Act of Union of 1707, which unified England and Scotland into Great Britain, established the monarchy as the oldest form of government in the UK. More specifically, it created a constitutional monarchy in which the monarch serves as the head of state, while decision-making authority lies with the prime minister and the elected parliament. Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-serving British monarch and one of the longest-serving rulers in the world, played a pivotal role in shaping the national identity. Over the course of her reign, she navigated numerous crises and became an enduring symbol of national unity, particularly following Victory Day in 1945. On that day, the royal family appeared on the balcony of



Buckingham Palace alongside then-Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the first of 15 prime ministers with whom Queen Elizabeth II worked during her reign. During her 70-year reign, Queen Elizabeth II met with 15 British prime ministers. During her reign, Elizabeth II visited 260 countries, including notable trips to West Germany in 1965, Japan in 1975, Russia in 1994, Africa in 1995, and the Republic of Ireland in 2011 - a visit that symbolized a gesture of reconciliation. The jubilee year of her reign in 2012 saw the arrival of 50,000 guests from around the world to over 100 diplomatic posts. King Charles III, the current monarch, has emphasized his mother's enduring love for British tradition and her exceptional ability to see the best in people. The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 marked her accession to the throne as Queen of the United Kingdom and served as a call for British national unity. The televised broadcast of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation - the first public broadcast of such an event - was a call to strengthen collective identity, creating a shared historical moment of unity, pride, and the ideal of voluntary service to the people. Anholt highlights that the royal family serves as the enduring and natural guardian of the nation's reputation (Anholt, 2009).

From the above indicators, it can be concluded that the role and influence of the royal family serve as a key pillar supporting the Theory of Collective Identity (TCI), reinforcing Britishness as a collective community identity rather than the distinct national identities of individual ethnic groups (English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh). This does not imply a lack of respect for, or the disregard of, the national identities of these ethnic communities. Rather, TCI is an inclusive theory that seeks to highlight the political and historical context of Britishness as a shared identity.

## **Conclusion**

The Theory of Collective Identity is, in fact, a transformative theory, as the concept of identity has not been sufficiently researched, likely because it is often perceived as something self-evident. However, the rise of multiculturalism, driven particularly by large-scale migration, has brought the concept of identity to the forefront for nation-states seeking to preserve their own identity in the face of emerging, diverse identities that are culturally, historically, and sometimes politically opposed to their own.

British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who believed that research was essential for societal reform, provided a classic definition of culture. Often equated with national identity, Tylor described culture as a complex whole, encompassing knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, art, customs, and habits that an individual acquires as a member of society. This concept of culture is central to understanding the role of cultural diplomacy in shaping national identity. The research questions surrounding the purpose, promotion, and impact of cultural diplomacy - specifically how it influences British identity - led to the hypothesis that cultural diplomacy is a key form of diplomatic action. The royal family, in particular, plays a measurable role in promoting Britishness as a collective identity. The construction of this collective identity has also been facilitated by UK artists and the strategic use of soft power, enabling the UK to selectively promote certain events, places, and individuals that contribute to the shaping of national culture and identity. Historical events, such as the signing of the Magna Carta, the Industrial Revolution, and the UK's interaction with its former colonies, combined with the contributions of prominent British figures, have all significantly shaped the development of British society. The spread of collective identity has been closely tied to the maintenance of British societal values and traditions. Today, the entire world knows where the oldest tennis tournament is held and who Shakespeare and James Bond are, thanks to cultural promotion as a key component in the affirmation of collective (British) identity. A prime example of British cultural diplomacy is the British Council, the world's oldest organization for cultural relations, alongside the government's art collection, both of which subtly promote British cultural values. According to the *Country Brand Index*, Anholt highlights that the United Kingdom ranks first as the most respected country, with the royal family serving as a constant and enduring guardian of British identity. Members of the royal family also act as prominent promoters of British culture (Anholt, 2009). Cultural diplomacy, through its promotion of British identity, emphasizes that cultural values are amplified when shared across borders. However, cultural diplomacy is not limited to the promotion of historical heritage. Large nations, such as the UK, use cultural diplomacy as a strategic tool in foreign policy, with a particular focus on advancing collective identity. The promotion of Britishness as a collective identity is an important factor in understanding the role of cultural diplomacy within the broader context of foreign policy goals. Cultural diplomacy is not solely the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Like public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy increasingly involves a range of state institutions and bodies outside the traditional diplomatic sphere, all aimed at strengthening national branding and

advancing the country's interests. Consequently, cultural diplomacy is often regarded as a specialized aspect of public diplomacy, with the distinction between the two sometimes becoming blurred. In the case of the UK, cultural diplomacy carries an additional dimension: the promotion of Britishness as a collective identity, making it a fundamental objective in the country's foreign policy, particularly in terms of promoting its historical heritage.

However, the research could give the conclusion that Britishness is not equally accepted as a collective identity. For example, the majority of Scots and Welsh consider themselves to be nationally belonging to Scotland and Wales, and less to Britain. From a political-institutional point of view or from a London perspective, it can be concluded that Britishness plays a role in the general acceptance of collective belonging after belonging to a national identity. Institutions and the Crown are promoting Britishness as a collective identity of the commonwealth, and so far, the success is quite limited. But at the same time, it should be emphasized the present desire of a good part of the Scots, Welsh and Irish for greater self-determination, and often the intention towards independence. The aforementioned tendencies inevitably re-examine the essence of the Theory of Collective Identity in a theoretical, and especially in a pragmatic sense.

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## KOLEKTIVNI IDENTITET KAO ALAT KULTURNE DIPLOMACIJE: SLUČAJ BRITANSTVA

**Sažetak:** *Građanski koncept identiteta uključuje razvoj nacije u državama koje imaju geografske i političko-nacionalne entitete. Označava privrženost vlastitom podrijetlu, tradiciji, kulturi, jeziku, a ne nužno državi u kojoj je osoba rođena i u kojoj živi.*

*Teorijskom metodom istraživanja rad je analizirao dostupne podatke i izvore literature kao i ciljane relevantne teorijske izvore. Kompilacijom i sintezom podataka objedinile su informacije iz različitih izvora radi izgradnje teorijskog okvira. Kritičkom analizom obuhvaćena je evaluacija postojećih istraživanja i teorija o nacionalnim identitetima posebno u kontekstu Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva. Empirijskom metodom kroz statističku analizu britanstva kao kolektivnog identiteta pridonijelo je boljem razumijevanju što znači britanski identitet u odnosu na nacionalne identitete država koje sačinjavaju UK.*

*Rad inaugurira Teoriju kolektivnog identiteta (TKI) na primjeru britanstva kojom se želi učvrstiti i promicati britanstvo kao kolektivni identitet. Ujedinjena Kraljevina (UK) posjeduje zajednički (kolektivni) identitet koji se sastoji od engleskog, velškog, škotskog i sjevernoirskog. Sve što se dogodilo kroz povijest do danas, sve ono što su ljudi svojim djelovanjem stvorili kako bi oblikovali društvo, zajedničke vrijednosti poput vjerskih sloboda, tolerancije, prihvaćanja osobne i društvene odgovornosti, djelovalo je na izgradnju britanskog identiteta. Postavlja se pitanje koje su komponente važne za određivanje britanstva, koliko tome pridonosi engleski jezik, rođenje u Britaniji, britansko državljanstvo, život u Britaniji, britansko podrijetlo, religijska pripadnost odnosno jednostavno osjećati se britanski.*

**Ključne riječi:** *Teorija kolektivnog identiteta, britanstvo, kolektivni identitet, kulturna diplomacija, kraljevska obitelj*