

The background of the entire image is the Union Jack, the national flag of the United Kingdom, featuring a red cross on a white field with a blue border.

Great Britain

A Case Study

Country Profile

Population: 69,715,842

Area: 88,745 sq mi (229,848 sq km)

Head of State: King Charles III

Head of Government: Rishi Sunak

Year of Independence: none

Capital: London

Year of Current Constitution: Unwritten; Magna Carta 1215, Provisions of Oxford 1258, Bill of Rights 1689, Act of Settlement 1701, etc.

Languages: Officially English; Irish & Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, local/regional

Religion: Officially Christianity (Church of England), Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism

GDP per Capita: 46,209.11 (Dec. 2021)

Human Development Index: .929 (2021), ranked 18th

*Considered Free, 95/100. 40/40 – Political Rights. 55/60 – Civil Liberties

Country Overview

Regime Type:	Legislature:	Executive Branch:	Judicial Branch:	Political Party System:
Parliamentary System	Parliament	Prime Minister	Supreme Court (2009)	Multi-party; Conservative (357)
Constitutional Monarchy	House of Commons (650 seats)	Cabinet	Court of Appeals	Labour (196)
(Commonwealth Realm)	House of Lords (787 Lords)		High Court	Scottish National (44)
			Crown Court	Liberal Democrat (14)
			Magistrates Court	

Why does the British Monarchy Survive?

Throughout the last few centuries, many countries that were formerly ruled by monarchies or a crowned family have shifted to have more democratic governments, while England's Crown remains part of the British government into the 21st century.

Hypothesis: The British Crown adapting its power over time has allowed the monarchy to remain part of the government system

Independent Variable: Adaptation

- The Monarchy has relinquished powers to more democratic practices or features

Dependent Variable: Survival of the Monarchy

- The Crown remains part of the government system in the age of democracy

Changes in Royal Power

The British Revolution (1688)

- King James was trying to make Catholicism the most dominant religion in Britain, abolished Parliament to try and form one that would agree with him more
- Protestant daughter Mary replaced as heir when he had a new baby, which he wanted to raise Catholic – people afraid of a Catholic dynasty
- Mary, and Dutch husband William of Orange, led revolution

Bill of Rights (1689)

- End of revolution, Mary and William on the throne
- Parliament reinstated; made monarchy joint
- William and Mary accepted more restrictions from Parliament than any monarchs before – - shift in power
- Document; right for regular Parliaments, free elections, freedom of speech, forbade the Monarchy from being Catholic

British Settlement Act of 1701

- designed to secure the Protestant succession
- strengthen guarantees for the parliamentary system
- Reinforced the Bill of Rights (1689), as government was led by Sovereign + elected ministers (not personally chosen advisors)
- Declared the line of succession as Mary's children, but they all died, so they ensured instead that next Monarch was Protestant
- Parliamentary consent now necessary for Monarch to engage in war or leave the country
- Judges hold office on 'good conduct', and not at 'Royal pleasure' – judicial independence

*This Act was slightly amended in 2013, ending the system of male primogeniture (Princess Charlotte is in line in front of her younger brother. Princess Anne and her family are still very far down in line)

Independence Declared and Hereditary Power Decreased

- Before independence, colonies battled for dominance with British rule, were unable to continue being under British rule and declared independence
- 1947: India, “the jewel of the crown”
- 1957: Ghana
- 1960s: South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Mauritius, Malawi, Kenya, Gambia

Less of the world now under the British Crown, so naturally less people answering to the British monarch

- House of Lords, half of Parliament, is made of non-elected officials that received power because of their families/history
- 1999: House of Lords Act, all hereditary peers (except for 92) were removed from the House. The 92 were elected by their peers after writing papers saying why they should be able to stay

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