Scotland: Argument For That Scotland Is Inclusive In Theory, But May Not Always Be In Practice

Using accounts from Minna Liinpää and Teresa Piacentini, I will compare and critique how they both shape the argument that Scotland is inclusive in theory, but may not always be in practice.

Liinpää sets out their work with an illustrative explanation on the role of Scotland in Empire during the 18th century. Here Piacentini explains that Scotland had a huge impact on the slave trade during this period, and co-operated in the empire for the political and economic benefits it brought to the country. Their approach is effective in comparing the country's involvement in the systematic racism that existed in that time, to now where we have a government that promotes civic nationalism. This type of nationalism is defined by Inagetieff who says it holds the idea that, "a nation should be composed of all those" regardless of their demographics. Homecoming led by the SNP-led government was an initiative to welcome everyone across the globe with Scottish roots to "come home" to celebrate with 'highland tradition', despite the country appealing to be a multicultural one. Liinpää critiques the government in pointing out that the SNP sees those born in Scotland who now live abroad as Scottish, too. This confusion highlights a flaw in the SNP's argument, particularly during the independence referendum, that living in scotland is the sole thing that makes someone Scottish – it's about ancestry. Liinpää does, however, recognises Scotland's progressiveness, she gives an example of MSP Humza Yousaf who invites the Commonwealth 2014 to include the continent of Africa and the Caribbean and form new relations with them that is more in partnership, rather than having superiority to them. Although publicly the government are outspokenly inclusive, the scholar underlines the government must show consistency in their efforts to create a harmonising, multicultural country.

Teresa Piacentini takes a polarised approach to evaluate Scotland's belief system in terms of immigration. She sets upon a case study where she gains her information from specifically African immigrant communities habituating in Scotland. She concentrates her study on a specific margin of people, which is the African community in Scotland. Piacentini, like Liinpää, also sheds light to the involvement of Scotland in the slave trade which has meant African people have been living in Scotland for a long time. She sets out her own case study. She has two sites – one of which is focused in on Glasgow. Here, asylum seekers are slummed together in high-rise flats with little support. They generally stick to their own area, but have founded not only a close-knit community while being together but also an association that seeks to advocate for multiculturalism and share their own culture with the wider society. At the same time, fought with the community on other injustices such as on women's rights and also celebrated special occasions. Although incredible, it was not without their own challenges. Firstly, being grouped together in the same area meant that there was a 'ghettoisation' of their area and this unfortunately leads to there being an easy target for racist abuse. Piacentini recounts one time when the association is having a meeting and young teenagers claim that the building was "theirs", because of their race. The members of the association were used to it and responded unsurprised, but called the police who were late in responding – which was a regular occurrence too. This shows that there is still socially a poor attitude towards ethnic diversity in Scotland. This is further enhanced by the other study of refugees in Motherwell. Although they benefited from health, education and other measures of stability , due to the area's extremely low

diversity, it is equally as easy to “stand out” as a non-white person and be targeted in a hate crime. Both housing strategies by the political sphere failed to properly fulfil the needs of asylum seekers and refugees alike. Piacentini does say, however, that the world has changed since her case studies. In 2017 a lot had changed – the Glasgow community the association build had been destroyed, an anti-immigration attitude was build from the EU referendum and the 2016 restrictive immigration act and globally, Donald Trump was elected on a racist campaign. Scotland still remained accepting of refugees, and every local authority has began to home people through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation. Ultimately, despite some effort, this has failed to provide the proper framework needed for their social needs, such as translation support, which has a damaging affect on their opportunities and social integration – it seems that we are not a country that supports inclusivity to the same extent that’s imagined.

It’s interesting to compare two vastly different types of literature that shows two very varied interpretations of the inclusiveness of Scotland today. They both also include different methods of research – Liinpää uses the work of wider scholarship while Piacentini uses her own case studies. This is effective to showcase both the political and social factors impacted. Liinpää perhaps seems to dig deep into the big political questions, “what makes us Scottish?” Whereas, Piacentini uses experiences that gives us an insider on the social factors; the picture we never get to see for ourselves, which truly matters in the argument to consider if the people who live here feel Scottish and feel supported in their wider society.

Although using different methodology and have different scopes on how to best measure the inclusiveness of Scotland, both scholars exponentially show that the liberal view on ethic diversity exists to varying degrees. Liinpää shows that politically we are inconsistent on our view on a Scottish person whereas Piacentini shows that the country does not do enough to socially support people who move to Scotland to warrant a perfect inclusive title. Sometimes fail our fellow Scots who come from afar when we fail to include them consistently in our patriotism, or gloss over the racism that still exists in Scotland today.