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Post-Brexit Crisis of Britishness and its Implications in Northern Ireland

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the Requirements for a **Master Degree** in English **Literature and Civilization**.

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Abstract

The 2016's referendum has been one of the main subjects of discussions in Britain. While Northern Ireland expressed its will to remain within the European Union, it found itself forced to follow the path of England which voted in favour of leaving it. In fact, many questions started to emerge, including the sense of the British union and the issues of Devolution, Nationalism, and Britishness which have become themes of discussions today. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 that ended the thirty years of bloody war may be threatened. Our main objective behind conducting this research is to show the consequences of Brexit on the stability of the British unity. We will particularly examine the impact of the crisis of Britishness on the relationships between Northern Ireland and the UK by using the expository method.

Key words: 2016's Referendum, European Union, Brexit, Devolution, Nationalism, Britishness, Northern Ireland.

Dedication

Ilham Djennane

Of all the lessons that I have learned during my 5 years at the university, I have believed that the most important one is “Thinking Outside the Box”.

I dedicate this work to my parents, brothers, sister, and all of those who have encouraged me and supported me in my studies.

Dedication

Tinhinane Djebbar

My deepest gratitude goes to ALLAH for being with me during my life.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my family; my dear parents who have supported me, my lovely siblings; Dihia, Lynda, Lyakout, Djouhra, Katia, Mohand, and especially Zahra, and my brothers in law: Lyes, Elhadi, and especially Lyes.

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List of Abbreviations

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

EEC: European Economic Community

EC: European Community

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

EU: European Union

EFTA: European Free Trade Association

Euratom: European Atomic Energy Community

IRA: Irish Republican Army

IRB: Irish Republican Brotherhood

NI: Northern Ireland

NICRA: Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

SNP: Scottish National Party

UK: United Kingdom

DUP: Democratic Unionist Party

ESC: European Solidarity Corps

WWII: World War Two

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The United Kingdom is made up of four nations which are governed under one crown. With the death of Elisabeth I, her cousin James VI of Scotland succeeded her and became James I of England. In 1707, the parliament of Scotland and that of England signed a treaty which united England and Scotland together and became under the title of Great Britain. A second Act of Union was signed in 1801. The latter abolished the parliament of Ireland and submitted Ireland to the English political dominance and economic oppression.

However, before the ratification of the Act of Union, Ireland was facing a long-standing conflict with England, which dates back to the time of the Norman invasions in the 12th century when the king of England Henry II had aspired to annex the Irish island. Moreover, the protestant settlers from England and Scotland had been able to impose themselves in Ireland, dividing the territory with the Normans. In 1541, the latter dominated the Irish parliament and managed to pass an act which proclaimed Henry VIII of England the king of Ireland. Despite this act, tensions continued to increase until the 1800s. During these years, many despicable actions were observed on the British side where the latter implemented an anti-Catholic policy in order to deprive them of their civil rights. In order to strengthen its supremacy, England incorporated Ireland through the Act of Union in 1801. The main objective of this act was to reinforce the power of England, by creating a UK made up of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland where England played the role of the leader by imposing its army and political forces over the rest of the isles. After a long conflict with Britain, Ireland decided to free itself from England's domination and built its new independent state known as the Irish Free State. Northern Ireland joined the Republic of Ireland in 1921, but this union did not last long since the parliament of Northern Ireland decided to leave the new state and join the United Kingdom.

The question of identity has been given a significant importance in the political sphere in Britain. Britain was once united under the notion of Britishness during the time when it was a global power. After the collapse of the British Empire, the influence of Britishness on the whole UK also declined. With the emergence of nationalist movements in Scotland, Wales, and, NI each of these began to claim their own identities and seek to revive their ethnic origins. In addition, Devolution in 1997 increased the demand for independence in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In June 2016, a referendum on UK membership of the EU took place. The results showed that 51. 89% wanted to leave the EU. However, since the announcement of the Brexit, UK faced multiple external as well as internal crises mainly with NI since 55. 9% of Northern Irish people were against the Brexit and expressed through the referendum vote their wish to remain within the EU. Political tensions between Britain and Northern Ireland have occurred because of the Brexit. Many politicians see this as a dangerous condition for the stability of the UK and the power it holds. For instance, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 which managed to put an end to the thirty years of bloody Troubles in Northern Ireland, from 1968 to 1998, may be threatened because the anti-Brexit who represent the majority in Northern Ireland are more likely to support a unified Ireland. Additionally, the political party, Sinn Féin, which campaigns for the reunification of Ireland gains more importance than ever before. The idea of a unified Ireland becomes more logical for people in Northern Ireland today and a referendum about Northern Ireland's reunification with the Republic of Ireland may take place at any time. From "the Empire on which the sun never sets" to a fragile union, sooner or later, UK's course of history may be brought into an end.

Literature Review

Brexit phenomenon is one of the current debates among politicians, historians, journalists, and researchers who have examined it from different perspectives.

One of the recent studies is *How Britain Ends* (2021), written by the Scottish journalist and author Gavin Esler. In this book, the author contends that English Nationalism emerged as a consequence of devolution in 1997 which provided Home-Rule to all of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. While Scottish and Northern Irish MPs can vote on laws that concern England, the latter cannot vote on laws that concern the devolved nations in Britain. Esler explains that the increase sense of Englishness is due to the fact that England was not provided an Assembly. In addition, Brexit may disunite Britain since neither Northern Ireland nor Scotland voted in favor of leaving the EU, adding to the fact that nationalism could bring an end to the unity in Britain.

Another recent significant book is *Brexit Causes and Consequences* (2020) in which the author Rudolf G. Adam explains the causes that led Britain to leave the European Union and the consequences that were drawn from leaving the union. The book gives an understanding of the political evolution of the Brexit. The author explains that Brexit does not only have a relationship with the economic and financial domains but also and most importantly with the question of English nationalism. He writes that it is England who wanted to leave the EU and not the whole of Britain, and that the political landscape in Britain will change due to Brexit (208).

Another relevant study is the article “The Bloody Sunday of Northern Ireland in a New Perspective” (2020), in which Rania Merzoug explores the most traumatic day in the history of Ireland and the thirty years of war that are known as ‘the Troubles’ (1968-1998). According to her, the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland was influenced by the Black

Civil Rights Movement that emerged in the USA. She describes the extreme violence in NI that characterizes the period, and puts focus on the Bloody Sunday which took place on 30th of January 1972. It resulted in the killing of thirteen civilians and the injuring of seventeen people which is something unforgettable for Northern Ireland. In addition, Merzoug examines the two main contradictory Reports of Saville and Widgery. On one hand, the Saville Report did not accept the idea that the event happened due to the country's authorities, and even the shoot was considered intentionally by the soldiers even though the movement was peaceful. On the other hand, the Widgery Report relied on what happened that day and concluded that soldiers' confusion resulted in the shoot. The author stresses that the event was considered as a calculated plan rather than an unplanned event. Gerry Adams, the former president of the political party 'Sinn Féin', claimed that the fact was a well organised plot by high level persons. In 2010, David Cameron apologised for the massacres and considered "What happened in Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable. It was wrong" (Merzoug 292). For Merzoug, the main purpose behind the sorrowful Bloody Sunday was to set out law and order by the means of violence, however, this did not happen.

Equally important is in Seamus McGuinness and Adele Bergin's article "The Political Economy of a Northern Ireland Border Poll" (2019). The authors analyse the aftermath of Brexit in Scotland and NI, specifically the rise of Scottish Independence referendum and the emergence of a Border Poll in Northern Ireland. They argue that subsequent political developments will continue in Northern Ireland in order to realise Irish reunification referendum. Additionally, they compare Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland position in different fields like trade, education, healthcare, and labour market behaviour. After this, they highlight the gap in Northern Ireland's system of education and growth within the UK and Ireland. Adele and Seamus conclude that Northern Ireland is the country which is more

affected by Brexit in the UK; this fact gives a high possibility of the re-unification of the Island of Ireland.

Another relevant study for our research is “An bhfuil ár lá tagtha? Sinn Féin, special status and the politics of Brexit” (2021) by Jonathan Evershed and Mary C. Murphy. They demonstrate the reaction of Sinn Féin after the Brexit. In fact, the party was against the EU integration in 1972 as it voted for ‘No’ vote; because it considered it as a threat and violation for Irish sovereignty, and even for the Irish economy. However, it started later to reshape its opinion especially after Brexit by showing its supportive attitude toward it. The researchers assert that the Brexit dilemma could lead to economic and political threat in Ireland, North and South, that may put the achievements of the Good Friday Agreement and Irish Republicanism in danger. In response, Sinn Féin advocated that a referendum on Irish unity is needed, this unity is gaining more supports after 2016 Brexit referendum, which is considered widely as a British issue. Moreover, they claim that Sinn Féin marked a great change in the history of NI after its ‘No’ vote for Brexit in 2016.

Significance of the Study

From the above review of literature, we deduce that various works examined Brexit from different lenses. Our research work is a contribution to this field of study. We examine the consequences of Brexit on the future relations between Northern Ireland and UK with focus placed on the emergence of nationalist movements in the devolved nations of UK and the crisis of Britishness in the aftermath of Brexit.

Aims of the Study

Our study aims to review the history of the formation of UK and explores the emergence of nationalist movements in Northern Ireland and Scotland which contributed to the demand for Home-Rule. We also aim to show the consequences of Devolution on the British identity

and explain the reasons which led Northern Irish people to vote against Brexit. Accordingly, we examine the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland and Britain and their future relations.

Thesis Statement

In this study, we rely on the expository method to explore the crisis of Britishness in post-Brexit Britain and the future relations between Northern Ireland and UK. We examine the rise of Nationalism which may bring an end to the unity of Britain and may lead to the Irish reunification.

Research Questions

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do political implications in Britain contribute to the changing of the meaning of Britishness over time?
2. How does Brexit impact the relationships between Northern Ireland and UK?
3. Why does UK risk to disunite?
4. Will Northern Ireland re-unify with the Republic of Ireland as a consequence of Brexit?

Research Methods and Materials

Our study is qualitative based on the reading and interpretation of primary sources like Michelle O’Neil’s speech and Boris Johnson’s letter response to Nicola Sturgeon, in addition to secondary sources related to our research. Moreover, we rely on concepts like Nationalism, identity, and Britishness to explain the implications of Brexit on future relations in Britain.

Structure of the Research Paper

In terms of the structure, our research paper is divided into two chapters. The first one is a historical background about UK and Brexit. It provides an overview of the formation of the UK through the unification of the four nations by Acts of Union. It also explains the reasons behind the partition of Ireland in 1821. The second chapter explores the emergence of nationalist movements and the crisis of Britishness and examines the implications for the future relations of Northern Ireland with Britain.

Chapter I

Historical Background of the English Rule in Ireland and UK's Integration in EU

Chapter I

Historical Background of the English Rule in Ireland and UK's Admission in EU

Introduction

The present chapter provides a brief historical background of the circumstances that led to the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It shows why Ireland became an independent country and the purpose behind Northern Ireland's decision to remain within the UK in 1921. It also includes an overview of UK's membership in the EU and introduces the Brexit phenomenon while providing reasons behind the 2016's referendum along with its results.

1. UK: The Union of the Four Nations

UK is one state composed of four nations. Britain grew gradually into statehood after the unification of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland under the English throne. Before reviewing the history of the formation of Britain, we first explain the difference between a state and a nation since they are used interchangeably despite the fact that they do not have the same meaning (Rosenberg). A state, on the one hand, is characterized by four distinct components: first, a territory which is delimited by borders, second, a population that is residing on the same territory, third, a sovereign authority which exercises its power over this population and territory, finally, an international recognition of the state being independent (Rosemberg). A state can have several nations while a nation may not have a state. A nation, on the other hand, is a territorial community where people share the same culture, tradition, same sets of moral values, language and religion (Ghai). Steven Grosby defines nation as follows:

The nation is a territorial community of nativity. One is born into a nation. The significance attributed to this biological fact of birth into the historically evolving, territorial structure of the cultural community of the nation is why the nation is one among a number of forms of kinship. It differs from other forms of kinship such as the family because of the centrality of territory. It differs from other territorial societies such as a tribe, city-state, or various 'ethnic groups' not merely by the greater extent of its territory, but also because of its relatively uniform culture that provides stability, that is, continuation over time (7).

Scotland, Wales, England, and Northern Ireland are nations and together they form the state of UK. Britain is the informal denomination of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The term 'Britain' derives from the Greco-Roman word "Pretani" which was attributed to the British inhabitants by the Roman Imperialists (McDowall 8).

Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England were all brought together through Acts of Union. The English conquest of Wales started in 1282, when King Edward I of England (1272-1307) took over the Northern and Western lands of Wales, claiming them to be English territories. However, at that time Wales was not officially considered as a part of the kingdom of England (Little). Around 1536 to 1543, King Henry VIII (1491-1547) passed an Act of Union incorporating and annexing the whole of Wales into England. Henry VIII forced the Welsh to accept new laws and managed to assimilate them into the English culture (Davies). Jones and Roderick state that "Wales and England had been one country for centuries both constitutionally and in practice and they shared a common education system" (2).

In 1603, Scotland and England were united under one crown for the first time. When the queen Elisabeth I (1558-1603) died, her cousin, James VI of Scotland (1567-1625) succeeded

her as James I (1603-1625) of England. James I believed that Scotland and England needed to strengthen their union. His accession did not give a guarantee that the royal succession would follow the same direction in both countries (Scotland and England). As far as Scotland maintained its autonomous assembly, the probability existed that the Scottish crown might be 'alienated' from that of England (Levack 5). As a matter of fact, many arguments were put forward in order to unite the two nations. For instance, John Thornborough and Alberical bodies suggested that if there was a union of a crown, there should also be a union of parliaments. Moreover, the Scottish and English unionists considered it as a divine mission that should be accomplished (Levack 7).

After long considerable debates about the union of parliaments, a last session of the estate of Scotland in the royal union started on the 3rd of October 1706, believing it was a good advantage to have Scotland and England under one unified government which would fortify their strength and enlarge their wealth (Helling 209). In 1707, the Act of Union was passed, forming a United Kingdom of Great Britain. However, this union defies definitions since Scotland maintained its own church, law, and educational system (Wormald 144).

The union of parliaments between Ireland and Britain is a bit more complicated than that with Wales and Scotland. Unlike Scotland and Wales, Ireland was colonized by the English lords. It is commonly considered as the British first colony (Smith). It had been under English control since the Roman invasions of the 12th century. Nevertheless, the plantation system of the country accelerated under King James I in 1609. Many of the planters, who were in majority from Scottish origins, began to set foot in the north east of Ireland, Ulster, where they took over the lands of the catholic Irish inhabitants (Maxwell 120). The lands of the Catholics who refused to convert to Protestantism were confiscated and were given to the English and Scottish protestant settlers who were loyal to the British throne while Catholics were discriminated and considered as second-class citizens.

Even though, the Irish were treated badly, they refused to submit themselves to the colonizers. The English wanted to assimilate them to their culture and religion but they did not succeed to do so, partly because of the Irish unwillingness to accept the faith of their conquerors and also because of their determination to preserve their Gaelic origins (Maxwell 252). In terms of religious beliefs, Catholicism was the predominant one in Ireland. Paseta stresses that “almost 81% of the population was catholic, 10.7% was Anglican, and 9% was Presbyterians; 99% of the country’s Presbyterians and 45% of its Anglican lived in Ulster” (2).

Religious differences were one of the main reasons behind the different conflicts that occurred in Ireland even though Catholicism was the largest religion by population. The Irish culture was regarded as barbaric and its people as uncivilized by the British settlers. In 1695, the British government introduced a set of Penal Laws on Catholics in Ireland. These laws restricted their liberties in order to secure and ensure the British government’s authority and power. This is highlighted by Burke when he says that “Penal Laws were put in place to encourage religious conversion by denying basic rights to those who remained faithful to the Catholic Church” (2).

The American and the French revolution along with the ideals of the enlightenment era had strongly influenced the thinking of politicians of the Irish society (Irish Rebellion) Theobald Wolfe (1763-1798), an Irish republican who founded the society of Irishmen in 1791, sought to work as a peaceful reform organization against the British authority in Ireland. In 1798, the Irish rebellion led by this organization failed to accomplish its objectives and many of the leaders were killed or imprisoned.

In 1799, Ireland and Great Britain witnessed an uprising economic crisis; the prices of food began to rise continually during that time (Kennedy 2). This economic crisis led both

parliaments of Ireland and Great Britain to unite. On the 1st of January 1801, the Act of Union between Ireland and Great Britain was signed. The Irish parliament was dissolved and its members were sent to seat in both houses of London parliament (Oakland 64). James Kelly stresses that the economic crisis was the main motivation behind this union, insisting on the point that it was not a legislative union but a commercial one (255). Additionally, Edith Johnson holds that the union was a result of ‘exhaustion’ and not ‘evolution’ (quoted in Kelly 263). Ireland’s incorporation in UK was not a natural process or a choice made by its people, it was a consequence of the colonization of England over the island.

1.1. Consequences of England’s Union with Ireland on Irish Language and Culture

The English dominance over Ireland after the union is undeniable; it managed to impose its authority, through a gradual process, all around the country and even attempted to impose its culture and language under the guise of civilization.

England forced the Irish to use and adopt the English language, claiming it to be God’s chosen language. Jenny Wormald explains that the English began to accentuate their authority, associating national pride to their location as an elected nation by God. In this context Toney Crowley notes that:

After Union, a combination of forces, many of which had been emergent for a considerable period, created a new linguistic situation in which English became not only the dominant language of everyday life for the majority in Ireland- the medium of economics, education, family life, religion and even political aspiration- but also the culturally hegemonic language of prestige and status. As a corollary, Irish became an unmodern language of poverty and exclusion (9).

The British authorities regarded the Irish language as archaic and primitive. Therefore, they imposed the English language which became later the language of aristocracy.

1.2. Independence of the South of Ireland

After the Act of Union was introduced, Ireland was ruled directly from London as part of UK. Yet, the Irish sentiment of belonging to an island distinct culturally and linguistically from that of Britain made them protest for their own independence. This led to the emergence of claiming Ireland's self-determination. The secret organization, Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) was founded in 1858 by James Stephens for the purpose of establishing an independent Irish republic and a couple of years later, Home-Rule movement was founded by Issac Butt in order to revise the Anglo-Irish relations through constitutional methods (Mulvagh). Irish Nationalism had seen a great emergence during the twentieth century. The Irish nationalists, under the direction of IRB, started to rebel against the British on 24 April 1916; but with no success since the British authority continued to oppress them.

In 1919, the nationalist party, Sinn Féin which stands for "We Ourselves" or "Ourselves" in Irish language, founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905, had the majority of seats among the Irish representatives in London parliament but they refused to sit in Westminster and instead created an independent assembly in Dublin called Dail Eirean, under the presidency of Cathal Brugha, in order to proclaim the Irish Republic (Colton 2). On 21 January 1919, Dail Eireann proclaimed independence when saying that: "We ordain that the elected representatives of the Irish people alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland, and the Irish parliament is the only parliament to which that people will give its allegiances" ("Dail Eirean Debate").

After the establishment of the parliament of Ireland (Dail Eireann), Sinn Féin created the Irish unionists and the Irish parliamentary party for an assembly. Yet, neither unionists nor

Irish parliamentary party accepted to attend to the assembly (Colton 2). On the 11th September of the same year; the British government proscribed the Irish parliament and Sinn Fein which they became illegitimate organizations (Hopkinson).

Ireland was divided between two opposing movements: nationalists and unionists. Irish nationalists, mostly concentrated in Dublin, wanted Ireland to be established as a fully independent nation while unionists, mostly concentrated in Ulster, wanted to remain with UK.

The period from 1919 to 1921 was one of the most horrific periods that people in Ireland had ever experienced. Tensions between the Irish army (IRA), a nationalist armed organization, and the British authority rose and both sides took arms against each other, which resulted in the death of more than 2000 people (Dolan). The Irish fighters for an independent Ireland and the British government were both tired of the disasters of the war and decided to negotiate a treaty, known as the Anglo-Irish Treaty which was signed on the 6th of December 1921 (Torrance 5). This treaty established an Irish Free State in 1922. Yet, the Free State remained a dominion of the British Empire and it was not until 1949 that it became a Republic. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, with the majority of Protestant unionists chose to remain part of the UK through a political decision.

1.3. Civil War (The Troubles)

Northern Ireland had known a period of political confusion and violence during the second half of the twentieth century. Nearly fifty years after the partition of the island, intercommunal relations were marked by a climate of delicate stability where the Protestants held the dominant role in politics, economy, and even social life of NI (Woodwell). This conflict is known as the Troubles and the darkest period of its history started in 1968.

The conflict began when Catholics, who were the subjects of political, economic and social discrimination, organized a civil rights movement which was inspired by the struggle of the blacks in the United States of America. It was led by Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and their demands were essentially based on the reform of the electoral code and the end of the anti-Catholic discrimination (Melaugh).

Early in 1968, NICRA worked hand in hand with nationalists to organize marches and protest against the injustices that they were victims of. On 5 October 1968, thousands of people went out to protest in the city of Derry. However, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was present to repress them. In *The Longest War* (2002), Marc Mulholland assessed that:

The most serious such provocation was when the wholesale occupation of Armagh city by loyalists to prevent civil rights gathering on 30 November 1968. At this point the RUC began to fear a civil war. When loyalists harried civil rights “long march” from Belfast to Derry in early January 1969, eventually attacking it at Burntollet Bridge on its final day, the strategy of tension threatened to overreach itself (69).

The repression deeply angered many nationalists’ opinions to the degree that the next march doubled in number in the same city.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) countered the British attacks with military tools. This organization was regarded as legitimate by the Catholics. Mulholland maintains that ‘‘ the IRA was seen not just as republican revolutionaries, but also as champions of the Catholic nationalist minority’’ (2). However, while nationalists regarded IRA as a freedom fighter, royalists regarded it as a terrorist organization.

The Bloody Sunday of 30 January 1972 was one of the massacres that Ireland had ever witnessed in the course of its history. The British authority took up arms against pacific protesters and killed over fourteen of them, and injured eighteen others. The Irish Prime Minister, Jack Lynch, described the Bloody Sunday as an unjustified attack against innocent civilians through the use of violence (Beggan 72).

After two years of talks and decades of division between unionists and republicans that resulted in a bloody war, where three thousand people were killed, an agreement that unites loyalists and republicans was finally reached. The British and Irish governments, along with leaders of the Republic of Ireland signed the Good Friday Agreement which brought an end to Troubles.

1.3. Good Friday Agreement and the End of Troubles

Republicans in Northern Ireland understood that a united Ireland could not be reached with violence, and that the British government was more powerful in terms of military means (Fenton). Thus, after long considerations, they came to a conclusion that the conflict needed to come to an end. On 10 April 1998, a historic agreement, known as Good Friday Agreement was signed. It was a deal which contributed to put an end to the thirty bloody years of Troubles that NI had miserably gone through. The British and Irish governments, along with the political parties in NI met together to make peace. After two years of negotiations, a referendum was held and people voted in favor of the agreement. Fenton writes in his book, *The Good Friday Agreement* (2018), that:

The document was an ambitious and ingenious document based on a bold reworking of Northern Ireland's constitutional status. Its language and provisions were finally balanced to carefully reassure both communities and secure their support for an agreed way forward (Fenton).

The Agreement was signed by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, the Irish first minister, Bertie Ahern, in addition to Nationalist and Unionist parties. They agreed upon several arrangements such as the creation of a cooperative council with representatives from NI and the ROI, and the right to hold both Irish and British citizenships. The Agreement also states that if Northern and Southern Irish people want a united Irish Republic, their will will be respected and guaranteed (Ahern 1196).

1.5. Northern Ireland Divided by Peace Walls

After the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Irish government separated Catholics and Protestant neighborhoods in order to prevent any dispute between the two. Accordingly, the social and cultural life has been divided by walls that are referred to as peace lines, peace fence, or boundary fence. Each name assigned to a wall emphasizes its usage perceptions. They are considered as signs of peace by some people and objects to maintain security between the two communities by others. Still, others see them as tools that mark out each person's respective territory. Whether they contain a political or security name, it is evident to remember that the walls of peace are used to separate and divide two distinct communities.

The walls first appeared in 1969, when the Royal Ulster Constabulary lost control of security in Northern Ireland. The army was sent to the streets of Belfast to protect Catholics from protestant attacks. To do so, they built walls in some neighborhoods. These walls are the first material manifestation of a divided society in Northern Ireland. The life of each community is organized around these borders which delimit their territory within the same district, city, and country. Moreover, each community claims the representation of its culture and identity. For example, during commemorations of July 12th, some Protestants houses unfurl Union Jack flags from their windows, the sidewalks are painted in red, blue, and white, and signs which represent the king William of Orange on horseback adorn the roads. In

catholic communities, orange, green, and white paint, flags of the republic of Ireland and inscriptions in Irish delimit their place of life. In a documentary entitled 'Divided and Damaged' Scraton says that "One of the issues that people forget is when the peace agreement arrived, things didn't just stop and change overnight, this is a society that had been in wall, and divisions between communities remained and the hostility between communities remained" (quoted in Snow 6:14).

Even at the institutional level, divisions persist within schools; the controlled schools are predominantly protestant while the Voluntary schools are Catholic. Both schools are subsidized by the state. There are very few mixed schools which only concern about 4% of the population of Northern Ireland.

Belfast is the city where a large number of walls were built. Nowadays, this city encourages both Catholics and Protestants from different borders to mix together. For instance, each week, the Irish Children's Fund association prepares activities in the cultural center of a neutral district of the city. Children from both communities can get together, swim, play volleyball, and football, or chat. This association tries to help younger generations understand each other better and learn to live together. In the documentary "Divided and Damaged", Scraton says that "Those divisions are historical and those divisions are clearly rooted in the minds of children who grow up, they see walls, they see the divisions, they see defenses and that has become institutionalized" (Quoted in Snow 6:37).

2. UK's Membership in the EU

The Second World War (1939-1945) affected the European continent and led to its decline, which resulted in a deep misery including famine, poverty, and exile. France and West Germany contributed to form the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 as a common market to develop the production of coal and steel, and economic cooperation

between the Western European countries. Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands joined the community later for the goal of growing the European economy. The representatives of the six countries that are known as the 'Inner Six' signed the Treaty of Rome on the 25th of March, 1957. They established the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in order to develop nuclear sources and the European Economic Community, also known as a Single Market. Indeed, they sought to explore their trade and economic relations without barriers by providing transportation, agriculture, and other trades. The three organizations; ECSC, Euratom, and EEC were ruled and served by a single council of ministers (representative assembly and court of justice), which in 1967 led to gather these three organizations in one single organization called the European Community (Moore 67-69).

UK did not want to join the EEC. Instead, it created the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1969 with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland (Moore 70). The Common Market showed a positive situation in the early 1960s; economy grew and realized great prosperity. In addition, after the decline of the British Empire (1945) Britain lost its powers and its colonies in America and others countries such as Australia, Canada, and India. For this reason, the United Kingdom observed that it had big benefits if it joined the EC. Thus, it tried to be a member twice in 1963 and 1967, but the French president Charles de Gaulle vetoed British admission because the United Kingdom had close ties with the United States of America (Moore 71).

After two attempts to join the EC, Britain did not give up and tried a third attempt after de Gaulle's resignation from the French presidency in 1969. This last attempt was successful and the United Kingdom could finally join the EC on the 1st of January, 1973 with Denmark and the Republic of Ireland by leaving EFTA in 1972 (Achcroft, Michael, and Culwick).

The EC was considered as a major step toward the union of the European countries that led to a developed economy. For this reason, the Maastricht Treaty was signed on the 7th of February, 1992 to establish the European Union. The EC's name became the European Union in 1992 since it managed to unify the European states (Gowland, Turner, and Wright 10-11).

Scotland reacted against UK's admission in the EU. In the late of 1960s and early 1970s Scottish people were opposed to British membership which led the Scottish political party, SNP, to support that (Devenney 102). However, it turned to pro-European after UK's admission because Scottish awareness and relations with Europe developed. Political developments in Scotland like the creation of Scottish Labour Party in 1976 and its contribution to Scottish independence continued to maintain Scottish support for the EEC (Devenney 343). Also, the Scottish government believed that EU-membership could realize economic prosperity and employment.

European integration was considered as a matter for the Irish people in 1970s (Leavy 38). On one hand, Irish nationalists regarded the EEC integration as an opportunity to develop their economy and solve the conflicts which existed in Ireland like rendering the Irish border as an invisible border without military checks. On the other hand, Irish unionists were Eurosceptics because they considered the European integration as a menace for their position in the UK (Martin 6-8). Nevertheless, the 1990s witnessed Irish tendency to the EU. Because of the common market, the physical Irish Border was removed in order to develop trade relations with the European countries for a better economy. Additionally, the peace process was also established between the Republic of Ireland and UK after the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 (Martin 12-13). John Nagle argued that "the architects of the peace process clearly viewed the GFA's architecture as profoundly facilitated by EU integration" (7). The European Union did not play a great role in achieving this agreement, but it helped by supporting the consent.

The 1975 referendum was the first referendum in the United Kingdom for remaining or quitting the EC. The Conservative and Labour leaders, Margaret Thatcher and Harold Wilson, supported UK's integration in the EC. Thus, 67.23% of the British population voted to remain and 32.77% voted to quit. The majority of the population in the United Kingdom; England (68.7%), Wales (64.8%), Scotland (58.4%), and Northern Ireland (52.1%), encouraged the membership because the organisation could accomplish the goal of a prosperous and peaceful Europe (Henderson et al. 190).

The 1980s witnessed the emergence of the European integration's opposition which is known as Euroscepticism. Political parties emerged to reinforce this phenomenon (Leruth, Startin, and Usherwood). For instance, the political party UKIP, which was created by Alan Sked in 1993, called for UK's disintegration from the EU. Thus, people in the UK were influenced by Euroscepticism, especially in England. This resulted in Brexit and the referendum's decision in 2016 to leave the EU (Ray).

3. The Brexit

The term 'Brexit' was first used by Peter Wilding in the UK and the whole Europe especially in social media. Wilding added this term to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in May 2012. He was influenced by the term "Grexit" that stands for "Greek exit" because of the Greek debt crisis in 2010 (Moseley). This term stands for 'Britain exit', the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This dilemma impacted various fields in Britain like trade, foreign direct investment, immigration, and regulations (Reenen 367-368).

In 2013, the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, promised the British people to hold an in/out referendum in the coming years on whether to leave or remain in the EU. The Remain side supported the European integration. It encouraged the membership because they believe that Britain will remain strong in Europe. It used the slogan 'Britain Stronger in

Europe' to support UK's membership in the EU. This side was supported by several political parties in the UK such as the Conservative Party, Green Party of England and Wales, Liberal Party, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymry, Scottish Green Party, SNP, Sinn Féin, Alliance Party of NI, Green Party NI, Ulster Unionist Party, and Social Democrats and Labor Party. However, the Leave side believed that Europe is worse for Britain. This side used the slogan 'Take Back Control' in order to express their opposition against the EU (Humphreys). Different political parties were supporting this campaign including UKIP, People Before Profit Alliance, Traditional Unionist Voice, DUP. These parties gave various arguments for leaving the EU.

3.1. Causes of Brexit

Several reasons gave birth to Brexit either socially, culturally, politically, or economically. However, the major ones had strengthened and called for more voices in Brexit vote.

The first reason is related to the crisis of English national identity. This cause played an important role in UK's vote to quit the EU. The opponents of the EU's integration think that national identity could be threatened by adopting other European cultures. Sean Carey notes that "Those people who are fearful of the process of European Integration leading to their language being used less, or their national identity and culture becoming less distinct, are expected to hold a more negative view of the European Union" (393).

After the Second World War, the English were so proud of being 'British' even though they embraced Englishness. However, the "West Lothian question" emerged after the devolution of powers in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in the 1990s. This question is also known as "the English Question" which asks why the MPs of England cannot vote on the matters that concern Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, while the MPs from the devolved

nations can vote on the matters that concerns England. This resulted in rapid growth of Englishness which was supported by Brexiters (Howorth and Schmidt 6).

The negative impact of immigration was a main argument for the leavers. According to them, this resulted in a pressure in the social infrastructure in the UK. The former Prime Minister, David Cameron, argued that it was very important to be controlled. He tried to negotiate and decrease the number of immigrants, but he could not realize that (Adam 97). He called the refugees a “foreign invasion” or a “swarm” who take advantage desperately from Britain. In fact, immigrants came from Central and Eastern Europe as EU citizens, and from Middle East and Northern Africa as refugees. At the beginning of 2015, people began to seek refuge in Europe because of political persecutions and troubles in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. This incident witnessed a rapid growth in the UK. This fact led to the emergence of right-wing, nationalist parties like UKIP which supports UK’s disengagement from the EU.

Nigel Farage, the UKIP leader, argued that immigration is worse for Britain. Before the 2016 referendum by one month, he made a poster with the slogan “Breaking point: the EU has failed us all”. Thus, it supported the Leave campaign. The supporters of the Leave campaign maintained that immigration caused the decrease of employment and wages for the British people (Day 32-33). Hall argued that “Nearly 75%” of the EU-leavers mentioned that immigration was the main reason behind the leave vote. This phenomenon was considered as a potent argument for the persons who voted to leave the EU in order to regain control and decrease the number of people in Britain.

The economic insecurity was also considered as an important concern which called for the Brexit referendum. After the 2008 financial crisis, British economy decreased and the wages in the UK fell by over 8% in the six years (Reenen ii). Besides, the Eurozone crisis of late 2009 affected Britain negatively. The EU migrants move to Britain or EU countries since

the UK's currency is Pound Sterling in order to find prosperous financial situation. These crises encouraged the UK to call for separating its economy from EU's economy in order to protect it ("Inevitability" 7).

The Brexiters believed that the European integration led to the loss of sovereignty. Lord Denning maintained that sovereignty was lost in Britain and controlled by the European Court of Justice (Ringeisen-Biardeaud 2). In fact, Britain's powers were transferred to the EU government. Nigel Farage argued in his speech that "this transfer of powers from our country, from our parliament, from our courts to these of the EU institutions is not what my mother and father voted for back in 1975" ("Nigel Farage MEP at the Grassroots Out Launch in Kettering" 00:25). Farage expressed his Eurosceptics attitudes toward the EU and explained that the UK should be governed by its own rules and not by the EU's ones. He added that "I believe we should make our laws in our country, I believe we should control our own borders, I believe our courts are the ones that should be supreme, and I believe that the best people to gather Britain are the British people themselves" ("Nigel Farage MEP at the Grassroots Out Launch in Kettering" 00:45). British people should take back control over their laws and frontiers, and depend on their own courts.

4. The Results of 2016's Referendum in the UK

The referendum was held on the 23rd of June, 2016, and its results shocked the whole world (Appendix 1). After 43 years of membership, the UK, which is the first state in the European history, decided to leave the EU (Goodwin 59). The majority of the population (51.9%) voted in favour of leaving the European Union and (48.1%) others voted to remain (Reenen 367). However, this referendum was not supported by the whole kingdom. England and Wales voted to quit the EU whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain (Howorth and Schmidt 4).

Since the announcement of Brexit, Scottish people expressed their desire in the referendum to remain in the EU with 62%. The political party, SNP, did not support UK's withdrawal from the EU. In fact, this party tried to ask for another referendum regarding the independence of Scotland in order to separate from the UK and re-join the EU. The Scottish people attitudes toward the EU were positive; they believe that the EU is beneficial for Scotland.

Northern Irish people were against Brexit and expressed themselves through the referendum to remain within the European Union with 55.8% (Doyle and Connolly 4-5). The nationalist parties in NI including SDLP, Sinn Féin, Alliance Party, and Green Party supported the remain vote, whereas the unionist parties such as the DUP, Traditional Unionist Voice party wanted to leave the EU. In fact, the nationalists expressed their fears about building a physical border in Northern Ireland; this may lead to border checks which could lead to Irish instability. And also, the peace process in Northern Ireland could be threatened (Garry et. al 5). Since then, numerous tensions and conflicts between Britain and Northern Ireland occurred because of Brexit.

Conclusion

This chapter explores how Britain developed into Statehood through the Acts of Union. In fact, the English used violence against the Catholics in Ireland, but the Irish people resisted and struggled for their independence from the English oppressors. Additionally, it sheds light on the English hostility towards Northern Irish Catholics after the partition of Ireland and the Catholics rebellion that resulted in thirty years of bloody war, which had shaped the history of Northern Irish people.

Furthermore, it shows the potent causes of UK's disintegration in the EU after 2016's referendum, which includes in crisis of English national identity, immigration, economic

insecurity, and the loss of sovereignty in UK. Then, it argues that Euroscepticism influenced British people to stand up for Britain exit with the support of the political party UKIP. Additionally, it highlights the results of 2016's referendum where Britain voted in favor of leaving the EU in which the majority of those who voted for Brexit were from England and Wales, while the majority of people in Northern Ireland and Scotland, voted against Brexit. Nevertheless, Britain left the EU without Scottish and Northern Irish consent.

Chapter II

Post-Brexit Crisis and the Future of Northern Ireland

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Introduction

This chapter reviews the circumstances in which Britishness emerged as a unifying identity during the time when Britain was a global power, and how it marginalized other national identities in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Then, it shows how the emergence of nationalist movements in Scotland and Northern Ireland played a significant role in the decline of Britishness. Moreover, it examines the reasons why Tony Blair created devolved institutions and how he failed at ending up the calls for independence in the devolved Nations. After this, the chapter focuses on the post-Brexit impact on Scotland and Northern Ireland, mainly the Irish border which was established after the partition of Ireland in 1921. Finally, it attempts to elucidate the contributions of the political party, Sinn Féin, to the reunification of Ireland.

1. Crisis of Britishness and the Rise of Nationalist Movements in Britain

1.1. Definition of Britishness

For a long time, Britishness has been an essential subject of discussion in Britain. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* gives a simple definition to it: "Britishness is a term attributed to people living in the UK." In other words, it is the condition of being British. Yet, this concept is a contested thought that changes through time.

According to Oakland, the complexity of defining the term Britishness has to be perceived within a historical context. He points out that the common sense of Britishness before 1707 did not exist and that Scotland, Wales, England, and Ireland were distinct countries which did not share any common values (71-72). Jeremy Black asserts that

“Britishness is a time-limited, essentially political, concept, and of value within a state shaped by very different historical legacies” (12).

The Guardian published an article entitled “who do we think we are”, on 19 January 1999, asking historians, artists, as well as authors about their own perception of the meaning of Britishness. The historian David Cannadine answered this question by arguing that:

Britishness is a complicated and enormous thing – what different people see as meaning different things. It can mean one island, a group of islands off the coast of Europe, or it can mean the British Empire – at times it means all those things. Politicians, and the rest of us, define it in different ways at different times (Austin).

Another historian, Malcolm McLaren, who was asked the same question, has a completely different answer:

Being British is about singing Karaoke in bars, eating Chinese noodles and Japanese sushi, drinking French wine, wearing Prada and Nike, dancing to Italian house music, listening to Cher, using an Apple Mac, holidaying in Florida and Ibiza and buying a house in Spain. Shepherds pie and going on holiday to Hastings went out about 50 years ago and the only people you’ll see wearing a Union Jack are French movie stars or Kate Moss (Austin).

For Malcom, Britishness is the mixture of all the cultures which have integrated British society today.

Based on the definitions of Britishness provided above, we deduce that it is not accurate to delimit its meaning because while each person has their own interpretation of the term, the meaning it carries for some is not the one it carries for others. Indeed, Britishness can only be well-defined according to a determined historical context and a surrounding culture. Back to

Britain's imperial century, it was defined as an identity of superiority and dominance. Today, there are significant shared values which underline British society. These values are about the respect of law, tolerance, democracy, freedom of speech and religious liberty.

it is about the British values such as democracy and secularism.

1.2. Britishness or Englishness

Englishness is very often used synonymously with Britishness. According to the Oxford Lexicon dictionary, Englishness is the status of having English roots or having features considered as typically English. However, it is very often confused with Britishness. People outside England are most often called English and this causes a deep conflict. Referring to a Scottish, Welsh, or an Irish person as English is considered as an insult to them. It is England's hegemony over UK that makes people outside Britain refer to people living in the other parts of UK as English.

Esler states that English people tend to think of themselves as the representatives of the Union (6). This is due to the centrality of the government in Britain and the predominance of England over British institutions and economy. This is emphasized by Gwynfor Evan: "In any case, it is of no consequence to English people that Britain is called a nation because they know that apart from geography everything British is English. For them, Britain is a synonym for England. Britishness poses no threat to Englishness (8).

The English know that their identity is the one that holds monopoly in Britain. This explains why they are not bothered when they are called British since there is unqualifiedly no difference between the two. The Irish, Scots, and Welsh know very well what differentiates them from one another. Their languages, traditions, and cultures are different.

1.3. Chauvinism in Colonial Britain

During the 16th century, an era known as the age of discovery in Europe, England began to set colonies in new lands overseas. The British Empire, known as “The Empire on which the sun never sets”, was the largest empire to exist in history. It reached across the globe and succeeded to expand widely and in a very challenging period of time. Being one of the strongest imperialist powers that had left its scars on each corner of the earth, Britain had been able to rule over around a quarter of the world’s population.

The reason why Britain wanted an Empire was to enrich its economic resources, to become a world leading power, and also, to protect itself from foreign invaders. The British government and its peoples strongly believed that the future of their wealth would be found through the oceans.

It is during this time that British chauvinism came into existence. *Collins dictionary* defines chauvinism as a powerful belief that one’s nation and identity is superior and more important than the others. Many intellectuals in Britain defended Imperialism and justified all the massacres which were done by the British colonialists as being a matter of civilizing other nations and bringing light to them. For instance, John Robert Seeley, the author of the book, *Expansion of England*, nourished a severe national chauvinism as it is shown in the following quote:

There are two very different kinds of colonization. First, there is a kind which may be called *natural* in the sense that it has manifest analogies in the nature world. Colonies are like fruits which only cling till they ripen; said Turgot. Colonization say others, is like the swarming of bees; or it is like the marriage and migration to another house of the growing-up son.

And no doubt history furnishes us with real examples of such easy and natural colonization (Seeley 37).

In the same vein, Seeley argues that colonization is a natural process which brings civilization to the colonized people. The superior race, according to him, should take the responsibility of educating the inferior races. Without the help of the former, the latter would not be able to embrace civilization.

Charles Dilke is another British chauvinist who justified imperialism and believed in the superiority of British race and values which, according to him, should be taught to other uncivilized and archaic nations. In his Book, *Greater Britain*, he notes that “It is no exaggeration to say that in power the English countries would be more than a match for the remaining nations of the World, whom in the intelligence of their people and the extent and wealth of their dominions they already surpass” (407).

As a matter of fact, the imperialist discourse associates Empire with Britishness arguing that the British people are the predominant and superior race. Indeed, it was during the period of the British Empire that Britishness gained its popularity and Britain was united under Britishness. People, in Britain, had a remarkable sentiment of belonging to this strong empire. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), a British statesman, in a speech said: “I believe that the British race is the greatest of the governing races that the world has ever seen” (1895).

1.4. The Crisis of Britishness

After the Second World War, nationalist movements for the decolonisation of the former British colonies emerged. These movements rejected British authorities and started to claim their own ethnic identities. As a consequence, almost all of the territories which were under the rule of Britain gained their independence while most of them joined the Commonwealth of Nations, retaining the British monarch as a symbolic head of the Commonwealth.

The fall of the British Empire caused the crisis of the British identity and the influence it used to have on the world. Britain did not only lose its previous colonies, but also faced issues within its union. Its decline as a global power means the decline of Britishness as a concept which used to unite the nations forging the United Kingdom. Linda Colley, in her book, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (1992), maintains that the concept of Britishness was once highlighted by Protestantism, Empire, as well as, War which do no longer play a central role in Britain. Likewise, Gavin Esler asserts that “In the twenty first century, these traditional elements of ‘Britishness’ seem less relevant, or completely irrelevant, to many of the people of these Islands” (2) and that “clearly the union means a lot less than it used to be” (12).

In contemporary life, secular discourse replaced religious one. Democracy and diversity became fundamental elements in the British identity. Easton says that “Britishness is ultimately about shared values of tolerance, respect, and fair play, a belief in freedom and democracy.”

1.5. Meaning of Nationalism

The *Collins Dictionary* defines Nationalism as “the desire for political independence of people who feel they are historically or culturally a separate group within a country.” It is an ideology which aims at forming a national community with a sovereign state. It emerged as a reaction to imperialism and colonialism and aspires to decolonize the occupied lands and maintain their self-governance. It was used for the first time by Augustin Barruel, an anti-Jacobin French priest in his well-known book, *Memoire Pour Servir à L’histoire du Jacobinisme* (Kamenka 8). According to Anshuman A. Mondal “Nationalism cannot be considered as just a political movement or principle since to assert that would be to ignore the fact that, for nationalists, what is at stake is not only power but identity” (19). Therefore,

Nationalism does not only fight colonialism, but also defends ethnic identities and aims at reviving them.

Nationalism is also defined as a feeling of loyalty that gathers a group of people who shares common principles and cultures, which create a strong union among them. It is considered as a human phenomenon that stands for 'liberty and progress'. Therefore, this phenomenon covers common main elements like race, language, religion, history, customs, or geography. However, one element is not enough to create a nation because it is not necessary that every nation must have one single race or speak a common language to form a nation. For instance, in Canada the English and the French form one nation even though they are different races, and also in Canada and Switzerland there exists various languages but this did not prevent them to develop their own nationhood ("Nationalism: Meaning and Concept" 3).

Vinsensio M.A Dugis points out that Ernest Gellner defined Nationalism as a sentiment of anger which was resulted by the imposition or violation of principles on a certain nation. He also defined it as a movement that was derived by this sentiment in order to defend nation's roots and origins (Dugis 52).

To Eugene Kamenka, Nationalism is a controversial term to define by saying that "It is not the skills of the philosopher but the historians' sense of connection which is needed to understand the meaning or the definition of Nationalism". It is important to examine the circumstances under which this phenomenon emerged and progressed in order to differentiate its meaning from other concepts. It is necessary to look backward and forward to see its historical pre-conditions to recognize its significance. According to him, Nationalism is known as a European phenomenon since it was raised after the French Revolution. The revolution called for the abolishment of the monarchy and people united in order to realize

that and take their place. After this, the concept of 'Nation' came as a political force to defend people's identity and interests (Dugis 53).

2. Devolution and Its Consequences

2.1. Defining Devolution

The rise of nationalist movements in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland led to the demand for devolution. The *Collins dictionary* defines Devolution as the "transfer of some authority or power from a central organization or government to smaller organisations or government departments." In 1997, Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, held a referendum on devolution. The results were 50.22% for the devolution of power. Devolution decentralized the parliament of Westminster which is located in London, providing 'Home-Rule' for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Scotland and Wales created parliaments while Northern Ireland an assembly. However, these three countries still remain under the authority of Westminster. They can only adopt laws which concern regional issues, such as transport, health, and education. There are, on the other hand, laws which do not concern regional issues. These laws are referred to as 'reserved laws'. Reserved powers such as foreign policy, defence, immigration, and multiple other economic aspects remain the sole competence of the government of UK which are dealt with the House of Commons and the House of Lords in Westminster (Torrance).

2.2. Devolution and Reinforcement of Nationalist Movements in Scotland and Northern Ireland

"The Welsh and Scottish referendums of 1997 were supposed to heed the calls for greater autonomy and silence the drum beat of nationalism." (Brand) Devolution was granted to Scotland, Wales, and NI in order to stop the nationalist calls for independence, but it proved to be the complete opposite. After the establishment of the Scottish parliament in 1999,

nationalists did not stop to ask for further demands for Home-Rule (McCluskey and Sangster 14). Meadows suggests that devolution became a threat to the stability of British Union and may probably lead to the calls for independence (43). Indeed, the nationalist party in Scotland, SNP, and that of NI, Sinn Féin, persist on the fact that devolution did provide them enough with enough power to decide about their own nations and remain convinced that independence is the solution. James Fenton, in his book, *When the Devolution Comes* (1976), states that the word Devolution itself is a threat “The English pronounce it to rhyme with evolution, the Scots with revolution” it represents a danger to the British unity and might bring an end to everything that was fought for (86). Yet, while unionists perceive it as a threat, nationalists see it as an opportunity.

2.3. English Nationalism as a Consequence of Devolution

Devolution reform of 1997 largely impacted the British political life. Paul Brand, a UK editor for *ITV News*, reported that Tony Blair admitted he had made a mistake when he held a referendum about devolution. While Blair believed that devolution would end up the calls of nationalist movements, it turned out to be the opposite (Brand).

Little is known about English nationalism, but it is one of the main subjects that politicians and historians, in Britain, tackle. This is highlighted by Kumar when he writes that “If nationalism was studied before, it was Welsh, Scottish, and Irish, rather than English, nationalism that got all of the attention” (19).

English nationalism rose as a consequence of Devolution. When Tony Blair held the referendum about devolution, he only focused on Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, while England remained at the periphery. Esler thinks that the increase sense of Englishness in England is a political answer to Devolution; while Scotland enjoys its own representative parliament, England does not. In his book, *How Britain Ends* (2021), he says that the census

which has been taken from 1801 till 2011 in UK showed an increasing sense of belonging to an English identity rather than a British identity among English people. They gradually become more attached to their English identity. The majority identify themselves as English first then British.

3. Post-Brexit Britain

3.1. "Brexit" or "Engxit"

It is not surprising that the majority of the English people voted for Brexit and not surprising also that Scottish and Northern Irish people voted to remain within the EU. Rudolf G. Adam, in *Brexit Causes and Consequences* (2019), has raised many questions as well as probable answers to the dilemma of Brexit. He asserts that Brexit should not be called as such, instead it is "Engxit", supporting his argument with giving the percentage of people who voted against Brexit in Scotland and Northern Ireland (62% and 56% respectively) and that UKIP and Tories were not as dominant outside England as they are inside (209).

The results of the referendum revealed that the United Kingdom is not as united as its name suggests. Speaking about Scotland and Northern Ireland, Esler says in his book *How Britain Ends* (2021) that "they know the difference, they know that whatever way they vote English voters will largely determine their future."

3.2. Scotland's Future

The future of Scotland remains uncertain within UK. Brexit was a traumatic event for many of Scottish inhabitants who believed that their decision about staying within the EU was not respected and because of this, the course of Scottish history may change.

In 2014, a referendum on Scottish independence "should Scotland be an independent consent?" was held and showed that 55.3% of Scottish citizens voted to remain within the

United Kingdom. Indeed, Scotland had never ceased in believing in its own nation as a sovereign, but at that time many believed that its economic progress was within the United Kingdom. However, things have consequently changed after Brexit.

While Scottish people voted to remain within EU, they found themselves forced to follow the path of England against their will. The increase of the national sentiment of Scots is remarkable. Adams suggests that “Brexit strengthens the determination in Scotland to become a fully independent state” (211).

The majority who voted against Brexit thought that it would highly impact the Scottish economy. According to the article, “Bad Brexit Deal for Scotland” published in 2020, it is argued that Scotland would attract lesser immigrants, which would consequently impact negatively their economy. In terms of health care and social care, poverty would expand in many areas. Moreover, Scottish students would not be able to participate in Erasmus, in company with other EU programmes which were excluded from the deal by the UK. Indeed, people who voted against independence started to regret their decisions the morning after the results about Brexit.

In contemporary life, Scottish nationalism has become a powerful movement. Recently, Scottish independence continues to emerge into public debate. Jackson in his book, *The Case for Scottish Independence* (2020), asserts that during these last years, Nationalism has flourished as a “genuine mass movement” where it had dominated the Scottish electoral politics at Holyrood and Westminster and that it is capable of mobilizing a large number of activists (1).

The Scottish National Party, known as SNP, is the party which proclaims the Scottish independence. During the last couple of years, it has and continues to increase in power.

During the Scottish elections, in 2021, it won 64 seats in the parliament of Scotland, the highest number of seats it had ever won (Sturge).

On the 19th of December 2019, the Scottish leader of SNP and First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, sent a letter to Boris Johnson, the British Prime Minister, where she asks for the right to hold a second independence referendum. She states that people in Scotland form a nation, and as a nation they should be guaranteed the full right to decide on their own future (Reid).

Unsurprisingly, the demand for another Scottish referendum was immediately rejected by Boris Johnson. He sent a response letter, on the 14th of January 2020. He posted his own response on Twitter:

You and your predecessor made a personal promise that the 2014 independence referendum was a “once in a generation” vote. The people of Scotland voted decisively on that promise to keep our United Kingdom together, a result which both the Scottish and UK governments committed to respect in the Edinburgh Agreement. ("Boris Johnson Refuses to Grant Scotland Powers to Hold Independence Vote")

Despite the Prime Minister’s rejection to accept to hold a second independence referendum, Scottish First Minister remains determined on her decision, believing that nothing has to stand in the way of the democratic will of the Scots. On an interview conducted on “Good Morning Britain”, she argues that “Nobody can decide that democracy is a once in a moment” ("Nicola Sturgeon on Another Scottish Independence Referendum" 7:35).

4. Post-Brexit Northern Ireland

4. 1. Brexit and the Irish Border

In 1920, a border with customs checkpoints between Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland was set after the War of Independence in order to separate the two entities. In 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was signed by the British and the Irish governments in order to maintain peace in the UK and establish an invisible border (Appendix 2).

However, after UK's withdrawal from the EU, a hard border may be established in order to separate the two countries. Thus, many Irish people stand against the idea of the construction of a physical border because they believe that it would revive the old conflicts that shaped the course of the Irish history.

The Republic ambassador, Dan Mulhall, argued that the Irish Border could be a threat for economy and political stability (O'Carroll). Economically speaking, Northern Ireland, is with no doubt the poorest in terms of economic income comparing to the remaining other nations that form the UK. John Doyle and Eileen Connolly also assert that NI's economy since the beginning has been comparatively poor and the poverty level is higher than any other region within the UK (7-8).

After the event of Brexit, many suggestions to harden the border have been overspread; but people from the south of Ireland are against this idea. They consider it as an external border for the European Union. Thus, the EU has strict rules and laws that require customs checks when goods arrive from a non-EU country (House of Commons, 26). However, checks were not required when Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland were parts of the EU because they followed the same EU trade rules before the Brexit.

Colum Eastwood holds that: “The re-emergence of a physical border between north and south with customs checks would unravel the progress we have made on north/south partnership to a pre-Good Friday level” (Berberi 6). The hard Border for Sinn Féin and the SDLP is not something acceptable because of the Troubles; as it may revive the old memories when Ireland was split into two parts. Police Chief George Hamilton considers that the hard border could be negative for the whole Ireland. He stresses that if there will be a physical wall, there will be different conflicts that will lead to different tensions about identity (McDonald).

In addition to this, the Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny asserts that “possible border controls along the Northern Irish Border could damage the peace process”. This process was established in order to stop different conflicts between the unionists and nationalists by making various agreements like the Belfast Agreement or the Good Friday Agreement (1998) (Livingstone). However, the Good Friday Agreement could be jeopardised if a hard border would be built between NI and ROI; this is highlighted by Moltmann:

The impending Brexit has paralysed the disintegrating peace process. It has also reprioritised the issue of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which the Brexit will transform into an external border between the United Kingdom and the EU. Thereafter, cross-border movement of persons, goods and services will have to be controlled, effectively destroying a fundamental advantage of the peace process in which the border disappeared from everyday life. The basic principles of the peace agreement have been undermined (I).

Nevertheless, contradictory views emerged about the peace process and the issues of the border among the main political parties; stating that the border and the contribution to peace

and democracy will remain as it is, because the Good Friday Agreement is independent of the EU membership. Besides, the Irish citizens in NI have the right of EU citizenship after Brexit because the ROI is a part of the EU and nationality is considered as a main constitutional principle in the Good Friday Agreement (Stevens 27). First minister Arlene Foster declared in Andrew Marr's programme BBC News that:

The Common Travel Area between ourselves and the Republic of Ireland was in existence before we entered the European Union, and it will be there when we leave the European Union if that's what the people of the United Kingdom decide to do, and we recognise that the ROI is our closest neighbour, and of course they benefit greatly in terms of trade with the UK; Great Britain's their biggest export destination, and so we will still have to work through all of that and we will do so if we come to situation where we decide to leave, it will become part of the negotiations ("DUP FM: NI peace Process 'not based on the EU' -BBC News" 4:42).

Thus, the Democratic Unionist Party asserts that if the UK left the EU, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland would both remain members of the Common Travel Area (CTA) and the latter would not be impacted by Brexit (Berberi 7). It is considered as an arrangement between the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands (Bailiwick of Jersey and Bailiwick of Guernsey), and every person has certain rights: travel, live, work, or study freely within these countries. Besides, they can have access to healthcare or social support. The CTA was created in 1922 by the British government because immigration checks and passport imposition were refused at the border. Their social and economic relations needed a free movement between the Islands especially for the workers who cross the Irish Border. As a result of Brexit, a new Anglo-Irish Treaty was needed in order to ensure

the rights that were mentioned before between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in the Common Travel Area (Stevens 14).

Nigel Dodds claimed in BBC Newsnight that the real meaning of a Union can be felt through remaining in the EU rather than threatening the position of Northern Ireland. It is not necessary to risk the separation of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom, and the 2016 referendum outcomes should be respected ("Brexit: Nigel Dodds 'Would rather stay in the EU than risk union'0:05).

Brexit resulted in fear and uncertainty in the whole Kingdom. As a reaction, the United Kingdom calls for getting rid of checks, taxes, and paperwork between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Furthermore, the United Kingdom wants to remove the European Union and the European Court of Justice's role in the British government after the establishment of the Northern Ireland Protocol which prevents the building of a hard border between Northern and Southern Ireland, and only British Standards can control goods that remain in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Protocol suggests that goods, which arrive from Great Britain, should be checked in Northern Ireland's ports to get in the Republic of Ireland (Appendix 3).

4.2. Sinn Féin's Call for Irish Reunification:

The most dominant political party in Northern Ireland is Sinn Féin which seeks to unify the island of Ireland and supports nationalism since a very long time. It was an anti-EU party in the 1970s, the Irish Republican politician Gerry Adams who was Sinn Féin's president said that "We are critical of the European Union because of the democratic deficit." For him, the sovereignty of the Irish nation may be threatened because of the European integration. However, this party began to support the EU membership, and its main goal was to unify the Island of Ireland and build a social Europe (The Newsroom).

In the event of Brexit, nationalists see themselves as Irish citizens, for this reason they voted to remain in the EU. However, they saw Brexit as misrepresentative of Northern Ireland's vote which is to remain (Stevens 20). The impact of Brexit on the future policy and the devolution settlement of Northern Ireland is characterised by fear and uncertainty (Berberi 7).

Sinn Féin demanded a border poll that would be in the whole Ireland, South and North, in order to gain more votes of consent to reunify Ireland. This call is not something new for Sinn Féin, but it used the threat of Brexit in order to revive this request. Brexit was depicted by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir as “the gift that keeps on giving” for the persons who wished for a united Ireland (Stevens 23). This largest Party is always trying to reunify the Island. Gerry Adams argued in his speech on visit of EU Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier to the Oireachtas:

In light of the provisions for Irish unity in the Good Friday Agreement, the European Union should not diverge from EU norms. Sinn Féin would like a referendum on Irish Unity within the next five years. However, the immediate challenge facing the EU and the people of Ireland is how to meet the threat of Brexit. The only way to adequately deal with that, is through a designated special status for the North of Ireland within the European Union (4).

According to Adams it is necessary to make a referendum poll in order to unite the Island of Ireland. Nevertheless, Brexit had a great negative impact on Northern Ireland in each field. Sinn Féin seeks to realize a prosperous and fair economy of the Irish Unity. In addition, it aims to protect the Good Friday Agreement which is considered as a potent element in the Irish history.

Michelle O'Neill, Sinn Féin Vice-President, claimed in 2018 that Brexit is an unwanted choice for the majority of the Irish people because it portrayed an economic threat for the whole Ireland not only Northern Ireland. She said that "Brexit was not our choice and it is unwanted by the majority of people and parties in the North. There is no good that comes from Brexit for Ireland North or South." Also, she considered it as a greatest danger that can damage every field in Ireland. She advocated in her speech that "Sinn Féin wants a New Ireland, and a united Ireland." The Former MEP Ben Habib stated in a show in GB News that:

If Sinn Féin go on to be the biggest party I would not underestimate their drive towards a border poll. And it is something that we should really have, never have allowed the control of that was in our governments it had to get behind unionism before these elections.....If Sinn Féin win, it is a catastrophe I think for unionism. And we will be facing calls for a border poll and it is high time Westminster and the government in particular got behind the union of the United Kingdom which remember only exists as a result of Northern Ireland and Great Britain being in union. If we lose Northern Ireland, we lose the United Kingdom, we become Great Britain and we lose the Saltire and Patrick in the Union Jack ("Sinn Féin victory will be a for unionism | Ben Habib, former MEP" 00:00).

Sinn Féin has won the large number of seats in May 2022 in Ireland. This Party seeks to realize peaceful, economic, and social justice in Northern Ireland, and even to gain more international solidarity and democracy. Therefore, the political scientist Niall Ó Dochartaigh asserted in a show in DW News in 2022 that Sinn Féin is considered as the largest Party in Ireland. He also proclaimed that it is likely for the reunification of Ireland in the next five or ten years ("Sinn Féin eyes historic victory in Northern Ireland election | DW News" 1:53).

For the first time, Sinn Féin wins the largest seats (27) in the parliament of Northern Ireland. This party which advocates for the reunification of Ireland may find a way to leave Britain and join the Republic of Ireland. Mary Lou McDonald, the president of Sinn Féin, believes that the referendum on the reunification of Ireland would be planned to take place within a five-year timeframe (Richards).

Conclusion

This chapter explains the meaning of the term Britishness. It shows that the use of the words English and British interchangeably raised many questions among the Scots and Irish people who felt that their identity was excluded. Nationalist movements in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland began to call for devolution. Tony Blair agreed to create devolved institutions hoping that the calls for independence would cease. Nevertheless, devolution did not stop the calls for independence mainly in Northern Ireland and Scotland, it reinforced them. Moreover, Brexit reinforced nationalist movements and the calls for independence. Rudolf G. Adam argues that it is Engxit rather than Brexit. As a consequence, both Scotland and Northern Ireland may find a way to leave the British union.

The chapter deals also with the issue of the possibility of hardening the Irish border after Brexit since it was not accepted by the Irish majority as they voted in favor of remaining in the EU. A physical border in Ireland may threaten the political and social stability in Northern Ireland. Besides, it could also be economically disruptive because trade rules changed after Brexit by the EU, thus, customs checks are required when goods arrive from a non - EU country. Furthermore, our investigation demonstrates that the basic principles of the Good Friday Agreement may be put in danger and damage the peace process in Northern Ireland. However, contradictory views, like Arlene Foster's declaration, emerges and confirms that the Good Friday Agreement would not be jeopardized because nationality is the main nucleus of

the agreement and it is independent on EU membership. Then, we deduce that Northern Ireland could be reunified with the Republic of Ireland after the rising of different tensions in Northern Ireland. This reunification could be considered as a threat for British identity that could menace the Union of the four nations.

In the last section of this chapter, we explore the contribution of Sinn Féin in reunifying Ireland after Brexit. Indeed, the latter revived the request for a border poll in Northern Ireland, in which the north and the south will vote for the reunification. Gerry Adams argues in his speech that it is very important to make a border poll in order to reunify the two divided parts, particularly after Brexit because various conflicts that were raised could be solved. Therefore, Michelle O'Neill insists for the Irish unity and notes in her speech that Brexit is not an Irish choice.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This paper aims at examining post-Brexit identity crisis, the instability of UK's politics and the Northern Ireland Protocol. In order to explore the outcomes of Brexit we rely on concepts like Britishness and Nationalism.

In the first chapter, entitled "Historical Background of the English Rule in Ireland and UK's integration in the EU", we provide a historical background of UK's four Nations which were brought together through Acts of Union; Wales in 1543, Scotland in 1707, and Ireland in 1801. We also explain the causes that led to the partition of Ireland into two distinct entities; the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in 1921. Additionally, we shed light on the religious conflict which started in Northern Ireland after the independence of the South. This conflict is referred to as "The Troubles". It began when the Catholics, who were victims of discrimination, organized a campaign against the unionist government in Northern Ireland to claim their rights in 1968. The Good Friday agreement was set in 1998 by the British and Irish governments to put an end to the thirty bloody years of the Troubles. However, divisions persisted in Northern Ireland and barriers between nationalist Catholic and unionist Protestant communities were built to avoid inter-communal violence. After this, we review the UK's admission in the EU and we show that Euroscepticism emerged as the opposition of UK's integration that led to Brexit. Yet, the latter was not supported by the whole of the UK; in the 2016 referendum, England and Wales voted to leave the EU, whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU. Accordingly, Scotland and Northern Ireland had no other choice than to follow the path of England.

In the second chapter, entitled "Post-Brexit Crisis and the Future of Northern Ireland", we introduce the concept of Britishness. We explain that British identity became dominant during Britain's imperial century. However, after the WWII, the emergence of Nationalism mainly in

Northern Ireland and Scotland brought the crisis of Britishness. Furthermore, we explore the growing demand for Home-Rule in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In 1997, Devolution provided an Assembly for Northern Ireland and parliaments for Scotland and Wales. While the aim behind Devolution was to end up the calls of the nationalists in Northern Ireland and Scotland for independence, it reinforced the demand for further autonomy and led to an increasing divide between England and the other three Nations in Britain. Besides, we expose the impacts of Brexit on Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement, which preserves a set of principles related to Northern Ireland's stability, is threatened and the cross-border issue emerged as a negative outcome after Britain withdrawal from the EU. As a matter of fact, the emergence of a physical wall in Northern Ireland could lead to political and economic changes like requiring security regime and custom checks for the non-EU countries. However, divergent views emerged about this issue. The Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny confirms that the peace process in Northern Ireland may be threatened. On the other hand, Arlene Foster argues that Brexit will not affect negatively Northern Ireland.

From the analysis and interpretation of the information gathered, we conclude that Britain's withdrawal from the EU has affected both social and political life in UK. Various factors have led to a crisis of Britishness after Brexit. First, the rise of Nationalism has raised political awareness among Northern Irish and Scottish people who started to claim for the recognition of their identities, which according to them, are marginalized. Second, the Brexit results have reinforced the demand of nationalists in Scotland and Northern Ireland for further autonomies.

Scottish and Northern Irish Nationalism threaten the UK's territorial stability and unity. We indicate that SNP, the largest political party in Scotland, prepares for a referendum on Scottish independence that will be held in the coming years. In accordance, the nationalist

party in Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin, revived the desire for a border poll in Southern and Northern Ireland. The party's ultimate objective is the reunification of Ireland. In a speech, Gerry Adams asserts that it is very important to hold a referendum for the Irish reunification. On May 2022, Sinn Féin gained high number of seats in Ireland (27). The position that Sinn Féin holds in Northern Ireland enables it to hold a referendum on the Irish reunification. Mary Lou MacDonald argues that a referendum will be held in the few coming years.

Accordingly, the Irish unity is a high possibility in the coming years, in addition, the Scottish Prime Minister and SNP leader, Nicola Sturgeon, admits that a referendum on Scottish Independence will soon be held. Besides, Nationalism in Wales increases significantly these last years and gains more support among the Welsh. Furthermore, UK, from "the Empire on which the sun never sets" to a fragile union, sooner or later, its course of history may be brought into an end.

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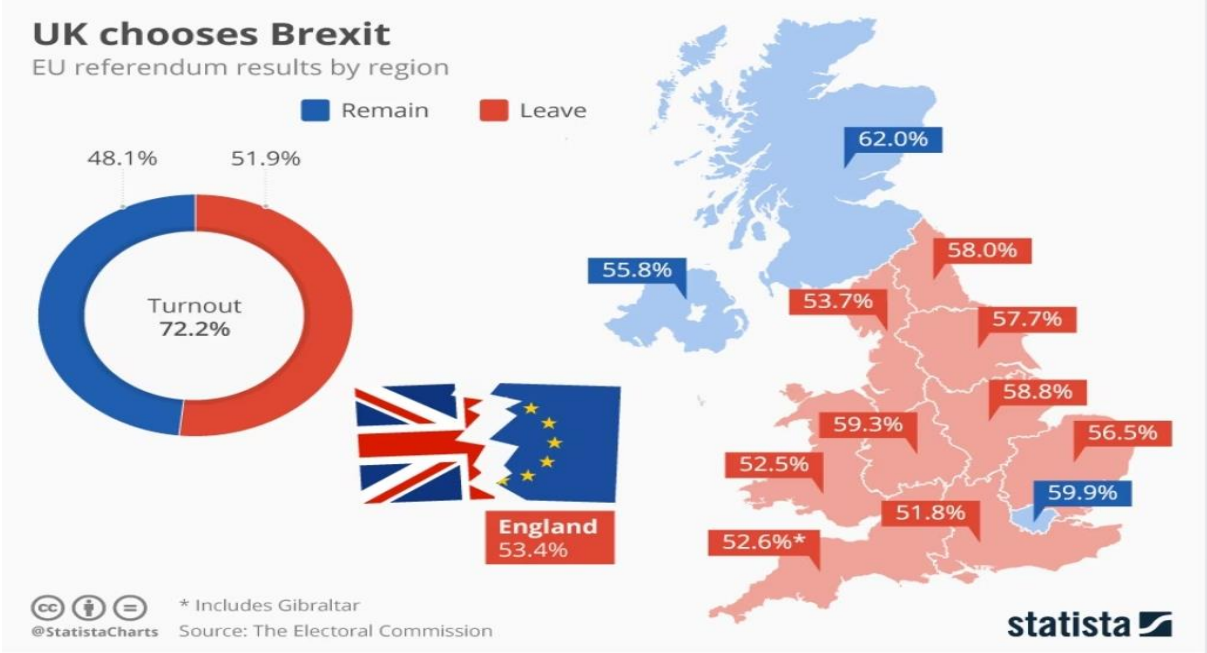
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Appendices

Appendix 1: 2016's Referendum results.



Source: "Chart UK: A Divided Nation | Statistica."

Appendix 2: The Invisible Border between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.



Source: "Brexit and the Irish Border" The Times.

Appendix 3: Northern Ireland Protocol after Brexit.



Source: "Brexit: What's the Northern Ireland Protocol" BBC News.

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche étudie l'histoire de la formation du Royaume-Uni de la Grande Bretagne et de l'Irlande du Nord. Il analyse les circonstances qui ont introduit à la partition d'Irlande en 1921 en deux territoires séparés : Irlande du Nord et République d'Irlande. Il explique les raisons qui ont poussé le Royaume-Uni à intégrer l'Union Européenne en 1973 et introduit le referendum de 2016. Il montre également les causes pour lesquelles la Grande Bretagne a fait le choix de quitter l'UE tout en introduisant le phénomène du Brexit. De plus, il explique différents concepts tels que la Britannicité et la Dévolution. Ensuite, il montre comment l'émergence des mouvements nationalistes en Ecosse, au Pays de Galles et en Irlande du Nord ont conduit à la crise identitaire. En outre, ce travail se concentre principalement sur les conséquences du Brexit et sur la frontière Irlandaise. Pour ce, nous utilisons la méthode expositive tout en s'appuyant sur des ouvrages récents.

Mots clés : Référendum de 2016, Union Européenne, Brexit, Dévolution, Nationalisme, Britannicité, Irlande du Nord.