Understanding the Choice of Brexit
A case of Disintegration

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the majority vote of the people of the United Kingdom in the British EU referendum. Brexit, as the event has been dubbed, is one of the most important events to understand within European politics and integration in the 21st century. It is an event with immense consequences not only for the United Kingdom but for every member of the European Union. It is in the interest of the EU to prevent further disintegration and thus it is necessary to understand the reasons behind the leave votes in the 2016 EU referendum especially when one considers the supposed benefits of an EU membership. For more than 60 years the European Union has helped to secure peace and prosperity on the European continent - something the majority of the British population is no longer interested in being a part of. In this dissertation the aim is to understand the choice of Brexit as a case of disintegration brought on by a surge of nationalism in the UK. The dissertation describes how the UK's position has changed on the global scale over the last two centuries, and it analysis the reasons for the majority vote in Brexit by the use of the theories disintegration, nationalism and national identity. The result of this analysis is used to create an understanding of Brexit through the concepts of realism and disintegration. Furthermore, the dissertation discusses the potential future of the United Kingdom and whether Brexit will result in the dissolution of the UK. Moreover, the dissertation discusses whether the theories applied may serve to answer the chosen research question. In itself, Brexit is a unique case, and therefore the methodological approach chosen is that of a single-case study. This approach is chosen despite the criticism of its ability to generalise its results. The aim of this dissertation is therefore not to generalise the findings as they are very case-specific, but the belief is that elements of the dissertation can be generalised and enable a better understanding of the surge of nationalism in countries such as France and Italy. The dissertation shows that the vote of Brexit can largely be explained by nationalism as the main reasons given by the voters in favour of leaving include sovereignty, immigration, and national identity. Furthermore, there is evidence that Brexit and the surge of nationalism in the United Kingdom is a result of a growing opposition towards globalisation and an increasingly integrated world. The wish by the majority of the population to secure their sovereignty as well as to protect their national identity and their country correlates with the way disintegration is defined by realism as countries should only stay integrated as long as they benefit from it and maintain their security. If this is no longer possible, disintegration becomes the obvious choice with every country for itself. The two main reasons for the UK to initially join the EEC in 1973 were

security and economic gains. However, these reasons have severely been reduced as there is no longer one single threat against the European continent, which was the case when the UK the EEC, and therefore the need for protection through numbers might not be felt the same way in the population. Furthermore, the EU has had economic challenges since the crisis of 2008, and therefore the main benefit has dwindled. The dissertation concludes that the British population hope for a better future with less interference from the EU, fewer immigrants and a higher level of sovereignty. However, they expect to escape globalisation and retain their sovereignty to a level of their satisfaction will be interesting to observe as it might prove very difficult.

Contents

Preface

The following contains the dissertation of "Understanding the Choice of Brexit: A Case of Disintegration" which have been conducted through a theoretical understanding of disintegration and nationalism. It has been carried out to fulfil the final educational requirement of Master's in Development and International Relations at Aalborg University, Denmark.

The dissertation came about due to my own interest in Brexit in general and more specifically in why a nation like the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. The interest in Brexit has existed since the EU referendum became a reality as I have always been very fund of the UK and interested in its culture. However, this interest only grew after I conducted a six-month internship in the Trade Council at the Royal Danish Embassy in London last fall. Here I was able to witness multiple aspects of Brexit and its potential consequences, which only led to an increased interest in understanding the "why" behind. The potential implications of Brexit played an important role during my time at the Embassy as I wrote my internship report on "The consequences of Brexit on Denmark's Trade with the United Kingdom".

The hope is that the research conducted here will help illuminate one of the most important "why's" related to Brexit and enable others to understand this. As such, there is no real limitations to the audience of the dissertation, however, scholars within the field of international relation will most likely find it more relevant and understandable as it is academic writing written with this specific field in mind.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Søren Dosenrode, for his guidance and persistence without which I would not have had the same product as is the case. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Danish Embassy in London for nurturing my interest in Brexit and for giving me unique opportunities in this regard. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their patience and understanding these months. A special thanks to my mom who has read many pages of this dissertation and to my boyfriend for helping with technical assistance and advice.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Aalborg, Denmark in May 2019,

Michelle Kristensen

List of Abbreviations

CEE	Center and Eastern Europe
ECSC	European Community of Coal and Steel
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MP	Member of Parliament
NHS	National Health Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PM	Prime minister
SNP	Scottish National Party
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independent Party
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1 | Introduction

The United Kingdom and the European Union has a longstanding relationship going back to 1973 but the majority of the British population no longer desires this affiliation. On June 23, 2016 after a period of growing disdain within the British population, a vote was put forward to separate the United Kingdom from the European Union and this British EU referendum resulted in a win for the Leavers 51.9% to 48.1% (Hunt & Wheeler, 2018). Brexit, the British decision to leave, is without any doubt a large change in international relations especially within the European borders and it will bring both consequences and uncertainties with it. It begs the question if the UK will stand stronger or weaker after its divorce with the European Union as there is no doubt that the belief of the Leavers is for a stronger United Kingdom (Thelle, et al., 2017). The wish for certain changes has largely fuelled the decision to Leave but how did these wishes come about? How did the United Kingdom end up with 51.9% of their population so dissatisfied with the European Union that they did not see any other solution than to leave the EU? Brexit is one of the most important events of the 21st century so far in Europe and it is necessary to understand the reasoning behind it. It is of great importance for the western world and especially Europe. The aim of this dissertation is to try to understand the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union.

1.1 Research area

At present time Brexit is on the majority of Europe's mind to a more or lesser extend and it is, therefore, highly relevant to try to understand the United Kingdom's decision to separate from the European Union. The EU and European integration has been around for over 60 years and for many it is hard to envision a world without the European Community as we have come to know it. For many, it has been a part of their entire life and as such, they have never known a world without some form of European integration. Therefore, it comes as a shock for many that some might wish to no longer be a part of this community. There has always been awareness of dissatisfaction among some of the member states but the fewest might have imagined Brexit as the potential outcome. There are many ways in which one can try to understand this event and even though it is still ongoing, quite a few scholars have tried through varying theories as explanation[1].

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[1]A more detailed account is available in Chapter 2, Literature review.

However, for the purpose of this paper the focus will mainly be on understanding Brexit as a case of disintegration[2] brought on by the rise of nationalism within the British population. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to answer the following:

Considering all the supposed benefits of a European Union membership how can the majority vote of the United Kingdom's population in the British EU referendum be explained?

One might hope that if a better understanding of the reasons behind Brexit is obtained, then it might be possible to prevent further disintegration of the European Union in the future. In this dissertation, the hypothesis is that the United Kingdom's decision to disintegrate from the European Union is largely due to the British population's dissatisfaction with the EU as a result of increased nationalism within the UK and a heightened sense of Them versus Us. This assumption is based on preliminary research and in order to hopefully prove it an understanding disintegration along with nationalism will be used in order to exemplify how Brexit can be explained. These theoretical approaches will serve as tools to understand the chosen empirical material, which will be included but is not limited to articles, statistics, and interviews. Brexit is still a current event, however, nothing after the vote will be considered. This means anything after June 2016 will not be included this does not however exclude material produced after the votes as for exam. The hope is to shed some light on the reasons behind Brexit through the use of these theories in order to achieve a better understanding of why this was the wish of the majority of the British people. Furthermore, it is the hope that the dissertation will manage to fulfil the knowledge gap presented in chapter two.

1.2 Synopsis

Chapter one will make an introduction to the dissertation as well as the chosen research area of Brexit and underline why it is important to understand the reasoning behind the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. There will also be a very short introduction to the chosen theories and methods, which will be used throughout the paper along with the outline of the research and delimitations.

Chapter two will be dedicated to existing literature related to the topic of Brexit in order to establish the existence of the knowledge gap which this paper will try to fill. The chapter will revolve around a variety of topics but some topics have gained more attention than others such as understanding the vote, economy, immigration and the elites. The chapter

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[2]For the definition and discussion of disintegration please see Chapter 4, page 23.

allows for a positioning of the research project by outlining the tendencies encountered in contemporary academic writings.

Chapter three will explain the methodology used throughout the paper. There will be an introduction to qualitative research in general and in relation to this dissertation. Furthermore, there will be a presentation of the method of case study both in general and specific to this dissertation as it is the chosen research method. There will also be an introduction to the two chosen approaches of analysis, namely, process tracing and document analysis along with a presentation of the empirical data chosen for this dissertation. The chapter will also include an explanation of how the chosen theories will be used in the dissertation as well as the quality assessment criteria, which this dissertation will aim at fulfilling.

Chapter four will present the theory of integration and disintegration as well as outline how these two relate to two of the main theories of international relations, namely Liberalism and Realism. There will equally be an introduction to nationalism and national identities. The chapter will conclude with an introduction into the role of these in the dissertation.

Chapter five will provide the paper with the necessary background on the United Kingdom and its position and relationships throughout modern history which will lay the ground for the coming analysis. The UK's history as an imperial power will be presented along with how its role changed through the 20th century. Furthermore, there will be an introduction to the UK's relationship with the European Union.

Chapter six will entail the case study analysis of the dissertation and attempt to answer the presented research question. The analysis will be divided into two sections; one focusing on disintegration and one focusing on nationalism. The analysis will be carried out through the use of process tracing and document analysis with the theories of disintegration and nationalism as guiding concepts.

Chapter seven will entail a discussion of the future of the United Kingdom and whether nationalism has the ability to break apart the United Kingdom. This will not entail a guess on how well the United Kingdom will fare outside of the European Union.

Chapter eight will include a discussion and assessment of the chosen theories' abilities to provide at complete and detailed answer of the research question and what they might not be able to account for.

Chapter nine will attempt to summarize and conclude the findings of the paper. Furthermore, it will evaluate the course of the dissertation meaning that an evaluation of the chosen methods, theories, data etc. will be carried out.

Chapter ten will include an appraisal of the research carried out throughout the dissertation. There will be an assessment of how the research measures up to the chosen quality criteria, what new insights the research brings and a presentation of potential future work. Outside of the above-mentioned elements, the paper includes an abstract, preface, list of abbreviations, a bibliography, and appendices.

1.3 Delimitations

The focus of this dissertation is on the recent history of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union in the form of a focus on how to explain the majority vote in favour of Brexit, separating the UK and the EU after more than 40 years. As mentioned, there will be a background chapter illuminating how the situation in the UK has evolved from the start of Great Britain until now with Brexit looming. For the purpose of answering the present research question the material will mainly be limited to the years leading up to the vote which will include 2015 and 2016. There is some prior to these years and also material past 2016 but for the purpose of this dissertation everything pertaining to the time in between the EU referendum vote and the enactment of article 50 as well as the following Brexit negotiations will not be included as neither is able to provide an answer to the question of interest. Therefore, the material which have been generated after the vote is still pertaining to the vote itself and not to the Brexit aftermath. Furthermore, it is only the voters and reasons in favour of leaving the European Union, which will be taking into account, as the Remainers are unable to add any value to the process of answering the research question. The dissertation will only focus on the British side of Brexit in the form of the British voters and thus there will be no focus on the larger consequences for either the United Kingdom or the European Union. Additionally, there will not be a focus on the voter's prior political affiliations as voters in favour of leaving the Union were all over the spectrum, which is evident from appendix A. As expected, there is a large majority from the UKIP in favour of Brexit, but the Leavers were from every party and not just one. As the dissertation only relates to the votes in favour of leaving the EU there will not be a large focus on the economic aspects of leaving. It is not possible to discuss Brexit without touching upon the economic aspect, but the majority will revolve around disintegration, nationalism, (national) identity, sovereignty and globalisation.

2 | Literature review

The purpose of the following chapter is to present the existing literature related to the topic of Brexit and position the dissertation in relation to the contemporary research presented. It has to be acknowledged that it would be almost impossible to include all literature on the topic of Brexit and thus this chapter will serve as a reference map on the topic to enable the reader to understand the current positions within the research of Brexit.

As previously mentioned, Brexit is a unique event in 21st century Europe and unlike anything, the European Union has ever seen. Therefore, it follows that a good amount of research has already been created revolving around this topic even though it is still somewhat ongoing depending on the focus of the research. Some scholars (O'Reilly, 2016; Grey, 2016; Froud et al., 2016; Matti & Zhou, 2017) have aimed at understanding the vote, who voted what and why. O'Reilly (2016) argues that Brexit is the physical evidence of divisions of both social and political nature across generations, ethnicity, regions and generations. O'Reilly describes the statistics of how the vote went establishing among other that the older generation was more likely to vote in favour of leaving compared to the younger generation. Furthermore, education played a role where Remainers were more often educated than non-educated (p. 809-810). O'Reilly believes that Brexit unveiled socio-economic and political fault lines within the United Kingdom. Likewise, Grey (2016) believes that Brexit brought to the foreground a series of changes, which were already underway, but Brexit brought it to everyone's attention. He argues that this will in turn create a new political landscape, which will shape the political organisations for many years to come (p. 829). Matti & Zhou (2017) agree with O'Reilly that many of the votes in favour of leaving can be traced back to older and less educated citizens with a lower social status (p. 1131). Furthermore, Matti & Zhou (2017) argue that racism played a role in the vote for leave as they have found that districts that had experienced an increase in religious and ethnic diversity had a higher percent of pro-Brexit voters. In the words of Matti & Zhou (2017), the *"UK citizens supporting the leave campaign engaged in 'celebratory racism', resulting in a fourfold increase in hate crimes"* (p. 1131) further underlining their point. Some of the main topics, which have been covered by many of the scholars (Froud et al., 2016; Warhurst, 2016; Frerichs & Sankari, 2016; Le Galès, 2016; Matti & Zhou, 2017; Bailey, 2018) is that of economy and immigration in relation the 2016 EU referendum. Froud et al. (2016) argues that Brexit has brought to attention the economic division within the United Kingdom (p. 814). They believe that the

British population have now *"realize[d] that GDP and the unitary economy is an invention of recent date which is reaching its end."* (p. 818) and that Brexit is an opportunity to reconstruct the economic management (p. 818). On the other hand, Matti & Zhou (2017) argue that despite what many might think the overall *"economic interest both for trade, freedom from regulation and employment"* (p. 1133) seems to be of insufficient relevance to have influenced the leave vote. Warhurst (2016) agrees with the minor impact the question of economy had on the leave vote. Instead, Warhurst argues that the main reason behind the leave vote was immigration. The government had for a long time acknowledged the issue and the need for action but had failed at achieving this. Furthermore, Warhurst argues that the government failed to address this issue during the Brexit campaign giving full way to the Leaver's version of the extent of the problem of immigration (p. 820). Immigration is one of the main topics in the current Brexit literature both in regard to intra-EU mobility but also referring to immigrants coming from outside the European Union. Frerichs & Sankari (2016) argue that Brexit can be viewed *"as shorthand for 'reserving British workfare for Brits'"* (p. 843) because one of the main concerns was the loss of British jobs and British welfare due to the EU mobility. It was often the new Eastern members of the Union and the *"polish plumber"* which were blamed for the decrease in proper jobs for the Brits (p. 841). Many scholars (Morgan, 2016; Wood & Wright, 2016; Le Galès, 2016; Froud et al., 2016; Bailey, 2018) have also focused on how the British EU referendum can be viewed as an opposition towards the elites of Britain. Craig Calhoun, Director of the LSE, has called Brexit *"a mutiny against the cosmopolitan elite"* (cited from Morgan, 2016, p. 825). Le Galès (2016) argues that Brexit is a break with the metropolitan liberal elites and that it might be a break, which will spread to other countries in Europe such as France, Germany and Hungary (p. 850). Furthermore, he believes that Brexit *"(....) underlines income and territorial inequalities"* (p. 853) and he is questioning why the population should not vote in favour of leaving when the elites and the European Union do nothing to protect them from *"(...) crisis and economic difficulties (...)"* (p. 853). Bailey (2018) argues that despite this vote against the elite they have failed to change their way and continued to cling onto their post-Brexit positions (p. 49). Morgan (2016) argues that the period leading up towards the British EU referendum was a case of lions versus foxes where David Cameron and his people were the lions who hoped for a positive outcome and Boris Johnson and his people were the foxes in favour of a British exit from the EU. This analogy is often used in cases of class differences, but in this case, Johnson is as much a part of the elite as Cameron (p. 826). According to Morgan (2016) this points towards a fragmentation of the elites in the United Kingdom and he believes that the elites *"lacked the interest in or a capacity for playing (...) a role"* in supporting Cameron

despite the fact that they have benefited greatly from the past 30 years European policies (p. 828). Wood & Wright (2016) follow along this line by arguing that *"Brexit was marked by elite failure and bungling"* (p. 834) and they, too, believe that the elite of the United Kingdom was fractured. They argue that the intellectual elite was excluded from the failure and in general that the elites of the UK can be divided into three separate groupings namely; *"the rich/owners of capital, militarist and intellectuals"* (p. 834). They continue by arguing that it is only when the intellectuals are taking serious that the political elites can be held properly accountable for their actions and decisions (p. 834). Some scholars (Boyer, 2016; Rona-Tas, 2016; Abu-Jamal) view globalisation[1] as a potential explanation for Brexit as they argue that globalisation is what the Leavers are against. Another possible angle to understanding Brexit is that of Oliver (2017) who has tried to explain Brexit through different theories such as neoclassical realism, constructivism, cognitivism etc. Some (Boyer, 2016; Schimmelfennig, 2018) believe that Brexit is an indicator on the failure of neo-functionalism and Schimmelfennig (2018) further argues that Brexit can be explained through differentiated disintegration. Others (O'Reilly, 2016; Morgan, 2016; Bailey, 2018) argue that Brexit can be viewed as a challenge towards the existing neoliberal order. Then there are scholars (Henderson & Pils, 2016; Kaiser, 2018; de Ruyter & Tsiligiris, 2018; Clegg, 2019) who have focused on other aspects of Brexit than to explain it. De Ruyter & Tsiligiris (2018) analysis the impact of Brexit on higher education while Clegg (2019) examines whether or not the Commonwealth can file the gap of the EU in the UK. Kaiser (2018) focuses on the European Union's difficult relationship with the United Kingdom and Henderson & Pils (2016) analysis the impact of Brexit on relations with Russia and China. The literature review enables the positioning of this dissertation in the context of contemporary research. At the present time there is a lack of research trying to explain Brexit through disintegration and nationalism along with national identity which is the aim of this dissertation. Therefore, it is believed that the dissertation will fill an existing knowledge gap and thus contribute to the research on Brexit.

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[1]Many (Held et al., 1999; Albrow, 1990; Giddens, 1990; Bird & Kopp, 2019; Rouse, 2016) have tried to define the term of globalisation and most agrees on the fact that it involves an increase in interaction on a global scale. It differs, however, whether or not the defining focus is on economics or on the more social aspects of globalisation. On one hand, Giddens (1990) defines globalisation *"(...) as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."* (Giddens, 1990, 64) leaning heavily on the social impact globalisation has on people. On the other hand, Bird and Kopp (2019) defines globalisation from an ore economic point of view as *"(...) the spread of products, technology, information and jobs across national borders and cultures."* (Bird & Kopp, 2019, 1). Bird and Kopp's definition might be easier understood but it lacks the ability to underline the impact globalisation has on the everyday life of the citizens of the world. Globalisation is a social concept which also includes economy and not an economic concept including social aspects. For the purpose of this dissertation globalisation is understood as an international process which can affect every aspect of social life within a nation including but not limited to culture, national identity, economy, politics, international relations etc.

3 | Methodology

The purpose of the following chapter is to introduce the chosen methodological approach of the dissertation. It will consist of a qualitative approach, namely a single-case study and the analysis will be carried out through process tracing and document analysis. The chapter will also touch upon the choice of data as well as how the chosen theories will be used in the dissertation. Furthermore, the chapter will include the quality criteria, which the dissertation will try to meet.

As mentioned the dissertation is a qualitative research study and will therefore consist of qualitative methods. There will be a use of what is normally regarded as quantitative data but as these are premade by another researcher, they will function in this dissertation under the same criteria as the other chosen data.

According to Brinkmann & Tanggaard (2015) there is no clear definition of what qualitative research implies. It is usually presented as an opposite to quantitative research and they argue that it most often refers *to who* something is said, done, appeared, developed or is experienced (p. 13). One of the points of critique of the qualitative approach is that it cannot meet the established quality criteria of *validity* and *reliability*. This will be addressed later in the chapter, however, it is worth mentioning that these two criteria usually are associated with quantitative research and they can be difficult to apply to qualitative research. According to (Flyvbjerg, 2016) there is a lot of focus on what one type of method can do over another but he argues that instead of viewing it as an either/or we should look at it as both/and because this will help ensure the best possible outcome (p. 242). This is not only concerning the methodological part of a research but also the data selection. Emmenegger and Klemmensen (2012) argue that the use of multiple data sources from both the quantitative and the qualitative approach will enhance the validity of the study (p. 428). This is part of the reason to include the quantitative data in this research, as the hope is to answer the presented research question thoroughly.

The dissertation has an abductive approach meaning that it is aiming at testing a hypothesis to see if it is actually true (Czarniawska, 2015, 290). The hypothesis has already been presented in the introduction and the aim is to understand whether or not it is actually true by answering the research question. Another main aspect of abduction is that the researcher aims at grounding *"a theoretical understanding, the context and the people he or she is studying in the language, meanings, and perspectives with their world view"*. In other words, the aim of the research is to try and understand the worldview of the people whom are the subject of the research (Bryman,

2016, 394). In this case, this means that it is necessary to try and understand the people who chose to vote in favour of leaving the European Union and try to understand their world view. The hope is that the chosen methods will help achieve this and provide the best possible answer to the research question.

3.1 Case study

As previously mentioned, the method of choice for this dissertation is that of case study. This choice has been made based on the assumption that it is the best suited for explaining Brexit as a single case of disintegration. In order to understand this choice one must first aim at understanding what a case is. There are some different definitions of what constitutes a case but Kumar (2011) argues that a case can consist of *"an individual, a group, a community, an instance, an episode, an event, subgroup of population, a town or a city"* (Selecting a study design, p. 126) which is the preferred definition here. Hence, it follows that a case study can be defined as *"the investigation of a well-defined aspect of a historical happening that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical happening in itself."* (Bennett, 2004, 21). As a method, case studies are usually preferred in research where the question is of the 'how' or 'why' variety and here the aim is to understand *how* the chosen theories can help explain Brexit (Yin, 1994, 1). A case study is a preferable method if the wish is to gain an in-depth understanding of a specific contemporary case and the dynamics within (Kumar, Selecting a study design, 2011, 126-127; Yin, 1994, 8). The case study enables one to obtain and/or expand one's knowledge regarding a specific situation, event, group, etc., and thus obtain a holistic understanding (Kumar, Selecting a study design, 2011, 126-127). Another favourable aspect of the case study is that it allows for an investigation over time, which for the purpose of this dissertation enables an understanding of how the British population's choice might have changed over a period of time (Yin, 1994, 24-25). Case studies are often faced with a high amount of critique from especially quantitative researchers as there is a belief that a case study cannot create construct validity or representativeness[1]. However, Bennett (2004) argues that the ability to achieve high levels of construct validity is in fact one of the greatest strengths of the case study method (p. 34). Furthermore, Bennett believes that the aim behind the case study should not be to select representative cases of a larger population in order to understand with what frequency something occur but rather the interest should be in discovering the circumstances under which certain outcomes occur and the mechanism behind it (p. 42-43).

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[1]Quality criterias which are not employed in this dissertation as the quality criterias more suited for qualitative research have been chosen instead.

3.1.1   Single case study

As Brexit can be said to be a single event the best approach is through a single-case study as opposed at a multiple-case design in which multiple cases are combined to say something about a singular thing (Yin, 1994, 38). According to Yin (1994), the use of a single case design can be justified if the case is a rare or unique event (p. 44). Even though the disintegration of a country is not a unique event and has happened before the disintegration of a European country from the European Union is a first and thus Brexit qualifies as a rare event.

According to Flyvbjerg (2006), some scholars have argued against the use of case studies in general and single-case studies in specific. The main argument is that it is impossible to generalise a single case and thus it cannot add any value to the field of research. This line of thought can be devastating for the case study-approach as it might discourage researcher to conduct case studies (p. 224). Generalisation is one way of asserting the value of research, but it is not the only one and it is possible to obtain and accumulate knowledge regardless of the ability to generalise it. According to Flyvbjerg a descriptive case, unable to be generalised, can be of equal value to a similar generalizable study. Therefore, it can be said that:

> *"One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas "the force of example" is underestimated."* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 227).

This is a rather important point for the case study, which will take place in this dissertation due to the fact that Brexit, as mentioned earlier, is a rather unique and rare case. Even though it can be argued that a generalisation of parts of the case study will be possible, such as the disintegration part in itself or the theories of neoliberalism and realism in connection with disintegration in general, it will most likely be impossible to generalise the entire case. The reasoning for a country's choice to disintegrate is very individual and will vary from case to case. Thus, it is not possible to generalise the choice of Brexit with other cases of disintegration.

3.2   Process Tracing

As mentioned earlier the analysis will consist of two different methods namely document analysis and process tracing. The former will be introduced in the next section and the latter will be presented here along with how it will be used in this dissertation. The main goal in process tracing is to study and understand causal relations by trying to identify the expectation, obtained through theory, which one has to the relation between the independent variable X and the dependent variable Y. In other words, this method enables the theory to seek out the relevant factors which by the logic of the theory connects X and Y (Beach & Pedersen, 2012,

235). This means that for the purpose of this dissertation, process tracing will help identify the relation between the chosen theories of disintegration and nationalism and the reasoning behind the majority vote in the British referendum. Process tracing is explicit in its choice of theory and it can be argued that the observation made through process tracing provides source data, which have yet to be considered analytically (Beach & Pedersen, 2012, 236-237). This is also the case in this dissertation and why the other theory of document analysis is introduced as a second method.

There are two different types of process tracing namely the case-centrical and the theory-centrical. The latter can be further divided into the two subcategories of theory-testing and theory-building (Beach & Pedersen, 2012, 238). However, the chosen method of process tracing for this dissertation is the case-centric and a further explanation of the theory-centric approach is thus, deemed unnecessary[2]. Figure 3.1 illustrates the approach to the case-centric process analysis. The first point of interest has been how to explain Brexit and what theories can be used for this. From here the process moves on to the analysis in which process tracing will play a role and help to show whether there was a change in the arguments put forth by the leavers in connection with Brexit. What is of interest here is to try to understand the
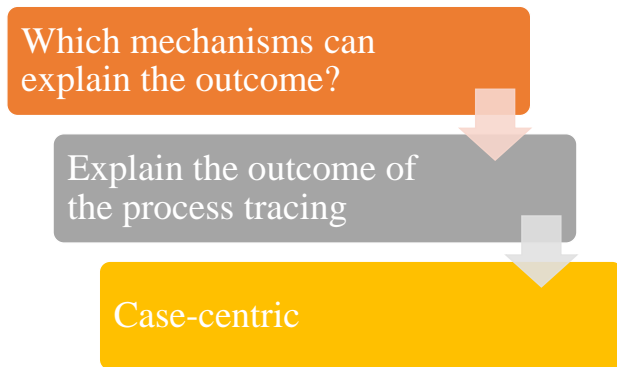
Figure 3.1: Modified from: Figur 10.1: Typer af process tracking-studier. Beach & Pedersen (2012): *"Process tracing: metode, design og forskningslogik"*.

reasoning behind the majority voting in Brexit and attempt to explain these through the using of the chosen theories and the selected empirical data. The case-centric approach is often limited to a specific case where the aim is to explain the outcome in the given case but without the need to generalise the findings to a broader context (Beach & Pedersen, 2012 238). The case-centric approach is advantageous to use in relation to a single case study as both aims at explaining the outcome of a single case (Beach & Pedersen, 2012, 239). One thing to be especially aware of when using the case-centric process tracing method on a single case study is to ensure that the data selected is adequate to enable a thorough examination of the topic (Beach & Pedersen, 2012, 239).

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[2]For further information on the theory-centric approach to process tracing see *"Process tracing: metode, design og forskningslogik" in Metoder i Statskundskab.* OBS!: the book is in Danish.

3.3 Document analysis

The other method, which will be used in this dissertation is document analysis. As the data largely consists of qualitative material such as written text this method will enable a deeper understand of the chosen material. Document analysis if often used in combination with another method or another datatype besides qualitative and in this case as previously mentioned quantitative statistical documents will also be used (Lynggaard, 2015; 153). Document analysis is favourable in this dissertation as it is a method often used to identify specifics in the field of study over time (Lynggaard, 2015; 153). Here this means that the document analysis will enable a thorough analysis of the factors of interest in the case of Brexit over a small period. The theory will help steer the document analysis in providing operationalisation which will help underline the relevant information (Lynggaard, 2015, 160). As will be explained in the upcoming section the theory will provide guidance in examining the chosen material for the analysis. The document analysis might reveal unexpected patterns and themes, which might in turn render a review of the research question. This is something to keep in mind through the analysis as to ensure a correlation between the question presented and the analysis (Lynggaard, 2015, 160). As a method of analysis, document analysis is at a high risk for subjectivity from the analyst and it is worth noting that the analyst should attempt to stay as objective as possible throughout the analysis (Lynggaard, 2015, 161). One way to help insure a limit in the subjectivity is to illustrate important points with citations from the used material in order to underline where the evidence of what is being argued can be found. This is an approach which will be used in the coming analysis to hopefully maintain transparency throughout the analysis (Lynggaard, 2015, 165).

3.4 Data considerations, selection, and presentation

In a qualitative approach, the main sources of data are qualitative documents unless it is a case of mixed methods. In general, the difference between qualitative data and quantitative data is defined as text and numbers where the former is concerned with text fixed in time and the latter with numbers (Elklit & Jensen, 2012, 37). It can be said that almost every written document can qualify as a qualitative document and this includes in some cases statistical material as well if it is already generated before it reaches the researcher (Elklit & Jensen, 2012, 120). In order to select the optimal data material, one must first be aware of once pre-understanding of the topic. The pre-understanding usually revolves around three key-points: 1) the notion of how the theory relates to the topic, 2) the empirical data one already has access to, and 3) a general idea of the coherence between the theory and the empirical data (Elklit & Jensen, 2012, 119). The hypothesis of this dissertation first presented in the introduction disclose the pre-understanding

of this research. From it is evident that there is a preliminary idea that disintegration and nationalism will be able to explain why the majority vote in Brexit happened. However, it is important to attempt not to be influenced too heavily by this pre-established hypothesis so as to not exclude material which might be relevant but might not fit with the hypothesis. What will steer the data selection for this dissertation is the presented research question along with the theories (Elklit & Jensen, 2012, 120-121).

In order to properly understand and use the chosen documents it is necessary with a clarification of them. In general, there are three different distinctions, which relate to the recipient(s) of the document. These are 1) primary, 2) secondary, and 3) tertiary (Lynggaard, 2015, 154). Primary documents are usually only circulated among a close net of recipients and are not in general for public consumption. There will not be used primary sources in this dissertation as the chosen data material is for the public eye. Secondary documents are publicly available documents produced in the vicinity of the event or situation it refers to. This dissertation will largely consist of secondary documents, as they are easy to obtain but also because the majority of polling information and voter-concerns will have been made publicly available and these are the best documents to help answer the presented research question. The aim is to mainly use data collected during the EU referendum campaign, on the day of the referendum or soon after. In this case soon after is understood to be the first month after the event as time to generate the documents must be taken into account. The last type is tertiary documents, which is similar to secondary in its public/available nature, but it differentiates on when it was produced. Tertiary documents are produced after the event or situation to which it refers. This dissertation will not rely heavily on this material due to the scope of the research ending at the vote in June 2016. There is, however, a small number of relevant documents produced following the referendum, which will be used but they still pertain to the vote itself. One must always bear in mind the implication of choosing one type of document over another especially if time is of high concern for the research (Lynggaard, 2015, 154-155).

What is evident so far and what must always be at the forefront of the research mind to ensure the highest quality. There are several criteria for ensuring high quality document, which are 1) authenticity, 2) credibility, 3) representativeness, and 4) meaning. By assessing the authenticity of the document, the researcher is evaluating the origin and sender of the specific document and if this correlates to the alleged sender and origin. This does not render the document useless but it is necessary to assess the impact this might have on the findings of the analysis. Assessing the credibility of the document allows for considerations regarding any uncertainties or bias the document might have. Again, this does not necessarily exclude the document for the research,

but it must be taken into consideration. If the document used is an article produced by the British newspaper Daily Mail one might have to consider if it is biased as the majority of Daily Mail articles published regarding Brexit is pro-Leave (University of Oxford, 2016, 3). When considering a document's representativeness, the main focus is on whether or not the document is representative for the event or situation is regarding. Meaning is, as it sounds, related to the meaning of the document and whether or not the meaning is clear. This is mostly related to the language of the text and it is not expected to become an issue regarding the coming analysis, as the documents will mostly have been written by professionals and for public consumption. These four assessment tools are sometimes overlapping, and documents might live up to some more than others (Lynggaard, 2015, 163-165).

In order to obtain at greater level of transparency an overview of the data chosen for the analysis is presented in Appendix B. The majority of data consist of articles and statistical material produced by British newspapers and polls with the exception of some American Medias such as Politico, Vox, The Washington Post. The hope is, by including sources from different countries than the United Kingdom, to obtain a greater understanding of the reasons behind the choice to vote in favour of Brexit as well as to secure a more thorough analysis. Furthermore, there will be a use of academic writing in the analysis to supplement data collected. This will enable a deeper understanding of the data along with the presented theoretical approach.

3.5 The Use of Theory

In the hope of answering the previously presented research question, a number of theories will be used. The theory chosen for any project or paper will always be able to help formulate the initial hypothesis, as is the case here (Klemmensen et al., 2012, 27). It was presented in the introduction and states that Brexit can be explained as a result of dissatisfaction with the European Union as a result of increased nationalism within the UK and a heightened sense of Them versus Us. The use of the theories can help to clarify and explain the patterns in the chosen empirical material (Klemmensen et al., 2012, 25). The theory will help with this process and limit the area of interest for the analysis (Klemmensen et al., 2012, 26). Here the expectation is for the theory to help show patterns which indicates a correlation between the theories of disintegration and nationalism and the majority vote in the British EU referendum. The hope is that these theories will provide a more complete and detailed analysis.

3.6 Quality assessment

One of the main aspects of doing research is to ensure that it lives up to the quality of standards expected from such research. This is to ensure that the it has been carried out properly and that it can thus fill out the knowledge gap as intended (Andersen, 2012, 97). It is necessary to actively decide which quality assessment criteria the research will try to meet as it is difficult for any type of research to meet all quality criteria at an equally high level. However, one should always aim at meeting all the quality criteria as best as possible (Andersen, 2012, 112). Through time, qualitative research has been criticised for its inability to meet the most common quality criteria *namely validity (external and internal)* and *reliability*. Furthermore, it has been said that qualitative research cannot be generalised and thus hold no value in science because it is a subjective relay from individuals (Kristiansen, 2015, 494). The quality of the research is mainly determined by the design and methods chosen to provide the best answer to the research question (Klemmensen et al., p. 37).

In regard to the assessment of qualitative research Richards (2005) believes that the main quality criteria is transparency which will enable other researchers to try and replicate the research and see if they arrive at the same conclusions (p. 192. Cited in Kvalitative metoder, 494). Neumann (2000) argues that qualitative research should mainly rely on ensuring its authenticity by a through documentation of the data used (p. 171. Cited in Kvalitative metoder, 494). In order to ensure as much transparency as possible every pieces of data used in the analysis of this dissertation is presented in Appendix A. Here the material is sorted according to their time of publishing and information regarding title, author(s), and date of publishing is given along with an URL-address. The hope is that by making all the data available the dissertation will obtain the highest level of transparency possible as it enables fellow scholars to try to conduct the same research with the same sources to see if they arrive at the same conclusions.

Regarding quality criteria, Guba and Lincoln (1994) have created a new set for qualitative research, which are mainly concerned with *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* (p. 114. Cited in Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). Authenticity regards the data as well as the data collection and here the researcher must be able to follow the data from beginning to end (Dahler-Larsen, 2012, 193). The previous section about data collection, selection and presentation explains how the dissertation will achieve this. Trustworthiness include four different subcategories namely *Credibility, Transferability, Dependability* and *Confirmability*. These criteria will be used to assess this dissertation and they will be presented next along with an explanation of how this dissertation will aim at fulfilling them.

3.6.1 Trustworthiness and how to obtain it

Kumar (2011) bases his definition of credibility on that of Trochim and Donnelly (2007) stating that credibility relates to the way in which the researcher establishes his/her results in a credible way or in a way which enables the research participants to believe the result (Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). In other words, it is the job of the researcher to illustrate that the findings are credible due to thorough and detailed research, which, after it has been concluded, is submitted to his/her peers for further studying to obtain confirmation of the findings (Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 184). This dissertation will be carried out with as much transparency as possible in order to help ensure the credibility of the study. This will happen through a thorough description of the methods and theories used along with the data as evident from this chapter. The hand-in and defence of the dissertation will allow other scholars to examine the results and question the chosen approach, but it will also allow for a defence of the decisions made throughout the dissertation. The hope is that these measures will ensure the credibility of the research.

Transferability refers to the research's ability to be transferred or generalised to different settings and/or contexts and it can be difficult to achieve in the qualitative research area even though this term has been designed for this area. It depends largely on the approach chosen and the level of transparency (Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). A higher degree of transferability can be achieved through a thick description of the research, which will allow for a better assessment of whether or not the results can be transferred to other research areas (Brymann, 2016, 384). The dissertation will entail as detailed a description as possible without compromising the understanding, however, it is important to stress that there are restrictions regarding the amount, which is allowed in the hand-in and thus the dissertation will have to fit within these pre-established limitations. Furthermore, the aim of this dissertation is not to generalise or even transfer the findings to other areas, as Brexit is a unique case in itself. As previously mentioned, one might be able to generalise certain aspects of the research and findings, but it will be impossible to generalise the dissertation in its entirety.

Dependability is quite similar to what quantitative research refers to as reliability and it revolves around whether or not one would make the exact same observation(s) if observing the same thing for a second time (Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). Again, this is most easily obtained through a high level of transparency throughout the research and a detailed record of the data used (Kumar, Establishing the validity

and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). Confirmability is similar to dependability and is concerned with whether or not the results can be confirmed by a fellow researcher (Kumar, Establishing the validity and reliability of a research instrument, 2011, 185). Furthermore, its aim is to help ensure as high a level of objectivity as possible by showing that the research has been carried out according to standards acknowledge by the researcher's peers (Brymann, 2016, 386). As mentioned, there will throughout this dissertation be a high degree of transparency in the hope that fellow researcher will be able to achieve the same result using the same approach and material.

3.7 Further considerations and subconclusion

As both the quantitative and qualitative research approach consists of a large variety of methods, a different approach could have been chosen for this dissertation. From the qualitative approach, there is methods such as interviews or field research and they could possibly have contributed. However, as the dissertation is limited to everything pertaining to the 2016 EU referendum vote it is not possible to carry out a field research study to answer the question of interest. Unfortunately, it is not possible to travel back in time and thus, the necessary field research cannot be carried out in the most relevant period. If it was possible it would have been interesting to carry out to separate field studies; one in a pro-Remain area of the UK and one in a pro-Leave area of the UK as it is most likely possible to find a pro-Leave in the pro-Remain area but this voter's reasoning for wanting to leave might differ dramatically from those in the pro-Leave area.

Interviews could have provided an insight into the area of study, however, if the interviews were to be carried out at the present time, they would be influenced by everything that has happened following the vote. As Brexit, by some standards, has been a quite messy affair, there is a chance that some of the pro-Leave voters have had a change of heart and this would be evident in the interviews. However, as with the field study, if it was a possibility to travel back, interviews could be conducted which included a variety of people in different areas of the UK. Again, it would be necessary to ensure interviews from both the pro-Remain and the pro-Leave parts of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, it could have been interesting to talk to the politicians in favour of leaving the EU to fully understand their reasoning behind this.

However, for the purpose of answering the presented research question a qualitative approach is deemed the best to provide a full and detailed account. As Brexit is a case of disintegration, the method of case study and more specifically a single-case study is believed to be the most successful approach for understanding this topic. Furthermore, the methods of process tracing

and document analysis is believed to be the best option as for instance, interviewing is not a viable possibility and document analysis will allow for the inclusion of material from the entire EU referendum process. Process tracing will allow for an understanding of whether or not there is a change in the reasons given by the majority voters and for an understanding of the correlation between the Leavers reasons and the theories. Finally, with the presented quality criteria in mind, the hope is that the dissertation will live up to as high a standard as possible but as previously mentioned, research is rarely able to be equally successful in every aspect. The believe is that these are the approaches best suited to answer the presented research question.

4 | Theory

The following chapter contains a comprehensive presentation of the previously mentioned theory of disintegration and nationalism. In order to obtain a full understanding of disintegration the concept of integration will be presented as well. Both will be presented under the light of realism and liberalism as these are the main IR theories. Furthermore, nationalism and its different types will be presented along with the concept of national identity.

4.1 Integration and Disintegration

In order to attempt to understand the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union one must first attempt to understand the concept of disintegration. However, to understand why and how a country becomes disintegrated a level of understanding regarding why a country decides to integrate in the first place is also necessary. For many, the terms of integration and disintegration may seem straightforward. The former bringing parts together to one whole and the latter being the diametrical opposite (Balassa, 1994, 174, in Nielsen & Stubb *The European Union*). The interesting thing to understand about these processes are why they occur, what drives them forward and should they be regarded as a good and desirable process or a process to be cautious of (Sharp, 2012, 145-146)? Here integration can be said to be ahead as it is more often easier to understand why something is coming together than why it is falling apart (Sharp, 2012, 142).

4.1.1 Integration

Integration is here understood as a process of merging separate states into a more cohesive entity. It brings together not only the states in general but the life within which merges with life within the other member states (Sharp, 2012, 123). One of the best examples of this is the European Union, which has managed a successful mass-integration that has resulted in a peaceful Europe for several decades (Sharp, 2012, 123). However, this is an integration, which combines states while simultaneously allowing them to maintain a certain amount of sovereignty. Understanding the state's relationship with its own sovereignty is part of what makes the study of integration interesting as one of the greatest puzzles is how to explain a state's wish to give up some of its sovereignty in order to coordinate its policies and economy with the other member states (Moravcsik, 1998, 1). European integration has throughout its existence been the centre of the work of a large number of scholars (Sharp 2012; Moravcsik, 1998; Waltz, 1979; Cafruny & Ryner, 2003; Bieler & Morton, 2001 etc.), however, disintegration has not been subject to the

same amount of interest in the study of International Relations.

Integration can be understood through various international relation theories but here the focus is on liberalism and realism as these are the main ones. Liberalism is the theory, which are best able to explain integration, but realism is also able to account for this phenomenon. Integration is not, in itself, a liberal approach nor is European integration[1] but liberalism has come to play a central role in the way of understanding integration, especially in Europe. Its ability to explain the values and benefits of cooperation not only through economic gains but also through collective security enables it to provide a better understanding of the wish for integration. Here integration is the natural approach as opposed to staying separate or disintegrating (Kunz, 2013, 3-4). However, in the 1980s and 1990s European integration became excitedly market-driven as a result of increased globalisation, the implementation of the Internal Market-program and the increase in the implementation of neoliberal policies (Cafruny & Ryner, 2003, 3; Bieler & Morton, 2001; 15-16). At this time, the thought of war between the European countries no longer played a large role and thus, their focus shift towards economic gains, which became the prime motivation for a continued integration within the continent of Europe (Balassa, 1994, 173, in Nielsen & Stubb *The European Union*). It can be argue that the introduction of more neoliberal policies in the European integration process can be traced back to the Treaty of Maastricht through which the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union came about. This helped create a global market with discipline and the perfect macroeconomic institutional framework (Cafruny & Ryner, 2003, 3-5; Van Apledcorn et al., 2003, 18).

Unlike liberalism, realism is not the obvious choice for an explanation of integration. This does not, however, exclude it from providing one or at least attempt it. As a prominent IR theory, it has to adapt and tried to explain the way of the world and this includes integration. Integration is not impossible in a world of realism, but it is highly unlikely. It will take an exceptionally good reason for states to decide to cooperate as well as integrate and it will probably be broad on by external factors (Kunz, 2013, 3-7). It might be a case of *"if you can't beat them, join*

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[1]The European Union, as a project, is the result of multiple devastating wars on the European continent. After the Second World War the European Community of Coal and Steel (ECSC) was established in an effort to prevent future war as it would be impossible to wage war on the country which helps to provide the materials needed for a war. Among the founding members were West Germany and France the main powers on the European continent. The ECSC developed into the European Economic Community (EEC) and finally became the European Union (EU) in 1993 (Bideleux, 1996, 9-14). The development of European integration is largely related to the Cold War either through the belief that the European Union came about as a result of US domination or as a result of the fear towards a growing Soviet Union. In any regard, it can be argued that the integration of the European countries came about due to change in the web of international relations on the global scene (Kunz, 2013, 8). However, the global scene is changing, and it is no longer a case of a bipolar world but a more multipolar one with new countries emerging into power. This is also evident in the European Union where the member countries will either have to start thinking about a common grand strategy or maybe witness as their union starts to dissolve in order to accommodate this new world (Kunz, 2013, 10).

them" (Kunz, 2013, 6). Nevertheless, other factors are of values in realism than in liberalism and this is also the case with integration. The focus in realism is on maintaining the state's security above all and integration can be a contributing factor if this is the best possible way to secure the state's security (Waltz, 1979, 126; Kunz, 2013, 14-15). As evident from the above, integration is not the most likely scenario according to a realist point of view and this goes for the European Union as well. How to explain the successful integration of multiple countries over several decades? A reason and explanation for this might be that it enable the states to combine their power resources in order to withstand greater powers such as the Soviet Union and the United States while simultaneously increase their own influence in the globalised world. Another factor could be the desire to maintain the status quo. This can be viewed from two points: 1) the status quo of a world (and Europe) not at war and 2) maintaining the already existing integration and discouraging disintegration (Kunz, 2013, 10-14). Thus, Realism is able to explain integration to some extent, but it will never become a concept fully integrated into the realist thought.

4.1.2 Disintegration

It stands to reason that there is a process opposite to integration, namely disintegration. Disintegration happens when one or more states decide to withdraw from the collective and there are several known cases of disintegration (e.g. Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia etc.). There has, however, never been a case of disintegration, within the European Union. This is also why, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the Europe Union is getting so much attention. When it comes to disintegration it has not received quite as much attention as integration (this have been changing in reason years). Kunz (2013) argues that this is because many integration approaches are of a teleological character and that integration is desirable whereas disintegration is something to be avoided (p. 1). Sharp (2012) is using a similar argument revolving around integration being the future one wish for and disintegration being the opposite (p. 123). There are a number of reasons as to why disintegration for the most part is undesirable. It will hurt both the leaving state and the remaining members if trade barriers are introduced and it will disrupt the international supply chain. In the words of Walter (2018), disintegration will result in higher *"(. . .) transaction costs, economic distortions, and also financial risks that arise as economic agents adjust to the new disintegrated environment."* (p. 6). Furthermore, a wide range of policies will be affected such as those pertaining to security and the environment. There is also the risk of contagion in which other member-states see one member-state's possibly successful disintegration and decide to follow suit (Walter, 2018, 2-3). The potential contagion can be hard

to control, however, if the exit of the leaving states is considered messy and complicated it might limit contagion considerably. As a result, the EU might be more reluctant in its negotiations with the United Kingdom as it does not wish to see a further disintegration of the Union. In recent years integrated entities such as the European Union has witnessed an increase in dissatisfaction and disintegration votes, most of which have been successful. The reason to why the EU is particular hit by small steps of disintegration is largely due to its effective and almost total integration of its member countries. The EU have managed to increase the trade-off between the gains from sovereignty, international cooperation and democracy to the point where it is becoming too much for its member states who wish to slow down or even reverse the process (Walter, 2018, 2). As stated, the most prominent disintegration process in the recent history of the European Union is Brexit which might be the biggest withdrawal process of recent times if not of all times. It is the manifestation of Euroscepticism and this change against European integration may result in fundamental change to international institutions and the liberal world order, as we know it (Walter, 2018, 1-3).

As with integration, it is possible to view disintegration through the main IR theories of realism and liberalism. Liberalism has a hard time explaining disintegration as it argues that integration is the best mean to obtain peace and prosperity in the world. The integration of the European Union has resulted in peace since the Second World War and this can only be maintained by continued integration. Realism, on the other hand, is able to explain and conceptualise disintegration as the focus here is on the state as the primary actor and how best to secure it (Kunz, 2013, 1; Van Apeldcorn et al., 2003, 20-21). Integration, as already discussed, is not impossible according to realism. It is, however, very unlikely to occur unless the state's security is guaranteed. There are many reasons as to why disintegration would occur or why integration would not occur in the first place. Insecurity, competition and distrust are just a few which would result in the absence of corporation and make integration unlikely. These could also be increased after integration has already happen and then result in disintegration (Kunz, 2013, 5). Furthermore, states worry about the division of gains and if one integrated state believes that, the other states are more favoured then this might in turn lead to disintegration. Another likely reason for disintegration to happen is if the state feels too dependent on one or more of the other member state. The state might choose to disintegrate to maintain or regain its independence and sovereignty (Waltz, 1979, 106). This means that there is usually a greater reason not to corporate than there is to corporate. In other words, *"(. . .) centrifugal forces [is expected] to prevail over centripetal dynamics"* (Kunz, 2013, 6). Some other factors which might push a state to disintegrate could be a large difference in the visions of a grand strategy for the member states

or if anarchy and the security dilemma where to return (especially in Europe) as a result of US withdrawal and the emergence of an even more multipolar system which could in turn result in conflict and ultimately chaos (Kunz, 2013, 12). In the end, it will be the international system and the conditions within that determine whether a state continues to be a part of the entity (Kunz, 2013, 15). From a realist perspective, the European Union is an unlikely scenario and difficult to explain. However, the occurrence of disintegration is a process that is understandable through realism (Kunz, 2013, 2).

One of the key factors that draws integrated states away from the entity or blocks the integration all together is nationalism and national identity because here it becomes paramount to protect the nation and its sovereignty at all costs. However, the protection of the nation can also happen through integration as with the original purpose of the European Union, but the integration is more likely to reduce the sovereignty. This will be further elaborated in the following section.

4.2 Nationalism

Nationalism has been notoriously difficult to define despite that fact the most people seem to believe they know what it is. According to Waldron (1985), we might be able to *"(…) identify the phenomenon, but how do we explain it?"* (p. 417). It might be that nationalism is nearly impossible to define but maybe it is possible to reach a common understanding of what it entails, what we believe to be nationalism, what binds the national community together and what threatens it? The threat to our national identity and our national community has become of vital importance and it is through this perceived threat that Brexit can be understood. According to Bosworth (2007), nations of the twenty-first century are growing more and more anxious in regard to who belongs where and who does not belong at all. Thus, focusing more on the exclusion of the aliens (p. 6-7). This further relates to questions posed by Bosworth as to how one nation should relate to the next? How does the national community address immigrants bringing in foreign cultures, languages and ideals? Moreover, what if the people of the nation, sharing its language, culture and ideals, lived under another flag (p. 7-8)? All these questions point in the same direction as previously mentioned: nationalism is hard to define. There seems, however, to be a common ground found in culture and its relation to nationalism.

Many scholars have tried to define the nationalism (Calhoun, Anderson, Gellner, Armstrong, and Smith) and even though their definitions vary there are some recurrent factors and themes such as the concern with the nation, culture, language and national identity. Calhoun (2002) defines nationalism as *"(…) a bias in favour of one's own nation (…)"* (p. 1) and this might show

itself through state-politics, social movements or manifested in sentiments (p. 1). Anderson (2006) holds a constructivist view of nationalism and believes that nations and therefore nationalism is based on imagined communities due to the fact that most of the members within the nation do not know one another but despite this they still feel bound together through nationalism (Finkel 2016, 1). Gellner (2006) on the other hand views nationalism as the result of cultural and political changes brought on by the industrialisation (Calhoun, 2002, 1-2). As a postmodern thinker he further argues, that nationalism *"(...) comes from the fabrication of recognition, not any shared ideas (...)"* (Finkel, 2016, 2). Gellner believes that nationalism is based on three factors; power, education and identity (Gellner, 2006, 83-89). Gellner's position is, however, criticised by both Anderson and Armstrong according to Waldron as Anderson argues that Gellner's position is too focused on illustration nationalism as *"(...) masquerading under false pretences (...)"* (Waldron, 1985, 422-423) rather than being brought on by imagination and creation as Anderson himself believes. Armstrong argues that Gellner's account of nationalism is aiming at being too functional. Instead, Armstrong argues that nations and nationalism are understood by how factors affect the way in which the population think and feel (Waldron, 1985, 423). Smith (2010) argues that nationalism is *"[a]n ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential "nation"."* (p. 9). Furthermore, Smith defines the basic propositions which according to him constitutes nationalism: 1) the world consists of nations with their own history, destiny and character, 2) the nation is the only source of political power, 3) loyalty to one's nation come before anything else, 4) the individual must belong to a nation in order to secure its freedom, 5) *"(...) every nation requires full self-expression and autonomy (...)"* and 6) in order to ensure a world-wide peace and justice the world has to consist of autonomous nations (Smith, 2010, 25). When it comes to the general definition of nationalism, based upon the presented, it can be said to be a combination. Nationalism here is understood as the unity of a community based on an imagined cohesiveness, which is based on the belief of a shared history, culture and language and thus results in a bias towards one's own nation.

4.2.1 Civic and ethnic nationalism

Nationalism can be divided into a variety of sub-categories but the most common once used are that of civic and ethnic or as some might call them; Western and Easter. Both types of nationalism are rooted in Europe, but this does not mean that Eastern nationalism is only found in the Eastern part of the European continent (Lim, 2012, 1215). In relation to this, it is important to note that every nationalism contains both civic and ethnic elements to a varying

degree and from (Smith, National Identity, 1991, 13). Civic nationalism is often said to be the more benign of the two whereas ethnic nationalism is often seen as the more terrifying. In terms that are more dramatic it can be said that civic nationalism consists of flag-waving and singing of the national anthem while ethnic nationalism can end in genocide (Calhoun, 2002, 2). Calhoun argues that civic nationalism is believed *"(...) to be more inclusive, less inclined to stigmatize outsiders, and less prone to violent struggles (...)"* (Calhoun, 2002, 2). Opposite Calhoun is Smith (2010) as he disagrees with the inclusiveness pointed out by Calhoun. He believes that civic nationalism is failing in regard to opening up to minority groups, but this is understandable and should be expected as *"(...) genuine multiculturalism can only exist in the framework of a 'plural' nation."* (p. 45). As previously mentioned, nationalism has its roots in culture and history of the specific nation and population. Hence, including new minorities who are reluctant to give up their history and culture would corrupt the nationalism present. Moreover, newly included minorities might not feel a strong bond to the nations and their national identity would therefore be limited. Furthermore, Smith argues that civic nationalism is rooted in a shared territory and common laws whereas ethnic nationalism, as the name might imply, is "(...) based on a belief in common culture and ethnic origins (...)" (Smith, 2010, 43). Ethnic nationalism can be understood as a nastier version of nationalism (Gellner, 2006, 96). Arguably, both types of nationalism are well known, however, one might question if the generally population connects the two as being different branches of the same tree? Is it possible to understand that us singing our national anthem and wave our flag in order to support our national team is done in the name of the same thing as the Nazi's genocide under World War II? One might wonder how something so benign and something so horrible can belong under the same umbrella, namely nationalism. However, it is understandable. It leads back to Calhoun's point that nationalism is a bias in favour of one's own nation. When we cheer on our national team, we do it in support and belief of our nation. When the inner circle of the Nazi's decided to slaughter millions of Jews, homosexuals and handicapped they did it for the good of their nation in their delusional belief that these groups were everything which was wrong in Germany. Anything can be done in the name of and for the good of the nation.

4.2.2 Critique of nationalism

There are multiple points of critique of nationalism, which is to be expected of a concept this broad and this hard to define. One point is that nationalism is difficult to use in an analysis or as a way to explain history. However, according to Waldron (1985) this depends on the understanding of nationalism. If it is understood as an independent force, then its ability to

understand history or being used as an analytical tool will be wide. If, on the other hand, it is limited and contingent it will, as a tool, be equally restricted (p. 417). Furthermore, Waldron argues that the theoretical framework put forward by scholars concerning nationalism is not able to support the explanatory structures, which these scholars aim at. As Waldron (1985) puts it: *"Nationalism in general is a powerful and comprehensible idea. Yet, while it defines general situations, it is not very useful in explicating specific events."* (p. 427). This, however, is not the position of this dissertation. As previously stated, it is the belief that nationalism along with the theory of disintegration can help bring about an understanding behind the choice of Brexit. Thus, the aim here is to use nationalism as a tool to explain the specific event of Brexit. Another point of critique is that nationalism in itself is not an ideology and that it only fills out other ideologies such as socialism, conservatism and liberalism. Smith (2010) puts this critique to bed by stating that nationalism is to be understood as an ideology or a belief-system regardless of whether it matches with mainstream political ideologies. Furthermore, nationalism is to be seen as more than a belief-system. It is to be understood as a culture and maybe even a species of religion. This separates it from the mainstream political ideologies and thus render that type of critique irrelevant (p. 27). Whether or not nationalism fills out other ideologies is in some ways irrelevant, as it does not necessarily mean that it cannot stand alone. Many ideologies, concepts and ideas overlap in one way or another and it is no different with nationalism. It is, however, useful on its own as an analytical tool and will be used as such.

4.2.3   National identity

National identity is paramount to the understanding of nationalism but also in regard to the present research question. As the choice to decide the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom was given to each British individual their individual national identity played a role in their decision. Like nationalism, national identity is not easily definable (Smith, 2010, 18). In general, it can be argued that each individual has multiple identities depending on the situation in which he or she is. The identity used with one's family will differ from the one used at work etc., and therefore it follows that one has an identity of a national character. According to Smith (2010) national identity differs from other identities by *"(...) its concern for collective character and its historical-cultural basis."* (p. 30) - a basis similar to that of nationalism. National identities can be said to have come into existence during the Enlightenment, at approximately the same time as modern nationalism. It is a term mainly understood as the individual's relation to the nation and the level to which the individual identifies with the nation (Burner, 2012, 1212). In general, there are two approaches to understand national identities

namely primordialist and constructivist. The former believes that each nation and thus each population within the nation has a unique essence that is based on the history of the nation. Through this view, national identity is objectively linked to factors of culture, material and ethnicity. Hence, the primordialist approach fails to include language in its understanding of national identity (Burner, 2012, 1210). The constructivist approach, on the other hand, believes that shift in historical conditions results in a shift in national identity. Furthermore, this approach is more political as it views national identities as a way of imagining and connection with one's people. Unlike the primordialist approach, the constructivist approach often associates national identity with language both in itself and through its impact on cultural, economic, legal, ethnic and political frameworks (Burner, 2012, 1210). As with the two different types of nationalism these two types of national identity often appear in connection with one another. No national identity is based sole on the one but on a combination of them both (Burner, 2012, 1210). In this way, national identities are multi-dimensional (Smith, 1991, 14). These national identities are bound together by shared values, traditions and symbols and it is these, which create a sense of a common identity and a feeling of belonging (Smith, 1991, 17). Identity, and therefore also national identity, is criticised for being inflated and being used to cover a too broad spectrum rendering it somewhat useless in analysis (Smith, 2010, 18). It might be true than identity is used very broad, but this does not render it useless as an analytical tool. In order to understand the choice of Brexit as is the aim of this dissertation it is necessary to understand the underlying national identity of the people who voted. How else are we supposed to understand the reasoning behind this? National identity is a necessary tool to provide an answer in this context.

4.3 Subconclusion

"Dulce et decorum est, pro partria mori" (Bosworth, 2007, 10).

The meaning of the Latin quote is *"it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."* (Bosworth, 2007, 10) and when it comes to nationalism, it is extremely accurate. Most people have waived their flag, painted it on their face, worn their national colours and sung their national anthem whether it was in honour of their national sports team or in honour of their fallen soldiers. Nationalism is for many a feeling of togetherness. An imaging community, to which we all belong but what happens if you tell the soldiers that the nation, the community and the national identity they are fighting for is all make-believe? We need something to believe in. We need to feel as though we are a part of something bigger than ourselves. Something worth fighting for. Nationalism brings this to us and it gives us a name to what we believe. However, as mentioned nationalism comes in more variants and even though both are rooted in a common belief system

and community they have very different approaches. The ethnic nationalism of *Them* versus *Us* can sometimes end in horrific decisions affecting millions of people. Most nations have a presence of nationalism based on a combination of both the civic and the ethnic and this is no different for the United Kingdom. The belief is that the nationalism present in the United Kingdom brought on the wish for a disintegration. As the European continent has become more peaceful and secure than it has ever been, the need for protection via integration has suddenly gone. People want to make their own decision, to protect their country and culture from others and maintain their sovereignty. Moreover, to them, this is only possible through the disintegration of the country from the European Union. The presented types of nationalism along with the national identities and disintegration theory will help bring about an understanding of the majority of the British population's choice on the June 23, 2016.

5 | The United Kingdom: From imperial might to regional voice

The following chapter will review part of the modern history of the United Kingdom and the changes it has undergone in the past centuries. It will touch upon the UK as an imperial power, its position during the World Wars and the struggles it faced in the aftermath. Furthermore, the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union will be presented as well.

5.1 The United Kingdom - an imperial power

There is no doubt that the United Kingdom was once an imperial power but this evolution did not start with the United Kingdom but with England as a single country and a desire to expand. The United Kingdom is, at present, comprised of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 3-4). Scotland and England were first united in 1603 when James I (James VI of Scotland) succeeded Elizabeth I thereby becoming the first monarch to rule both countries (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 6). The two countries did not become a political entity until 1707 when they through the Act of Union became Great Britain. Hereafter, Scotland ceased to have its own parliament and instead the Scottish MPs joined the English parliament in London (Lowe, 1998, 510). In 1801, Great Britain became the United Kingdom through the union with Ireland, which had been under English rule since the fifteenth century (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 7). Like Scotland, Ireland had its own parliament, however, this was dissolved in 1800 and the Irish MPs had to travel to London as well. Unlike Scotland and Ireland, the Welsh never had their own parliament, but they did have members in the parliament in London (Lowe, 1998, 510). The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy with a parliament and a monarch as head of state (Gordon & Gray, 1994). Unlike the United States, the UK does not have a formal written constitution, but different important elements have been written in the form of constitutional documents and as statute of law (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 4). The union of these four countries have not always been easy and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have always been and are still greatly concerned about maintaining their own nationality. England is the most dominant country within the United Kingdom as it has the largest population and its capital, London, is also the capital of the UK and the home of the parliament (Lowe, 1998, 510). Since the establishment of the United Kingdom, Ireland has split into two with only Northern Ireland remaining in the Union and Scotland has tried to gain independence from the UK, latest in 2014, but without any luck (BBC, 2018).

The union of these four countries was the beginning of the English dream of an empire. A dream, which now became the dream of the United Kingdom. The nineteenth century saw the United Kingdom developed from a predominantly agrarian power to a predominantly industrial power and the UK advanced to be the world's first industrialised power (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 7). Due to this potent position on the world stage, the United Kingdom managed to become one of the largest empires in history (Lewis, 2011, 18). The empire was far reaching and consisted of territories in both Asia and Africa as well as territories in Europe and the white dominions of Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Lowe, 1998, 420). There has been some debate as to how exactly the UK managed this. According to Niall Ferguson (2004) the United Kingdom managed to secure their imperial rule through the expansion of the Western values and institutions such as democracy and parliament along with the rule of law, Western education and capitalism (p. xxi; Lewis, 2011, 19). However, Ferguson has been criticised by imperial historians for only focussing on the more positive aspects of the British colonisation and disregarding the slave labour, which was surrounded by bloodshed and violence. Ferguson is said to be naive in his depiction of the British colonial rule and viewing benefits, which are not actually beneficial to the people of the country but for the white settlers (Lewis, 2011, 19). On the other hand, John Darwin argues that the UK was not actually a true hegemonic power but a three-way global system consisting of 1) the commercial empire, 2) the white settlement of the Dominions, and 3) India - a global system but not a hegemony (Darwin, 2009, xi-xii; Lewis, 2011, 20). According to Darwin, the British position was also helped on a geopolitical level with a peaceful Europe, a neutral United States and indifferent India without which the UK would not have managed to conquer as much as it did. Therefore, when Germany and the United States began to emerge as world powers, the UK's power started to deteriorate (Lewis, 2011, 20).

5.2   A world at war and declining power

At the outbreak of World War I the United Kingdom was still considered an imperial power and thus, was expected to react as one. The UK's relationship with Germany was deteriorating prior to the outbreak of the war, which resulted in the UK going against Germany in the war (Lowe, 1998, 527; BBC, 2018). Despite the UK's might, it was not able to defeat Germany neither by itself nor only with its European allies but had to rely on help from the United States (entering the war in April 1917). The last desperate German attempt in France failed in spring 1918 and combined with the British effort against the German submarines the allies were winning the war. The First World War ended on 11 November 1918 by the signing of an armistice which was followed by the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (Lowe, 1998, 355). The United

Kingdom managed to expand her imperial might through the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire from which the UK gained Iraq, Iran and Palestine (BBC, 2018).

Even though the UK gained land after the war, it was no longer the supreme global power as it was now equal with countries such as the USA, Germany and Japan. On top of this new position an anti-colonial fewer was spreading jeopardising the British Empire (History of England, n.d., 1). This was the beginning of the breakdown of the empire and in 1921, after three-years of Irish war for independence, the Republic of Ireland was established. Six counties decided to remain as a part of the United Kingdom forming Northern Ireland (Barr et al., 2019, Britain from 1914 to present, 12). For a short time during the interwar period "international relations were harmonious" (Lowe, 1998, 431) largely as a result of the Dawes Plan from 1924 and the Locarno Treaties from 1925 (Lowe, 1998, 431). However, this only lasted for a short period of time as the Great Depression broke out in 1929 as a result of the Wall Street Crash at the New York Exchange (Lowe, 1998, 431). The crisis was worldwide, and unemployment began to rise everywhere including the United Kingdom where unemployment rose to 2.5 million by May 1931 as a result of the full-blown financial crisis (Lowe, 1998, 431). Another result of the economic crisis was a goodbye to the goodwill and sweetness of the Locardo will and it was now every country for itself (Lowe, 1998, 431). This did not fit well with British policy during this time as it was mostly dominated by the principle of appeasement in which reasonable concessions would be made towards aggressive countries in the hopes of avoiding another war (Lowe, 1998, 431). This was mainly regarding to Germany and Italy who began to solve their economic problems by aggressive territorial expansion. The League of Nation tried to intervene but lacked the necessary backing, as both France and Britain believe in appeasement. The consequence of which, unfortunately, was the outbreak of the Second World War (Lowe, 1998, 431). With the German invasion of Poland, the United Kingdom was once again at war as the UK, prior to the invasion, had vowed to guaranteed Poland's independence (Lowe, 1998, 431-432). However, Britain's might in the face of Germany was minute and in the beginning, it was only able to send a small army. Slowly, with the help from the entire empire as well as with the force of the USA and USSR the tables turned in the favour of the allies. With the Anglo-American invasion of Normandy and reclaiming of Cologne Britain played an important role in ending the war which ended with Germany's surrender in May 1945 (Lowe, 1998, 446-447).

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Britain experienced economic problems brought on by the loss of its merchant fleet and the loss of two-thirds of its export. This combined with the lack of aid from the US made it difficult to get the economy back to normal (Lowe, 1998, 474). From an international perspective, the UK was bankrupt. Despite a loan from the US,

Britain did not manage to turn the tide and had to withdraw support from Turkey and Greece. Finally, the US's Secretary of State announced that the US would begin a program of financial aid towards Europe. A program also known as the Marshall Plan (Barr et al, 2019, Labour and the Welfare state (1945-51) in United Kingdom, 5). It was an unstable time with the Cold War and decolonisation threatening (Lowe, 1998, 474). The British Empire had managed to get through the First World War as well as the interwar period and gathered the strength of the empire for the Second World War, however, this proved too much, and the empire started to dissolve. This happened gradually over the next 40 years starting with India (1947) and ending with Rhodesia (1980). This empirical decline brought on by the Second World War became the end of the British empire and Britain's position on the world stage changed from superior to a second-rate power in comparison to the US and USSR (Lowe, 1998, 527). The end of the British Empire became the beginning of the Commonwealth still in existence today with the reigning monarch as its head (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 7; Lowe, 1998, 420). However, some argue that Britain had a hard time of accepting its new position, which has been referred to as *"delusions of grandeur"* (Lowe, 1998, 527).

After the war Labour gained power and began, nationalising the coal mines and railroads in an effort to re-establish the British economy. Another important Labour politic was their welfare legislation through which they aimed at controlling and minimising unemployment as well as introduce free health insurance and in 1948, they established the National Health Service (Barr et al, 2019; Labour and the Welfare state (1945-51) in United Kingdom, 1). In 1951 the Conservative Party won the election and during this period at the reigns (1951-1964), PM MacMillan came to see the possibilities a close Europe could bring but his attempt to bring the United Kingdom into the EEC was shot down in 1963 by France and Charles de Gaulle (Henley, 2016, 1). Afterwards, Labour once again gained the power in 1964 and an EEC membership was no longer in focus. Instead, the interest was on modernising politics of class needs, recognition of the power of the trade unions and minimising the social classes. However, they also inherited quite a lot of problems for the previous conservative government, which the new policy hoped to address. Regardless of the efforts made, the Labour government witnessed armed violence in Northern Ireland as a consequence of civil rights agitation (Barr et al, 2019; Conservative Government (1951-64), 1). The unrest in Ireland continued throughout the 20th century and the situation become highly explosive due to the group called the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who gained a high amount of support as a result of the Bloody Sunday on January 30, 1972 where 13 Roman Catholic civilian demonstrators lost their lives at the hands of British Troops in Londonderry. The situation evolved with IRA hunger strikes in the beginning of the 1980s

and the bombing of the Conservative Party conference in Brighton in 1984, which was seen as an attempt on current PM Margaret Thatcher's life (Barr et al, 2019; Thatcherism (1979-90), 6). Secret contact between the IRA and the British government was slowly established afterwards and a process of peace began. In 1994, the IRA called a ceasefire that ultimately ended with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. However, the final solution of power sharing between the two sides were not obtained until 2007 (Barr et al, 2019; The Good Friday Agreement, 1). The Irish situation was rather unique within the British borders as the Scottish and Welsh remained non-violent despite their increased sense of nationalism and in 1997 they increased their local control considerably which culminated in the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly of Wales in 1999 through which they gained power previously located at the central government (Black, 2011, Domestic policies, 1; Barr et al., 2019, London's local government, House of Lords reform, and devolution for Scotland and Wales, 3). It is worth noting that Scotland tried to gain independence in 2014, however, with 55% the majority voting in favour of staying in the UK (Barr et al., 2019, BBC, 2014, 1)

5.3   The United Kingdom and the European Union

Following the Second World War the UK along with the rest of the world made an effort to avoid a third war by establishing a set of institutions. This came about by establishing the UN Security Council, which the UK joined as a founding member in 1945. This was followed by the establishing of NATO in 1949 in which the UK was likewise a founding member (BBC, 2018). Lastly the ECSC, as previously mentioned, was established in 1951 and became the EEC by the Treaty of Rome in 1957, however, the United Kingdom initially decided not to join but regretted this decision in 1961. A French veto prohibited the UK from joining and this was status quo until it was finally able to join in 1973 (Gordon & Gray, 1994, 7; BBC, 2018). In 1975, PM Wilson was able to renegotiate the British membership with the EU (Barr et al., 2019; Labour back in power (1974-79), 1). During the time of Blair, a question was raised in regard to the European Monetary Union and whether or not the UK should join. It was largely a question of sovereignty versus global integration and in the end, sovereignty won (Barr et al., 2019, Navigating the European monetary system and the EU Social Chapter, 2). Furthermore, Blair's government signed the Social Chapter in the Treaty on European Union which aim was to bring about a more unified European social policy especially regarding higher equality levels in the workplace, better working conditions and equal health and safety regulations on the workplace (Barr et al., 2019, Navigating the European monetary system and the EU Social Chapter, 2). A central dispute between the UK and the EU was the continued increase of immigration from central and

eastern European countries and this continued to play a large role throughout the beginning of the 21st century (Barr et al., 2019, The battle for the soul of the Conservative Party, 2). The financial crisis in Europe in 2009 hit the UK hard regardless of the fact that it was not part of the Eurozone. Many British companies traded with countries and businesses within the zone and the impact was hard on an already strained British economy. This only helped to further fuel Euroscepticism in the UK (Barr et al., 2019, Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition rule (2010–15)). Britain was continuously scared to lose her sovereignty and was not interested in a European super state (Lowe, 1998, 7). The UK continued to hold on to former Prime Minister, Winston Churchill's words from his article "The United States of Europe":

> *"We see nothing but good and hope in a richer, freer, more contented European commonalty. But we have our own dream and our own task. We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked, but not <u>comprised</u>. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed."* (Churchill, 1930).

The reluctance of the British people culminated in a British EU referendum in 2016 regarding whether or not the United Kingdom should remain a part of the European Union. The vote ended in favour of the UK leaving the EU (BBC, 2018; Barr et al., 2019, The "Brexit" Referendum, 2).

5.4 Subconclusion

The previous hundred or so years have not been kind on the United Kingdom. As evident from this chapter, the UK has gone from being one of the world's greatest empirical powers to being a mere pond in the game that is the European Union – or so they might think themselves. Through it all, the United Kingdom has tried to maintain its own self, its sovereignty but has it succeeded, or has it lost too much to the EU. *"The road to hell is paved with good intentions"*[1] (Unknown, n.d.) as the majority of the British population can attest to. There is no doubt, or at least there should not be any doubt, that the politicians, through the years, have had the UK's interest at heart but that does not change the fact that the majority of the British population feel betrayed by the British politicians and the EU. They envision something different for the United Kingdom. Why they chose as they did will be examined in the following chapter.

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[1]English proverb.

6 | Analysis

The following chapter will entail an analysis of the British population's choice to vote in favour of Brexit in the 2016 EU referendum. The presented theories of disintegration and nationalism along with national identity will clarify patterns in the chose data, which will help ensure a full and detailed answer of the present research question.

6.1   A vote for nationalism

Most often when it comes to a national vote, or even a local one, the reasoning behind the votes are often multiple and very varied. Therefore, it can be hard to pin down exactly what made the British population vote as they did. Here, however, the belief is that a majority of the Leave voters chose as they did under the umbrella of nationalism to a more or lesser extent. Many of the different reasons given by the Leavers relate back to nationalism but there are also some, which do not fit under this theory. These are not of any less value than others are, but they are believed to play a lesser part in the larger picture compared to nationalism and the topics that fall under here such as sovereignty[1], immigration[2] and the opposition towards a possible imagined European Union. In regard to the EU referendum it is worth noting that the majority of voters in favour of leaving the European Union were males and females over the age of 50[3] (Statista, 2016). Furthermore, the majority of voters in favour of leaving the EU reside in England and Wales[4] (Statista, 2016).

6.1.1   Nationalism

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the United Kingdom has always had a special relationship with the continent of Europe. This manifest itself both in the UK's relation to the European Union but also in regard as to how the UK and its population perceive of themselves in this relation. As evident from the previous chapter, the UK has a rather unique history, as a global power on the shores of Europe - a history no other country shares (Riley & Ghilés, 2016, 1). Along with this unique history comes a special perception of oneself and the nation to which one belongs. Over the years, there have been evidence of a growing disdain towards the level of control the European Union holds over the United Kingdom. Almost half of the voters in favour of leaving (49%) put one of their main reasons for leaving as a wish for the decisions concerning

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[1]According to the Cambridge Dictionary sovereignty constitutes *"[t]he power of a country to control its own government."*. (Cambridge, Dictionary, n.d.).

[2]According to the Oxford Dictionaries immigration is defined as *"[t]he action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country."* (Oxford dictionaries, n.d.).

[3]See appendix C.

[4]See appendix D.

the UK to be made by the UK itself and not by outsiders who do not understand or see the effect of their choices (Lord Ashcroft, How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why, 2016, 5). Here one of the problems becomes that the EU does not understand the British people and their culture. They are foreigners and they do not know how to best safeguard everything that is British. Furthermore, a question has been raised as to why the UK are paying £55 million a day to the EU instead of using them to the good of its own people (Lord Ashcroft, 2015, 1)? Here it is worth noting that a certain amount of the money is used in or in connection with the UK and that, they are not all lost within a black hole called the EU as some Leavers might believe (The Economist, 2016, 3). These are just some examples of how the UK has moved towards a *Them* versus *Us* position - Them being either the bureaucrats in Brussels or the immigrants (O'Toole, 2016, 2). It is a way for the Leavers to position themselves against the European Union - by demonising it. This is also evident in the level of nationalistic rhetoric used throughout the Brexit campaign by for example former London mayor Boris Johnson and former UKIP leader Nigel Farage (O'Toole, 2016, 1). These two dominated the Leave campaign in the name of nationalism and their mantra; *"Take Back Control"*. They were able to speak the language of nationalism and captivate the attention of many of the Leaves by playing on the already rising resistance towards the EU (Prosser et al., 2016, 5; Lowry, 2016, 2).

Furthermore, they were able to draw on the national identity of the people and their feeling of belonging. CSI Admin (2018) argues that the British population already had a low sense of European identity (p. 1). In other words, they did not feel like they belonged to this European community of which they were members. However, this did not apply to the entire UK but mainly to the populations of England and Wales. The reasoning behind this might steam from an increase in English and Welsh nationalism rather than British. O'Toole (2016) argues that the Brexit movement in reality was *"(...) an English nationalist movement (...) [driving England] towards national independence (...)"* (p. 1). The identification as English or more English rather than British can be said to correlate with voters in favour of Leave[5] but not exclusively (Lord Ashcroft, How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why, 2016, 8). According to Kenny (2016) this might have been brought on by an increase in identity politics which have their roots in a combination of sovereignty, identity and immigration as also evident in the case of Brexit and in understanding the vote in favour of leaving the EU (p. 4-5).

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[5]See appendix E.

6.1.2 Sovereignty

The fight for British sovereignty played a large role in the 2016 EU referendum both for the Leavers but also in the Leave campaign, as it was one of the central themes behind the campaign's mantra (CSI Admin, 2018, 1). In fact, as evident in appendix F, sovereignty was listed as the number one reason by the voters in favour of leaving the European Union (Prosser et al., 2016, 2). However, it is worth mentioning that a reason of sovereignty often was accompanied by a resentment towards immigration which illustrates that both of these together played a large role in the minds of the British population (Prosser et al., 2016, 2). One of the main reasons for the focus on sovereignty stems from a dissatisfaction about how Brussels handles UK affairs and the extent to which they decide what can and cannot happen in the United Kingdom. *"Britain should be ruled by Britain"* (Lowry, 2016, 1) and not by the non-elected bureaucrats in Brussels (Lowry, 2016, 1; Fishwick, 2016, 4). The fact that the EU can override British national laws is a fact especially the intellectual community of the Leave campaign have a hard time accepting (Lee, 2016, 1). Former Lord High Chancellor Michael Gove believed that *"(...) our membership of the EU stops us being able to choose who makes critical decisions which affect all our lives."* (The Economist, 2016, 4). A view shared by many Leavers who felt that if the price for British sovereignty was a loss of the benefits of EU membership then that was a price worth paying (The Economist, 2016, 4).

According to the Economist (2016), there are three elements to the argument of sovereignty. Firstly, *"(...) is the pure concept of parliamentary supremacy"* (The Economist, 2016, 5) which prior to the 1972 European communities act was never in question according to former PM Edward Heath (p. 5). This is the goal. It is what the Leavers aim at attaining once again. However, this is hindered by the second argument, which entails, as previously mentioned, that EU law overrules the national laws of the United Kingdom (p. 5). This leads to the third argument, namely that there has been a loss of democracy along with the British sovereignty mainly because all EU laws imposed are done so by non-elected bureaucrats (p. 5). This view was shared by Leave-voter Gary who states that *"[f]or me it was all about sovereignty, the ability to make our own decisions and not be ruled by faceless, non-elected bureaucrats (...)"* (Fishwick, 2016, 4). This is, however, not the case as there are publicly elected British politicians within the EU but they cannot overrule anything and they only have a 1/28 say like the other members of the European Union (Europa.eu, How EU decisions are made, n.d.). This is a great illustration of the fact that the democracy is still alive, as the British politicians do not have more to say than the other member countries.

The fight for British sovereignty is argued by some such as former PM's Sir John Major and

David Cameron as being a fight for a perceived illusion as it can be argued whether British sovereignty actually exist or can exist in this modern world (Lord Ashcroft, Control v. risk: which will win out in the referendum debate?, 2016, 2; The Economist, 2016, 5). Constitutional historian, Vernon Bogdanor is of the belief that British parliamentary sovereignty no longer exists not only as a result of the EU membership but also an effect of the increased devolution of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (The Economist, 2016, 5). Furthermore, even if the United Kingdom claims its sovereignty following the Brexit aftermath the UK is still bound to the international community by a large amount of international treaties to institutions such as NATO and the UN. These, as with the EU, do also hold influence over the United Kingdom's sovereignty and as such, they are not able to obtain full sovereignty by leaving the European Union. However, this is a lesser hold compared to that of the EU. In the end, if the voters in favour of leaving the EU made their decision based on a hope of British sovereignty then they might end up disappointed.

6.1.3 Immigration

As mentioned earlier, immigration was one of the main reasons behind many of the Leaves' decision in June 2016[6] (The Economist, 2016, 6; Clarke et al., n.d., 1; Lee, 2016, 2). As such, one third of those who voted leave did so because they felt that it *"(...) offered the best chance for the UK to regain control over immigration and its own borders."* (Lord Ashcroft, How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why, 2016, 5). In some ways, it can be said that immigration was the emotional argument in the Brexit campaign as opposed to that of economy or sovereignty, even though they are connected. It is an issue that has been present in British politics since the financial-crisis of 2008 and maybe even prior to that (Lee, 2016, 2). In 2004 the European Union decided to include eight new Eastern European countries which according to Hutton (2015) triggered a waved of in-union immigration that only grew as new countries were added (p. 1). Becker et al. (n.d.) finds that there is a clear link between the in-union immigrants arriving from the 12 countries joining from 2004 to 2007 and the share of the votes in favour of leaving the EU (p. 3). Riley and Ghilés (2016) concur with this as they state that *"[t]he sheer volume of people moving from the CEE states, and from southern Europe appears to have been a major factor in driving the Leave vote."* (Riley & Ghilés, 2016, 2). According to Riley and Ghilés this was largely brought on by the fact that the UK was one out of only three countries providing full free movement[7] (Riley & Ghilés, 2016, 2). However, the UK could have enacted their treaty rights and postponed the arrival of new immigrants to correlate with the other EU countries.

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[6]See appendix F.

[7]The other two countries being Ireland and Sweden.

Regardless of this surge in immigration the arguments brought by the British population of a lack of control over these immigrants and the borders are not entirely truthful. No one can argue against the free movement being a part of Europe, but the United Kingdom could have enacted its treaty right, which would have postponed the flow of immigrants. The large number of immigrants was partly a result of the people having only three countries to choose from during a time when their own country did not fare so well. If instead the UK had decided to wait along with the majority of the Union then the immigration flow might not have been equally as high as was the case (Riley & Ghilés, 2016, 2). Furthermore, the United Kingdom is one of the only countries within the Union, which is not a part of the Schengen Agreement[8] and thus they maintain a high level of border control especially compared to the other member countries. Every single non-British national has to go through border control upon arrival with the exception of Irish nationals (The Economist, 2016, 6-7). Therefore, it might just be that immigration as part of the Brexit campaign has been very successful as a scare technique. According to Colantone and Piero (2016) there is no evidence of a connection between areas experiencing high levels of (new) immigrants and votes in favour of Brexit. It does seem, however, that areas with high levels of immigration such as London were more likely to vote in favour of remaining within the EU (p. 2). This might suggest that those who voted in favour of Brexit based on immigration as an argument might have done so out of fear of something they did not know.

One is tempted to ask; why this fear and the answer might be very simple; the fear of the unknown. It can be argued that this fear of the potential massive hordes immigrant steam from a nationalistic view of *Them* versus *Us* brought on by a desire to maintain what the British people already know. The culture they already possess. The identity they feel connected to. Many of the voters in favour of leaving live outside of the main metropolises, where the majority of the immigrants reside and the immigrants become a very foreign element from what the Leavers are used to. This does not necessarily mean that you are unaware of their existence or the potential damage they are creating in your country. In this instance, the British media have made a good job illustrating the foreign invasion befalling the UK and if this is all you know about foreigners in your country would you not try to protect it too (Taylor, 2016, 1)? As mentioned earlier foreigners that arrive to a new country bring along new cultures, new languages, and essentially new national identities. There is a risk that these will in some ways change the already existing identity if a large enough amount arrive. People protect what they know and fear the unknown.

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[8]The only other EU country outside of the agreement is Ireland. Furthermore, there are multiple countries which are members of the Schengen Agreement but not a member of the EU. (Schengenvisainfo.com, n.d.).

6.1.4 An imagined community

There is an argument to be made that what the British population voted against simply does not exist. That what they dislike is an imagined European Union much like their imagined community. That they are leaving what they think the EU is and not what it actually is. In their view, they would be better off without the EU even though this might not be the truth. No one can argue against the fact the that the European Union have helped ensure European peace for more than 70 years. Furthermore, the EU have helped bring about a time of prosperity for all member countries including the United Kingdom. Leaving the EU will without any doubt hurt the British economy for a short period and possible also for an extended period as no one knows what the outcome of a deal between the UK and the EU will be so with this in mind why did they vote to leave? To eliminate immigrants, maintain sovereignty and secure their national identity? To protect their country and what they believe in against the EU-monster? Two questions arise: 1) do the British population actually know what it is they are fighting to protect and 2) do they know what they are leaving?

There are multiple problems with the British nationalism, which they are trying to protect. Firstly, is there even a British nationalism or is that impossible. The United Kingdom has never really been standing alone as they are now arguing in favour of. As evident from the previous chapter, the UK has for a long time been an imperial power and as such, it has spread and shared its own culture, language and identity with multiple countries. Therefore, it follows that the culture and people in the countries that the UK dominated are more or less mixed with the British culture and influenced their way of thinking. Furthermore, citizens from the British colonies immigrated to the UK, which only increased the impact they had on the British way of life. When the empire started to disintegrate the UK started looking for a new partner and found it first in the UN and NATO and then in the European Union but this also means that the EU is far from the only institution the UK is a member of and the decision to leave the EU will most likely not revive the sense of nationalism and unite the country as the British population might hope for. They are still bound to the international community. The feeling the British population is protecting, the national identity they are fighting to maintain will probably not disappear even if they stayed within the Union. As Anderson (2006) argues, the nationalist feeling is bound to an imagined community, which only exist in the mind of the beholder but even so, everybody is willing to fight for this belief. It makes us different from everybody else. It separates us from the others, and it allows us to connect and believe. It might be that what the British population believe in is nothing more than face paint, a national anthem and Union Jack but that is all it takes.

Furthermore, there is the question of whether or not the British population understand what the European Union is and what they have decided to leave. Fung (2016) wrote an article claiming that Google saw a British increase in searches about what the EU is following the vote in 2016 (p. 1). If true, this indicates that parts of the population did not know what they were voting against which might indicate that they voted against what they perceived the EU to be based on information provided by the British media and the Leave campaign. They understand the European Union to be a meddling institution trying to eliminate any kind of sovereignty and right to decide that might still be present within the UK. However, the goal of the European Union is not to eliminate every country's sovereignty, despite the fact that this might end up being a side effect of the continued integration of the member countries. Some of the goals is to promote *"peace, offer freedom, combat social exclusion, and enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries"* while respecting the EU's *"rich cultural and linguistic diversity"* (Europa.eu, The EU in brief, n.d., 1). Logic dictates that these elements all should be something, which the UK and its population were in favour of but with a campaign dictated largely by emotion there is no logic to rely on (Clarke et al., n.d., 2). The Leave-campaign might have painted an evil picture of a Union, which parts of the British population did not understand or decided not to.

6.2 A vote against globalisation

The concepts of globalisation and nationalism are fundamentally oppose one another and as such, they are *"(…) destined for a relationship of resistance and confrontation."* (Sabanadze, 2010, 1). In general, there are two separate understandings of the relationship between globalisation and nationalism. On one hand, nationalism is a thing of the past which has given way to the increasing integration and interconnectedness of the global world. On the other hand, nationalism is the most potent and logical choice to fight globalisation and gaining strength in the face of increasing challenges to globalisation (Sabanadze, 2010, 1). In the first scenario nationalism is losing the battle against globalisation and in the second scenario nationalism is the saviour of the globalised world and all of its problems (Sabanadze, 2010, 1). Based on this, logic follows that for the purpose of the voters in favour of Brexit it is the second scenario which, is in play as the more negative aspects of globalisation correlates with some of the reasons given by the pro-Brexit voters.

According to Rouse (2016) globalisation is criticised for *"(…) for undermining national policies and cultures (…)"* (p. 3) as a result of the increased elimination of barriers between countries. This correlates with the increased dissatisfaction expressed by some of the Leaves in

connection with the EU referendum. According to Lord Ashcroft (Control v. risk: which will win out in the referendum debate?, 2016) 60% argued that *"we must have more control over our own affairs even if that means missing out on some of the benefits of co-operating with other countries."* (Lord Ashcroft, Control v. risk: which will win out in the referendum debate?, 2016, 2). As previously mentioned there is an increasing opposition again the Bureaucrats of Brussels meddling in British affairs and overriding national law (Lowry, 2016, 1). Furthermore, globalisation is criticised for *"(…) destabilizing advanced labour markets in favour of lower-cost wages elsewhere"* (Rouse, 2016, 3) by moving companies from wealthier countries such as the United Kingdom to developing countries resulting in an elimination of jobs in the developed country (Rouse, 2016, 3). According to Calantone and Stanig (2016) *"[d]isplaced British manufacturing correlates far more strongly with a pro-Brexit vote than immigration does (…)"* (p. 3). This will probably still continue regardless of whether or not the UK is a member of the European Union. It might actually be evidence that the British population wish to leave not only the EU but also the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the entire global economy (Calantone & Stanig, 2016, 3). However, moving jobs out of the country is not the only threat against British workers according to the Leavers. Some might believe as Leave-voter Angus, 52 from Norwich, that the immigrants arriving from the EU threaten British jobs, as they are low-wage and without a union (Fishwick, 2016, 2). This is making them more desirable for the employers and leaving uneducated British citizens without a job. The rise of nationalism in the United Kingdom resulting in the Brexit vote might actually be a vote against the globalised international system rather than the European Union. It will be interesting to see if leaving the EU will prove to be enough or if the dissatisfaction will continued and evolve into leaving the WTO, UN, NATO etc.

6.3 A case of disintegration

As evident from the previous sections' nationalism helps to create an understanding of why the majority of the British population decided to leave the European Union. The patterns uncovered correspond in large with the worldview associated with realism and, therefore, this can further help the understanding of Brexit. As mentioned previously, disintegration is rarely desirable as it carries the possibility of both economic and political consequences for both parties. This aside, the majority of the British population still decided to vote in favour of Brexit due to concerns revolving around sovereignty, immigration, nationalism as well as their national identity and these different elements correlate with a country's wish to protect and secure itself. As mentioned, a country should only integrate if it is to maintain its own security but not at all cost (Waltz, 1979, 126; Kunz, 2013, 14-15). The country should only stay integrated as long as it

benefits from it and as long as the integration does not compromise the country's own sovereignty. In some sense the UK's decision to join the European Union in the first place can be viewed through this lens as the commonwealth was declining and the British Empire was diminished (Campos & Coricelli, 2015, 6). It was a way to secure the UK and the British population in the international society. However, the main explanation for the United Kingdom's decision to join the EEC in 1973 was economic and thus, easier explained by liberalism as economic gain and sustained peace are the main aspects of this theory especially in connection with integration (Campos & Coricelli, 2015, 6). The question then becomes; if the European Union brings security and economic prosperity to the United Kingdom why did the majority vote against it?

The disintegration of the United Kingdom is evidence of a changing world compared to when the UK decided to join the Union and there are two main counts on which this change has influenced the Brexit vote. First of all, there is no longer one single threat against which the West must unite, as it was the case in 1973 during the Cold War. It might be that it was not the peak of the Cold War, but the Soviet Union was still a very real threat to every Western country especially and to the world in general (Bradley, 2012, 1-2). However, there is no longer one common country threatening the rest. Instead there is terrorism, Russia, China, North Korea and many others stepping into the spotlight as troublemakers to a more or lesser extent. Secondly, the UK saw the possible prosperity, which an EEC membership could bring. It was cooperation based on economic aspects and not a Union growing further and further towards establishing The United States of Europe (Campos & Coricelli, 2015, 6). However, since the financial crisis of 2008, the British population have been sceptical towards how the UK benefits economically from an EU membership. With these two main reasons to join in the first place eliminated the question in the mind of the population then becomes; why stay? In some ways the British population have returned to the core of realism and decided to vote in favour of securing and protecting their own country instead of partaking in further European integration. They do no longer trust the EU. They do not believe that the EU is concerned with what is best for the UK, which might be true as there are 27 other members to consider at every decision (Europa.eu, How EU decisions are made, n.d.). Hence, they have voted in favour of themselves and decided to leave the Union. When it comes to understanding disintegration both separately but also in connection with realism it is usually done from the country's and its leaderships point of view and not that of the population but in this instance the view of people became the view of the country. The parliament had no other choice than to listen to its people and so it did. The threats which led the UK to join the EEC might not be the same as the threats which broke the bond between the two, but they are of equal importance. The Soviet Union is

no longer threatening the UK, but immigrants and the reach of the European Union is perceived as a threat against everything British by the majority of the population. In order to protect themselves they saw no other choice than to disintegrate.

6.4   Subconclusion

A rise in nationalism and opposition against an increasingly globalised world explains why the majority of the British population voted in favour of leaving the European Union in 2016 EU referendum vote. Their will to protect the national identity of the UK from the many imposing immigrants and meddling bureaucrats from Brussels drove forward the vote for Leave in the hope of eliminating the reach of the European Union. Whether or not the populations of the United Kingdom are protecting something real or imaginative will always be debatable. This belief will always be strong and difficult to take away but that is not the goal. Regardless of whether it is imagined or not it still exists in the mind of the beholder and it binds together a community. It results in Them versus us both in the good sense but also in the bad. It is okay to believe in your nation and wanting to protect it, but it might prove increasingly difficult in a continuously globalising and integrating world.

The topics present in the EU referendum and in the time leading up to it do not seem to have changed much as there is evidence of the role nationalism played in the referendum from Lord Ashcroft's article a year prior to the vote concluding that the main topics of concern for both side were *"(…) trade, sovereignty and human rights [as well as] migration, national security and [the British] contribution to the EU budget (…)"* (Ashcroft, 2015, 2). As evident from the analysis, the topics of trade and human rights have largely not been represented mainly because it was concerns brought forth by the voters in favour of staying within the European Union. As such, the process tracing throughout the case-study has documented that the main concerns of the Leavers have stayed more or less the same or at least the main arguments have.

7 | Nationalism and the future of the United Kingdom

The following will include a discussion of the future of the United Kingdom not pertaining to how well it will fare outside of the European Union but if the UK will remain together or if Brexit will break it apart. For the purpose of conducting these discussions there will be drawn on everything in this dissertation prior to this chapter.

As mentioned in the analysis there is a correlation between voters' feeling increasingly as English rather than British or more English than British and voters in favour of leaving as evident from appendix E. Here it also becomes evident than there is a correlation between how British the voter felt and a vote in favour of staying within the European Union (Lord Ashcroft, 2016, 8). This raises the question about whether or not Brexit is connected to British nationalism or in fact English nationalism? As mentioned in chapter five, the United Kingdom started out as only England, a country with a growing desire to rule, and thus came first Britain and then the United Kingdom. Every living person within the UK has never tried anything else. They have always been a part of the entity that is the United Kingdom and never had a single country with full independence but regardless of this there is still a larger part of the population in the different countries of the UK that feel increasingly English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish rather than British. According to Kenny (2016) an argument can be made that *"(…) Britishness (…) has become associated with the kind of liberal 'globalism' favoured by the political and economic elites (…)"* as oppose to its counterpart *"(…) English nationalism rooted in locality, tradition and popular culture"* (p. 5). If true the there might be talk of a split between the elite and the rest of the British population. It correlates with the fact that London, the home for many elites, for instance largely voted in favour of staying with in the European Union. It indicates, as previously mentioned, a connection between English nationalism and globalisation as polar opposites. A rise in nationalism is a wish for a decrease of globalisation and vice versa. It can be argued that English nationalism have been on the rise since the mid-2000s, and thus quite some time prior to the EU referendum vote. This begs the question if it is English nationalism which brought about the EU referendum and not the EU referendum which resulted in high levels of English nationalism? There is probably some truth to the fact that the surge in nationalism brought on the EU referendum. The United Kingdom had witnessed an increased dissatisfaction with the EU and this only grew in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis as large parts of the British

population felt that the UK had to bail out the Euro-countries (Beauchamp, 2016, 3).

With the above question raised about whether Brexit is concerning British or English nationalism another question arises. Does Brexit have the potential to break apart the United Kingdom? As illustrated in appendix D Scotland and Northern Ireland were more in favour of staying with in the EU than Leaving it as oppose to England and Wales. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have already witness an increased devolution and they might therefore already be slowly heading towards the dissolution of the UK. Despite the 2014 Scottish referendum which ended in a victory for the No's and left Scotland to remain as a part of the UK. There is, however, a growing concern that Brexit will result in a new Scottish independence vote and with the lure of a continued European membership there is an increased risk that this time the Scots will leave the United Kingdom for good (O'Toole, 2016, 1). Furthermore, Brexit will most like leave Northern Ireland in a horrible position isolate on the Irish island with the potential of a hard border established between Ireland and Northern Ireland as this will become the only physical border between the United Kingdom and the European Union. A hard border which might risk the peace on the Irish Island. Whether Northern Ireland will stay or leave the UK will probably depend on Scotland. If Scotland successfully leaves the United Kingdom and enters the EU with a satisfactory deal then Northern Ireland might decide to follow suit. If, on the other had, Scotland leaves but without entering the EU on its own or with a less favorable deal then Northern Ireland will probably decide to stay. Whether Northern Ireland will try to reach for independence if Scotland stays is hard to tell but as it has never held an independence referendum it seems unlikely. Wales is the most likely to stay with England as the majority here voted in favour of leaving the EU too as evident from appendix D. Wales have not in the same sense as Scotland

Whether or not Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will leave the United Kingdom will probably stay unknown until such a time as either a deal is reach between the United Kingdom and the European Union or the negotiations fail and the UK leaves without one. Scotland and Northern Ireland will wait and see if the deal secured by the UK will make up for what would otherwise be lost with Brexit. If they believe the deal to be bad they might try to gain independence and then enter the EU themselves, however, there is no guarantee under which terms they will then become members of the EU, as they, themselves, might be less desirable than the entire UK. It might also be that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland decides that the longstanding relationship within the is of greater value than that of the European Union and as such they would decide to stay in the UK.

8 | Disintegration, Nationalism and Brexit Did it work?

For the purpose of answering the presented research question nationalism and disintegration were chosen as the main tools to understand the choice of Brexit. Whether or not they were the right choices for the aim of this dissertation will be examined further in the following.

The dissertation has been limited to the two main theories of nationalism and disintegration which begs the questions; what are these theories not able to account for; what are their limitations in relation to understanding Brexit? Understanding Brexit through disintegration is an obvious choice as Brexit, in itself, is a case of disintegration but to connect disintegration with the main IR theories of Realism and Liberalism in order to determine whether or not these are able to account for disintegration in general and more specific in the case of Brexit is not necessarily the obvious choice for every scholar. As this dissertation is written with in the field of study of Development and International Relation it makes sense here but if on the other hand the dissertation had been written within another field of study then these theories might not be the obvious choices. They might, however, still be of great values regardless of the field of study. As evident from the work liberalism is not quite able to account for disintegration and as such it cannot account for the disintegration of the United Kingdom from the European Union. In the terms of Liberalism, integration is what we should aim at as this is the best way to secure peace and prosperity. Realism on the other hand is able to account both for disintegration in general and in the case of Brexit. Here it becomes evident that a state should always put itself first and protect itself from the outside. In the case of Brexit, it can be argued that the British population voted in favour of leaving the EU in order to protect themselves and their country against the power of the European Union. Even though Realism and Liberalism are regarded as the main IR theories there are still many more IR theories to choose from and which might have been able to understand the disintegration of the UK. One of these could have been Neo-functionalism but as with Liberalism this IR theory expects integration rather than disintegration (Vollard, 2018, 17). Neo-functionalist work with the term of *"spillback"* when trying to explain disintegration and it involves the reversal of integration. This means that *"(...) national jurisdictions are restored at the expense of European competences, and expectations, activities, and loyalties shift back to national states."* (Vollard, 2018, 18). According to the neo-functionalist thought there are a number of reasons as to why a country would chose to disintegrate including *(...) integrative*

overstretch (...) changing interest coalitions, or declining desire for European solutions (...) (Vollard, 2018, 18). At least two of these three are relevant in the case of Brexit as the British population as evident in chapter six wish for less EU interference and thus are showing a lesser desire towards the EU and its solutions. Furthermore, every argument made in chapter six regarding Brexit and the British population's choice showcases a feeling of integrative overstretch which they know desire to retreat from. Thus, the theory of Neo-functionalism could have enabled a further explanation of the disintegration case of Brexit but was rejected due to a desire to test the two main IR theories abilities in this.

Outside of disintegration, nationalism along with national identities were chosen as the main concept to provide an understanding of the reasons behind the leave votes in the 2016 EU referendum vote. As evident from the literature review there are a number of different ways one could try to understand the vote. Nationalism seems unable to account for the more economic aspects of Brexit and if the wish is to understand the vote in general then there is a need to account for the economy as this was the main argument put forth by the Remainers. Economic theory along with liberalism or neoliberalism would be able to provide an understanding of the economic consequences the population had to consider in connection with the Brexit vote. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, as mentioned in the delimitations, the votes in favour of remaining within the EU were not considered and as such the economic aspect of Brexit played a minor role here as it is impossible to disregard completely. Furthermore, there might be a wish for a deeper understanding of the opposition against the European Union and here an argument can be made that the opposition was against the neoliberal aspects of the European Union such as the Single Market and the Monetary Union opening the flow of services and goods while eliminating exchange rates. This was a possible aspect which was thoroughly considered but was disregarded as it seemed unable to account for the majority of reasons related to the Leaver's votes. Nationalism along with national identity seemed the most viable option to explain the reasons connected to the votes of the Leavers as it is able to account for the wish of more sovereignty and fear of immigration. One of the advantages of nationalism is its versatility. As evident from the previous chapters it can entail many different things but there is of course limits as evident for this section. Ethnic and Civic nationalism in combination enable a complete understanding of the case involving nationalism and specifically the case of Brexit. As mentioned earlier, nationalism will almost always be influenced by both and never just be a pure case of either Ethnic or Civic nationalism which is also the case here. National identity was also paramount in understanding the choice of Brexit as it allowed for an interpretation of how the national identity of the Leavers played a role in their votes - an insight which would have been

hard to achieve otherwise. Overall, it is the belief that these theories in combination provided the best option to research the question of why the majority of the British population decided to vote in favour of leaving the European Union.

9 | Conclusion

As previously stated the aim of this dissertation was to research the reasons behind why the majority of the British population decided to vote in favour of leaving the European Union in 2016 despite the benefits their membership brings. The hypothesis was that the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU can be explained by a growing dissatisfaction with roots in nationalism and a heightened sense of them versus us. The aim was to provide new insights into the topic of Brexit as it was assessed that there was a lack of research in this specific area with the use of the theories of nationalism and disintegration in connection with realism.

Nationalism is able to account for the majority of the themes the voters in favour of Brexit listed as their reasons. As evident from the analysis and appendix F immigration and sovereignty were at the forefront of the EU referendum and both of these at explainable through nationalism. It is the wish to protect what they know and what they believe in which drove the majority vote. The Leavers wanted to regain British sovereignty by limiting the reach and effect of the EU in the UK. Furthermore, they managed to paint a picture of Them versus Us both in regard to the supposed mass immigration from within the EU and from outside of it but also in regard to the bureaucrats of Brussel. They wanted to protect their national identity from immigrants and secure their national feeling and community. Whether the community they were protecting exist is a different matter. As evident from the chapter on nationalism the belief of this dissertation is that nationalism is an imagined community, but this does not make it any less relevant if the belief is strong enough it can influence anything as for example the Brexit vote. The Leavers believed that their reasons, arguments and fears outweighed any potential benefits of an EU membership and therefore they voted in favour of leaving the European Union.

There is no doubt that Brexit is a case of disintegration and the argument in this dissertation is that the disintegration of the United Kingdom from the European Union can be understood through the lens of realism. The evidence presented above with nationalism as the main explanation behind the Brexit vote illustrates this further. It becomes clear that there was a wish to protect and secure the United Kingdom and everything British. This only seemed achievable through a process of disintegration as this was the only way to guarantee the UK. As there is no longer one single threat and the EU, in the eyes of the Leavers, is a failure there is no apparent reason to stay a member.

In a greater perspective it is possible to argue that the vote in favour of Brexit was in fact a vote against globalisation. Globalisation is in many ways the opposite of nationalism. It favours

continued integration and open markets. In many ways it favours the European Union. The Leavers did not wish for an increased integration and they feared that a continued membership of the European Union would cost more British jobs than it already has. However, as mentioned earlier leaving the EU might not solve their problems entirely as they are still active members of a globalised world and will continue to be so. Therefore, it is a question if it will be enough for the UK to leave the EU or if there is a wish for the UK to exist more institutions. It might be, that it will proof enough to leave the EU as the Union's influence on the UK and British policies exceeds that of any other organisations the UK are members of.

What the future holds for the UK is anyone's guess but there is a real possibility of the UK dissolving depending on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. As evident through the dissertation it can be argued that it is not a rise of British nationalism but of English nationalism which has caused the vote in favour of Brexit. Scotland and Northern Ireland voted in favour of staying within the Union, however, there is some exceptions to this, but it begs the question if they would wish to leave the UK and enter the EU on their own. Northern Ireland might decide to do so in order to avoid a hard border on the Irish Island.

10 | Assessment of the research

Throughout the research the aim has been to try and maintain a high level of transparency. This has been done by listing every single piece of material used throughout the dissertation as well as a more detailed listing of the data material used in the analysis. This is presented in appendix B where it is listed in a table along with the most relevant information pertaining to the data. The reason behind this level of transparency has been to try and ensure the credibility of the dissertation and allow for follow research to try to recreate the research carried out here. The hope is, of course, that if the research was to be conducted by a fellow researcher the result would be the same. In the event that the result would turn out different it would be in the best interest of the dissertation to revisit the data material, theories and methods in order to try to understand how and why a different result was achieved. Fellow researchers might be able to carry out the research without the same restrictions and thus reach a different result. As mentioned earlier there are both time restriction and certain requirements which the dissertation needs to fulfil including page restrictions. This might have influenced the level of detail possible in the dissertation, but the aim has continuously been to try and maintain as detailed an account of the research conducted. As previously mentioned, the aim of this dissertation was never to be able to generalise it and from that draw a conclusion. Brexit is a rather unique case and so is the understanding the reason behind the Leavers' choice. It might be possible to generalise certain elements of the research but not its entirety. The point in understanding the vote in favour of Brexit is to obtain an understanding of this specific event and possible an understanding of the potential consequences of nationalism. This has been achieved here.

10.1 The limitations of the research

There is without any doubt other ways to explain and understand the choice of Brexit but the belief here is that nationalism and disintegration provided the best opportunity to clarify the reason behind this choice. These theories enable an understanding of the main reasons put forward by the Leavers and are therefore deemed the best option. Other theories could have supported these main theories as evident from the previous chapter but were rejected as nationalism and disintegration were deemed sufficient. As previously mentioned other possible theories could have included economic theories, neo-functionalism, neoliberalism etc. but these possibilities were rejected mainly due to the established delimitation but also due to the previously mentioned time and pages limitations. The time limitation involved in doing a master thesis

is well known and expected and therefore maybe not be good as an argument. However, this dissertation did not start out with this research question or these theories and as such the first two months were spend reading and researching neoliberalism and its possibility to account for Brexit. The initial aim of this dissertation was to investigate Brexit as a break with neoliberalism. Therefore, the actual time spend on the dissertation as it is now has been shorter than usual, but this is to be expected and it is part of the process. This only increased the knowledge on Brexit and on neoliberalism and as the dissertation is part of my education it only increased the learning process.

Both in regard to the chosen methods and data there could have been made different choices. As previously mentioned methods such as interviews or field work could have been of interest and would have provided a unique insight into the Brexit vote is carried out in the period leading up to the vote and the immediate aftermath. However, if carried out now the methods would provide unreliable data as there is a potential risk that the aftermath of the EU referendum up until this point will have affect the voters making the result different from what was originally the case. In regard to the data and data collection it would most likely have been more beneficial to carry out the collection during the time of the referendum as it would have been easier attainable and easier to discover. The three-year mark of Brexit is soon approaching but the negotiations are still going and a lot of material regarding this event and the following period have been generated. Therefore, it has been necessary to refine the data searches to try to eliminate material after the fact.

10.2   Future work

Regarding future work in relation to the post research question it could be of interest, as previously mentioned, to try to understand the vote through economic theories, as a vote against neoliberalism or as a break with neofunctionalism. However, another interesting approach could be to try to see if the rise of nationalism which brought on Brexit in the United Kingdom is similar to the nationalism rising in countries such as France and Italy. It would then be possible to try to assess the probability of a similar referendum vote in each of these countries. The aim of this dissertation was not generalisation but as previously mentioned it should be possible to generalise elements of the research. Here the research has been focused on the relation between nationalism and the votes in favour of leaving as such, if the aim is to conduct a comparative case study between France and the UK one would first have to assess the nationalism leading up to the referendum going back further than what is the case here. If this is not done it would be impossible to understand the role nationalism played in bringing about the EU referendum.

After this is done it would be possible to analyse the nationalism present in France and hereafter assess if there are common denominators between the two types of nationalism. Furthermore, it would be necessary to assess the level of importance of each aspect of nationalism in order to assess their potential to create a Frexit.

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Appendices

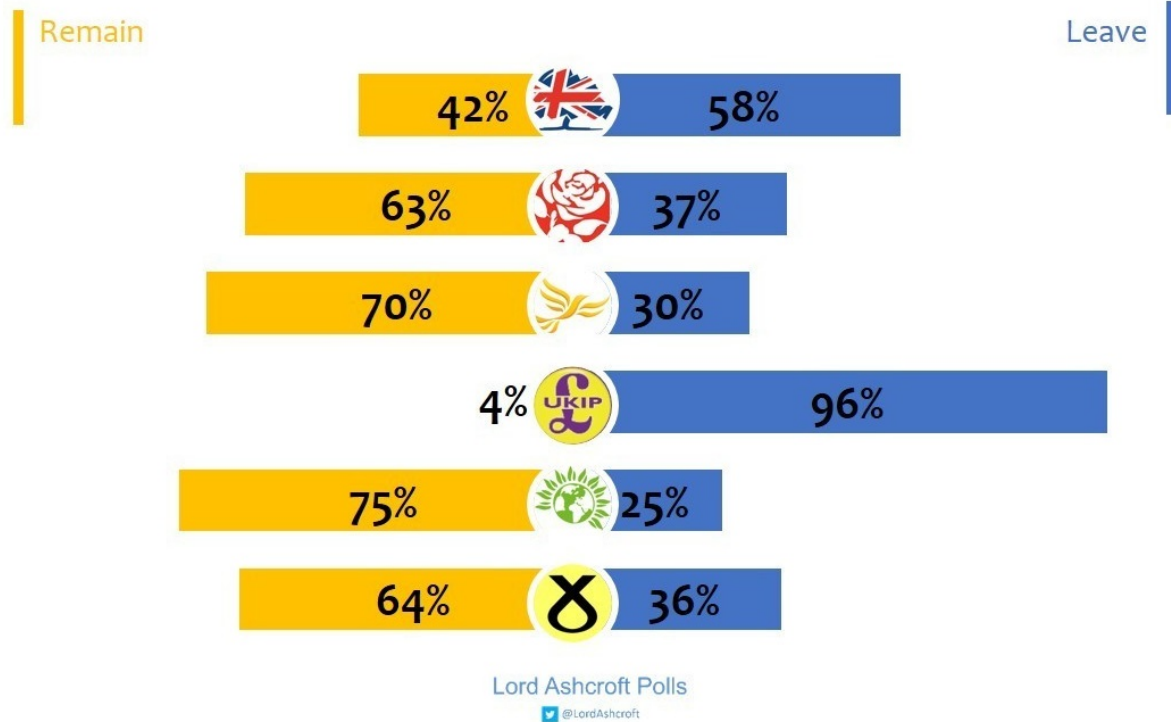# Appendix A: How Britain Voted

Figure A: Indication of the British parliament party's voters' position in regard to the EU referendum of 2016. The parties from the top include:
1. Conservative
2. Labour
3. Liberal Democrats
4. United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP)
5. Green Party
6. Scottish National Party (SNP)

Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls, 2016. Accessed: May 16, 2019

Appendix B: Analysis material

Text No.	Title	Author(s)	Publishing date	URL
1	Countries	Europa.eu	No date	https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en
2	How EU decisions are made	Europa.eu	No date	https://europa.eu/european-union/eu-law/decision-making/procedures_en
3	The EU in brief	Europa.eu	No date	https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en
4	Globalization and Nationalism: The Relationship Revisited in *Globalization and Nationalism: The Cases of Georgia and the Basque Country*	Natalie Sabanadze	2010	https://books.openedition.org/ceup/575
5	Why did the UK join the EU? A new insight from economic history	Vox EU. Nauro Campos and Fabrizio Coricelli	February 3, 2015	https://voxeu.org/article/britain-s-eu-membership-new-insight-economic-history
6	Leave to Remain: Public opinion and the EU referendum	Lord Ashcroft Polls. Lord Ashcroft	June 16, 2015	https://lordashcroftpolls.com/?s=+Leave+to+Remain%3A+Public+opinion+and+the+EU+referendum
7	The Brexit briefs: Our guide to Britain's EU referendum	The Economist	March-June, 2016	https://www.economist.com/sites/default/files/EconomistBrexitBriefs16.pdf
8	The Roots of Brexit	Bloomberg. Robert Hutton	May 8, 2016 (Last edited March 20, 2019)	https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/will-uk-leave-eu
9	Control *v.* risk: which will win out in the referendum debate?	Lord Ashcroft Polls. Lord Ashcroft	May 26, 2016	https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/05/control-v-risk-which-will-win-out-in-the-referendum-debate/
10	Globalisation	Margaret Rouse	June, 2016	https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/globalization

Text No.	Title	Author(s)	Publishing date	URL
11	Brexit is being driven by English nationalism. And it will end in self-rule	The Guardian. Fintan O'Toole	June 18, 2016	https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/18/england-eu-referendum-brexit
12	Brexit and the Case for Modern Nationalism	Politico. Rich Lowry	June 22, 2016	https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06/yes-to-brexit-213984
13	How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday. . . and why	Lord Ashcroft Polls. Lord Ashcroft	June 24, 2016	https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/
14	The British are frantically Googling what the E.U. is, hours after voting to leave it	The Washington Post. Brian Fung	June 24, 2016	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2016/06/24/the-british-are-frantically-googling-what-the-eu-is-hours-after-voting-to-leave-it/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8a939c202270
15	Why did Britain vote to leave the EU?	Vox.com. Timothy B. Lee	June 25, 2016	https://www.vox.com/2016/6/25/12029962/why-did-britain-leave-the-eu
16	The uncomfortable question: Was the Brexit vote based on racism?	The Washington Post. Adam Taylor	June 25, 2016	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/06/25/the-uncomfortable-question-was-the-brexit-vote-based-on-racism/?utm_term=.ed99a5140ae1
17	Meet 10 Britons who voted to Leave the EU	The Guardian. Carmen Fishwick	June 25, 2016	https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/25/meet-10-britons-who-voted-to-leave-the-eu
18	Distribution of EU referendum votes in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2016, by age group and gender	Statista	June 30, 2016	https://www.statista.com/statistics/567922/distribution-of-eu-referendum-votes-by-age-and-gender-uk/
19	The real reason to U.K. voted for Brexit? Jobs lost to Chinese competition	The Washington Post. Italo Colantone & Piero Stanig	July 7, 2016	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/07/07/the-real-reason-the-u-k-voted-for-brexit-economics-not-identity/?utm_term=.072359ae0f3b
20	What mattered most to you when deciding how to vote in the EU-referendum?	The British Election Study Team. Chris Prosser, Jon Mellon & Jane Green	July 11, 2016	https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-findings/what-mattered-most-to-you-when-deciding-how-to-vote-in-the-eu-referendum/

| Text No.	Title	Author(s)	Publishing date	URL
21	The Genesis of English Nationalism	Michael Kenny	September 1, 2016	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2041905816666124?journalCode=plia
22	Brexit: Causes and Consequences	CIBOB. Alan Riley & Francis Ghilés	October, 2016	https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionals/n1_159/brexit_causes_and_consequences
23	The fundamental factors behind the Brexit vote	Vox EU. Sascha O. Becker, Thiemo Fetzer & Dennis Novy	October 31, 2016	https://voxeu.org/article/fundamental-factors-behind-brexit-vote
24	Why Britain voted to Leave (and what Boris Johnson had to do with it)	LSE blog. Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin & Paul Whiteley	May 4, 2017	https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2017/05/04/why-britain-voted-to-leave-and-what-boris-johnson-had-to-do-with-it/
25	People's Stated Reasons for Voting Leave or Remain	CSI Admin	April 25, 2018	http://csi.nuff.ox.ac.uk/?p=1153

Appendix C: Votes by age group and gender
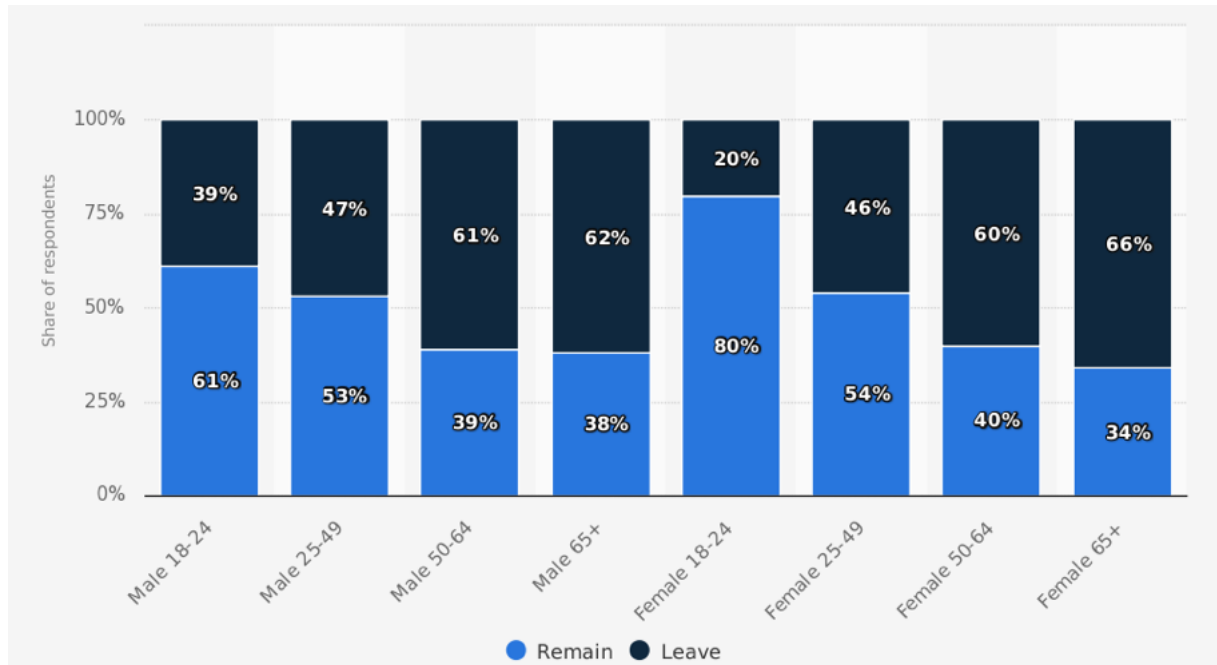
Figure C: Distribution of EU Referendum votes in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2016, by age group and gender.

Indicates the distribution of votes in the 2016 EU referendum divided into categories of gender and age. From here it becomes evident that males and females over the age of 50 was more in favour of leaving the European Union compared to males and females under the age of 50.

Additional Information: United Kingdom; YouGov; June 23 to June 24, 2016; 5,455 respondents; 18 years and older

Source: Statista, 2016. Accessed: May 11, 2019.
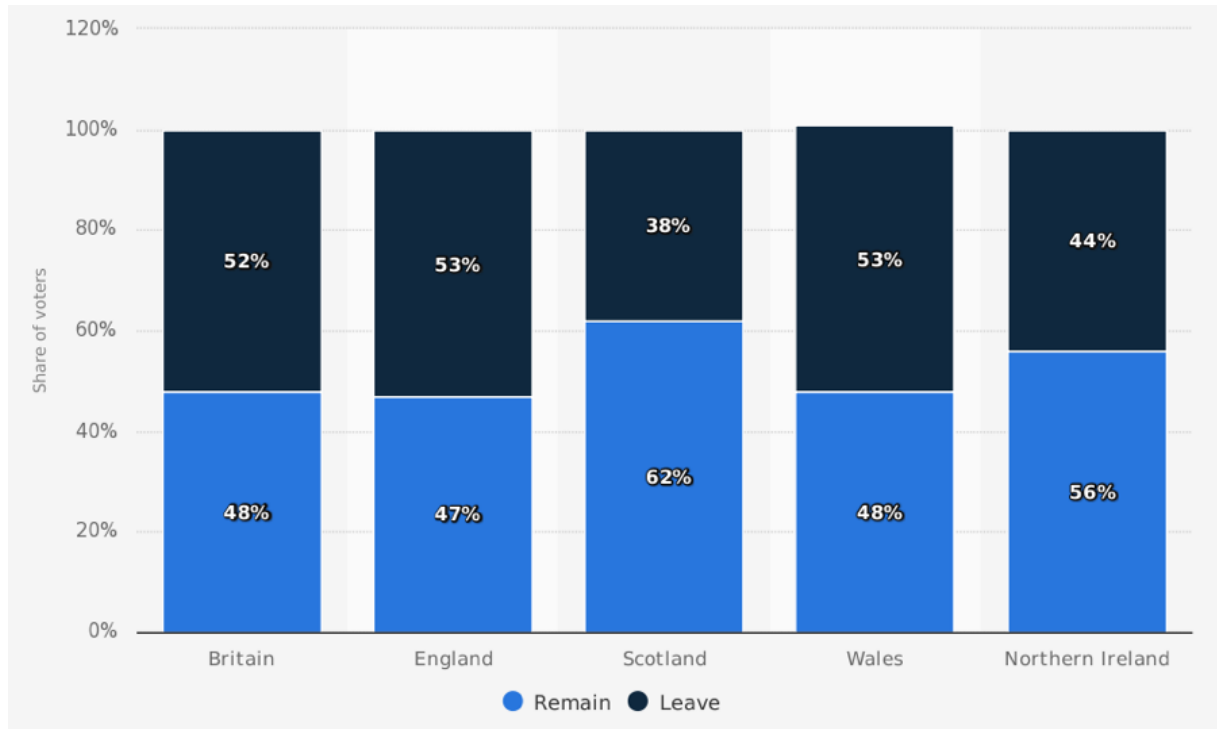
Appendix D: Results by nation

Figure D: EU referendum results of the United Kingdom (UK) in 2016, by nation.

Indicates the distribution of votes in the EU referendum divided by country and from here it becomes evident that the votes in England and Wales were more in favour of leaving the European Union compared to the voters in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the overall division of votes is depicted in the column named Britain.

Additional Information: United Kingdom; The Electoral Commission; June 24, 2016

Source: Statista, 2016. Accessed: May 11, 2019.
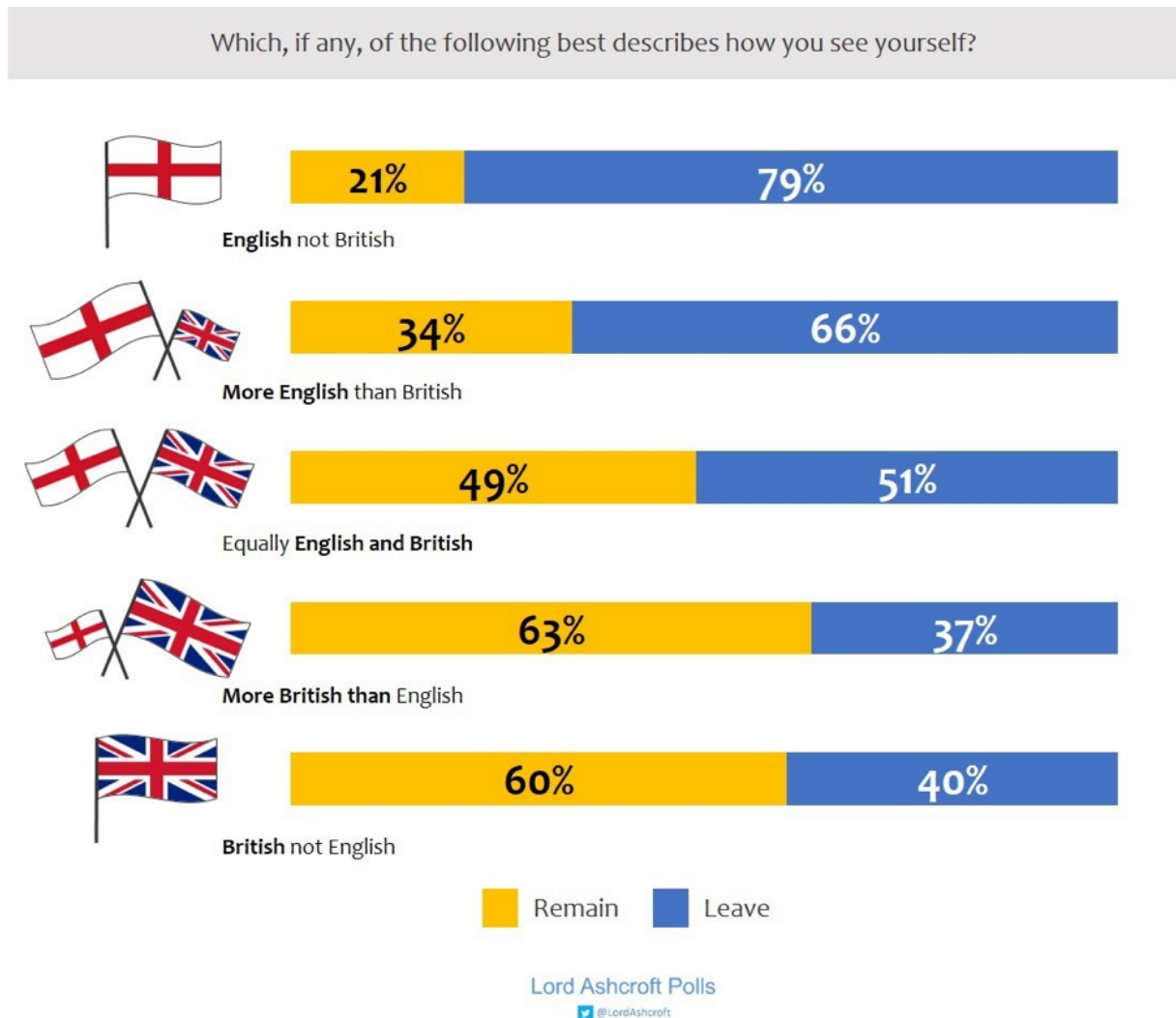
Appendix E: National feeling and the vote

Figure E: The relation between national feeling of belonging and the 2016 EU referendum vote.

Indicates the relation between the 2016 EU referendum vote and the feeling of national belonging in the voters. From here it becomes evident that there is a correlation between a feeling of being more English than British and a vote in favour of leaving the European Union.

Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls, 2016. Accessed: May 11, 2019
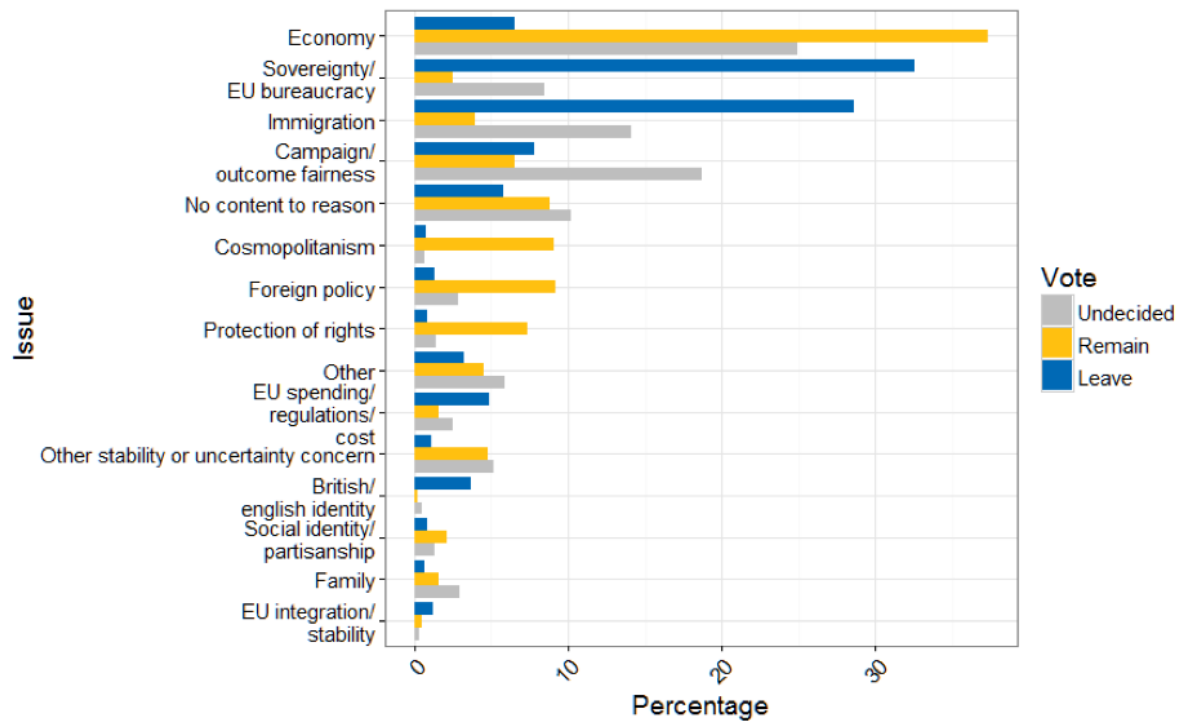
Appendix F: Stated reason for voting

Figure F: Stated reason for voting in the 2016 EU referendum.

Indicates the distributions of votes in relation to topics of concern in regard to the 2016 EU referendum. It becomes evident that the most important issues for the voters in favour of leaving was Sovereignty and immigration whereas economy played he larger role for the voters in favour of staying in the Union.

Source: The British Election Study. Accessed: May 12, 2019