

**The Enduring Influence of Ethnonationalist Conflict:
How the Memory of Northern Ireland's Past is Employed in the Political Realm**

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Abstract

Conflict resolution has clear goals of lasting peace, though even states with successful legislative resolutions to violence and unrest can face a resurgence of tensions of the nature experienced in the past. The Good Friday Agreement effectively ended three decades of intense violence in Northern Ireland, though the collective memory of the harrowing events that occurred are pervasive in social and political life. References to the Troubles have often characterized Northern Irish politics, but a resurgence in tension could be expected after the announcement of Brexit. This research uses discourse analysis and comparison of party manifestos and speeches to understand how the narratives of key Northern Irish political parties had changed once Brexit negotiations were underway. A resurgence of identity disputes and ethnonational references after Brexit highlight the fragility of post-conflict societies, namely when a tumultuous political event threatens stability. The role of collective memory in politics is a powerful and dynamic force in harnessing and retaining support, especially during times of volatility.

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Introduction

Studies of ethnonational conflicts reveal that scholars and the international community often classify conflicts as ongoing, or consider them resolved through cooperation, international mediation, and legislation. As first explored by Johan Galtung in 1964, the lack of violence and war in a region can be classified as “negative peace”, whereas the existence of a more integrated and interconnected society is referred to as “positive peace”.¹ Upon examining the makeup of the Good Friday Agreement, also called the Belfast Agreement, one can find numerous references to a desire for this so-called positive peace in the case of Northern Ireland, such as the promise of the upholding of human rights, the creation of joint institutions and committees, and reconciliation attempts for victims of violence.² While legal documents may promise an end to the conflict that neatly settles disputes in a way that appeases international bodies, citizens of conflict zones find that the memory of conflict lives on to impact the social and political realms of life. The collective memory that is forged and experienced by various groups, even across generational divides, serves to continue to influence the social and political realms of societies that faced the previous conflict. Further understanding of these collective experiences and their lasting results is imperative in conflict de-escalation and the creation of positive peace in respective communities.

The Troubles of Northern Ireland are characterized as a thirty-year time period of violence and strife. In 1921, negotiations following the Irish War of Independence led to a state partition, where Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, as the majority of the

¹ Galtung, J., 1964. Summit meetings and international relations. *Journal of Peace Research*, 1(1), pp.36-54.

² "The Belfast Agreement". 1998. *GOV.UK*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-belfast-agreement>.

North were Union supporters³. The end of the 1960s saw an uprising of violence after protest campaigns from the minority Catholic group were met with police brutality.⁴ Three decades of violence from paramilitary groups of Unionist and Nationalist origin led to widespread loss, community divisions between Catholics and Protestants, and a generation left traumatized by the actions of governments, law enforcement and ethnonational and sectarian fighters.⁵ While the Good Friday Agreement effectively ended the Troubles, the memory of the conflict persists. Now that the Agreement and its promises are back in daily political talks regarding Brexit negotiations, it is unsurprising that memories of divisions and divergent loyalties have resurfaced. The divided life that has existed among Protestants and Catholics after the Troubles is not lost on policymakers, who aim to draw support by capitalizing on collective trauma that remains pertinent to the political decision-making of citizens. In the years that have passed since the time of intense conflict, one can analyze how the collective memory of said disputes remains in the communities, and how these memories are instrumentalized in the political sphere and used to gain influence and power. In the case of Brexit, one can recognize that the related events and negotiations have acted as catalysts for a resurgence of strife, highlighting the importance of critical junctures and their ability to reignite conflict in areas in which past disputes are considered resolved and peace has been attained.⁶ In utilizing the comparison in this way, one can produce findings that can showcase the power of conflict to remain over years and generations, in the hearts and minds of individuals and political parties alike.

³ McKittrick, David, and David McVea. *Making sense of the troubles: The story of the conflict in Northern Ireland*. New Amsterdam Books, 2002.

⁴ Bryan, Dominic. *Orange parades: The politics of ritual, tradition and control*. Pluto Press, 2000

⁵ Bryan, Dominic. *Orange parades: The politics of ritual, tradition and control*. Pluto Press, 2000

⁶ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

Brexit can be characterized as a highly critical juncture, and Northern Irish politicians struggle to safeguard EU liberties and privileges to their constituents, many of which voted against leaving the EU.⁷ The challenge of Brexit can be summarized by the work of R. Daniel Keleman, and his trilemma explanation.⁸ In leaving the EU, the UK is unable to uphold promises made to Northern Ireland, including no hard border between the North and South of Ireland, no Irish Sea trade border between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, all while fully exiting the single market and customs union.⁹ Failing to deliver on these promises means that certain stipulations of the Good Friday Agreement cannot be upheld, such as the creation of a hard land border. Although it was created to effectively end the violence of the Troubles, the Good Friday Agreement is being referenced again in the wake of Brexit to ensure promises made are kept.¹⁰ Nationalist and Unionist parties alike face challenges in the age of Brexit, and it's unsurprising that the memory of the Troubles comes along with the use of the Good Friday Agreement. Brexit as a micro-study can analyze the results of collective experience and identity on a modern issue of which negotiations are ongoing and changing in real-time. Identifying the results of two distinct collective identities on Northern Ireland's political and social society, can help to recognize the power that trauma and memory hold in post-conflict societies as they strive for lasting peace and political stability.

⁷ Garry, John. "The EU referendum Vote in Northern Ireland: Implications for our understanding of citizens' political views and behaviour." In Northern Ireland Assembly: Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS), vol. 17. 2016.

⁸ R. Daniel Keleman, Rutgers University. Souce: Twitter.com

⁹ Lawless, Martina. "Brexit and trade on the Island of Ireland." *Revue de l'OFCE* 167, no. 3 (2020): 95-119.

¹⁰ Phinnemore, David, and Katy Hayward. "UK Withdrawal ('Brexit') and the Good Friday Agreement." (2017).

Chapter 1

1.1 Research question and its scope

This thesis aims to answer how the collective memory of the Northern Irish Troubles has impacted both Protestant and Catholic communities and political societies in a time that has shown a resurgence of unionist and nationalist sentiment. These impacts can be identified through the analysis of political rhetoric surrounding the current issue of Brexit-related negotiations, and how both Unionist and Nationalist voters interpret Brexit proceedings and collectively remember the past ethnic conflict themselves.¹¹ Northern Ireland remains far more segregated than much of the international community realizes, and this thesis aims to explore how the memory of the Troubles, as well as the collective identity of both groups, is utilized by political parties on either side as a means of gaining support. Now more than ever, concepts of identity and belonging are being challenged in the post-Brexit world, with Northern Ireland in the middle. In analyzing how Nationalist and Unionist political parties of Northern Ireland utilize references to The Troubles to further their political agenda and garner support towards their Brexit strategies, I show how the resurgence of deep-rooted issues of conflict and identity can occur during periods of political debate, negotiation, and unrest in societies that experienced ethnic violence historically.

In analyzing how the memory of ethnic conflict is used to frame political parties' discourse surrounding Brexit and the future of Northern Ireland, I aim to explore how collective memory is used in the wider political sphere over time, and how it reignites in conflict regarding

¹¹ Doyle, John, and Eileen Connolly. "Brexit and the Northern Ireland question." In *The law & politics of Brexit*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

issues of territory and citizenship liberties. The outcome of this study goes beyond this micro-analysis of ethnic conflict escalation during Brexit, providing a lens that shows the management of contentious issues in post-conflict societies. I hope that ultimately, this thesis can contribute to the broader literature of the long-term impacts on post-conflict resolution states. Furthermore, I hope to use the event of Brexit and its ability to reignite matters of ethnic conflict on social and political levels as an example of the importance of lasting dedication to post-conflict peacebuilding that is required by states and international bodies as well. Political events that hold the power to reopen wounds of ethnic strife and identity showcase the lasting fragility of post-conflict states. The power of collective memory itself shows that diligence towards lasting peaceful conflict resolution is of utmost importance, and the process of peace itself is continuous and intergenerational, lasting far longer than the signing of key resolution legislation.

1.2 Literature Review

This thesis will employ the works of scholars who discuss the root causes of ethnonational conflict in Northern Ireland, as well as those who seek to analyze the impact of Brexit and its relationship with the occurrences of the past through the use of collective identity. An insightful work, written in 2001, is Padraig O'Malley's journal article, "Northern Ireland and South Africa: Hope and History At a Crossroads".¹² This work delves into the structural characteristics of fragmented societies, and also explores the impact of conflicts on future generations and how collective memory shapes Northern Irish society. O'Malley's work also provides key analyses of the Irish Republican party, which is highly relevant in providing a

¹² O'Malley, Padraig. "Northern Ireland and South Africa: Hope and History at a Crossroads." (2000).

historical background that will aid in a more recent analysis of the Sinn Fein and how the memory of the troubles is used in the modern political party that is most associated with the Irish Republicans of the conflict years. "Northern Ireland after the Troubles: A Society in Transition " is an excellent work that gives immensely helpful insight in conceptualizing the political transformation of Northern Ireland.¹³ This text will pair well with analyzes of primary documents from Nationalist and Unionist-affiliated parties that I will present. Another book this thesis will consult for the analysis is that of "The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies and Memories".¹⁴ which will be especially helpful in conceptualizing the word of political leaders of Protestant-affiliated Unionist parties in Northern Ireland. I will also draw from Patricia Lundy & Mark McGovern's works regarding the politics of memory in Northern Ireland to provide insight into development of Northern Irish politics, and the creation of themes that exist in the modern political environment.¹⁵ These works are vital, as they show the underlying causes of religion, ethnicity, loyalty, and belonging that were key to igniting the conflicts of the past and remain central to the resurgence of conflict today. Regarding the ever-changing Brexit arena, John Doyle and Eileen Connolly's "Brexit and the Northern Ireland Question" gives insight into the relationship between Brexit and the Good Friday Agreement, highlighting the difficulties that the UK faces when upholding the Agreement while fully exiting the EU as a union.¹⁶ John Barry's 2017 work "Northern Ireland: Hardening Borders, Hardening Attitudes" excellently documents the post-Agreement political climate of Northern Ireland, one

¹³ Coulter, Colin, and Michael Murray, eds. *Northern Ireland after the Troubles: a society in transition*. Manchester University Press, 2013.

¹⁴ Dawson, Graham, Jo Dover, and Stephen Hopkins, eds. *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies and Memories*. Manchester University Press, 2016.

¹⁵ Lundy, Patricia, and Mark McGovern. "The politics of memory in post-conflict Northern Ireland." *Peace Review* 13, no. 1 (2001): 27-33.

¹⁶ Doyle, John, and Eileen Connolly. "Brexit and the Northern Ireland question." In *The law & politics of Brexit*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

that is defined by politics of negotiation.¹⁷ Furthermore, Barry provides commentary on the “hardening attitudes” that have come as a result of Brexit negotiations, especially those that suggest a land border and reduced trade opportunities for Northern Ireland. Besides Barry’s works, most writing on Brexit and Northern Ireland ignore the role of individual politicians and the direct action of their parties. Thus, this thesis will employ the aforementioned works paired with primary political texts, such as speeches and manifestos, and will provide analysis on the present political environment, and how it is influenced by the memory of the Troubles.

Various theories can be called on to explain the increased political and social division in Northern Ireland as a result of Brexit. By analyzing Brexit through the lens of Erin K. Jenne’s 2015 book one can see that the case of Brexit acts as a destabilizing force that can disturb the “nested security” that the Good Friday Agreement provided.¹⁸ Without upholding the promises that the Agreement allowed to the people of Northern Ireland, the UK government could risk the peace-building efforts that the Good Friday Agreement led to. The matter of honoring the Agreement proves logistically difficult, as outlined in R. Daniel Kelemen’s trilemma theory.¹⁹ Kelemen highlights the fact that the UK cannot successfully exit the EU while upholding the promise of refusing a land border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as a sea border with good checks between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.²⁰ Kelemen’s theory is a structural explanation as to the feasibility of a Brexit deal is accepted by all Northern Irish citizens, but the divide in government that is presented by this explanation doesn’t take into

¹⁷ Barry, J., 2017. Northern Ireland: hardening borders and hardening attitudes. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 66, pp.48-54

¹⁸ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

¹⁹ R. Daniel Kelemen, Rutgers University. Souce: Twitter.com

²⁰ Lawless, Martina. "Brexit and trade on the Island of Ireland." *Revue de l'OFCE* 167, no. 3 (2020): 95-119.

account how parties are using collective memory to gain support for aspects of the negotiation they deem most important. John Barry's work provides a theory of Northern Irish politics that relates directly to Brexit party dynamics, stating: "Northern Ireland appears to be heading towards a Janus-faced system in which each of the dominant parties publicly appeals to their sectarian base for electoral power by blaming the 'other' for all the Assembly's faults, while privately collaborating with the very same 'other' to ensure they remain the dominant powers in the political process".²¹ Dated in 2017, this theory is instrumental to the analysis of discourse before and after Brexit. One can find, after considering the changes in speech content and manifesto focus, that sectarian appeals and the public direct blaming of opposing parties has increased substantially. The political document analysis will refer back to Barry's work, showing the changes overtime and increase in public polarization of party documents, all while highlighting the collaboration needed from dominant parties to remain powerful.

1.3 Theoretical Framework of Collective Memory and Ethnonationalist Conflict Resurgence

The thesis will utilize the work of Stuart Kaufman and his theories outlined in his book.²² Defying the rationalist perspective of the root causes of ethnic conflict, Kaufman employs a variety of case studies to argue that the causes of these conflicts can be found in the emotionally-driven myths and symbols that leaders historically use to gain support and increase positive sentiment towards the in-group. Furthermore, this work contends that lasting efforts of

²¹ Barry, J., 2017. Northern Ireland: hardening borders and hardening attitudes. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 66, pp.48-54

²² Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern hatreds*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

peacebuilding must occur at the citizen and elite levels to successfully end current conflict and prevent future strife as well.²³ While Kaufman focuses on the power of emotional appeals as means for mobilization that can lead to ethnic conflict, V.P. Gagnon presents a different argument in his work.²⁴ Gagnon presents the argument that the conflict in the region was rooted in the desire to maintain economic power by the elite class, thus leading to the creation of conflict as a means to destabilize populations that may otherwise have been capable of creating change in the social, political, and economic realms of society.²⁵ Both Kaufman and Gagnon employ a similar trend in their works, one that highlights how elites and leaders can successfully gather support for their interests by utilizing references to matters of ethnic and religious identity. Their ideologies will prove highly relevant in the case of Brexit, where the numerous and ongoing negotiations require politicians to gather as much support from their constituents, even if this means doing so through appeals to ethnicity and loyalty. While both authors present compelling arguments as to the causation of ethnic conflict with substantial case examples to conceptualize their claims, this thesis aims to explore how causation of the resurgence of conflict can be found in more than one realm of society, be it economic, political, identity-based or otherwise. Rather than identifying one singular root cause, this micro case study will analyze how the combination of multiple factors and their relations to each other come together to impact the resurgence of conflict.

²³ Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern hatreds*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

²⁴ Gagnon, Valère Philip. *The myth of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

²⁵ Gagnon, Valère Philip. *The myth of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

To analyze the changes in discourse before and after the beginning of Brexit negotiations, this thesis will draw from the work of Jelena Subotic.²⁶ Subotic describes how state narratives are carefully crafted with attention paid to both political and cultural factors and are used in strategic ways by political leaders.²⁷ Her work also describes how tumultuous political environments can be catalysts for changes in narratives to occur, and these narratives can be key in the creation to gain support and enact policy changes. While Subotic uses the case study of Serbia's changing narrative regarding its foreign policy toward Kosovo, this thesis will employ her theories as it identifies the change in narratives that occur in Northern Irish political discourse before and after Brexit, with Brexit serving as the traumatic event that Subotic describes as being highly susceptible to narrative changes and political changes that follow. To further build on the power of destabilizing events and their ability to catalyze a resurgence of ethnic conflict, this thesis will also rely on the work of Erin K. Jenne as displayed in her 2015 book, to aid in the explanation of why and how a re-emergence in conflict was and continues to be felt in Northern Ireland after the onset of Brexit negotiations.²⁸ In understanding Brexit as a critical event that uprooted past memories of ethnic strife, one can understand the power of destabilizing forces as well as the importance of lasting peace-building attempts that are put into action with the expectation of managing future events of a similar caliber. Brexit and its ability to impact the resurgence of references to ethnonationalist conflict of the past as well as reignition of disputes in the current day will serve as a micro-case study in the field of ethnonationalist

²⁶ Subotić, Jelena. "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change." *Foreign policy analysis* 12, no. 4 (2016): 610-627.

²⁷ Subotić, Jelena. "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change." *Foreign policy analysis* 12, no. 4 (2016): 610-627, pg. 616.

²⁸ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

conflict management, building on the aforementioned works centered around the power of critical junctures to negatively impact societies deemed peaceful after past friction.

The research of this thesis stems from its hypothesis that an increase in the rhetoric surrounding identity and ethnic conflict will be visible in the speeches, manifestos, and other press releases of Northern Ireland political parties after the start of Brexit negotiations. To demonstrate this, the resulting analysis will aid in the field of conflict study, especially to the works of authors such as Subotic and Jenne, who highlight the importance of volatile events in destabilized regions that allow for an environment in which political leaders are easily able to mobilize groups, gain support, and create policy changes in their parties' favor. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify multiple reasons for a resurgence in ethnic conflict in both the words of politicians and the actions of members of society, be these economic factors such as those identified by Gagnon, or identity root causes similar to those explored by Kaufman.²⁹³⁰ The lasting impression left by the findings of this thesis hopes to contribute to Kaufman's message for the future as well, that lasting peace-building action must be taken both initially and continually over time and must be directed towards elites and other sectors of the population as well. In analyzing the current discourse surrounding Brexit and how it has changed the dynamics of identity conflict in Northern Ireland today, this thesis hopes to produce results that show a strong correlation between the critical political event and its ability to reignite ethnic strife. In doing so, further evidence will be contributed to the field that can be used to understand how necessary international organizations' attempts towards truly lasting peace are.

²⁹ Gagnon, Valère Philip. *The myth of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

³⁰ Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern hatreds*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

1.4 Research Methodology

To contrast the use of allusions towards the Troubles in pre-and post- Brexit times, employing speech analysis of party documents from political parties to analyze the use of the memory of conflict. The thesis will investigate the resurgence of identity in the realm of politics that was and still is being experienced in direct response to Brexit. The analysis of speeches and manifestos that reference Brexit and the future of Northern Ireland in the European community will be used to showcase how each party uses references to the conflicts of the past, and how they aim to appeal to voters. The aim is to present findings of how differently affiliated parties utilize these references, if the same references are being used in different ways, or if multiple identities are used in order to connect voters to current political issues. From here, an analysis of the discourse of various parliamentary parties surrounding the issue will be employed in order to examine how each of them shapes the memory of The Troubles to fit their political aims in ways that relate to the future of Northern Ireland as a whole. Exploring the relationship between identity and politics through direct analysis of political documents, speeches, and manifestos will ultimately lead to a fuller understanding of the long-lasting impacts of ethnic conflict, even after peace agreements are signed. This research will ideally be able to shed light on similar ethnonationalist conflicts around the world, where citizens and political parties navigate collective identity and trauma, segregation, and representation.

1.5 Research Design

The first group of analyzed political documents will be dated from the year 2013 to the first months of 2016, leading up to Brexit's referendum and subsequent negotiations. The secondary group will be taken from documents dated June of 2016 to the present day, a period

characterized by negotiations that followed the referendum. I will analyze the speeches and manifestos from the Northern Irish Unionist parties with the largest support, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), as well as the top Nationalist Parties, the Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). In addition to these parties, I will also include an analysis of the platform of a traditionally neutral party, the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland. In doing so, I hope to provide insight into how a party that is not aligned with the Nationalist or Unionist tradition has reacted to Brexit. Each party will have its manifestos examined, with one chosen from pre-Brexit years and one from the years during Brexit negotiations. Two speeches will be chosen from each party for each period. Speeches with relevance to matters surrounding the past and present state of identity, religion, and ethnonationalism and how they relate to the modern political arena will be selected. The goal of this study is to determine if and how references to The Troubles have changed in political rhetoric before and after Brexit's introduction to the political arena. Understanding how political leaders utilize references to ethnonationalism to gain support is key in understanding the field of conflict causation, and the role political elites play in capitalizing on collective identity.³¹³² In doing this, the goal is to build upon previous research that cites critical junctures as catalysts for resurgences in ethnonationalist conflict.³³³⁴ How political elites use references to ethnicity, religion, and identity in their rhetoric, as well as the anticipated responses of citizens is vital to this analysis. By tracing the change in discourse before and after Brexit, important conclusions

³¹ Gagnon, Valère Philip. *The myth of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

³² Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern hatreds*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

³³ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

³⁴ Subotić, Jelena. "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change." *Foreign policy analysis* 12, no. 4 (2016): 610-627.

can be drawn regarding the power of destabilizing events, as well as the discursive tools used to gain and maintain popular support during turbulent periods.

Chapter 2: Manifesto Analysis Pre-Brexit

2.1 Unionist Manifestos Pre-Brexit

Regarding party manifestos, one can first look to the pre-Brexit era manifestos of the leading Unionist parties of Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). In the DUP's 2015 Westminster Manifesto before the destabilizing Brexit event, the party introduced a plan for Northern Ireland that included the creation of a fair society, as well as the goal of strengthening and protecting voters' British identities. However, Party Leader Peter Robinson maintained his goal of fighting "for the interests of everyone in Northern Ireland".³⁵ The manifesto describes goals for strengthening the economy, honoring veterans, and improving intergovernmental relations. A revealing part of the manifesto is the portion entitled "Traditions and Identity", which highlights the importance of the flying of the Union Jack in all public buildings, as well as advocated for exchange programs and youth groups with members across the UK's constituent parts.³⁶ Interestingly, the "Traditions and Identity"

³⁵ "DUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/dup_2015-04-21_ge_man.pdf.

³⁶ "DUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/dup_2015-04-21_ge_man.pdf.

portion of this 2015 manifesto has no mention of the multi religious makeup of Northern Ireland, nor does it make any mention of the celebration of identity for all Northern Irish citizens. The DUP proposed that, to safeguard British identity locally, the party will “Sell the benefits of the United Kingdom to the widest audience possible in Northern Ireland” as well as “At every level of government in Northern Ireland defend [their] British cultural heritage”.³⁷ This manifesto is characterized by an obvious lack of discussion of the existence of a non-British-based identity in Northern Ireland, although there are several references to the opposition party Sinn Fein as the cause of political impasse.³⁸ In fact, besides the DUP’s reiteration of the importance of maintaining a strong British identity, one could read this manifesto and be entirely unaware of the Catholic, Nationalist minority.

While the DUP may ignore Northern Ireland’s diverse ethnic makeup, the same cannot be said for the UUP's 2015 manifesto. The text begins with a statement from party leader Mike Nesbitt in which he offers the policy change of mandating that school children begin public education from four years old to offset the prevalence of sectarianism.³⁹ Rather than naming Sinn Fein as the source of internal turmoil in the UK, the UUP places the blame on Scottish Nationalists: “In fact, they have done more to destabilize the Union than Irish Republicanism ever did, and the Scottish Nationalist Party did so without bombs or bullets”.⁴⁰ Climate change, healthcare, and an equitable education system are the pillars of this manifesto. While the DUP

³⁷ "DUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/dup_2015-04-21_ge_man.pdf.

³⁸ Dawson, Graham, Jo Dover, and Stephen Hopkins, eds. *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies and Memories*. Manchester University Press, 2016.

³⁹ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2015-04_ge_man.pdf.

⁴⁰ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2015-04_ge_man.pdf.

forewent any mention of the Irish-identifying population, the UUP do not follow suit: “We acknowledge that many residents of Northern Ireland do not consider themselves to be British; we respect their right to a separate identity, be it Irish or other”.⁴¹ With this acknowledgment, the UUP does attempt to remind voters of the Good Friday Agreement and the importance of Northern Irish citizens remaining in the agreement. For the UUP, adhering to the Agreement represents an important balance that allows for peace-keeping in the post-conflict space.⁴² Lastly, this manifesto includes a small but illuminating section on managing occurrences and assisting victims of terror attacks, noting that the memory of this trauma lives on. “Thirty years of terrorism devastated Northern Ireland and left a legacy that will be acutely felt for many years to come”.⁴³ Although the DUP and the UUP both stand as strong Unionist parties of Northern Ireland, one can clearly see a vast difference in their manifesto in the discussion of the role of identity in Northern Ireland. While the DUP ignores Irish Catholic-identifying citizens as a whole, the UUP makes mention of the ethnic makeup of Northern Ireland multiple times throughout their manifesto and cites the work they pledge to do for victims of terror attacks. Similarly, the party takes a strong stance of acknowledging the lasting collective trauma from The Troubles that exists over 30 years later, while urging citizens to avoid a resurgence of conflict.

⁴¹ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2015-04_ge_man.pdf.

⁴² McGrattan, Cillian, and Stephen Hopkins. "Memory in post-conflict societies: from contention to integration?." (2017): 488-499

⁴³ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2015-04_ge_man.pdf.

2.2 Nationalist Manifestos Pre-Brexit

Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) are regarded as the two most important Nationalist Parties in Northern Ireland today. The Sinn Fein's party manifesto has a striking difference from its Unionist counterparts which is immediately noticeable, the manifesto is bilingually written and includes English as well as the Irish language. The party outlines three major goals for the term which include overcoming austerity measures, successfully rebuilding the economy, and promoting a unified community and a unified Ireland, with an emphasis put on fighting sectarianism and remaining in the European Union.⁴⁴ Sinn Fein made it clear that while their goals include a united Ireland, they were committed to upholding the rights of those who identify as British: "The identities of all citizens must be respected and supported. This includes those who cherish their British identity. A united Ireland must and will deliver and be a place for all our citizens".⁴⁵ The party maintains that a new referendum surrounding the unification of the North and South is a long-standing issue that hasn't been resolved in the way the Good Friday Agreement promised. Furthermore, Sinn Fein places a large importance on the EU for Northern Ireland to maintain its free economic relationship with the South, something the party argues would cause economic suffering if made more complicated. Even in the pre-referendum times, it is unsurprising that Sinn Fein's manifesto included many references to the cultural and economic value of a united Ireland, as this has been their political

⁴⁴ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2015-04-20_ge_man.pdf.

⁴⁵ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2015-04-20_ge_man.pdf.

goal for decades.⁴⁶⁴⁷ Even in the 2015 manifesto, one can foresee the strong political stance the party will take once a referendum materializes in the years following. Although the push for a united state is strong, Sinn Fein's respect for British-identifying citizens can be seen as a recognition of the power of collective identity, and the party seems to understand that the past events of the Troubles make it necessary to proclaim their modern-day ideology of respect for minority rights. Aside from supporting equality of religious groups, Sinn Fein proclaims its ongoing fight against sexism and age discrimination, as well as its opposition to a conscience clause proposed by the DUP, which would allow merchants to refuse service to members of the LGBT community.⁴⁸ The link between ethnonationalism, Unionist Protestantism, and anti-LGBT sentiment is well documented in Northern Ireland, and Unionist parties have been vocal about their support for this type of legislature.⁴⁹ Respect for people regardless of their sexual orientation is a sentiment echoed by the Social Democratic and Labor Party in their 2015 manifesto, where they voice their support for the upholding of human rights, including marriage equality.⁵⁰ The party shares Sinn Fein's desire for a unified community in Northern Ireland that benefits from its relationship with the international community, interestingly proclaiming itself as the only pro-European party in Northern Ireland, although pro-EU sentiment was plentiful in Sinn Fein's manifesto rhetoric. Out of 24 pages, only one page of this manifesto was also

⁴⁶ Cochrane, Feargal. "7 The Incomplete Agreement: The Good Friday Compromise." In *Northern Ireland*, pp 196. Yale University Press, 2021.

⁴⁷ O'Malley, Padraig. "Northern Ireland and South Africa: Hope and History at a Crossroads." (2000).

⁴⁸ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2015-04-20_ge_man.pdf.

⁴⁹ Hayes, Bernadette C., and John Nagle. "Ethnonationalism and attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights in Northern Ireland." (2016): 20-41

⁵⁰ "SDLP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/sdlp_2015-04-15_ge_man.pdf.

transcribed in the Irish language-the portion of which the SLDP highlighted its efforts to uphold the teaching and respect for the language in schools and government alike. Aside from pro-EU sentiment and the SLDP's desire to move forward as a unified community, references to British exploitation and ethnonationalism are not present in the manifesto. That being said, it is likely that the party that proclaims itself as the only pro-European party in Northern Ireland is likely to see large changes in its manifesto rhetoric when the region's EU future is threatened by an impending referendum.

2.3 Alliance Party Manifestos Pre-Brexit

With its 2015 slogan of "Step Forward, Not Back", the Alliance Party has taken on the daunting task of presenting a nonsectarian, unified political background without traditional Unionist or Nationalist ties. The party itself notes the importance of the past and the memory that surrounds it in its manifesto, noting that overcoming the past through integrated schools, mixed communities, and the promotion of equality of religion and language through legislation.⁵¹

⁵²Equality for women, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities is also a large part of the 2015 platform, as is the reconstruction of the economy and improvements to the health care and housing sectors.⁵³ Emerging as a result of the sectarian violence of The Troubles, the Alliance believes in the fluidity of identity and culture, and full loyalty to a singular Unionist or Nationalist identity will never allow Northern Ireland to move past the ethnonationalist

⁵¹ "Alliance Party Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/apni_2015-04-16_ge-man.pdf.

⁵² Coulter, Colin, and Michael Murray, eds. *Northern Ireland after the Troubles: a society in transition*. Manchester University Press, 2013

⁵³ "Alliance Party Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/apni_2015-04-16_ge-man.pdf.

environment in which The Troubles were created.⁵⁴ Although the party's creation was a backlash against ethnonationalism and sectarianism, references to The Troubles do not overwhelm the party's 2015 manifesto. Rather, the manifesto focuses on specific policy plans that will improve Northern Ireland, accompanied with references to the importance of moving forward as a unified community.

Chapter 3: Manifesto Analysis Post-Brexit

3.1 Unionist Manifestos Post-Brexit

After the introduction of Brexit discourse in Northern Irish politics, party leaders made it a focus of their manifestos, and addressed the various concerns of citizens as to how their rights and livelihoods would be impacted by Brexit. Beginning first with the traditionally Unionist parties, DUP's 2019 manifesto provides well-articulated plans on how the Northern Irish economy and society can best benefit from the post-Brexit UK, noting that the party would not accept any deal that harms Northern Ireland's economic standing.⁵⁵ The manifesto's message centers primarily around the creation of a united United Kingdom, while maintaining that the region will ultimately benefit from the non-EU future of the UK as a whole. References to the economy are plentiful, and the DUP focuses on the importance of unrestricted trade between

⁵⁴ Mitchell, David. "Non-nationalist politics in a bi-national consociation: the case of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24, no. 3 (2018): 336-347.

⁵⁵ "DUP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/dup_2019-11-28_ge-man.pdf.

Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and interestingly does not refer to Northern Ireland's trade relationship with the Republic of Ireland. Like the 2015 manifesto, references to non-Unionist identities are not present; the drive for a strong, unified United Kingdom is the theme of this manifesto.⁵⁶ While the DUP may claim to fight for Northern Ireland's union with the UK, fellow Unionist party UUP blames the DUP for weakening Northern Ireland's position in the UK and its failure to oppose a regulatory border.⁵⁷ UUP party leader Steve Aiken delivers a strong opening message, where he insists that the political environment of 2019 has left Northern Ireland in the weakest state of its existence.⁵⁸ Aiken also expresses discontent at the nonfunctional state of Stormont, citing that the two decades that had passed since the signing of the Belfast Agreement should have led to a working assembly and that the lack of existence of one is a democratic failure.⁵⁹ Outlining the party goals, the UUP makes various references to the violence of the past, which was not as salient in the 2015 manifesto. First, the party states their intention to stand against the creation of a body, The Historical Investigations Unit, proposed by the DUP and Sinn Féin. This body would delve into the actions taken by police officers during The Troubles, something the UUP believes is an attempt to rewrite history as it would investigate preliminary law enforcement members, known to have been mostly of Unionist self-identification.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the party claims that the one-sided body would not analyze the

⁵⁶ "DUP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/dup_2019-11-28_ge-man.pdf.

⁵⁷ Barry, J., 2017. Northern Ireland: hardening borders and hardening attitudes. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 66, pp.48-54

⁵⁸ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2019-12-04_ge-man.pdf.

⁵⁹ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2019-12-04_ge-man.pdf.

⁶⁰ Haughey, Sean. "Back to Stormont: The New Decade, New Approach Agreement and What it Means for Northern Ireland." *The Political Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (2020): 134-140.

actions of IRA terrorists, which made up “90 percent of deaths during the Troubles”.⁶¹ Further references to policing are made, with the UUP claiming that the rise of violence in recent times demonstrated a need for more officers. The economic concerns dominated the 2019 Unionist manifestos, but intraparty grievances and the UUP’s references to The Troubles highlight issues that were not discussed in the 2015 political rhetoric. A resurgence in violence and a revisiting of the acts committed by law enforcement during the Troubles highlights the very real impact of the Troubles in the 2019 political and social field, even if the majority of Unionist debate surrounded economic matters related to Brexit.

3.2 Nationalist Manifestos Post-Brexit

For the traditionally Nationalist parties of Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic Labour Party, animosity toward proposed Brexit deals and the parties behind them was to be expected. The Sinn Féin’s “Time For Unity” manifesto begins with a strong message from party leader Mary Lou McDonald, who reinterprets the Good Friday Agreement as having the answer for Brexit deal woes - a united Ireland.⁶² The manifesto centers around the Agreement as being a solution for Brexit, and the party provides data that highlights the support for reunification, especially in the country’s young population.⁶³ Although the primary focus of the manifesto is upholding promises made in the Good Friday Agreement, the party’s stance on the matter of the creation of a Historical Investigation Unit highlights a clear increase in references to collective

⁶¹ "UUP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/uup_2019-12-04_ge-man.pdf.

⁶² "Sinn Féin Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2019-12-02_ge-man.pdf.

⁶³ Wincott, Daniel, Gregory Davies, and Alan Wager. "Crisis, what crisis? Conceptualizing crisis, UK pluri-constitutionalism and Brexit politics." *Regional Studies* (2020): 1-10.

trauma⁶⁴, where the party assures that British forces accused of violence during the Troubles should not receive amnesty.⁶⁵ Sinn Fein claims that the right to be British or Irish, allowed to Northern Irish citizens under the Good Friday Agreement, has been ignored by British legislators as well. This manifesto shows that, for Sinn Fein, Brexit is more than an economic worry, but a question of whether the very identity and political self-determination of Irish people in the north are being ignored. References to past trauma and power dynamics are strong in this provocative manifesto, and the sentiments expressed by the party are likely shared by supporters, allowing for one to understand that a resurgence in matters of identity has been felt as a direct response to the event of Brexit. The pattern of 2019 manifestos centering around party backlash towards Boris Johnson and dissatisfaction with Brexit negotiations continues with the SDLP, with their strong manifesto title of “Stop Boris, Stop Brexit”. The manifesto, just as its UUP counterpart, expresses extreme disappointment at the nonfunctional state of Stormont, and discusses the negative efforts that decision-making outsourcing has had on the country, from health care to regional growth.⁶⁶ Just as in their 2015 manifesto, the SDLP makes a conscious effort to describe the party’s commitment to making Northern Ireland a fair and inclusive community. Furthermore, a section on policing and justice offers more references to “the Past” and discusses the benefits of trauma healing, fair reparations being paid as promised by the Good Friday Agreement, and proper police funding to address the rise in violence.⁶⁷ While the SDLP is not

⁶⁴ Lundy, Patricia, and Mark McGovern. "The politics of memory in post-conflict Northern Ireland." *Peace Review* 13, no. 1 (2001): 27-33.

⁶⁵ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2019-12-02_ge-man.pdf.

⁶⁶ "SDLP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/sdlp_2019-12-04_ge-man.pdf.

⁶⁷ "SDLP Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/sdlp_2019-12-04_ge-man.pdf.

quite as passionate as the Sinn Féin, both Nationalist manifestos' inclusion of Troubles references and violence provides evidence of a certain resurgence in the use of collective memory to justify an identity-based ethnonationalist appeal. While Unionist parties focussed on the economic woes of Brexit deals, Nationalist politicians took aim at the Good Friday Agreement.

3.3 Alliance Party Manifestos Post-Brexit

The sentiment of wanting a more positive deal for the north is echoed in the Alliance party's "Demand More" 2019 manifesto, where party leader Naomi Long immediately cites the societal division that Brexit has produced. With the nature of the Alliance party being to bridge the communities of Northern Ireland, Long seems to be aware of the increased use of references to collective memory that has come out of Brexit, citing the state's diversity as strength: "It is something to be celebrated rather than exploited to divide us".⁶⁸ Besides upholding the Good Friday Agreement alongside other parties, Alliance's pro-European status places them against Brexit as a whole. Economic and social consequences are discussed, and the manifesto focuses on the protection of EU-granted rights for both Irish and British citizens of Northern Ireland. A broader discussion of a more inclusive society is presented, with a desire for integrated communities and schools, as well as allowing for higher levels of inclusion regarding government decisions.⁶⁹ For the Alliance party, references to past trauma and identity are evidence that an integrated Northern Ireland will have increased economic, social and political success. Now more than ever, the goal of the Alliance Party creation seems highly challenging.

⁶⁸ "Alliance Party Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/apni_2019-11-25_ge-man.pdf.

⁶⁹ Alliance Party Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/apni_2019-11-25_ge-man.pdf.

Brexit has proved to further divide the state, and the task of spreading inclusion for Alliance comes along with a Brexit deal that benefits Northern Ireland and upholds rights allocated to its citizens through the Good Friday Agreement.

Chapter 4: Speech Analysis Pre-Brexit

4.1 Unionist Speeches Pre-Brexit

The first selected speech of the DUP was delivered by 2013 party leader Peter Robinson, at the Mayoral Installation dinner in October. This speech centers around the future of Unionism, and Robinson himself notes that moving forward, in terms of shared education and making political compromises is key for a successful party and country as well. Noting the state of the Union at the time, Robinson describes the Republican parties' inability to convince voters of the future benefit of a united Ireland, something that certainly changed with the introduction of

Brexit.⁷⁰ The speech moves to the discussion of the Belfast City Hall's lowering of the Union Flag, and Robinson notes the division that this action caused in the community. The resulting protests were supported by Robinson as a means of upholding personal liberties, but he notes that violence serves no interests, and is self-defeating.⁷¹ For the party leader, Unionism is an amalgamation of ever-changing interests and supports a diverse percentage of the population. Regarding identity and collective experiences, Robinson notes "Nobody can take our culture away from us. It's within us. It's our values. It's our art and music. It's our beliefs. It's our history. It's how we express ourselves. It's our way of life. Outsiders might try – and from time to time succeed – in limiting our cultural expression in a specific place or manner but they have no power to stop us increasing our expression in other ways".⁷² Although the speech includes numerous references to Union exceptionalism, the party leader makes clear that both unionist and nationalist leaders must move forward and seek mutual respect that will uphold positive community relations. While Robinson upholds the values of his party, he notes that cooperation and unity between both party alliances is the only method of creating a prosperous future for Northern Ireland.⁷³

⁷⁰ Doyle, John, and Eileen Connolly. "Brexit and the Northern Ireland question." In *The law & politics of Brexit*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

⁷¹ Robinson, Peter. "Castlereagh Borough Council's Mayoral Installation Dinner Address" Transcript of speech delivered at Mayoral Installation Dinner, Castlereagh, UK, October 18, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/pr_2013-10-18.htm

⁷² Robinson, Peter. "Castlereagh Borough Council's Mayoral Installation Dinner Address" Transcript of speech delivered at Mayoral Installation Dinner, Castlereagh, UK, October 18, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/pr_2013-10-18.htm

⁷³ Robinson, Peter. "Castlereagh Borough Council's Mayoral Installation Dinner Address" Transcript of speech delivered at Mayoral Installation Dinner, Castlereagh, UK, October 18, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/pr_2013-10-18.htm

2015 saw the election of the new DUP party leader, Arlene Foster, who cited her predecessor's many achievements and positive actions as party leader. For Foster, references to the Troubles in her victory speech were salient, presented through the lens of peace and democracy overcoming the harmful effects of terrorism. Furthermore, the loss of life that was experienced as a result is presented by Foster as a sacrifice for Northern Ireland securing a place in the United Kingdom, and this must be appreciated.⁷⁴ The speech's central theme depicts the opportunity of the future of Northern Ireland to be vastly different from the horrors of the past, through Union political action. Maintaining that a united Ireland was a vision of the past and Northern Ireland's best chance for success is in the United Kingdom, Foster notes "We aren't held back by the Troubles. Or the inability to shape our destiny. We don't need to look to anyone else for help. Or point the finger of blame in another direction. Our future is in our own hands".⁷⁵ Foster concluded that without a dedication to a united community, a return to conflict is inevitable. She ends her speech with the hope that other party members share a similar willingness for cooperation.

The UUP's annual conference in October of 2013 saw the address of party leader Mike Nesbitt, and his direct references to the Troubles, including a discussion of Sinn Fein party leader Gerry Adams IRA ties.⁷⁶ Delving into the events of the past, Nesbitt is not afraid to place blame on Republicans for the deaths of the Troubles and notes the strong division that is still

⁷⁴ Foster, Arlene. "2015 Speech Following her Election" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on December 17, 2015. <https://www.ukpol.co.uk/arlene-foster-2015-speech-following-her-election/>

⁷⁵ Foster, Arlene. "2015 Speech Following her Election" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on December 17, 2015. <https://www.ukpol.co.uk/arlene-foster-2015-speech-following-her-election/>

⁷⁶ Hopkins, Stephen. "The life history of an exemplary Provisional republican: Gerry Adams and the politics of biography." *Irish Political Studies* 33, no. 2 (2018): 259-277.

experienced in Northern Irish political and social life.⁷⁷ Although this speech is highly pro-unionist, Nesbitt references his own identity as being fluid and diverse, as a man identifying as British, Irish, Ulster, and European. To Nesbitt, the matter of selfhood goes beyond siding with the Catholic or Protestant religion, and he notes the shared experience of many Northern Irish citizens whose upbringing has led to multifaceted identities as well.⁷⁸

In Nesbitt's speech regarding the flag protests of 2013, resulting from the Belfast City Hall removing the Union Jack flag, he makes clear his perception of the anger of unionist voters. Respecting their liberty to protest yet condemning acts of violence, Nesbitt blames the Sinn Féin for exploiting the divided society for its gain, and not supporting a unified state.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Nesbitt claims that some Republican supporters engage in murderous violence, and have incited conflict due to the flag protest in a predominantly unionist neighborhood of Belfast.⁸⁰ As a strong Union supporter, Nesbitt's response to the removal of the flag and subsequent violence is not unexpected. From his divisive speech that referenced past violence, one can see the power of a key political event, such as the flag removal, to result in a resurgence of ethnonationalist

⁷⁷ Nesbitt, Mike. "Speech by Mike Nesbitt, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Annual Conference" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on December 19, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/mn_2013-10-19.htm

⁷⁸ Nesbitt, Mike. "Speech by Mike Nesbitt, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Annual Conference" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on December 19, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/mn_2013-10-19.htm

⁷⁹ Nesbitt, Mike. "Statement by Mike Nesbitt, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), about the flag protests" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on January 6, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/mn_2013-10-19.htm

⁸⁰ Nesbitt, Mike. "Statement by Mike Nesbitt, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), about the flag protests" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on January 6, 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/mn_2013-10-19.htm

conflict.⁸¹ The power of identity and the symbols that represent it become clear in Nesbitt's response to this event, and memories of the past that were reignited through it.

The discussion of the flag protests and the choice of Belfast City Hall to lower the Union Jack, certainly dominated cross-party discourse in 2013. In January of 2013, SDLP Belfast City Council Group leader Tim Attwood spoke about the loyalist supporters that blocked streets in protest, and both loyalists and "dissident Republicans" threatened the safety of officers.⁸² This short speech focuses on the need for resilience and bipartisan cooperation between unions and national parties. Mutual respect for the multiple identities that constitute Northern Ireland, as well as the SDLP's commitment to equality and social justice characterize this speech. Departing from previous Unionist party speeches on the flag protests, Attwood maintained an air of cooperation and problem-solving, rather than placing blame on any one group for the violence.

4.2 Nationalist Speeches Pre-Brexit

A similar sentiment of cooperation was conveyed in the 2015 SDLP conference speech by party leader Alasdair McDonnell, who remarked that uniting Protestant and Catholic citizens takes tremendous effort, but is necessary to create a symbiotic future society.⁸³ McDonnell notes that the pain of the past violence does still linger, but the SDLP's values of "Reconciliation, Prosperity and Social Justice" ensure a long-term solution to the state's problems and benefit citizens who need politicians that choose to work for them. For McDonnell, attention to the

⁸¹ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

⁸² Atwood, Tim.. "Statement by Tim Attwood, then SDLP Belfast City Council Group Leader, about the flag protests" Transcript of speech delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on January 6, 2013. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/ta060113.htm>

⁸³ McDonnell, Alasdair. "Alasdair McDonnell's lunchtime speech as SDLP leader – renewal and rebuilding" Transcript of speech delivered at the SDLP conference in Armagh, Northern Ireland on November 14, 2015. <https://sluggerotoole.com/2015/11/14/alasdair-mcdonnells-lunchtime-speech-as-sdlp-leader-renewal-and-rebuilding-sdlp15/>

current economy and well-being of citizens is just as crucial as managing the trauma of the past and thwarting future paramilitary activity.⁸⁴ Regarding the future of a united Ireland, McDonnell notes that only peace in Northern Ireland can lead to a prosperous future for the entire island. Part of this peace comes from the proper support for victims, and the SDLP favors the creation of the Historical Investigation Unit, much to the disapproval, according to McDonnell, of the British government.⁸⁵ This speech contains many instances of Irish nationalism, but the overarching theme of McDonnell's words is the importance of equality and integration in the future, which can be achieved by resolving conflict from the past.

The past violence is referenced in Sinn Féin Vice President Martin McGuinness's annual peace lecture in 2013, which commemorated the violence in Warrington that occurred in 1993.⁸⁶ In addressing the IRA bombs that took the lives of two children, McGuinness's words are full of remorse and for the tragedy that all parents who lost children during the Troubles experienced.⁸⁷ The speech centers around the process of reconciliation, which involves mutual forgiveness and understanding. The Warrington Peace Centre focuses on teaching peaceful conflict resolution, and members closely associated with the tragedies of the conflict have been crucial figures in the Peace Process. McGuinness describes how the use of past trauma by politicians should not be tolerated, noting "Some politicians have sought to use victims for their political ends. This is

⁸⁴ McDonnell, Alasdair. "Alasdair McDonnell's lunchtime speech as SDLP leader – renewal and rebuilding" Transcript of speech delivered at the SDLP conference in Armagh, Northern Ireland on November 14, 2015. <https://sluggerotoole.com/2015/11/14/alasdair-mcdonnells-lunchtime-speech-as-sdlp-leader-renewal-and-rebuilding-sdlp15/>

⁸⁵ McDonnell, Alasdair. "Alasdair McDonnell's lunchtime speech as SDLP leader – renewal and rebuilding" Transcript of speech delivered at the SDLP conference in Armagh, Northern Ireland on November 14, 2015. <https://sluggerotoole.com/2015/11/14/alasdair-mcdonnells-lunchtime-speech-as-sdlp-leader-renewal-and-rebuilding-sdlp15/>

⁸⁶ Lelourec, Lesley. "Responding to the IRA bombing campaign in mainland Britain: The case of Warrington." In *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain*. Manchester University Press, 2016

⁸⁷ McGuinness, Martin. "Speech by Martin McGuinness, then Sinn Féin Vice President, the Annual Peace Lecture" Transcript of speech delivered at the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Centre in Warrington, England, 18 September 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mmcg_2013-09-18.htm

wrong on every level. The past cannot be allowed to destabilize the future. But it must inform our path to a better future”.⁸⁸ The speech centers around the transformation of once-violent figures and regions, noting that respect and compromise will lead to a peaceful society. Political cooperation, and fighting for peace in the name of victims of past conflict, can achieve this.

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams, at the Sinn Féin party conference of April 2013, recognized Republican efforts to secure the Good Friday Agreement, noting the inclusion of a border poll on Irish unity. After outlining much-needed changes to austerity measures, healthcare, and quality of life in rural Ireland, Adams discusses the ongoing dialogue between Loyalists and Unionists regarding the flag controversy.⁸⁹ Adams remarked that those in impoverished communities would suffer most from resurgence of violence. The power of the flag protests to reignite tensions has been remarked upon by nearly every party and proves the existence of ethnonationalist sentiment that lies under the surface of peace in a post-conflict society.

4.3 Alliance Party Speeches Pre-Brexit

An insightful discussion of the flag protests is brought forth by Alliance Party leader David Ford, in a January 2013 statement, in which he calls on all five party members to discuss how to remain committed to peaceful conflict resolution.⁹⁰ Ford outlines the impact of the resurgence of violence, noting that community members must consider the safety of remaining in

⁸⁸ McGuinness, Martin. “Speech by Martin McGuinness, then Sinn Féin Vice President, the Annual Peace Lecture” Transcript of speech delivered at the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Centre in Warrington, England, 18 September 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mmcsf_2013-09-18.htm

⁸⁹ Adams, Gerry. “Speech by Gerry Adams, then President of Sinn Féin, to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis” Transcript of speech delivered at the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Castlebar, County Mayo, 13 April 2013. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/ga_2013-04-13.htm

⁹⁰ Ford, David. “Statement by David Ford, then leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), about the protests over the Union Flag at Belfast City Hall” Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland, 6 January 2013. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/df060113.htm>

Northern Ireland. A resurgence of paramilitary involvement and numerous instances of destroyed property and violence demanded a collaborative solution from all party members, according to Ford.⁹¹ Ford's statement proves the damaging impact that reignited conflict has on citizens and outlines the volatility of the country that certainly comes at a price to the economy, political environment, and society as a whole.

Later in the same month, the Alliance released a blueprint on the creation of a shared future, noting that the Assembly and the Executive must both be committed to the society's transformation.⁹² Party leader Ford explains the significance surrounding flags and parades and notes that they are symbolic of the divide of identities and loyalties in the state.⁹³ The Alliance believes that violence occurring as a result of flag or parade-related issues will continue after a radical societal change, one that comes from the collaboration of all Northern Irish parties. The cost of a divided society is too great, and a truly inclusive future is the only long-term solution against the reinstatement of an identity-fueled conflict.

⁹¹ Ford, David. "Statement by David Ford, then leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), about the protests over the Union Flag at Belfast City Hall" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland, 6 January 2013. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/df060113.htm>

⁹² Alliance Party. "Alliance Unveils Blueprint to Deliver Change for Everyone" Transcript of press release delivered on 29 January 2013. <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/df060113.htm>

⁹³ Bryan, Dominic. *Orange parades: The politics of ritual, tradition and control*. Pluto Press, 2000

Chapter 5: Speech Analysis Post- Brexit

5.1 Unionist Speeches Post-Brexit

In Arlene Foster's 2017 DUP executive meeting speech, she focused on the success of the party and made certain to highlight the many reasons why Northern Ireland belongs to the United Kingdom.⁹⁴ This speech was steeped in references to identity and belonging, and Foster noted that the most crucial argument for the Union's value did not lie in economic matters, but rather in matters of collective identity and national pride, such as music, literature, and art.⁹⁵ To Foster, remaining a part of the Union best serves all of Northern Ireland's citizens, not only Unionists. She addresses the identity of Irish-identifying citizens, where she assured party members that meetings with Irish language groups gave her confidence that they pose no threat to Unionism. However, regarding the use of the language in Northern Ireland, she maintained that her party will not accept "one-sided demands", remarking that many issues of identity are unsolved, even noting that the preoccupation of these problems kept Northern Ireland from participating in Brexit talks.⁹⁶ In a precarious time for Brexit and Northern Ireland's future, Foster focused on reigniting a passion for the shared identity of Unionists. The unity of party supporters seemed to trump the lesser, albeit present, desire for Northern Irish community unity.

⁹⁴ Foster, Arlene. "Speech by DUP Leader Arlene Foster to Party Executive members" Transcript of speech delivered at the DUP Executive meeting in South Belfast, Northern Ireland on September 1, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/af_2017-08-31_speech_w.pdf

⁹⁵ Foster, Arlene. "Speech by DUP Leader Arlene Foster to Party Executive members" Transcript of speech delivered at the DUP Executive meeting in South Belfast, Northern Ireland on September 1, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/af_2017-08-31_speech_w.pdf

⁹⁶ Foster, Arlene. "Speech by DUP Leader Arlene Foster to Party Executive members" Transcript of speech delivered at the DUP Executive meeting in South Belfast, Northern Ireland on September 1, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/af_2017-08-31_speech_w.pdf

As of April 28th, 2021, Arlene Foster resigned from her position in the DUP. Noting the successes and setbacks of her career with the DUP, Foster's resignation is free of internal and external party blame, and she encouraged young people, especially young women, to pay little mind to "online lynch mobs" and pursue their political careers.⁹⁷ Diverging significantly from her 2017 speech on the unity and power of Unionists, Foster shares her future desire for a unified society, noting "There are people in Northern Ireland with a British identity, others are Irish, others are Northern Irish, others are a mixture of all three and some are new and emerging. We must all learn to be generous to each other, live together, and share this wonderful country".

⁹⁸Foster's resignation from her role as DUP Party Leader and First Minister came after internal party conflict, including disagreements among religious party members regarding the banning of gay conversion practices and backlash regarding the ongoing border dispute.⁹⁹ A lack of sentiment of identity and unity in Foster's resignation may be explained by the DUP's internal disagreement and public scrutiny.

Ulster Unionist Party MLA John Stewart delivered the 2018 speech on the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, where he was swift to address "fake news" and "rewriting of history", as it pertained to the Sinn Fein who, according to Stewart, did not play a pivotal role in the conclusion of the Belfast Agreement.¹⁰⁰ Stewart notes that the Agreement was

⁹⁷ Foster, Arlene. "Arlene Foster: Full statement of resignation" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 28, 2021. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/arlene-foster-full-statement-of-resignation-1.4550267>

⁹⁸ Foster, Arlene. "Arlene Foster: Full statement of resignation" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 28, 2021. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/arlene-foster-full-statement-of-resignation-1.4550267>

⁹⁹ Carroll, Rory. 2021. "Why Is Arlene Foster Stepping Down As Leader Of The DUP?". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/28/why-is-the-dup-preparing-to-dump-arlene-foster>.

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, John. "Statement by John Stewart, then Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) MLA, on the 20th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 10, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/js_2018-04-10.pdf

an exercise of compromise, although it would uphold the right for Northern Ireland to remain in the Union if the majority wished it so. The backlash against the Sinn Fein, which was not as prevalent in pre-Brexit speeches, could very likely be explained by the Sinn Fein's prolific use of references to the Agreement in their manifestos, speeches, and political arguments surrounding Brexit.¹⁰¹ The intersection of matters of identity, loyalty, and legislation are clearly present in the discourse during the Brexit era, from party members and those they wished to gain support from.

Further support for unionism can be found in UUP Party Leader Robin Swann's 2018 Spring Conference speech, where he outlines the benefits of Union membership for all Northern Irish citizens. The success and security of the United Kingdom, and the responsibility for supporters to strengthen it, characterize this address.¹⁰² Swann notes the value and reward of British loyalty throughout the speech, while maintaining his support for diversity and free expression, being sure to chastise fellow Unionist party DUP for the distribution of racist materials and Islamophobic sentiment¹⁰³ Swann outlines numerous plans to improve Northern Ireland, which will, in turn, improve the Union as a whole. He also remarks upon the possibility of a united Ireland, stating that parties who exploit Brexit negotiation drawbacks to support unification efforts are "selfish".¹⁰⁴ Post-Brexit UUP rhetoric, not unlike what was seen from the

¹⁰¹ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2019-12-02_ge-man.pdf.

¹⁰² Swann, Robin. "Speech by Robin Swann, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Conference" Transcript of statement delivered in Newcastle on April 7, 2018.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/rs_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

¹⁰³ Scott, Jane. 2018. "DUP Is Hit By Second Islamophobic Twitter Storm In Days As Bradley Says Sorry For Post". *Belfasttelegraph*. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/dup-is-hit-by-second-islamophobic-twitter-storm-in-days-as-bradley-says-sorry-for-post-36775800.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Swann, Robin. "Speech by Robin Swann, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Conference" Transcript of statement delivered in Newcastle on April 7, 2018.
https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/rs_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

DUP, seems to rely on the extensive promotion of British identity and the value of the Union, as well as placing blame on other parties, namely the Sinn Féin, for exploiting the matter of Brexit and the Good Friday Agreement to advance their own agenda¹⁰⁵.

5.2 Nationalist Speeches Post-Brexit

Rather than placing the blame of Brexit failures and the downfall of Stormont on an opposing party, Colum Eastwood humbly addressed his party during the 2018 SDLP conference. Eastwood noted that certain blame is shared by all Northern Irish parties for the lack of government and representation in Brexit negotiations, and argued that upholding the Good Friday Agreement and reinstating a functional government must be prioritized.¹⁰⁶ His address notes the calamitous effects of Stormont's failure, economic and social hardship for citizens, leading to social conflict and unrest. Brexit's uncertainty has left the future of Ireland unstable, though Eastwood remarks on the hope in the state's young people. The SDLP believes that modern Northern Ireland cannot be built on the memory of historical wrongdoing, and the peaceful progress of individuals since the Troubles must not be ignored.¹⁰⁷ While Eastwood's speech contains numerous references to identity and the collective memory of the Troubles, he draws the lesson that while new Northern Ireland must respect the events of the path, it must look to an optimistic future of peace and collaboration.

¹⁰⁵ Barry, J., 2017. Northern Ireland: hardening borders and hardening attitudes. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 66, pp.48-54

¹⁰⁶ Eastwood, Colum. "Speech by Colum Eastwood, then Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), to the SDLP annual conference, in Titanic Belfast" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on April 7, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/ce_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Eastwood, Colum. "Speech by Colum Eastwood, then Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), to the SDLP annual conference, in Titanic Belfast" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on April 7, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/ce_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

In his second address regarding the Good Friday Agreement, Eastwood describes the need for renewal and review of the Agreement. Citing the fact that the matters of Stormont and Brexit negotiations are far less volatile than the conflict the Agreement aimed to resolve, the Party Leader notes the philosophies of “power-sharing, partnership, and cooperation” that are found in the document can inspire similar conflict resolution today.¹⁰⁸ It becomes clear the SDLP’s references to the Troubles and the Good Friday Agreement are centered around conflict resolution efforts that so many embodied, with the hope that the future will see a similar sentiment of cooperation and peace.

Then-President of the Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, remarks upon the 2017 anniversary of the death of Louis Leonard, a victim of Troubles violence.¹⁰⁹ Adams notes that the experiences of victims and survivors ranged greatly, citing his own personal experience with death during the years of conflict.¹¹⁰ The spirit of reconciliation characterizes this address, and Adams chastises the British government’s lack of support for a government body that could allow survivors to gain knowledge of family trauma, with the hopes of finding peace.¹¹¹ Adams notes that the past and its memory continue to be felt, “The reality is that the past is not another distant country; it shapes our lives, our politics, and our present”.¹¹² This impactful speech centers around

¹⁰⁸ Eastwood, Colum. “Statement by Colum Eastwood, then Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), on the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement” Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on April 10, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sdlp/ce_2018-04-10_text.pdf

¹⁰⁹ “Unanswered Questions Over The Death Of Louis Leonard | An Phoblacht”. 1997. *Anphoblacht.Com*. <https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/2957>.

¹¹⁰ Adams, Gerry. “The future requires a process of reconciliation’ - Speech by Gerry Adams, then President of Sinn Féin, at the Louis Leonard commemorative lecture” Transcript of statement delivered in Fermanagh on December 15, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/ga_2017-12-15_speech.pdf

¹¹¹ Adams, Gerry. “The future requires a process of reconciliation’ - Speech by Gerry Adams, then President of Sinn Féin, at the Louis Leonard commemorative lecture” Transcript of statement delivered in Fermanagh on December 15, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/ga_2017-12-15_speech.pdf

¹¹² Adams, Gerry. “The future requires a process of reconciliation’ - Speech by Gerry Adams, then President of Sinn Féin, at the Louis Leonard commemorative lecture” Transcript of statement delivered in Fermanagh on December 15, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/ga_2017-12-15_speech.pdf

forgiveness and the nurturing of peace, and upholding the memory of past victims by actively practicing inclusion and standing firm against violent conflict.

Current Sinn Fein party leader, Mary Lou McDonald, was firm in her dislike for Boris Johnson's Brexit negotiations in her 2019 speech in Belfast. Stating that the rights and best interests of all Northern Irish citizens were not being upheld, McDonald remarked that the Good Friday Agreement was being tarnished, and Northern Irish progress was heading backward.¹¹³ The speech delves into the behavior of the DUP, and their desire to uphold the Union over Northern Ireland. The obvious divide in politics and identity leads McDonald to reiterate that Irish Unity is the path to a Northern Irish future in the EU, something McDonald refuses to apologize for supporting.¹¹⁴ The immense divide that is felt by Sinn Fein can be characterized by one of McDonald's final remarks, "It is the choice between the narrow negative self-serving divisive decisions taken by 'little Englanders' in Westminster. Or a shared inclusive future in which we take our own decisions together in the interests of the people of this island".¹¹⁵ strong sentiments in this address come in response to remarks of the DUP and UUP that seem to uphold British exceptionalism. Sinn Fein's nationalist response further highlights the political and social divide that Brexit has exacerbated in Northern Ireland¹¹⁶.

¹¹³ McDonald, Mary Lou. "Dublin must plan for Irish Unity" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on July 30th, 2019. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mcdonald_2019-07-30_speech.pdf

¹¹⁴ McDonald, Mary Lou. "Dublin must plan for Irish Unity" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on July 30th, 2019. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mcdonald_2019-07-30_speech.pdf

¹¹⁵ McDonald, Mary Lou. "Dublin must plan for Irish Unity" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on July 30th, 2019. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mcdonald_2019-07-30_speech.pdf

¹¹⁶ Barry, J., 2017. Northern Ireland: hardening borders and hardening attitudes. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, 66, pp.48-54

5.3 Alliance Party Speeches Post-Brexit

In a sentiment also shared by the SDLP, Alliance Party Leader Naomi Long notes that amidst political turmoil and a lack of a functioning assembly, politicians and citizens must recall the immense conflict they have previously overcome.¹¹⁷ Like the SDLP, the Alliance Party wishes to honor the Good Friday Agreement's resolution nature and apply its stipulations for matters related to Stormont as well as Brexit. In her 2019 Alliance conference address, Long remarks again on the need for a functional government, one where outsourcing of decisions does not occur.¹¹⁸ Being a party founded on the principles of non-identification with either Unionism or Nationalism, Alliance criticized the DUP's support for a hard border, as well as Sinn Fein's exploitation of the matter to further their goal of Irish unification.¹¹⁹ The Alliance stands firmly against sectarianism, which proves more challenging in the age of Brexit than ever before. Alliance's negative response to the DUP and Sinn Fein's reaction to Brexit, and their use of political exploitation to achieve their aims, further showcases the deep divide that has stemmed as a result of Brexit. For a party that aims to ally Northern Irish voters, Brexit could serve as a tremendously difficult time to win support from citizens who feel their rights, identities, and safeguarded futures are not being upheld. However, perhaps the tumultuous events of Stormont's failure and the bleakness of Brexit negotiations could convince voters that a nonsectarian party

¹¹⁷ Long, Naomi "Statement by Naomi Long, then leader of Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), on the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement "Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on April 10th, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/apni/nl_2018-04-10.pdf

¹¹⁸ Long, Naomi "Naomi Long's Leader's Speech at the Alliance Conference "Transcript of statement delivered at the Stormont Hotel in Belfast on March 2, 2019. <https://d3n8a8pro7vbm.cloudfront.net/allianceparty/pages/3583/attachments/original/1554236841/naomi-long-mla-s-speech-to-alliance-conference-2019.pdf?1554236841>

¹¹⁹ Long, Naomi "Naomi Long's Leader's Speech at the Alliance Conference "Transcript of statement delivered at the Stormont Hotel in Belfast on March 2, 2019. <https://d3n8a8pro7vbm.cloudfront.net/allianceparty/pages/3583/attachments/original/1554236841/naomi-long-mla-s-speech-to-alliance-conference-2019.pdf?1554236841>

could aid in narrowing the divide that has been recently widened in Northern Irish politics and society.

Reflections on Findings and Conclusion

The changing dynamic of political life in Northern Ireland since Brexit can be found in the words and texts of the parties that fight to gain support for their goals for the future of the country. Brexit has proven to be a critical juncture in reanimating the discussion of loyalty, ethnonationalism, and even the discussion of a united Ireland- all symbolized by the resurgence of the Good Friday Agreement as a legislative tool to test the legitimacy of Brexit propositions.¹²⁰ Tasked with maintaining loyalty from Unionists amidst backlash regarding broken Brexit promises, it is clear that Unionist politicians have significantly increased their pro-British sentiment in their speeches and manifestos, often using emotional appeals to the collective identity and memory of Northern Irish Voters.¹²¹ The waning popularity of the DUP,

¹²⁰ Cochrane, Feargal. "7 The Incomplete Agreement: The Good Friday Compromise." In *Northern Ireland*, pp. 189-224. Yale University Press, 2021.

¹²¹ Swann, Robin. "Speech by Robin Swann, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Conference" Transcript of statement delivered in Newcastle on April 7, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/rs_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

due to their position supporting the British government as a member of the Conservative ruling coalition, had led to a tremendous increase in references toward British exceptionalism. While the UUP can gain support from Unionists who feel underrepresented by the DUP, the strategy of the DUP seems clear- to make certain that voters recognize the value of not only Union membership, but British identity. For the DUP, the fight to secure Northern Ireland's spot in the Union must be respected by loyalty from voters in the time of Brexit.¹²²

Nationalist parties, finding the stipulations of the Good Friday Agreement in jeopardy, have responded by bringing the Agreement to the center of the political arena, using it as a mechanism with which to weigh possible Brexit outcomes.¹²³ For Sinn Fein, the opportunity arose to frame Brexit as a problem with only one solution- Irish unification.¹²⁴ A plethora of references to collective memory and identity can be found within this argument, as Sinn Fein suggests that another period of ethnonationalism could result from the existent divide.¹²⁵ Unionist politicians, such as Robin Swann, critique the party for its emotional appeals and for exploiting Brexit to achieve its political aims.¹²⁶

¹²² Foster, Arlene. "Speech by DUP Leader Arlene Foster to Party Executive members" Transcript of speech delivered at the DUP Executive meeting in South Belfast, Northern Ireland on September 1, 2017. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/dup/af_2017-08-31_speech_w.pdf

¹²³ Cochrane, Feargal. "7 The Incomplete Agreement: The Good Friday Compromise." In *Northern Ireland*, pp. 189-224. Yale University Press, 2021

¹²⁴ "Sinn Fein Westminster Manifesto 2019". 2019. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/sf_2019-12-02_ge-man.pdf.
"UUP Westminster Manifesto 2015". 2015. *Cain.Ulster.Ac.Uk*.

¹²⁵ McDonald, Mary Lou. "Dublin must plan for Irish Unity" Transcript of statement delivered in Belfast on July 30th, 2019. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/sf/mcdonald_2019-07-30_speech.pdf

¹²⁶ Swann, Robin. "Speech by Robin Swann, then leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), to the UUP Conference" Transcript of statement delivered in Newcastle on April 7, 2018. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/uup/rs_2018-04-07_speech.pdf

In the words of both Unionist and Nationalist parties, it becomes clear that the Brexit era gave way to an increase in appeals to collective memory, be it the fight to remain in the Union or the despair of a partitioned state that could one day be unified. This micro-case serves as a salient example of the theories of Gagnon and Kaufman, both showing how elites gain support to maintain power, as well as how emotional appeals have the power to increase sentiment towards the in-group and widen the divide between two factions of society.¹²⁷¹²⁸ In addition to these theories, the case of Brexit and Northern Ireland also serves as a notable example of a critical political juncture. Northern Irish parties have proven their power to craft narratives that suit their needs, and the case of Brexit presents itself as a strong example of a traumatic event that demanded a narrative adjustment from Unionist and Nationalist parties.¹²⁹ The shift in narratives from pre-Brexit to post-Brexit years highlight the significance of this narrative change, and the importance of Brexit as a destabilizing event. If the Good Friday Agreement created an environment of stability and peace, Brexit has served as a means of jeopardizing this, thus leading to a return to conflict.¹³⁰

While each party may strive to uphold different interpretations of the Good Friday Agreement, be it Union membership or the chance for Irish unity, each party is tasked with crafted a narrative based upon collective memory and identity. In doing so, the evocation of past strife is adjusted to suit the threats of the modern-day. Northern Ireland has been viewed as a peace-building success by much of the international community, and the collaborative efforts of

¹²⁷ Gagnon, Valère Philip. *The myth of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, 2013.

¹²⁸ Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern hatreds*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

¹²⁹ Subotić, Jelena. "Narrative, ontological security, and foreign policy change." *Foreign policy analysis* 12, no. 4 (2016): 610-627.

¹³⁰ Jenne, Erin K. *Nested security: Lessons in conflict management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Cornell University Press, 2015.

the Good Friday Agreement are certainly commendable. In analyzing the speeches and manifestos of its parties, one can see the significance that critical, destabilizing junctures have on the resurgence of ethnonationalism and utilization of collective memory in post-conflict states. While some parties in the North advocate for a unified state that seeks to reconcile from the wounds of the past, the collective memory of trauma manages to persevere in the political and social lives of citizens. While conflict often remains dormant, its resurgence during destabilizing events shows the lasting power of collective memory.

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