

TREBALL DE RECERCA

An Approximation to Brexit in Northern Ireland

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Abstract-Resum:

Aquest Treball de Recerca està centrat en esbrinar la manera en què el Regne Unit gestiona la seva sortida de la Unió Europea a Irlanda del Nord. Per poder fer una aproximació adequada a aquesta situació política i social, s'ha estudiat, d'una banda, la història recent de la regió i l'acord que va posar fi als anys de violència. D'altra banda, s'ha analitzat l'acord que determina una sortida ordenada de la Unió Europea i el procés en si, fent esment especial de les qüestions que afecten la frontera entre Irlanda del Nord i la República d'Irlanda.

El treball de recerca consta de les següents parts.

En primer lloc, l'apartat "Theory" inclou una breu història d'Irlanda, principalment enfocada als moments clau, per contextualitzar la resta del treball. A continuació, la segona secció de la teoria consisteix en un resum del Good Friday Agreement i del Withdrawal Agreement, els acords que han determinat la història recent d'Irlanda del Nord. Al final de la part teòrica hi ha la selecció de dos diaris per a la part pràctica.

En segon lloc, la part pràctica "Praxis" està dividida en dues principals seccions: una comparació de dos punts de vista i un eix cronològic. La primera secció conté quatre comparacions de dos diaris, un britànic i un irlandès, en quatre moments clau. La segona part de la pràctica consisteix en la presentació d'un eix cronològic que resumeix visualment el procés de retirada del Regne Unit de la Unió Europea.

Cal destacar que, d'entre les múltiples conclusions, allò que crida l'atenció és el fet que dos mitjans de comunicació puguin assemblar-se en certs aspectes i ser, al mateix temps, completament oposats en d'altres. A més, una altra conclusió interessant és constatar que trobar una solució a problemes de caire social o polític és extremadament complicat. Tanmateix, el principal resultat d'aquest Treball de Recerca és que el procés conegut com a Brexit ha causat un augment de les tensions polítiques a Irlanda del Nord.

Resumen:

Este Trabajo de Investigación está centrado en conocer la manera en la que el Reino Unido gestiona su salida de la Unión Europea en Irlanda del Norte. Para poder hacer una aproximación adecuada a esta situación política y social, se ha estudiado, por un lado, la historia reciente de la región y el acuerdo que puso fin a los años de violencia. Por otro lado, se ha analizado el acuerdo que determina una salida ordenada de la Unión Europea y el proceso en si, considerando en especial las cuestiones que afectan a la frontera entre Irlanda del Norte y la República de Irlanda.

Una sección de la parte práctica de esta investigación ha consistido en comparar las publicaciones de ciertas noticias en *The Times* y *The Irish Independent*, dos medios que ven el conflicto, aparentemente, desde puntos de vista distintos. La otra sección práctica ha consistido en elaborar un eje cronológico que resuma el proceso del Brexit.

Merece la pena destacar que, de entre las múltiples conclusiones, algo que llama la atención es el hecho que dos medios de comunicación puedan parecerse en ciertos aspectos y ser, a la vez, completamente opuestos en otros. Además, otra conclusión interesante es constatar que encontrar una solución a problemas sociales o políticos es extremadamente complicado. Asimismo, el principal resultado de este Trabajo de Investigación es que el proceso conocido como Brexit ha causado un aumento de las tensiones políticas en Irlanda del Norte.

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Introduction, Motivation and Expectations

The political situation in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom has always seemed interesting to me. I used to be curious about what I heard on the news when I was growing up, and sometimes those news were about Ireland: Sinn Féin, Brexit, the border...

Before making my final decision and choosing a topic, I also considered the banning of news channels and newspapers in the last few years or the links between New Zealand and Barcelona. Nevertheless, I ended up choosing the political situation in Northern Ireland, even though it was not easy.

This Research Project is titled “An Approximation to Brexit in Northern Ireland” because the main objective is to understand and comprehend the political situation in that region. However, the hypothesis I try to prove or discard is the following one: Brexit has damaged the political situation in Northern Ireland and has increased tensions.

Due to different reasons, I have spent a week in Ireland and Northern Ireland this Summer. I was able to visit Belfast, Bushmills, Derry/Londonderry and Letterkenny, a town in County Donegal, Republic of Ireland. Thanks to my trip I could see some landmarks related to my Research Project and I also had the opportunity to talk to some locals and find out more about their views on the matter.

Since it is a historic and political topic, the methodology used must be as precise and objective as possible. Therefore, when looking up information or selecting newspapers, I have considered several options and chosen the most accurate one.

This Research Project consists of the following sections.

Firstly, the Theory includes a brief History of Ireland mainly focused on the pivotal moments to contextualise the rest of the project. Consecutively, the second section of the Theory consists of a summary of the Good Friday Agreement and the Withdrawal Agreement. At the end of the Theory, two newspapers are selected to be compared in the Praxis.

Secondly, the Praxis is divided in two main sections: a Comparison of two Points of View and a Timeline. The first section comprises four comparisons of two newspapers, a British one and an Irish one, on four key moments in the recent History of Ireland. The second part of the Praxis consists of the presentation of a Timeline that summarises the process of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

Finally, a general Conclusion synthetizes the main results and knowledge acquired during this Research Project. The Research Project mentions several specific terms that appear underlined. This means that they are further explained in the Key Word Reference section.

What I expect from this project is to comprehend better the political situation in Northern Ireland. In addition, I also expect to learn how to prepare a formal Research Project, how to organise information and how to use a methodology to address social or politic topics. On top of that, the main result of this Research Project must be the confirmation or the rejection of the hypothesis.

I. Theory

In order to comprehend and contextualise the praxis, the following section includes some key aspects about the History of Ireland. In addition, the Good Friday Agreement and the one regarding the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union are summarised.

I.1 A brief History of Ireland

The island of Ireland is an 84,421 km² island located in North-Western Europe. It is the twentieth largest island in the world and it is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean on its North, West and South coasts. Furthermore, the North Channel, the Irish Sea and Saint George's Channel extend between Ireland's East coast and Great Britain.

As of 2022, it is divided into the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI). On the one hand, the Republic of Ireland



Figure 1: Political map of the island of Ireland

is a sovereign nation within the European Union with a population of about 5 million inhabitants. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, has a population of 1.9 million and belongs to the United Kingdom, which does not belong to the European Union.

I.1.1 Origins of the Conflict

After the Prehistoric Era, the Gaelic social, political and cultural traditions were alive in Ireland until the 17th century. Since the Romans never arrived in Ireland, local inhabitants continued to live in their traditional way. After the fall of the Roman Empire,

Christian missionaries introduced their religion in Ireland, the most famous one is Saint Patrick.

Several British kings tried to expand their territories into Ireland after the unification of the kingdoms in Britain. In 1534, Henry VIII was named Supreme Head of the Church in England, becoming the maximum authority of the Protestant branch of the Christian religion, sometimes called Anglicanism. Those living in Ireland never acknowledged the new religion as a sign of protest and expression of dissent to the British growing influence in Ireland. To impose British rule, the inhabitants of Ireland were forced into policies of plantation¹ and banishments². Nevertheless, until the 17th century, Ireland never effectively became an English colony.

From 1297 and until 1800, the Parliament of Ireland, with the same structure as the one in Britain: House of Commons and House of Lords, was effective. Nonetheless, in 1801 it was abolished with the Act of Union with Ireland, which officially recognised the addition of the island of Ireland to the United Kingdom of Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), therefore it became the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.



Figure 2: poster explaining the origin of the Union Jack and mentioning the Act of Union of 1801 in Bushmills (Northern Ireland) – personal compilation

¹ For all the underlined words: check the Key Word Reference (page 47)

² Banishment – “desterrament”

During the 19th century, Irish politicians with nationalist aspirations tried, unsuccessfully, to set up a parliament in Ireland as the former one. This would mean a new status within the United Kingdom that lots of Irish seemed to have supported. Regardless, the British Parliament did not accept any of the proposals made by the Irish politicians.

I.I.II The 20th century

After several attempts to establish autonomy for Ireland within the British Empire, the Irish Party convinced the Liberals to support Home Rule in 1912. The proposal became a law after receiving approval two years later. However, due to the ongoing World War I and the unionist militants in the North, it never entered into force. The Ulster Volunteer Force was set up to prevent the implementation of Home Rule by force. In response, nationalists created their own military group: the Irish Volunteers.

Some nationalists that had promoted Home Rule, supported World War I, which started in July 1914. As a response, a small group of radical nationalists started the Easter Rising of 1916, a rebellion that the British suppressed with exaggerated measures. This triggered Sinn Féin's clear victory in the 1918 general election, which meant a radicalisation of the nationalists from the moderate Irish Party to a more radical perspective as Sinn Féin. The 73 MPs from Sinn Féin created their own parliament in Dublin called Dáil Éireann.

The Irish Volunteers gained influence and changed their name to Irish Republican Army (IRA). The tense situation resulted in the Anglo-Irish War, a guerrilla war that lasted from 1920 to 1921.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, that meant the end of the war, was narrowly accepted by the Dáil in December. On the one hand, Ireland became the Irish Free State, a dominion with self-government within the British Empire. On the other hand, six of the

nine counties of Ulster with unionist support remained as part of the United Kingdom as an autonomous region forming Northern Ireland³.

The Sinn Féin party did not accept the partition and the Irish Republican Army started the Irish Civil War the same year. Nonetheless, the Free State forces defeated them in 1923.

In 1937 the Irish Free State changed its name to Éire (Ireland) and a new sovereign constitution was approved. A few years later, in 1949, it officially left the Commonwealth and became the Republic of Ireland.



Figure 3: Anti-partition stamp of 1921

In Northern Ireland, the autonomous government was always composed by unionists, mainly Protestants. Therefore, the Catholics felt left out by the government in matters of housing and discrimination. In 1963, Terence O'Neill, as prime minister of Northern Ireland, applied policies of economic modernisation that the Catholic middle classes coincided with. Although, they demonstrated to demand an end to discrimination.

By the end of the 1960s, Northern Ireland became completely involved in a power fight between nationalists and unionists. Demonstrations, counter demonstrations and police interventions often resulted in riots and violence. A popular place for Catholic protesters to meet was the Free Derry corner. Since the late 1960s, the social situation in Northern Ireland has been known as *The Troubles*.



Figure 4: Free Derry corner in Summer 2022 showing support to the Palestine people – personal compilation

³ As of 2022, the criteria for the partition of Ireland are still unclear. Nevertheless, facts are that in those Ulster counties there was a Protestant majority in addition to more unionists than in the rest of Ireland. Furthermore, it ensured British presence in the island.

The British government intervened deploying troops in 1969 and in 1972 applied Direct Rule, a suspension of the government in Northern Ireland. This proved out to be completely unsuccessful since both nationalists and unionists started to blame the British government for failing to deliver results.

In 1972, a civil rights demonstration took place in Derry/Londonderry to protest about a law that the British Parliament had passed in 1971 which allowed the authorities to imprison people without any kind of trial. The Army dodged the march towards Free Derry corner, where a riot started. 21 British soldiers opened fire causing 13 deaths among the crowd. The tragedy is known as *Bloody Sunday*.



Figure 5: the 13 victims of Bloody Sunday, all of them Catholic protestants

After the massacre, the families of the victims fought for justice repeatedly until the British Prime Minister Tony Blair promised in 1998 to open a new investigation, The Saville Inquiry, given that the first one did not condemn any of the soldiers.

The conclusion of that inquiry was published in 2010. It stated: “none of the casualties were posing a threat or doing anything that would justify their shooting”⁴. On top of that, the prime minister David Cameron apologised on behalf of the state saying the killings were “unjustified and unjustifiable”.^{5 6}

⁴ Source: BBC <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-foyle-west-47433319>>

⁵ Source: The Guardian <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/15/bloody-sunday-report-saville-inquiry>>

⁶ After the long fight for justice, as of 2022, any of the soldiers has been sentenced by any crime.

In 1973 the Sunningdale agreement was proposed to address the demands from the Catholics. However, it failed because the unionists argued it was too pro-Irish due to a mention of an Irish Council that would have effective powers over Northern Ireland.

That same year both countries joined the European Economic Community. Still, the Troubles continued with social tension and violence during the 1980s.

Apart from the social and political protests, the IRA was a paramilitary organisation that recycled the name of those who fought against the British in 1921. They had the same objective: to establish a United Ireland without British Rule. The means they used all through the Troubles were bombings, shootings and gunfights against the British Army and some unionist politicians.

In 1981 Bobby Sands, a famous republican, and nine other IRA prisoners died after going on a hunger strike⁷. They were protesting for the removal of the political prisoner's condition. During his hunger strike, Bobby Sands became MP for the Northern Ireland constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone, receiving more attention and media coverage.



Figure 6: Bobby Sands drawing on a wall in Belfast, Summer 2022 - personal compilation

In 1985 the Anglo-Irish Agreement was reached. It implied a clear British pertinence of Northern Ireland with a supervision of the Irish government and the re-establishment of the autonomous government. Still, this agreement did not succeed in ending violence. Despite this, it brought the British and the Irish governments closer together.

⁷ Hunger strike – “vaga de fam”

In 1998, after a referendum in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement entered into force. This meant an end of the violence and it brought the power-sharing system to Northern Ireland.

I.I.III The beginning of the 21st century

During the end of the 20th century and until 2007, the Irish economy grew extremely fast. This period is known as the Celtic Tiger Years and is believed to be a consequence of several factors, such as low corporate taxes, foreign investment, European Union membership and a stable national economy. The economy of Northern Ireland did not grow like the Irish one until the Peace Process started because of the Good Friday Agreement.

In 2002, due to police investigations about possible links between Sinn Féin, in government, and the IRA, the Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended and the Parliament of the United Kingdom started to rule directly over Northern Ireland. The situation stayed that way until 2007, when Ian Paisley, from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness agreed to participate in the power-sharing system. Consequently, the autonomy was devolved to Northern Ireland.

The Good Friday Agreement's specifications of North-South cooperation were implemented gradually and the economy in Northern Ireland improved. Additionally, the European Union financed several projects in Ireland and Northern Ireland with the objective of cross-border cooperation and the improvement of cross-community relations.



Figure 7: The Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry – personal compilation



Figure 8: Plaque in Coleraine Train Station - personal compilation

One of the European achievements is the Peace Bridge in Derry-Londonderry, shown in Figure 7, which symbolises a handshake of peace across the Foyle River. Another European project is the re-opening of the railway from Coleraine to Derry/Londonderry⁸, shown in Figure 8.

The economic crisis of 2008 had a huge impact in Ireland and was the end of the Celtic Tiger Years. The European Union offered loans to the Irish government to diminish the impact of the crisis.

The Northern Ireland Executive has been using the power-sharing system uninterrupted since devolution of powers of 2007 with DUP as the major unionist party and Sinn Féin as the most popular nationalist party. Despite the economic crisis of 2008, Northern Ireland's economy has been continually improving thanks to the peace and the co-operation provisions of the Good Friday Agreement.

I.I.IV The 2016 referendum

After the 2015 General Election in the United Kingdom, the Conservatives obtained a majority of seats in The House of Commons and formed a new government with David Cameron as Prime Minister. As the Conservative manifesto⁹ stated in the campaign, the government decided to re-negotiate the country's relation with Europe. The main

⁸ Coleraine is a town in a traditionally unionist area that has always been connected by train to Belfast. Derry/Londonderry, on the other hand, is traditionally nationalist and the railway to Coleraine was deteriorated while the railway between Coleraine and Belfast was not. The European Union funds helped rehabilitate the railway to improve cross-community relations.

⁹ Check Annex 2

reason to do so was to address the social and political issue of the United Kingdom's condition in the European Union.

After several negotiations, a deal was reached in February 2016 when *A New Settlement for the United Kingdom within the European Union*¹⁰, often referred as "New Settlement", was approved by the European Council. It was supposed to take effect if the United Kingdom decided to remain as part of the European Union. A few days later, a date for a referendum regarding whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union or not was set: June 23rd, 2016.

As all the other referendums held in the United Kingdom, the result of this one was not legally binding, meaning that the government did not have the obligation to legislate based on the result. However, the Conservative government promised to act according to them. Unlike in a general election, where the voters are divided into constituencies, in a referendum all the votes have the same value and the only official result is the absolute number of ballots in the whole United Kingdom.

The chosen question was: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" and there were two possible answers: "Remain a member of the European Union" and "Leave the European Union".

Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union	
Vote only once by putting a cross <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in the box next to your choice	
Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?	
Remain a member of the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 9: Example of the ballots used in the 2016 referendum in the United Kingdom

On the one hand, the government's official recommendations¹¹ were to vote to stay in the European Union under the new conditions agreed in 2016: the "New Settlement". Nevertheless, David Cameron allowed his ministers and Conservative MPs to campaign for whatever they felt was best for the nation, implying free/conscious vote. Lots of organisations, celebrities and businesses actively campaigned for 'Remain' before the

¹⁰ Check Annex 3

¹¹ Check Annex 4

2016 referendum, being the official campaigner recognised by the Electoral Commission “Britain Stronger in Europe”.

On the other hand, “Vote Leave” was the official campaigner for ‘Leave’ among a lot of other groups and individuals. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) was extremely active campaigning for leaving the European Union and its leader, Nigel Farage, was involved in some controversies.



Figure 10: UKIP controversial propaganda

In Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin (SF), Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP) and Alliance Party (Alliance) campaigned for ‘Remain’ in the 2016 referendum explaining how the European Union had helped improve the agriculture, the stability and the relations with Ireland.

On the other hand, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) officially backed a ‘Leave’ option. Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), however, was divided with a more pro-Remain area, including the leader, Lord Trimble, while some elected members campaigned for ‘Leave’.

The electorate was set to be of 46,500,001 including all British, Irish, Maltese, Cypriot and Commonwealth citizens residents in the United Kingdom who were, at least, 18 the polling day, registered to vote and not legally unable to participate. In addition, those residents in Gibraltar could also participate in the referendum.

Citizens of United Kingdom Overseas Territories registered to vote at a United Kingdom address in the last 15 years were allowed to vote. In addition, the members of The House of Lords, who must not participate in a general election, could participate in this referendum. Nonetheless, residents of Crown Dependencies (Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey, and the Isle of Man), that are not part of the United Kingdom nor the British Overseas Territories, but within the British Islands, even if they were also British Citizens, were not allowed to vote in the referendum.

June 23rd, 2016, the **2016 United Kingdom European Union membership referendum** took place and the results were published the day after. According to the Electoral Commission, the participation was 33,577,342, a turnout of 72.2%. 51.9% voted for 'Leave' while 48.8% voted for 'Remain'.

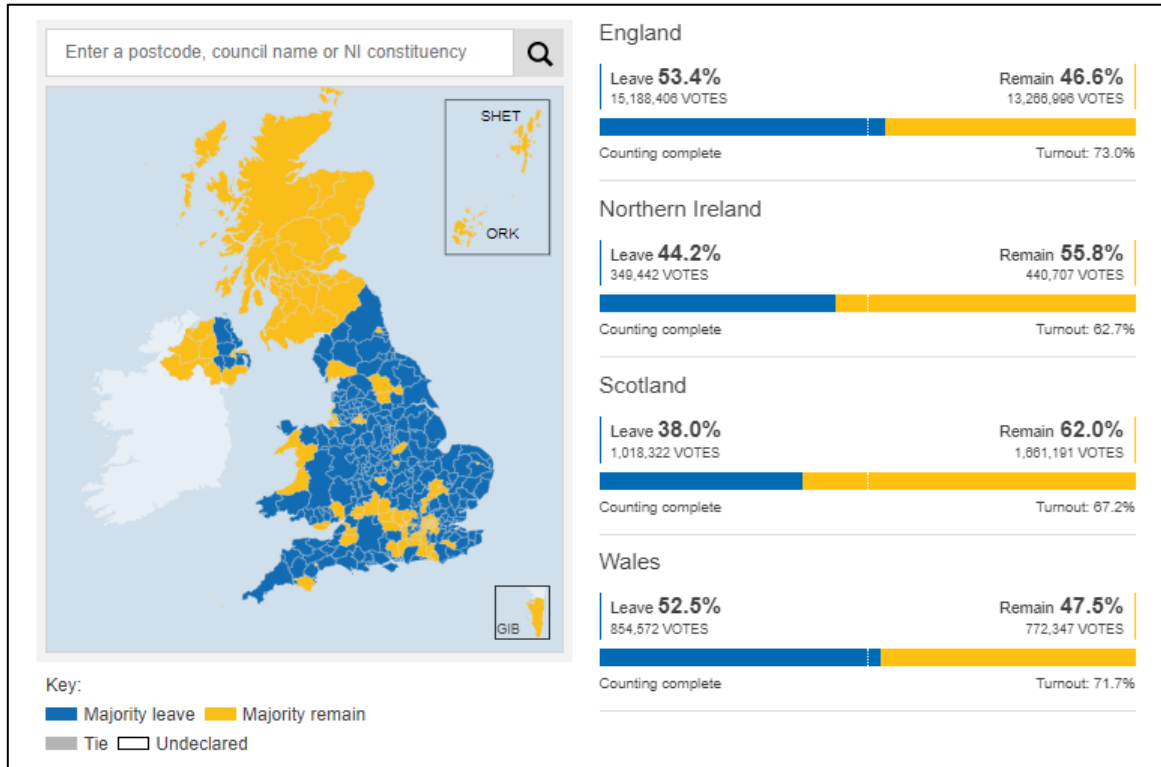


Figure 11: official results of the referendum in the United Kingdom and Gibraltar

As shown in the map of Figure 11, in constituencies including major cities in England, the votes for 'Remain' were higher than the votes for 'Leave', such as Liverpool, Manchester, Cambridge, Leeds and Oxford. In the region of London, 2,263,519 voted to stay in the European Union and 1,513,232 voted 'Leave'. However, the voters from the rest of England mainly voted to leave. Therefore, the final result in England was 53.4-46.6% in favour of leaving. In Wales, 52.5% voted to leave the European Union against a 47.5% that wanted to remain. Scotland, however, voted strongly for 'Remain', with a 62%, and a 38% for 'Leave'¹².

¹² The case of Scotland is special since, after the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum (where the No independence side won 55-45%) lots of Scottish politicians argued that a possible withdrawal from the European Union could also mean a future withdrawal of Scotland from the United Kingdom. As of October 2022, Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland and leader of the Scottish National Party, is confident a referendum regarding the independence of Scotland from the United Kingdom will take place in October 2023.

In Northern Ireland, the turnout was 62% of the electorate and the result was 440,707 in favour of remaining in the European Union and 349,442 wanting to leave. This proportion is approximately a 56-44% relation on remaining front leaving. In all the constituencies next to the Irish border the votes for ‘Remain’ were higher than those for ‘Leave’. The same happens in three of the four constituencies of Belfast. Therefore, 11 constituencies were in favour of staying in the European Union, while the other 7 preferred to leave it.

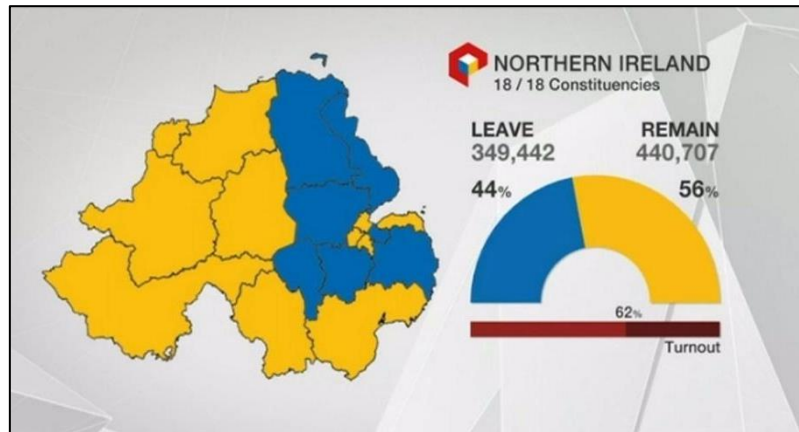


Figure 12: Map showing the option that got the most votes in each constituency in Northern Ireland in the 2016 referendum

The age factor all over the United Kingdom turned out to be decisive in the 2016 referendum. The young tend to be more pro-EU than those over 65 in a clear progression shown in Figure 13. Furthermore, in 27 out of the 30 constituencies with the most elderly, the ‘Leave’ option won against ‘Remain’. Additionally, 28 of the 30 constituencies with the fewest graduates were in favour of leaving the European Union.

In Northern Ireland, The Ulster University, the Queen’s University in Belfast and the Open University carried out a poll to 4,000

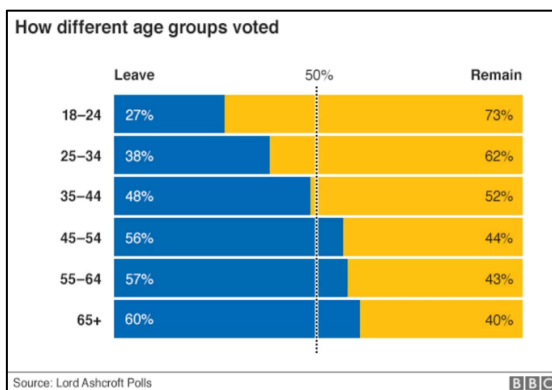


Figure 13: Graph with data of how age is a crucial factor in this matter

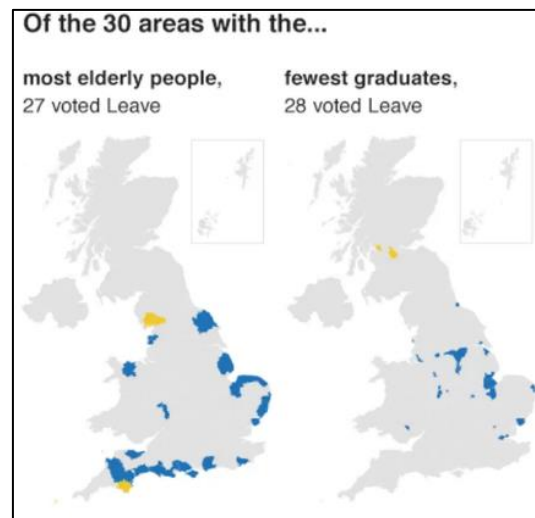


Figure 14: Map with results of the 2016 referendum in some constituencies with specific conditions

adults commissioned by the Northern Ireland Assembly. The main conclusion was that the higher the level of studies were, the more pro-remain in the European Union people were in Northern Ireland. The progression had no exceptions and started with a 49-51% staying front leaving at a no studies level to an 80-20% staying front leaving at a professional graduation level.

	P.Grad	Degree	btech	'A'	btecN	gcse	cse	none
	%	%	%	%				
Stay	80	71	57	59	52	49	48	49
Leave	<u>20</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>51</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 15: Table of the poll showing the progression

I.I.V Post – referendum

After the publication of the results of the referendum, David Cameron resigned as Conservative leader and as Prime Minister. The 2017 Conservative Party Leader Election took place and Theresa May became the new United Kingdom’s Prime Minister. With Parliamentary support, after the Miller Case¹³, she implemented Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union and formally notified Europe about the United Kingdom’s intention to leave the Union. The 2017 general election¹⁴ took place and Theresa May continued as Prime Minister.

After the election, a Conservative minority government with occasional support from DUP was established with Theresa May as Prime Minister. The main objective of this new legislature was to go ahead with the withdrawal and achieve a good deal with the European Union, avoiding a hard Brexit.

¹³ When the new government tried to implement Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union, a particular activist, Gina Miller, brought the case to justice with the arguments that that kind of decision must require an Act of Parliament, requiring a parliamentary majority, to be applied. After several judicial battles, the United Kingdom Supreme Court ruled in favour of Gina Miller in the case known as “R (Miller) v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union” or simply “the Miller case” on January 24, 2017.

¹⁴ Check Annex 5

Negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom started and in November 2018, a deal was reached. The European institutions supported it. Nevertheless, the British Parliament did not ratify it. The several votes in which Theresa May's proposals were defeated are known as meaningful votes.

After the several defeats of Theresa May's proposals in Parliament, the government was in a weak position. In addition, several Conservatives did not agree with her and wanted her to step down. On 7 June 2019, Theresa May resigned as Conservative Party leader, meaning that another Conservative Party leadership election would take place. Boris Johnson won the 2019 Conservative Party Leadership Election and became Prime Minister.

He announced that on October 31st, 2019, the United Kingdom would leave the European union with or without an agreement and removed the Irish Backstop¹⁵ from the draft of the agreement.

On October 17th, 2019, negotiators finished their work presenting the Withdrawal Agreement having replaced the Irish Backstop with the new Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, often referred as Northern Ireland Protocol¹⁶ (NIP). Two days later, after passing the Letwin Amendment with 322 in favour and 306 against, Parliament forced Boris Johnson to ask the European Union for another extension of the withdrawal date until 31 January 2020.

Boris Johnson managed to convince Parliament to pass the Early Parliamentary General Election Act of 2019. This new proposal became a law after the Lord's approval and having received Royal Assent. It allowed the government to call a snap election without the mandatory support of two thirds of parliament. Therefore, the 2019 general election¹⁷ took place.

¹⁵ "Irish backstop" is the plan negotiated while Theresa May was PM, that would prevent the implantation of an evident border in mainland Ireland between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

¹⁶ New plan for Northern Ireland negotiated while Boris Johnson was PM.

¹⁷ Check Annex 6

The Conservative Party formed a new government with Boris Johnson as Prime Minister and approved the Withdrawal Agreement. The United Kingdom left the European Union January 31st, 2020, at 23:00 GMT.

The transition period started and came to an end on December 31st, 2020.

During that period, negotiators from both parts established how the future relations would be. January 1st, 2021, the new Trade and Cooperation Agreement, as well as the Security of Information Agreement and the Civil Nuclear Agreement entered into force.

After lots of speculation, Boris Johnson's government proposed plans on Northern Ireland on June 13, 2022. Lizz Truss, the Foreign Secretary, argued that those plans were "a reasonable, practical solution to the problems facing Northern Ireland"¹⁸. In addition, Boris Johnson's government claimed that the European Union had not accepted their proposals and passing future laws to, in fact, overrule the Northern Ireland Protocol, was not unlawful¹⁹.

September 5th, 2022, Lizz Truss became the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom after winning the 2022 Conservative Party Leadership Contest. Boris Johnson had resigned a few days before because of multiple scandals. Lizz Truss' government was extremely weak. Due to the change of Prime Minister, the Northern Ireland issue left the spotlight. Lizz Truss resigned a few weeks later due to an economic controversy, lasting only 45 days as Prime Minister.

¹⁸ Source: BBC <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-61790248>>

¹⁹ Source: BBC <<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-61790248>>

I.II Agreements regarding Ireland and Northern Ireland

The main goals, stipulations and relevance of the Good Friday Agreement and the Withdrawal Agreement are noted in this section. The summarisation is made directly from the proper official documents.

I.II.I Good Friday Agreement

After several attempts to reach a compromise to stop the violence and establish peace in Northern Ireland, a deal was approved on Good Friday 1998, therefore called **The Good Friday Agreement** of 1998 or **The Belfast Agreement**. It consists of two agreements signed by the Government of the Republic of Ireland, the Government of the United Kingdom and most of the parties in Northern Ireland²⁰. There were two referendums in Ireland and Northern Ireland in which the society approved the agreement.

This agreement was a turning point in the History of Northern Ireland since it meant the end of the Troubles, the violence and the insecurities. Even though there were several attempts to put an end to the Troubles in the past, none of them succeeded until this agreement.



Figure 16: British PM Tony Blair (left) and Taoiseach-Irish PM Bertie Ahern (right) signing the Agreement on 10 April, 1998

"We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning" are the first words of the agreement. They acknowledge the delicate situation in addition to showing hope and high expectation in the future.

²⁰ SDLP, UUP and Sinn Féin signed the agreement. Nevertheless, the DUP did not.

After the Opening Sections, that include a Declaration of Support, there are three strands. Strand One establishes the creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly in Stormont, Belfast. The new Assembly is supposed to exercise the legislative and executive powers in Northern Ireland. In order to do so, all sections of the community must have the opportunity to participate together in the institutions.

This ensures that neither the unionists nor the nationalists will take over public institutions. The principle to be used is called power-sharing and, amongst other things, requires more than 60% of members voting, being more than 40% of each nationalist or unionist designation.

Strand Two creates the North/South Ministerial Council. It is supposed to include representatives of the governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland and must "develop co-operation within the Island of Ireland".

The British-Irish Council is established under Strand Three and it has the objective of "promoting the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands".

The last part of the agreement is titled Final Sections and includes measures in several aspects, such as human rights, safeguards, security, justice, prisoners and when should the agreement enter into force. A special aspect of this section is the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, which turned out to be extremely effective in reducing violence. Furthermore, an early release of paramilitary prisoners was agreed as long as a complete ceasefire took place.

Finally, the signing entities agree to the "commitment to the mutual respect, the civil rights and the religious liberties of everyone in the community".

I.II.II Withdrawal Agreement

The **AGREEMENT on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (2019/C 384 I/01)** is the legal document that provides certainty on those areas where the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union was unclear. Its main goal is to establish the rules that define how the withdrawal must happen and the transition period. It was approved by both the United Kingdom's Parliament and the European Commission in January 2020.

The usually referred as "Withdrawal Agreement" or simply "Brexit Agreement" starts explaining the common grounds and basic intentions of itself. The main reasons for the writing and acceptance of this Agreement are also stipulated on the first page. After this introduction, the body of the agreement is divided into six major parts, each one about a specific subject.



Figure 17: Starting of the Withdrawal Agreement

The Agreement's last pages are dedicated to the citation of mentioned laws, procedures, protocols, resolutions and other references to official documents related to this matter.

Furthermore, there are three Protocols annexed to the main Agreement that deal with specific matters. The application of the Protocols is different to the rest of the Agreement and specific for each one since there are special conditions and other institutions that have a say on it, like the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1. Part I – Common Provisions:

This part, divided into several articles, determines the common provisions and guidelines and sets out the arrangements for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. There is an article dedicated to establishing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the rest of the agreement to prevent misinterpretations. For instance, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is usually referred to as “United Kingdom” and the European Union is mentioned as “Union”. In addition, the European Atomic Energy Community is only cited using its acronym “Euratom”. Furthermore, an article of this section also determines that both the Union and the United Kingdom should assist each other in mutual respect and good faith.

2. Part II – Citizen’s Rights:

The second part of the Agreement deals with how the United Kingdom should treat European nationals and how the Union should treat British nationals. Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement allows British residents in the Union to keep living, working or studying in their host country in the transition period and the same conditions apply to Union citizens residing in the United Kingdom.

This part of the Agreement also provides legal background to allow access to social security and healthcare of those in the previous situation. It also reaffirms that past agreements about recognition of professional qualifications remain valid. This allows students and education administrations to keep using the same system that provides a more standard methodology in the educational world.

3. Part III – Separation Provisions:

The third part of the Withdrawal Agreement is titled Separation Provisions and provides detailed ways to proceed on ongoing joint processes and causes.

On movement of goods, the Agreement entails that all goods in the market before the end of the transition period will not need to be re-catalogued or re-labelled. During the

transition period, Value Added Tax (VAT)²¹ will continue to follow already established European Union rules.

In addition, all commercial intellectual property rights (design rights, trademarks and geographical indications) established before the end of the transition period will continue to be legally protected in both the Union and the United Kingdom.

About ongoing criminal procedures, the Withdrawal Agreement states that European Union applicable regulations must be followed to complete ongoing police and judicial procedures. Joint teams of police officers from the United Kingdom and one or more European Union members will continue to work in the same conditions until the finalization of the cooperation.

The Agreement ensures data protection by applying Union data protection regulation on Union's data stored in the United Kingdom until the European Union considers that an eventual new United Kingdom regulation guarantees protection measures equivalent to the European ones.

Since the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union also implies a withdrawal from the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), the United Kingdom is responsible for the safeguard of radioactive material and equipment following other international treaties of which the United Kingdom is a party.

During the transition period, the United Kingdom and the European Union must continue to provide current privileges and immunities to institutions, agencies and bodies as they did before. In addition, the Agreement states that classified documents and information acquired by the United Kingdom during its European Union years must be protected to prevent filtrations or leakings.

4. Part IV – Transition

“Part IV – Transition” states the agreements about how the transition period is going to be applied once the United Kingdom leaves the Union. According to this section, the Union will continue to treat the United Kingdom as a member state and it will be under European Union law until the end of the transition period. This period is supposed to

²¹ Valued Added Tax – “Impost sobre el valor afegit (IVA)”

last 11 months, with a unique possibility of a single extension if the two parts agree on it.

As long as the transition period is in force, the United Kingdom will continue in the European Union single market. It will allow citizens to adapt to the new circumstances and will also provide the right circumstances under which the Union and the United Kingdom will negotiate their future relations.

5. Part V – Financial Provisions

The fifth part of the Agreement entails the Financial Provisions. The first article of this part determines the currency to be used between the European Union and the United Kingdom: the euro (€). The Agreement requires the United Kingdom to pay its share of deals and commitments made during its time in the European Union as well as its share on the 2014-2020 EU budget. This section also indicates how to calculate the amounts of money that will have to be transferred, but not how much this will be.

One of the many goals of this part of the deal is to ensure that all Union programs will continue to be financed. However, this does not mean that the United Kingdom will have to pay sooner or more than it would pay if it had not decided to leave the Union. A specification provides legal security to the continuance of the PEACE IV programme (2014-2020), financial support to Ireland and Northern Ireland with the objective of cross-border cooperation. In addition, it contemplates a possible new programme to be implemented after 2020 if the Joint Committee and both the European Union and the United Kingdom agree on it.

6. Part VI – Institutional and Final Provisions

The last part of the Agreement is called Institutional and Final Provisions. Article 164 establishes the creation of a Joint Committee containing representatives from both the Union and the United Kingdom: “A Joint Committee, comprising representatives of the Union and of the United Kingdom, is hereby established. The Joint Committee shall be co-chaired by the Union and the United Kingdom [...]” It also states that there must be meetings, at least, once a year to supervise the implementation of the Agreement and to solve certain doubts. Furthermore, specialised committees are also created to deal with specific matters.

This last part also determines special institutional arrangements. The last article, the 185, determines when the Agreement and its annexed Protocols must enter into force.

In addition, the Agreement includes three protocols that deal with specific subjects and are to be applied differently than the rest of the agreement because of the unique conditions of these matters.

A. -Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland

The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (often referred as “Northern Ireland Protocol” or simply “NIP”) starts by considering the unique geographical, historical and social circumstances of Northern Ireland.

According to article 1, the objectives of the Protocol are to respect the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, to regard the United Kingdom’s essential state functions and its territorial integrity and to meet special conditions of the geographical island of Ireland.

Article 2 makes sure of the preservation of individuals’ rights on the Good Friday Agreement and forces the United Kingdom to ensure that no one’s rights are to be lost as a result of the withdrawal from the European Union.

Additionally, the Protocol entails that goods brought into Northern Ireland susceptible of entering the Union may be subject to customs duties²² but requires the Joint Committee to specify how this can be applied. It also implies that no article attempts against the United Kingdom’s internal market. Nevertheless, this section also means that European Union’s representatives have the right to make the United Kingdom perform checks of goods entering Northern Ireland susceptible of being transported then into Ireland. The goal of this specification is to protect the Union’s single market, regulation and safety requirements.

²² Custom Duties – “aranzels”

Several articles specify that North-South cooperation in Ireland is mandatory under the application of the Protocol, especially in tourism, education, health, agriculture, transport, energy, justice, fisheries, sport and environment.

The United Kingdom has, according to this Protocol, the obligation to inform the Union of its implementation in the joint consultative working group that is established with representatives of both the United Kingdom and the Union.

Article 16 provides the option for the United Kingdom to take safeguards in certain circumstances of the implementation of the Protocol under certain circumstances.

The Protocol also requires democratic consent in Northern Ireland four years after the end of the transition period to continue its application.

B. -Protocol relating to the sovereign base areas of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Cyprus

The Protocol of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) in Cyprus ensures Union's law in those areas to protect the dozens of Cypriots living and working there in terms of customs, taxation, goods, agriculture and fisheries.

C. -Protocol on Gibraltar

The Protocol on Gibraltar provides bilateral cooperation on several aspects between Spain and the United Kingdom, such as citizen's rights, tobacco and custom matters, as well as a bilateral agreement on the protection of financial interests and taxation.

I.III Selection of Newspapers

Newspapers, TV channels, radio stations and digital newspapers have a huge impact in society. Not just the kind of news that they deliver to the public, but also the way in which news are expressed, has a huge effect on the public. Because of that, the media is usually referred to as the fourth power, in addition to the legislative, the executive and the judicial.

In order to understand this matter better, the main newspapers from each position in the conflict have been selected to be analysed in comparisons on pivotal dates to this matter. The criteria used to select the newspapers has been: relevance, distribution, political views and track record.

I.III.I *The Times*

The reference British newspaper is *The Times*, sometimes wrongly referred to as *The London Times* or *The Times of London*. It was founded on January 1st, 1785, in London and it began publishing daily news. Its original name, *The Daily Universal Register*, only lasted three years, before adopting the popular name that is still in use nowadays. It is widely considered a newspaper of record by reputation. This means that it is a national newspaper with large circulation and an independent editing team and news-gathering functions. However, *The Times* belongs to News UK, a subsidiary of News Corp.



Figure 18: Name and logo of *The Times*

According to its own description: “*The Times* has supported both New Labour and the Conservatives in recent times and supported Remain in the 2016 EU referendum”.

This newspaper allows customers to receive a copy of the daily newspaper by Royal Mail in the United Kingdom with a special subscription. In addition, another subscription allows online customers to check and receive the latest news and special reports using its mobile app. However, <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/>> is the official website where, with a basic subscription, people can access their daily edition and the archive. On top of that, everyone can buy every day’s edition at newsagents or shops.

I.III.II *The Irish Independent*

On the other hand, the *Irish Independent* is the Irish newspaper with the most circulation. It is a newspaper founded in 1905 as a result of the merger of *The Irish Daily Independent* and *Daily Nation*, two minor newspapers. During the 20th century, the *Irish Independent* combined with *Sunday Independent* and multiple other regional newspapers in Ireland, such as *Sunday World*, the *Herald*, the *Belfast Telegraph* or *Sunday Life*, forming Independent News and Media (INM). As of 2022, they are the bestselling newspapers in Ireland.

In 2019, the Belgium company Mediahuis acquired INM and, for extension, all the other companies under this big conglomerate. Taking into account all of Mediahuis newspapers, they publish in English, Dutch, French, Luxembourgish, Portuguese, German, Frisian and Irish.



Figure 19: Name and logo of *The Irish Independent*

The fact that almost two thirds of Irish newspapers belong to Independent News and Media, at the same time belonging to Mediahuis, can be controversial. It is commonly considered a centre-right or conservative newspaper.

The Irish Independent provides the service of home delivery to receive a copy of every day's edition at home. In addition, everyone can buy every day's edition at shops. Their website, <<https://www.independent.ie/>>, unlike what happens in *The Times one*, allows internet users to read any article without a subscription. However, to be able to access past editions, to the archive or to the ePaper²³ a monthly subscription is required.

²³ ePaper – digital format of everyday editions

II. Praxis

II.I Comparison of two Points of View

The two previously selected newspapers are going to be analysed by several comparisons on specific dates relevant to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

II.I.I Editorial on the 2016 European Union referendum

On the one hand, *The Times* published, June 18th, 2016, an Editorial titled "Remaking Europe". "The best outcome of next week's referendum would be a new alliance of sovereign EU nations dedicated to free trade and reform, led by Britain" is the subtitle and it clearly defines the newspaper's view on the matter.



Figure 20: Starting of *The Times*' Editorial on June 18th, 2016

The Editorial is written from an objective perspective and highlights some of the flaws that the European Union has. The writer of this text uses those same flaws to criticise the extremely active and controversial campaign for 'Leave', implying that there was no need to exaggerate that much. Furthermore, some corrections of fake statements made by the leave campaigners are corrected or refuted. Consecutively, the positive points of remaining in the European Union are noted. In the end, the following is stated: "It may not sound as exhilarating or romantic as a defiant march to Brexit, but it is the better choice for Britain and Europe". This refers to the nationalist feeling that voting for Brexit might cause in some British citizens. *The Times* advises its readers that the right choice for Britain is to stay in the European Union, though.

On the other hand, *The Irish Independent* published a few weeks earlier, May 1st, 2016, another Editorial regarding the same matter. It is titled “Brexit and the Ireland question” and has no subtitle. It is illustrated with a picture of the United Kingdom’s Prime Minister David Cameron.

This Editorial is written using clear and objective language. In the first paragraph, the economic consequences in Ireland of a ‘Leave’ victory in the referendum are estimated. In addition, it mentions that those Irish citizens living in the United Kingdom that have the right to vote can be essential to ensure a ‘Remain’ victory.



Figure 21: Starting of *The Irish Independent's* Editorial on the referendum published on May 1st, 2016

After that, more economic facts are highlighted to try to convince its readers that the best decision is to vote ‘Remain’. After the explanation of the extremely tight results of two polls, the Editorial concludes that the economic issue is defended by those who campaign for ‘Remain’ and that immigration is what Eurosceptics use to promote ‘Leave’.

An interesting observation about *The Irish Independent* is that, when the British government announced the date of the referendum, it published an Editorial titled “Britain’s ‘in/out’ vote poses huge challenges”. This Editorial is way more political: when talking about Northern Ireland’s political parties, it clearly states “We look forward to Sinn Féin, as the bigger nationalist party, putting in a strong campaign in the coming months”.



Figure 22: Title of *The Irish Independent's* Editorial on February 22nd, 2016

What seems more interesting about *The Times'* Editorial is the fact that it uses the obvious flaws that the European Union has to criticise the ‘Leave’ campaigners. The Irish Independent’s Editorial most interesting aspect is the almost exclusively economic point of view. As expected, *The Times'* Editorial is written from a British perspective and it

does not even mention the consequences that a withdrawal from the European Union might cause in Northern Ireland. The Irish Editorial, on the other hand, does mention those possible complications and specifies how careful the arrangements should be made to avoid a return to a hard border in mainland Ireland.

II.I.II Front Pages and main articles on the referendum's results



Figure 23: *The Times*' front page on June 24th, 2016

The Times published an article the day of the announcement of the results, June 24th, 2016, titled "Britain's votes for Brexit". In addition, that day's frontpage shows "Britain's Brexit revolt" and a picture of "Vote Leave" campaigners celebrating their victory.

The article mentions the results in the biggest cities, the pro-Leave tendency in the rural areas, Nicola Sturgeon's call for a referendum on Scottish independence and the fall of the pound to a 31-year low. The vocabulary used is objective except for a few

expressions when talking about those who voted 'Leave', such as "ignored David Cameron's warnings".

On June 25th, 2016, *The Times* published its usual Saturday edition with "Brexit earthquake" on the frontpage. The principal picture shows David Cameron and his wife leaving 10 Downing Street²⁴.

The article under the same title explains his resignation using a compassionate tone. Another issue that this article deals with is the fact that some Conservatives started to back Boris Johnson for new PM while some others gave their support to Theresa



Figure 24: *The Times*'s front page on June 25th, 2016

²⁴ 10 Downing Street is the official residence of the Prime Minister and their family in the City of Westminster, Central London.

May. Unlike in *The Times'* Editorial on the referendum, this article contemplates some of the delicate consequences that Northern Ireland will have to face. Furthermore, it mentions Sinn Féin's call for a border poll on a United Ireland. In the last paragraph, Boris Johnson and Michael Gove are considered "the two men that brought the PM down".

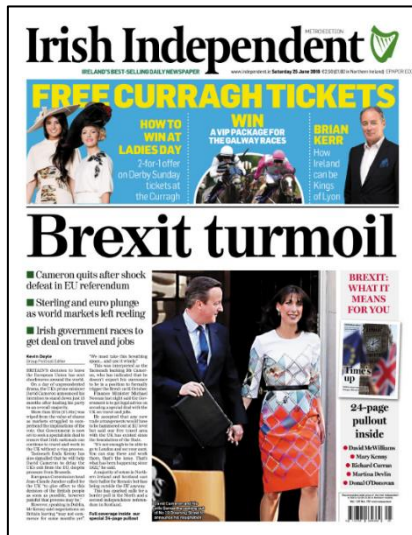


Figure 25: Front page of *The Irish Independent* on June 25th, 2016

The Irish Independent's edition on June 24th, 2016, did not include the results since they were announced in the A.M. Therefore, next day's edition is the one analysed.

On June 25th, 2016, *The Irish Independent* published "Brexit turmoil" on its frontpage and a picture of David Cameron and his wife leaving 10 Downing Street.

That day's edition contains a 24-page special coverage of the referendum results and its impact titled "Time's up". The subtitle of this section is "British voters turn

backs on Europe with vote to leave the EU", clearly remarking the newspaper's opinion. All these articles deal with the different aspects and outcomes of the result.

When talking about David Cameron's resignation, the use of the verb "to quit" makes him look like a coward. The age factor in the referendum is highlighted and criticised. Furthermore, several articles analyse the challenges that this new situation poses to Northern Ireland. The economic consequences, Frequently Asked Questions and Opinion sections are included in "Time's Up".

When talking about David Cameron, *The Times* uses a more compassionate vocabulary than *The Irish Independent*. If we compare the pages dedicated to analysing the economic consequences, we can conclude that they are far more important to the Irish newspaper than to *The Times*. An interesting fact in the British newspaper is the use of pictures of pro-Leave voters celebrating instead of photos of pro-Remainers. The results of the referendum are explained in both newspapers and the age factor is specifically noted as well.

The Times deals with the reactions to the results both in Scotland and in Northern Ireland, and *The Irish Independent* only mentions the situation in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In addition, the specific accusation of *The Times* to Boris Johnson and Michael Gove is, at least, unusual. *The Irish Independent* receives the result of the referendum as a problem that will have to be dealt with considering the special status of Northern Ireland.

II.I.III Boris Johnson becomes new Prime Minister

On July 24th, 2019, *The Times* published “Johnson goes to work” on its front page with a picture of him in front of 10 Downing Street. That day’s principal article is titled “Boris Johnson goes to work as Prime Minister”.



Figure 26: *The Times*' front page on July 24th, 2019

Several reactions of celebrities are noted to show what other politicians expect from him. The “spirit of can-do” that he intends to bring to the government, with new members, is what will get Brexit done, he says. However, the article also mentions Theresa May’s speech in which she recommends a Brexit with a deal for Northern Ireland: “to deliver a Brexit that works for the whole UK”. The article also includes a short biography of the new PM, and it mentions Labour’s call for a general election, given that he has only been elected by his party.

The Irish Independent's edition on July 24th, 2019, does not include the new PM of the United Kingdom on its front page. Nevertheless, this matter is explained on pages 4 and 5, illustrated with the same picture as the one used in *The Times*. Those pages include

his proposal to “get Brexit done”, his way to PM, the economic reaction and his observations about Ireland.

His intentions to leave the European Union on October 31st with or without a deal are explained. *The Irish Independent* cites the reactions of some Irish politicians to the new PM. In addition, it also mentions Theresa May’s speech.



Figure 27: *The Irish Independent* on July 24th, 2019

Both articles deal with the same information, but *The Times*’ article seems more optimistic than *The Irish Independent* one. The British newspaper highlights his “spirit of can-do” while the Irish newspaper is concerned about the consequences. As expected, each newspaper focuses on the reactions of its own country. This fact also gives a hint on each country’s general reaction to the new PM: more positive in the United Kingdom than in Ireland. When commentating Theresa May’s speech, *The Irish Independent* does it more extensively even though both newspapers highlight her opinion on a plan regarding Northern Ireland. In addition, both articles include a short biography of Boris Johnson.

II.I.IV Editorial on the Northern Ireland Protocol

On the one hand, *The Times* published on June 13th, 2022, an Editorial regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol. The title is shown on Figure 28 and the subtitle determines the newspaper’s view on this matter.

When talking about the law to invalidate key points of the NIP proposed by the government, it mentions that several experts consider it unlawful. *The Times*’ Editorial highlights that despite the fact that some businesses have been affected by the European customs checks, Northern Ireland’s economy has improved, becoming the

second most-performing region, right after London. The reason for that growth is because Northern Ireland has special conditions in both internal markets: the European Union's and the United Kingdom's.

"It is the British government that has refused to participate in formal negotiations since February", claimed by the Editorial. This refers to the British complaining that they have been neglected by the European Union.

The Editorial explains the DUP's rejection to serve on the Northern Ireland Executive unless the Protocol is removed. Furthermore, it criticises the government's decision to side with the DUP and accept its proposals explaining some of the disastrous consequences that overriding it can cause.

The Irish Independent, on the other hand, published an Editorial regarding the same matter on October 18th, 2022. Its title is "A negotiated deal is the only way forward for Northern Ireland Protocol" and it has no subtitle.



Figure 28: The Times' title of its Editorial on June 13, 2019

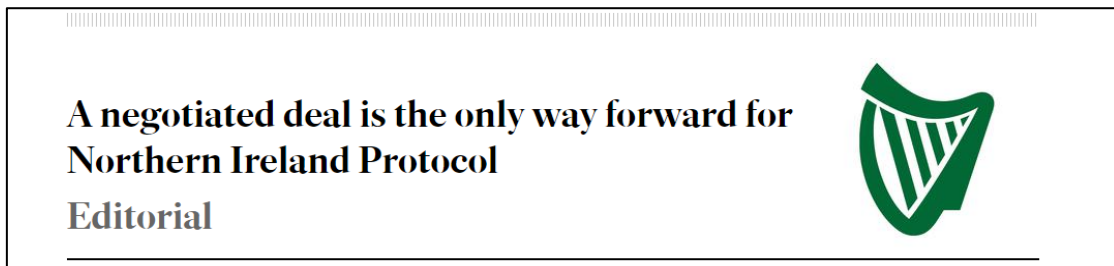


Figure 29: The Irish Independent's Editorial on October 18th, 2022

The Editorial states "Its people, and democracy itself, demand more" about those living in Northern Ireland. This is used to criticise several aspects. For instance, the weak government's acceptance of the DUP proposal to dismiss the Protocol with or without the European Union's cooperation is disapproved. In addition, it also condemns the fact that the DUP uses arguments such as "respecting the Good Friday Agreement" or "the protection of the United Kingdom internal market" to justify its actions. Furthermore,

the fact that the DUP opposes maintaining stability on the Northern Ireland Executive until the Protocol is revoked is what that phrase tries to synthesize.

As this Editorial clearly states, the best solution to this problem is a fairly negotiated new deal in Northern Ireland to avoid more damage.

Both newspapers agree on the consideration of the government's proposal to override the Northern Ireland Protocol as a bad decision. *The Times'* Editorial is more focused on explaining the legal and economic consequences while *The Irish Independent'* almost exclusively refers to the political situation.

The Irish Independent not only disapproves of the government's bill, but it also states that the only democratic solution is to re-negotiate another deal. *The Times'* Editorial, however, only explains the damages that the proposed bill would cause if it was approved. Unlike the British newspaper, *The Irish Independent* does not mention the economic growth in Northern Ireland.

II.II Timeline

A timeline has been designed to visualise the turning points on Brexit. The dates and facts included have been sorted by general relevance, always considering the special situation in Ireland and Northern Ireland. After a huge research of information, the design tool used to portray the final work has been *Canva*. For practical reasons, it is included in this Research Project through the following QR code and via link.



QR CODE

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SErn4sbl2CR_n9zwP_tZzKyq0c_KnzKc/view?usp=sharing

Conclusion

Having finished this Research Project, I can confirm that what I supposed about the effects of Brexit in Northern Ireland was true: Brexit has damaged the political situation in Northern Ireland and has increased tensions.

The comparison of newspapers and the brief History of Ireland show the political situation in Northern Ireland as of October 2022. What must be highlighted is the fact that the DUP opposes to continue to participate in the Northern Ireland Assembly until the British government overrules the Northern Ireland Protocol. Since devolution of powers in 2007, the Northern Ireland Assembly has been working peacefully to reduce the social divisions. However, due to the Brexit process, this extreme situation is creating more social tensions in Northern Ireland.

The main conclusion of the comparison is that *The Times* continues to use a London-centred perspective and *The Irish Independent* hardly ever deals with news from outside the isle of Ireland. In addition, the Irish newspaper appears to be extremely focused on the Irish economy.

The British newspaper shows support to the Conservative Party on several occasions while the Irish one is more reserved about its political opinions on Irish and British politics. Nevertheless, *The Irish Independent* does mention its political views when referring to Northern Ireland.

At a personal level, what has surprised me the most is the argumentation that *The Times* used to promote a 'Remain' victory before the referendum and the fact that it supported that option.

The first section of the Theory, A brief History of Ireland, has helped me put my previous knowledge on the matter into perspective and it has also contextualised the actual situation.

The part in which two international agreements are summarised has made me realise how precise the vocabulary used in the juridic world must be. In addition, the task of reading, comprehending and explaining this kind of documents has been complicated. Nevertheless, it has made me understand how complicate it is to establish rules that do

not create social or political problems, given that both agreements seem to have brought peace but not a solution to the problems.

After establishing the newspapers to be analysed, a selection of a few key moments was made. Obtaining the editions of those dates was definitely not an easy task. *The Irish Independent* offered that service through subscription. Nevertheless, *The Times* did not. To obtain those front pages I have had to go through several websites such as Twitter or Pinterest, and even other newspapers like *The Guardian*.

Once having access to that material, a detailed examination was made. Furthermore, each piece of news was summarised to facilitate the work. After that, the comparison of how each newspaper addressed the same news was made.

The elaboration of the Timeline has helped me visualise how Brexit has taken place. Furthermore, this has helped me implement different technology in this Research Project.

During my trip to Northern Ireland, I was able to talk to locals about their views. What I learned from that experience was definitely not what I expected²⁵. I supposed I could just ask people about their political views and they would happily explain them to me. Reality proved me wrong: people are more reserved than I thought about this specific subject.

From a personal perspective, I had the urge to establish similarities between the affairs in Northern Ireland and the one in Catalonia. After having slightly studied the situation in Northern Ireland, I have the feeling that they are two completely different circumstances: the Northern Irish question is, by far, way more tense and complex than the Catalan one²⁶.

Having finished this project, I am curious about what will happen with the NIP. On top of that, the research has raised more questions: will this situation promote a United Ireland? or will Brexit unite Northern Ireland with the United Kingdom even more? And what about the young generations, are they as opposed as the older ones?

²⁵ Annex 8 and Annex 9

²⁶ Annex 10

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The information sources are arranged according to the sections of the Research Project instead of using the standard procedure: alphabetical order. The reason to do so is to facilitate an easy access and justification of what is written in each part of the project.

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ELECTORAL COMMISSION. *Official site* [online]
 <<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/report-23-june-2016-referendum-uks-membership-european-union>> [September 2022]

Figure 11: Results of the referendum in the United Kingdom and Gibraltar

BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY. *Television* [online]

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results> [September 2022]

THE GUARDIAN. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/14>> [September 2022]

Figure 12: Map showing the option that got the most votes in each constituency in Northern Ireland in the 2016 referendum

Figure 13: Graph with data of how age is a crucial factor in this matter

Figure 14: Map with results of the 2016 referendum in some constituencies with specific conditions

BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY. *Television* [online]

<<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36615507>> [September 2022]

Figure 15: Table of the poll showing the progression

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY IN BELFAST. *University* [online]

<<https://www.qub.ac.uk/brexit/Brexitfilestore/Filetoupload,728121,en.pdf>> [September 2022]

I.II AGREEMENTS REGARDING IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

I.II.I GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT - PUBLISHING SERVICE. *Official site* [Online]

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1034123/The_Belfast_Agreement_An_Agreement_Reached_at_the_Multi-Party_Talks_on_Northern_Ireland.pdf> [October 2022]

Figure 16: British PM Tony Blair (left) and Taoiseach-Irish PM Bertie Ahern (right) signing the Agreement on 10 April 1998

BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY. *Television* [online]

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4079267.stm> [October 2022]

I.II.II WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

Figure 17: Starting of the Withdrawal Agreement

EUROPEAN UNION - PUBLISHING SERVICE. *Official site* [online]

<<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1580206007232&uri=CELEX%3A12019W/TXT%2802%29>>

[September 2022]

EUROPEAN UNION - PROGRAMMES. *Official site* [online]

<<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/102/northern-ireland-peace-programme>> [September 2022]

BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY. *Television* [online]

<<https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53724381>> [September 2022]

I.III SELECTION OF NEWSPAPERS

I.III.I THE TIMES

Figure 18: Name and logo of *The Times*

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/static/about-us/>> [June 2022]

I.III.II THE IRISH INDEPENDENT

Figure 19: Name and logo of *The Irish Independent*

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.independent.ie/service/our-story-40128170.html>> [June 2022]

II. PRAXIS

II.I COMPARISON OF TWO POINTS OF VIEW

II.I.I EDITORIAL ON THE 2016 EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM

Figure 20: Starting of The Times' Editorial of June 18th, 2016

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/remaking-europe-h7lcgs8bw>> [September 2022]

Figure 21: Starting of The Irish Independent's Editorial on the referendum published on May 1st, 2016

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]
 <<https://www.independent.ie/opinion/editorial/brexit-and-the-ireland-question-34674670.html>> [September 2022]

Figure 22: Title of The Irish Independent's Editorial on February 22nd, 2016

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]
 <<https://www.independent.ie/opinion/editorial/britains-inout-vote-poses-huge-challenges-34473118.html>> [September 2022]

II.I.II FRONT PAGES AND MAIN ARTICLES ON THE REFERENDUM'S RESULTS

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]
 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/closest-call-for-britain-5rcrxnjh0?gclid=Cj0KCQiAgribBhDkARIsAASA5bvlwmjpQ5xR5liYJwArWkQ0QRdCY6JOn0nHHz74Clf4m1UBcFlloPsaApbhEALw_wcB> [September 2022]

Figure 23: The Times' front page on June 24th, 2016

THE GUARDIAN. *Newspaper* [online]
 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/gallery/2016/jun/24/newspapers-brexit-front-pages-eu>> [September 2022]

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]
 <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-earthquake-bgw296b32>> [September 2022]

Figure 24: The Times' front page on June 25th, 2016

PINTEREST. *Social networking site* [online]
 <<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/24347654214668607/visual-search/?x=10&y=10&w=544&h=709&cropSource=6&imageSignature=e10635f4a18d841daf081c3b89af7adb>> [September 2022]

Figure 25: Front page of The Irish Independent on June 25th, 2016

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]
 <<https://epaper.independentnewsstand.ie/titles/irishindependent/>> [September 2022]

II.I.III BORIS JOHNSON BECOMES NEW PRIME MINISTER

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/boris-johnson-goes-to-work-as-prime-minister-nh55w33c0>> [September 2022]

Figure 26: The Times' front page on July 24th, 2019

TWITTER. *Social networking site* [online]

<https://twitter.com/TimesPictures/with_replies> [September 2022]

Figure 27: The Irish Independent on July 24th, 2019

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://epaper.independentnewsstand.ie/titles//NaN/publications/1137/pages/4>> [September 2022]

II.I.IV EDITORIAL ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROTOCOL

Figure 28: The Times' title of its Editorial on June 13, 2022

THE TIMES. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-the-northern-ireland-protocol-bill-brexit-undone-swms2q76f>> [October 2022]

Figure 29: The Irish Independent's Editorial on October 18th, 2022

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT. *Newspaper* [online]

<<https://www.independent.ie/opinion/editorial/a-negotiated-deal-is-the-only-way-forward-for-northern-ireland-protocol-42074120.html>> [October 2022]

Key Word Reference

Several specific terms have been properly explained in this section to provide a better understanding of this Research Project. They have been sorted in order of appearance.

Plantation – The British and Scottish governments established policies of Plantation in several parts of Ireland. The goal of those policies was to effectively colonise the entire island. They consisted in limited areas in which the new settlers from Great Britain had the right to establish themselves without consent of the original inhabitants. Furthermore, the governments used to sponsor the families moving from Britain to Scotland to Ireland. The biggest plantation was the Ulster Plantation.

House of Commons – House of Lords

The Parliament of the United Kingdom is made up of The House of Lords and The House of Commons. On the one hand, the UK electorate decides the 650 members of The House of Commons, where major political issues are discussed and laws are proposed. On the other hand, The House of Lords examines bills (draft laws) and holds the government to account.

Irish Party

The Irish Parliamentary Party was founded in 1874 by Isaac Butt and was the biggest party from Ireland in The House of Commons in several general elections during the end of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century. Its objectives were to achieve legislative independence for Ireland and a land reform.

Home Rule

Home Rule is the movement to secure internal autonomy for Ireland within the British Empire. After multiple attempts to achieve Home Rule, the Irish succeeded in 1914, but it never entered into force.

Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin is the largest nationalist party in Northern Ireland. Its purpose, amongst other things, is to establish a United Ireland. It was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith and gained popularity through the years. It also participates in Irish politics.

MP - PM

On the one hand, MP is short for “Member of Parliament”, a representative for a constituency in The House of Commons. On the other hand, PM is short for “Prime Minister”, referring to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Irish Republican Army

Irish Republican Army (IRA) refers to several paramilitary organisations and sub organisations that fought for the end of British Rule over the entire island of Ireland. At the start of the 20th century, it was established to achieve the independence of the entire island after changing its old name: the Irish Volunteers. After the partition, the IRA continued to fight for a United Ireland, though their influence decreased over the years. Nevertheless, with the beginning of the Troubles, a new group of nationalists established themselves as a paramilitary organisation and adopted the same name to fight for a United Ireland. Their methodology included: terrorist attacks to the British forces and symbols, bombings and gunfights. After the Peace Process, the IRA was disarticulated.

Protestants – Catholics

English and Scottish settlers to Ireland during Plantation were mainly Protestant, while the locals were Catholics. To maintain their tradition and refuse the British invasion, the Irish inhabitants continued to be Catholics. In Northern Ireland, almost the entire community of Protestants are unionists (pro-British) and almost all Catholics are nationalists (pro-Irish). This division has lasted until today. For the first time since 1801, the Catholic population of Northern Ireland is bigger than the Protestants.

Free Derry corner

Free Derry corner was a corner in the city of Derry/Londonderry in which the mainly Catholics protestors used to meet to discuss political issues during the Troubles. It was in one of the Catholic neighbourhoods in the city and “You are now entering Free Derry” was written on it. As of 2022, the corner does not exist anymore, but the wall with the popular phrase is still there. It also shows support to the Palestinian people. Traditionally, over the Troubles, the Catholics have been more open minded and have also supported other political causes such as the Palestinian conflict.

Derry/Londonderry

Derry, officially Londonderry, is the second largest city in Northern Ireland and it is next to the Foyle River, in the Western part of Northern Ireland. It is just a few miles away from the border with the Republic of Ireland. It was the most polarised and conflictive city during the Troubles. Traditionally, the main inhabitants in the city centre are Protestant but the majority of the Derry Urban Area is mainly Catholic. As well as Belfast, it was brutally physically divided through big walls that separated unionist neighbourhoods from the nationalists’ ones.

European Economic Community

The European Economic Community was the previous stage of the European Union. For more information go to Annex 1.

Northern Ireland Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly is the legislative body established from the Good Friday Agreement. It appoints the Northern Ireland Executive, formed by the cabinet members of the government of Northern Ireland.

General Election

A United Kingdom general election is an election in which British citizens choose the members of The House of Commons. The voting method used in the United Kingdom is the First-past-the-post (FPTP) system, which implies that every citizen eligible to vote can give their one vote to the candidate of their preference. After the election, the

political candidate, belonging to a party or being an independent, with the most electoral votes in a constituency becomes the representative in The House of Commons. There is, at least, a UK general election every five years since the Parliament is automatically dissolved when those years expire. However, a new election can take place if a successful confidence motion takes place, since it would have to resign. A new law, Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022, gives the monarch the powers to dissolve the parliament if asked by the Prime Minister, returning to the situation prior to 2011, when this mechanism was eliminated. This procedure can also cause a UK general election before the five-year period.

Constituency:

A constituency is an electoral area defined according to distribution of population. There are 18 constituencies in NI and each one has an average of 68 300 voters.

Conservative Party – Labour Party

On the one hand, the Conservatives, also known as Tories, are the members of the Conservative Party. It is one of the two main political parties in the United Kingdom. It is considered to be centre-right and is formed by one-nation conservatives and traditionalists. The Labour Party, on the other hand, is the other one of the two principal political parties in the United Kingdom. It is of a democratic socialist view and is considered to be in a centre-left position. It is usually associated with the red colours, while the conservatives often use the blue.

Free/Conscious vote

Free vote or conscious vote is an expression used when a leader of an institution allows their colleges to support whichever view they personally support.

UKIP

The United Kingdom Independence Party is a Eurosceptic political party in the United Kingdom that was intensively active during the Brexit referendum. It has never had significant representation in The House of Commons but it has achieved electoral victories in the United Kingdom for the European Parliament.

SDLP

Social Democratic & Labour Party is a political party in Northern Ireland. Its name expresses its political views. It is, in addition, an Irish nationalist party. It was one of the two main parties in the Good Friday Agreement negotiations.

Alliance

Alliance Party is a political party in Northern Ireland without a clear position on a United Ireland.

DUP

The Democratic Unionist party is a conservative unionist party in Northern Ireland. It did not support the peace process nor the negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement.

UUP

The Ulster Unionist Party is a conservative party in Northern Ireland. It is a unionist party and was the other main political party in the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of nations is the voluntary association of 56 nations that are connected throughout the use of the English language and historical ties. The Head of the Commonwealth is the King or Queen of the United Kingdom. Some of its members are the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Pakistan and South Africa.

Crown Dependencies

The Crown Dependencies are 2 small archipelagos and an island within the British Isles: The Bailiwick of Guernsey, The Bailiwick of Jersey, and the Isle of Man. They are not part of the United Kingdom nor the British Overseas Territories. They are considered "territories for which the United Kingdom is responsible". Even though they are not considered sovereign states, they are miniature states with wide powers of self-government.

Act of Parliament

An Act of Parliament is a law to be applied in the United Kingdom. A draft act or bill is a document containing a future act. In order to become a law, a bill has to be read at least twice in The House of Commons. Usually after the second reading, a debate on what the bill entails takes place. Continuedly, a committee considers the bill and can make amendments to it. The third reading means a final debate on the proposed law and a vote. If the bill is approved by The House of Commons, it passes on to The House of Lords, where another review of the bill takes place. After that, if The House of Lords has made amendments, the bill returns to The House of Commons and is voted again. If approved, it receives, after a few days, Royal Assent (a formality) and it becomes an Act of Parliament.

Annexes

In this section there are a few documents related to this Research Project.

Annex 1:

European Union Important Dates:

After WW2, Western European countries sign agreements to regulate and standardize some products to improve their economies:

1952 European Coal and Steel Community (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy and West Germany)

1957 European Economic Community (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy and West Germany)

1957 European Atomic Energy Community (Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Italy and East Germany)

1967 Merger Treaty (EEC & EAEC become 1)

1973 The UK, Ireland and Denmark join the EEC

1981 Greece joins the EEC

1985 Schengen Agreement – open borders

1986 Spain and Portugal join the EEC and Single European Act (obj: Single market by 1992)

1990 East Germany and West Germany unification --> reunified Germany in the EEC

1992 Maastricht Treaty: EEC --> EU and intentions to create the €

1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden join the EU

2002 The euro (€) is established and its circulation starts in some countries (not the UK)

2004 Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join the EU

2007 Treaty of Lisbon – New structure

2007 Bulgaria and Romania join the EU

2013 Croatia joins the EU

2016 The UK decides to leave the EU

2020 The UK leaves the EU

Annex 2:

The 2015 Conservative Party Manifesto



Fragment of the Conservative Party Manifesto of 2015

<<https://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1429010009028/Conservative-Manifesto-2015.pdf>>

Annex 3:

New Settlement



Introduction of "A new settlement for the United Kingdom within the European Union".

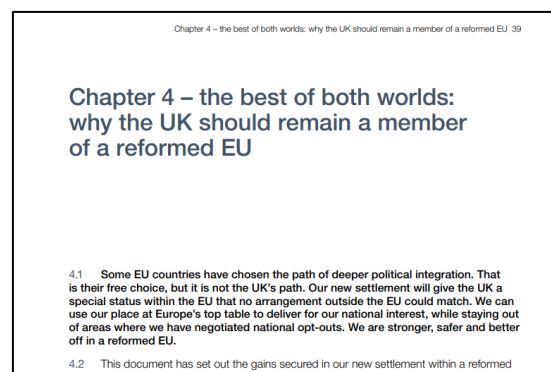
<<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.CI.2016.069.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2016:069:TOC>>

Annex 4:

The government's recommendations

HM's Government shared some documents expressing their opinion on what is best for the United Kingdom: staying in the European Union. Those documents included facts and data showing how belonging to the European Union improved British economy and stability. Figures of exports, jobs, European investments and others are shown to the public and the insecurities and new threats that leaving the Union are explained in those documents.

Here are two examples: "Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK" and "The best of both worlds: the UK special status in a reformed EU" showing the advantages of staying in the Union", both published by Her Majesty's government in 2016.



Last page of "Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK" published by HM's Government in 2016

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/515068/why-the-government-believes-that-voting-to-remain-in-the-european-union-is-the-best-decision-for-the-uk.pdf>

Page 38 of "The best of both worlds: the UK special status in a reformed EU" showing the advantages of staying in the Union", published by HM's government in 2016

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/502291/542_84_EU_Series_No1_Web_Accessible.pdf>

Furthermore, Her Majesty's Treasury published an objective analysis of how leaving the European Union would affect the United Kingdom, and the main conclusion was: "A vote to leave would cause an immediate and profound economic shock creating instability and uncertainty which would be compounded by the complex and interdependent negotiations that would follow [...] the effect of this profound shock would be to push

the UK into recession and lead to a sharp rise in unemployment”. The official name of this document, made public by the government and presented to Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer by Command of Her Majesty, is “HM Treasury analysis: the immediate economic impact of leaving the EU”.



Page 3 of “HM Treasury analysis: the immediate economic impact of leaving the EU”

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524967/hm_treasury_analysis_the_immediate_economic_impact_of_leaving_the_eu_web.pdf>

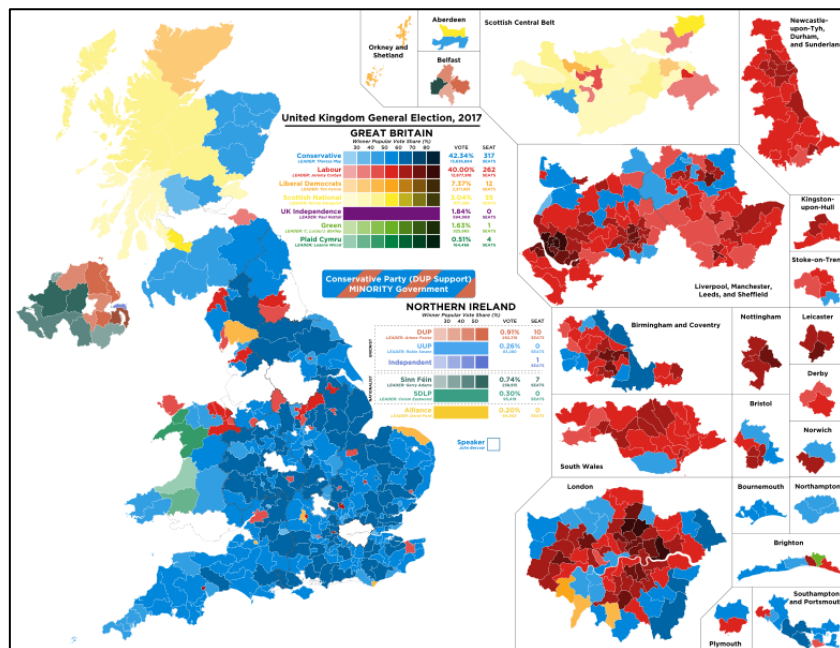
Annex 5:

2017 General Election

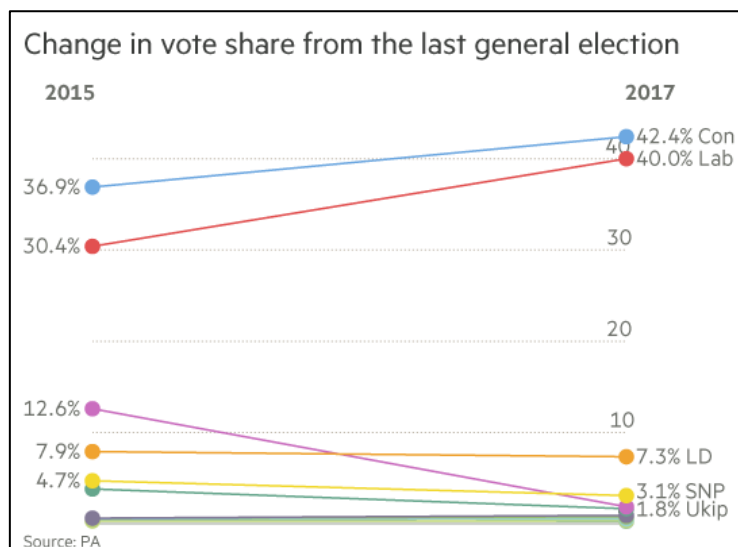
After several political movements since the 2016 referendum, another election was convenient to let the previous Parliament adapt to the new situation. In addition, Theresa May considered that a new election could benefit her strength in parliament in order to materialize a withdrawal agreement. Therefore, a United Kingdom General Election took place on 8 June 2017. The campaign was focused on how the withdrawal from the European Union would happen.

The turnout was 68.9% and the Conservatives won 317 seats, losing the simple majority they had but having received a higher vote share than in 2015 (Figure 19). Labour Party obtained 262 seats and no other significant changes happened respect the 2015 election (Figure 20).

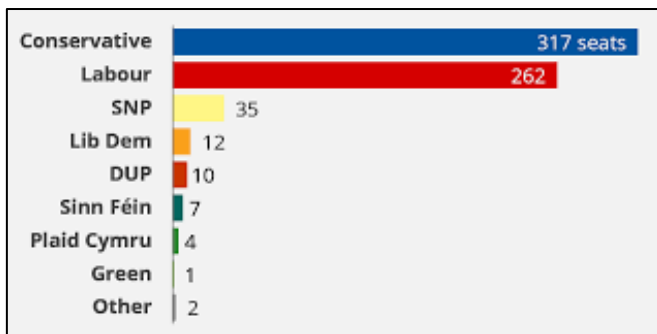
In Northern Ireland, the turnout was 65.4% and except for the independent candidate, Lady Sylvia Hermon for North Down, DUP and Sinn Féin were the only parties that obtained seats in this election. 10 of the 18 constituencies elected a DUP MP and in the remaining 7, Sinn Féin was the candidate with the most votes, bringing 7 Sinn Féin politicians to The House of Commons. This election has significantly decreased the number of parties that won in Northern Ireland constituencies. This means that the votes have concentrated under Sinn Féin, on the pro-Irish side, and under DUP on the unionist side.



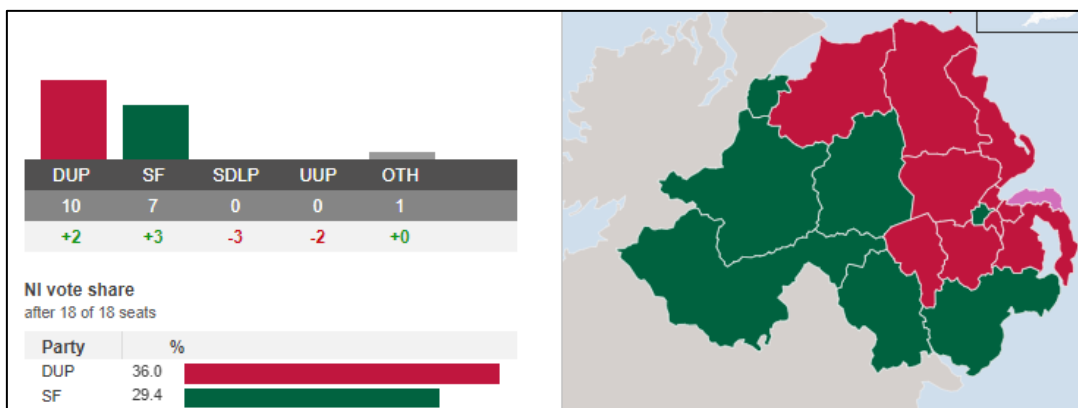
Map with the specific result of the 2017 General Election in the United Kingdom
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7979/#fullreport>



Graph showing the change in vote share in the 2017 general election from the 2015 one <https://ig.ft.com/election-results-2017/>



Graph that shows the number of seats that each party obtained in the 2017 general election which is the same as the number of constituencies where each party won <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7979/>>



Map and charts that show the results in the 2017 General Election in Northern Ireland <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results/northern_ireland>

Annex 6:

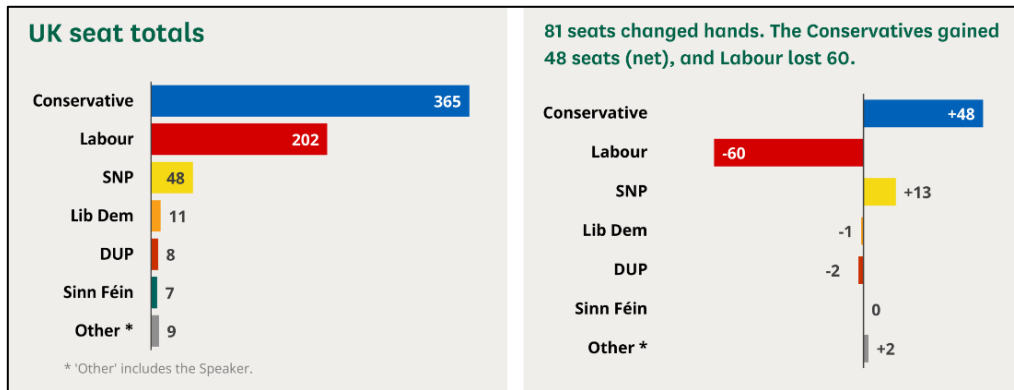
2019 General Election

The 2019 United Kingdom General Election took place on the 12th of December. The turnout of this election was 67.3%.

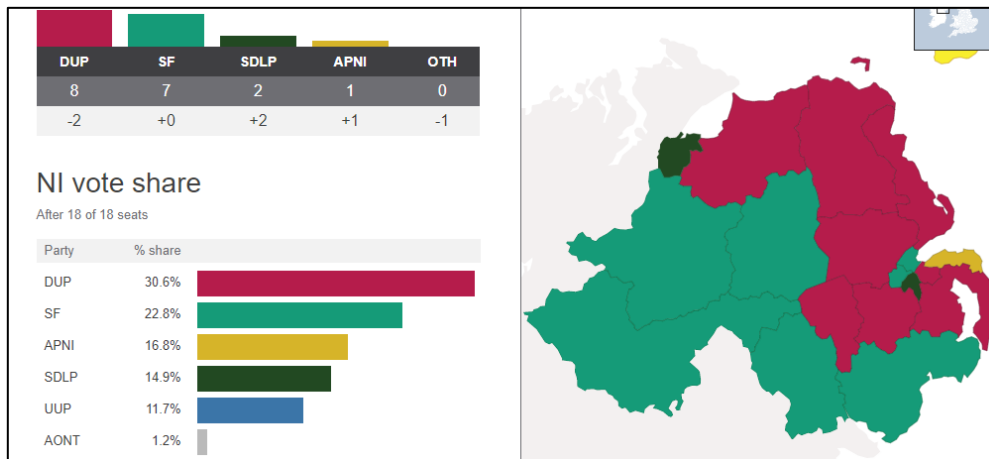
With the slogan of “Get Brexit Done”, the Conservatives won 365 seats in parliament, obtaining a vast majority and allowing them to form a new government with their leader, Boris Johnson, as Prime Minister. On the other hand, Labour Party, the other one of the two main parties in the United Kingdom, obtained 202 seats. The Scottish National Party obtained 48 seats and its leader, Nicola Sturgeon, considered it a huge victory, claiming a referendum on Scotland’s independence for 2023.

In Northern Ireland, 8 constituencies designated a DUP MP and 7 of the 18 constituencies a Sinn Féin one. Two constituencies elected SDLP candidates and the remaining one, North Down, elected an Alliance Party candidate. Therefore, the unionist voters stay mainly in the DUP, like they did in 2017. However, UUP received a higher

vote share than in 2017, but that was not enough to win in a constituency. On the other hand, the pro-Irish voters split their votes into Sinn Féin and SDLP, unlike in 2017, when SDLP could not bring any MPs to The House of Commons.

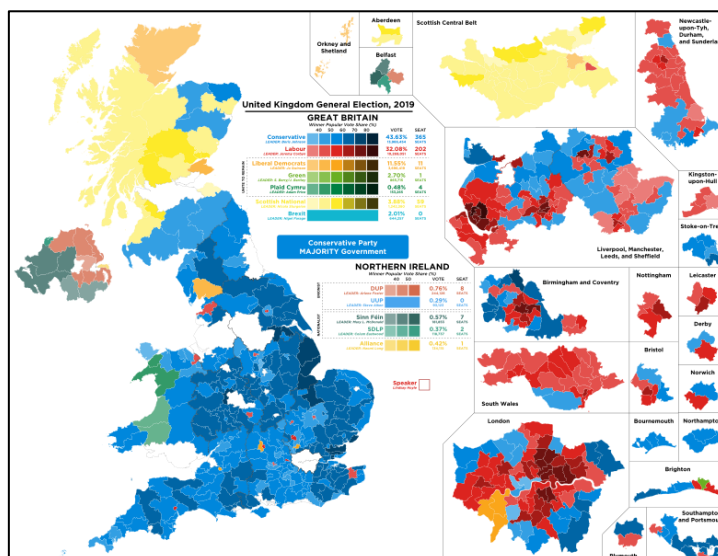


2019 General Election in the United Kingdom results by party and change in the number of seats since the 2017 General Election. <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8749/>>



Charts and map showing the results in Northern Ireland of the 2019 General Election

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2019/results/northern_ireland>



Map with the specific result of the 2019 General Election by constituency and party

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_United_Kingdom_general_election>

Annex 7:

Brexit Important Dates:

1973 the UK joins the EEC

1975 referendum held in the UK to decide its future in the EEC (67.2% on staying) proposed by the divided Labour cabinet (Conservatives pro staying and the Labour party no position)

1997 The UK Treasury concludes that the UK's economy isn't sufficiently converged with the rest of the EU nor flexible to adapt to the euro.

2013 The Eurosceptic wing of the Conservative Party starts to grow and the leader of the party, David Cameron, promises to negotiate a better deal for the UK in the EU in the Bloomberg Speech

2015 the Conservative party wins the election and forms a government. It approves the EU Referendum Act --> campaign before the 2016 referendum

- Britain Stronger in Europe (David Cameron and others) pro staying in the EU
- Vote Leave (Boris Johnson, Gisela Stuart and others) pro leaving the EU

Parties:

Pro-staying in the EU: Labour, Liberal Democrats, SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party

Pro-leaving the EU: UK Independence Party, DUP

Conservative Party – Neutral. Labour and Conservative allowed their MPs to campaign for either position.

2016 (June 23) Referendum “Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?” held in the UK and Gibraltar

Remain a member of the European Union – 48.1% of votes

Leave the European Union – 51.9% of votes

David Cameron resigned and Theresa May became UK Prime Minister.

Gina Miller (businesswoman) won a trial that forced the government to require the parliament permission to go ahead with Brexit.

2017 the EU (Notification of withdrawal) Act 2017 was approved and Theresa May formally notified the EU of the UK'S intention to leave the EU

Later that year a partial agreement between the EU and the UK government was reached

2018 21-month transition period (until December 31, 2020)

2019 March 29 was the original date for Brexit.

Three drafts of Theresa May's Brexit proposal were rejected in parliament leading to a rush that forced Theresa May to ask the EU to postpone Brexit. Irish land border is a

sensitive aspect of the agreement, but Theresa May's drafts contemplated "Irish backstop" as a plan to prevent an evident border in mainland Ireland.

The UK parliament approved the change of date to: 22 May if a deal is reached or 12 April if it's not. Since a deal was not reached, April 12 was going to be the date. However, the EU agreed to an extension until the end of October.

Theresa May resigned the 24th of July and Boris Johnson became the UK Prime Minister. Boris Johnson renegotiated with the EU and reached a new deal that was passed by the UK parliament (European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019) (prorogation controversy). This act considered January 31 2020 as the date of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

2020 (January 31) the UK leaves the EU at 23:00 GMT and starts the Transition Period (the UK has left the EU institutions but it remains in the customs union and single market).

December 31 end of the transition period.

Present day Northern Ireland Protocol issue

Annex 8:

Personal experience from the trip:

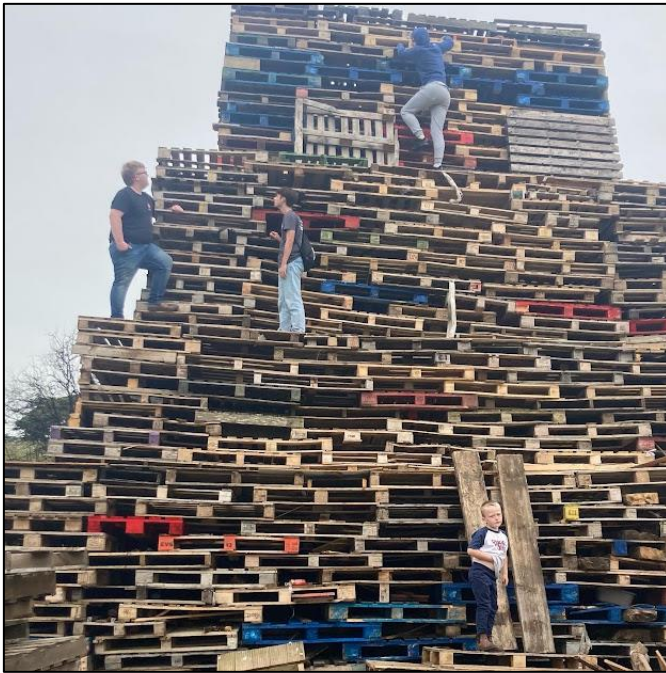
When I was in Bushmills, a town in an unionist area in Northern Ireland, John, who was fishing for fun, defined himself as "Northern Irish", not "Irish". It was July 9th, a few days before the night of the 11th of July. On that night, all over Northern Ireland, the unionists light mountains of wood to commemorate the arrival of the first Protestant king to Ireland. During the Troubles, that night used to be extremely problematic and usually ended up with riots. He invited me to go climb the Bonfire, the mountain of wood that they were going to set on fire in two days, to see how it was. He admitted he was not into politics, but since all his friends were participating, he would be there.



John and his friend Albert fishing in Bushmills July 9th, 2022 - personal compilation

On the other hand, I met Barbara, a nurse who lives in Letterkenny, County Donegal, ROI. She confirmed that due to Brexit, the Northern Irish society was more divided. She

said that she wanted a United Ireland. Nevertheless, she argued that she knew that unionist would not like it and would get violent if that ended up happening.



me on top of a Bonfire - personal compilation

After all, what they both transmitted me was that it was not an easy subject to address as a foreign and that my intention to conduct a little poll (annex 9), would not be as easy as I thought because some people took that subject from a very personal perspective.

Annex 9:

Poll/questionnaire:

One of the original ideas for this Research project was to carry out a poll to a few people during my trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland to obtain information about people's views. Nevertheless, once I got there, I felt it was going to be more complicated than I thought because people took the matter extremely seriously and it was not an easy topic to bring up in a conversation. Therefore, I decided to focus my Research Project on the comparison of newspapers.

Sample of the pamphlet I wanted to use with a QR code to the questionnaire.



Annex 10:*Northern Ireland - Catalonia:*

A painting in Belfast, Summer 2022 - personal compilation

In Northern Ireland, a usual place to express opinions are houses' walls. Belfast and Derry/Londonderry are two cities in which their inhabitants express themselves on paintings on the walls. During my trip I was able to see some of those paintings: about the IRA, the History of the town, remembering someone who had died, flags or condemning past issues. One of those painting was the one shown in the picture. It was on a house in Belfast and explains a brief History of the Catalan Countries. It highlights that it has been under foreign (Spain and France) occupation for more than 350 years. Furthermore, a flag of Catalonia and an Irish flag are raised together. Traditionally, the nationalists from Northern Ireland have been more open-minded and friendly with other nations.