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Master's Thesis of International Studies

**Get Brexit Done: a discourse analysis
on the UK news media in reshaping
the British-ness of Britons (2016 and
2020)**

2016년 그리고 2020년의 영국 신문사들 담론
분석을 통해 보는 브렉시트: 영국 시민들에게
주는 민주적 정체성 변화를 중심으로

August 2020

Graduate School of International Studies

Seoul National University

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**Get Brexit Done: a discourse analysis on
the news media in reshaping the British-
ness of Britons (2016 and 2020)**

Eun, Ki-Soo

Submitting a master's thesis of International Studies

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Abstract:

On June 23rd 2016, the UK held a referendum on its withdrawal from the European Union. News media were extremely active in using the term ‘Brexit’ to illustrate Britain’s firm decision to leave the Union. Nevertheless, the term itself was publicly first used in 2012 by David Cameron, when he made a decision to open the referendum for the first time. Consequently, ‘Brexit’ was quickly used in international media as an identification of the British people and the country. Domestically, traditional newspapers (also known as broadsheet newspapers) and tabloids take advantage of the term to exploit its readers to the Brexit issue. Through investigating the political and nationalistic critical discourse analysis of the right and left wing broadsheet newspapers and tabloids (Guardian & The Daily Mirror, The Sun & The Daily Mail), it searches if these media outlets have used discussions of identity to be able to shift the course of identity of its readers between the years of 2016 and 2020.

Key words: Brexit, European Union, broadsheet newspaper, tabloids, identity, Britons, identity

Student number: 2018-20863

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Table of Contents:

0	Abstract-----	I
1	Acknowledgement-----	II
2	Introduction	
2.1	Background Information-----	1
2.2	Quantitative Data-----	5
2.3	Research Purpose -----	19
2.4	Research Material -----	19
3	Literature Review	
3.1	The Tories and the Labour Party on Brexit-----	21
3.2	The Rise of Euroscepticism-----	24
3.3	Post-Brexit relationship between UK and EU-----	27
3.4	Britishness or Englishness?-----	29
3.4.1	Social Identity Theories-----	29
3.4.1.1	Understanding Britain’s dilemma-----	33
3.4.2	Britain’s sense of place-----	36
3.5	Media Culture: British Newspapers and Tabloids-----	38
4	Methodology	
4.1.1	Discourse Analysis-----	41
4.1.1.1	Critical Discourse Analysis-----	41
4.1.1.2	Media Discourse-----	45
5	Results	
5.1	Discourse Analysis -----	49
5.1.1	The Labour Party (The Guardian) 2016-----	49
5.1.2	The Labour Party (The Daily Mirror) 2016-----	65
5.1.3	The Tories (The Sun) 2016-----	71
5.1.4	The Tories (The Daily Mail) 2016-----	83
5.1.5	The Labour Party (The Guardian) 2020-----	96
5.1.6	The Labour Party (The Daily Mirror) 2020-----	102
5.1.7	The Tories (The Sun) 2020-----	108
5.1.8	The Tories (The Daily Mail) 2020-----	115
6	Discourse Analysis on British Identity	
6.1	Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Labour Party – 2016	
6.1.1	The Guardian 2016-----	123

6.1.2	The Daily Mirror 2016-----	125
6.2	Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Labour Party – 2020	
6.2.1	The Guardian 2020-----	128
6.2.2	The Daily Mirror 2020-----	129
6.3	Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Tories – 2016	
6.3.1	The Sun 2016-----	131
6.3.2	The Daily Mail 2016-----	132
6.4	Political and Nationalistic discourse for the The Sun & The Daily Mail 2020-----	134
7	Conclusion-----	137
7.1	Limitations of Research-----	139
8	Bibliography-----	138

Chapter I: Introduction

1. Background information:

“*Get Brexit Done*”. On June 23rd 2016, the Brexit referendum – first identified through David Cameron – marked the beginning of change for the UK as a country. The decision to leave the European Union allowed the Brexiteers and Conservative party to be more vocal in regaining the sovereignty they lost as member of the EU. Ironically, a country that once exercised imperialism over other countries during the course of history, now became one that sought independence from established foreign rule.

Nigel Farage’s speech after the first result of the Brexit referendum in 2016 ostensibly focuses on announcing the needs of the United Kingdom. His underlining of the term ‘we’ appears to talk for Britain, but it is, as a matter of fact, neglecting voices that have voted to remain.

“Because what the little people did, what the ordinary people did – what the people who’d been oppressed over the last few years who’d seen their living standards go down did – was they rejected the multinationals, they rejected the merchant banks [...] they said actually, we want our country

back, we want our fishing waters back, we want our borders back”¹

Farage’s speech highlights Britain’s purpose of taking back what was once taken away. Nonetheless, the real question lies as to how much this sovereignty reflects the whole of the country. Furthermore, the most important aspect is whose identity Farage focuses on. Would it be the British, or the English?

News media, both broadsheet newspapers and tabloids have also had their share of disputing what Brexit is and who it was for. Centre-left papers (mostly the Guardian, the Daily Mirror) and those of the centre-right (The Times, The Sun) have had fierce fights between one another, trying to convince the public to make choices that envision a better future for the country. Then what are the differences they serve to their readers?

Tabloid journalism is defined as the following: “popular, largely sensationalistic journalism”². With condensed stories published together,

¹ Stone, J., 2016. *Independent*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-brexite-speech-european-parliament-full-transcript-text-a7107036.html> [Accessed 1 5 2020].

² Gossel, D., 2020. *Tabloid Journalism*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tabloid-journalism> [Accessed 1 5 2020].

most of them serve the purpose of entertainment for people who do not prefer broadsheet newspapers. Thus, their choice of words or imagery is much more impulsive, which attracts many of their readers. On the other hand, broadsheet newspapers are the ones that readers are most familiar with. They are the ones that contain long stories (mostly focusing on the global political issues). For the UK though, the targeted audience is specific – usually middle-class readers. Also, unlike tabloids, broadsheet journalism uses less intriguing language to broadcast stories

In 2016, news media was extremely active in writing opinions or articles directly related to Brexit. Not only were The Sun and The Guardian the most accessible, but it also published stories related to Brexit until the referendum occurred, and even after the official announcement in 2020. Certain choice of words, the use of language to depict opposition parties, or choice of images to visualise the situation have all given certain impacts to readers. In this sense, centre-left- and right-wing newspapers and tabloids serve as rich resources in investigating difference of illustrating Brexit, and trying to analyse the influence they give in shifting the Britishness of their readers. Previous studies have done research on the shift of Britain after Brexit, however, have not conducted an analysis on what influences newspapers and tabloids brought to the shift of Britishness.

Indeed, the newspaper and tabloids selected for the paper does not

represent the whole of Britons. Nonetheless, since Britain has now officially left the European Union in January 2020, the purpose of this paper is to better understand the phenomenon news media has brought to selected readers in terms of their Britishness. Hence, it focuses on the year 2016 and 2020 between a month period (May ~ June 2016) leading to the Brexit referendum, and the same period (January ~ February 2020) up until the official announcement of Brexit.

For further information, quantitative data based on demographics are provided for easier understanding of the audience of selected newspapers and tabloids.

A. Demographic result of preferred political party after Brexit referendum 2016 ~ 2020:

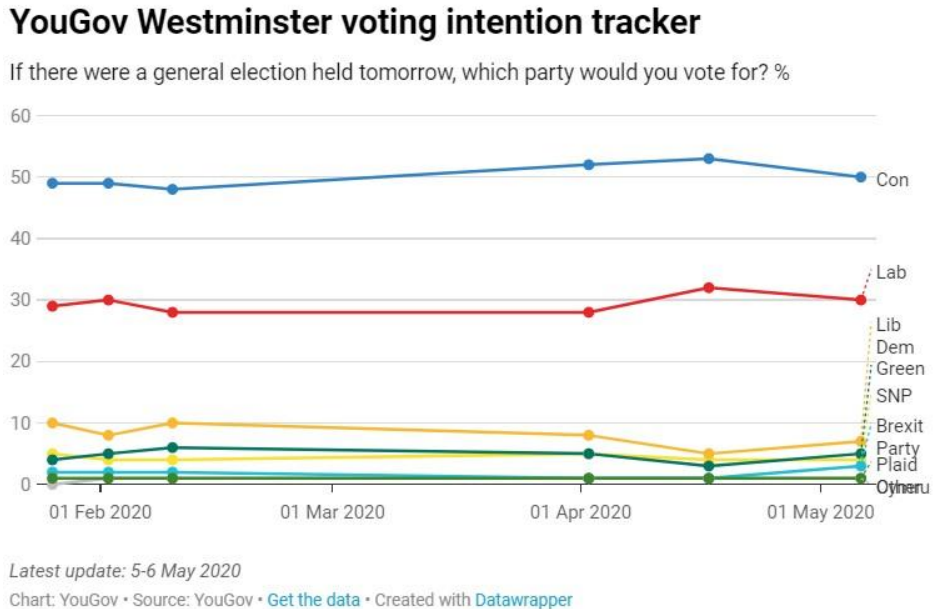


Figure 1: YouGov Westminster voting intention tracker³

In light of the 2016 Brexit referendum, YouGov created a political tracker that presents demographic data, which is based upon surveys conducted from the periods of 2016 until 2020. Figure 1, as shown above, illustrates a line graph of Westminster voting intention, showing which party people would rather vote for in general elections beginning from January 26th 2020; this was 4 days before the official announcement of Brexit. Overall, the

³ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/02/05/political-trackers-31-jan-2-feb-2020-update>

graph suggests that British people would prefer to vote for the Tories more so than the Labour Party. The outstanding result of the Conservative party describes how much the public relies on the Tories – this is reasonable since the Labour Party were not successful in addressing the lower and middle-class.

B. Demographic results of the vote for Brexit (2016 ~ 2020):

Figure 2: YouGov right/wrong to vote for Brexit⁴

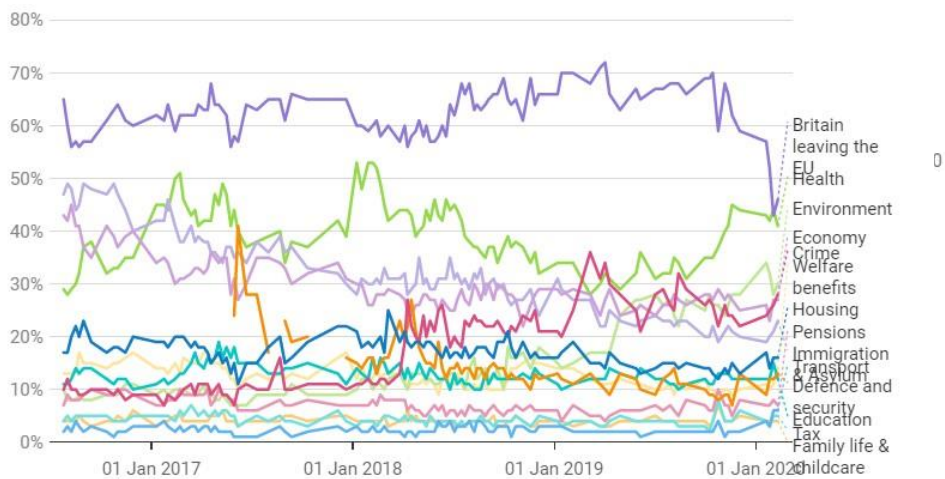
YouGov right/wrong to vote for Brexit tracker

In hindsight, do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the European Union?



YouGov top issues facing the country tracker

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three.



Latest update: 8-10 Feb 2020

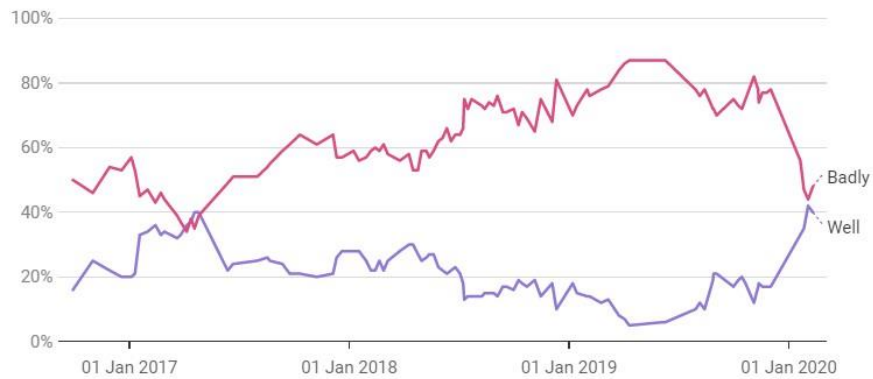
Chart: YouGov • Source: YouGov • [Get the data](#) • [Created with Datawrapper](#)

⁴ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/02/05/political-trackers-31-jan-2-feb-2020-update>

Figure 3: YouGov top issues facing the country⁵

YouGov government handling of Brexit tracker

How well or badly do you think the government are doing at handling Britain's exit from the European Union?



Latest update: 8-10 Feb 2020

Chart: YouGov • Source: YouGov • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Figure 4: YouGov government handling of Brexit⁶

The three figures are trackers of the transition of the country, focusing on the outcome of Brexit. Figure 2, shown on the left, is structured around survey results from August 2016 until January 2020 surrounding the issue of the right or wrong to vote for Brexit. The purple line that represents that it was right to vote for Brexit significantly decreases after the beginning of 2018, whilst those who believe it to be wrong increased more in number since the mid-2017. In light of this result, figure 3 (shown on the left) also shows

⁵ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/02/05/political-trackers-31-jan-2-feb-2020-update>

⁶ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/02/05/political-trackers-31-jan-2-feb-2020-update>

notable results of the top issues Britain is facing. With the issue of environment coming second, the problem of Britain leaving the EU has been the most important problem for the country since 2016, but has shown rapid drop after February 2020. This is also understandable, since the government officially announced Britain's leave of the EU. In relation to this, figure 4 supports how much the outcome of Brexit has negatively impacted the opinion of the British citizens. Despite the strong support of the Conservative party, the years counting up to the official announcement Brexit proves that the government has not been effective in handling Britain's exit especially after the start of 2019.

C. Newspaper consumption based on tabloids and newspapers 2016



Figure 4.6 Newspapers used for news nowadays, by demographic group

% of those who use newspapers for news

	All 16+	Male	Female	16-34	65+	ABC1	C2DE
Daily Mail	26%	24%	28%	28%	28%	27%	24%
The Sun	22%	25%	18%	↑ 32%	17%	14%	↑ 31%
The Mail on Sunday	15%	17%	12%	5%	↑ 17%	14%	15%
Daily Mirror	11%	11%	10%	18%	11%	8%	↑ 15%
The Sun on Sunday	10%	13%	8%	12%	10%	7%	↑ 14%
The Guardian	9%	8%	9%	↑ 18%	3%	↑ 12%	5%
The Times	9%	9%	9%	10%	8%	↑ 15%	2%
Metro	9%	9%	10%	↑ 19%	2%	10%	9%
The Sunday Times	9%	10%	9%	11%	6%	↑ 15%	3%
Any local daily newspaper	9%	7%	12%	6%	↑ 13%	9%	10%
The Daily Telegraph	7%	7%	8%	12%	10%	↑ 10%	4%
Daily Express	6%	6%	7%	5%	7%	5%	8%
Sunday Mirror	6%	8%	4%	3%	↑ 9%	4%	8%
'I'	5%	3%	6%	1%	↑ 6%	↑ 6%	2%
London Evening Standard	5%	5%	6%	5%	1%	↑ 7%	3%
The Sunday Telegraph	5%	5%	4%	4%	6%	↑ 8%	1%
Daily Star	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%	1%	↑ 7%
The Observer	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	↑ 6%	2%
Any local paid weekly paper	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Sunday Express	3%	4%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%
Any local free weekly newspaper	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%
The Financial Times	2%	2%	2%	8%	1%	↑ 4%	*
Daily Record	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%

Q5b/Q5c) Thinking specifically about [daily/weekly] newspapers, which of the following do you use for news nowadays?
 Base: All who use newspapers for news (910), Male (456), Female (454), 16-34 (111), 65+ (482), ABC1 (448), C2DE (462). Note: only sources with an incidence of 2% or more are shown. Arrows in red indicate significant differences between demographic groups.

Figure 5: Ofcom table for newspaper consumption 2016⁷

To understand the logic behind the effectiveness of news media linguistics on influencing the Britishness of British people, it is important to give attention to the news appetite of the British people. Figure 5 (shown above) adds a great deal to the demography of people who read national broadsheet newspapers and tabloids. It is apparent that in 2016, readers of

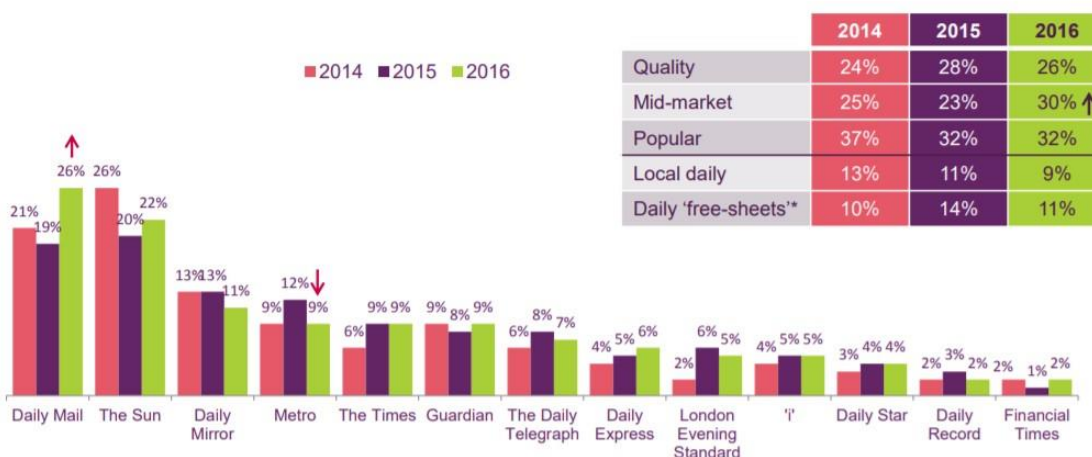
⁷ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/103570/news-consumption-uk-2016.pdf

The Sun (conservative tabloid) has increased up to 32%, whilst the Guardian had a slight increase up to 18% for the age group of 16 ~ 34 years old. What is also interesting to note is the fact that readers have continuously chose the



Figure 4.4 Daily newspapers used for news nowadays, 2014-2016

% of those who use newspapers for news



Q5b) Thinking specifically about daily newspapers, which of the following do you use for news nowadays?

Base: All who use newspapers for news 2016 (910) 2015 (957) 2014 (1160). Arrows in red indicate differences of statistical significance between 2015 and 2016.

*Daily free-sheets are the Metro and the London Evening Standard

Note: 'Quality', 'Mid-market' and 'Popular' are the standard terms used by the NRS for classification of titles

Daily Mail, with a consistency of around 27% choosing this newspaper.

Figure 6: Ofcom survey table for daily newspapers used for news 2014-2016⁸

As Figure 5 has shown the demography of newspaper consumption, figure 6 also shows which broadsheet newspapers or tabloids consumers prefer to read every day. Based on the survey question 'which of the following

⁸ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/103570/news-consumption-uk-2016.pdf

do you read nowadays?’, compared to the past 2 years, readers selected both the Daily Mail and The Sun in 2016. The Daily Mail appears to be much more accessible than The Sun, which is shown with nearly a 5% increase from 2014. Additionally, for the choice of newspaper, those visible in the mid-market have made shown substantial growth with an overall of 30% of people using newspapers for news.

In this regard, in 2016, news consumption is shown to be prone to the Conservative tabloid and broadsheet newspapers (The Daily Mail and The Sun). The question would be then how much of the difference is made in the year 2019.

D. Newspaper consumption pattern in 2019:

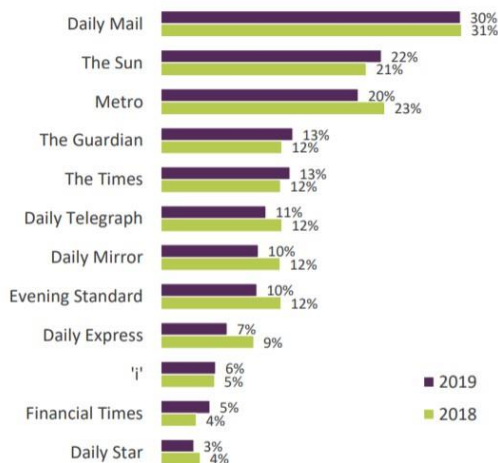
Among the two fifths (38%) of adults who claim to consume news through newspapers, the most-used title is the Daily Mail followed by The Sun and Metro



Figure 6.2

Daily newspapers used for news nowadays (print only)

All using printed newspapers for news



In total, **23%** (26% in 2018) of print newspaper readers used daily 'free-sheets'

Figure 7: Ofcom survey showing news consumption habit in 2019⁹

Compared to newspaper consumption habits in 2016, the Daily Mail is to be rendered as the most popular newspaper around Britain, followed by The Sun and The Metro. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this data only counts printed newspapers only. Digital access to tabloids or newspaper sites may change the arrangement of news consumption rankings. Viewed in this light, reasons behind the popularity of the Daily Mail may vary. However, when subscribers of the newspaper were asked of its political stance the

⁹ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/157914/uk-news-consumption-2019-report.pdf

outcome was rather interesting.

E. Survey on Political Stance of The Daily Mail (2020)

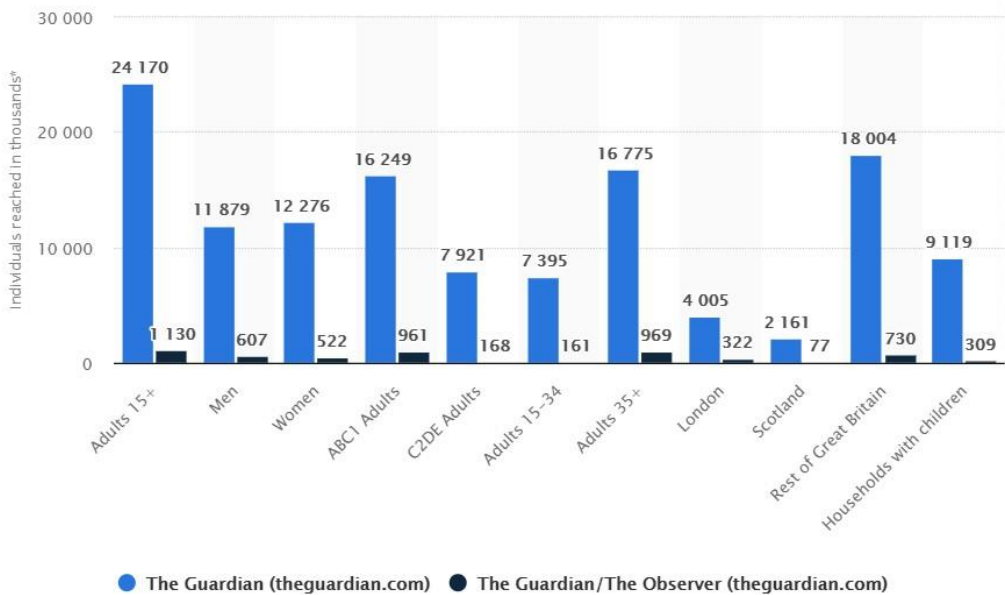


Figure 8: YouGov data survey on political stance of The Daily Mail¹⁰

Above represents the percentage of readers' answers whether they are aware of the political stance of The Daily Mail. Surprisingly, 36% of the readers know that the Daily Mail genuinely supports the Tories, whilst 42% of the participants have said that they are not sure what political stance the newspaper supports. On the surface, this could relate to why figure 7 illustrates that the most-used newspaper is the Daily Mail.

¹⁰ YouGov, 2020. *Is The Daily Mail more favourable towards Labour/the left or the Conservatives/the right?.* [Online] [Accessed 12 5 2020].

F. Target Audience for The Guardian



© Statista 2020

Figure 9: The Guardian Readership Demography (Statista)¹¹

The following bar graph introduces the Guardian's targeted audience into demographics. What is interesting to note from this result is the fact that high number of adults over the age of 15 are targeted, whilst distributions of the newspaper are mostly aimed at the rest of Great Britain. An additional

¹¹ Statista, 2019. *Monthly reach of The Guardian and The Observer in Great Britain from January 2019 to December 2019, by demographic group.* [Online]

Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/380687/the-guardian-the-observer-monthly-reach-by-demographic-uk/> [Accessed 11 5 2020].

finding is the fact that adults who come from a middle-class background read this newspaper more than the those who don't (the C2DE group). Furthermore, it can be noted that females prefer to read the Guardian more than males, with a difference of 1000 readers.

G. Target Audience for The Sun

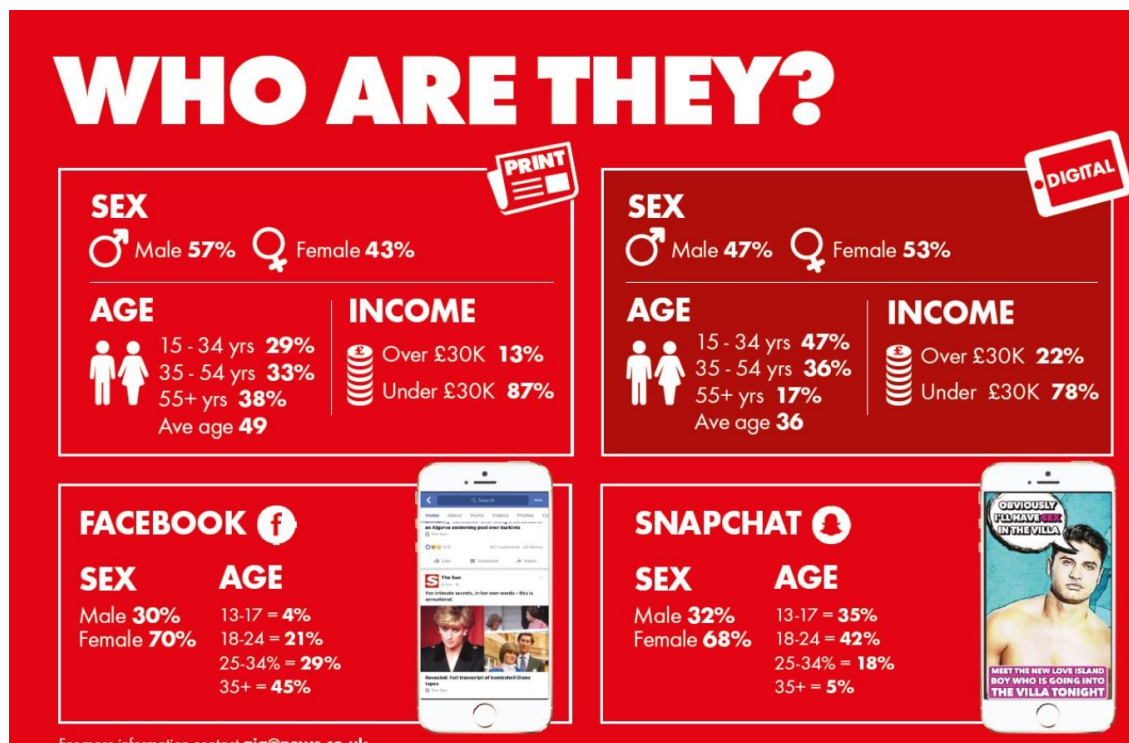


Figure 10: The Sun targeted audience data¹²

Different to the Guardian, centre-right wing tabloid The Sun has the most readership from the middle to lower class citizens. The average age of their targeted audience is 49 years old, and more males read the printed version of this tabloid more than females.

Then how much of the British identify themselves as British or

¹² The Sun, 2020. *The Sun*. [Online]

Available at: <https://newscommercial.co.uk/brands/the-sun> [Accessed 11 5 2020].

English? From YouGov, surveys were distributed across the nation for the BBC's research on British identification. The results are the following:

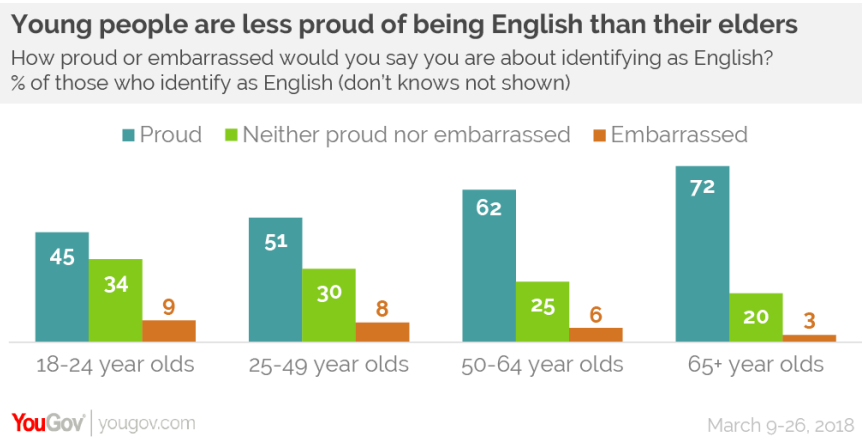


Figure 11: YouGov bar chart of identity survey¹³

¹³ Smith, M., 2018. *Young people are less proud of being English than their elders*. [Online] Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2018/06/18/young-people-are-less-proud-being-english-their-el> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

Overall, it is visible that more of the younger generation are not as proud to be English compared to their elders.

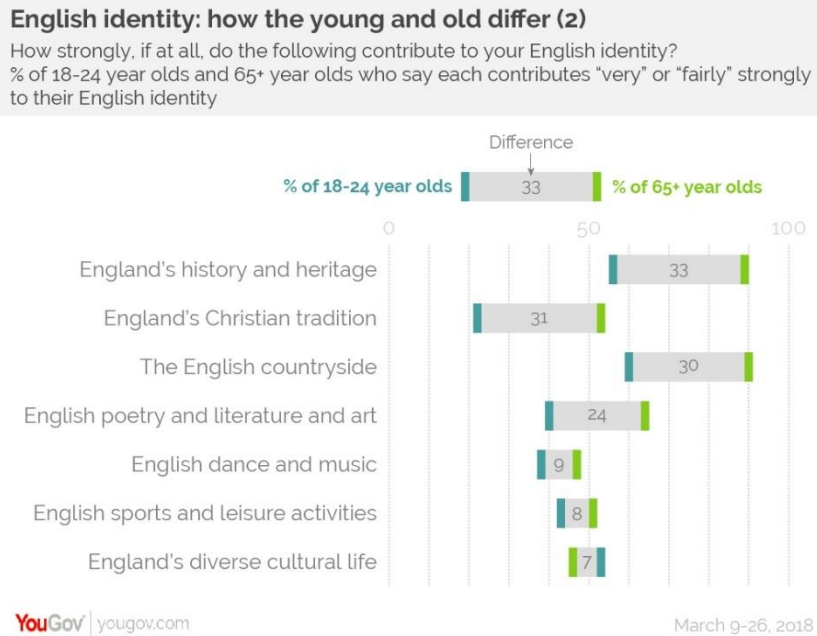


Figure 12: YouGov bar chart of identity survey¹⁴

Another data from the YouGov illustrates how the younger generation are different in terms of their 'English' identity. Differences are particularly visible when the younger generations see England as a diverse nation. While, on the other hand, the older generation would relate themselves closer to the English history.

¹⁴ Ibid

2. Research purpose:

To contribute to the absence of research in the relation between the role of news media in determining the social identity of Britons during *Brexit*, this research attempts to contribute in research of Brexit around 2016 and 2020 using discourse analysis, under the support of existing quantitative data for visual purposes.

Through the research, this paper suggests two hypotheses: 1) Tabloids have shown stronger nationalistic discourse through a repeated tactic used in 2016 and 2020 with the inclusion of Euroscepticism; 2) Euroscepticism dissolves, making the Labour party focus more on political discourse on Britain's identity in 2020..

3. Research material:

The interest of this research remains in analysing newspapers and tabloids between during the Brexit referendum (2016 April ~ 2016 June), and after the official announcement of Brexit (2019 December ~ 2020 February). Materials used for analysis are the following newspapers and tabloids: those on the left party are The Guardian and Daily Mirror, and on the right party are The Sun, and The Daily Mail. For broadsheet newspapers, their contents vary based on how important the story is. The structure is different from tabloids, in the way

that journalists focus more on global issues. On the other hand, tabloids would be subjective in addressing important issues, and would use sensitive language to grasp the attention of all readers.

Chapter II: Literature Review:

To make it easier to understand the development of the effect newspapers and tabloids have on English nationalism, I divided information prior to existing literature into two forms: 1) The Tories and the Labour Party on Brexit; 2) The development of Euroscepticism; 3) Britain's sense of place post-Brexit.

I. The Tories and the Labour Party on Brexit

Under the constitutional monarchy, the British political system is multi-party system that mainly includes the conservative and labour party.

The Conservative party (more commonly known as the Tories), position themselves as the right-wing in British politics. Ideologies were drawn from Thatcherism; an ideal that was made to “construct a socially authoritarian but economically liberal consensus in British politics”¹⁵. Their foreign policy, especially for Europe, was heavily created under Margaret Thatcher, where

¹⁵Ludlam, S. & Smith, M. J., 2014. The Character of Contemporary Conservatism. ; *Contemporary British Conservatism*. London: MacMillan Press LTD, pp. 264-287. (266)

her position focused on the “opposition to monetary union”¹⁶. Even though this attitude has received much criticism, this adaptation continued under John Major since both agreed that “the establishment of a single EU currency would signal the end of the UK as a sovereign nation”¹⁷. The combination of both “libertarian and collectivist thought”¹⁸ formatted state-building for the Conservative party in which administered governance was preferred over a *laissez-faire* one. This was to prevent any possible domestic class conflicts and to establish tighter bonds between the individual and the party. As such, the protection of British sovereignty is a key factor for the Tories to call themselves the pragmatic party in British politics. Few of the many things they have attempted to do were mostly against public ownership, which would explain why decline of public spending or income tax was favourable in saving Britain from a “threat of bankruptcy”¹⁹. Therefore, they would try

¹⁶ George, S. & Sowemimo, M., 2014. Conservative Foreign Policy towards the European Union. .; *Contemporary British Conservatism*. London: MacMillan Press LTD, pp. 244-264. (245)

¹⁷ Ludlam, S. & Smith, M. J., 2014. The Character of Contemporary Conservatism. .; *Contemporary British Conservatism*. London: MacMillan Press LTD, pp. 264-287. (267)

¹⁸ Smith, M. J., 2014. Reforming the State . .; *Contemporary British Conservatism*. London: MacMillan Press LTD, pp. 143-165. (146)

¹⁹ Kavanagh, D., 1996. A United Kingdom?. .; *British Politics: Continuities and Change*. Oxford: Oxford Press, pp. 19-38. (20)

to “unleash the potential of this great country [UK]”²⁰ through pushing deals for *Brexit*, just as they did with the Thatcherite methods (the consideration for authority in the Parliament). In which case, *Brexit* for them would be the most ideal way of preserving Britain’s power from Europe.

On the other hand, the Labour Party associates itself with the idea of both social and economic equality. According to their website, the party emphasises a democratic procedure in their policy-making. Unlike the Tories, focus is set on the creation of a people’s movement that underlines state interaction as a mechanism to pursue a welfare state that is made for class support²¹. Their targeted audience goes to the working class. The reason for this is because members part of the party was “ignored by the Tories and disillusioned with the Liberals”²². Instead of limiting the government, the Labour Party desired to “obstinate refusals to modify old state-based forms

²⁰ Conservatives, 2020. *Conservatives*. [온라인] Available at:

<https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/get-brexit-done-and-unleash-britains-potential>

²¹ Brivati, B. & Bale, T., 1997. Earthquake or watershed? Conclusions on New Labour in power. ;: *New Labour in Power: Precedents and Prospects*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 183-203.

²² Labour Party, 2020. *Labour*. [온라인] Available at: <https://labour.org.uk/about/labours-legacy/>

[엑세스: 12 04 2020].

whose credibility [...] have themselves eroded”²³. Therefore, policies such as equal income distribution or efficient NHS services are legitimised accordingly to the objectives of the Labour Party. More importantly, the Labour Party’s desire to remain with the EU was criticised amongst other scholars who have said that the party needs to recognise “England and the English more explicitly”²⁴. Therefore, *Brexit* would not be appealing as they would want to still be part of the EU membership for the maintenance of the “common immigration policy”²⁵ and social justice as part of Europe.

II. The Rise of Euroscepticism

To understand how the UK has built its Eurosceptic view of the European Union, its relationship with the EU will be explained. The EU-UK relationship dates far back to history when the British Empire was rising in the midst of the Roman Empire. Historian, Jeremy Black, from his short novel *Britain and Europe: A Short History*, mentions the importance of analysing just how much the British citizens “feel themselves to be Europeans, taking

²³ Alexander, G., 1997. Managing the state and the state as manager. ;: *New Labour in Power*. London: Routledge, pp. 79-101. (100)

²⁴ Wellings, B., 2019. England’s Dilemma. ;: *English Nationalism Brexit and the Anglosphere*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 26-44. (30)

²⁵ Young, J. W., 1997. Foreign, defence, and European affairs. ;: *New Labour in Power*. London: Routledge, pp. 137-154. (152)

an informed and sympathetic interest in what was happening, or did their ignorance of Europe lead to insularity and xenophobia?”²⁶. The construction of Britain initially begins from the Roman era, where Britain was introduced to a “system of politics and government through which events elsewhere in Europe had a continuous direct impact in Britain”²⁷. Arguably, this was the beginning of European integration with the UK, and the starting point in which Britain now began to have the capacity to build their own empire – Britannia. It was at this time in history, where Britain obtained the ability to develop not only politically but also agriculturally.

Nevertheless, the strongest British integration could be argued to have started after the burst of WWII. As the UK saw France and Germany recovering quickly from the²⁸ aftermaths of the war, Britain believed that it would be beneficial to join the EEC, in 1961, which created “mutual benefits [that] is part of the motivation of the European Project”²⁹. At that time, all three parties of the UK fully agreed to join the Union “with more than 67%

²⁶ Black, J., 2019. *Britain and Europe: A Short History*. London: Hurst & Company. (1)

²⁷ Ibid (3)

²⁸ Fukuyama, F., 2018. *Identity*. New York: FSG.

²⁹ Wilson, S., 2014. *Britain and EU: A long rocky relationship*. [온라인] Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-26515129> 액세스: 10 6 2019].

in favour”³⁰. But this quickly faded when the UK realised that it was receiving less “agricultural subsidies”³¹ than it should be receiving. The 1980s was the period in which the European Commission desired to make a federal Europe and unite all member-states with a single currency. Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, at the time pointed out that “a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels”³², meaning that the Union acted beyond the UK’s acceptance. Another downfall to Europe and UK’s relationship comes from the incident of ‘Black Wednesday’, where the UK withdrew from accepting the “Exchange Rate Mechanism”³³, which actually led to the use of Sterling Pounds today. There were, however, good occasions with the EU during Tony Blair as Prime Minister. He actually was considering Britain’s entry to the single currency, even highlighting that “to the extent that you are part of the economic structures of Europe, you abide by Europe’s rules. You are a rule-taker not a rule-maker”³⁴.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Thatcher, M., 1988. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*. [온라인] Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332> [엑세스: 11 6 2019].

³³ Inman, P., 2012. *Black Wednesday 20 years on: how the day unfolded*. [온라인] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/sep/13/black-wednesday-20-years-pound-erm> [엑세스: 11 6 2019].

³⁴ Blair, T., 2018. *Tony Blair to EU Leaders: Giving Us a Way Out Will Save Both Britain and*

Despite the fact that the European Union and the UK had ties before the rise of Margaret Thatcher, the feeling of Euroscepticism from the Conservative party and its people have already started the downfall of a stronger bond for further political and economic integration.

III. Post-Brexit Relationship Between Britain and the EU:

Then how is Britain and EU's relationship change post-Brexit referendum, if their connection already deteriorated? According to the Institute for Government report, the UK proposed a new approach to manage international trade without the European Union. For instance, the report suggests a "regulatory partnership model"³⁵ that would make it flexible for the UK to "diverge from EU rules [that might] create barriers to trade"³⁶. Moreover, as Britain leaves the Single Market of EU, under the European jargon, the UK

Europe. [온라인] Available at: <https://institute.global/news/tony-blair-eu-leaders-giving-us-way-out-will-save-both-britain-and-europe> [엑세스: 11 6 2019].

³⁵ Institute for Government, 2017. *Summary: Trade after Brexit*. [온라인]

Available at: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/IFGJ5896-Brexit-Report-171214-final_0.pdf [엑세스: 10 6 2019]. (pg 2)

³⁶ *Ibid* (2)

is now illustrated as “a third country”³⁷, which would make the Union impose custom checks on all British goods that could impose “a large impact on high value supply chains that British and European businesses have developed over the period of the UK’s membership of the union”³⁸. This indicates the leave of larger businesses such as Dyson, as they longer see any benefits of implanting companies in the UK.

Moreover, from the report of the House of Lords, the present inquiry related to post-Brexit Britain and EU remain in terms of trade. Both sides emphasise that they would desire “a strong UK-EU relationship”³⁹. The House of Lords also pointed out that the crucial point of this relationship is to make negotiations that would address interests of both sides instead of “closing-off”⁴⁰ discussions any further.

Nonetheless, these attempts to create new relationships with the EU seem to show sluggish process, in that talks became more constructive within areas of “governance, fisheries and police cooperation..”⁴¹. Following from these

³⁷ Ibid (3)

³⁸ Ibid (3)

³⁹ House of Lords, 2018. *UK-EU relations after Brexit*, London: House of Lords: European Union Committee. (7)

⁴⁰ Ibid (16)

⁴¹ House of Commons, 2020. *House of Commons Library*. [Online] Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/brexit/the-eu/what-is-happening-in-the-uk-eu->

negotiations, the Conservative party appeared to be reluctant in allowing the EU to extend talks with the Parliament as EU rules “still apply to the UK”⁴². As explained in the objectives of the Tories, post-Brexit relationship with the EU would try to preserve the British sovereignty more so than losing it.

In light of an overview of Britain, the study refers to the discussion of Britain’s identity, the growth of the Anglosphere, and the role of news media with the help of social identity theories that has been absent in many of the researches regarding Brexit.

1. Britishness or Englishness?

I. Social Identity Theories of Nationalism

To explain what a Briton is, there are alternative names that could be used: British or English. The question, however, remains as to how much of a difference both terms have in describing a Briton. According to

[future-relationship-negotiations/](#)

⁴² House of Commons, 2020. *Brexit Next Steps: The Transition Period*. [Online] Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/brexit/negotiations/brexit-next-steps-the-transition-period/> [Accessed 21 4 2020].

the UK Home Office, one way of defining a British citizen highly depends “on where you were born and your parents’ circumstances”⁴³. As such, people residing in Scotland would call themselves Scottish, while citizens residing in Wales would call them Welsh instead of British or English. The distinction of Britishness is rather blurred, which several scholars also indicate in their researches. In the words of Robert Colls, “British national identity survived because it was a broadly acceptable expression of the British people”⁴⁴, however, indicates that “national identity is not always to be trusted as true representations”⁴⁵. It is worth noting that the debate on Britishness still causes academic debate, however, Julios (2008) argues that the inclusion of the English language is part of the identity of Britain nowadays. They also “share an even stronger communal bond”⁴⁶ that allows the citizens to distinguish what is part of their society and what is not. Hence, Julios’ argument would ideally support Anderson’s imagined community for the reason being that Britishness derives from what defines the citizens as people who have “responsibilities as British citizens [...] as

⁴³ UK Home Office, 2019. *Identity Cards*. [온라인]

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/identitycards> [액세스: 09 11 2019].

⁴⁴ Colls, R., 2012. British national identity. *History Today*, 62(8), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Julios, C., 2008. *Contemporary British Identity : English Language, Migrants and Public Discourse*. London: Ashgate. (5)

such to supersede any others”⁴⁷. Results from the referendum could be said to illustrate his point, as citizens across the nation have taken responsibility to vote leave on June 2016.

Nevertheless, Julios’ statement shows its limits in explaining how regions that have voted to remain identify themselves as either British or English. Shin uses a social identity theory to call this the “black sheep effect”⁴⁸. This concept illustrates how differences are created within a group that had promoted “unitary identity”⁴⁹. Following from this domestic clash, the black sheep within the group would be the one causing identity trouble, forming social identifications that are difficult to harmonise with others. In other words, the theory would promote “a sense of ethnic unity”⁵⁰ that strengthens “in-group homogeneity”⁵¹ that underlines the importance of Britishness. Putting this theory into practice, the black sheep within a uniformed British identity would be the Conservatives who strongly advocate Britishness to be the sole description of its national citizenry. On

⁴⁷ Ibid (6)

⁴⁸ 신, 기., 2006. Division and Politics of National Representation. *∴ Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*. 출처 미상:Stanford University Press, pp. 151-165. (158)

⁴⁹ Ibid (158)

⁵⁰ Ibid (158)

⁵¹ Ibid (158)

the other hand, those supportive of the vote to remain – especially with the case of London – would see the Conservative party to purposefully divide Britain to be British and not part of the EU. As such, bitter resentment over this attitude would bring the possibility of “a process of selective in-group derogation”⁵², which leads to regional division within the nation.

Scholars such as Benedict Anderson demonstrate how people create an “imagined community”⁵³ that allows the nation-state to “always conceive [as a] deep, horizontal comradeship”⁵⁴. To explain this differently, British citizens across the nation would, essentially, define themselves to be British because they share the same sentiments to leave the EU. Hence, within the perception of Anderson, he would indicate this to be the growth of nationalism that would unify divided regions within a certain country.

Geographer, Doreen Massey, also addresses a similar ideology to Anderson in that she refers to Harvey’s explanation of ‘time-space compression’ to argue that countries have “ethno-centricity”⁵⁵, to the point in which ethnicity illustrates why people mobilise to alternative groups that

⁵² Ibid (158)

⁵³ Anderson, B., 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

⁵⁴ Ibid (7)

⁵⁵ Massey, D., 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

fit their interests. Massey points out that these mobilisations can “undermine the power of others”⁵⁶ because the sense of locality would not be a source of stability for the citizens sharing the same imagined community. As a matter of fact, Massey highlights that the sense of place shows insecurity because it forces heritage; this can also be understood as nationalism.

II. Understanding Britain’s dilemma

As mentioned above, since mobility of a person determines how they use shared space to create a certain identity, Bevir and Rhodes helps to explain why the beliefs and actions of these people come together “as a loose-knit”⁵⁷. *Brexit* has passively illustrated its identity politically that has caused political dilemma. National tradition, as Bevir and Rhodes states, can change “their heritage for reasons that make sense to them”⁵⁸. Therefore, this would be noted as “local reasoning”⁵⁹ because it is not the tradition that structures people’s belief, but the individual thinking that allows them to change their

⁵⁶ Ibid (4)

⁵⁷ Bevir, M. & Rhodes, R. A., 2003. *Interpreting British Governance*. London: Routledge. (35)

⁵⁸ Ibid (35)

⁵⁹ Ibid (36)

own beliefs. This is why national tradition becomes the guideline for people's belief whilst also allowing them to determine whether adherents create dilemma. People's satisfaction matters the most in maintaining the traditional belief, which would be the vote to leave. As Bevir and Rhodes has discussed, those who vote to remain would be the ones who would stir political dilemma because Britishness, to them, refers to active European integration. In this case, national tradition mixed up with the political dilemma of the British identity between Eurosceptics and pro-EUs cause the "process of change [...] that involves a pushing and pulling of dilemma and a tradition"⁶⁰.

In relation to Bevir and Rhodes, Wellings and Baxendale illustrate how much the idea of the Anglosphere has "reinforced the centrality of British narratives"⁶¹ that allows Euroscepticism to reflect the political dilemma within the UK. Boris Johnson, in 2013, announced the following:

"When Britain joined the Common Market, it was at a time when the establishment was defeatist, declinist and obsessed with the idea that we were being left out of most powerful economic club in the world [...] it was assumed that in order to be 'internationalist' it was enough to be

⁶⁰ Ibid (37)

⁶¹ Wellings, B. & Baxendale, H., 2015. Euroscepticism and the Anglosphere: Traditions and Dilemmas in Contemporary English Nationalism. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(1), pp. 123-139. (123)

*European. Well, it is perfectly obvious, in 2013, that that is no longer
enough”⁶²*

Boris Johnson has publicly announced what Britain’s identity should strive to be in 2013 – one that no longer dwells with the EU to be identified as European or British. Arguably, he used Britain’s history to change people’s belief of Britain that requires independence from the EU. Aughey describes this result as “contrasting historical narratives in which the positive of European integration [...] clashes with a negative, specifically English [...]”⁶³. He uses the term Englishness to underline the importance of Westminster, arguing that Englishness derives from a renewed political system that securitises the English identity within Parliament. Yet, he stresses that contemporary British identity includes irony because the English governance no longer has sovereignty over “power [...] for the whole of the United Kingdom”⁶⁴. To explain this differently, he refers to Scotland’s secession with the UK that has diverted Britain’s sovereignty.

⁶² Johnson, B., 2013. *Daily Telegraph*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10265619/The-Aussies-are-just-like-us-so-lets-stop-kicking-them-out.html> [Accessed 22 4 2020].

⁶³ Aughey, A., 2013. Review: English Nationalism and Euroscepticism. *Scottish Affairs*, 83(1), pp. 113-118. (116)

⁶⁴Aughey, A., 2010. Fifth nation: The United Kingdom between definite and indefinite articles. *MacMillian Publishers LTD*, 5(3), pp. 265-285. (281)

III. Britain's Sense of Place

Since the division of Britain's sovereignty has stirred domestic political dilemma, the other question is then where contemporary Britain's sense of place lies after *Brexit*. Wellings talks about "double vision"⁶⁵ in Britain's image. This vision is created from the division between the Labour and Conservative party revealed the fragmented version of Britain's sovereignty, where identity crisis emerged between calling the country either Britain or England. Michael Kenney has mentioned the idea of Britain's identity as the following:

*"the language and sentiments associated with resurgent ideas of Englishness have a more complex set of causes than devolution itself, and have afforded considerable opportunities for those seeking to promote a variety of political agendas and arguments"*⁶⁶.

In other words, sentiments from Euroscepticism or those that are more supportive of the UK's role in the EU are all part of the politicisation of the country. As a result, Britain's plurality in governance appears to be "an increasingly dyspeptic, pessimistic, and populist attitude towards current

⁶⁵ Wellings, B., 2019. England's Dilemma. In: *English Nationalism Brexit and the Anglosphere*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 26-44. (57)

⁶⁶ Kenney, M., 2014. *The Politics of English Nationhood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [2]

political arrangements”⁶⁷. Kenney links this idea of an English nationhood to be the causation from Britain’s economic change. This shows a difference from previous scholars who have only underlined the importance of individual support in the power-transition process at Parliament. Nonetheless, his remarks are crucial, in the sense that, Kenney describes that Britain’s identity is created based on political parties and not within the individual level. Hence, he discusses the possibility of compromises between these parties (Tories and Labour), which is what Brexit showed differently. Even though plurality plays a role in explaining the reasons to the division of English nationhood, Kenney’s point differentiates identity to the nationhood. Arguably, Britain’s nationhood could have been met with much influence from the Conservative party, which allows the party to blend their own narrative of Britain with its tradition. Wellings highlights that the formation of identity requires a “battle of ideas over nationalism”⁶⁸, where the majority (Conservatism) and the “shifting popular support”⁶⁹ go against each other to formulate a political identity.

⁶⁷ ibid [91]

⁶⁸ Wellings, B., 2019. England's Dilemma. In: *English Nationalism Brexit and the Anglosphere*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 26-44. [59]

⁶⁹ Ibid [59]

2. Media Culture: British Newspapers and Tabloids

Through examining Britain as a country, the interest would then lie on to what extent media culture (especially those on newspapers and tabloids) has laid an influence on reforming the Britishness. To examine this question, Benjamin De Cleen wrote in the *Handbook of Populism* that “both populism and nationalism revolve around the sovereignty of the people” (Cleen, 2017, p. 424). For the ideology of populism, it is “constructed through a down/up antagonism between the people as a large powerless group and the elite as a small and illegitimately powerful group” (Cleen, 2017, p. 427). Even though this research does not focus much on the idea of populism, it can be speculated that the British media takes advantage of this ideology to infuse their own perceptions towards the assessment of the EU to the public, which the Independent indicated as problematic.

Adding on to the idea, other scholars such as Kramer have reused the term as “media populism” (Kramer, 2014, p. 48). In the words of Kramer, the role of the news media serves to act as a representation of society and its people where it communicates through “unstructured but powerful movement that only consists of public sentiment, shared moral concerns, and collective mobilisation” (Kramer, 2014, p. 49). Simply put, direct communication between the public and news media creates a whole new group associated with readers or viewers of a particular news media community. As a case

study, Hameleers et.al (2017) conducted research based upon Dutch citizens' selective diet on tabloid media, arguing that "citizens with populist attitude [...] are attracted to different types of media populism" (Hameleers, et al., 2017, p. 483). As the story continues, it is said that the relationship between the people and media populism demonstrate the people's preference of entertainment, which stirs a larger potential of populist attitude than those who do not prefer such type of media (Mazzoleni, et al., 2003).

On the surface of this discussion, the division of the practices of journalists (broadsheet newspapers and tabloids) show their differences as the former would rather rely on expert data whilst the latter would use ordinary people's perceptions as a tool to write effective stories (Hameleers, et al., 2017). Therefore, media populism becomes a mechanism for journalists to greatly convince its readers to agree with a certain ideology.

In the case of the UK, the mechanism of tabloids is highly effective as it supposedly addresses the public's opinion more than broadsheet newspapers. Furthermore, depending on their political-wing, the use of language would differ based on broadsheet newspapers or tabloids. According to the British media market, news consumption trends illustrate that "of all

UK adults, 57% use at least two sources for their news”⁷⁰. In other words, half of the population of adults consume various newspapers instead of sticking to one particular source.

Therefore, tabloids or broadsheets distributed around British regions would vary, which would increase competition amongst news medias. This was especially vivid during the Brexit referendum in 2016 and 2020.

⁷⁰ Horsman, M., Fleming, P. & Genovese, J., 2018. *Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport*, London: Mediatique Limited. [30]

Chapter III: Research Design

For the purpose of analysing the news media influence on the idea of Britishness, this paper has attempted to use critical discourse analysis as its methodology. Prior to discussions based on founded data, the research paper will begin with the introduction to a discourse analysis, and would extend it to a media discourse to explain why it is critical for this paper. It will then proceed to explain why it would use quantitative research to support the main methodology.

1. Critical Discourse Analysis:

1.1 Discourse Analysis:

A discourse analysis looks beyond sentences written, and examines the morphology and semantics within the language. As the term itself is broad, this paper takes the definition of discourse to be related to critical discourse analysis (also known as CDA). This methodology contains two studies of languages: firstly, the study of pragmatics and secondly, the study of the

pattern of texts⁷¹. According to Gee and Handford, the study of both the pragmatic and text pattern divides into subcategories of the “utterance-type meaning”⁷² and the “utterance-token meaning”⁷³. Both authors suggest that there are hidden meanings behind phrases and structures of words, which explains the former concept. To extend this within a deeper context, the latter focuses on the meaning of words behind specific situations. For instance, Gee and Handford stresses how there is correlation, depending on the subject within sentences. They underline the dangers of ignoring using the methodology without distinguishing the type-measurement and token-meaning. As such, within a traditional context, discourse analysis plays an important role in “tying language to politically, socially, or culturally contentious issues...”⁷⁴. Unlike Bell and Garrett, Caldas-Coulthard holds the view that a “discourse identity”⁷⁵ is created through the interactions that are made between people. She makes an interesting point in connecting the modes of discourse with the formation of multiple identities, which would

⁷¹ Gee, J. P. & Handford, M., 2012. Introduction. In: *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. s.l.:Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 1-6.

⁷² Ibid [1]

⁷³ Ibid [1]

⁷⁴ Gee, J. P. & Handford, M., 2012. Introduction. In: *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. s.l.:Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 1-6. [5]

⁷⁵ Caldas-Coulthard, . C. R., 2018. Discourse Analysis. In: *Exploring Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 219-244. [222]

make a “channel of communication”⁷⁶ at the end of the process.

1.2 Media Discourse:

Then what kind of connection would this have to an analysis of news media? In researching the language of it, O’Keeffe calls this process the “media discourse” (O’Keeffe, 2019). He sees this as a “representation; identity; production; consumption; regulation” (Phelan, 2016) within a given article or journal, and attempts to address the hidden patterns behind media descriptions. For this reason, media discourse analysis differentiates itself from a discourse analysis, as the focus would not only be in texts but also in photos or layouts of stories within newspapers and tabloids.

Many studies have provided other reasons why the study of media discourse should be done. Smith and Bell have discussed several reasons to study this methodology. Firstly, judging from the wealth of resources available offline and online, they argued that researches could be fruitful. Secondly, media discourse not only reveals the meaning behind linguistics, but it also unravels the characteristics of society. Thirdly, the method allows

⁷⁶ Ibid [223]

researchers to become “media literate”⁷⁷; essentially, the ability to read media through the bias.

1.3 How Critical Discourse Analysis is Done:

Despite the plethora of methodological research, little is understood about the affect of linguistics in a discourse analysis. Fairclough approaches this in a three-dimension, where media discourse is done through text analysis, discourse practice then social practice⁷⁸. The most crucial one out of the three is text analysis, where it provides “a specific news story”⁷⁹ that can take various forms (photos, videos or a headline of a newspaper). Once the spine of the analysis is complete, Fairclough illustrates how it is then used to discourse practices, where “the organisational structures of news organisation”⁸⁰ is revealed to understand how readers are affected through the text analysis. In the last step, the social practice takes into account the

⁷⁷ Smith, P., 2018. Media Discourse . In: *Exploring Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 406-430.

⁷⁸ Fairclough, N., 2012. Critical discourse analysis. In: *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. s.l.:Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 9-20.

⁷⁹ Smith, P., 2018. Media Discourse . In: *Exploring Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 406-430. [415]

⁸⁰ Smith, P. & Bell, A., 2018. Media Discourse. In: *Exploring Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 406-430. [414]

events surrounding the analysis. To put it differently, the third level would allow researchers to grasp the idea of how “historical, social, political and cultural discourses”⁸¹ are embedded deeply in society. Therefore, the final process would evoke research into the influence society gives to the readers of media. Similarly, to Fairclough, Smith and Bell have also recognised the lack of research in understanding why previous scholars have only focused on value-neutrality in the study of media discourse.

On the other hand, scholars such as Foucault made the Foucauldian discourse analysis in relation to psychology. To understand how society effects people, Foucault’s research allowed discourse analysis to provide “a set of explanations of the local and heterogenous subject positions within discourse”⁸². The meaning of subject position, according to Ayllon and Walkerdine suggest that it refer to the societal positions of individuals. Thus, the connection of psychology and discourse analysis allowed Foucault to see the power-relations hidden inside society.

Then what does critical discourse analysis (CDA) help to explain in a discourse analysis methodology? Locke gives a different interpretation of

⁸¹ Ibid [414]

⁸² Ayllon, M. A. & Walkerdine, V., 2017. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 2판 ed. London: Sage. [111]

CDA, and claims that the methodology is self-reflexive. For instance, the number of subscribers for a particular newspaper agency would be the truth-value of Foucault's finding of power in society. He suggests that researchers would be aware of the existing "ideological imperatives [...] that inform [their] research as well as their subjective claims"⁸³. In turn, the use of discourse analysis would be a challenge against the political agenda, where Locke describes it as a commitment "to [...] the relative power bases of competing discourses"⁸⁴. As a result, critical discourse engagement becomes an "overt-conscious awareness exercise"⁸⁵ in searching for a power-structure within society using linguistics.

2. Addition of quantitative and qualitative data:

Following from a critical discourse analysis, this research requires further information of understanding the media trend of the UK during the selected time periods of 2016 and 2020. Hence, the obtainment of data would be both

⁸³ Locke, T., 2004. The Critical Turn: Making Discourse Analysis Critical . In: *Critical Discourse Analysis : Critical Discourse Analysis As Research Methodology*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, pp. 25-39.

⁸⁴ Ibid [37]

⁸⁵ Ibid [39]

quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative research requires statistical data that is measured with a variety of variables whilst for a qualitative research, the requirements include analysis such as interviews or questionnaires. Since the purpose of this research is to explore the influence of news media on the nationalistic identity of Britons after Brexit, it requires both statistics to examine how the selected news media are regionally diffused across the UK, and to analyse the general information of the types of readers (age, education background) for both broadsheet newspapers and tabloids. Discussions upon demographic data would be an interesting addition to the reading, and would help the readers to understand how nationalistic identity formation is apparent to certain groups in certain regions.

Qualitative data, on the other hand, inquires methodologies such as surveys or interviews. To examine the news media influence on the nationalistic identity formation of Britons with the case of Brexit, *Statista* will be used to examine readers by region in the UK. In addition, the paper will not limit itself in gaining statistics from the Home Office government of the UK or other public sites such as *Politico* to examine the demography of the UK.

3. Limitations to the data:

In terms of quantitative data, this paper has its restrictions in obtaining accurate data that would be between May – June 2016, and January – February 2020. Furthermore, due to restrictions of mobility, survey data are only available online, which would mean that there could be a possibility of the data being outdated or incorrect. Another factor to consider is that discourse analysis is only conducted with existing articles that are available to the public. Hence, other resources that would be available in the UK only would be difficult to obtain, which would limit the scope of the research further.

Chapter IV: Results

Discourse Analysis

This chapter details the findings of the research that was conducted. A general statistics overview of audience tastes in news media during 2016 and 2020 is described. Prior to the discourse analysis data, the paper presents the overall demographic flow of voting procedures, as well as the status of Britain after the Brexit referendum up until the official announcement of Brexit in 2020. Based on the analysis, results would be labelled into the contents of each discourse: 1) Political discourse; 2) Nationalistic discourse.

The Labour Party

A. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Guardian (2016): April ~ June

In the Guardian, the topic on ‘domestic politics’ mainly overlooks the term *Brexit*, and The European Union. From a three-month period, this word has been used the most to describe British politics, and to mainly allow readers to understand what the term is about. In other words, as the Guardian is a supporter of the Labour

Party, it has tried to repeatedly underline topics related to *Brexit* on a weekly basis. Articles selected from the proposed time period are shown by their titles in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Theme of articles in The Guardian (2016.04 ~ 2016. 06)	
The Denial of the Remain Camp (otherwise known as their failure) – Political and National	
2016.04.09	The Brexit Nightmare is Becoming Reality. The Remain Camp is in Denial.
2016.04.17	Brexit would be a messy divorce, and very hard on the children
2016.04.20	EU referendum: Vote Leave's Dominic Cummings questioned by MPs - Politics live
2016.04.22	Barack Obama: Brexit would put UK 'back of the queue' for trade talks.
The Potential Economic Outcome of Brexit – Political	
2016.05.09	EU referendum: Europeans in Britain fear Brexit vote
2016.05.12	Brexit Could Lead to Recession, Says Bank of England.
2016.05.28	Economists Overwhelmingly Reject Brexit in Boost for Cameron.
2016.05.31	The Brexiteers look like villains cornered by Batman in a hall of mirrors
Brexit Referendum Results: LEAVE – Political and National	
2016.06.03	'The Brexit lot are doing a victory lap already': readers on the EU referendum

2016.06.11	David Cameron On the Prospect of Brexit: ‘Leave Want to Take the Country Backwards’
2016.06.20	The Guardian View on The EU Referendum: Keep Connected and Inclusive, Not Angry and Isolated
2016.06.24	EU referendum as it happened: Juncker calls for start to Brexit negotiations

From the course of April 9th 2016 until June 24th 2016, three main themes were visible that the Guardian had repeatedly used: 1) explaining Brexit; 2) focusing on the Economic outcome if Brexit occurs; 3) Why the referendum has resulted in LEAVE. As the Guardian publishes on a weekly basis, it is helpful in predicting the purposes of the journalists of The Guardian. In terms of the linguistic style, the Guardian has kept itself constant in all of its news articles.

The Denial of the Remain Camp – Political and Nationalism Tone:

Months before the Brexit referendum, the Guardian continuously used negative connotation when describing the Leave campaign. Between April 9th until April 22nd, the main topic of Brexit focused on how the REMAIN campaign was in denial that Brexit was going to occur. Terms that indicate the failure as well as the consequences that come afterwards are mentioned in the headlines of the Guardian. Essentially, Brexit is called the ‘nightmare’ of Britain, and targets the blame on the EU’s weak approach in maintaining good terms with Britain. It acknowledges that the REMAIN

camp was in denial of reality, and indicated that the Labour Party is not much active as it should be like its counter-party, highlighting that British students are putting effort into the REMAIN campaign:

*"From Cameron's Panama Papers debacle to **the weakness of Merkel and Hollande, the omens for Britain remaining in the EU get poorer by the day. Does anyone care?**"*⁸⁶

*"What's so **worrying** that is that **developments in the UK** and events beyond it are together **setting the stage for a train-wreck**. For Britain and EU alike, **Brexit would be a tremendous loss**. Yet a whiff of fatalism in the air, or at least a **careless passivity**, makes the **situation especially dangerous**... To seriously contemplate **Brexit is almost a taboo** – there's a great deal of comment, but **few see it as a reality**"*⁸⁷

*"It could be argued that the **remain camp has not yet pumped up the volume**, that it's **still really early days to be alarmist**. **Some British students** are just starting to campaign, and they are doing so eagerly. **One media outfit, InFacts.org**, is actively exposing the many **myths that Brexiters are spreading**. The **Labour Party** has made **remain** its official policy. But its grassroots activists will only put energy into that message after the UK's local elections in May – and that **could be too late**. Also, the credibility of **Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Leader**, as a **pro-EU voice** leaves much to be*

⁸⁶ Nougayrede, N., 2016. *The Brexit nightmare is becoming reality. The remain camp is in denial.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/09/brexit-nightmare-remain-camp-denial-cameron-panama-papers> [Accessed 14 May 2020].

⁸⁷ ibid

desired.”⁸⁸

Furthermore, as highlighted in bold, the Guardian describes the LEAVE campaign with much negativity, calling their campaign and beliefs ‘myths’ that the Labour Party must stop before it spreads across the nation. In addition, the Guardian also shows critical tone to the entire British media, saying:

*“In **Britain** the media has long been **Eurosceptic**. Even the **BBC** seems **hesitant** these days. The Daily Telegraph describes **the EU** as either a **threatening entity for Britain**, or **too weak an institution to protect it**.”⁸⁹*

*“And **long gone** are the days when **authoritative European voices** could **reach out to British voters in a convincing manner** – as when Jacques Delors singlehandedly swayed the **British left towards a pro-European position** in 1988”⁹⁰*

Tone of resentment over the lack of power pro-EU is shown in the article written on the 9th of April. Sentiments of negativity are continuously shown in the next three articles, especially on the one written in April 17th where the focus is on Britain’s nationalism and the social issues that come from the incompetency of the Labour Party:

*“The **Leave campaign’s idea** that renegotiation of trade terms with the EU*

⁸⁸ ibid

⁸⁹ ibid

⁹⁰ ibid

will be easy is **absurd**. We will be **suppliant outsiders**, just as we were in the 1950s”⁹¹

“With due respect to the grandfather generation, they **do not**, according to the polls, **seem to be paying much attention to the views and ambitions of the younger people** who will have to **cope with the consequences of Brexit** rather longer than they will”⁹²

“This may have suited **Cameron** when he was panicking about losing the last election – and let us not forget that it was concern about the electoral threat from Ukip that induced him to commit to a referendum in the first place. Unfortunately, **it does not suit him now**. It is a safe bet that, as a result of that earlier cheap electoral trick, **many of the youngsters** on whom Cameron and Osborne should be relying on for the referendum will find that, unlike their grandparents, **they have not got around to being eligible to vote on the biggest political issue of their young lives**.”⁹³

“Whatever the **deficiencies of the EU**, we are not going to remedy them if **we leave**. And the Lawson/Johnson idea that we can renegotiate our way into the advantages of belonging to an organisation that **we have just left is for the birds**. **Messy divorces** do not work like that...Above all, Europe and

⁹¹ Keegan, W., 2016. *Brexit would be a messy divorce, and very hard on the children*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/17/brexit-messy-divorce-trade-negotiations> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

⁹² *ibid*

⁹³ Keegan, W., 2016. *Brexit would be a messy divorce, and very hard on the children*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/17/brexit-messy-divorce-trade-negotiations> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

*the rest of the advanced economies are faced with so many problems that what is needed now is **maximum cooperation, not splendid isolation.***”⁹⁴

Mentioning the difficulties of the younger generation demonstrates how much of a ‘political issue’ Brexit is. In addition, the Guardian uses the term ‘divorce’ to describe the separation of Britain to the EU. As such the Guardian attempts to address the purpose of the Labour Party, through emphasizing the importance of cooperation with Europe. Hence, Britain’s sense of nationalism depends on its ties with the EU, which is the reason why the Guardian argues the following against the LEAVE campaign:

*“And those **latter-day Thatcherites** who evoke the lady’s name **in favour of Brexit** should heed the words of her biographer Charles Moore: “**Mrs Thatcher was the most effective promoter of European integration Britain has ever known.**””*⁹⁵

The Potential Economic Outcome of Brexit – Political Tone

A week after publishing content about the harsh reality of the Brexit referendum, the Guardian turned its eye on the economic impact the incident could bring to the country. This topic is something that other British medias have not focused on. Most of the other newspapers or tabloids have only

⁹⁴ ibid

⁹⁵ ibid

highlighted the importance of the political changes occurring in the UK after Brexit.

In the beginning of May, the Guardian introduces European residents living in the UK, showing how confused they are with the potential outcome of Brexit. Alongside the economic problems, the Guardian mentions how European citizens are troubled in the lack of clarity they are receiving:

*“Respondents also reported an **increase in anti-migrant feeling, and criticised the remain campaign for not being vocal enough in promoting the cultural and democratic upsides of European membership alongside the economic argument.***

*While some EU citizens already living and working in Britain may secure indefinite leave to remain, **the lack of a clear picture of what a post-Brexit Britain would look like is causing concern for Europeans resident across the UK.**”⁹⁶*

*“One of the **Brexit camp’s most potent arguments** is that leaving the EU would enable Britain to secure a firmer grip on immigration. For **European immigrants**, particularly those who have been here only a short while, **this raises all kinds of worries about a future dominated by visas, work permits***

⁹⁶ Walsh, J., 2016. *EU referendum: Europeans in Britain fear Brexit Vote*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/09/eu-referendum-europeans-in-britain-fear-brexit-vote> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

and bureaucracy.”⁹⁷

Not only does the Guardian show how much the European immigrants question Britain’s potential of a post-Brexit country, but they also use a negative tone in criticising the Labour Party’s inefficiency for the ‘economic argument’. As seen in its other articles, economics appears to be one of the pressing concerns of the Guardian when talking about Brexit. Statements made from the Bank of England is referred in one of their articles:

*“The **Bank of England** has warned for the first time that Britain could slide into recession in the aftermath of a vote to leave the EU in next month’s referendum.*

***Governor Mark Carney** also warned Brexit could knock the pound sharply lower, stoke inflation and raise unemployment. That would leave the Bank with a difficult balancing act as it decides whether to cut, hold or raise interest rates to counter opposing forces, Carney added.”⁹⁸*

“Carney also warned of the risk of a spillover to international markets from the uncertainty around the vote, saying almost everyone he met wanted to talk about Brexit. “This issue is the No 1 issue that is raised with me and

⁹⁷ ibid

⁹⁸ Allen, K., 2016. *Brexit could lead to recession, says Bank of England*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/may/12/bank-of-england-keeps-interest-rates-on-hold-as-brexit-fears-bite> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

*my colleagues every time we meet another central banker, finance minister, the head of a major corporation, and most small business owners.”*⁹⁹

Talks about recessions, spillovers and the lower value of the sterling are all mentioned in the article, which illustrates how much the Bank of England does not prefer to carry on with the Brexit referendum. The use of verbs such as ‘to warn’ is underlined several times that demonstrates the Guardian’s description of how Britain would look like post-Brexit. Therefore, concern over an unstable Britain is seen in the Guardian.

In this light, the newspaper describes the LEAVE campaign supporters as “the villains cornered by Batman”¹⁰⁰. Strong negative connotations are visible in the article, where the EU referendum (which is how they introduce Brexit) is ‘hideous’ that is grouped around a bunch of liars.

“The politicians supporting Brexit are all dreadful, as are all the politicians against it, and most of the politicians for and against most things. The Leave movement looks like a group of villains cornered by Batman in a hall of mirrors. Who better to head up a campaign against unelected people ruling over us than Lord Lawson? Nigel Farage, a sort of end of level boss for Freudian psychoanalysis, has a face that only a

⁹⁹ ibid

¹⁰⁰ Boyle, F., 2016. *The Brexiteers look like villains cornered by Batman in a hall of mirrors*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/31/brexit-referendum-campaigns-politician> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

mother could abandon to the boarding school system.”¹⁰¹

“The most obvious beneficiary of a Remain vote will be George Osborne, a man who exudes all the warmth of Scott of the Antarctic’s last dump, who made detailed claims about what the British economy would be like in 2030, despite not being able to predict the recession a week after it happened. It was like someone telling you they can predict what the weather will be like on any given day in 14 years’ time, while standing in the rain without an umbrella.”¹⁰²

The description of the Brexiteer leave campaign politicians are referred as ‘dreadful’. The reason behind this is because of their behaviour in pushing forward Brexit in comparison to the Remain campaign. In other occasions, unpredictability was seen in the Guardian’s behaviour of discussing Britain’s future economic performance. Hence, they use a political tone in persuading its indecisive readers to have a negative image of the leave campaign.

Brexit Referendum Results: LEAVE – Political and National

After the official announcement of the results for the Brexit referendum, the Guardian showed more criticism on the leave campaign by calling them ‘the Brexit lot’¹⁰³. In the article written in June 3rd, the focus is

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Holmes, M., 2016. *‘The Brexit lot are doing a victory lap already’: readers on the EU referendum.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/03/the->

on the opinions of the Guardian readers who are part of the leave campaign.

*“Can't wait until the 23rd when the **chickens come home to roost!** Thousands of hours' worth of establishment spin will come to nothing. We won't be **bought, bullied, manipulated or frightened into remaining.** We're **prepared for whatever the aftermath of Brexit look like.** We won't cower like the indoctrinated, ignorant remainers scared of potential change. **We are leaving,** that's the zeitgeist and well you know it. Forget the polls, they're yo-how at present. **Watch the exit poll and cry into your sherry if you're a remainer. Good riddance to the EU.**”¹⁰⁴*

*“So, there's the fallout from Cameron's gilling yesterday. **Brexit lot** doing a **victory lap** already and yet **Bremain is still ahead in the Sky poll of polls by 5 points.** Anyway, I've always said this **but I think BEMAIN will have comfortable victory** on June 24. Today is the chance of Gove, I really hope **Faisal Islam tears Gove apart and this whole Brexit bollocks of "sovereignty" being the answer to everything.**Jobs? So, what we'll be more **sovereign.** Working directives that protect the working class? **So what we'll be more sovereign.** Australia points based system accepts more migrants? So what we'll be more **sovereign.** British Immigrants in other EU countries? We know Rajoy and Dutch PM have said they will reciprocate any sanctions on their citizens. So what we'll be more **sovereign.** In fact, the classic BS from Brexiters is that somehow Pensioners leeching off healthcare systems in other EU countries are **NET contributors.** Laughable.”¹⁰⁵*

[brexit-lot-are-doing-a-victory-lap-already-readers-on-the-eu-referendu](#) [Accessed 16 5 2020].

¹⁰⁴ ibid

¹⁰⁵ ibid

The Guardian posted these comments to the articles published on June 3rd to compare how the remain campaign and leave campaign supporters think about David Cameron's action on Brexit. Despite the criticisms from the leave campaign, praises about David Cameron were seen. Hints of nationalism were also spotted, with the term 'sovereign' repeating itself in comments of Brexit. The Guardian has indicated the rising concerns of the remain campaigners, quoting readers' comments such as:

*“So, Vote Brexit, get the **most right-wing government in living memory**. And if Scotland leaves the UK after Brexit we **can look forward to Tory governments stretching into the distant future**. And still people haven't woken up to the fact that the **most enthusiastic Brexiteers are the far-right elites**.”¹⁰⁶*

As for David Cameron's actions, the Guardian uses his interview as a way of proposing the good of the remain campaign, due to the rising concern of the leave campaign winning the Brexit referendum:

*“He also talks in a way that suggests **he thinks his side needs to accentuate the positive arguments for membership**: “We've got an incredibly strong case to say: look, **if we stay in a reformed European Union, we've got a very bright future**. A lot of businesses and investors will see Britain has decided its future in Europe and has got enormous opportunities around the world. **I think we'll see investment. We'll see more jobs**. “All this is an*

¹⁰⁶ ibid

*exciting future and we need to get that across alongside the huge risks there are from leaving.”*¹⁰⁷

Given that the remain campaign shows a big deal of Euroscepticism, the Guardian indicates that David Cameron needed the pros and cons of Brexit to make the wisest decision for the benefit of the country. Most of his concerns reflect the economy, which was previously emphasized in articles published in May.

*“We remind him that Gove – still, though it may sometimes be hard to believe, a member of his cabinet – has **dismissed the many warnings from expert bodies of the perils of Brexit on the grounds that “people in this country have had enough of experts”**. Cameron responds with a withering contempt that suggests he’s had enough of his erstwhile friend: “I thought that was **a telling phrase** because, in fact, even if one can find experts frustrating, you wouldn’t buy a house without listening to one, you wouldn’t build a bridge. **The idea that you just brush all these warnings aside is absurd.**”*¹⁰⁸

Part of the article showed repeats of ‘disappointment’ at the leave campaign, calling Gove’s behaviour as ‘absurd’. Furthermore, the Guardian

¹⁰⁷ Rawnsley, A. & Helm, T., 2016. *David Cameron on the prospect of Brexit: ‘Leave want to take the country backwards’*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/11/david-cameron-brexit-eu-referendum-listen-jeremy-corbyn> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

stresses how experts have countlessly argued of the economic risks post-Brexit. Ultimately, this shows a negative connotation in the domestic politics of Britain.

Another article that was written days before the referendum demonstrated why indecisive readers should choose the remain campaign over their counterpart. Not only did it show signs of nationalism, but it has also showed an immense number of negative connotations in describing the Tories:

*"Who do we think we are, and who do we want to be? Are we so different from others that we cannot play by shared rules? Are we one member in a family of nations, or a country that prefers to keep itself to itself and bolt the door?"*¹⁰⁹

"We need, too, to remember our history. Britain was formed and shaped by Europe. And we are – in historical as well as cultural, geographical and trading terms – a European nation. In almost every generation of European history until the past 70 years, people from these islands have fought and died in European wars. But within the borders of the European Union, there has been no war at all. This has not been an accident. To turn

¹⁰⁹ The Guardian, 2016. *The Guardian view on the EU referendum: keep connected and inclusive, not angry and isolated.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/20/the-guardian-view-on-the-eu-referendum-keep-connected-and-inclusive-not-angry-and-isolated> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

our back on that is unworthy of our traditions.”¹¹⁰

Talks of ‘unworthiness’ for throwing away the European tradition, and the questioning of the British identity can easily be seen from this article. The Guardian supposes that being British is part of the multicultural identification Britain has proudly promoted for years. Repetition of the word ‘vote’ and ‘remain’ all serve to persuade the neutral stance readers, and to tell the public that remaining in the EU isn’t a bad choice:

“Imagine a world without the EU – without the clout to face down Russia over Ukraine, without the ability to put together coherent answers to carbon emissions, to protect standards at work from a race to the bottom. Like democracy, the EU is an imperfect way of answering the modern world’s unrelenting challenges. But the answer to its imperfections is to reform them, not to walk away – still less to give in to this country’s occasional hooligan instinct in Europe... EU is not just the least bad of the available options. It is also the one that embodies the best of us as a free people in a peaceful Europe. Vote this week. Vote for a united country that reaches out to the world, and vote against a divided nation that turns inwards. Vote to remain.”¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ ibid

¹¹¹ ibid

B. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Daily Mirror (2016): June

For the Daily Mirror, the focus of domestic politics is on *Brexit*, the European Union and David Cameron. As of the case of The Guardian, the Daily Mirror also repeatedly uses the term *Brexit* as a way of persuading their readers to support the Labour Party in winning the vote to REMAIN for the Brexit referendum. Since this source is a tabloid, papers are published on a daily basis. Selected articles are seen below in table 2, and are divided by themes.

Table 2

Theme of articles in The Daily Mirror (2016. 06)	
Nationalistic identity of Britain after Brexit	
2016.06.21	Why the Mirror is backing Remain for the sake of our great nations
2016.06.24	Britain votes for Brexit in historic EU referendum that threatens the breakup of the nation
2016.06.24	EU referendum recap: Remain wins back the lead over Brexit in final two polls before historic vote

Nationalistic identity of Britain after Brexit

The lack of resources available in terms of articles dating back to April 2016 have made the research conduct discourse analysis based on the single theme of nationalism after the Brexit referendum results were revealed in 2016. But the Daily Mirror's contribution is crucial in illustrating how

attempts were made in creating Britain's sense of place – part of the EU.

*“The Mirror certainly has its issues with the EU but after the most **divisive, vile and unpleasant political campaign** in living memory we say vote **Remain for your jobs, your NHS, your pensions and your children** ... On Thursday we have **the chance** to change the course of Great Britain.”¹¹²*

The Daily Mirror's tone remains firm in the sense that they called the leave campaign as 'divisive', 'vile' and 'unpleasant' to British politics. Furthermore, similarly to the Guardian, the tabloid underlines the importance of making the right choice for the future generation. Partially, this proves that Labour Party supporters would desire to keep Britain's identity tied to the EU as they believe British people are 'European' whether they like it or not.

*“Because this **newspaper's true aim** is the same as it has always been. We want only what is **best for our readers**. After much consideration, **our view is that it is better for the people of this country if we stay in the EU. Do not be fooled.**”¹¹³*

¹¹² The Mirror, 2016. *Why the Mirror is backing Remain for the sake of our great nations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/mirror-backing-remain-sake-great-8251613> [Accessed 16 5 2020].

¹¹³ *ibid*

Using terms such as ‘true aim’ points out to the fact that the Daily Mirror views Brexit as much of a problem as the Guardian sees it to be. Their concerned tone in the end illustrates that the leave campaign does not do much good to the British people. The Tories, especially under Michael Gove and Boris Johnson, are called illusional for dreaming of a self-sovereign Britain without the EU.

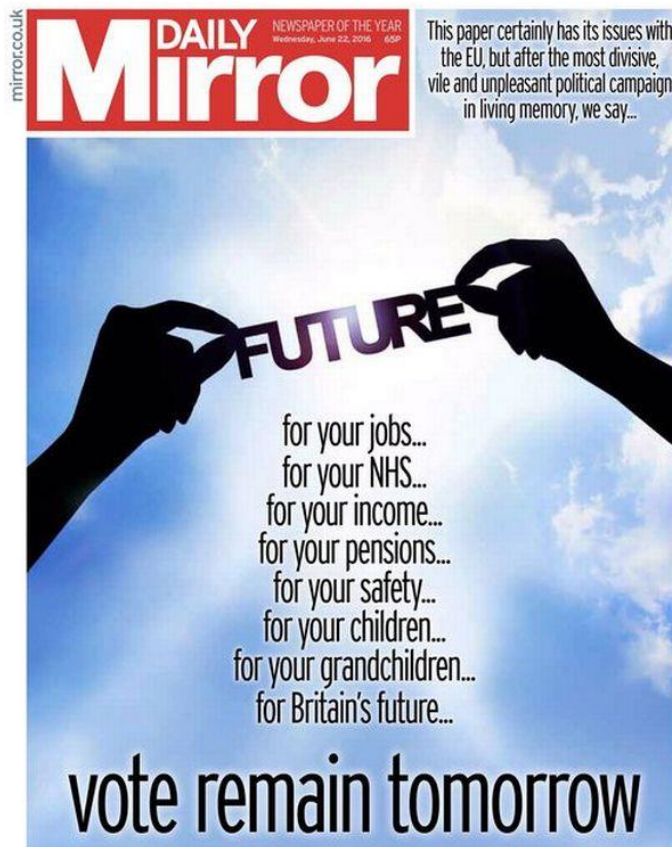


Figure 10: The Mirror front cover on the 22nd of June 2016¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ The Mirror, 2016. *Why the Mirror is backing Remain for the sake of our great nations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/mirror-backing-remain-sake-great-8251613> [Accessed 16 5 2020].

The cover page of the Daily Mirror on the time the article was published, highly pinpoints the importance of making the right choice not for the present, but for the future. Emphasis on ‘jobs’, ‘income’, ‘children’ and ‘Britain’s future’ all link towards a nationalistic attitude of Britain. The image of a person holding ‘FUTURE’ cut-out letters suggests that the remain campaign has a brighter future than the leave campaign.

*“But they cannot tell us how big the “blip” will be or how long it will last. So, we ask this question: **Who will suffer? Who always suffers? Those who can least afford it, that’s who. The hard-working core of our society. The disadvantaged, not the silver-spooned. We believe we have a duty to tell you the truth as we see it. It’s a truth supported by almost every major employer from Vodafone, BMW and Easyjet and Microsoft to almost every Trade Union including Unite, Unison and the GMB.**”¹¹⁵*

The targeted audience is clear. The tabloid wants to focus on the working-class, where most of them prefer to read The Sun or any other tabloid. Therefore, the concentration goes back to nationalism; the discussion of understanding who the British people are within the context of Brexit. In the case of the Daily Mirror, it is preserving the identity of the working class.

Again, in the article written on the day of the results of the Brexit referendum, the Daily Mirror describes Britain to have a ‘breakup’.

¹¹⁵ *ibid*

*“But **Labour heartlands** like Sunderland, Birmingham, Swansea, Darlington, Sheffield, Rotherham, Coventry and Stockton - along with 17 of 22 areas in Wales - **all voted Out**. As the results rolled in the pound tumbled to its lowest level against the dollar since 1985 – losing 15 cents in just a few hours.*

*It left a **deeply Disunited Kingdom Northern Ireland**, 28 of 33 London areas and all 32 areas in Scotland backed Remain.”¹¹⁶*

¹¹⁶ Beattie, J., Blanchard, J. & Bloom, D., 2016. *Britain votes for Brexit in historic EU referendum that threatens the breakup of the nation*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/britain-votes-brexit-eu-referendum-8271100> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

On the metaphorical level, the Daily Mirror plays with the term ‘United Kingdom’, and instead describes the UK to be a ‘Disunited Kingdom’. It is clear that the results of the Brexit referendum had brought disappointment to this tabloid, as it expresses how the ‘Labour heartlands’ have opted Out instead of Remain.



Figure 11: Daily Mirror front cover June 24¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Ibid; it is to be noted that articles from the Daily Mirror were limited for international readers, hence, there would be a lack of data for a 2-month time period.

From ‘Project Fear’, the Daily Mirror reworded the term to ‘Project Reunite’ with the hopes of mending the clash between the leave and remain campaign. They call it ‘the healing process’, and show an acceptance of the harsh reality after the Brexit referendum result in 2016. Not only does this reflect political defeat of the Labour Party, but it also maintains the purpose of the party – keeping good terms with the EU. The image from the cover page symbolises ‘forgiveness’, in which the tabloid hopes to come across. This could portray the Labour Party’s decisiveness in keeping Britain’s identity as part of the EU even though Brexit has occurred in 2016.

The Tories

C. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Sun (2016): March ~ June

Articles selected from the tabloid, The Sun, were done only through those that were available online for 2016. Hence, the date excludes articles published in April. Nevertheless, it is to be understood that The Sun was one of the most active tabloids to publish on June. Based on the articles, themes were divided into three sections. Each also indicates the tone of all of the articles combined to either political or nationalistic. These are all presented in table 3.

Table 3

Theme of articles in The Sun (2016.03 ~ 2016. 06)	
Change of Identity based on the LEAVE campaign – Nationalistic and Euroscepticism	
2016.03.08	Revealed: Queen backs Brexit as alleged EU bust-up with ex-Deputy PM emerges
2016.05.20	No EU Don't: Building houses for every migrant would 'change nature and character' of UK, says Grayling
2016.05.23	Is Jeremy Corbyn plotting a shock return to frontline politics for Ed Miliband?
2016.06.09	Win or lose, the game's up Dave... EU referendum mess means we're witnessing end of the PM
Opinions from the Tories – Political	
2016.06.11	Sun Says Baroness Snob
2016.06.19	A vote for Brexit is all it takes to set Britain free
2016.06.23	'It was over by tea time' claims Brexit would spell economic doom dismissed as a 'very British apocalypse' after pound rallied
2016.06.23	English Defence Leave: Polling station decked out with national flags is compared to EDL rally as voters complain of Brexit bias
Post-Brexit: Regaining Great Britain – Nationalistic	

2016.06.24	Business as Usual: Germany makes plans for a post-Brexit Britain and wants us to still trade with the EU
2016.06.24	So Who Will Be NEXIT? The other countries who could follow Britain out of the EU after becoming disillusioned with Brussels.
2016.06.25	Can Europe Survive? German Chancellor Angela Merkel tells of 'great regret' as she admits Brexit is a 'blow to Europe... no way around it'
2016.06.27	Be Quick to Steer Our Rudderless Ship, BOJO

Change of Identity based on the Leave campaign – Nationalistic and Eurosceptic

From tabloid articles that were allowed online, how has the Sun illustrated the Brexit referendum up until its outcome? The Sun's choice of words is much more direct and daring. Few months before the Brexit referendum in 2016, the Sun released a paper with reference to the Queen's opinion on Brexit. As much of a scandal this caused, the Sun has shown a defensive tone against its published story, suggesting the following:

“The newspaper said that readers would have known that the headline referred to no more than a claim that the Queen backs Brexit. The text of the article set out the basis for that claim: the accounts of apparently Eurosceptic views said to have been expressed by the Queen on two previous occasions.

This was a legitimate public interest story, and its readers were entitled to

know the Queen's views ... The 89-year-old monarch firmly told passionate pro-European Mr Clegg that she believed the EU was heading in the wrong direction.

Her stinging reprimand went on for "quite a while", leaving other guests around the table stunned."¹¹⁸

The Sun calls attention to the interests of their targeted audience, arguing that publishing the Queen's views on Brexit is the right to the citizens because it is an engaging story. Furthermore, as this supports the Remain campaign, the Sun uses this as an opportunity to vocalise Euroscepticism in the following paragraphs of the article:

““The EU is clearly **something Her Majesty feels passionately** about.” The monarch is also said to have **revealed her Eurosceptic feelings** during a separate conversation with MPs at a Buckingham Palace reception... *Anti-EU campaigner and Tory MP Jacob Rees Mogg said: "I'd be delighted if this was true and Her Majesty is a Brexiter. "The reason we all sing God Save The Queen so heartily is because we always believe she is there to protect us from European encroachment.*"¹¹⁹

Verbs such as 'to reveal' or 'to feel passionately' addresses the

¹¹⁸ Dunn, T. N., 2016. *Revealed: Queen backs Brexit as alleged EU bust-up with ex-Deputy PM emerges*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1078504/revealed-queen-backs-brexite-as-alleged-eu-bust-up-with-ex-deputy-pm-emerges/> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

presupposed argument of the Queen, whilst also becoming proof of what the Sun wanted to push forward – Euroscepticism for the win of the Leave campaign. Essentially, since monarchy serves as part of the identification of Britain, it changes people’s perspectives on Brexit.

An additional issue that the Sun has argued against the Labour party’s newspapers is the issue of European migrants, which the centre-left have proposed to be a major problem if Brexit happens. Again, the tabloid refers to Chris Grayling, Cabinet Minister, to display that Brexit would not worsen the migration crisis that is seen in the following paragraphs of the article:

“The prominent Brexit-backing Cabinet Minister said he could not do anything about people coming to Britain from EU while the country was still a member of the bloc ... Mr. Grayling said: “What we have is the EU telling us we are not building enough houses and yet telling us also that we have to accept unlimited migration from elsewhere in the European Union.

“There is just a fundamental democratic gap in all of this.””¹²⁰

“Mr. Grayling said that while he was not someone who always believed that immigration was bad for Britain, if somebody on a doorstep told him that they wanted to slow it down, he would not be able to do anything about the EU influx. He added that in sovereign countries, he believed people with

¹²⁰ Tolhurst, A., 2016. *NO EU DON'T Building houses for every migrant would 'change nature and character' of UK, says Grayling.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1198446/building-houses-for-every-migrant-would-change-nature-and-character-of-uk-says-grayling/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

such views on immigration should have a say and while Britain remained a member state, they would not.”¹²¹

In terms of the European migrant crisis, the Sun openly criticises the EU’s condescending behaviour. It quotes Grayling’s response, highlighting the democratic gap there is between the Union and Britain. Ultimately, it is obvious that the Sun’s tone against the Labour party is overall much more nationalistic (considering the best for Britain sovereignty) and political (promoting the Leave campaign’s intentions).

The tabloid also notes its disappointment on David Cameron in 2016, who had first used the term *Brexit* to leave the EU for good. They are especially critical on his behaviour towards the whole process of Brexit:

“David Cameron was all over the place. Skewered time and again by clever questioners from ITV’s audience. He seemed to lack conviction in what he was saying — not surprisingly, as a few months ago he had “an open mind” on whether we should leave or stay... And now he’s trying to tell us that if we leave it will be the end of the world as we know it, everybody dead, plagues of locusts, etc.

It was a sad sight, in a way. Because I think we’re witnessing the end of David Cameron. A shame, because while I’m no Tory, I do rate Cameron as one of our best prime ministers of the past 40 or 50 years. Persuasive, - competent, pragmatic and engagingly human, with a sense of humour...

¹²¹ *ibid*

*Every time he puts on his sincere face and tells us we need to **stay in the EU**, the **EU** goes right ahead and does something utterly f***ing deranged that **makes us all know we have to leave.**"¹²²*

Even as the Sun denounces David Cameron, they also underline that the EU has been limiting Britain's sovereignty to the point that they call it 'deranged'. Reflecting the EU in a negative way enables them to persuade their readers to vote leave because there is nothing good about the Union. It also shows that the Tories aren't solely focusing in self-isolating the country, but rebuilding an old relationship under the conditions Britain prefers to act under.

Opinion from the Tories - Political

Moving away from David Cameron and the behaviour of the Conservative party, the Sun focuses on what the opposing party has to offer to the Remain campaign.

*"This is the **gulf between the metropolitan political classes and ordinary people** writ large. It has rarely looked wider. **Labour's London elite pretends mass immigration is not a problem.** Their **working-class former voters**, who bear the brunt of it, watch this **in dismay and prepare to back***

¹²² Liddle, R., 2016. *Win or lose, the game's up Dave... EU referendum mess means we're witnessing end of the PM.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/opinion/rod-liddle/1252905/rod-liddle-win-or-lose-the-games-up-dave-eu-referendum-mess-means-were-witnessing-the-end-of-the-pm/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

*Brexit, then Ukip... They assumed the referendum would be a walkover, Mr. Cameron would proceed serenely towards retirement and his successor would thrash Labour in 2020. The public has not read the script. **Remain may claim an edge on the economy — but it has no answers on immigration or sovereignty.***”¹²³

Their language, nonetheless, is more skeptical of how the Labour Party is dealing with the migrant crisis. Firstly, the tabloid labels the officials as ‘London elite’, and mentioning that they are not doing much to help make Britain regain her sovereignty or to solve the problem with European immigrants.

In addition, a few days before the Brexit referendum, the Sun also published a story that persuades their readers to vote for the leave campaign. Nationalistic symbolism appears, where the EU is described as a ‘monster’ that tries to consume Britain’s democracy. To put it differently, this is to say that Britain has lost more of its sovereignty as part of the EU for more than 60 years.

*“Free from the **stranglehold of the EU super state** which, from its modest beginnings 60 years ago, has grown into **a monster engulfing our democracy...** This **negative campaign** has been based on **little except promoting phoney fear of giving up our EU membership.** On the two other*

¹²³ The Sun, 2016. *Baroness snob.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1266198/baroness-snob/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

big issues — immigration and sovereignty — they simply have no case.”¹²⁴

*“The decision to leave is the most important of a lifetime, but perhaps the easiest. Scrapping the free movement of people — that sacred foundation stone of the EU — will finally give Britain some control over the numbers of migrants flooding in from Europe... It could be to relieve the pressure on the working-class communities that have been hit by the surge in their migrant population... After years as just one member of a giant trading federation, we can use our muscle as the world’s fifth biggest economy to strike our own lucrative deals with the host of independent nations around the world growing much faster than those in Europe.”*¹²⁵

Through including the benefits of leaving the EU, the Sun openly demarks the Labour party in terms of the migration crisis. Furthermore, they target the working-class, explaining why supporting the Leave campaign would be beneficial to them in the longer term. The tabloid also highlights redeeming Britain’s sovereignty. The strong emphasis on making deals with other independent nations portrays how the UK wants its identity to be self-developed.

An additional paper interprets the Brexit referendum as ‘freedom’. Teatime, which is an hour in the afternoon for tea, is referred to illustrate how

¹²⁴ The Sun, 2016. *A vote for Brexit is all it takes to set Britain free*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1306294/a-vote-for-brexit-is-all-it-takes-to-set-britain-free/> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

¹²⁵ *ibid*

quick the referendum voting procedure was.

“It was all over by teatime. Not a bad first day of freedom.” The pound plunged to a 31-year low in a matter of moments after Britain voted to leave the European Union. But it wasn't long before the stock market fought back more than half its losses before closing down 3.2 per cent or 199.41 points at 6138.69. One astonished investment analyst said after the City had one of its biggest roller-coasters ever: “It’s been a remarkable day,”¹²⁶

The decrease of the sterling value has certainly destabilised the global market, however, the Sun mentions it as a successful turnback. This is due to the fact that the market has recovered its losses, which makes it a “remarkable day”¹²⁷. This counter-argues the Labour Party’s claim that the vote to leave would trigger economic destabilisation.

Post-Brexit: Regaining Great Britain – Nationalistic

In connection to the previous two big themes presented in the Sun, the tabloid reassures its readers that post-Brexit has not changed anything of Britain’s society. It actually highlights the new ties created with Germany,

¹²⁶ Phillips, R., 2016. *‘IT WAS OVER BY TEA TIME’ Claims Brexit would spell economic doom dismissed as a ‘very British apocalypse’ after pound rallied.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1332816/pound-plunges-to-lowest-point-against-dollar-since-1985-and-japan-halts-trading-as-brexite-vote-shakes-world-markets/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹²⁷ ibid

even indicating that relations with the EU are in harmony.

“GERMANY is already making plans to keep business going with Britain just hours after it was announced Brits had voted for Brexit. Boris Johnson has said there is no need to rush the process of leaving the EU but it looks like it needs us as work is already underway to draw up terms...”¹²⁸

Not only does the Sun declare that the EU needs the UK for effective negotiations after Brexit, but the tabloid also describes Germany as submissive to Britain. This is an interesting point as signs of nationalism (demonstrating Britain’s sovereignty without the EU) are visible in the words that they have selected.

Confidence is shown in the tabloid’s published articles, particularly during June 24th 2016.

“FAR right political parties across Europe are calling for their own countries to stage referendums on leaving the EU just hours after Brits voted in favour of Brexit yesterday. Britain's decision to get out of the EU

¹²⁸ Fisk, R., 2016. *Germany makes plans for a post-Brexit Britain and wants us to still trade with the EU.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1337980/germany-makes-plans-for-a-post-brexit-britain-and-wants-us-to-still-trade-with-the-eu/> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

sent *shockwaves* around the world - triggering a *frenzy* of other European nations calling for their own *Frexits, Nexits, Swexits* and more.”¹²⁹

This represents that the UK has influenced other countries to follow the path of Brexit. Ultimately, positive connotations can be seen as the Sun describes each EU membership country leaving similar to ‘Brexit’. Therefore, it hints upon the regaining of British sovereignty as it sends ‘shockwaves’ across Europe.

The factor of ‘confidence’ is continuously visible in their other article that asks the question if Europe can actually survive without Britain.

*“She added: “We take note of the **British people’s decision with regret.** There is no doubt that this is **a blow to Europe and to the European unification process.** “There’s no way around it. Today is **a watershed moment for Europe, for European unification.** “The remaining 27 countries must **avoid drawing any hasty or easy conclusions** from the referendum in Britain that **would only divide Europe further.** “We need to do a calm and measured analysis of the situation. “Until **there’s an exit, Great Britain has all the rights and obligations of an EU member.** Our goal should be a close and co-operative relationship in the future.” ... Asked if a **Brexit was the “death blow”** for Europe, Mr Juncker snapped “**No**” before leaving a stage. In a letter, he reassured the Commission’s British staff he would do*

¹²⁹ Cain, K., 2016. *SO WHO WILL BE NEXIT? The other countries who could follow Britain out of the EU after becoming disillusioned with Brussels.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1337081/the-other-countries-who-could-follow-britain-out-of-the-eu-after-becoming-disillusioned-with-brussels/> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

*what he could do to protect their jobs. At his own press conference, Mr Tusk said Europe would survive, adding: “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”*¹³⁰

The Sun claims Merkel’s points with a sense of triumph, explaining that the results of the Brexit referendum are not a ‘death blow’ to the country or to its relationship with the EU. Hence, the tabloid’s affirmative tone in describing the leave campaign’s victory reflects upon the main purpose of the Sun – to show that Britain is strong without the EU.

D. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Daily Mail (2016): April ~ June

The Daily Mail is one of the most read newspapers across Britain. Articles were selected based on their availability. They were then organised into three major themes that occur, which would be briefly discussed as with previous newspapers. Table 4 illustrates the date of the

¹³⁰ Hawkes, S., 2016. *CAN EUROPE SURVIVE? German Chancellor Angela Merkel tells of ‘great regret’ as she admits Brexit is a ‘blow to Europe... no way around it’*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1338424/german-chancellor-angela-merkel-tells-of-great-regret-as-she-admits-brex-it-is-a-blow-to-europe-no-way-around-it/> [Accessed 17 5 2020].

articles published, as well as their titles.

Table 4

Theme of articles in The Daily Mail (2016.04 ~ 2016. 06)	
Reasons Britain needs to leave – Political	
2016.04.06	We'll have no voice if we stay in the EU says Grayling: Leader of the House of Commons says Britain will be isolated and subject to harmful meddling if it was to remain.
2016.04.08	Dutch no vote on trade deal 'shows Europeans are sick of Brussels': Brexit campaigners say result proves UK is 'not alone' in anti-EU sentiment.
2016.04.10	Britain's 'out' campaigners mistrust the EU, and each other.
2016.04.21	Fantasies, scares and the real threat to jobs.
Gaining back Britain's sovereignty - Nationalistic	
2016.05.03	First Barack Obama, now legendary US investor Warren Buffet urges us to stay in EU....and Bill Clinton is next in the queue.
2016.05.12	I'm the Bane of your life, Dave! Boris channels menacing Batman villain as he tools up during Brexit battle bus tour.
2016.05.22	Why we MUST quit the EU, by Cameron's guru: Friend and strategist Steve Hilton breaks ranks on Brexit to say Britain will be 'literally ungovernable' unless we take back power from the self-serving elite.
2016.05.26	Remain camp 'must better explain why UK must stay in EU'.
Strong and Independent Great Britain - National	
2016.06.02	Who are you to lecture us, Mrs Merkel? German Chancellor accused of trying to bully Britain into staying in the EU.
2016.06.15	Labour's head in the sand on immigration.

2016.06.21	If you believe in Britain, vote Leave. Lies, greedy elites and a divided, dying Europe – why we could have a great future outside a broken EU.
2016.06.24	MailOnline’s guide to how the world will change after Britain votes for Brexit in historic EU referendum result.

Reasons Britain needs to leave – Political and National

Following the Sun, as mentioned above, the Daily Mail is not only the most distributed printed newspaper but also the most read across the nation. As much of an influence this newspaper brings to the people, the Daily Mail made clear reasons why the leave campaign is the right choice months before the referendum.

“Britain will be left voiceless, isolated and subject to ever more harmful meddling by a ‘giant Federation of Eurozone states’ if it votes to stay inside the EU, a Cabinet minister warns today. In a searing intervention, Chris Grayling says that being reduced to the role of bit-part player is ‘no place for a proud United Kingdom to be’. His comments open up a crucial new front in the increasingly heated referendum debate... Eurosceptics point to the so-called Five Presidents Report, which was published by the European Commission last year. It proposes a full ‘political union’ of the euro countries. By voting as a bloc, they can push through legislation that suits their interests. The document also proposes abolishing the UK’s representation on key international bodies where global regulations and standards are increasingly set. The report says the EU must act ‘with one voice on the global stage’. The document complains that ‘in the international

financial institutions, the EU and the euro area are still not represented as one' – singling out the IMF as one example.'”¹³¹

The Daily Mail affirms the leave campaign position, indicating that the vote to remain will only do harm to Britain. It also highlights that the UK would not have a place if it continues to maintain its membership with the EU. Introducing the ‘Five Presidents Report’, the newspaper presents factual evidence in a political tone to criticise the Labour Party because it does not respect ‘a proud United Kingdom’.

“They cannot go on like this, and they know it. The eurozone crisis was caused by huge disparities between different countries. The Greeks retired ten years younger than the Germans, at a huge cost to their economy. When the tough times came, they couldn't afford it any more, they racked up massive debts, and the Germans and others had to bail them out. In future it's impossible to see how EU governments can carry on doing things in such different ways ... But where does that leave us? We are already outvoted again and again in Brussels. As ministers we are obliged time and again to compromise on new laws that we know are bad for Britain, but our

¹³¹ Slack, J., 2016. *We'll have no voice if we stay in the EU says Grayling: Leader of the House of Commons says Britain will be isolated and subject to harmful meddling if it was to remain.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3525610/We-ll-no-voice-stay-EU-says-Grayling-Leader-House-Commons-says-Britain-isolated-subject-harmful-meddling-remain.html> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

*only choice is to try and **improve** them a little. And if things come to a vote, and we **disagree with Brussels, we always end up on the losing side.***”¹³²

It also underlines the problems with how the EU tries to solve external conflicts occurring between the EU members. Then continues to assert that a future with the EU is unthinkable because they do not have alternative ways to solve problems properly. The Daily Mail points out that Britain has always has been faced with disadvantages every time it tried to go against the propositions of Brussels. This serves as a purpose to the undecided voters; to open their eyes to the reality Britain faces if it remains with the EU.

*“The EU already **dominates our way of life.** It is **the job of Brussels** to decide on the working conditions in our factories and offices. **To decide on the environmental rules** that can hold back the development of new housing estates. **To decide who can be defined as an asylum seeker.** How our farmers work their land. The rules that govern our oil industry in the North Sea. The safety measures that we can put in place on our roads. How cancer research is conducted. The rules on fishing in our waters. The hours that doctors work. **How powerful our vacuum cleaners can be. And on and on.**”¹³³*

“Over the **next ten years** we are going to hear that refrain more and more. **They have no choice.** More Europe is the only way for the euro to survive. **But it’s no place for a proud, independent United Kingdom to be.** If we

¹³² ibid

¹³³ ibid

want to be able to defend our national interest, we have to take back control and leave.”¹³⁴

Terms such as ‘dominates our way of life’, ‘no choice’, ‘proud, independent Britain’ all reflect upon how much the Daily Mail wants Britain to find its own identity. It also addresses the need to ‘defend’ the national interests, and also describes how the EU is not the place for an independent Britain.

Besides employing the protection of British interests for the British people, the Daily Mail goes even further to say that Britain is not alone when it comes to Euroscepticism.

“The rejection by Dutch voters of an EU trade deal with Ukraine is proof anti-Brussels sentiment is spreading across the bloc, Eurosceptics claimed last night. Brexit campaigners said the result proved the UK was ‘not alone’ and warned people had had enough of a ‘remote self-serving bureaucracy’. The final outcome of Holland’s ‘advisory’ referendum showed a No vote of 61 per cent against the deal, on a turnout of 32 per cent.”¹³⁵

Inside this article are embedded anti-sentiments against the EU. The

¹³⁴ ibid

¹³⁵ Brown, L., 2016. *Dutch no vote on trade deal 'shows Europeans are sick of Brussels': Brexit campaigners say result proves UK is 'not alone' in anti-EU sentiment.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3529199/Dutch-no-vote-trade-deal-shows-Europeans-sick-Brussels-Brexit-campaigners-say-result-proves-EU-not-anti-EU-sentiment.html> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

Daily Mail even suggests that Brexit campaigners are ‘correct’ in their decision because of the EU’s ‘self-serving bureaucracy’ system.

*“Daniel Hannan MEP, of Vote Leave, said it was **a boost for the Out campaign**, on the back of other votes, including in Greece and Denmark. ‘In every recent referendum **people have voted against Brussels**,’ he said. ‘People have had enough of a remote self-serving bureaucracy. **The reality is, Europe isn’t working**. I don’t think this vote was really, for most people, about the intricacies of the Ukraine agreement. ‘On almost every metric the **European Union has failed to deliver what it promised which was greater prosperity and greater national cohesion**.’ He said the Dutch poll would help Brexit in the ‘**sense that we are not alone**’.”¹³⁶*

Moreover, continuous emphasis on the fact that Britain is not ‘alone’ portrays how much the UK has gained back in terms of sovereignty. It clearly shows the sense of freedom, the sense of place – being the Great Britain it was once again. All of this is to show the Eurosceptic view of the Daily Mail that would convince people to vote for the leave campaign.

By and large, in its next article, the Daily Mail openly judged the Grassroots Out campaign for not accurately representing the Leave campaign. Interestingly, this represents conflict within domestic politics. The newspaper indicates the following about the divided Leave campaign:

¹³⁶ ibid

“Farage accused Vote Leave of seeing their rivals as "members of the lower orders and not really fit to sit round the same table as them." Banks has been even less complimentary, saying of Vote Leave's organizers: "I wouldn't put them in charge of the local sweet shop." The divisions have become acutely personal. UKIP's sole lawmaker in the House of Commons, Douglas Carswell, defied party leader Farage to support Vote Leave. "I don't care," Farage said. "He is irrelevant." The infighting has left the "leave" camp without a strong single figurehead to go up against Prime Minister David Cameron, the face of the "remain" campaign.”¹³⁷

Admittedly, Britain faces an identity clash within the Leave campaign. They call each other ‘members of the low order’ that do not really belong next to the Vote Leave campaign. Ostensibly, excluding the opposed party foreshadows the victory of the Tories in the Brexit referendum.

Gaining back Britain’s sovereignty – Nationalistic

Throughout the course of May, the Daily Mail focuses in addressing third party interveners who talk about the benefits of the remain campaign. The first country who shows concern was the United States.

“The US guru made clear he thought there were many things wrong with the union but argued that leaving would be a 'backward step'. Mr Lamy, a Frenchman who headed the World Trade Organisation between 2005 and

¹³⁷ The Daily Mirror, 2016. *Britain's 'out' campaigners mistrust the EU, and each other.* [Online]
Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3532407/Britains-campaigners-mistrust-EU-other.html> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

2013, said that the **rest of the EU would drive a 'hard bargain' in the event of Brexit. 'EU leaders will fear that anti-Europe parties in their own backyard will get momentum from Brexit, so will want to drive a hard bargain to avoid contagion,'** he wrote in *The Times*. **'In a competitive global marketplace, they will seek any advantage they can get.'**¹³⁸

*"But Vote Leave spokesman Matthew Elliott said: 'The underlying belief of the Remain campaigners appears to be that Britain – the world's fifth largest economy and a nation with a great history of trading across the globe – would be an economic backwater if it wasn't for Brussels taking control of our trade deals. That's absurd.'"*¹³⁹

Nevertheless, the newspaper evidently argues against the dangers of Brexit, saying that the economic support of the EU is 'absurd'. 'Brussels control' over trades done between UK and other countries echoes the loss of British sovereignty. Hence, remaining in the EU would be a 'backward step' that needs to be avoided.

In addition to this point, the Daily Mail associates Boris Johnson's opinions to be the saviour of Britain.

¹³⁸ Tapsfield, J., 2016. *First Barack Obama, now legendary US investor Warren Buffett urges us to stay in EU... and Bill Clinton is next in the queue*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3571038/First-Barack-Obama-legendary-investor-Warren-Buffett-urges-stay-EU-Bill-Clinton-queue.html> [Accessed 16 5 2020].

¹³⁹ *ibid*

*“Mr Johnson said that **Brexit would enable the UK to escape the 'protectionism' of the EU which has held back negotiations on a series of major deals. Leaving would mean we could strike trade deals with some of the biggest economies in the world** creating almost 300,000 new jobs, he argued. **Vote Leave** said that in recent years the EU had **failed to complete a series of five key negotiations** - with the United States, India, Japan and the Asean and Mercosur groups of nations - because of the protectionism within member states... The **Remain campaign** has consistently **argued the UK will be in a far weaker position** to negotiate new trade arrangements as a single nation and that any new deals would take years to complete... Predictably, **the gloomsters** want to **do down Britain** - they **claim we are not strong enough** to stand on our own two feet. **What total tosh**. There is a huge world of opportunity and prosperity out there if we take this opportunity to take back control.”¹⁴⁰*

Similarly, to the Sun, the Daily Mail announces the failure of the EU. It repeats how the five key negotiations with different nation-states were not successfully carried out. Therefore, the author is interested in triggering further Euroscepticism for the success of the leave campaign. Negative narration about the Remain campaign (such as ‘tosh’ or ‘gloomsters’) all contribute to downgrading the campaign’s image further. To support this point, the Daily Mail wrote articles based on ‘David Cameron’s guru’, who talked

¹⁴⁰ Tapsfield, J., 2016. *I'm the Bane of your life, Dave! Boris channels menacing Batman villain as he tools up during Brexit battlebus tour*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3586733/I-m-Bane-life-Dave-Boris-channels-menacing-Batman-villain-tools-Brexit-battlebus-tour.html> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

about the possibility of Britain becoming “ungovernable”¹⁴¹, including other stories of triggering the Labour Party to try and convince the British people to vote for the Remain campaign.

Strong and Independent Great Britain – National and Eurosceptic

During June, the Daily Mail sets the scene of illustrating the purpose of the Leave campaign. As with previous articles, the newspaper repeatedly makes use of terms such as ‘greedy elites’ or expressions such as ‘Labour’s head in the sand’. An interesting thing to note is that most articles that show Eurosceptic characters were written by the same author.

*“Angela Merkel was last night **accused of trying to ‘bully’ Britain into staying in the EU by warning we would be punished if voters back Brexit.** The German Chancellor sparked a backlash after saying the UK **could not expect favourable trade deals** if it was ‘outside the room’... Wading into the debate for the first time, she called **for Britain to remain ‘part and parcel of the EU’**. Her comments came hours **after similar warnings** by the Dutch and*

¹⁴¹ Slack, J. & Groves, J., 2016. *Why we MUST quit the EU, by Cameron's guru: Friend and strategist Steve Hilton breaks ranks on Brexit to say Britain will be 'literally ungovernable' unless we take back power from the self-serving elite.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3603793/Why-quit-EU-Cameron-s-guru-Friend-strategist-Steve-Hilton-breaks-ranks-Brexit-say-Britain-literally-ungovernable-unless-power-self-serving-elite.html> [Accessed 20 5 2020].

*Spanish prime ministers in what appeared to be a co-ordinated push by the European elite to head off a Brexit vote.*¹⁴²

Descriptions of Germany being the ‘bully’ and Brexiteers as people who should be ‘punished’ all relate to the reasons why the EU is not useful to the country. Moreover, the Daily mail purposefully describes the EU as threatening the UK, especially through trade deals with other EU member states.

Following this article, the Daily Mail shame-called the Labour Party figurehead in terms of their questions regarding the EU immigration.

*“They really don’t get it. Senior Labour figures still don’t understand how shamefully out of touch they are with their **own voters** on the profoundly troubling question of EU immigration. Unbelievably, Alan Johnson, leader of Labour’s In campaign, claimed yesterday that **staying in the EU will help us to control our borders**. His assertion will be treated with the derision it deserves, for Brussels insists on free movement – **enabling millions of EU citizens to settle in Britain in the past decade.**”¹⁴³*

¹⁴² Tapsfield, J., 2016. *Who are you to lecture us, Mrs Merkel? German Chancellor accused of trying to bully Britain into staying in the EU.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3621972/Now-Merkel-wades-EU-referendum-debate-warning-Britain-won-t-good-result-vote-leave.html> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹⁴³ Daily Mail, 2016. *Labour’s head in the sand on immigration.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3641982/DAILY-MAIL-COMMENT-Labour-s-head-sand-immigration.html> [Accessed 20 5 2020].

Following from the critique of the Labour figureheads, the article proceeds to underline the necessity of Labour party supporters to vote for Brexit.

*“After a decade of **ignoring Labour voters**’ entirely reasonable concerns about immigration, the party’s credibility on this issue is shot to pieces. No wonder **Labour voters are flocking to vote for Brexit**. It’s their chance to show they’re fed up with being ignored by the **remote, hampered and insufferably arrogant Westminster elite**.”¹⁴⁴*

Ultimately, the Daily Mail now moves on to show an affirmative tone in promoting the Leave campaign.

*“Throughout this long and often acrimonious referendum campaign, the most striking fact about the **Remainers** is that they have **failed to articulate a single positive reason for staying in the EU**. Instead, they have **subjected voters to a barrage of scaremongering**, with the aid of a once proudly independent Civil Service, **pinning all their hopes on persuading the British people** that the dangers of withdrawing from Brussels outweigh the many drawbacks of belonging to it. In doing so, they have had to seek the support of the likes of Jeremy Corbyn, Ed Miliband, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair — from the very party voters rightly rejected at the last election on the grounds that they couldn’t be trusted.”¹⁴⁵*

¹⁴⁴ ibid

¹⁴⁵ The Daily Mail, 2016. *If you believe in Britain, vote Leave. Lies, greedy elites and a divided, dying Europe - why we could have a great future outside a broken EU*. [Online]

Putting the blame on the Labour party for persuading the British people, the Daily Mail describes them as failures. They divide the ‘us’ and ‘them’ for the people supporting the Remain campaign. In addition, signs of Euroscepticism were also seen when talking about the EU.

“But then the EU is an edifice built on lies — starting with the blatant untruth, peddled when we signed up to the Common Market in 1973, that we were joining nothing more threatening than a tariff-free trading zone, which would involve no sacrifice of sovereignty.”¹⁴⁶

The Labour Party

A. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Guardian (2020): January ~ February

In the Guardian, articles were selected during a one-month time period has to focus much more on a few weeks before and after the official announcement of Brexit.

Table 1

Theme of articles in The Guardian (2020.01 ~ 2020. 02)	
Brexit weekly briefings - Political	
2020.01.07	Brexit weekly briefing: UK counts down to 31 January departure

Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3653385/Lies-greedy-elites-divided-dying-Europe-Britain-great-future-outside-broken-EU.html>[Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹⁴⁶ ibid

2020.01.14	Brexit weekly briefing: UK and EU all smiles but fault lines obvious
2020.01.27	What happens on Brexit day and what comes next?
EU's power over Britain - Political	
2020.02.01	'Make leave not war': what the papers say about Britain exiting the EU
2020.02.09	Brexit is a crisis, not an opportunity. But we'll see that too late
2020.02.16	Brexit: Britain and EU 'will rip each other apart' in trade talks
2020.02.23	Boris Johnson is the ultimate purveyor of fake news
2020.02.24	EU to demand right to punish UK if it fails to shadow Brussels rules

From January 7th 2020 until February 24th 2020, two main themes were visible that the Guardian had repeatedly used: 1) Brexit briefings; 2) Why voting to Leave was a bad choice. As the Guardian publishes on a weekly basis, it is helpful in predicting the purposes of the journalists of The Guardian. In addition, an interesting factor in the Guardian's articles is the fact that they actively published more in comparison to January.

Brexit weekly briefings – Political

In the course of 4 years, the Guardian changed the format of its stories of Brexit. Rather than criticising the opposition party, it now focuses on giving people briefings of what is happening to the country. This shows

the acceptance of the new British identity that was about to occur on the end of January. Additionally, the newspaper also explained how it would be providing articles until the official announcement of Brexit. The change, however, is that the Guardian decides to focus much more on issues surrounding Europe even more.

*“As **Britain gradually disengages from the EU**, the Guardian’s European coverage will be developing and deepening. **In the meantime, tap into the continental conversation on our Europe Now pages here, and subscribe to our fortnightly Europe newsletter.**”¹⁴⁷*

*“Could **Johnson prove more pragmatic?** Perhaps, but probably only when talks reach a climax in the autumn. **The government could be tempted to follow EU rules** in sectors such as aerospace, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. But this is not a given. **A scrappy, relatively unambitious, low-alignment trade deal is arguably the most plausible landing zone.** The risk of tariffs, not just regulatory barriers, is real.”¹⁴⁸*

Essentially, the Guardian explains how talks between Boris Johnson and Ursula von der Leyen have proceeded.

*“But in signs of potential problems ahead, **MEP’s expressed “grave concern”** about the **UK government’s attitude to the 3.3 million EU citizens in Britain**, and the UK was accused of behaving “like a bunch of*

¹⁴⁷ Henley, J., 2020. *Brexit weekly briefing: UK and EU all smiles but faultlines obvious*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/14/brexit-weekly-briefing-uk-eu-all-smiles-but-faultlines-clear> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*

cowboys” after a confidential EU report accused it of “deliberate violations and abuse” of the Schengen Information System database.”¹⁴⁹

The article emphasises how Britain carries out a differentiation of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Hence, it shows a political narrative in assessing citizen behaviour in Britain. The Guardian goes forth to actually illustrate Brexit as the following:

“The magic dust of populism has blinded reason, and damage and diminishment lie ahead... It’s done. A triumph of dogged negotiation by May then, briefly, Johnson, has fulfilled the most pointless, masochistic ambition ever dreamed of in the history of these islands. The rest of the world, presidents Putin and Trump excepted, have watched on in astonishment and dismay. A majority voted in December for parties which supported a second referendum. But those parties failed lamentably to make common cause. We must pack up our tents, perhaps to the sound of church bells, and hope to begin the 15-year trudge, back towards some semblance of where we were yesterday with our multiple trade deals, security, health and scientific co-operation and a thousand other useful arrangements.”¹⁵⁰

“What did we learn in our blindness? That those not flourishing within the status quo had no good reason to vote for it; that our prolonged parliamentary chaos derived from an ill-posed yes-no question to which there were a score of answers; that the long-evolved ecology of the EU has

¹⁴⁹ ibid

¹⁵⁰ McEwan, I., 2020. *Brexit, the most pointless, masochistic ambition in our country’s history, is done.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/feb/01/brexit-pointless-masochistic-ambition-history-done>[Accessed 13 5 2020].

*profoundly shaped the flora of our nation's landscape and to **rip these plants out will be brutal**; that what was once called a hard Brexit became soft by contrast with the threatened no-deal that even now persists;*¹⁵¹

As shown in bold, the Guardian explains Brexit as a terrible loss to the country. It goes further to question whether 'we' were blind to make the wrong decision. This shows regret in what Britain has lost as it cut its ties with the EU.

EU's sovereignty over Britain – Political

From the previous article, the Guardian continues to stress that Brexit is not the opportunity for Britain to re-start as a newly independent country.

*"The **prime minister tells us he wants to bring the country together**. This is rich from the politician who made a major contribution to **tearing it apart**. In theory, **Johnson is monarch of all he surveys**: the British political system resembles, in Lord Hailsham's famous phrase, an elective dictatorship. And Johnson already manifests dictatorial tendencies. **We Remainers have lost. Great Britain has officially left the European Union (it is not at all clear that Northern Ireland has)**. But, in fact, **Brexit has only just begun**."*¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ ibid

¹⁵² Keegan, W., 2020. *Brexit is a crisis, not an opportunity. But we'll see that too late.*

Boris Johnson's decision to make Brexit happen has become addressed as a monarch of Britain. It also depicts the Remainer campaign separately from this situation, calling the loss of a 'Great Britain' that was connected to the EU. What is also interesting is how the Guardian calls most of the Tory opinions of the EU as Euromyths.

*“There was the **infamous fabrication of a quote in 1988** that resulted in his being sacked by the Times. Then, as the Daily Telegraph’s Brussels correspondent for five years from 1989, he learned how to spin, making a significant contribution to the **creation of Euromyths**. The enduring nonsense about straight bananas was one of his recurring themes. More important still, he realised that his cavalier coverage of the European Commission had **a political consequence**. It provided Eurosceptic Tory MPs with ammunition to **pursue their war against the EU**. As his biographer, Sonia Purnell, rightly put it, Johnson’s writings in those years helped to **make Euroscepticism “an attractive and emotionally resonant cause for the right”**”¹⁵³*

“Johnson knows exactly what he is about. He is contemptuous of press freedom because he has spent so long making a mockery of it through his

[Online]

Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/feb/09/brexit-crisis-not-opportunity-see-that-too-late> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

¹⁵³ Greenslade, R., 2020. *Boris Johnson is the ultimate purveyor of fake news*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/feb/23/boris-johnson-is-the-ultimate-purveyor-of-fake-news> [Accessed 17 5 2020].

distortions of the truth. In that sense, he imagines that all other journalists are no different from him. Give them a chance and they'll do unto him what he has done to others. He has a particular loathing for broadcast journalists because they can hold him to account in public, hence the snub to Neil."¹⁵⁴

They further explain how Boris Johnson used his knowledge of journalism to create 'attractive' Eurosceptic opinions to the public. It also explains how the news media was able to persuade most of the British citizens in voting for the Leave campaign.

B. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Daily Mirror (2020): January ~ February

For the Daily Mirror, the focus of domestic politics is on *Brexit*, the European Union and Boris Johnson. As of the case of The Guardian, the Daily Mirror also repeatedly uses the term *Brexit* to make briefings of the situation post-Brexit. Nonetheless, the tone is critical and negative throughout the articles. Selected articles are seen below in table 2, and are divided by themes.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*

Table 2

Theme of articles in The Daily Mirror (2020.01 ~ 2020. 02)	
Brexit is a threat to the UK-EU relationship	
2020.01.28	Brexit: EU launches hardline talks warning of checks, courts and 'consequences'
2020.01.30	Brexit's threat to the Union - why it could be the end of the UK
2020.01.31	Brexit: What happens now after the UK officially leaves the EU
2020.02.01	Brexit day RECAP: Britain leaves the EU to tears and cheers across nation
2020.02.03	Brexit: Boris Johnson says Britain will break with EU rules as Brussels issues fishing warning

Similar to 2016, the Daily Mirror limits its availability of articles online, which makes it difficult to properly analyse the articles based on their characteristics and influence to readers. Hence, the addition of looking at cover pages of the Daily Mirror will be used.

On January 28th, the Daily Mirror titles the threat in which the EU presented against the UK. Firstly, the term ‘warning’, ‘consequences’ and ‘hardline talks’ are used to illustrate how little is occurring in terms of smooth talks between the UK and the EU.

“Claims the European Court of Justice could rule on a future trade deal will infuriate 10 Downing Street - while an EU chief slaps down Boris Johnson's claim there would be no checks to Northern Ireland... Last night

*the EU's chief negotiator Michael Barnier rejected Boris Johnson's claim there would be no checks on goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland - saying "Brexit has consequences". Mr Barnier said checks would be "indispensable" after 1 January 2021 because **Boris Johnson's own deal "makes frictionless trade impossible"**. The Withdrawal Agreement avoids putting up a hard border along the 310-mile line between Northern Ireland and the Republic.*"¹⁵⁵

*"He declared the UK "is now a small country" and the EU would have the "upper hand" in talks. In a blow to Brexiteers he added: "You may have to make concessions in areas like fishing in order to get concessions from us in areas like financial services."*¹⁵⁶

The Daily Mirror throws some light on indicating how the UK has lost much of its sovereignty instead of gaining them back. Therefore, the outcome of Brexit has not really given much freedom as the Tories suggested.

*"Mr Johnson has promised **post-Brexit Britain** will be an outward-looking global power, building on relationships with old Commonwealth allies and newer "Five Eyes" security partners. By leaving the EU we may have more freedom, but we will also have markedly less clout in a world where the three major global hubs are the US, China and the EU. For decades Britain saw itself as a bridge between Europe and the US - but with Brexit and Donald Trump those relationships are under strain. And while we remain a major global economy, our departure from the single market*

¹⁵⁵ Bloom, D., 2020. *Brexit: EU launches hardline talks warning of checks, courts and 'consequences'*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-eu-launches-hardline-talks-21375477> [Accessed 17 5 2020].

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*

*makes us less attractive to many foreign investors. If the UK splinters after Brexit, with Scotland going it alone, it could put at risk its right to a seat on the United Nations Security Council.*¹⁵⁷

The tabloid clearly highlights the point of having more freedom in exchange of less ties with the stronger nations (US, China and the EU). Consequentially, the Daily Mirror illustrates Britain as a weaker state that needs to rely on third parties. Domestically, the country would be facing potential clash with nationalistic countries such as Scotland. The Daily Mirror then proceeds to explain whether an everyday living of a British citizen changed. In terms of travelling, the tabloid emphasises the following:

*“You will **no longer be guaranteed free mobile phone roaming in the EU** as the issue will be left to operators. **Duty free will return on flights and boats to the EU.** But there are likely to be **some checks on lorries and vehicles crossing the Channel** that could lead to delays. There will also be new checks on goods crossing between Britain and Northern Ireland under the terms of the Irish backstop. **You may also need an international driving permit as well as a ‘green card’ to prove you have the right car insurance and a GB bumper sticker.** Pet owners can carry on bringing their animals to the EU on ‘pet passports’ until December, but after will need to obtain a health certificate. The Supreme Court will be the highest court of appeal in the UK **and there will be no direct role for the European Court of Justice***

¹⁵⁷ Crerar, P., 2020. *Brexit: What happens now after the UK officially leaves the EU.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-what-happens-now-after-21404402> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

in British life.”¹⁵⁸

A day after the announcement of Brexit (February 1st 2020), the Daily Mirror titles its first article as “*Brexit day RECAP: Britain leaves the EU to tears and cheers across nation*”¹⁵⁹. Words such as ‘tears’ and ‘cheers’ are used to describe the sentiments of the Remain campaign and the Leave campaign. An interesting point to this particular article is its front cover.

¹⁵⁸ ibid

¹⁵⁹ Shadwell, T., 2020. *Brexit day RECAP: Britain leaves the EU to tears and cheers across nation*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-day-live-britain-set-21399089> [Accessed 19 5 2020].



Figure 13: Daily Mirror front cover (February 1st 2020)¹⁶⁰

This image of a person looking over the horizon, represents the beginning of a new Britain. The wordings are ‘now build the Britain we were promised’. Furthermore, it indicates Brexit as a ‘moment of history’.

"Gibraltar lowered the flag of the European Union "solemnly, in sadness

¹⁶⁰ ITV, 2020. *Britain's exit from the EU dominates Saturday's newspaper front pages.* [Online]

Available at: <https://www.itv.com/news/2020-02-01/britain-s-exit-from-the-eu-dominates-saturday-s-newspaper-front-pages/> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

*and with a **heavy heart***”, the chief minister of the British Overseas Territory said. The British outcrop in the south of Spain voted overwhelmingly to remain in the June 2016 referendum with only 4% of ballots cast for Leave. Speaking ahead of the ceremony, chief minister Fabian Picardo said: “**As we lower the flag of the EU, we will do so solemnly, in sadness and with a heavy heart.**” **We will play the EU’s Ode to Joy as a sign of friendship and respect. “Because we have enjoyed the human and economic benefits of membership of the EU. “We have prospered in the EEC, the EC and now the EU.”**¹⁶¹

Descriptions as such demonstrate how much counties that have voted for the Remain campaign are mourning over the results of Brexit. Thus, the Daily Mirror’s political tone is visible in expressing its condolences to the loss of a great partner.

The Tories

A. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Sun (2020): January ~ February

The Sun has shown strong welcoming of the new beginning of Britain. Most articles that were published illustrate strong signs

¹⁶¹ Shadwell, T., 2020. *Brexit day RECAP: Britain leaves the EU to tears and cheers across nation*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-day-live-britain-set-21399089> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

of a nationalistic narrative. All of the selected articles for 2020 are shown below in table 3.

Table 3

Theme of articles in The Sun (2020.01 ~ 2020. 02)	
Public reaction on Brexit - Nationalistic	
2020.01.08	Full Brexit trade deal WON'T be possible without delaying beyond 2020, new EU boss Von der Leyen warns Boris.
2020.01.11	Boris Johnson should get Brexit done as he promised and not bend under EU pressure.
2020.01.13	Brexit day: Plans to fly Union Jacks and Big Ben could bong to mark January 31 exit.
2020.01.23	Bloated BBC must face a full investigation into its flagrant abuse of public money.
The victory of the Tories – Nationalistic	
2020.01.30	Brexit day's the day Remoaners should stop spewing their hate – but they won't.
2020.01.31	Britain FINALLY leaves the EU sparking euphoric scenes as Boris pledges to unleash UK's full potential.
2020.02.03	Boris Johnson tells EU to give up bid to control UK after Brexit, warning: 'We've made our choice'.
2020.02.06	We congratulate all Sun Military Awards winners – you put the Great in Britain.
2020.02.20	Blair is right... the lefties who want to lead Labour need to focus on what really matters to working class voters.

In January, the Sun focused more on the public's reaction to Brexit, and has published a different side to the same story of Boris Johnson and

Ursula Von der Leyen's trade deal discussions, which was an interesting finding compared to the Daily Mirror.

Firstly, in terms of new trade deals, the Sun details the meeting through quoting Ursula Von der Leyen as the following:

“The 61-year-old insisted “we should be optimistic”, and vowed Europe would never turn their back on Britain, even after we eventually leave. She said: “I hope that by being constructive and ambitious in the upcoming negotiations, we can all move forward together. “There will be tough talks ahead and each side will do what is best for them. “But I can assure you that the United Kingdom will always have a trusted friend and partner in the European Union.”¹⁶²

The narration of confidence that the EU would still support Britain even if it leaves is visible in this article. This is an interesting point to see because the Sun later on published another story of how Boris Johnson does not “bend under EU pressure”¹⁶³

¹⁶² Brown, A., 2020. *EU CAN'T Full Brexit trade deal WON'T be possible without delaying beyond 2020, new EU boss Von der Leyen warns Boris*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10696173/full-brexit-trade-deal-wont-be-possible-without-delaying-beyond-2020-new-eu-boss-von-der-leyen-warns-boris/> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

¹⁶³ Forsyth, J., 2020. *Boris Johnson should get Brexit done as he promised and not bend under EU pressure*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10715867/boris-should-not-bend-opinion/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

*“Boris wants ministers to stop talking about Brexit once the UK has left as he doesn’t want the trade negotiations with the EU to dominate British politics in the way that leaving has since the referendum. He wants to show voters that the country has moved on and the Government is once more focusing on the domestic issues voters care about. But however much he tries, it will be hard to make these talks boring. They are important and there is already DRAMA BREWING.”*¹⁶⁴

*“The DANGER is that the EU thinks that under time pressure Boris will bend, that he will either extend the transition period — something he has repeatedly promised not to do — or drop his commitment to breaking away from EU rules and regulations. Boris is determined not to do either of these things. He doesn’t want to extend and believes in the value of the UK having the right to do things differently.”*¹⁶⁵

The Sun presents Boris Johnson to have a firm position in leading Britain out of the EU, without becoming pressured from the Union. They describe his beliefs to be that of the country as a whole, and explains that Boris Johnson would do things differently in comparison to David Cameron.

The tabloid further gives a nationalistic picture of the victory of the Tories with the title *“Brexit day: Plans to fly Union Jacks and Big Ben could bong to mark January 31 exit”*¹⁶⁶. Within this particular article, the Sun

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶⁶ Brown, A., 2020. *FLY THE FLAG Brexit day: Plans to fly Union Jacks and Big Ben could*

illustrates a nationalistic narrative. As much as the Union Flag and Big Ben represent the image of the United Kingdom, the Sun inserts these images in to describe both the victory of the Tories as well as a proud UK.

*“Britain will finally have left the EU when the clock strikes midnight at the end of the month. Ministers are preparing a series of announcements for **the big day**, which is **finally arriving after Boris Johnson landed a stonking majority**. This could see cash set aside from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local **Government to help put up flags.**”¹⁶⁷*

“Big Ben could also ring in Britain’s new golden age after the Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle said he would allow the scheme if MPs voted for it. Pro-Brexit businessman Lord Ashcroft has already offered to foot the £120,000 cost..”¹⁶⁸

The victory of the Tories – Nationalistic

The most notifiable article from the end of January to the beginning of February is the one that describes the Remain campaign to stop mourning for the results of Brexit. They openly criticise the Labour party supporters to stop the hate.

bong to mark January 31 exit. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10725461/brexit-day-plans-to-fly-union-jacks-and-for-big-ben-to-bong-to-mark-january-31-exit/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹⁶⁷ ibid

¹⁶⁸ ibid

*“They tell Leavers not to be overtly triumphant. That the country must unite. On balance, we agree. But then publicity-hungry TV has-beens launch vile, deranged rants against Brexit supporters, cheered on by like-minded bigots convinced **THEY are the nice, open-hearted liberals.** In fairness, plenty of other Remainers just want Brexit done too. The election proved that. So does the latest poll giving the Tories 49 per cent. But many more are still angry. Unity requires Leavers and Remainers to make Brexit work together. **That will happen only when both sides denounce hate-filled Remoaner ‘celebrities’ as the poisonous, divisive extremists they are**”¹⁶⁹*

*“It’s not about **trimming the newsroom or cutting the odd programme,** hand-picked to generate the loudest pro-Beeb protest. It’s about the basic structure of the place, about paring the output back to the essentials it can do better than a commercial broadcaster **Be bold.** Scrap the entire website. Who will miss it? **Bin the podcasts few listen to. To win back viewers, change your ingrained cultural and political bias.** Make comedy and drama genuinely funny or gripping, not unwatchable tripe that ticks “woke” boxes.”¹⁷⁰*

After Brexit, the Sun gives several suggestions to other liberal newspaper agencies as to what they should do to be much more convincing in the stories they publish, which is shown above as a quote. The tabloid goes

¹⁶⁹ The Sun, 2020. *Brexit day’s the day Remoaners should stop spewing their hate — but they won’t.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10851797/brexit-remoaners-stop-spewing-hate/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹⁷⁰ *ibid*

further to focus on the opening of Britain's new potential with Boris Johnson.

*“BRITAIN has finally left the EU tonight as millions celebrate one of the biggest moments in the nation's history. The UK is at last an independent country again, sparking wild scenes of joy across our United Kingdom.”*¹⁷¹

*“After years of dither and delay, tonight the public celebrates with Boris Johnson finally delivering Brexit. It came as the Prime Minister vowed to unleash the “full potential” of Brexit Britain and pledged “hope and opportunity” for the North. Scenes of jubilation erupted at a rally in Parliament Square as the clock struck 11pm and hardcore Brexit fans had tears in their eyes as they sang a rendition of God Save The Queen. A recording of Big Ben's bong was played and flares were set off as a video screen displayed the words 'We're Out!' People in the crowd were heard screaming: "We're gone!" and "We were there.”*¹⁷²

“Before 11pm, he said in a speech: "Something truly remarkable is going to happen. "Something that I fought for 27 years and something many thousands of you have given your time and money for." He went on: "The people have beaten the establishment. The real winner tonight is democracy. And I am someone who believes we should be pro-Europe, but not the European Union." Speaking less than an hour before the nation

¹⁷¹ Clark, N. & Brown, A., 2020. Britain FINALLY leaves the EU sparking euphoric scenes as Boris pledges to unleash UK's full potential. [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10863148/britain-leaves-eu-millions-celebrate-boris-potential/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

¹⁷² ibid

celebrated the historic EU exit, the PM promised to "level up" and improve the lives of everyone in Britain."¹⁷³

The Sun's language in this article shows confidence in Boris Johnson – this is proven through word selection such as 'improve the lives of Britain' or singing 'God Save the Queen'. In addition, the cover page shows the Sun's nationalistic narrative even further.



Figure 14: The Sun front page 2020¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ ibid

¹⁷⁴ The Guardian, 2020. *Brexit day bonanza: newspaper front pages beat drums of victory.*

B. The Domestic Politics and Nationalism Discourse in The Daily Mail (2020): January ~ February

Similarly, to the Sun, the Daily Mail openly welcomes the start of England without the EU. From January until February, the newspaper published stories regarding criticisms of the Labour Party. Selected articles are shown below in table 4.

Table 4:

Theme of articles in The Daily Mail (2020.01 ~ 2020. 02)	
Explanations of Brexit to the Public – Political and Nationalistic	
2020.01.16	There’s no need for a ding-dong, but Big Ben SHOULD ring out for Brexit.
2020.01.17	Die-hard Remainer academic is slammed for comparing Brexit celebrations planned for January 31 to ‘a re-enactment of Kristallnacht’.
2020.01.19	Labour leadership hopeful Phillips insists she is not an ‘uber Remainer’
2020.01.25	Boris Johnson: Britain will become global, trail-blazing country after Brexit
Labour’s backlash after Brexit – political	
2020.02.01	Bitter Remainers make ‘THICK’ trend on Twitter with their insults aimed at Leavers following Brexit Day celebrations
2020.02.05	Denying journalists access to briefings is outrageous censorship that Boris Johnson should be ashamed of

[Online]

Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/brexit-day-bonanza-newspaper-front-pages-beat-drums-of-victor> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

2020.02.14	Long-Bailey vows to challenge media ‘smears and lies’ if elected Labour leader
2020.02.17	UK to EU: we won’t accept supervision in post-Brexit deal

Explanations of Brexit to the Public – Political and Nationalistic

One of the most notable articles that the Daily Mail has published was the one in relation to the ringing of the Big Ben because the author directly illustrates the emotional change of both the Leavers and the Remainers.

*“But let’s not quibble. Symbolically we are leaving, even if technically we’re not. Brexiteers will be happy in varying degrees. I suspect quite a lot of Remainers won’t be particularly unhappy. But some will.”*¹⁷⁵

“Big Ben is a national symbol. When it strikes the hour — though it is mostly silent during the absurdly prolonged four-year restoration of the Elizabeth Tower — it marks out time for the British State. No one thinks, on hearing the inimitable sound of Big Ben, of celebration. It is just formidably there — through wars, successive governments and political upheavals, as it was when our grandparents were alive, and their grandparents before them. That is why, even while the tower that houses it is being lengthily restored (I expect the Chinese could build a dozen brand new replicas in four years), Big Ben

¹⁷⁵ Glover, S., 2020. *There’s no need for a ding-dong, but Big Ben SHOULD ring out for Brexit.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-7892745/STEPHEN-GLOVER-Theres-no-need-ding-dong-Big-Ben-ring-Brexit.html> [Accessed 20 5 2020].

*has been allowed to strike on Remembrance Sunday and New Year's Eve. Why not on the day we leave the European Union? Our departure is a huge national event, whether you like it or not, and that is what **Big Ben is in the business of noting.***"¹⁷⁶

The emphasis on Big Ben ringing on the day of Brexit, according to the author, is important because Brexit is one of Britain's most historical events. It also adds that a minority of the supporters of the Labour Party would also agree with Big Ben ringing.

Following from this article, the Daily Mail demarks the Remain campaign because Brexit is compared to a Nazi terror from Kristallnacht. Political narrative wordings are used continuously.

*"A university lecturer has **provoked outrage** after comparing the planned **Brexit celebrations in London** to a 're-enactment of **Kristallnacht**.' Dr Mark Berry, of Royal Holloway University, suggested that the Leave Means Leave event on January 31 was similar to the Nazi's vicious assaults on Jewish property in 1938..."*¹⁷⁷

The Daily Mail made it clear that the comment from a Remainer is insulting, which is why the title "*die-hard Remainer academic ... slammed*

¹⁷⁶ ibid

¹⁷⁷ Ibbetson, R., 2020. *Die-hard Remainer academic is slammed for comparing Brexit celebrations planned for January 31 to 'a re-enactment of Kristallnacht'*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7897287/Remainer-slammed-comparing-Brexit-celebrations-planned-January-31-Kristallnacht.html#comments> [Accessed 17 5 2020].

for comparing Brexit celebration”¹⁷⁸ is written in this format.

Labour’s backlash after Brexit – Political

Followed from this article, the Daily Mail immediately describes how the outcome of Brexit would allow England to become further globalised than it was when part of the European Union.

*“Boris Johnson has said **Britain will become a global, trail-blazing country after it leaves the European Union** as he unveiled the **Government’s full plans to mark Brexit day**. The Prime Minister said he will “**look ahead with confidence**” to the future on Friday when the UK formally leaves the bloc – nearly four years since the referendum... The day after Britain’s departure, the Government’s new “**GREAT ‘Ready to Trade’**” campaign will launch in 17 cities across 13 countries outside the EU as the UK seeks to build future trading relationships.”*¹⁷⁹

The newspaper then moves on to the perspectives of the Labour Party after Brexit happened. It announced Remainers as ‘bitter’ due to the trending hashtag, thick, in Twitter after Brexit.

¹⁷⁸ ibid

¹⁷⁹ The Daily Mail, 2020. *Boris Johnson: Britain will become global, trail-blazing country after Brexit*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-7929819/Boris-Johnson-Britain-global-trail-blazing-country-Brexit.html> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

*“Brexiters awoke on Britain's first day outside the European Union to find themselves being **branded 'thick' by sour Remainers**. Pro-EU activists flooded social media with the insulting hashtag, which first spawned as they poured scorn on Leavers celebrating the historic occasion. **Rather than extinguishing the Brexit battle lines** which have bitterly divided the nation over the last three and a half years, the **UK's eventual divorce from the bloc appeared to spur animosity**... Piers Morgan led the kick-back and tweeted: 'So #thick is trending, driven by **Remoaners who think they're so much smarter than the 17.4m people who voted for Brexit**. 'If you're all so **f***ing smart, how did you get beaten by a bunch of thickos?**' His fury was echoed by many Brexiters online, who also reminded the Remain campaign predicted a vote to Leave with trigger an economic hit.”¹⁸⁰*

The divide between the Remainers and the Leavers were expressed to be in a fight after the divorce between the UK and EU occurred. The Daily Mail used strong criticism against the Remain campaign who could not get over the fact that the Tories won. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the newspaper was in favour of everything Boris Johnson had done. A few days following Brexit, the Daily Mail shame-called on the Prime Minister for censoring journalists from receiving information in regards to Brexit-briefings done with the EU.

¹⁸⁰ Elsom, J., 2020. *Bitter Remainers make 'THICK' trend on Twitter with their insults aimed at Leavers following Brexit Day celebrations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7956265/Insulting-hashtag-aimed-Leavers-shared-Twitter.html> [Accessed 18 5 2020].

*“On Monday afternoon, journalists at No 10 who were expecting a briefing on EU trade were asked to line up on one side of the entrance hall while a security officer checked them off against a list. Those acceptable to the powers-that-be were asked to cross over to the other side of the room. The remaining journalists – mostly, though not entirely, from organisations disliked by No 10 – were told to leave... It is part of a misguided attempt, largely orchestrated by the Prime Minister's chief adviser Dominic Cummings, to seize control of the news agenda in a way reminiscent of Donald Trump.”*¹⁸¹

*“He believes that what he calls the 'People's Government' should communicate directly with voters without what he sees as the anti-Tory media (of which the BBC is in his mind the most powerful constituent) corrupting the message... How should those of us who do not always approve of the BBC's political coverage respond? Pretty critically, I believe. Because the main victims of this guerrilla warfare are ordinary voters... That is not how we do things in Britain. We have a tradition here, though Mr Cummings and Mr Cain may not like it, of allowing a range of voices in the media, some of which are bound to be critical of the government of the day. I never thought I would live to see a Tory administration blackballing journalists and publications it dislikes”*¹⁸²

The Daily Mail openly expresses its disgust in the way the new

¹⁸¹ Glover, S., 2020. STEPHEN GLOVER: Denying journalists access to briefings is outrageous censorship that Boris Johnson should be ashamed of. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-7967495/STEPHEN-GLOVER-Denying-journalists-access-briefings-outrageous-censorship.html> [Accessed 16 5 2020].

¹⁸² *ibid*

government is trying to control the media. It also emphasizes that British media does not work this way, and that the main victims from the fight are the voters. As such, most of the language of the articles published on February illustrate nationalism of being both a proud Leave voter or 'British' as well as pointing out the political victory of the Great Britain.

Chapter V: Discourse Analysis of the British Identity

For the following chapter, the analysis of the results shown in the previous chapter would be discussed based on 2016 and 2020.

Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Labour Party – 2016

Upon the discourse analysis of newspapers and tabloids reaching up to the 2016 Brexit referendum, supporters of either the Tory or Labour party have not only illustrated their political interests regarding Brexit differently, but also showed visible tactics to persuade its readers of maintaining or changing the identity of Britain.

a. The Guardian – 2016

The Guardian (broadsheet newspaper) was more direct and factual in comparison to the Daily Mirror. Both of them have a strong political and nationalistic narrative – mainly for the purpose of convincing indecisive voters to vote for the Remain campaign. In addition, the Guardian describes the Remain campaign to be ‘not vocal enough’, and the Leave campaign as having ‘a lack of a clear picture of Brexit’. They also express their worries about the potential outcome of Brexit, whilst also mentioning that the EU has warned the Leave campaign of the consequences that follow from their

decision – such as the problem with the immigration crisis or the unemployment crisis. This is partially the reason why the Leave campaign is illustrated as villains with Nigel Farage being the extreme case due to his strong Eurosceptic behaviour.

The British identity in 2016:

In this light, results for 2016 demonstrate that the Guardian formed an identity that mostly speaks to the middle-upper class, with high emphasis on Brexit's potential risk of the British economy and its trade relations. In terms of its discussions of identity, the Guardian has selectively used the term 'divorce' to illustrate an unwanted separation from the EU. Primarily, this indicates the base of keeping the British identity faith alive in 2016. Moreover, as the idea of *Britishness* lingers on the idea of fostering inclusiveness into Britain's community, the Guardian's tactic of titling its article as "*The Guardian View on The EU Referendum: Keep Connected and Inclusive..*"¹⁸³ for June 20th 2016, already depicts its message of being British rather than English.

Furthermore, within its article about President Obama's concern of

¹⁸³ The Guardian, 2016. *The Guardian view on the EU referendum: keep connected and inclusive, not angry and isolated.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/20/the-guardian-view-on-the-eu-referendum-keep-connected-and-inclusive-not-angry-and-isolated> [Accessed 15 5 2020].

potential loss of trade talk with Britain, the Guardian indirectly addresses Britain's potential backwardness economically as a way to suggest the importance of keeping the British identity. Referring to President Obama's speech about his concerns of British exclusion, the newspaper also points out what the US president would have done if he were British: "*he also weighed into UK domestic considerations, arguing that if he were a British voter he would be wary of cutting himself off from the market that takes 44% of British exports*"¹⁸⁴. Again, this indicates the newspaper's tactic to convince its readers that even international actors, such as the USA, would vote to remain to keep the British identity. Similar methods were used for other articles discussing the economic impact of Brexit. Emphasis on opinions of the public sectors and specialists – that the result of Brexit would be harmful in the long-run – portray how the Guardian uses domestic economic issues as a way of arguing for both the remain campaign and the British identity in 2016.

b. The Daily Mirror - 2016

For the case of the Daily Mirror (centre-left tabloid), the structure of

¹⁸⁴ Asthana, A. & Mason, R., 2016. *Barack Obama: Brexit would put UK 'back of the queue' for trade talks*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/22/barack-obama-brexit-uk-back-of-queue-for-trade-talks> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

the tabloid has ultimately allowed them to be much more critical about the Leavers' campaign more than the Guardian. In general, their tactic to convince their readers to maintain their British identity lie, mostly, in the history of Britain. Additionally, they purposefully use effective front cover pages to attract readers and non-readers alike to read the tabloid.

Historical check for British identity maintenance 2016:

The Daily Mirror, firstly, questions 'who' we are to decide what is good and bad in leaving the EU when, historically, Britain has been part of Europe from the beginning. This, itself, reflects the core nationalistic identity the centre-left party has of Britain or more so England. They visualise Britain to be England in that all of the states are united as one – hence the word United Kingdom is used. Unmistakeably, the targeted audience of the Daily Mirror would have been convinced in such perspective. This is the reason why the tabloid focuses itself mostly on the historical development of the United Kingdom. On June 21st 2016, the Daily Mirror suggested that the Brexit referendum would give an impact to future generations. Similarly, to the Guardian, it maintains its British identity through blaming the lack of economic development on the Tory government. However, the tabloid aims to target the working-class, pointing out how much the "*hard working people*

of this country who have had to battle to survive the recent recession”¹⁸⁵ have tried to correct the wrongdoings of the “reckless bankers”¹⁸⁶. Their reference to the opposite party suggests that the Daily Mirror desires to remind the undecided right-wing supporters about their British background, instead of becoming narrow-minded. Crucially, however, the tabloid was not as popular compared to its other opponents. Nevertheless, the downfall of the tabloid’s effect, however, is its lack of audience to be able to convince potential readers of the benefits of keeping the British identity.

Considering the demographics for the Labour Party 2016:

For the readers of the Guardian, middle-class adults aging from the age of 15+, have their identities as a British citizen engraved into the Remain campaign. Their opinions are voiced through the Guardian, which is why the newspaper vividly uses the term ‘we’ to represent the whole of the Remain campaign. When connected to the quantitative data, many of the younger generations have believed that Britain is a diversified country. Therefore, it is

¹⁸⁵ The Mirror, 2016. *Why the Mirror is backing Remain for the sake of our great nations*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/mirror-backing-remain-sake-great-8251613> [Accessed 16 5 2020].

¹⁸⁶ *ibid*

only reasonable to suggest that the voting outcomes of the Remain campaign in 2016 were not as much compared to the Leave campaign.

Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Labour Party – 2020

When comparing this to 2020, the transition of the tone of articles is rather different after a course of 4 years. Neither the newspaper or the tabloid have maintained their position in attempting to convince readers to stay strong as British.

a. The Guardian 2020:

Results after the Brexit referendum have changed the way in which the Guardian sees Brexit. Instead of openly criticising the lack of economic development, its focus is now on publishing news related to the relationship between Europe and Britain. For instance, on January 14th 2020, the Guardian acknowledges the fact that Brexit cannot be changeable, hence, informs its readers that “*the Guardian’s European coverage will be developing and deepening*”¹⁸⁷. In other words, the newspaper admits to the shift of Britain

¹⁸⁷ Henley, J., 2020. *Brexit weekly briefing: UK and EU all smiles but faultlines obvious*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/14/brexit-weekly-briefing-uk-eu-all-smiles-but-faultlines-clear> [Accessed 12 5 2020].

sticking to its Englishness, which allows itself to not argue against the remain campaign but introduce new ideas into maintaining the bond Britain has with the EU.

Even though there are signs of remorse from Britain's departure, the Guardian makes it clear that the EU would still be connected to the country because of the withdrawal agreement. Therefore, instead of persuading citizens of the British identity, the Guardian suggests that domestic clashes would also occur after the ending ties with the EU. This is one of the reasons why the Guardian still publicises Brexit as an ongoing issue that risks the division of Northern Ireland and Scotland. Hence, from its articles after the official leave of the EU, national discourse has indeed decreased significantly due to the inevitable outcome of Brexit. But the political discourse still remains to be a heated debate in structuring the new identity of the United Kingdom after its leave from the Union. In other words, the Guardian in 2020 still desires to keep its connections to the EU, which indicates the maintenance of a British identity tied to being European.

b. The Daily Mirror 2020:

The tabloid also follows a similar method to the Guardian, in that it published more discussions made between the EU and the UK more so than

any nationalistic discourse. For example, the Daily Mirror presents relations with the EU to be more difficult than before, suggesting that the hard-line talks are bringing consequences to Britain. This presents a political discourse of the discussion of the identity (British or English). In the case of the Daily Mirror, their desire to maintain the British identity has made their political discourse more negative than in 2016. One of their articles suggest that Britain is facing its end with Brexit. They call the results of Brexit a reality that has made England diverge; this directly indicates the political debate surrounding the identity of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the tabloid mentions other areas within England, such as Wales and Scotland, to indicate their lack of trust in the English identity.

Hence, similarly to the Guardian, the Daily Mirror does not change much of its arguments related to where Britain belongs. Expressing remorse of its loss of ties with the Union prove that the tabloid still supports the country's identity to be related deeply to the EU even after Brexit.

Political and Nationalistic discourse for the Tories – 2016

When examining the Daily Mail and The Sun for the 2016 Brexit referendum, it is obvious enough to understand that the Sun, in particular, had been vocally loud in degrading the Labour Party especially in June 2016.

a. The Sun 2016:

Identity discussion within the Sun is described tactically through both its front covers as well as its selection of words within their published stories. First off, the tone for the Sun appears to be sensitive to those targeted for criticism (i.e. the Labour Party). As an example, publishing the reference from the Queen (particularly on her opinion about being a Brexiteer) demonstrates grand influence in changing the perspectives of their readers. Using the monarch indirectly symbolises the Sun's objective of presenting the United Kingdom as England, pushing forward the idea of Englishness to its readers. Those in favour of the monarchy, therefore, would be strongly convinced of the idea of Englishness. This is one of the reasons why the Sun targets the working class, as they are presumed to be easily influenced to media exposure more so than readers of the Guardian. Furthermore, the tabloid has a way of making news sound juicier, and full of entertainment with black humour. Creating puns to describe other European member-states leaving as 'NEXIT' can be seen as an example of a behaviour that portrays Britain's independent beginning away from the European Union; this can also be taken as the start of dismemberment for other smaller member-states.

Within the identity debate, the Sun directly addresses Brexit to be a very 'British apocalypse' that pulls the country away from the European mess.

The fact that the tabloid openly blames the European Union for ruining Britain's chance of independency can be argued to be an indicator of persuasion for its readers to rethink their English heritage. Moreover, the Sun has proved to be extremely active in promoting the glory of being English. In their article on June 25th 2016, titled *Can Europe Survive?*, it poses the question of the EU without Britain. Again, not only does this indirectly question the potential of the Union with Britain's absence, but it also shows the proud independent Britain (more so England), which would appear appealing to its targeted audience – the working class. Hence, the Sun appears to relate the identity debate close to a Eurosceptic English, which is what most supporters of the Tory would support as the EU has done nothing beneficial to the country.

b. The Daily Mail 2016:

Keeping in mind that the Daily Mail is one of the most read newspapers across Britain, this newspaper has also publicly denounced the British identity through addressing the powerless European Union. *We'll have no voice if we stay in the EU...* written in April 6th 2016, indicates Britain's potential increasing isolation from becoming one that is named a 'proud United Kingdom'. Highlights of the lack of benefits left in the Union, coupled up with the address of Britain's role as an individual role-player, all

demonstrate how much the Daily Mail considers ‘Englishness’ to be important. This change of the political union points out that Britain’s past of being part of the EU’s one voice no longer represents the United Kingdom in 2016. Hence, nationalistic discourse is strong in addressing the readers as *we*, whilst also describing Britain as Great Britain. The newspaper also bolds the term ‘MUST’ in its May 22nd 2016 for further emphasis of choosing to Leave, which indirectly symbolises the end of Britishness, and the call of Englishness. To make its point on the identity debate, the Daily Mail’s focus on *Project Fear* (a project meant to address two referendums that have occurred in 21st century British politics – the Scotland 2014 referendum and Brexit referendum 2016). Through this focus, the Daily Mail serves an interesting point to Britain’s identity with using the Labour Party’s description *Tory Right* and *Ukip tendencies*. The newspaper backfires this point, indicating that the left-wing party’s description of the Leave campaign reveals a new form of the EU. In other words, the Daily Mail indirectly presents the benefit of maintaining Englishness through using the Labour party as a way to prove to its readers that being English is the way to protect the country from becoming weaker than before.

In addition, the Daily Mail does not fail to publish an article 5 days before the 2016 Brexit referendum, saying that the Labour Party’s sole focus on the issue of immigration does not solve Britain’s domestic problem. Again,

the newspaper uses the Labour Party to construct a solid English identity that talks on behalf of the citizens. Hence, articles published on the perspective of the Tories in 2016 carefully used the Labour Party as a mechanism to secure Englishness to its targeted audience – the working class. This is seen as a similar tactic to that of the Sun. Additionally, national discourse proves that the Daily Mail pushes forward Euroscepticism tied to Englishness in the identity debate against the Labour Party.

The Sun and The Daily Mail 2020:

Both the tabloid and newspaper in 2020 were nationalistically vocal in every story they published. Not only were they emphasising a strong, independent Great Britain, but they were also congratulating all of the Leave campaign voters for making a grand contribution to the change of British history. Compared to the Sun, the Daily Mail underlines how Britain would be more global and would strive in trade deals with the super-states. Not much discussion on identity (British or English) were seen directly and indirectly. Instead, the Sun and the Daily Mail target the Labour Party news agency for maintaining ‘useless’ talk about the identity of Britain. With the case of the Sun, *Brexit day's the day Remoaners should stop spewing their hate – but they won't.*, not only does the content directly criticise the Labour party for not accepting their defeat, but it also serves to be a reminder to the readers that

the United Kingdom serves to be English rather than British. This is because the Sun publicly announces the need for “Leavers and Remainers to make Brexit work together”¹⁸⁸.

Cooperation, in the case of the Sun, strongly results into a stronger England. Therefore, the tabloid’s expression for a domestic union sparks a new debate of domestic identity crisis. The Daily Mail follows a similar pattern to the Sun, becoming more vocal in turning away from the discussion of the right and left-wing political identity. It strives to address the domestic division of being British versus English. To put it differently, the newspaper still maintains its Eurosceptic perspective, however, addresses problems of the Labour party, which is seen in most its published titles after the 30th of January: *Bitter Remainers make ‘THICK’ trend on Twitter with their insults aimed at Leavers following Brexit Day celebrations; UK to EU: we won’t accept supervision in post-Brexit deal.*

Unlike 2016, the change of behaviour from the Tories is interesting, as it illustrates the shift of identity talk to be subtle and less Eurosceptic. Thus, not much force is put into downgrading the opposing party. Rather, the Sun

¹⁸⁸ The Sun, 2020. *Brexit day’s the day Remoaners should stop spewing their hate — but they won’t.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10851797/brexit-remoaners-stop-spewing-hate/> [Accessed 19 5 2020].

and the Daily Mail strive to achieve successful cooperation to unite the United Kingdom into one single identity – solely English with no EU ties.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Through investigating the selected tabloid (The Sun and The Daily Mirror) and the newspapers (The Guardian and the Daily Mail), this chapter will now explain the outcomes of the research. The hypotheses of the research were: 1) Tabloids have shown stronger nationalistic discourse through a repeated tactic used in 2016 and 2020 with the inclusion of Euroscepticism; 2) Euroscepticism dissolves, making the Labour party focus more on political discourse on Britain's identity in 2020.

For the case of the first hypothesis, the findings of this paper suggest that the Sun was indeed extremely influential in playing with the Eurosceptic emotions to allow the citizens to identify closer in being 'English'. For the Labour party, the Daily Mirror has shown to be much direct in focusing its working-class audience to understand the benefits of remaining as part of an EU member. Tactics created from the Sun, in 2016, were appealing because of repeated national discourse in every article published up until the 2016 Brexit referendum. Publicly denouncing the Labour Party has served the Tories well enough to use the working-class to identify themselves as being a proud English. Therefore, it is understandable that the Guardian shifted its position from a newspaper to a tabloid for this very reason – effectiveness in

convincing its readers of maintaining Englishness.

On the other hand, the hypothesis that states that political discourse on Britain's identity intensifies for the Labour Party in 2020 appears to show the opposite effect. It is the Tories who show stronger political interest in a domestic union within the UK. This allows careful assumption that the Labour Party's media tactic to focus on more political discourse than national discourse in 2016, led to its failure in solidifying the British identity to stronger supporters of the Tories.

Through critical discourse analysis, it is visible enough to see that the identity debate within the UK was at its peak in 2016 for both the left and right-wing media. Clear divisions were seen – being British or English. Therefore, the Brexit referendum 2016 appears to have been a political domestic mess, that has been dragged on to continuous talks in 2020.

Even though a concise conclusion could not be drawn, as Brexit is still an on going issue within the UK, this research finds certain evidence that in 2016, Britain's identity revolved around the argument of Eurosceptic views (British-European vs. English), whilst in 2020 the Tory narrowed-down its focus to an English identity union.

Limitations:

It is to be understood that the purpose of this paper was to give an estimation of whether the news media has taken part of the shift of identity of British people based on their supporting political stance. Due to the fact that number of articles were not publicly accessible, the research is limited for the centre-left party. In addition, the most recent quantitative data available for 2020 was to examine those of 2019. Further research into this topic would allow the paper to expand its scope into the 2020 data when available.

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