

Mette Kristine Nilsen

The Battle for British Independence

How UKIP, Labour and the Conservatives
constructed British National Identities on the
Leave side of the 2016 EU Referendum

Master's thesis in English

Supervisor: Astrid Rasch

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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

Abstract

Though there is a lot of attention awarded to the question of British national identities in the context of Brexit not a lot of this research has focused on politicians' role in the construction of national identities and how they might have influenced or mobilized national identities to support a Leave vote. The British-English national identity has, since Friedrich Meinecke developed the distinction between the *Staatsnation* and the *Kultnation*, been used as an example of the quintessential civic nation whose identity was based primarily on their institutions and values like inclusion and ethnic plurality (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, p.580). This view was reaffirmed when in the 1990's the two major political parties in Britain, the conservative party and the Labour party, aligned in their conception of the British nation as essentially civic again emphasising its foundation built on shared values rather than shared ethnicity or history (Billig, Downey, Richardson, Deacon & Golding, 2007). Why then would this community of people who valued cultural and ethnic plurality, inclusivity and openness decide to leave the European Union whose identity was based on many of the same values? And why would the free flow of people within the EU and the immigration it brought to Britain become such a contentious issue? This thesis finds that while the Leave-campaigning politicians construct the national in-group of Britain they speak of the British nation in civic terms, that is based on shared values and institutions, but when it comes to the construction of out-groups the 'outsiders' are differentiated on the basis of cultural and in some cases even ethnic components like religion and history. This tells us that while politicians wanted to be perceived as constructing and identifying with an inclusive civic British nationalism they all saw the similarities that bound the British nation together also as cultural and ethnic elements which to some extent exclude certain outsiders.

Sammendrag

Selv om det er mye oppmerksomhet rundt spørsmålet om britiske nasjonale identiteter i forbindelse med Brexit, har ikke mye av denne forskningen fokusert på politikernes rolle i konstruksjonen av nasjonale identiteter og hvordan de kan ha påvirket eller mobilisert nasjonale identiteter for å støtte Leave kampanjen. Den Britisk-Engelske nasjonale identiteten har siden Friedrich Meinecke utviklet skillet mellom Staatsnation og Kulturation blitt brukt som et eksempel på den sentrale borgernasjonen hvis identitet primært var basert på deres institusjoner og verdier som inkludering og etnisk flertall (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, s.580). Dette synet ble bekreftet da de to store politiske partiene i Storbritannia, det konservative partiet og Labour-delen, på 1990-tallet, innrettet seg i deres oppfatning av den britiske nasjonen som i det vesentlige borgerlige, og understreket dens grunnlag bygget på felles verdier i stedet for delt etnisitet eller historie (Billig, Downey, Richardson, Deacon & Golding, 2007). Hvorfor skulle da dette samfunnet av mennesker som satte pris på kulturelt og etnisk mangfold, inkludering og åpenhet, bestemme seg for å forlate EU hvis identitet var basert på mange av de samme verdiene? Og hvorfor skulle den frie strømmen av mennesker innen EU og innvandringen den førte til Storbritannia bli et så omstridt spørsmål? Denne oppgaven finner ut at mens politikerne i Leave kampanjen konstruerer den nasjonale gruppen i Storbritannia, snakker de om den britiske nasjonen i samfunnsmessige termer, er det basert på delte verdier og institusjoner, men når det gjelder konstruksjon av ut-grupper, er utenforstående differensiert på grunnlag av kulturelle og i noen tilfeller til og med etniske komponenter som religion og historie. Dette forteller oss at mens politikere ønsker å bli oppfattet som å konstruere og identifisere seg med en inkluderende borgerlig britisk nasjonalisme, ser de alle likhetene som binder den britiske nasjonen sammen også som kulturelle og etniske elementer som til en viss grad ekskluderer visse 'utenforstående'.

Acknowledgements

First of all, the biggest thanks to my supervisor Astrid Rasch for all the help, support and ideas you have given me throughout this process. I dread to think what the end result would have been without you.

I also need to thank my family and friends for always believing in me and cheering me on even if you do not always know what I am doing. I especially need to thank my brother for his help and kind words about my writing.

Lastly, thank you Synnøve and Roberta for all your great feedback and for all the coffee breaks which made this whole process a lot more fun.

Mette Kristine Nilsen

Trondheim, 25 May 2021

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1. Introduction

On the 23rd of June 2016, the British people were for the second time during their 43-year long relationship asked if they were willing to recommit to their membership in the European Union. The first time this question was asked, in 1975, a two-thirds majority of the British people answered that 'yes, we are committed' with the highest percentage of yes votes found in England (Ward, 2004 p.109). In 2016 however when the British people again were asked 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or Leave the European Union?' they seemed to have changed their minds as a 51.9 percent majority decided to end the relationship with this opinion being strongest in England where 53.4 percent were in favour of leaving (Henderson, Jeffery, Wincott & Wyn Jones, 2017, p.631). While the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union might have been a predictable end to the long and turbulent relationship with the union the result of the 2016 membership referendum came as a surprise to many. As the majority of Britons decided that they wanted the UK to leave the EU, questions about how and why this had happened started to emerge and the answers, in many cases, revolved around identity (Brown, 2017).

Some of the research on identity as a factor in the Brexit referendum found that the voting patterns in the referendum closely aligned with patterns of national identification and so they suggested that votes might have been determined, or at least influenced by national identification (Hobolt, 2016). It is therefore important to look at how these identities are constructed and more importantly reconstructed in the political sphere to uncover the potential subtle manipulations employed by political actors. It is generally known that national identity is politically relevant and as Agius and Keen assert.

"In our 'post-factual' age, where untruths and inaccuracies are consumed and circulated as 'truth', and established understandings of politics and society are fraying, questions about how we form our identities and see others hold great importance, because identity plays a role in how we are constituted and how we regard others and has meaning for our future choices." (Agius & Keen, 2018, p.3).

The United Kingdom does however contain no less than four nation, all with their own separate national identities and so the questions of what national identities are at play become quite complicated. Even though all the different national identities within the UK are relevant and interesting to look at in relation to the Brexit vote this subject has been given a lot of attention already. In addition, Henderson et al. (2016) posited that the referendum debate took on a distinctly English dimension. He found that in addition to the differences in attitudes towards the EU between the nations in the UK there were also differences in attitudes within each nation and that these differences are structured

around patterns of English national identity (Henderson et al., 2016, p.188). This thesis will therefore be contained to the English dimension of the referendum debate, more specifically it will focus on how British identity was constructed or reconstructed during the referendum campaign by politicians who wanted the UK to leave the EU.

Though there is a lot of attention awarded to the question of British national identities in the context of Brexit not a lot of this research has focused on politicians' role in the construction of national identities and how they might have influenced or mobilized national identities to support a leave vote, and this is where this thesis will add to the literature on Brexit and national identity. The focus of this thesis lies solely on how politicians represent and reconstruct British national identities. It does not consider if these constructions correspond to national identities held within Britain, but does make a comment on who, that is what groups within Britain, the different political parties are directing their arguments towards. The British-English national identity has, since Friedrich Meinecke developed the distinction between the *Staatsnation* and the *Kulturation*, been used as an example of the quintessential civic nation whose identity was based primarily on their institutions and values like inclusion and ethnic plurality (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, p.580). This view was reaffirmed when in the 1990's the two major political parties in Britain, the conservative party and the Labour party, aligned in their conception of the British nation as essentially civic again emphasising its foundation built on shared values rather than shared ethnicity or history (Billig, Downey, Richardson, Deacon & Golding, 2007). Why then would this community of people who valued cultural and ethnic plurality, inclusivity and openness decide to leave the European Union whose identity was based on many of the same values? And why would the free flow of people within the EU and the immigration it brought to Britain become such a contentious issue? This thesis will shed some light on these issues through the thesis question which reads:

How did UKIP-, Labour- and Conservative politicians on the Leave side construct British national identities during the 2016 EU membership referendum?

The first part of the analysis will answer the questions of how the different political parties constructed the national in-group and what they considered the quintessence of the British people to be. The first part of the analysis will reveal who the different politicians are targeting their discourse towards and in turn how they want their constructed national identities to be perceived. Through the second part of the analysis the thesis will explore what out-groups the national identity is constructed against. Analysing the 'others' that the national identity is constructed in opposition against is very useful because as Richard Jenkins notes; "Defining 'us' involves defining a range of 'thems'" (Jenkins, 2008 p.102). The second part of the analysis will then answer the questions.

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To answer these questions, the method of critical discourse analysis will be employed. Critical discourse analysis is a qualitative approach used to study complex social phenomena which require multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approaches and which is often interested in studying power relations in societies (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p.20). It will therefore allow the thesis to draw inspiration from several academic traditions and to ground the theory chapter in various fields like social psychology, political science and international relations.

The analysis reveals that while the Leave-campaigning politicians construct the national in-group of Britain they speak of the British nation in civic terms, that is based on shared values and institutions, but when it comes to the construction of out-groups the 'outsiders' are differentiated on the basis of cultural and in some cases even ethnic components like religion and history. This tells us that while politicians want to be perceived as constructing and identifying with an inclusive civic British nationalism they all see the similarities that bind the British nation together also as cultural and ethnic elements which to some extent exclude certain 'outsiders'. The discourse analysis also found that the politicians campaigning for a vote to Leave actively portrayed the out-groups as threats to different aspects of the British national identity in order to heighten the emotional bonds within the nation and exploit national identification in order to mobilize the population into voting Leave.

The thesis contains eight chapters. The second and third chapter contains the theoretical background of the thesis which is mostly grounded in theory on identity and how it is constructed with chapter three introducing the political aspects of national identity. Chapter four and five then position the thesis in the historical context of national identity discussions within Britain and explain the political situations that lead up to the 2016 referendum. Chapter six goes on to explain the choice of discourse analysis as method, before chapter seven goes into the analysis of identity construction by Leave campaigners. Chapter eight then makes the concluding remarks and also raises some questions open for further research.

Theory

The theory employed in this thesis will focus primarily on identity, what it means, what it is and what it does. It will, however, also need to explain other related terms that are relevant for the exploration of national identities within the Brexit referendum, that is, discourse and rhetorical strategies in political speech.

2. Identity

What is identity? The answers to this question are numerous, and often they explain the term with varying definitions that seem to diverge from or even contrast with each other. This might be a result of the long and often complicated usage of the term within different theoretical traditions and the extensive criticisms it has faced over the years. Because of this, the thesis will therefore start with an overview of the term's history and critiques before it establishes what the term identity means within this thesis.

2.1 Its History and Critique

The term identity as we know it today was first introduced in the 1950s. It had been used and discussed before that time, most notably perhaps by the philosopher John Lock when theorising the connection between mind and body. The meaning Lock ascribed to the word is in some ways similar to how it is employed today. Lock meant: 'Identity ... consists in nothing but a participation of the same continued life, by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organized Body.' (Gleason, p. 911). Lock's definition of the term was closely tied to the continuity of the self, being the same person over extended periods of time and in changing situations. Lock applied the term to investigate the unity of the self. Usages of the word following the work of Lock referred to both personality and individuality in relation to identity. However, the connections were much looser and unclear than what we see today (Gleason, p.912). The modern use of the term was constructed by developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, whose work on identity crisis popularized the use of identity. Though Erikson's use of the term was quite specific, it did not convey an unambiguous definition. Gleason interpreted Erikson's use of the term like this: 'Identity involves an interaction between the interior development of the individual personality, [...] and the growth of a sense of selfhood that arises from participating in society, internalizing its cultural norms, acquiring different statuses, and playing different roles.' (Gleason, p.914). By the late 50s, this usage of identity had become frequent, and identity was adopted as an analytical device used to describe how people positioned themselves in the world around them. The term was connected to individuals and groups, social classes, gender, and races (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 3). It saturated academic discussion in several different fields so rapidly that by the 1970s, the term had become so general and diffuse that it had lost its

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meaning (Gleason, p.914). Though Gleason's account of the semantic history of identity was published in 1983, the emerging critique that the term met in the '70s is still prevalent today. Identity still faces criticism for its overuse, and from that overuse, it has become ambiguous.

One of the most extensive critiques of the term comes from Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper in *Beyond Identity*. In this article, Brubaker and Cooper argue that today the term identity is being applied to so many different phenomena and practices that it has lost its meaning. They, therefore, propose a range of other terms they believe would be more useful as analytical tools (Brubaker & Cooper, p.1). Brubaker and Cooper distinguished between identity as a category of practice and as a category of analysis. By identity as a category of practice, they refer to how the term is used in everyday social experiences. 'Normal people' might think of and use the term identity in their daily lives in order to make sense of who they are in relation to other people. What are their interests and desires, what elements of themselves can they recognise in others and what elements separate them? All these questions that individuals have about themselves might be answered and prioritized through the use of identity (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.4). Although Brubaker and Cooper concede that the practical implications identity can have on individuals and groups are real and important, they argue that the prevalent existence of the term as a category of practice does not necessitate its use as a category of analysis (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.5).

'The problem is that 'nation', 'race,' and 'identity' are used analytically a good deal of the time more or less as they are used in practice, in an implicitly or explicitly reifying manner, in a manner that implies or asserts that "nations", "races", and "identities" "exist" and that people "have" a "nationality", a "race", an "identity."' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.6)

What they imply here is not that one should avoid studying identity, but that when studying how identity works and the effects it can have, one should avoid analysing the existence of identities. Their concern being that the continual analysis of identity as a category of analysis could reproduce or reinforce the reification of identity (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.5).

The term identity has to carefully defined in order to avoid its reification. At the most basic stage, this is done by clarifying what usage of the term one will employ. There are, however, contradictions in how the term identity is viewed and used. Some usages of the term imply a fundamental sameness between people, while other uses reject the notion that identity or components of identity can be fundamental. Identity can therefore be applied in either a strong or a weak sense. Identity in the strong sense of the terms sees

it as something fundamental and unchanging. This is how identity most often is used in identity politics (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.10). Brubaker and Cooper, however, point out that using identity in this way entails some problematic assumptions. Viewing identity as something fundamental implies that it is something all people either have, ought to have or if they do not, they are searching for it. Similarly, all groups and collectives have or ought to have identities. It also implies that people and groups can have identities without being aware of it themselves, which suggests that identity is something that exists objectively and has to be discovered. Furthermore, it implies strong and intrinsic connections between group members and an inherent distinction between insiders and outsiders (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.10).

Because of the implications these assumptions have on theoretical work and the problems academics face when using 'strong identity', scholars have in later years favoured using the weak sense of the term (Brubaker & Cooper, p.10). The weak sense of the term does however also pose some problems. First, weak conceptions of identity always insist that identity is something that is multiple, unstable, changing, fragmented, and constructed. The insistent use of these terms with identity has however become so prevalent in the theoretical work that they no longer seem to convey any meaning. Words like these are often thrown into academic work without any real explanation for what it means for identities. Second, in the weak sense of identity, it is not inherently clear that the phenomena discussed are in fact identity, as opposed to other terms that could be equally useful for explaining these phenomena (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.11). Third, the term might be too weak to develop any serious analytical work from. It may in fact become too weak to be useful. In his book *Social Identity*, Richard Jenkins employs the terms *identity* and *identification* and recognises that both of these terms have their own limitations when it comes to explaining or predicting behaviour and that these limitations need to be actively integrated into research about identity (Jenkins, 2008, p.15). He still believes that the term identity cannot be excluded from social analysis because it is already an established term that has a long, although complicated, history in the social sciences (Jenkins, 2008, p.14).

2.2 Identifying Identity

Before the definition of identity that will be applied in this thesis is presented two things need to be clarified. Firstly, what this thesis will use as a basis for the term identity is the weak sense of the word. Meaning identity here is believed to be constructed, changing and multiple. The theory on identity in this thesis, therefore, draws from various fields that discuss the term like social psychology, political science, and international relation as they all contribute very useful perspectives to the wide and rich field that is identity. Secondly, the previous chapter barely touched upon the distinction between individual

identity and collective identity a.k.a. social identity. Individual identity is the identity of an individual, their concept of who they are and how they relate to others (Abrams & Hogg, 1988, p.2). Social identities on the other hand are the identities shared between members of groups i.e., they cannot be held by single individuals, and these are the identities that will be discussed within this thesis. The two forms of identities are of course closely linked as a person's concepts of who they are is very much affected by the groups they are a member of. What this thesis is concerned with however is the construction and reconstruction of social identities and the term *identity* will henceforth be applied to refer to social- and collective identity.

One of the terms Brubaker and Cooper present as an alternative to identity is *identification*. They believe that identification can be more useful than identity in certain circumstances both because it is not as easily reified and it is more specific because it signals the difference between the agent that identifies and the object or group it identifies with (Brubaker & Cooper, p.14). This is in fact something that Richard Jenkins adopts in his book *Social Identity*. Jenkins uses both the term identity and identification (Jenkins, 2008, p.15) and asserts that at the very basic level, "Identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know who is who and what is what." (Jenkins, 2008, p.5). It is how we make sense of who we are and who other people are and reciprocally how they make sense of themselves and others (Jenkins, 2008, p.18). Jenkins views identity as a multidimensional classification or mapping of the human world and how people position themselves in it, as individuals and members of collectives (Jenkins, 2008, p.5). He emphasises that identity is a process (of identification), not a thing. Identity then is not something that people can have, but rather the act of identifying with someone or something is something that they do. Another useful definition comes from Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg's *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*. They define social identity as the individual's knowledge that she/he belongs to a certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p.2). They agree with Jenkins in that social identity theory is helpful in categorizing the world into comprehensible units and emphasise that social identification is a matter of involvement, concern and pride derived from the knowledge of sharing a social category and membership with others (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p. 4). With this distinction between members and non-members also comes a distinction between 'good' and 'bad'. Abrams and Hogg present that identification involves an element of social comparison: people will compare themselves to others they find similar or slightly better than themselves. With social identity, this comparison is often related to in-groups and out-groups. Furthermore, individuals have a desire for positive self-evaluation, which motivates them to differentiate between social groups. The positive self-evaluation then often creates the belief that the members, the in-group

is better than the out-group (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p.3). Individuals therefore often automatically favour those who they share group-membership with, while also having negative feelings towards those who are not a part of the group.

From these two definitions then we find that identity connects individuals to groups through a process of identification where individuals attach positive feelings towards their own membership in the group and the other members. These groups then create boundaries that inform interaction both within and between groups creating structure within the social world. This thesis will use an amalgamation of these definitions as they each introduce important facets of what identity is and can be. Abrams and Hogg's definition emphasises the presence of feelings that are often attached to identities and identification while Jenkins's definition makes clear in what way identity is useful and its organizing principles. Another crucial element to recognize in Jenkins' definition is the role of language in identities which will be discussed in depth in chapter *1.3 Constructing identities*.

2.2.1 National identities

National identities are a special form of collective identity that is shared between the members of a nations. The application of the term national identity however necessitates the explanation of the term nation. Benedict Anderson, arguably one of the most prominent scholars within the field of nations and nationalism, proposed that the nation is "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." (Anderson, 1991, p.6). It is imagined because even within the smallest nation's members will never be able to know, meet or even hear about all their fellow members, but still they all know that they are connected (Anderson, 1991, p.6). Of course, this does not only apply to national communities it will also be applicable to religious communities for instance whose countless members span all over the globe. Anderson even suggests that all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined (Anderson, 1991, p.6). Furthermore, the nation is not only imagined but imagined as 'both inherently **limited** and **sovereign**' (Anderson 1991, p.6). Nations, or in fact any community, are limited because their boundaries cannot encompass everyone on earth. The nation requires distinction from other nations. Furthermore, the nation imagined as inherently sovereign, precedes form the fact that the concept of the nation has its origin in the enlightenment period between the 18th and 19th century when the legitimacy of the state went from being divinely ordained and hierarchical to coming from free people of a sovereign state. Sovereignty therefore continues to be essential to the idea of a nation and threat to that sovereignty is often seen as a threat to the personal freedom of the people within it (Anderson, 1991, p.7). Defining a nation as inherently political is not however universal. It is important to

distinguish between nations, states and nation-states and acknowledge that it is not always the case that a state only contains one nation or that all nations have their own states. The United Kingdom contains no less than four nations, and the relationships between those nations and the state are complicated. States can contain several different nations with their own national identities that can be in conflict with each other (Guibernau, p.23).

It is important to note that people do not only identify with one group or national identity at a time. All people identify with several different social groups throughout one's life and can belong to many groups at one time. A person who identifies as British can simultaneously identify as a woman, a mother, a lawyer and a Muslim. Even though these different identities might seem to have little to do with one another collective identities or fragments of these identities are always intertwined. They all exist at once, but one identity might become more salient at one point than another (Wodak, 2007 p.16). Because identification is a process of looking for similarities in some people while finding differences in others a specific identity becomes most salient in interactions with people who do not share the characteristics of a specific identity ().

2.3 Constructing Identities

How then are these collective identities constructed? Based on the definitions of identity presented above we gather that the construction of collective identities involves constituting who the groups is, what similarities unify them and subsequently what distinguishes them from others who are not part of the group. Eisenstadt and Giesen argue that this process is the intentional or unintentional result of social interaction. They state that through interactions, individuals navigate social life and by becoming members of social groups they attribute similarity to some people while looking for differences in others (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995, p.75). The content that constitutes who the group is does however vary and depending on this content one can distinguish between three types of social identities which will be explained before moving on.

2.3.1 Civic, Cultural or Ethnic Identities

What creates the psychological link between an individual and a group depends on the contents of the specific community. The content of a social identity is composed of the different norms and rules that define the group, its goals and purposes, and the criteria for membership (Risse, 2015, p.25). For a national identity, the content can be understood as what the people within a nation see as or believe should be the most important factors that unite those within the nation and what distinguishes them from others. This then becomes the basis for defining membership in a nation i.e., who can become citizens (Shulman, 2002, p.558).

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In 1970, Friedrich Meinecke developed a distinction between what he called the *Staatsnation* and the *Kulturnation*. He argued that some nations were based primarily on the joint experience of cultural heritage, the *Kulturnation*, while others were based on common political history and constitutions, the *Staatsnation* (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, p.580). The basis for membership in the *Staatsnation* was a 'social contract' that had to be adopted by anyone wanting to be a citizen. It was considered more open to 'outsiders' as anyone willing to accept this social contract could become members. The *Kulturnation* on the other hand was based more on ethnicity and membership was awarded only to descendants of specific ethnic groups. These different types of nations were believed to be the result of states and nations developing at different speeds. In countries like England, France and the Netherlands the development of the state preceded the rise of the nation and nationalism. Because the nationalism arose within a community already united politically the nation and its identity took on a particularly political nature. Citizenship was equated with membership in the nation and members were unified by their equal political status and their will to be a part of the nation (Shulman, 2002, p.555; Smith, 1991, p.100). In areas of central and eastern Europe however nationalisms arose within political communities that did not correlate with cultural and ethnic communities. In these areas nationalism was therefore used to draw new political boundaries that coincided with ethnic or national communities. The state was constructed around the nation and consequently these nations, and therefore also the states, were unified through their common heritage (Shulman, 2002, p.555).

Eisenstadt and Giesen utilize this distinction between the *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation* through what they call primordial and civic identities (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995). Civic identity is the equivalent of the *Staatsnation* while primordial identity also known as ethnic identity is the equivalent of the *Kulturnation*. They additionally (along with several other scholars) distinguish a third type; Sacred identity also known as cultural identity which differs from ethnic identity in its openness to new members (Shulman, 2002 p. 558). Ethnic identity is based on essentialized properties that are the same or similar in the in-group which is contrasted by some essentialized properties of the out-group. This can be identities based on gender, generations, race or ethnicity where the similarities between the group and the difference from others are seen as fundamental attributes that cannot be changed. It then follows that ethnic identities do not have a fluid membership, members cannot come and go, they are either born into it or not (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995, p.77). Furthermore, like most identities, the in-group is viewed more positively than the out-group and because the differences in these identities are based on natural properties it can create the belief that the in-group is fundamentally superior (Risse, 2015, p.27). Cultural identity has similar negative connotations towards the out-group and positive feelings towards the in-group but differs from ethnic identities

in that those in the out-group can convert into the community if they are willing to adopt the in-group's beliefs, faith and goals. Here the in-group is also viewed as better than the out-group, and that only through adopting the 'right cause' can the members of the out-group advance into membership (Risse, 2015 p.27). Culture, in this context, might be best understood as a system of rules and principles that dictate proper behaviour (Wodak, 2007, p.20). Cultural identities then might be based on traditions, religion, or political structure. Civic identities also involve the differentiation between members and non-members, but here the differences do not necessarily imply any judgement over what the superior properties are (Risse, 2015, p.28). The out-group is here also emphasised as different but without the suggestion that they are inferior to the in-group. Individuals can therefore move more freely between in-group and out-group. The contents of civic identities are often shared values or goals, or set rules of conduct, traditions or routines (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995, p.80).

Shulman distinguishes similarly between the three types and his outline of the main components of the different types is shown in the table below (Shulman, 2002, p.559).

Table 1
Alternative Contents of National Identity

Content of National Identity	Key Components
Civic	territory citizenship will and consent political ideology political institutions and rights
Cultural	religion language traditions
Ethnic	ancestry race

Figure 1 (Shulman, 2002, p.559)

Though academics often discuss the different types of identities as completely separate it is important to keep in mind that these are theoretical ideals and that identities that are exclusively either ethnic or civic only exist in theory. Realistically members of groups and citizens of nation base their identities on a wide variety of factors that do not fit into a single type of identity construction (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010, p.580).

2.3.2 The Content of National Identity

Anderson's definition of the nation and its imagined nature is closely tied to national identity, it seems that one cannot exist without the other. Guibernau echoes the role of

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imagination in her definition of national identity which she describes as "a collective sentiment based upon the belief of belonging to the same nation and of sharing most of the attributes that make it distinct from other nations." (Guibernau p.11). Members of a nation have to be aware that there is something distinct about their community that separates them from other nations, this involves shared culture, symbol and traditions that are specific to a single territory or a group of people (Guibernau, p.10). Guibernau organizes the attributes used to distinguish a nation into five dimensions; the **psychological, cultural, territorial, historical, and political** all of which contribute to foster closeness, trust and emotional connections between the members of a nation (Guibernau, p.11). These dimensions will be given a brief explanation.

Cultural

The cultural dimension of a national identity contains the values, customs, habits, and languages that are particular to a specific nation. Sharing a common culture promotes solidarity as the members of the nation can easily recognize other members and can imagine their nation as distinct from others. Furthermore, through the interaction with the national culture individuals tend to internalize the nations values and beliefs (Guibernau, p.13). Common language is also an essential part of the culture as it enables communication. For a national identity to be constructed the people within that nation must be able to communicate with each other. Nationals have to have a common public sphere where they can exchange ideas and communicate effectively (Anderson, p.25).

Historical

The historical dimension of a national identity often is a story of how the nation first emerged and a collection of events that lead the nation to where it is in the present. National identity is not the product of national history, but history is nonetheless an important condition for national identities. Stories about a common past legitimizes feelings of belonging by portraying them as something innate and ancient, they create structure around national mythologies unique to the specific nation and celebrate events and figures in the past that ensured the continual existence of the nation. History writing is however a process of remembering and forgetting and narratives about the past are always reimagined in the present. History is therefore always a product of its time (Dewey, 2009, p.27). Individuals and collectives create narratives about themselves that inform their identity. This narrative is meant to make sense of who 'we' are to 'ourselves' and to others. 'It functions "to integrate with permanence in time what seem to be contrary in the domain of sameness-identity, namely diversity, variability, discontinuity, and instability."' (Wodak, 2007, p.14). Meaning the narrative is created to maintain a sense of permanence and stability in ever-changing situations and across time. The narrative is based on past events and expectations of future events but is crucially

susceptible to change. As the narrative is used to present oneself or one's collective to others the narrative, and the past that it is based upon, is always open to reinterpretations and rearrangements. Thus, the plot can always be revised to fit the course of action one is about to take (Wodak, 2007, p.15). National history is therefore often a source of pride or self-esteem for the members of the nation as it typically highlights times of national greatness or events where the nation overcame daunting challenges. The narrative of national history contributes to signifying the uniqueness of the nation but crucially also often evoke features of history that portray the nation as superior to others (Guibernau, p.20).

Territorial

Nations often, but not always, have their own distinct territory to which they 'belong', a national homeland which the nation's history is contained to. The geographical aspect of national identity holds a duality of being both a physical space and 'imaginative geography'. Dewey (2009) points out that 'imagined geography' is crucial in the formulation of 'us' as it constructs conceptual boundaries that inform who is part of the in-group and who is not (Dewey, 2009, p.29). Imagined geography thus contributes to reifying the nation in the minds of the individuals.

Political

The political dimension of national identity lies within the connection between nations and states. The nation-state as evident by its name, has traditionally based its legitimacy on the idea that it is a representation for the nation. Most, if not all, nation-states are however populated by several different nations and ethnic groups. The state therefore often has to engage in nation-building processes that assimilate these different groups and construct a common culture, language and history that can unite them. This is often done by proclaiming the language and culture of the dominant group as 'official' and make the minority groups assimilate. Governmental institutions, schools and the media play important roles in this assimilation process as they constitute what is considered the official language, history, and culture of the nation (Guibernau, p.61).

As Anderson made clear, the time of the development of nation states resulted in sovereignty being considered an inherent part of the nation (Anderson, 1991, p.7). 'Sovereignty is the central building block in the wall of national identity', where people do not distinguish 'between sovereignty as an attribute of the state and as their own cultural property' (Dewey, 2009 p.33). Members of a nation therefore feel that they have the right to sovereignty, and that it belongs to them personally. A threat to the sovereignty of the nation is therefore perceived as a threat to the individual. Democracy has come to be equally important for the nation as it legitimized the state through its support from the members of the nation and refocused the loyalty of the people away from the

monarch to the state. This also necessitated the development of citizenship as the entitled certain people to take part in the democratic process of the country while other, non-citizens, could not in this way citizenship was also integral to establishing a distinction between members and non-members of the nation. Having citizenship in a country awarded the right to participate in government processes like voting and awarded certain rights, like access to the welfare state, that were withheld from non-citizens (Guibernau, p.24).

Psychological

Guibernau's psychological dimension is closely tied to Anderson depiction of the nation as imagined. The construction of a national identity can only occur when the people within a nation are aware of the similarities that connect them and feel a sense of closeness to their fellow members and feel an emotional bond to them (Guibernau, p.12). The members of a nation are not necessarily conscious of this connection or feel a sense of closeness to their fellow nationals on an everyday basis but as Michel Billig (1995) asserts the nation is still being subconsciously reproduced on a daily basis through what he calls *Banal Nationalism* (Billig,1995, p.8). He asserts that banal nationalism is the routines, and habits of language that, although taking the nation for granted, are continual reminders of the 'homeland' which reproduce the national identity and the world of nation as the natural world (Billig, 1995, p.93). Nationals do however become especially aware of their shared closeness in times when the nation is perceived to be under threat from an internal or external enemy. This enemy can be real or imagined and can be seen to pose a threat to the national people, their culture or territory, the nation's prosperity, or its sovereignty. When the nation is faced with some kind of threat the emotional bonds within the nation come to the surface and can invoke very real and intense sentiments of love for the nation and hatred or fear of those who are perceived to threaten it. Politicians are fully aware of the strong emotions connected to national identities and often exploit them to mobilize the population (Guibernau, p.12).

It becomes clear that all the dimensions of national identity together construct particular image of the nation and it's people that is distinct from all other nations. The construction of a national identity therefore always involves its separation from others and creates boundaries which dismisses everything beyond them as different, outside and alien (Jenkins, 2008, p.102). As Billig(1995) asserts however the existence of nations and national identities requires the continual reconstruction of the nation on a daily basis, and this is what we will now turn to.

2.3.3 The Discursive Reconstruction of Identities

As outlined above, the initial formation process of a nation has an impact on what type of national identity states have, but that does not mean that the national identity present at the dawn of a nation or nation-state is identical to contemporary national identities. As national identities belong to 'imagined communities' it follows that the national identities present in the minds of people today are not the same imaginings as those of the first people to hold that national identity 'as Anderson suggests, contemporary national identity is a function not merely of an original imagination but also of the extent to which the nation is re-imagined.' (Dewey, 2004, p.21). National identities are continually imagined and re-imagined. Some aspects tend to continue over time while some change or take on new meaning. Nationalism can therefore best be understood as a process which involves the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity (Dewey, 2009, p.21). Billig argues that the continued relevance of national identities requires that the members of the nation be continually reminded of its existence through 'flagging the homeland' (Billig, 1995, p.93). Citizens are reminded of their nation on a daily basis by the flag waving on the government building or the neighbour's home and by the symbols etched on the national currency. Billig however asserts that this daily flagging of the homeland is most effectively achieved through discourse (Billig, 1995, p.93)

Discourse, like identity, is a term that has a long history in the social sciences and has acquired many different meanings over the years. This thesis will however adopt a definition which is frequently found within critical discourse studies which describe discourse, i.e. language in written or spoken form, as social practice. Crucially this definition points to a dialectical relationship between discursive events and the context in which it is embedded. Essentially, discursive acts are shaped by the situation, institutions, and structure in which they are performed but the situation, institutions and structures are in turn shaped by the discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p.5). Discourse can 'constitute situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people.' (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p.6). It is through rhetoric that in- and out-groups are defined, and sameness and difference are constructed. Therefore, analysing how discourse produces and reproduces social groups is important for understanding national identities (Delanty & Kumar, 2006, p.105). Billig then asserts that to examine the continual reproduction of the nation through discourse one has to investigate the habitual use of language and its nationalist assumptions and this is where politicians become relevant (Billig, 1995, p.94).

3. The Role of Politics Within Identity Construction

The state, its institutions and political figures play an integral role in the construction and reconstruction of national identities. Through things like laws, educational structures, and social rituals the state can influence people's perceptions, categorisations, interpretations and memories to establish their view of right and wrong and constitutes the basis for a 'national common sense' (Wodak, 2007, p.29). Wodak suggest that one of the main motivations for reproducing national identities is its potential political implications. By reproducing national identities, political actors can channel political emotion into action and influence efforts to modify power structures. "[Identity narratives] transform the perceptions of the past and the present; it changes the organization of human groups and creates new ones; it alters cultures by emphasizing certain traits and skewing their meaning and logic." (Wodak, 2007, p.28). Through their reproduction, political actors can therefore bring forth new interpretations of the world with the goal of changing it. Most scholars seem to argue that politics only influence national identities through these broad-scale, long-term policies that clearly define what the nation is and who its members are. Helebling, Reeskens and Wright (2016) challenge this notion and believe individual can also be affected by more short-term political activity. They argue that political elites utilize the normative features of national identities with the objective to leverage widespread and salient attitudes for political mobilization (Helebling, Reeskens & Wright, 2016, p.749).

This form of discursive reproduction is engaged in consciously by political actors. Discursive reproductions of national identity are however not always done consciously. Political actors as well as 'normal people' are motivated to continuously reproduce national identities because they have an almost faith-related identifying bond to the nation or specific elements of it. They have firmly held beliefs that are tied to the national identity and which, in their mind, is perceived as real (Wodak, 2007, p.28). It is however this need for individuals to reproduce national identities and their emotional bonds to them that make individual vulnerable to politicians' manipulation of that identity (Helebling, Reeskens & Wright, 2016, p.749).

Billig presents an essential aspect of political addresses to the nation, the notion of representation. He asserts that as the nation-state is the arena for political discourse, then the politician assumes the role of representing the nation. In this context, representation has two meanings; first, the politician represents the nation as in *standing for* or *speaking on behalf of* the nation, second the politician represents the nation through *depicting it*, creating a picture of what the nation is and in turn who its people are and conveying this picture to the nation itself and to outsiders (Billig, 1995, p.98). The two forms of representation are in practice closely connected and politicians are

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speaking for the nation will also necessarily be depicting it. Billig also emphasizes that the politician should conventionally compliment the nation when addressing it. As they are the representors of the nation to itself the politicians has the role of depicting a nation which its people can be proud of and admire so that they can make a positive emotion connection to the community (Billig, 1995, p.98). In so doing, politicians should also identify themselves as one of the audiences by constructing and overall, we that encompasses the whole nation (Billig, 1995, p.98). This helps to foster a feeling of equality even in communities that are hieratically ordered. As will see in the analysis the role of politicians representing the nation will become important.

Historical Context

4. The British-English National Identity

As mentioned, earlier the United Kingdom is a state that contains several nations with their own unique national identities. Though all of the national identities within the UK and the tension between them are very interesting in the context of Brexit, the scope of this thesis will be contained to the English dimension of Brexit and will therefore not discuss Scottish, Welsh or Irish nationalisms. Within the English dimension of Brexit however there are still to nationalisms to account for, English national identity and British national identity. The two nationalisms have historically been closely linked and used interchangeably. This stems from the fact that England, its language, laws, culture, and political institutions have historically dominated the rest of the British Isles which subsequently made it difficult to discern one from the other (Kumar, 2003, p.475). Additionally, the rise of empire necessitated an Englishness that was open and inclusive to all its members both within and outside of England. Englishness therefore became something that could be embraced by people all over the world. It was defined by values that could be adopted anywhere like institutions and law, social values like liberty and justice and Anglo-Saxon culture. It was related more to the upper-class or a way of being than a group of people who held citizenship in England (Young, 2008, p.232). Young further believed that because so many people outside of England were involved in the construction of this Englishness it should be considered as something made from afar constructed by people on the outside looking in (Young, 2008, p.3). This close association between Englishness, the empire and citizens of overseas territories meant the eventual end of the empire left Englishness without substance, it did not have any cultural essence, its history was not tied to the territory of England. As a result, Englishness never became a 'complete' national identity in the same sense as the other national identities of the British Isles (Kumar, 2003, p.470). Englishness and Britishness have therefore mostly been seen and used interchangeably both by politicians and academics. In his book *Britishness since 1870* (2004), Paul Ward refers to English-British national identity, Krishna Kumar (2003) outlines the development of Englishness while Dewey(2009) uses Britishness, and they often refer to similar aspects of the national identities. Distinguishing the contents of one from the other is therefore difficult and as Kumar asserts; perhaps unnecessary (Kumar, 2003, p.472). This thesis will therefore employ both the terms Britishness and Englishness and use literature on both to explore the contents of British and English national identity as they pertain to England.

4.1 The Politics of British identity

Though national identities are shared between all members of the nation and they are all involved in the continual reproduction of the nation, politicians have a crucial role in the construction and representation of the nation. As Billings (1995) noted, the politicians not only represent the nation to the outside world but also depicts a national image to the nationals themselves (Billings, 1995, p.98). That said it is however important to remember that there is not one national identity shared by all members of the nation, but rather different often competing constructions. Political parties within a nation often present different versions of the national identity which correlate to their political ideologies and goals. This section will therefore explore how national identities have been constructed by political parties within Britain and through this examine what components are central to British-English national identity.

There has been a long-standing fight between the major British political parties over what constitute British identity. Patriotism and nationalism are sentiments commonly attributed to conservative political parties. The same is true in Britain where the conservative party had a firm hold on what it meant to be a British patriot for most of its history. The parties on the right strived for hegemony over British patriotism while the left sought to challenge that notion (Ward, p.93). Bhikhu Parekh outlined two competing views of British national identity which he attributed to opposite sides of the political spectrum; the New Right and the New Labour conceptions of British national identity (Parekh, 2000, p.256). Parekh traces the debate about British national identity to the 1960s when Britain experience an identity crisis brought on by the loss of empire, rise of the welfare state, increased immigration in the post-war period and entry into the EEC (Parekh, 2000, p.251). New Right nationalism was first presented by Enoch Powell who outlined four main components of British national identity. Firstly, parliamentary sovereignty was seen as integral to national identity and had been since the 1707 Act of Union as it stipulated the importance and prioritisation of English customs and institutions over the Scottish resulting in the house of commons becoming the personification of the British people and their independence (Parekh, 2000, p.257). Secondly, Britain had always championed the rights and liberties of the individual to a higher degree than other nations and this individualistic character was therefore central to its identity and was deeply embedded in the national character. This was closely related to the third component which was the fact that the country's geography, as an island separated from Europe, and history, of being globally oriented, had led to a national identity that was distinctly singular and unattached. Fourthly, and perhaps most controversially, was Powell's belief in the ethnic pre-political unity of the British people. The British, he believed, had an intense awareness of their ethnic identity which allowed

them to bond deeply with 'their kind' at home and abroad and which made it impossible for black and Asian immigrants to assimilate to Britishness (Parekh, 2000, p.257). This view of the British national identity was subsequently reiterated and amended by other conservative politicians like Margaret Thatcher who agreed with Powell's vision on most counts but took a slightly more progressive view on immigration and believed black and Asian immigrants should assimilate to British culture as that was preferable to cultural pluralism (Parekh, 2000, p.258). Thatcher did however express that Britain's national ideals were founded on the Bible, making little room for religious plurality (Ward, p.110). This New Right nationalism then exhibited several civic criteria like emphasis on citizenship and political institution but crucially had an abundance of ethnic components which made it more exclusionary. Like resistance to outsiders often based on ethnicity with an underlying implication of race and the importance of tradition and language (Parekh, p.260). Parekh's view of the conservative's New Right nationalism was reaffirmed by a report from the commission of racial equality which found that the conservative party did in the 1990s and early 2000s display a more traditional ethnic nationalism that was Anglo-centric and based on notions of English idyll (Billig et al., 2007, p.15).

On the other side of the political spectrum, Parekh found the New Labour conception of British identity. He attributed the emergence of this new nationalism to the development of New Labour and its key figures Mark Leonard and Tony Blair (Parekh, p.261). In the late 1990s Tony Blair tried realigning the 'new left' with a 'new Britain' (ward, p.93). Left-leaning intellectuals had previously preferred international sentiments to nationalism as they often seemed more congruous to Labour values of equality, tolerance and plurality. The Labour party under Blair did however speculate that the lack of patriotic sentiment was losing them support and decided to appropriate patriotism for the centre-left. Blair's New Labour Britishness was more concerned with the future and emphasized the importance of constructing a New Britain (Billig et al., 2007, p.16). Similarly to the New Right nationalism, New Labour also emphasises the importance of governmental institutions but stresses that it was parliamentary democracy rather than parliamentary sovereignty that was central to British identity (Parekh, 2000, p.261). Britain's individualistic character was also stressed within New Labour but was crucially consolidated with the British sense of justice and ethnic sharing. Blair regarded ethnic and cultural diversity along with values of tolerance, compassion, decency and duty to be essential for this new Britishness (Billig et al., 2007, p. 17). It therefore follows that the starkest contrast to the New Right view was on the issue of multiculturalism where New Labour politicians discerned Britain's multicultural and multi-ethnic character as integral to the national identity (Parekh, 2000, p.261). This view of national identity was therefore seemingly more tolerant and inclusive than the New Right nationalism as it was

based more on values like compassion, tolerance, plurality and hospitality. Parekh however pointed out that with its multicultural and forward-looking nature New Labour nationalism was exclusive in its own way. New Labour nationalism was mostly based in London and other cosmopolitan areas and viewed the progressiveness of the big city as the standard. This view of national identity was therefore rarely adopted by people in other, more rural areas of the country (Parekh, 2000, p.261).

These competing constructions of national identity naturally had implications for policy decisions with the political parties. Devolution was evidently within the conservative party seen as a threat to parliamentary sovereignty and therefore had to be resisted. The same was true when it came to the issue of EEC membership where many conservatives saw membership as a transfer of power away from the British people and was subsequently viewed as a threat to British identity (Parekh, 2000, p.259). On the other hand, the Labour party's insistence on democracy rather than sovereignty made them see the devolution of powers as an acceptable and even necessary evolution while the historic connection to Europe and the global connection EEC membership provided was seen as complimentary to the national identity (Parekh, 2000, p.261).

A report on the depiction of Britishness in general elections however found that between 1997 and 2005 the major political parties in Britain had converged in the way they depicted Britishness, and both had moved towards a more civic nationalism rather than the more traditional ethnic nationalism. Blair's construction of the New Labour nationalism was seen as an influencing factor in this shift (Billig et al., 2007, p.16). Blair's new construction of a civic nationalism looked towards the future, casting away old notions of a particular ethnic Britain and rather focused on a Britain of ethnic and cultural diversity bound together by values like tolerance, compassion, decency and duty later extended to include liberty, fair play and internationalism (Billig et al. 2007, p.17). Rather than refuting this notion of nationalism the conservatives decided to embrace the New Labour nationalism and adopt it as their own (Billig et al., 2007, p.21). The conservatives under William Hague decided to no longer discuss race as an electoral issue and Hague expressed that the multi-ethnic character of Britain was valuable but did however not argue it was integral to the national identity (Parekh, p.261). Though this civic nationalism was more inclusive to some people, especially those who had previously been excluded because of religion or ethnic background, it was still excluding others who were not seen as sharing these particularly British values. Insisting that values like tolerance and fair play were particular to Britishness implied that those who were not British were neither tolerant nor fair which meant that this civic nationalism still encouraged differentiation, distrust and potentially fear of outsiders (Billig, 2007, p.20). Although the two major political parties reached a consensus on a Britishness that was

open and tolerant, they were still divided on ideology and policy. Britain's membership in the EU and immigration subsequently became crucial points of contention in the 2000s (Billig et al., 2007, p.22)

5. How Brexit Came to be

On the 23rd of June 2016, the British people were asked the question 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or Leave the European Union?'(). A fifty-two per cent majority of UK citizens decided that the UK should leave the EU with this opinion being strongest in England (Hobolt, 2016). This was not however the first time the British people had been asked their opinion about the UK's relationship with the EU. In 1975 a similar question was put to the people of Britain but at that time a two-thirds majority of Britons wanted to remain in the EEC with the highest percentage of yes/remain votes found in England (Ward, p.109). This change in opinion was not only visible in the people but over the years also included changes in policy and opinion amongst British political parties. This section will therefore look at how British political party views on EU changes since first becoming members of the union and how these changes eventually led to the 2016 referendum.

The British government made two attempts at joining the EEC in the 1960s. The first was made by Harold Macmillan's conservative government, the second by Harold Wilson's Labour government. Both attempts were unsuccessful as their applications were vetoed by the French president Charles de Gaulle. It was the conservative government under Edward Heath that finally secured membership in the EEC in 1973 but only two years after the accession Harold Wilson's second Labour government decided, after persistent demands for a popular vote, to hold a referendum on the continuation of the membership (Bryant, p.272). Wilson supported the continuation of membership in spite of moderate hostility towards Europe within the Labour party (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.77). The Labour party's stance on EU membership started to shift from hostility to a relative pro-European stance at the end of the 1980s. This however meant that Labour, who traditionally was supported by significant numbers of working-class people, would no longer reflect the Eurosceptic view of many of their voters. Labour's change in stance on the EU subsequently made UK-EU relations a cross-cutting issue but as long as it remained a peripheral issue it had insignificant effect of voter turnout. At the same time Margaret Thatcher emerged as the leader of the conservatives with a firm anti-EU position. Though Thatcher's hard-line Euroscepticism was one of the contributing factors to her eventual political downfall it also contributed to moving a considerable portion of the conservative party towards a more Eurosceptic stance exacerbating division within the party (Evans, 2003, p.96).

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The emergence of Tony Blair and the development of New Labour with a new enthusiastic support of EU membership was met by considerable support in the early 1990s. By the 2000s however the issue of EU membership and its related issues of immigration came to the forefront of political debate. Since the 1970s immigration and EU membership had been seen as two separate issues and attitudes on one would have minimal effect on attitudes on the other. This however changed in the early 2000s as the Labour government decided to implement immediate open borders with ten EU accession countries which led to a drastic increase in EU-immigration (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.78). Concerns over immigration steadily increased which prompted the two major political parties to respond. The Conservatives, in opposition, adopted a harder line on immigration and as a result saw increased support as Labour saw voters defecting to the conservatives. When the conservatives under David Cameron came into power however it became clear that they could do nothing to subdue the number of immigrants coming from the EU. While they tried to decrease immigration by drastically limiting non-EU immigration, immigration from within the EU only increased. As a result, many conservative voters, some politicians as well as the defected Labour voters with concerns over immigration turned to the United Kingdom Independence Party (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.81).

The realisation of the referendum has largely been attributed to the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). The relatively young party was founded in the early 1990s with the sole policy of leaving the EU. The party's growth was relatively slow in the early years but by 2004 it gained a 15.6 percent vote to the European parliament which grew to 27 percent in 2013 (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.76). This increase in support came from UKIP's success in linking their anti-EU stance with concerns over immigration. Though the governing conservative party made repeated attempts at limiting immigration, promising to reduce it to under 100,000, it became increasingly apparent that they were unable to fulfil that promise as EU-immigration which the government could not restrict only increased. UKIP was subsequently recognised as the party who was most likely to achieve the promise of reducing immigration resulting in a substantial number of votes moving to UKIP (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.81).

In an effort to appease the vocal Eurosceptics within his party and stop more people moving to UKIP, David Cameron pledged to hold a 'straight in-out referendum of the European Union by the end of 2017' if they won an outright majority in the next general election (Conservative Party Manifesto, 2015, p.32). The conservatives subsequently won the 2015 general election and Cameron made attempts to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU promising to win substantial concessions from Brussels. After having finalized a renegotiated deal with the EU in February of 2016 Cameron announced

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that the referendum on EU membership would be held on 23rd June 2016 (Hobolt, 2016, p.1261). The announcement triggered politicians, economist, company leaders and celebrities to declare their support for either the Remain- or Leave-campaigns. On the 13th of April 2016 *Britain Stronger in Europe* and *Vote Leave* were designated as the official campaigns for the Remain and Leave side. The major points of contention were clear from the outset with Remain focusing on the economic risks of leaving the EU while Leave emphasised the need to take back control and restrict immigration (Hobolt, 2016, p.1262). While the Prime minister was adamant in his position for remain, the conservative party was divided on the subject of continuing the UK's membership in the EU and many conservative politicians decided to back Leave. Some of the most prominent being former London mayor and MP Boris Johnson and Michael Gove who served as justice secretary in Cameron's government ("In graphics: Britain's referendum", 2016). As the battle lines of the referendum were drawn, the parliamentary Labour party decided to officially back the Remain campaign and registered itself as a campaigning organisation. Though this decision reflected the fact that most Labour Parliamentarians were in favour of remaining in the EU, there was a small minority of ten Labour MP's who openly backed leaving the EU (BBC, 22.6.21).

Method

Before moving on to the analysis the mythology employed in the thesis will be presented. This chapter will first describe the method of critical discourse analysis and give an explanation for the decision to employ this method as opposed to other qualitative methods. Then we will look at some of the challenges that occurred as a result of employing critical discourse analysis. Lastly the process of data collection, selection and coding will be explained.

6. Critical Discourse Analysis

What is critical discourse analysis? Ruth Wodak describes it not as a specific method or theory but rather as a research program. This stems from the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to study multifarious subjects and situations based in a plethora of different theoretical traditions. In addition, critical discourse analysis can be applied to the analysis of a large range of data (Wodak, 2007, p.186). That said, most researcher employing critical discourse analysis adhere to some common principles. CDA is generally problem-oriented and interested in untangling ideologies and power structures. Additionally, it is also commonly interdisciplinary (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p.3). Critical discourse analysis can subsequently be employed to explore a range of different topics and gives freedom to the researcher. The use of this approach does however necessitate a definition of the term discourse and its relation to critique.

The definition of discourse that will be employed in this thesis has already been established in chapter 2.3.3 but as a reminder; CDA regards both written and spoken 'discourse' as a form of social practice and assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded (Wodak, 2009, p.8). The critique aspect of CDA stems from critical theory and its orientation towards critiquing and changing society. Wodak & Mayer (2009) assert that CDA research always seeks to convey critical knowledge with the goal of enabling individuals to recognise manipulation and domination and subsequently be able to free themselves from it (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p.7). What separates CDA from other discourse analytical approaches then is the aim of critiquing or changing as opposed to gaining understanding.

Critical discourse analysis was therefore determined the best method for analysing the reconstruction of British national identities within the discourse of Leave campaigners during the 2016 referendum. Using this approach would allow the thesis to be interdisciplinary. Rather than grounding itself in one academic tradition the thesis is positioned in between fields, drawing inspiration both from linguistics, sociology and political science. Additionally, as social identification is such a multifaceted concept, the

theory applied in the thesis comes from various fields like social psychology, political science, and international relation. Committing to discourse analysis as a method for this thesis did however involve some challenges. Discourse analysis is often concerned with discourse surrounding a particular event, intuition or topic and work with small data sets surrounding them. Though this gives the opportunity for a close and detailed analysis of the data it does not provide results that can be generalized. In addition, because a discourse analysis is more focused on describing the small features that are similar or different between particular cases or the nuances within a case it is unsuitable for making broad generalised comparisons of large data sets (Johnstone, 2018, p.31).

6.1 The Data

There were many different campaigns in the leadup to the 2016 referendum and most of them were coalitions of different political parties unified solely by the opinion that the UK should leave the EU. Though the different leave-campaigns most likely had unified strategies that all of their 'spokespeople' were supposed to execute, the utterances made by the different politicians would likely differ depending on the politicians' party affiliations since a Labour politician and a UKIP politician most likely would try to appeal to different potential leave-voters. In addition, several people, like Nigel Farage and Kate Hoey, were involved in several different campaigns, either publicly backing several campaigns at once (BBC, Farage supports both) or moving from one campaign to another during the campaign period. On the background of these observations, I decided to focus on the people rather than the campaigns and only make the restriction that the discourse analysed came from politicians who wanted the UK to leave the EU.

As I wanted to explore how politicians constructed national identities during the referendum campaign there was a lot of material available in the form of campaign material, referendum debates, interviews, and newspaper articles. Having already decided to focus on politicians and their relation to their political party rather than their association with one of the Leave-campaigns, official campaign material was quickly disregarded. I instead decided to focus on material that gave a direct and unfiltered (or at least as unfiltered as possible) access to the politician's discourse. As the definition of discourse employed in this thesis regarded both written and spoken language as social practice made sense to include both forms of data. I decided to use interviews with, and articles or opinion pieces written by prominent figures in the Brexit debate as well as some interviews with the Leave campaigners the interviews would not give an equally unfiltered view of the politicians statements, but by focusing on the parts that were reported as direct quotes, interviews would be acceptable and useful.

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I then needed to find a balanced group of people to analyse as there were people from all over the political spectrum that campaigned for a leave vote. Here I mainly wanted to focus on the two major political parties in Britain but seen as UKIP played such a large role in making the referendum come to fruition it would not make sense to exclude UKIP politicians.

The selection criteria became as followed:

1. Politicians
2. Who were British citizens
3. Who were vocal leave-supporters
4. With membership in either UKIP, the Conservatives or Labour

Based on these criteria, nine politicians seemed relevant. Nigel Farage and Douglas Carswell from UKIP, Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Daniel Hannan and Andrea Leadsom from the conservatives, and Kate Hoey, Gisela Stuart, and Frank Field from the Labour Party. With these initial criteria clearly defined data collection could be initiated. Within critical discourse analysis and critical discourse studies, however, data collection is not considered to be a specific phase that must be completed before the analysis is started. One should rather find indicators of specific concepts, then expand those concepts or categories and on the basis of the results continue collecting further data (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p.27). I therefore did several rounds of data collection and coding but for the purpose of the thesis it is sufficient only describe the initial coding process in detail.

I started by looking at how the politicians constructed the image of themselves through who they seemed to reference in their use of personal pronouns like us, we, ours and the use of 'the people' or 'the British people'. In addition, I looked at how they constructed the image of 'the others'. After an initial coding process of the first round of data collected, several constructions of in- and out- groups were observed which are summarized in the table 1 below. Because the data came from politicians from different political parties the political parties appear as both in- and out-groups as a Labour politician would characterise conservatives as out-group and Labour as in-group and vice versa.

In-Groups		Out-Groups	
Leave Campaigners/Supporters	14	Remain Campaign	30
Conservatives	5	Conservative	18
Labour	4	Labour	3
UKIP	10	UKIP	1

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England	46	EU	51
Europe	3	Elites	17
		Migrants	24

Table 1: Overview of different In- and Out-groups and coding frequency found after initial coding process.

In this debate however there were several in-groups and out-groups that were often referred to and talked about simultaneously. And since the focus of this thesis was specifically concerned with the construction of a national in-group, I decided to not devote a lot of attention to the many subgroups that were within the British nation. The initial coding process did however reveal that the out-groups most often talked about were the EU, the Remain camp and immigrants. Because defining the national in-group would involve the definition of several outgroups (Jenkins, 2008, p.102) the second round of data collection was devoted to the different political parties' discourse on the EU, immigration and the Remain-campaign.

After a few rounds of data collection and coding I made some interesting observations that would affect the analysis. Firstly, it became evident that although all the political parties constructed the Remain campaign as an out-group, they differed in who they saw the out group to be and what their motives were. I therefore decided to broaden the title of this out group to internal others, so that it would encompass a wider subgroup. Secondly it also became evident that the discourse from the Leave campaign was almost exclusively presented by the party leader at the time Nigel Farage. The reason for Farage's prominence as the voice of UKIP on all TV appearances, interviews and debates also became clear. UKIP, as a party whose political platform was based primarily on the UK leaving the EU, should have had a united front during the campaign, but it became clear through several news paper articles and interviews with not Farage and Carswell that there were some in-fighting specifically between Farage and Douglas Carswell who approach the campaigning from two different standpoints (Sparrow, 31/5/2016). It therefore seemed that UKIP's focus on Farage was a deliberate attempt to present UKIP as a united front (Hughes, 2019, p.256).

Analysis

7. Identity Construction in the Political Discourse of Leave-Campaigners

As presented in the theory, nations and nationalism are produced and reproduced discursively, and they are reproduced continuously. Shotter (1993) described nationalism as a 'tradition of argumentation'. Through this phrase, Shotter reveals the unfixed nature of nationalism as the nation have a tradition of continuously arguing about who 'we' are. Politicians are often engaged in the reproduction of identities. Different political parties present different versions of the nation and its people to electorates. What the national 'we' should think of themselves and what the nation's future should hold is always up for debate (Billig, 1995, p.96). By asking the question; **How did UKIP-, Labour- and Conservative politicians on the Leave side construct British national identities during the 2016 EU membership referendum?** the analysis will look at how these political parties tried to reconstruct British national identity during the Leave campaign of the 2016 referendum. This will be done by looking at who they construct as 'others' both externally and internally and how they construct the national 'we' and examining what these constructions reveal about their image of the nation.

Discussions about national identity become especially passionate in times where the nation is perceived to be under threat or when the nation stands at a crossroads where it seems its future hangs in the balance. The 2016 European Union membership referendum was one of these points where the British nation had to choose between continuing the membership in the EU or leaving it and building a new future outside the EU. This question revealed old divides within British politics that went across party lines. The opposing reconstructions of national identity, therefore, were no longer presented by those on the left versus those on the right, but rather by those who supported Leave versus those who supported Remain. This new divide did, however, not remove distinctions between the political parties. The different political parties, therefore, could be seen to construct different versions of the British national identity.

Delany and Kumar assert that the starting point for any investigation into discourses of national identities should be positive self-representation and negative other representation (Delanty & Kumar, 2006, p.105). To do this however it first has to be clarified who the 'selves' and the 'others' are. Because we are looking at three different constructions of national identity by political parties holding different ideologies it is natural to assume that they will construct themselves and their 'others' in different ways. In addition, it cannot be surmised that even though they are all on the 'same side', that

being the side of those who want the UK to leave the EU, they viewed or constructed an in-group that encompassed all leave-campaigners. The first part of the analysis will therefore be an exploration of how the different political parties constructed the national in-group and what they considered the quintessence of the British people. The second part of the analysis will then look at what out-groups were most prominent in the discourse and how the constructions of these out-groups informed the national identities of each party.

7.1 Who are the British People?

As the data explored in this thesis is collected from politicians with different political positions it would be expected that they would have diverging views on what constituted the British people. As chapter 3.1 showed Billig et al. (2007) found that the two mainstream political parties, Labour, and the Conservatives, had in the 1990s converged on a construction of a distinctly civic nationalism that was based on shared values and institutions. They would however still not be expected to represent identical images of the British nation as their political ideologies and objectives were still disparate. The United Kingdom Independence Party on the other hand was more radical right-wing and would therefore not be expected to depict the British nation in civic terms as the two mainstream political parties. UKIP was in addition characterised as a populist party and its discourse would therefore be expected to construct a more exclusive nationalism that was more distrustful of 'others' (Breeze, 2019, p.90). The analysis will begin by looking at UKIP's discourse and explore what they believed to be the essence of Britishness, before moving our way left on the political spectrum with the Conservative party and lastly looking at the Labour party.

7.1.1 UKIP

It seems natural to start with the rhetoric of the United Kingdom Independence Party as the Brexit referendum would arguably never have taken place if it were not for them and their attempts to mobilize the British public to stand up to the EU. The fact that UKIP was a populist party introduced the possibility of the construction of in- and out-groups not being national but rather populist. Populist rhetoric often make references to 'the people' which designates only part of the political community not the nation as a whole (Brubaker, 2020, p.50). Breeze (2019) however found that the rhetoric of UKIP often employed not only references to 'the people' but specifically to 'the British people' (Breeze, 2019, p.94). Farage would therefore presumably continue constructing a common British people within the referendum campaign. Indeed, Farage's rhetoric was distinctly more focused on creating a common 'we' than the politicians from the other

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two political parties. He repeatedly used the personal pronoun 'we' and made references to 'the people'. These are linguistic means used to unite people who do not necessarily regard themselves as a common group and to increase their sense of sameness or common destiny (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p.45). The reference to 'the people' is also typically seen within populist rhetoric to identify a homogeneous group that inhabits the 'homeland' (Breeze, p.89). In Farage's statements at the spectator debate this became especially visible.

"The fact is ladies and gentlemen we do not have a good deal with the European Union. For access to the single market, we pay a membership fee, we have the free movement of people, we have a massive regulatory burden, and we are prohibited and stopped from making our own trade friendships with the rest of the world." (The Spectator, 2016, 10:38)

As this quote is taken from a debate with a live audience this 'we' could be taken to mean 'I', the speaker, and 'you', the audience, or be interpreted as a reference to a populist in-group consisting of the 'ordinary people' but within the context of the rest of the sentence this is not sufficient as it is not only Farage and the rest of the people in the Palladium or the people he regards as ordinary people who pay a membership fee to the EU. The content of the sentence therefore makes it more plausible that Farage is stating that 'we', Britons, do not have a good deal with the EU. Farage could have expressed this more clearly by explicitly saying; '*Britain* pays a membership fee' or '*the government* is stopped from trading' but through the persistent repetition of the 'we' Farage gives the impression that membership in the union affects individual people; 'you', in the audience, and 'me' Farage himself, and that it costs all Britons collectively to be a part of the Union; "**we pay** a membership fee, **we have** the free movement of people, **we have** a massive regulatory burden, and **we are** prohibited and stopped...". The burden of membership is put on 'the people' of the British nation.

UKIP further created an image of the British people that was influenced by their populist rhetoric. Populism relies on a distinction between 'us', the normal people, and 'them', the elites (Brubaker, p.50). Within the leave campaign Farage used this distinction to position the ordinary people, which were described as working class people, as 'real' Britons. Farage emphasised this distinction in an opinion piece in the Express where he stated 'The battle bus will continue to go out and meet real people. I will keep this up until June 23. We will get our country back.' (Farage, on the roll to quitting Brussels). By describing this in-group as the 'real people' Farage dismissed the elites as not real people and in effect saying they are not real Britons. Again, this is a sentiment that is influenced by the populist nature of UKIP where the elites, which includes the government is depicted as betraying the people and in so doing betraying their own country (Breeze,

2019, p.90). Farage stating that 'we will get **our** country back' therefore not only means back from the EU but 'back' from these elites that have betrayed us. Farage describes the elite's betrayal in another piece in the Express.

"I 've heard a lot through the course of this campaign from the wealthy establishment about GDP. About maintaining the status quo. Well that might be all right for them with cheaper nannies and chauffeurs but it isn't what's in the best interests of ordinary British workers. Open-door migration has suppressed wages in the unskilled Labour market, meant that living standards have fallen and that life has become a lot tougher for so many in our country." (Farage, 21/6/2016).

Farage states that because the 'wealthy establishment' see benefits from membership in the EU they do not care if the membership has a negative effect on 'ordinary British workers'. It is also important to note that Farage makes a distinction between them, the elites, positioning them at a distance and implies that they are not a part of 'our country'. Farage also emphasised the difference between the two groups' financial status, highlighting that the establishment of the elites are wealthy while the ordinary British workers are being suppressed. By doing this Farage is intensifying the resentment felt by ordinary British workers who he believes are struggling because of membership in the EU. Farage further positions the British working class as the real Britons in the Express.

"How I would love to see Mr Cameron and Mr Osborne listen to the genuine concerns of people whose children can't get houses and find the schools full. These are the people whose quality of life has suffered directly due to mass open-door EU immigration. From Dagenham we went on to Dudley, the heart of the Black Country and the heart of England in many ways." (Farage, 25/5/2016)

Proclaiming the black country as the heart of England reveals two things about Farage's view of Britishness. Firstly, Farage resists or at least wants to display resistance towards the importance of cosmopolitan London and its traditional position in the heart of both the English and British nation. Secondly, it reaffirms Farage's positioning of the ordinary British workers as the quintessential Britons as the black country was, as the name suggests, the heart of the British mining industry. With the decline of the mining industry however, large parts of the black country started suffering high unemployment rates and saw an increase in the minority population. The west- and east-midlands were therefore arguably especially receptive to UKIP's discourse.

UKIP's discourse clearly positioned the British working class at the heart of the nation, portraying the ordinary working people as the real people and the real Britons. In accordance with its position as a right-wing populist party the UKIP rhetoric seemed to dismiss the British elites as un-British as they had betrayed the British nation and

argument that will become more obvious as we examine the UKIP's construction of out-groups (Breeze, 2020, p.95). UKIP's description of who the British people are does however reveal very little about the content of their nationalism, that will however become clearer as we look at their construction of the various out-groups.

7.1.2 The Conservative Party

The conservatives Leave-campaigners were to a lesser extent than UKIP concerned with creating a specific image of the quintessential Brit. As the party in government at the time of the referendum this might have been a deliberate choice to create a more universal appeal to the British people. Conservative Leave-campaigners were however clearer in what they regarded as the content of British nationalism. As Billig et al. (2007) found that the conservative party had adopted a more civic nationalism since the early 2000's their discourse during the 2016 referendum campaign was expected to show their construction of a more open and inclusive nationalism. The discourse did certainly show some of the civic aspects of the British nation including emphasis on values specific to Britain and the importance of their governmental institutions. Gove summarized these components in an interview with James Slack in the Daily mail.

"Rejecting the pessimism of the Remain camp, led by David Cameron, [Gove] told the Mail: 'This is D-Day. It's Democracy Day. It is an opportunity for us to demonstrate a vote of confidence in our country and its ingenuity, its generosity, its tolerance and its potential. We have got to have confidence in our institutions. Britain gave the world parliamentary democracy. It gave the world common law traditions, trial by jury and the principle of innocent until proven guilty. We gave the world moral leadership in the fight against slavery and the fight against fascism. We gave the world the NHS and public service broadcasting and we did all these things as a self-governing democracy. So, the idea that Britain is a rain-soaked little island where we eat too much cake – that is just not right. Voting to leave is a rejection of pessimism and an embrace of optimism.'" (Slack on Gove, Daily Mail)

Gove highlight that Britain is a country of ingenuity, generosity, and tolerance all of which correspond to the values Parekh (2000) observed within the New Labour nationalism (Parekh, 2000, p.261) which Billig et al. (2007) found that the conservative party had adopted. Like Farage, Gove also actively makes use of personal pronouns like we, us and our, to emphasise that these values and institutions are specific to 'our' way of life. Gove further emphasises the importance of the British governmental institutions, specifically mentioning parliamentary democracy. This shows that the conservatives have

moved away from prioritising the parliaments sovereignty over to democratic status which would be consistent with their move towards a national identity inspired by the New Labour nationalism. Gove emphasis on brain giving the world moral leadership shows that he regards Britain's historic role as a global power as important to the British national identity, this argument will be made more clearly when analysing the construction of out-groups. Additionally, the conservative leave-campaigners conception of British national identity saw Britain as separate from and crucially as superior to Europe as Johnsons made apparent in the Telegraph.

"Now is the time to believe in ourselves, and in what Britain can do, and to remember that we always do best when we believe in ourselves. Of course, we can continue to provide leadership and support for Europe – but intergovernmentally, outside the supranational EU system." (Johnson in telegraph please vote leave on thursday).

The Britain that Johnson depicts here is one that is separate from Europe, but which can provide 'leadership and support' for the continent when it is in need. This sentiment is reminiscent of Winston Churchill who famously stated of Britain; "We are with Europe, but not of it. We are linked but not combined. We are interested and associated but not absorbed." (Wit and Wisdom, n.d.). The fact that Johnson sates 'we can continue to provide leadership' shows that the Britain he constructs is different from UKIP's Britain. Where UKIP constructs a 'British people' who are being ruled over by the elites both in government and, as we shall see, in the EU, the conservatives position Britain as superior to its neighbouring countries in Europe. In addition to this suggestion of British superiority, the conservative leave campaigners' national identity contained some cultural components. Hannan made references to these more cultural aspects of the British national identity at the spectator debate when he asserted that; "[...] is as easy to do business with a company in New Zealand as with a company in France in fact, easier because the Kiwi company will be English-speaking and common-law." (Spectator, 2016). We see here that although the conservative leave-campaigners relied primarily on civic aspects of the British nation they also made references to more cultural components and as will become evident through the analysis of out-group construction, more ethnic nationalism.

7.1.3 The Labour Party

As expected, the Labour Leave-campaigners exhibited predominantly civic aspects of national identity. They presented a discourse that was in favor of multiculturalism, tried to distance themselves from racism and any mention of ethnicity, and talked mostly

about the British people in the sense of their shared values. This was expected as the Labour party, even before the development of New Labour nationalism, supported universal values like equality and openness (Billig et al., 2007, p.16). The Labour Leave-campaigners presented Britain a generous and forward-looking nation, where social rights and equality was central, and which valued multiculturalism. The Labour leave campaigners were arguably starting with the biggest disadvantage as they started campaigning for leaving the EU. As their party had officially backed the Remain side, essentially signalling to the British people that the Labour party's values were best represented with voting to remain in the EU, Leave-voting Labour politicians had two hurdles; first they had to communicate to Labour voters that in spite of Labour's official stance it was perfectly possible and acceptable to be a Labour voter who also wanted to leave, but secondly, they had to make sure that they were not perceived as holding the same opinions as other more right-wing Leave-campaigners whose rhetoric was often offensive and at times even racist as this association could alienate Labour voters from voting leave. These dilemmas clearly effected their strategies as Labour Leavers to a larger extent than the other parties concentrated especially on targeting members of their own party. At the spectator debate Kate Hoey asserted that the Labour party at its roots were a party that represented the workers, and which valued Britain's democracy above everything else.

"I'm very proud to be following in the footsteps of great Labour figures whose Democratic credentials can never be doubted. Hugh Gaitskell, Peter Shore and people like Barbara Castle. The Labour movement's roots were to represent the interests of the workers against big business. The roots have shrunk, then if they have and they are, then so has a true meaning of left-wing politics and we need to refresh them." (The Spectator, 2016, 20:36)

Hoey emphasises that at its core the labour party had always regarded democracy as integral to British nationalism and

The Labour Leave-campaigners undoubtedly constructed a more civic nationalism than both UKIP and the conservative party. As already mentioned, this was expected because of the party's firm historic base in this approach. What was surprising however was the politicians repeated references to more cultural components of nationalism like references to historic ties to the commonwealth and in Fields's case to Britain's historic differentiation from Europe based on their protestant religion.

7.2 Constructing Out-Groups

The process of forming a collective identity based on specific similarities inevitably involves the exclusion of other who do not share these similarities often with the characteristics the in-group share being believed to make them better or superior to the outgroup (Jenkins, 2008, p.102). This exclusion may sometimes be subconscious but certain groups can also deliberately be constructed as 'others' in order to strengthen the feeling of unity within a community. Guibernau asserts that uniting the people against a common enemy is an essential strategy in constructing a national identity (Guibernau, p.30). This process could be observed during the Brexit referendum campaigns. Not surprisingly all the political parties constructed the EU as an 'other' seen to pose a threat to the British nation. How the EU was portrayed and what it threatened within Britain did however differ between the parties campaigning for leave. Similarly, all the parties campaigning for leave constructed immigration or immigrants as outsiders who in some way posed a threat to Britain. These out-groups were to be expected as they account for two of the most contested issues in Britain since the turn of the century (Billig et al. 2007, p.22). More unexpectedly however was the emergence of a new, internal threat within the discourse of all the political parties campaigning for leave, the Remain-campaigners. The analysis will start by examining how UKIP constructed these outgroups starting with the construction of internal threat before moving on to the conservative Leave-Campaigner and lastly looking at Labour Leave-campaigners.

As Jenkins posits; "Defining 'us' involves defining a range of 'thems'" (Jenkins, 2008, p.102). What Jenkins means by this is that often when people say something about other people it often says a lot about themselves it may reveal how they see the world, what they value and what they condemn (Jenkins, 2008, p.102). It is at the boundaries that we discover our own distinctiveness because we can see what attributes we possess that the others do not. The construction of a national identity therefore becomes much more effective when contrasted with the others.

7.2.1 The United Kingdom Independence party

As we saw in the historical context, UKIP's growth was closely connected to their success at linking the EU membership issue with fears over immigration (Evan & Mellow, 2019, p.84). It was therefore not a surprise that they continued emphasising this link during the referendum campaign and became, as Farage claimed, agenda-setting on the issue of immigration during the campaign (Aitkenhead, 2016). UKIP, as a populist party, constructed the out-groups along traditional populist lines of elites both within the country and in the EU as threats from above and immigrants as external threats. These

threats were emphasised to unite 'the people' and inspire them to stand up for themselves. There is a distinction between nationalist rhetoric and populist rhetoric, and it could therefore not be surmised that the out-groups that were constructed were positioned as threats to the nation as a whole rather than a threat to the 'ordinary people' which is the typical in-group within populist discourse or that the in-group that was constructed was in fact the national in-group or a separate subgroup within the nation (Breeze. 2019, p.90). Breeze (2019) have however found that there is a link between the way populist parties construct 'the people' and the type of nation they identify with. The constructions of out groups will therefore be analysed with regards to their distinction from a common national in-group.

Billig et al. (2007) showed how since the late 1990s mainstream political parties had moved away from more traditional ethnic constructions of nationalism in favour of a more civic nationalisms. The same could not be said about UKIP's construction of the English nation. Though, as we shall see, they show some civic aspects in the way they construct the EU as an 'other', their rhetoric shows clear signs of ethnic and cultural nationalisms both through how they argue against immigration and the way they distinguish between normal people and the elites.

Internal Others

All the parties did to some extent construct a new, internal threat which emerged from the divide between the Leave-side as 'in' and the Remain-side as 'out'. Within the context of UKIP's discourse however this distinction could not be characterised as new as UKIP. The UKIP discourse was heavily characterised by a conflict between 'us' normal people and 'them' the elites. This internal divide was not surprising as UKIP was characterised as a populist party whose rhetoric often focuses on the divide between 'normal people' and 'elites' (Hughes, 2019, p.255). Farage, as the representative of the most radical right position in leave campaign, was often at odds with his fellow leave campaigners both within and outside his own party. This was public knowledge as criticism and insults were exchanged in the media (Sparrow, 31/5/2016). This may have contributed to Farage seldomly referring to the Leave-campaign as a whole (here the leave campaign referrers to everyone who campaigned for a leave-vote regardless of campaign ties) as one common in-group. Instead, Farage chose to construct a common 'we' who he describes as 'normal people', 'ordinary people' and 'real people'. During the Spectator debate Farage put this group at odds with the 'elites' which Farage more or less equates with the remain campaigners, experts and politicians all of which were characterised as elitist, corrupt and threatening.

"...we are fighting a referendum where the remain side or the Remanians as I think they are now known - but I'll come on to immigration later - the Remain side

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have clubbed together. They have *Goldman Sachs*, they have *Siemens engineering*, they have the *International Monetary Fund*, they have Obama, they have the political class, at least most of them, in Westminster telling us that if we do not stay part of this political Union, dreadful things will happen to us because we have this wonderful trade deal being part of the European Union. They are putting the Leave camp on the back foot and they are doing it to try and put us off the main arguments in this referendum." (The Spectator, April 28 2016, 9:49).

In this paragraph of his opening statement at the Spectator Debate, Farage is very clearly making a distinction between 'we' and 'they'. Who the 'we' is referring to exactly is quite ambiguous. As he states 'we're fighting a referendum' he could be referring to either the country or the Leave-campaign, the 'they' on the other hand is very clearly the Remain side. Farage repeats what 'they', the Remainers, have "**They have Goldman Sachs, they have Siemens engineering, they have the International Monetary Fund, they have Obama, they have the political class...**". In this context it would be sufficient to simply say 'they have' and listed these actors to get the same information across but by repeating 'they have' he asserts that 'they' are not part of 'us', they are different. This difference is also emphasised by labelling them 'Remainians' which is clearly a play on Romanians which Farage uses to liken the Remain campaigners to immigrant implying they are less like 'us' Britons than they are immigrants. Furthermore, Farage draws attention to all the powerful actors on the remain side and declares to the audience that 'they' are trying to tell 'us' what to do; 'telling **us** that if **we** do not stay part of this political Union, dreadful things will happen to **us**'. By combining these statements Farage suggests that the remain campaign have a lot of power which they are using to threaten 'us', which is then reinforced by the statement 'they are putting the leave camp **on the back foot**', which is a metaphor for feeling threatened and acting defensively. This clearly invokes populist rhetoric by displaying a conflict between the elites and the 'ordinary people' where the elite is threatening.

Farage also made repeated attempts to undermine the remain campaigners and the elites. He adopts a strategy of delegitimization of the Elites and Remainers by stating that their arguments should not be believed, and they should not be listened to.

"Do not believe them when they tell you tonight that the single market is good for Britain, that we need to be part of this club to access the single market. [...] So, do not listen to politicians who have never bought and sold a cargo or a product or a good in their lives." (The Spectator, 2016, 10:56)

Farage is trying to undermine the authority/legitimacy of the remain campaigners by telling the audience 'do not believe them' and 'do not listen to politicians'. Farage justifies not trusting Remainers and politicians by saying they do not have the same experience as 'us'. "[They] have never bought and sold a cargo or a product or a good in their lives." Which implies that they can therefore not be trusted to govern those of us who have. This is of course an exaggeration as nobody can go through life without having bought anything, but Farage is trying to make the point that 'they' are not 'normal like us', they do not have the same experiences as us and can therefore not understand us or our struggles." Farage deliberately separates himself from 'political types' who he characterises as money hungry, dishonest, fake. He also to a larger extent than other political parties talk negatively about the government. It may be easier for him as he has never been seen as an accepted part of the British government, but he conflates the government and elites and is very negative towards both. Through this line of argument, he positions himself as the underdog or revolutionary, as a 'little guy' who wants to challenge the 'establishment'.

External 'Others'

As already mentioned in the historical context, UKIP's most central political issue was UK-EU relations, and they championed the need for radical reform of the relationship. Having harshly criticised the EU, its institutions, and key figures for several years similar rhetoric could be anticipated from UKIP during the leave campaign. Unsurprisingly the UKIP leave-campaigners continued condemning the EU during the campaign focusing on how it was failing and corrupt. During his opening statements at a debate organized by *The Spectator* newspaper Farage repeatedly referred to the EU as a failure, a disaster and in crisis signifying that Britain received no benefit from continued membership and was in fact impeded by it.

'The fact is ladies and gentlemen we do not have a good deal with the European Union. For access to the single market, we pay a membership fee, we have the free movement of people, we have a massive regulatory burden, and we are prohibited and stopped from making our own trade friendships with the rest of the world.' (The Spectator, 2016, 10:38)

Farage implies that the only benefit the UK sees from membership in the EU is access to the single market and apart from that membership is only a burden. The free movement of people and the inhibition to make new trade agreements with the rest of the world were both characterises as negative aspects of the membership. Farage charged the EU as the cause for this burden on the British people and claims that they were actively restricting the UK's possibilities; 'we are **prohibited and stopped** from making **our own trade friendships** with the rest of the world.'. By employing the phrase *trade*

friendships instead of trade agreement or trade relationship which seems the natural choice within this context Farage is emphasising that what they are prohibited from is something beneficial like a friendship which implies a sense of mutual affection and equality. This distinguishes the possible trade agreements Britain could obtain outside the EU (based on equality) to the trade they experience with the EU which was repeatedly portrayed as being unfavourable to the UK. In an opinion piece in the Express newspaper Farage utilized the feeling of unbalance and accentuated it by employing a vocabulary reminiscent of oppression and empire; "Hard-hitting images will connect with the British public and rattle the establishment. It is a message that says we can do better than this, provided we have the guts to ignore our rulers and stand up for ourselves and ordinary people next Thursday." (Farage, express 15/6/2016). Farage characterises the EU as 'rulers' implying that they are in control of the British people who, in contrast, are depicted as 'ordinary people'. By employing this vocabulary Farage is emphasising that the EU poses a threat to the British people. This distinction between rulers and ordinary people was, as we shall see later, even more pronounced in the construction of Remainers and elites as 'others'.

Farage also emphasises that the free movement of people and the restriction of trade with countries outside the EU were burdens which implied that Britain should pursue something different. The need for restriction of free movement of people was argued by Leave campaigners from all political parties but within UKIP's discourse it was coupled with a more intolerant view of immigration which conveyed an exclusive national identity that reserved citizenship to a limited and specific number of people (Parekh, p.260). However, Farage's demand for increased trade and, as emphasised on *the Andrew Marr show*, engagement with the world outside the EU did to some extent contradict this view.

"The single market actually is inhibiting us in a world – we're living in a 21st century global economy, and no one talks about this. We put up trade barriers against countries all over the world as part of the EU. And my answer is this: we are not leaving Europe, we're divorcing ourselves from a failing political union so that we can re-engage with a bigger, broader world." (Andrew Marr Show, June 12 2016, 4:24)

Here again Farage emphasises that re-engaging in the broader world is something that should be a goal for Britain. This contradicts the traditional UKIP argument of Britain first and goes against the exclusionary and inward-looking nationalism often exhibited by far-right political parties (Bryant, p.189). It therefore makes clear that it is not the international or outward-looking component of the relationship with the EU Farage and UKIP opposes but rather the nature of the relationship. As already touched upon, the supranational nature of the EU membership was highly criticised by Farage and others

because it removed control from and diminished democracy within the UK which Farage highlighted at the Spectator debate.

“The real debate in this referendum is we have an opportunity, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to vote to take back the independence, self-governance, and control of this country's laws, of this country's courts, and crucially, of this country's borders. I am urging you tonight to support this motion. [...] There is no direct democratic accountability within this European system and frankly I believe that those that went before us and sacrifice so much in two world wars did so, so that we could be a free, independent, sovereign nation that governs itself.” (The Spectator, 2016, 11:40)

The independence, self-governance and control of Britain's governmental institutions are portrayed as the most integral components of the nation which, Farage emphasises, people have fought and died to protect. The UKIP rhetoric on the EU and the threats and burdens they put on Britain paints picture of a national identity whose most central aspects are independence, self-governance and control, essentially being sovereign is an important aspect from the UKIP perspective. Farage puts more emphasis on control than democracy which suggest that he is reconstructing a national identity more aligned with Parekh's New Right nationalism which sees parliamentary sovereignty as more important than democracy (Parekh, p.256). The EU is therefore constructed as an 'other' who is actively removing the sovereignty of the UK and in the process inhibiting them to make decisions regarding their own trade, migration and future. The aspects emphasised here are mostly civic in nature and create a distinction between the civic values essential to British national identity and the values and agendas of the EU. However, Farage points out that regaining control over the county's borders is the most crucial reason for leaving the EU. Which, as we shall see, indicates that the UKIP discourse does not only emphasise civic aspects but also exhibit ethnic conceptions especially when it comes to their discourse on immigration.

Immigration was a central subject on both sides of the referendum and on all sides of the political spectrum. UKIP was however the most outspoken when it came to the problems increasing immigration brought to the UK. As the party had grown in popularity on an anti-immigration platform, they could expect that a hard anti-immigration stance would not alienate UKIP voters from voting leave. Their immigration discourse was as a result very explicit and did in most cases make no attempts to conceal their hard line on immigration. Migration within the EU and into the UK were described as being uncontrolled, disastrous and posing a security risk and migrants were linked with

unemployment, crime and even terrorism. During his appearance at the Spectator Debate, Farage emphasised how the high number of immigrants coming into Britain was putting a strain on public services.

“Net migration into Britain is now running at ten times the post-war average and that is if you believe the official figures, which frankly I do not. We have to build a new house in this country every seven minutes just to cope with current levels of immigration. We are short tens of thousands of primary school places for this September and the National Health Service is under literally intolerable pressure. What we need to do is take back control of our borders, to say that our passport should not be available to five hundred and eight million people...” (The Spectator, 2016, 12:52)

Farage started by comparing the number of immigrants coming into the UK in 2016 to the number coming after World War II. He relies here on the presupposition that the audience knows that immigration was at an all-time high in the post-war period and uses that knowledge to exacerbate feelings of trepidation and powerlessness associated with the immigration issue. Farage then goes on to outline what the high amount of immigration might mean for governmental institutions; ‘**We have to build** a new house in this country **every seven minutes** just to cope with current levels of immigration. **We are short tens of thousands** of primary school places for this September and the National Health Service is under **literally intolerable pressure**.’. What he actually utters here is more to do with the capacity of these governmental institutions than anything else, but what is said implicitly is that immigrants put a strain on these institutions and in so doing affect ‘our’ access to and benefit from them. This connects the threat immigration poses to the nation to single individuals and shows how it might affect their lives. It might be reasonable to assume that Farage uses this argument to invoke fear in the audience but as we shall see, he does this more explicitly at other occasions. In an interview with Tim Ross in the *Telegraph* Farage’s immigration rhetoric became very direct as he claimed immigrants were linked to several sexual crimes all over Europe.

“Women may be at a particular risk from the ‘cultural’ differences between British society and migrants, after gangs of migrant men allegedly launched a mass sexual attack against hundreds of women in Germany last New Year’s Eve, [Farage] said. ‘There are some very big cultural issues,’ he said. Asked whether mass sex attacks on the scale of Cologne could happen in Britain, Mr Farage replied: ‘It depends if they get EU passports. It depends if we vote for Brexit or not. It is an issue.’” (Ross, 2016)

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Farage refers to cultural differences between British society and migrants effectively saying all migrants share the same culture which is different from 'our' British culture. It is this 'cultural difference' Farage claims to be the reason migrant men are assaulting women implying that sexual assault is an inherent part of this culture shared by all migrants. Interestingly, Farage avoids using explicitly racist language, not mentioning migrants of a particular race or ethnicity but he nonetheless manages to articulate arguments usually associated with racism. By doing this he can pander to audiences who dislike migrants while avoiding being dismissed as racist. Farage then employs a fallacious argument by stating that if Britain does not leave the EU then British women will be in danger of being sexually assaulted by 'gangs of migrant men'. This is classic scare tactics employed to evoke an emotional response both in women, who might become afraid of being assaulted and men who become angry and feel the need to protect them. Farage employed similar scare tactics several times during the campaign period and especially in the context of immigration from middle eastern countries. Within the immigration discourse there was a lot of focus on the possible accession of Turkey into the EU and how this could have dire consequences for the UK. The possible EU membership of Turkey was equated to the UK sharing a boarder with Syria and Iraq and in relation to this Farage's discourse on immigration arguably became increasingly offensive. In an opinion piece in the Express newspaper Farage linked the accession of turkey to unemployed migrants and terrorist.

"Open borders with Turkey would be a total disaster for our country. With a population of 80 million, it would mean even more uncontrolled migration into the UK and, as the survey showed, would include a huge flow of unemployed people into Britain. [...] Then there is the security risk. For the UK to have total open borders with a country sharing a land border with Syria, Iraq and Iran would be madness. We already know that Islamic State wish to do us great harm and indeed security bosses have warned that ISIS are already entering Europe in large numbers, posing as migrants and refugees." (Farage, 22/5/2016).

Farage is again stoking fears of migrants claiming that when Turkey joined the EU it will increase the amount of unemployed migration into the UK legitimizing this argument by claiming to have the objective truth from a survey. The fact that he emphasised that the migrants coming from Turkey would be unemployed fed into the already widespread resentment of migrants who were frequently blamed for the lack of job opportunities especially amongst low skilled people who felt that migrants were taking 'their jobs' (Fligstein et al, 2012, p.115). Additionally, Farage argued that the accession of Turkey posed a security risk as it would make it easier for terrorists to enter Britain. Syria, Iran and Iraq were specifically mentioned even though none of them were ever said to

possibly enter the EU. Combined with the reference to the Islamic state it seems the connection Farage is implicitly trying to make is that to religion. The EU had until the point of Turkey's application for membership only consisted of countries whose population was mostly white, predominantly Christian and who were geographically positioned in the continent of Europe (Risse, 2015, p.27). The accession of Turkey would mean an extension of the European Union into the Middle East and the accession of a country that did not belong to the predominant religion and ethnicity of the rest of the union. For the EU as an institution, this did not pose an imminent problem as it had constructed its 'supranational' identity mostly in civic terms so that all countries could become members as long as they adhered to the Copenhagen criteria (Risse, 2015, p.26). For ethnic conceptions of national and European identity however, the accession of Turkey posed a problem as it would bring a group that was historically very clearly defined as 'other', as a threat and as different into the in-group of 'Europe' (Fligstein et al. 2012, p.115).

The UKIP constructions of external threats continued along the lines of their traditional populist sentiments. Farage depicted the EU as an oppressive ruler who was taking away the British nations sovereignty and in so doing taking away control from the British people. The EU was portrayed as an extension of the bureaucratic elites within the nation. Though Farage mostly differentiated the EU based on civic criteria like institutions and values and tried to stay away from mentioning race and ethnicity when talking about immigration he clearly exhibited traditional ethnic conceptions of national identity like resistance towards immigration and rejection of Turkish membership in the EU (Fligstein et al., 2012, p.115).

7.2.2 The Conservative Party

The parliamentary conservative party was visibly divided in their position on Brexit. While David Cameron, sitting prime minister campaigned for remain, backed by most of his fellow party members, there were several high-profile conservatives who went against the party leader and backed Leave. The most prominent being former mayor of London, Boris Johnson, and Cameron's own justice secretary Michael Gove.

Internal 'Others'

In addition to constructing these traditional external threats of the EU and immigrants, the Conservatives constructed and you internal threat of the remain campaign who were dubbed project fear. The rhetoric of 'project fear' was present in the discourse from all political parties, but it was most salient from the conservatives. 'Project fear' was a term put in use to refer to the *Remain campaign*. It came from what the Leave campaign

claimed was a deliberate attempt by the remain campaign to scare the British public to vote remain. The *Remain campaign*, supported by most major British politicians, business interests, trade unions, foreign leaders, and international organisations, relied on economic prediction and statements from experts to persuade the British public to vote Remain. The repeated warnings of economic disaster and global isolation the UK would face in the event of leaving the EU was however, criticised by the leave camp and dismissed as scaremongering. One of the aspects of this line of argument was portraying the Remain campaign as consisting of elites and experts who were corrupt bureaucrats who only wanted Britain to remain in the EU because they personally gained financially from it.

"We have heard from the IMF (which got the Asian crisis completely wrong), as well as the banks and the CBI, all of whom were wrong about the euro. Davos man – the kind of people whose club-class air tickets are paid by the taxpayer, all the lobbyists and corporate affairs directors of the big companies: they are all increasingly nervous that they have been rumbled, that people can see the emperor has no clothes and that Britain could have a glorious future outside the EU." (Johnson).

Accusing the Remain-campaigners of wanting to stay in the EU because they will personally gain financially from membership create the belief that they do not have the nation's best interest at heart. Subsequently, they can argue that they, the Leave campaign, are the ones who are fighting to preserve the will of the people, and they are the only ones who have national interests at heart (Billig, 1995, p.103). The second aspect of the *project fear* rhetoric was highlighting the fact that the Remain side had nothing positive to say about the EU, and instead of putting forth positive arguments for staying in the EU (being unable to do this because of widespread Euroscepticism in the UK) they had to resort to arguing negatively for Britain, focusing on explaining why it would be bad for Britain to leave and why they would not make it on their own, outside the EU.

"They are back; it hasn't taken them long. They began with telling us they were going to have a positive and patriotic case, and they are back to project fear within moments of this debate. Now they go again, they have nothing positive to say[...]" (liarpoliticians2, 2016, 18:15)

Billig (1995) presents an essential aspect of political addresses to the nation, the notion of representation. He asserts that as the nation-state is the arena for political discourse, then the politician assumes the role of representing the nation. In this context, representation has two meanings; first, the politician represents the nation as in *standing*

for or speaking on behalf of the nation, second the politician represents the nation through *depicting it*, creating a picture of what the nation is and in turn who its people are (p.98). Billing also highlighted that it was important for the politicians to represent the nation positively, to compliment the nation to the nation. Through the project fear rhetoric the conservative leave-campaigners highlighted that the remain campaign failed to follow this principle and were in effect insulting or talking down the nation to the nation. At the BBC's Great debate both Johnson and Gove wanted to represent the leave campaign as the alternative to the negativity espoused by the Remain-campaign.

"[Johnson:] At the end of this campaign I think you'll agree that there is a very clear choice between those on their side [motioning to the remain speakers], who speak of nothing but fear of the consequences of leaving the EU and we on our side who offer hope. Between those who have been endlessly rubbishing our country, talking it down, and those of us who believe in Britain. They say we can't do it, we say we can. They say we have no choice but to bow down to Brussels, we say they are woefully underestimating this country and what it can do."
(Liarpoliticians2, 2016, 1:41:42)

Here, the conservative leavers in effect accuse the *Remain campaign* of undermining the spirit of the nation. They were not seen as sharing the values that was fundamental to Britishness and could therefore be excluded from being real Brits and a rather Weber trade as traitors. They accuse remain-campaigners of representing Britain in a bad light both to the outside as they are some of Britain's most important representatives to the outside world and to the British people as they are expressing their belief that Britain would not do good on its own. The Conservative Brexiters do this while simultaneously emphasising that they, the conservatives and their fellow leave campaigners, do the exact opposite, putting forward a more positive view of Britain and a belief that they would do better on their own.

External 'Others'

The conservatives had like many other political parties changed their attitude towards the EU several times since the UK first became a member and the party had long been divided on the subject. As Parekh (2000) described, the New Right Nationalism traditionally seen within the conservative party looked unfavourably on membership in the EU as it could pose a threat to parliamentary sovereignty (Parekh, 2000, p.258). Billig at al. (2007) however found that the Conservatives had converged with a more civic conception of nationalism based primarily on values that were seen as particular to Britain. They conservative leave campaigners could therefore be presumed to

construction national identity mostly based on civic values but who also saw parliamentary sovereignty as important. The Conservative Leave campaigners repeatedly described the EU as undemocratic, elitist, outmoded and supranational and they spent a lot of time emphasising the negative effects membership in the EU had on not only Britain but also other EU member states and their citizens.

“Whatever the noble ambitions on which it was founded, the EU is an anachronism. It is increasingly antidemocratic; its supranational system is being imitated nowhere else on earth; and its economic policies are causing misery in many parts of the EU. It is sclerotic, opaque, elitist: different nations bound together by a centralised bureaucracy that ordinary people can neither understand nor vote out. It is an attempt to build a United States of Europe; to create a single political structure.” (Johnson, 13/6/2016).

Johnson’s stamen gives a clear example of Guibernau’s political dimension of national identity. By describing the EU as antidemocratic and supranational Johnson is positioning the union as a threat to the national sovereignty, which Guibernau showed will be perceived by the national audience as a threat to their personal freedom (Guibernau, 2007, p.24). Describing the EU as an anachronism means that it is out of step with modernity, it is outmoded which implies that Britain wants to be different, more forward-looking. Membership in the EU is then portrayed as a hindrance to Britain’s future development and subsequently becomes a threat to their prosperity. The insistence on the EU not only being undemocratic but antidemocratic implies that the EU is not interested in increasing its democratic credentials (which is a known argument from pro-Europeans). Johnson wants to highlight that the well-known negatives associated with the union is not only a symptom of the institutions malfunctioning but rather a consequence of the EU’s intentions to be advantageous for some member at the expense of others. These statements are similar to UKIP’s in that they cast the EU in the role of oppressor which need to be fought off but rather than portraying Britain as the oppressed Johnson highlight how other European member states are being abused. This argument was made more clearly by Johnson in an interview with Tim Ross in the Telegraph;

“The Italians, who used to be a great motor-manufacturing power, have been absolutely destroyed by the euro – as was intended by the Germans,’ Mr Johnson claims. ‘This is an act of economic takeover. The euro has become a means by which superior German productivity is able to gain an absolutely unbeatable advantage over the whole eurozone territory.’” (Ross, 14/5/2016).

Here Johnson implies that Italy’s economic decline was a result of an intentional takeover by the Germans who are portrayed as utilizing the EU to gain advantage in Europe.

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Germany's role as somewhat of a leader within the EU is also repeated within the conservative leave campaigners' discourse which is a continuation of a long Eurosceptic tradition within the conservative party which has based dislike of the EEC and later the EU on historical distrust and hostility towards Germany (Ward, 2004, p.110). The hostility towards Germany stems from the long history of conflicts between the two countries which the conservative leave campaigners actively use to their advantage in the campaign. We can see Guibernau's historical dimension in action as the national memories of World War II are alluded to by both Boris Johnson and Michael Gove. In the same interview with Tim Ross, Johnson is very clear:

"I wrote a book on this subject, and I think it's probably right. The truth is that the history of the last couple of thousand years has been broadly repeated attempts by various people or institutions – in a Freudian way – to rediscover the lost childhood of Europe, this golden age of peace and prosperity under the Romans, by trying to unify it. Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically,' [Johnson] says. 'The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods. But fundamentally what it is lacking is the eternal problem, which is that there is no underlying loyalty to the idea of Europe.'" (Ross, 14/5/2016).

Although Johnson admits that the EU is using different methods to unite Europe the underlying implication is that the EU and its leadership is similar to a totalitarian regime. Johnson legitimizes the statement by claiming he has written a book on the subject and can therefore determine what is 'right'. As Guibernau (2007) reminds us, national history is often a source of pride and for Britain there is no national memory that invokes greater pride than their role in World War II (Dewey, 2009, p.36). Additionally, by comparing the present conflict between the EU and Britain to Britain's role in fight against Nazi Germany Johnson is referencing a narrative of Britain coming to the aid of Europe and being its protector in times of need. By invoking the memories and emphasising how other European countries are being taken advantage of by the EU the conservative Leave-campaigners encourage the British people to reclaim the role of global leadership they had during the war. Johnson repeatedly does this by emphasising that a vote to leave not only means fighting for Britain but also for other disadvantaged members states.

"[1:42:20] If we vote Leave, we can take back control of [...] [1:42:31] the democracy that is the foundation of our prosperity, and if we stand up for democracy we'll be speaking up for hundreds of millions of people around Europe, who agree with us but who currently have no voice, and if we vote leave and take back control, I believe that this Thursday can be our country's Independence Day!" (liarpoliticians2, 2016).

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It is clear that Johnson wanted Britain to retake its historic role as a global power and that the way to this was leaving the EU. This argument is in line with traditional British Eurosceptic perspective which view proximity to Europe more as a constraint for Britain whose goals lie beyond the regional limitations of Europe. In this line of argumentation close cooperation with commonwealth countries and English-speaking people around the world are prioritised over proximity to Europe (Daddow, 2013, p.213). This is, in fact, also emphasised by the Conservative Leave-campaigners, specifically the Spectator Debate, Daniel Hannan asserts that;

“This is an age of the internet, of cheap flights, of Skype it is as easy to do business with a company in New Zealand as with a company in France in fact, easier because the Kiwi company will be English-speaking and common-law. Never before has geographical proximity been as irrelevant as now (The Spectator, 2016, 32:20).

Hannan implies that Britain is more closely connected with people sharing their language and laws than with people who are close to them geographically. The aspects he draws attention to, English language and law, show that the conservatives are constructing a more civic conception of Britishness while crucially also containing cultural aspects like common language. In addition, using New Zealand as an example, Hannan draws attention to Commonwealth links which, as we will see later, the conservative Leavers argue should be prioritized higher than EU membership. There were however some statements from conservative leavers that contradicted the main construction of Britain reclaiming its role as a global power. Specifically, Daniel Hannan's remarks in the Guardian showed an alternative goal for Britain.

‘Barack Obama says we should accept EU jurisdiction because “it enhances Britain’s global leadership”. Well, maybe we’d rather have accountable rulers than global leadership. Maybe, like New Zealand, we’d be happy enough as a prosperous democracy that works with the international community. As Denis Healey once put it: “Their Europeanism is nothing but imperialism with an inferiority complex.”’ (Hannan in The Guardian).

Here Hannan explicitly says that the British people want out of the EU because they want to keep their democracy alive not because they want to be a central actor on the global stage. He rejects the notion that Britain only wants to leave in order to regain global leadership, but still stresses that it wants to be a part of the international community. This construction contradicts most of the conservative Leave campaigner's constructions of Britain as an example that other countries should follow and of Britain standing up for

the other EU member states who are being silenced. This deviation becomes especially contradictory when compared Johnson's statements in the Telegraph.

"If we stay, we will find our global influence and weight not enhanced, but diminished – as the EU ruthlessly cuckoos us aside from our seat on international bodies, from the IMF and the UN and the WTO [...] We are not more powerful, or more influential for being around the table in Brussels – look at the pitiful results of the so-called renegotiation earlier this year. We are drowned out." (Johnson in telegraph please vote leave on Thursday)

Johnsen makes it very clear that Britain should not be seen or regard itself as just one of the many members of the EU. He accentuates the British distinctiveness from the other European countries and draws on the fact that the British national identity has always constructed Britain as separate from Europe and resulted in an identity that is singular and detached.

The conservative Leave-campaigners portray the EU as a malicious, authoritarian organisation who purposefully takes advantage of some member states. This is done to construct an enemy who the British people can unite against. Though most of the differentiations between Britain and the EU are made on civic aspects, there are some cultural aspects as well. The discourse show that parliamentary democracy is given more importance than parliamentary sovereignty which suggest that the conservatives' construction of national identity is more closely aligned with New Labour or civic nationalism as was expected. When it came to the immigration discourse however the same patters could not be observed.

As we saw in chapter 5. the Conservatives adopted a hard line on immigration in response to increased concerns over high numbers of immigration in the early 2000's (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.81). During the 2016 referendum this stance continued with repeated demands for increased boarder control and the need to restrict immigration. Within the conservative Leave-campaigners discourse on immigration one of the most repeated arguments was the warning of new impending member-states in the EU. Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Serbia were all in accession negotiations during the time of the campaign and this was framed as a potential thret to Britain. In most instances, these arguments were framed around what the accession of new member-states would mean for immigration into the UK. In the Daily Mail Gove emphasised the pressure increased immigration would put on the NHS, schools and housing.

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"When Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey join the EU, another 88 million people will be eligible for NHS care and school places for their children."
(Gove in Daily mail).

Gove's stamens employed similar scare tactics to Farage as he made it appear like the combined population of all these countries will have access to the NHS if they join the EU, which was not a truthful claim. Furthermore, Gove implied that immigrants who made use of the national institutions and the welfare system were infringing on services that should be reserved for Britain's. Gove did however make attempts to highlight the multicultural aspects of the British nation sating in an opinion piece in *I/News* that Britain has always welcomed foreigners.

"Throughout our history, and particularly in the decades since the end of the Second World War, we have welcomed foreign workers and their families as they made the UK their home. We should be, and are, proud of that fact. But our people were always assured by our government that they would limit numbers arriving in order that local services would not be overwhelmed." (Gove, I, 16/6/2016)

It is notable here that Gove states that Britain has always, but especially since the Second World War been welcoming to immigrants when Britain has seen many race-related conflicts since the war, most notably perhaps in the 1980's. Gove might be dismissing these conflicts in order to combat claims that he and the leave campaigners are racist, how could they be racist in a country that have always welcomed immigrants? As he is making this argument however, Gove reasserts the distinction between foreign workers who now see the UK as their home, seemingly referring to British citizens of foreign decent, and 'our people' and 'our government'. This implies that immigrants, even when settled down and attained citizenship are not included in the British 'us' that Gove envisages.

In addition to this line of argument much of the discourse also showed signs of another reason the accession of these countries would be bad for the UK. The countries and their inhabitants were linked with poverty, corruption and even terrorism. Gove explicitly made these connections in an opinion piece in the Daily mail.

"Secretary Theresa May also gave a significant speech about the future of Europe this week. And she was admirably clear about her concerns. 'The states now negotiating to join the EU include Albania, Serbia and Turkey — countries with poor populations and serious problems with organised crime, corruption, and sometimes even terrorism. 'We have to ask ourselves, is it really right that the EU

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should just continue to expand, conferring upon all new member states all the rights of membership?" (Gove in Daily Mail).

Note here that by quoting what another politician has said about the dangers of the accession of these countries, Gove can distance himself from the stamen in the event that they caused outrage. By employing these stamens in his own opinion piece Gove is nevertheless making these connections clear to the audience with the implication being that being that if Britain still is a member of the EU when these countries join the union, criminals and terrorist will gain easy access into Britain. In the same piece Gove continues to link migrants to terrorism and in addition starts problematizing the religion within the accession countries.

"And just as the fate of Bosnian Muslims in the Yugoslav wars inspired jihadists to flock to Europe, so Syria has become the training ground for thousands of Islamist terrorists. Against this background, the Home Secretary is surely right to say it cannot be wise for us to extend the frontiers of the EU so that we have a land border with Syria. But that is EU policy backed by the Foreign Office. The EU is planning not just to give visa-free travel to 77 million Turks, but also to absorb this Muslim state into the EU. [...] How can it possibly be sensible to allow Turkey, in its current straits, and with Islamic State on its border, to become a full member of the EU?" (Gove, Daily Mail, 30/4/2016).

Again, Gove relies on scare tactics referencing jihadists and Islamism terrorists and implying allowing turkey to join the EU will mean the increased follow of criminals and terrorist into Britain. The statements here are however not specifically showing what consequences this will have for Britain. This is notable in and of itself as it becomes clear that it is not only Britain sharing a land border with these countries that is seen as a problem but the fact that these countries are eligible for membership at all. Gove reveal that the conservative leavers construction of the British national identity is more ethnic than originally expected. Like Farage, Gove perceive the British nation partially in cultural term as he regards it as a problem that countries where the predominant religion is not Christianity have the opportunity to become members of the EU. Within the discourse and immigration, the conservative leave campaigners made very clear the distinction between insiders and outsiders based on values. Britain was again for trade as a generous open nation who wanted to help others while the immigrant what portrayed as taking advantage of the Britons generosity and coming into Britain to exploit the generous welfare system. By doing it this way the Conservatives could argue against immigration without referring to race or ethnicity. Though the two parties discussed so far differed in how they constructed the EU as a threat, their discourse on immigration was quite similar. We saw that UKIP's immigration discourse reviled a national identity

with several cultural and ethnic components and the conservative Leave campaigners echoed many of the same sentiments with Gove stating in the Daily Mail; 'How can it possibly be sensible to allow Turkey, in its current straits, and with Islamic State on its border, to become a full member of the EU?' (Gove, 2016). Gove makes the same connection between the accession of Turkey and threat of the Islamic state as Farage with the same religious overtones.

7.2.3 The Labour Party

We observed in the Labour Leave-campaigners construction of the British in-group that they wanted to hold on to their open and civic conceptions of nationalism, and as we shall see they managed to do this while constructing both the internal out-group and when construction the EU and an out group. As the immigration issue took centre stage in the referendum debates, however, Labour leave-campaigner had to accommodate Labour voters who were concerned over immigration without abandoning the Labour party's values of multiculturalism, tolerance, and generosity.

Internal 'Others'

Within the discourse of the Labour Leave-campaigners there also emerge a new internal out-group. Within their discourse however it was not the remain campaign as a whole who was cast as the outsider but rather, they repeatedly made attempt to separate themselves and the leave campaign from Labour members who were campaigning for Remain. Knowing that a majority of people who supported Labour would probably be inclined to support remain the Labour Leavers made attempts to discredit Labour members who campaigned for Remain.

"[Stuart] believes there is an attitude among many pro-EU campaigners that voters who are sceptical about the benefits of membership must be naïve, or even racist. 'There's a bit of sneering, which is, if you're voting for leave, you're probably the wrong side of 60, you're probably not very well educated.'" (Stewart, 2016).

Stuart is arguing that not only are those who are proud leave-voters branded as naïve or racist, but she claims that even people who are sceptical in some way to Britain's membership in the EU are dismissed by the Remain camp as racist. Stuart's argument is quite similar to Farage's populist rhetoric as it fosters the belief that the 'pro-EU campaigners' are not listening to those who are sceptical towards the EU and their concerns are dismissed and even mocked. At the same time the Labour leave campaigners emphasised that they understood the concerns of the British people and presented the opportunity to appease their concerns. At the Intelligence squared debate

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Stuart explicitly stated that she particularly wanted to encourage Labour voter to vote leave.

"I brought this along [holds up a Labour party rosette] not particularly because I wanted you to vote Labour, but I brought this along just to remind any Labour voters that it is perfectly legitimate, honourable and possible to wish to vote leave and still be a Labour member and I shall partly make that case as well." (Stuart, Great intelligence squared)

It is important to remember that after the Labour party adopt a pro-EU stance and as immigration numbers started to increase they saw several voters move towards more right-wing parties which were better representatives of their Euroscepticism (Evans & Mellon, 2019, p.81). Labour politicians were therefore not only interested in securing Labour votes but also wanted to underline that the Labour party could also represent citizens who were not in favour of the EU in an attempt to stop more people defecting. Stuart's claim that voting leave as a Labour voter was not only a legitimate choice but an honourable one carried the implication that voting Remain was not honourable. In fact, the Labour leave campaigners made several implicit suggestions that Labour politicians who were campaigning for remain had abandoned the Labour case. Hoey's statement at the spectator debate, already looked at in 7.1.3, showed that she was very proud of being in the leave side of the debate while she subtly criticised her Labour colleagues.

"I'm very proud to be following in the footsteps of great Labour figures whose Democratic credentials can never be doubted. Hugh Gaitskell, Peter Shore and people like Barbara Castle. The Labour movement's roots were to represent the interests of the workers against big business. The roots have shrunk, then if they have and they are, then so has a true meaning of left-wing politics and we need to refresh them." (The Spectator, 2016, 20:35)

All the political figures Hoey claiming to be proud to follow are, predictably, outspoken Eurosceptics and by asserting that their democratic credentials could not be doubted she was implying that other Labour politicians' democratic credentials could be. As Britain's parliamentary democracy had traditionally been very important to Labour's civic nationalism implying that some Labour politicians no longer held these beliefs was a damning accusation. Hoey then suggested that the Labour party's historic position as the representatives for workers had shrunk and needed refreshing. As the Labour party's stance shifted from Euroscepticism to relative pro-EU in the 1980s they were seen to no longer represent the Euroscepticism often found within the working class which made up most of their supporters (Evans, 2003, p.96). Hoey's statement then seemed to suggest

that the party needed to move back towards this Eurosceptic tradition which she now, through campaigning for Leave, did.

Through their construction of Labour Remain-campaigners as an internal out-group, it becomes clear that the Labour Leave-campaigners view Britain parliamentary democracy as the nation's core, this will in fact be reaffirmed within the construction of the EU as an out-group. It also became evident both through their construction of the national in group and of the Remainers as outgroup that Labour Leave-campaigners were actively trying to represent working class people who no longer felt that the Labour party as a whole did not.

External 'Others'

Just like the other two political parties, the Labour leave-campaigners discourse also focused on the more established out-groups of the EU and immigrants. At the surface level the civic nationalism of Britain which is often displayed by the Labour party would merge well with the values and culture that underline the unification of Europe. This is perhaps the reason the majority of Labour parliamentarians supported Remain. What the minority leave-supporting Labour politicians had to do then was to prove that this was not the case, but rather that the values so essential to British civic nationalism was not compatible with the EU (Bryant, p.272). However as most traditional Labour voter had a predisposition favourable to the EU the Labour Leave-campaigners had to adopt a line of argumentation that was not as explicitly negative towards the union as that could risk Labour voters distrusting their arguments or even dismissing them as propaganda because it undermined their firmly held beliefs, known as confirmation bias. Labour Leave-campaigner, therefore, had to strike a balance between criticising the EU but doing it in a way that would not alienate the people who were pro-EU. Gisela Start exemplifies this in her opening statements at the Great Intelligence Squared debate where she admits that the EU had had some positive impact on the UK.

"Well, I remember the [Jacques] Delors commission when in the 1980s, it is true, it was a very socialist commission that gave us rights which Margaret Thatcher did not give us, but maternity rights, paternity rights all these things, the UK government has actually been more generous and more forward-looking than the EU has been since." (Stuart, great intelligence squared debate, 11:43)

Stuart asserts that in the 1980s the commission made positive attributions to Britain in the form of social rights. She contrasts the socialist commission of Delors with Thatcher's conservative government which emphasises that the contributions had a positive impact because they were based on a socialist ideology. She specifically mentions that the UK has been generous and forward-looking two values typically emphasised in civic

conceptions of nationalisms and which implies that the EU does not embody these values. Stuart then goes on to assert that since then the UK has been the source of progressive social right not the EU. That the positive aspects often attributed to the EU should actually be contributed to Britain was a repeated argument from Labour Leave-campaigners with Frank Field stating to BBC two's Daily politics "that many of the social rights that are trumpeted about as European were ones which we actually took into Europe. It is not that in fact somehow that workers in this country were bereft of rights until we joined the European union." (Field, Daily politics 16/4/2916). Labour Leave-campaigners repeatedly argued that people, especially their fellow Labour politicians, were wrong when representing the EU as democratic or socialist because, as Kate Hoey stated in the Spectator debate, the EU was the opposite.

"I am in the Labour party because I care about our public services and the service that they provide the most vulnerable and the EU is going down a neoliberal path to open up those very services to global tax-dodging multinational-corporations. Many people in [the Labour] party think vaguely of the EU as some kind of social democracy. It is not socialist, it is not democratic, it is exactly the opposite. It is corporatist and anti-democratic." (The Spectator, 2016, 21:54).

Hoey describes the EU as neoliberal, corporatist and anti-democratic all attributes that are meant to demonstrate that the EU's values are no longer compatible with the social and democratic values that the Labour-leavers clearly positioned as the most integral aspect of their construction of Britishness. Hoey not only suggest that the EU is incompatible with the British nation but also that the EU poses a threat to British institutions and services by opening them up to abuse from outside Britain. In this way she is implying that the EU threatens what she sees as the core of the Labour party as one of their most central values is to take care of the most vulnerable. Hoey then goes on to argue that because of these disparate views it should be more natural for Labour members to vote Leave as, in Hoey's view the EU and its government goes against Labour values.

"The EU's purpose is to rule in the interests of the smooth running of a corporatist economy without regard to the encumbrance of an electorate. Is this something that Labour voters or anyone else can support?" (The Spectator, 2016, 22:37).

In this statement Hoey seems to make a similar argument to the conservative leave-campaigners by stating that the EU is not undemocratic because it is not functioning as intended but that its purpose is to ignore national electorates in order to pursue financial gain. Hoey ends the paragraph with a rhetorical question that is meant to make the audience contemplate the question but with the implicit answer being; no of course not!

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The EU's anti-democratic status was arguably the most salient issue people in Britain, and in fact all over Europe, had with their membership in the union. This issue was therefore inevitable also a central to the labour leave-campaigners construction of the EU as an 'other'. At the same debate hosted by the Spectator Hoey explicitly stated that the EU's democratic deficit should in fact be enough to persuade people to want to end the membership.

"Now no one can deny that the EU's government, the Commission, is unelected and cannot be removed by any of us or elections and that fact alone is reason to me enough to reject the EU regardless of all the other considerations that you will hear tonight." (The Spectator, 2016, 21:19).

Hoey is highlighting Guibernau's political dimension of national identity which sees democracy as an integral part of the national identity as grounds the state's legitimacy in the national people. As already pointed out, democracy is especially central to the British national identity as it is tied to their view of themselves as historically more progressive than their European neighbours and is tied to the history of the empire when Britain saw themselves as transmitters of democracy around the globe (Dewey, 2009, p. 32). This is true for all the political parties discussed here and may be the reason the democratic deficit argument is so effective in Britain.

Throughout the construction of the EU as an out-group the labor leave-campaigners relied solely on civic concepts of the national identity. Highlighting the values integral to the civic Britishness was effective in differentiation Britain from the EU as the EU could subsequently be portrayed as a threat to the British people, their rights, and their sovereignty. The EU's democratic deficit was also effectively portrayed as a threat to Britain parliamentary democracy which was especially central to New Labour Nationalism (Parekh, 2000, p.261). When it comes to the Labour Leave-campaigners immigration discourse however it seems that these civic components of the British nation were not adequate to demarcate the British nation.

While the leave campaigners from all the political parties emphasise the need for the UK to 'take back control' over their border in order to decrease the amount of immigration, they differed in the reasoning behind the limitation of immigration. When it came to the construction of immigrants as outsiders it was very obvious that the Labour Leave-campaigners wanted to maintain a civic conception of Britain as an open, tolerant and multicultural nation. They resisted any mention of race and ethnicity and avoided making negative claims about immigrants. As the Labour party generally was more pro-immigration, or at least less anti-immigration, than parties to their right like the

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conservatives and UKIP, arguing against immigration while not alienating Labour voters could pose a problem. Labour Leave-campaigners rhetoric on immigration was therefore very careful. At the Great intelligence squared debate Stuart even explicitly stated that talking about immigration often carried the assumption of racism.

"The second one is where they talk about immigration, and this is really important; we have spent a long time telling ourselves that this is something which we must not talk about because if you talk of border control and immigration 'you are a racist'." (Stuart, great intelligence debate).

It becomes very clear from this statement that the different political parties are trying to reach people with very different views. The fact that Stuart purposefully says that 'we tell ourselves we are racist' in contrast to the conservatives' stating that; 'they accuse us of being racist' show that the audience she is trying to target is very aware of the connection between supporting leave and opposing immigration. Stuart acknowledges that 'being racist' is not only something 'we' are afraid others will accuse us of but something 'we' are afraid of being or seeming and recognises that leave supporters might be afraid that they seem racist if they vote Leave. The Labour Leave-supporter try to remove the connection between immigration control and racism in two ways. Firstly, they argue that limiting immigration has nothing to do with racism but rather it is a question of the national people concet i.e. they should have a say in the immigration numbers.

"I regard it as a function of the nation-state to have a policy as to who lives and does not live in your country, a policy designed by consent of it's people, and that consent to be is more important than anything else." (Stuart, great intelligence debate,).

Secondly, Stuart tried to dispel the connection between immigration control and racism by emphasising that it is not only white Britons that want to limit immigration. At the same debate Stuart emphasises that it is people who come from families that have come to Britain from commonwealth countries who are worried about immigration.

"I am a Birmingham MP. Significant numbers of that city come from the former commonwealth, second, third generation. They find it really difficult because of the pressure of half a billion who are allowed to come in without any question we are tightening up so severely on what they think are historic links. They don't think that is fair, and I am afraid I happen to agree with them." (Stuart, great intelligence squared debate).

Stuart asserts that it is the second and third generation immigrants that feel the pressure that the high immigration numbers put on the country. She also specifies that these are immigrants from former commonwealth countries drawing on the historic dimension of

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the British national identity and the nations ties to the empire and later the commonwealth. Stuart states that it is unfair that Britain is obliged to take in certain amounts of immigrants from the EU because it makes it harder for people from outside the EU to come to the UK. Here she highlights the historical link to the commonwealth and implies that the UK should prioritise immigrants from the commonwealth countries to honour this historic relationship. Suggest that they are more similar or at least closer connected to Britain than the EU and EU citizens are. It is also important to note that Stuart claims that these opinions are not her own but those of her constituents as she states 'they find it difficult' and 'what they think are historic links'. By doing this Stuart is distancing herself from the immigration comments in order to shield herself from claims of being racist. Though her statements implied a prioritization of commonwealth immigrants over EU immigrants that was based in shared history the Labour leavers emphasis on shared history was made much more explicitly by Frank Field on a debate segment on BBC two's Daily Politics presented by Andrew Neil.

Neil: 'I think the [immigration] numbers are a problem for two reasons; one is that we have never decided in this country what we, as locals, should actually sign up to as citizens, and we have had no idea to our newcomers to what we expect to them. So huge numbers of people have come, and instead of strengthening our culture in some key instances, have actually divided it. And I think that is bad for a nation -'

Neil: 'What? People coming from the EU?'

Field: 'Yes, I do.'

Neil: 'Why is that?'

Field: 'Well, because you have a whole range of religions, of different histories, and I think -'

Neil: 'Lots of the Poles are catholic; I think we are used to that in this country.'

Field: 'but most of this country aren't.'"

Field firstly made a distinction between 'locals' and immigrants implying that there are some people who are native to Britain, while others are not. By using the term 'locals' Field avoids making an explicit distinction between 'real Britons', those who already are inhabitants of Britain and immigrants avoiding possible racist connotation this would entail. Field further states that these locals share a common culture that is distinct to them and that large amounts of immigrants coming into Britain poses a threat to this culture. In addition, Field expresses that differences in religions and history might be divisive to the British culture. These statements are contrary to the multiculturalism

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consistently expressed by the Labour party. It is important to note however that even though Field here expresses components of the British nation that are similar to UKIP and the conservatives' more ethnic construction, Fields's stamens do not imply any value judgments or consideration of one culture being superior to the other. This would mean that Field's differentiation could still be regarded as civic given Eisenstadt and Giessen (1995) definition of civic nationalism in the theory asserting that; 'The out-group is [in civic nationalism] also emphasized as different but without the suggestion that they are inferior to the in-group.' (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995, p.80).

Through the Labour Leave-campaigners construction of the various out-groups it become evident that they were construction a civic British national identity that saw multiculturalism and values like tolerance, generosity, and equality as integral to the nation. We did however also see some cultural aspects in this discourse, especially through Field's comments on common history and religion. These comments did however seem to be devoid of any value judgments, at least explicitly, on the in- and out-groups.

8. Conclusion

As presented in the chapter 3 the state its institutions and political figures play an integral role in the construction and reconstruction of national identities. While politicians' role in the reconstruction of national identities is often attributed to broad-scale long term policy changes, this thesis focused on politician's role in affecting citizens perceptions and national identification with more short term political activity (Helebling, Reeskens & Wright, 2016, p.749). Through exploration of the question; **How did UKIP-, Labour- and Conservative politicians on the Leave side construct British national identities during the 2016 EU membership referendum?** the analysis revealed that while the Leave-campaigning politicians primarily construct the national in-group of Britain in civic terms, striving to creating a national identity that was based on shared values and institutions they all to varying degrees also based their conception of the British national identity on more cultural and ethnic aspects as well.

As UKIP continued in its traditional populist position, Farage positioned both the internal elite as well as the external elite in the form of the EU as others who posed a threat to the normal, working people who they positioned as the heart of the British nation. Though Farage mostly differentiated the EU based on civic criteria like institutions and values and tried to stay away from mentioning race and ethnicity when talking about immigration he clearly exhibited traditional ethnic conceptions of national identity like resistance towards immigration and rejection of Turkish membership in the EU.

The conservatives were expected to construct a more civic nationalism that UKIP, and through the initial analysis of their construction of the Remain campaign and the EU as out-groups these expectations seemed to be confirmed. When it came to the construction of immigrants as out groups however the conservative leave campaigners, like UKIP, started referring to Britain's uniqueness of more cultural and ethnic terms, excluding immigrants based on their religion and positioning the British national identity very clearly as superior to both the immigrant out-group and the EU out-group.

The conservative Leave-campaigners did as expected construct the most consistently civic nationalism among all the political parties looked at. This was in line with their party's traditional position of valuing openness, inclusivity and multiculturalism. However the labour leave-campaigners construction of Britishness could not be said to be devoid of cultural conceptions of the nation as especially Frank Field seemed to differentiate immigrants on the

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basis of their religion and history. As these differentiations seemed to be devoid of any value judgment however, they could arguably still be positioned within civic nationalism.

The most crucial observation was however that regardless of what type of national identity the different parties constructed they all argued that the out-groups' difference from the national community was a reason to exclude them from entering into the nation. simultaneously these out-groups were constructed as threat to the British nation which the politicians arguably did to mobilize the national people to support the leave cause, as leaving the EU was presented as the only opportunity to keep the constructed out-groups at bay.

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