



Dealing with Political Uncertainty in the Aftermath of Brexit

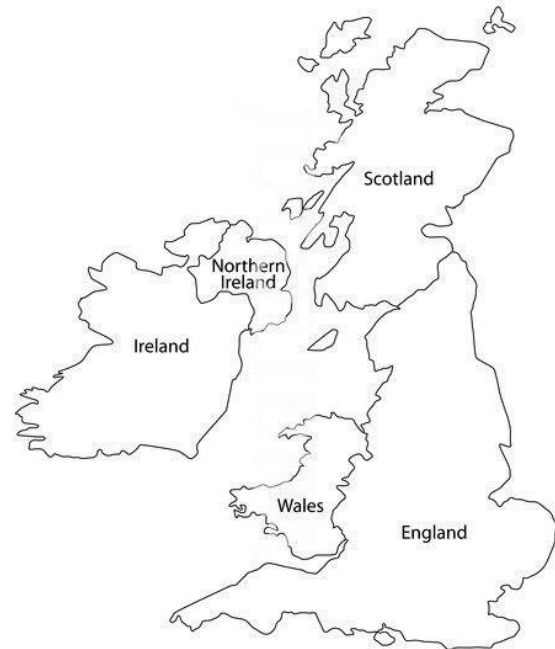
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Introduction

The problems of Brexit are unlike anything the House of Commons has faced since it was created in the 14th Century. Evolving with the government and the needs of the British people over the past 6 centuries, Commons developed from offering advice to the King and court, to become the center of English Government. Today, under the leadership of the Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his solid majority of Conservative Party Members of Parliament (MPs), Commons struggles to lead the United Kingdom from its withdrawal from the European Union, which became official on 31 January 2020.

That day, the EU shrank from 28 to 27 Member States, and the UK restored the economic and social independence it gave up when it joined in 1975. But the consequences of Brexit remain massive, poorly understood, controversial and unresolved. The UK's relationship with the EU—its dominant trading partner—and major issues like control over ports, relations with other partners like the United States, and above all the delicate relationships between London, Northern Ireland and Scotland, remain uncertain. If mishandled, the process could leave the UK isolated, impoverished, and smaller with the loss of Scotland. Additionally, it could lead to the resumption of armed conflict over the future of North Ireland. These are the challenges facing the Members of Parliament (MPs).



Brexit: The First Issue

Brexit, Britain's withdrawal from the European Union (EU), has been the overwhelming issue of British politics ever since it was discussed in a speech by then-Member of Parliament David Cameron's in 2013. No issue in modern politics has divided the people of the United Kingdom more sharply. It cast a dark shadow internationally, as the first successful initiative of populist politics in a wave that has affected virtually every democracy around the world since.

Brexit, or 'British Exit', withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, has been a complicated process in attempting to secure the United Kingdom's exit in a fair and



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favorable deal toward all parties involved. Whereas mention of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union brought about national attention at its time of announcement, it was not until David Cameron's successful election as Prime Minister in 2015 that Brexit became the overwhelming issue of the government. Reflecting long-standing unhappiness within his ruling Conservative Party with EU membership, Cameron pressed an issue sure to attract controversy. Keeping his word to the people in an effort to deliver, Cameron and his Conservative Government quickly announced that a national referendum would be held a year later in 2016 to determine the public favorability toward leaving the European Union.



How Brexit advocates saw the choice: either/or

To the great surprise of many observers, the people of the United Kingdom voted in favor of leaving the European Union under a very slim majority, 51.9% to leave versus 48.1% to remain. The vote revealed the sharp division and foreshadowed the confusing, dramatic, and in times childish processes to come.

Prime Minister David Cameron, who approved the referendum not because he supported it, but to mollify and silence his internal opponents, resigned as Prime Minister. The ruling Conservatives replaced him with Theresa May and a new Conservative Government that would lead the charge in delivering Britain's exit from the European Union. Theresa May activated

Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty starting the processes for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union which included, a two-year negotiation period ensured that the rights of EU citizens left in the United Kingdom would remain the same, and that enough time existed to properly negotiate an exit from the European Union.



Despite the possible appearance of a peaceful transition period of two years, this transition period resulted in three different changes of Government, four different Brexit deals, three of which failed to gain majority support, and a time of political headache and uncertainty for all. After the activation of Article 50, Theresa May called for general snap elections in an attempt to bolster the Conservative majority in Parliament to pass the upcoming Brexit deals. Unfortunately for May, Conservatives lost the majority in Parliament and had to form a coalition Government with the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party. With a parliamentary majority in hand, Theresa May proceeded with initial EU negotiations in June of 2017, ultimately resulting in a deadlock between both sides. Unable to get the European Union to compromise and in an effort to promote cooperation between both sides, Theresa May publicized the main issues of Brexit, many of which members of the European Union agreed upon. Now under a moment of cooperation, Theresa May and the European Union each issued statements of agreement, leading to the creation of an official withdrawal agreement months later.



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Although the news of an Brexit agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union would bring joy to the hardline Brexiters in Parliament, overwhelming criticisms over the finite details of this arrangement led to calls for a new Government, a vote of no confidence, and the resignation of several Members and Secretaries of Parliament. Undeterred by a vote of no confidence in her own party and bolstered by the EU's endorsement of the Withdrawal agreement, Theresa May pushed forward with introducing the agreement as a bill to be voted upon in Parliament. Unfortunately for Theresa and her Government, the original withdrawal agreement failed with an overwhelming majority of 432 Members of Parliament voting against the proposed agreement, the largest defeat of a Prime Minister in history. Theresa May and her Government would push forward twice more with their attempts to settle a Brexit deal, both times resulting in a failure to gain the support and consent of Parliament. On the heels of her third and final defeat in Parliament, Theresa May resigned as Prime Minister citing her inability to gain Parliament's favor, ultimately paving the way for new Conservative leadership to push the United Kingdom through the finish line.



Social distant House of Commons¹

¹ George Lythgoe, 'South Cumbria MPs Simon Fell and Tim Farron react to controversial Brexit bill in House of Commons', *The Mail*, 15 September 2020,

Running hot off the heels of his resignation as Foreign Secretary under Theresa May, Boris Johnson became one of the leading candidates in the race to replace Theresa May, eventually gaining enough support within the Conservative Party to become Prime Minister. While under the direction of Boris Johnson, Brexit negotiations shifted from that of finding a deal acceptable to all, to that of getting Brexit done. In an attempt to pass any Brexit deal while under his administration, Boris Johnson shortened the time allocated to Parliament to debate Brexit, a move considered unconstitutional by some and dangerous by others. Despite Johnson's promise to the people of the United Kingdom that Brexit would be done before the agreed upon deadline of the 31 October 2019, Johnson was forced by Parliament to send a letter asking the European Union for an extension after losing the vote on his deal in Parliament.

Granted an extension by the European Union, the date that the United Kingdom would officially leave had been set for 31 January 2020. Under immense public pressure to see Brexit through, Boris Johnson called for an election to try and regain a Conservative majority in Parliament in an effort to pass an upcoming Brexit deal. Campaigning heavily under the promise to "get Brexit done," Boris Johnson was able to gain his Conservative majority by flipping a number of Labour constituencies referred to as the "red wall." These industrial constituencies though traditionally Labour, had been bought on the Conservative promises of Brexit to return financial growth and stability to their regions. Emboldened with his new majority, Boris Johnson pushed through Parliament with a new Brexit deal. Taking criticism from several

<https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/18720885.south-cumbria-mps-simon-fell-tim-farron-react-controversial-brexit-bill-house-commons/>



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Members of Parliament as his new deal had been that of Theresa May's, but with the creation of a Customs Union to negate the issues of an "Irish Backstop," Boris Johnson was able to pass his Brexit deal in a historic 358 majority vote. With a deal now ratified by Parliament, the

United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January 2020, and entered into a 2-year transition period to negotiate next steps with the world.

Brexit Timeline

Brexit: key events in the process of the UK's exit from the EU



Source: Evening Express, 2019 - <http://bit.ly/2NKNQva>; Government.nl, 2019 - <http://bit.ly/352xhkb>

Reasons to Leave

Despite being a member of the European Union for 47 years, calls to leave the European Union had been well present before David Cameron's speech in 2013. Stemming from a wide range of issues each speaking to a niche voting base of the British Public, these issues had been placed into three different categories: financial, political, and social. These three categories represented a multitude of concerns,

constituencies, and opinions on why the United Kingdom should leave the European Union.

Starting with the financial aspect of Brexit, as part of being a member of the European Union, the United Kingdom had to agree to be in the European Union's single market. The European Single Goods Market is an agreement between member nations recognizing that international borders and the tariffs and customs that exist between them should no longer hinder trade. Essentially killing tariffs, customs checks, and



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other fees associated with international trade, the European Single Goods Market was meant to be a tool to bolster member nations economies, and yet in the eyes of Pro-Brexiteers, the opposite was occurring. As other member nations gained the ability to freely trade with the United Kingdom, Pro-Brexiteers saw this influx of international trade unfavorable and harmful to domestic industry and interests. Many felt leaving the European Union and its Single Goods Market would see a return to the rise of domestic industry and economic growth.



Boris Johnson's famous 2016 Brexit campaign bus, with its emotionally compelling, and factual dubious slogan

Pro-Brexiteers also felt that they had not personally seen the economic advantages promised to them under the guise of the Single Goods Market. With the economies of all member nations of the European Union being interconnected and under strict regulation, fears over economic damage and instability grew immensely due to the resulting 2008 financial crash and the 2009 Eurozone crisis. Thanks to these fears of economic uncertainty and the general lack of control felt by the British Populace, financial reform became the centerpiece of the Brexit campaign, and a rallying call for the Conservative Party. Despite the worry over finances and the cost of Brexit becoming the focal point for all political parties, the financial aspect of Brexit, be it the cost of staying in the European Union, or leaving the European Union remained as the point of contention and fierce debate.

Although economic concerns led to fierce debate over Brexit, political concerns and issues followed suit as a close second. The idea that there is no higher authority than Parliament has been a defining philosophy of British Governance, and the basis for the concept referred to as “Parliamentary Sovereignty” since the Glorious Revolution in the 17th Century. Ever since joining the European Communities (what would later become the European Union) in 1973, many have felt that the superiority of the European Union’s law making body to be a direct threat toward Parliament and the ideals outlined in Parliamentary Sovereignty. Exemplified further through Parliament’s imperative to adopt and implement the common laws of the European Union, Pro-Brexiteers have felt that this imperative continuously violates National and Parliamentary Sovereignty.

Political tensions and distrust between the United Kingdom and the European Union have existed long before the calls of Brexit, however, they are best embodied through the several migrant crises felt within the last two decades. Pro-Brexiteers have felt that the European Union’s unwillingness to place harsher restrictions on those migrating and immigrating out of Eastern Europe and the Middle East have continued a streak of lax policy decisions. Stirred further into the public’s eye during the Brexit campaign was Member of Parliament Nigel Farage’s continuation of anti-migrant fliers, tweets, and other forms of social media outreach. Though the migrant aspect of Brexit received a majority of media attention during the Brexit campaign, it is often regarded as one of the least contributing factors toward the public favorability of Brexit.

Although it may seem that the debate around Brexit has been that of financial and political, it illuminates the social differences and inequalities between the classes of the United Kingdom. In a poll conducted by Statista indicated that younger and more educated voted



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largely in favor to stay, in stark comparison to older and less educated generations. Some experts have concluded that older generations were generations were likely more in favor to vote to leave the European Union as they have experienced the United Kingdom before joining the European Union in 1973. Further boiled down to political party comparisons, the majority of younger and more educated voters tended to vote Labor and other parties based upon staying, whereas older and lesser educated voters tended to vote Conservative and other parties based upon leaving. Though generational differences were one some of social issues at hand during the Brexit campaign, they were not the only social matter relevant toward Brexit.

The availability of non-partisan and factual information has always been a struggle for developed countries, especially those in periods of political uncertainty. Claims that newspapers such as The Times, The Sun, The Daily Telegraph, and a handful of others are purposefully eurosceptic had been present since the United Kingdom joined the European Union in 1973, but had been further amplified during Brexit. These newspapers viewed by some as “intentionally encouraging Brexit” became yet another debate at the dinner table furthering the generational and societal divide, and even led to the creation of the pro-european newspaper: The New European. The war for or against Brexit was waged both between Members of Parliament and in the households of their constituents, but it represented larger issues than “Parliamentary Sovereignty,” “vulnerabilities of domestic trade,” or “over-politicized newspapers.” To the people of the United Kingdom and to the world, this war represented addressing change.

Inter-Party Turmoil

Despite the Conservative Party’s “unified” appearance of running a Pro-Brexit platform, tensions and disagreements within the inner workings of the party often led to fierce debates and several changes of Government. At the heart of the Conservative party lies the political differences between Members of Parliament who wished for a “soft-Brexit,” and those who wished for a “hard-Brexit.” A “soft-Brexit” being that of an official split from the European Union while staying within its Single Goods Market, and a “hard-Brexit” being that of a complete and total withdrawal from the European Union. It is these political differences between these two factions of the Conservative Party that agreements over negotiated Brexit deals and the performance of the Conservative majority led Government became a hotbed issue often resulting in the resignations of several Members of Parliament. Though the beginnings of Conservative Members of Parliament resignations began with their own personal decision to resign, these deciding issues can be traced back to the beginnings of Brexit negotiations.

Ever since David Cameron’s announcement that the finite handlings of Brexit would be placed in the hands of his predecessor back in 2015, the races to replace both David Cameron and his eventual successor Theresa May after her failures to obtain an “acceptable” deal have proven to the British public to be nothing short of a political fiasco. Starting with the race to replace David Cameron after his



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resignation as Prime Minister, Conservative Party Leaders had pegged Boris Johnson as one of the potential candidates, but had felt his unpredictability and rash behavior would cost the party a majority in the next election. The 2016 Conservative Party Leadership Race initially appeared to be a showdown between all sides of the Conservative Party and yet in a surprise toward all, resulted in the resignations.

Though infighting and resignation of cabinet secretaries soon became commonplace within the Conservative run Government, the same became on the other side of the aisle within the Labour-led Opposition. Officially, the Labour Party's position on Brexit was that of staying in the European Union. A position many sought natural for the opposition party, but a position that felt its share fair of political turmoil. Controversies within Labour Leadership and claims of anti-Semitism directed toward Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn soon shifted the spotlight off of Labour efforts in delaying Brexit, resulting in the resignation of several members of his cabinet. Criticisms began to run rampant within the Labour party, some of which felt that not enough was being done to address the party's history of anti-Semitism, with a majority feeling that not enough is being done to keep the United Kingdom in the European Union. Adding fuel to the fire, the Labour Party proceeded with a vote of no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, a vote which he narrowly passed, furthering the divide within the Labor Party.

Resignation of Theresa May

Theresa May's Government hit deadlocks and political landmines just as quickly as it had



gained traction and the confidence of the Party after her successful election in the 2016 Conservative Party Leadership Race. Although her resignation would not come for another 3 years, the beginnings of her decision to step down can be traced back to her first attempts to negotiate a withdrawal agreement from the European Union. Despite initial majority support from backbench Conservatives, Theresa May's original attempts in negotiating a deal with the European Union would see that support quickly diminish. Caught in between a hailstorm of appeasement in trying to gain the support of Hard-Brexiteers and Soft-Brexiteers alike, Theresa May managed to alienate both sides of the Conservative party and brought about a vote of no confidence. Managing to pass the first vote of no confidence, Theresa May soon found herself in the midst of a second vote of no confidence, this time in the presence of Parliament.

Narrowly surviving the second vote of no confidence with 19 votes in favor of her Government, Theresa May quickly realized she no longer had the support in Parliament to be able to pass a Brexit deal. In an effort to regain the ability to pass a Brexit deal, Theresa May called for elections to try and regain the Conservative majority. Unfortunately for May, she would lose that majority and would be



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forced to form a coalition Government with assistance from the Democratic Unionist Party. After her failure to gain the confidence of her first Brexit deal, Theresa May tried twice more, unfortunately resulting in failures to gain Parliament's confidence. Hot off the heels of her third failure, Theresa May resigned from her Premiership, stating her frustrations in not being able to reach an acceptable deal with Parliament.

The resignation of Theresa May highlighted the difficulties and frustrations felt by both Members of Parliament and the general public they represented. The inability of Theresa May's Premiership to pass an acceptable Brexit deal in Parliament signaled to some that the Government of the United Kingdom might not be ready or able to handle the challenges of governing outside of the European Union. Citing the key failures and political mockeries made within Parliament, mainly Theresa May's historic worst parliamentary defeat in British history, Conservative leadership and the general public felt that a new, bolder, and greater envisioned leader needed to take the mantle to get Brexit done. Thusly began the race to replace Theresa May, and the race to set the United Kingdom back on its feet.

The Rise of Boris Johnson

Considered by some as a political clown who would not amount to anything greater than a spot on the local council, Boris Johnson's rise to Premiership proved to all that unconventional politics has the ability to alter the course of a nation. Not your typical politician, Boris Johnson started his political career in political journalism as a journalist for The Daily Telegraph. Ironically writing pieces on making the case for both staying and leaving.

Hard pressed to see Brexit through, Theresa May pushed forward in her attempts at Union, Boris Johnson became known as an unconventional man with a habit of uttering out politically incentive remarks, which he would later claim had been taken out of context. Boris Johnson's political career officially began in 2008 in which he ran for the Mayor of London, a position that he would hold until 2016. Boris Johnson became known in the public spotlight for his popular appeal, his ferocity, and the often outlandish quotes he would spout out on the campaign trail. Due to his popularity and public appeal, he obtained the position as Foreign Secretary under the Theresa May Premiership.

Though quite sure his chances at one day gaining the Premiership were as likely as him being "reincarnated as an olive," those chances grew immensely after his resignation from the Theresa May Cabinet over her Brexit plans, and especially after Theresa May's resignation from the Premiership.



Prime Minister Johnson tries his best in the Common, September 2020.²

Slated not only as the public favorite, but viewed as the only person capable of uniting the Conservative Party and the people of the United Kingdom to get behind a Brexit deal, Boris Johnson soon rose to the Premiership. Quoted as he would rather "die three times over" than ask

² 'Brexit: House of Commons continues debate on the controversial Internal Market Bill | LIVE', NewsxTV, 15 September 2020,

<https://newsx.tv/2020/09/15/brexit-house-of-commons-continues-debate-on-the-controversial-internal-market-bill-live/>



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the European Union for an extension on getting a Brexit deal, Boris Johnson's Premiership and his message became quite abundantly clear: "Get Brexit Done." The change in governance from that of Theresa May to Boris Johnson signaled toward the British populace that enough time had been spent on feeble attempts to pass a deal, and that action can and would be taken now. Championing and campaigning toward those tired of nothing coming out of Parliament, Boris Johnson was able to blow past Parliamentary standstills and gained a Conservative Majority in Parliament through flipping a number of Labor industrial constituencies who had not seen the economic growth promised to them under Labor leadership.

Despite being forced by Parliament to ask for an extension in Brexit negotiations, Boris Johnson with the aid of his Conservative Majority finally presented Parliament with a deal capable of being passed. With a 358-234 vote, a 124 vote majority in favor of Boris's Brexit deal, the United Kingdom was slated to leave the European Union on 31 January 2020 and would remain in a two year transitional period to figure out how the United Kingdom would function apart from the European Union. Boris Johnson's Premiership signaled many key differences and changes within how Government should function, and how it can be impacted through unconventional means. The rise of Boris Johnson from journalist to Prime Minister of the United Kingdom serves as a testament toward the role of the media, and how unconventional methods can result in unforeseen successes. The same can be said for the deal he was able to broker between the United Kingdom and the European Union, leading many wondering how the fate of the nation will be altered.

Deal or No Deal?

While under the Premiership and Governance of Theresa May, many feared that the United

Kingdom would be stuck in a loop of Brexit negotiations unable to find an acceptable compromise. The processes and challenges faced by Theresa May's three failed deals stands as a 21st Century example on what cannot occur without the consent of Parliament. Each of these three deals negotiated under Theresa May exhibits a multitude of different concerns held by Parliament and the constituencies they serve. Starting with the failures of Theresa May's original Brexit deal, fears that the Irish Backstop, that being the creation of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, would prohibit easy and necessary trade soon grew from quiet whispers to frustrated shouts. Continued with Hard-Brexiteers feeling her deal left the United Kingdom "too closely intertwined," it became clear that without the support of Hard-Brexiteering back-benchers, that no deal would pass.

Though appeasing the Hard-Brexiteering seemed like an ample compromise to be able to get Brexit done and through, Theresa May risked alienating those who supported her original deal with some intertwinement with the European Union. Her unpopularity continued with her next set of deals, each one more infuriating than the last. Issues arisen with legal rights of both EU citizens in the United Kingdom, and United Kingdom citizens in the EU, to issues with fishing rights and other trade agreements made it clear that a new approach would have to be taken to lead the nation out of the European Union. Despite her best attempts, Theresa May realized that she would never be able to push her Brexit deals through and left it as the priority of the next Prime Minister with her resignation.



Rough day: Prime Minister Theresa May Resigns as premier on 7 June 2019

Brexit deals negotiated under the Premiership of Boris Johnson signaled a clear and apparent change to Members of Parliament and the British Populace, that getting Brexit done no matter the cost was the priority. Emboldened with the public's feelings of anger or inaction, the negotiating process under Boris Johnson switched from that of finding an acceptable compromise for all, to utilizing political statecraft and other loopholes to force a deal through. Bearing striking resemblances toward the deals negotiated under Theresa May's Premiership, Boris Johnson took advantage of the political chaos left in the wake of the previous general election. Playing upon unknowing advantages given to him by Labor inaction and infighting, Boris Johnson gained the ability to push a Brexit deal through before the opposition could react. Although the long-term impacts of his deal have yet to be seen, many are left wondering how the nation might look in the coming years.

Brexit: A threat to the Union?

Although Brexit deals with the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, both the trials and tribulations of Brexit and other political motivations have led to members of the United Kingdom to consider leaving the British Union. Historically the United Kingdom since the passage of the Acts of Union in 1707, again in 1800, and with the creation of the Irish free state in 1922, the

United Kingdom has long since been founded on a history of broken promises and exploitation. As the United Kingdom is split between a wide range of Kingdoms from England to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, so have these Kingdoms been split on the issue of Brexit. With the Kingdoms of Scotland and Northern Ireland voting in majority to stay in the European Union during the 2016 Referendum in stark contrast to the majority vote to leave in the Kingdoms of England and Wales, evidence suggesting Brexit to be a regional phenomenon and only regionally beneficial have never been more apparent. Taking a closer look at the agendas and political manifestos published by the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, the Social Democrat and Labour Party, and finally the Alliance Party, reunification, independence, and the immediate reversal of Brexit, have taken precedence in and lie within direct opposition of the wishes of the United Kingdom and her Government.

The call to disband or to leave the United Kingdom has been present since its creation in 1922. More recently exhibited through Scotland's Independence Referendum of 2014, and definitely exacerbated in the political campaigning of post-Brexit United Kingdom, the threat of a potential breakup of the British Union could spell disastrous for the people of the United Kingdom if not mitigated delicately. Though causes of the call for independence and separation vary from attempts to increase farming subsidies, concerns about defense spending, and more recently the handlings of Brexit, something has to be said that several members of the United Kingdom would rather pursue these tasks alone than leave it to the House of Commons.

What now?

Having left the European Union in January 2020, the United Kingdom has been in a two year transitional period that shall last until the 31

January 2022. Now that Brexit has been done and dusted, much is left toward Parliament to figure out solutions with Brexit's seen and unforeseen consequences. Mainly with issues of trade and the Irish Backstop, to issues of security, law enforcement, further regulations, and finally toward issues of rights of both UK and EU citizens, a lot has been left unresolved and in desperate need of a solution.



Don't forget the other 48.1 percent

Starting with issues of trade and the Irish Backstop, much has been left undecided with the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union's Single Goods Market. As the United Kingdom is no longer a member, new trade deals shall need to be negotiated between the European Union, the United States, and several other foreign countries in an effort to recuperate the financial loss. Moving on to the issue of the Irish Backstop, a creative solution is needed to prevent the emergence of a "hard-border" and the problems with trade and the flow of goods arisen with the onset of a "hard-border." Though the United Kingdom voted to not adopt the Euro, worries about the stability of the Pound Sterling in the atmosphere of the Post-Brexit United Kingdom have started to become a pressing issue on global stock markets.

³ Department for Exiting the European Union, "New Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration," GOV.UK (Department for Exiting

Continuing toward issues of Security, with leaving the European Union, the United Kingdom has removed itself from several data sharing and other official security agreements. Making the jobs of law enforcement harder as with these agreements comes access to important databases and other crucial security infrastructure, much attention is needed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the nation and its inhabitants. Though contributions toward and participation within NATO and other military organizations exist on a per-country basis, fears that the United Kingdom shall withdraw from these organizations have been present since Brexit began.

Finalizing with other legal issues and social matters such as the rights and protections given to European Union Citizens living in the United Kingdom and vice versa, attention is needed toward ensuring or reforming these rights and protections. Although the English Bill of Rights outlines the rights and protections afforded to English citizens, a decision must be made if these rights and protections should be given to European Union citizens as well. With issues of the rights and protections of European Union Citizens arises issues with citizenship agreements and travel restrictions. Should the decision be made to afford these agreements, rights, and protections to European Union Citizens, much to do exists in the necessity for a legal framework.

Previous Bills

- *Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration*³

The new Withdrawal Agreement sets out the terms of the UK's exit from the European Union and European Atomic Energy Community, with

the European Union, October 19, 2019), <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-withdrawal-agreement-and-political-declaration>



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changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol to remove the so-called backstop and replace it with arrangements that meet the Government's objectives. The new Political Declaration sets out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom and reflects the Government's ambition to conclude an ambitious, broad, deep and flexible partnership across trade and economic cooperation with the EU, with a free trade agreement with the EU at its core, alongside agreements on security and other areas of cooperation.

- *EU Withdrawal Bill*⁴

A Bill to implement, and make other provision in connection with, the agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union which sets out the arrangements for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU.

- *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*⁵

One of the two main treaties forming the basis of European Union Law. Originally the Lisbon Treaty but with significant alterations, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union sets out the organizational and functional details of the European Union.

- *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*⁶

The Charter of Fundamental Rights brings together all the personal, civic, political, economic and social rights enjoyed by people within the EU in a single text. It covers all the rights found in the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU, the rights and freedoms enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, and other rights and principles resulting from the common constitutional traditions of EU countries and other international instruments

Party Positions

- **Conservative Party:** Arguably one of the most vocal, if not the most vocal about "getting Brexit done," the Conservative party lies at the forefront of the Brexit movement and in control of the current Government. Despite the best efforts of opposition parties, the Conservative party through several administrations has managed to see Brexit through, and intends to forge the United Kingdom on a path of controlling immigration, securing stronger funding for the NHS, growing the economy, and managing the debt deficit.
- **Labour Party:** Forming the primary opposition to the Conservative party, the Labour party attempted time and time again to cede all Conservative progress

⁴ European Commission, "The EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement," European Commission (European Commission, 22 July 2020), https://ec.europa.eu/info/european-union-and-united-kingdom-forging-new-partnership/eu-uk-withdrawal-agreement_en

⁵ EUR-Lex, "Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union PART TWO - NON-DISCRIMINATION AND CITIZENSHIP OF THE UNION," Lex Access to

European Union law (EUR-Lex, 6 July 2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E018>

⁶ EUR-Lex, "Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union," Lex access to European Law (EUR-Lex, 26 October 2012), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012P%2FTXT>



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toward Brexit. Until its leadership scandal with Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn and increasing public outcry for action, the Labour Party held its ground as the “anti-Brexit” party. Flipping its role to that of getting a more favorable Brexit deal after a sea of public outcry, the Labour Party is now concerned with rebuilding public infrastructure, tackling the war on poverty, pursuing a green industrial revolution, and strengthening the United Kingdom’s international ties through increased diplomacy.

- **Scottish National Party:** Serving as another opposition party toward Brexit, the Scottish National Party is the largest of two parties forming the Scottish Government. Campaigning on the principles of remaining in the European Union, reversing the budget cuts enacted to the Scottish Government by the House of Commons, and putting Scotland first. With the aftermath of Brexit upon the SNP, the SNP is now worried about protecting the environment, aiding the NHS, assisting with the increasing cost of living in the United Kingdom, and winning a fair retirement deal for pensioners.
- **Liberal Democrats Party:** An anti-Brexit party at heart, the Liberal Democrats Party have been increasingly vocal on how leaving the European Union would be damaging to the people of the United Kingdom. Sitting as one of the minority parties in the latest session of the House of Commons, the Liberal Democrats primarily concentrate on tackling the climate emergency, reforming and providing the United Kingdom’s schools with better teachers, building a fairer economy with free temporary childcare and a universal

income, and transforming the NHS’s mental health services.

- **Democratic Unionist Party:** Evolving from the Protestant Union Party as the very pro-Britain party out of Northern Ireland, the DUP has received a lot of attention during the Brexit campaign as a very Eurosceptic and Right-winged party. Fixating heavily on securing future investments for Northern Ireland, advocating for increased infrastructure to benefit all the United Kingdom, and committed in their pursuit to ensure no disconnect between the markets of Britain and Northern Ireland.
- **Plaid Cymru Party:** Representing the people of Wales in the House of Commons, the Plaid Cymru Party exists as yet another opposition party toward Brexit. Heavily campaigning for a people’s vote on leaving the European Union rather than leaving it up to Parliament to decide, the Plaid Cymru party has focused on remaining a part of the European Union. Under the advent of the post-Brexit Johnson Administration and following in the footsteps of Ireland, the Plaid Cymru party now wishes to seek independence from the United Kingdom and seeks to address all corresponding governmental issues related to seeking independence.
- **Social Democrat and Labour Party:** Forming the anti-Brexit party of Northern Ireland, the Social Democrat and Labour Party or the SDLP, has long since stood for Irish nationalism and reunification. Despite being overshadowed in both Northern Ireland and in Parliament by the Democratic Unionist Party, the SDLP has bold visions of widespread educational reform, advocates for regionally based



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infrastructure plans and improvements, reforming the NHS for better quality care, and reuniting Ireland.

- **Alliance Party:** Significantly smaller than its other Northern Ireland counterparts, the Alliance party served as a Pro-European, centrally left, political party out of Northern Ireland focused on stopping Brexit. With only one seat in the House of Commons, the Alliance party has bold visions of restoring the power of the Northern Irish Parliament which has been closed since 2017, addressing the climate emergency, and enacting economic change to protect the United Kingdom from the harm Brexit has caused.
- **Green Party:** The smallest party to represent both England and Wales in the House of Commons, the Green Party of England and Wales or the GPEW, seeks to adhere to its core values of environmentalism and center left economic reform. Avidly anti-Brexit, the GPEW heavily lobbied its base to try and lower the voting age to 16 in an effort to increase the vote to remain. Despite only holding a single seat in the House of Commons, the GPEW envisions the United Kingdom's future as one with increased corporate taxes, a heavier stance on protecting the environment, increasing European cooperation and integration, and placing more power in the hands of those they represent.
- **Independent Party:** The smallest and only minority party with a single Member of Parliament currently in power in favor of Brexit, the United Kingdom Independent Party or UKIP bore a significant bout of media scrutiny and attention with the advent of their

often controversial and incorrect comments on immigration. Established as a British Nationalist party, UKIP has been primarily concerned with expanding its base of rightwing populism and British nationalism. Although its rather controversial and small holdings in Parliament run disadvantageous toward UKIP's goals, the United Kingdom Independent Party endeavors with visions of taming political correctness's effect on free speech, overhauling the NHS's funding and policies, cracking down on mass immigration, and ensuring today's youth are self-sufficient in schooling.

Constitutional Roles

- **Prime Minister:** The current leader of Her Majesty's Government. One of the two Heads of State, the Prime Minister possesses the unique ability to appoint members of Government, oversee the functions of the Civil Service and other Governmental organizations, and be the leading figurehead in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister has a duty to represent Her Majesty's Government in a fair and transparent manner, and as such is required to take questions from and stay transparent with all Members of Parliament, including the opposition. The current Prime Minister is the Rt Ho. Boris Johnson MP.
- **The Opposition Leader:** As the Prime Minister is the leader of the party that wins the most amount of votes in the general election, the Opposition Leader is the Leader of the Party that received the second most amount of votes. Commended with a bonus salary for being a part of the opposition, the Opposition Leader is tasked with



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forming a “Shadow Cabinet” to oversee the functions of the current Government. The current Opposition Leader is the Labor MP, Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer.

- **Speaker of the House of Commons:** Required to be non- partisan and to renounce previous political affiliations, the Speaker of the House of Commons is tasked with one of the most unique roles in British Parliament. Presiding over the flow of debate, which members are allowed to speak, and what amendments may be brought before the committee, the Speaker of the House of Commons serves a role crucial to the
- **Encourage the Government to seek new trade partnerships:** With the advent of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union’s Single Goods Market, much has been left to Parliament to fill this new financial gap and trade deficit. Whether it be the negotiations of new trade agreements between the United Kingdom and the European Union or other foreign partners it is apparent that action must be taken soon.
- **Invest in the technologies of the 21st Century to offset the effects of the Irish Backstop:** Innovative Customs protections technologies such as automated license plate readers can clear products bound for the border before they leave the warehouse. Similar to the technologies utilized on the border between Norway and Sweden, 21st century technology such as advanced cameras can be used to alleviate any pressure on a “hard-border.”
- **Seek out a free trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union:** One of the many

House of Commons. Serving as the Crown’s representative in Parliament as a Senior Government Official and voting only in the case of a tie, the Speaker of the House of Commons is still able to represent the constituency in which they originated from. Following the retirement of longstanding Speaker of the House John Bercow and a unanimous election, the current Speaker of the House is the Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP.

Proposals for Action

Solutions geared towards eliminating the effects of a “hard-border” may be obtaining a free trade agreement. Removing tariffs and other customs associated with international trade have the potential to reduce all if not a majority of the concerns surrounding the creation of a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- **Advise the Government to create new security partnerships with the EU:** With the end of the transitional period marking the end of database access and sharing for agencies like Scotland Yard, further pieces of legislation could strengthen the bond between the United Kingdom and the European Union.
- **Inform the Government of the necessity to reaffirm and solidify rights of EU Citizens:** Without the existence of an agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom the rights and protections of the citizens of both the United Kingdom and the European Union lay at risk. Potentially risking the deportation of the citizens caught in the political crossfire, the hit to the economy is enough of a



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warning what a lack of an agreement might look like.

- **Require the Government to rejoin the European Union:** Despite the United Kingdom having already left the European Union back in January of 2020, heavy opposition towards Brexit and strong sentiments towards the European Union exist. Perhaps a renegotiated membership addendum can be created with the European Union to relieve the concerns of even the hardest Pro-Brexiteer.
- **Hold a second referendum:** Feelings of political abandonment and general sentiments of distrust for the Government has left significant proportions of several constituencies across the Union disenfranchised from those in power. A Second Referendum on how the Government should proceed next might alleviate those feelings, and put the Government back in touch with the people it represents.



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