The battle of national identity in foreign policy

A discourse analytic approach to national role study

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Abstract

This paper endeavours to study whether Brexit could be Britain's way to find its national role in the international arena by analysing three levels of theory analysis from foreign policy analysis operating discourse analysis in its different forms. Initially, individual decision-makers are scrutinised by operating psychological discourse analysis on three Prime Minister's speeches to learn the primary actor's construction of the world. Further, domestic politics with Putnam's two-level game lenses is studied operating critical discourse analysis to analyse the language use of leave and remain side, the major parties, Labour and Conservative, as well as the media during the EU referendum campaign. Moreover, national identity operating discourse theory examines the nation's construction of a national role from the postcolonialism concept to comprehend whether Brexit could help Britain accomplish its goal of becoming a 'Global Britain'. The timeframe of this paper is from Cameron's declaration of an EU referendum till the end of the transition period studying how the past affects the future and plays a role in Britain's national role construction that has led to Brexit.

Key words: Brexit, National Identity, Individual Decision-Makers, Domestic Politics, Postcolonialism
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Table of contents

1   Introduction

'The state, as an aggregation of meaning-making individuals, groups, and subcultures, must also grapple with "who we are" to guide the nation-state behavior in the world.' (*Hudson & Day 2020, p. 123*).

International Relations is a 'two-level' game where the state decision-makers both play domestic politics and international politics at the same time. The core of the two-level game is the human decision-makers through which one learns how humans are shaped. Through these observations, humans' perceptions and reactions to the world around them may be understood. Foreign Policy Analysis identifies the interaction between material and ideational factors, as these are considered the most important determinants of state behaviour. Further, the sources and changes in international politics from the eyes of FPA are the humans using its agency, whether it is an individual or a group. However, FPA is layered in various levels of analysis: From the individual decision-maker to groups. These may be found as small or large organisations or bureaucracies and are all found to be integrated (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 3, 7, 17-18, 21).

The nation-state is considered the fundamental level of analysis where decision-making is a method of organising the determinants of action of officials acting for the political society. Both internal and external factors may be related to the actions of the decision-makers, even if they may not seem obvious (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 14). Further, the mind of the decision-maker is complex and covers beliefs, values, emotions, national and self-conceptions, etc. that take part in shaping its decisions (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 20-21).

Furthermore, the concept of national role comprises both the psychological and the social environment of the individual, and in this manner, the nation's view and role in the international arena are perceived. Nonetheless, the elite perceptions of the national role may be more important to foreign policy, although it is defined as a set of shared expectations that relates to the state's behaviour regards to its international position (Morin – Paquin 2018, p. 271; Hudson & Day 2020, p. 22-23).

While globalisation has been emerging since World War II, countries are seen to have turned their direction in the latest times. This has caused uncertainty in the international order, as it is said that 'in conditions of globalisation, all politics has become foreign policy in one way or the other' (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 4, 32). Many Western countries are seen to be reconsidering their national identity in the age of globalisation to resolve the question of collective identity. An example of this is Brexit where a slight majority voted to leave the European Union (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 124). As the US secretary of state Dean Acheson said in 1962, 'Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role' (ECFR), the

question arises *whether Brexit could be Britain's way to find its national role in the international arena?*

Through this question, it is the hope to discover whether Brexit is the United Kingdom's approach to finding its national role in the world by questioning its national identity. This paper strives to accomplish this by scrutinising the primary leaders' world construction, the campaigning approach of the remain and leave side during the EU referendum in 2016, and comprehending the national identity of the UK from a historical point of view, especially through postcolonialism.

2 Is the way forward, backwards?

At the same time, the dissertation will take support from earlier research on the matter through which the desire is that this essay will strive and support future research. Principally, the research of Chatham House is studied due to their research on UK's future international role to understand how Brexit may improve UK's global position whilst upholding the British national identity.

While the UK may have achieved sovereignty on paper, it still holds a 'continued interdependence with Europe and global markets' (Niblett 2021, p. 5) in practice that restricts its sovereignty. The country cannot protect itself from global challenges as it could as a member of the EU. Even if it may not have to follow EU regulations and laws, it will still be dependent on its neighbour countries in economic health and security (ibid).

The UK Government's proclamation as Brexit leading to a 'Global Britain' implies that the UK will become more internationally engaged than before, while it is disengaging from its closest neighbours (Niblett 2021, p. 6). Despite Brexit, the UK will need to consider a close relationship with the EU due to the 'geographic proximity and deep economic interconnections' (Niblett 2021, p. 8), although the country may end up spending more time on managing its relationship. Although the UK won't have to agree on a common foreign policy yet will work together with the EU on common positions, such as the World Trade Organization reform, the UN Climate Change Conference, and the Middle East peace process (Niblett 2021, p. 8-9).

However, the UK is in a better position having left the EU to compete internationally with an independent seat in all major multilateral organisations in the world where its seat is cemented due to its nuclear weapon powers and being a close ally to the US. Similarly, the UK has also the world's leading intelligence service. Further, the UK holds a high share of the world GDP, the size of the military, and the soft power of being able to engage internationally and influence global outcomes. The use of 'Global Britain' reminds us of this and 'implies that the country will "step up"' (Niblett 2021, p. 18). Whilst enjoying these benefits, they do not guarantee to lead toward global change or ensure that the outcomes are of advantage to the state (Niblett 2021, p. 14-8).

Thus, the research of Chatham House shall be helpful when scrutinising what Brexit means for the UK, and whether leaving the EU benefits the UK's global position. Likewise, the London School of Economics' research on Brexit foreign policy is studied as this combines plentiful research that would not be possible to study due to the time limit of this project. Further, their chosen era stretches from the transition period till the post-Brexit era, which is included in the timeframe this paper that starts from the announcement of a referendum till the end of the transition period.

Brexit is identified with Britain's identity crisis with the UK having left cooperation with its main partner searching for a role in the international arena. Britain is moving toward one of five roles globally with Brexit: The first being 'Global Britain', the second being Great Power, the third being a regional partner to the EU, the fourth being the leader of the Commonwealth, and the fifth, being a power to proxy strategy. Britain's role as a global leader was anchored to its EU membership, however, a 'Global Britain' is unlikely to be accomplished. Nonetheless, the importance of 'sovereignty' for the Conservatives '…is the pursuit of a neo-liberal globalist trajectory of low taxes, deregulation and a minimal state outside the logic of European integration' (Risoli, p. 2-3).

Further, 'Global Britain' should be considered more of a society than solely the result of the elite's beliefs, although the rhetoric may come from the elite. According to the scholar Srdjan Vucetic, 'Global Britain' is based on Britain's history as being a former colonial power as Vucetic highlights that English exceptionalism is central to 'Global Britain'. Hence, it could be considered a project of the Commonwealth. However, the UK is likely to be in a position close to the EU but even closer to the US, as desired. Yet, there is also a risk of the UK becoming isolated (Risoli, p. 3).

Furthermore, Ian Manners studies the conjugation of psychology and politics to understand contemporary European integration which is 'understood as the economic, social, and political processes of mutual accommodation and inclusion by European states and peoples.' (Manners 2018, p. 1213-4). This may be necessary to understand while analysing the leave and remain campaigning groups to elucidate how domestic politics influence national identity in UK's future role after Brexit as Manners studies the construction of identity and emphasises 'the British desire for a "return" to the comforting familiarities of a post-World War II imperial "homeland"' (Manners 2018, p. 1214). Similarly, activist groups within the leave side campaigned with 'Global Britain' to promote the Conservative party's idea of combining the former colonies again which could be identified as 'nostalgics in search of a lost empire' (Manners 2018, p. 1223).

Similarly, Manners argues for the right wing of the English Conservative party being anti-EU since the late 1970s of Thatcher's policies, and UKIP was the growth of far-right groups not only being anti-EU but rather antiforeigner. Likewise, a vote for Brexit was a belief in national greatness and reflected in the 'effect of the collective on the construction of identity' (Manners 2018, p. 1215-6). While 'Remainers' considers the leave side as '"Breximists" who exhibit dangerous right-wing authoritarian traits.' (Manners 2018, p. 1217), the 'Leavers' considers their opponents as '"Remoaners" who question Britain's national uniqueness.' (Manners 2018, p. 1217). Further, the hard-right-wing Mail often used headlines as 'enemies of the people' or 'crush the saboteurs' in support of Brexit. As such, the language has been operated by newspapers, politicians, and activist groups engaging in local and national demonstrations and social media campaigns alike (Manners 2018, p. 1217-8).

Moreover, the previous studies are examined to understand the global and domestic aspects from a British historical point of view. As discovered, there is little research on combining the three levels of theory analysis, particularly

concerning national identity in FPA. Hence, this paper strives to support the existing research from three levels of analysis combining, individual decision-makers, domestic politics from Putnam's two-level game, and national identity, to enhance the comprehension of domestic aspects in the international setting, while holding the same historical foundation.

3   Brexit in Foreign Policy

This essay desires to discover whether the UK's departure from the EU could be its approach to finding its role in a world that constantly keeps changing. The UK had colonised many countries majority of which it lost after World War II. However, Britain kept a close connection to these countries to the extent that the royal king or queen even today is the official head in some of the countries, especially in major English-speaking countries, such as Canada and Australia. The principal question will consider this approach from a national identity aspect and strives to discover the theoretical aspects of the problem that may be important to consider, such as the individual decision-makers, domestic politics, and national identity. Thus, the essay will study the question on three levels to discover how national identity relates to its national role construction in the international arena.

3.1   Individual decision-makers

Beginning with the principal roles that led to Brexit and had an impact on the outcome of Brexit, it may be relevant to consider the primary roles of David Cameron, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson as these were the UK Prime Ministers during the timeframe of this paper. By understanding the principal leaders and their decisions, it may be possible to understand the course of Brexit through the actor-structure theory in foreign policy analysis.

While there may exist several numbers of decision-makers throughout the political arenas, the personalities of world leaders are seen to be given greater importance in the latest time due to their influence on foreign policy decision-making (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 39). Likewise, the elite is considered the most important actors in international politics due to their role as leaders, as they make the decisions for the state their views matter the most in foreign policy. Therefore, it is important to understand their 'definition of the situation' (Ripley 1993, p. 407).

Further, the prime leaders in the UK are solely national leaders, and it may therefore be helpful to understand their view when observing the national role in an international context. As they decide the national policies, one may need to understand the individual and their role to understand the course of Brexit. This may also help while comparing with other international leaders, although this is not the purpose of this essay.

As the human being's perception varies, the perspective of a particular situation will similarly depend on the person. Similarly, the attitude of individuals is shaped by their unique mental model of the world which includes beliefs,

values, and memories. These beliefs are known as attributions in psychology and are given the reason behind an incident. Further, the fundamental attribution error tends to explain our behaviour according to the situation, whereas the behaviour of others is based on their free choice or nature (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 58-59).

At the same time, the specific situation is also relevant to the final choice of action and is affected by the presence or absence of someone, as being pressured to conform in a particular way (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 56; Dyson & Preston 2006, p. 267). Time constraint is another issue that affects the situation as one may need to act differently in an emergency situation compared to a non-emergency situation. Another issue is the developing one where some decisions need careful deliberation, such as war, compared to a more routine-based one where there may not be a large consequence. Likewise, social roles and rules influence decision-making as well as the personal stakes for the leader (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 57- 8).

Furthermore, the ambition of the actor-structure theory is to understand the chosen leaders and their decisions. The essay will consider how their choices may have been impacted by Brexit, and the further course of the Conservative party with regard to Brexit. Bearing this in mind, the essay will compare the major domestic parties through Putnam's two-level game.

3.2   Domestic politics & Putnam's two-level game

While the prime leaders may help to comprehend the Brexit course, it may be relevant to compare their views on the party's politics and compare it with other national parties. As such, Brexit may be understood from the national level by comparing the campaigning sides during the referendum campaigns.

Domestic politics is often seen as entangled with international relations and both determine each another (Putnam 1988, p. 427). However, the majority of the public voters either lack interest or understanding of international affairs (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 148). As there is a strong link between foreign policy and national security interests, major compromises cannot be made by the domestic opposition forces as they often lead to either electoral defeat or severe setbacks internationally (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 164).

Further, Putnam portrays the two-level game between domestic politics and diplomacy. Various domestic groups are found to pressure the government at the national level to change the policies according to their will. At the same time, the national governments try to fulfil this pressure while limiting its consequences in the international arena. In order not to be ignored by the principal decision-makers, the countries must be sovereign and remain interdependent (Putnam 1988, p. 434). As such, the leave and remain sides will be compared to each other from their linguistic aspect whilst also comparing the media and the major parties, Conservative and Labour.

Besides, the domestic determinants of foreign policy are emphasised in various political arenas, such as parties, social classes, and legislators besides the

executive official and institutional arrangements (Putnam 1988, p. 432). As there are many roles in foreign policy, each actor is expected to adopt a particular role (Brommesson 2015, p. 3). This proves that other parties may affect international policies.

Thus, the ambition of this theory is to comprehend how domestic groups and parties have influenced domestic politics and the course of Brexit. Hence, it may be relevant to discover how their influence affects British relationships internationally based on Putnam's two-level game due to which the campaigning sides shall be compared to each another.

3.3   National identity and culture

The thesis aims to understand the United Kingdom's construction of its national role in the international arena. Therefore, this essay studies the national identity and culture to understand the Brexit discourse globally. This may be understood concerning the abovementioned theories of Putnam's two-level game in domestic politics and the individual decision-makers concerning protecting and supporting the nation-state.

The aspects of national identity are not fixed, rather they are politically shaped and changed every moment by the interactions and conversations in society. The questions raised regarding national identity are 'Who are "we"?', 'What do "we" do?' and 'Who are "they"?'. These are both taken into the context of the individual as well as the collective society to discover the behaviour of a nation. Although the definition of being a citizen differs between individual citizens, the general overall conception will hold a similar explanation. Likewise, shared culture leads to specific assumptions of other nations and their people. Most likely, the perception of one's own nation will vary from other nations. Although there may be subgroups in the national society that hold a different cultural view, there is likely to be a 'mainstream' cultural view (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 123-4).

'Who are "we"?' is often questioned in uncertain periods. At such times, the question may be answered according to the political aims that are known as the 'strategic social construction'. Similarly, the discussions that often take place at these times are shaped by the country's history and cultural values amongst the majority of the population. This leads to the question 'What do "we" do?' where the nation's heroic history is often considered to act accordingly, instead of objective norms of strategy and rational choice. Finally, 'Who are "they"?' is the question that helps to understand how one's own culture differs from the others. This could be someone external to the nation, but also another group in the same society (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 124-6).

The UK's EU referendum in 2016 is an example of a country seen confused about its national identity. The question regarding remaining an EU member or leaving the union was based on whether the respondent considered himself a UK citizen and the nation as being 'part of Europe' or 'apart from Europe'. In the same way, the degree of the national identity and the ideals of independence,

sovereignty, and self-reliance evolved to a large part where sharp regional and class differences were seen (Hudson & Day 2020, p. 125).

Hence, to understand the national identity, it may be necessary to study the country's history. The UK was a powerful hegemony and had colonised a large part of the world. After World War II, it lost most of its colonies that became independent, such as India, which was among the larger important ones. As such, it may be relevant to study postcolonialism to comprehend the British national identity and the current British attitude towards being a 'Global Britain'.

3.3.1 Postcolonialism

The theory considers the impact of colonial histories and the course of the West that had the power to marginalise the non-Western world. This theory concerns what the world is like and how it should have been and offers various perspectives on history and contemporary events (Nair, 2017).

Primarily, postcolonialism assesses the critical intersections of empire, race/ethnicity, gender, and class in global power that leads to a hierarchy in International Relations instead of equality. The theory believes that the Western perception of non-Western countries is due to the legacies of European colonisation that demonstrate the non-West to be inferior (ibid).

Similarly, the concepts of sovereignty and power arrive from a European perspective imposed by the European powers during their colonial era. The power, the state, and security are more complex than the characteristics perceived in traditional theories. Likewise, sovereignty is taken for granted by realist and liberalist scholars. Postcolonialism challenges the Marxist view of class struggle being the root of historical change (ibid). As seen by Brexit, the leave campaign concentrated on many of these concepts.

Following the aftermath of World War II, the UK's position weakened as the colonised territories started to break away and gained independence. The British Empire transformed into the Commonwealth where earlier colonies voluntarily associated with Great Britain. During the British colonisation, the countries attained enhanced infrastructure, including schools, roads, and hospitals. Further, the English language was spread out to the colonies to the extent that it became operated during religious conversations, education, and health care. Thus, this had a natural impact on the former colonies that led to migrants from these countries settling in England later, and as such, creating a multicultural Great Britain (British Literature Wiki).

Moreover, the protection of Britishness may be discovered as early as during the decolonisation by the military giving higher importance to the Britishness, rather than the diplomatic benefits the UK was striving to pursue from foreign cadets in Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst after World War II (Eck – Ruffa 2022, p. 14). Nevertheless, the difference between the immigration of Europeans compared to non-Europeans may be questioned, as the immigration of EU citizens was a major reason for Brexit. However, as discovered by Manners in Chapter 2, Brexit was not solely an outcome of being anti-EU, but antiforeigner.

Ultimately, the ambition of the theory is to get a larger picture of national identity in a global setting. This may be studied from a discourse analytic approach to comprehend the meaning of the Brexit discourse. Thus, this methodology will be presented with its varieties to examine each of the three-level theories respectively.

4 Nation-state through discursive lenses

The thesis aims to study whether Brexit may be Britain's approach to searching for its place in the world. Due to the focus being on national identity and cultural values, it seems fit to do so through discourse analysis to understand British values and goals to comprehend the meaning of Brexit and how Britain wishes to be perceived globally. Further, as Brexit is an ongoing process this thesis will focus on the timeline from David Cameron's declaration of a referendum till the end of the transition period that took place at the end of 2020 in order to limit the controversial aspects that could be discussed.

Through this distinction and by defining the question, it is the aim that the essay follows the abstraction ladder and abstains from a too-open question. Therefore, the question is not vague, and the problem is limited and defined as this may not be possible due to limited time and resources (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 17, 21-22). Conscious boundaries are to be made to refrain from a discussion on little on much instead of much on little (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 22). However, the question is not too specific either due to the desire to constructively get a larger picture of Brexit and its discourse.

In relevance to the topic, it is fundamental to consider the intra- and non-disciplinary. The research should try to support the existing research on the topic and strive cumulatively. When it comes to intra-disciplinary relevance the research should consider how it may relate to existing research. This could be a theoretical hypothesis that has not been empirically tested. At the same time, it is necessary to focus on the non-disciplinary criteria that are relevant for the world that is significant politically, economically, or from a social perspective (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 18). Brexit is an ongoing process and may therefore match the non-disciplinary research. Likewise, the goal of this essay is to contribute to the current research on the topic while using the support of earlier research and therefore, also follow in the category of intra-disciplinary research.

To achieve this, it may be relevant to operate discourse analysis that considers the principles and meaning behind concepts and expressions that may be connected to Brexit instead of other methodological approaches. While other methodological approaches such as case study, quantitative or content analysis could have operated in the essay, it would not help in operating the meaning behind the concepts and expressions utilised during Brexit in the same way as discourse analysis. Thus, discourse analysis has been chosen as the methodological approach to operate the dissertation.

When mentioning or trying to name the observed in the material world, a world of language is created. At the same time, the giving of a name to

phenomena shape a system and order as it can be combined with similar phenomenon through our concepts. The term may be specific while the concept shows a general phenomenon. Likewise, a term may contain different meanings depending on the scenario operated (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 37-38). The semantic triangle may help to understand the words and expressions used during the Brexit campaign and later during the transition process by analysing the literal and implied meaning. Bearing this in mind, the thesis will consider expressions such as 'Brexit means Brexit' and 'Global Britain' (appendix).

4.1   Three discursive approaches to nation-state

However, there are various variants of discourse analysis: discourse theory and critical and psychological discourse analysis. These will be used to analyse the three levels of theories. Primarily, these will be presented with their advantages and disadvantages followed by a discussion on which variant may be used on the various theoretical aspects.

Firstly, discourse theory aims to explain the social as discursive construction where all social phenomena, in principle, may be analysed through discursive analytic tools. The overall mentality in discourse theory is that the social phenomenon is never complete. The meaning may never be defined, due to which there may be a social struggle on definitions of society and identity (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 31). Further, the discourse theory analyses the identity aspect based on individual and collective identity (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 48).

Further, a discourse is considered a fixation on meaning in a particular domain. All signs in discourse are momentary and the discourse is established as a totality where every symbol is determined distinctly as moments through their relation to other meanings. That excludes all possible meanings the symbols may contain and what may relate to those meanings (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 33). Moreover, the terms hegemony and power are connected to objectivity and the political arena and are used to operate the analysis (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 44). However, this analysis is abstract and examines the resources people use and reshape in everyday concrete tasks (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 27).

At the same time, critical discourse analysis places theories and methodologies on theoretical problems and empirical research on the relation between practical discourse and social and cultural development in social situations due to social and cultural processes and structures having a partly linguistic and discursive character. Further, discursive practices that produce and consummate texts are considered crucial to forming social progress that contributes to constituting the social world, including social identities and social relations. As such, the analysis aims to illuminate the linguistic-discursive dimension of the social and cultural phenomenon and change processes in late modernity. Nonetheless, the topic has been a subject of discursive analysis in different fields, such as nationalism and identity (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 66-7).

Moreover, psychological discourse analysis considers the critical and cognitive questioning aspects. The cognitive consideration of language is studied through texts and oral communication, which illustrates the outer world or considers it a product of an underlying mental representation of this world. Further, the psychological discourse considers texts and oral communication as a construction of the world that orients toward social actions and implies that mental processes are social discursive activities rather than being considered internal processes. By empirically analysing the use of language where it develops, discourse analysis varies from the approaches within cognitive psychology that focus on language and discourse theories that do not consider concrete social interaction (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 97-8).

As outlined in section 3.3 and 3.3.1, the bachelor thesis will be based on postcolonialism. The UK lost most of its colonies after World War II, especially the significant ones such as India. As such, the methodology will be considered according to power and nation-state. Thus, this essay examines the variants of discourse analysis. As mentioned above, the bachelor thesis aims to discover the meaning of Brexit and Britain's construction of its national role in the world.

Through discourse theory, Brexit may be studied from a societal and identity perspective. As the UK was historically powerful, this method may help in analysing the symbols of terms such as hegemony and power. At the same time, critical discourse analysis may contribute to learning the linguistic perspective during events that took place during the Brexit referendum and how the leaders have expressed Brexit from a social identity perspective concerning nationalism.

On the other hand, the psychological discourse analysis may contribute to discovering the focus on how identities occur, reshape, and become subject to negotiations in social practices (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 105-6). As such, the 'I' may be seen in relation to the national identity aspect of Brexit, especially a social identity in relation to other countries and international organisations.

However, there may be found issues with the abovementioned approaches. Although discourse theory may be the purest poststructuralist theory, it constitutes the social world in the meaning that cannot be locked due to instability in the basic language. However, no discourse is a closed unit (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 13). Further, critical discourse analysis is considered weak in group formation processes, subject, and agency, including issues of subjectivity and people's degree of control over their language use (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 94). Similarly, the psychological discourse does not consider the larger societal differences but focuses on examining people's social interaction (Jørgensen – Phillips 2000, p. 13-4). These may be regarded in accordance with the nation-state and can be used in different scenarios. The essay will consider each of these approaches in relation to their applicable theory.

As national identity and culture focus on the identity aspect, it may be approached with discourse theory. Through discourse theory, the historical aspect may be considered relevant to power and hegemony. The desired outcome is to understand what made the British citizens choose to vote for leaving the EU scrutinising British society from a historical point of view. While the discourse is

by no means a closed unit, the methodology could help view whether the Brits consider themselves a closed unit and their reasons.

Further, the theories of domestic politics using Putnam's two-level game lenses may be operated through critical discourse analysis to understand the social and cultural processes and structures from a linguistic point of view. While comparing the major parties and the campaign strategies of both sides during the referendum may help in learning the cultural phenomenon. As media has a strong power in society, it may be relevant to consider how they influence the agenda of various domestic political stances. Although the methodology may be weak in group formation processes and people's control over their language, it may help to understand the party's view as a formed group and explore how language is being used over time. The consistency may support the validity of having control of the language used by observing citations.

Moreover, psychological discourse analysis may consider the main leaders through their communication to discover the construction of the world from their point of view. Further, it may help to understand the British identity through their negotiations in social practices with other countries and international organisations. At the same time, the aim of this method is to understand how the nation interacts globally, rather than considering the societal differences across borders.

4.2   The searching approaches

With regards to the material, the analysis will consider the Telegraph articles due to its main readers being conservative and its focus towards the party view that has been the leading party throughout the Brexit process. The party had issues with the EU throughout its membership period. Further, discussions on Brexit started as early as 2013, and the party were the one to rule out the referendum. Later, the head of the party triggered Article 50 to begin the process and was part of international negotiations, including the EU negotiations (Pruitt 2017). As such, speeches of individual decision-makers will be studied by Telegraph to understand their social construction of the world. Likewise, the newspaper will be considered during the domestic politics theory to understand the Conservative party's view and use of language.

However, domestic politics from Putnam's two-level lenses will initially scrutinise the Government's leaflet, and the leave side's website, Vote Leave Take Control. These will help understand each point of view to analyse the theories linguistically. At the same time, the newspaper The Guardian will be used to discover Labour's perspective as the newspaper is rather left-wing focused, whereas the Sun, which is the nation's most-read paper, will be used to apprehend the mainstream media language (Oxford Royale).

Finally, to scrutinise the national identity aspect in the international setting research of Oppermann, Beasly, and Kaarbo on British foreign policy after Brexit: losing Europe and finding a role will be taken into account to apprehend the role

that the UK is searching for beyond Brexit. Similarly, consideration is given to previous studies on UK's future role beyond Brexit to elucidate the possibilities and challenges that may arise by Chatham House and LSE, and how the hegemony status of the UK was given importance as early as after World War II having lost the earlier colonies as studied by Eck and Ruffa. Likewise, Ian Manner's research is studied to comprehend identity in domestic groups and the use of language during the EU referendum in 2016.

5 Well, Brexit means Brexit

In order to comprehend whether the UK leaving the EU will help find its national role in the international arena, this paper will discuss three theories ranging from the individual decision-makers to Putnam's two-level game in domestic politics followed by the national identity and culture.

5.1 Individual decision-makers

Initially, the first theory is analysed with psychological discourse analysis by studying the three leaders of the Conservative party appointed as the prime minister during the timeframe of this paper: David Cameron, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson. By scrutinising their communication method during their speeches on Brexit, it may be possible to discover the world construction from their point of view. As such, it shall be discovered what British identity is considered as from the elite's perspective who negotiate the country's global deals. Further, this may help to learn how the nation interacts globally.

David Cameron was the prime minister who promised publicly in January 2013 a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union if the Conservatives won the next general election (Bale 2022). Nevertheless, Cameron announced his resignation as prime minister the day after the referendum as he did not support the outcome of the referendum, and as such, did not see himself in a position to carry the negotiations (Martin – Bowman, 2019).

'On 23rd June, nothing less than the future of our country is at stake.' (Cameron 2016) was Cameron's beginning statement questioning the cabinet that campaigned to leave the EU a few months prior to the referendum. Cameron further argued for the opportunities that Britain may have by staying in the EU: the country would prosper with the certainty of global benefits. Cameron demanded a vision outside the EU, as the leave campaigners' vision of a UK outside the EU was vague. Similarly, the former prime minister questioned the possibilities for the country's future regarding trade and security and reminded the leave side of the challenge to access the desired without trading for the reasons the leave side wanted to opt-out from the EU claiming that 'we would be subject to rules we would have no power over influencing – the complete opposite of sovereignty.' (ibid). The speech shows that Cameron was a strong believer in Britain in the EU and opposed the world construction of the leave side.

During the speech on the referendum outcome, Cameron stated: 'The will of the British people is an instruction that must be delivered', being clear to be against the outcome, although respecting the decision. Further, the former PM

believed in a great future for Britain outside the EU claiming that 'I was absolutely clear about my belief that Britain is stronger, safer and better off inside the European Union' (Telegraph, 2016). The speech again demonstrates respect for the decision of the people, but also a stance that is different to theirs. However, Cameron does believe that 'Britain can survive outside the European Union' and declares, 'I am the first to praise our incredible strengths.' (ibid).

Comparing the two articles, Cameron's stance on Brexit seems not to have changed. Prior to the Brexit referendum, the former Prime Minister agreed that 'we're a strong country. We're the 5ht largest economy in the world. We've got superb armed forces' but argued for a better future as a member state of the EU (Cameron 2016). Similarly, after the outcome, the former Prime Minister agrees that 'Britain is a special country … respected the world over' (Telegraph 2016). Thus, this demonstrates consistency in the actor's world construction.

Followed by Cameron's departure, Theresa May became the prime minister who processed the legal procedure of Brexit. Like Cameron, May did support UK's membership in the EU during the referendum but was willing to offer the people their will, especially the leave group who won the referendum, as 'Brexit means Brexit' (Hope 2019). During the Brexit speech, May stated that the British people 'voted to shape a brighter future for our country … and embrace the world' (May 2017) and presented the opportunity to become a 'Global Britain' with her 12-point Brexit plan. Likewise, the virtue of a global relationship was presented as the one the UK shares with Commonwealth, and thus, she decided not to withdraw the country from the world as 'Britain's history and culture is profoundly internationalist.' (ibid).

Consequently, May's communication shows a desire to follow the people's will that Cameron opposed, although her construction of the world appears to be different after the referendum result. However, while negotiating with EU May claimed that 'Anything which fails to respect the referendum or which effectively divides our country in two would be a bad deal … no deal is better than a bad deal' (May 2018) proving that the former PM was determined on getting a deal that brought no challenges for the UK. According to May, the EU wanted to effectively keep Northern Ireland in the Customs Union to which the former Prime Minister emphasised, 'that is unacceptable. We will never agree to it. It would mean breaking up our country. We will set out alternative that preserves the integrity of the UK.' (ibid).

Hence, May's construction of the world appears to vary before and after the EU referendum. However, the former Prime Minister strived to deliver the UK a deal she understood as that which people wanted based on the referendum result. This is discovered by the Prime Minister's claim not to give in to the EU's deal which the leave side opposed during the referendum: 'In plain English, this would mean we'd still have to abide by all the EU rules, uncontrolled immigration from the EU would continue and we couldn't do the trade deals we want with other countries.' (ibid).

As May could not continue the Brexit negotiations, Boris Johnson took over till the end of the transition period. The first Prime Minister's speech was a determination to deliver Brexit as the Prime Minister mentions 'we are going to

restore trust in our democracy ... and come out of the EU on October 31, no ifs or buts' followed by 'we politicians need to remember it is that the people are our bosses.' (Telegraph 2019). Further, Johnson presented a new partnership with the EU 'that will maximise the opportunities of Brexit' (ibid). Like the former Prime Ministers, Johnson believed that the greatness of the country will flourish even further and claimed that a truly 'Global Britain' was to be accomplished (ibid). However, unlike the other two prime ministers, Johnson led the pro-Brexit campaign during the referendum (Vote Leave Take Control(a)).

Moreover, during the prime minister's speech on Brexit Day, Johnson implied understanding all kinds of feelings about the Brexit process and argued that it is 'our job as the government – my job – is to bring this country together now and take us forward.' (Johnson 2020). During the speech, the Prime Minister appeared more hopeful than ever before having accomplished Brexit and a new deal with the EU, and claimed this would 'be the beginning of a new era of friendly cooperation between the EU and an energetic Britain.' (ibid) as Britain 'is simultaneously a great European power and truly global in our range and ambitions' (ibid). Thus, Johnson communicated the prospect of being a sovereign state: with controlled immigration, free trade deals and making its own laws and rules that benefit the people of the country. Further, Johnson sends the message that Britain is European with global ambitions that will succeed outside the EU where its potential was limited (ibid).

Finally, as discovered by the three prime ministers with the operation of the psychological discourse analysis, there is an emphasis on success beyond the EU. The message these prime ministers concludingly send is that a 'Global Britain' is truly realistic, although the first two were against Brexit in the first place and were unable to deliver it. Although Johnson delivered Brexit the question lies in whether a 'Global Britain' is ever accomplished. As such, the national role of the country is discovered in the elite's construction of the world, through which the paper will strive to illuminate the party's stance and compare this to the domestic opinions.

5.2   Domestic politics & Putnam's two-level game

Through Putnam's two-level game operating critical discourse analysis, the paper will compare the leave and remain campaign sides against each other while comparing the leading government party, the Conservative, to the leading opposition party, Labour. This will help to understand the social and cultural processes and structure from a linguistic point of view to enhance the comprehension of domestic politics. Likewise, the paper strives to comprehend how domestic politics had an influence during the referendum and how the campaigning sides had influenced the agenda by examining articles from the media.

As discovered by the analysis of the individual decision-makers, the Conservative party was divided during the referendum: various MPs wanted the

UK to continue staying in the EU while others wanted the country to leave the EU (Telegraph 2016). In fact, two-thirds of Conservative MPs supported the UK leaving the EU (Helm – McDonald 2016). Yet. the party officially stayed neutral during the EU referendum. Hence, Cameron and other MPs had to campaign without the support of their party (Hope 2015). On the other hand, Labour was mostly unified with its members to back remain in the EU, although some of the Labour party members were campaigning for the Chair of Vote Leave, such as the Labour MP Gisela Stuart (Vote Leave Take Control(a); BBC).

Starting with the stance of the Government that David Cameron led, the Government pointed out that the benefits of staying in the EU outweighed the cost of being a member of the EU in their leaflet. 'The UK has a special status in reformed EU' (HM Government 2016) was a message the Government had sent to secure the Brits that the UK will not join the euro and keep the border controls. The Government informed that the UK is not part of the EU's border-free zone and ensured that new EU migrants in the future won't have full access to certain benefits before working in the country for up to four years. Further, they pointed out that the EU is the UK's largest trading partner as the Single Market has an economy that is five times bigger than the UK, and as such, 'leaving creates uncertainty and risk.' (ibid). Similarly, EU cooperation makes it easier to keep out criminals and terrorists (ibid).

On the other hand, the leave side had a campaign website pointing out the benefits of leaving the EU. The benefits of Brexit would be saving £350 million a week to spend on the NHS, schools, and housing. Further, the campaign indicated that the UK could control its borders instead of being overruled by EU judges and control immigration where the UK could welcome people based on skills rather than their passports. The message the leave side sent: 'The EU stops us signing our own trade deals with key allies like Australia or New Zealand, ad growing economies like India, China or Brazil.' (Vote Leave Take Control(b)). Further, the leave campaign indicated that the UK could create their own laws. This would be more democratic as they would be made by people that could be elected and later kicked out. Similarly, the leave campaign argued against staying as a member of the EU as the EU is expanding, as Turkey would be one of the five new countries about to join the EU (ibid).

Comparing the two leading sides, the main factors of immigration, economy, and trade were considered a threat by the leave side that was ensured not to be a threat by the remain side. However, the leave group did not argue against the threats that the remain pointed that Cameron considered vague, as discovered during the debate with the cabinet. Similarly, the media had a strong effect as the Sun, a right-wing newspaper, wrote the day before the referendum with about ten reasons to leave the EU. The paper argued: 'Voting to stay in means agreeing to the closer union that the Eurocrats want', 'No one is talking about an EU army', and 'A vote to Remain will be a vote to have one country called Europe.' (Green, Hannan & Minford 2016). As discovered previously by studies of Manners, there was an extreme use of defining the other group during the referendum.

On the other hand, media such as The Guardian arguing for remaining in the EU used rather questioned identity questions. These included: 'Who do we think

we are, and who do we want to be?' (The Guardian 2016). Thus, they argued with the message: 'Vote for a united country that reaches out to the world, and vote against a divided nation that turns inwards. Vote to remain.' (ibid)

However, other major parties as Labour, which were campaigning with Cameron, Green, Liberal Democrat, and trade union, were considered to be 'uniformly uncertain' about their campaign to stay in the EU. Voters seemed not to know whether the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was for or against it as 'his heart isn't in it' (Mason 2016). As such, Corbyn was speaking to people about whether 'we protect jobs and prosperity in Britain … Or do we step into an unknown future with leave, where a Tory-led Brexit risks economic recovery and threatens a bonfire of employment rights?' (Syal 2016). However, Corbyn further mentioned that 'I'm not a lover of the European Union' which made people believe that Corbyn did not sound 'too keen' to which Corbyn replied 'Whatever the result, we have got to work with it' (ibid). This further strengthens the use of the critical discourse analysis demonstrating a societal identity perspective concerning nationalism.

Moreover, the domestic parties have been examined from Putnam's two-level game operating the critical discourse analysis to comprehend the social and cultural aspects from a linguistic point of view. As discovered by scrutinizing the national major parties, Conservative and Labour, as well as the media, a harsh tone was used during the referendum, particularly by the leave side, with parties not being unified to the extent that citizens were unsure about their party's stance.

As previously discovered by Putnam's theory, domestic politics is related to foreign affairs and the majority of voters either lack interest or understanding which could lead to severe international setbacks (Putnam 1988 p. 427; Hudson & Day 2020, p. 148, 164). As such, the paper strives to understand how domestic politics and the world construction of various groups mark the national role of Britain in the international arena.

5.3   National identity from a postcolonial perspective

National identity will be analysed through operating discourse theory, through which it may be possible to understand power and hegemony, especially concerning the expressions, 'Brexit means Brexit' and 'Global Britain'. Further, it may likely be understood why a slight majority voted for leaving the EU, which resulted in the country leaving the EU. As mentioned, this will be scrutinised from a historical aspect, especially postcolonialism, through which the paper aims to comprehend whether Brexit could be Britain's way to find its construction of the national role in the international arena. Nevertheless, the analysis aims to understand whether the Brits consider themselves a closed unit by relating to the earlier studies of this paper.

As discovered during the previous analysis of individual decision-makers and domestic politics in sections 5.1 and 5.2, there was a strong emphasis on bringing forward a 'Global Britain' as the UK is capable of striving beyond membership in

the EU. Likewise, members of other parties or campaign sides believed this, as discovered by Cameron during the referendum outcome speech and Corbyn during the speech to demonstrate Labour's view on the referendum. Similarly, it is discovered that May was a supporter of the UK in the EU, and during her time as Prime Minister used expressions such as 'Brexit means Brexit'. This demonstrated that the former Prime Minister wanted a deal in the interest of the leave side who won the referendum.

Further, the paper studies that the leave side concentrated on many of the concepts from postcolonialism during the referendum campaign that focused on sovereignty, power, and security. The group believed that the EU was a threat in these aspects, although this was ensured by the remain group not to be the case. The leave side believed that the UK would create better deals with their 'key allies', such as New Zealand and Australia, and commonwealth countries, such as India, that is economically striving. As such, they could become a 'Global Britain' independent of the EU.

The modern Commonwealth of Nations was born in 1949 after the UK lost most of the empire after World War II, although Commonwealth existed from earlier times. King George VI was the first head of the modern Commonwealth followed by HM Queen Elizabeth II. In 1953, HM Queen spoke to the new association: 'Thus formed, the Commonwealth bears no resemblance to the Empires of the past. … To that new conception of an equal partnership of nations and races I shall give myself heart and soul every day of my life.' (The Commonwealth). In this manner, membership today is based on free and equal voluntary cooperation. Further, the last four countries to join the Commonwealth had no historical ties to the British Empire: Rwanda, Mozambique, Gabon, and Togo (ibid).

Nevertheless, the Commonwealth was created 'out of the slow disintegration of the British Empire' (Mckeever 2022), as this was Britain's strategy to uphold its power as the individual colonies began to push for freedom. However, India became the first country to join after independence without having to 'swear allegiance to the crown.' (ibid). While the British monarch is not automatically appointed as the head of the Commonwealth, the organisation has to date only appointed the British monarchy. Although the role may be symbolic, most of the countries still swear fealty to the British monarch (ibid). Thus, it demonstrates that the UK still upholds some power after World War II, having lost the majority of its colonies. As discovered by the studies by Eck and Ruffers, the UK has strived to maintain their colonial hegemony ever since.

Following the Brexit referendum, Britain has explored a role as the leader of the Commonwealth that would allow Britain to be more Global outside the EU and upgrade its historical ties to Commonwealth countries, as seen being a strong focus of the leave campaign. Further, the Government strived to achieve this goal by visiting many of the Commonwealth nations after the Brexit referendum.

During the Prime Minister's visit to India in November 2016, May stated, 'I wanted to come to India on my first bilateral visit outside Europe because this relationship matters more than ever. … As the UK leaves the EU and India

continues its rise in the world, we should seize the opportunities ahead.'
(Oppermann, Beasley & Kaarbo 2020, p. 142-143).

Similarly, Foreign Minister Boris Johnson advocated in a speech in Sydney that 'Australia will be at, or near, the front of the queue for a new Free Trade Agreement with Britain' (Oppermann, Beasley & Kaarbo 2020, p. 143). While this has been taken with open arms by the Commonwealth countries, though being sceptical before the referendum, many have objected to the neocolonial tones of Britain's ambition with sceptical officials within Whitehall branding the initiative 'Empire 2.0' considering Brexit being Britain's desire for more sovereignty and the colonial past of the UK (ibid).

This further proves the British desire to find their national role in the international arena since losing the hegemony status. As studied during section 3.3, the national identity questions 'Who are "we"?', 'What do "we" do?' and 'Who are "they"?' keeps returning, although, there seems to be an existing a social construction, particularly for the leave group that won the EU referendum in 2016. Likewise, their views are seen to be regarded by the individual decision-makers. The use of language scrutinised by the domestic politics theory from Putnam's two-level game proves this social construction. Further, these theories answer the questions and define the roles of 'us' and 'them'. Although EU immigration was a key issue for the leave side, it does not solely concern the EU citizens as racism was seen to be increased for every foreigner after the leave side won the referendum (Booth 2019).

Ultimately, the analysis of national identity studies the power and hegemony aspects from a postcolonial perspective operating discourse theory. While comprehending these aspects from the theories of principal leaders and domestic politics, it further strives to understand the historical concepts that were seen by the leave side's campaign. Thus, expressions such as 'Brexit means Brexit' and 'Global Britain' are examined. Further, the Commonwealth is studied to elucidate the aspect of sovereignty and how Britain has been searching for its national identity in the international arena ever since World War II.

6 Brexit, a national identity discovery?

The dissertation studied whether Brexit could be Britain's way to find its national role in the international arena in three levels of theory by operating discourse analysis in its various forms. Through the question, the essay aims to understand the construction of the United Kingdom's national role by scrutinising the national identity according to foreign policy analysis, and further, how the country aspires to become more global by ending cooperation with its neighbour ally.

As the thesis strived to support existing research, it based its comprehension on 'Global Britain' from Chatham House discovering that the UK has achieved sovereignty but needs continued interdependence with the continent being unable to fight global challenges on its own and would therefore be better within the EU. Further, the studies of LSE showed that Brexit is related to Britain's identity crisis and should not solely be considered as the beliefs of the elite but rather the British society as a whole. Similarly, the paper scrutinised Ian Manner's studies on the identity of the groups during the EU referendum to learn how domestic politics relates to foreign affairs.

Further, the paper studied three levels of theory analysis to comprehend global and domestic aspects from a British historical point of view. Initially, the individual decision-makers were studied by operating psychological discourse analysis to understand the principal actors' social construction of the world. During the timeframe of the paper that stretched from the declaration of the EU referendum till the end of the transition period, the three Prime Ministers that led the country were David Cameron, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson. The former two were supporters of Britain in the EU, with the latter leading the leave campaign. They all believed in Britain being successful outside the EU, although the former two were supporters of a UK in the EU with Cameron leading the campaign. On the other hand, Johnson was leading the leave campaign and ended up leading the nation out of the EU.

At the same time, domestic politics is found to be entangled with international relations, and as such, the theory is studied from Putnam's two-level game lenses operating critical discourse analysis. Through this theory, the leave and remain campaign language was studied to comprehend the cultural and social processes and structures. Likewise, the major parties, Labour and Conservative, and the media were scrutinised to comprehend the world construction of different groups from their use of language.

As discovered, the language used was extreme while defining or referring to the other group, particularly by the leave side. While the leave side campaigned the EU of being a threat to trading opportunities, immigration, and the economy, the remain strived to ensure the opposite. However, many voters were unsure of the views of the remain side, as discovered by Corbyn's stance. Likewise, the

media praising the leave focus areas were seen to scare the voters, whereas the media arguing for remain were seen to question identity questions.

Furthermore, national identity theory was analysed through the operation of discourse theory from a postcolonial perspective. The theory studied the questions, 'Who are "we"?', 'What do "we" do?' and 'Who are "they"?', to apprehend the national identity of Britain through the combination of the aforementioned theories. These are proven to exist as a social construction, particularly for the leave group. As such, the paper studied that 'Global Britain' is constructed from the postcolonial times when Britain had a hegemony status in the world which is seen by Britain by holding onto the Commonwealth mostly consisting of British colonial countries with whom Britain started negotiation deals after Brexit. From this, it is learned that Brexit is Britain's way to accomplish the construction of its national role in the world.

Moreover, this paper discovers that Brexit is affected by the national role construction from before postcolonialism that is seen in the leave campaign during the EU referendum. The focus during the campaign was on sovereignty, hegemony, and having the opportunity to negotiate deals themselves from the belief that Britain can achieve better by itself. As such, these beliefs are a comeback of defining oneself and others, and what one may do varies from what others do, according to the FPA theory on national identity.

Ultimately, this paper studied that Brexit lies in Britain's past that has affected its future from the nation's construction of a Britain independent of the EU. This is seen from the engagements in Commonwealth since World War II, and by Britain quickly going back to these countries after Brexit. Likewise, there was the belief that the UK had a better potential outside the EU, particularly on the leave side, but the leaders from the remain side have shown a belief in UK's strength as well. Prime Minister May's expression 'Brexit means Brexit' was proof of the leave side having won the referendum and her promise to deliver the conceptual opinions.

Whilst endeavouring to support existing research, the paper unbolts the aspects that could be further studied. This could be the national identity studied ahead of the timeframe of this paper concerning domestic groups and the engagement of the future leading actors to understand how Britain is developing after Brexit. Other aspects include Northern Ireland, Scottish independence, and the relationship of a future Britain with Commonwealth countries that it shares close cooperation with, or the EU. These aspects could support current research elucidating the battle of national identity in foreign policy.

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8 Appendix

The semantic triangle according to Teorell & Svensson:

Term   Expresses   Concept

Indicates   Refers to

Phenomenon
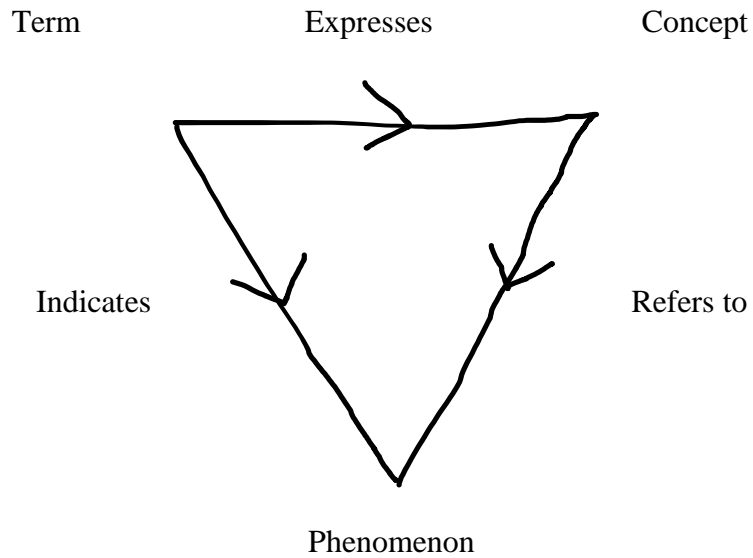
(Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 37)

An example of it being used in the dissertation:

Domestic politics

Brexit   No more EU immigration

British exit from the European Union