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Is there Political Change afoot in Northern Ireland: A Critical Evaluation of the Impact of Nationalism in Northern Ireland Power-Sharing Government by Sinn Féin.

*Callum McNeill-Keay**

Postgraduate Student of International Relations of the Department of History and Politics, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK.

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Abstract: This investigation of the transformation of nationalism in Northern Ireland by Sinn Féin is very complex to interpret; this is so with the fact that Sinn Féin is comprehensively intertwined within the historical narrative presented through the study of nationalism in Northern Ireland.
This thesis addresses the critical question of how the politics of Sinn Féin and its ideological perspective on nationalism has been adapted to the focus on the changing political atmosphere in Northern Ireland and its impact on the power-sharing government. Furthermore, this thesis will evaluate the transformation of nationalism undertaken by Sinn Féin. It is suggested that the transformation of nationalism has enabled the ideological shifts of Sinn Féin to evolve through a new sense of nationalist identity and nationalist politics, which will be presented in a new chapter for the cause of nationalist politics in Northern Ireland.

Keywords: Nationalism, Ireland, Republicanism Irish Politics, Sinn Féin, Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement; Northern Ireland.

1 Introduction

The transformation portrayed through the politics of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland has been part of a developing narrative, which has culminated in the establishment of a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. Analysis of this will be illustrated through this paper of the differing ways in which Sinn Féin have altered their political standings. In addition, how this alteration of the political landscape of Northern Ireland by the nationalism politics of Sinn Fein has critically undermined the safety and security of the power-sharing executive and assembly at Stormont. The transformation of the nationalism politics of Northern Ireland can be clearly seen as becoming more focused on a democratic form of politics, instead of focusing on a more radical version of politics seen during the most dangerous and heightened days of the Northern Irish troubles.

2 Backgrounds

"This Border is… an artificial line that runs across and divides in two a country which has always been regarded as one, and which has always regarded itself as one"

Charles J. Haughey (1986, cited in Kelly, 2016, p.1)

The quote by Haughey above has been debated by Tonge (2006) who signifies that Northern Ireland's relationship between Republican and loyalist community has resulted in "unionist–British rule in the North has been disastrous" (Tonge, 2006, p.11). Whereas on the other hand, loyalists have suggested that the actions of the republican community have resulted in

* Corresponding author E-mail:17009718@hope.ac.uk

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Northern Ireland is allowed to "descent into violence and failed political initiatives" (ibid, 2006 p.11). The sectarian differences that are evident in Northern Ireland between Loyalists and Republicans has been the source of permanent political and cultural conflict since the period of the partition of the Island of Ireland into two separate states.

However, to establish an in-depth analysis to the study, there will be a small review of the impact of Ireland's colonial history, which will be able to outline why nationalism plays a prominent role in Northern Ireland. The aspect of colonial history, which reviewed, focused upon Ireland's chequered relationship with its closest neighbor, the UK. As demonstrated with the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in 1921, with the establishment of the Irish Free State (nationalist majority), and Northern Ireland (the Unionist majority at the time of establishment), after completion of partition for the Island of Ireland. Although through the preconception of Kelly (2013) deliberated that the partition of the island, into the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. Established a situation where there would be a continuous period of hostilities between the two factions on the island. Furthermore, according to Sinnfein.ie (2018a, n.p.), The policy of partition in Ireland was one that Sinn Féin argue "The consent of the Irish people was never sought nor freely given" (Sinnfein.ie, 2018a, n.p).

The relationship that exists with nationalism is one, which is seen as being extremely complex and has evolved ever since the partition of the Island of Ireland in the early period of the 1920s. This idea is seen as a turning point with the relationship that exists between the political parties within Northern Ireland. Which Todd and Ruane (2001) argue that there has been a "dramatic development in the recent period has been in Northern Ireland where Sinn Féin after 25 years of violent struggle" (2001, p.1), Resulting in Sinn Féin having to "endorsed a devolutionary settlement within the United Kingdom" (ibid, 2001, p.1). This notion of a peace settlement has resulted in the political landscape of Northern Ireland. To alter and resulted in parties such as Sinn Féin and DUP now joined in a power-sharing agreement, in the formation of an elected representative body situated at the Stormont Parliament in Belfast.

Northern Ireland has many different political parties and not only Sinn Féin and DUP to take into consideration. For instance, there are other parties that are of both Unionist and nationalist elements, these include for the Unionist elements: the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP, right-wing) Ulster Unionist Party (UUP, center-right), Progressive Unionist Party (PUP, Left-wing). For the nationalist elements: Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP, Centre-left), followed by the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI, centre and no affliction to either nationalist or unionist). On the contrary, the political parties in Northern Ireland divided not only by their ideological standpoints but also by their interpretations of the way in which Northern Irish society should be defined by the perceptions of social and political life. These new versions of political parties have been able to introduce a refreshed version of nationalism, As Todd and Ruane (2001) debated this alteration of Northern Irish politics by pointing out that "national identity and nationalism aims remain strong" (Todd and Ruane, 2001, p.17).

Gellner (1964) expressed the view that the combined affiliation of a nation and its citizens is focused solely on the concept of being a member of their selective community within that nation, which is the case when referring to the idea of nationalism in Northern Ireland. Gellner reaffirms nationalism as "it invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner, 1964, p.169). Boyce (2005) is able in supporting the view expressed by Gellner whose inkling of nation and citizen, illustrated as being similar in nature to one expressed by Boyce who refers to the concept of the transformation of Northern Irish politics and society. As these elements are similar in their arguments towards the relationship of understandings towards nationalism. Hearn (2006) delves further into this notion that nationalism within the context of contemporary Ireland and in relation to that of Sinn Féin. Especially with a particular focus upon by the idea of political identity within nationalism as an ability to outline Irish nationalism within Northern Ireland illustrated as being a "collective history and ways of symbolically marking membership in the group" (Hearn, 2006, p.6). Tonge's (2008a) work has been critical in examining the implications of political operations established by nationalist parties in Northern Ireland towards their own communities. In alteration in their relationship of unambiguous formula of democratic politics in Northern Ireland.

Although on the contrary to the point outlined by Tonge (2008a), Tonge (2008b) has debated it; with the notion of a direct version, focus on the nationalist community in Northern Ireland would have a massive impact of the sense of identity seen throughout the nationalist community, as the introduction of conventional politics would be maintained. Despite this, there is an irregularity, which has been introduced by Baycroft (1998). Baycroft has debated that the past has played an essential role in the discussion when trying to recognise nationalism; "every nation or would be nation has a strong identification and association of the past" (Baycroft, 1998, p.24).

On the other hand, it has been stipulated by English (2012) that "the seamless identification of self and nation here is telling, for it has been a persistent part of the Irish republican story" (2012, p.4). However, McGarry and O'Leary (1995), see Sinn Féin as a political party, which are at the forefront of Irish republicanism. This has resulted in the enlargement of condemnation of outside forces responsible for the ascendency of Ireland, in particular as McGarry and O'leary argue that

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these forces "hold the British state historically responsible for the cultural and political oppression of Ireland" (McGarry and O'Leary,1995, p.17). Northern Ireland as a political place is where religion and political beliefs seen as being interconnected together a concept stressed by Tonge that Northern Ireland is a political community, which has been self-established in the aftermath of the partition of Ireland. Which able in allowing for a similar narrative as the one portrayed by the nationalist community with the conception of "self-determination" (Tonge, 2006, p.2).

Notwithstanding the argument by Nolan and Bryan (2016) note that the unionist community feels that their cultural sense of identity is being withdrawn from them, as they believe "Protestant identity has lost security because of the encroachment of an assertive Irish nationalism" (Nolan and Bryan, 2016, p.3). On the other hand, Breuilly (1985) suggests that the notion of the perspective of nationalism on Northern Ireland illustrated through the changing political and cultural strands of identity within a state such as Northern Ireland. As claimed by Breuilly that "The Modern State both shapes nationalist politics and provides that politics with its major objective, namely possession of the state" (1985, cited in May, 2007, p.2).

3 History of the Irish Republicanism in Sinn Féin

As the Republican split in 1969 into differing factions has had lasting effect on the running on the ideological elements within Sinn Féin. Politically Sinn Féin was redefining itself as an organisation for whom it did not want to be associated with the paramilitary wing of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). Doyle (2008) notes that as Sinn Féin were seen as being inactive in Irish politics both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. The aforementioned created the illusion that Sinn Féin were being engaged towards a period of what they believed to be unrealistic objectives or as Doyle states "static constitutionalism and an almost mythical idea of the 'Republic" (2008, p.131). However, the split was seen by Dixon (2001) as being a "traditional Republican boycott" (2001, p.11). As aforementioned Sinn Fein split in 1969 was due to continuing pressure both internally, and externally, within the party. The impacts of this on the party were that the move towards a more central and critical focus on political development seen by the ceasing of abstention from Dáil Éireann. The abstention established even greater divisions within the party, which lasted until the party entered the Dáil, Stormont, and Westminster.

Kirby (2005) has outlined that Sinn Féin as a political organisation was in a situation where there was a "growing politicisation within the organisation led to the development of a `twin-track' approach" (Kirby, 2005, p.127). Although Bean (1994) countered Kirby's argument by stating Sinn Féin were able to "mobilise the masses, elections and "politics" (1994, p.7) which could be used as a platform, for which the intended struggle with violence would act in the remit as a "form of armed propaganda" (ibid, 1994, p.7). Although according to Honohan (2008) the existing link with the argument of Bean (1994) and Kirby (2005) has resulted in the notion of republicanism becoming "highly valency in Irish Politics" (2008, p.1). Furthermore, this concept of republicanism is reintroduced by English (2006) where he is able in labeling Sinn Féin a "self-reliant nationalist movement" (2006, p.259). This resulted in Sinn Féin establishing itself as a significant political actor within the politics of both sections of Irish politics, North and South since its creation in 1905 by Arthur Griffin and for which English (2006) has portrayed Griffin as being "a long-dominant influence on Irish nationalist thought" (2006, p.259). However, pointed out by scholars [Feeney, 2002; Hennessey 1997] collectively, that Sinn Féin had disappeared as a significant political actor on the island of Ireland for several decades.

Alternatively, the historical ties, which Sinn Féin created, can be firmly shown through the sphere of the republican ideal of the French Revolution, this ideal can be portrayed through Sinn Féin's policies towards; equality, secularism and the context of the significance of the focus upon the political frame for nationalists in Northern Ireland to be part of one nation. Doyle has indicated Sinn Féin had socialist and republican thinking of James Connolly pre the era of 1916 within its fundamentals. Moreover, Nolan and Bryan come to the consensus that 1916 was used as a new phase of symbolical nationalism by Sinn Féin as "Easter Rising seized the sympathies of the Irish people it was the Tricolour that came to express the new mood – not yet the symbol of the state, but a flag which summoned up the spirit of rebellion" (2016, p.4).

Sinn Féin political influence is noted as being small scale until the events of 1916. Politically Sinn Féin saw themselves in confines of republican nationalism as Feeney (2002) indicates that Sinn Féin was able to "express separatist sentiments well before 1905" (2002, p.19). Additionally, Sinn Féin sought to include in their philosophy that the Irish nation seen as being fully entwined. Adshead and Tonge (2009) concluded that Sinn Féin ideas created a "Centre ground" (Adshead and Tonge, 2009, p.88). This ultimately allowed for the linkage of the existing "ethno-national fault line" (ibid, 2009, p.88). Nevertheless

this argument has been strengthened by Jeffery and Arthur (1996) who indicates the position that the political centre line which Sinn Féin has been pushing has become "exaggeratedly, as almost mythical" (1996, cited in Adshead and Tonge, 2009, p.88). Griffith's ideological version of incorporating Sinn Féin into the political dominion became a reality in the early period of the 20th century. In continuation to the previous point, Sinn Féin was created to counter the increasing internal

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pressures asserted by forces of the loyalist community and unionist politics of the Unionist Party, later split into the UPP and DUP. Sinn Fein's main objective for when it was established by Griffin lay the foundations for an independent nation as indicated by Feeney (2002) who advocated that the party in its modern capacity saw themselves as the party to continue the fight of ensuring and obtaining a 32 county Irish Republic, instead of the 26 counties that have been in existence since. Feeney noted that significance of Sinn Féin purposely located within the sphere of a "separatist tradition" (2002, p.18) which has allowed for the republican traditions of Irish nationalism to be continued on from the days of its inception in 1916 when they first began to fight for a separate Irish nation.

Thus with this in position the party was now able to proclaim it is not the past that has been associated with Ireland's nationalistic past but further to the "mainstream of pre-First World war European nationalist thinking" (Feeney, 2002, pp.18-19). As the manner of the early leadership of Sinn Féin to redirect the ideas of Irish nationalism to "the changing mood of the times" (Feeney, 2002, p.19) endured into being established as one of the organisations which can be seen as a driving force within the party within the remainder of the 20th century. So far, this paper has focused on the evolution of the history of nationalism within Northern Ireland with a key focus on the Irish republican movement of Sinn Féin. Laitan (2007) has pointed out that the impact of religious sectarianism between the nationalist and unionist communities are being diverse and centered of the other religious movements within Northern Ireland. Mainly within the confines of the international pattern as argued, "Different ethnic groups living near one another tends the main to clash violently" (2007, cited in English, 2011, p.455). As Walker (2004) proposes, the idea indicated by Laitan (2007) is closely associated with the unionist community in Northern Ireland "Unionism bore Irish Nationalism's hallmarks of class alliances, religiosity, the politics of populist defiance" (Walker, 2004, p.5). Furthermore, Shirlow and McEvoy (2008) have concluded that due to the increased focus of the historical importance towards sectarianism it ultimately ensured the increase in violence that has been associated with the nationalism towards Sinn Féin and DUP "viewed violence as the logical response to the denial of their respective rights" (Shirlow and McEvoy, 2008, cited in McAuley 2011, p.146).

The present study of nationalism that has been implemented by the main political parties within Northern Ireland; Sinn Féin and DUP. this is reinforced by Graff-McRae (2011) holds the view that the political relationship that is related to the past within both the Unionist and Republican divisions is due to "{t} he construction and contestation our past: it is intricately bound to discourse of the nation, the state, identity and opposition" (Graff-McRae, 2011, cited in McGratthan, 2013, p.10).

4 Theories of Nationalism

Firstly, the most general understanding of the review of the study of nationalism can be found within the works of scholars like Anderson English and Hobsbawn outlined by his conception of 'imagined community'. Anderson holds the thought that a nation is on a separate and individual level part of a 'socially constructed community' by which he established by the majority of those who live within the constructed society. Additionally, Anderson's concept of society and nation demonstrated within the political ideas of a constructed Irish nation in Northern Ireland.

Richard English has claimed in his 2006 book '*Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland'* that the clear and defined characterised of Nationalism and Irish Nationalism is seen as the "commitment to a set of shared features (territory, descent, cultures, history and so on)" (English, 2006, p.435). However, it is claimed by English that the very notion of nationalism, which nationalists seek to define a shared and "actual decent, or homogeneous culture or truly continuous history" (English, 2006, p.437). Furthermore, English has used the two previous opportunities when outlining what he sees as the accurate definition of nationalism in the Irish context. English refers to the argument that Irish nationalism and nationalists alike should introduce the shared influence and feature of "perceivedly shared life" (ibid, 2006, p. 436), which is seen as being "itself essential to nationalism" (ibid, 2006, p.436). However, Powell (2009) has indicated Tonge's analysis of nationalism in Northern Ireland portrayed between Nationalists and their Unionist counterparts. For instance, Powell uses the example of referring to nationalists as "Republican speak was ornate, literary and didn't always mean what it said" (Powell, 2009, p.58). Whereas on the other hand "Unionist language was blunt, direct, unyielding and always suspicious" (ibid, 2009, p.58).

English has used his definition to outline his belief that the differing approaches to nationalism in particular with Irish nationalism, is one that has to be analysed through different spectrums of nationalistic thought as for Sinn Féin. On the other hand, defining nationalism and understanding its origins within the European concept though introduced and cemented in the late 18th century with the outbreak of the eras of revolutions on the American continent, and the European continent within France. These events that occurred within America and France created a movement which helped in establishing what is seen as being part of three critical concepts of the origins of0 nationalism, that are the ideas around Community, Struggle and Power. These elements have allowed for a refreshed view on the ideas of what it is meant to be part of a nation, and how its

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separate national identity could be portrayed alongside being part of a selected community. As Berlin (2005) suggests, "to belong to a given community, to be connected with its members by indissoluble and impalpable ties of common language, historical memory, habit, traditions and feelings" (Berlin, 2005, cited in English 2006, p.432).

Although when referring to the relationship that is seen within Northern Ireland stipulated by the various elements of the nationalist argument. English (1999) has been able in illustrating that it is his belief that nationalism in Northern Ireland should be looked at through the prism of a Hobbesian approach. The indicated approach could be used in implementing a more in-depth understanding of the "concentrate on the popular reluctance to accept that what people (on various sides) claim as good or right is in the fact merely what is or seems to be in their own particular interest" (English, 1999, p.98).

Gledhill (2017), has introduced to the analysis surrounding nationalism that it is being portrayed as having a clear connection with a political element like Sinn Féin is seen as an "ideological response to the new conditions and provides impetus for the national movement and its struggle for state power" (Gledhill, 2017, p.20). Just like Gledhill analysis of the response of the party adapting to new surroundings in Northern Ireland, Blair (2010) has referred to the continued treatment of nationalist minority in Northern Ireland by using the example of Catholic oppression as "Irish nationalism was containable without paradigm change in the treatment of Irish Catholics" (Blair, 2010, p.153).

Moreover, English argues that nationalism in Northern Ireland has been the influence of two major elements of social and national demands, English offers the explanation by arguing that the nationalist parties have used the increase of political demands to their advantage of the nationalist cause. As English suggests, "What carries social power here is less the scientific or historical reality" (English, 2006, p.441). English has also raised the question of what has the increase of nationalism done for the population of Northern Ireland?. English's belief that the answer to the question is they have been used to "believe simplified or profoundly distorted though" (ibid, 2006, p.441).

Whereas Girvin (1999) has noted that the discipline of nationalism can be used in relation to this study of the transformation of nationalism by Sinn Féin as it could be used to "provide one of the strongest sources for political legitimacy" (1999, p.369). However, Girvin uses this opportunity to reintroduce the argument portrayed by Sinn Féin as being the main political threat to its version of nationalism as being: "the main source of instability if national identity or sovereignty are in dispute" (ibid, 1999, p.369). Although according to May (2007), argues that nationalism in the Irish context has gone through two separate phases when evaluating its relationship with Sinn Féin. Firstly, May focuses on the reflection of the historical connotation of nationalism by the emergence of a focused approach towards a "unified anti-colonialism bent" (Mays, 2007, p.53). Moreover, Mays suggests further that this focus enabled Sinn Féin to focus on their interpretation of a renovation of an Irish nation.

Although according to Miller (2000) points out that within the context of nationalism that the nationalist communities in Northern Ireland are often seen in introducing a version of radical "ethical attitudes" (Miller, 2000, cited in English, 2006, p.449). Further to the argument, Miller has been able to indicate, "Nations use ethical communities. They are contour lines in the ethical landscape" (Miller, 2000, p.27). This is seen in Northern Ireland with the manner in which the nationalist community has been portrayed by the state. This has enabled Sinn Fein to use the argument of nationalist communities being undermined and has resulted in the nationalist community in focusing "on achieving or maintaining the unity of their national community" (English, 2006, p.452). Though argued this issue has been influencing nationalist agenda and has allowed Sinn Féin to be more successful in recent elections within Northern Ireland. As indicated by remarks made by Breuilly (1993) suggest that the tactic used by what he calls "a national movement seeks to bind together people in particular territory in an endeavour to gain and use state power" (Breuilly, 1993, p.381).

Calhoun has suggested the definition established by Breuilly has been unable to reinforce the concept of what kind of national movement Sinn Féin wish to portray. Calhoun states that "Nationalist visions of internally uniform and sharply bounded cultural and political identities" (1997, p.19). Calhoun analyses have shown that Sinn Féin believes that their focus on the nationalist cause is that it has "often have to be produced or maintained by struggle" (ibid, 1997, p.19). On the other hand, Mays second phase of transformation of Irish nationalism is indicated through the examination of a continuing shift of Irish nationalism throughout the evolution of Sinn Féin. Surrounding the question of what it is meant to identify as Irish, as Mays claims that "what it meant to be not-English or to what is meant to be *Irish* as the struggle to forge a new, independent post-colonial nation took shape" (ibid, 2007, p.53).

Smith (2009) outlined the factor that a nation more focused on its culture rather than focused on the ideas outlined, in Berlin (2005) analysis, seen as being politically focused. As Smith defined "a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values" (Smith, 2009 cited in Butler-Perks, 2016, p.50). Whereas in deep contrast to the definition given by Gellner, Smith (2010) is able to give a more updated definition of what he feels to be the correct definition, which Smith is able to define in a 5-point phase:

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1. A process of formation, or growth, of nations;
2. A sentiment or consciousness of belonging to the nation;
3. A social and political movement on behalf of the nation;
4. A language and symbolism of the nation;
5. A doctrine and/or ideology of the nation, both general and particular. (Smith, 2010, pp.5-6)

Five points stipulated by Smith (2010) have had a major effect on the different terminological meanings of nationalism. Reinforced by the impact of the way in which these definitions have had on the way that nationalists have interpreted their meaning. An example of where this is clear is the manner in which Sinn Féin have been seen to adopt a more nationalistic stance on their policies that cover areas of party policies surrounding their social and economic issues, within the context of Northern Ireland. For example, Sinn Féin, focus on enacting an Irish Language act in Northern Ireland could be seen as a method in which they have used point 4 of Smiths 5 point phase, which states that "a language and symbolism of the nation" (Smith, 2010, pp.5-6).

On a similar note, Hearn (2006) believes in the notion that nationalism is seen as a "particular system of morally charged beliefs about the world, which sees the world as naturally made up of discrete nations, each with a natural right to self-determination" (2006, p.6). According to Nic Craith (2004) both sets of communities within Northern Ireland "place different degrees of emphasis on individual and communal conceptions of belonging" (Nic Craith, 2004, p.111).

Because of this conception for unionists and their nationalist counterparts have established a separate yet identical sense of the historical and cultural form of nationalism within Northern Ireland that belongs to both the UK and Ireland. Thus consequently instead it has established a greater emphasis on the "concept of Citizenship and Culture" (2004, p.115). Moreover, Finney (1995) argued that with the continuing line of inquiry of that; the unionist community has seen the equality of Irish traditions. As one of the dividing sections of what they consider an adoption of a more politically focused version of nationalism by their Republican counterparts. Finney (1995) argues that "In Northern Ireland, we are now being subject to the latest propaganda "in" phase – parity of esteem for the two traditions" (Finney,1995, cited in Nic Craith, 2004, p.124). The idea of an Irish tradition in Northern Ireland is extended by Finney's analysis, noting that this concept of esteem in relation to the idea of a nationalist tradition is merely presented as "esteem is not a right" (Finney, 1995 cited in Nic Craith,2004,p.124).

McGarry (2003) piece argues that by having "an awareness of history, and its uses, has long been a notable characteristic of modern Irish republicanism, an introspective political tradition with a marked preoccupation with the past and its own within it" (McGarry, 2003, p.1). By having a clear understanding of Irish history, we are able to have a clear definition of objectives behind the actions of the critical political actor within Ireland such as Sinn Féin. Numerous scholars within the discipline of nationalism such as Anderson, English, Boyce, Hobsbawm, and Hennessey, have in conferring, accounted for the modification in Irish republican nationalism by Sinn Féin. Thus, by the changing nature of the political cultural and social factors within the Northern Irish landscape could argue that there would be a clearer analysis of nationalism as a whole.

The nationalism being used to defined Irish nationalism, which is associated with Sinn Féin. This has been defined by Smith (1998) who notes; "a group of human beings, possessing common and distinctive elements of culture ... citizenship rights for all members, a sentiment of solidarity arising out of common experiences" (1998, cited in Githens-Mazer, 2005 p. 21). Although, Honohan (2008) states that the form of nationalism that Sinn Féin is trying to implement is critical in its relation with the separatist politics of the party as it is "highly valency within Irish Politics" (Honohan, 2008, p.1). Additionally, Honohan raises a further issue from the above statement by asking whether Sinn Féin truly understand "what it means to be a Republican in Ireland" (ibid, 2008, p.1) could be represented as "a contested matter" (ibid, 2008, p.1).

Although, Anderson stipulated that the concept of nationalism portrayed by Sinn Féin is one that is "proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse" (Anderson, 1983, cited in English, 2006, p.431). McManus (2016) argued that the contributions implemented by nationalism as a whole have allowed for these factors to contribute to the academic understanding of nationalism within Northern Ireland has resulted in "development of nationalist sentiments" (McManus, 2016, p.2). Besides, with the introduction of separate nationalist vision that can be demonstrated within the works of Gellner, Anderson, Hobsbawm, and English there have been elements of nationalism that have allowed for the expansion of vision within the theory of nationalism. One such example offered by Smith (2008) who says that the vision of nationalism "exist before the advent of modernity" (Smith, 2008, cited in McManus 2016, p.2). Honohan's analysis on theorising nationalism mainly aimed at the arguments associated with the evolving elements of nationalism, which Honohan defines with the concept of 'nation' when referring to the idea of an independent nation. Whereas, Honohan is able to offer another definition of a nation is seen as an "unchanging social entity" (ibid, 2012, p.9).

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Whereas Gellner states the following idea that covers the thought, that socially constructed idea that is associated with the traditional version of nationalism. One that can be seen as being transformed by the "pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations" (Gellner, 2008, cited in Hobsbawm 2012, p10). Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) stipulate Gellner's argument introduced with the concept of "pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations" (2008), used to elevate the influence of the idea of a nation-state as "ancient" (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983, pp.13-14). Anderson (1991) is also able in defining what he sees the concept of a nation as when he refers to ideological stances of community, which Anderson sees as being the link that joins the set of people who are members of a community located in a particular confine of a state. This concept has been critical to the understanding of Anderson's positioning of nationalism through thoughts and feelings to the discipline, these thoughts illustrated through Anderson's stance towards the "development of a linguistic standard and literacy imagination" (1991, cited in Hoffman and Graham, 2006, p.117). In addition, it can be deliberated that nationalism has been successful, in securing the continued narrative of historical phenomena, surrounding identity and nationalism, which have converged, on the same point.

Goodwin (2007) has concluded that the concept of an idea includes, "nationalism or patriotism, which people feel for a country to which they are contented to belong- a feeling which includes a sense of community and which is important to the maintenance of a society" (2007, p.264). However, numerous political researchers see nationalism as part of 'contentious politics' or collective political struggle. Although, suggested by scholars such as Crenshaw (1995), that the link exists between republican nationalism within Sinn Féin has resulted in "communicating messages and myths in motivating future generations" (1995, p.12).

Thus, the manner in which the literature connects to previous academic studies that have been undertaken in relation to the study of nationalism established by Sinn Féin, has resulted in a clear demonstration of the analytical knowledge of the subject in question. For example, the way in which the transformation of the groups has altered the political objectives that they have set themselves in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. Hennessey has been able to describe that within Northern Ireland there has been an expansion of the thought of Northern Ireland being semi-independent. This a concept portrayed by the DUP and UPP, although Hennessey claim "nationalists represented an Irish identity and an Irish dimension but that there was another Irish identity that nationalists appeared incapable of understanding" (1997, p.281). Hennessey points out as being a part of the inability of the nationalist and shows that Sinn Féin were unwilling as a political movement within Ireland to "accept the legitimacy of the Irish Unionist identity" (ibid, 1997, p.281). Furthermore, Sinn Féin were unable to recognise this fundamental and critical mistake on the part of Irish nationalism that "the feeling of belonging; the feeling of sharing with our fellow-citizens in Great Britain in great national events; of being part of something larger than simply the six counties" (ibid, 1997, p.281).

Moving onto the next section of this article, which will focus upon the contextualisation and critical analysis of the different strands of Irish nationalism of Northern Ireland. These strands include the civil, republican and the constitutional format of Irish nationalism, which would be indicated through the most influential elements of nationalism through the philosophy of the politics of Sinn Féin.

5 Critical Analysis of Nationalism

The analysis of nationalism shown within Northern Ireland has been in the revival of Irish traditions such as culture, sports, language and the role of constitutional nationalism. Though as Hayward (2009) has stated that referring to the past in the context of Ireland is seen as reintroducing it into the current period, this is seen where Hayward says "the narrative of the historical culture of the Irish nation supports the integrity of Irish nationhood with assertions of its ancient roots" (2009, p.118).

As English (2016) stipulated that the Irish nationalists who are associated with Sinn Féin have been focused on the 'ancient roots' was one reason why Hayward delves in more detail with the argument, that a political party like Sinn Féin and its interpretation of Irish nationalism could be shown as "the image of Ireland projected in this is one of a nation comfortable with its own culture and willing to share it" (ibid, 2009, p.119).

Contextualising nationalism in the modern context within Northern Ireland is difficult to interpret due to the multi-level political party system that is within Northern Irish Politics. Though it has been argued by Clark (2012) that as Northern Ireland has its own particular political election system which Clark states as being "dominant cleavage revolves around attitudes towards a united Ireland and a union with Britain" (2012, p.134). Clark analysis could be a portrayal of the division between two nationalisms: one Irish and one Ulster (British). Therefore, this ideological separation of political thoughts and identity emphasises the influence created within Northern Ireland to the idea and concepts of Nationalism. The opinion held by Clark suggests that it is important to understand that these temperaments of nationalism altered by a new generation of nationalists within in northern Irish society.

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English (2009) has argued that Irish nationalist identity in Northern Ireland has been complicated by its relationship to two separate states, as English states "The UK (within northern nationalists have existed, but from which many have withheld loyalty and allegiance)" (English, 2009, p.520). Furthermore, Adams (1986) has reinforced this point raised by English, by arguing the stance adopted by nationalists in Northern Ireland is one associated with the concept of national identity "This was a view long held by Irish nationalists north and south" (Adams, 1986, p.88). Additionally, through the investigation into the concepts of identity and nationalism focused on Northern Ireland and the Irish state Todd (2015b) sees the sense of identity and nationality of those in the north of Ireland as showing that "Catholics and nationalists had no strong identification with any state" (2015b, p.14).

Cullen sees nationalism as a technique for where "particular communities and peoples define and describe themselves do not involve creative acts of self-imagination" (2000, p.8). This is totally opposite to the belief in the argument held by the above point introduced by Todd (2015b). Furthermore, Tonge (2014) has stated that the concept of national identity that is shown in Northern Ireland is one, which has been established the continuing assessment closely related to its force within ethnic conflicts like the one seen in Northern Ireland. As Tonge has claimed that Northern Ireland and its approach to nationalism and identity shown as:

"A belief in an organic approach to reintegration is justified in the years following conflict, but when unaccompanied by a longer-term plan for societal integration, does not offer the promise of movement towards reconciliation, instead leading to the restatement of difference" (Tonge, 2014, p.194).

Whiting (2016a) has argued that Sinn Féin republican transformed from the Republican Party connected with supporting the political violence introduced by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), therefore allowing Sinn Féin to go through a period of extended non-political activities. Permitting Sinn Féin to become the "largest nationalist party in the Northern Irish Assembly" (2016a, p.9). However, Tonge (2007) argues, that this process of the party establishing itself as the largest nationalist party was reinforced by the way Sinn Féin were able in "stealing of the SDLP political clothes" (Tonge, 2007, p.96). This overtaking of the SDLP was used by Sinn Féin as it "symbolised a remarkable transformation for Sinn Féin as up until the close of the twentieth century" (Whiting, 2016b, p.542).

Porter (1998), has pointed out that the combination of the forms of republicanism in which has portrayed relative distinctions byways of the definition of the manner in which the elements of the use of physical nationalistic values with the mixture of political traditions in Northern Ireland. This suggestion has been shown by the way Sinn Féin have been able to use the concept of Irish nationalism as an "incredibly broad diffuse ideological configuration" (Potter, 1998, cited in Bean and Hayes, 2009, p.134). Additionally, according to Potter's analysis towards the republicanism, which has been able to introduce a sense of continued salience to the character of Irish republicanism.

Sinn Féin has been able to introduce an argument that they have been changed into a national and international political actor, counter-argued by Whiting (2016) who notes that because of the significant linkage that is still prominent in the party's ranks. As Whiting points out that with the idea of "examining the evolution of Sinn Féin also provides a unique contribution to the literature on how armed groups more broadly make the transition into constitutional politics" (2016b, p.542).

As Todd and Ruane have suggested that with the dramatic development in Northern Ireland by Sinn Féin, who saw that their 25-year campaign of continuous violence against the British state to achieve a fully integrated Republic, choose to support a "devolutionary settlement within the United Kingdom that granted a majority of the population of Northern Ireland" (Todd and Ruane 2001, n.p).

Bew (2007) has been able to identify that the method in which Sinn Féin have directed their support for the Good Friday Agreement, has shown that the majority of the nationalist enclave wished for the combined forces of nationalist and republican to enter into conventional Northern Irish politics. McGuninness (2005) believes Sinn Féin actions are worth the struggle as stated "the contribution we have made in the peace process and in transforming the political situation" (McGuiness and Arthur, 2005, p.4).

Furthermore, it is important to understand the argument offered by Whiting, although the political wing of the republican movement in Northern Ireland has ceased in their objective of violence to ensure that their aims of an equal and united Northern Ireland. It does not show any alteration towards deferring with the traditions of revolutionary politics, surrounding the narrative of the Easter Rising of 1916. This point can be confirmed by the then Northern Irish Secretary of State Theresa Villiers referred to the modifications of Sinn Féin which would accept the maintaining of "wholly political focus" (Secretary of State, 2015, cited in Whiting, 2016b, p.542).

There has been an argument introduced by Sanders (2010) that Sinn Féin's policy of transforming itself from an abstention to being part of a fully elected body such as the Northern Irish Assembly. The party becomes a legitimate political party rather

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than focusing on separate elements of non-political activities with groups such as the IRA, like they did at prior stages of their history. This point reinstated the way Sinn Féin emerged from being a "fringe position, abstaining from the British, Irish and Northern Irish Parliaments" (Sanders, 2010, p.200).

In contrast to Whiting, this idea that is exemplified with Unionist ideas of being undermined by the nationalist. Sinn Féin, who are reformed supporters of an organisation such as the European Union (EU), as being vital in ensuring that the two factions continue to respect the volatile peace that exists within Northern Ireland. Ladreech (2002) argues, that the approach that has been set out by Sinn Féin in relation to the support of the EU described as being "engagement with and acknowledgment of the EU has increased with reference to its political programmes and policies" (2002 cited in Maillot, 2010, p.143). Whereas, Frampton (2005) argues that the evolving approaches towards Europe have reinstated the party is seen in "the wider conditions of the party" (2005, p.236).

Another factor that must be taken into consideration when evaluating the changing scope of nationalism in Northern Ireland is the challenges posed by the changing political environment. For instance, the ongoing political situation associated with the UK's departure of the European Union (EU) and its effect on Northern Ireland. This is having a major effect on Northern Ireland's relationship with the Westminster government. As Pow (2018a) pointed out this friction for the northern Irish political system has "produced a particularly toxic environment" (2018a, n.p.) between the UK government and the two communities in Northern Ireland. Pow sees this as creating an opportunity for nationalists to "increasingly look south of the border" (2018a, n.p.). However, Holmes has stated the position that Sinn Féin holds towards the EU is one, which has been out of "nascent opposition to the EU was clearly built on nationalist objections" (Holmes, 1998, p.102).

Pow has claimed the two communities have become politically challenging as there has been "the preferences of the two communities have become increasingly distinct" (2018a, n.p.). A position examined through the assessment of Garry *et al* (2018),

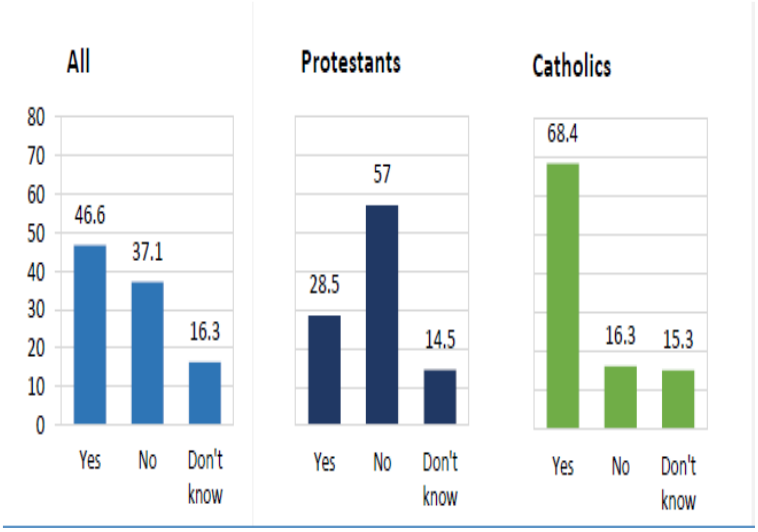


Fig.1: Referendum on a United Ireland.

Source: Garry et al (2018, p.43)

As indicated by Garry et al (2018), in the responses to figure 1 which is shown above, the percentage of people who were surveyed as part of the research. Figure 1 is able to show a summary of responses to this question: "When the UK leaves the EU, should there be a referendum in Northern Ireland asking people whether they want Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom or to re-unify with the rest of Ireland?" In other words, Figure 1 does not indicate how the population of Northern Ireland would vote in the event of a referendum. Therefore, in short, from this graph, it is not possible to infer whether people support a United Ireland or not. However, Garry et al (2018) indicate that "21% overall favour a united Ireland, with half of respondents preferring to remain in the UK. 10% said they would not vote and 19% said they didn't know" (Garry et al, 2018, p.43).

Anderson and Shuttleworth (1998) point out there has been "decisive shift in the balance of power with Catholics in numbers and territory at the expense of Protestants" (1998, p.188). Although this investigation does misinterpret the Catholic increase

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seen in Northern Ireland, which has been used in feeding the unionist paranoia or even the nationalist triumphalism claimed as being "politically self-defeating whatever the short-tern opportunistic gains" (Anderson and Shuttleworth, 1998, p.189).

According to Coakley *et al* (1997) stipulation that the focus of nationalist movement in Northern Ireland has seen "Irish nationalist tradition was not merely anti-British, with Britain" (1997, p.213), but this enabled Sinn Féin to be "frequently at loggerheads with the major powers of continental Europe" (ibid, 1997, p.213). However, the politics of Sinn Féin towards the EU which according to Coakley and Garry (2016) resulted in "86% of Sinn Féin and 92% of SDLP voters supported remain" (Coakley and Garry, 2016, cited in Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, 2017, p.504).

However, when these percentages were broken down within the context of nationalist and Unionist communities, a total of only "4%" (ibid, 2018, p.43) of unionists surveyed answered that they would choose a unified Ireland. In deep comparison, the nationalist community voted "42%" (ibid, 2018, p.43) in favor of a United Ireland. This investigation by Garry *et al* (2018) this opportunity has opened up new circumstances for Northern Ireland to explore. An example of this new circumstance is the growth in support for Irish unity due to the prospect of a No deal with Brexit. As Cochrane *et al* (2018) has suggested that the level of support for both a vote on Irish Unity or stay with the UK has steadily increased as on an average of 34 %" (Cochrane et al, 2018, n.p).

Both Cochrane *et al* (2018) and Garry *et al* (2018) analysis have been able in conferring to the fact that those within the nationalist community are frightened with the prospect of the return to the days where the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic had physical boundaries applied to it. An installment of a hard border would ultimately result in the nationalists in the north [with the support of the Irish government] implementing a call for the facilitation of government agenda towards Northern Ireland. When Taoiseach Jack Lynch (1977-1979), referred to Northern Ireland position as a major concern for the government in the south. Lynch believed required vital "Constitutional change" (Lynch, 1971, cited in Hayward, 2009, p.153). It is possible to reinforce the position outlined by nationalists in the North by referring back to Lynch when referencing to the growing notion of a united Ireland "to seek the reunification of the country by peaceful means" (Lynch 1971, cited in Hayward, 2001, p.3).

Todd (2009) describes the argument by Lynch by referring to the nationalistic tone expressed. Outlining the failure in accomplishing the nationalistic aspiration of reunifying Ireland. As Todd notes "just enough to detach Irish political leaders and populace from practical concern over Northern Ireland, their primary interests remaining in their own territory" (Todd, 2009, p.3).

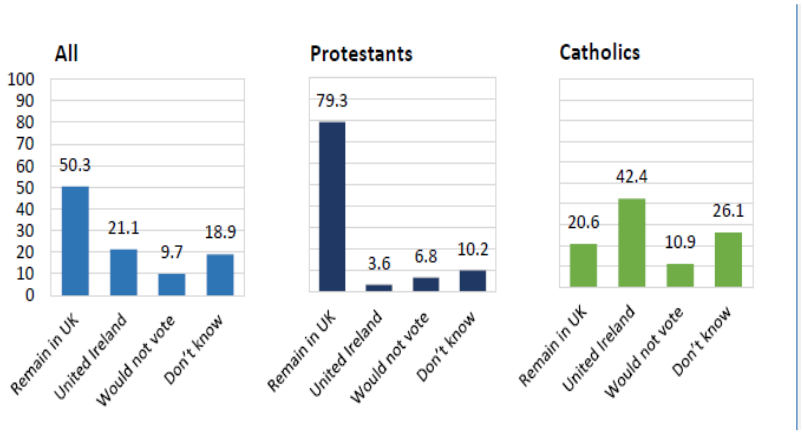


Fig.2: United Ireland or Stay in the UK.

Source: Garry et al (2018, p.44)

To assert for a more influential analysis of the ideological factors that connect to Sinn Féin, when asked concerning the question of a united Ireland or remain within the United Kingdom, Garry *et al* used several key factors when collecting the data for this analysis. Firstly, Garry *et al* focused on the answers given by the selected members of the Catholic community. This is due to them wanting to understand the extent in which the Catholic community show their backing for the proposed idea of Irish unity, as Garry *et al* states this is all "dependent on the type of UK exit from the EU" (*et al*, 2018, p.44). Referring back to the analysis by Garry *et al* it is important to raise the question of, has Brexit provided an opportunity for Sinn Féin to realise its ideological goals? Additionally, it is important to ask how the party has responded to developments since the referendum (e.g. called for a border poll, called for special status etc.). Moreover if at all, has Sinn Féin response to

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Brexit been different to previous articulations of its ideology and differing political situations, closely affecting the politics of the party.

As noted in remarks given by Adams where he calls for a referendum vote on the concept of Irish Unity, he reinforces his support for the indicated referendum within five years. Adams states that as Brexit is making the call for a referendum more likely it is showing that the Island of Ireland has become united in the sense of opposing Brexit; "How a shared Ireland, an agreed Ireland is created is another matter deserving of careful, generous and positive inclusivity" (Adams, 2018a, n.p.). Adams quote has pinpointed the fact that Sinn Féin has moved more closely in engaging more directly in the analysis of an ideological position for the support of a Border poll/referendum, which would be used in reinforcing its ideological viewpoint on its policies of Brexit and Irish unification.

Todd (2015a) has referred to her argument that Brexit and its implications for Northern Ireland and Adams objective of achieving a united Ireland with the proposed referendum, suggests as being a critical junction because of the current threat of instability to the Good Friday Agreement. As Todd points out with the statement that refers to the aspect of the agreement, may cause one of the nationalist's groups in Northern Ireland to overreact "If instead Brexit rolled back the achievements of the Good Friday Agreement"(Todd,2015a, p.7).

However, Adams stated in 2016 in an article for *An Phoblacht (The Republic),* that the nationalist community in Northern Ireland must advocate for a clearer focus on the arguments on Irish Unity. Adams states, "It needs a political strategy with clear objectives and actions" (Adams, 2016, n.p.). Ferguson argues that there is "nonsignificant difference for the religious-affiliation groups by the circumstances that the political-affiliation groups subsume the variance" (Ferguson *et al* 2007, p.318).

MacGinity *et al* (2007), describes that nationalism has developed in Northern Ireland by the creation of a situation where there has been a "complex social-political and cultural construct" (et al, 2007, p.7). That this is reinforced by Nic Craith (2003), who points out the enhancement of "cultural infrastructure" (2003, p, 48, cited in MacGinity et al 2007, p.7). However, Mcarthy (2018), sees the changing opinion to the prospect of Irish unity represents a historic opportunity for Sinn Féin and Irish nationalism on a whole. McCarthy states, "The past several years that confirm a significant trend in rising support for Irish unity among citizens in the North" (McCarthy, 2018, n.p.). McCarthy strengthened the opinion created by the Irish Unity poll by saying: "First, there has been a consistent rise in the proportion of people who say they would vote for a united Ireland" (McCarthy, 2018, n.p). In addition "The gap is narrowing with support for unity just 3% behind support for the constitutional status quo" (McCarthy, 2018, n.p.).

Toynbee (2018), argues absence of Sinn Féin with the impending Brexit votes on issues like the Irish border and the effect of Northern Ireland's relationship with the EU, has raised the question of whether SF is focused on the matter in hand and its effect on securing Irish unity. By which Toynbee notes, "Sinn Féin need only appear for the few crucial votes that would stop the Brexiters wrecking Irish prospects" (Toynbee, 2018, n.p.). Coakley and O'Dowd (2007) have noted that the geopolitical context posed by the Irish Border expanding inequality surrounding the economic and social framework that is seen as a critical element of how the border would be affected because of a Hard Brexit, on both sides of the argument, from the communities. Douglas and Shirlow asked the question of "Why people have struggled violently for a protracted period in the place that is called Northern Ireland" (Douglas and Shirlow, 1998, p.128). Coakley and O'Dowd (2007) argue that this argument of the importance of the Irish Border has been implemented in "drawing attention to the peculiar narrowness of the geopolitical context" (2007, p.878).

Whereas, Tonge (2005) argues that question of the Irish border as being undermined in its importance surrounding the ongoing political situation of the Good Friday agreement and the manner in which it "has been hampered by attendant political instability" (Tonge, 2005, p.3). This situation has played in the issue of nationalist identity because of the political instability currently in play in Northern Ireland. Todd (2017) suggests that Brexit as has ensured "identity change becomes widespread when changes in power relations make it clear to the public that the identity status quo is no longer an option" (Todd, 2017, p.6). This alteration has assisted in understanding the constitutional earthquake that is taking place in Northern Irish society and political life due to Brexit.

Garry *et al* (2018), has been able to offer the argument that a hard Brexit, one that is wished by members of the current Conservative government, would create a situation in [Northern Ireland] concluding in the nationalist community voting 53% in favor of a united Ireland as indicated in Garry's report. Whereas for the unionist in Northern Ireland it is seen as the least desirable option for the Unionist community with support at 44% according to Cochrane *et al* (2018).

Tonge (2016) notes the increasing situation in Northern Ireland on the issue of a hard border after Brexit shown in the context of a growing percentage of the population wish for a clear definition of what a hard border would result in for Northern Ireland. With the increasing effects of national identity to be contained by the "constitutional terms, with unionist

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versus nationalist differences over its long-term future still dominating Northern Ireland politics" (Tonge, 2016, p.7). Adams (2018b) suggested that the whole process of Brexit will have a more dangerous and significant effect on Northern Ireland as Adams states Brexit will be a massive threat to "our two economies and to the Good Friday Agreement. The Irish people need certainty on no hard border" (Adams, 2018b, n.p.). Tonge (2005) analysis has raised the question that the impact of the departure of the UK from the EU, poses significant consequences to the North. An argument outlined by Adams (2018b). According to Tonge (2005), reaffirms that peace is a key concern to the nationalist community, which could be a "fruitful route for Sinn Fein than calls for a border poll on Irish reunification" (Tonge, 2005, p.4).

However, Ó Dochartaigh (2012) illustrates that Northern Ireland on the issue of the Irish border has been "greatly underrepresented in the most recent poll" (2012, p.256). Although it is important to understand that the poll is a "picture of steep decline and needs to be treated with caution" (ibid, 2012, p.256). Though in comparison it has been stated that a small percentage of around 28%, when asked the same question, indicated they would support a united Ireland only the UK; "if the UK changed its mind and remained a full member of the EU" (Garry *et al*, 2018, p.44). Moreover, Pow (2018b) concludes the nationalist sentiment of 'green white and orange' in the aftermath of Brexit has suggested, the increase in the polarisation of the political ideas of a fragmentation of Northern Ireland, as well as Sinn Féin and its Unionist neighbors. As Pow specifies with the amplified "uncertainty exists around the precise form of Brexit, it is very possible that Northern Ireland will be predictably divided on the outcome along traditional dividing lines" (2018b, n.p.).

Additionally to re-illustrate the point made by Pow on how nationalism has been in Northern Ireland and how a society such as one that has been fragmented due to nationalistic and cultural lines, can be seen within the argument posed by McNulty which focuses on the expanding tensions that are occurring in Northern Ireland between the two ideological communities. However, in his argument McNulty illustrates the critical importance of having a more detailed understanding of the combined historical and cultural dynamics of the separate nationalisms at play in Northern Ireland by stating Northern Ireland is "dysfunctional, but it is still possible to show respect for all cultures in our society" (McNulty, 2018, n.p).

Furthermore, Hayward (2018a) has outlined the argument that Brexit is a critical threat to the continued fragile peace and stability in Northern Ireland. With the potential of the growing obsession with avoiding physical infrastructure at the Northern Irish border has indicated the limitation of a view for peace. Thus by referring to the growing question of physical border Hayward has been able to claim that a physical border would enable members of the existing republican paramilitaries to use it as leverage for target practice by concluding that it appears to reintroduce "violent conflict can be averted merely by not having obvious targets for that violence" (Hayward, 2018a, n.p.) Hughes and Hayward (2018) stipulate in their recent report on the relationship of Northern Ireland on Brexit. Argue that Brexit has ensured the political dynamics of Northern Ireland have altered concluding with the position that "Sinn Féin are strong in all the constituencies that run along the Irish border" (Hughes and Hayward, 2018, p.5).

Hughes and Hayward have also claimed that the Brexit result for Sinn Féin and its standing on the issue is more than just a political situation, it is more than an "ideological token- a pressing, material concern for many" (Hughes and Hayward, 2018, p.5). Hayward (2016a) also weighed into the argument surrounding the issue of Brexit and nationalism in Northern Ireland saying that Brexit has reignited the issue of what the British state call Northern Ireland the "problem child" (2016a, n.p) with its two conflicting identities one British whereas the other seen as Irish. As seen by Hayward that with the importance to indicate the momentousness of the issue of the departure from the EU, and what effect this would have on Sinn Féin as Hayward states "Northern Ireland's position becomes more 'vulnerable' as the grip of British sovereignty wanes" (Hayward, 2016a, n.p.). Although Buckler (2017) has indicated from the position that Hayward holds is that "Republicans believe Brexit could strengthen their case and support their ultimate aim a united Ireland" (Buckler, 2017, n.p.).

The point indicated above could be further analysed by Hayward's (2018b) report published in June 2018 for the Centre for International border research of Queens University Belfast. As part of the report, participants asked to take part in a survey focusing on different elements of the expanding issues surrounding the relationship of Brexit and the island of Ireland. One of the respondents when asked for their feedback on the area of a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and whether or not the introduction of Brexit would allow for the re-establishment of violence prior to the creation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Hayward (2018b) indicates that "30% of respondents mention Peace Process, division, return to the troubles, conflict, protest, soldiers on the border, paramilitary activity as their many concern and focus" (Hayward, 2018b, p.47). One of the respondents in the report stipulated that the prospect of a return to a physical border between the Republic and Northern Ireland have people in Northern Ireland concerned by the prospect of the destabilisation of Northern Ireland. States "I actually fear for peace in the region. Any tangible, overt, physical security being introduced at the border could become a target for opportunists" R569, Mid Ulster, 46-65, M, cited in Hayward, 2018a, p.48).

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Though in a report published by Morrow *et al* (2013), on the issue of community relations in Northern Ireland from 1989 to 2013. Morrow stipulated the position of the majority of the young Catholic population within Northern Ireland have shown their support by feeling "increasingly Irish, they do not necessarily feel that a united Ireland is the best option for Northern Ireland" (Morrow *et al*, 2013, p.83). In accordance with the argument established by Morrow *et al* (2013).

Mallon and Phoenix (2003) indicate within their assessment of the transformation of nationalism as being significant within the parameters of Northern Ireland and in "political, economic and cultural terms" (2003, p.8). This sense of confidence indicated by the nationalist community because of the "corresponding sense of demoralization in the Unionist population" (Mallon and Phoenix, 2003, p.9). Hayward's respondents were able to state surrounding the devastation, caused by any impact posed by a hard border. Noting that it would be nationalist communities who face the burden of a situation as "They cannot and must not be allowed to succeed by playing fast and loose with our future peace and prosperity" (R464, 46-65, M, cited in Hayward, 2018, p.52).

Paula Kelly (2018) in her article by arguing that the GFA must be untouched in the interest of the Northern Ireland peace process. Brexit, Kelly argues will have a lasting effect on the paralysation of Northern Irish politics, especially on Sinn Féin. "Brexit has paralysed Northern politics, it only adds urgency to the need for a restored Assembly and to the need to ensure the Agreement is fully realised" (Kelly, 2018, n.p.).

Burgees *et al* (2007) have reinforced this point by that political groups would be able to continue the conventional political arrangement would "allow for Northern Ireland to progress beyond being divided into groups distinguished sharply by religious background" (Burgees *et al* 2007, p.70). Ideally, there would not be the recreation of a hard border on the island, and as stated by Michel Barnier on the 22nd January 2018, whilst giving oral evidence to members of the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs committee. Barnier asked by the committee to express his definition of a hard border on the Island would be like. Barnier responded with a definition of a hard border as, "I am not going to attempt to define our border, which I hope will never come into being" (Barnier, cited in Northern Irish Affairs Committee 2018, n.p).

Barnier added that if there was the unforgettable establishment of a hard border that North and South cooperation would not cease "In the interests of the citizens of Northern Ireland and the citizens of Ireland itself, I very much hope that the north/south co-operation that you have sustained will continue" (Northern Irish Affairs Committee 2018, n.p). Additionally, Hayward points out the position that is held by nationalists especially those of the traditional elements, "see EU membership as a vital lifeline extending beyond UK borders, most, especially to the Republic of Ireland" (ibid, 2016, n.p.).

In a recent report published in August 2017, by the joint committee on the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement (JCIGFA) for the House of the Oireachas. Former Irish Attorney general Rory Brady (2002-2007) expressed in the foreword of Richard Humphreys 2009 book, 'Countdown to Unity: Debating Irish Reunification' by identifying the growing set of objectives created by the prospect of Irish unity in light of a Hard border. As Brady states, "It is now for the political world to address when and how it will embrace those challenges and induce that change" (Brady, 2009, cited in JCIGFA, 2017, p.22).

Bean and Hayes see the foundation for Republican politics under Sinn Féin as reinforcement of a "strategic shift was a radical reorientation of Provisional politics" (Bean and Hayes, 2009, p.128). Furthermore, Smyth noted that with the shift established by Sinn Féin as a major policy issue for the Unionist element of the agreement. Like the DUP who can be referred to as a "politico-religious organisation" (Smyth, 1986, cited in Tonge, 2003, p.1).

On the other hand, Hume expressed the opinion on the transformation of nationalism undertaken by Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland as the instituting of a new form of politics since the Good Friday Agreement. Hume believed that the introduction of cooperation with organisations such as the European Union (EU) on the matter of transforming the political landscape of Northern Ireland has been a success and "the finest example in the history of the world of conflict resolution" (Hume, 2004, cited in Hayward, 2004, p.3).

Neumann (2009) has critically argued the positioning of Sinn Féin policy towards nationalism, seen as being engaged in a complexed variety of nationalism. He argues further intensified conditions in Northern Ireland as "conditions of independent political inequality between the two communities existed in Northern Ireland" (2009, cited in Bew *et al* 2007, p.21). Whereas Hearty (2016) examination of the discourse introduced by Sinn Féin surrounding the issue of inequality, associated with the distrust with the politics of the nationalist community, is seen as the inherent link that is seen by "Sinn Féin discourse was shaped by their increased tactical interaction with state structures" (Hearty, 2016, p.2).

Bew *et al* (2009) argued that with the inequality outlined by Neumann, the existing issue of inequality in Northern Ireland has been a condition for which the two communities had to endure through identity-driven violence. Although some within the unionist and nationalists communities saw the ceasing of violence as a betrayal to their separate cause of "the halt in violence will only be temporary. This is not acceptable" (Sinn Féin, 1993 cited in Bew *et al*, 2009, p.122).

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To conclude this section, which has been used to critically analysis the development of nationalism. The development of the argument has been focused upon the concept of nationalism has been altered by Sinn Féin. Therefore, it shows that the affiliation of the beliefs become less focused over an extended period. The manner in which the transformation of nationalism can be highlighted through the departure of Sinn Féin from the past relationship with the use of violence of a political nature and more into a situation of democratic politics in Northern Ireland.

Moreover, It is important to raise the question of what is it about nationalism how it has effected the alternation of Sinn Féin in its transformation on the Northern Irish political stage. One way in which nationalism used in transforming the party, is the way Sinn Féin have used its link to the historical periods of Irish nationalism, For example, the Rising of 1916 to re-inverted its profile in being the only nationalist party in Northern Ireland to be interested to fight for a united Ireland and 'Socialist Irish Republic' as outlined by the leaders of the rising.

6 Political Origins of Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin can trace its origins to the year of 1905, when it was established by Marie Butler and later taken over and transformed by Arthur Griffin in 1907 Griffin used the platform of the party to implement "his policy of national self-reliance" (Coakley, 1980 cited in Gallagher, 1985, p.94). Sinn Féin were fixated on the creation of a more political movement for the cause of Irish nationalism in the context of the nature of a "pan-nationalist independent movement" (Holmes, 1998, p.50). As well, Holmes (1998) suggested Sinn Féin had enabled "metamorphosed rapidly between its foundations and Irish Independence" (1998, p.46). As noted later in this section in Table 1.

However, English (2016) argues that the evolution and transformation that has taken place in the politics of Sinn Féin has occurred to the changing relationship with Northern Irish politics and the issue of identity. From its creation in the modern sense in the 1960s due to "desire of the Northern Irish Catholic minority to pursue fairer treatment within the northern state during the 1960s" (2016, p.100). English notes that Sinn Féin relationship with groups like the IRA is one which they thought they could use to devastate the Northern Irish state due to being done all in the name of nationalist cause, "the latter had prompted the existing, inherited inter-communal enmity in the north to become more sharply and violently charged" (ibid, 2016, p.100). Holmes (1998) stipulated that Sinn Féin was seen as an "explicitly nationalist party" (1998, pp.140-141). At the beginning of their existence as a political party as the party is known on focusing on a wide range of policies were aimed at interrupting on a "basis of a nationalist interpretation of events" (ibid, 1998, pp.140-141).

Table 1 below is able to discuss the alteration in the political nature that has occurred from Sinn Féin since its creation and the manner in which the party has been able to change with the changing times. The table below will also be used in obtaining a chorological order of how Sinn Féin have changed

Adshead and Tonge (2009) state that Sinn Féin's nationalistic ideas created a "Centre ground" (2009, p.88) Though this argument has been strengthened by Jeffery and Arthur (1996) who see the position which Sinn Féin have been pushing has somewhat become "exaggeratedly, as almost mythical" (1996, cited in Adshead and Tonge, 2009, p.88). Manning (1972) identifies the evaluation of Sinn Féin occurred on no more than four separate junctures from 1905, that "at least four successive parties bearing the name Sinn Féin" (1972, cited in Holmes, 1998, p.46).
Between the foundation years of 1905 to 1926, these have included the Provisional Sinn Féin (established in 1971 after the split in 1969/70), Morrison (2010) argues the split of Sinn Féin and Provisionals was instrumental in the forming of "separate process of left-wing republican movement" (Morrison, 2010, p.115). Because of this separation, noted by Morrison analysis the two separate elements of the republican movement materialised into "its influential modern day actors" (ibid, 2010, p.119). English (2012), pointed out in his argument that the split caused due to the growing political context of tensions created by the controlling influence of different elements of the republican movement. This can be seen through the way in which the Northern Irish state was being run at the time of the split, as English has indicated with his view; "traditional republicans argument held the northern state was of necessity unjust, that its reasons for existence and its structures were alike thoroughly sectarian" (English, 2012, p.103). Although it was not until the 1940s that Sinn Féin relationship with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) seen as taken down a path that focused on the use of violence to destabilize Northern Ireland. Bishop and Mallie (1987) note the influence by the IRA, showed by a strategic move by the IRA which "Sinn Féin submitted willingly" (1987, cited in Holmes, 1998, p.46).

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Table 1: The evolution from Sinn Fein to Democratic Left, 1905-1992.

Date	Event	Nature of party
1905	Sinn Féin founded by Arthur Griffith	Pan-nationalist independent movement
1922	Sinn Féin splits over Treaty: pro-Treaty faction leave to form Cumann na nGaedheal	extra-parliamentary opposition
1926	Sinn Féin splits again: majority of remaining anti-treaty leave to form Fianna Fáil	Extreme nationalist splinter group
1949	IRA take over Sinn Féin	Political front for paramilitary organisation
1962	Collapse of IRA campaign	Drift towards the left begins
1971	Split in Sinn Féin and IRA between Officials and Provisionals	Increasingly left-wing
1975	IRSP/INLA split from Officials	Increasingly distant from nationalism
1977	Publication of 'The Irish industrial Revolution': name changed to Sinn Féin the Workers' Party	Neo-communist party
1981	Electoral breakthrough and name changed to the Workers' Party	Transition to democratic socialism begins
1992	Split in the Workers' Party: leave to form Democratic Left	Democratic socialist party

Source: Holmes (1998, p.50).

Sinn Féin move towards a more politically driven approach is seen when they alter towards a position of a more populist left-wing party, which was tagging alongside the combined political policies of civil rights and ensuring the continued softened style of republicanism. Additionally, two studies (Whiting, M. 2013a; Whiting, S. 2013b) both found that the relationship which existed between Sinn Féin and IRA evolved through many alterations over time which Whiting (2013b) has argued as being "gradual prominence of Politics as an evolutionary, logical step" (Whiting, 2013b, p.29). When referring to Sinn Féin political relationship it is also important to illustrate the parties' link with Republicanism. Within the context of Ireland what Honohan has illustrated as "less stringently assimilationist and secularist" (2008, p.17) within its approach to the issue. Honohan states further that the significant impact of republicanism seen by Sinn Féin is clearly using the form of republicanism closely related to moving from a pan-nationalist organisation to which fully embraces democracy. This enabled the party to experience a brand new version of republicanism that it was trying to introduce would be able to form a rapport "to see if and it fits into this broader tradition of Ideas and practice" (Honohan, 2008, p.2).

This concept of a new transition of republican and nationalist ideas by Sinn Féin can be illustrated through the leadership of Adams, as Dolan argued Sinn Féin were able in "successfully re-brand and sell the mode of politicized republicanism" (Dolan, 2016, p.37). Powell (2009) challenges the widely held view that the leadership of SF by Adams and McGuinness were able "to carry the whole movement with them" (Powell, 2009, p.25). Although Powell, felt that any previous leadership "move forward had been accompanied by a split" (ibid, 2009, p.25). Powell, claimed that the relationship which Adams and

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McGuinness had with Sinn Féin could be seen through the portrayal of control over the organization as: "Adams represented Belfast, the center of gravity and ideological heart of the movement, while McGuinness represented Derry, it's emotional stronghold on the other side of the province" (ibid, 2009, p.99).

Whiting (2015) pointed out that with the split, Sinn Féin were able to profoundly transform itself through "the development of revisionist republicanism" (Whiting, 2015, p.66). This development by the party is traceable to "the 1986 decision to drop the long standing republican policy of abstention" (ibid, 2015, p.66). Though it is important to understand that the blind difference that exists between the nationalist and republican threads of Sinn Féin is the manner in which elements of the party were able in "putting violence to one side" (Powell, 2009, p.36). As such, the party believed that by reforming itself against the use of physical violence and force in the cause of nationalism could be used to "create a sovereign independent Ireland" (ibid, 2009, p.37). Further analysis by Honohan indicated that republicanism roots can be traced back to the 18th century revolutionary movements through its reflections on factors on the expansion of European nationalism, as seen in the diverse works and ideas of key revolutionary scholars such as Jefferson and Robespierre. As a result of the nature and definition of republicanism is seen as a significant interest for Sinn Féin, due to the fact with the party politics of its nationalist ideals having been examined and "closely identified with the separatist version of republicanism" (Honohan, 2008, p.1). The definition associated with the version of republicanism portrayed by Sinn Féin has been able to challenge the view Honohan (2008), holds on the issue of the alteration of political ideology, which for this view by Bean (2002) is a clearly defined method of which can be used to "analysis of the past" (Bean, 2002, cited in Ruane, 2004, p.9).

However, Whiting (2015) argues that the definition of what it is meant to be republican in the context of Sinn Féin happens to establish significant connotations that the republicanism seen through Sinn Féin, is one which is seen as an "acknowledgment of republicanism as a heterogeneous entity" (2015, p.3). The concept of republicanism, which is being, used in shaping the alternations, perceptions, and relations to the continuing growing issues surrounding the Irish society. Moreover, Spencer (2015), has sought to examine the continuing exchange with the different political and religious ideology, most notably ensuring that the "political strands seeking more to fuse social and political change through class mobilization" (Spencer, 2015, p.41). Through the party's analysis of the impact of language that is seen throughout Ireland when it comes to republicanism. As McNally (2006) notes, that there has been an influx of a "systematic programme of republicanism and a more fluid republican language or discourse" (McNally, 2006, p.80, cited in Honohan, 2008, p.17). Enabled McNally to call this move by Sinn Féin as showing "influence political thinking without rigidly determining political positions" (McNally, 2006, cited in Honohan, 2008, p.17). This resulted in the distinction established between republicanism as a programme that has continued to be influential on political parties closely afflicted with the republicanism movement in Sinn Féin.
Bean (2007) distinguished that there has been a creation of clear division and alterations of the political objectives of Sinn Féin within Northern Ireland, as seen through the parties choice to change their standpoint on Northern Irish republican counterparts, as indicated as a "similar assessment placed these developments within the historical context of northern nationalism and the narrowing of the political options open to Republicans from the mid-1980s" (Bean, 2007, p.139). Frampton (2009) has indicated that the pragmatic shifts by Sinn Féin in recent times by the leadership of Adams and the new leadership of Mary Lou McDonald has concluded that with the "remarkable shift made in recent years by the provisional republican movement in the north" (2009, cited in English, 2011, p.452).

Shimada (2010) suggested that focusing on academic analysis established by Tonge (2008b), on issues of identity and transformation of political organisations. Allowed for Tonge argument to reinforce the point that Sinn Féin documented itself as "the second-most-powerful political party in Northern Ireland" (Tonge, 2008b, p.68) in the years that succeeded after the establishment of a power-sharing government and the collapse of the SDLP. This has shown that Sinn Féin commitment to its redevelopment from a political party affiliated to groups.

As Shimada argues that "political operations at work in these communities, particularly in their transition from terrorism to democratic politics" (2010, p.72). Additionally, McIntyre (2008) has claimed that Sinn Féin has successfully been able in "marginalizing the various oppositional voices that regard participation in the peace process as a betrayal of Republican principles" (McIntyre, 2008, cited in Coulter, 2014, p.772). McIntyre (2008) cemented the concept that Sinn Féin was against the peace process from the beginning. However, McIntyre noted the result of these elements being against the GFA. It allowed for a new form of intra-party democracy to be established although the opposition to this conception in the party to encourage and support debate on the issue. Though it can be further illustrated, it is important to state that Sinn Féin saw themselves as the rightful guardians of republican movement and community within Northern Ireland, there is the continuing argument that unionist counterparts also believed that they were the guardians of the Unionist community. Therefore, because of the identical challenges posed by the two communities, there was a "heightened sectarian tension during the Troubles" (Panzer, 2015, p.170) which is seen as "developed out of or was exacerbated by the parading of one side or the other" (ibid, 2015, p.170). Moreover, Tonge (2008a) has pointed out that the parading by both sections of loyalist and republican populations had the prospective for "destabilising" (Tonge 2008a, p.69).

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Concluding this element of the article, which has focused on the literature review that has surrounded the different sections applied to theorising of nationalism, the critical analysis of nationalism and the political origins of Sinn Féin. Therefore, Sinn Féin as a political intuition it could be argued, have assisted in ensuring the social and political elements of nationalism remerge within a new format for the next generation of nationalists who are fighting and aligned with the causes of civil and economic rights for those in Northern Ireland.

The preceding section will evaluate the research methodology, implemented throughout this paper

7 Theoretical Frameworks

Within this section of this thesis paper, there will be the introduction of a critical demonstration of how the chosen research methods have employed to suit the research aims. This is indicated by evaluating the ethical considerations shown in this paper. However, it is critical to answering the research questions as part of this research. In addition, there will be a clear definition of the methodological process.

Firstly, to understand the research subjectivity we must firstly analysis the theoretical framework that will be implemented in this study, as defined by Mertz (2017, n.p.) “Is a lens through which you are looking and approaching the research” (Mertz, 2017, n.p.). In addition “guides the various parts of the study, so it can have a very encompassing affect on that study” (Mertz, 2017, n.p). In relation to the area of research investigated, and supported by using Qualitative research as its base for this article.

As Creswell (2007) has established, the methodology for the theoretical framework is seen in the format of a Qualitative inquiry into the study of nationalism in Northern Ireland. This will be conducted through the manner of both contextual analysis and data collection through the settings of a set of semi-structured and open-ended interviews followed by documental analysis. Interviews were put to independent academics from separate institutions. The academics were selected for their research on Irish politics.

Academics who took part in the interview process included Professor Jonathan Tonge of the University of Liverpool. Dr. Dominic Bryan and Professor Richard English of Queens University Belfast, Chris Hazzard MP for South Down, furthermore, Hazzard was designated to be part of the research because of his position as a Sinn Féin MP. Also for the high profiled understanding of nationalism and a personal understanding of the ideological shift seen within Sinn Féin. Dr. Bill Kissane of the London School of Economics and Political Science, Professor Michael Kerr of Kings College London (Please see appendix 4 for transcripts of interviews conducted). By conducting these interviews, it enabled the research to further analysed through their academic and research knowledge on the discipline of nationalism in Northern Ireland and Sinn Féin.

Miles and Huberman (1994) argues that the selection of undertaking interviews as the form of data collection for this method of research is that interviews allow for the most concise and analytical method for investigating subjects of this nature, As this is why it is the most relevant method, due to the fact the selected group of interviewees were chosen. On basis that they fitted into the “purposeful sampling procedures mentioned in the proceeding discussion” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, cited in Creswell, 2007, p.132).

Additionally, it is important to recognise that as the members of the selected interviewee group were professional academics, they were able to express and critical argue their individual attitudes and expertise of nationalism and Sinn Féin. Moreover, interviews such as the ones indicated for this research seen as being relevant is seen that they are some of the most influential scholars currently undertaking research within this discipline, with their continued impact on the output of research would result in the portrayal of current research on the extensive area of nationalism.

As this research project explores the transformation of nationalism within Northern Ireland, by nationalistic arguments introduced by Sinn Féin, there is a concisely outlined potential for the alteration of the discipline in the context of Northern Ireland to occur. This illustrated through the sense of identity and political standings of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. I will continue to build upon the theoretical framework established for this paper. In doing this there will also illuminate the complex interaction that can be seen to exist between different components of Irish nationalism, Northern Irish political parties (e.g., Sinn Féin, SDLP, and Alliance) and concluding with the concept of nationalism identity.

Flowing through the article there will be theoretical ideas reinforced by different examples supplementary to Northern Ireland. In contrast, I do accept and seamlessly acknowledge that there is a continuous academic challenge illustrated by the delicate definition and understanding of ‘nationalism’ but increasingly with Irish nationalism. As a society like Northern Ireland tries to regenerate and construct itself after twenty years, after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement from a society once the international focus for conflict, to a place where the nationalist and unionist communities could flourish

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respectively of political identity or ideology. I will argue the three main schools of thought closely related to Irish nationalism, have separately accomplished for the transformation of nationalism in Northern Ireland,

At the same period with trying to strengthen Sinn Féin by its changing attitudes in the direction of nationalism within Ireland. Consequences, of this action, have been major attempts to counteract both the radical and peaceful nationalism of Sinn Féin. With the politics of the party initiating moves towards a more left-wing and socialist standpoint within the political system of Northern Ireland. As outlined by the aims of the policies of Sinn Féin is to achieve and accomplish a 'united Ireland' with the context of what they see themselves as "striving for an end to partition on the island of Ireland and the establishment of a democratic socialist republic" (Sinnfein.ie, 2018b, n.p.).

Moreover, Sinn Féin Policies is concentrating on the representation of Northern Ireland in the Irish Parliament. They argue for both a border referendum on Irish Unity. Illustrated in their policy agenda on the party's website "A referendum on Irish unity. To be held simultaneously, North and South" (2018b, n.p.). Furthermore, "Northern representation in the Dáil. The existing 18 Westminster MPs to automatically be accorded membership of the Dáil, with consultative and speaking rights" (2018b, n.p) Other Authors (See McAllister (2004) and Frampton (2009) question the influence of this approach taken by Sinn Féin in their quest of achieving electoral victory. The development which they have been using in working towards a mainstream position in Northern Irish politics Frampton has argued that this alteration in the organisation stance of being "bought in from the cold" (2009, p.65). This was seen by Sinn Féin as an opportunity in pursuing their many political objectives of "pan-nationalist unity" (ibid, 2009, p.65). Moreover, Sinn Féin has claimed in the past that they wished to ensure political revival in Northern Irish and Republic politics.

Frampton argues that the focus of the party has merely been focused on "predominantly Northern entity" (2009, p.65). McAllister claims the policy of absenteeism by Sinn Féin leadership of Adams and McGuinness was pointless in their argument, that it would be more effective and significant for the nationalist cause by taking the seats that they had won in elections. Although suggested a motion of going against the principles of the republican and nationalist ideology which would "constituent recognition of the legitimacy of the elected body" (McAllister, 2004, p.128).

However, with the introduction of Sinn Féin into the mainstream politics in Northern Ireland in the early 1980's it had become more apparent that the party had extremely visible competition for votes from their main nationalist competitor the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). McAllister points out that whenever there has been an election in Northern Ireland "Sinn Féin vote has always remained constant" (McAllister, 2004, p.129). Whereas Neumann has suggested with the opinion that Sinn Féin have established a "unique opportunity to integrate the republican movement into the political process" (Neumann, 2002, p.283), this has enabled for the combined nationalist vote of the SDLP and Sinn Féin to increase to conclude with the "total nationalist and republican vote by 12%" (McAllister, 2004, p.129).

As seen in analysis illustrated by Pow and Matthews (2017) that shows the election success of SF was on the back of nationalist party approaches to elections, for instance, 2011 and 2016 which "reflected sheer pragmatism" (Pow and Matthews, 2017). As shown in Table 2 below from 2011 to 2016 from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (2016, cited in Pow and Matthews, 2017). Furthermore, Gormley-Heenan and Aughey (2017) have stated that this stance by Sinn Féin has used its success in also ensuring to "put Irish unity back onto the agenda" (2017, p.505).

Table 2: Is able to offer a clearer insight into the altering voting behaviors of the Northern Irish electorate within the period of 2011 to 2016. The table also reinforces the change in the decreased electoral support for the nationalist political parties of Sinn Féin and the SDLP from the previous election in 2011.

Although Whiting (2016a) has claimed in her growing analysis of SF that "Bears many characteristics of a modern political party they are unique in their lineage to revolutionary past" (2016a, p.9). What's more, Whiting points out with the distinction that Sinn Féin are trying to portray an unswerving party image which has enabled Whiting to say that this stance may "become even more difficult as the party wears different hats either side of the border" (Ibid,2016a, p.10).

In the concluding of Whiting's argument, she clearly strengthens her position on the role Sinn Féin has within the spectrum of nationalism in Northern Ireland by concluding: "There is no doubt that Sinn Féin remain the dominant force within Northern Irish nationalism, the party has reaped rewards by broadening their appeal beyond traditional Republican heartlands"(ibid, 2016a, p.10). Thus allowing Sinn Féin to reinforce the critical importance surrounding the linkage between the increases of votes for Sinn Féin shown through "community activism is important to its support" (Doyle 2005, cited in O'Malley, 2008, p.16). Mitchell et al (2009) argue Sinn Féin have been able to "out-paced the more moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in six successive elections" (Mitchell *et al*, 2009, p.3) which is a consequence of Sinn Féin being able to secure a larger sway of votes that is "fierce party competition" (ibid, 2009, p.10).

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Table 2: Summary of Northern Ireland Ass embly election results: 2016 and 2011*.

party	Seats 2016	Vote Share 2016 (%)	Seats 2011	Vote Share 2011(%)
Dup	38	29.2	38	30.0
Sinn Féin	28	24.0	29	26.9
UUP	16	12.6	16	13.2
SDLP	12	12.0	14	14.2
Alliance	8	7.0	8	7.7
Green	2	2.7	1	0.9
PBPA	2	2.0	0	0.8
TUV	1	3.4	1	2.5
Ind	1	3.3	1	2.4
Ukip	0	1.5	0	0.7
PUP	0	0.9	0	0.3
Cons	0	0.4	0	0.4
NILRC	0	0.2	-	0.2
Others	0	1.0	0	0.2

(*Cited in Pow and Matthews, 2017, p.322)

Hayward (2009) has claimed that nationalism in Northern Ireland is duly focused on the sense of national identity and the meaning of what is meant to be Irish in the context of nationalism, she states, “The traditional tenets of Irish identity underlying the meaning of Irish nationhood were those that bolstered the legitimacy of the Irish state” (2009, p.228). However, this transformation of nationalism is one that has been slow to come to the forefront of nationalist politics in Northern Ireland due to the continuation of a fragmented society.

The question was raised by McAllister as to whether the entry of Sinn Féin into the mainstream Politics of Northern Ireland had left the SDLP “virtually unaltered” (2004, p.130), therefore, with the percentage of nationalist and republican vote increasing, McAllister’s analysis indicated continued argument of why the two communities were “shown to be divided equally” (ibid, 2004, p.130). Therefore, the hypothesis offered by McAllister has shown the continued growth of the nationalist and republican vote for Sinn Féin and the SDLP. Most recently, Sinn Féin has been able to attract support from a wider range of the electorate, in areas of Northern Ireland that they usually do not obtain votes from, Such as taking votes from, the SDLP transferred to Sinn Féin. Outlined through the “expansion into middle-class professionals who traditionally eschewed Sinn Féin” (Evans and Tonge, 2013, cited in Whiting, 2013a, p.98). The success for Sinn Féin has been due to the party advancements for a “popular desire for the reforms and political advancement then there was for militant action” (Evans and Tonge, 2013, cited in Whiting, 2013a, p.96).

De Bréadún (2005) indicates that nationalist politics of Sinn Féin altered in new directions in Northern Ireland. Whilst Adams still had influence over the party, even though he has stepped down after over 35 years at the helm of the nationalist party. This, however, raises the question of how two separate ideas of Sinn Féin and nationalism was seen to relate as one. One stance introduced is the question of how Irish nationalism has responded to the changing politics of Sinn Féin. Nationalism has developed throughout the republicanism and nationalist feelings of nationalist parties in Northern Ireland.

Ivory (2008) has suggested that there has been an introduction of the theoretical level when referring to republicanism as “republicanism can be defined as a political system where rule is in the interests of all citizens” (2008, p.90). The adopting versions of nationalism have ensured that the policy-making of nationalist parties in Northern Ireland like that of Sinn Féin has assisted in adjusting their aims and objectives and their methods to achieve these aims and objectives. This accounted for the changes introduced by the transformation through the change in the structure of the party, was seen as being significant political change that had occurred in Sinn Féin. As Stevenson (1996), argue that Sinn Féin and IRA “openly advocate Irish Republicanism” (1996, p.128), this method would also incorporate the sanctioned implication of violence against the Northern Irish state.

O’Doherty (2017) has claimed the Sinn Féin relationship with the terrorist organisation enabled for the IRA military operations transformed from an active militarism. To a position argued as with the decline of the use of violence and more inclined to a political solution. Which O’Doherty sees as “diluted militarism with political opportunism” (O’Doherty, 2017, pp.197-198). Furthermore, the combined strategy of Sinn Féin and IRA were creating a situation that was “diverging and becoming a strain on one another” (2017, p.201), in relation to it's combined military and political purposes. Another

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instance of were political change can be seen to have been implemented by Sinn Féin is the recent parting of Gerry Adams as leader in 2018 after 34 years in charge and replaced by Mary Lou McDonald. However, some have argued that the departure of Adams from Sinn Féin as "Adams has been president of Sinn Féin since 1983" (Stevenson, 1996, p.126). Adams departure is seen as the creation of a new era and the transformation of Irish nationalism as Adams stated in Sinn Féin party conference (*Ard Fheis*) where McDonald was elected as the party next leader that Sinn Féin will continue to transform itself within the nationalism context and to "challenge ourselves and our support base. We also have to challenge unionism," (Adams, cited in Mcdonald, 2018, n.p.).

An argument introduced by Moloney, a leading researcher on Irish republicanism who believes that even though there seems to be a new beginning for Sinn Féin without the control of its old guard, who were linked with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). However, Moloney confers this opinion by pointing out "I do not believe the IRA has gone away nor the influence of its leaders, e.g. Adams et al, nor have I come across any evidence that the famous IRA dictum" (Moloney, cited in McDonald, 2018, n.p.). Alternatively, that "Sinn Féin should be under army control at all levels" (Moloney, cited in McDonald, 2018, n.p.).

Additionally, according to Stevenson who noted that the linkage that is seen to currently exist between Sinn Féin and the IRA is one that is "no rigid executive or administrative separation between Sinn Féin and the IRA" (ibid, 1996, p.126). Moloney, further analysis expressed that without any statement nor press release by any platform of the IRA indicated that they saw the departure of Adams coming before anyone else, as Moloney says "The IRA's failure to say anything to the contrary publicly leads one to suspect that is deliberate." (Moloney, cited in McDonald, 2018, n.p.).

8 Interview Analyses

The study has two significant overarching contributions to the analytical arguments that have been introduced within the remit of nationalism and Sinn Féin in relation to the transformation in Northern Ireland. On examination of the literature which was able to show the study of nationalism with special reference to Irish nationalism and the ideological understanding of Sinn Féin, has grown in significant size in recent years. As numerous scholars (English, 2006, Hayward, 2001, Geliner, 2008, Hobsbawn, 2012) have been able to suggest that although there has been an increase in the understanding of nationalism and Sinn Féin and its move towards a more central political position rather than one a radical position.

Moreover, there must also be a more enhanced argument of the how and why there has been an increase in the discipline of nationalism. Moving onto the analytical arguments posted within the interviews conducted and how these interviews were able to shape the foundations of the argument that was tried to be implemented in this paper.

Firstly, it is a study, which has focused on the combined attributes of nationalism and Sinn Féin respectively. These opinions outlined with the analysis of the Interviews that were carried out in due course of this research. Moreover, this discussion used in interpreting the definition of arguments raised by the results that emerged at the completion of the investigation. The arguments within the ten separate interviews conducted, have all been able to introduce their own analytical perspectives on the transformation of nationalism and Sinn Féin created in Northern Ireland.

The first interview conducted with Professor Jonathan Tonge at the University of Liverpool was where Tonge was able to outline his view that nationalism in Northern Ireland and its relationship with the nationalist politics of Sinn Féin had evolved with the new phase of politics that has been seen in Northern Ireland since the creation of the power-sharing government and executive after the Good Friday Agreement.

Tonge was able to commence the interview by illustrating that the way in which Nationalism has been seen as being the "driving force of Northern Irish politics" (Tonge, 2018) where he also saw the introduction of the changing political world with the continuing situation of Brexit playing a major part of how the differing nationalist stance of politics of the nationalist community and Sinn Féin is being portrayed with its ideological feelings towards the issue of Brexit and its continuing relationship with the state of Northern Ireland. Tonge was able in illustrating through his continuation of the definition which was given on nationalism that he believed that the nationalist standpoint on nationalism by Sinn Féin. Become more inclined towards a moderate version of the arguments for which they were trying to portray to their unionist counterparts on issues, such as the Good Friday Agreement and more relevant political changes like that of Brexit as already mentioned above. It is important to point out that the significance of the results that were established in Tonge's interview as seen as a new phase of politics has been created in light of the transformation of nationalist feelings.

However, these thoughts are not the only thoughts on the subject. As with the other interviews which were carried out as part of this study. For example, this belief by Tonge of the contrasting ideas of surrounding the areas of Nationalism in Northern Ireland is completely in contrast to the thoughts of the integrated ideas illustrated by the findings established during the interview with Chris Hazzard, it is preserving cross-examination of nationalism through the lens of a member of the Sinn

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Féin party. Hazzard felt that the position of nationalist feeling and politics by Sinn Féin had become more politically focused rather than what had been seen prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Although Hazzard believed that those of a nationalist and Irish identity in Northern Ireland had been ignored in recent years by the majority Protestant state, under the direction of the nationalist counterparts of the Unionists, Hazzard made several references to this through the interview of issues surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union 'Brexit' and what he saw as the leaving behind of a section of the Northern Irish population which believed it was their right to not only remain a member of the European Union but to also ensure that their identity as Irish was not eroded due to the exit. Therefore, it is critical to point out that the ideological transformation, which has taken place by Sinn Féin, has to be recognised as an experience, which would be used in following their political objectives of achieving a unified Ireland but at the same time ensuring that there is not a return to period of ongoing sectarian violence.

Secondly, in the interview conducted with Dr. Dominic Bryan, concluded in his belief that the opinion given by Tonge was a legitimate academic opinion on the issue of nationalism in Northern Ireland. Although Bryan pointed out through his lengthy and detailed response to the question of nationalism in Northern Ireland that he held the opinion that, the whole issue of nationalism in Northern Ireland created through a socially constructed idea.

Moreover, Bryan was able in establishing the idea that although there is a major influence of Irish nationalism in relation to the politics of Northern Ireland there is also a countering argument that Irish Identity which is so closely associated, complicated versions of nationalism and its relationship with the ideas of Sinn Féin is part of a much wider separation of identity with the concept of Britishness and the way in which Northern Nationalism has been intertwined with the idea of a British sense of identity.

Bryan also notes in the interview how it would be to express their nationalist sense of identity in relation to the historical sense of Irishness when talking about Irish nationalists This is more straightforward to argue then looking at the two combined nationalist ideological stances that are available for analysing on the Island of Ireland, both North and South, seen through its inception through the different periods of the historical divide that occurred in the North of Ireland. Additionally, Bryan noted that by analysing Irish Nationalism against that of the nationalism, presented by the unionist, is shown to be harder to take apart, and analyses due to its close partnership with what Benedict Anderson illustrated as an imagined community. Reinforced by the concept of Britishness and Irish Nationalism being part of a notion an idea that has been constructed out of a social and political idea.

This research has taken a pragmatic stance towards the existing literature by maintaining and understanding the shift of the political position that has occurred by Sinn Féin and to have a clearer understanding of its relationship with nationalism. Moreover, it could be argued that throughout this research it has been able to outline and define a broader analytical argument surrounding the topic in question. Furthermore, this research could also be used in analysing and consolidating the existing academic knowledge into the discipline of nationalism that ultimately enabled the document and interviews as forms of research methods to be implemented into the research on their own separate accord, to be investigated on a separate footing.

This ultimately ensured the research in question was able to develop a solid workable framework that would make this opportunity more accessible in the end. As the research questions below, indicate

- To critically evaluate the transformation of nationalism by Sinn Féin.
- To critically analyse, the role of nationalism in its steps towards understanding the different tensions that exist between the separate driven ideological sections of society of republicanism and nationalism.

On the other hand, other interviews conducted with Professor Richard English goes further than the interviews that were carried out with either Bryan or Leader-Maynard in their analytical argument on the issue of nationalism and the understanding of the topic.

Looking at the argument established by English in the interview and his response to his definition of what nationalism is in context to Northern Ireland that he used this phase 'Intra-nationalist' because it creates a sense of fostering of inner political differences in the interpretation of nationalism and seen when describing the type of new nationalism that has been associated with the politics of the republican movement. Furthermore English is also able to create the impression that nationalism in the modern sense was allowed to come to fluorine during the period of the Northern Ireland peace process which allowed for the nationalist parties and their unionist counterparts to ensure that in essence their political rivalry was no longer going to cause Northern Ireland and its political capabilities to suffer at the hands of one another.

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Thirdly, English used the interview to express his professional and sound academic opinion on the issue as he saw that the literature on nationalism doesn't always focus or address the contemporary issues when looking at nationalism, as it is often used in overlooking key areas of nationalism such as identity and its major role in answering the question on northern Ireland and nationalism. Although it is important to state that the interview given by Hazzard offered a new and exciting direction in understanding the way in which the nationalist politics has changed over time in Northern Ireland, however it could be argued that the information gathered through Hazzard's interview was bias in its mannerisms as Hazzard was only following the party line of the nationalist sentiment and narrative.

This finding argued by English broadly supports the work of other studies in this area linking Irish nationalism with identity in Northern Ireland. However it is important to note that previous studies of the interviews with Bryan and Tonge were unable to demonstrate that the nature and notion of any political change had occurred within the nationalist politics of Sinn Féin as it could be argued that the arguments given by Bryan felt like it was being suggested from a sociological standpoint when referring to the concept of nationalism being 'social constructs' rather than a real thing. In addition, there are many weaknesses offered by the argument given by Tonge, who it was felt that the argument lacked the right direction and focus when referring to the question of nationalism by Sinn Féin. Tonge's answers was dually focused on areas of investigation of devolution and its relationship with nationalism.

Therefore, it the argument stated by Tonge could be seen as a method for republicanism in Northern Ireland, and Ireland as a whole to expand its being into even more positions of mainstream politics and ultimately assist in completing Sinn Féin and the nationalist communities' political objective of a unified Ireland. However, we will see how the current political relationships of the existing political Parties in Northern Ireland evolve.

9 Conclusions

This thesis aimed in providing a deeper analytical understanding of the transformation of nationalism, which has taken place in Northern Ireland by Sinn Féin. This concluding section will be used to reaffirm the movement that has taken place within Sinn Féin and how this movement has impacted on the understanding of Northern Irish politics and its implications upon nationalism. To assist in this analysis of the shift conducted by Sinn Féin, there will be a summary of the interviews conducted as part of this research.

The development within the transformation of nationalism established by Sinn Féin is very much a work in progress and as the transformation moves on, it will continue to have a significant impact on the politics of Sinn Féin and its approaches to nationalism in particular to Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland. This interpretation of Sinn Féin approach to nationalism reinforced through the different analytical arguments introduced in the interviews conducted as part of this research by academics. One such argument set out by Tonge when asked what he thought of nationalism in the context of Northern Ireland his response was that nationalism as seen by him as the "dominant ideology within Northern Ireland" (Tonge, 2018). Additionally, Tonge he indicated that the nationalism being portrayed by the nationalist parties of Sinn Féin and SDLP has created for what he see as an reasoning, for there to be an outlook of differing stances of the opposing ideologies between nationalists and their unionist counterparts in Northern Ireland, which has created an idea that there "isn't a middle ground, because ultimately the outworking's of those two rival ideologies is a very different constitutional perspective on Northern Ireland" (Tonge, 2018).

Moreover, on the other hand, Bryan believes that the notion of nationalism in Northern Ireland is often seen as being "the complicated version of nationalism in many ways is Britishness"(Bryan, 2018) as the complex understanding of Northern Ireland as Bryan puts it in the prism of a cultural identity as; "intuitional all Irish" (Bryan, 2018, n.p.) when referring to the idea of the sense of Britishness and the belief of Northern Ireland being part of the United Kingdom which is seen by the those of a nationalist sentiment as being "the Britishness that Unionists have is Irish" (Bryan, 2018, n.p.). This has created the narrative of the idea that it is British in name only and actually Irish in reality. Furthermore, Bryan has established through the interview his academic standpoint on nationalism in Northern Ireland as being shown through "the senses of nations are being constructed and re-constructed by with politics within our whole different ways that they change over time" (Bryan, 2018) which is no different to the understanding of nationalism in Northern Ireland.

However, Hazzard has been able to establish that in his eyes that Irish nationalism when referring to Northern Ireland is seen as "Northern nationalists is a group of people who are identifiable by the fact that they those with an Irish identity living in the north of Ireland" (Hazzard, 2018). Hazard's remarks regarding the concept of northern nationalism, has been questioned by Maginness and Todd (2001) are able in suggesting the indication of "northern" nationalism is one that can be a "questionable one, since the nationalist tradition within Northern Ireland sees itself in an island-wide context" (Maginness and Todd, 2001, p.1). Another factor that must be taken into consideration is outlined by Whiting (2018) who notes that

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Hazzard's stance is somewhat driven by the party line of Sinn Fein, as Whiting points out to Hazzard idea that "Over time SF needed to concern itself with the everyday needs of Catholics and this diluted their nationalist agenda" (Whiting, 2018).

Whiting notes that Sinn Féin stance to nationalism is one that as whiting sees "Nationalism also, according to Freeden, is a 'thin' ideology or an incomplete one. So it is impossible to base an entire political programme around nationalism" (Whiting, 2018) when referring to an entire programme for one spectrum of Northern Irish society. Leader-Maynard has associated several key factors in the analysis separately put forward by Whiting and Hazzard, these factors when describing nationalism used to influence the growing definitions of nationalism. Therefore, Leader-Maynard has been able to demonstrate "Nationalism frequently undermines community cohesion in circumstances where it identifies" (Leader-Maynard, 2018). Leader-Maynard extends his analysis by demonstrating that nationalism in Northern Ireland is on a diverse level to nationalism elsewhere. This is evident as "The whole community as part of the nationalist in-group, but only certain members of society" (Leader-Maynard, 2018). In addition, Nationalism within Northern Ireland is one, which Kaufmann sees as "a territorial-political form of behavior or thought" (Kaufmann, 2018).

Moreover, Hazzard illustrates further with the concept that Sinn Féin and its Ideas of Irish nationalism established upon the concept of equal interpretation of identity. Hazzard argues, "They are equal citizens that they have through parody of esteem, that they are equally entitled to their Irish identity as those living in the north who see themselves with a British identity" (Hazzard, 2018). A position argued through Hazzard's interpretation of nationalism in the concept of the ideological thought has been a major reason behind the shift within the politics of Sinn Féin approaches to the transformation, which it has undertaken in Northern Ireland.

Whiting argues that Sinn Féin portrayed as political, illustrated through the changes it has made on electoral matters. Whiting stated this "won't get it very far in terms of electoral success or legislative/executive influence and that everyday policies are needed" (Whiting, 2018). As well, Whiting has been able to express the opinion that the electoral factors that occurred in the party whilst under Adams, concluded in there being an evolution of "critique of the O Bradaigh era of traditional republican nationalism has become hegemonic in the party" (Whiting, 2018).

In contrast, to the opinion held by Whiting, demonstrated that there should be a fresh approach introduced to the movement established in the party. Kerr (2018) suggests, "with respect to Sinn Féin in terms of changing the context of republicanism. I mean there is a distinction there to be made its probably much less clear today and it would be in the anytime before the beginning of the century" (Kerr, 2018). English has been able to strengthen his argument of nationalism by defining Sinn Féin move as being part of a combined "rivalry between different intra-nationalist approaches" (English, 2018). An approach, which English is able to express by the using the example of the move constructed by the party with the focus of the "rivalry between Republicans and the SDLP, rivalry between different republican paramilitary groups" (English, 2018).

Although Leahy holds the opinion that the approaches outlined by English has created new boundaries within nationalism, Leahy points out in his argument "the boundaries between Irish nationalism – as once represented by the SDLP – and Irish Republicanism – represented by Sinn Féin have collapsed in my view" (Leahy, 2018). Leahy extends his argument on the move by stating, "Sinn Féin actually are closer to the values expressed by the 1916 rebels about an Ireland of equals" (Leahy, 2018). This opinion established by Leahy could be noted as reinforcing Hazzard stance by suggesting that the nationalist idea is now focusing on the development of a cross-communal identity as part of a combined community that is seen as equal as one.

To strengthen Leahy's position on the argument of Sinn Fein move, can be seen by Leahy focusing on the changing focus of the parties politics on the island of Ireland and nationalism, but firstly on Northern Ireland as he points out "I think northern nationalism has been a progressive force on the center-left of politics in an Irish and UK context that has ensured equal rights for nationalists in the north" (Leahy, 2018). Nevertheless Leahy debates the position that has been shown by Sinn Féin, in relation to the Republic of Ireland by suggesting that the southern elements of the party have been in a different version of the position of the move the southern leadership of McDonald is seen as "Sinn Féin may appear radical and on the left" (Leahy, 2018). Leahy is able to suggest further the southern faction of the party "seeks to change the rather center-right nationalist orientation in the south" (Leahy, 2018).

Moreover, Leahy has sensibly pointed out, it is interesting that it was not only Sinn Féin who were trying to incorporate the concept of a nationalist shift north and south on the island. Parties like Fianna Fáil were aiming at a more intense nationalist shift in Northern Ireland. Kelly (2018) states that Brexit is making parties like Fianna Fáil feel; "Threatened by the growing electoral strength of Sinn Féin" (Kelly, 2018b, n.p.). Faulkner (2006) noted that any external participation in Northern Ireland from a southern nationalist party would culminate in a supplementary "split a fragmented nationalist electorate" (2006, cited in Kelly, 2014, p.7) strengthens both studies by Kelly (2018b) and Leahy (2014). Now, moving on now to consider the impact of a shift in the party. Analysis demonstrated by Leahy has been able to conclude the leadership of Adams and

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McGuinness were able to halting the party's stance to focus on elements of its history. As Leahy suggests "perception that Sinn Féin make dealing with the past difficult" (Leahy, 2018). This analysis by Leahy has opened up an opportunity for the new leadership to "to justify their actions in the past for present political and constitutional reasons" (Leahy, 2018).

Moreover, Whiting (2018) claimed that he sees the re-emergence of a radical shift of nationalism by Sinn Fein or any other nationalist political party as pointing out that the shift of nationalism as "radical is variable and their radicalism has certainly declined since the 1980s" (Whiting, 2018). Leahy is able to extend his analysis on the radical phase of nationalist politics seen within Sinn Féin through the argument constructed by Whiting. Leahy suggests the concept of radical politics is merely reintroducing the suggestion that the nationalist parties "are more radical in an all-Ireland context" (Leahy, 2018). Leahy reinforces his position by using the example of the radical politics in the form of "socio-economic policies" (Leahy, 2018).

Many of those interviewed made note of the ongoing political situation of Brexit and its impact on the shift of politics in Northern Ireland. Kissane has argued that Brexit has re-opened by nationalism is being seen as "This nationalism has been revived since Brexit, which makes constitutional issues more salient" (Kissane, 2018). Kissane has indicated through his answers to the interview questions by referring his academic opinion that "Sinn Féin and the DUP will continue to dominate" (Kissane, 2018).

Therefore, it is important to understand the arguments surrounding the issue of the implications of a significant alteration within a political party and the positioning of its ideological framework, such as the likes of Sinn Féin. The interviews conducted established brand new approaches, which will prove useful in expanding the understanding of nationalism and the combined narrative of Northern Irish politics and the shift seen in Sinn Féin. I would like to conclude this paper by referring to the words of Professor Richard English, illustrating "In Ireland, as elsewhere, nationalism- enjoying the combined force of a particular kind of community, struggle, and power- seems unlikely to evaporate in the foreseeable future" (English, 2006, p.506). English's extension on the argument that there has been a significant political transformation of the nature of nationalism by Sinn Féin. The party truly have abstracted their overall political and historical objective of a united Ireland, which has enabled the divide of the political ambitions of the northern and southern sections of the party onto conflicting journeys.

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