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Introduction

There is no doubt that nationalism has re-established itself as a salient feature of our times. In Britain more particularly, a nationalistic rhetoric pervaded the Brexit campaign and has shown no sign of relenting since then. The leave side has mobilized the language of nationalism with such terms as “national self-determination” calling on what had been described as an essentially English nationalism. Several commentators have also pointed to its populist nature and described Brexit as the expression of a populist-nationalist trend, which has shown no sign of abating since. These analyses see Brexit as a symptom of a resurgence of nationalism in England, the UK and beyond, linking it to the rise of populist politics throughout the world.

Yet, strictly speaking, this nationalistic renaissance is not new in British political life, as nationalism has been ubiquitous since the rise of Celtic politics. It appears that there is specific feature to the British context, namely the co-existence of two diverging forms of nationalism. Indeed, in the UK, the asymmetry of the nations is mirrored by the asymmetry of their current nationalisms: Scottish and Welsh nationalism seem very different from English nationalism, not to mention Northern Ireland. As these introductory remarks point out, nationalism is highly complex if only because, in this case, it is used to describe two political phenomena that appear rather distinct, at least in as much as Scottish – or Welsh – nationalism is broad and inclusive, whereas the kind of nationalism that underpinned the leave vote was “narrow and exclusionary”.

Furthermore, the resurgence of nationalism is far from being limited to the confines of Britain, there is no doubt that “the Brexit story is at once very British, especially English, and part of a troubling global pattern”. Populist-nationalist parties have become prominent across the European continent having in some cases managed to seize power and retain it when they have succeeded in turning their country into illiberal democracies. Examples abound elsewhere, in India, Brazil, Russia as well as in
Trump’s presidency. Consequently any attempt at clarifying nationalism, both as a theoretical notion and a political phenomenon must consider a broader perspective.

There is a tendency to discuss each in terms of national history, context, personalities, and cultural memes – but the explanations of each are partly international, not all idiosyncratically domestic.7

This article insists on this broader perspective to try and provide insight into the reappearance of nationalism as a defining factor of British politics. It concentrates on nationalism, understood as general notion and phenomenon, or, according to the useful distinction drawn by Tom Nairn between nationalism and nationalisms, on the global dimension of nationalism as an ideology, as opposed to its aspects in a given country. Nationalism generally professes to be defined by the very nation it is concerned with, but this is, in Nairn’s own terms “the empirical country-by-country fallacy which the ideology of nationalism itself wishes upon us.”8

The article begins by looking at the apparent demise of nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century, focusing on how it was interpreted by commentators. It then moves on to the end of the twentieth century when some observers began to predict its resurgence and sought to explain it. Finally, it draws on recent analyses of nationalism to attempt to provide theoretical tools that help provide an approach to the kind(s) of contemporary British nationalism.

**The brief decline of nationalism**

In the last decades of the twentieth century, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, it seemed that nationalism was receding. This was no small feat as nationalism had been considered as no less that one of the defining principles of history for more than two centuries.

A single red line traverses the history of the modern world from the fall of the Bastille to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Emerging fitfully in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and Holland, it rises bright and clear in late eighteenth-century France and America. Dividing and redividing lands and peoples, it stretches the length of Central and Latin America, pushes across southern, central, eastern, then northern Europe into Russia, India and the Far East, and then winds its way in many guises into the Middle East, Africa and Australasia. In its wake come protest and terror, war and revolution, the inclusion of some, the exclusion of many. At last, the red line becomes blurred, fragmented, faded, as the world moves on. The name of the red line is nationalism, and its story is the central thread binding, and dividing, the peoples of the modern world.9

Some fifteen years before Smith’s book was published, the waning of nationalism coincided with what has been described as “the renaissance in nationalism studies”.10 Eric Hobsbawm, who added his contribution to the renewal of studies on nationalism in the 1980s, as well as Ernest Gellner’s Nations and Nationalism (1983) and Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1983),11 focused on the cultural, subjective or sociological aspects of nationalism, notably rejecting the earlier naturalist approach. They did not deny that, in terms of political agenda, nationalism was a declining force, at least if nationalism is taken to mean the building of nation-states. By the 1980s, according to the dominant view, this nationalism had accomplished its mission as most peoples had become sovereign in their own lands. But the dangers of nationalism, such as its territorial expansion ambitions, its possibly
aggressive us-vs-them stance, resulting in such catastrophic consequences as ethnic cleansing and world wars, as the first half of the century had amply demonstrated, were too great. The consensus seemed to be that nationalism needed to be kept in check. In Europe, on the continent at any rate, such supra-national organisations as the EU or the EEC had in fact been born, partly in any case, out of a desire to stifle or to contain the worst aspects of nationalism.

7 Within forty-five years after the Second World War, liberal democracy seemed to have won the day, as nation-states all converged towards the same polity through a process that was sometimes believed to bring them ever closer, maybe even heralding the kind of internationalism that free-trade liberals and early Marxists had called for or marking the transition from a nationalist era to a post-nationalist one. This is not to say that what used to be known as the nationalistic principle had simply withered away, first because it had been a necessary condition to the formation of the now established liberal democracies and as such, still underpinned them, secondly because it could even manifest itself in regions that had not been constituted into nation-states. Most strikingly, in the decades after the Second World War, nationalism re-emerged through decolonization, as former empires collapsed and former colonies were constituted into nations, embarking, more or less successfully, on the path of representative government. By the 1990s, the breakdown of multinational states in the former Eastern Bloc, including the outbreak of war in the Balkans could be explained away by the end of the socialist regimes whose authoritarian rule had stood in the way of the unfolding of the nationalistic principle to its conclusion. These local crises were only to last until the former Eastern Bloc had caught up with history, namely had become self-governed liberal democracies. Incidentally, this broad moderate and originally progressive conception, usually referred to as classical nationalism could also account for nationalistic movements in multi-national states, such as the UK and provide guidelines for successful settlements. This type of nationalism recognizes the need for the self-determination of peoples, though it places a limit on the size of viable nation-states, thereby excluding smaller communities from full-blown independence, in which case it favours autonomy or devolution. The nationalist movements that grew in the Celtic fringe appear consistent with this interpretation for instance as Ireland gained independence while Wales was granted devolved powers.

8 Overall, there was no inconsistency between the demise of nationalism in most of the Western World and the rise of nationalism elsewhere or in some specific Western regions. Nationalism was said to recede only when it had achieved its purpose, namely the representative nation-state, which according to the narrative, was its end-goal. In a nutshell, the civic nationalism that was advocated focused on the notion of self-government and was of the classical kind that spread in the nineteenth century and which classical liberalism adhered to, though sometimes reluctantly as in the case of J.S. Mill:

All Mill said was that nationality was a fact of life and that, if people felt so strongly about their nationality that they could not live with people of different nationalities or be ruled by rulers who were not co-nationals (which he regretted), they should be allowed to form their own state, in the cases where this latter option was feasible. His rationale for this recommendation was that representative government was not likely to work in a state composed of mutually hostile groups of people (nationalities) that put their “sentiment of nationality” above “the love of liberty” – which he very strongly regretted, as he made clear both in chapter XVI of
Looking back, it might seem striking how short-lived the end of nationalism actually was. As the economic miracle, the German Wirtschaft Wunder or the French Trente Glorieuses increasingly appear to us to have been a historical anomaly and the triumph of political liberalism – famously hailed by Francis Fukuyama – a brief hallucination. In fact, towards the end of the 20th century, there was already widespread concern about the political effects of a phenomenon that, in contrast to liberalism, did indeed truly triumph in the late twentieth century, namely globalisation. In fact, in his study of nationalism, Hobsbawm had already hinted at the problem which globalisation could pose, without, remarkably, using the word itself but rather pointing at “the major transformations in the international division of labour, whose basic units are transnational or multinational enterprises of all sizes, and by the corresponding development of international centres and networks of economic transactions which are, for practical purposes, outside the control of state governments.”

He identified a demise of the nation or at least a weakening of its power especially in its role as a “territorially bounded ‘national economy’ which formed a building block in the larger ‘world economy’, at least in the developed regions of the globe.”. Crucially he noted that as these “building blocks” had been undermined they had not entirely been replaced by larger “associations or federations of ‘nation-states’ such as the European Economic Community, and collectively controlled international entities like the International Monetary Fund” leaving a significant part of the world’s economy “outside any control whatever”.

Conversely, at the very end of the twentieth century, Jürgen Habermas was one of the many who took stock of the anxiety triggered by the collapse of the national exercised by nation-states: “Clearly, the nation-state fulfills important preconditions for societies constituted within determinate borders to exert a democratic form of self-control”. Yet it did not follow that nation-state should or could be re-established but rather that democracies should -and could- become postnational.

Today, developments summarized under the term “globalization” have put this entire constellation into question. [...] It is a paradoxical situation. We perceive the trends toward a postnational constellation as a list of political challenges only because we still describe them from the familiar perspective of the nation-state. But the more aware of this situation we become, the more our democratic self-confidence is shaken; a confidence that is necessary if conflicts are to be perceived as challenges, as problems awaiting a political solution.

Indeed the demise of the nation-state was not the problem per se, democracy was undermined the dissolution of a redistributive, social-justice oriented political power in a global market. This, Habermas believed, could be preserved in the shape of supranational organisations that would continue regulating the economy with the same purpose.

At the turn of the century then, a critical attitude towards globalisation, or rather globalism, namely the ideology that rejoices in globalisation or at least sees it as inevitable, began to spread. In many cases, it differed from Habermas’s analysis inasmuch as it fell back on nationalism as a bulwark against the subjection to global
market rules. The LSE, for instance, hosted a talk by John Ralston Saul following the publication of his book, *The Collapse of Globalism and the Rebirth of Nationalism*, and the chair, Pr. Robert Wade introduced his guest with the following comment:

> The role of the state is to construct a public space. [...] The only viable unit or certainly the primary viable unit has to be the nation-state and at a time when many on the left have basically given up on the whole idea of the welfare state this is, I think, a refreshing argument. [...] The book recognizes that Mrs Thatcher’s favourite words namely TINA does not have to stand for “there is no alternative”, it can also stand for this is no alternative.18

The same concern about the waning power of the state went along with a conflation of nationalism and economics in order to mean “the embedding of markets in a social democratic framework”,19 or even the welfare state. Rather contentiously, if ones bears in mind Habermas’s position, what was claimed here was that only the nation-state could implement significant social policies. In this case, as in many others, the word nationalism was used in a social-democratic, anti neo-liberal sense, conceiving the nation as a stable frame for solidarity and the development of social justice, as argued by David Miller in his *Principles of Social Justice*.20 So roughly at the same time, Habermas and Wade, as well as many others, felt that the nation-state was in jeopardy, or more precisely that the erosion of economic and political sovereignty was a threat that could no longer be ignored. They were looking into alternatives, either by establishing supra-national structures or by strengthening the state within the nation, or, even more precisely, by strengthening the democratic state. Because since in a democracy sovereignty is democratic, the sovereignty deficit brought about by globalization soon came to be seen as a democratic deficit.

**Two faces of nationalism?**

The appeal of the equation whereby nationalism is made into a synonym for democratic self-government, not least due to the fact that is cuts across class lines, or imagined “horizontal comradeship”21 as Anderson puts it, was certainly not discovered with globalization. In 1977, Tom Nairn famously made it, or rather the lack of it, the reason the British State was allowed to remain “unreformed”, and, for a long time, nationalism was indeed a progressive force, or rather, in the famous words of Nairn again, a “modern Janus” a two-faced God looking forward and backwards. According to Nairn’s own description of the metaphor, some twenty years later,

> Nationalism was the effort by one ‘backward’ culture and people after another to appropriate the powers and benefits of modernity for their own use. Having been redefined as backward, they aspired to move forward. However, this motion occurred partly against the tide coursing over them from the central domains of industry and urbanisation. The pressure wave was mainly imperial (arrogant, ethnocentric, homogenising and armed to the teeth) as well as gift-bearing. In order to appropriate the gifts without enduring the imperial wrappings, overborne populations had to assert ‘their own terms’ — that is, political and cultural independence. This implied that, in most cases, the terms had to be ‘discovered’ via scrutiny and vindication of their own past history. There seemed no way for nationalities to become nations without such new retrospect. Hence, modernising ambition and novel cults of a particular past and tradition notoriously co-exist within most varieties of nationalism: the backward- and forward-looking faces of any discrete population or area struggling for tolerable survival and prosperity.22
Nairn’s metaphor echoes a trend in studies of nationalism which insists on its double face both progressive and destructive at the same time. In the wake of such scholarly works, it is tempting to distinguish between a “good” nationalism, inclusive, progressive, redistributive, civic and liberal, and a “bad” one, exclusionary, reactionary, defensive, and even ethnic-based and authoritarian. It is, furthermore, also tempting to use this dichotomy to explain the apparent distinction between the two types of nationalism found in Britain. As already mentioned, there is indeed a general tendency to distinguish strongly between English nationalism on the one hand and Scottish or Welsh nationalism on the other. The first one is often perceived as backward looking, xenophobic, dangerously prone to populism, while the other is emancipatory, inclusive, and forward looking. This ambivalence must be recognized as inherent to nationalism and not one of its unfortunate evolutions. J.S. Mill saw it as legacy from less civilized times and did not doubt that it would fade away in due time.

It is far from our intention to defend or apologise for the feelings which make men reckless of, or at least indifferent to, the rights and interests of any portion of the human species, save that which is called by the same name and speaks the same language as themselves. These feelings are characteristic of barbarians; in proportion as a nation is nearer to barbarism it has them in a greater degree: and no one has seen with deeper regret, not to say disgust, than ourselves, the evidence which recent events have afforded, that in the backward parts of Europe, and even (where better things might have been expected) in Germany, the sentiment of nationality so far outweighs the love of liberty, that the people are willing to abet their rulers in crushing the liberty and independence of any people not of their own race and language.

What Mill intimated would now probably be formulated by contrasting ethno-nationalism with civic nationalism. In Michael Ignatieff’s words, the former is “based on ethnicity” whereas the latter is “based on citizenship”. This distinction is indeed useful, though the term ethnicity is highly contentious if only because it hints at a biological reality that has no scientific basis. This is why the term ethnocultural is often favoured instead. In David Brown’s definition:

[...] ‘ethnocultural nationalism’ refers to a sense of community which focuses on belief in myths of common ancestry; and on the perception that these myths are validated by contemporary similarities of, for example, physiognomy, language or religion. The myth of common ancestry, related myths of homeland origin and migration, and the pride in the contemporary linguistic, cultural or physical evidence of common kinship, provide the basis for claims to authenticity, and thence for claims to the right of collective national self-determination.

However, in the light of what has been said, it must be admitted that both nationalist trends can be interpreted as a sign of a crisis of the nation-state, as its sovereign prerogatives have been pushed on the ropes, and both encourage the belief that things will improve when political power is brought home as opposed to left in extra-national hands.

Yet, if this is correct, if nationalism is a consequence of discontent with the democratic deficit and the State’s relative powerlessness with the economy, or, in other words, with the democratic deficit caused by globalization, it does not automatically follow that nationalism, or that nationalism alone, can indeed provide a viable solution. The power of the State cannot simply be willed back into existence, at least if it does not come with far-reaching economic reorganization which central political power may or may not be able to implement, even if it is indeed willing to do so. The nationalistic
promise of a return to the truly sovereign nation-state can simply not be kept, as argued by Calhoun:

With or without the EU, the UK is enmeshed in a welter of international treaties and obligations, trading relationships, and credit flows. The fault line between cultural definitions of a mainly English national whole and the legal unity of the UK is a further complication. But relying on a simplified and old-fashioned notion of sovereignty is unlikely to make either England or the United Kingdom great again. Addressing migration flows requires international cooperation. So does achieving security against terrorism and other forms of transnational conflict and crime. No country has perfect autonomy in addressing a global issue like climate change – or for that matter financial stability.

It is, no doubt, far easier to curb political discourse towards nationalism to provide an illusion of power, especially it is tied to a façade of strong leadership that might compensate the loss of sovereignty, understood here as agency, in voters’ minds. Interestingly the SNP’s agenda includes joining the EU upon breaking-up with England and that certainly appears more in tune with the need for supra-national structures previously mentioned. This may give the impression that Scottish nationalism is more progressive than its English counterpart, and that it is more a “civic nationalism” as opposed to an “ethnocultural-nationalism” This interpretation must nevertheless be qualified for both nationalisms have common features inasmuch as they are built against a perceived illegitimate source of power: the British State occupies the same symbolic function for Scottish nationalism as the EU did in the nationalist rhetoric that wished to “Take our country back”. In the same way, national identity and the need for recognition are also common characteristics in both cases.

Conclusion: sub versions of nationalism

Pointing towards shared features of Celtic nationalism and right-wing Brexit discourse is in keeping with the two-faced God metaphor that implies that nationalisms have a common core though they may have a very different face. Beyond the longing for representative government described by civic nationalism, one should insist on the need for sovereignty, for representative institutions to actually wield power and ensure social justice. In this respect, the contemporary trend that consists in breaking down nationalism in hyponyms provides us with relevant analytical tools, while placing them under the hypernym- nationalism- thus pointing to the permanence of common features. Among them, the new nations theory seems particularly appropriate for Celtic nationalism:

Sharper differences in economic circumstance encourage the emergence of political entrepreneurs who attempt to develop “new” national identities among disadvantaged members of society, different—and rightfully apart—from the nation asserted by the existing state (e.g.,Brass 1991; Brown 1998; Hechter 1975). If this is true, then the result of more inequality should be that poorer citizens identify more closely with these new nations and so become more likely to reject the nationalism the state attempts to foster among them.

In the same way, I would contend that the political strategy behind Brexit, including the more recent “getting Brexit done”, is best explained with the theory of diversionary nationalism that takes into account the socio-economic aspects mentioned above.
As Anderson explained, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (1991, 7). Indeed, idealizing the commonalities shared by members of the asserted national community while forgetting their differences has been recognized as “the essence of a nation” since the nineteenth century (Renan 1996, 45). Rosa Luxemburg (1976, 135) famously decried how “the concept of ‘the nation’ as a homogenous social and political entity” was used as a “misty veil” to conceal the differing conditions and antagonistic interests of its purported members. To the extent that nationalism is spread among citizens of a country, then, those citizens are unlikely to recognize their unequal circumstances, much less call for policies to ameliorate them. (...) The diversionary theory of nationalism therefore contends that states generate nationalism in their citizens to defuse the ticking bomb of economic inequality. Nationalism conceals unequal conditions, preempts calls for redistribution, and thereby pre- vents the development of unrest, so states should be expected to inculcate more nationalism in their populations when economic inequality is greater (Posen 1993, 88–89; Van Evera 1990, 28–29).

Far from effectively attempting to solve the crisis of sovereignty and social justice brought about by the effects of globalization on the State’s power to control the economy, diversionary nationalism stands out as textbook national(ist) populism. This is no surprise insomuch as the anti-EU rhetoric has often been described as populist. As the inclusive definition of populism favoured by Cas Mudde makes clear, populism is always a mixture of three elements, namely anti-establishment feelings, authoritarianism and nativism. The latter is specifically equated with nationalism in national populism. The greatest irony of the increasingly numerous, increasingly powerful national populist movements is that they are headed by members of the very elite which they purport to oppose, those who have themselves benefited from the globalized world and its economic polarization between global players, who have been educated in elite institutions or global schools and universities and whose financial wealth is not tied to a national territory. It is true that nationalism consists of a myth, possibly intrinsic to large communities, and is, as such, particularly suited to be used to serve the interest of power if only to reinforce its legitimacy. This was widely the case during the transition to mass politics when new voters were lured to a sense of national belonging deemed crucial for the cohesion of the nation. The striking difference between the second part of the nineteenth century and nowadays was that these were the days of the supremacy of the nation-state, when the State could more easily deliver on its redistributive pledge. This made nationalism a more dependable vehicle for progress. In a way, it seems that nationalist discourse today is inevitably underpinned by a nostalgia for this past. More generally of course, nationalism always contains a nostalgic element as it must call on common origins to make sense – one of the faces of Janus must look backwards. But its role in the nationalist speech that supported Brexit cannot be overstated as Eleanor Newbigin points out:

From the phrase “take back control” to UKIP’s adoption of the Trump-esque “make Britain great again”, the call for Britain to leave the EU has been saturated with nostalgia. These slogans invoke a sense of our past so familiar that it seems to need no dates or references: they bring to mind the late-Victorian/Edwardian period, when most of the atlas was pink; they celebrate Britain’s courage and fortitude in the Second World War and its alliance with the US and USSR – the “other” superpowers at the time. In this story, membership of the EU emasculates Britain by rendering it equal to the European nations it liberated and defeated, affronting its hard-won status as a global power.
The longing for the return of a golden past is typical of defensive nationalism, yet another hyponym emphasizing the psychological and subjective dimension that connects nationalism and the sense of identity, or even “what Hage (2004) calls paranoid nationalism, which describes a situation where nationalists become so focused on protecting the nation, that their enjoyment of it becomes compromised through a constant fixation on the possibility that the nation is threatened”. This type of analysis brings to the fore the psychological dimension of nationalism rather than its material causes. Nostalgia for an imagined past, as well as resentment and anger are commonly described as the emotions that fuel national populism. Liam Gillespie’s article offers a very convincing Lacanian reading of the defence nationalist psyche. There is, indeed, no reason to expect political preferences to be shaped solely by conscious, rational decisions rather than by more diffuse factors such as one’s sense of identity, including national identity. This would suggest that the contemporary nationalist resurgence is based on three crises: the socio-economic dimension, the loss of democratic sovereignty and the question of identity. Given this complexity it should not be expected to retreat again in any foreseeable future.

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NOTES


2. See “When you strip away the rhetoric, Brexit is an English nationalist movement.”, Fintan O’Toole, 19 June 2016, *The Guardian*; or “Brexit is an English-centric phenomenon in which Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales appear as complications or afterthoughts”, Hudson Meadwell, “It’s the English, stupid!”, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/08/06/long-read-its-the-english-stupid/> , consulted 1 April 2022.

3. Brexit is part of a populist-nationalist current that will make it harder to achieve effective policies and management of practical affairs in an interdependent world.”, Craig Calhoun, “Populism, Nationalism and Brexit”, in William Outhwaite (ed), *Brexit Sociological Responses,*


5. Craig Calhoun, ibid.


7. Craig Calhoun, ibid.

8. “Welsh nationalism, of course, has much to do with the specifics of the Welsh people, their history, their particular forms of oppression and all the rest of it. But Welsh nationalism – that generic, universal necessity recorded in the very term we are interested in – has nothing to do with Wales. It is not a Welsh fact, but a fact of general developmental history, that at a specific time the Welsh land and people are forced into the historical process in this fashion. The ‘ism’ they are then compelled to follow is in reality imposed upon them from without; although of course to make this adaptation, it is necessary that the usual kinds of national cadres, myths, sentiments, etc., well up from within.” Tom Nairn, The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism (London, Verso, 1981), p. 335.


12. A brief definition of “post-nationalist” can be found in Keith, Breen and Shane, O’Neill, After the Nation? Critical Reflections on Nationalism and Postnationalism (Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 3: “the term ‘postnationalist’, which best captures the nature of the debate, does not imply a denial of national identity or its endurance. Rather, the suggestion is that the nation-state and the forms of nationalism that underpinned it, while they have not been dissolved, are being empirically and normatively superseded. This claim of supersession rests on two key arguments which typify the postnationalist perspective: that the nation-state is being relegated as an effective political institution by processes of globalization, and that national identity is being outstripped and displaced by the rise of alternative forms of identity.”


17. Habermas, ibid., p.60.


19. ibid.


24. This description is of course highly questionable. National sentiments cannot be described as “good” or “bad” in themselves. According to Michael Kenny, “Yet the way that politicians take up and shape the image of nationalism is crucial to the way it is perceived, allowing one expression of it to dominate in the public consciousness.” <https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view,what-is-nationalism_14551.htm>, consulted 1 April 2022.


31. See introduction.


35. *ibid.*, “A Lacanian framework acutely highlights what is at stake for nationally dominant subjects who attempt to maintain their dominance. Whereas for Hage, dominant subjects become paranoid that they will lose their privileged positions within the nation, my thesis is that subjects are also anxious they will lose what that dominance assists in providing them: mastery of the self. (...) what is at stake for nationalists is not merely the maintenance of a specific national order which is perceived as being favorable by the nationalist. So too, the illusion the social order provides is at stake: namely, that of a stable national self”, p.1005.
ABSTRACTS

As a multi-nation state the UK has harboured various nationalistic discourses. Yet recently it has witnessed a resurgence of nationalism, as exemplified by the Brexit campaign, that is part of a global phenomenon, and cannot be explained only from the national point of view. The article seeks to analyse nationalism from a broader perspective to provide insights on the British context.

Le Royaume-Uni est un État multi-national où s’expriment, à ce titre, des discours nationalistes. Le pays connaît aussi une résurgence du nationalisme, manifeste lors de la campagne du Brexit, qui participe d’un phénomène global et ne peut s’expliquer uniquement du point de vue national. L’article propose une analyse plus large du nationalisme pour tenter d’éclairer le contexte britannique.

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