

MA Thesis

International Relations – Culture & Politics

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Title: Sovereignty in the Brexit Debate: Competing Conceptions between Left- and Right-wing Newspapers

Research Question: *How do understandings of sovereignty differ between discourses in left- and right-wing newspapers in the UK during the runup to the Brexit referendum?*

Abstract: On June 23, 2016, a referendum in the UK made clear that the EU would lose a member for the first time since its birth in 1951. In a highly intense campaign during the months before the referendum, those in favor of Brexit faced off those that fought to maintain the status quo. Among the many issues debated, sovereignty emerged as heavily contested. This thesis attempts to shed some light on the competing concepts of sovereignty that were used by the two camps by analyzing the discourses of left- and right-wing newspapers in the UK. After performing a discourse analysis of 90 articles that these newspapers published during the runup to the referendum, this thesis concludes that right-wing newspapers view sovereignty as an indivisible, high-value concept that should be held by a national, democratically elected government. By contrast, left-wing newspapers view it as having various degrees, which makes them more willing to cede some of it, if this benefits the nation. Academically, the thesis draws on existing literature about sovereignty and the British understanding of it, expanding on this literature especially through the insights on the British left-wing newspapers' discourse. Moreover, it seeks to stimulate public debate on sovereignty by drawing attention to these newspapers' less absolute, more cooperative perspective of the concept.

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Introduction

The notion of state sovereignty, enshrined in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, is one of the most fundamental concepts of the international system. (Croxton, 2010) Especially to realist theories, its importance is immense, as it bolsters sovereign nation states as the main actors and units of analysis in international relations (IR) theory. (Harrison, 2006, p. 21) In recent times, however, its absolute status has been challenged by the emergence of international organizations. Perhaps the most prominent example is the European Union (EU), a supranational organization which holds the power to make rules and regulations that apply in its member states, in policy areas where they have pooled their sovereignty in the EU institutions. For several decades, EU member states were willing to cede sovereignty for harmonization: what started as a highly specific economic initiative between six states in 1951 (EUR-Lex, 2017), developed into the EU as we know it today: a 28-member supranational behemoth, with a flurry of decisions, directives and regulations in areas as diverse as environmental, monetary and foreign policy. (Cini, 2016) But, after its first-ever departure of a member, namely the United Kingdom (UK), the EU will soon consist of only 27 members. It would seem that the vast efforts made towards integration have generated considerable amounts of resistance. In the UK, it culminated in the Brexit referendum, where more than half the voters decided that the country should leave the EU, despite the many benefits that mainstream scholarship attributes to the country's membership. (Dhingra, Ottaviano, Sampson, & Van Reenen, 2016; Ebell & Warren, 2016; Kierzenkowski, Pain, Rusticelli, & Zwarti, 2016) In a very hard-fought campaign, two sides stood against each other: those that wanted to leave the EU, known as the *Leave* campaign, and those that sought to maintain the status quo, known as the *Remain* camp. As the Martin Moore and Gordon Ramsay's (2017) analysis shows, the battle was fought on a number of issues, like immigration, economics and health care. Perhaps surprisingly, personal financial concerns were not the primary motivation for Brits to vote to leave the EU. Only 15% of voters expected personal financial benefits, with even some of those voting to leave expecting losses. (Clarkson & Livermore, 2017, p. 9; The Guardian, 2018) Therefore, other factors must be considered, and it is evident that sovereignty played an important role in this decision: 49% of leave voters named national self-governance as the main reason for their decision. (Lord Ashcroft, 2016) But what is sovereignty? Daniel Philpott (1995) popularly defines the elusive concept as "supreme legitimate authority within a territory" (p. 2). Furthermore, he specifies three dimensions by which it can be assessed, namely, those who hold sovereignty (*holders* dimension), the internal and external nature of

sovereignty, as well as the issue scope of sovereignty. (Philpott, 1995) This thesis examines how left- and right-wing newspapers in the UK framed the concept of state sovereignty during the runup to the Brexit referendum. Hence, it aims to produce a deeper understanding of how some justify holding onto it fervently, while others are willing to pool some of it in the name of national interest. The analysis of this thesis proceeds in three steps: a discourse analysis of the interpretation of sovereignty in left-wing newspapers; a discourse analysis of the interpretation of sovereignty in right-wing newspapers; and a comparative analysis of these discourses and their concepts and arguments. Examining statements from 90 articles published during the runup to the Brexit referendum, the thesis investigates the conceptual and argumentational differences between left- and right-wing newspapers' understandings of sovereignty, seeking to explain their contrasting attitudes towards it. For what the analysis will clearly demonstrate is that left-wing newspapers are very supportive of pooling sovereignty, while right-wing strictly oppose it, demonstrating the continued relevance of the political distinction between left and right, at least when such a fundamental issue is at stake. Drawing and expanding on existing literature on sovereignty in the UK, the thesis explores what a British alternative to the traditionalist, nationalist understand of sovereignty would look like. (Nakano, 2013; Todd, 2014, pp. 66-70; Gifford, 2010; Vines & Wellings, 2016, pp. 310-315) Furthermore, it deepens the empirical understanding of how different news outlets frame the same concept in contrasting ways, resulting in opposing stances. Moreover, as public opinion is thought to influence media reporting (Habel, 2012), understanding how newspapers write about sovereignty provides insight into how the public views this concept, which can also help understanding public discourse around it. Socially, the thesis aims at stimulating a more diverse public debate by drawing attention to different understandings of sovereignty.

Research Question

As indicated in the introduction, this thesis seeks to examine the notions of sovereignty in the UK in the context of the runup to the Brexit. Foremost, this means examining the fundamental concepts of sovereignty deployed by left- and right-wing newspapers. Paired with the discourses in which they embed this concept, the researcher seeks to elaborate on the understanding these newspapers have of sovereignty. Here, 'understanding' comprises two elements: the fundamental concept of sovereignty according to a newspaper camp, and their attitude towards it, being how they believe it should be dealt with. The main research question is:

“How do differences left- and right-wing newspapers’ understandings of sovereignty explain their opposing stances during the runup to the Brexit referendum?”

Naturally, this question is broad and will therefore be divided into sub-questions that follow the approach taken in this thesis. First, the notion of sovereignty will be examined in three newspapers from each the left- and the right-wing, leading to the following two sub-questions:

- 1a** *What is the nature of the discourse used by the left-wing newspapers The Guardian, Independent and Mirror when writing about sovereignty?*
- 1b** *What is the nature of the discourse used by the right-wing newspapers The Sun, Express and Daily Mail when writing about sovereignty?*

With these two questions answered, it will become possible to compare the two newspapers’ discourses in sub-question 2:

- 2** *What are the similarities and differences between the discourses on sovereignty deployed by left- and right-wing newspapers?*

The main research question of how the differences between the sovereignty discourses of left- and right-wing newspapers in the UK explain their divergent stances on sovereignty will hence be answered by examining the similarities and differences pointed out in sub-question 2, which will be derived from the discourse analyses addressed in sub-questions 1a and b.

Literature Review

The Concept of Sovereignty

Often, papers using the concept of sovereignty do not draw on or create scholarly definitions. However, this conceptual vagueness is an obstacle to research that deals with sovereignty, as it makes works less comparable to each other. Moreover, individual papers lose quality, as their imprecise concepts of sovereignty allow them to adapt it without need for justification, and risk that different readers will interpret these works in different ways. Therefore, this thesis applies Daniel Philpott’s (1995) impactful definition of the concept of sovereignty which, although it is not the only one, remains the most widely cited understanding. Elegantly, it reconciles parsimony with a necessary degree of complexity, needed to make it widely applicable to examples and understandings of sovereignty, but still specific enough to

be comparable across works. First, it is important to understand that power is not part of his definition. According to this definition, Britain would not leave the EU in order to increase its power. Rather, it would do so to regain *supreme legitimate authority within its territory* (Philpott, 1995, p. 2), his most basic definition of sovereignty. Moreover, he identifies three dimensions of sovereignty: its holders, whether it is internal or external, and absoluteness.

The holders of sovereignty are the individuals or institutions that hold sovereignty. (Philpott, 1995) In the UK today, these are foremost the EU and the UK government. If one considers sovereignty as a motive for Brexit in this context, UK citizens and Brexit campaigners wished for the UK government to become the sole holder of sovereignty, and the EU to lose any sovereignty it held over the UK.

With the internal/external dimension, Philpott refers to a distinction between sovereignty over the people within a territory, and an independence to rule free from outside influence. (Philpott, 1995) In the case of the Brexit campaign, external sovereignty is clearly a defining characteristic of the notion, as it is not linked to how much control the UK government has over its people. Possibly, Brexit will allow the UK government to enact stringent, anti-democratic laws that the EU would have prevented. But it is unreasonable to assume this will happen, let alone that the people voted for Brexit because they wanted it to, also because it was never part of the debate.

Finally, although this might seem intuitive, the absoluteness dimension does not refer to how much authority an entity holds over a certain issue. For if it does not hold full authority, it is not supreme and hence, by definition, not sovereign. Rather, the degree of absoluteness refers to the scope of issues over which an entity holds full authority. Hence, if the UK holds sovereignty over most policy areas, its sovereignty still has a very high degree of absoluteness. By contrast, if it only holds sovereignty over a few select areas, its sovereignty would have a very low degree of sovereignty. (Philpott, 1995) In the context of Brexit, it seems likely that this played a big role, as the EU is sovereign over certain environmental, trade and security issues, limiting the scope of British sovereignty. (Cini, 2016)

Hence, this thesis focuses on two of Philpott's three dimensions of sovereignty: the holders (EU/UK), and the absoluteness of sovereignty, in the view of left- and right-wing newspapers. (Philpott, 1995)

Sovereignty in Brexit and the UK

The concept of sovereignty has been a widespread element in research on the causes of Brexit. Most of this research has at least one commonality, namely, the conclusion that sovereignty was a prominent issue in the public discourse around Brexit. Moreover, authors comparing Leave campaigners to Remain campaigners find that sovereignty is an argument used more frequently by the former group. (Clarkson & Livermore, 2017, p. 22; Moore & Ramsay, 2017, p. 116; Saunders, 2016, p. 320; Aslan, Levy, & Bironzo, 2016, p. 20)

However, what role exactly sovereignty played is debated. Moore and Ramsay (2017), for instance, observed UK media coverage during the runup to the Brexit referendum. While they find sovereignty to be used very frequently in the context of Brexit, they also point out that it is usually linked to arguments about immigration and the economy. Hence, they conclude that it is a secondary issue, used to frame the primary issues, namely, economy and immigration. (p. 116-126)

By contrast, the other authors mentioned above do not make such interpretations, taking the proliferation of sovereignty in the media at face value. Saunders (2016) even argued that the issue of immigration was in part so important due to a partial loss of sovereignty, because “voters were no longer permitted a say on something as fundamental as who could live or work [in the UK].” (p. 320) Based on Philpott’s (1995) definition used here, approaches that consider the proliferation of sovereignty in the Brexit debate are logical. For if arguments are made about sovereignty over a specific issue area like immigration, this would pertain to the *absoluteness* of sovereignty, as they address its scope. Hence, sovereignty would still be a primary issue, and the issue area would be a defining characteristic of the exact nature of how sovereignty is addressed by the argument.

Moreover, the broader literature on the importance of sovereignty in the UK also merits considering the frequent use of sovereignty to mean that it is a primary issue, and one that may have played an important role in the outcome of the Brexit referendum. For many works recognize a traditional or ideological status of sovereignty, and Eurosceptics view EU membership as a threat to sovereignty. (Nakano, 2013; Todd, 2014, pp. 66-70; Gifford, 2010; Vines & Wellings, 2016, pp. 310-315) Nakano (2013), for instance, explains the importance of sovereignty through British nationalism. For the popular understanding in Britain is that the people are politically sovereign over who rules, while parliament is legally sovereign, able to make and repeal any law. For one, support for this understanding and the importance of it is rooted in nationalism, which he describes as seeking autonomy of a nation on behalf of the

population. And this requires sovereignty, in order to protect the nation's ability to act in its own interest, as other holders, like the EU, would consider a wider or different set of interests. Hence, nationalists oppose concepts of sovereignty that allow for division, like Philpott's (1995) definition, as it undermines a perceived right of the nation to self-determination. In the same way, Euroscepticism is a result of British nationalism, which causes a sentiment of resistance towards governance from a supranational organization, even if this is limited to certain legislative issues, as it is the case in the EU. Moreover, Britain is described as having a confrontational political culture, where things like wrong and right tend to be absolute. Sovereignty is viewed in the same way, as indivisible, which means that infringement upon it by the EU is met with significant resistance. (pp. 36-42) This chain of argument would form part of an explanation as to why sovereignty was a prominent, primary issue during the Brexit debate. Moreover, the indivisibility of sovereignty contrasts Philpott's (1995) definition of the concept by omitting the *absoluteness* dimension. Hence, one would expect the issue of indivisibility to shine through in parts of the newspapers' discourses, as they address the population to which this understanding of sovereignty appeals.

Todd (2014) argues that tradition is important to the British desire for sovereignty, which is even displayed by Remain campaigners like then-Prime Minister David Cameron. This desire is rooted in a "self-proclaimed island identity" (p. 70), but also driven by democratic ideals that perceive the partially unelected EU bureaucrats as a threat to democratic UK sovereignty.

Gifford (2010) terms this kind of sovereignty "popular sovereignty" (p. 323), arguing that it plays a big role in the British understanding of sovereignty, together with parliamentary sovereignty, which is rooted in the British monarchy. Together with economic sovereignty, which grants the market a certain degree of freedom to run itself, rather than being highly regulated, these three dimensions elucidate what sovereignty means in the UK. (pp. 323-324)

Methodology

This section lays out the methodological approach used to answer the research questions presented above. A suitable method for analyzing the sovereignty discourse in British newspapers is the discourse analysis according to Gillian Rose (2016), an approach that allows the determination of key themes, relations and framing strategies of a particular discourse. What she describes as discourse analysis I does not follow strict procedures, but rather requires immersion into the relevant material, in order to then identify the elements of a discourse through what she calls "rigorous scholarship". (pp. 186-219)

This paper will analyze the discourses within which the left-wing newspapers *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Mirror*, and the right-wing *The Sun*, *Express* and *Daily Mail* construct and embed their respective concepts of sovereignty during the runup to the Brexit referendum. Interestingly, these six newspapers, which find themselves at opposing ends of the political spectrum according to YouGov (2017), have the same respective stances on sovereignty, as the analysis shows. Hence, it is possible to analyze them jointly. The Analysis comprises 90 articles in total, equally distributed between left- and right-wing newspapers, from a 4-month publishing timeframe which runs from February 22 to June 23, 2016, the respective dates on which the referendum was announced and held. (House of Commons, 2016, Column: 24)

The primary sources are a total of 45 articles from the left-wing newspapers, with 19 each from the *Guardian* and the *Independent*, and 7 from the *Mirror*. The latter mentioned sovereignty on relatively few instance. All articles cited discuss or mention the issue of sovereignty in the the context of Brexit, in order to advance their stances. *Guardian* and *Daily Mail* that discuss or mention the issue of sovereignty in the context of Brexit. The articles were selected based on the role that sovereignty plays in their content. Articles must not necessarily have been part of the print version, but have all been written by journalists representing the respective stances of their newspapers, rather than by guest writers providing a controversial opinion piece. This choice was made to ensure that the analysis creates a picture of the newspapers' prevalent discourses.

The discourse analyses will be performed by first identifying key themes around sovereignty addressed in the articles. Particular attention will be paid to how the issue of sovereignty is used in the context of various issues, groups and actors, and how the concept is related to these. While the central issue under scrutiny here is of course sovereignty itself, it is important to also pay attention to other issues that it is linked to in the articles, and how these are used to frame sovereignty. Based on these themes, contexts and links, the general discourses through which the individual newspapers present the concept of sovereignty will be interpreted in an isolated manner, producing separate understandings of how the concept is framed in the respective news outlets. Naturally, objectivity is not fully possible, and the impact that one discourse has on the authors perception of the other can only be limited as much as possible through awareness of the potential of biasing that the discourse analyses hold against each other. Finally, they will be discussed comparatively. Based on the previous individual analyses,

this discussion then provides insight the concepts of and attitudes towards sovereignty that left- and right-wing newspapers portray in their respective discourses.

Analysis

This chapter analyses how left- and right-wing newspapers understand the concept of sovereignty, and how they integrate it into their respective stances on Brexit. First, sovereignty in left-wing media is analyzed, beginning with the conceptual understanding deduced from the thesis' primary sources, as well as the status quo around sovereignty described in the articles. Then, the argumentational context in which the concept and status quo are embedded is analyzed, seeking to understand how left-wing newspapers framed British sovereignty and its state at the time, and how they viewed it normatively. The same procedure then follows for the right-wing newspapers.

Sovereignty in Left-wing Newspapers

The Concept and Status Quo of Sovereignty

In this first subchapter of the analysis, the left-wing newspapers' general understanding of the concept of sovereignty is examined. Overall, the left-wing newspapers analyzed in this thesis mostly offer at least complementary, often even coherent concepts of *sovereignty*. Although with one exception, none of the articles were found to attempt a clear conceptualization, much can be deduced from their use of the term. There are 6 articles (see Appendix, Table 1) that refer to sovereignty in a descriptive way that shows how the left-wing newspapers see its nature, and each one refers to notions of *self-determination*, either literally (Dewson, 2016; Rawnsley, 2016), or through phrases like "masters of our own destiny" (Freedland, 2016a) or "our right as a country to make our own laws" (Rentoul, 2016c). Notably, this reflects Philpott's (1995) definition of holding "supreme legitimate authority" (p. 2), or the right to make laws without interference from other parties, demonstrating the applicability to the left-wing newspapers' discourse of his most basic premise.

Beyond this, left-wing newspapers posit that the holder of sovereignty on most issues is the UK, giving it not necessarily fully absolute sovereignty, but a significant degree of absoluteness. Moreover, the articles argue that the EU holds sovereignty only on limited issues, giving it a low degree of absoluteness. (See Appendix, Table 2) Duffy (2016), for instance, describes both these points by stating that "within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty". On the one hand, this expresses that the UK is still highly sovereign, as significant aspects were retained. On the other hand, as not all aspects were retained within

the EU, it also acknowledges that a degree of sovereignty has been conferred to the EU. Many articles address the issue of absoluteness, and none claim that the UK has not conferred a degree of sovereignty to the EU. Some describe the UK as less absolute today, “different from (...) when the notion of sovereignty first took root”, for instance due to “international interdependence” (Freedland, 2016a), which requires that sovereignty on certain issues is pooled. Others posit that fully absolute sovereignty is outright utopian, or even that it never existed for a nation state, due to the many institutions and treaties binding the UK and other nations. (See Appendix, Table 3) Coherently, they present the current status quo of UK sovereignty not as fully absolute, but as partly conferred to the EU. First, this reflects Philpott’s (1995) *holders* dimension, which considers the entities that hold sovereignty an essential element in assessing its status quo. Second, his *absoluteness* dimension is represented, which describes sovereignty not as simply given or absent, but as taking on different degrees, depending on the scope of issues over which an entity has supreme authority.

To surmise, the left-wing newspapers construct a discourse where the concept of sovereignty is always understood in ways that are at least complementary, often coherent, and never contradictory. Implicitly or explicitly, it paraphrases Philpott’s (1995) definition of sovereignty as holding *supreme legitimate authority* (p. 2). Moreover, the newspapers understand the status quo of sovereignty as being shared between the UK and the EU as its *holders*, with the UK holding sovereignty to a fairly absolute degree, and the EU to a much less absolute degree. Therefore, the left-wing newspapers’ coherent use of the term sovereignty is in line with Philpott’s scholarly definition, demonstrating its continued relevance for understanding contemporary conceptions of sovereignty.

The Discursive Context of Sovereignty

Here, the argumentational context in which left-wing newspapers embed the concept of sovereignty is analyzed, examining the concept’s importance to their discourse, and how they construct their arguments around it. This allows for a deeper understanding of what sovereignty means to left-wing newspapers, and how they believe it should be addressed.

Regarding the importance of sovereignty to left-wing newspapers’ discourse, Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) seminal essay *Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse* provides useful insight. According to this essay, there are a series of factors whose presence indicates high transitivity and therefore importance, including:

- two or more *participants (agent and object)*

- *kinesis*, i.e. the performance of an action by an agent on an object (*action/non-action*)
- *volitionality*, i.e. the degree of purposefulness with which an action is performed (*volitional/non-volitional*)
- *affirmation* (*affirmative/negative*)
- *agency*, i.e., the higher the agency, the more the agent can act upon an object

(Hopper & Thompson, 1980, p. 252)

Without exception, sovereignty is almost always *affirmatively acted* upon by a second *participant*, an *agent*, which is mostly the UK government. It is never lost or taken away by the EU. These actions are always *volitional*, using words like *ceding*, *pooling* or *sharing* that imply that the action is effectuated purposefully. These words were respectively found twice, 10 and 7 times in the context of sovereignty, as shown in Table 4 of the appendix. Moreover, the agents have a very high level of *agency* in that it is generally declared that the UK is sovereign and can hence decide to share it, or to take it back. (See Appendix, Table 5) Although these are not all of Hopper and Thompson's criteria, they already indicate a high level of transitivity, meaning that the issue of sovereignty plays an important, *foreground* role in left-wing newspapers. (Hopper & Thompson, 1980, p. 280)

Six lines of arguments about sovereignty can be identified: that the UK is already sovereign; that UK sovereignty is greater in the EU than out; that leaving the EU does not mean fully absolute sovereignty; that pooling sovereignty is in the national interest; that EU membership is not so harmful; and that sovereignty is a dated concept.

The first argument is also the most fundamental one. By describing the UK as sovereign despite its EU membership (see Appendix, Table 6), this framing found in all three left-wing newspapers is not aimed at making a case against the merits of sovereignty, but at discrediting arguments that Brexit is needed to acquire it. For if the UK is already sovereign by virtue of the status quo, then its value is of no relevance in the context of Brexit: leaving the EU cannot result in any gain of sovereignty, as the UK already holds it. Often, this argument is supported by the claim that the UK as a sovereign nation that chooses to share its sovereignty, which is in itself an act of sovereignty. As *The Guardian's* Jonathan Freedland (2016a) points out, "[t]he UK has not somehow lost its sovereignty by being in the EU. Parliament can simply repeal the European Communities Act of 1972 and we'd be out. MPs could do it now without a referendum if they wanted. Such is the power of a sovereign nation." Next to this, articles also explain that the UK still holds sovereignty in important areas. For instance, Sophia Besch

(2016), writing for the *Independent*, points out that “[d]ecisions on defence and foreign policy require unanimity in the Council of Ministers”, of which the UK is part, giving it sovereignty of these issues. And Voice of the Mirror (2016b) writes that important issues, like “laws on defence, health and education will continue to be made where they always have been – at Westminster.” Moreover, the many phrases where left-wing newspapers use words like *ceding*, *sharing* and *pooling* further demonstrate that they believe the UK to still be sovereign, as these words indicate that it is still intact, rather than *lost* or *destroyed*. (See Appendix, Table 4) At the conceptual level, the argument that the UK is still sovereign builds upon the absoluteness dimension of the left-wing newspapers’ definition of sovereignty. As the absoluteness dimension allows for a nation to cede part of its sovereignty while remaining sovereign, left-wing newspapers are able to construct the argument that the UK is a sovereign nation. More generally, this means that their sovereignty discourse as a whole does not need to justify a total loss of sovereignty, and rather argues for sharing it in certain areas, as the following arguments will show.

The second argument expands on the first. For it argues that, rather than gaining sovereignty, which the status quo already provides, Brexit would cause the UK to hold less sovereignty (see Appendix, Table 7), which is only possible if the nation is already sovereign to a certain degree. For one, this argument draws on the fact that the UK has significant exceptions as an EU member, allowing it to compete globally with a high degree of sovereignty. As Henley (2016) puts it: “Paradoxically, within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty[, like] tax and spending[, border controls[.] And it will not have to surrender any more power because it is excluded from ever closer union.” Moreover, all of the articles that claim that UK sovereignty is higher while inside the EU than outside base this claim on the idea that leaving the EU would not remove all limits of sovereignty. As Britain would have to negotiate on its own, Brexit would put it in a weaker position that would lead to less preferable negotiation outcomes, according to these newspapers. Arguments include that the UK might be “compelled to bow before rules that, like Norway, we have no say in writing” (Freedland, 2016a); that they would lose “that larger sovereignty which can also protect their diverse and distinctive customs, and their national traditions” (Kettle, 2016); or that they would lose sovereignty because other countries “would discriminate against” (Smith & Bloom, 2016) them. So while the government could indeed act as the supreme lawmaking authority, it would be forced to adapt its laws to the demands of strong negotiation partners, as the country would continue to depend on the international system for trade and other matters. Hence, although

Brexit would theoretically increase sovereignty, this would not be realistically applicable due to necessary ties with other countries, according to the left-wing newspapers. Therefore, they do not view sovereignty as an isolated capacity of self-determination, but in the context of cooperation for mutual benefit. For if one has full control over domestic law-making, but still has a vested interest in cooperating others, then one is forced to adapt domestic laws to the requirements of ones counterparts, especially if they are more powerful. Essentially, this reflects a realist account of cooperation, which argues that institutions like the EU are “tools of statecraft”, which “are established when (...) there are mutual benefits to be gained.” (Jervis, 1999, p. 63)

Another frequent argument made is that leaving the EU would not bring about fully absolute sovereignty, meaning that Britain would not be able to fully control all its policy. (See Appendix, Table 8) Many articles address this issue, by two different means in particular. First, articles refer to other factors, especially organizations and treaties. For instance, as Wright (2016b) points out, “the ECHR [European Convention on Human Rights] has nothing to do with the EU (...), [and its] rules would still be binding on the UK.” Other authors refer to the UK’s NATO membership, which “limits (the UK’s) sovereignty in matters of war and peace” (Rentoul, 2016d), and Henley (2016) points to the more general circumstance that the UK has an impressive “14,000 treaties signed with international organisations”. Next to other commitments that the UK has beyond the EU, left-wing newspapers point to the fact that leaving the EU would not mean independence from it. Often referring to Norway, authors posit that the UK would not be able to ignore EU laws due to the importance of the Single Market, to which the UK would only be able to maintain access by abiding by its rules. As Johnston (2016) points out, even Leave campaigners “want the UK to remain in the European single market (...). However, that would allow Brussels to retain sovereignty over many regulations affecting Britain.” And, referring to Norway, Larsson (2016) points out that the country “is still the 10th biggest budget contributor, but doesn’t participate in decision-making in Brussels although it has to abide by its policies. This would not appeal to many Brexit supporters who long for more sovereignty.” This understanding that sovereignty will not be fully absolute after Brexit due to international agreements and the benefits of the EU Single Market further demonstrate that left-wing newspapers view sovereignty as something that can and should be shared for mutual gains, in the same way that realists would explain it. (Jervis, 1999, p. 63) And they also see the status quo as containing a complex array of agreements to do so, many of which extend beyond the EU. Moreover, this status quo is framed as the norm, meaning that

these newspapers consider the pooling of sovereignty to be a standard characteristic of modern-day politics, and has thus been normalized.

The fourth argument is the most common one found in left-wing newspaper articles, linking the pooling of sovereignty through EU membership to various national interests. (See Appendix, Table 9) In a cost/benefit fashion, these arguments admit that sovereignty is constrained by membership, but that this is well worth the many benefits they cite. Mentioned 17 times, references to the economy proliferate, and these newspapers believe it has thoroughly benefited from the UK sharing sovereignty with the other member states. Hence, the newspapers see a trade-off: “(...) since we joined in 1973, we seem to have taken the view, as a nation, that this “pooling of sovereignty” has been **pragmatically in our interest**. So much so that we have handed over more powers since then – especially in the Single European Act, which created the **single market**, agreed by Margaret Thatcher in 1985.” (Rentoul, 2016d) So, by lending some sovereignty to the institutions of the EU, the UK gains access to the EU Single Market, which affords the UK “economic advantages” (Lichfield, 2016), for instance by enabling “access to 500 million customers” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a). Moreover, were the UK to leave the EU and restore its sovereignty to the furthest possible extent, they argue that these benefits would no longer be available, citing “damning data on the potential economic woes of a Brexit” (Jones, 2016a), which would cause “significant upheaval” (Independent Voices, 2016), such as “serious economic precariousness with the consequent drop in living standards” (Rawnsley, 2016). Beyond economic costs, many articles also refer to a loss of power. (See Appendix, Table 9) It is argued that Britain is a relatively small country in a globalized world, making it difficult for them to matter on an international stage without being part of significant political organizations, such as the EU: “in the age of international interdependence”, Britain cannot be “sovereign alone”. (Freedland, 2016a) Moreover, emphasizing again the importance of the Single Market, articles argue that the UK has more power over EU policy if it remains “at the table, shaping those regulations, leading Europe in the direction [they] want, protecting [their] national interests” (Stone, 2016). Furthermore, articles hold that EU membership benefits national security, as it is easier to deal with international threats, especially “international terrorism” (Freedland, 2016a), through an international organization. Aside security, some articles mention issues of the EU facilitating migration control and climate change management. (See Appendix, Table 9) Generally speaking, left-wing newspapers see three ways in which pooling sovereignty can serve national interests: by bringing economic prosperity through cooperation; by improving the UK’s

relative power; and by cooperatively managing cross-border issues like terrorism, climate change and security. Again, this constitutes a realist view, as these newspapers consider sovereignty a sort of resource, which can be partially ceded to international institutions for the benefit of the nation. (Jervis, 1999, p. 63)

The fifth widespread argument is that the dominance resulting from the EU's sovereignty is not as significant as many perceive it, either because the UK agrees with most laws, or because EU law often has no effect on the UK. (See Appendix, Table 10) Hence, left-wing newspapers believe that sovereignty can often be pooled without being hawkish, because it often does not have much impact, such as when the other parties with which it is pooled have similar stances. This argument has a normalizing effect, because sometimes there is simply no reason for concern about the consequences of sharing sovereignty.

The sixth and last type of argument that this thesis identifies inside left-wing newspapers is the framing of sovereignty as a dated concept. (See Appendix, Table 11) These arguments state that one cannot expect the concept of sovereignty, which "first took root" in "the 17th and 18th centuries" to be applicable today, "in the age of international interdependence." (Freedland, 2016a) As Jon Stone puts it, "the "golden age" of sovereignty [is] over and that the European Union would affect Britain whether it [is] a member or not." So left-wing newspapers consider fully absolute sovereignty a concept of the past, a time they point out is almost absurdly different from today, when pubs had signs reading "No Dogs, No Irish, No Blacks". Hence, they view fully absolute sovereignty as completely outdated, while pooling it is the new norm.

Overall, the left-wing newspapers appear to hold coherent views on what sovereignty is, and why Britain should continue to pool it in the EU. It is not an absolute concept that the UK has lost (see Appendix, Table 6) and, similar to the way that realists would argue, it is a resource at the disposal of the state, that can be pooled to a certain degree, if this is in the interest of the nation (See Appendix, Table 9; Jervis, 1999, p. 63). This is often the case, according to these newspapers, especially for economic benefit, but also for increasing power and dealing with cross-border challenges. By contrast, not pooling sovereignty is seen as harmful to sovereignty, rather than a way of gaining a fully absolute version of it. (See Appendix, Tables 7 and 8) Moreover, the pooling sovereignty is normalized in this discourse, as it is done frequently in modern-day politics (see Appendix, Tables 8 and 11), and indeed because it can often be done without concern (see Appendix, Table 10).

Sovereignty in Right-wing Newspapers

The Concept and Status Quo of Sovereignty

Conceptually, the right-wing newspapers analyzed here present a highly parsimonious, coherent definition. Although no article puts forward a direct definition, all three newspapers tie it to notions of self-governance. (See Appendix, Table 12) Often, this is about law-making, about “[taking] charge of our own laws” (Express, 2016), instead of accepting those made by the “unelected bureaucrats” (Tolhurst, 2016b) of the EU. Moreover, it is important that these laws are supreme in British courts without interference from the EU Court of Justice, which “can strike down [UK] laws. As this means that the right-wing newspapers view sovereignty as holding supreme law-making power in the UK, their definition reflects Philpott’s (1995) underlying criterion for the concept, namely holding “supreme legitimate authority within a territory” (p. 2).

Equally, Philpott’s (1995) dimension of *holders* of sovereignty plays a big role in right-wing newspapers’ picture of the status quo: 9 articles posit simultaneously that the EU and its institutions hold, while the UK does not. This is sometimes implied indirectly, for instance in statements like “I did not expect [the UK] to hand over sovereignty to the EU”, from which it follows that the UK no longer holds sovereignty, while the EU does. And sometimes it is stated more directly, such as in Dathan’s (2016) words that “if the EU Court of justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.” (Tolhurst & Fisk, 2016) Based on this, it would appear that right-wing newspapers view sovereignty as an absolute concept: it cannot, they believe, be called sovereignty if it is not whole. Authors therefore claim that “Britain has lost its sovereignty to the EU” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016), or that Churchill would never “have surrendered [the UK’s] sovereignty” (Lawson, 2016). Moreover, none of the articles analyzed here speaks of varying degrees of sovereignty, so that the overall picture that is created defines sovereignty as an absolute concept, which an entity can either have or lack. Hence, Philpott’s (1995) *absoluteness* dimension does not seem to form a part of right-wing newspapers’ definition of sovereignty. According to Nakano (2013), this understanding that sovereignty is indivisible is widespread in Britain, and he explains this largely through nationalism. (pp. 36-42) Indeed, articles often take a nationalist stance, arguing that Britain is a “great country” (Peat, 2016; Woodhouse, 2016) that must leave the EU to “resume [its] rightful place among the great nations of the world” (Express, 2016)

Overall, the right-wing newspapers’ concept of sovereignty is coherent and

parsimonious, and in line with Philpott's (1995) definition of sovereignty as "supreme legitimate authority" (p. 2). Moreover, his dimension of the *holders* of sovereignty is addressed on many occasions, focusing on the UK and the EU. However, his *absoluteness* dimension is omitted. While this increases the parsimony of the concept, it leaves no room for variations in the degrees of sovereignty, which makes the concept an almost impossible ideal in the era of global interconnectedness. Taken at face value, the definition would mean that the supporters of Brexit want more than to leave the EU; they would want to free themselves from any international influence on the UK's policy, which is a highly unlikely goal. Therefore, it seems likely that the *absoluteness* dimension was omitted to create a discourse deemed more suitable to the agenda, which will be discussed in the following sub-section.

The Discursive Context of Sovereignty

Here, the argumentational context in which right-wing newspapers embed the concept of sovereignty is analyzed, examining the concept's importance to their discourse, and how they construct their arguments around it. This allows a deeper understanding on what sovereignty means to right-wing newspapers, and how they believe it should be addressed.

Remembering Hopper and Thompson's (1980) transitivity criteria from the previous chapter, it seems less whether sovereignty plays an important role in right-wing newspapers. There are always an agent and an object, where the object is sovereignty, while the agent can be the UK or the EU. Usually, that agent performs a volitional, affirmative action the object, with the UK *surrendering* (Lawson, 2016) or *giving up* (Carlin, 2016) sovereignty, or the EU *destroying* (Express, 2016), *damaging* (Perring, 2016a), *eroding* (Dunn, 2016a) or *removing* (Perring, 2016b) it. While these examples signal high transitivity of sovereignty in right-wing newspapers, making it a foreground issue to them, the UK is sometimes described as non-volitionally loses sovereignty (Wooding, 2016), signaling lower transitivity. (Hopper & Thompson, 1980, p. 280) However, these cases are much less common: 6 articles refer to *losing* sovereignty, while 12 refer to volitional actions, like *giving it up* or *eroding* it (See Appendix, Table 14), so that the issue seems to maintain a foreground position. Moreover, some articles emphatically stress the importance of sovereignty, stating that "immigration and the economy (...) are really about sovereignty" (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016), that it "matters above all" and trumps the economy, lamenting that other are "stupid enough to think the loss of national sovereignty a small price to pay for lining their pockets." (MacDonald Fraser, 2016) Hence, sovereignty is clearly important to right-wing newspapers.

Six main arguments were deduced from the right-wing newspaper articles analyzed

here: that the UK is not sovereign; that EU law overrides UK law; that sovereignty is in the UK's national interest; that advocates of sovereignty are virtuous, accomplished men; that those willing to pool it are weak; and that the EU's democratic deficit makes it "unworthy" (MacDonald Fraser, 2016) of holding sovereignty.

Following from the previous sub-chapter, the right-wing newspapers' understanding of sovereignty is an absolute concept and, in their view, the UK's sovereignty is being undermined by the EU. Combined, the two claims form these newspapers' first argument: that the UK is not a sovereign nation. For if sovereignty can only be sovereignty when it is absolute in all issues of affairs, then any outside interference with it means that the nation is not sovereign, because "Britain has lost its sovereignty to the EU" (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016), an argument put forward by 15 of the 45 right-wing newspaper articles analyzed here. (See Appendix, Table 15) Sometimes this is done directly, like when Tolhurst and Fisk (2016) write that "the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU"; sometimes it is more subtle, by stating that Remain campaigners don't think the UK should "choose to restore our national sovereignty" (Parsons, 2016a). Here, the choice of the word *restore* means that it is no longer intact, else, it would not need restoring. And many more examples demonstrate that the right-wing newspapers do not consider the UK sovereign. As a result, one can expect these newspapers to be much more hawkish about pooling sovereignty since, in effect, this means losing it. Paired with the important role that sovereignty plays in their view, it thus seems probable that they would insist that Brexit is necessary regain it, at almost any cost.

Another common argument is that EU law overrides UK law, found in 11 articles where authors argue, for instance, that parliament cannot legally reduce the number of EU immigrants, because "that law would be struck down by [UK] judges, who have to give EU law primacy", that "EU law would continue to override British law", and that "the EU Court of justice is supreme and can strike down our laws". (See Appendix, Table 16) On the one hand, these articles do not always declare the loss of, but rather an infringement on sovereignty. However, as the right-wing newspapers define sovereignty as an absolute concept, these statements support the argument that the UK is not sovereign, as it constitutes an infringement and, hence, the loss of sovereignty. Interestingly, the articles lamenting the supremacy of EU law seldom address the implications this has on national interest. Only Green et al. (2016) and Wigg (2016) do so, both pointing out that the supremacy of EU law makes it impossible for the UK to control migration, as the EU requires freedom of movement. Green et al. also

stipulate that the economy would improve upon Brexit, although they do not explain how.

But this does not mean that national interest is not part of the right-wing newspapers' argumentation. Indeed, it is another widespread argument, found in 11 of the articles analyzed here. Seven of them argue that security requires sovereignty because, for instance, it would grant Britain "the power to expel terrorists and others without interference from the European Court." (Widdecombe, 2016) Hence, these articles argue that leaving the EU would give the UK "better opportunities to keep people safe" (Sculthorpe, 2016). Next to security, 5 articles respectively argue that migration and the economy would be better managed after Brexit. (See Appendix, Table 17) Similar to the security argument, the migration argument is based on sovereignty gaining control over who is in the country, by "controlling our borders" (Reynolds, 2016). In reality, these arguments possess limited merit, as the ECHR would still apply, and not all migrants are EU citizens. Moreover, the absence of studies providing evidence that immigration to the UK has negative impacts on crime rates, economy or other socioeconomic factors calls into question why the UK would benefit from limiting EU immigration. As for the economic argument, the introduction already explained that the scientific consensus is that the UK benefits from immigration. While this may seem like an ivory tower argument, it is hard to imagine how leaving the community responsible for 43% of the country's exports and 54% of its imports (Full Fact, 2017) would benefit the economy, even if it means making trade deals more easily with other countries. Hence, does not seem that there are rational reasons to believe that sovereignty should be restored in order to control immigration or economic policy. Hence, Nakano's (2013) theory that nationalism drives the British desire for sovereignty is one way to explain this. Moreover, despite being in favor of Brexit, some authors even concede that "Remain may claim an edge on the economy" (The Sun, 2016), but they believe that one "can't put a price on independence and national sovereignty" (Littlejohn, 2016), strengthening the idea that right-wing newspapers do not view holding sovereignty as something highly important to national interest, but rather a sort of norm or value.

Another striking feature of the right-wing newspapers' sovereignty discourse is the moral elevation of those who want to bring it back to the UK. (See Appendix, Table 18) These articles emphasize the virtue of individuals arguing for sovereignty. Strikingly, they are exclusively male and, with the exception of Boris Johnson (Johnson 2016), they are also accomplished military men, as the articles point out without fail. "Distinguished Army chief SIR MIKE JACKSON" (Jackson, 2016), "Decorated former sergeant George D Cowie" (Woodhouse, 2016) and "the SAS hero" (Dunn, 2016a) are a few examples, and they highlight

the potential value of Nakano's (2013) theory that nationalism fuels the popular British understanding of *indivisible sovereignty*. (pp. 36-42) Hence, it seems probable that the right-wing newspapers' understanding of sovereignty as an absolute concept is rooted in nationalism, as shown by these examples of presenting supporters of sovereignty that are known to be valiant servants of the country. (See Appendix, Table 18)

These positive examples of 'sovereignty heroes' are contrasted with citations of Remain campaigners, frequently subject to harsh or even aggressive words when questioning the merit of sovereignty. For instance, reader is told how they are *chastised*, *slammed*, *blasted*, demonstrating how much right-wing newspapers condemn any pooling of sovereignty, along with those that advocate it. (See Appendix, Table 19)

Lastly, a very common argument is that the EU is an undemocratic holder of sovereignty. Such instances refer to EU members as unelected, and the institution's democratic deficit is lamented. (See Appendix, Table 20) This concern reflects an ongoing discourse, for while for instance Moravcsik has prominently argued that democracy takes different forms, rather than being absent in the EU (Moravcsik, 2002), the EU's democratic deficit remains a contested issue (Follesdal & Hix, 2006). Therefore, it is unsurprising that a strand of newspapers would also question it. Regarding their understanding of sovereignty, this reflects a normative value that is important to right-wing newspapers, namely that holders of sovereignty should be democratically legitimized. Hence, the EU is viewed as "an illegitimate challenge to our sovereignty" (Heffer, 2016b), and its commissioners are considered "unelected foreign bureaucrats (...) in whose appointment we had no say" (MacDonald Fraser, 2016), in contrast to the UK government, whom the population "can get rid of" (Reynolds, 2016), should they disapprove of their performance. Apparently, the democratic merit of the holders of sovereignty matters a lot to right-wing newspapers, which address this issue nine times in the articles analyzed. (See Appendix, Table 20)

Overall, the right-wing newspapers' argumentation is coherent and reveals much about their view of sovereignty. As they consider sovereignty to be indivisible, it follows logically that they do not view the UK as sovereign, given that the EU can override British laws in certain areas. Moreover, their argumentation is not significantly geared towards rational arguments that reclaiming sovereignty is in the national interest. Rather, these issues remain marginal, and are sometimes even considered a cost. (MacDonald Fraser, 2016; The Sun, 2016) However, this cost is considered high in their efforts to reclaim sovereignty, which "matters above all" (MacDonald Fraser 2016), which is highlighted by the two opposing camps: those in favor of

Brexit are valiant men (see Appendix, Table 18), while the Remain campaigners are condemned (see Appendix, Table 19) for trying to *surrender* British sovereignty to “unworthy, undemocratic, unprincipled, authoritarian” (see Appendix, Table 20) bureaucrats in Brussels. From these arguments, it is clear that right-wing newspapers view sovereignty as indivisible, and as a morally essential element that must be in the right hands, namely the democratically elected UK government.

Sovereignty in British Newspapers: A Comparative Analysis

In this section, the similarities and differences in the left- and right-wing newspapers’ understanding of sovereignty is critically analyzed, drawing largely on observations and interpretations from the previous sections of the analysis.

First, the clearest similarity to be found is Philpott’s (1995) *holders* dimension. Not only is it reflected in all newspapers’ conceptualization, but the holders identified are also the same: both left- and right-wing newspapers speak mostly of the UK government and the EU as holders of sovereignty. (See Appendix, Tables 2 and 13) Moreover, most newspapers agree that some degree of sovereignty has been conferred to the EU (see Appendix, Tables 2, 3, 12, 13 and 14). Furthermore, they all reflect Philpott’s definition of sovereignty as “supreme legitimate authority” (p. 2), as can be seen in statements like “(...) there is no limit to the power of the House of Commons except those that it chooses to impose upon itself.” (Rentoul, 2016d), or that Britain “(...) will take charge of our own laws (...)” (Express, 2016). (See Appendix, Tables 1 and 12) Although these similarities may appear simple and unsurprising, they likely reflect the commonalities of the majority of the British people’s understanding of sovereignty. For regardless of whether newspapers shape public opinion or vice versa, or whether or not the relationship is reciprocal – six of the biggest newspapers in the UK, from opposing ends of the political spectrum, had these aspects in common. Therefore, they can be regarded as almost universal across the political landscape, leading to the following most basic understanding of sovereignty in the UK: *Sovereignty is supreme legitimate authority. It is generally held by political institutions and has been conferred from the UK government to the EU to a certain extent.*

And it is the last part of this common understanding from where conflict arises. For while all newspapers agree that the UK has conferred its sovereignty to the EU to some extent, how far this extent reaches differs widely between the left and right. Where left-wing newspapers describe sovereignty as being shared with the EU only to a limited extent (see Appendix, Tables 3 and 4), their right-wing counterparts believe it has been lost, plain and

simple (see Appendix, Tables 13, 14 and 15). Conceptually, this can surely be explained by differences in their definition of sovereignty: while the left-wing newspapers' concept essentially integrates Philpott's (1995) *absoluteness* dimension (see Appendix Table 3), the right does not (see Appendix, Table 15). As a result, the left's understanding of sovereignty allows them to paint a more nuanced picture, where the UK still holds most of the sovereignty, which means a high degree of absoluteness. On the other hand, the EU holds less sovereignty, which means a lower degree of absoluteness. By contrast, the right-wing newspapers' understanding does not allow for this kind of nuance, leading their picture to paint the UK as not sovereign. (See Appendix, Table 15) This is a striking demonstration of the impact of Philpott's (1995) *absoluteness* dimension. But while Nakano's (2013) theory would expect its absence from the British discourse, as nationalism makes for an understanding of sovereignty as an indivisible concept, the left-wing newspapers' integration of absoluteness is striking, and possibly points to a revolution of public discourse.

At the very least, it is clear that there is a significant challenger to the traditional, indivisible understanding of sovereignty as a moral value that must be upheld at all costs. For the UK's major left-wing newspapers demonstrate a very different understanding, which allows for sovereignty to remain intact while part of it is pooled. That being said, this is argued often on the merit that sovereignty can be taken back: "But sovereignty is not like virginity, that once given away is lost forever. On the contrary, sovereign nations can reel back in what they have lent out the instant they decide the previous sharing arrangement no longer suits them." (Freedland, 2016a)

Hence, the challenge that the left-wing newspapers' discourse poses to that of the right-wing newspapers does not argue that sovereignty should be given away permanently, but that it is always possible to reclaim it. But more than considering it a non-absolute concept, their discourse shows an understanding according to which sharing sovereignty is and should be shared, because this can benefit the nation. Foremost, the "economic advantages of having a true European Single Market" "cannot be dismissed lightly." (Lichfield 2016) But although economic aspects dominate, power also plays a role, as do cross-border issues like terrorism, climate change and migration. (See Appendix, Table 9)

Therefore, left-wing newspapers view cooperation by pooling sovereignty as beneficial, and as an essential aspect of modern regional and global politics (see Appendix, Table 11), in the way that perhaps neorealists would (Jervis, 1999, p. 63). For when it is in the national interest to pool sovereignty, it can seemingly be traded by the government, like a

resource. This is done in international institutions like the EU, which are then “tools of statecraft” (Jervis, 1999, p. 63), meaning that EU institutions are viewed as useful instruments, and gaining access to them is worth ceding a degree of sovereignty.

By contrast, right-wing newspaper’s put forward less arguments about holding sovereignty bringing benefits to the nation, and even admit that pooling it might benefit the economy. (See Appendix, Tables 9 and 17; MacDonald Fraser, 2016; The Sun, 2016) Instead, they view the holding of sovereignty in itself as desirable, because it is a moral principle that sovereignty belongs not in the hands of “foreign”, “unelected” (Gutteridge, 2016; MacDonald Fraser, 2016; Tolhurst, 2016b) entities, but with “properly elected Britons” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016), in other words, a democratically legitimate national government. (See Appendix, Table 20) And in order to achieve this, right-wing newspapers believe it is worth relinquishing all the benefits that left-wing newspapers point out come from pooling it, for sovereignty is something one “can’t put a price on” (Littlejohn 2016).

Indeed, this is a striking contrast, but also a logical one: while left-wing newspapers view sovereignty as a divisible concept that can and should be pooled to the benefit of the nation, right-wing newspapers view it as indivisible and highly valuable. In scientific terms, the former conceptualize sovereignty as an *ordinal variable*, so one that can take on a range of degrees between fully lacking and fully given, while the later see it as a *dichotomous variable*, so one that can only take on of the two values: fully absent or fully given. In addition, one can argue that there are different perceptions of the extent to which pooling sovereignty in the EU actually benefits the UK. For although left-wing newspapers agree with mainstream scientists that it brings huge benefits, especially economically, the idea that the opposite is true, or at least that the benefits are limited, persists throughout the discourse found in right-wing newspapers. And while the overwhelming scientific evidence for the economic benefit of the EU (Dhingra *et al.*, 2016; Ebell & Warren, 2016; Kierzenkowski *et al.*, 2016) makes it hard to believe that right-wing newspapers truly expect reclaiming sovereignty to be highly profitable, other issues are less clear: for instance, left-wing newspapers’ arguments on how “mass migration” (Freedland, 2016a) would be better managed through the EU remain vague, right-wing newspapers are able to specify that sovereignty would allow the UK “to control the immigration coming in from eastern Europe” (Widdecombe, 2016). Therefore, it seems that right-wing newspapers do not simply value sovereignty in and of itself higher than economic gains, but they value control over immigration, “controlling (the UK’s) borders” (Reynolds, 2016), higher than “lining their pockets” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016).

However, these conclusions make sense only if the right-wing newspapers' statements are considered sincere. For as discussed, the left-wing newspapers' sovereignty discourse around national interest constructs a broad, diverse case that covers various issues. And although certain arguments lack explanation as to how EU membership specifically is beneficial, such as migration management, they present a detailed picture of why pooling sovereignty in the EU is tremendously beneficial to the UK's national interest. On the other hand, the right-wing newspapers make a far more narrow case on national interest. Aside an emotional appeal to "restore our status as a sovereign nation" (Daily Mail Reporter, 2016), immigration is a key argument, as a sovereign UK could indeed control its border. (See Appendix, Table 17) However, this argument is fragile, as it builds on the premise that reducing EU immigration to the UK is actually desirable. Given the fact that empirical evidence has shown that EU immigration has no significant impact on employment rates, wages, inequality and public services (Dhingra, Ottaviano, Van Reenen, & Wadsworth, 2016; Dustmann, Fabbri, & Preston, 2005). If this scientific consensus is accepted, it again becomes difficult to justify a need for sovereignty by way of immigration arguments. What then remains is the democratic deficit argument. (See Appendix, Table 20) Although it derives merit from the contemporary discourse (Follesdal & Hix, 2006), the fact that the UK's House of Lords is a potent, unelected lawmaking body (Evans, 2017), indicating that a democratic deficit might also not be the key reason for large parts of the UK's social and political landscape to desire sovereignty. Therefore, the explanation offered in this thesis, based on the right-wing newspapers' conception and valuation of sovereignty, as well as the scholarly literature, which advocates tradition and nationalism as potent drivers for this desire (Nakano, 2013; Todd, 2014, pp. 66-70; Gifford, 2010; Vines & Wellings, 2016, pp. 310-315), is not necessarily sufficient. For the significant doubts described above remain about whether or not the right-wing newspapers' sovereignty is credible. Therefore, Moore and Ramsay's (2017) idea should also be considered:

"Sovereignty, while covered often, was not a primary issue in referendum campaign coverage but a secondary one. In other words, it was referred to frequently, but almost always in the context of other issues – most notably the economy or immigration – rather than being an issue on its own. Rarely was sovereignty, for example – or the terms related to sovereignty – referenced in a headline. Over the course of the campaign sovereignty became increasingly linked to immigration, and when it was referred to, it was regularly associated with the Leave campaign's framing of sovereignty as 'taking back control'." (p. 116)

In essence, this means that sovereignty was simply a rhetorical tool to talk about the real issues that mattered to right-wing newspapers. However, whether this explanation or the one put forward by this thesis is correct cannot be answered conclusively, as this would require knowing what the authors and editors actually thought, which is impossible to assess with any degree of certainty. Therefore, the contribution of this thesis is a less interpretative, more conceptual approach to understanding the different attitudes towards sovereignty between left- and right-wing newspapers. While interpretation plays an important role here as well, it is limited to direct inferences from the many statements analyzed, which coherently lead to the concepts and discourses described here, rather than interpreting the value of sovereignty based on how much it is linked to certain issues. For these issues could simply be the most prominent cases where Brits feel they have lost their sovereignty. Nonetheless, Moore and Ramsay's explanation could still hold true, and it is not the aim of this thesis to discredit their work, merely to offer a more careful and rational alternative explanation, supported by literature on British understandings of sovereignty, and expanding on it.

Conclusion

To surmise, this thesis constructs three key arguments. First, both left- and rightwing newspapers conceptualize sovereignty as lying with those who hold supreme legitimate authority. (See Appendix, Tables 1 and 12) Second, the fundamental conceptual difference is that right-wing newspapers consider sovereignty to be a dichotomous variable, and an entity can either have or lack it, while left-wing newspapers view it as an ordinal variable, and an entity can have or lack it to varying degrees. Third, right-wing newspapers value holding sovereignty much higher than left-wing newspapers do. At the beginning of the two individual discourse analyses, the basic conceptual understandings were analyzed, showing the underlying commonalities of left- and right-wing newspapers. By also paying attention to the status quo, it was possible to understand also the key difference, that sovereignty is viewed divergently as an ordinal or a dichotomous variable. And the examination of the discourses' respective argumentations allowed for further insight into their conceptual understandings, and into how important sovereignty is to the two individual newspaper camps. Finally, a comparative analysis contrasted the two discourses, revealing insights, but also questions, about why the two newspaper camps differ. Ultimately, it seems that the conceptual divergence plays a big role: while left-wing newspapers can pragmatically advocate the cession of only a part of the UK's sovereignty in return for access to the EU's systems like the Single Market,

right-wing newspapers consider any pooling of sovereignty to constitute its loss. Paired with their very high valuation of sovereignty, and their belief that it should be held by a national, democratically elected government, this makes it impossible for them to condone any sharing of sovereignty, regardless of the benefits.

However, the analysis also posed significant questions about the argumentation of right-wing newspapers, since they seem to be willing to pay a very high price to hold on to a tradition. Especially the comparative analysis showed this, where the economic benefits outlined by left-wing newspapers and researchers alike cast doubt on whether right-wing newspapers truly believe that fully absolute sovereignty is worth these costs. Indeed, researchers like Moore and Ramsay (2016) have argued that sovereignty is not what they actually want. Rather, they say, it is a mere pretense, used in order to talk about other issues that really matter to them, such as the economy and immigration. But although this is a plausible explanation, it is hard to evidenciate, as one cannot look inside the minds of the authors and editors, and so must rely heavily on interpretation for such a claim. By contrast, this thesis' explanation for the right-wing newspapers' high valuation of sovereignty relies on simpler interpretations that can be inferred directly from the statements analyzed.

The conclusions on right-wing newspapers' understanding of sovereignty also fit well with existing literature: an indivisible concept, fueled by traditional and nationalist ideals is what scholars in this field would already expect. (Nakano, 2013; Todd, 2014, pp. 66-70; Gifford, 2010; Vines & Wellings, 2016, pp. 310-315) Beyond this existing understanding, this thesis contributes an understanding of the left-wing newspapers' challenge to the popular indivisible concept, based on Philpott's (1995) absoluteness dimension. This difference seems to be the underlying conceptual tension between the two newspaper camps, for it is a defining element of the respective discourses, and it influences their attitudes towards sovereignty in terms of how willing they are to share it. Left-wing newspapers, which perceive the degree of sovereignty as an ordinal variable, paired with their pragmatic approach to contemporary international politics, makes them very willing to trade at least some degree of sovereignty. On the other hand, right-wing newspapers perceive sovereignty as a dichotomous variable, and hold a more traditional understanding of international politics, hoping that "in a few years' time, we can be sovereign, democratic nation states that work and trade together" (Maddox, 2016b). As a result, they are far less willing to pool sovereignty.

As most readers probably only subscribe to one newspaper, one can imagine that little cross-fertilization among readers would occur, resulting in continued separate existence of the

two stances. For instance, those reading right-wing newspapers would get an incomplete image of the EU subjugating the UK by forcing huge amounts of law on it against its will, with valiant men fighting to free Britain from its grip, while weak politicians unelected bureaucrats try to keep Britain subdued. (See Appendix, Tables 16, 18, 19 and 20) Left-wing newspapers' readers, on the other hand, would get the idea that fully absolute sovereignty is extraordinarily harmful to Britain's national interest, especially its economy, while EU law is usually beneficial, and pooling sovereignty is an essential part of modern-day politics. (See Appendix, Tables 9, 10 and 11) Moreover, they would understand sovereignty as a concept that can take on varying degrees of absoluteness, while readers of right-wing newspapers would perceive it as something that Britain can have or lack completely, depending on whether it is a member of the EU or not. (See Tables 3, 6 and 15)

Future research could examine the extent to which this difference in the conceptualization of sovereignty presents an obstacle for productive discussions between the two reader groups, like Thomas Kuhn's influential description of the incommensurability of paradigms. In brief, this aspect of his theory of scientific revolutions means that, because the most basic assumptions of scientific discourses, their *paradigms*, differ in their definitions of concepts, they often cannot assess each other in a meaningful way. (Chen, 1997, pp. 258-259) In linguistic terms, this means they partly use the same terms with different meanings. Regarding the two concepts of sovereignty that the left- and right-wing newspapers construct through their discourses, this means that a debate between the discourses would be stagnant, as the former views sovereignty as an ordinal variable, while the latter frames it as a dichotomous one. Of course, scientific paradigms are quite different from public discourses, but it could be worth testing the hypothesis that they are similarly difficult to reconcile if their basic concepts differ, which seems plausible at face value.

Other avenues for future research also abound. For instance, it remains unanswered whether the right-wing newspapers' discourse on sovereignty can be considered authentic, or whether it was entirely created in order to talk about other issues, especially immigration, which is a sensitive topic that might be more subtly addressed through sovereignty. In order to triangulate an answer, one could examine whether the right-wing newspapers' concept of and discourse on sovereignty has been consistent in the decades before the Brexit referendum. If it were to emerge that the understandings found in this analysis only emerged recently, it would be a step towards proving that the discourse found here was merely constructed, for xenophobic or other reasons. More opportunities for future research could include further examination of

the left-wing's novel concept, how it developed over time, whether similar forms exist in other countries and, if so, what conditions are needed for this understanding to take hold which, based on the outcome of the vote, was unsuccessful in Britain.

Appendix

Table 1: Left-wing newspapers' statements referring to sovereignty as the capacity of self-determination. Bold highlighting edited.

“(…) <u>the UK is already a sovereign nation</u> (…) <i>The out campaign claims our membership of the EU prevents us from being masters of our own destiny. In fact we already have that power</i> ” (Freedland, 2016a)
“But, that is not arguably a stand-alone reason for denying the argument posited for self-governance and democracy as offered by the Brexiteers. The trouble is that in reality this is not feasible because the global movement is for people to join forces and pool their sovereignty (…)” (Rawnsley, 2016)
“What is sovereignty anyway? (…) there is no limit to the power of the House of Commons except those that it chooses to impose upon itself . “ (Rentoul, 2016d)
“(…) do we value our sovereignty and our right to self-determination (…)” (Fearn, 2016)
“[Boris Johnson] can’t then beg the Scots to stay, having led a Brexit campaign based on national sovereignty and self-determination arguments ” (Dewson, 2016)
“The big argument of the Leave side is that we would regain full national sovereignty , which means our right as a country to make our own laws ” (Rentoul, 2016c)

Table 2: Left-wing newspapers' statements referring to the holders of sovereignty. Bold highlighting edited.

“ <u>the UK is already a sovereign nation</u> ” (Freedland, 2016a)
“Paradoxically, within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty (…)” (Henley, 2016) <i>‘Retained’ implies that some of it now lies with the EU.</i>
“(…)the limitations on sovereignty demanded of Britain by the EU .” (Freedland, 2016b)
“Because parliament is sovereign , it can’t be bound, even by a referendum result.” (White, 2016)
“EU regulations do have the force of law in the UK (…)”(Duncan, Gutiérrez, & Clarke, 2016)
“In the United Kingdom sovereignty lies with [the] ministers (…)” (Rentoul, 2016d)

“EU member states do not want to cede sovereignty on defence policy at all. Decisions on defence and foreign policy require **unanimity in the Council of Ministers.**” (Besch, 2016)
Hence, sovereignty over defence and foreign policy lies with the UK.

“On sovereignty and control, we’re actually not that bad in spotting where the **EU** has sole jurisdiction, on things like trade agreements.” (Duffy, 2016)

Table 3: *Left-wing newspapers' statements on the absoluteness of sovereignty. Bold highlighting edited.*

<p>“National independence is more abstract, less absolute in the age of international interdependence. Britain can no more be sovereign alone in the face of global terror, mass migration or climate change than Canute could be master of the waves.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p>
<p>“May argued that no country had ever been totally sovereign and added that international institutions always required compromises.” (Asthana & Mason, 2016)</p>
<p>“At a global level, sovereignty today means less than it once did: globalisation, the mobility of international capital, the power of multinationals, means that economically and fiscally, it is hard for countries to do much radically different.” (Henley, 2016)</p>
<p>“The issue of sovereignty is similarly complicated. Greece last year brutally illustrated the limits of national democratic power when confronted by blunt, regional economic force.” (Younge, 2016)</p>
<p>“(…) the global movement is for people to join forces and pool their sovereignty to ensure a greater chance of self-determination against the onslaught of real challenges from climate change to market forces; from the inevitable movement of people across the globe in the direction of Europe, to the sheer necessity for nimble responses to the major issues that confront us.” (Rawnsley, 2016)</p>
<p>“Equally, power has been passed to the European Union by Acts of Parliament” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p>
<p>“Britain can never be 'fully sovereign' again – even if it leaves the EU”</p> <p>“The idea that Britain can be fully sovereign and self-governing outside the European Union is “an illusion”, a Cabinet minister has said.</p> <p>Michael Fallon, the Defence Secretary, warned that the “golden age” of sovereignty was over and that the European Union would affect Britain whether it was a member or not.” (Stone, 2016)</p>
<p>“When terrorists are planning to kill and maim people on British streets, the closest possible security cooperation is far more important than sovereignty in its purest theoretical form” (Glaze, 2016)</p>

Table 4: *The left-wing newspapers' choice of words by which sovereignty is acted upon.*

<p>Cede (2 instances)</p>	<p>“If the Commons chooses to cede some of the people’s sovereignty” “We ceded that power in 1973” (Rentoul, 2016d) “EU member states do not want to cede sovereignty on defence policy at all.” (Besch, 2016)</p>
<p>Pool (10 instances)</p>	<p>“sovereign nations often pool or share that sovereignty with others”; “exercising their sovereignty, they decided that pooling what they had (...) served the Scottish national interest better” (Freedland, 2016a) “Britain’s sovereignty is already pooled” (Henley, 2016) “no great desire to pool sovereignty” (Elliott, 2016) “the global movement is for people to join forces and pool their sovereignty” (Rawnsley, 2016) “we need to pool what muscle we have with others” (Freedland, 2016c) “this “pooling of sovereignty” has been pragmatically in our interest.” (Rentoul, 2016d) “it’s her sovereignty that is being pooled” (Rentoul, 2016b) “We’ve pooled our sovereignty with NATO”; “We’ve pooled our sovereignty with the United Nations” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a)</p>
<p>Share (7 instances)</p>	<p>“sovereign nations often pool or share that sovereignty”; “sovereign nations can reel back in what they have lent out the instant they decide the previous sharing arrangement no longer suits them.”; “But a sovereign nation understands that to share what it has in order to get more can be not an act of weakness – but of great strength.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p>

	<p>“Since power in the modern world is relative and often shared, how much real extra sovereignty would it gain from leaving the EU?” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“For a nation’s sovereignty and law-making power to be “shared” with other nations is an unusual state of affairs” (Lichfield, 2016)</p> <p>“she was personally responsible for the biggest sharing of sovereignty in British history - the Single European Act.” (Hughes, 2016a)</p> <p>“If we share sovereignty we have more power as we are part of a bigger club” (Robinson, 2016)</p>
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Table 5: *Left-wing newspaper's view of sovereignty as under control of the UK's parliament, which can choose to confer it or take it back. Bold highlighting edited.*

<p>UK can choose to confer sovereignty (6 instances)</p>	<p>“But sovereignty is not like virginity, that once given away is lost forever. On the contrary, sovereign nations can reel back in what they have lent out the instant they decide the previous sharing arrangement no longer suits them. The Scots could have made that move in September 2014 but, exercising their sovereignty, they decided that pooling what they had with England, Wales and Northern Ireland served the Scottish national interest better. (...) The UK has not somehow lost its sovereignty by being in the EU. Parliament can simply repeal the European Communities Act of 1972 and we’d be out. MPs could do it now without a referendum if they wanted. Such is the power of a sovereign nation.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“Paradoxically, within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty: it controls tax and spending, because it is not part of the eurozone; it maintains border controls because it is not part of Schengen. And it will not have to surrender any more power [although it could] because it is excluded from ever closer union. Rather than an abdication of power, therefore, it could reasonably be argued that EU membership, for Britain, is actually a pretty effective exercise of power.” (Henley, 2016) <i>Here, Henley speaks of sovereignty as power, as he argues that the UK “will not have to surrender any more power”, while writing about sovereignty.</i></p> <p>“joining an alliance to strengthen your national muscle is itself an act of sovereignty: it’s a decision we take ourselves.” (Freedland, 2016c)</p> <p>“If the Commons chooses to cede some of the people’s sovereignty elsewhere, it can always take it back.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p> <p>“EU member states do not want to cede sovereignty on defence policy at all. Decisions on defence and foreign policy require unanimity in the Council of Ministers.” (Besch, 2016)</p>
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	<p>“As for ‘regaining our sovereignty’? About 13 per cent of our laws are created in the EU. The big stuff; laws on defence, health and education will continue to be made where they always have been – at Westminster. We always have been and always will be a sovereign nation. But one which has the confidence and boldness to work in partnership with other countries to achieve our goals.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016b)</p>
<p>UK can take conferred sovereignty back (3 instances)</p>	<p>“But sovereignty is not like virginity, that once given away is lost forever. On the contrary, sovereign nations can reel back in what they have lent out the instant they decide the previous sharing arrangement no longer suits them. The Scots could have made that move in September 2014 but, exercising their sovereignty, they decided that pooling what they had with England, Wales and Northern Ireland served the Scottish national interest better. (...) The UK has not somehow lost its sovereignty by being in the EU. Parliament can simply repeal the European Communities Act of 1972 and we’d be out. MPs could do it now without a referendum if they wanted. Such is the power of a sovereign nation.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“We only stay in as long as it suits us. If we want to leave in the future, we will always retain that right. That’s what being sovereign means.” (Freedland, 2016c)</p> <p>“If the Commons chooses to cede some of the people’s sovereignty elsewhere, it can always take it back.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p>

Table 6: Left-wing newspapers’ statements that the UK is sovereign despite EU membership.

<p><u>“the UK is already a sovereign nation”</u> <i>“The out campaign claims our membership of the EU prevents us from being masters of our own destiny. In fact we already have that power”</i> “The UK has not somehow lost its sovereignty by being in the EU. Parliament can simply repeal the European Communities Act of 1972 and we’d be out. MPs could do it now without a referendum if they wanted. Such is the power of a sovereign nation.” “If anything, after a Brexit, we could discover that we are rather less sovereign than we are now.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Paradoxically, within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty: it controls tax and spending, because it is not part of the eurozone; it maintains border controls</p>

because it is not part of Schengen. And it will not have to surrender any more power because it is excluded from ever closer union.” (Henley, 2016)

“Because parliament is sovereign, it can’t be bound, even by a referendum result.” (White, 2016)

“Britain has all the sovereignty to limit tax avoidance today as a member of the EU, and this will not change after a Brexit.” (Guardian Small Business Network, 2016)

“(…) joining an alliance to strengthen your national muscle is itself an act of sovereignty: it’s a decision we take ourselves. Indeed, it’s the decision we will take tomorrow. We only stay in as long as it suits us. If we want to leave in the future, we will always retain that right. That’s what being sovereign means.” (Freedland, 2016c)

“(…) there is no limit to the power of the House of Commons except those that it chooses to impose upon itself. If the Commons chooses to cede some of the people’s sovereignty elsewhere, it can always take it back.” (Rentoul, 2016d)

“Mr Cameron also insisted that UK would remain sovereign even if the UK voted to remain in the EU but added that a vote to leave would damage Britain’s economic prosperity.” (Wright, 2016a)

“Decisions on defence and foreign policy require unanimity in the Council of Ministers.” (Besch, 2016)

“The big stuff; laws on defence, health and education will continue to be made where they always have been – at Westminster.
We always have been and always will be a sovereign nation. But one which has the confidence and boldness to work in partnership with other countries to achieve our goals.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016b)

Table 7: *Left-wing newspaper statements about the UK being less sovereign outside the EU.*

<p>“If anything, after a Brexit, we could discover that we are rather less sovereign than we are now. In order to do business, we could find ourselves compelled to bow before rules that, like Norway, we have no say in writing.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Paradoxically, within the EU Britain has retained significant aspects of sovereignty: it controls tax and spending, because it is not part of the eurozone; it maintains border controls because it is not part of Schengen. And it will not have to surrender any more power because it is excluded from ever closer union. Rather than an abdication of power, therefore, it could reasonably be argued that EU membership, for Britain, is actually a pretty effective exercise of power. The notion that in a globalised world, Britain could somehow enhance its standing on the world stage by standing alone seems fanciful.” (Henley, 2016) <i>Here, Henley speaks of sovereignty as power, as he argues that the UK “will not have to surrender any more power”, while writing about sovereignty.</i></p>
<p>“It is said with truth that this involves some sacrifice or merger of national sovereignty and characteristics, but it is also possible to regard it as the gradual assumption by all nations concerned of that larger sovereignty which can also protect their diverse and distinctive customs, and their national traditions.” (Kettle, 2016) <i>As this quote speaks of a larger sovereignty achievable by pooling it, un-pooling through Brexit would reduce that sovereignty.</i></p>
<p>“Brexit would lose the country influence and "weaken its sovereign power" outside the EU.” (Hughes, 2016b)</p>
<p>“We could lose sovereignty if we end up negotiating a new trade deal with the EU, one in which we will have no say at the table on how it is implemented.” (Beattie, 2016)</p>
<p>“But David Cameron repeats his claim, saying other countries would take against Britain after Brexit. “They could discriminate against us. They would discriminate against us. “We might feel more sovereign but it would be the illusion of sovereignty”.” (Smith & Bloom, 2016)</p>

Table 8: *Left-wing newspaper statements that leaving the EU would not bring about fully absolute sovereignty. Bold highlighting edited.*

<p>Due to other commitments</p>	<p>“Britain’s sovereignty is already pooled, in many areas, in the form of 14,000 treaties signed with international organisations including the United Nations, Nato and the World Trade Organisation.” (Henley, 2016)</p>
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	<p>“May argued that no country had ever been totally sovereign and added that international institutions always required compromises.” (Asthana & Mason, 2016)</p> <p>“Condemned by Boris Johnson as undermining British justice and sovereignty, the charter and court in effect incorporate many of the liberties balanced and enforced through the European convention on human rights. The convention is separately overseen by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, not the EU.” (Bowcott & Sherwood, 2016)</p> <p>“Nato membership limits our sovereignty in matters of war and peace: we are obliged to defend our allies. But in return, they are obliged to defend us.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p> <p>“We would still be a member of the European Court of Human Rights if we pulled out of the EU. The ECHR has nothing to do with the EU and contains a number of non-EU countries. It’s rulings would still be binding on the UK.” (Wright, 2016b)</p> <p><i>After Brexit, Britain</i> “will quickly discover that it is financial and corporate power, not Brussels, which is the biggest threat to our sovereignty, something which the British government standing alone has little power, and no willingness, to do anything about.”</p> <p>“We’ve pooled our sovereignty with NATO because an attack on one is an attack on all and no one suggests we leave that.</p> <p>We’ve pooled our sovereignty with the United Nations because our decisions are subject to Vladimir Putin’s veto and no one suggests we leave that.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a)</p>
<p>Due to the Single Market</p>	<p>“because those [EU] nations have formed a single market, to trade with them on the same beneficial terms they all enjoy means complying with that market’s rules. We could do it from the outside, as the Norwegians do. Or</p>

	<p>we could do it from the inside, as we do now. Both options involve some constraint of our sovereignty.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“Pro-Brexit Tory politicians (...) want the UK to remain in the European single market (...). However, that would allow Brussels to retain sovereignty over many regulations affecting Britain.” (Johnston, 2016)</p> <p>“Norway is still the 10th biggest budget contributor, but doesn’t participate in decision-making in Brussels although it has to abide by its policies. This would not appeal to many Brexit supporters who long for more sovereignty.” (Larsson, 2016)</p> <p>“(...) if we got back to the ‘golden age’ where our parliament is absolutely sovereign, you would still have the European Union next door, taking decisions that affect our trade and businesses and our way of life.” (Stone, 2016)</p> <p>“If Britain is opting to leave the EU to regain its sovereignty, this is not the way to do it. Countries may be technically outside the EU but in reality are still beholden to Brussels. And they don’t get a formal say in EU decision-making. EEA members must accept basic EU principles, including the free movement of workers. That means the primary driver of the Brexit campaign – concerns about immigration – would remain unaddressed.” (Witte, 2016)</p> <p>“Ignore a Norway-style free trade deal. EU citizens would enjoy the same freedom of movement they do now.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a)</p>
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Table 9: Left-wing newspapers arguing that pooling sovereignty is often in the national interest. Bold highlighting edited.

<p>Economy (18 instances)</p>	<p>“because those [EU] nations have formed a single market, to trade with them on the same beneficial terms they all enjoy means complying with that market’s rules. We could do it from the outside, as the Norwegians do. Or we could do it from the inside, as we do now. Both options involve some constraint of our sovereignty.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“For many of those who want to leave the EU, the only real issue – the one for which they would be prepared to pay a high economic price – is sovereignty.” (Henley, 2016)</p>
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“When Britain first sought to join the Common Market in the 1960s it did so for **pragmatic, not ideological reasons**. There was no great desire to pool sovereignty in pursuit of wider political goals, merely a feeling that Germany, France and the Netherlands were **growing faster and had more modern economies**.” (Elliott, 2016)

“Pro-Brexit Tory politicians such as Boris Johnson and Michael Gove want the UK to **remain in the European single market** even if voters do opt to leave the EU in the 23 June referendum, he told the audience.” (Johnston, 2016)

“The issue of sovereignty is similarly complicated. Greece last year brutally illustrated the limits of national democratic power when confronted by blunt, regional **economic force**.” (Younge, 2016)

“The British people seem unimpressed by airy liberal issues such as **jobs and money** as, in the looming EU referendum, they head for an assertion of national sovereignty that flies in the face of all those scary warnings of **instant self-imposed recession**.” (Jones, 2016b)

“the US does trim its sovereignty when it suits its purposes: it agrees to be bound by the **trade rulings** of the World Trade Organisation and Nafta, even if that means Congress is forced to back down on its own decisions.” (Freedland, 2016b)

“(…) damning data on the potential **economic woes** of a Brexit piled up and Barack Obama delivered his cool blow. Patriotic feelings are all the Brexiteers appear to have. In place of **economic reason**, they resort to absurd vitriol.” (Jones, 2016a)

“Norway is still the [EU’s] **10th biggest budget contributor**, but doesn’t participate in decision-making in Brussels although it has to

	<p>abide by its policies. This would not appeal to many Brexit supporters who long for more sovereignty.” (Larsson, 2016)</p> <p>“But most of them are in our economic interest, or don’t matter very much, or aren’t as bad for us as they were. For example, people stopped complaining about the Common Agricultural Policy years ago.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p> <p>“(…) the possibility of serious economic precariousness with the consequent drop in living standards is likely.” (Rawnsley, 2016)</p> <p>“(…) since we joined in 1973, we seem to have taken the view, as a nation, that this “pooling of sovereignty” has been pragmatically in our interest. So much so that we have handed over more powers since then – especially in the Single European Act, which created the single market, agreed by Margaret Thatcher in 1985.”</p> <p>“The “sovereignty” and democratic arguments against the EU cannot not be dismissed lightly. Nor should the economic advantages of having a true European Single Market.” (Lichfield, 2016)</p> <p>“Mr Cameron also insisted that UK would remain sovereign even if the UK voted to remain in the EU but added that a vote to leave would damage Britain’s economic prosperity.” (Wright, 2016a)</p> <p><i>“Absolute sovereignty is worthless if it reduces the prosperity and security of British citizens”</i> (Hughes, 2016b)</p> <p>“By contrast, the overwhelming majority of economists believe that Brexit would both cause significant upheaval in the short term and that long-term recovery can’t be regarded as a given – and indeed it should not be. The International Monetary Fund, the Bank of England, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Institute for Fiscal Studies have all sounded the alarm vis-à-vis a vote to leave.” (Independent Voices, 2016)</p> <p>“But very quickly it became apparent that they had lost the economic argument.” (Cooper, 2016)</p>
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	<p>“Brexiters now claim we can magic up sovereignty by leaving the international organisation which gives us access to 500 million customers and feeds three million British jobs which go with that.”</p>
<p>Security (7 instances)</p>	<p>“Britain can no more be sovereign alone in the face of global terror, mass migration or climate change than Canute could be master of the waves.”</p> <p>“In the face of global problems – south-north migration, climate change, Islamist terror – [pooling sovereignty] is no bad thing.” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“But we won’t be any more sovereign in the face of climate change or international terrorism than Canute was sovereign over the waves.” (Freedland, 2016c)</p> <p>“The “sovereignty” and democratic arguments against the EU cannot not be dismissed lightly. (...) Nor should the EU’s role in diluting, or caging, the worst aspects of European nationalist jealousies and hatreds.” (Lichfield, 2016)</p> <p>“(…) do we value our sovereignty and our right to self-determination, or the agreement of what it means to be a European citizen – a floor below which our rights as Europeans cannot sink, whatever government we vote for – more highly?” (Fearn, 2016)</p> <p>““When terrorists are planning to kill and maim people on British streets, the closest possible security cooperation is far more important than sovereignty in its purest theoretical form,” he said.” (Glaze, 2016)</p> <p><i>“Absolute sovereignty is worthless if it reduces the prosperity and security of British citizens”</i> (Hughes, 2016b)</p>
<p>Migration (3 instances)</p>	<p>“Britain can no more be sovereign alone in the face of global terror, mass migration or climate change than Canute could be master of the waves.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“In the face of global problems – south-north migration, climate change, Islamist terror – [pooling sovereignty] is no bad thing.” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“But if your life has been saved by one of the 50,000 EU migrants who keep our hospitals on their feet you may wish to think twice before cutting the NHS off at the knees.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a)</p>

<p>Climate Change (4 instances)</p>	<p>“Britain can no more be sovereign alone in the face of global terror, mass migration or climate change than Canute could be master of the waves.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p> <p>“In the face of global problems – south-north migration, climate change, Islamist terror – [pooling sovereignty] is no bad thing.” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“The trouble is that in reality this is not feasible because the global movement is for people to join forces and pool their sovereignty to ensure a greater chance of self-determination against the onslaught of real challenges from climate change to market forces” (Rawnsley, 2016)</p> <p>“But we won’t be any more sovereign in the face of climate change or international terrorism than Canute was sovereign over the waves.” (Freedland, 2016c)</p>
<p>Power (7 instances)</p>	<p>“Rather than an abdication of power, therefore, it could reasonably be argued that EU membership, for Britain, is actually a pretty effective exercise of power. The notion that in a globalised world, Britain could somehow enhance its standing on the world stage by standing alone seems fanciful.”; “Since power in the modern world is relative and often shared, how much real extra sovereignty would it gain from leaving the EU?” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“(…) we need to pool what muscle we have with others – and make all of us stronger.” (Freedland, 2016c)</p> <p>“[David Cameron’s] argument is that we have more power as a member of international bodies including the EU. The same arguments apply to Nato and the European Convention on Human Rights (which is separate from the EU although increasingly entwined with it).” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p> <p>“Isn’t it better to still be there – however frustrating it is – at the table, shaping those regulations, leading Europe in the direction you want, protecting your national interests?” he said.” (Stone, 2016)</p> <p>“If Britain is opting to leave the EU to regain its sovereignty, this is not the way to do it. Countries may be technically outside the EU but in reality are still beholden to Brussels. And they don't get a formal say in EU decision-making.” (Witte, 2016)</p>

	<p>“Brexit would lose the country influence and "weaken its sovereign power" outside the EU.” (Hughes, 2016b)</p> <p>“If we share sovereignty we have more power as we are part of a bigger club” (Robinson, 2016)</p>
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Table 10: Left-wing newspaper statements that EU dominance is lower than often perceived.

<p>UK support for EU law</p>	<p>“the UK has been on “the losing side” in Brussels on just 2% of occasions in 17 years. It is hard to escape the conclusion that almost always, Britain agrees with legislation Brussels proposes. And yet. For many of those who want to leave the EU, the only real issue – the one for which they would be prepared to pay a high economic price – is sovereignty.” (Henley, 2016)</p> <p>“But most of them are in our economic interest, or don’t matter very much, or aren’t as bad for us as they were. For example, people stopped complaining about the Common Agricultural Policy years ago.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p> <p>“Since 1999 the British Government has voted against laws passed in Brussels 56 times – which have been imposed upon us. But that represents two per cent of the total EU votes during that time and we’ve been on the winning side 2,466 times.” (Wright, 2016b)</p> <p>“Only around 15% of our laws come from Brussels and they cover areas such as consumer rights and workers’ rights which are welcomed by most people. Britain wins the majority of votes on the Council.” (Beattie, 2016)</p>
<p>Insignificance of certain EU law</p>	<p>“3. Sovereignty (...) EU regulations do have the force of law in the UK, so the seeming sleight of hand in including them in these sums has a logical basis. But to compare them one-to-one with Westminster Acts is eccentric; EU regulations can be transient items of quite local application, such as this one, allowing Portugal to be late with a report on its olive harvest in 2001.” (Duncan, Gutiérrez, & Clarke, 2016)</p> <p>“But most of them are in our economic interest, or don’t matter very much, or aren’t as bad for us as they were. For example, people stopped complaining about the Common Agricultural Policy years ago.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p>

	<p>“Allegedly designed in the same Brussels and Berlin offices where dreams of an ever closer European union are fostered, this purported European army has become a symbol of EU overreach in one of the most sensitive areas of national sovereignty – defence. (...) EU member states do not want to cede sovereignty on defence policy at all. Decisions on defence and foreign policy require unanimity in the Council of Ministers.” (Besch, 2016)</p> <p>“There is no way of accurately measuring how many UK laws originate from or are influenced by Brussels. The leave side claims up to 70 per cent of laws have some European element contained within them – while remain says it is less than 20 per cent. Both figures can be justified depending on how you count them. But those at the higher end count EU rules that aren’t really laws in any meaningful sense.” (Wright, 2016b)</p> <p>“As for ‘regaining our sovereignty’? About 13 per cent of our laws are created in the EU. The big stuff; laws on defence, health and education will continue to be made where they always have been – at Westminster.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016b)</p>
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Table 11: Left-wing newspaper statements framing sovereignty as a dated concept.

<p>“Today’s world is very different from the 17th and 18th centuries, when the notion of state sovereignty first took root. National independence is more abstract, less absolute in the age of international interdependence. Britain can no more be sovereign alone in the face of global terror, mass migration or climate change than Canute could be master of the waves.” (Freedland, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Since power in the modern world is relative and often shared, how much real extra sovereignty would it gain from leaving the EU?” (Henley, 2016)</p>
<p>“The trouble is that in reality this is not feasible because the global movement is for people to join forces and pool their sovereignty to ensure a greater chance of self-determination against the onslaught of real challenges from climate change to market forces; from the inevitable movement of people across the globe in the direction of Europe, to the sheer necessity for nimble responses to the major issues that confront us.” (Rawnsley, 2016)</p>
<p>“since we joined in 1973, we seem to have taken the view, as a nation, that this “pooling of sovereignty” has been pragmatically in our interest. So much so that we have handed over more powers since then – especially in the Single European Act, which created the single market, agreed by Margaret Thatcher in 1985.” (Rentoul, 2016d)</p>
<p>“The idea that Britain can be fully sovereign and self-governing outside the European Union is “an illusion”, a Cabinet minister has said.</p> <p>Michael Fallon, the Defence Secretary, warned that the “golden age” of sovereignty was over and that the European Union would affect Britain whether it was a member or not. (...)” “(...) if we got back to the ‘golden age’ where our parliament is absolutely sovereign, you would still have the European Union next door, taking decisions that affect our trade and businesses and our way of life.” (Stone, 2016)</p>

“Brexiters argue that by leaving it we would regain our sovereignty, what they call getting our country back.

That means going back to our past. You must decide if that past can become our future.

The past can be a wonderful nostalgic dream, the idealised Britain fondly imagined by John Major as containing “long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, dog lovers and pools fillers and old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist”.

The past also contained tuberculosis and rickets, polio and smallpox, fewer workplace rights and “No Dogs, No Irish, No Blacks” signs in pub windows.

The past was unkindler than the present, a place in which same sex relationships were not just a sin but a crime, and pride meant the most inventive way of putting Johnny Foreigner’s nose out of joint.” (Voice Of The Mirror, 2016a)

Table 12: Right-wing newspapers' statements describing sovereignty as self-governance. Bold highlighting edited.

<p>“The referendum has mainly been fought on immigration and the economy. But both are really about sovereignty. In other words, both are really about who gets to decide.” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p>
<p>“Can I ask the Prime Minister to explain to the House and to the country in exactly what way this deal returns sovereignty over any field of law-making to these Houses of Parliament?” (Dunn, 2016b)</p>
<p>“After all if the EU Court of Justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.” (Tolhurst & Fisk, 2016)</p>
<p>“Mr Cameron was grilled over issues of sovereignty, with one audience member saying it was a "disgrace" that laws were made by "unelected bureaucrats" in Brussels and the Supreme Court could be overruled by European judges.” (Tolhurst, 2016b)</p>
<p>“What would happen to sovereignty if Britain stays in the EU? Brexit campaigners decry the fact that more important decisions would be made in Brussels and EU law would continue to override British law.” (Foster, 2016)</p>
<p>“As a sovereign democracy once more, we will take charge of our own laws, borders, taxes, justice and welfare.” (Express, 2016)</p>
<p>“Speaking at the rally of GO - a cross party group calling for the UK to leave the EU, Mr Farage said: “This is about do you wish us to be a self-governing, democratic, independent nation or part of a bigger, political union [in] which at best we have an eight per cent say.[”]” (Reynolds, 2016)</p>
<p>“However contrary to suggestions coming from Project Fear it will strengthen our hand inasmuch as we will be able to control the immigration coming in from eastern Europe, set rules which do not rely on the EU for agreement and have the power to expel terrorists and others without interference from the European Court. In short we will get our parliamentary sovereignty back.” (Widdecombe, 2016)</p>
<p>“Leaving the EU would offer a chance to put the UK in charge of our own destiny and laws again — and restore our status as a sovereign nation.” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2016)</p>
<p>“This has always been about democracy and self-determination, not money. You can't put a price on independence and national sovereignty.” (Littlejohn, 2016)</p>
<p>“I think we want our sovereignty and we want to make our own laws.” (Wigg, 2016)</p>
<p>“For sovereignty matters above all, the right to make our own laws (thrown away with the incorporation of the mad and disgusting European Convention on Human Rights into our domestic law, which has already caused disruption in our courts), the right to be independent of the unworthy, undemocratic, unprincipled, authoritarian, bureaucratic rabble of Brussels.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016)</p>

Table 13: Right-wing newspapers' statements referring to the holders of sovereignty. Bold highlighting edited.

<p>“Britain has lost its sovereignty to the EU.” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p>
<p>“Boris [Johnson] eventually hit back with the question: “Can I ask the Prime Minister to explain [how] this deal returns sovereignty over any field of law-making to these Houses of Parliament?”” (Dunn, 2016b)</p>
<p>““After all if the EU Court of Justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.”” (Tolhurst & Fisk, 2016)</p>
<p>““I did not expect [the UK] to hand over sovereignty to the EU. I certainly did not expect unaccountable leaders in Brussels to govern over us.” (Hawkes, 2016)</p>
<p>“Mr Cameron was grilled over issues of sovereignty, with one audience member saying it was a "disgrace" that laws were made by "unelected bureaucrats" in Brussels and the Supreme Court could be overruled by European judges.” (Tolhurst, 2016b)</p>
<p>“[Signalling] he would vote to leave [the] EU, the SAS hero added: “Sovereignty and security are intrinsically linked, and in recent years we’ve seen the EU erode [the UK’s] sovereignty” (Dunn, 2016a)</p>
<p>“What would happen to sovereignty if Britain stays in the EU? Brexit campaigners decry the fact that more important decisions would be made in Brussels and EU law would continue to override British law.” (Foster, 2016)</p>
<p>“After all if the EU Court of justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.” (Dathan, 2016)</p>
<p>“Suppose in 1945, with the Nazi war machine smashed and Britain rejoicing after the greatest victory in her history, we had been told: 'Of course, 50 years hence your leaders will have surrendered [the UK’s] sovereignty to the people you've just defeated and those you've liberated.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016) <i>The defeated and liberated people referred to are Germany and France, the most influential nations of the EU</i></p>

Table 14: The right-wing newspapers' choice of words by which sovereignty is acted upon.

Bold highlighting edited.

<p>Sovereignty is given up/ surrendered/ sacrificed sovereignty (6 instances)</p>	<p>“It’s hypocritical of the Americans to exalt us to further loss of control when America would never dream in a millions years of surrendering sovereignty.” (Wooding, 2016)</p> <p>“Would Churchill have surrendered our sovereignty to the EU? Never!” (Lawson, 2016)</p> <p>“But then the EU is an edifice built on lies — starting with the blatant untruth, peddled when we signed up to the Common Market in 1973, that we were joining nothing more threatening than a tariff-free trading zone, which would involve no sacrifice of sovereignty.” (Daily Mail Comment, 2016)</p> <p>“London Mayor Boris Johnson accused [Barack Obama] of making an 'incoherent' and 'inconsistent' argument because the U.S. would never give up sovereignty” (Chambers, McLelland, & Dathan, 2016)</p> <p>“The London Mayor accused Mr Obama of ‘hypocrisy’, saying it was ‘absolutely bizarre’ that Britain was being ‘lectured by the Americans about giving up our sovereignty... when the Americans won’t even sign up to the International Convention on the Law of the Sea, let alone the International Criminal Court’.” (Carlin, 2016)</p> <p>“Suppose in 1945, with the Nazi war machine smashed and Britain rejoicing after the greatest victory in her history, we had been told: 'Of course, 50 years hence your leaders will have surrendered your sovereignty to the people you've just defeated and those you've liberated.”</p>
<p>Sovereignty is destroyed/ damaged/ eroded/ removed (6 instances)</p>	<p>“EU erodes our sovereign justice system” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p> <p>“[Signalling] he would vote to leave [the] EU, the SAS hero added: “Sovereignty and security are intrinsically linked, and in recent years we’ve seen the EU erode our sovereignty” (Dunn, 2016a)</p> <p>“Never mind that open borders enabled two terrorist attacks in Paris last year. Never mind the British sovereignty heroes fought and died for is being eroded by rule from Brussels.” (Parsons, 2016b)</p>

	<p>“With our sovereignty destroyed and our identity obliterated, we will be shackled ever more tightly to the sclerotic, dysfunctional bureaucracy of Brussels” (Express, 2016)</p> <p>“During a controversial speech at the London School of Economics, Mr Sked compared Brussels to Nazi Germany’s drive to remove the sovereignty of nations in Europe.” (Perring, 2016b)</p> <p>“Defiant, [Steven Woolfe] calls on the US to support “those in Britain who do not want a political union that damages the sovereignty of the other democracies”.” (Perring, 2016a)</p>
<p>Sovereignty is lost (6 instances)</p>	<p>“It’s hypocritical of the Americans to exalt us to further loss of control when America would never dream in a millions years of surrendering sovereignty.” (Wooding, 2016)</p> <p>“Britain has lost its sovereignty to the EU.”; “That’s what losing sovereignty means.” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p> <p>“While not going as far as calling for Brexit, the article reveals [Jeremy Paxman’s] doubts about the bureaucracy of the EU and the loss of British sovereignty.” (Express, 2016)</p> <p>“[Winston Churchill] would be horrified at the loss of sovereignty this country has suffered and would definitely campaign for us to Leave.” (Maddox, 2016a)</p> <p>“(…) there are those quite base and stupid enough to think the loss of national sovereignty a small price to pay for lining their pockets.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016)</p> <p>“For the British in particular, it is the loss of sovereignty and the inability of Britain or indeed any member state to reform and restore the democratic freedom of the nation state which have made the impositions of the EU such a running sore for many people. It is likely that a significant number of British people will always resent the loss of sovereignty and will be dragged eternally against their will into any further pooling of power in Brussels.” (Carey, 2016)</p>

Table 15: Right-wing newspapers' view that the UK has lost its sovereignty due to the EU.

Bold highlighting edited.

<p>“Britain has lost its sovereignty to the EU.” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p>
<p>“Blasting the impact [of joining the EU] on our own sovereignty he said: “What it’s done to our Parliament is put them down to level of Parish Council.” (Tolhurst, 2016a)</p>
<p>“And there are millions like me. But what about the other side? From Downing Street to the Labour Party’s HQ, the liberal elite warns us that doom and destruction await us if we choose to restore our national sovereignty.” (Parsons, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Boris [Johnson] eventually hit back with the question: “Can I ask the Prime Minister to explain to the House and to the country in exactly what way this deal returns sovereignty over any field of law-making to these Houses of Parliament?”” (Dunn, 2016b)</p>
<p>““After all if the EU Court of Justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.”” (Tolhurst & Fisk, 2016)</p>
<p>“[Boris Johnson] warned: “It’s hypocritical of the Americans to exalt us to further loss of control when America would never dream in a millions years of surrendering sovereignty.” (Wooding, 2016)</p>
<p>“While not going as far as calling for Brexit, the article reveals [Jeremy Paxman’s] doubts about the bureaucracy of the EU and the loss of British sovereignty.” (Express, 2016)</p>
<p>“The recent pathetic “negotiations” showed beyond all doubt that we will never have power to reclaim any sovereignty for if the EU would make no worthwhile compromise under the threat of Brexit then why would it ever do so once that threat has gone away?” (Widdecombe, 2016)</p>
<p>“I won’t fall out! Distinguished Army chief GENERAL SIR MIKE JACKSON says you must vote for Brexit if you want a sovereign Britain but leaving would be a strategic risk” (Jackson, 2016)</p>
<p>“If you believe in the sovereignty of this country, (...) there is only one way to vote. Brexit. This is our one chance. We must seize it.” (Daily Mail Comment, 2016)</p>
<p>“Leaving the EU would offer a chance to put the UK in charge of our own destiny and laws again — and restore our status as a sovereign nation.” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2016)</p>
<p>“[Michael Gove] urged wavering voters not to flinch from regaining sovereignty from a Brussels machine that would leave their country poorer and less secure.” (Groves, 2016)</p>
<p>“Suppose in 1945, with the Nazi war machine smashed and Britain rejoicing after the greatest victory in her history, we had been told: 'Of course, 50 years hence your leaders will have surrendered your sovereignty to the people you've just defeated and those you've liberated.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016)</p>
<p>“He only cared about sovereignty, and getting ours back – but we sort of knew that already.” (Johnson 2016)</p>

“For the British in particular, it is the **loss of sovereignty** and the inability of Britain or indeed any member state to reform and restore the democratic freedom of the nation state which have made the impositions of the EU such a running sore for many people.” (Carey, 2016)

Table 16: Right-wing newspapers' statements about EU law overriding UK law.

<p>“If Parliament passed a law limiting the number of EU settlers to 100,000, that law would be struck down by our own judges, who have to give EU law primacy.</p> <p>The 100,001st applicant would claim his residence rights — and welfare and voting rights — from British courts. That’s what losing sovereignty means.” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p>
<p>“Boris [Johnson] eventually hit back with the question: “Can I ask the Prime Minister to explain to the House and to the country in exactly what way this deal returns sovereignty over any field of law-making to these Houses of Parliament?”” (Dunn, 2016b)</p>
<p>“After all if the EU Court of Justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.” (Tolhurst & Fisk, 2016)</p>
<p>“Mr Cameron was grilled over issues of sovereignty, with one audience member saying it was a "disgrace" that laws were made by "unelected bureaucrats" in Brussels and the [UK] Supreme Court could be overruled by European judges.” (Tolhurst, 2016b)</p>
<p>“What would happen to sovereignty if Britain stays in the EU?”</p> <p>Brexit campaigners decry the fact that more important decisions would be made in Brussels and EU law would continue to override British law.” (Foster, 2016)</p>
<p>“And asked about sovereignty, he said the issue was “essential” and “at the heart” of the referendum debate. Describing how "only the unelected European Commission has the permission to propose new laws or repeal old laws”, he asked the audience: "With your vote can you change your government?”” (Gutteridge, 2016)</p>
<p>“1. A QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY</p> <p>Leaving the EU would offer a chance to put the UK in charge of our own destiny and laws again — and restore our status as a sovereign nation.” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2016)</p>
<p>““After all if the EU Court of justice is supreme and can strike down our laws, the British people would have just laughed at the idea Britain can be sovereign unless we leave the EU.”” (Dathan, 2016)</p>
<p>““Yes, I do feel we should leave,” she says of the EU. ‘I think we want our sovereignty and we want to make our own laws.’” (Wigg, 2016)</p>
<p>“For sovereignty matters above all, the right to make our own laws (thrown away with the incorporation of the mad and disgusting European Convention on Human Rights into our domestic law, which has already caused disruption in our courts), the right to be independent of the unworthy, undemocratic, unprincipled, authoritarian, bureaucratic rabble of Brussels.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016)</p>

“European law, in my view, has already seriously undermined UK's combat effectiveness as a result of the intrusion of European law into national law.” (Brown, 2016)

Table 17: Right-wing newspapers arguing that holding sovereignty is in the national interest.

Bold highlighting edited.

<p>Security</p>	<p>“[Signalling] he would vote to leave [the] EU, the SAS hero added: “Sovereignty and security are intrinsically linked, and in recent years we’ve seen the EU erode our sovereignty” (Dunn, 2016a)</p> <p>“Never mind that open borders enabled two terrorist attacks in Paris last year. Never mind the British sovereignty heroes fought and died for is being eroded by rule from Brussels.” (Parsons, 2016b)</p> <p>“However contrary to suggestions coming from Project Fear it will strengthen our hand inasmuch as we will be able to control the immigration coming in from eastern Europe, set rules which do not rely on the EU for agreement and have the power to expel terrorists and others without interference from the European Court. In short we will get our parliamentary sovereignty back.” (Widdecombe, 2016)</p> <p>“Mr Gove added: 'Our security and sovereignty stand together. I believe that there are better opportunities to keep people safe if we are outside the European Union.’” (Sculthorpe, 2016)</p> <p>“And in a final impassioned plea, Michael Gove declared today was 'D-Day' for current generations of Britons. He urged wavering voters not to flinch from regaining sovereignty from a Brussels machine that would leave their country poorer and less secure.” (Groves, 2016)</p> <p>“Sovereignty and defence are indivisible. European law, in my view, has already seriously undermined UK's combat effectiveness as a result of the intrusion of European law into national law.” (Brown, 2016)</p>
<p>Migration</p>	<p>“Leaving the EU will save our sovereignty, rein in migration and boost our economy” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p> <p>“As a sovereign democracy once more, we will take charge of our own laws, borders, taxes, justice and welfare.” (Express, 2016)</p> <p>“This is about us governing our country, it’s about us controlling our borders.” (Reynolds, 2016)</p> <p>“However contrary to suggestions coming from Project Fear it will strengthen our hand inasmuch as we will be able to control the immigration coming in from eastern Europe, set rules which do not rely on the EU for agreement and have the power to expel terrorists and others without interference from the European Court. In short we will get our parliamentary sovereignty back.” (Widdecombe, 2016)</p>

	<p>“I think we want our sovereignty and we want to make our own laws. This country is very different from the country I grew up in. I’ve seen a big change. This is a tiny island. There are too many people coming in and we’re going to sink into the sea with so many people.” (Wigg, 2016)</p>
Economy	<p>“Leaving the EU will save our sovereignty, rein in migration and boost our economy” (Green, Hannan, & Minford, 2016)</p> <p>“As a sovereign democracy once more, we will take charge of our own laws, borders, taxes, justice and welfare.” (Express, 2016)</p> <p>“In short we will get our parliamentary sovereignty back. We can fix up trade agreements with the rest of the world without having to worry about the terms of EU membership.” (Widdecombe, 2016)</p> <p>“This has always been about democracy and self-determination, not money. You can't put a price on independence and national sovereignty.” (Littlejohn, 2016)</p> <p>“And in a final impassioned plea, Michael Gove declared today was 'D-Day' for current generations of Britons. He urged wavering voters not to flinch from regaining sovereignty from a Brussels machine that would leave their country poorer and less secure.” (Groves, 2016)</p> <p>“[Nigel Farage] said: “I hope that on June 23, it isn't just Independence Day for the UK, I hope it brings an end to this entire project and in a few years' time, we can be sovereign, democratic nation states that work and trade together.”” (Maddox, 2016b)</p>

Table 18: Right-wing newspapers’ statements emphasizing the valiance of those arguing for sovereignty. Bold highlighting edited.

<p>“Decorated former sergeant George D Cowie said: “Our forebears fought and made terrible sacrifices in two World Wars for the freedom of their families and the sovereignty of our great country.” (Woodhouse, 2016)</p>
<p>“[Signalling] he would vote to leave [the] EU, the SAS hero added: “Sovereignty and security are intrinsically linked, and in recent years we’ve seen the EU erode our sovereignty” (Dunn, 2016a)</p>
<p>“[Winston Churchill] would be horrified at the loss of sovereignty this country has suffered and would definitely campaign for us to Leave.” (Maddox, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Former sergeant George Cowie said: “Our forebears fought and made terrible sacrifices in two World Wars for the freedom of their families and the sovereignty of our great country.” (Peat, 2016)</p>
<p>“Would Churchill have surrendered our sovereignty to the EU? Never!” (Lawson, 2016)</p>

<p>“I won't fall out! Distinguished Army chief GENERAL SIR MIKE JACKSON says you must vote for Brexit if you want a sovereign Britain but leaving would be a strategic risk” (Jackson, 2016)</p>
<p>“Sir Michael commanded UN troops in Bosnia from 1994 to 1995 and was in charge of the SAS siege of the Iranian embassy in 1980.” (Brown, 2016)</p>
<p>“I outlined four scenarios that sketched out [Boris Johnson’s] political future whether he came down for ‘In’ or ‘Out’, but he wasn’t interested. He only cared about sovereignty, and getting ours back – but we sort of knew that already.” (Johnson 2016)</p>

Table 19: Right-wing newspapers’ statements condemning those willing to pool sovereignty.

Bold highlighting edited.

<p>“SIR John Major has been slammed for telling Brexit campaigners they should move to North Korea if they want “sovereignty”.” (Hawkes & Woodhouse, Brexit campaigners blast John Major for saying they should move to North Korea if they want ‘sovereignty’, 2016)</p>
<p>“Blasting the impact [of joining the EU] on our own sovereignty he said: “What it’s done to our Parliament is put them down to level of Parish Council.” (Tolhurst, 2016a)</p>
<p>“Boris [Johnson] eventually hit back with the question: “Can I ask the Prime Minister to explain to the House and to the country in exactly what way this deal returns sovereignty over any field of law-making to these Houses of Parliament?”” (Dunn, 2016b)</p>
<p>“Mr Cameron was grilled over issues of sovereignty (...)” (Tolhurst, 2016b)</p>
<p>“Corbyn hits out at EU on tax, migrants and sovereignty – despite campaigning FOR Remain (...) Jeremy Corbyn chastised Brussels for overruling Britain’s sovereignty, shielding tax havens and its "appalling" handling of the migrant crisis.” (Smith O. , 2016)</p>

Table 20: Right-wing newspapers lamenting the EU’s democratic deficit, making it an illegitimate holder of sovereignty. *Bold highlighting edited.*

<p>“I did not expect us to hand over sovereignty to the EU. I certainly did not expect unaccountable leaders in Brussels to govern over us.” (Hawkes, 2016)</p>
<p>“Mr Cameron was grilled over issues of sovereignty, with one audience member saying it was a "disgrace" that laws were made by "unelected bureaucrats" in Brussels and the [UK] Supreme Court could be overruled by European judges.” (Tolhurst, 2016b)</p>

“He pointed out that in 1992 a majority of Danes votes no to the Maastricht treaty, in 2000 the Danes voted no to the Euro and last year in December the Danes said no to hand over sovereignty to the EU on the justice and home affairs area.” (Maddox, 2016b)

“It’s about us being the masters of our own destiny, charting our own course and recognising that if a British government makes a Horlicks of it, **we can get rid of them** and replace them with somebody else.” (Reynolds, 2016)

“As well as the cost to taxpayers of fighting these lengthy drawn out cases, it’s clearly an **illegitimate challenge** to our sovereignty.” (Heffer, 2016b)

“1. A QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

According to the Commons Library, up to 60 per cent of regulations originate from the EU and the 28-member Commission in Brussels — **none of whom were elected.**” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2016)

“This has always been about **democracy** and self-determination, not money. You can't put a price on independence and national sovereignty.” (Littlejohn, 2016)

“our farming and fishing industries have been brought to the brink of ruin, our constitution undermined and our laws, passed by properly elected Britons, brushed aside whenever they are at odds with the directives of **unelected foreign bureaucrats** whose corruption is a byword, **in whose appointment we had no say**, but whose will is sovereign while ours goes for nothing. (...) For sovereignty matters above all, the right to make our own laws (thrown away with the incorporation of the mad and disgusting European Convention on Human Rights into our domestic law, which has already caused disruption in our courts), the right to be independent of the unworthy, **undemocratic**, unprincipled, authoritarian, bureaucratic rabble of Brussels.” (MacDonald Fraser, 2016)

“For the British in particular, it is the loss of sovereignty and the inability of Britain or indeed any member state to reform and restore the democratic freedom of the nation state which have made the impositions of the EU such a running sore for many people.” (Carey, 2016)

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