

## **Abstract**

The subject of this bachelor's thesis is Northern Irish unionism and its evolution after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) on the 10th of April 1998 through the analysis of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). This political party is very significant for Northern Irish unionism and for Northern Ireland as a whole through its political dominance for the majority of the period since the implementation of said agreement. Even with its aforementioned dominance, the DUP didn't successfully defend the position of the strongest political party in Northern Ireland following the latest regional elections, which occurred on the 5th of May 2022. There has not been such a defeat for unionists in Northern Ireland since its formation over a century ago. This thesis will aim to explain said decline of electoral support through a case study of the DUP and it will try to explain if there was a singular tipping point behind it, or if there's a longer-term trend of decline. In the first part of the thesis, the author will describe basic knowledge about the party, ranging from its creation in 1971 to the present day. The second part will see the author attempting to analyze the party's actions and decisions through a periodization of the electoral periods since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, and the author trying to identify the moments that have led to the DUP's current result in the most recent regional elections to date. The author's analysis finds the factor of the party's support for Brexit and the events following said support to be the key long-term trend explaining the party's decline.