KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the *Student Hub Live.* In this next session, we're going to take a look at material Brexit. And I'm joined by Robert Samuels, from Music, and Philip O'Sullivan. And we're going to talk about the various ways in which Brexit might have an impact on our material things. Now, Philip, if I may start with you, from Northern Ireland one of the key sort of issues that we've briefly touched on but not in a lot of detail is how borders might have an impact on everyday life-- and even what might happen, which we we've talked about at previous events but not today.

Now, we've been looking at a map of the UK, at Northern Ireland, and looking at how constituents have voted. We've placed quite a lot of emphasis on that, yet, in our last session, spoken about how place doesn't always necessarily mean that physical location and how there are very subtle nuances within that. But can you give us the perspective from Northern Ireland, and update us? Because there has been some shift there, this week.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Place certainly matters in Northern Ireland. The border, ironically what Brexit has done actually is bring the border back in to the minds and the forefront to people. Because, in the recent political history of Northern Ireland and Ireland, with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, what's commonly referred to as the "peace process," what that had done actually, essentially, was sort of fudged apart the constitutional issue. Should it-- not have been part of the United Kingdom, should there be a united Ireland.

So the Good Friday agreements were a pact that put it to a side, and agreed to principle of consent. Only when a majority of people in Northern Ireland wanted a united Ireland, that would happen. So that was OK. And then you had the setting up of Stormont, and it worked.

But fortunately what Brexit has done-- because the UK and the Republic of Ireland were both in the European Union, in a way that sort of assured Northern nationalists. OK, they were in the United Kingdom, but both the Republic of Ireland and the UK were in Europe. So, part of a bigger club. It sort of widened, if you like, the conflict or the dispute. There was that sort of certainty or wider context to it.

Brexit, of course, now, what it will mean is, you know, the UK and Northern Ireland leaving the EU. There will have to be some reemergence, almost a repartitioning of Ireland. Which has then brought that right back into people's forefront mind. So it's creating questions about, will it

be a physical border, will there be customs checks, and all those kinds of things.

So it has really transformed Irish politics. It's probably the most important thing that's happened in Ireland or Northern Ireland since actually partition was created in 1921. So it's a huge--

And it's very material, because it's a question about, so will there be physical checks, will there not be, customs, tariffs, hard border, soft border, technology-- you know all that talk, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: We were talking, earlier, about maybe popping over the border to go to the shops and how there might be very different impacts. And also one of the things that Georgina was talking, about right at the start of the show today, was the extent to which we wanted some of those big questions answered. And this is a big, massive question. And yet, you know, so much is being sort of hammered out, in terms of detail. What's the impact, then, of these huge questions?

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Well, actually, nothing's been sorted yet. I was just reading this morning, again, that it's been, what, 23 months since the referendum, 14 months since the UK triggered Article 50, and yet we're no nearer knowing what is going to be the situation. So you're right. There are people who live along the border who could cross the border five times a day. You say they could go to the shops--

I mean, the border's over 300 miles long. And it's not a very obvious border. It's not a material, physical border. It runs through fields, it goes down the middle of streets, and so forth.

So people shop, go to school, work, go to college, go to the doctors, both sides of the border, all day long. So, if there is going to be some manifestation of a hard border, it is really going to cause an awful lot of trouble and issues.

There was the deal in December-- without getting too technical about it-- do you remember, there was an agreement between the EU and the UK, that, in the absence of an agreement, that they guaranteed there'd be no hard border and that they would maintain the customs and regulatory arrangements internally on the island of Ireland, the so-called "backstop deal." But, when the EU then went to put that into legal terms, the UK government opposed it. So it sort of agreed in December, politically, 2017. And now, the UK government are sort of backtracking a bit or fudging it.

So, we actually are no further along. You see the things that have been agreed, that haven't been. I mean, everything's still up in the air.

And actually, I think, the Irish border, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, actually encapsulates many of the whole issues remaining with Brexit. Because they are outstanding and remaining. You know, they haven't been resolved. And it's coming to some kind of brinksmanship, or a game of chicken, if you like, because neither side at the moment is moving. You know?

KAREN FOLEY: I wonder, Bob, if we may take a look at sort of historical perspective. One of the things we've been saying is, we don't know where we're going. We all completely agreed on that.

ROBERT SAMUELS: [LAUGH]

KAREN FOLEY: But, actually, there is some sense of looking at things from the past, you know, and ways in which we can take something from historical accounts. And I wonder if you can talk to us a little bit about what was happening in 19th-century Europe, in terms of how borders happened then, and the music industry.

ROBERT SAMUELS: Well, it's a cliché that music doesn't respect borders, because it's held to be universal. As far as that goes, that is a cliché. Because, of course, musicians rely on material things in order to make music, the whole time. And a lot of the issues that Philip's talked about boil down, today, to taking instruments across borders, through arranging concerts, through getting people from one place to another, to hear your craft, to consume the music you're talking about.

And really that's always been the case. Britain, as a whole, has actually been at the centre of a European musical culture, for at least the last 200 years-- in fact, probably for a lot longer than that. And the question of how music is consumed, who is performing it, and how they're performing it, is something where borders-- the existence of them or, more often, the capacity to ignore them-- has been extremely important.

Another cliché is that Britain doesn't have a home-grown musical culture. But, in fact, it does. And one of the important things about Britain, of especially the 19th century and of the 18th century, was, as it achieved a kind of economic dominance within Europe, it started importing its culture from all across Europe. And some of the most famous British composers are, of course, not British-born.

I mean, the most famous British composer of all time is probably George Handel, who lived in London from his mid 20s until he died in his mid 70s. So his entire working life, almost, really was centred on Britain. Somebody in the Music department had done a great deal of research into it, because, you know, from our perspective he's the great UK performer.

But, of course, he couldn't have been here if there had been the kind of obstructive borders in the Europe at the time, but he benefited from the free movement of people and the cultural exchange which is essential to musical culture.

KAREN FOLEY: Because he was German-born.

ROBERT SAMUELS: Yeah, that's right. He was German-born. His early career was in Italy. And then he came--

Actually, if you, as we were, trying to assemble documents relating to his life, you need specialists in German and Italian and, indeed, in Swedish and other languages, as well. So it's a complex task. He moved everywhere, but that was because he was facilitated by the position of the UK in Europe.

His most famous work must be *The* Messiah-- performed in Dublin. [LAUGH] You know, it's absolutely typical of the time. And that continued through the 18th century and into the 19th century, as well.

After Handel's death, the most famous composer in Britain was JC Bach, the eldest son of Johann Sebastian Bach. And, if you talk about Bach in the 18th century, you're talking about him-- and he lived in London. The most famous composer of the late 18th century, Haydn, was somebody he facilitated coming to this country.

Haydn lived in London for five years. He described them as the happiest years of his life. I think because they were the most profitable years of his life, as well.

KAREN FOLEY: So this really-- I mean, well, there's two things here, I think, we can pick up on. One is this idea that borders, for you, are very much in the mind. And the other is that, whilst that might happen, actually place seems to really, really matter, in terms of having some sort of claim. And that links very much to identity. So, that is potentially another area of commonality between what you're both saying.

PHILIP Yeah, absolutely. I mean, there's actually a string of literature now been written about this

O'SULLIVAN: question in Northern Ireland, saying how the border of the mind is now a real issue. I think it was JC Beckett, who was a famous Irish historian, wrote a book in Northern Ireland, 1966. And he said-- because there had been a period of tranquillity and relative peace and stability.

And he said that now the border isn't really a political line on a map, it's a border of the mind. But now that border of the mind has been complete disrupted, as I say, because it really is front and central. You know? And, even this week, there's been a lot of new research, so some colleagues in Queen's University, Belfast.

Unlike actually, I think-- and we have to be careful, here, because we're conflating sometimes Britain and the UK. They're two different things. Britain-- if I'm being really pedantic-- is the island of England and Scotland and Wales. The UK, of course, as you know, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. So, it's different than Northen Ireland.

Because, I think, here, if you-- they are doubtful, if the referendum was run again, the result might roughly be the same? The research they published on Monday in Belfast showed that if it was-- 56% people voted Remain, in Northern Ireland. Research yesterday came out saying that 69% people would vote to remain, if it stayed the same.

So, you know, the actual feeling, the Leave-- sorry, the Remain vote is actually, sentiment is actually growing stronger. So that is changing. So they're just highlighting there's some differences between-- huge differences-- between Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the rest of the UK, too.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. But, whilst you've also got that very-- you know, that link with national identity, as well, there's also the physical border.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Absolutely. Well, the main difference-- I mean, the main way of disseminating and analysing the vote was actually Unionist Nationalist, you know, initially.

KAREN FOLEY: Would you like to take a look at the map?

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Yeah, sure.

KAREN FOLEY: Let's bring the map back, which we've been looking at a couple of times this morning, and take a look at how the various constituents in the UK voted.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Sure, OK. Well--

KAREN FOLEY: And Northern Ireland.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: So, I'm looking at Northern Ireland. My eyesight isn't great, but I can see that, Northern Ireland, there, if you see the west of Northern Ireland and the south, there are all those constituencies in yellow voted to--

KAREN FOLEY: Remain.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: --remain, yep. And then the blue ones, to leave. Now, if you actually transpose that map to how people voted in the 2017 general election, it's almost identical. What you see there in yellow would have been all the nationalists votes.

So there's 18 MPs in Northern Ireland. All those constituencies which are virtually yellow, there, almost identically map onto the Remain. And all the ones which are blue would actually be the 10 DUP seats, which all voted to-- or the DUP, the 10 DUP, are, obviously, Remainers.

So the in/out, remain/leave vote maps directly onto the Nationalist, Sinn Fein, and DUP MP votes, with one exception. There's one Lady Sylvia Hermon, in North Down. But, so, you know, of the--

I mean, I actually did-- a previous speaker, Allan Cochrane, was doing a talk with some colleagues in Belfast. And I showed that map. The two maps actually, you know, they figure completely. So that is-- you know, it's very much on that sort of ethnonational, some might say sectarian, sort of divide in Northern Ireland, the Leave/Remain, you know.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Let's take a quick trip to our hot desk and see what people are at home are talking about. David and Joan, you are typing away [LAUGH] very busily. How is everyone?

JOAN: Yeah, it's a great discussion, actually. One of the things that, um, what we've been talking about is whether people's lives really will change so much. There's some feeling that perhaps, in the short term, there won't be much change and that it will kind of creep up in the long term. But it's not at all clear what that change is going to be.

Certainly, issues of housing are very important, on people's minds, housing and unemployment. And there's been a point made that, from our Richard in Barcelona, that the

problems for housing are actually very severe in Barcelona and Madrid, in the cities where he is. And actually I can relate to that, too. I do some work in Greece, and the problems in Athens are far worse than in the more flexible working areas you find in the rest of Greece, where people might have several jobs at once and manage their finances better that way.

ROBERT SAMUELS: I think the point that borders are in the mind is a very important one. Because, in fact, as borders get imposed through political will and the changing fortunes of political things, then often the identities of who you say are the people you have fellow kinship with, re-jig themselves. They're shifted around, as well.

I mean, in the 18th century, the hard border was between Britain and France. And, in fact, when Haydn came to this country it was partly because the impresario who brought him over had to take out an advert in the paper to say, I'm very sorry, I can't put on any concerts this year because I can't get any French singers. But, the very next day, he puts another advert in the paper, saying, it's all right, I'm going to have nine concerts with Dr. Haydn performing his new symphonies, and so on.

So, there's a reevaluation of identity and of cultural kind of centre of gravity, entirely because of the imposition of one hard border and the simultaneous removal of others. And so, it doesn't matter that the great British musical establishment actually goes to Germany and Austria to find its main exponents, because at least they're not French. [LAUGH] And, when Haydn put on his own concert in 1795, it was the last concert of the years in which he lived here, he takes out an advert in the paper, which I--

KAREN FOLEY: You can take a look at that, yeah.

ROBERT SAMUELS: --think you can put on the screen. And the notable thing about this is that he's inviting the gentry and the nobility to his concert, is that all the music and most of the musicians he wants to trumpet are not British-born. But this is actually, in the London opera house, the great British musical event of the season.

He very much liked being called "Dr. Haydn." He's got his doctorate from the University of Oxford, when he arrived here, and was very proud of that.

But, as you can see, he has Sgr. Rovedino, Mr. Ferlendis from Venice. He's very proud. He's just arrived from Italy. This is the first concert that he's going to play his own work. And there's a Viotti, another Italian, who's going to play his Violin Concerto in the second half.

And this kind of shows that the musical culture-- which could not have existed anywhere else. It could only exist in London. But it relied on this free movement and cultural exchange. And, in that sense, the cliché that music does not depend on borders or can transcend borders kind of became true, in that a distinct musical culture was being assembled and collected, a kind of montage of different European identities, which only in Britain could become a pan-European musical identity.

And I think the UK'S position, as a kind of centre of a pan-European culture, is something that's been lost in the Brexit debates but undoubtedly will resurface and reformulate itself, because it has, every time that that's happened previously in the last couple of centuries.

KAREN FOLEY: And movement of people was one of the important issues. People were very keen to facilitate. And, earlier today, we were saying, you know, what might that mean for me, in terms of whether I can come and stay or go, et cetera? So we were talking about that, a little bit earlier.

But to what extent does that really, really matter? To what extent does having to cross a border matter, in terms of that national identity? Is it something like you say that's more, perhaps, well, at least we're not French, or something? Is it an in-group, out-group thing? You know, to what extent does border really play a part in that?

ROBERT SAMUELS: Well, I think what I was saying, the dialectic of the physical border and the mental border means that these things shift. The relationship between identity and the place you come from, and the place in which you labour, in which your work is consumed and appreciated, that shifts around. Though there's always an interaction of these elements. I think it's impossible to say that they've remained fixed.

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Identity politics, the constitutional question, they're all wrapped up, completely. You're saying, what difference does it matter if you do-- I mean, if there is the hard-- for example, the main barrier now, the main border between the United Kingdom and the European Union, is going to be that 300-mile border in Ireland. That is the only land border. So, conceivably, it's possible for immigrants to be able to travel, in Europe, into the EU, travel to the Republic of Ireland freely, because there's no restriction, and then they can get into the UK, go ahead and cross the Irish border.

So, whether that's managed at ports or airports and things, as well. But I mean, actually, I think many of the arguments for the people who were maybe opposed to Brexit was that it's

doing that. It's so somehow limiting, you know? In a world where we talk about globalisation and internationalisation, the UK leaving EU and reimposition, perhaps, of a border in Ireland, to what extent-- whether it's seamless, frictionless, technological, or there has to be some hard structure-- it's, again, somehow limiting and controlling, and there's checks and so forth, as well. So that does seem, for some people, to be perhaps a retrograde step.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. I'd be interested in your take on that, though, Philip, because Jane is saying that, a long time ago, we used to go across borders really easily. So why is it becoming such an issue, now?

PHILIP O'SULLIVAN: Well, for a simple fact that-- you're right. I mean, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have had a common travel area for almost 100 years. And there's reciprocal agreements between the two countries that people can live and work. For example, I'm actually an Irish citizen. I was born in Dublin. I can live and work in Milton Keynes, if I wished, and there's no problem, because of that.

But the thing that has changed is that the UK and the Republic of Ireland were always in the same situation, regarding EU membership. They were both outside of it. They both joined at the same time, in 1973. But now, where we're with Brexit, for the first time there'd been a different status to that. Because the Republic of Ireland will be in the EU, and the UK will be out of it.

So that has changed something. And the point I made about people travelling into Ireland from the rest of the EU, and then maybe going to Northern Ireland, crossing to Stranraer in Scotland, or elsewhere, is an issue that's going to have to be managed. Now, British and the Irish governments cooperate a lot in immigration and security and so forth. And I'm sure they have all these checks.

But, I mean, it is-- horrible cliché-- it is a game-changer. You know? Sorry to say that. [LAUGH] But it is. You know, it fundamentally alters completely the relationship between Ireland and the UK.

And it has had huge impacts for the political relations. Political actions north and south, between Northern Ireland and Dublin, were very good. They're now at the worst they have been-- I was speaking to some Unionist politicians-- forever. The relations between Dublin and London, east-west, are the worst they've been forever. Because it puts this real pressure on it. You know?

Ireland is now negotiating as one of 27 in the EU. Barnier said, the other week, he said, in Europe we put Ireland first. Previously, you know, the relationship was one of asymmetry-- big United Kingdom, economically dominant. Republic of Ireland was more dependent on it, especially economically. But now, Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, is one of 27 negotiating with the UK. So it's now, the whole symmetry, that power-balance relationship has changed completely.

So the whole political relations have changed completely-- north-south, east-west. And it's still all up in the air.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, indeed. It's a very nice end to the session, because, in our next session, we're going to be talking about new politics and new identities and how the future might look. So, Philip and Bob, thank you so much for that really interesting discussion.

We're going to take a quick break, now, and look at a quick video, which is "A Separate Scottish Deal." And then, join me for that final session with Richard Heffernan and Eleni Andreouli, where we talk about new politics and new identities. See you in a few minutes.