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LONDEPENDENCE AND THE 'LEFT BEHIND': Social Class, Race and Gender as Determinants of Attitudes to Brexit in London

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LONDEPENDENCE AND THE 'LEFT BEHIND'

Social Class, Race and Gender
as Determinants of Attitudes
to Brexit in London

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Since the 2016 'Brexit' Referendum, which saw a slim majority of Britons vote to leave the EU, largely quantitative political science research has been undertaken to investigate why people voted the way they did. While this burgeoning literature has helped to identify patterns in voting behaviour, tropes around the 'left behind' and the so-called 'male-stream' nature of social science research has left us with a limited picture of voting behaviour, with certain voices, including women and ethnic minorities, often excluded. What's more, while London was set aside as a remain-voting outlier in leave-voting England, and various campaigns began for an independent London, we know very little about the Brexit vote in the capital.

As such, this research aims to dig deeper into the determinants of attitudes to Brexit, in particular looking at the effects of social class, race and gender on voting behaviour at the referendum in two London boroughs: Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham. These boroughs are – on the face of it – very similar in terms of ethnic diversity and deprivation, in comparison to the rest of the UK. However, their very different referendum results do not fit patterns of voting behaviour identified in the existing literature. The study draws on qualitative research, combining (very) semi-structured interviews and participatory 'identity mapping' to collect a rich dataset of participants' experiences of Brexit.

In doing so, the study contributes empirically to what we know about the determinants of attitudes to Brexit. It picks apart key issues like immigration, political disillusionment and economic and cultural anxiety to bring to the fore new issues that are yet to be drawn into the mainstream Brexit debate, from gentrification to 'smoking beagles'. It also makes a conceptual contribution by applying Bourdieu's concepts of 'cultural capital' and 'fields' to a new setting. In particular, it is argued that, alongside gender and race, citizenship should be viewed as part of our 'embodied cultural capital'. Doing so makes it possible to understand how identity shaped the Brexit attitudes of migrants living in the UK at the time of the referendum, existing research into which is very sparse. Ultimately, this research highlights the value in combining sociological and political science approaches in the study of Brexit and British politics, and outlines a number of future research avenues on this basis.

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1. INTRODUCTION: 'Londependence' and the so-called 'Left Behind'

"London is an international city, and we want to remain at the heart of Europe. Let's face it - the rest of the country disagrees... let's make the divorce official and move in with our friends on the continent" began the 2016 petition for 'Londependence', a movement supported by nearly 200,000 people (O'Malley, 2016a). This petition – and wider campaigns for Londependence and Londexit – became so part of the zeitgeist in London Remainer circles after the vote to leave that Mayor of London Sadiq Khan responded directly in a speech. Khan admitted, on 28 June 2016, that "as much as I might like the idea of a London city state, I'm not seriously talking about independence today... but on behalf of all Londoners, I am demanding more autonomy for the capital...to protect London's economy from the uncertainty ahead" (Mayor of London, 2016).

While Sadiq Khan painted London as an entity so financially separate to the rest of the country, given the City of London's status as an international business hub, that it needed its own seat at the Brexit negotiation tables, the initiator of the 'Londependence' petition, argued instead on the basis of *values*, that "London is a wildly different place to much of the rest of the country" (O'Malley, 2016b). This binary, situating London against the rest of the UK, in terms of economic and social values, very much defined the discussion of the Brexit vote in London. Support for this binary is found in the (albeit limited) academic literature on the vote in London. Generally, London is considered an exception to the English Euroscepticism that drove the Brexit vote, and more in line with the pro-EU sentiment found in Scotland (Henderson et al., 2016; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a). We know a bit about Londoners' attitudes towards the EU over time through the British Social Attitudes Survey and the Future of London Survey (Henderson et al., 2016) and that support for Eurosceptic parties has been consistently lower in London than across the rest of England (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a). In terms of the Brexit vote, general conclusions have been made. Scholars have highlighted that voters' age and education levels, central to the 'left behind' explanation, might not have as much explanatory power in London as in other parts of England, and that levels of ethnic diversity made a difference to the vote in London but not elsewhere (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a). Yet, rather than considering

voting behaviour and Brexit attitudes in London in more detail, it is subsumed by abstract, large-scale country-wide analyses based on socio-demographic and geographic explanations. The binaries associated with the Brexit vote in London reflect the wider Brexit literature, which is largely quantitative and painted only a broad-brush picture of voting behaviour at the referendum. Socio-demographic explanations of the Brexit vote relate to age (the older a voter is, the more likely a leave vote was) (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Henderson et al., 2017), education levels (lower levels of education are associated with a leave vote) (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b) and closeness to poverty (associated with a leave vote) (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). In relation, the notion of the 'left behind', describing "financially struggling, older and white male workers who have been 'left behind' by the economic and social changes of the past thirty years" (Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 185), received a great deal of airtime (Mckenzie, 2017b). Geographical factors include the ethnic diversity of an area (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017), levels of migration (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017) and post-industrialism (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016). Research into identity politics has linked the leave vote to a strong *English* national identity (Curtice, 2016a; Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017), negative attitudes towards immigration (Vasilopoulou, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019), right-wing populism and 'whitelash' (Iakhnis, 2018; Kellner, 2017; Gusterson, 2017; Sengupta et al., 2019).

But can these broad-brush results relating to London and the rest of the UK *really* be the whole story? Whilst it's true that London was the only region to vote to remain (Mayor of London, 2017), the city contains multitudes that a regional approach cannot speak to. Four London boroughs voted to leave, with three of those boroughs (Havering, Bexley, and Barking and Dagenham) seeing more than 60 per cent of voters backing leave (BBC News, 2016c). Taking a closer look, clear divides also exist within the boroughs, which is understandable given that most boroughs are home to between 150,000 and 400,000 people (GLA, 2018). Lambeth, for example, saw the second highest vote to remain, only after

Gibraltar, and was home to the infamous 40 metre long ‘Bollocks to Brexit’ sign set atop the Pimlico Plumbers headquarters (Pimlico Plumbers, 2018). At the same time, however, residents of Vauxhall, an area of Lambeth next to the Thames, were represented by one of the most stridently-pro-Brexit Labour MPs, Kate Hoey, who held the Vauxhall seat from 1989 to 2019 (Woollen, 2022) (Hoey has since spoken out against Labour’s line on Brexit and the actions of remain-voting Labour MPs and in support of Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson (NPR, 2019; Brexit Central, 2020) and did not necessarily represent the views of those living in Vauxhall). We know that the majority of London boroughs voted to remain, but what about the four that saw a majority support leave? What caused London to vote (generally) so ardently for remain? Is it the (generally) higher levels of ethnic diversity? Or the historically high levels of immigration, including large numbers of EU migrants?

The incomplete picture we have of the referendum is thrown into the light when considering the starkly different results of two London boroughs, Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham. Whilst Barking and Dagenham in East London voted to leave, Lambeth, in the South, had the highest remain vote, only after Gibraltar. These referendum results are puzzling when considering the similar economic position of residents and levels of ethnic diversity in the boroughs. According to demographic statistics, residents in these boroughs are much less well-off and live in areas much more ethnically diverse than the national average (see Geographical Focus section of chapter 4 below, pp86-95). The starkly different results across the two boroughs, therefore, do not meet the expectations laid out by quantitative findings, and the gap in which this project sits becomes clear. We need to go deeper than the research that already exists in order to work out what really happened in 2016 and to understand how two – on the face of it – similar areas could vote so differently.

What’s more, what we do know is based on (often) exclusionary data and research. The almost wholehearted focus of quantitative political science research into Brexit on the so-called ‘left behind’, which painted a picture of support for leave among older, white, working-class men in post-industrial areas of the UK, means that ethnic minority voters and migrants are largely ignored. Most migrants (aside from those with Irish or Commonwealth citizenship) were excluded from the vote itself. EU

migrants, whose legal and social status was on the line at the Brexit referendum, did not have a say in the matter and that is reflected in the very limited academic attention that has been paid to the attitudes and experiences of that heterogeneous group.

In the context of Brexit, such exclusionary rhetoric continues not only to silence the voices of ethnic minorities, women and non-binary people but also to devalue the identity of the working class in post-industrial areas, contributing to the narrative of the 'feckless poor' (Mckenzie, 2017a: 272). The anti-immigration discourse of the leave Campaign also had powerful and dangerous implications for the already excluded groups. The day that the UKIP-supported leave.EU campaign launched its infamous and explicitly racist Breaking Point billboard (Rogaly, 2019: 31), Labour MP Jo Cox was "killed by a white man shouting "Britain First!" (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 24); an unthinkable outcome of political campaigning. This fatal incident and numerous public displays of xenophobia following the leave vote (Emejulu, 2016) illustrate "how thin the 'veneer of civility' is and how easily it "can be peeled back to reveal the virulence of racism and xenophobia seething under the skin of British life"" (Wilson, 2016: 4).

We need to go deeper, not only because Londoners are left out of research due to the focus on the 'left behind' pattern in the rest of England, but also because the racialised nature of the 'left behind' explanation drew our attention to, generally, white, male, working-class voters and, in doing so, left out ethnic minority voters and attitudes of EU migrants. The focus on 'left behind' voters means huge swathes of the population, in particular those living in London, one of the most diverse cities in the world (BBC Radio 4, 2016), have been excluded, perpetuating the white, male-stream nature of social science research historically. If Brexit is "a moment when the stakes are particularly high for those same socioeconomic groups [historically excluded]" (Guerrina et al., 2018: 253) due to the limits on their ability to weather the post-Brexit economic storms (Mckenzie, 2017b), it is vital that these exclusionary narratives are challenged and research into the Brexit vote is made more inclusive.

Hence, for this PhD research, I set out to expand what we know about the vote. What started as a study of working-class voters in London evolved into a study encompassing people of all classes and

different nationalities, using qualitative methods and Bourdieu's theories of social class, to understand the attitudes of a diverse group of residents of two London boroughs, which voted differently at the referendum, and the ways in which various aspects of their identities intersected to determine their views. What's more, I focus on attitudes at the time of the Brexit *vote* and feelings towards the subsequent Brexit *process*, comparing then and now.

To bring greater depth to what we know about Brexit, I set out to use qualitative methods, at first inspired by ethnography and later drawing on participatory research. Whilst ethnographic methods have been used to study Brexit (for example, Evans, 2017; Miller, 2019; Anderson et al., 2019), there has not been a systematic account of voting behaviour at the referendum, with a particular focus on the aspects of identity central to this study and, as far as I can tell, participatory methods have not been used at all.

I collected data using a mixture of (very) semi-structured interviews and focus groups and used 'identity mapping' to get a sense of my participants' identities, in their own words and on their terms, as much as I could without the benefit of long-term engagement with them, as would be the case in ethnographic studies. The conversations were as participant-led as they could be while also touching on key issues like identity and Brexit. I also gathered demographic data prior to the interviews using a questionnaire, to protect against elite bias in my research. This shaped the sampling methods I used later on in my fieldwork, switching to in-person recruitment in Lambeth to broaden the largely white and entirely remain-supporting group of participants I had interviewed so far.

The inductive and cyclical research process that I followed allowed me to develop my research design throughout, giving me the opportunity to change track to meet my aims as much as I could and to represent the voices of my participants in this thesis. While my research did not meet participatory aims in, for example, community empowerment, I hope I have been able to go some way in expanding the Brexit literature by bringing to the fore accounts of real people's real experiences. The generic inductive approach in title alone sounds like something of a cop out, methodologically, but it meant I could develop my research as I went, broadening my inclusion criteria from those who were able to

vote at the referendum, to migrants, too, who have been almost completely left out of research on Brexit. It also means that my findings, at once, engage with and expand what we know about Brexit and the key issues on which individuals voted. I have tried to honestly present my research here, beginning with literature on which my research was initially informed, and showing through the empirical chapters the issues that came up for my participants and, therefore, the areas of research that could be expanded in relation to Brexit.

In order to understand my participants' attitudes towards Brexit, I turned to sociology, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, fields and the symbolic economy. This is expanded by using more recent readings of his work on gender (McCall, 1992; Reay, 1998, 2005, 2007; Skeggs, 1997, 2004a, 2004b) and on race (Wallace, 2017, 2018) and British sociological work on social class and changing class formations (Savage, 2003, 2010; Savage et al., 2015). These alternative readings allow for Bourdieu's theories to be better applied to the intersections of social class, gender and race, overcoming criticisms of his original theoretical work. Bourdieu's theories have been used widely in fields such as the sociology of education, but his concepts have scarcely been used to understand the Brexit vote: Sara Hobolt (2016), for example, broadly discusses 'human capital' in relation to the quantitative findings about the Brexit vote, but only Lisa McKenzie (2017) appears to have applied Bourdieu's concepts more systematically, convincingly drawing the link between cultural capital, exclusion from the symbolic marketplace and a vote to leave. My research also engages with the concept of 'fields' in relation to Brexit which I'm almost certain is yet to be done. By describing the two boroughs as such, it is possible to analyse how the histories of the two areas affected the symbolic value of residents' cultural capital, in turn affecting the way they voted in the Brexit referendum. As a result, my research makes a conceptual contribution, as well as an empirical one. By applying Bourdieu's framework to a new setting, it's possible to say more about the interaction between fields and cultural capital, bringing more nuance to the concepts. This is particularly the case in relation to 'citizenship'. I did not set out to understand how citizenship shaped attitudes but it came to be a central part of my research. I argue that citizenship, like race and gender, should be

viewed as a part of our embodied cultural capital. Only when it's understood as such can the hugely impactful nature of citizenship on attitudes towards the EU be considered intersectionally, and intertwined with class, race and gender. This also allows citizenship to be better understood outside the confines of its legal nature, as it is most commonly considered by scholars (Siklodi, 2020). The theoretical framework I use here, and develop throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, could be used widely in relation to political attitudes in the UK and across Europe, particularly in relation to understudied populations like migrants.

With that said, I'll begin the next chapter, chapter 2, by delving into existing research into Brexit. As mentioned above, the chapter tends to the socio-demographic and geographic explanations of the Brexit vote and I use those studies to illuminate the gaps that exist in what we know, in relation to attitudes of Londoners, specifically, and attitudes of oft-excluded groups like migrants and ethnic minority voters. While I have developed this chapter throughout the last four years, the research outlined reflects, largely, the early aims of the project, to more honestly show how the project developed. Rather than filling in gaps in my literature review during analysis, I wanted to show how the key issues for my participants, including their concerns about their children's citizenship or local gentrification, differed to the (highly gendered) issues of security, economy and immigration that were generally described in relation to Brexit (Galpin, 2021: 1). The most significant addition I made to the chapter relates to migrants' EU attitudes, which I chose to do when I expanded my inclusion criteria during fieldwork in the summer of 2021, so I could be informed as much as possible, based on what little we know, when going into my interviews.

Next, in chapter 3, I describe my theoretical framework, starting with Bourdieu's concepts and expanding his original work to take into consideration the intersections of class, race and gender. In particular, I describe McKenzie's ideas around exclusion and a vote to leave to operationalise Bourdieu's concepts in relation to Brexit. Again, these were the initial goals of my research, so I tend to the theoretical implications of including citizenship throughout my empirical chapters instead (and argue for citizenship to be considered as part of our embodied cultural capital; Bourdieu did not

theorise about citizenship specifically). I also describe the intersectional aims of the project, based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's original definition and work that has used an intersectional framework. What follows is an account of my research design. I begin by describing, in detail, the generic inductive approach that I followed throughout this research and my intentions for inclusivity and participant-led research. I also describe the methods I used – identity mapping, interviews, and focus groups – in practice and in theory.

Three empirical chapters follow my research design. Each of these chapters centres on a key issue that arose in relation to discussions of Brexit with my participants. The inductive nature of my research allowed me to put my participants' views and experiences first, allowing what was important to *them* to define the structure, rather than the shape and importance of my findings being dictated by existing literature. I begin each chapter with a consideration of the relevant literature – whether that was a focus of my literature review or not – and situate the topic within what we know about the so-called 'left behind'. Starting with these most basic building blocks allowed me to consider where my research fits existing patterns and, on the flip side, where so clearly the gaps exist and where the assumptions of the existing literature limit our understanding of the vote.

The first of these chapters, chapter 4, examines the inescapable topic of immigration in relation to my participants' Brexit attitudes. While some class-related explanations fit, as did the importance of *recent* immigration, I show how, in fact, proximity to the welfare state allowed people to see through the leave campaign's welfare tourism and anti-immigration rhetoric. I also draw out local dynamics to bring greater context to the impact of recent immigration, such as changing dominance of traditional majority social groups shifts, leading to exclusion and a vote to leave. It is in this chapter that citizenship – and EU citizenship in particular – comes to the fore and is so definitively related to a vote to remain. Hence, in this chapter I begin to make the case for citizenship as embodied cultural capital.

The second key issue that was brought up in relation to Brexit among my participants, which will be the focus of chapter 5, was politicians – and, crucially, a lack of trust in or disillusionment with politicians. Distance in terms of their perceived social values, or a lack of trust that politicians would

support participants financially was related to a vote to leave. This largely, in fact, backs up existing literature which pays lip service to the importance of a lack of trust in the leave vote. What this chapter does, however, is highlight the nuance between participants who are, on paper, not dissimilar but, in reality, voted in very different ways at the referendum. It also tells the participants' stories in their own words, bringing to light the real-life impacts of cuts to public spending over recent decades. Not everyone voted at the EU referendum on the basis of issues related to the EU (the second-order nature of European issues is long-established) but the unexpected and absurd issues that were related highlight the advantages of participant-led qualitative research; in no literature on the so-called 'left behind' is there a reference to the 'smoking beagles', but that 1970s animal rights campaign did, too, shape one participant's Brexit attitude.

The third and final empirical chapter of this thesis, chapter 6, investigates participants' anxiety and uncertainty of all kinds; economic, cultural, social, and legal. This chapter importantly creates space for the emotions and visceral reactions of voters and non-voters around the EU referendum. Brexit was so divisive and emotive but existing literature, given its quant-heavy nature, tends to keep such human reactions at arm's length and, instead, focuses on cold, hard variables. It becomes clear, in this chapter, that economic anxiety most certainly played a role, supporting existing patterns in the literature, but that cultural anxiety was predominant and ultimately shaped attitudes. In drawing out this pattern, I show how recent gentrification of different London boroughs had similar effects to recent immigration in creating anxiety around social dominance and, in turn, exclusion and support for leave. In this chapter, I also bring to the fore accounts of EU migrants' uncertainty over their legal and social standing post-Brexit, one way in which Brexit is still felt viscerally six years after the vote. I thereby show how, again, EU citizenship undermines existing class-related explanations of the Brexit vote.

I conclude this thesis by reflecting on the literature and theoretical assumptions on which my research is based. Ultimately, I make the case for more inclusive and expansive research into Brexit and political attitudes more widely, from a sampling inclusion criteria perspective and a theoretical

perspective. Doing so would ensure that research considers the views of the population more fully and would mean that the theory on which research is based allows space for those oft-excluded voices to be heard.

With that said, I will next introduce the literature that paved the way for this research in the first place.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: WHAT DETERMINED ATTITUDES TO BREXIT?

In this chapter I outline the key literature related to Brexit attitudes and highlight the gaps that exist in our knowledge. I describe the (mostly quantitative) literature on voting behaviour at the Brexit referendum and delve into the (limited) research into Brexit attitudes in London to provide a base from which to consider the Brexit attitudes of my participants.

The determinants of attitudes generally fall into the following groups: geographic, socio-demographic, and identity-related explanations. *Geographically*, it is said that the vote for Brexit was made in England (and to a lesser extent, Wales), with Scotland and Northern Ireland – and London – generally viewing the EU in a more positive light (although research into London is inadequate). Support for Brexit was also higher in areas that have *recently* experienced high levels of migration. *Socio-demographically*, people with lower skill levels and older people more commonly voted for Brexit. Often, a combination of these socio-demographic and geographical factors is found to be jointly impactful, and come together in the so-called ‘left behind’ explanation of the Brexit vote.

This rhetoric, however, centres white, working-class men from post-industrial parts of England as the motor behind Britain’s decision to leave the EU, in reaction to feelings of alienation from the political system and to ‘mass’ immigration. The so-called ‘left behind’ rhetoric became closely intertwined with discussions of Brexit in the media and academia alike and is couched in the mis-representation of the working class in the British imagination. Ultimately, this has limited our understanding of the Brexit vote, leading to the exclusion of ethnic minority voters and migrants, and stops well short of a full understanding of the impact of social class on Brexit attitudes. To highlight the gaps that do exist in academic work on Brexit, I describe the very little we *do* know about ethnicity and the Brexit vote, about migrants and the Brexit vote and about class and the European question. I also outline the academic work on race and Brexit that draws a line between empire, UK immigration policy through the years, anti-immigration attitudes and the vote to leave the EU. By drawing on the work of Critical Race scholars, I highlight how *English* racism, in particular, was a current running beneath the Brexit vote.

The first iterations of this literature review considered only the socio-demographic, geographic, national identity- and immigration-related explanations of the Brexit vote, and delved deeply into relationships between ethnicity, social class and voting behaviour in general, to bolster the limited research available into these aspects of identity and Brexit. Over time, I added a section on London and the Brexit vote, given how it stands out as a (generally) remain-supporting bloc in a (generally) leave-supporting England. I also looked more deeply into the so-called 'left behind' rhetoric (and critiques of it) and work on racism and Brexit. This research in particular, and learning from these scholars, has helped me to consider the relationships between social class, race and the Brexit vote through a more critical lens during my analysis, in order to move away from quantitative explanations that sometimes take simple correlations between identity-related factors and the leave vote at face value.

In this chapter I highlight that there is a significant *lack* of understanding of the relationships between race, migrant identity and social class and the Brexit vote, and of Brexit attitudes in London more generally. Crucially, people of colour and migrants are largely missing from analyses of Brexit. Lip service is paid in the academic literature to data that suggests around two-thirds of people from an ethnic minority background voted to remain. However, explanations for the ethnic minority remain vote are few and far between and surface-level where they do exist, while ethnic minority leave voters are left out of the discussion almost entirely. The vast majority of migrants were unable to vote at the Brexit referendum due to exclusionary voting eligibility requirements, and this theme continues into academic research following the vote. Some have (helpfully) considered the effects of Brexit on the lives of migrants in the UK, given how impactful the vote was on these groups' lives. However, this research by no means received the same attention that the mainstream, quantitative analyses of the Brexit vote did. The leave campaign was highly gendered – as is the rhetoric around the 'left behind' – but we have a limited understanding of the impact of gender on Brexit attitudes. Social class is discussed in relation to the 'left behind', but mostly in terms that devalue working-class identities. Finally, London is described in the literature as a homogenous, remain-voting bloc. This, however, leaves out of the

equation London's leave voters, and limits our understanding of the (multitude of) reasons behind London remain-voters' decisions.

2.1. GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Across aggregate- and individual-level research, key themes came to the fore in the literature on the Brexit vote. Support for Brexit was high amongst so-called 'left behind' voters, with age and, to a lesser extent, education-level both playing a significant role. Geographical location also mattered, in part explained by local levels of recent migration and post-industrialism. Research into attitudes in London is very limited, however; Londoners' attitudes are generally an exception to English Euroscepticism, and more similar to Scottish voters, who tend to feel more positively towards the EU.

2.1.1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *RECENT* LEVELS OF MIGRATION

Initial research did not bring about a clear picture of the relationship between ethnic diversity, migration levels and attitudes to Brexit. What was clear, however, was that support for Brexit was higher in predominantly white areas and areas with high levels of specifically *recent* immigration (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017). At the same time, however, research showed that "places with large non-white populations tended to be somewhat less likely to vote leave" (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 329). The latter finding broadly defines the Brexit vote in London with its almost unanimous remain vote and high levels of ethnic diversity in comparison to the rest of the UK (ONS, 2018). As further research was carried out, the tangled relationship between levels of migration to an area and longer-term levels of ethnic diversity was teased apart. We learned that low levels of *EU migration* appear correlated with a vote to leave (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a). South Staffordshire, for example, has "one of the lowest levels of EU migration in the country, with less than 1 per cent of the population born in mainland Europe" (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 329) but a leave vote of almost 65 per cent. Later individual-level research backed this up: "areas with relatively high levels of EU migration tended to be more pro-remain" (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b).

Levels of *recent* migration, however, complicate the picture. Sudden demographic change is associated with a vote to leave (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017), providing some clarity to the contradictory conclusions of initial research. Boston in Lincolnshire, which “experienced a particularly high rate of change in the period prior to the 2016 referendum and subsequently went on to deliver the highest vote for Brexit in the entire country, of slightly more than 75%” (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017: 454), exemplifies this. Goodwin and Heath, similarly, found that areas which had experienced an influx of migration in the ten years prior to the referendum were often pro-leave (2016a; 2016b). This migration may not be linked at all to the ethnic diversity of a place if those who do settle there are largely white Europeans. However, the relationship with race is highly complex given how these migrants have been racialised and re-racialised by political actors over time (see section 2.3.2, pp34-46).

With so much attention paid to immigration in analyses of Brexit, immigration quickly became “a – if not the – decisive factor behind the leave vote” (Favell and Barbulesca, 2018: 119). However, as will become clear throughout this chapter, and like much of the political science literature on Brexit, the focus of research on the issue of immigration alone took attention away from what lay beneath it. It played into tropes about the so-called ‘left behind’, the white working-class voters who became the face of the leave vote. We seemingly know *so much* about the relationship between anti-immigration attitudes and the leave vote but these academic “interpretations and statistical constructions bear some responsibility for confirming rather than contesting the misrepresentations that drove the leave vote” (Favell and Barbulesca, 2018: 120).

Aside from migration levels, pro-Brexit attitudes were significantly more common in post-industrial areas of England; “it was in England outside London where the decision to leave the E.U. was made” (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016: 4). The leave vote was strongest in “the regions that prospered during the industrial revolution in manufacturing and declined due to globalisation” (2016: 4). Post-industrial areas like Durham, Staffordshire and Lincolnshire, which played a central role in the industrial revolution but have declined over the past century “relative to London and the South East” (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016: 4), all saw high leave votes of over 60%. This finding is supported at the individual-level: “voters

tended to vote according to social locality...illustrated through the tendency of eastern England to vote leave, while south-central England [and seven of Britain's largest cities] voted to remain" (Manners, 2018: 1216). The relationship between post-industrialism and support for Brexit is said to arise from the marginalisation of people with lower skill levels being entrenched by a lack of opportunity, synonymous with post-industrial areas (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). It's important to note that while the post-industrial explanation carries weight in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland do not fit the same pattern. Scotland, "which prospered during the industrial revolution...voted for the remain side, and voters in Northern Ireland, where the industrial revolution transformed the city of Belfast, also voted to remain" (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016: 4). No doubt, the SNP played a role in the Scottish remain vote, linking independence to EU membership (Greene et al., 2018), while avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is said to have drawn at least some voters towards remain in the former (Garry, 2018).

2.1.2. LONDON AS AN EXCEPTION

With the England-wide patterns addressed, I'll now turn to the Brexit vote in London itself. It must be noted, before this literature is addressed that where 'London' does come into research on Brexit, it is generally in analyses of the *City of London*, the UK's financial centre, how the City's lobbying power shifted through the Brexit period (James and Quaglia, 2019) and how it needs to adapt to post-Brexit UK-EU relations (Talani, 2018). There is very limited data available on Londoners' attitudes and much of what we know is based on London-wide rather than local patterns. Whilst this provides us a broad picture of Londoners' attitudes, there is huge variation across the city and across each borough.

This section will, therefore, outline what we *do* know about the Brexit vote in London, generally, and attitudes towards the EU over time. We know that the vote to leave was made in England, outside of London (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016: 4), and that Londoners were more likely to vote to remain in the EU (Henderson et al., 2016). We also know that ethnic minority voters overwhelmingly voted to remain (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a) and that many parts of London are significantly more diverse than the rest

of the country (ONS, 2018). We don't, however, know much about the intricacies of the vote in London. The vote in London is much more complex than is currently given space to explain in the literature and, by outlining what we know here, the gaps which this project attempts to fill become clear.

2.1.2.1. LONDONERS' ATTITUDES OVER TIME

It appears that London is an exception when it comes to EU attitudes in England – and voting patterns and attitudes are much more similar to those found in Scotland. This has been the case for decades. At the first European referendum in 1975, 68.7 per cent of English voters voted “Yes”, when asked whether the UK should remain part of the European Economic Community, the highest of the four nations of the UK (EEC) (Henderson et al., 2016: 190). Interestingly, while the highest “Yes” vote was seen in the South East of England, London was “something of a less enthusiastic exception” (Henderson et al., 2016: 190), alongside Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Since 1975, that pattern has flipped: data from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey from 1993 to 2014 shows that “London [now] generally displays the least Eurosceptic attitudes” (Henderson et al., 2016: 193), compared to other English regions. Even when a majority of Londoners held Eurosceptic attitudes (in 2013, 60 per cent of Londoners stated a preference to ‘leave EU’ and ‘reduce EU’s powers’), London still displayed lowest levels of Euroscepticism seen across the country at the time (Henderson et al., 2016: 196) (70 per cent of Southerners appeared to hold Eurosceptic attitudes, as did 67 per cent of respondents in the Midlands, and 62 per cent of Northerners (Henderson et al., 2016: 196)).

There has, of course, been variation in attitudes since the 1975 referendum. In fact, in 1993, the proportion of BSA respondents in the North and the Midlands who held Eurosceptic views was lower than that in London, if only by one per cent (36 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively) (Table 5, Henderson et al., 2016: 196). Generally, however, during periods of significant change in EU attitudes, for example, throughout the 1990s and early 2010s, “England – with the partial exception of London – [has been] relatively homogenous [and Eurosceptic]” (Henderson et al., 2016: 193).

The Future of England Survey (FoES), carried out nine times between 2011 and 2019, considers England's national identity and attitudes towards various constitutional matters including the United Kingdom and the European Union (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2021: 4). From the outset, FoES reports argued that London is set apart from the rest of England, given its position as a 'highly cosmopolitan' city and its 'compositional differences'; "London contains more of those individuals that, by race, migration, and age, are less likely to describe themselves as English" (Henderson and Wyn Jones, 2022: 46). London's distinctiveness "raises obvious questions about the coherence of England as a political community" (Wyn Jones et al., 2012: 5) and London is consistently found to be an exception in terms of national identity, where "Englishness was notably weaker than elsewhere and Britishness rather stronger" (Wyn Jones et al., 2013: 6). The 2014 survey found that, linked to differences in national identity, Londoners "are markedly less sceptical than the average English view on the European Union" (Jeffery et al., 2014: 21).

The 2014 iteration of the FoES also offers a more recent source of regional data on Euroscepticism, as the survey included respondents from across the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, rather than England alone. Here, it becomes clear that London is not only an exception to patterns of Euroscepticism in England but is more similar to Scotland in terms of general attitudes to the EU. As Henderson et al. explain, "opinion varied very little by English region...excepting London, which was more positive (and closer to Scottish levels) on EU membership" (Henderson et al., 2016: 193). London is also more similar to Scotland in terms of the (lack of) support for Eurosceptic parties over the years (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 331). Table 1 below, adapted from Henderson et al. (2016), highlights some of the key regional differences in attitudes to the EU. Interestingly, the authors argue that "nothing in these data suggests that England is politically divided by territory—say, North versus South [and only] London shows a consistently distinctive pattern" (Henderson et al., 2016: 194). While this FoES data is useful to gauge London attitudes prior to the referendum, more recent reports on the survey do not comment on London and different questions are asked each time, limiting our ability to compare attitudes towards the EU longitudinally.

Table 1. Regional differences in EU attitudes								
	Scotland	Wales	England					
	% Agree	% Agree	All England	North	Midlands	East	London	South
			% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree
As an island Britain has less reason to belong to the EU than other countries	30	38	39	39	43	43	29	38
Britain has a great deal in common with the cultures and peoples of other EU countries	34	29	30	28	31	27	33	29
British people benefit greatly from being able to live and work in other EU countries	52	40	43	41	41	39	49	44
The EU helps to promote freedom and democracy across Europe	45	36	39	35	36	39	46	40
According to the Future of England Survey (2014) and adapted from Henderson et al. (2016: 195)								

2.1.2.2. THE BREXIT VOTE IN LONDON

At the Brexit referendum, Londoners voted generally in line with pro-EU London trends from the 1990s onwards: 59.9 per cent of voters supported remain at the referendum (Electoral Commission, 2019). London also remained an exception to England-wide trends, and more similar to Scotland in its support for EU membership; “Only in Scotland, Northern Ireland and London did the leave vote fail to surpass 50 per cent” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 323). What’s more is that seven of the ten boroughs across the UK with the highest remain vote were in London (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 325), including

Lambeth, which saw the highest remain vote only after, not surprisingly, Gibraltar. However, turnout in London was about two per cent lower than the average across England (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 326).

Given the generally remain-leaning nature of London, it is not surprising that the only two London-based opinion polls published on *What UK Thinks* also highlight Londoners' generally pro-EU attitudes. As Table 2 shows, just before the 2016 referendum, almost twice as many Londoners thought EU membership had been good for London than those who thought it had been bad. In 2017, when asked whether, in hindsight, Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the European Union, more than half of the respondents (53 per cent) thought the decision to leave was wrong (What UK Thinks, 2017).

Table 2. 'Do you think being part of the EU has been good or bad for London' (London views) (%)	
Very good	21
Fairly good	25
Good (total)	46
Neither good nor bad	17
Fairly bad	13
Very bad	10
Bad (total)	26
According to YouGov poll, 06 June 2016 (What UK Thinks, 2016)	

When it comes to the 'left behind' pattern of voting, even Goodwin and Heath – it was Goodwin who helped coin the term – agree that, whilst a correlation between age, education levels and a leave vote exists, “the pattern in London and Scotland may have been somewhat different” (2016a: 327). Their analysis, however, continues to focus on the leave vote outside of London, rather than digging into the different factors contributing to the vote in London. London comes up only once again in Goodwin and Heath's analysis in relation to the ethnic diversity of a place, where it is suggested that the vast majority of places with 'the largest non-white population' were in London and voted remain but that, outside of London, ethnic diversity did not affect the referendum results (2016a: 329). Aside from the fact that this analysis groups all ethnic minorities together, framing them as what they are *not*, i.e., white, and

at the same time excludes all white ethnic minority voters, the authors do highlight that no further analysis can be made based on the aggregate-level data they use. The quantitative analysis they make and the short conclusions they draw to explain their results are insufficient to help us understand the Brexit vote in London.

This section shows, not least in its short-ness, that we do not have a clear idea about the determinants of attitudes to Brexit in London. The literature that does discuss London lacks depth, in terms of the regional measures used and the analysis of the pro-EU attitudes of residents, and skims over the 'left behind'-related variables and the effects of ethnic diversity and migrant identity and/ or experience on the vote. All of this creates a vacuum in what we know and excludes people of colour and migrants in discourse around Brexit, in doing so furthering the white, male-stream traditions of social science research.

2.2. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS: RACE, CLASS AND THE 'LEFT BEHIND'

...Or, how racialised notions of the working class made the 'left behind' a key constituent part of rhetoric around Brexit, if not a key constituent part of the vote to leave itself.

On top of geographical explanations of the Brexit vote, socio-demographic factors were also used to explain the varying levels of support for leave and remain across the UK. These quantitative findings relating the Brexit vote to skill level and age were conflated with social class measures, resulting in the so-called 'left behind' rhetoric. I begin this section with a discussion of the messaging around a racialised working class and how this fed the 'left behind' explanation of the leave vote. A discussion of the quantitative findings that fed this rhetoric follows.

2.2.1. THE WORKING CLASS HAS BEEN (MIS)REPRESENTED AS WHITE IN THE BRITISH IMAGINATION

As Mondon and Winter summarise, "the so-called 'working class' is usually painted as the socio-economically and politically disenfranchised and alienated, but also as essentially white and indigenous" (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 512). Such claims are apparent in political discourse from across the spectrum in the years leading up to and during the Brexit campaign. Events like Labour MP

Emily Thornberry ‘snobbishly’ posting a photo of a St George Flag-flying house in Rochester, with a white van outside, which later led to her resignation from Labour’s shadow cabinet (BBC News, 2014), no doubt bolstered Farage’s repeated claims that Brexit was a revolt of the working classes against a “contemptuous elite who fails to represent them” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 512).

Outside of their exploitation by some politicians for political gain, it is important to note that there is no doubt that the working classes in Britain *are* facing increasing inequality, due to processes and events like de-industrialisation, the economic crisis of the late 2000s and neo-liberalism (the economic and then political trend rocket-boasted in the UK by Margaret Thatcher, which pushes free-market economics (Gamble, 2001), the fall-out of which has been increasing privatisation, individualisation and austerity). Of course, this is all being exacerbated now, in early 2023, in the face of increasing fuel prices and the rising cost of living in the UK for which headlines and research abound (see, for example, Harari et al. (2022) and Quach (2022)). It’s important to note, however, that in this context working-class people of colour face even greater political disenfranchisement and inequality. Working-class women of colour, who felt the impact of austerity so acutely (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018), exemplify this.

In spite of these intersectional impacts, we have seen the development of a ‘post-race’ narrative in UK discourse, which “allows for the discursive displacement of whiteness in a position where it has lost its historical power...and appears thus in decline, vulnerable and subject to victimisation by others” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 512). In part at least, the post-race narrative has been fed by government policy over time. Just as immigration policy post-Second World War sought to delineate the white British subject and the racialised immigrant ‘other’ (see section 2.3.2, pp34-46), the working class was kept white post-WW2 as Black labour “was alien per se – and automatically excluded from integration into a racist white working class” (Sivanandan, 2008: 71), as Britain imported workers from its colonies and ex-colonies, not to benefit those new migrants who had been born into the British Empire, but the British economy.

As such, the working class has come to be mis-represented as white in the British imagination, through political and media discourses. At the same time, the white working class came to be seen (by some

white elites) as the victims of anti-racism, an idea that is often accompanied by “justifications of alleged working-class concerns about immigration” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 513). This elite-level discourse was disguised, however, as racism was normalised and mainstreamed “in both discourse and practice by portraying it as a popular demand” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 522).

2.2.2. BREXIT, THEN, SAT IN THIS CONCEPTION OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Brexit campaign was run by “figureheads from [white] elite and establishment backgrounds” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 516) who only discussed a white working class. Even though pro-Brexit elites were placing themselves as those willing to stand up for the working classes (echoed by Theresa May when in her first speech as Prime Minister set out to help the ‘Just About Managings’ (Parkinson, 2016)), it was, in fact, “whiteness, national identification and indigenous status that was at stake as opposed to socio-economic status or class” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 516). Meghji, in fact, points out how white elites like Boris Johnson pushed these class-based discourses alongside racialised notions of the working class, “directly [evoking] the concept of indigeneity when he criticized how the EU’s policy of ‘open borders’ marginalized British workers” (2020: 8).

Brexit was also a gendered campaign. As Galpin explains, we can see “the presence of hegemonic masculinity in the 2016 leave campaigns” (2022: 301), through, for example, militaristic discourses that discreetly glorify war. Such language is itself “classed, raced and embedded in European colonial histories” (Galpin, 2022: 305), as such binaries rest on the “juxtaposition of ‘rational man/ irrational woman’...[and] are, in the British context, associated with the upper-class ‘English gentleman’” (Galpin, 2022: 302). It’s important to note that, like the racialised discourses that pushed anti-immigrant sentiment in Britain, it was not just the political right or the leave campaign perpetuating the gendered, racialised and classed claims that set the ‘left behind’ narrative at the front and centre of Brexit Britain. Like the left’s post-colonial amnesia, the remain campaign (while eschewing “the most militaristic metaphors of the leave campaigns (Galpin, 2022: 302)) reproduced gendered binaries all the same. Similarly, the ‘left behind’ narrative was pushed by politicians and academics on the left and right of

the political spectrum. With that in mind, we see how the racialised, gendered and classed pieces of the puzzle were put together and the 'left behind' narrative – explaining the Brexit vote as a revolt of white, working-class men – became so definitive. It is this set of ideas I hoped to challenge and unpack through this research, to gain a more inclusive idea of the intersectional impact of social class, race and gender on Brexit attitudes.

2.2.3. RESEARCH INTO THE SO-CALLED 'LEFT BEHIND'

That the post-industrial explanation does not sufficiently explain UK-wide Brexit attitudes (see p31) did not stop “political pundits, followed by political scientists, [identifying] the leave vote with white working-class voters in Northern England, popularly termed the “left behind” by globalization” (Manners, 2018: 1215). The 'left behind' has become almost synonymous with the leave vote in common discourse, particularly in relation to voters in post-industrial areas of the UK, such as the ex-mining areas of the Northeast (Anderson and Wilson, 2018) and Nottinghamshire (Mckenzie, 2017b). The relationship between the 'left behind' voter and support for Brexit has also received a great deal of airtime in studies employing socio-demographic variables, explaining the vote to leave as pushback from those not benefitting from European trade liberalisation. Trade liberalisation generally “favours citizens with higher levels of human capital (education and occupational skills)” (Hobolt, 2016: 1264). Hence, the 'winners of globalisation' – the young, well-educated professionals in urban centres – have historically been more supportive of European integration, whilst the 'left behind' have opposed more openness and are, stereotypically, working class, less educated and older (Hobolt, 2016: 1265).

Age (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Henderson et al., 2017) and education (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b) are key in determining whether one will benefit from globalisation, leading to “stark demographic divides” (Hobolt, 2016: 1260) amongst leave and remain voters. A “50 year old is 10 percentage points more likely to support Brexit compared to a 33 year old voter” (Hobolt, 2016: 1269) and, in fact, Henderson et al. (2017) found age to be the *only* significant socio-demographic factor in explaining the Brexit vote.

Over three times as many people with no qualifications voted to leave the EU than those with a postgraduate degree (Hobolt, 2016) as those with low education or skills levels “might find it harder to grasp the opportunities from globalization in the form of EU membership and at the same time suffer most from the challenges posed by globalization” (Becker et al., 2017: 15). Becker et al. (2017) bring nuance to this variable by explaining the effect of changing education levels in an area over time; an increase in the share of the baseline population with no qualifications between 2001 and 2011 is “associated with a higher Vote leave share” (2017: 23). Social divisions related to age and education also exist in Scotland, however, “voters in Scotland were more likely to vote to remain irrespective of their social background” (Curtice, 2016b). Interestingly, while education levels are apparently so closely entwined with Brexit attitudes, the same cannot be said for knowledge of the EU, specifically: Leave and Remain voters are almost equally ignorant about the EU (Carl et al., 2019b).

It follows that low household income and unemployment are also associated with a vote to leave (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). Support for Brexit amongst those out of work and with an annual household income of less than £20,000 was almost double that of households with an income of over £60,000. An individual’s *perception* of their financial situation also mattered; “people who thought that their household’s financial situation had got a lot worse over the previous 12 months were somewhat more likely to support Brexit” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). This suggests a link between economic precarity and a vote to leave (although this has not been explored in detail).

Finally, white, male-ness is often associated with the ‘left behind’ voter (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Manners, 2018), while older women were less like to support UKIP as they generally “felt less strongly about the EU as an issue” (Shorrocks, 2022: 52) (a finding that my research goes a long way in repudiating), and young women were ‘particularly unlikely’ to support leave at the Brexit referendum. Importantly, it is these modifiers (‘white’, seemingly always, and ‘cis-gender male’, nearly always), which are often-implicit but rarely stated outright in common discourse, and synonymous with explanations of the working-class Brexit vote (Emejulu, 2016; O’Dwyer, 2018: 22). This, however, is problematic in a number of ways. The oft-unsaid ‘white’ and ‘cis-gender male’ modifiers exacerbate

the historical 'malestream' nature of politics (Guerrina et al., 2018), silencing the voices of minorities, notably, people of colour and women. In reality, very little research has been carried out into the relationship between ethnicity and the Brexit vote; where ethnicity is included, it is one of many socio-demographic variables. Research into Brexit appears to follow the same exclusionary lines as the "male dominated, and overwhelmingly white" referendum campaign (O'Dwyer, 2018: 18) and, as a result, the "pervasive 'methodological whiteness' has distorted social scientific accounts of...Brexit" (Bhambra, 2017: 214). The "working class in this country are not all white" (Eddo-Lodge, 2017: 194) and the common association of the Brexit vote with white, male, working-class voters means that we do not have a clear idea about the relationship between ethnicity and the Brexit vote.

2.2.4. ETHNIC MINORITY VOTERS AND BREXIT

Outside of mainstream political science research into Brexit, we can piece together some findings about ethnicity and the Brexit vote, helping to lay the groundwork for a more inclusive understanding of Brexit attitudes. Ethnicity is not a synonym for race (see further discussions on p52 and p108) and there are, inherently, limits to how useful the below can be when researching race but it does help to build up what research is available into Brexit outside of that which focuses on exclusionary variable and the so-called 'left behind'.

Khan and Sveinsson's study is a rare example of research into ethnicity and the European question (2015). Framed in terms of *interest in*, rather than *attitudes towards*, it appears that ethnic minority voters "tend to be much less interested in the European question than are the white British" (Khan and Sveinsson, 2015: 7). However, a crucial qualification follows, that this "tells us more about the kind of white people who are exercised about Europe than it does about minorities" (Khan and Sveinsson, 2015: 7).

In terms of Brexit, we know that the vast majority of ethnic minority voters voted to remain (Bhambra, 2017: 217), making ethnicity a significant socio-demographic factor in explaining the Brexit vote. It is reported that "75% of voters of colour opted to remain in the EU" (Emejulu, 2016) but that different

rates of support were found across different ethnic minority groups (House of Commons Library, 2016). A simple explanation for this is “that immigration became an issue of contention during the referendum campaign” (House of Commons Library, 2016) and ethnic minority voters were more likely to hold positive views towards immigration: “One factor that differentiated ethnic minority remain voters from their white equivalents was the strength of their reaction to what they saw as the xenophobic and anti-immigrant tone of the leave campaigns” (Begum, 2018). A similar finding relates to the ‘nostalgia for empire’ central to the votes of many ‘Affluent Eurosceptics’, a significant bloc of leave voters (Nurse and Sykes, 2019: 594); that nostalgia for empire “which worked so well in other quarters seemed to have a dragging effect with ethnic minority voters” (Nurse and Sykes, 2019: 594).

Having said this, it’s also important to note that a minority of ethnic minority voters *did* vote to leave. Crucially, there is “important heterogeneity in levels of support for Brexit..., with those of Indian ethnicity reporting the highest levels [of support for leave], and those of black African ethnicity the lowest” (Martin et al., 2019: 29). Since the referendum, it has been suggested that the “strength of Euroscepticism within the British South Asian population was perhaps stronger than previously anticipated” (Ehsan, 2017). This is based on constituency- and ward-level data that shows that a number of areas with large South Asian populations, especially in West London, saw higher proportions of leave vote. While Ealing and Hounslow boroughs both saw remain votes overall, areas with high proportions of non-white ethnic minority voters only *just* voted to remain, compared to white, prosperous wards which voted almost 70% to remain. Given the links here between ethnic diversity and economic position, it’s possible that race and social class intersected in their impact on Brexit attitudes.

In one of the very few pieces of research on the ethnic minority leave vote, Martin et al. find important intersections between ethnicity, migrant status, age and education levels (2019). In terms of migrant identity, those born abroad, or first-generation migrants, “were more likely to support leave than those born in the UK” (Martin et al., 2019: 29). Mirroring statistics for white voters, older people and less educated people from an ethnic minority background were also more likely to support leave. Martin et

al. (2019) make two important conclusions based on their findings. First, ethnic minority voters were divided on similar lines to majority white voters. Second, there is a 'clear parallel' between the leave votes of ethnic minority groups and the so-called 'left behind'. The 'left behind' are said to have voted leave in reaction to their position as the 'losers' of globalisation, while "for minorities, the different treatment of migrants from the EU, combined with promises of better treatment of Commonwealth countries, offered a similar group-based reason to support Brexit" (Martin et al., 2019: 29). These grievances of ethnic minority leave voters fit, also, with the trends of xenophobia directed at Central and Eastern European migrants after the registration requirements were removed in the early to mid 2010s (see section 2.3.2.7 on p39 below).

It may seem surprising that some ethnic minority voters supported leave in light of the, if not racist, then overtly xenophobic grounding of the leave campaign. However, with "targeted messages to ethnic minority groups and distance from the more exclusionary leave.EU campaign, Vote leave succeeded among some voters in escaping the association with racism that makes the Conservative Party unattractive to many minority voters" (Martin et al., 2019: 30). One example of this targeted campaign is the association built between Vote leave's 'Save Our Curry Houses' campaign and the Bangladesh Caterers Association. The latter were approached by Vote leave leaders, including Priti Patel and Boris Johnson, and told that "if [they] were to support the leave campaign, [the Conservative government] would ensure [they] were able to get more chefs from south Asia by relaxing immigration rules with lower salary thresholds to hire staff from outside the EU" (Khan, 2019). These promises have, of course, not been met, as the across-the-board minimum salary of the post-Brexit points-based immigration system shows.

While we have *some* idea about which ethnic minority groups tended to vote leave and why, critically, ethnicity is more complex than has been generally allowed for in the existing literature and ethnic minority voters have largely been left out of research into Brexit. The overlap between ethnicity and migrant status (Martin et al., 2019: 6) makes the picture all the more complex. Voters from an ethnic minority background may have lived in the UK all their lives or moved to the UK as children or adults.

Others may be Commonwealth citizens, with different voting rights to non-Commonwealth citizens. After all, Commonwealth and Irish citizens were the only groups without British citizenship able to vote at the 2016 referendum (BBC News, 2016b). More research is needed to ensure that our understanding of the determinants of attitudes to Brexit is inclusionary and complete.

2.2.5. MIGRANTS AND BREXIT

Given the focus of the 'left behind' rhetoric on the white, working-class leave voter, it is not surprising that migrants' voices and perspectives were also largely excluded from public debates about Brexit (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 1) and migrants' "responses to Brexit and their experiences of negotiating everyday life...have largely been discussed outside formal political or policy channels" (Botterill et al., 2019: 1). While this may result from the strict voting eligibility criteria, that allowed only British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens to vote in the referendum, the vast majority of migrants were excluded from the Brexit process from the beginning. It is this group which continues to face uncertainties due to the vote to leave, as the government continues to adapt EU legislation on issues like trade with and travel to the EU, which it admits "may affect your business, family, or personal circumstances" (UK Government, 2022a). Such "experiences of hostility and ambiguity over rights and entitlements have longer histories and impact on modes of belonging, meanings of home and future mobilities" (Botterill et al., 2019: 1).

While this literature is limited in size, the generally negative impact Brexit has had on migrants is clear. Overall, Brexit can be seen as a process of 'unsettling'; European migrants who had settled, and felt settled, in the UK, felt like 'outsiders' after the Brexit vote (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 7) with Brexit presenting a particular 'rupture' (Zontini and Però, 2019) or "political earthquake" (Lulle et al., 2018: 5) for this group, difficult for anyone who hasn't been through such an unsettling event to understand fully (Zontini and Però, 2019: 96). Polish migrants reported feeling shocked, anxious and uncertain about the Brexit vote (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 71). European migrants felt the emotional impact of Brexit due to the uncertainty it created over their rights and social standing (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019:

6). Decisions surrounding applications for settled status resulted in “emotional stress and anxiety” (Zontini and Però, 2019: 95), due to time and financial constraints but also due to the questions Brexit raised about life in the UK and ‘now-disappearing’ multiculturalism. Emotional stress and anxiety was particularly felt by EU migrant parents (Zontini and Però, 2019). Brexit presented particular uncertainty for EU migrant parents due to the severe lack of clarity that existed around children’s’ rights under the UK’s post-Brexit ‘settled status’ policy (Zontini and Però, 2019: 101).

Migrants are not a homogenous group and have variegated experiences due “to the diverse intersectionalities and geographies of experience between different generations of migrants” (Botterill et al., 2019: 3) and different intersections of ethnicity, race, class and family status (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 7). Migrants’ experiences are also continually re-drawn as inclusion and exclusion shift due to unsettling events like Brexit (Zontini and Però, 2019: 101), and migrants are racialised and re-racialised (Fox et al., 2012) based on political and media elite discourse. The migrant/ race/ social class intersection is highlighted by Rzepnikowska’s findings about migrants’ feelings of safety in different parts of Manchester after the Brexit vote. One Polish migrant, who “pointed out that because of her darker skin complexion she has often been perceived as Spanish...[or as] a Muslim woman of Asian origin” (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 71), reported feeling safer in a more ethnically mixed neighbourhood. Other Polish migrants, however, felt safer in a ‘posh’ or prosperous neighbourhood, as “neighbourhoods mostly populated by poor white Britons were perceived as dangerous...reinforcing the idea that racism is a white working-class issue” (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 72).

Studies of migrant perspectives and experiences of Brexit are few and far between. This research highlighted to me not only an additional gap in our knowledge of the Brexit vote, but also the importance of widening my inclusion criteria beyond the referendum voting eligibility criteria, to speak to migrants *without* British, Irish or Commonwealth citizenship, who were unable to vote but for whom Brexit had much longer-lasting effects.

2.2.6. SOCIAL CLASS AND THE EUROPEAN QUESTION

Aside from the experiences of migrants and those of an ethnic minority background, the popular rhetoric of the 'left behind' also limits our understanding of social class and the Brexit vote. Research into the class position of UKIP (UK Independence Party) voters may allow more insight into the relationship between social class and the European question, given the clear anti-EU position of the party. It is found, generally, that levels of Euroscepticism and support for UKIP are higher amongst working-class voters (Ford et al., 2012: 226). Key issues for UKIP voters, such as Euroscepticism, "have long been known to separate the working class from the middle class" (Evans and Mellon, 2016: 466) – more divisive, even, than the traditional left-right economic preferences in some cases.

Factors associated with the 'left behind' voter appear in the literature explaining support for UKIP and Euroscepticism. Lower education levels, for example, are associated with Euroscepticism in the same way as the leave vote: people with low levels of formal education are "particularly sensitive to insecurity caused by recent developments in post-industrial societies" (Kuhn et al., 2016: 28) and, therefore, more sensitive to income inequalities when evaluating the EU.

Alvarez has developed a theoretical explanation for the relationship between social class and attitudes towards the EU. Social class is "expected to influence peoples' values, orientations, and cognitive functioning...[and have] a profound psychological effect on individuals in the way they perceive the world" (Alvarez, 2002: 60). In turn, this affects attitudes towards the EU. For example, evaluations of the economic benefit of EU membership will change according to occupation; "unskilled workers are less supportive of the EU than are skilled workers" (Alvarez, 2002: 61). The difference appears even starker when considering social stratification, a measure combining occupational status with education level and income; "A one-unit increase in social stratification position increases the likelihood that an individual believes membership in the EU is beneficial by 49 percent" (Alvarez, 2002: 66). Overall, social class appears to be a significant and strong predictor of EU attitudes. Despite this, a huge range of other

factors – some linked to class, others unrelated – became central to political science explanations of the Brexit vote, framed as the ‘left behind’.

Ultimately, the so-called ‘left behind’ rhetoric mis-describes white working- and middle-class experiences as working class alone (Bhambra, 2017), at the same time, devaluing the “identity of the deindustrialized working class” (Mckenzie, 2017a): 277), associating this group with economic and cultural impoverishment. As the labelling of this group as the ‘left behind’ becomes engrained in day-to-day discussion, it “risks contributing to narratives of a ‘feckless poor’ that will only exacerbate further social exclusion, and class distinction” (Mckenzie, 2017a: 272). In describing the white working classes at once as ignored politically in favour of ethnic minorities and as the “protagonists of xenophobia and racism...the ‘left behind’ is part of a racialised and politicised set of discourses, apportioning blame for the country’s political circumstances [i.e., increasing inequality and capitalism in crisis]” (Isakjee and Lorne, 2020: 8).

By drawing too heavily on the ‘left behind’ as the key constituent part of the vote to leave the EU, and Brexit as a revolt of the white, working-class man, victim of increasing migration to Britain, we are not only contributing to narrative of a feckless poor but also ignoring “other ways in which class inequality and racisms contributed [to the leave vote]” (Rogaly, 2020: 2) in really tangible ways. For instance, donations from super-rich supporters of the leave campaign, and the white, middle-class people in the South of England making up the majority of the leave vote (Dorling, 2016; Antonucci et al., 2017), are often neglected in the Brexit narrative.

Authors like Mckenzie (2017a; 2017b) take a deeper look at the role played by social class in the context of Brexit. Outside of the relatively limiting variables used to understand social class in the literature on the so-called ‘left behind’, Mckenzie draws on Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital and related work by Savage et al. (2015) and Skeggs (2000; 2004) to understand the attitudes of working-class people in East London and Nottinghamshire (2017a; 2017b). Mckenzie and the authors just mentioned view measures of class like occupation and economic position as “only ever partially accurate” (2017b: 202) and instead argue that class is a constructed and dynamic concept. Such an understanding of class is

missing from analytical work on Brexit, outside of that published by McKenzie, and, as such, the research that does exist “runs the risk of reducing social divisions to abstract variables and their distribution across geographical space” (Koch et al., forthcoming). In so doing, the historical and imperial roots of and intersectional nature of inequalities are largely ignored in political science (although, of course, sociologists like Bourdieu have done much of the necessary and ground-breaking conceptual work and empirical research in that discipline). I explore these ideas in more detail in my theoretical framework below (see section 3.3, pp53-57), to take forward this broader understanding of social class, and its intersections with gender, race and citizenship, and begin to fill in some of the gaps left by research into the so-called ‘left behind’.

2.3. IDENTITY, POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND THE BREXIT VOTE

A penultimate issue I will unpick is immigration. Attitudes to immigration come up time and time again in relation to Brexit, as the first section of this chapter has showed. What are ignored by analyses drawing on the so-called ‘left-behind’ rhetoric, however, are the potential Imperial and racist roots of this anti-immigration-leave vote relationship.

2.3.1. EXISTING RESEARCH ON ANTI-IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES

The ‘fear of others’ (related to strong national identity (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017: 455)) plays a “significant role” (Clarke et al., 2017: 443) in fostering anti-immigration views. Jeffrey et al. (2014), again, find a specifically English dimension to anti-immigration sentiment. Whilst a majority in each UK state had concerns over immigration (it was the second most important issue in England and Wales, and third in Scotland), far higher levels of opposition to immigration were found amongst those identifying as ‘English’ over those identifying as ‘British’ (Jeffery et al., 2014: 15).

Feelings towards immigration explain attitudes towards the EU over time; “public concerns over immigration...shaped longer-term volatility in British public attitudes towards EU membership” (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017: 451). At a time when “immigration was ranked by citizens as the most important issue in the country” (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017: 451), the vote to leave becomes less

surprising – and a number of aggregate- and individual analyses argue that anti-immigration attitudes drove the leave vote (Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Hobolt, 2016). The picture becomes much more nuanced, however, when *types* of immigration are taken into account, as there exists a “consistent hierarchy of preferences between immigrant groups, with white and culturally more proximate immigrant groups less opposed” (Ford, 2011: 1017). The differences between groups of migrants are large and “hostility to immigrants is greatly magnified simply by describing the migrant group in cultural rather than economic terms” (Ford, 2011: 1019). There is greater opposition towards migrants from ‘culturally distinctive’ regions. Having said this, Bond and Tejeiro find that “prejudice towards and perceived threat from *EU immigrants* was significantly more predictive [of referendum voting behaviour] than the same measures across all migrants” (2019: 333). Crucially, prejudice towards and *perceived* threat of migrants were significant in producing EU attitudes, rather than actual contact with migrants (Bond and Tejeiro, 2019: 338). This highlights how important political campaigning (e.g., the leave campaign’s fear mongering around immigration (Koch, 2017)) may have been in determining EU attitudes, rather than actual experience of migration to an area, as discussed in the first section. A related finding by Palma et al. (2020) suggests that “the explicit desire to reduce immigration was not associated with anti-EU attitudes” (2020: 726) but a higher ‘perceived’ immigrant population size drove Euroscepticism and feelings of competition with migrants.

Some studies have found the most explanatory power for the Brexit vote in identity-related *and* socio-demographic factors explained above (Ford, 2011; Ohberg and Mederios, 2019). Anti-immigration attitudes are “particularly intense among the less educated, the working classes and those who feel migrants represent a threat to the national culture” (Ford, 2011: 1018). This is seconded by Ford and Goodwin who suggest that “immigration was the political catalyst” for the socially conservative, less-educated, so-called ‘left behind’ group to vote Brexit (2017: 22). Hence, negative attitudes towards immigration may be less a result of ‘identity politics’ and more closely related to one’s position in society. It’s worth reiterating, of course, that the Brexit referendum took place during a moment of

‘peak austerity’ (Dorling, 2017), defined by austerity politics and severely limited public funding, leaving working class voters in increasingly precarious positions.

2.3.2. EMPIRE, RACISM AND BREXIT

...Or, how Empire fed English racism and anti-immigration attitudes and made Brexit inevitable.

Thus, the existing literature highlights that anti-immigrant attitudes had a clear impact on attitudes during the Brexit referendum. In this section, by drawing on the work of Critical Race and decolonial scholars, I discuss how these attitudes may have been bolstered by political elites and policy throughout the latter half of the 20th Century. In short, Britain’s history of empire and economic developments since the 1980s, including neo-liberalism, led the political elite consciously or subconsciously to push an anti-immigrant agenda which is arguably racist at its core. Over time, as this position was institutionalised by successive governments’ increasingly restrictive immigration policy, and austerity led to huge funding cuts across public services, anti-immigrant attitudes and a sense of white victimhood became increasingly common among the public, too. In the decade leading up to, and throughout the Brexit campaign itself, much attention was directed at Central and Eastern European migrants, the ‘xeno-racist’ discourse surrounding whom was fuelled by these long-standing racial hierarchies. This manifested itself in the vote to leave the EU and the violence towards migrants and people of colour that followed the referendum. Britain’s history of empire not only fuelled anti-immigrant sentiment prior to the referendum but reared its head in the government’s ‘Empire 2.0’ post-Brexit free trade plans as well.

2.3.2.1. BREXIT AS A MANIFESTATION OF ENGLISH RACISM

Prior to starting this research, my understanding of Brexit was contained within a relatively short period of time, beginning with the campaigns in Spring 2016. As I started to delve into the topic, I was pointed in the direction of certain authors by colleagues and academics at King’s and learnt that, instead, maybe, Brexit could or should be viewed with a longer-term lens, as a “symptom of a continuing organic crisis of the British state” (Jessop, 2017, cited in MacLeavy, 2018: 207), resulting at least in part from

the racism that has become, “in Bourdieusian terms, an integral component of the English habitus” (Virdee, 2014: 163). From this standpoint, Brexit Britain is seen as “fuelled by, and [reproducing], specific racialized emotions and ideologies” (Meghji, 2020: 6), with “2016 [marking] a new step in the mainstreaming of reactionary and particularly racist, Islamophobic and xenophobic political movements, agendas and discourses” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 510). By zooming out and looking into the past, as these scholars do, it’s possible to see the roots of Brexit in Britain’s history of Empire, and how the racist ideologies and anti-immigrant attitudes were reinforced by economic decisions and changes since the 1980s.

2.3.2.2. ‘EUROPE’, EMPIRE AND WHITENESS

This discussion begins well before the rise of the British National Party (BNP) in local authorities like Barking and Dagenham in the mid- to late-2000s, and before UKIP gained a seat in Westminster in 2014, in 1. the initial conceptions of the ‘idea of Europe’ that framed European modernity, 2. late 19th Century New Imperialism and 3. the rise of neoliberalism in the second half of the 20th Century and the austerity politics of the 2010s.

As Bassel and Emejulu argue, the ‘idea of Europe’ “was willed into being through its exploitative colonial relations” (2018: 20). The dehumanising and ‘othering’ of the colonial subject was necessary to legitimise the enslavement, plundering and exploitation that colonial European modernity necessitated. Capitalism and colonialism together legitimised the ongoing othering of those living under colonial rule, instilling a notion of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in the European psyche.

This continued through the ‘New Imperialism’ that came about in the late 19th Century; a shared whiteness, “in opposition to the ‘non-white’ colonized other of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean” (Virdee, 2014: 59), became central to the self-conceptualisation of the British elite. As such, immigration rhetoric became increasingly racialised – and that racialisation was institutionalised in new legislation on immigration. In turn, ‘immigration’ became “a racialised signifier, even though the majority of international migrants entering Britain in the 1950s were white” (Rogaly, 2020: vii). This occurred at

the same time as the British elite set out to re-imagine the country as Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and the “idea of race [became] the glue...which bound the nation together in opposition to [the ‘other’]” (Virdee, 2014: 59). Such views were legitimised by elites’ ‘selective amnesia’ and their “cultivation of a nostalgic view of empire and the continuing suppression of full information regarding the violence through which colonial rule was enforced” (Rogaly, 2020: 11).

2.3.2.3. EMPIRE AND ENGLISH RACISM

The specifically ‘English’ nature of the Brexit vote may not be so surprising when the deep-seated Euroscepticism of the English electorate (with historic roots in the existence of institutions like the Church of England (Carl et al., 2019a: 297)) is considered, alongside England’s imperial history. Virdee and McGeever (2018) argue that a crucial part of this increased ‘Englishness’, and, by extension, Euroscepticism, is racism. If “colonial racism had a very specific impact on the formation of English nationalism and English national identity” (Virdee and McGeever, 2018: 1809), then colonial racism is tied up with the deep-seated Euroscepticism which, at least in part, drove the leave vote.

While a majority of Welsh voters also voted to leave, “in Wales and Scotland, national identity (British or Scottish/Welsh) does not appear to structure attitudes on EU membership consistently” (Henderson et al., 2016: 195) – and therefore a similar link cannot be drawn. However, it has been shown that migrants in Wales experienced similar processes of othering and unsettling as those living in England (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 5) as a result of the vote to leave the EU.

2.3.2.4. NEOLIBERALISM, CULTURAL HOMOGENEITY AND CUTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

In more recent memory, the policies of Thatcher and the beginnings of neo-liberalism brought about a distillation of these long-term trends establishing whiteness as key to Englishness. Individualism was driven by neoliberalism (“the shift to the subject, the personal, the individual” (Sivanadan, 2008: 34) was sold as ‘exhilarating’) and the ‘authoritarian populist agenda’ of Thatcher’s government “emphasized a racializing nationalism underpinned by a shared allegiance to cultural homogeneity” (Virdee, 2014: 148). Cultural homogeneity does not create space for diversity, and government policy,

especially in the areas of policing and immigration, institutionalised these political ideals at elite level, ultimately filtering down to the public.

Neoliberalism of course also had tangible financial impacts. It “provided a rationale for...cuts to central government spending, including the decimation of grants to local government” (Rogaly, 2020: 11), setting local authorities and public service providers in bad stead to weather the storm of future cuts in the 2010s.

2.3.2.5. THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, AUSTERITY AND THE VICTIMISATION OF THE WHITE WORKING CLASS

As Rogaly argues, the Brexit era is “defined by the period of austerity since the 2007-08 financial crisis and fed into by longer-term processes including neoliberalism, de-industrialisation, and the residue of colonialism” (Rogaly, 2020: xiii). Each of these issues served to strengthen anti-immigration attitudes (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018: 125), rather than driving an anti-racist/ anti-capitalist movement against the causes of increasing inequality. The possibility of this had become near impossible given the decimation of working-class solidarity through political choices that ran alongside the developments of New Imperialism and neo-liberalism (Virdee, 2014; Shilliam, 2018a).

Ultimately, the Brexit era comes at the end of 40+ years of neoliberalism and 10 years of austerity, which have led to ‘peak inequality’ (Dorling, 2018; Rogaly, 2020: 23). Local authorities saw the greatest funding cuts in comparison to any other area of public spending under the 2010-2015 coalition government, with its budget cut by more than 60 per cent between 2009/10 and 2015/16 (Centre for Cities, 2019). Even in the last two years, publicly funded services like children’s centres have continued to be closed by even the most well-off local authorities (Inman, 2021), despite the government’s announcement in 2019 that “austerity is over” (Jordan, 2019). Austerity “hit working-class people and workers hard, especially women and racialised minorities within the working class” (Rogaly, 2020: 12), in terms of job cuts in public services and reduced service provision. As Bassel and Emejulu explain, financial cuts in public service provision were felt acutely by minority women, who have been widely employed in the public sector and caring professions since post-Second World War labour shortages

led to the “recruitment of Black Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani workers to fill the gaps in a rapidly expanding public sector” (2018: 42).

Rather than putting these increasing economic inequalities in the context of long-term funding cuts to public services, right-wing leaders like Nigel Farage pointed the finger at ‘immigrants’ (Rogaly, 2020: ix) and the media pitched the interests of the British working class against migrants (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 66). As such, Brexit was presented as a “project that could redistribute value back to the victimized, hard-working white families whose social status had been relegated by racialized immigration” (Meghji, 2020: 8), adding fuel to the ‘anti-immigrant’ fire.

2.3.2.6. ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

The racism that these historical trends have bolstered has been legitimised not only by governments on the right, as common rhetoric would have us believe, but through the post-colonial amnesia perpetuated by governments across the political spectrum (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018: 19). Most overtly, the Windrush Scandal, first reported in 2017 (Gentleman, 2017), saw people who had arrived in the UK from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s facing deportation, being refused medical care and wrongfully losing their jobs (Shaw, 2022: 56). The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government’s 2012 ‘Hostile Environment’ policy required people who had arrived in the UK before the early 1970s – the so-called ‘Windrush Generation’ – to provide documentary evidence of their citizenship from decades before. The Home Office had, however, destroyed thousands of landing cards and records from the time (JCWI, 2022) and many people from that generation had not acquired the correct papers when changes to citizenship law in the 1970s had turned them from citizens into ‘immigrants’ (Rogaly, 2020: 125). More recently, the ‘Go Home’ vans, organised in 2013 by Theresa May as Home Secretary (Elgot, 2018) and driven around parts of London including Brixton, that urged ‘illegal immigrants’ to ‘Go Home’, were called out, inadvertently, by the Home Office itself, as it gave the term ‘go home’ as an example of a racist hate crime during a campaign to encourage the reporting of such crimes (Bulman, 2019). Such policy is fuelled by the Conservative Party’s guiding racialised nationalism, that is said also to be the source of its Euroscepticism (Shilliam, 2018a: 136). This rhetoric

is pushed by the British right-wing media, which is significantly more negative and aggressive towards migrants than the press in other Western European states (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 1), and whose racism and xenophobia led to a rise in hate crimes after Brexit (McGuire, 2018-2019: 255).

While the above focuses on Tory policy, according to Shilliam, “when it came to racism, the Labour Party was historically duplicitous...in terms of claiming an internationalist ethos while at the same time pursuing and even enacting anti-immigration legislation” (Shilliam, 2018a: 142). Labour’s ‘controls on immigration’ mugs are a prime example of this (Perraudin, 2015), and reflect the party’s 2015 and 2017 general election campaigns to reduce overall immigration, “committing themselves to draconian (and completely unrealistic) upper number limits” (Favell and Barbulesca, 2018: 121).

2.3.2.7. XENOPHOBIA TOWARDS CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN MIGRANTS

English racism and discrimination did not only target people of colour, it was also directed towards EU migrants, in particular from Central and Eastern Europe, although it was expressed in a slightly different manner. The EU’s 2004 enlargement saw significant labour migration from Central and Eastern Europe to the UK, at levels unpredicted by the government at the time. Migrants from the new EU states were subject to ‘registration’ requirements in the UK for seven years, until they were lifted in 2011 (Bulgarian and Romanian migrants, however, were subject, until 2014, to “significantly more strident work restrictions” (Fox et al., 2015)). Levels of xenophobia swelled in the period from 2011 onwards, and particularly from 2014, as fear about these migrants’ access to the UK labour market exploded.

Xenophobia towards Central and Eastern European migrants was expressed using economic arguments. With the late 2000s financial crisis, people began to “justify their negative attitudes towards this migrant group through competition for resources, particularly in terms of job security and the receipt of benefit payments” (Harris et al., 2022: 1). Increasingly stretched services meant that the UK simply did not have capacity to support this population growth; the country could not keep up with – widely debunked – ‘benefit tourism’ (Mintchev, 2014: 5), an idea pushed not only by Conservative-turned-UKIP MP Douglas Carswell (Portes, 2013) but by the then-Tory Prime Minister David Cameron, too

(Favell and Barbulescu, 2018: 125). Media elites – from broadsheet to tabloid – played a significant role in (mis)representing migrants in this way too (Runfors et al., 2022: 460), bolstering the strength of the benefit tourism rhetoric among the public. In the case of The Daily Mail “a negative consensus about immigration [and] certain fears...specifically about Romanians and Bulgarians” (Demetriou, 2018: 387) were reinforced, while reporting by The Guardian, reinforced an inherently exclusionary ‘us/ them’ dichotomy. Figure 1, below, highlights how the right-wing tabloid press perpetuated false rhetoric around benefit tourism; The Daily Mail story starts by describing how UK services are “stretched already...by long-standing incidences of benefit tourism” (Heffer, 2013) while The Daily Express calls for deportation of supposedly widespread EU migrants falsely receiving UK welfare (Sky News, 2014).

Figure 1. *The Daily Express and Mail Online pieces perpetuating ‘benefit tourism’ rhetoric*



(Heffer, 2013; Sky News, 2014)

Arguably, Central and Eastern Europeans’ whiteness increased fear that these migrants would take British people’s jobs, as they were regarded as competition in the labour market by white workers in the UK, unlike Asian and African-Caribbean migrants, who were more likely to experience workplace discrimination (Harris et al., 2022: 2022: 5). Xenophobia towards Central and Eastern European migrants is, therefore, paradoxical: this group were feared to be stealing British people’s job, while also receiving unemployment benefits, that could or should be going instead to British people.

To be sure, Central and Eastern European migrants have been perceived differently based on their home country, and perceptions towards these groups have changed significantly over time. In particular Romanian migrants have “figured prominently in the public consciousness and (tabloid) media as objects of fear, scorn and contempt” (Fox et al., 2015: 735), due to the conflation between Roma populations (who are considered too culturally different) and Romanian migrants. Polish migrants, on the other hand, have “occasionally enjoyed a reputation as ‘good workers’” (Fox et al., 2015: 735) and, like Hungarian migrants, have been perceived as ‘desirable’ and ‘invisible’ due to their whiteness (Fox et al., 2015; Rzepnikowska, 2019). Immigration policy and elite discourse also play into this privileged position. (More) favourable attitudes towards Polish and Hungarian migrants in the 2000s and 2010s was bolstered by the more favourable (but still discriminatory) registration requirements that these migrants saw due to their being part of the initial group of countries to join the EU in 2004 (Fox et al., 2015). Institution- and elite-led hierarchies between migrants, for example, marking ‘highly skilled’ migrants as ‘desirable’ are internalised by migrants (Koskela, 2014; Lulle et al., 2018), perpetuating and reinforcing those hierarchies.

The institutionalised and elite-led nature of this privilege, however, makes it incredibly precarious. The more privileged position that these groups held in the racial hierarchy in the UK due to their whiteness has, however, shifted, since the economic crisis and Brexit, as *all* European migrants have been increasingly ‘othered’ (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 61). Ultimately, despite claiming whiteness to deny discrimination based on their migrant status (Fox et al., 2015), and using ‘race’, sometimes in the form of racism towards migrants of colour “to assert and defend the relatively privileged position their putative whiteness affords them [in the UK labour market]” (Fox, 2013: 1871), their whiteness has not exempted Eastern Europeans from xenophobia and racism (Fox, 2013; Fox et al., 2015; Rzepnikowska, 2019). Language, religion and culture have become less visible, but no less invidious, forms of differentiation on which discrimination is based (Fox et al., 2015: 731). Brexit has continued to re-draw “hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion” (Zontini and Però, 2019: 101) for EU migrants, based on race and nationality.

While Mintchev warns against calling all arguments to reduce immigration ‘racist’ (2014: 9), xenophobia and racism often overlap (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 63) and this is seen in the experience of Central and Eastern European migrants in the UK in recent decades. Race is a notion socially constructed around exclusion. As such, racism is a “dynamic phenomenon [that can take] different forms at different times” (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 74), and policy and the media racialize groups differently at different points in time (Fox et al., 2012: 692). While this migration *looked* different to much of the post-war migration to the UK (which, outside of that from still-discriminated against white, Christian Ireland, originated from black and brown colonised states) due to the whiteness of the vast majority of Central and Eastern European migrants, these migrants have become “subject to ongoing hostility, stigmatisation, and racialisation by British media and political discourses” (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 3). Different groups are lightened and darkened by policy and the media (Fox et al., 2012: 692). As anti-immigrant attitudes became more widespread in early-to-mid 2010s, some groups became racialised as ‘less white’. As such, it’s possible to see how the ideas spread under ‘New Imperialism’ translate to today’s anti-immigration rhetoric.

The ‘othering’ of Central and Eastern European migrants, associated with xenophobia, has also coincided with racism becoming increasingly defined in cultural terms, rather than by skin colour (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 63), as seen in the media’s reporting of this wave of migration (Fox et al., 2012: 680). It was argued that “too much cultural difference and too many immigrants [would] become a threat to community cohesiveness” (Mintchev, 2014: 7) - regardless of the economic benefit that this migration brought to the UK economy. Roma migration was considered particularly detrimental and the Conservative Party has been vocal in their critique of Roma communities based on its “favoured notions of whiteness and national identity” (Ryder and Cemlyn, 2016: 145). Romani people also face discrimination across Europe, which has led to the EU’s introduction of various frameworks to promote their “social and economic integration in European societies” (European Parliament, 2022).

Racism may have changed since the late 19th century, and xenophobia, rather than racism, may better-describe economically-driven anti-immigration arguments (Mintchev, 2014: 9) but recent rhetoric

against Central and Eastern European migrants, due to its novelty, evades “the censorship of commonly-accepted social regulations about what language can and cannot be legitimately used when discussing race...[enabling] neo-racist and xenophobic ideas...to circulate freely in the media” (Mintchev, 2014: 1). Rzepnikowska (2019) therefore draws on Sivanandan’s term ‘xeno-racism’ to describe the experience of migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe. For Sivanandan, these migrants have experienced ‘xeno-racism’, which is racism “not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial countries, but at the newer categories of the displaced and dispossessed whites...It is racism in substance but xeno in form” (2001: 2; cited in Rzepnikowska, 2019: 63).

2.3.2.8. THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS AND BREXIT

The Brexit referendum was situated not only in the wake of the financial crisis, austerity, and migration from Central and Eastern Europe to the UK, but also in the midst of the major and multifaceted, so-called “European refugee crisis”, which took place between 2015 and 2017 (Stockemer et al., 2020). Whilst “[EU-wide] dissatisfaction did not increase in the wake of the crisis” (Stockemer et al., 2020: 903), it’s possible to see the impact the crisis may have had on attitudes in the UK, given how closely associated attitudes towards immigration and Euroscepticism are in the UK. For example, in Britain, 61 per cent considered immigration to be the most important issue facing the EU at the time (Vasilopoulou, 2016: 222). This was despite the UK *actually* taking in a significantly lower number of refugees and asylum seekers than countries like Germany, France and Sweden (see Table 3).

Table 3. Number of Refugees and Asylum Seekers living in various European states in 2017		
	Refugees	Asylum Seekers
Turkey	3,480,350	308,838
Germany	970,357	429,265
France	337,158	63,115
Sweden	240,954	51,588
UK	121,821	40,354
Data adapted from UNHCR (2022b)		

During the referendum campaign, UKIP capitalised on simmering anti-immigration attitudes and the ongoing European Refugee Crisis, campaigning against Turkey's supposed imminent accession to the EU. That UKIP drew on this claim so frequently may not be so surprising given that nearly one third of refugees coming to Europe live in Turkey, "which remains the largest refugee-hosting country with 3.7 million refugees" (UNHCR, 2022a). The party not only published a (widely criticised) video focusing on Turkey's accession to the EU, but also released the infamous 'Breaking Point' poster (see Figure 2), which used a photo of Syrian refugees to further its own political aims by suggesting that membership of the EU was opening its door to thousands of, crucially, young, male, non-white migrants (Stewart and Mason, 2016). The poster was later reported to the police for inciting racial hatred. These are just two examples of UKIP's attempts to capitalise on the European Refugee Crisis to further its campaign to leave the EU and, ultimately, "there is a good case to be made that the unfounded claims made by the leave campaign about Turkish membership of the EU have ultimately cost Britain its own membership of the Union" (Ker-Lindsay, 2018).

Figure 2. Nigel Farage and UKIP's 'Breaking Point' Poster



(Stewart and Mason, 2016)

2.3.2.9. CULMINATING IN THE LEAVE CAMPAIGN (AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, REMAIN'S) OBSESSION WITH IMMIGRATION AND SOVEREIGNTY

Immigration had become an increasingly racialised notion and the real fears of terrorist attacks like 9/11 and 7/7 promoted “a politics of spurious fear...braced by anti-terrorist legislation” (Sivanandan, 2008: xv). That fed into the immigration ‘hype’ around Brexit: “the idea that large-scale immigration of non-EU nationals, particularly Muslim men, was likely if the UK remained” (Rogaly, 2020: vii). The Brexit campaign “deployed imagery of Muslim immigrants as a simultaneous security and cultural threat” (Meghji, 2020: 12) (see, again, Figure 2), shown “with the growing belief that many areas across the nation are now governed by Sharia Law” (Dearden, 2018, cited in Meghji, 2020: 12). During Brexit, xenophobia was central and “long-standing racial hierarchies were reinvoked..., irrespective of citizenship or migration status” (Botterill et al., 2019: 2). As such, racial hatred was directed towards Black and Brown citizens *and* White migrants from Eastern Western Europe indiscriminately (Virdee and McGeever, 2017; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019).

2.3.2.10. XENOPHOBIA, RACISM AND EMPIRE POST-BREXIT

The racism that drove part of the leave vote also manifested itself in the spate of racist hate-crimes that followed the referendum (Hirsch, 2018), “[rehearsing] all-too-familiar discriminations which emanate from long-standing and socially embedded suspicion of racialised ‘others’” (Isakjee and Lorne, 2020: 8) (see also: Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Rzepnikowska, 2019). These attacks are not just a reaction to Brexit: “every utterance shouted alongside a specific racist attack, is already a dominant ideological policy position” (Burnett, 2017: 89), legitimated by successive governments on both sides of the left-right divide. Parallels can be seen between the leave campaign’s ‘take back control’ slogan and the racist abuse using similar language post-referendum, directed to white European migrants as well as ethnic minorities (Burnett, 2017; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Rzepnikowska, 2019). It is also reflected in the abuse of Muslim communities and demands for them to ‘live by British rules’ after the vote and public policy which has repeatedly demanded the same (Burnett, 2017: 89). There was a 42 per cent spike in hate crime in the two weeks after the Brexit referendum (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018:

118). Crucial, however, is how these attacks only became a “public issue requiring political and policy action” (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018: 119) when they were instead inflicted on white Europeans as the “fear of racist violence and harassment is influenced by race, class and location” (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 67).

The theme of empire also continues to play a role, now that Britain has officially left the EU, in the ‘trade deals’ with the Commonwealth. Post-Brexit economic plans revolved around the government’s plans for ‘Empire 2.0’, which highlights Britain’s “profound historical forgetfulness” (Meghji, 2020: 11), given that Britain did not have ‘free trade’ with its colonies but “an ‘open season’ over their resources” (Meghji, 2020: 11). As such, we see the political elite post-Brexit pleading for a return to the time where “Britain was – as the (mis)representation holds – a benign, democratic empire, praised in all corners of the world” (Meghji, 2020: 11).

By delving deeper into these historical roots of the vote to leave, I have shown how elite-driven ideologies fuelled anti-immigrant attitudes more widely amongst the public, which paved the way for the leave vote. By doing so, I provide a basis for a later discussion in my analysis, avoiding labelling individual attitudes as race-related and the “tendency in the UK of ascribing racism to poor white British people” (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 70), but drawing them into a wider discussion of xenophobia and racism as themes running beneath the vote to leave the EU and the ways in which Britain’s history of Empire continues to rear its head. This longer-term view allows me to understand Brexit “as an ongoing process of “othering” and unsettling” (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 1) deeply rooted in British imperial and political history, rather than as a single political decision.

2.3.3. RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND POLITICAL DISILLUSIONMENT

In addition to imperial nostalgia, attitudes to immigration and racism, the relationship between identity, political attitudes and the Brexit vote is further complicated when (specifically, right-wing) populist views are considered. The relationship between populism and the Brexit vote is the source of a huge amount of academic interest. According to Mudde,

“populism is defined as a thin ideology that considers society to be essentially divided between two antagonistic and homogeneous groups, the pure people and the corrupt elite, and wants politics to reflect the general will of the people”

(2014: 218)

When combined with nativist sentiment and authoritarian ideals, a specifically *right-wing* form of populism is established (Mudde, 2014; Iakhsnis et al., 2018). The leave vote has been associated, in particular, with the nativist (defined by Mudde as “a xenophobic form of nationalism in which a monocultural nation-state is the ideal and all non-natives (i.e., aliens) are perceived as a threat to the nation” (Mudde, 2014: 218)) and anti-elitist aspects of the concept (Iakhsnis et al., 2018).

The significance of anti-elitism – leading to a disillusionment with and dislike of both Westminster and EU elites – is backed up by other research. Goodwin and Heath find that “people who felt disillusioned with politics – and agreed with the statement that “politicians don’t care what people like me think’ were more likely to support leave” (2016b). This is brought together in the concept of “whitelash” (Kellner, 2017; Gusterson, 2017; Sengupta et al., 2019). The vote to leave, these authors argue, is a product of the changing meaning of the (white) working class, from productivity to “downwardly mobile, poor, even pathological” (Gusterson, 2017: 211), and the general feeling that “native whites are faring worse in their societies than other ethnic groups” (Sengupta et al, 2019: 759). This extends the ‘left-behind’ rhetoric beyond a purely socio-demographic explanation or a reaction against neo-liberalism into the realm of identity politics and was capitalised on by UKIP and right-wing Tories alike.

2.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I’ve highlighted what we know about the Brexit vote, in terms of socio-demographic and geographical explanations of the vote, the ‘left behind’ rhetoric that was central to many discussions of Brexit in the media and academia alike, and the ways in which race and racism can be seen as significant trends running beneath the vote to leave the EU. I have also brought to light the many gaps that exist

in our understanding of the Brexit vote, largely in relation to Londoners' Brexit attitudes, migrants' and ethnic minorities' attitudes towards Brexit, and the relationship between social class and Brexit attitudes.

Most significantly, my research has been shaped by critiques of the so-called 'left behind' explanation of the Brexit vote and the male-stream nature of social science research more generally. If Brexit is one of the biggest shocks that British politics has faced since the Second World War, with significant electoral and societal impacts (Fieldhouse et al., 2019), it is hugely problematic that there are such gaps in our knowledge. A large proportion of mainstream research into the vote is either exclusionary or based on generalisations that turn out not to explain the vote in its complexity (namely, that the leave vote was not a result of 'left behind' voters in post-industrial areas of England, but, to a large extent, of middle-class voters in the Southeast of England (Dorling, 2016; Antonucci et al., 2017)).

Against this backdrop, my research brings a personal, participant-led look at Brexit attitudes in London, in particular, to learn more about the impact of social class, race and gender on attitudes. I also pad out what we know about the impact of location or geography on Brexit attitudes, by considering attitudes in London, a city that does not fit widely discussed England-wide patterns and has been largely ignored in academic research. In the next chapter, I outline my theoretical framework, which introduces Bourdieu's concepts of *cultural capital* and *fields* and describes how these concepts were employed to more fully understand the relationship between social class, race and gender and the Brexit vote in London.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BOURDIEU AND THE ‘METAPHORS OF CAPITAL’

3.1. INTRODUCTION

As I’ve just argued, the existing literature on Brexit paints a relatively superficial picture of Brexit attitudes with the focus of the ‘left behind’ leaving little space for a deeper understanding of social class, gender and race on attitudes. We also know very little about the vote in London specifically. I’ll now introduce Bourdieu’s metaphors of capital, and the concepts of cultural capital and fields, specifically, which provide a theoretical base from which the complex and tangled determinants of attitudes to Brexit can be understood.

Bourdieu is held by some as “undoubtedly the greatest sociologist of the second half of the twentieth century” (Savage et al., 2015: 46) and his work is still widely considered a useful lens through which to view the social structures of, and inequality that exists in, the Western World. Bourdieu’s ‘economistic metaphors’ expose “the lack of equivalence between people” (Skeggs, 2004a: 17) and help us to understand, quite straightforwardly, how social mobility is limited for some more than others; people with less capital will find it more difficult to accrue capital in all forms (Skeggs, 1997). Of course, as Skeggs notes, the metaphors of capital also show how “some people do actually fit and benefit from shaping themselves through these capitalist metaphors” (2004a: 187); an individual might ‘capitalise’ on their social capital and connections to increase their economic and/ or cultural capital. Ultimately, Bourdieu’s work on social class paved the way for “a new kind of cultural class analysis” (Savage, 2003: 536). It enabled “feminists to put class back onto the feminist agenda” (Skeggs, 2004b: 20) and prompted discussions of the intersections of class, race and ethnicity. The following chapter highlights the importance of Bourdieu’s work and how his theorising initiated a wave of new conversations on class in the UK, which together act as the theoretical basis of this thesis.

With that said, it’s important to acknowledge that Bourdieu is criticised for a “neglect of ethnicity...[and] failure to accord women any autonomous role” (Bennett, 2010: xxii). In doing so, his work “ignores a significant amount of social life” (Skeggs, 2004b: 29). I refer to both race and ethnicity in this chapter,

based on the literature referenced. In order to understand the intersections between race, gender and cultural capital, it is necessary to delve deeper into Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, to 'embodied cultural capital'. This chapter focuses on the intersections of class, gender and race, in line with the initial aims of this project. A discussion of cultural capital and citizenship can be found in chapter 5 (pp151-158, in particular), reflecting how this project developed to understand participants' citizenship, too.

With that addressed, in this chapter, I draw upon the more recent work of sociologists focusing on the sociology of class and changing class formations (Savage, 2003, 2010; Savage et al., 2015), gender and Bourdieu (Reay, 1998, 2005, 2007; Skeggs, 1997, 2004; McCall, 1992) and race and Bourdieu (Wallace, 2017, 2018, 2019). Whilst more recent sociological work has expanded upon Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, offering a more comprehensive framework from which to investigate race, ultimately, I will argue that to carry out an intersectional analysis it is worthwhile considering, instead, the work of anti-racist (Sivanandan, 2008; Virdee, 2014; Shilliam, 2018a) and Black feminist and intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989; Rollock, 2014; Bassel and Emejulu, 2018) scholars. Doing so allowed me to better understand how race, and its intersections with class and gender, might impact on the cultural capital available to an individual. Ultimately, if "class just as much as race, gender, age and sexuality shapes, and goes on shaping, the individuals we become" (Reay, 1998: 259), and the metaphors of capital allow us to understand the relationship between the various aspects of identity, then these theories offer a useful and all-encompassing lens through which attitudes to Brexit can be understood. This cannot be said of the generally quantitative socio-demographic or geographical explanations described in chapter 2 (e.g., Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Henderson et al., 2017).

3.2. DEFINING SOCIAL CLASS, GENDER AND RACE

Throughout this thesis so far I have thrown around terms like class, gender, race and ethnicity. Before I get into Bourdieu's theories and how they might apply to an intersectional study of Brexit attitudes, I'll outline my definitions of these not-so-straightforward terms.

3.2.1. SOCIAL CLASS

Avoiding a discussion of how to measure class here or what the typology or hierarchy is based upon (the widely-used NS-SEC schema and employment measures don't provide a definition of what social class is, but how to categorise people into them, while Bourdieu's theories of capital discussed in detail below tell us what constitutes social class but, still, not what they are), I sought a definition of social class. For Bourdieu, preceding any definition of social class is a necessary discussion of the problem of knowledge, arguments about the inherently political nature of social class and an assumption that any definition will be based on one's own politics (Bourdieu, 1987). This, of course, is fair enough, and I'd agree that social class is inherently political. What he offers, however, is by no means a simple, tangible definition (Bourdieu, I get the impression, would see my seeking of a digestible definition of social class entirely pointless). Therefore, I turned to Savage et al. and *Social Class in the 21st Century*, where social class is "hierarchical...[yet] fuzzy and complex in its middle layers" (2016: 4). The social class system is not a "throwback to the old industrial era" (Savage et al., 2016: 4) but relevant and present today, seen in growing inequalities and social fractures "that characterize the opening decades of the 21st Century" (Savage et al., 2016: 406).

3.2.2. GENDER

When it comes to defining gender, debate has been rampant in at least some enclaves of academia since the 1980s (Haslanger, 2000). Simple differentiations between "biological factors (sex) and social factors (gender)" (Slade et al., 2020: 1) don't seem to cut it though. The terms have become muddled by the use of 'gender' (man/ woman, commonly, and cis man/ cis woman/ non-binary/ trans, less

commonly) by (prudish?) academics and society to politely avoid the use of the word 'sex' (male/female) (Haslanger, 2000: 31) and clear anatomical distinction between the sexes has also been challenged. What's more, we might be 'assigned' a sex at birth based on our anatomy but that still comes with gendered assumptions and expectations (so-called 'gender-reveal parties', arranged to reveal the 'sex' of an unborn child, highlight that this is alive and kicking (Schiller, 2019)). What is clear is that hegemonic masculinity exists in society and politics (Galpin, 2021) and gender shapes all of our experiences, negatively impacting on non-binary and trans people most as seen by disproportionate levels of violence against these groups (Galop, 2022). It's worth reiterating, that any gender-related prejudice and violence will be felt more acutely by women, trans or non-binary people of colour. Like class, then, gender cannot be defined without reference to associated prejudices.

3.2.3. RACE

Often, definitions of gender are discussed simultaneously with race, as the societal impacts and under-development of term, are "similar, if not worse, in respect to race" (Haslanger, 2000: 32) given how the "self-evidence of racial distinctions in everyday American life [and life in the UK] is at striking odds with the category of race in law and academia" (Haslanger, 2000: 32). Of course, the debate has developed and accelerated significantly since the mid-2010s, when discussions of white supremacy and knowledge and support for Black Lives Matter became mainstream (and if not accepted by then at least central to some right-wing commentators' 'culture wars') across the UK, the US and the rest of the world (see, for example, Lowery, 2016, and Eddo-Lodge, 2017). The 'self-evidence' of racial distinctions might no longer be at striking odds with discussions in academia but it is certainly at odds with the Tory Government's denial of structural racism in the UK (UK Government, 2021b). That said race is understood to be a social construct and "places people into categories based on physical characteristics, whereas ethnicity is self-defined and includes aspects such as culture, heritage, religion, and identity" (ONS, 2023) (my understanding of this shifted throughout my PhD and I reflect on p108). My theoretical framework is divided into 'categories' of class, race and gender in order to give due time

and attention to each concept. It is, however, no wonder that gender and race are discussed concurrently, given the go-betweens and intersectional nature of prejudice in society and, again, the term cannot be defined without reference to prejudice.

3.3. INTERSECTIONALITY

With terms defined, I'll introduce intersectionality which, it seems to me, is the only appropriate lens through which to understand the research puzzle presented in this thesis. It is particularly appropriate for an analysis that unpicks the Brexit vote through a Bourdieusian lens, given the male-centric rhetoric around the Brexit vote (MacLeavy, 2018; Galpin, 2022) and the white, male-stream approach to social science research historically (Guerrina et al., 2018).

The term 'intersectionality' was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, following her experience in law of the "authoritative universal voice-usually white male subjectivity masquerading as non-racial, non-gendered objectivity" (Crenshaw, 1989 154). At its base is the idea that we, as individuals, are affected differently by our class, race and gender – and any other part of us. Individuals can be subject to double discrimination, and aspects of our identities will have different effects during different interactions (Rollock et al., 2015: 11; Burrell and Hopkins, 2020: 5).

Specifically, I choose to draw on intersectionality for two reasons. First, "'race', gender and class are not distinct and isolated realms of experience" (Brah and Phoenix, 2004: 80). To consider each of these factors – class, gender and race – separately would limit my understanding of their combined effects, i.e., how a working-class person might be seen to possess less cultural capital, but the cultural capital available to a working-class person of colour is limited even further. Studying the intersections of class, race and gender "allows a more complex and dynamic understanding than a focus on social class alone" (Brah and Phoenix, 2004: 75) but it's also completely necessary. To *not* undertake an intersectional analysis would be to ignore the multi-layered oppressions created around race and gender and, in doing so, ignore the lived experiences of so many. Intersectionality, in the words of

Bassel and Emejulu, “forces us to confront and think about [people] in complex and heterogenous ways” (2018: 9).

Second, it is not possible to understand class without considering race alongside it (Rollock, 2014).

The racialised history of the working class in Britain, highlighted in the work of anti-racist scholars like Virdee (2014), Rollock (2014) and Shilliam (2018a), should be central to our understanding of social class in Britain. The racialised notion of the ‘left behind’, so commonly associated with the Brexit vote, requires unpacking – an unpacking that is only possible if we first understand the historic links between race and class (as introduced in chapter 2, pp20-23, and expanded on in this chapter).

3.3.1. EXPANDING FEMINIST THEORY, EMBRACING THE INTERSECTION WITH ANTI-RACIST POLITICS

Crucial to the concept, and a huge draw for me, is that intersectionality is all about *expanding* feminist theory by *embracing* the intersection with anti-racist politics (Crenshaw, 1986: 166). Bassel and Emejulu, for example, put this into practice, making an expansive case for intersectionality in their study of minority women activists. To fully understand these women’s experiences, they considered “processes of racialisation and hierarchies of legal status, ability and other processes of stratification which exist *alongside* and are *inflected by* gender inequalities” (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018: 10).

The expansiveness of the concept makes it inherently inclusionary. Treating race and gender – or any other part of us – as mutually exclusive is problematic because it distorts experience and theoretically erases the experiences of anyone facing multiple levels of oppression, for example, Black women. This is perpetuated by research using a single axis framework (Crenshaw, 1989: 139). A single-axis framework, i.e., looking at the impact of social class alone and excluding other factors, would distort my understanding of individuals’ everyday lives. An intersectional approach will provide me a better chance to understand the full experience of people’s lives, the multiple levels of oppression they may face, and the impact of that on cultural capital. It will guide me to see the whole story, to draw on anti-racist *and* feminist scholarship to ensure I am not pigeonholing the experiences of my participants. I am guided particularly by Crenshaw, who stated that “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum

of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women [and others subject to multiple forms of discrimination] are subordinated” (Crenshaw, 1989: 140). An intersectional lens is the *only* way I will avoid producing a limited reproduction of my participants, as far as I possibly can as a white middle-class researcher who cannot fully understand the experiences of another.

Whilst I move towards intersectionality there are “limits to any one-size fits all explanations and...we should be cognisant and critical about where those limits lie” (Nurse and Sykes, 2019: 602). Crucial then, also, is to clarify that, whilst I initially wrote about class, gender and race, I was open to participants naming implicitly or explicitly the factors that were important to them. This may lead to the consideration in my analysis of citizenship, which so shaped the research finally presented here.

When I initially begun work to understand the role of gender in Bourdieu’s theories, I drew on the writing of white feminist critics. Those scholars linked class and race in their analyses of Bourdieu’s work, for example, that categorisations of race were “interlocked with those of class through the generic definition of ‘dangerous classes’” (Skeggs, 1997: 4) and that “class, just as much as gender and race, is implicated in...the fashioning of the self” (Reay, 2005: 923). In doing so, they showed how the metaphors of capital could be used to describe the connection between these two aspects of identity and social class.

However, feminist theory “often overlooks the role of race [and white feminists] thus ignore how their own race functions to mitigate some aspects of sexism and, moreover, how it often privileges them over and contributes to the domination of other women” (Crenshaw, 1989: 154). One tangible and recent example of women being different affected by race and class is the uneven impact of austerity. Austerity measures undermined public services in favour of unpaid care work, generally carried out by women, and reduced the jobs where women are overrepresented (MacLeavy, 2018: 209; Bassel and Emejulu, 2018). What’s more is that these jobs are most commonly carried out by women of colour; “BME women are concentrated in health and social work (meaning that when these services face government cuts, black women feel it especially hard” (Eddo-Lodge, 2017: 194).

When the every-day experience and political decisions continue to more negatively impact on women of colour, it is inherently limiting to draw only on the work of white feminist scholars who are relaying the experiences of other – or *othered* – people. Intersectionality has brought me to the work of Black feminist scholars, like Kimberlé Crenshaw and Akwugo Emejulu, from whom I can learn directly about the multiple forms of oppression faced by women of colour and other groups facing multiple forms of oppression and prejudice that, given my positionality, I will never experience. I will take this further, too, and follow in the footsteps of Bassel and Emejulu who refused “to collapse minority women into an undifferentiated mass” (2018: xiv). This, I hope, brings greater depth to the analysis I make, and helped me to move away from the social science research which “routinely compares white and minority women...with the implicit assumption that white women constitute the norm” (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018: xiv). By taking an intersectional approach, I learnt (and continue to learn) from those who have gone before, following in their footsteps to be at least part of the process to create space for historically under-represented voices.

3.3.2. CLASS AND RACE HAVE, FOREVER, BEEN INTERTWINED

Whilst the work just referenced tends to focus on gender and race, my second motivation to draw on intersectionality follows from an introduction to the work of anti-racist activists and scholars, who argue that “class identity cannot be understood without taking account of the intersecting role of race” (Rollock, 2014: 445).

Class and race have always been linked in Britain. Whilst the “English working class in particular was a heterogenous, multi-ethnic formation from the moment of its inception” (Virdee, 2014: 162), political decisions motivated by colonial and racist assumptions have distorted this (Sivanandan, 2008), leading to racialised judgements about the deserving and non-deserving working class (Shilliam, 2018a). In the late Victorian era, for example, “children were taught to be unyieldingly obedient to the dominant social order if they wanted to be...members of the superior race... two generations of working-class children [were] shaped by this education system, and the accompanying discourses of racism, patriotism and

empire” (Virdee, 2014: 61). Successive government decisions meant that, by the late 1960s, “Black and Asian migrant workers and their British-born children had come to occupy a distinctive position in class relations – as a racialised faction of the working class...[and] there existed two working classes, one white, and the other black, politically and historically constituted in opposition to each other” (Virdee, 2014: 112). Despite the heterogenous nature of the working class, and the political decisions that racialised and divided the working class, limiting any hope of class solidarity (Virdee, 2014), politicians from across the spectrum, at the same time, “fantasize the [white] working class as a “moral agent”” (Shilliam, 2018a: 145). This, in part, leads to, for example, “the high representation of black and minority ethnic groups in low paid employment and [higher levels] of unemployment amongst black men” (Rollock, 2014: 447) and a higher likelihood of people of colour fitting occupational or economic measures of working-class-ness. As such, the existence and possibility of working-class people of colour is erased from political rhetoric.

The interaction between class and race is far more complex than much of the academic work on Brexit and, indeed, than the short introduction to the racialisation of the working class in Britain that I have made here and above (see section 2.2.1. in chapter 2, pp20-22), gives space to. This brief discussion does, however, show that race and class must be considered side-by-side. Intersectionality allows for this and by learning from the anti-racist scholars cited here, I (hope that I) brought depth to my analysis of the factors affecting Brexit attitudes.

3.3.3. INTERSECTIONALITY AND BOURDIEU’S CONCEPT OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

In order to understand Bourdieu’s takes on race and gender (or lack thereof), this theoretical framework introduces Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital and the interactions with race and gender separately, as each presents a vital area of critique. Whilst the separate introductions below are necessary to understand the concepts at play, intersectionality is at the very core of this project and an intertwined understanding of class, race and gender is wound into my analysis.

Much of the work cited in reference to cultural capital is written through a Bourdieusian lens and by Bourdieusian scholars. However, I take a broader approach when it comes to race and gender, drawing on the work of anti-racist and feminist critics to ensure that my understanding of each of these concepts and their relationship with cultural capital is not limited by the constraints of Bourdieu's original texts and *his* takes on race, gender and class (in regard to these intersections, his work feels somewhat dated). An intersectional appreciation of the impact of class, race and gender on the concept of cultural capital necessitated this updated approach to Bourdieu. Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' constitutes a further area of investigation. By looking at the boroughs and smaller-scale neighbourhoods and communities in which an individual lives, it was possible to investigate how different 'rules' across these social worlds – and the resulting different 'valuations' of class, race and gender – affected Brexit attitudes.

Whilst there is debate around placing emphasis on class, race or gender in an intersectional analysis, and any one of these aspects of one's identity could be at the centre of analysis (Rollock et al., 2015: 15), Acker (2006) used social class as the entry point to understand the "operation of intersecting power relations" (Rollock et al., 2015: 15). In a similar way, I have chosen to place social class at the centre of my analysis. Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' (in its embodied, i.e., long-held dispositions of the body and mind, and institutionalised forms, e.g., educational qualifications and career experience (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986)) is my indicator of social class, and the intersecting and varied impacts of race and gender on cultural capital are the key areas of investigation for the analysis. With my motivations laid out and my approach described, I now go on to discuss Bourdieu's work in detail, the metaphors of capital and the ways in which the factors under analysis here can be intertwined with his concept of cultural capital.

3.4. BOURDIEU: HABITUS, FIELDS AND THE 'METAPHORS OF CAPITAL'

Three concepts are central to Bourdieu's theory of social class: *habitus*, *fields* and *cultural capital*. Habitus is the essence of a person, brought about by the circumstances into which they are born and

their life experiences. One's habitus is durable (Tichavakunda, 2019) in that it results from objective structures that apply to society as a whole, i.e., the privileges one is or isn't is assigned as a result of their gender, sexuality or skin colour. It can also change over time, affected by subjective structures like "the individual actions people take" (Tichavakunda, 2019: 655). Habitus is of primary importance when it comes to cultural capital: "the legitimate way of appropriating culture and works of art favours those who have had early access to legitimate culture, in a cultured household, outside of scholastic disciplines" (Bourdieu, 1984: xxv).

Fields are described by Bourdieu, primarily in his work *Distinction*, as different social "worlds" (1984: 223). There exist, therefore, any number of fields – from entire sectors, such as the "financial, legal, political and journalistic" (Savage et al., 2015: 309), to different fields within a social world. One's habitus is perceived differently across fields and cultural capital is differently valued due to these varied 'social rules'; in other words, there are "differential chances of profit...as a function of the volume and the composition of their assets" (Bourdieu, 1986: 17). An understanding of 'fields' is vital to an understanding of cultural capital as the latter does not exist or function except in relation to the former (Tichavakunda, 2019: 655). Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' goes a long way in defending his theory against criticisms that it is deterministic; it allows people's dispositions to be dynamic, rather than fixed (Savage, 2003: 541).

3.4.1. BOURDIEU'S 'METAPHORS OF CAPITAL'

Bourdieu identified four kinds of capital "to account for the structure and functioning of the social world" (1986: 15). Crucially, for Bourdieu, social class is not just a result of one's economic position but a sum of economic, cultural, and social capital. Bourdieu's concepts, therefore, could be seen to sit in line with Marx, who also viewed an individual's position in the social world to be defined by the (economic) capital they possess. However, "Bourdieu borrowed as needed from the sociological canon" (Weininger, 2005: 119) and his concepts cannot be solely identified with Marx, Weber, or any other.

He, in fact, described his simultaneous distance from and closeness to Marx in the opening of *The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups* (Bourdieu, 1985: 723).

3.4.1.1. ECONOMIC CAPITAL

The first 'guise' that a person's capital can take is economic. This is the least abstract form; economic capital is "immediately and directly convertible into money" (Bourdieu, 1986: 16) and is institutionalised as property rights. It is possible to see and track the accumulation of economic capital (and the inheritance of economic capital through the generations) most easily (Savage et al., 2015: 165).

3.4.1.2. SOCIAL CAPITAL

The second 'guise' that a person's capital takes is social; it is made up of the "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network...or in other words, to membership of a group" (Bourdieu, 1986: 21). Social capital is the sum of the size of one's network and the *volume* of capital associated with it. Group membership "is the product of an endless effort...which is necessary in order to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits" (Bourdieu, 1986: 22). The endless effort it takes to produce lasting relationships is, however, less endless for those whose are 'sought after'; the relative cost to them is lower and their efforts to socialise are "highly productive" (Bourdieu, 1986: 23). Social inequality is the result.

3.4.1.3. CULTURAL CAPITAL

A person's cultural capital is the most relevant to this study and exists in three forms (adapted from Bourdieu, 1986: 17):

- a. Embodied (long-held dispositions of the body and mind)
- b. Objectified (cultural goods e.g., books)
- c. Institutionalised (educational qualifications; "academic qualifications are to cultural capital what money is to economic capital" (Bourdieu, 1977: 187))

This kind of capital is inherited but is “no doubt the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital” (Bourdieu, 1986: 19). Cultural capital takes three forms, each intertwined with education. First, embodied cultural capital – the form in which it exists in mind and body – “requires pedagogical action, [like] the investment of time by parents...to sensitize the child to cultural distinctions” (Reay, 2004: 75). Second, in its objectified state, cultural capital exists “as cultural goods such as books” (Bourdieu, 1986: 17). Finally, in its institutionalised state, cultural capital takes the form of educational qualifications.

Unlike the direct inheritance of economic capital in the form of money or property rights, inheritance of cultural capital is probabilistic. Well-educated parents are more likely to pass on to their children the capacity to succeed in the Western education system and, consequently, the skills needed to get the best jobs. This not only equates to academic knowledge; “the educational institution [also] succeeds in imposing cultural practices that it does not teach” (Bourdieu, 1984: 18). The appreciation of ‘high’ art, for example, is “a product of history reproduced by education” (Bourdieu, 1984: xxxvi).

3.4.1.4. SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

Finally, symbolic capital is the form the others take when they are perceived as legitimate by those with the upper hand in society; this is the “key mechanism in the conversion to power” (Skeggs, 1997: 7). In the following, I will elaborate on the process of legitimation and the conversion of capital to symbolic capital. This conversion is key in understanding how levels of cultural capital may have affected attitudes to Brexit.

3.4.2. THE SYMBOLIC ECONOMY, INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSION

The Bourdieusian concept of the symbolic economy and its links to inequality and exclusion, can help us understand the relationship between social class and the Brexit vote (Mckenzie, 2017b). Ultimately, “people are distributed in the overall social space according to: the global *volume* of capital they possess; the *composition* of their capital, the relative weight in their overall capital” (Skeggs, 1997: 7). This affects ‘inclusion’ in the symbolic economy. By economy, Bourdieu refers not only to a “monetary

organization, but also the systematic organization of the symbolic, which enables exchange and the attribution of value across a range of fields” (Skeggs, 2004a: 15).

When ‘trading’ in the symbolic economy, capital is most valuable and profitable in its legitimate form, when it becomes symbolic. The question is, though: who decides what is valuable and legitimate? Value is “often equated with *ought*, the norm or moral, and separated from *is*, the fact” (Skeggs, 2004a: 14) and “always works in the interests of those who can name it as such” (Skeggs, 2004a: 14). In terms of cultural capital, simply because the middle classes were able to assign greater value to the inscriptions associated with themselves (Savage, 2003; Reay, 2007), the legitimate and most valuable form that cultural capital can take is based on the [white] middle-class norm (Reay, 1998; Savage, 2004; Skeggs, 2004a) – at least in the European context. The subsequent devaluing of anyone not part of the ‘norm’ means that what the ‘other’ possess is seen to hold less value. These groups are stigmatised, rather than ennobled (Bourdieu, 1984: 15), and the result is inequality between different groups in society. The white-ness of this ‘legitimate’ position is also problematic; “skin colour acts as a form of embodied capital that disrupts and lessens the worth of the cultural capital held by black middle classes” (Rollock, 2014: 448). According to Rollock, the dispositions which are considered legitimate, i.e., white middle-class male-ness, “are exactly those which keep the black middle classes on the fringes of middle classness” (2014: 449). As will be explored below, this is not just a case of mis-identification but has far reaching effects, causing inequality in educational outcomes, health inequality, and income inequality. The inequality created by the middle-class norm is exacerbated by representations in the media, academia and politics. The centrality of the middle-class, white male norm in social science research historically (Savage, 2003: 536) and the media coverage of Brexit voting behaviour suggests this kind of exclusionary device is just as predominant now in Britain as it was a century ago (Reay, 1998: 265). As such, “most representations of working-class people [in the UK] contribute to devaluing and delegitimizing their already meagre capitals, putting further blocks on tradability, denying any conversion into symbolic capital” (Skeggs, 2004: 9).

Mckenzie uses the ideas outlined above in conjunction with the Brexit vote. In describing the many factors which combine to create patterns of class exclusion, she suggests that the participants in her study – working-class communities in East London and Nottinghamshire – “could only ‘trade’ in social and cultural capital that had very little worth beyond the bounds of their own local communities” (2017b: 202). This devaluing led to feelings of exclusion amongst her participants and a vote to leave the EU. Cosmopolitan ‘remain’ voters, on the other hand, were typically “middle-class, urban, white-collar professionals and who possess economic, social and cultural capital of much broader value” (Mckenzie, 2017b: 202). It is on the basis of Mckenzie’s ideas about cultural capital, exclusion and Brexit that I began to understand my participants’ attitudes and operationalise Bourdieu’s concepts in the context of Brexit. With that addressed, I’ll describe how gender and race can be seen to intersect with cultural capital.

3.5. BOURDIEU AND GENDER

Bourdieu is criticised for his “less than rigorous and often androcentric treatment of gender” (McCall, 1992: 839), where gender is taken to constitute a ‘secondary’ – read: less impactful – part of us. Gender, however, clearly continues to play a definitive role in society. In order to sufficiently understand the impact of gender on cultural capital, it is first necessary to outline the criticisms levelled against Bourdieu’s work, to make clear the insufficiencies of the concepts, and necessity of reading gender as part of our ‘embodied cultural capital’ instead.

It is argued that Bourdieu cannot account for the nuanced practices of those who are not in the dominant – or legitimate – group. He describes in great detail the position of the ‘legitimate’ (white, male) middle classes, and this is a weakness of his work (Skeggs, 2004b: 30). Whilst an individual’s social position is “determined by many factors” (McCall, 1992: 840), the primary principle of societal division, for Bourdieu, is occupation and the capitals associated with it (McCall, 1992: 841). This is highlighted by the position of a penniless artist who, despite a lack of economic capital, would still be considered part of the ‘dominant’ group as a result of the cultural capital associated with the occupation (this is

not particular to contemporary society but has been the case since the Victorian era, where elite discourses separated “‘people like “the intelligent artisan”, to whom British middle-class radicals were anxious to give the vote, from the “dangerous and ragged masses” whom they were still determined to exclude” (Hobsbawm, 1997, cited by Virdee, 2014: 39)). In other words, the individual’s occupation defines their place in society. Secondary principles of societal division, on the other hand, include age, race, gender, sexuality and geographical location. These aspects of identity are “considered *general, biological forces* which obtain *specificity* from social class position” (McCall, 1992: 841). This reading of Bourdieu’s work, and the secondary position of gender as influencing aspect of our lived experiences, means, however, that Bourdieu’s work stops “short realizing the potential of gendered dispositions” (McCall, 1992: 845).

If, however, we take a slightly different approach, it is possible to look at gender as a *defining* part of our lived experience, rather than something that lies in the background, only given meaning by our social position. Gender is often seen as secondary “because it is hidden and it is hidden because it appears to be universal” (McCall, 1992: 844). Maybe Bourdieu, as part of the ‘legitimate’ group he describes, is able to ignore gender in this way. Feminist accounts suggest that instead, the nature of gender as universal, i.e., something that affects everyone, means that it cannot be ignored. Instead, it can be seen to constitute part of our *embodied cultural capital*. Rather than secondary and unimportant, then, gender “is predisposed to function as symbolic capital...to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate (inherited) competence” (Bourdieu, 1986: 245) and, as a result, cultural capital in its most powerful form. Hence, according to McCall (1992), gendered cultural capital becomes a palpable force in the social structure and intimately tied to class position. Despite criticisms, then, that Bourdieu does not “consider gender in any systematic fashion” (McCall, 1992: 837), it becomes possible to use his concepts to understand the significant role of gender in cultural capital and society, the inequality that exists across genders, and the potential resulting feelings of exclusion of those not part of the ‘dominant’ group.

Just as the white middle-class norm is taken as the legitimate form of cultural capital in certain spheres, gender can boost an individual's levels of cultural capital "only if it is symbolically legitimated (historically, for instance via class, as a particular version of middle-class moral femininity)" (Skeggs, 2004: 24). MacLeavy argues that Brexit was "a critical moment in which gender relations [were] reshaped" (2018: 206). Given the focus of campaign rhetoric on the economy, trade, immigration and defence, rather than issues such as gender equality, it appears, therefore, that Brexit has done the opposite of legitimating the position of women. Instead, we have seen "a further re-masculinisation of the state and politics... [where] equality is side-lined in pursuit of higher political and economic goals" (MacLeavy, 2018: 211). Taking an intersectional view of Brexit, the 'double discrimination' faced by minority women, who can "experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men" (Crenshaw, 1989: 149) must be taken into account; Brexit side-lined women and, at the same time, legitimised racial violence, negatively impacting on minority women even more so. It is possible to understand how the Brexit debate could have created distance between women, and especially women of colour, and the ideals of the leave campaign, in turn bolstering support for EU membership. Even seven (!) years on, it's still crucial to explore the impact of the "relatively little attention paid to women's issues (and other minority rights) in the exit negotiations" (MacLeavy, 2018: 2016) on Brexit attitudes.

3.6. BOURDIEU AND RACE

Just as Bourdieu is criticised for his misunderstanding of the role of gender in society, he is called out for lack of attention to race. In fact, Bourdieu only refers to race in his first book, *The Algerians/ Algerian Sketches* (1962). Throughout this work, he tries to understand and explain Algerian culture, Algeria as a colonised nation at war against France, its coloniser, and (briefly) the racial discrimination experienced by Algerians to (left-wing) French society. Crucially, the attention Bourdieu pays to race in this book is in no way proportional to the attention he pays to social class. This is likely the result of two factors. For a start, social theory in general, "throughout most of the twentieth century, remained impoverished in

its consideration of [race]" (Trevino et al., 2008: 7), and Bourdieu was limited by French legislation prohibiting the use of questions pertaining to ethnicity in social surveys (Bennet, 2010: xxii). The whiteness of the 'legitimate' version of cultural capital is also criticised as problematic and exclusionary (Archer, 2010; Wallace, 2017, 2018, 2019; Yosso, 2005), just as the middle-class and male-ness of it is. Ultimately these criticisms have led to a dismissal – by some – of the idea that Bourdieu's theory is useful when researching the experiences of ethnic minorities. Bourdieu's inadequate attention to race has led to ambiguity in the use of the concept of cultural capital when considering race, and to the idea that race only puts limits on the cultural capital available to a person of colour. I will argue, however, that Bourdieu's concepts do help us understand the relationship between race and social class, but only if race is taken to constitute a definitive part of our embodied cultural capital, just as gender is. When understood as such, and informed by anti-racist as well as Bourdieusian work, the effects of race on cultural capital can be seen most completely, and by bringing into play the concept of 'fields', in a not-always limiting way.

Rollock argues that, although Bourdieu does not mention race explicitly, it is "quietly present in his work" (2014: 449) and that "skin colour acts as a form of embodied capital that disrupts and lessens the worth of cultural capital held by black middle classes" (2014: 448). Whilst we can gain more objectified cultural capital by buying more books and we can increase our institutional cultural capital by getting another degree, or a promotion, we can't change our embodied cultural capital so easily. It is who we *are*, it is inherent to us and, therefore, most directly converted – or not – to symbolic capital. The whiteness of the 'legitimate' version of cultural capital has very tangible effects on the cultural capital available to people of colour – and can be seen as a motor behind the everyday and systemic racism that exists in the UK, and across the West. Two such examples of this, described in relation to Bourdieu's work, are 'deficit thinking' (Yosso, 2005) and 'class imaging' (Rollock et al., 2015; Wallace, 2018) – I will explain below what these two concepts mean. Following this thread, it is possible to see how racism limits the cultural capital available to some individuals. If, for example, an overriding signifier of membership of the middle class is whiteness (Archer, 2010), then the social mobility of

people from an ethnic minority background, middle-class or not, will be inherently limited (Yosso, 2005). This argument is often used to “explain why the academic outcomes of People of Colour are significantly lower than the outcomes of Whites” (Yosso, 2005: 70). Central to these explanations is the idea that people from an ethnic minority background are in some way ‘lacking’. This kind of ‘deficit thinking’ is overtly disempowering for anyone not part of the white, middle-class group and “one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism” (Yosso: 2005: 75). Given that educational attainment is a key marker of cultural capital for Bourdieu, it is clear to see the impact that the whiteness of cultural capital has on a person of colour’s own accrual of cultural capital.

The whiteness associated with middle-class-ness also confines ethno-racial identities to the working classes (Rollock et al., 2015; Wallace, 2018) (although we know, too, that the working class in Britain has been mis-represented as white, excluding working-class people of colour (see section 2.2.1. of chapter 2 above, pp20-22)). The assumptions related to this ‘class imaging’ – which renders “blackness synonymous with material and cultural poverty” (Wallace, 2018: 467) – is “limited, and arguably racist” (Wallace, 2018: 467) and leads to the exclusion of the experiences of those from an ethnic minority background who do identify as middle-class. Related to this racialised notion of cultural capital are the effects of national belonging (Skeggs, 2004a: 19; Erel, 2010: 644), or the supposed lack thereof. The whiteness of cultural capital also limits the opportunities available to new migrants. The ‘rucksack approaches’ which assume that migrants “bring a set of cultural resources from the country of origin to the country of migration that either fit or do not fit” (Erel, 2010: 642) limit the inherent value of migrants’ cultural capital¹.

It is possible to see, based on these criticisms of the whiteness of legitimate cultural capital, how the cultural capital available to people of colour and migrants is limited by the racialised concept of cultural capital and, ultimately, the structural and everyday racism that exists in the UK. Outside of the realm of

¹ In the interests of presenting the development of my research transparently, this is about as far as I went initially into discussing migrants’ experience and cultural capital, and it was tied to a discussion of race, limiting any potential (but necessary) discussion of the attitudes of white migrants.

Bourdieuian scholarship, the work of anti-racist and intersectional scholars brings to light the ever-present and unending very tangible impact of the whiteness of legitimate cultural capital, explaining it in terms of white privilege (Eddo-Lodge, 2017) and white supremacy in Western societies (Saad, 2020). The negative impacts of white privilege are endless and include people of colour working twice as hard to reach the same position as their white counterparts (Hirsch, 2018) and the psychological effects of the whiteness of the workplace on people of colour (Rollock et al., 2015: 164). Taking an intersectional view, it has been shown in the (very relevant) realm of British academia, for example, “that a Black person will never reach the same level of inclusion as their white peers, and as Black *women* it becomes even more difficult to be taken seriously” (Diallo, 2019: 221). It is all the more relevant to highlight the ongoing prejudices faced by minorities in light of the current government’s decision to contest the notion of ‘white privilege’, considering it “unhelpful, stigmatising and potentially divisive” (UK Government, 2022b). The paper just cited, Kemi Badenoch’s ‘Inclusive Britain: government response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities’, makes for quite an uncomfortable read as decades of prejudice against students of colour is side-lined, while the importance of support for white British children is put at the forefront of their policy concerns, a position also pushed by the Education Committee, fronted by Tory MP Robert Halfon (see p190 for further discussion).

What has been discussed so far in reference to race and culture capital is how the ‘legitimate’ version creates *limits* for people of colour, and people of colour have only been referenced as a homogenous group in comparison to white people. Whilst this basic understanding helps to paint a picture of the relationship between race and cultural capital in Bourdieu’s terms, it does not tell us the whole story and to stop here would be exclusionary. It is necessary and possible to move towards a broader understanding of race and cultural capital, where ethnic minorities are considered heterogeneously, rather than as a homogenous group. By bringing in the additional concept of ‘fields’ it also becomes possible to see versions of ‘legitimate’ cultural capital not defined by whiteness.

There are two key considerations necessary to moving towards an understanding of the heterogeneity of different ethnic groups. First, just as ethnic minorities are not a homogenous group in society,

different ethnic groups are not homogenous in terms of social position either; we cannot assume that all people from a particular ethnic group will fall into the same social class. Learning from Erel's understanding of different *migrant* groups, the cultural capital of an individual is affected by gender, class, educational status and ethnic affiliation (2010: 650), i.e., the social position of any individual from any ethnic background will result from any number of different aspects of their identity. Each ethnic group may, however, also "be categorized by the social positions of its members" (Bourdieu, 1985: 743). The cultural capital available to members of a particular ethnic group will, therefore, also be affected by the capital held by the whole group. This cyclical relationship is complex but independent of economic or cultural considerations as ethnicity, according to Bourdieu, is not defined by economic or cultural properties (1985: 743).

The second part of this understanding of ethnic groups as heterogenous begins with inequality in the 'tradability' of different racialised identities. Black working-class masculinity, for example, "operates in popular culture as a mobile cultural style" (Skeggs, 2004: 1) and can be "transported through white bodies" (Diawara, 1998: 52, cited by Skeggs, 2004: 1). A white male actor can be expected to play a 'cool' character, based on the aforementioned essentialised black identity. The same would not be expected of white working-class masculinity. That the stereotypical Black working-class form of masculinity is 'played' but white working-class masculinity is not devalues the former, limiting the cultural capital associated with it. Multiple similar examples exist, unequally affecting the cultural capital of individuals of different ethnic identities and class backgrounds.

A final aspect of the debate around race and cultural capital which will inform my analysis is Wallace's concept of 'Black cultural capital'. Wallace, and others, argue that criticisms about the lack of attention to race in Bourdieu's work are actually based on mis-readings of his work (Wallace, 2017; Tichavakunda, 2019). The work of those who criticise Bourdieu for his lack of attention to race, it is argued, are based in "rampant misinterpretations" (Tichavakunda, 2019: 660). Wallace, for example, argues that race did matter to Bourdieu and that, in fact, he was more interested in an expansive framing of race that moved beyond the black/ white binary dominant at the time. Bourdieu "invested in an understanding of caste

– a typology of ‘race’ or ethnicity – which highlighted the social construction of racialisation” (2017: 909) and did not fit the dominant ideas of the time, still based in the idea that race was a fixed biological category.

Wallace argues, based on his reading of Bourdieu’s work, that cultural capital *can* help us to understand the intersection between race and social class, by bringing the concept of ‘fields’ into play. In studying ‘Black cultural capital’, the “appropriation of middle-class values by black ethnics” (Wallace, 2017: 907), it becomes clear that “cultural capital is not tantamount to middle-class whiteness” (Wallace, 2018: 477). Through research at a South London secondary school, Wallace finds that Black cultural capital “produces economic returns...in the corporate sphere and potentially for [a Black middle-class student] too in enhancing his candidacy for admission to elite universities” (Wallace, 2018: 477). Habitus “needs to be placed in the context of different fields, with the result that it can be dynamic” (Savage, 2003: 541). If the inherent value of Black cultural capital is clear in certain settings or ‘fields’, then it is possible to move past the overwhelmingly limiting conceptions of white cultural capital, but only if field is central to the understanding; the white, middle-class nature of cultural capital may hold in some settings but certainly not all of them.

3.7. BOURDIEU, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Educational attainment is also relevant to this study given its centrality to Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital and the quantitative analyses of the Brexit vote that highlighted the impact of education on voting behaviour (see section 2.2.3. of the Literature Review, pp23-25) and in need of a more detailed discussion here. Education is tied up with each of the three forms of cultural capital conceptualised by Bourdieu – embodied, institutionalised and objectified – as outlined above. However, processes of social reproduction mean that educational attainment is often not just the product of individual talent but of the school attended and the family’s resources. As such, cultural capital is unequally spread across the board, with middle-class families advantaged (Sullivan, 2001: 893).

Schools are an important source of social reproduction, according to Bourdieu, as they sanction “the hereditary transmission of cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986: 17) and, in doing so, instil a certain set of middle-class values in successive generations. Schools work in a subtle way to perpetuate the inequality in educational attainment. Rather than enforcing conservative values across the board, schools respond “to students who are, in fact, “ready” for such schooling, to privilege them in this sense” (Nash, 1990: 436). At the same time, students without the necessary white, middle-class *embodied* cultural capital, are left to withdraw. Those students who have been ‘primed’, or who push through the initial barriers created by schools’ white, middle-class bias, will be met by a second hurdle in accruing *institutionalised* cultural capital. The value of academic qualifications – cultural capital in its *institutionalised* state – differs from school to school. In this way, Bourdieu argues that the education system institutes “cultural capital by collective magic” (Bourdieu, 1986: 2); schools with an exceptional reputation bring (later, occupational) opportunity to their students not available to others.

A relationship between low educational attainment and a vote to leave were found at the aggregate and individual levels (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). McKenzie’s suggestion that the exclusion of some voters from the symbolic marketplace led to a leave vote at the referendum could be extended to take voters’ individual education attainment, skill levels, or work experience into account. In McKenzie’s terms, low educational attainment and associated limited cultural capital could have driven feelings of exclusion and, by extension, anti-EU sentiment. That many Eton and Oxbridge-educated Conservative MPs and their supporters also voted to leave the EU implies that feelings of exclusion caused by lower educational attainment cannot fully explain the Brexit vote, but it may go some way in expanding what we do know about class and Brexit.

3.8. FIELDS: TWO BOROUGHES AS SEPARATE SOCIAL WORLDS

Moving away from capital, I’ll now turn to the concept of ‘fields’ and the idea that the context of the two boroughs as separate *fields* may have affected the referendum results. McKenzie notes the importance of *context* in looking at social class and that “the connection between space, place, and

class inequality is central in understanding [the Brexit vote]” (2017: 269). The concept of ‘field’ offers a useful lens through which to view this relationship. If “different exchange mechanisms generate different values from different perspectives in different fields” (Skeggs, 2004a: 2), then it is possible to see how the boroughs’ – or smaller scale neighbourhoods’ and communities’ – ‘rules’ could lead to different ideas of ‘valuable’ cultural capital. I assumed that, if (parts of) the two boroughs constituted different fields as a result of their different histories (as explored in the Methods section below), then this could go a long way in explaining the opposing referendum results.

According to Bourdieu’s early theorisations, fields were abstract social spaces, rather than physical locations; in fact, he “insisted on a very clear distinction between social and physical space” (Hanquinet et al., 2013: 511). The logic of this idea makes sense in large urban areas, as it is not necessarily true that two people living next door to each other will know each other or hold similar views. However, there appears to be a shift in Bourdieu’s later work where he demonstrated that “fields matter concretely, that the relational power struggle they illuminate cannot but be marked in the urban landscape itself” (Hanquinet et al., 2013: 513). Whilst two neighbours might not know each other, there is an inherent link between physical location and social space.

The idea that the “physical space is the concretization of the social space” (Hanquinet et al., 2013: 514) is evident in Skeggs’ study of working-class women. Value depended on the field and the field was ‘local’: “sometimes the value attributions [for femininity, race and class] contradicted one another and in their local situations the women were able to produce value for themselves from these negative attributions” (Skeggs, 2004a: 14). In the ‘local’ field, these women were able to re-evaluate the inscriptions associated with them and contest the negative connotations with working-class-ness or gender. This was, however, more difficult outside of the local, in fields in which the inscriptions were institutionalised, “when [the negative connotations were] written into social relations by forms of authorization and legitimation” (Skeggs, 2004a: 14).

The two boroughs’ starkly different social and economic histories may lead them to constitute two very separate fields, with different social rules and values assigned to racialised cultural capital and class.

The same can be said when it comes to smaller scale neighbourhoods and communities *within* the boroughs (and my study shows, in the end, that it is smaller areas that shape attitudes, rather than whole boroughs). By bringing this into analysis, I bring a new level of understanding to what we have learned about the Brexit vote through quantitative research. What's more, certain trends associated with the two boroughs I consider in this research could also be representative of other areas in the UK, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the geographic explanations of the Brexit vote. Hence, the concept of 'fields' and the utility of Bourdieu's theory explaining the relationship between physical and social space, identity and political attitudes, may give weight and theoretical backing to the quantitative explanations of the Brexit vote, well-established in the political science literature.

3.9. OPERATIONALISING BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS IN THE CONTEXT OF BREXIT

I explained above how I used McKenzie's ideas about exclusion to understand attitudes to Brexit. However, some other concepts – including cultural capital and transnationalism – still require attention.

3.9.1. OPERATIONALISING 'BREXIT ATTITUDES' AS 'FEELINGS TOWARDS TRANSNATIONALISM'

How an individual feels towards transnationalism appears to be the crucial link between demographics and the Brexit vote, bringing with it, too, a clear link between identity and exclusion in McKenzie's terms. Transnationalism, when considered broadly, applies to the EU itself – considerations of EU integration as a process (Hooghe and Marks, 2018) and trust in the EU's institutions and democracy (Costello et al., 2012; Clarke et al. 2017: 445; De Vries, 2020) – and extends past it, bringing into the debate, for example, a preference for an open or closed society and an affinity with or resistance against being part of a wider community (Clarke et al., 2017) and attitudes to immigration. I use transnationalism as the operationalisation of EU attitudes as it links various aspects of the Brexit debate to levels of education and occupation (key markers of cultural capital).

3.9.2. A BROAD OPERATIONALISATION OF 'CULTURAL CAPITAL'

Sullivan argues that “the concept of cultural capital is substantive enough to be operationalised, although Bourdieu does not make it at all obvious how this should be done” (2001: 894). Whilst this has led different researchers in different settings to operationalise the concept in a multitude of ways (see, for example, Nash, 1990; DiMaggio, 1982; Robinson and Garnier, 1985; Crook, 1997; Sullivan, 2001; Reay, 2004), it does allow a degree of flexibility in operationalising the concept in a new setting. Education and occupation are central to the literature just outlined *and* to the concept of cultural capital itself, which helps in understanding Bourdieu’s concepts in a new setting. In short, low levels of cultural capital tend to lead to a resistance towards transnationalism and feelings of exclusion from the EU. High levels of cultural capital, on the other hand, tend to lead to positive feelings towards transnationalism and feelings of inclusion. Having said this, DiMaggio warns that single measures of cultural capital, for example, educational attainment, are inadequate (1982: 199) – a sentiment also held by Sullivan (2001). Therefore, I used a broad operationalisation of cultural capital, including two of the three forms of cultural capital most relevant to this study. In Bourdieu’s description, educational qualifications constitute institutionalised cultural capital. As an extension, Robinson and Garnier (1985) find that educational attainment is a vehicle of mobility into managerial positions, making educational qualifications *and* higher-level occupations signifiers of institutional cultural capital. I also considered how participants describe their embodied cultural capital outside of their gender and race, is often operationalised as interest in ‘highbrow’ culture, like artists and musical composers (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985), and involvement in cultural activities, including arts attendance (DiMaggio, 1982; De Graaf, 1986), reading literature (DiMaggio, 1982; Crook, 1997; Sullivan, 2001) and watching sophisticated television programmes (Sullivan, 2001). In the context of the EU, I assumed this would extend to a desire to travel, learn different languages and an interest in ‘other cultures’. This led to a greater fit between the operationalisation and concept itself and allowed for a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between cultural capital and EU attitudes than is possible through looking at education levels alone.

3.9.3. CULTURAL CAPITAL, TRANSNATIONALISM AND EXCLUSION

Education and occupation are frequently mentioned in analyses of the Brexit vote and divide leave and remain voters. In short, individuals with lower education levels and lower status occupations were more likely to vote to leave, whilst those with higher levels of education and higher status jobs were most likely to vote to remain. Transnationalism is the most compelling explanation for this and is picked up in many analyses, including those that use the 'left behind' terminology (for example, Hobolt, 2016) and those that critique it (Mckenzie, 2017b).

Transnationalism is unlikely to benefit those with lower skill levels and lower status occupations and does not lead to their upward mobility. Instead, transnationalism creates a wider pool of low-skilled workers willing to take low wages, keeping that group in competition for low-skilled jobs at ever lower wages (Clarke et al., 2017). Transnationalism, then, can lead less educated groups to resist being part of a wider community, to be more likely to have an 'exclusive' national identity (i.e., a strong English national identity) (Hooghe and Marks, 2007; Clarke et al. 2017) and see Brexit as an opportunity to restrict immigration (Clarke et al., 2017; Hobolt, 2016). Negative feelings towards transnationalism are also likely to undermine trust in democracy at the EU level (Costello et al., 2012) and increase the desire to defend national sovereignty (Kriesi, 2007: 89; Hooghe and Marks, 2018). These voters tend to be more socially conservative (Costello et al., 2012; Hobolt, 2018) and more likely to push back against what they see as 'political correctness' (Bowman and West, 2021).

The effect of low levels of education on transnationalism and, in turn, EU attitudes, is backed up by and elaborated upon by Mckenzie (2017a; b), whose ethnographic work involves the Brexit attitudes of working-class people in East London and post-industrial areas of Nottinghamshire. These voters were very poorly paid, on zero-hour contracts, or in highly deskilled jobs, with no prospect of career development (low cultural capital) and felt excluded: the political remoteness of these voters led to an undeniable fear of outsiders coming and taking what little was left. They saw transnationalism as a

threat to their already disadvantaged way of living and felt excluded from the potential benefits of EU membership, fostering anti-EU attitudes.

Transnationalism can, however, benefit those with higher levels of education and higher status occupations, as higher status occupations are more likely to benefit from low trade barriers (Clarke et al. 2017). This can lead to positive feelings towards transnationalism and an affinity with the concept of being part of a wider community (Clarke et al., 2017) and 'inclusion' within the realm of EU membership and what it represents. In turn, this group is more likely to favour multiculturalism and international cooperation (Hobolt, 2018) and have a more inclusive national identity (i.e., British or mixed national identity) (Clarke et al., 2017). This more socially liberal group is, therefore, more likely to be open to immigration (Hobolt, 2018), to be more satisfied with democracy at the EU level (Costello et al., 2012) and wish to strengthen European unification (Dolny and Babos, 2015).

3.9.4. RACE, TRANSNATIONALISM AND EXCLUSION

Race and the Brexit vote has received very little attention in the literature, relative to that revolving around the so-called 'left behind'. However, research into ethnicity and Brexit does offer one useful insight: "that immigration became an issue of contention during the referendum campaign" (House of Commons Library, 2016) and ethnic minority voters were more likely to hold positive views towards immigration. An individual from an ethnic minority background may feel positively towards transnationalism if they themselves, or members of their family or community, have benefited from the opening of borders and migration – and were more likely to have had more positive contact with EU migrants (Begum, 2018). It makes sense that a stronger affinity with the concepts of an open society and of being part of a wider community would follow.

Having said this, Begum also suggests that the ethnic minority remain vote may have been less about positive EU sentiment and more a reaction against the leave campaign's anti-immigration rhetoric: "Slogans such as 'take back control' and 'make Britain great again' were less appealing to ethnic minority remain voters, who associated them with nostalgia for empire and a longing for a 'pre-

immigration white era' on the part of the leave campaign" (2018). Whether the ethnic minority remain vote was actively pro-immigration or a push-back against the leave campaign's anti-immigration rhetoric, the social rules of the community – or 'field' – appear to be the crux of the matter in this case, rather than levels of cultural capital.

In terms of the whiteness of the leave vote, structural racism, white supremacy and xenophobia all point towards negative feelings towards transnationalism and feelings of exclusion from the EU. If the leave campaign was built at least in part around re-imagining the English working class as the victim of neoliberalism (Emejulu, 2016), then it is possible to see how that rhetoric could have shaped white voter's attitudes to see transnationalism as the cause of poverty and the de-valuing of the working-class identity and that led some working class people to feel they would not and could not benefit from EU membership.

With my Bourdieusian, intersectional theoretical framework outlined and operationalised, I'll now describe my research design.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I explain why and how I used the generic inductive approach, and the ways in which I intended to create inclusive and participant-led research. I then go on to describe my methods, including theoretical considerations and how they worked in practice. This chapter also contains a description of my sample.

4.1. GENERIC INDUCTIVE APPROACH

As I began my research and became aware of the gaps in our knowledge of the Brexit vote, I was drawn to ethnography, studies that explain the Brexit vote very convincingly, bringing vital nuance to the current quantitative political science work on Brexit attitudes while avoiding extractive research practices. Conducting an ethnographic study was out of my reach due to the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted in-person research. This left me seeking an alternative appropriate methodology for this qualitative research and, in turn, led me to the generic inductive approach. This approach allows for ‘methodological flexibility’ (Lui, 2016: 9) and is most clearly defined in the negative, in that it is “not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known [or more established] qualitative methodologies” (Caelli et al., 2003: 4). Hence, a generic inductive approach allowed me to wind the strengths of established methodologies, including ethnographic and feminist methodology, into my work, whilst maintaining flexibility (Kahlke, 2014: 39). Whilst this flexible methodological approach leaves it open to criticism, particularly about the rigorousness of the research produced (which I will discuss later on), its value lies in the bespoke design it allows the researcher to develop.

The approach is often used in areas where there is little or no empirical or theoretical research but “even when a significant amount of research literature and theories are available...some researchers still find merit in the [approach]” (Kahlke, 2014: 47). Brexit could not be considered ‘understudied’ but the research that does exist sometimes lacks depth and nuance. This, I’d say, is a case for methodological innovation, to blend what we know from quantitative studies which used huge survey

datasets with the depth and breadth of qualitative methods. Whilst I could claim a ‘hollow allegiance’ to, for example, ethnography, to tick a box and avoid criticism, I, instead, chose to do “the difficult but productive work of building a research framework of [my own, asking] important questions about how various aspects of the research framework will interlock in order to offer a congruent design” (Kahlke, 2014: 48)².

I first outline the aspects of ethnographic and (intersectional) feminist methodology central to my project, followed by the aspects of the generic inductive approach which make it perfectly suited to my research (summed up in Table 4). Finally, I tend to the criticisms frequently made towards the approach, and how I ensured my research was rigorous and its design congruent.

Table 4. Features of a generic inductive approach	
Research questions	Interpretive: what are the core meanings evident in the text, relevant to the research aims
Sample	Purposeful; criteria for inclusion are contingent and demographic
Research process	Inductive and usually cyclical, moving back and forth among questions, data gathering, and data analysis
Data analysis	Focus on themes and interpretation
Criteria for ending data collection	Added data yields little new information or insight
Design	Develops and becomes increasingly focused during the research process. Goal is interpretation of rich data.
Adapted from Lui (2016: 130)	

4.1.1. INSPIRED BY ETHNOGRAPHY AND FEMINIST METHODOLOGY

There are certain aspects of ethnography which inspired me and led my research. The contextualisation and “textual rendering of social worlds” (Abu-Lughod, 2000: 261, cited in Harrison,

² My love for qualitative methods meant that this work was far more enjoyable than difficult.

2018: 5) mean that we're able to see further than some of the data collected through large-scale surveys, and what we get is based on what's happening to the people involved, in their own words.

Ethnography as "an elaborate venture in... 'thick description'" (Geertz, 1973: 6, cited in Harrison, 2018: 28) leads the reader to imagine the world being researched and to view participants as people, rather than containers of data ready to be used elsewhere in a very disembodied form.

The inclusion of Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' to understand better how communities and neighbourhoods may have affected Brexit attitudes made this 'textual rendering of social worlds' all the more possible. By empathising with my participants and placing them at the centre, I have tried to go some way to understanding the division and emotion that exists around Brexit.

Re-balancing the researcher-researched relationship has been a guiding principle of my research from the beginning as well, hence, I also took inspiration from feminist methodology (Pillow, 2003; Berger, 2015). However, I broaden this to frame it as 'intersectional feminist methodology', as introduced in my theoretical framework (see pp53-58). Feminist methodology, in its essence, aims to create an "equal relationship between researcher and participants in order to: (1) empower women [and] (2) raise consciousness of women's issues" (Cooper and Endecott, 2007: 817). Taking the lead from intersectionality, I recognise that focusing on the effects of gender alone means ignoring race as a form of oppression (Crenshaw; 1989; Alinia, 2015). Leading my research was a commitment, then, to place participants as the experts in their own lives, and me as learner, and to raise awareness of the inequalities, gender- *and* race-based, created during much of existing research into Brexit. By critiquing the 'left behind' explanation, bringing to light its limited and exclusionary nature, it was possible to open the debate up in a more inclusive way, at the same time, bringing an opportunity for those who have been historically excluded to share their experience of Brexit. Most obviously, this led me to broaden my study to include those migrants unable to vote at the referendum and to consider citizenship as an additional key aspect of analysis.

4.1.2. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE APPROACH

Alongside its methodological flexibility, a number of other features of the generic inductive approach make it well-suited to my work. First of all, sampling tends to be purposive (Lui, 2016: 130). As I will explain later on in this chapter, my snowball sampling began with gatekeepers in each borough and was contingent (Lui, 2016: 130), rather than *a priori*, based on the relationships I built during my fieldwork.

While interviews tend to form the basis of a generic inductive research design, multiple sources and methods are used to broaden the material collected and for methodological triangulation (Cooper and Endacott, 2007; Kahlke, 2014). In depth interviewing allows for participants' "worlds to be approached through their own perspectives" (Lui, 2016: 132), a crucial part of the 'inductiveness' of the approach. In addition, I used focus groups and identity mapping to understand people's Brexit attitudes in ways that may not come up through individual interviews.

Analysis, in the generic inductive approach, is inductive and cyclical, moving back and forth between data gathering and analysis (Lui, 2016: 130). The inductive and cyclical nature of the data collection process suited my research well and offered me the scope to build my sample gradually, allowing for a more organic building of relationships with gatekeepers and participants over time and to take the difficulties of various COVID spikes into consideration. The research design of a generic inductive study "develops and becomes increasingly focused during the research process" (Lui, 2016: 130) and the simultaneous material gathering, analysis, re-analysis and re-reading of transcripts helped me to reflect and innovate, to ensure the research fit my overarching aims, and ensured I wasn't ignoring what a participant from the very beginning of my research had said on a topic that came up later on in fieldwork. This follows the work of academics like Charlotte Galpin, whose iterative analytical process of coding and re-reading before finalising a codeframe "allowed for a rigorous, reflexive analysis of the data" (Galpin, 2022: 306). Going back into transcripts before writing, re-writing and editing brought necessary complexity to the windy picture of Brexit attitudes described in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The cyclical nature of analysis also increased the inductive-ness of my research. Respondent validation and feedback (Cooper and Endacott, 2007: 818) ensured a close fit between my research output and the experiences of the participants themselves. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, I fed back to participants what I was hearing, to ensure we were on the same page and opening an opportunity for correction or elaboration by them. I did not always do this perfectly and made mistakes. For example, in my March 2021 focus group, I didn't double check that all participants had filled in both sides of my questionnaire, which included a question on their attitudes at the time of the Brexit vote. Given the far-reaching nature of that focus group discussion and the number of participants involved, I didn't get a chance during our time together to get a full sense of each of their attitudes (we spoke more commonly about their experiences in Dagenham and class identities, for example). As a result, and in a turn of events that is still surprising to me, given that this is a study of Brexit attitudes, I'm still unclear on the attitudes of one participant: BD21 (this is discussed in more detail on p211).

4.1.3. POTENTIAL CRITICISMS

There's not a huge amount written on the generic inductive approach and it may leave my research open to questions about its methodological grounding, its rigorousness and, ultimately, of 'method-slurring' (Kahlke, 2014). 'Method-slurring', the haphazard and unplanned mixing of methodologies, is a common criticism of generic approaches that are not rigorously planned, with claims that it leads to atheoretical research and 'bad science' (Kahlke, 2014: 43-46). To avoid 'method-slurring' and associated risks, I followed advice to set out clear strategies to establish rigour (Cooper and Endacott, 2007: 817). This started with clearly defining each phase of my research process, ensuring congruence between each phase (Cooper and Endacott, 2007: 817; Kahlke, 2014: 39). For example, my intention to create inclusive research that avoids exploitation fed into my learning from intersectional scholars, who bring to light the different forms of oppression that affect people differently. This, in turn, led to

my decision to use multiple methods, to broaden the material I gathered, bringing about a better chance to re-present my participants in the fullest way I could.

The generic inductive approach isn't a methodology as such, but its purpose is to offer an alternative to strictly defined and commonly used methodologies. The inherent flexibility of this approach suited my project and my aims to create kind and reflexive research, re-balancing the researcher-researched relationship (as far as I could) in doing so.

4.2. STRATEGIES FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE RESEARCH

My intention for this research was to wind inclusivity and openness into every decision I made, and to create a space for a wide range of voices to be heard. However, the central roles that social class and race play in this project mean that extra care and reflection on my role in the research were needed. For a white middle-class researcher to study a 'diverse' sample, in terms of race, class and, ultimately, citizenship, it was necessary to engage in "critical questioning of [my] own role and scope" (Agyeman, 2008: 82), particularly in terms of the power and privileges I have accrued through my white Britishness, middle-class upbringing, and education. While I can't limit the impact of me on the work I produce completely, I wrote this as a kind of reminder to myself as I researched the experiences of people whose lives are different to my own, and I include it here as a record of my aims (and how well I achieved them).

I cannot fully comprehend what it is like to not be a middle-class white woman, particularly when it comes to understanding a participant's experience of racism. What's more, "claiming a 'neutral' position in the study of anti-Brexit campaigns would be impossible" (Galpin, 2022: 306) for me, as, like Galpin, I found myself living and working in the EU in 2016 and proudly sent my postal vote to remain from a post box in Paris. I needed to recognise the impact of my position on the research process and outcomes, and on the participants themselves, in terms of the researcher-researched relationship and how that may have affected the openness of the people who chose to take part in my study

(Berger, 2015: 220). A crucial first step was recognising that “no research is free of the biases, assumptions, and personality of the researcher” (Sword, 1999: 277).

I positioned myself as the ‘learner’, following the principle of feminist methodology to equalise the research relationship and conduct research *with* rather than *on* (Pillow, 2003). If done well, this can create empowering research, placing the respondent as the expert and the researcher as ignorant (Berger, 2015) and there to learn about the lived experience of those who have been ‘othered’ and made invisible through academic research and public policy (Agyeman, 2008: 78). In order to place myself as learner, I was clear on meeting participants that I was there to learn and was actively seeking guidance from the participants who were ‘in the know’. Berger suggests using prompts such as ‘tell me what I may be missing’ (2015: 231) and by relaying back to participants throughout the interviews what I thought I had learnt, they were able to correct me and elaborate, or point me in the direction of anything they had not yet had the opportunity to raise.

I also intended to ‘re-present’ the voices of those involved in my research, rather than ‘represent’ them, patronisingly speak on behalf of the ‘Other’ (Agyeman, 2008: 79). While I was unable to engage in prolonged engagement with my participants (Berger, 2015: 222) through the multi-stage interview process I first planned, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the flexible nature of data collection in a generic inductive approach gave me the scope to build relationships with gatekeepers and participants as organically as I could. Taking inspiration from ethnographic research, immersion requires a “commitment to doing as much as [the researcher] can to become akin to what we might term a ‘knowledgeable tourist’” (Scott-Jones and Watt, 2010: 7). Immersion through ‘ethnographic walks’ through Barking and Dagenham with a long-term resident (BD11) in Spring 2021, helped me to ‘learn the language’ of the participants (even down to estate and area names that were brought up frequently in discussions) and understand the potentially disguised and subtle expressions of themes (as much as someone who exists outside of the participants’ communities can do). Inductive analysis was also key in re-presenting the voices of my participants, allowing themes to emerge in *their* language, reflecting their emphasis based on their experience.

Mama (1995: 65-74) carried out conversational research, which was entirely inductive, non-directive and open-ended. During her interviews, no specific questions were asked, the discussion followed from an initial introduction to the topic and allowed her to take on the role of participant. The approach allowed her to re-balance the researcher-researched relationship and to push back against the historically extractive nature of social science research. Mama's research process was fluid and kind and non-exploitative. Mama was a part of the community she was studying – she was immersed in it – and was therefore able to carry out truly free-flowing conversational research. As someone generally living outside of the groups I wished to study, this was more difficult and is reflected in the methods I chose to use (for example, semi-structured interviews, see a full discussion below, pp113-115). I took a generic inductive approach, rather than fitting my research into a more established methodological box. Doing so helped me to generate a deeper and richer 'dataset' within the confines of my PhD timeline.

Finally, I took time throughout the process to critically reflect on what I was doing, alone and through critical discussions with my supervisors and colleagues (Berger, 2015: 222). Reflexivity is increasingly seen as "a crucial strategy in the process of generating knowledge by means of qualitative research" (Berger, 2015: 219) to ensure that research is non-exploitative and avoids stereotyping. Reflexivity is particularly important in studying the unfamiliar and marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Through continual internal dialogue and critical self-reflection at every stage of the research process (Berger, 2015: 220), I hoped to be able to better maintain the ethics of the researcher-researched relationship. In reality, this became less continual and more periodic as I wrote up and edited chapters, to ensure I did indeed engage critically with my work. To identify content that I emphasized or shied away from, I also re-reviewed transcripts a few weeks after each interview and throughout the multiple 'rounds' of analysis, to see it through a new lens and become aware of what I may have over-emphasised or ignored earlier on. This was most important in my discussions of the whiteness of participant BD13 as I veered close to painting her as part of a racist, devalued working class and ignoring the experiences that led her to feel concerned by increasing migration to her town. With the

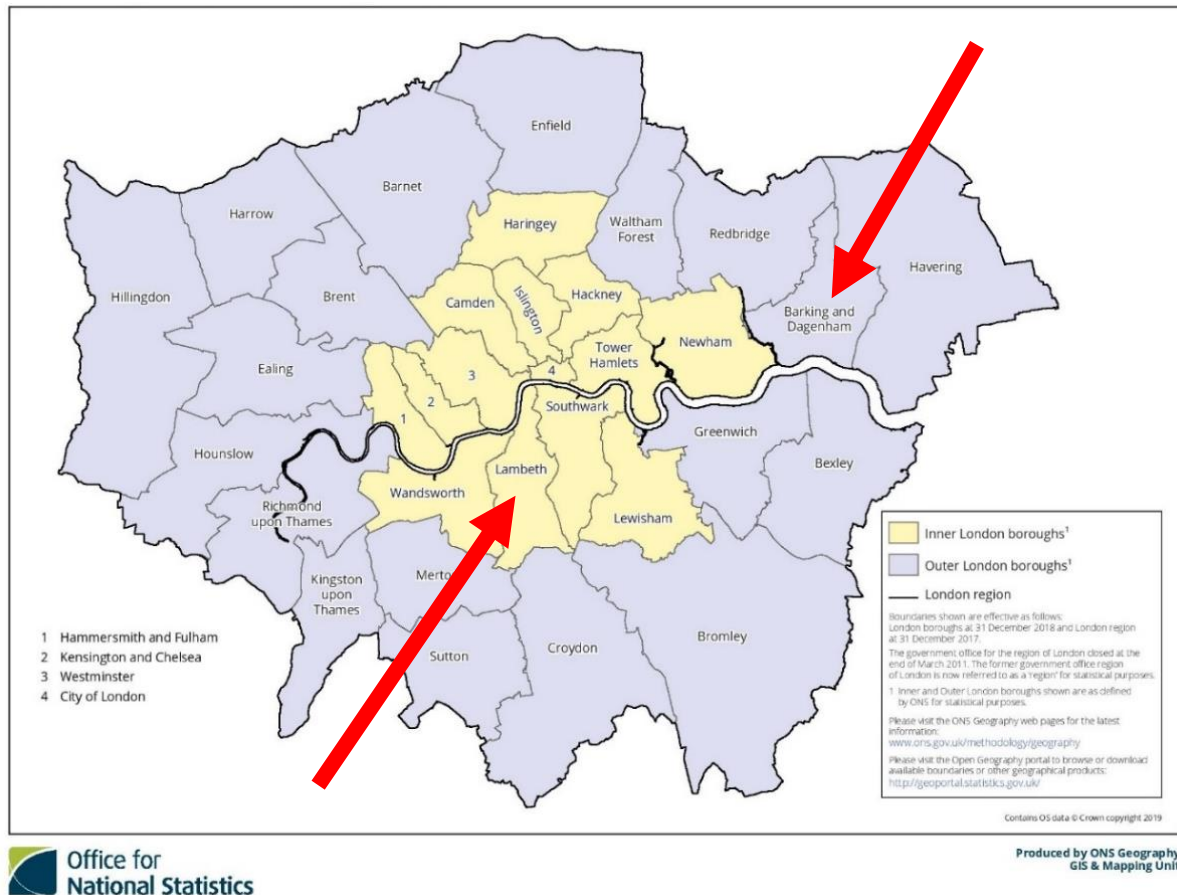
considerations I made when planning this research addressed, I will now present the geographical focus of my study and the sampling and research methods I used.

4.3. GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

I carried out my research in two London boroughs; *Lambeth* and *Barking and Dagenham*. The demographics and referendum votes in these locales make for an interesting comparison. Considered alone, these boroughs, at the time of Brexit, do seem to fit the general patterns of voting behaviour outlined in the existing Brexit literature. Lambeth is less deprived, more ethnically diverse and voted to remain. In fact, the borough was home to the highest ‘remain’ vote on the British Isles (only Gibraltar topped it, see BBC News, 2016a). Lambeth has long been a highly ethnically diverse borough; 62.4 per cent of residents at the 2021 census described their ethnicity other than White British (ONS, 2022d). Lambeth is the 8th most deprived borough in London and ranked 42 out of 317 local authorities, nationally (GLA, 2019). As the borough stretches south from the River Thames, Lambeth’s residents live between 0.2 and 6.5 miles from the Palace of Westminster, yet the diverse nature of this borough sets residents apart demographically from the representatives in Parliament.

Barking and Dagenham, on the other hand is more deprived, has experienced high *recent* levels of immigration and was one of only four in London to vote to leave. Barking and Dagenham is the most deprived London borough and ranked fifth out of 317 local authorities nationally, when looking at the Index of Multiple Deprivation (GLA, 2019). In the years between 2011 and 2021, the proportion of ‘English’ people in the borough fell from almost 70 to just under 60 per cent (ONS, 2023b). In recent years, the borough has experienced significant levels of migration due to its proximity to central London but lower cost of living. Interestingly, while Barking and Dagenham was once more demographically similar to Essex than the rest of London, with a very high proportion of White British people, it now has a lower proportion of white British people than Lambeth does, at just over 30 percent (ONS, 2022d). The centre of the borough is around 13 miles from Big Ben. The map below (Figure 3) shows the location of the two boroughs in question.

Figure 3. Map of London boroughs, highlighting Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham



(ONS, 2019a)

However, in comparison to the rest of the UK, the divergent referendum results are surprising. On the face of it, the boroughs are not all that dissimilar from each other when compared to local authorities across England and Wales: both boroughs have relatively high levels of ethnic diversity (where the proportion of White British people living in some UK Local Authorities is 80-90 per cent (ONS, 2018), in these boroughs, the figure is half or lower) and are in the top 15 per cent of deprivation of UK local authorities. The headline figures and quantitative research miss the nuance and the personal, both of which help us to understand why exactly residents voted the way did. What follows, therefore, is a detailed picture of the two boroughs as 'fields', in Bourdieu's terms, comparing each borough's demographic, cultural and industrial histories. In what follows I have used the most recent data available. The bulk is from the 2021 census, but other sources are also used and, at times, the most

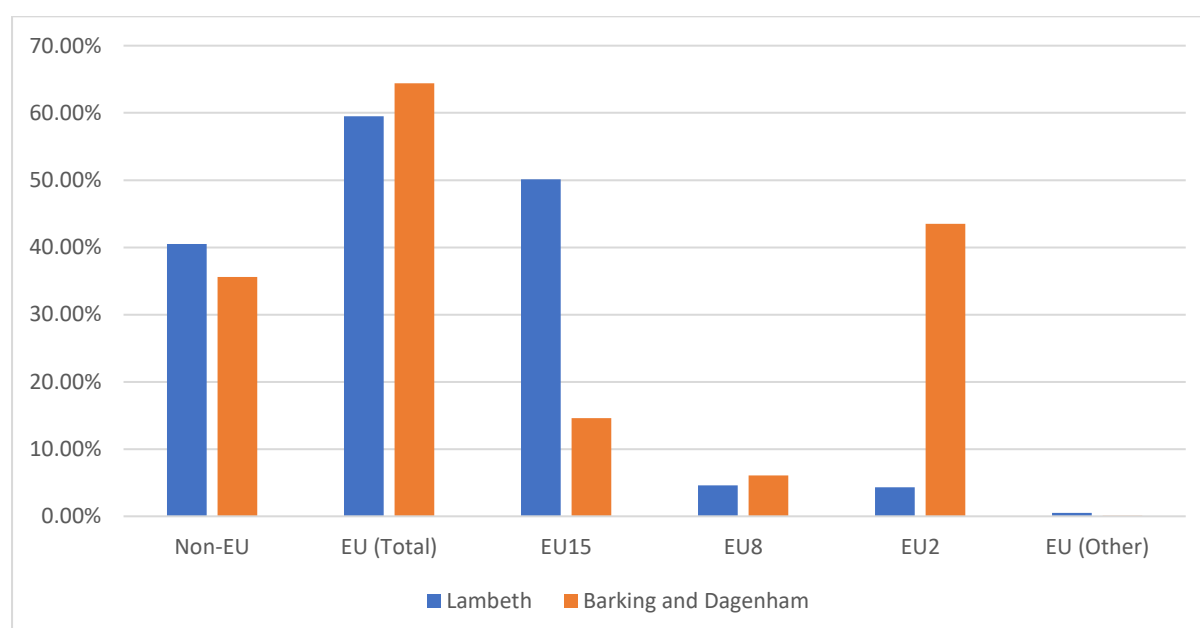
recent sources are Council documents from the mid-2010s which have not been updated or where more recent 2021 iterations do not include comparable data.

4.3.1. MIGRATION, ETHNIC DIVERSITY, AND RELIGION

Despite the similarity in the headline figures relating to current levels of ethnic diversity, the two boroughs have very different *histories* in terms of migration. When it comes to recent migration to the boroughs, the difference in EU country of origin is also stark, as Table 5, below, shows.

Lambeth has a long history of ethnic diversity and its history is tied to that of the SS Empire Windrush. During the post-war period, the borough, and Brixton in particular, became a cultural centre for the black Caribbean population (Lambeth, 2015: 14; Lambeth, 2016b: 10). This history of migration is celebrated through cultural institutions, including the Black Cultural Archives on Windrush Square in Brixton. Brixton, especially, has long been home, also, to protests and demonstrations against racism, discrimination and police violence. In 1969, for example, a Black Power rally was held “against ‘organised police brutality’ on the streets of Brixton” (Sivanandan, 2008: 120) and just over a decade later, the Brixton riots broke out after ongoing police violence against people of colour (in fact, it was after the 1981 uprisings that the Black Cultural Archives was first established (Shilliam, 2018b: 57)). That Theresa May’s ‘Go Home’ vans were driven around Brixton, urging ‘illegal immigrants’ to ‘Go Home’ (see p38 above), suggests that Brixton still stands out among political elites as a racially diverse place (despite the whitening of the area due to ongoing gentrification, see section 4.3.2. in chapter 4 for a discussion, pp90-93). According to the 2021 Census, 55 per cent of the population classified themselves as white (ONS, 2022c) (down from 57 per cent in 2011, Nomis, 2023), and 37 per cent of those in 2021 as white British (ONS, 2022d). Interestingly, this is higher than is the case for Barking and Dagenham (as will very soon be explored), making Barking and Dagenham, on the face of it, now more ethnically diverse than Lambeth.

Table 5. National Insurance Registrations by adult non-UK citizens in the year ending March 2020 (%)³



(Migration Observatory, 2022)

The borough also takes pride in being home to “the highest proportion of Portuguese-born people in the country” (Lambeth, 2015: 14), hence, the existence of ‘Little Portugal’ between Stockwell and Vauxhall and Portuguese being the most common foreign language being spoken in Lambeth (GLA, 2020). Lambeth has continued to experience rapid population growth, especially over the last couple of decades, as “large numbers of workers from abroad and also younger migrants from elsewhere in the UK” (Lambeth, 2014: 1) move to the borough. Almost 60% of non-UK citizens registering in the borough in the year ending March 2020 were from the EU. As Table 5 shows, the majority (50.1%) of incoming migrants were EU15 citizens (EU Member States covering most of Western and Southern Europe) (Migration Observatory, 2022). Having said this, the percentage of people born outside of the UK living in Lambeth at the time of the 2021 Census was 0.3 per cent lower than the same time in 2011 (falling from 38.9 per cent to 38.6 per cent) (ONS, 2022b).

³ At the time of writing, this is the most up to date data available on migration; according to the Migration Observatory, the “2021 Census and ongoing work at ONS to estimate the migrant population using administrative data sources is likely to shed light on this issue during 2022” (2022), however, I’ve not been able to find any updated data.

The story of migration to Barking and Dagenham is very different. Until at least 2001, “the borough very much mimicked Essex in terms of ethnic diversity” (Allies and Morrison, 2015), i.e., largely White British. In the last two decades, however, the borough has seen a rapid increase in ethnic diversity. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, for example, “the ethnic minority population grew from 19%...51%” (CODE, 2017: 1). According to the 2021 census, the ethnic minority population of Barking and Dagenham had risen again to 55.1 per cent of those living in the borough (ONS, 2022c), with 69 per cent describing their ethnicity as other than white British (ONS, 2022d).

In terms of in-migration, there is also a large Lithuanian community in the borough and Lithuanian is the most common language spoken after English (GLA, 2020). As in Lambeth, most recently, the majority of migrants came from the EU. However, the greatest proportion of migrants in Barking and Dagenham came from the EU2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania) (Migration Observatory, 2022), rather than Western and Southern Europe. What’s more, unlike in Lambeth, the proportion of people born outside the UK living in the borough has risen significantly since the 2011 census, from 30.9 per cent to 41.3 per cent (ONS, 2022b). Notably, this rapid population change has led to tensions, and the migrant community is actively working to “tackle hostile attitudes to immigration in the borough” (Barking and Dagenham Post, 2018).

It's crucial to note that while ethnic diversity is often used as a standalone measure, particularly when ‘diversity’ is being discussed, it arguably flattens and limits our understanding of a place (Berg and Sigona, 2013). The intersectional inequalities that different groups face in different ways when it comes to access to public services and housing, and overall levels of deprivation, in boroughs like Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham must not be ignored.

4.3.2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND DEPRIVATION

Historically, Lambeth has been characterised by its high levels of deprivation and deprivation is still very much present in the borough. Lambeth is now less deprived than it was a decade ago (Lambeth, 2021: 16) but is still in the top 25 local authorities nationally in terms of income deprivation (ONS, 2021). This

is a sign of the stark inequality in the borough: Lambeth “combines areas of affluence with areas of severe poverty and deprivation” (Lambeth, 2021: 16). Relevant to the findings of this project, areas like Brixton are home to some of the most deprived areas (Lambeth, 2021: 16) but have also seen continued gentrification and rising house prices (for example, Nelson (2012), Williams (2015) and Ahmed (2021)). Inequality can also be seen in the educational attainment of residents: the number of residents with no qualifications has fallen but “skills levels remain polarised with disproportionately high levels of residents in Lambeth having either no qualification or an NVQ level 4 qualification [equating to an undergraduate degree], compared to London as a whole” (Lambeth, 2015: 16). These patterns of inequality may result from the proximity of Lambeth to central London and, therefore, the borough’s popularity amongst commuters.

Lambeth is largely residential, but it continues to be “a destination for young working age people, rather than families” (Lambeth, 2016b: 4). Indeed, the borough “has the [second] highest working age (16 to 64) population in London” (Lambeth, 2022: 2) and the number of employed people rose between 2011 and 2021 by 1.5 per cent, while the national average fell by slightly less than one per cent (ONS, 2023a). Having said that, the population of Lambeth is now less young than it was in 2011, with populations aged 20-49 falling (ONS, 2023a), perhaps reflecting rising housing costs in the borough (average property prices were less than £300,000 in 2011, and are now almost £550,000 (Land Registry, 2023)). The “percentage of households including a couple with dependent children in Lambeth fell” (ONS, 2023a), as did the number of children aged 0-9 suggesting that the number of young families able to afford to live in the borough is even lower than it was, too.

Those who move to Lambeth as it gentrifies lead to greater levels of inequality and, at the same time, gentrification leads to rising house prices. It is not surprising, therefore, that the crisis over affordable rented and privately owned housing in the borough has only worsened in recent years (Lambeth, 2020: 2). Housing costs in Lambeth make up, on average, 51 per cent of household incomes, which is higher than the London average of 46.3 per cent (Trust for London, 2023). This leads to a geographical divide in the borough with young professionals and working age international migrants choosing to live in the

affluent areas of the borough, like Clapham and, increasingly, Brixton, with far higher than average council housing register applications in the southeast of the borough (Lambeth, 2022: 75).

Deprivation in Barking and Dagenham, on the other hand, appears to be linked to the borough's de-industrialisation. The post-war clearance of East London slums saw the development of huge social housing estates in the borough. Whilst the quality of residents' homes improved, prospects did not. A generational problem arose "leading to the need for more social housing and perpetuating the cycle of deprivation" (LBBD, 2015: 8). Suppressed land values in the borough allowed inner-London businesses to move its industrial areas, keeping jobs low in quality and requiring lower skilled workers, harming the image of the borough and acting as "a barrier to the delivery of adjacent regeneration opportunities [in other East London boroughs]" (LBBD, 2015: 8). There are parallels here between Koch et al.'s findings on Oxford and Tunbridge Wells, despite the difference in many other aspects between those towns and Barking and Dagenham. The regeneration that is celebrated by local elites (as seen in various Council publications on the topic from the mid-2010s, for example, LBBD, 2013b; LBBD, 2015; LBBD, 2020) typically benefits wealthy 'outsiders', like commuters moving out from more-central London, and neighbourhoods and residents of peripheral housing estates are "written out of the 'official' narratives of their towns" (Koch et al., forthcoming: 118-121).

Barking and Dagenham is seeing unprecedented population growth; between 2011 and 2021, the population grew by more than 17 per cent, against a 7 per cent London average (ONS, 2023b). The majority of this population growth is in wards home to the large housing estates (LBBD, 2015: 12), increasing population density specifically in those already densely populated. A number of these wards are "within the 10 percent most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England" (LBBD, 2015: 42). Population growth has also been very much concentrated in younger age groups; the median age of residents is lower than London and England averages (ONS, 2023b) and nearly half of children live in poverty, the third highest rate across the country (Peach, 2022). As in Lambeth, house prices in the borough feed deprivation; Barking and Dagenham saw the highest average house price rises in London

in 2022 (Prynn, 2022) but the second lowest average wages across all London boroughs (London Datastore, 2022).

4.3.3. ECONOMICS, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS

The industrial revolution reached Lambeth in the mid to late 19th Century – earlier than Barking and Dagenham. The “largest and most prosperous of these [industries] was pottery” (Vauxhall History, 2012). That the original buildings home to these industries are now the offices of start-ups and co-working spaces for those in the creative industries, exemplifies perfectly how industry and business in the borough have changed. The creative and digital industries sector is one of the borough’s strengths, fuelling significant growth in other parts of the economy (Lambeth, 2020: 12). The borough’s low business density (the number of businesses per 1000 working age residents) (Lambeth, 2020: 18) reflects the residential nature of the south of the borough (Lambeth, 2020: 29). Lambeth’s proximity to the centre of London increasingly makes it “well placed for residents to take advantage of the London economy, with good transport links, a skilled work force, and high employment rate” (Lambeth, 2016b: 6), reflected by the increasing working population and fewer families in the borough. It’s important to note here, however, the inequality in employment in Lambeth. Whilst Lambeth residents are more likely to be employed than the London average (Lambeth, 2022: 17), “employment rates are significantly higher for white Lambeth residents [85% employment rate] than for those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds [66% employment rate]” (Lambeth, 2016b: 5).

From the early 20th Century, Barking and Dagenham became known for its industrial presence, becoming home to two significant employers for local residents: Barking Power Station opened in 1925 (Barking and Dagenham Post, 2009) and the Ford plant at Dagenham opened in 1931 (Ford, 2009). However, industry declined in the 1960s. By the early 1980s, industrial jobs “still accounted for over 50 percent of total jobs in the borough...[but] by 2007 the proportion of industrial jobs had decreased to 34 percent and in 2013 stood at less than 30 percent” (LBBD, 2015: 16). Ford, for example, once London’s largest employer (Ford, 2009), bringing with it 40,000 jobs to Dagenham alone in 1953, now

only employs 5000 people in manufacturing roles across its Bridgend, Dagenham and Halewood plants (The Independent, 2019). Concerns around the safety of these jobs were raised in relation to the Brexit-induced job insecurity in the car manufacturing sector (O'Carroll and Topham, 2018). This industrial decline has seen a move towards service sector jobs in the borough; 'business administration and support services' are the largest industries in the borough, and 'elementary administration and service occupations make up the largest proportion of job roles in the area (Varbes, 2023).

4.3.4. PARTY POLITICS

Relatively high levels of support for the BNP in the mid- to late-2000s, and for UKIP since the early 2010s, were seen at Barking and Dagenham Borough Council, and at general elections in the two constituencies covering the borough: *Barking*, and *Dagenham and Rainham*. At the 2006 local elections, Barking and Dagenham "became nationally notorious for the strong showing of the extreme right-wing British National Party" (Martin, 2013: 62), gaining 12 council seats (LBBD, 2006) after standing only 13 candidates. As Margaret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking, commented, had the BNP "stood candidates in all the seats that were being contested, [Barking and Dagenham] would have had the first BNP-controlled council in the country" (Hodge, 2020). Crucially, however, when the BNP attempted to take control of the Council in 2010, they performed 'dismally' and lost all 12 of their councillors, with Labour taking complete control of the Council instead (Taylor, 2010).

In the realm of national politics, a similar story played out. At the 2005 general election, the BNP became the third party in Barking, only a handful of votes behind the Conservatives (BBC News, 2005), gaining the party its highest vote share anywhere across the country (Cruddas et al., 2005: 5) and leading to the press to dub the town the "race hate capital of Britain" (Bragg, 2010). Mirroring local elections in the same year, infamous BNP leader Nick Griffin stood for the seat and again, came third, after the Conservatives (BBC News, 2010) ending Nick Griffin's (attempted) Parliamentary career and marking the beginning of the end of the BNP across England generally (Taylor, 2010). By 2017, however, UKIP had instead risen to third place in the constituency instead (LBBD, 2017). Neighbouring Dagenham

and Rainham has seen similar levels of support for both parties: the BNP was the third party in 2010, with UKIP coming second, closely behind Labour in 2015. Support for UKIP fell in 2017 in both constituencies (UK Parliament, 2017) and plummeted in 2019 (UK Parliament, 2019), in line with national trends (Booth and Walker, 2017).

Lambeth, on the other hand, has a far less complicated recent history in terms of its party politics. Three parliamentary constituencies cover the borough: *Dulwich and West Norwood*, *Streatham*, and *Vauxhall*. Each of these constituencies is a Labour stronghold and has been since at least the 1990s (and since the 1920s, in the case of Vauxhall). While Vauxhall was, at the time of the Brexit referendum, represented by ardent leave supporter Kate Hoey, Streatham was represented by staunch remain supporter Chukka Ummuna who defected to establish Change UK after the Brexit vote (Woollen, 2022). While the Green Party is gaining increasing ground in local elections (gaining 22 per cent of the vote in 2022 (Lambeth Green Party, 2022)), Labour has a strong and long-standing hold at the Council-level too.

These comparisons show just how different two parts of London can be and why it's crucial to look in more detail. Euroscepticism, class and deindustrialisation set these boroughs apart, making for an interesting comparison in the context of Brexit, so much of the analysis into which centres on similar issues. With some context provided for the two boroughs in question, I'll move on to describe my sampling and recruitment methods.

4.4. SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT

In this research, I wanted to challenge the historic biases in the social sciences and try to bring to front and centre those oft-excluded voices. Sampling can pose particular problems for reliability and validity. I did not use random sampling, so the 'data' I collected is "inherently biased" (Bayard de Volo and Schatz, 2004: 269). However, scientific replicability is not the only concern in qualitative research; it is also vital to take into account ethical considerations and the benefits brought about by other non-

random methods (Robinson, 2014: 35). The range of sampling methods I used were, in the end, hugely beneficial in centring historically excluded groups in my research.

My inclusion and exclusion criteria were shaped throughout my research. My research was initially only open to British, Commonwealth and Irish citizens who were all eligible to vote at the referendum in 2016. However, through various conversations with a local community leader in Lambeth, herself a migrant who had been unable to vote at the referendum, I was recommended to open up my research to anyone living in Lambeth or Barking and Dagenham at the time of the vote. This advice was not only crucial in creating more inclusive research (migrant women constituted 50 per cent of my sample) but also brought about a chance to consider how Bourdieu's concepts might be expanded to include citizenship.

The continued focus of this project on attitudes towards the Brexit vote and the subsequent Brexit process, comparing then and now, meant I retained my inclusion criteria that specified participants must *still* live in the borough they were in at the time of the referendum. Whilst this exclusion criteria may have limited the involvement of some willing people to participate, and residents not included in my sample will naturally have opinions on Brexit, these remained important considerations given the study's emphasis.

Initially, I aimed to recruit participants by contacting potential 'gatekeeper organisations'. I contacted 28 organisations in Lambeth and 22 organisations in Barking and Dagenham by email in early Spring 2021. These included business associations, civic societies, religious organisations, training and education organisations and groups supporting and/ or representing different communities. I planned to use snowball sampling once an initial group of participants had been recruited via gatekeepers. Sampling has largely been "'left behind' the front lines of critical and deconstructive thought" (Noy, 2008: 328), however, snowball sampling can "generate a unique type of social knowledge – knowledge which is emergent, political and interactional" (Noy, 2008: 327), unlike sampling conducted, for example, via social media alone, which is inevitably skewed towards those with a higher income and with computer literacy skills. Ultimately, I had to diversify my sampling method and different

recruitment methods worked across the boroughs throughout the year and a half my fieldwork eventually spanned.

In Lambeth, I found the most success early on by recruiting participants through ‘snowball sampling’ via active members of the local community already known to me, rather than through gatekeeper organisations. A handful of organisations politely declined my requests after follow-up emails and I did not hear back from the majority of them. This was not entirely surprising; responding to cold calls for assistance from a researcher can hardly be the priority for local organisations with limited access to funding. One individual at a local community hub kindly responded to my request for assistance in Lambeth, however, and, during a meeting in May 2021, she provided me with an additional list of organisations to contact and participant LA14 responded to my flyer as a result. I also asked former neighbours, those running community groups and owners of local businesses known to me in Lambeth whether they themselves would be willing to participate or whether they were able to share my flyer on social media or via local Whatsapp groups. Whilst some warn that insider status can complicate the research process (Taylor et al., 2019: 40), being embedded in the social network has increased the trust of informants for other researchers (Browne, 2005: 50) and I did find that I had a higher rate of participation among those I already had a relationship with. The participants I interviewed in Lambeth in 2021 (LA11, LA12 and LA13) all responded to these requests.

In Barking and Dagenham in Spring 2021, I also had no success in finding gatekeeper organisations. Instead, I found individuals through in-person recruitment, for example, flyering in Barking town centre (BD13) and speaking to people in local shops (BD12). I was also introduced to a PhD student living in the area (BD11) who kindly participated in my study and put me in touch with a number of individuals involved in local community organisations.

By early Spring 2022, after the winter’s COVID waves had passed (and before cases rose again in the summer...), I realised that I needed to change tack in both boroughs. While in-person recruitment in Barking had been somewhat successful and I had spoken to two individuals as a result, it was time-consuming and I was warned that it might not always be safe in certain areas of Dagenham by a long-

term resident (who did not participate in the study). What's more, my sample in both boroughs was very white, largely middle-class, and largely remain-supporting, going against the initial inclusive aims of my project.

I can only speculate as to why these individuals spoke to me and others didn't. My position as a white, middle-class researcher, and as an outsider of communities of colour and working-class communities, may have, understandably, limited the engagement of people within those groups. What's more, in Lambeth, I found it incredibly difficult to find leave voters who might be willing to participate. Given the overwhelming support for remain in the borough, leave supporters may have been 'shy' or simply *over it* (later, LA19 confirmed this: his one local leave-voting friend declined to participate in my study as he had for so long been the token leave voter, a role he did not enjoy playing). The implications of these issues are, however, clear: my research was only re-producing the existing exclusionary patterns in social science research.

I ploughed on with gatekeeper recruitment and found some success during this 'round' of fieldwork; I heard back from two organisations in Dagenham, one representing Albanian people living in the area and a community group for women living in Dagenham. Through these contacts, I carried out my March 2022 focus group and interviewed BD15 via a translator. At the same time, I also heard back from an individual working for a church in the area (BD14), although she made clear that her views were her own and not those of the church. These women represented a far more diverse group; they were largely migrants from across Europe and while the majority considered themselves white, two did describe themselves as mixed race. In these cases, therefore, snowball sampling allowed me to connect with those less likely to answer adverts seeking participants for political research (Robinson, 2014: 37) and with hidden populations (Browne, 2005: 49).

I was, however, still struggling to find leave voters and people of colour in Lambeth and, despite further contact with potential gatekeeper organisations, I did not have as much luck as I did in Dagenham that spring. The 'hyperlocal' social media platform 'Next Door' was recommended to me as a means of advertising. Especially through online advertising, a sample can end up skewed towards those with

higher education or income levels and it disadvantages those without internet access (Robinson, 2014: 36), however, Rollock et al. (2015), for example, had successfully recruited participants through social media and relevant Facebook groups.

I advertised on the platform that I was looking for participants, especially leave voters and those from an ethnic minority background. Self-selection bias is unavoidable in interview-based research, “as voluntary participation is central to ethical good practice, therefore all a researcher can do is be aware of the possibility for bias and consider its possible impact on findings and generalisability” (Robinson, 2014: 36). Such a significant number of people (who largely identified as white and middle-class) replied to my advert that I had to take it down and politely decline some offers for participation. While I did not meet a leave voter, my sample in Lambeth did become ever so slightly more diverse in terms of class (LA16 was very open about her identity as a care leaver, too, and the class implications) and ethnicity (LA20 was clear in her email that she saw her Jewish background as an ethnic minority background and this fed into her views on Europe). It was only through in-person recruitment, however, that I managed to reach those populations that I had struggled to connect with previously. In July 2022, I carried out a ‘micro-focus group’ with LA21 and LA22 after speaking to the administrator of a training organisation near Brixton in Lambeth.

4.4.1. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables 6 and 7 show the self-described demographic information of the participants included in this study, provided to me in response to the questionnaire I gave to participants to fill out online prior to the interview, or, more commonly, at the start of our time together. I created this questionnaire so that I would be able to describe participants in my thesis in their own terms. When collating the data together, I started to ‘tidy it up’ so that categories were uniform, and so that I could easily create charts to show how many of which type of person I had spoken to. As I was doing so and, for example, changing a participant’s response of ‘female’ to the question about gender, I realised I was doing exactly what I set out *not* to do: I was fitting my participants into boxes they had not chosen.

Entries in the Table are not uniform and are word-for-word responses, as I had used an open-ended response for this question in my questionnaire. This is particularly the case when it comes to gender and race. In terms of gender, some people used language associated commonly with 'sex' rather than gender, i.e., female or male, while others used language more commonly associated with gender identity, i.e. woman or man. None of my participants identified as non-binary. I'm not coding the questionnaires as part of a large-scale survey study and therefore it is not so problematic that responses weren't uniform (Hughes et al., 2016: 140), nor am I aiming to differentiate between the "role biological factors (sex) and social factors (gender) have" (Slade et al., 2020: 1).

Race and ethnic group were also commonly interchanged by participants. Some responded 'White British' to the race question and ticked the same box in response to 'ethnic group'. One individual described his race using his nationality: 'English'. This may reflect age differences between participants. Those I spoke to first during fieldwork; BD11 and BD12, both middle-class, highly educated men in their 20s and 30s, mused in detail about their identities, discussing, race, class, gender and sexuality. Those who were less clear on concepts associated with race, ethnicity, gender and sex tended to be aged over 50. This age-related pattern is not surprising given factors like higher social media usage by younger people, where issues such as these are more likely to be discussed (although, of course, echo chambers and divisions on social media mean age is not definitive).

I also left 'Brexit attitudes' responses exactly as they were provided to me, hence, it's not entirely clear from the questionnaires alone how or whether some participants voted, or their attitudes if they were not eligible to vote (BD21 is a good example). At first that seemed horribly problematic to me; I set out to look at individuals' race, social class and gender and how identity may have impacted on Brexit attitudes, and I couldn't always even work out, without looking at transcripts more in detail, how some of them felt about Brexit. After some reflection I realised that, maybe, it was actually perfectly reasonable to present somewhat spotty 'data' about Brexit attitudes. Not everyone had a clear idea of their attitudes at the time and may not have voted, and this may well have become all the more complicated five or six years on, either after consuming news story after news story on the

matter (as BD21 describes) or not thinking about it at all. Trying to force a clear remain/ leave response on my questionnaire may have led some participants to provide an answer for the sake of it. That some didn't respond at all to the question or told me that they did not vote but didn't provide a leaning towards the remain or leave camp reflects exactly the non-binary ways in which some people felt about Brexit. Below I illustrate the areas of the two boroughs in which the majority of my participants were located.

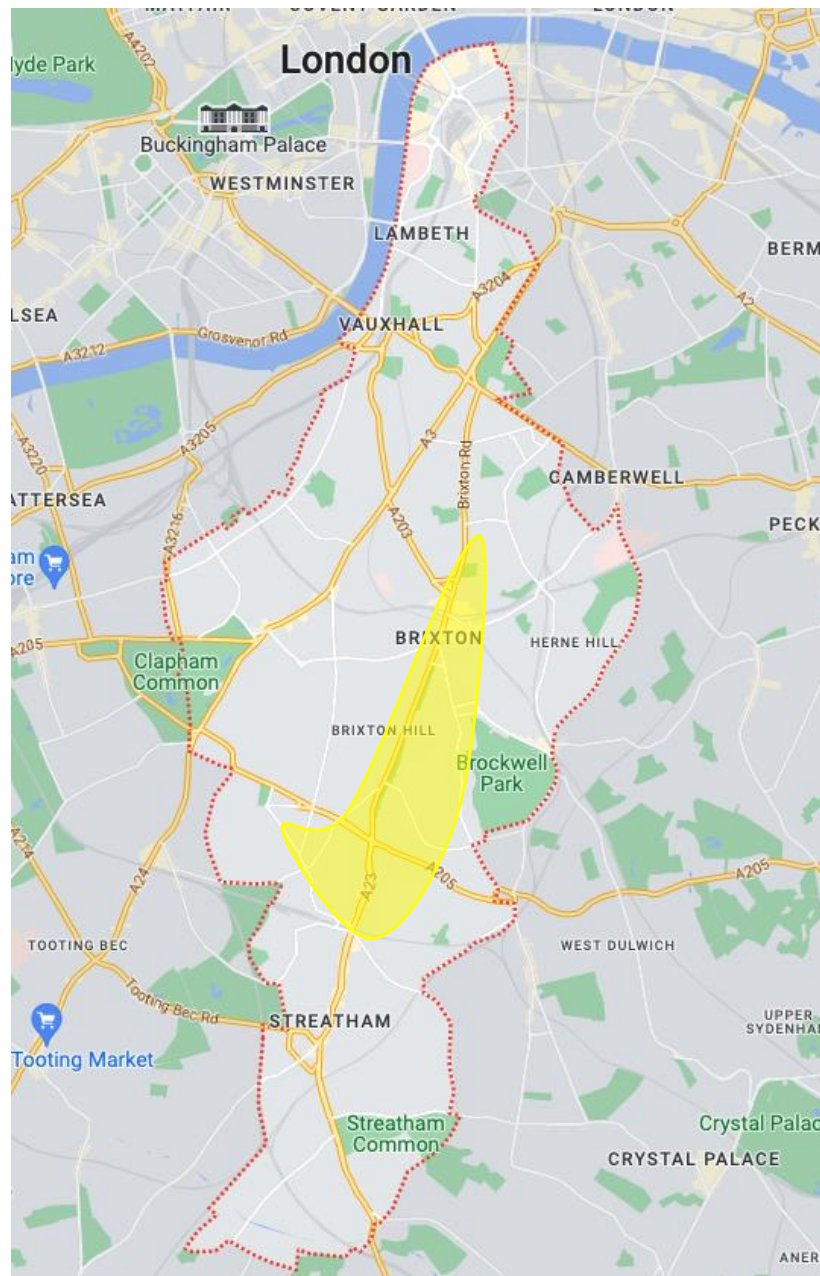
Seven of the 12 participants in Lambeth were concentrated in the areas between Brixton, Tulse Hill and Streatham Hill, highlighted in Figure 5. Participants in Barking and Dagenham tend to be living between Barking and the Northwest edge of the borough in Dagenham, also highlighted in the map above. I was able to speak to people in both key areas of the borough, as shown in Figure 6, (and participants described living in Barking *or* Dagenham, rather than the borough itself, thereby reflecting the divided nature of the borough).

The average (mean) age of my participants is 52; ages ranged between 27 and 81 at the time of the interview. This may reflect my sampling method in parts. Using 'NextDoor' in Lambeth, for example, meant my sampling may have been skewed towards older people who are more established in an area or who move around less, and have time to give to this research project due to retirement or freelance work (which participants like LA19 remarked on about his own availability).

I included a simple (or too simplistic, as it happens) question about class in my questionnaire asking participants whether they defined themselves as part of the working class, middle class, upper class or 'other'. As a result, around 50 per cent described themselves as part of the working class and 50 per cent described themselves as part of the middle class. Some provided 'other' responses, including 'lower class' and 'pensioner' and 'bohemian class'. I did receive some feedback in interviews, from LA12 for example, that the classification was insufficient and should be widened. This highlights the trade-off between open and closed questions. Tick boxes and categories can lead to frustration for participants and, potentially, inaccurate responses (Hughes et al., 2016). This was the case for LA12; during our interview she criticised the limited nature of the categories and ticked the 'I don't know'

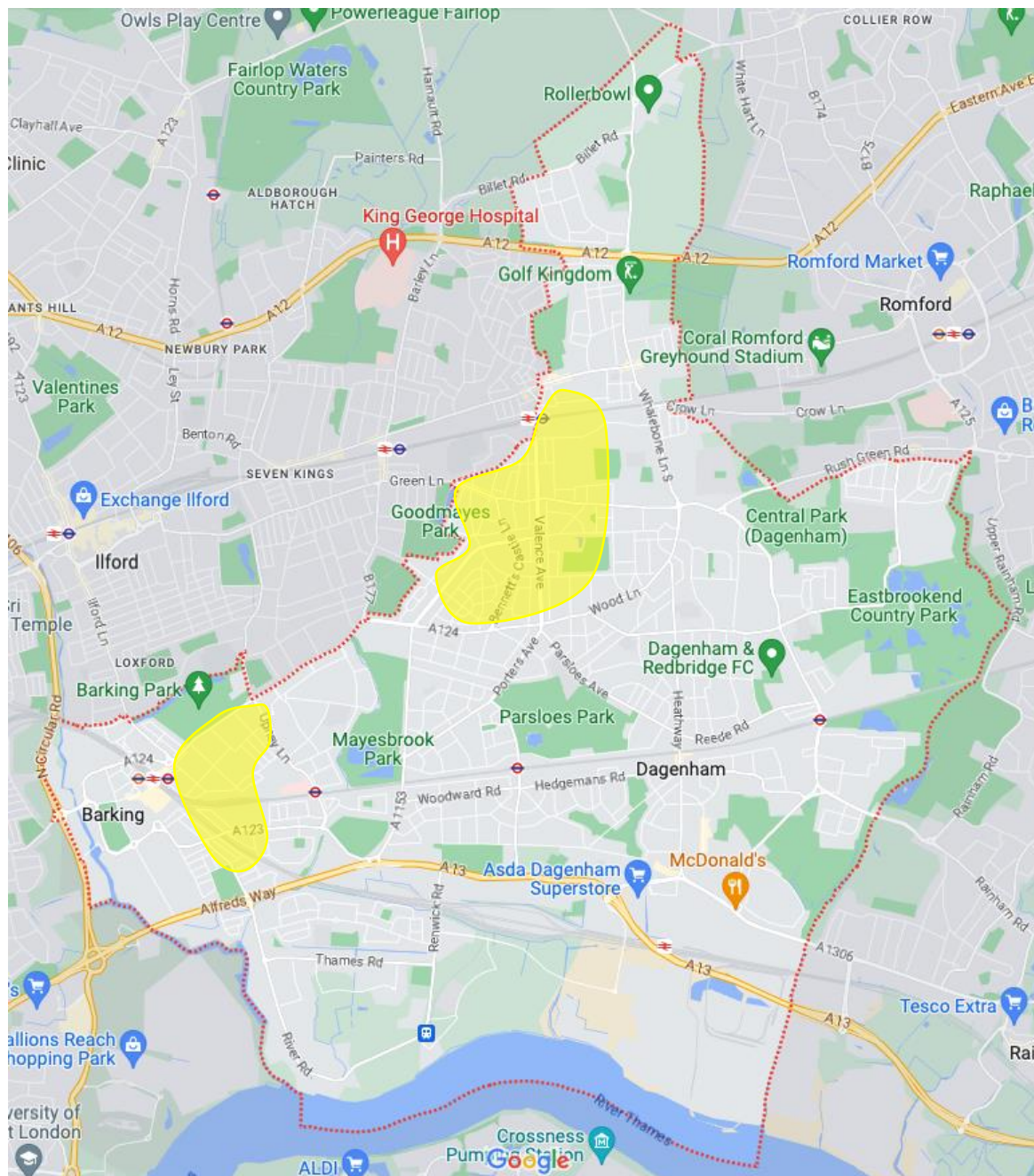
box. It's clear that my questionnaire alone would have been insufficient to capture class identity; the interviews and focus group discussions were necessary to go deeper into understanding participants' class (for them as well as for me), and class self-identifications were particularly complex when I spoke to the many migrant women who were part of my sample.

Figure 5. Key locations in Lambeth⁴



⁴ Borough is outlined in red. Yellow area is where the majority of (but not all) participants were concentrated, in Streatham Hill, Brixton, Herne Hill and Tulse Hill.

Figure 6. Key locations in Barking and Dagenham⁵



The vast majority of my sample identified as a woman (or female, in some cases). This may reflect the gatekeeper organisations who responded to my requests. The Albanian community group was woman-led and all but a couple of people I met there were women. My focus group in March 2022 took place at a weekly women's meeting group, shaping the overall gender balance of my sample in

⁵ Borough is outlined in red. Yellow area is where the majority of (but not all) participants were concentrated in two areas, in Barking (west of the borough) and in Dagenham (towards the north of the borough).

Barking and Dagenham: all but one of the participants there were women. In Lambeth, my sample was slightly more balanced (seven of 12 participants were women). This gender imbalance could reflect any number of factors, including my gender (my email address and name were on flyers) and societal and/ or community norms around gender and work. After all, for many women in the March 2022 focus group, it was common to spend their time as ‘homemakers’, while their husbands worked. However, this was not always the case, for example, LA14, LA15 and BD14 all took time out of their workday to speak to me.

Three quarters of my sample identified as white or ‘white British’ where race/ ethnic group distinctions were unclear. Half of my sample were migrants and all of those who were not British by birth were women. Many of these women’s home countries were in the EU or Europe (Italy, Greece, Romania, Albania, Portugal and Spain), which could explain their over-representation in my sample. After not being afforded a vote at the referendum, this may have been an opportunity to voice their opinions (and, indeed, the Albanian community group suggested as much when they invited me to their Saturday morning meeting to find participants for my study). Others, however, were from further afield: Australia, West Africa, and South America. These places of origin are less precise but it didn’t seem necessary to ask for more information, as the intention of my questionnaire was to gather information that participants were willing to share with me.

Especially in Lambeth, participants were remain-supporting. This is not surprising given the overwhelmingly high vote for remain in the borough and the potential Brexit fatigue of leave voters living there. Most of my Barking and Dagenham participants also supported remain. This may reflect, again, the make-up of my March 2022 focus group, which could have skewed the overall balance towards ‘remain’. I collected much more detailed data on the occupation and industry of my participants, all self-defined, but have categorised it below in Tables 6 and 7 for the purpose of anonymity.

My sample in Lambeth, particularly early on, very much over-represented those working in the arts and culture. This could reflect their availability to take part in research such as this, as a result of a

free-lance work schedule, for example. Given that the “size of a sample used for a qualitative project is influenced by both theoretical and practical considerations” (Robinson, 2014: 29), it is frequently advised that qualitative researchers do not hold a rigid plan of the nature and number of cases when designing research (Robinson, 2014: 29; Taylor et al., 2019: 38). I set out to speak to 10-15 people in each borough and, in the end, I spoke to 24 individuals, 12 in each borough (one interview was, however, not included in my final analysis). I strove for representativeness, seeking out difficult to reach populations and those I had not been able to include early on, while realising that tokenism which can occur in research with a relatively small sample (Browne, 2005: 51), can be a shortcoming. Given the whiteness of my sample, I have not been able to achieve what I initially set out to do. However, I have managed to bring other groups to the fore, expanding the inclusion of EU migrants in research on Brexit in particular, and looking at the role that ‘whiteness’ played in Brexit attitudes. This is a reflection of the practical considerations associated with this type of research. I went where I could, based on the groups who kindly responded to my requests for help recruiting participants.

4.5. METHODS

The Brexit process presented an impasse – a “stretched-out present” (Berlant, 2011: 5) – which created uncertainty; uncertainty for those who lived through the period of political deadlock during negotiations (examples for which are infinite; EU nationals living in the UK, UK nationals living abroad, businesses trading with other EU countries...) and who continued to face ambiguity as the COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted life in post-Brexit Britain (EU migrants, for example, found it all the more difficult to visit family, and parents and children had been kept apart due to travel restrictions).

Uncertainty creates difficulty in describing Brexit given that “the present that [is] interviewed in and that [is written] from has already changed and was never single or coherent nor separate from past or future presents” (Anderson et al., 2019: 11). The unpredictability brought about by the pandemic only served to further disrupt researching Brexit as the issue moved further away from people’s attention and news feeds. What follows is a description of the approach I took during my fieldwork between June

2021 and July 2022, that allowed me to stay close to my initial intentions on designing this project, to undertake inclusive research that put participants first, while working around the trials that came along with researching in pandemic-defined, post-Brexit London.

I primarily used individual interviews to mitigate the problem of researching during the impasse of Brexit; stretching is “common to interviewing as a method [and] rather than freezing or arresting life, multiple topics surface, shift, and become entangled as interviews happen” (Anderson et al., 2019: 5). As such, interviews “can be used to reconstruct past events that cannot be observed by the researcher” (Taylor et al., 2019: 104). I also carried out unstructured focus groups when preferred by participants. I combined these various interview types with a demographics questionnaire and identity mapping exercise, following qualitative researchers like Hayward (2000), Bharadwaj et al. (2021) and many others. This approach allowed me to collect a more expansive dataset, whilst also helping me to triangulate what I found, as per the generic inductive approach (Cooper and Endacott, 2007: 818; Kolar et al., 2015: 29), ensuring a close fit between participants’ words and my research output.

I undertook interviews in stages (Stage 1: June and July 2021; Stage 2: February and March 2022; Stage 3 June and July 2022) to avoid periods of high COVID cases and restrictions. Carrying out fieldwork in stages meant, however, that I was able to evaluate and re-evaluate the material I collected at each stage, critical in bolstering the inductive-ness of this research. This was particularly helpful in building a picture of migrants’ social class identities (or lack thereof) and of the boroughs in the lead up to and since the referendum.

When it comes to reliability and validity, qualitative research presents a trade-off. The methods outlined above ensure a close fit between the data and what people say and do, without being filtered through operational definitions, thereby increasing levels of validity (Taylor et al., 2019: 20). However, “pure replicability is impossible” (Bayard de Volo and Schatz, 2004: 270) and reliability of data will be lower than that of a quantitative study that includes thousands of participants. With that addressed, I’ll now introduce the methods I used, which included a questionnaire, ‘identity mapping’, interviews and focus groups.

4.5.1. QUESTIONNAIRE

I asked each participant to fill out a questionnaire so I could collect self-defined demographic data from them. This would allow me to describe all participants in this thesis in their own terms, a crucial consideration given the participant-led intention of this research. It also allowed me to see, for example, how certain identities, like social class, changed or became clearer cut throughout the discussion that followed. LA17, for example, did not know how to define her class identity when filling out the questionnaire, and later concluded during the focus group that she identified as working class. When certain issues, such as gender, weren't discussed explicitly during the interviews, I was able to consider the indirect or implicit impacts of gender on participants' Brexit attitudes, as I had that information available.

Largely, I followed the advice of Hughes et al. when putting together my questionnaire, who provide a guide to updating demographic questions to "better reflect the complexity of respondents' identities" (2016: 138). Providing a limited set of categories that do not fit participants' identities can lead to frustration and can impact on the accuracy of responses (Hughes et al., 2016: 139). What's more, there is – obviously – a "major risk of misclassification" (Slade et al., 2020: 3) if this data is collected on the basis of the researcher's own assessment of an individual's gender or race without consulting or clarifying with them. As such, the first part of my questionnaire asked standard demographic questions about participants' age, class, gender, race and ethnic group.

As I am looking at gender in this study, it was unnecessary to include a question also about biological sex. I followed the lead of Hughes et al. (2016) and asked an open-ended question about gender identity: "What is your gender?" to allow participants to respond in a way that was appropriate for them. I also included 'non-binary', 'woman' and 'man' as potential examples of *gender identity*. Given that the purpose of this questionnaire was to describe participants in their own terms in my thesis, I would also ask participants for their pronouns if I were to use a demographics questionnaire again in future research.

In asking for participants' class identity I provided the following options: Working Class; Middle Class; Upper Class; I don't know; Other (please specify).

When planning this study, the user-friendly 'The Great British Class Survey', which was developed by Savage et al. (2015), and is based on Bourdieusian concepts, taking race and gender into consideration, was available on the BBC News website (BBC News, 2013). By the time I began fieldwork, however, the survey was no longer easy to access online. Instead, I drew on the advice of Hughes et al. (2016), who endorse assessing 'subjective social status', or SSS, rather than asking for measures such as occupation, employment or wealth as the sole indicator of social class. SSS has a 'multidimensionality' that single measures like employment status do not (Hughes et al., 2016: 147), more in line with my theoretical basis in Bourdieu's wider conception of social class and cultural capital, than single measures would be. I followed Hughes et al. (2016) in providing tick boxes with this question, rather than leaving it open-ended as was the case with the gender question. However, given the complexity of social class identity (as is discussed more in section 4.4.1. above in relation to the demographics of my sample, see pp100-106) and the centrality of it to my study, the closed question I used to gather information on social class was insufficient. If I were to conduct this study again, I would explore in more detail how to capture Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital in this (or multiple) questions. In a study of this type, where the purpose of the questionnaire is to describe participants in their own terms, it would, on reflection, seem more appropriate to use open-ended questions, to ensure that all participants feel included and that they're not being required to fit themselves into categories chosen by the researcher.

I also asked participants to describe their race (open-ended) and ethnicity (based on the UK Government's classifications, includes set categories and space for 'other' responses), due to the "important analytical distinctions between the terms" (Gunaratnam, 2003: 11). At first, it seemed important to me to understand how participants described race in their own terms *and* how they might describe their ethnicity; race was a social construct while ethnicity or ethnic group constituted something more 'legal', that might be described on some kind of government form. As I try to explain the choices that led me to include or not include certain questions, nearly three years after writing the

initial draft of this chapter, I'm realising that, ultimately, my initial decisions were somewhat half-baked. I am only now learning about the intertwined-ness and overlap that exists between the concepts as "racism's two registers" (Hall, 2000: 223) and this is most-certainly reflected in what some of my participants told me, about their experiences as white or mixed-race EU citizens. Rather than reverse-engineering an epistemological justification for these questions, this will remain a gap in my research and a reminder to make more conscious decisions next time.

4.5.2. IDENTITY MAPPING: "Drawing is democratizing...It is a practice almost everyone can do"

(Hurdley et al. 2017: 749)

4.5.2.1. IN PRACTICE

Once the questionnaire and consent forms were completed, I spent five to ten minutes on the identity mapping exercise. I provided participants with paper and pens and, following guidance from Kolar et al., I showed participants examples of previous identity maps that I had consent to share to overcome participant hesitation (2015: 24). I explained that there was no 'right' way to do it and that their map might not look anything like the previous examples. There are many different ways in which participants could present their map, including the free-writing, entirely un-linear, identity mapping style, drawing shapes and bubbles of different sizes, with linking lines to emphasize relationships between aspects of their identities, a list-like or continuous-line form (Kolar et al., 2015: 19), or a hybrid of both (see Figure 4 below for examples). Ultimately this was an opportunity to put down on paper anything that was important to their identity. I suggested they think about social class, gender and race, given the focus of my project, but that they weren't limited to those aspects of identity – and they did not have to share anything with me that they did not want to share. Most participants added their social class identity to the identity map but gender and, more commonly, race, were left out.

I made clear that the purpose of the exercise was to create a prompt for use throughout the interview and was designed to help me understand *their* life experiences (Kolar et al., 2015: 18), rather than the number of political events they could recall. Placing importance of the 'personal' during this exercise,

I hoped, would allay concerns of participants who lack confidence or “feel they have nothing to contribute” (Cornwall, 2008: 279), a factor that often leads to self-exclusion from political research. I found this to be the case; all participants who took part in the exercise did so fully and shared aspects of their identities with me openly.

Figure 4. Examples of Identity Maps



The *personal* nature of identity mapping also led to the discussion of topics that the participant may not have otherwise shared or seen as relevant (Bharadwaj et al., 2021: 27) and brought to light the blind spots in my own thinking, for example, in placing too much emphasis on class, race and gender and side-lining other aspects of identity. Gender and race did not always feature in the identity maps but other aspects I had initially not sought to discuss, such as citizenship or family ties, did come up frequently and shaped my research as I moved between stages of fieldwork.

The drawings themselves do not constitute the material I collected but acted as a prompt for the interviews which generated the material I later analysed. I had great success in using this method and it could work on any number of topics; in research aiming to expand what we know, aiming to move beyond meanings derived from large-scale surveys, and especially in research taking an intersectional lens to the question at hand.

4.5.2.2. PRA AND PAR AS INSPIRATION

This identity mapping exercise was inspired by methods used in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) studies (Chambers, 1994) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Bharadwaj et al., 2021). PRA scholars come from across disciplines, including education, development, sociology and geography (Hall, 1992) and see research as “flexible art rather than rigid science” (Chambers, 1994: 955). They innovated to move away from the sole use of, for example, costly questionnaire surveys (Chambers, 1994: 956) that could not capture the practices of the communities being studied. I found the cross-disciplinary, ‘research as flexible art’ and inherently innovative nature of PRA and PAR particularly fascinating as I set out to build my project in a different way to the political science studies I had become accustomed to reading throughout my university career and that had informed my study on Brexit, too. Also at the heart of these participatory approaches is community empowerment, transformative participation and participant ownership of the research process (Cornwall, 2008) and they have been used to understand “intersecting inequalities from the perspectives and experiences of those most affected” (Bharadwaj et al., 2021: 13). However much I would have liked to have taken my research in

the direction of these approaches, I cannot claim that my research is transformative or community centred. Learning from the methods used by participatory researchers did, however, highlight again the importance of a participant-led approach and the ways in which individuals can become empowered participants in the research process. Including a drawing exercise in my research design allowed participants to lead the research by sharing what was important to *them*, rather than what I may have decided was important beforehand. Using this (in practice, very simple) drawing method has allowed me to conduct a kind of experiment too, pushing the boundaries of qualitative political science research and certainly bringing to the table a different kind of data to that which forms the basis of the generally quantitative work on Brexit.

By shifting the power dynamic “away from the conventional ask-and-answer of the verbal interview” (Kolar et al., 2015: 24) and putting the participant in control of the direction of the interview, drawing exercises helped me build rapport with my participants. The conversations that followed were more often than not chatty and informal, with participants speaking freely with very few prompts from me. As such, the inclusion of this method, I believe, went some way in overcoming the constraints to long-term engagement and relationship-building with participants inherent to time-limited PhD research during a disruptive pandemic.

4.5.3. (VERY) SEMI-STRUCTURED AND INFORMAL, CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Our ‘interview’ began when the participant was ready. Sometimes, a participant would talk me through their identity map as they were drawing and the interview would begin organically. More commonly, a participant would reach a point where they had added as much as they wanted to, and I would begin our interview by asking the individual to tell me about what they had written, usually about whatever was most important to them, or what they had decided to write about first. In individual interviews conducted over the phone or by Zoom (BD12 and LA14, respectively) where we didn’t create an identity map, I asked participants to tell me a bit about themselves. This offered a gentle way to ease into our conversation and helped me to understand who that person was a bit more, before moving onto topics

like their experience of Brexit, their memory of their area at the time of the referendum and their social class or cultural capital. Avoiding unnecessarily probing follow-ups and leaving the discussion of politics until later into the interview so as not to 'spook' the interviewees or appear critical is an approach endorsed by Leech (2002) and one I followed in every instance.

As far as possible, the interview was led in whichever way the participant wanted it to go. Whilst the methods used in generic inductive studies are generally "highly inductive [involving] the use of open codes, categories, and thematic analysis are most common" (Kahlke, 2014: 40), and conversational, unstructured interviews are preferred in ethnographic research (Burgess, 1982: 107), this (very) semi-structured interview is where I stray, slightly, from my approach. In some interviews I did sway towards the 'semi-standardised' interview type (McIntosh and Morse, 2015: 4) and used prompts (as minimally as possible). Semi-structured interviews are a 'core' method of PRA (Chambers, 1994: 959) and I felt this divergence was necessary given the specific aims of my research to look at social class, race, gender, 'field' and Brexit. After gaining a broad understanding of the participant's identity map, I tried to steer participants towards Brexit in as natural a way as possible. If, for example, they were talking about life in their borough, I would ask about their memory of the borough at the time of the referendum.

I did not use a set of pre-defined questions but I did have a set of topics that I asked about if the participant swayed towards them. This helped me to gather the material I needed and was worthwhile for "the degree of relevancy [it provided] the topic while remaining responsive to the participant" (McIntosh and Morse, 2015: 1).

On the advice of many authors (Burgess, 1982: 108; Pollard, 2009; Taylor et al., 2019: 114), I did my best to practice active listening throughout. In some interviews I rarely intervened; there are pages of transcripts with only the participants' words on them. I also went out of my way, on the advice of Taylor et al. (2019), to reassure participants that what they were telling me was 'right'. I made clear I was looking to learn about them and their understandings and memories of the Brexit vote, rather than specific facts or information about the topics under discussion. On reflection, during my interviews I could have done better to pause and allow silence. Instead, I used silences to shape the conversations

and “probably [produced] a strong shift in content” (Paget, 1983: 77), rather than letting the participant fill the silence and add to their story.

At times the informal and conversational nature of the interview did lead us into topics not necessarily relevant to my study, as is to be expected given this interview type (Patton, 1987), for example, participants would talk at length about their families and where they lived; that was a topic these participants saw as central to their identity, even if it wasn’t central to my study. During these periods, I remained patient for a natural break in the conversation where I could change the subject (Taylor et al., 2019: 114), or for the participant to reference, for example, their family member’s Brexit vote or experience post-Brexit, which allowed me to steer the conversation towards more relevant subjects. These detours were never particularly long and didn’t stop me from gathering the material I needed, generally. They did however help me to gain a better sense of the person in front of me.

4.5.4. UNSTRUCTURED FOCUS GROUPS

Where preferred by the participants or the ‘gatekeeper’, I arranged unstructured focus groups instead of individual interviews. In Barking and Dagenham in March 2022, I ran a focus group with six participants (BD17; BD18; BD19; BD20; BD21; BD22). I was introduced to these participants by BD20 who runs a community group and she suggested we arrange a focus group during one of the groups’ weekly meetings for convenience. I met LA21 and LA22 later that year when I visited a training organisation in Lambeth in July 2022 to talk about recruiting participants for my study. On the day, the training facilitator introduced me to LA21 and LA22, who were enrolled in a training course at that time. They both agreed to take part and it was suggested that their lunch break on the following day would work well for the interview.

These focus groups were an effective forum for a deeper discussion about the formation of attitudes to Brexit, in particular in relation to the ‘field’, as participants were grouped by borough. There are, of course, trade-offs in talking to these individuals as part of a group. I collected less ‘material’ from each individual and skipped the identity mapping exercise due to time constraints. Instead, during analysis, I

relied on material gathered through the questionnaire and any discussions of identity that arose during the focus groups to understand a bit more about my participants. In both, class naturally arose as a topic of conversation and the discussions themselves led some participants to re-think their earlier self-definitions and consider whether they identified as a particular social class at all (see more in the conclusion, pp253-257).

Again, the focus groups lasted no longer than one hour – although it was definitely more challenging to keep to time as the conversations continued to the very end; in both instances I had to (reluctantly) bring conversations to a close. As a form of unstructured interview, focus groups “use group dynamics to yield insights that might not be accessible without the kind of interaction found in a group” (Taylor et al., 2019: 128). Given the historic limited engagement of the public with the EU (Franklin, 2004) and the complexity of identity, “focus group discussion may allay concerns of some individuals that they do not have “anything of interest” to contribute” (Barbour, 2007: 42). Focus groups are discussion-based, allowing the free flow of opinions and ideas and the exploration of diverse views that may not be otherwise realised. This is especially relevant given my position as ‘outsider’ and the varied need I had found for prompts during individual interviews. I found I very rarely had to intervene in the Barking and Dagenham focus group.

Barbour (2007) suggests limiting the number of participants in a focus group to six to allow for an in-depth discussion of the topics introduced. The minimum, however, is set at four to facilitate diverse and interactive discussion between participants (Morgan, 1997; Bloor et al., 2001). This may explain why I needed to intervene more commonly in the Lambeth group of two. I would therefore classify my conversation with LA21 and LA22 as a *micro-focus group*. It allowed me to speak to individuals I had previously found it hard to reach. What’s more, the inter-group dynamics of our discussion were crucial to the material I collected when speaking to these two participants. The interactions between participants, however, to find points of understanding and of contention between themselves, brought depth that otherwise would not have been possible (their opposing feelings towards the Tory Party, for example, appeared and re-appeared throughout the conversation between LA21 and LA22). Morgan

(1988) suggests focus groups should not be homogenous concerning individuals' attitudes as heterogeneous perspectives can stimulate and enrich discussion (Robson, 2011: 296) mitigating, to a certain extent, the problem of 'groupthink' (Robson, 2011: 295). Given the nature of focus groups, where group interaction generates the 'material' that will then be analysed, interaction on topics on which participants disagree can only be of benefit. Discussions that arose in my Barking and Dagenham focus group among EU migrants BD17 and BD20 about, for example, the ineligibility of EU migrants to vote at the referendum, allowed me and other participants, like BD18, some insight into the anxiety and anger that had arisen for those individuals.

More broadly, I was unable to group participants together on the basis of Brexit attitudes as my sampling method meant that groups were pre-existing and I didn't have access to information on political attitudes of potential participants prior to arranging the groups. Both groups *happened* to be homogenous in terms of Brexit attitudes (all Barking and Dagenham group participants supported remain, while both LA21 and LA22 supported leave). However, if anything, this highlighted the multitude of factors that led to support for one side or the other at the referendum; LA21, for example, voted leave as a protest against the Tory government, while LA22's leave vote was based primarily on anti-immigration attitudes (see more in chapter 5, pp128-131).

Combining group and individual interviews at different stages attenuated some of the various limitations of each method. People "say and do different things in different situations" (Taylor et al., 2019: 105). Focus groups led to a different *kind* of discussion and were much more participant-led, with discussions meandering to issues that had not previously been discussed in such detail; LA21 and LA22 spoke, for example, about the Conservative Party leadership and its role in the leave vote; while the Barking and Dagenham participants spoke about post-Brexit citizenship issues, especially in relation to the children of the European migrants in the group. The group nature also mitigated some of the impact of my position as outsider on the openness of participants; the Barking and Dagenham participants were very comfortable together and laughed and joked with each other during the focus group itself. On the other hand, the use of individual interviews limited the pitfalls of the use of focus groups alone,

where “less detailed material can be gathered from individuals” (Burgess, 1982: 109) and “a superficial consensus in which some members defer to those who are most outspoken” (Taylor et al., 2019: 128) may have arisen.

4.5.5. MIXING ONLINE AND IN-PERSON RESEARCH – THE ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPANT CHOICE

I wrote the initial draft of this research design during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic and researching during that time shaped my work from the get-go, I was advised to be prepared to carry out my research online. Moving research online “requires thoughtful, careful analysis around a number of methodological challenges as well as ethical and equity-oriented questions” (Roberts et al., 2021: 1). These include concerns around accessibility, computer literacy and the digital divide, and around data storage and participant privacy. Moving my research entirely online would have impacted on my ability to carry out this research in line with my initial intentions. For example, my position as outsider would have been almost impossible to overcome as it would limit how much I would “travel to and navigate through the neighbourhoods, communities, and spaces where the participants live and work to collect data” (Roberts et al., 2021: 8). While Roberts et al. suggest taking virtual tours of the neighbourhoods to get to know the areas under study, I would not have been able to make the visits to the boroughs in question, with a Barking and Dagenham local to aid my local knowledge there, to get to know the area and a sense of the ways in which it was changing.

I was able, thankfully, to carry out my fieldwork in stages between COVID-19 high points in London and, as such, carried out all but two of my interviews in person. Overall, a mixed approach based on participant choice allowed me to carry out this research in the most convenient way for my participants, while still ensuring I could meet my initial research goals. In fact, decisions to conduct the two interviews I *didn't* do in person were not pandemic-related at all. Instead, they were arranged as an audio-only telephone call for BD12's convenience and due to her own lack of confidence using a programme like Zoom. My interview with LA14 moved to Zoom last minute when her plans for the day changed, so I could still meet her at the time and on the day we had planned.

While I had practiced using an online drawing tool (which could be shared simultaneously on my computer and the participant's) for the identity mapping exercise during my pilot interviews, I didn't end up using it. BD12 didn't feel comfortable using Zoom due to her own computer literacy concerns and, as such, I didn't think the use of an online drawing programme would be appropriate either. As my interview with LA14 moved online last minute, I skipped the identity mapping exercise as time was limited and it would have taken valuable time to explain and get used to using the online drawing programme.

Any research design involves trade-offs in terms of inclusivity and privacy. Carrying out research entirely online can make it less inclusive, limiting the recruitment of marginalised groups "owing to limited or inconsistent access to virtual tools" (Roberts et al., 2021: 7). Indeed, during my fieldwork, I found most success recruiting participants from groups I had not yet been able to speak to (Leave voters in Lambeth and people of colour) by going out, in person, and handing out leaflets and speaking to local shopkeepers and training organisations. Carrying out research entirely in person can, however, increase costs (for example, in travel) for participating. Allowing participant to choose a location most convenient to them, however, meant I would either be able to meet them close to home or in a place they'd already be (as was the case for both of my focus groups). I was keen to carry out interviews in public places like cafes as far as possible for my safety, however, I was aware that this would limit interviewees' privacy (Taylor et al., 2019: 111). Rather than reducing the likelihood of a participant opening up or creating pressure to perform in a certain way (Valdez and Gubrium, 2020: 7), cafes seemed to provide enough hustle and bustle to create a sense of anonymity. I went to private homes to conduct interviews only twice, when participants suggested it might be most convenient; in one case, I already knew the person I'd be speaking to and in another, it was decided that it would be most convenient for focus group participants if I met them where they met weekly.

Ultimately, as Brown et al. reiterate, the ideal research design "is the one that best aligns with the population of interest, minimizes participant risk, and maximises enrolment and participation" (2021: 6). While trying to avoid sounding like a methodological copout, I believe that by combining online and

in-person research, and giving participants the flexibility of individual interviews or focus groups, I was able to put participants first and allow them to decide how participating would work best for *them*. As such, I was able to equalise the researcher-researched relationship as far as I could and was able to speak to marginalised populations and hard to reach groups who have otherwise been excluded from political science research, particularly that relating to the Brexit vote.

4.6. DATA COLLECTION AND RECORDING PROCEDURES

I recorded each interview and wrote up a transcript each time. All participants consented to audio recording. I followed university guidance regarding the safe storage of data on my computer (OneDrive is recommended) to protect the privacy of my participants.

I have used 'codes' at all times for participants throughout data storage and in this thesis (e.g., LA11 for participant 1 in Lambeth; LA12 for participant 2 in Lambeth; BD13 for participant 3 in Barking and Dagenham etc) to ensure anonymity, in line with advice from Taylor et al. (2019: 110). I hand-coded hard copies of transcripts in multiple stages, using different colours and post-it notes to mark key themes. Inductive analysis meant that themes emerged and changed over time; for example, reflections on 'gender identity' were key to my first interviews (LA11 and BD11) and I gave it a colour code (pastel pink) as key theme. Gender identity was, however, rarely discussed in later interviews and themes like 'experiences of freedom of movement' (grassy green) became much more common and transcripts were increasingly covered in grassy green highlighter as I spoke to more EU citizens and migrants from across the world. Tables 6 and 7 (below) list all participants of my study, including demographic information.

Table 6. Demographic information of Lambeth participants

ID	Age	Years in borough	Education Level	Occupation	Industry	First language	Social Class	Gender	Race	Brexit attitude
LA11	30-39	5-9	Degree-level	Performer	Arts and Entertainment	English	Middle Class	Male	White	remain
LA12	40-49	5-9	NVQ level 4 or 5	Sales worker	Arts and Entertainment	English	Middle Class	Male	White British	remain
LA13	40-49	15-19	Degree-level	Artist	Arts and Entertainment	English	Middle Class	Female	White	remain
LA14	50-59	10-14	GCSE	Designer	Arts and Entertainment	Italian	Working Class	Woman	White	remain
LA15	50-59	5-9	Higher level degree	Manager	Local Government	Greek	Working Class	Woman	White	remain
LA16	30-39	10-14	Degree-level	Support worker	Education	English	Working Class	Woman	White	remain
LA17	50-59	35-40	Degree-level	Practitioner	Health and Social Care	English	Middle Class	Woman	White British	remain
LA18	70-79	50-54	Higher-level degree	Consultant	Politics	English	Middle class	Man	White	remain
LA19	50-59	25-29	Degree-level	Consultant	Health and Social Care	English	Working class	Man	White British	remain
LA20	60-69	20-24	Higher-level degree	Practitioner	Health and Social Care	English	Middle class/ Bohemian class	Woman	"I don't subscribe to the notion of race"	remain
LA21	50-59	55-59	Left school before age 16	Support officer	IT	English	Working class	Man	English	leave

LA22	50-59	30-34	GCSE	Assistant	Health and Social Care	Igbo	Working class	F	Black Africa	leave

Table 7. Demographic information of Barking and Dagenham participants

ID	Age	Years in borough	Education Level	Occupation	Industry	First language	Social Class	Gender	Race	Brexit attitude
BD11	20-29	25-29	Higher-level degree	Fund Manager	Charity Sector	English	Middle Class	Male	White	leave
BD12	60-69	65-69	A-Level	Service worker	Health and Social Care	English	I don't know	female	English/British	remain
BD13	60-69	60-64	GCSE	Service worker	Hospitality	English	Working Class	Woman	White	leave
BD14	30-39	10-14	Degree-level	Support worker	Health and Social Care	Romanian	Other: Lower class	Woman	White	Prefer not to say
BD15	80-89	5-9	A-Level	Service worker	Hospitality	Albanian	Other: Pensioner	-	-	remain
BD17	40-49	15-19	NVQ Level 3	Full-time parent	-	Portuguese	I don't know	Woman	Mixed	remain
BD18	40-49	10-14	Other	Full-time parent	-	English	I don't know	Woman	Mixed	Did not vote
BD19	50-59	5-9	GCSE	Full-time parent	-	Spanish	Middle class	Woman	Latin American	remain
BD20	50-59	15-19	GCSE	Support worker	Charity Sector	Spanish	Middle class	Woman	White	remain
BD21	40-49	40-44	GCSE	Full-time parent	-	British	Working class	Woman	White British	remain
BD22	40-49	10-14	Degree-level	Support worker	Health and Social Care	English	I don't know	Woman	White British	-

4.7. INCENTIVES

I paid all participants the London Living Wage (£10.85/ hour in 2021; £11.05/ hour in 2022) for their involvement in this research. This was possible thanks to the KCL School of Politics and Economics Small Bursary Grant, awarded to me in February 2021 for the purpose of remunerating participants. Whilst it's impossible to put a monetary value on the personal information that participants share with me, paying participants meant that I would not be the only one benefitting from the research (Head, 2009: 337), by being able to use their words in my final thesis, in publications and, by extension, for career progression. Paying participants has, of course, the added benefit of incentivising people to take part and increasing participation rates (Head, 2009: 336). In the context of my study – its central focus on Brexit and the existence of 'Brexit fatigue' in the public – paying people fairly can only be of benefit.

I paid people at the start of the interview to make clear they are being compensated for their attendance, rather than for what they share. This should allay concerns raised in the literature about monetary incentives leading participants to tell the researcher 'what they think they want to hear' (Head, 2009: 342). Other ethical considerations when planning financial incentives included fears around payment undermining free and formed consent; people on low incomes in particular "might feel coerced to participate if the level of 'reward' is too high to refuse" (Head, 2009: 339). This was relevant to my study because I recruited people of all walks of life. Hence, I followed other researchers in paying the living wage (Gubrium et al., 2016: 1795; Valdez and Gubrium, 2020: 4).

I also spent time considering *how* the payment would be made (Head, 2009: 341). Vouchers have often been used in social science research, however, I decided to provide participants the choice to be paid in cash, by bank transfer or in the form of a voucher (due to consequences the transfer of cash can have for benefits recipients). I follow Gubrium et al. in this respect: the participatory aims of their project led to their use of cash incentives to provide participants with a 'thread of autonomy' in the research process (2016: 1795).

With the aims and methods of the project established, I'll now move on to what I 'found'. The following chapters describe three key themes that arose in my conversations with participants, drawn out through inductive analysis. Each of these themes (attitudes to immigration; disillusionment with politicians; anxiety and uncertainty) played a key role in shaping attitudes to Brexit among my participants and are all described, explicitly or implicitly, in the key Brexit research outlined in my literature review. Each also has been tied to the so-called 'left behind' explanations of Brexit and feed patterns of inclusion and exclusion. At the start of each chapter, I summarise relevant literature, at times drawn from my literature review and, otherwise, additional research that can help to frame my participants' attitudes. By focusing on each of these themes in turn, I begin to draw a picture of the wider web of identity-related factors that fed individuals' concerns and determined their attitudes to Brexit. Bourdieu's concepts, generally, provide a useful framework through which to view this tangled web. Throughout the next few chapters, however, it becomes clear that citizenship needs more attention in discussions of cultural capital and social class; I show how and why citizenship should be viewed as part of our 'embodied' cultural capital. In doing so, it becomes possible to understand patterns of inclusion and exclusion within the realm of EU membership for a wider group of individuals, including EU migrants who have, largely, been left out of research into Brexit. I begin, now, by discussing immigration attitudes, the ways in which identity shaped attitudes to immigration and how those attitudes fed feelings of inclusion and exclusion, and support for leave or remain at the referendum.

5. IMMIGRATION – THREATENING OR CELEBRATED?

5.1. INTRODUCTION

“The result of the 2016 referendum revealed a society which had, on the issues of EU membership and immigration, become divided” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 324)

Given the prominence of immigration in the Brexit campaign, highlighted most infamously in Nigel Farage’s ‘breaking point’ poster (see section 2.3.2.8. of the literature review on the European Refugee Crisis and Brexit, pp43-44), it is not surprising that the issue came up in relation to Brexit attitudes in my interviews. Indeed, opposition to EU membership in the UK had been driven in the years leading up to the referendum by it increasingly being seen as the “source of uncontrollable migration inflows and the obstacle to effective policy responses” (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 22). In this chapter I base my analysis on 12 participants’ views. For these participants, immigration played a significant role in shaping attitudes to Brexit. Not every participant did discuss immigration, but given the potency of the issue, when it did come up, emotive language was used, and it was discussed passionately by those who felt both positively and negatively towards it. Crucially, the participants who did discuss immigration mirrored the very general nature in which elites at the referendum discussed the subject; all migrants, regardless of country of origin, were brought into the Brexit debate, despite, of course, EU migrants making up roughly only a third of all migrants settling in the UK between 2004 and 2016 (Migration Observatory, 2022). By taking all migrants as a homogenous bloc, inherently tied to EU membership, and ‘othering’ all migrants on the basis of racist and Islamophobic narratives (Meghji, 2020: 12) as they did so, leave-supporting elites could make the issue all the more salient.

Many political scientists drew on the rhetoric of the ‘left behind’ in describing the link between anti-immigration attitudes and the vote to leave the EU: “The mass migration from poorer EU countries that began in 2004 was something the “left behind” electorate never wanted, never voted for and never really accepted” (Ford, 2016). Supposedly, it was this section of society who felt threatened by ‘mass’ immigration that was linked to EU membership by politicians and the media. This chapter

therefore considers the key identity-related aspects of the so-called 'left behind' voter: age, class, race and area of residence and their effect on attitudes to immigration, as the leave vote is closely associated with older, white, working-class voters in post-industrial areas 'revolting' against a distant political elite, in Westminster or Brussels (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 331).

Broadly, my findings support existing research: those who considered immigration a threat voted to leave, mirroring a number of aggregate- and individual-level analyses of the Brexit vote that argue immigration attitudes drove the leave vote (Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Hobolt, 2016). Those who celebrate immigration and diversity, on the other hand, generally voted to remain.

I intended in this research to move away from the language of the 'left behind' in this research, which risks contributing to narratives of a 'feckless poor' that will only exacerbate further social exclusion, and class distinction" (Mckenzie, 2017a: 272). This is reflected in BD13's feelings about living in so-called 'deprived' Barking ("they [the political elite] keep this attitude that it's a deprived area, everybody that lives here is... I don't know really... sub-human or...? I do find it offensive"). Instead, I use 'transnationalism' and Mckenzie's framing of inclusion or exclusion to understand participants' Brexit attitudes. Mckenzie's research is rooted in Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. I, therefore, draw on cultural capital and its intersections with gender, race and citizenship, and field. As outlined in my theoretical framework (see pp63-70 in particular), this helps to elucidate the determinants of my participants' attitudes to immigration, including the attitudes of women and migrants who have commonly been excluded from social science research, particularly that seeking to understand the Brexit vote (Guerrina et al., 2018; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Botterill et al., 2019). I also consider how attitudes vary across London, a subject into which we have relatively little insight. In doing so, this chapter draws out the complex web factors related to identity and location in London that fed into their feelings about immigration, filling in gaps left in the literature on Brexit.

Broadly, I argue that those who feel excluded from processes of change related to EU membership (through, for example, experience of limited access to housing and public services) were more likely to view immigration as a threat and were therefore more likely to have supported leave at the EU

referendum. I find that identity-related aspects of the so-called ‘left behind’ rhetoric, and social class (in terms of self-identification, cultural capital and economic capital), in particular, had an impact on Brexit attitudes but had far less sway than is generally described in political science literature (backing up existing critiques of ‘left behind’-centred research (Dorling et al., 2017; McKenzie, 2017a)). By bringing into account those often excluded and speaking to those living in areas that did not feature prominently in analyses of the vote, I find that timing of immigration to an area and an individual’s race and citizenship intersect with social class to produce feelings of inclusion or exclusion, too.

Embodied cultural capital can be devalued on the basis of societal dynamics (structural racism; the patriarchy) or institutional factors (EU membership giving EU migrants a privileged position in the UK job market (Lulle et al., 2018: 2)), impacting on an individual’s *overall* levels of capital and ability to ‘trade’ in the ‘symbolic marketplace’ (see discussion of McKenzie’s work in chapter 3, pp74-76). To take into consideration the intersections, therefore, of gender, race, citizenship and class, I argue that we need a wider conception of ‘exclusion’ than is currently used in studies like McKenzie’s to understand the Brexit vote more fully. Doing so would bring important depth and breadth to existing political science research that focused predominantly on white, working-class voters in post-industrial areas of England (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b), by re-presenting the stories of those who do not fit that mould. In making this argument, I also make the case for viewing ‘citizenship’ as part of our ‘embodied cultural capital’, as race and gender have been conceptualised already. Doing so allows the complex identity-related aspects of citizenship to take centre stage, moving away from understandings of citizenship as merely a legal or rights-based concept (Siklodi, 2020).

This chapter begins with a discussion of participants’ views on so called ‘welfare tourism’ and the link (or lack thereof) between stretched public services and immigration, and the ways in which ‘field’ (in terms of immigration) shaped these attitudes. I go on to describe the potential impact of gender and race and clear impact of citizenship on cultural capital and immigration attitudes, highlighting that aforementioned need for a wider conception of exclusion. Finally, I summarise how well my findings support and contradict the key identity and place-related factors associated with the so-called ‘left

behind’ and, ultimately, argue that more inclusive research is crucial to understanding the complex web of factors that determine attitudes to Brexit. What becomes clear through this chapter is that no ‘one size fits all’ explanation exists.

5.2. WELFARE TOURISM, ‘FIELD’ AND EXCLUSION

The links drawn by my interviewees between stretched public services like health and social housing, benefit tourism and a vote to leave, stood out to me during my fieldwork due to the passion with which they were described. The tie between immigration and stretched services is not surprising, given the media and political discourse linking the two over time (for a discussion on welfare tourism, see chapter 2, section on ‘Xenophobia towards Central And Eastern European Migrants’, pp39-43). Location in London and social class are key intersecting factors that led my participants to link stretched services, benefit tourism and immigration, and vote to leave as a result.

Crucially, for two leave-voting Barking residents, migration was leading to stretched services and was limiting the availability of affordable housing and access to the NHS. According to BD13, a working-class Irish immigrant who moved to Barking with her family more than 60 years ago, the impact on housing began with the development of the Olympic Village, when Stratford residents were moved further eastwards to areas like Barking. BD13, who had lived in the borough for decades and considered herself as working-class, had noticed the changing access to social housing – “when I was a child growing up, anyone [could get] social housing...you went on the list, when your time was up you got a little flat”, and families or mothers with new babies had no problem accessing social housing. BD13 recalled, however, that when she went to the housing office to talk about options for her daughter, “I was told I was a racist because I said ‘why can’t people who come from the borough and live in the borough [access social housing]?’”. Like the participants of Koch et al. (forthcoming), BD13 attached to her experiences of difficulty “a belief that the white ‘indigenous’ population had a greater entitlement to services” (forthcoming: 125).

BD11, a white, middle-class British man in his 20s, who had grown up in and continued to live in Barking, stated that migration to the town is “a burden on [its] resources” and asked “how much can you give to this place? How much more pressure?” For him, it is “white British people, not me, but people who are older or [who are] struggling” who can’t access services in the town, as they are being stretched by the need to “help everyone else” (BD11). Migrants were taking up space in the social welfare system to which British people were entitled. For BD11 and BD13, migration to the borough and limited access to housing for local or long-term residents were clearly linked.

Immigration was also seen as a threat by leave voters due to so-called ‘benefit tourism’, whereby Central and Eastern Europeans were supposedly migrating to the UK for social welfare, leaving British people at a loss and unable to access the support they needed. This idea was pushed not only by UKIP (Portes, 2013) but also by then-Tory Prime Minister David Cameron (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018), and fed into wider anti-immigrant rhetoric used by the leave campaign. This discourse has been called out as inaccurate since, and a means for government to shift the blame of long-term public spending cuts (Mintchev, 2014: 5).

For BD13, there was some sense that migrants were asking for too much:

“if you live in a country and you’re paying your way, paying your tax, insurance, obviously you’re entitled. You don’t just turn up on the doorstep and “I want, I want, I want” and it’s human rights, it’s the human rights bit that drives me off my trolley... I find it crazy.”

It seemed, for BD13, that it was not just that migrants were using the services in the town, but it was the sense that they felt entitled to use the services without, supposedly, paying into the system at the same time.

LA22, a West African woman who moved to Lambeth 30 years ago, also vote to leave, in part, to take a stand against so-called ‘benefit tourism’. LA22 described how “a lot of [people] flew from all parts of [the] EU to come into this country because they know that there are a lot of benefits they can get” and “they are not coming here to do a job, they are coming here because of the benefit”. So-called

benefit tourism was particularly problematic for LA22 who described how “people here are suffering with housing, we are suffering more” and for people who do not have benefits “you struggle everyday”. For LA22, benefit tourism “is why then they have this Brexit”.

The rhetoric around supposed benefit tourism clearly struck a chord with LA22 who was feeling the effects personally of the cost of living crisis. While BD11 and BD13 did not discuss the origin of the migrants they perceived to be limiting their access to services, the discourse of LA22, who discussed her experience of tension with EU migrants (see more below) does reflect the increasing xenophobia directed at EU migrants after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, when claims of benefit tourism became all the more widespread (Fox, 2013; Fox et al., 2015; Rzepnikowska, 2019).

Limited economic and cultural capital and working-class identification are, not surprisingly, associated with experiencing stretched housing and public services for at least two of the participants I’ve just described: BD13 and LA22. It’s certainly true that public services and housing have seen mammoth cuts over the last 50 or so years, and ultimately, the Brexit era comes at the end of 40+ years of neoliberalism and 10 years of austerity, which have led to ‘peak inequality’ (Dorling, 2018; Rogaly, 2020: 23). Thatcher’s neoliberalism “provided a rationale for...cuts to central government spending, including the decimation of grants to local government” (Rogaly, 2020: 11) and her ‘right to buy’ policy devastated social housing stock. Local authorities and public service providers were set in bad stead to weather the storm of future cuts in the 2010s and the coalition government’s austerity “hit working-class people and workers hard, especially women and racialised minorities within the working class” (Rogaly, 2020: 12).

Rather than putting these increasing economic inequalities in the context of long-term funding cuts to public services, however, right-wing populist leaders like Nigel Farage pointed the finger at ‘immigrants’ (Rogaly, 2020: ix). As such, Brexit was presented as a “project that could redistribute value back to the victimized, hard-working white families whose social status had been relegated by racialized immigration” (Meghji, 2020: 8), adding fuel to the ‘anti-immigrant’ fire. This is reflected in the leave votes of both BD13 and LA22.

Working-class participants LA22 and BD13 had both felt the pressure on housing and services personally but associated this with increasing immigration, rather than cuts to funding. LA22's quote above, about people 'here' suffering with housing too, clearly shows the difficulties she has experienced. BD13 described in more detail how her family had experienced a period of financial struggle a few years before our interview; her husband was made redundant after 44 years, they had two children going through university and they had a mortgage to pay. She went to seek help from local Labour MP Margaret Hodge and was told she should sell her house, or re-mortgage it to help her children get onto the housing ladder. She felt disillusioned after their meeting, realising that there simply wasn't the support she needed available. Both LA22 and BD13 had limited institutionalised cultural capital, due to their lower educational attainment and occupations. As such, it's possible to see how, like the working-class women McKenzie spoke to for her research, BD13 and LA22 could generally "only 'trade' in social and cultural capital that had very little worth beyond the bounds of their own local communities" (2017b: 202), felt excluded from the benefits of EU membership and negatively towards transnationalism, and voted to leave.

Two working-class participants on universal credit⁶, however, saw through the link drawn between immigration and stretched services by right-wing political and media discourses in the 2010s, as did working-class Romanian migrant BD14. Like BD13 and LA22, both LA16 and LA21 described the financial hardship they had experienced and described themselves as working-class. Their proximity to the welfare system, however, seemingly helped them see stretched services as a result of political decisions since the 1970s and more recent austerity politics, instead of immigration.

Both LA16, a white, working-class woman in her 30s, and LA21, a white, working-class man in his 50s, described cuts to social welfare as a result of successive Conservative governments' policy specifically. When describing the cost of living, remain-voting LA16 spoke about how "support has definitely got

⁶ A Conservative government 'reform' introduced in 2013 with the purpose of simplifying social welfare for recipients (UK Government, 2015), but that has, instead, seen numerous criticisms from late payments to overall lowering of welfare available (Toynbee, 2019). See comments from LA16 on p222 of chapter 7, describing her own experience transferring to universal credit.

less and harder [to access]” since she had her son in 2011. At the time, she had access to services like the *Sure Start* grant but had “definitely seen a reduction” since. We talked about how reduced welfare had been conflated with immigration leading up to and during the referendum campaign, and she said she thought it was “so obvious” that it was instead caused by austerity. LA16 is a care leaver and grew up “not having family support”. As such, she has lived in close proximity to the social welfare system for much of her life and knowing, for example, how the housing system works was very valuable to her; it was a “blessing and a curse” and made her “more aware” that these were policy decisions rather than related to immigration. As a result, she wasn’t convinced to vote leave on the basis of anti-immigration arguments.

LA21, a white working-class man who had lived just outside of Lambeth’s borders since he was born there 58 years ago, on the other hand, did vote leave but his vote was also entirely unrelated to immigration. I spoke to LA21 and LA22 together and immigration was a key theme throughout our discussion, given its prominence for LA22’s vote to leave. LA21, however, was non-plussed by migrants moving to the UK or London; “I really don’t give a damn about what people are”. In a similar way to LA16, his proximity to social welfare through the years allowed him to see past the conflation of stretched services and increasing immigration and he described in detail the various points throughout his life when he had experienced limited support from (Tory) governments (I describe this in detail in the next chapter, see pp186-189).

BD14, a white, working-class Romanian woman in her 30s who had been living in Dagenham for a decade, on the other hand, was aware that ‘benefit tourism’ was part of the elite-driven xenophobia towards Central and Eastern European migrants (as is supported widely in the academic literature, see for example, Demetriou (2018) and Runfors et al. (2022), and a brief discussion of the issue in section 2.3.2.7., pp39-43, of this thesis). While she described herself as having been treated fairly in, for example, employment, the top-down nature of this “sometimes obvious and sometimes more subtle” rhetoric was clear to her. It was being pushed by politicians like Nigel Farage (who was “quite offensive, if I’m honest”) and the mass media which “definitely...plays a massive role” in driving

xenophobia. The media had created a ‘scapegoat’, “first there was Polish...now it’s Romanians and Bulgarians” and that, as a result, “there is a fear of people coming in and taking the resources and benefits and everything”. Given her personal experience of being on the receiving end of these “stupid comments”, though, she told me that “if you’re well informed, you realise that actually that’s not the case”.

While cultural and economic capital can explain some of the varying support for immigration between the participants discussed in this section, there’s more to the story. LA22, works as a healthcare assistant potentially leading her to witness first-hand the impact of austerity as austerity measures undermined public services in areas in which women of colour are over-represented (MacLeavy, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2017), like the health and social care sector. However, LA22’s leave vote was still motivated (at least in part) by widely debunked benefit tourism rhetoric, while BD14’s support for remain was in reaction to mass media discourse on benefit tourism that scapegoated Central and Eastern European migrants. What’s more, BD11, a middle-class man in his early 20s, mentioned first in this section, who was born and grew up in Barking, mirrored many of the statements made by BD13 about the impact of immigration on housing and services. While he himself had not been in a financially precarious position, he voted to leave seemingly in empathy for the older, working-class residents of Barking. I’ll now go on to explain how timing of immigration to an area, in the case of BD11, and race and citizenship in the cases of LA22 and BD14 and other EU migrants who participated in my research, help to explain the attitudes of these participants, highlighting just how complex Brexit really was.

5.2.1. IMMIGRATION TO BARKING AND THE SHIFTING DOMINANCE OF THE WHITE MAJORITY

What appears to have played a particularly important role (in the attitudes of participants who did not vote as we would have ‘expected’ based on political science research) is where those participants lived in London and whether migration to their area was recent or part of the history of the place. What is distinctive about the two boroughs in which I conducted my research – Lambeth and Barking

and Dagenham – is that *timing* of immigration was very different. Barking has experienced immigration recently, and has a recent history of support for UKIP and, before that, the BNP. In the last two decades, the borough has seen huge shifts in terms of the ethnicity of residents. By 2011, the white British residents were no longer the biggest group as the ethnic minority population had grown to 51% (CODE, 2017: 1) and according to the 2021 census, that number had risen to more than 55 per cent (ONS, 2022c). Central and Eastern Europeans made up the greatest proportion of migrants moving to Barking and Dagenham in 2020. Notably, this rapid population change has led to tensions, and the migrant community is actively working to “tackle hostile attitudes to immigration in the borough” (Barking and Dagenham Post, 2018). No doubt these tensions have been bolstered by long-term support for parties like the BNP and UKIP in the borough throughout the last two decades. It is already known that high levels of *recent* migration were associated to a vote to leave (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017), so support for the BNP and UKIP and hostility towards migrant groups in the borough are, unfortunately, not entirely unexpected.

Brixton’s history, on the other hand, is tied to migration. During the post-war period, the borough, and Brixton in particular, became a cultural centre for the black Caribbean population (Lambeth, 2015: 14; Lambeth, 2016b: 10). This history of migration is celebrated through cultural institutions, including the Black Cultural Archives on Windrush Square in Brixton. Lambeth is also home to ‘Little Portugal’ and the vast majority of recent EU migrants are from Western and Southern Europe.

The findings I’ll now describe reflect existing research, which showed that sudden demographic change is associated with a vote to leave (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017) and that areas that had experienced an influx of immigration in the ten years prior to the referendum, like Barking and Dagenham, were also more likely to see a leave vote (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; b). Bond and Tejeiro go further and find that prejudice towards EU migrants in particular, rather than all migrants, was more predictive of a vote to leave (2019). Given that EU migrants make up the vast majority of recent migrants to Barking and Dagenham, this could explain some of the leave vote in that area, too. Areas with large non-white populations like Lambeth were, on the other hand, more likely to vote to

remain (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a). Ethnicity and immigration are, however, not focuses for these authors and, as a result, we don't have full understanding of the impact of these factors on the Brexit vote. By drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, I hope to begin to fill in some of those gaps.

Economic and cultural capital and 'field' are crucial to understanding the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and support for Brexit among my participants. Those with low cultural and economic capital who live in an area that has recently experienced a significant wave of migration voted to leave on the basis that migration was limiting their access to public services and housing (BD13). Location in London – or 'field', if physical space is the concretisation of social space – is also particularly important, given how it shaped the views of BD11 (who shared BD13's concerns about immigration, despite his middle-class background). According to Bourdieu, each 'field' has different 'social rules' which define the kinds of cultural capital that are valuable and which are defined by the dominant group in that field. Significant waves of migration naturally shift the 'social rules' of a place as, for example, the ethnic or cultural diversity of an area changes, unsettling the dominant social position of long-term residents (in Barking, the long-term white residents). As their dominance shifts, these residents may feel threatened by that recent (EU) immigration (Bond and Tejeiro, 2019), excluded from processes associated with EU membership and negatively towards transnationalism, voting leave as a result. Indeed, in my March 2022 focus group, participants confirmed the various visible signs of increasing migration to the borough (which, crucially, these women celebrated). BD17, a working-class, mixed race British woman, and BD18, a working-class, mixed-race Portuguese woman, talked about the Portuguese and Turkish shops that had appeared on Green Lane in Dagenham. BD18 went into great detail about what she had learnt, for example, about new ingredients, from the shopkeepers. BD14, mentioned above, also described similar trends. She had noticed an 'influx' of migration to Barking and Dagenham before *and increasingly since* the Brexit referendum. She noted that migrants "don't always integrate very well" and she "can understand that causes friction". It's interesting that even an EU migrant, who stood so staunchly in support of remain, mirrored to an extent the rhetoric of the leave campaign. This could reflect her empathy towards the position of

long-term migrants, whose dominance in the borough was changing, or it could be a sign that anti-immigrant rhetoric is so deep-rooted that it crosses Brexit lines.

Both BD11 (for his white Britishness) and BD13 (for her whiteness) could be considered part of the (previously) 'dominant group' in Barking, given the whiteness of the area until 2001. Both residents had been in the borough for decades themselves (BD13) or have family who have been there for decades (BD11) and both discussed how much change the town has seen, for them, due to migration. BD13, in fact, described feeling like she was being pushed out of her own town due to migration and that she "shouldn't live here anymore", in a similar way to McKenzie's white working-class participants living in East London, who reported feeling like "there's nothing left for me here whether we are in or out and I've got nowhere else to go" (McKenzie, 2017a: 275), and voted to leave as a result. Race and whiteness, rather than citizenship or Britishness, seem to be what is shifting and unsettling BD11 and BD13. BD13 described herself as a white Irish immigrant, while BD11 described himself as a white British man. After six decades in the borough, BD13 still identified with her and her family's history of migration from Ireland but, as Mondon and Winter explain, "having entered the working class as racialised [and scapegoated] immigrant groups, [Irish working-class immigrants] 'became' white, demonstrating the contingency of the concept of whiteness" (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 516). As such, it's possible that this whiteness is what links BD11 and BD13 together, and may have been drawn on "as a source of power and a way of legitimising 'localness' for those seeking to resist change in the demographic composition of the area" (Rogaly, 2020: xi).

Ultimately, as the social rules of a place change, the cultural capital of that once-dominant group becomes less 'valuable' in the symbolic economy, leading these Barking residents to feel negatively towards transnationalism and like they are no longer benefitting from EU membership. As McKenzie (2017a; b) suggests, with less valuable capital to exchange, that group, the white (British) Barking residents, begin to feel excluded, and many vote for Brexit, as BD11 and BD13 did. The impact of recent immigration seems to have had a similar impact in London, then, as it did across England. Therefore, *some of* the leave vote was made in London somewhat contradicting Arnorsson and Zoega,

who found that “it was in England outside London where the decision to leave the E.U. was made” (2016: 4), and generally highlighting that there is more to the story than large-scale political science studies of the Brexit vote have explained.

What’s interesting is how potent the issue of immigration had become in Barking, seemingly overriding other factors, like social class. BD11 described himself as ‘pro-immigration’ and explained the reasoned process of research he had undertaken to inform his decision at the 2016 Brexit referendum. He also stated that he “should’ve voted remain, because the EU has done a lot for me as a gay man in the human rights angle of things...obviously, with the recent laws, and I recognise that the EU has encouraged [laws making homosexuality illegal] to be eradicated”. What’s more, BD11 had high levels of institutionalised cultural capital, in the form of a master’s degree and ongoing doctoral research, which would be closely related to support for remain in the literature on Brexit. However, instead, BD11’s close associations with Barking as a field seemingly led him to support leave, in part, altruistically and in the interests of others in the borough who *were* experiencing the effects of strained services. As a middle-class person living in the middle-class part of Barking, BD11 didn’t seem to feel the effects of strained services personally but was taking into consideration those in the borough who were struggling to make ends meet and grappling with the Council whose services were under constant stress, like BD13. He admitted at the very end of our conversation that migration to Barking was unavoidable when considering the EU: it “did come into my thought process...it was in the back of my mind – you can’t avoid that”. What’s interesting is that, while neither BD11 nor BD13 describe direct contact with those migrants who have moved to the borough in recent years, it is *perceived* threat of migrants, rather than actual contact with migrants (Bond and Tejeiro, 2019: 338), and a higher *perceived* immigrant population size (Palma et al., 2020: 726), that are said to shape Brexit attitudes, and that may be reflected in the generalised fear of increasing migration to the town and their votes to leave.

5.2.2. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN FIELDS

Through my interviews with those participants who discussed attitudes to immigration, it seems as though active engagement with the 'field' is crucial. Merely living in an area does not subliminally shape an individual's political attitudes. It is active participation in smaller social spaces, including schools and places of work, within larger fields, like Barking Town Centre for BD13, that is crucial to understanding attitudes more fully. This highlights how social space *and* physical space, the two conceptualisations of 'field', can shape attitudes. This is highlighted by considering the cases of BD11 and BD13 in comparison with BD12, a white, British, middle-class woman in her 60s (and a group of migrant women whose 'field' I discuss below).

BD12 was born in Barking in 1952 and has lived there ever since due to convenience for work in London: "I didn't have to leave home in search of work". By her own account, she "hated working locally, I liked to separate my work from where I lived". As such, she didn't spend much time in Barking until she retired a few years ago and seemed therefore to have less of a sense of a changing Barking. BD12 did mention migration to the borough but she seemed to view the claims of the leave campaign at a distance. She noted that "for certain people who didn't have a bigger view of it, it was just get our borders back under control and we can all go back to being English again" and that they thought "subconsciously, that on the day, when we left this stardust would drop out of the sky and all the foreigners would be gone, and it would return to 1958". She seemed to take the leave campaign's claims with a pinch of salt and given that "a lot of the people were here already and were second-generation", asked pragmatically "where did everyone think they were going to go?". In fact, BD12 was concerned about the racialised nature of the leave campaign, that the anti-immigrant thread was "in lots of cases a very racist-based thing, although nobody actually said it". Her distance from those claims may reflect that she was "never at the school gates" and worked away from the town.

BD11, on the other hand, grew up and feels very connected to the community through his work at the council and in local charity organisations. BD13 also spent time discussing her family life in Barking

during our conversation. While she also worked away, it may be that her family life tied her closer to the town day-to-day; she *was* part of the smaller fields within the town, for example, those which exist around the school gates and create the social ties that allow ‘field’ to have an impact.

BD12 may have been able to see through the leave campaign’s rhetoric linking immigration to stretched services due to her previous self-exclusion from life in the town (and, of course, her cultural and economic capital). BD11 and BD13 felt embedded within various aspects of life in Barking, and that connection led the changing social rules of the ‘field’ to impact on their attitudes to immigration. This supports the idea that “physical space is the concretization of the social space” (Hanquinet et al., 2013: 514); spending time within a particular field, as BD13 and BD11 did, shaped their views. BD12, on the other hand, who spent less time physically in Barking, appears to have had some impact on her diverging views.

5.2.3. (WHITE) MULTICULTURALISM AND INEQUALITY IN BRIXTON

I have explained how *recent* migration to Barking and Dagenham may have shaped the dominance of different groups in the town, and how that appears to have impacted on the attitudes of the white majority there. Lambeth has a very different history of migration (see section 4.3.1. of chapter 4, pp88-91) and I’ll now describe the ways in which its long history of migration seems to have shaped the attitudes of those living there.

My starting points are the cases of LA16 and LA21, described above, who were able to see past the anti-immigration rhetoric of the leave vote and were living in or very close to Lambeth at the time of the referendum, the history of which is closely tied to migration. It seems as though, as a result of this history, migration and ethnic diversity is embedded in the ‘field’ and considered valuable by residents there. Immigration is widely celebrated, and this is associated with support for remain at the referendum.

While LA16 and LA21 had not *chosen* to live where they did; LA21 was living in social housing in Southwark, next to the Lambeth border, while LA16 had moved to Brixton as that was where social

housing was available, the 'social rules' of their neighbourhoods may have impacted on their seeing through the stretched services-anti-immigration link. As mentioned above, Brixton's history is tightly intertwined with the UK's history of migration and Brixton itself has long been the cultural centre of London's Black Caribbean population. The borough's history appears to have played a role in shaping attitudes of those who didn't *choose* to move to the area for its cultural diversity. It also, no doubt, draws in individuals who celebrate immigration and diversity. A number of (white) Lambeth residents remarked on the ethnic diversity of the borough and explained that was one of its greatest draws when moving to that area of London (LA11; LA12; LA13; LA14; LA17), suggesting that ethnic diversity is not only a fundamental aspect of Brixton as a field, but also a *valued* aspect of that field. What's interesting is that 55 per cent of the population in Lambeth classified themselves as white in 2021, ten per cent higher than the white population in Barking and Dagenham (ONS, 2022c). This further emphasises the importance of Lambeth's history as a place of ethnic diversity. That proportion of white people includes those who identify as white and European, for example, so it may be a sign that Lambeth has a more significant white migrant population than Barking and Dagenham. It could also be a sign of the whitening of areas like Brixton as gentrification continues to take hold of the area. What we see for certain, though, is that it's not necessarily stark demographical differences but the sense of the place and its history as a centre of migration that appears to continue its reputation as a particularly open and diverse part of London.

LA12, a white British man in his 40s, made comparisons between Lambeth and the area in which he grew up. LA12 lives in Brixton and especially loves the "diversity of it" and compared the borough to the very white area his family lives in and he grew up in, calling his hometown 'dull' as a result. LA14 also felt very positively towards London when she first moved from Italy more than a decade ago, choosing to move straight to Brixton as her partner was living in the borough and because of its diversity. A significant part of her initially feeling at home and happy living in London seems to be due to the diversity of the city; "every borough had its own identity", making London "the best place to live". The diversity of London, in comparison to the place in which she grew up has, by her own

account, taught her so much, “about other [cultures], about respect, about identity”. She notes, in fact, that people in London were so openminded, which meant that “London itself was the most rich place because all this kind of ethnicity living together, usually there is a lot of problem related to that”.

LA17, a white middle-class woman in her 50s, stated that what she liked the most about her area of Lambeth, the Tulse Hill/ Brixton/ Streatham triangle, was “the diversity...everything diversity – ethnic, socio-economic, everything, that’s what I like about it”. As such, it appears that LA17 views diversity more widely than common tropes of difference or diversity do, when focused on ethnic, religious or cultural differences alone (Harris et al., 2019: 3231). For her, the inequality in the borough was a part of the (positive) diversity of the area. It was the ethnic diversity of Brixton that sets it apart from other areas nearby, providing further evidence that it is smaller social spaces, rather than whole boroughs that constitute a field. Indeed, Brixton seems set apart (at least for some; see critique of ongoing gentrification of Brixton below in chapter 7, pp217-222) from neighbouring Herne Hill which has, in the last 25 years or so, got posher and “probably got whiter”, too (LA19), despite, LA19 notes, Brixton and Herne Hill being linked together by Railton Road, which played a significant role in the Brixton riots when, in April 1981, “Brixton exploded in rebellion” (Sivanandan, 2008: 137) after ongoing police violence against black people and the unexplained death of Rasta ‘Cartoon’ Campbell in Brixton prison in March 1980.

That it was white Lambeth residents celebrating the ethnic diversity of the area may be a reflection of my sampling and nothing more. Alternatively, these ‘celebrations’ of diversity by white residents of Lambeth may (not purposefully) be playing into more problematic tropes. While LA17 did critically reflect that it may be her white privileged background that allowed her to see the ‘diversity’ of her area in a positive light, descriptions of diversity as positive, for example, due to the ‘richness’ that it can bring to an area (as seen in other participants’ reflections on the diversity of Lambeth), can be limited and limiting (Berg and Sigona, 2013; Harris et al., 2019). The numerous differences between individuals and groups living in a ‘diverse’ area flatten “the very diversity it ostensibly celebrates and

acknowledges” (Berg and Sigona, 2013: 353) and miss out “any critical reflection of people’s lives” (Harris et al., 2019: 3235). Such descriptions of diversity therefore ignore the intersectional inequalities that different groups face in different ways when it comes to access to services and housing in a borough like Lambeth (see section 4.3. of Research Design on descriptions of ethnic diversity and deprivation in both boroughs in question, pp86-96).

When reading these celebrations of diversity by white Lambeth residents, I felt a bit uncomfortable, that in some way white residents moving to Brixton [I was one of them] benefit from the specifically ethnic or racial diversity of the area. It felt in some way appropriative or exploitative. Ghassan Hage’s critique of *White multiculturalism* in Australia put into words my feelings and thoughts about this phenomenon. For Hage, White multiculturalism ‘appreciates’ diversity. To appreciate something, you first have ‘to have’ it. White multiculturalism is, therefore, structured by the verb ‘to have’ which “always presupposes a subject that has and an object that is had” (Hage, 2000: 139) – very different to the multicultural ‘we’ which doesn’t *have* diversity but *is* diverse. White multiculturalism, therefore, “always establishes an extrinsic relation between a White possessor and a non-White possessed” (Hage, 2000: 140). The power relations between the possessor and the possessed are, it seems, continuations of the colonial power relations that have existed in different forms in the UK since the beginnings of the British Empire and no doubt intersect with social class, too.

That aside, it’s also clear that immigration is celebrated and valued and that celebration is part of the ‘social rules’ of Brixton, seen also in how the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the leave campaign, in fact, bolstered support for remain among many residents. As we moved onto the subject of Brexit, LA16, who so easily saw through the leave campaign’s rhetoric, started by telling me that “I know why I didn’t want to vote for leave, because I felt like all the media coverage of it was all very negative and kind of propaganda”. She went on to say that leave voters were voting against their best interests, due to the impact on freedom of movement and “with things being so expensive” as the cost of living rises.

LA12, a white middle-class man, also suggested that the leave campaign “strengthened [Brixton’s] resolve to vote remain, to push against it”. He found their ideas, particularly around immigration, “so distasteful” and “very emotional”, and an attack on friends, neighbours, colleagues and, particularly, his partner who were migrants living in London. LA13, a middle-class Australian woman, mirrored these sentiments around the leave campaign capitalising on ‘campaign lies’: its use of “inflammatory ideas, all of that, the NHS [claims] on the bus and the queues of people coming from Turkey to the EU, you know...they were just lies”. Having grown up in Australia, LA13 found that the Australian immigration system (points-based to “select skilled migrant workers” (Migration Observatory, 2019)) which was “pedalled at the time” particularly egregious and “embarrassing...it’s completely and utterly shameful because Australia has massive problems around that very thing, you have people locked up in...cages...its horrendous”. LA20, a white German woman who didn’t associate with the traditional social class and instead described herself as part of the ‘bohemian class’, was also shocked that the leave campaign would “exploit people to the extent that they could hang their economic woes on that [immigration]...talk about misrepresentation [and] mis-advertising”. She went on to describe how her mother “became a nurse because there was a massive shortage [as a German immigrant, it was the only way she could get lodging] and every wave of immigration there’s been a take up of nursing places”. To LA20, the NHS had been put in jeopardy by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the leave campaign and “all the nurses from Europe who would be more than willing to help...have just been alienated”. Begum (2018) suggests that the ethnic minority remain vote may have been less about positive EU sentiment and more a reaction against the leave campaign’s anti-immigration rhetoric. These white Lambeth remain voters’ attitudes suggest there may be some go-betweens when it comes to White and ethnic minority voter attitudes, just as there were in relation to LA22’s vote to leave (Martin et al., 2019), which I’ll discuss very shortly. This suggests that not only have we missed huge swathes of the population outside of mainstream studies of Brexit, but that we’ve also missed out on understanding the determinants of attitudes that cross, in this case, race and ethnicity lines.

These participants did not feel excluded from or pushed out of their area in the way that BD11 and BD13 did. While many Lambeth participants I've just mentioned described themselves as middle-class, not all did (for example, LA16) and, therefore, again, field cross class lines; that immigration *wasn't* marked as the reason behind the stretched services in Lambeth suggests that the place itself shaped attitudes to Brexit there, suggesting that Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' is a useful way to understand how community and society norms shape attitudes of a place.

5.3. RACE, CITIZENSHIP AND EXCLUSION

Through the use of the concept of 'fields' we have seen how location in London motivated the leave votes of BD11 and BD13, cutting across expected class lines for BD11 in particular. It doesn't, however, explain the leave vote of long-term Lambeth resident LA22, who voted to leave on the basis of anti-immigration sentiment.

LA22 described how, pre-Brexit, she had felt some animosity from EU migrants while at work. As a West African migrant, who had moved to Lambeth more than 30 years ago, she described how EU migrants "were always wanting to intimidate you" and that "people that came from the EU were always... want to tell you that they are in charge". She described how, since the vote, relations between different migrant groups were "calming down little by little" now that "they know where they belong", highlighting how contentious some relations between different migrants may have been and suggesting that a pecking order existed between them. This may reflect the workplace impacts of white privilege; not only do people of colour find themselves working twice as hard to move up the promotional ladder as their white counterparts (Hirsch, 2018), but the workplace itself can become an anxiety-inducing place for those experiencing discrimination (Rollock et al., 2015: 164).

Martin et al. (2019) conclude that there is a 'clear parallel' between the leave votes of ethnic minority groups, like that of LA22, and the so-called 'left behind'. The 'left behind' are said to have voted leave in reaction to their position as the 'losers' of globalisation, while "for minorities, the different

treatment of migrants from the EU, combined with promises of better treatment of Commonwealth countries, offered a similar group-based reason to support Brexit” (Martin et al., 2019: 29), i.e., a sense that a different group were being favoured. LA22’s vote to leave certainly supports this finding but it is still worth considering the various factors underneath LA22’s attitudes so as not to paint her experience and attitudes with a single brush, as the ‘left behind’ rhetoric does for white working-class voters.

Instead, citizenship, and possibly also race and gender, may have led to a devaluing of LA22’s embodied cultural capital, bolstering her feelings of exclusion and highlighting the need for a wider conception of exclusion than is described in the literature on Brexit currently. The intersectional impact of race, citizenship and cultural capital are supported through comparison between LA22 and the EU migrants in my sample, all of whom supported EU membership, largely on the grounds of freedom of movement, regardless of social class.

All EU migrants (including Australian LA13, who had an EU passport) I interviewed for this research, all women and living across Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham, supported remain at the referendum. In fact, they celebrated the EU and transnationalism, due, in large part, to freedom of movement. LA14, an Italian woman who identified as working-class, linked her remain attitudes to freedom of movement based, fundamentally, on the idea that borders should not exist, that “we should be free to move, free to choose, free to live in other places...everyone should mix”. Growing up in Australia, where, even if you spend a few hours on a plane, you still end up in Australia, meant freedom of movement was a huge part of middle-class LA13’s vote to remain, too. Freedom of movement meant, for LA13, that you could have a passport that would allow you to travel throughout Europe, to so many different countries; she “just thought it was fantastic” being able to access French culture and food, and then Italian culture and food so easily, it was “paradise”.

Aside from travel, freedom of movement was related to contact and connection with family. Albanian migrant BD15 made the point that freedom of movement was beneficial for those migrating to the UK, and vice versa. BD15 explained that, pre-Brexit, it was much easier for her family to visit her but

now there were lots of forms to fill in and the embassy was involved (while Albania is not an EU member state, Albanian citizens will not need a visa to enter the EU from 2025 (ETIAS, 2022)). BD17 and BD20, during the focus group discussion, compared connection to their home countries pre- and post-Brexit, describing how much more difficult it had become to, for example, send and receive packages including things like food from their hometowns. Similarly, for Italian migrant LA14, it was not only freedom of movement of people, in terms of the ‘travel industry’ but also freedom of movement of goods, like ‘food commerce’, that she saw as such an advantage of EU membership. Price increases of European imports were a concern for LA14, who said that food products like Italian wine and mozzarella were now “for rich people, who can afford to [buy them]”. These EU migrants had been benefitting from and felt included in the European project and all that it entailed, regardless of economic or cultural capital, and were now unanimously feeling the negative impacts of leaving the EU.

By considering the cases of LA22 and the cases of the migrant women just described, it’s possible to see how various intertwining and inherently linked factors – gender, race and citizenship – could be at play here, intersecting with cultural capital in its *embodied* form to devalue overall levels of capital for LA22, and leading her to vote to leave. It’s possible, by bringing into the discussion the work of anti-racist, Critical Race Theory and intersectional feminist scholars, and by considering how, ultimately, what the ‘other’ possesses is seen to hold less value as they are “stigmatised rather than ennobled” (Bourdieu, 1984: 15), to see how various societal dynamics may have shaped LA22’s experience at work, exacerbating her feelings of exclusion.

Brexit – and the pre-referendum campaign – side-lined women through the re-masculinisation of the state and politics, where equality was set aside in favour of ‘higher political and economic goals’ (MacLeavy, 2018; Galpin, 2022). This followed years in which European migration policy favoured and legitimised men’s work over women’s and the two ‘emblematic figures’ that have emerged in research into labour migration highlight the gendered and classed nature of European migration policies: the “first figure is the Information Technology and Communication (ITC) worker, usually

male, and the second is the domestic/ care worker who, if not exclusively female, is, with a few exceptions” (Kofman, 2013: 579). These (male) migrants (in jobs associated with high cultural capital) became ‘sought-after resources’ (Bonizzoni, 2018: 47) while migration policy ‘deskilled’ “the recruitment channels for female labour migrants” (Bonjour and Chauvin, 2018: 9) and access to skilled work is limited by “racist and sexist stereotyping, such as gendered ethnicization as ‘Muslim woman’” (Erel, 2010: 648). Such discourse emphasises how some migrants’ embodied cultural capital is considered more or less legitimate or deserving than others’ based on their race and gender.

It’s also necessary to consider the ways in which race and racism fed into the Brexit vote. Brexit could or should be viewed with a longer-term lens, as a “symptom of a continuing organic crisis of the British state” (Jessop, 2017, cited in MacLeavy, 2018: 207), resulting at least in part from the racism that has become, “in Bourdieusian terms, an integral component of the English habitus” (Virdee, 2014: 163). From this standpoint, Brexit Britain is seen as “fuelled by, and [reproducing], specific racialized emotions and ideologies” (Meghji, 2020: 6), with “2016 [marking] a new step in the mainstreaming of reactionary and particularly racist, Islamophobic and xenophobic political movements, agendas and discourses” (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 510). This is reflected in numerous instances of racial violence legitimised by the Brexit vote (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018; Rzepnikowska, 2019).

Some white EU migrants may have, on the other hand, been able to capitalise on their whiteness in joining the labour market (before Brexit and before *all* migrants were ‘othered’ under the post-Brexit points-based immigration system). Race is not an essential characteristic of migrants, but a notion socially constructed around exclusion (Rzepnikowska, 2019: 64) and racism is “a dynamic and contingent social practice – a discursive strategy, an interpretive frame, a way of seeing and doing...that is judiciously used for specific purposes” (Fox, 2013: 1874). Migrants have been lightened and darkened as policy and the media shift over time (Fox et al., 2012: 692), and this may have been shaped by institutional factors like the EU’s freedom of movement. Pre-Brexit, rules for European migrants entering the UK labour market, while still inherently restrictive, were more lenient than

those by which other non-EU workers were constrained (Fox et al., 2012: 684). It's possible to see how the preferential position institutionalised through EU membership may have led to (white) EU migrants being perceived as more legitimate and as having more 'valuable' cultural capital, as these hierarchies are internalised by migrants themselves (Koskela, 2014; Lulle et al., 2018). The perpetuation of these hierarchies by migrants in an institutionally privileged position are, then, less likely to resist such hierarchies (Koskela, 2014; Lulle et al., 2018).

In writing this I do not mean to erase the racism and xenophobia that many EU migrants have experienced, particularly since the leave vote. My aim was to show how, on the basis of these dynamics, it has been suggested that *some* EU migrants, from Central and Eastern Europe, were able, *pre-Brexit*, to "wield 'race' to assert and defend the relatively privileged position their putative whiteness [afforded] them in the UK's segmented labour market" (Fox, 2013: 1871). This reflects, in part, the long-standing racialisation of the working class in Britain (where the 'deserving' were white) and the 'whiteness' associated with many European states' notions of nation and nationalism (the ties between national identity and whiteness are discussed not only in the UK but also in other EU states like Poland (Jaskulowska, 2021)). What *was* highly tradeable (symbolically), *pre-Brexit*, was European-ness and/ or whiteness and this may have driven tension *between* migrant groups, reflected in LA22's experience at work which, in turn, drove her vote to leave. If LA22's *embodied* cultural capital was considered less valuable by (white) EU migrants who asserted their dominance, it's possible to understand how she may have felt excluded from the benefits of EU membership and, as a result, viewed immigration in a negative light and voted to the leave the EU.

At first, based on the theoretical work mentioned above, I thought that the devaluing dynamics of gender and race on LA22's embodied cultural capital could so clearly explain her vote to leave, especially in light of her experience at work of EU migrants asserting their dominance. However, another migrant in my sample, BD17, who described herself as a mixed race, working-class migrant woman, and therefore could be seen to have similar embodied cultural capital to LA22, supported remain, along with the other EU migrants in my sample. Therefore, the additional factor of

citizenship, and how it interacts with cultural capital and social class, must also be considered, and may provide a far more compelling explanation than those factors just described. The experiences of other EU migrants provide additional support for this idea. Those with European citizenship have directly and recently felt the benefits of EU membership for them and their children and, as such, feel part of and included in the EU and the transnationalism that comes with it, possibly limiting BD17 from feeling excluded on the basis of her race and gender, in the way that LA22 did.

BD17 described experiences of racism on moving to Dagenham: “I used to [live in] Dagenham Heathway and they were quite racist...I remember one friend invite me to go to a pub and [the pub] said, ‘no we don’t want any foreigners’” and went on to describe BD17 using a racist and uniquely offensive term. For BD17, the EU and increasing immigration to the area may instead have made Dagenham a more welcoming place. BD17 agreed that the multiculturalism that had come along with increasing migration to the area was a positive thing, especially for her children to grow up amongst. This is very different to LA22, who perceived the racism she experienced to be tied to EU membership and ensuing immigration.

I spoke to working-class Portuguese woman BD17 as part of a focus group I conducted with a community group in Dagenham who personally saw the benefits of an increasingly diverse borough, that would allow their children to grow up in a place that was multicultural and “so unique in the whole of London” (BD22) and for the shops and food that migration had brought to Dagenham. Indeed, it is the now-disappearing multiculturalism that was a ‘pull factor’ for many EU migrants (Lulle et al., 2018: 4), especially parents with children, to move to the UK pre-Brexit, a sense that has now been undermined (Zontini and Però, 2019: 100). BD18, a mixed-race woman who had been living in Dagenham for nearly 15 years, spoke at length about various shops that had appeared in recent years selling food and ingredients from Egypt, Turkey and Portugal. To BD18, “looking at the wider picture...having these shops is actually teaching us different ways of living” by introducing her to new ingredients like ‘ful’ beans. This group was more than 50 per cent migrant women, and therefore that this group – or *field* – was one which celebrated and valued migrants coming to the area is not

surprising. BD18 recalled a meal, for example, that the group had shared, where BD20 from Spain and BD17 from Portugal both brought food “we never would have got to taste had we not known them”. Indeed, ‘commensality’, the act of eating together and food sharing, has been found to be incredibly valuable to community development for migrants post-Brexit (Caudwell et al., 2020).

As such, it appears that citizenship cuts across race, in terms of the attitudes to immigration of my participants. BD17 may experience prejudice on the basis of her class, race and gender in different ways to that experienced by LA22. Her EU citizenship and membership of ‘fields’ that value her migrant identity so much may have led her to feel included within the EU project and all that it entails in a way that LA22 did not. This backs up findings of research mentioned above (Fox, 2013) that, pre-Brexit, membership of the EU legitimised the position of EU migrants, in the labour market and in society. What’s more, while there is a notable lack of literature on EU citizens’ attitudes to freedom of movement (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2018; Lutz, 2021), it has been shown that if an individual has experience of migrating within the EU, due to the free movement principle, they are more likely to view European integration in a positive light (Kuhn, 2015; Ferrera and Pellegata, 2018).

EU migrants’ feelings of inclusion are reflected in them feeling ‘part of something’ and a sense of ‘solidarity’ through EU membership. Again, EU citizenship overrides class in these cases. BD20, a middle-class, white, Spanish woman, had enjoyed that “while we were in the [EU], it was like you were part of something”. The “sense of solidarity and protection” that came with membership of the EU, and the idea that it was meant to “bring nations together”, was particularly important for LA20, too, a second-generation German migrant who identified with the ‘bohemian class’. LA20 described, when drawing her identity map, the history of her parents, both Jewish, had escaped from Nazi-occupied Germany. Her mother had “lost all her family in the camps” and her father had been “beaten up by...Nazi thugs”. These details were the first LA20 described when making her identity map and she said directly that her family’s background had shaped her identity and “completely informed [her] vote to remain”. LA20, when describing her support for remain, explained that she “got the impression we entered the EU because people wanted to feel that...the discrimination, the

prejudice” was behind us; membership of the EU was linked to her feelings of inclusion. She was “absolutely horrified that we could even think about wanting to distance ourselves from that”.

While not born in the EU, white, middle-class woman LA13 has EU citizenship and it seems this also had sway on her vote. LA13 was born and grew up in Australia and says “I’m essentially just like a child of migration entirely”. Australia “is a country full of migrants” and saw high levels of migration post-Second World War; the Australian government subsidised the migration of more than a million working-class British people to Australia to satisfy post-war labour needs in the country (Hammerton and Thomson, 2005)). Her father and maternal grandparents migrated from Europe to Australia, and she was surrounded when she was growing up by other children of a migrant background: “my friends were half Greek, half Italian, half Chinese”. Her father retained his European citizenship, hence she could get an EU passport. As such, “there was no doubt...no question whatsoever [about her vote to remain] ...the EU is really why I’m here [in London]”. Ultimately, it was her European citizenship that directly informed her vote to remain.

5.3.1. CITIZENSHIP AS EMBODIED CULTURAL CAPITAL

I did not set out to understand EU citizens’ attitudes specifically when I began this research, hence why the following research is not part of the theoretical grounding of this project. Thanks to my flexible research design, however, I was able to broaden the reach of my research during fieldwork and speak to individuals who felt excluded from the Brexit process. The community group for Albanians living in the UK were so welcoming, I was told, as they felt they had been ignored throughout the Brexit process. In doing so, EU citizenship came to play a significant role in understanding different Brexit attitudes across London and so I am delving into the literature that does exist in this section of my analysis to try to pick apart some of the patterns that appeared among my participants.

Like Rollock (2014) and McCall (1992) view race and gender, respectively, as inherently tied to embodied cultural capital, I’d argue that citizenship should also be considered as inherently intertwined

with embodied cultural capital. The attitudes of the women I have described here highlight how citizenship and cultural capital feed into attitudes to Brexit, rather than existing as a standalone factor. Understanding citizenship as inherently tied to Bourdieu's wider conception of social class illuminates how and why EU citizenship cuts across all expected class-related explanations of Brexit attitudes. We also begin to see why aggregate-level studies, which found such strong class-related effects, cannot explain the whole story. Many of the EU migrant women to whom I spoke for this research considered themselves to be working-class (BD14, BD17, LA14, LA15) but still staunchly supported remain at the referendum. This is because migrating within the EU can benefit not only the so-called 'winners of globalisation', but also low-skilled and low-educated citizens "especially in countries that do not fare well economically" (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019: 811). As such, "low-skilled and low-educated individuals in poorer member states may view freedom of movement as an opportunity to go abroad" (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019: 811) for social mobility, and therefore feel positively towards free movement and the EU more broadly. The countries from which these women migrated have all experienced economic difficulties in recent years. The host countries of three women included in my study (Romania, Portugal and Greece) all received financial support from the International Monetary Fund and European Stability Mechanism between 2010 and 2015 following the global financial crisis. These women, therefore, may support the EU wholeheartedly, regardless of class and instead for the social mobility opportunities it provided to them, unlike individuals from wealthier countries where "attitudes are more dependent on individual-level characteristics" (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019: 819), reflected in the demographic divides between voters at the Brexit referendum. Aside from LA15, who described the impact of the financial crisis in Greece prior to her migration to London, it is not clear whether the economic state of the countries of origin are what motivated these women to move to the UK. What is clear, however, is that their migration experience is closely associated with staunch support for EU membership.

Providing further backing for my findings on EU citizenship, are the links drawn in the literature that does exist on EU citizens' attitudes. Positive attitudes towards free movement are associated with

support for the EU more broadly (Meltzer et al., 2018), bolstering the link between the EU migrants in my sample benefitting from free movement, feeling included as part of the EU project and supporting remain as a result. Vasilopoulou and Talving examined “for the first time Euroscepticism from the perspective of preferences for EU freedom of movement” (2019: 806), suggesting an inherent link between the two, and, again bolstering my ideas in this section and the chapter more widely, that immigration attitudes are key to understanding Brexit attitudes.

By drawing on the experience of LA22, BD17 and other EU migrants who participated in this research, I have highlighted how McKenzie’s ideas around exclusion, based on the experience of white working-class leave voters, can be expanded to take into account those excluded from Brexit research more widely. Considering societal inequalities, it’s possible to see how gender and race may have increased feelings of exclusion for migrants from outside the EU and people of colour (about whom there exists literally *no* research). What may be more compelling is a deeper understanding of how citizenship, and the various ways it may devalue one’s embodied cultural capital, impacted on feelings of exclusion and attitudes towards immigration. This is exemplified through the example of the EU migrant women included in this research, who unanimously supported remain at the referendum. The role of ‘rights’ is commonly regarded, in research, “as *the* principal dimension of citizenship” (Siklodi, 2020: 53). At first, therefore, I assumed it may only be possible to view citizenship as ‘legal capital’, existing in the form of, for example, a new passport (Moret, 2020), which might bring with it political or social rights. So-called ‘citizenship capital’ is discussed, too, but only helps to understand inequality that exists *between* states (Kalm, 2020). Kalm describes how inequality *between* states differs from that *within* states, where individuals’ citizenship intersects with other inequalities, like class, gender and race (Kalm, 2020: 531), but her concept is not designed to take the latter set of inequalities into consideration. It seemed that citizenship, on these bases, could only exist separately to the Bourdieusian concepts on which this research is based. However, there are various ways in which citizenship has been viewed through a Bourdieusian lens, in particular, how it is intertwined with cultural and economic capital in various ways, with mobility as an important intervening factor,

and these studies begin to shed some light on how citizenship could be drawn into an intersectional analysis, like this one.

Economic and cultural capital have been used to understand different migrants' mobility, as a new divide between mobile and immobile citizens and their attitudes towards the EU has come to light (Bauböck, 2018). The EU migrants in my sample have moved to the UK over the last few decades, a sign that they had sufficient economic, cultural and mobility capital to migrate (Moret, 2020), even if they didn't fit the most-mobile, highly skilled 'Eurostars' group (Siklodi, 2020: 193) (many of the women I spoke to described themselves as homemakers, which is not unskilled work by any means but would be considered as such by Bourdieu's theories; devaluing female labour is a significant oversight of his work). Mobility of EU citizens is often (but not always) associated with pro-EU attitudes. It makes sense, then, that EU migrants in my sample supported remain across the board and why, potentially, people like BD13 felt so threatened by in-migration; her lack of mobility meant she considered freedom of movement only in terms of (the threat of) other citizens' right to free movement (Lutz, 2021: 283).

Economic and cultural capital have equally been drawn on to understand individuals' trajectories after migrating. Social mobility after migration could increase support for the EU among migrants, as it could increase their economic capital. Relocating to the UK for work could also increase one's economic capital if wages in the UK are higher than those in an individual's home country (Cederberg, 2017; Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2018). Relocating can also impact on the educational qualifications and work experience (which constitutes institutionalised cultural capital) that an individual can earn, too (Moret, 2020). Indeed, some participants in my sample described such an experience. LA15, a Greek woman who had felt the negative impact of the financial crisis in Greece was now in a managerial position in London, increasing her institutionalised cultural capital. For the EU migrants in my sample, relocating to the UK may have increased their *embodied* cultural capital, by improving their English language skills. BD15 is a good example of this (she was learning English in order to be

able to communicate with her doctor in Barking and Dagenham without the need for a translator), as is BD14, for whom, the “whole point of being here” in the UK was “to learn the language properly”.

These studies help to illuminate the various ways in which different migrants’ experiences are intertwined with Bourdieu’s concepts and the use of those concepts then illuminates how and why the EU migrants in my sample supported remain unequivocally. I’d argue, though, that these understandings make migrants’ experiences seem straightforwardly transactional, increasing economic or cultural capital which then directly feed political attitudes. What is missing is a means to understand citizenship and its intersections with gender and race, as well as class, to unpick the varied ways in which citizenship shaped attitudes to Brexit for the EU migrants in my study and to look into the complex web of factors that lies beneath their support for remain.

Just as Bourdieu’s concept of embodied cultural capital has been expanded to include race (Rollock, 2014) and gender (McCall, 1992), I believe there is scope to understand citizenship as *embodied* and as a ‘long-held disposition of the body and mind’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 17), inherently tied to identity, rather than in terms of the legal rights which it provides (Moret, 2020) alone. I take as my starting point Skeggs’ discussion of ‘national cultural capital’.

According to Skeggs, “[w]ithin the nation, national belonging constitutes the symbolic capital of the field, and to belong is to be legitimate” (2004:19). In other words, if we consider the nation as a field, with its own set of ‘social rules’, national belonging is the most valuable form of capital and is converted to symbolic capital. As with cultural capital in general, it is the dominant group that decides what is legitimate, “marking some bodies as more valuable than others” (Skeggs, 2004:19). In the UK then, it is the white British group deciding what constitutes ‘national cultural capital’. Inherent will be Britishness and whiteness, the latter which “becomes the mark of national belonging” (Skeggs, 2004: 19) (although that’s not to say that in all fields within the nation, White Britishness is top dog).

All of this, at national and smaller field level, can be understood, using the concept of embodied cultural capital. Skeggs doesn’t make that claim explicitly but if “those who really belong have to

display and embody the right characteristics and dispositions” (2004: 19), then embodied cultural capital can help us to understand the value of citizenship and its associated qualities, in relation to the rules of the field. What's more, of course, is that embodied cultural capital is the most relevant and useful concept for this study, which takes an intersectional lens to identity.

The centrality of embodied cultural capital is reflected in the racialisation of migrants and waves of immigration (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Rzepnikowska, 2019). This racialisation shifts over time, migrants being lightened or darkened based on elite priorities (Fox et al., 2012: 692). The embodiment of citizenship can also be seen in the different language skills held by an individual, as speaking is an embodied marker of distinction (Erel, 2010; Barglowski, 2019). Citizenship, race and language skills are not *inherently* linked but are intertwined to create what constitutes the ‘deserving’ group in society, highlighted starkly in the differences between the two boroughs in question in this research and the impact on Brexit attitudes in those two places. In the case of language in particular, speaking is an embodied marker of distinction (Erel, 2010; Barglowski, 2019) and therefore it’s possible to include language is an aspect of embodied cultural capital closely related to migration. This link is institutionalised in migration policy, limiting some individuals’ *ability* to migrate; there are “number of immigration routes with an English language requirement (UK Government, 2020: 9), including the points-based migration route and some family visas (UK Government, 2022c). Migration and non-whiteness have been celebrated in Brixton since the latter half of the 20th century, and have appeared as a threat to *some* in Barking over the last two decades, highlighting how race and citizenship could intersect, along with gender, to impact on an individual’s cultural capital and social class. This very nascent understanding of citizenship is not something I have seen conceptualised in the literature, but I do believe there is utility in understanding it, like gender and race, as “predisposed to function as symbolic capital...to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate (inherited) competence” (Bourdieu, 1986: 245) and, as a result, cultural capital in its most powerful form.

Indeed, Siklodi describes in detail how citizenship can be conceptualised in identity terms. While her research does not draw on Bourdieu's theories, it does help to build the picture of citizenship as embodied cultural capital. Just as race, gender and class are variegated and multifaceted, especially when understood through an intersectional lens, so is citizenship. Indeed, citizenship brings with it membership of multiple political communities and social groups, resulting in "separate, nested, cross-cutting or multi-layered identities" (Siklodi, 2020: 52). Those identities intersect with race, class and gender (Siklodi, 2020: 53). There is daily negotiation and agency in this; citizenship as identity is not a single label stuck on an individual, which will lead to specific outcomes. Everyone "[negotiates] between the different layers of their identities...according to the specific context" (Siklodi, 2020: 53). Migrants I spoke to for this project, then, are likely to have "[sustained] certain elements of citizenship as identity, while neglecting others" (Siklodi, 2020: 53), generally but also during our interviews and focus groups on Brexit. While Siklodi discusses identity in national/ EU terms, rather than in terms I use in this study, what is clear is that citizenship "[shapes] individual political attitudes" (Siklodi, 2020: 193) and mobile EU migrants, in particular, are found to "have progressively 'opened up' and...[become] aware of the similarities and differences among European (not only EU) nationals" (Siklodi, 2020: 196). My findings support this final claim, I believe, in their overarching pro-EU and pro-transnationalism of the EU migrants in my sample.

All of this is to say that the multifaceted nature of citizenship, and how it, as identity, can be drawn on, or not, in different contexts and in relation to an individual's race, gender and class, makes it understood most fully as an addition to those forms of embodied cultural capital that make up who we are and shape access and inclusion in different spaces. I hope this offers a useful starting point from which to view citizenship as not only related to mobility, rights or economic capital, but also as a crucial aspect of our identities that intersects with class, gender and race. By considering citizenship intersectionally as a piece of a puzzle of identity, it's possible, also, to move past 'rucksack approaches' which assume that migrants "bring a set of cultural resources from the country of origin

to the country of migration that either fit or do not fit” (Erel, 2010: 642) and limit any further consideration about the ways in which citizenship might shape attitudes and experiences.

5.4. AGE OR TIME SPENT IN THE UK AND EXCLUSION

Having considered the various and, at times, intersecting ways in which class, field, gender, race and citizenship impacted on attitudes to immigration and, by extension, Brexit attitudes, one final factor remains: age. Age was found to have a significant impact on attitudes to Brexit in the literature on the vote; the older a voter was, the more likely they were to vote to leave the EU (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Henderson et al., 2017). It’s important to note, however, that there are ‘substantial differences’ among the ‘over 65s’, “with those who lived through the Second World War being far more likely to oppose Brexit” (Devine, 2019). Indeed, BD13 and LA22, discussed in detail above, were 68 and 52 respectively and both voted to leave on the basis of anti-immigration sentiment. It could be said that BD11’s empathy towards older voters in Barking could in some way reflect this pattern, too; he mentioned, in particular, older people in the borough struggling to access services. However, my findings largely disrupt the impact of age and I’d argue, therefore, that *time spent in the UK* should also be considered, when bringing migrants into the discussion.

The longer a migrant has been in the UK, the more likely they seem to fit patterns of inclusion and exclusion drawn out in the Brexit literature, namely, that older, working-class, white people with lower education levels, generally in post-industrial areas of England, were more likely to have voted to leave the EU. Both BD13 and LA22 described themselves as working-class, and both had limited cultural capital in terms of their educational qualifications (both had GCSE-level or equivalent) and their work (BD13 had worked as a cook in various London offices, while LA22 worked as a healthcare assistant). LA22’s embodied cultural capital may have been devalued on the basis of her gender and race, as described above. Both considered immigration a threat, albeit for different reasons. For BD13, recent migration to her hometown, Barking, fed into her vote to leave, while LA22 had experienced animosity from EU migrants and closely associated with the rhetoric around welfare

tourism. BD13 is an Irish migrant who came to the UK 60 years ago as a child, while LA22 moved from West Africa to London as an adult, around 30 years ago. These two women do not share similar nationality or experiences of migration. They do converge, instead, in line with McKenzie's findings: they are older, and their cultural capital left them alienated from the EU and transnationalism and from the 'benefits' that the EU migrants described above saw.

The length of time a migrant has been in the UK is also important in explaining the attitudes of LA20, a 'bohemian' woman living in Lambeth. She was 68 at the time of our interview and staunchly supported remain. As a second-generation migrant, LA20 had been born in the UK but identified with her family's history of migration and as German. Her attitudes were very much in line with other middle-class Lambeth residents and EU migrants living in both boroughs, who also supported remain on the basis that the EU had improved life in the UK and celebrated the positive impact that immigration from the EU had had:

"I remember when the EU, when we entered it...a huge amount of things improved: coffee, for a start, that was a big thing, food, obviously the Jewish immigrants of my parents' generation were hugely responsible for improving food in this country, as do every set of immigrants which is a great thing".

This, again, suggests that the longer a migrant has been in the UK, the more likely they are to vote in line with standard political science patterns of Brexit attitudes (aside from age). It seems like field and class may have shaped LA20's attitudes and overridden the impact of age; we can see how her field and class may have led her to feel included in the symbolic marketplace tied to a globalised world and how and why she may celebrate and benefit from immigration.

Further supporting this idea, that when migrants are brought into analysis, time spent in the UK rather than age is important, are the more recent EU migrants were unanimously in favour of EU membership, as shown in the above section. All those mentioned above moved to the UK less than 20 years ago; BD17 had been here for the longest period (17 years). They were aged between 47 and 68

(and therefore not vastly different to BD13 and LA22). Their citizenship, and for LA20, close identification with her family's history of migration, cut across class, race, location in London, and age. In other words, considering the attitudes of migrants towards Brexit disrupts key political findings in various ways. LA20 does not fit expectations around older voters supporting leave (she was in her 60s at the time of the Brexit vote, but ardently supported remain), but did seem to fit common patterns related to field and class (given her middle-class background and 20+ years living in Lambeth where immigration is so openly celebrated). The attitudes of EU migrants who have moved to the UK more recently seem to disrupt the vast majority of the identity markers tied up with the 'left behind', including age, race, gender and location in London. This highlights, again, that standard explanations of support for Brexit only fit a limited portion of the UK population and by considering oft-excluded groups, we gain more of a sense of the complexity of attitudes.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, what the above makes clear is that there is no one set of factors that can explain the vote to the leave the EU, especially when the attitudes of migrants, many of whom were excluded from the vote and have generally been left out research, are brought into analysis. This is especially clear when carrying out an intersectional analysis, which is necessarily complex and highlights the very different experiences individuals have based on their race, class, gender and other identity-related factors.

To be clear, my research does support some key patterns drawn out in the existing literature on Brexit, related to those factors commonly associated with the so-called 'left behind'. Location appears to have had an impact; some Barking voters were motivated to vote to leave in light of the stretched services in the town, that they perceived to result from recent migration (as reported by Goodwin and Milazzo (2017) and Goodwin and Heath (2016a; b)). An area's history of migration, then, seems to be more important than the post-industrial-ness of a place (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016: 4; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b) and could be said to describe Dagenham now that, for example, employment by Ford

has dropped so significantly (see section 4.3.3. of chapter 4, pp93-94). Viewed through McKenzie's framing of inclusion and exclusion, it appears that these participants, part of the white population who, for a long time, were the majority group in Barking, may be feeling their dominance in the town slipping away as the social rules change with successive waves of immigration, leading to feelings of exclusion from the EU and motivating a vote to leave. Like Rogaly found in Peterborough, white, long-term residents may have drawn on their race as a means of legitimising their place in town, and to resist demographic change there (2020: xi). It is on these grounds that we see the most significant differences *between* the two boroughs in question. Lambeth, and Brixton and its environs in particular, have a long and significant history of migration, leading the vast majority of participants there – and voters overall – to support remain and to support it ardently, largely regardless of capital available to them. Having said this, Lambeth residents also voted to leave based on fear of welfare tourism, showing that more is at play.

Lower cultural capital, in the form of lower educational qualifications, and lower economic capital, in the form of low income, were widely reported to have fed into a vote to leave (Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Hobolt, 2016). Some participants with limited institutionalised cultural capital on low wages did consider immigration a threat, voting to leave as a result. However, my findings muddy the picture, with intercepting other highly educated participants' votes, leading to support for leave in their case. What's more, in one case, limited economic capital actually led an individual to see through the anti-immigration rhetoric of the leave vote, making it 'obvious' that stretched services did not result from migration but from policy decisions and austerity.

Also disrupting social class-related patterns of support for Brexit were the EU migrants who had more recently moved to the UK; regardless of class, they felt included in processes associated with the European project, positively towards transnationalism and voted to remain. European migrants who self-identified as lower or working class and/ or had limited economic capital were ardently in support of EU membership. This supports the literature on EU migrants' attitudes to freedom of movement:

EU migrants, especially those who have benefitted from freedom of movement, are, not surprisingly, likely to be more supportive of it (Kuhn, 2015; Ferrera and Pellegata, 2018).

My research disrupts findings related to age, which was a factor closely tied to the 'left behind' explanations of the Brexit vote (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Henderson et al., 2017). While some older participants perceived immigration to be a threat, I argue above that time spent in the UK was just as, if not more, impactful as age when considering attitudes to immigration of a sample that includes migrants; the longer a migrant had been in the UK, the more in line with other identity markers, like class and area of residence, they voted.

Mckenzie's framing of inclusion and exclusion helps to bring more context and nuance to what we know about Brexit, too. For Mckenzie, the 'excluded' individuals "could only 'trade' in social and cultural capital that had very little worth beyond the bounds of their own local communities" (2017a: 271). As such, this group were excluded from the rewards and successes that capitalism and EU membership brought for the cosmopolitan middle classes. Barking voters feeling threatened by immigration reflects a similar kind of exclusion to that described by Mckenzie. As Barking experienced increasing migration, they felt excluded from processes of change that occurred as the 'social rules' of the place began to shift. Rather than feeling like there were benefits of this level of migration to the town, the discourse around migration limiting access to services by long-term residents took centre stage.

While whiteness is also associated with the 'left behind' (Bhambra, 2017: 214), this automatically excludes people of colour who voted to leave, about whom we know so little. One participant saw immigration as a threat not only due to perceived welfare tourism, but also due to her experience of intimidation by EU migrants, who wished to establish themselves as the dominant group in her workplace. This shines a bright light on what may have been considered legitimate and valuable, and therefore, *who* may have been considered legitimate and valuable. Her position as a black West African migrant, and her experience of EU migrants trying to assert their dominance, suggests that EU migrants may have been able to capitalise on their embodied cultural capital – as Europeans – and/ or

their putative whiteness. If whiteness is part of the habitus of Europe, as it is in the UK, and EU nationals were, pre-Brexit, afforded easier access to the UK job market due to EU membership, what was highly tradeable was European-ness and/ or whiteness. This is reflected in the ardent support for remain by EU migrants, who had more recently experienced the advantages of free movement; they did not feel separate to or left out of the European project and did not view immigration as a threat but very much celebrated the immigration that came alongside EU membership and felt included as a part of it.

By considering the intersections between gender, race and citizenship, it's possible to see how LA22 specifically may have felt excluded as a result of her embodied cultural capital being devalued by EU migrants at her workplace. If we think instead about headline findings on the so-called 'left behind' in terms of feelings of exclusion from the EU, then her experience has very much been ignored due to the association of whiteness with the 'left behind'. Her experience of hostility from some EU migrants, and the impact that had on her views to immigration and Brexit more widely, highlight that a wider conception of 'exclusion', taking into consideration race and citizenship, as well as class and gender, is needed.

Crucially, speaking to migrants from the EU and elsewhere has helped me to fill in some of the gaps that exist around the so-called 'left behind' explanations of the Brexit vote, given that even those scholars who discussed the 'left behind' in so much detail stated it was "predominantly, albeit not exclusively" (Goodwin and Heath 2016b: 331) important in explaining the Brexit vote. Immigration may have been the catalyst for *some* so-called 'left behind' voters (Ford and Goodwin, 2017) and anti-immigration attitudes *may have been* intense among *some* working-class voters with lower educational attainment (Ford, 2011; italicisation is my own). By re-presenting the stories of a diverse group of people from across London, I've been able to shine a light on the attitudes of those who do not fit the 'left behind' mould.

Various of Bourdieu's concepts were helpful in exploring attitudes towards immigration and, by extension, Brexit. Institutionalised and embodied cultural capital and 'field' were most prominent in

explaining identity- and place-related determinants of Brexit attitudes among my participants. Each of these concepts helped me to understand the different ways in which individuals felt included or excluded from processes associated with EU membership and globalisation, like free movement and immigration.

Most straightforwardly, it was possible to understand why someone feeling the pressure of the cost of living would vote against EU membership to protect their access to services or to push back against so-called 'welfare tourism'. The relationships between Bourdieu's concepts are relatively straightforward and fit McKenzie's expectations, whereby working-class individuals were less likely to have highly 'tradeable' institutionalised cultural capital, in the form of educational qualifications or work experience, and less likely to feel EU membership was a benefit to them.

At times, however, the picture was muddled, and relatively straightforward class-related explanations of attitudes no longer fit. Bourdieu's concept of 'field' helped to illuminate why some individuals' Brexit attitudes did not align with the capital they possessed, both in terms of his earlier conceptions of field purely as a social space, and his later conceptions of field where physical, concretised spaces could inherently be considered social spaces, too (Hanquinet et al., 2013).

When it comes to understanding the role of immigration in producing the leave vote in Barking, it's crucial to see that physical space can shape attitudes but that *active engagement* in the 'field', like collecting children from school alongside other local people, is crucial. We know that areas with high levels of *recent* immigration were more likely to vote to leave (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017) but Bourdieu's concept of field, and how the social rules appear to have shifted in Barking through immigration, is what explains those residents' support for leave. Brixton's history as a centre for new migrants entering the UK is institutionalised in, for example, the naming of its central square as 'Windrush Square'. Widespread support for remain among my participants who live in or near Brixton reflects this history that celebrates and values migrants. In both of these examples, it's possible to see how "physical space is the concretization of the social space" (Hanquinet et al., 2013: 514) and existing in or as part of different 'fields' impacted on attitudes.

My study has also highlighted how fields can constitute smaller social spaces, as well as physical spaces, too. It is by viewing these smaller social spaces *within* the boroughs, most notably the pro-immigration, remain-supporting Dagenham-based community group of women who took part in my March 2020 focus group, that the complexity and heterogeneity of Brexit attitudes within majority leave voting boroughs becomes clear.

At first, when drawing up the theoretical grounding of this study, I wanted to consider the two boroughs as separate fields. During a research seminar at which I presented my research design, I was advised that Bourdieu's concept of field could not be stretched so far. I was desperate to resist this critique and find a way to understand why the two boroughs saw such different referendum results, within this neat package of concepts drawn up by Bourdieu. As research went on and I undertook fieldwork and spoke to different people in different parts of both boroughs, it became clear that in fact field *could* help me explain the differences I was seeing. This would only be the case, however, if I let go of trying to explain differences between borough-level referendum results and in aggregate-level political science findings that formed the basis of the so-called 'left behind' rhetoric I was trying, through this research, to pick apart. Viewing 'fields' as smaller than the borough, at neighbourhood level in concrete, physical terms, and at an even smaller social circle scale, I have been able to highlight the complexity and heterogeneity that exist *within* boroughs, and to which the political science literature on Brexit has not been able to do justice.

One final piece of the puzzle described in this chapter relates to citizenship, which cuts across class expectations (in line with literature on EU citizenship and attitudes to freedom of movement, see, for example: Kuhn (2015), Ferrera and Pellegata (2018) and Lutz (2021)). Bourdieu's concepts, as they were originally conceived, and in terms of more recent engagement with them, don't offer a clear starting point from which to understand EU citizenship and its intersections with other aspects of identity. Given that understanding domestic social relations were the priority for Bourdieu, he "never paid attention to the instrumental value of citizenship" (Kalm, 2020: 529) and the ways in which it feeds inequalities between individuals. This may not be so surprising given that Bourdieu's final works

were published in the late 1990s (*La Domination Masculine* was published in French in 1998 and in English in 2001 (Bourdieu, 2001)), before his death in 2002 and before the migration of the mid-2000s, following the EU's Central and Eastern enlargement. Had mobility and migration of EU citizens been more of a conversation in the 1990s (as it is now, although still limited to certain enclaves of academia), there may not be such a gap in Bourdieu's work when it comes to migration and migrants' position in within social class structures.

Various concepts like 'mobility capital' and 'legal capital' have been used to understand migrants' mobility or experiences on migrating. These concepts are, however, drawn up in relation to individuals' *economic* capital and *cultural* capital is largely left out of the picture. This means we cannot understand how citizenship intersects with other aspects of identity, namely, social class, gender and race. For my study and other research considering intersection analyses of identity, then, it makes most sense to develop our understandings of embodied cultural capital, and view citizenship as intertwined with embodied cultural capital instead (for which Skeggs' concept of 'national cultural capital' paves the way (2004: 19)). This framing illuminates how citizenship played into feelings of inclusion or exclusion and how it impacted on attitudes to Brexit. I didn't set out to consider the impact of citizenship on Brexit attitudes, but the iterative nature of my research meant I could consider new issues as they arose. Citizenship was one such issue and by viewing it not as a rigid concept defined in my theoretical framework prior to analysis, I was able to think more widely about how citizenship is woven together as part of our identities.

As will become clear throughout these empirical chapters, it seems high time to study in more detail the attitudes of EU citizens and migrants from elsewhere living in London and across the UK. Taking a sociological lens and drawing on Bourdieusian scholarship could help us to produce insightful data of which there is currently such a sparsity. In relation to immigration, this would require considering the attitudes and positions of a wider group of migrants living in London and elsewhere, with varied experiences, in terms of length of time in the UK and reasons for migrating, and different identities and nationalities. Only by taking such a broad look at migrants' attitudes to immigration could we

begin to fill in the gaping holes in our knowledge. To begin to address this sparsity of research, initially research could be focused on particular groups, possibly those most understudied and or undervalued in research generally, like women of colour or people from a lower socio-economic position, i.e., those who will feel the negative effects of the post-Brexit immigration policy the most (Kofman, 2018). Rather than risking superficial, stereotype-ridden empirics, it seems crucial to initiate such a research agenda from a sociological standpoint, given the world of ways in which an individual's attitudes are likely to be shaped by the complexities of their experiences and identities, as the initial, personal findings illuminate here.

Now I have explored attitudes to immigration, I'll discuss the ways in which disillusionment with, or lack of trust in, politicians, also fed into Brexit attitudes among my participants.

6. POLITICIANS: DOES ANYONE ACTUALLY LIKE THEM?

6.1. INTRODUCTION

“There is a strong impact of lack of trust in politicians on the leave vote” (Hobolt, 2016: 1270)

Immigration, as shown by the previous chapter, was central to the Brexit attitudes of many of my participants as it was to the Brexit referendum campaign itself. How participants felt towards politicians and the two main political parties also arose frequently in our discussions. Here I present the role that disillusionment with and distrust of the political elite played in the Brexit attitudes of five of my participants, and why domestic politics and the UK political elite (collectively, hereon, the *domestic sphere*, as opposed to the EU sphere) did *not* matter for many more.

Disillusionment with the political elite was closely tied to research into the Brexit vote, and especially that explaining the attitudes of the so-called ‘left behind’ (as shown in my literature review, see p46). Over the last 30 years or so, it is said that the white working class have felt more and more distanced from “political and media elites’ broadly shared values that translated into support for social liberalism, multiculturalism and EU membership” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 325). They feel “cut adrift by the convergence of the main parties on a socially liberal, multicultural consensus, a worldview that is alien to them” (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 19). Those living in working-class areas, outside of London in particular, “had lost faith in their Labour Party representatives both locally and nationally” (Mckenzie, 2017a: 276). The Labour Party had failed to continue to represent these communities to which they were once so closely tied. This may have been exacerbated by Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, which appealed to a (not wholly different but) broader group of voters for whom, for example, anti-capitalist values were important (Whiteley et al., 2019: 95). It’s possible to see how some traditional voters may have been alienated and later voted Tory at the 2019 General Election, when the so-called ‘Red Wall’, “the geographically concentrated mass of seats situated in the Midlands and North, which were turning blue either for the first time ever, or the first time in recent history” (Kanagasooriam and Simon, 2021: 10), fell.

In the literature on Brexit, it is mentioned time and time again that many “leave voters have very low trust in the political system” (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 28) and, for some, populism also motivated a vote to leave (Hobolt, 2016). I described the socio-economic and geographical findings of this work in the literature review above but did not go into great detail about political trust, in part because the focus of those articles is not on trust but on the identity and place-related factors found to be important, which form the basis of the ‘left behind’ rhetoric. Inductive analysis has, however, led me down new avenues that I didn’t expect to be so critical when I started this project. Hence, I’ll now go into some more detail on the links between trust, disillusionment and Brexit to bring context to the headline findings of Hobolt (2016) and Ford and Goodwin (2017).

Disillusionment is “a state of “shattered assumptions” ...triggered by acute forms of expectancy violation that run counter to treasured beliefs or assumptions” (Maher et al., 2018: 205). Political disillusionment has been rising, particularly, since 1999 (Jennings et al., 2017: 750) as more and more voters lose faith in political leaders (Wroe et al., 2013; Whiteley et al., 2016; Helm, 2021). This is the result of numerous scandals “ranging from allegations of sexual misconduct to financial improprieties” (Bowler and Karp, 2004: 281), especially the ‘Expenses Scandal’ of 2009 (Allen and Birch, 2014), and foreign policy events like Blair’s decision to send UK troops to participate in the Iraq War (Strong, 2017). Disillusionment is also a result of longer-term trends of economic stagnation, marginalisation of working-class voters and discourses of white victimhood (Bromley-Davenport et al., 2019: 795).

Disillusionment among the electorate runs alongside falling trust in the political elite and is particularly relevant in discussions of EU-level political elites. The distant nature of EU institutions makes trust in the system all the more important, however, trust that politicians would “pursue European integration for benevolent ends” (Dennison et al., 2020: 2) is lower than it was, as reflected by discussions of the EU’s democratic deficit in academia and the media alike. Given the entwinedness of these trends, I use distrust of and disillusionment with political elites interchangeably when describing my findings in this chapter.

A lack of trust in elites and disillusionment has a cyclical relationship with ‘anti-politics’ (Clarke et al., 2017) and ‘protest voting’ (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016: 104). Voters’ disillusionment with and “negativity towards the institutions of formal politics” (Clarke et al., 2017: 13) can be observed in falling levels of trust. The case of Brexit, if seen as an overt manifestation of anti-politics (Flinders, 2018), was no doubt also fed by falling trust and disillusionment and an indication that British politics is currently framed “by who can mobilise anti-establishment and more broadly anti-politics sentiment” (Clarke et al., 2023: 120). This is because low levels of trust can lead to support for ‘protest parties’, like UKIP, which then cue supporters “[decreasing] one’s level of trust in politics even further” (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016: 126), creating a ‘spiral of distrust’.

Indeed, this mobilisation of disillusionment by populist entrepreneurs (Dennison et al., 2020: 2), like Nigel Farage, is reflected in the Brexit attitudes of the so-called ‘left behind’ in much of the political science literature. It is suggested that the ‘left behind’ were pushed to the margins by those increasingly liberal values that are now predominant among the political and media elite, in Brussels and in Westminster, and voted to leave as they thought politicians did not empathise with the rapid change they were experiencing, socially, economically and culturally. Politicians were openly promoting a worldview that ‘left behind’ voters “found threatening and rejected” (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 20).

Mckenzie suggests that there is some truth in the positions described by mainstream political scientists. However, she argues that “the ‘left behind’ rhetoric is somewhat simplistic” (Mckenzie, 2017b: 207) and “much of it is incoherent and disingenuous” (Mckenzie, 2017a: 277). Her ethnographic research of working-class communities in London and the Midlands shows how the Brexit referendum revealed “the frustration of those who had been left out of successes and rewards that capitalism had created for a cosmopolitan middle class in parts of the United Kingdom” (Mckenzie, 2017b: 208). The social, cultural and economic exclusion of those at the bottom of society occurs when “people are cut off from the opportunities that society can offer” (Mckenzie, 2017a: 270) and the referendum became a chance for voters to send the political elites their message and

convey their anger. In describing the referendum in these terms, Mckenzie brings necessary depth to the relationship between the white working class in East London and Nottinghamshire, and the political elite, and how and why feelings towards the latter motivated her participants to vote to leave. Mckenzie's analysis also begins to untangle the "knot of complex, multifaceted, interwoven and densely layered factors" (Flinders, 2018: 179) that appears when the relationship between anti-politics, trust and disillusionment and Brexit are under consideration.

Again, I am using the concept of 'exclusion' to understand how the feelings of my participants towards the political elite impacted on their attitudes at the referendum. It is, again, transnationalism and the globalised world, from which those with economic and cultural capital benefit, and is or was epitomised by EU membership, that was so closely tied to the increasingly socially liberal values of the political elite. Just as individuals may have felt excluded from the benefits of immigration that were tied to EU membership, it is possible to see how exclusion and distance from an elite who espoused values so different to those held by some voters, may have led to a vote to leave, too.

My research supports Mckenzie's claim that there is 'some truth' in the patterns drawn out by authors like Goodwin and Heath (2017) and Hobolt (2016) as social class did play a role here for some participants, and my aim for this chapter is to add detail to what we already know. Some of my participants felt distanced ideologically from the elites, and from their increasingly socially liberal attitudes, and this was particularly discussed in relation to Labour. Labour's long-term shift in values was noted by those who described themselves as working-class. However, only by considering Bourdieu's concepts of economic and cultural capital is it possible to fully understand the role that class then played in shaping attitudes to Brexit. Long-term Labour voters who were disillusioned with the direction in which the party had gone didn't translate their distance from the party into a vote to leave if they had either the economic and cultural capital to weather the storm of the referendum, or had EU citizenship and, therefore, different priorities than the UK political elites at the referendum. Field also played a role in terms of values: those who had limited capital and were distrustful of elites and were part of a field where immigration was seen to be a threat, then a vote to leave followed. If

they had limited capital and were not overly enthusiastic about political elites in the UK but were a part of a field that celebrated immigration, then they abstained, rather than voting to leave. This suggests that feelings of exclusion related to immigration played a more important role in shaping attitudes to Brexit than feelings of exclusion from politicians did. What's more, the remain campaign could have made use of this latent support but did not do enough to convince these abstaining voters to vote to remain.

Others felt distanced from political elites due to a lack of financial support. Again, if an individual feels able to weather the storm, despite a lack of trust that the government will support them, their lack of trust did not translate into a vote to leave. This is explicitly stated by one participant, LA19, a middle-class man living in Herne Hill, just next door to Brixton. Indeed, the case of LA19 sits starkly opposite to that of LA21, a working-class man living in social housing less than three miles away, who voted leave in protest against a Tory government by whom he had felt unsupported since he was a child, and could name various points throughout his life that led him to vote to leave. There are, of course, exceptions; class did not shape *all* participants' feelings towards the political elite. Therefore, I expand what we know, outside of the 'left behind' narrative, and build on McKenzie's research by widening the group of people included in my research. In doing so, I show how EU citizenship, gender and class meant some participants' attitudes to Brexit were related to EU-level issues, rather than the 'domestic sphere'. When politicians were not a concern at all, and they did not feel excluded by political elites, participants tended to vote to remain. Once again, EU citizenship is a crucial determinant of attitudes, as in chapter 5 above. What's more, this chapter highlights the importance of viewing citizenship as an aspect of our *embodied* cultural capital, in order to understand the intersections between citizenship, gender and class, on which this chapter elaborates.

There does not appear to be a divide between boroughs when it comes to feelings towards politicians. The key factors that fed disillusionment with the political elite are class and identity-related, rather than related to *place* (which was more so the case in relation to immigration attitudes, given the impact of historical and recent waves of migration).

I begin this chapter by introducing how individuals spoke about the political elites being out of touch, values-wise, and how they went on to describe the ways in which they (do not) feel supported financially. In doing so, I highlight the different ways in which participants felt disillusioned with both Labour and the Conservatives. What becomes clear in describing this (lack of) support for and trust in the political elites in the UK is how overtly economic capital and more subtly cultural capital shaped whether and how a lack of trust led to a vote to leave. I finish the chapter by highlighting how well the identity-related factors associated with the 'left behind' fit my research here, and how my research expands what we know.

6.2. VALUES

The political elite's values came up frequently in discussions I had with participants about Brexit. Generally, my research supports existing findings that suggest leave voters felt distanced and excluded from what they felt was an increasingly homogenous, socially liberal political elite. However, it is also clear that feelings of exclusion from the political elite exist across party lines, Brexit attitudes, class lines, and location in London.

6.2.1. POLITICIANS ARE "IN CUCKOO-LAND – THEY'RE TOTALLY IN CUCKOO LAND" (BD13)

There was a sense among some participants that the elites were out of touch in terms of their values. Politicians would espouse, for example, positive attitudes towards immigration but didn't live amongst it and, therefore, did not understand the pressure those who did live amongst it felt (BD11). Like for the working-class women living in East London included in McKenzie's study, local politics was disconnected from national politics. BD11 said:

"it's like Keir Starmer, Jeremy Corbyn, he's not living in an area full of, like, lots of migrants...they don't see it, they don't experience that and...that can really put your back up. It's like...during the migrant crisis, again these were people fleeing persecution and war, and [politicians said] "come, we will help and protect you" ..., right, great, but where are they

being housed? They're being housed down here, which is fine, but...that can create so many social tensions, so many divides and people will get annoyed".

Leave-voting BD11 iterated and re-iterated that he was 'pro-immigration' and 'not a racist in any way' but that for the "white British people, not me, but people who are older or [who are], like...struggling" the impact of immigration was overall negative and the politicians did not *get it*. They could be openly pro-immigration and say that "we're gonna help everyone else and that's fine, we have to help everybody else", while ignoring the needs of long-term residents of areas experiencing high levels of immigration.

BD13, a white working-class woman in her 60s, also living in Barking, felt that politicians foisted their liberal attitudes on people in a patronising way and were only in it for themselves. For BD13, this was linked to a general resentment of being told what to do, which fed directly into her decision to vote to leave the EU. BD13's vote to leave the European Union was related to gripes about post-material concerns (which exist outside the realms of strictly economic issues like taxation and wages and instead constitute 'higher-order' needs such as concerns about the environment and peace (Ingelhart, 1981; Rohrschneider, 1988; Lindell and Ibrahim, 2021)) being pushed on her in the form of, for example, the EU's new energy-saving (and therefore, greener) lightbulb rules. BD13's vote to leave on this basis supports the idea that "the leave side successfully mobilized...salient concerns about...anti-establishment attitudes, portraying the vote as a chance for ordinary citizens to 'take back control' from the elites in Brussels" (Hobolt, 2016: 1264). For BD13, it was also clear that politicians were not "[pursuing] European integration for benevolent ends" (Dennison et al., 2020: 2), but have "all got their little jobs and they're all looking after themselves and their families and their back pockets and they're earning a fortune".

BD13, also made the connection between the EU and so-called 'wokeness'. The Oxford English Dictionary offers a useful summary of the changing meaning of 'wokeness', defining it as: "Originally: well-informed, up-to-date. Now chiefly: alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice" (Zavattaro and Bearfield, 2022: 585). For BD13, race was tied up with other parts of identity, like sexuality. She

believed that political correctness had “gone off its head” and that EU membership had a role to play in that. BD13 seemed open to increasingly common and changing conversations about gender, sexuality and race but needed space to understand how ideas are changing, “without people ramming it down your throat, or they say, again, you’re simple and you’re a racist”. BD13’s leave vote, then, falls very much in line with headline findings that leave voters felt distanced from “political and media elites’ broadly shared values that translated into support for social liberalism, multiculturalism and EU membership” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a: 325) and “cut adrift by the convergence of the main parties on [those values], a worldview that is alien to them” (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 19). These quotes, albeit from academics rather than politicians, imply that leave voters simply didn’t understand the progressive, multicultural and socially liberal values tied up with EU membership, which is, in itself, patronising and leads smoothly into my very next point.

The distance felt from politicians was in some way bolstered by politicians using language related to the ‘left behind’. Participants from across the Brexit divide and from both boroughs criticised the ‘left behind’ narrative: the narrative itself felt “patronising” even for those not included in that group (remain-voting, middle-class LA11) and the labelling of areas like Barking as ‘deprived’ was described as “offensive” (BD13). As Mckenzie puts it for her participants, “understandably, they didn’t like being called ‘stupid’ and ‘turkeys voting for Christmas’” (Mckenzie, 2017b: 207). LA11 and BD13 both discussed the implicit link made through the ‘left behind’ narrative between economic struggle and irrationality (LA11) or sub-humanness (BD13). As a long-term resident of Barking, BD13 felt the effects of the ‘left behind’ narrative more personally: “I get very resentful when people class Barking as a deprived area...I find it offensive when people run the borough down, I really find it offensive.”

Some suggested, too, that the gap in values between politicians and voters meant that Brexit wasn’t being carried out in the interests of the people. A lack of trust in the political elite at the time of the campaign led BD21, a white, working-class woman, who had lived in Dagenham for her entire life, it seems not to vote at the referendum, she “just kept out of it because I knew whatever they promised, it wouldn’t be true”. BD18, a mixed-race working-class woman who moved from East London to

Dagenham for social housing availability, and part of the same focus group as BD21, echoed this statement, agreeing with BD21 that “yeah, that’s our government for you”. Interestingly, BD18 also abstained at the referendum (although she made her support for remain clear during the focus group). BD18 and BD21 had similar institutionalised cultural capital, in the form of educational qualifications and work: both were full time mothers and had GCSE (BD21) or lower-level qualifications (BD18). They also had similar levels of economic capital. Their lack of trust in the government didn’t, however, lead to an uproar and resurgence of political engagement at the referendum, like it did for McKenzie’s participants.

Comparing participants’ experiences and attitudes, it seems as though field (and related attitudes to immigration) shaped voting behaviour in, as ever, a very complex way. Those with limited economic and cultural capital who felt distanced from politicians and were part of a field, or lived in a place, like Barking, where immigration was viewed as a threat, voted to leave. If those with limited economic and cultural capital, who felt distanced from political elites but whose field(s) celebrated immigration, they did not vote to leave, and in the cases of BD18 and BD21, abstained instead.

Like BD17 and BD20 described in the previous chapter, who so avidly support EU membership on the basis of freedom of movement, BD18 and BD21 were part of a ‘field’ that valued and celebrated migrant women’s capital. If this stopped their buying into anti-immigration rhetoric (which, for BD18, it did, see the comment about ‘ful’ beans on p148), then their dissatisfaction with politics was reflected in abstention. The campaign was considered lukewarm and ineffective by academics (see, for example, Clarke and Newman (2017)) and participants in my study alike. The remain campaign was described as “a bit lacklustre” (LA13) and, as LA12 put it, “proved it wasn’t [great]”. LA13 took issue with the remain campaign missing out on significant issues such as the restrictive voting eligibility requirements. LA12, on the other hand, put the ineffective campaign down to messaging. For him, “leave is just, as a word, so much stronger and more definitive”, the campaign “had a better message” and “there seemed to be more passion and...decisiveness”. Remain, “in comparison sounds wishy washy” (LA12) and its messaging was more complex. It is possible to imagine, then, had the

remain campaign used more emotive language (as LA12 suggested) or had it not focused so wholly on issues related to the economy (neither campaign resonated with BD18 and BD21 so they ‘stayed out of it’), then maybe some of the disaffected and excluded working-class voters with remain-leaning attitudes would have voted remain, rather than abstaining, and could have swayed the final outcome of the referendum itself.

That BD11, again, does not fit the mould class-wise, as a middle-class person voting leave, and BD18 and BD21 disrupt the picture even further, it’s possible to see how, in a similar way to the immigration rhetoric above, *field* appears to be the crux of the matter. It also appears that the participants’ feelings about immigration played a more significant role in shaping feelings of exclusion and attitudes to Brexit than their feelings towards politicians did.

6.2.2. WORKING-CLASS DISCONNECTION WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

Distance from politicians was associated frequently with the two main parties, and both were discussed in negative terms when they did come up. Generally, however, disconnection with Labour was described in terms of social values, while distance from the Conservatives was described in financial or economic terms.

There was clear disconnection with the Labour Party across the boroughs, social and ethnic backgrounds, gender, and Brexit attitudes. Both former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and incumbent Keir Starmer were named in relation to the difficulties that the party was facing. White, middle-class man BD11 was concerned the *political elite* generally and, as such, both politicians, were seen as problematic given their (more) central London seats; the party leaders were described as out of touch with the lived experienced of the voters previously considered their key constituency. This reflects the convergence in values of the two main parties (Ford and Goodwin, 2017: 19), and Labour’s shift away from its traditional voter base in particular (Mckenzie, 2017b; Whiteley et al., 2019). Brexit had, not surprisingly, shaped individuals’ attitudes to both leaders given Corbyn’s Eurosceptic history (Woollen, 2022: 100). LA12, a white middle-class man living in Lambeth, said he felt a “bit more confident” with

Starmer as leader; he did like and support Corbyn but he wasn't sure if Corbyn was "right for the leader of the party". He now has more faith in Labour under Starmer due to his overt support for remain which has allowed him, on Brexit, to be "more decisive". Aside from leaders, LA18, a white, middle-class man in his 70s, put Labour's lost-ness down to the party trying to appease very different groups of voters. He argued "that Labour hasn't made up its mind or it's scared to say openly what its [position] is", and this was in part due to the so-called 'Red Wall' voters, many of whom voted to leave but had long been the party's key support. LA11 explained that his "dad voted, he voted leave and he's been Labour all his life" but that he'd voted Conservative at the 2019 general election as he didn't support Corbyn as leader. This changing party affiliation really surprised LA11 and highlights just how much Brexit shook up British politics.

Others, however, suggested that the issues were more long-term and related to a decades-long process of shifting values, rather than to recent leaders, and it was this that had resulted in disconnection and disaffection. LA14, an Italian working-class woman, echoed the claims made by Mckenzie, that Labour had "lost a little bit of identity" as they "don't do the big battles anymore". To her, Labour is now "not that strong because the Conservatives are, you know, like they're more organised in their own things." This was a problem pre-dating Brexit, it hadn't been caused by Brexit, reflecting Mckenzie's findings on the Labour Party's long-term disconnection from the working classes. However much she didn't support the Tories generally, to her they were at least coherent and consistent and Tory leader (at the time of the interview) Boris Johnson was "very smart" and "[looked] stronger" than Starmer.

LA19, a white, working-class man in his 50s, who had been living in Herne Hill for 28 years, also expressed a clear and somewhat painful disconnection from Labour. LA19 is originally from Sunderland; he identified as a Northerner and his affiliation to the Labour party was tied to this. He described himself as "kind of left-wing Labour" but that "the Labour Party kind of gets on [his] nerves though" and it is "really struggling with, um, its identity". He was very clearly aware of the shift of Labour politicians, away from its original *raison d'être*, to represent working-class communities but

which had “failed so badly in this regard” (Mckenzie, 2017b: 207). He said that while the party was now seen as the party of the ‘metropolitan elite’ and of London, it still relied “on Northern votes that were recently disenfranchised from what they were saying”. When asked, though, whether now living in London he felt better connected to the political elite, LA19 responded “no, I feel really disconnected from politics now...no I’ve always felt disconnected, uh, the way that we do politics in this country really, for the last ten to fifteen years really, it’s got worse not better.” He said that politicians are “doing increasingly mad, populist, weird, increasingly right-wing things to justify themselves, uh, we’ve gone all weirdly post-truth and the Labour party seems to be following that and...it feels quite scary”. For him, then, Labour had moved away from their traditional support for the working classes and had gone even further, edging towards the Conservatives and their policies on, for example, the widely criticised ‘Rwanda asylum plan’, with Labour losing their moral compass in doing so.

From the above it appears that social class shaped how participants felt disconnected from the party. The working-class participants felt disillusioned with the long-term shift in values of the party. Middle-class voters, on the other hand, were more concerned by the leaders and felt disconnected that way. Based on these participants’ class *self-identifications*, there was no clear translation, however, of these feelings of exclusion to Brexit attitudes. Many of those mentioned above, including LA14 and LA19 voted to remain, despite disillusionment with the party and describing themselves as working-class.

When, instead, economic and cultural capital are brought into the discussion, alongside class self-definitions, it becomes easier to understand why disillusionment with political elites did not translate to a vote to leave for some working-class individuals. This also highlights the value of considering social class in Bourdieu’s terms. When talking to LA14 and LA19, in particular, I got the sense that while Labour’s shifting values was problematic ideologically, it was not *personal* (like BD13 and LA21’s disillusionment is, described below), nor was it all that desperate; they both discussed the issue quite calmly and didn’t use particularly emotive language (unlike BD13 and LA21 below). While LA14, LA19,

BD13 and LA21 all described themselves as working-class, there are differences between them in terms of economic capital, institutionalised cultural capital and embodied cultural capital, that may have shaped feelings of exclusion and these individuals' Brexit attitudes.

LA19 said he'll "always see [himself] as working-class, that's just how [he] feels" because, for him, "it's about cultural heritage and your history" (for example, his "grandad was a miner"). However, he had accrued institutionalised cultural capital and economic capital highlighted by his freedom to work part-time now as a freelancer in the voluntary sector. He described how, as a result of this capital, his children would describe him as middle-class, and that his job and where he lived weren't necessarily associated with working-class-ness. He also stated that while he feels politically disconnected, "I'm economically protected, so it doesn't necessarily resonate in the same way for me".

Meanwhile, LA14 described herself as working-class, and this was more in line with her institutionalised cultural capital; she had GCSE-level or equivalent qualifications. However, her support for remain mirrors that of the EU migrants described in detail in the previous chapter, whose recent migration led them to feel inherently included within, and therefore supportive of, transnationalism and EU membership (Kuhn, 2015; Ferrera and Pellegata, 2018; Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2018; Lutz, 2021). This, I argue, is potentially due to the inherent fit between their *embodied* cultural capital and the aims of the European Union, one of the four pillars underpinning which champions the free movement of people (EU, 2022). This is, again, in stark contrast to BD13 and LA21, described in more detail below, who clearly feel separate from the political elite, at UK and EU levels, and voted to leave as a result.

6.2.3. CITIZENSHIP AND VALUES AT THE BREXIT REFERENDUM

We saw in chapter 5 just how much sway EU citizenship had over attitudes towards immigration; recent EU migrants felt included within the globalised world epitomised by EU membership, celebrated immigration and supported remain as a result. It's possible, also, to see a similar effect in relation to their feelings towards politicians. As will be elaborated below, some participants, like BD13

and LA21, framed their vote to leave around local issues and related it, generally, to UK politics and their distrust of and disillusionment with the British political elite. Others, however, framed Brexit around issues relating to the EU sphere and, therefore, feelings towards UK politicians did not come into their Brexit attitudes at all. EU citizens like LA14 (a working-class Italian woman), LA15 (a working-class Greek woman), BD14 (a working-class Romanian woman), BD17 (a working-class Portuguese woman) and BD20 (a middle-class Spanish woman) did not discuss UK politicians at all.

Citizenship plays a crucial role here. The EU has been considered in the past a socially liberal force which, as BD11 mentions, played an important role in strengthening women's and LGBTQ+ rights (see, for example, Ayoub and Paternotte (2020) on the EU's history and current relationship with LGBTQ+ politics, and Ellina (2003) for background on the EU and gender politics). Given that these women had recently benefitted from EU membership by moving to the UK and establishing their lives here, it's possible to see how they could or would have felt included within that globalised realm. It follows, then, that they may be more sympathetic or in tune with the socially liberal values of the EU and, possibly, of the UK political elites. In other words, the political elites at the time of Brexit may have verged towards socially liberal values, but these women, from across the EU celebrated that and felt included as part of that, rather than feeling distanced and alienated from the UK political elites, too, as a result. Indeed, BD14 described how she had sought out a socially liberal group of friends and had found it at the church on moving to the UK. While there was a growing Romanian community where she lived, she had not actively become a part of it, explaining that:

"I don't choose to be friends with them because...I don't like that mentality, it's still a bit...sexist in my opinion and... I think it's changing for the better but it is still...slightly oppressive and a bit...outdated...and I just can't, it's not who I am".

As such, the 'socially liberal' nature of UK politicians would not have put her off, and this sat in line with her support for remain. This reflects much of the political science literature which links socially liberal, cosmopolitan voters to the remain vote (for example, Hobolt, 2016).

Given the relatively recent arrival to the UK of these individuals, too, it makes sense that they may not have felt shifts in the values of the political elites over time. The women just mentioned nearly all described themselves as working-class, as BD13 did, but did not describe feeling distant from Labour in the way that BD13 did, and which played such a crucial role in her vote to leave. They had not been living in the UK for long enough to experience the shift in the values of that party and, as a result, disillusionment did not play such a prominent role in determining their attitudes to Brexit.

6.2.4. FEELING PATRONISED BY SOCIALLY LIBERAL POLITICIANS, OR FEAR OF AN INCREASINGLY AMORAL POLITICAL ELITE?

BD13 had in various ways felt patronised by politicians, by them ‘ramming’ their ideas about energy saving lightbulbs and ideas about gender and sexuality ‘down her throat’. This had clearly fed into her vote to leave as these ideas were caught up with the realm of EU politics. She felt distanced not only from her local MP, but also from the two main parties (“I’m not saying the Tory government is any better” than Labour) and EU politicians, too.

It’s possible to see, based on the examples of BD13 and LA21 (whose case will be discussed in more detail below), how people with limited economic and cultural capital, may have felt excluded from the realm of politics, and patronised by politicians, and voted to leave at least in part in reaction to that. There may have been a shift, though, since Brexit, at least among individuals with more economic cultural capital. The socially liberal nature of the political elite, which in some ways motivated support for leave at the Brexit referendum, may have seen a 180° shift, with the referendum stoking, among a different group of voters, distrust and disillusionment with a political elite that was now a ‘scary’, right wing force with ‘no moral compass’.

The Tories have been, in LA19’s words, doing “populist, weird, increasingly right-wing things”, legitimised by the referendum and he was scared by that shift. As is mentioned in LA19’s discussion above about Labour *since* the referendum, there was some sense that Labour was following slowly in the Tories’ footsteps; the party was “filling the vacuum left by this lot” as the Tories slid further to the

right. This contrasts with the idea that political elites had, over a period of three decades or so, lunged towards the centre, to espousing socially liberal values. In a similar vein, middle-class second-generation German migrant LA20, a woman in her 60s, described how politics, since the referendum, had “gone slightly AWOL” and become more narrow-minded as society became more divided.

This change, among remain supporters who otherwise generally did not discuss a distrust of politicians *before* the referendum, was spurred on by Brexit, in particular around the ‘lies’ used by the leave campaign and in relation to the way in which the referendum itself was conducted. Lies used by the leave campaign were brought up numerous times by remain-supporting EU migrants and British citizens of different class backgrounds, but nearly all living in Lambeth. The infamous red NHS bus, a campaign bus funded by *Vote Leave*, with claims about the millions of pounds that would be brought back to the NHS budget if the UK left the EU advertised on the side, was commonly discussed. LA20 said she found it “really scary” that people were “sold the lie [that]...it would be better through Brexit”; she was “absolutely astounded”, “speechless”, “furious” and “couldn’t imagine in [her] wildest dreams that people would believe the lie about the NHS”. Linking the leave campaign to the Conservative Party, working-class Greek woman, LA15, recalled that “the Conservative Party, they said we were paying so much money to the EU each week, and now we’re going to give it to the NHS”. It was people living outside of London, according to LA15, who believed those claims and that Brexit presented an opportunity to be well-off, “because that’s what they’ve been told”. LA14, a working-class Italian designer, told me that the campaign “cheated” and that the ‘campaign lies’ around NHS funding had been highlighted during the pandemic in light of minimal pay rise offered to workers (UK Government, 2021a). She asked “where is the campaign about Brexit, [about putting] a lot of money in the NHS, where is that?”. Interestingly she pointed out that “the fact that a couple of years later, throughout this disaster of a pandemic, it has so obviously not come true, is a really stark reminder of that campaign”.

In addition to campaign lies, the exclusionary voting rules were just one aspect of the referendum which led LA14 to state that it was done in a “very dodgy way”. Comparing the Brexit referendum to a

referendum in her home country, Italy, she states that “everyone thought that the referendum wasn’t definitive...In Italy, when you have the referendum, [it] is not the law”. LA13, a middle-class Australian woman, made a similar statement in reference to Australia where “you need a two-thirds majority to win a referendum”. The restrictive voting rules and the British constitution which is “all very old and traditional”, allowed, LA13 said, the leave campaign ultimately to ‘get away with it’. To her, the referendum was not approached “with any degree of thoroughness” and the “whole thing was disorganised and just done without any care”. LA13, in fact, is a clear example of Brexit increasing feelings of distrust in the political elite. She described how her husband “bought a very expensive bottle of champagne the day [Thatcher] died – he *hated* her... thought she was an absolute villain”. She continued that, at the time,

“essentially, I thought I don’t like the Conservatives, I’m a liberal, I don’t agree with that stuff... and after Brexit, in fact, I totally got it and I just thought ‘oh my god, these people are nasty’ ... you know, since that time, I do, I much more understand what that was all about”.

LA13’s changing perceptions of the Tories is reminiscent of research by Maher et al., which shows how Brexit sparked disillusionment among those on the ‘losing side’ of Brexit (remain voters), prompting “more “radically” liberal views” (2018: 210).

LA19, a white working-class man in his 50s, echoed the above statements, suggesting that “what we’re finding out is that the whole premise of the referendum is dishonest”. What had also become clear to LA19 was that people did not vote thinking Brexit was a 50-year project, as Jacob Rees-Mogg had since suggested (a sentiment echoed by white British middle-class woman BD12, BD17 and white, working-class woman BD21 who were surprised that people thought they could vote to leave and the following day all migrants living in the UK would vanish). To LA19, the referendum was not set up in a way that allowed people to make fully informed decisions: voters were unaware of the scope of the project that a vote to leave would entail. Indeed, that the referendum “wasn’t pre-planned or properly planned” (mixed-race, working-class woman BD18), meant that “everybody that was talking about Brexit was thinking that it would be something different” (mixed-race working-class Portuguese

woman BD17). For LA17, a white middle-class woman in her 50s, the media did not help voters make informed decisions either; she expressed concern about the role of key referendum figures like Nigel Farage, asking “I mean who is he? He’s not an elected politician”. She took issue with the BBC bringing figures like Farage onto programmes like Question Time in the name of impartiality.

When reflecting on the process to leave the EU after the referendum, leave voters (BD11; BD13; LA22) on the other hand blamed the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic for the messy settlement post-Brexit, rather than the UK political elite. BD13 said the Brexit process was “in such a mess” – and that it’s the EU’s fault. She described the EU side of the negotiations as ‘childish’ – that they’re creating these “little rules again [and] it’s all about control”, like those that led her to want to leave the EU. This was echoed by LA22. Rather than engaging civilly and basing withdrawal on a “sit down dialogue that this thing is not working” but that “we will still be friends”, Brexit was an “aggressive separation”. Crucially, LA22 painted the EU as aggressive negotiator; they “are suffering” because they no longer have the UK buying from them and have, therefore, lost out on revenue, leading to hostility on their part. BD11 expected that the EU ‘would play games’ when the UK left – the EU would take the position that the UK left and “that’s what you get from us”, at least for a few years, but that the UK government would take a strong stance in response “no matter what”. As such, BD11 “knew all along we were gonna have a hard Brexit”. This was not related to any particular policy goal but to say that “we’re making a stand, we’re gonna show [the EU]”. For BD11, the COVID-19 pandemic had also scuppered the UK’s Brexit plans and their “potential”; COVID-19 was the reason for ongoing hiccups in the post-Brexit process, rather than UK politicians ‘going AWOL’ or ‘losing their moral compass’.

Aside from LA19, who had felt increasingly disillusioned with Labour, none of the remain-supporters with new distrust in UK politics otherwise discussed feeling particularly distanced from UK politics or the two main parties. Instead, Brexit itself seems to have spurred on a distrust and disillusionment with politics among those who previously did not feel as such, and the once socially liberal political elite now represents a scary, right-wing, morally corrupt bloc.

6.3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Aside from the gap in values, participants also described feeling disillusioned with politicians due to a lack of financial support.

6.3.1. NO GOVERNMENT LOOKS AFTER THE PEOPLE FINANCIALLY...

BD13 has entered the discussion in numerous ways so far and her leave vote ties together negative feelings towards immigration and towards politicians, two issues that were so central to Brexit debates at the time. For her, politics was local and it was personal and her Brexit attitudes reflect that. She went to see her local MP, Margaret Hodge, for help with the ‘community charge’ (the community charge or ‘poll tax’ was the predecessor to Council Tax) as her husband was “surviving on £60 a week [pauses] um, dole money, whatever you call it” but found that because she “was working [they] couldn’t get anything”. She got the sense from her MP that because she had a job and she had a house, and that houses in Barking are “worth a lot of money now, [then] what you complaining about?” Her MP was therefore taking “no responsibility” to help her and her family. While BD13’s “father was a Labour man through and through, a union man, a shop steward in Ford’s” and that when her and her siblings were “brought up, it was Labour or die”, she’d “rather open a vein than vote for Labour now” due to her experience with her MP. Just as was the case for the working-class women living in East London described by McKenzie (2017b), BD13 felt that the “national political situation had little connection with the local politics in the borough” (McKenzie, 2017b: 203) and her MP’s ‘advice’ reflected that. She felt “estranged from national politics despite living only [11 miles away] from Westminster and Parliament” (McKenzie, 2017b: 204). Indeed, red hot anger towards Labour had been rising for many years in ‘forgotten’ communities as the party “[parachuted] in their ‘bright young hopefuls’ from Oxford and Cambridge to seats they had no connection with” (McKenzie, forthcoming: 253). McKenzie suggests, then, that the referendum “had the effect of a lit match on a highly flammable substance” (McKenzie, forthcoming: 253) as people like BD13, who felt so disconnected from the Labour Party, voted to leave in reaction.

6.3.2. ...ESPECIALLY A TORY GOVERNMENT

BD13 had felt under-supported financially by her Labour MP and this disaffection had broadened to the current government and governments over time: “I don’t think any government looks after anyone”. For LA21, a white working-class man in his 50s, however, the Tories and their policies over time were entirely to blame. LA21 voted leave “to get David Cameron out of power”, highlighting how his disillusionment with politicians motivated his protest vote (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016) and dynamics that, more broadly, show how Brexit was, at least in part, an overt manifestation of anti-politics (Clarke et al., 2017; Flinders, 2017). By unpicking LA21’s leave vote, however, we can begin to untangle the “knot of complex, multifaceted, interwoven and densely layered factors” (Flinders, 2018: 179) that underly disillusionment and a vote to leave.

LA21 could map his life in relation to funding cuts and lacking financial support from various Conservative governments over the last six decades. From the ‘smoking beagles’ petition that LA21 had signed as a child and had been ignored by government, to the ‘bedroom tax’ which decimated his already-limited universal credit payments, LA21’s disdain for the Conservative Party was deep-rooted and immovable. LA21 thus explained how he had “never been a fan of the Tories... Hate them”. The ‘smoking beagles’ campaign, which aimed to stop the use of dogs in the testing of cigarettes in the 1960s (Greenslade, 2012), had clearly struck a chord and it was the first issue we talked about together. He explained that “in the late 60s, early 70s a, load of children and uh, *The Mirror*, they put out a campaign to stop the smoking beagles”. The petition was sent off to “Ted Heath, and his government, and they were Tory at the time” but nothing changed. He described how one of his teachers “went up to Downing Street and they’d actually taken the actual massive signature thing and put it on the fire and burned it” due to the Conservatives’ alliance with the tobacco industry (“it turned out that Ted Heath and his government were into cigarettes – they loved making them”). He said “it’s just one of those things, I’ve never voted Tory in my life” as a result, and while some might change their minds over time, “me, I’ve never liked the Tories, I hate them, I always have done, they’ve never really done anything for me.”

This hatred was also related to his and his family's experience trying to access financial support after he and his mother were "forced out of [their] flat due to domestic violence" and "the Tory Party had literally wiped out the cash" available to families in need. He remembered them not being able to access household appliances like a kettle, or clothes. LA21 later went on to describe the school he went to (it was "crap... it was like a dumping ground for all the schools when they, when people didn't go anywhere") and led him to leave school without qualifications. By that time, Thatcher and her government, he explained, had introduced the 'Youth Opportunities Programme' "and about 30,000 of us went straight to the dole" before being given, according to LA21, mindless tasks to do. The government "made [him and others in the programme] pretend we were doing something".

Unemployment had reached 4.9 million and LA19 was aware that the Youth Unemployment Programme was not created to provide young people with training but to reduce unemployment according to statistics. When that didn't work, "they started selling things off", through privatisation, negatively impacting services and, according to LA21, that has "never changed". This is reflected in section 2.3.2. of my literature review, which describes how Thatcher's neoliberalism slowly spurred on more cuts to local government funding, ultimately leading to the 'peak inequality' (Dorling, 2018) that may have made the vote to leave the EU inevitable. LA21's account is an individual's personal experience of that same story.

Since that time, the Tories had introduced the 'means test' for clothing allowance and other support for job seekers and changed the ways in which the job centre worked. For LA21, then, it was the Tories' decisions over time had left him struggling to find work now: "I've been doing courses after courses after courses and I'm not going anywhere. My CV is brilliant [but] no one's interested" despite the qualifications he had since achieved (and, in fact, I met LA21 and LA22 at a local authority-funded training and skills centre, where they were undertaking maths and IT training).

Ultimately, these events have led LA21 to conclude that "the Tory Party are not very nice to people, only their own kind". Very clearly, this statement signifies distance and, arguably, the populist attitudes – there existing an 'us' and a 'them' – which, according to Hobolt (2016: 1270), was one

foundation of the leave vote. Not surprisingly then, when, in 2013 in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, David Cameron had brought in the bedroom tax, a tax that cuts universal credit payments for social housing tenants classed as having a spare room (Shelter, 2022), LA21's disillusionment with the Tories was only fuelled. LA21 had felt the effects of the bedroom tax very acutely, explaining that his universal credit payments were £64 a month lower, reduced to £263. As a result, LA21 "just wanted them out" and voted to leave. The Brexit referendum seemed to him a prime opportunity to send the government his message, reflecting a picture similar to that found by McKenzie, where Brexit was "an opportunity to push back against the expectations of the privileged elites...the decision to vote leave was a way to kick back at an establishment that they felt let down by" (McKenzie, 2017b: 205). LA21's leave vote reflects not only how the leave campaign gave a "voice to the fears of 'ordinary, decent people' in opposition to a political establishment that has often failed to listen" (Hobolt, 2016: 1273), but also the idea that some working-class voters' "anger and frustration of being ignored and overlooked became legitimized in their right and power to vote 'leave' when they knew that most politicians, mainstream media outlets and the wider middle-class electorate wanted to 'remain'" (McKenzie, 2017b: 206). Like many white working-class voters, LA21 may have felt a sense of relief when the referendum "provided a conduit for their growing disillusionment, dissatisfaction, and anger [towards the political elite]" (Bromley-Davenport et al., 2019: 808). LA21 seemed frustrated during our interview however that, while he had cast his vote to leave in protest against the Conservative government, "we're still in Europe" and "we still wound up with the Tories another ten years down the line, so it didn't work very well".

It seemed, as I spoke to LA21, that in fact his vote to leave was entirely unrelated to EU membership or politics. He didn't discuss what it meant for him to no longer be an EU citizen. This, of course, perhaps may not be so surprising given the different position in which he finds himself, compared to those who did sing the praises of free movement (middle-class Lambeth residents, LA11, LA17 and LA18 who wanted to or had travelled for work, and EU migrants of different class backgrounds whose ties to the EU were numerous). As shown above in chapter 5, he seemingly had no problem with

immigration, an issue so closely related to the discussions of Brexit, nor did he mention that we should be ‘taking back control’ from a distant political elite in Brussels and pushing for sovereignty. His vote was tied in every respect to domestic politics and the party in government.

I have explained in detail each of the points that spurred on LA21’s leave vote because it was so important to him when discussing Brexit. While this is the story of only one individual, it shows in great detail and in real terms the impact of policy made in the 1980s on the current system of support and how decimation of that support for working-class communities in particular has had, since, such inconceivable impacts on the lives of people living in the UK and across the EU, if Brexit is seen as an indirect result of those political decisions. It also highlights just how complex Brexit attitudes are once we scratch below the surface. *Recent* immigration and animosity between migrant groups may have impacted on some leave voters’ attitudes, but the Brexit vote, in part at least, was also motivated by memories of a government decision in the 1970s to ignore children’s signatures on a petition to bring an end to the ‘smoking beagles’.

6.3.3. NOT EVEN THE ‘DESERVING POOR’ FEEL DESERVING

The experiences and subsequent attitudes of LA21 and BD13 reminded me of certain themes picked up in Shilliam’s book, *Race and the Undeserving Poor* (2018a). Shilliam argues that politicians categorise the groups who matter to them, an idea that was brought up by LA11: “politicians categorise voters and they...categorise the people who matter...to them politically”. In Bourdieu’s terms, politicians as the dominant group define what is and who has legitimate cultural capital; other groups are disempowered and left to feel ‘sub-human’ (BD13). Shilliam discusses the various and increasingly frequent examples of politicians defining their “prime deserving constituency” (2018a: 2). For Theresa May, that group was the “ordinary working class” (2018: 2). Shilliam asks “what, then, counts as an “ordinary” member of the working class” (2018a: 2) and makes the point clearly that the ‘deserving working class’ is a racialised concept, rooted in slavery, which saw the development of “a moral relationship – but not quite co-incidence – between whiteness and deserved-ness and

blackness and undeserved-ness” (2018a: 7). LA21 and BD13’s claims above are, then, surprising: not even the white working class (as they both defined themselves, in line with their economic and cultural capital) feel ‘deserving’. In fact, BD13 seemed to feel patronised by those in power and, to her, politicians are “not worried about working class, or any class, all they’re worried about is themselves” – a sentiment echoed by LA21 and his feeling like part of an ‘us’ that was distant from the ‘them’ in power.

Since Shilliam’s book was published in 2018, we have seen an increasing awareness in the UK of the everyday and structural racism pervasive to society. Critiques of this and of white privilege are increasingly part of public discourse. BD13 feeling sub-human, even as a white, working-class person, may be linked to changes we’ve seen in recent years, as sections of society become more aware and critical of the prejudices that exist. This is not to say that Shilliam’s claims no longer stand: the white working class as “a constituency produced and reproduced through struggles to consolidate and defend British imperial order” (2018a: 6) still rings true. In June 2021, the House of Commons Education Committee published its report entitled “The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it” (UK Parliament, 2021). This cross-party committee, led by Tory MP Robert Halfon, is still willing, ultimately, to perpetuate the victim discourse that the education of white working-class children suffers because of minoritised racial groups and their advocates. This kind of rhetoric “secures societal White supremacy and provides a further setback to progressive reforms that focus on race, gender and disability equality” (Gillborn, 2010: 3).

Despite fitting the mould of the supposedly ‘deserving’ group, BD13 and LA21 clearly felt excluded from the political elites, an elite that was self-interested and could not or would not provide the social and financial support they needed. This economic and cultural capital-related exclusion is reflected in these individuals’ votes to leave the EU.

6.4. CLASS, CITIZENSHIP AND GENDER AND *NOT* CONSIDERING THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

So far, I have considered the views of those who did discuss politicians and (lack of) trust in the political elite, and the patterns of support largely support the findings of some of the literature on the so-called 'left behind' and of McKenzie's research. Those with sufficient economic capital could weather the storm and their disillusionment did not translate to a vote to leave. Those struggling financially felt excluded from elites and voted to leave as a result. However, I haven't done much to broaden what we know.

I started to think about what was missing and what *wasn't* there: why was the Tory Party the one and only basis of LA21's vote to leave, while a handful of other participants hadn't mentioned British politics at all? It was interesting in and of itself that participants like BD11, BD13 and LA21 were so concerned by British politics when discussing Brexit, while, for others, the domestic sphere didn't come up at all in relation to the Brexit vote. It was, as I will now explain, a matter of social class, citizenship and gender, that led participants to form their Brexit attitudes based on issues relating to the domestic sphere or the EU sphere.

A combination of class, citizenship and gender appeared to play a role for BD17, LA15 and LA18, all of whom supported remain, in part at least, for their children. When we started to discuss Brexit during the focus group, of which BD17, a working-class woman from Portugal, was a part, the first thing she mentioned was having to apply for the right to remain in the UK after Brexit. She explained that, since Brexit, there had been a great deal of confusion and a lack of clarity around her children's citizenship. Indeed, Zontini and Però found Brexit to present a particular rupture for EU migrant mothers, who not only feared losing their own precarious rights, but also felt that Brexit left their children in a particularly vulnerable position (2019: 99), due also to the lack of clarity around the 'settled status' policy for years after the Brexit referendum (2019: 101). BD17's adult children now would have to apply for the right to remain for themselves and her "two little ones, even though they were born here in England, um, because I am not British... [the Home Office were] not sure if I have to apply for

them to remain as well...". She went on to describe how she had called the Home Office to confirm whether or not "because I'm the mother, if I apply to remain in the UK, and I'm granted the status, then that status spreads to my kids" and "they didn't know themselves!" BD17's concern, pre-Brexit, about what could change for her children was a key motivator in her support for remain (and is elaborated on in chapter 7 below).

The citizenship of her child was also a key concern for LA15 (a working-class Greek woman), when discussing Brexit. She moved to London with her young son to live with her now-husband. She explained that, at the time, her "son didn't speak English" but that she was very confident that he'd pick it up: "he's a lot like me and I'm a polyglot, so I thought English will not be a problem". She enrolled him in a bilingual state school that taught in English and German, where "we found ourselves like fish in water...because I'm fluent [in] both English and German and there I had you know a community of people, who were like myself, multilinguals, immigrants...Europeans". When the referendum was announced, then, she and the other parents at the school were immediately concerned. When she moved here, she found it to be relatively straightforward to bring her child, enrol him at a school and find a job, whereas "today this is impossible". Not only did she choose for her son a school in London in which he could have a similarly Europhile life to hers, but her son's citizenship was an immediate concern when discussions of a referendum began: "we found ourselves in this difficult situation where we didn't know what was about to happen, were our passports going to be valid?". As such, "when the time came for the two of us, for my son and myself, we applied as well, so we have our dual British Greek citizenship, both countries, both passports". Speaking to LA15, it was clear that Brexit had had an unsettling effect – her and her son now had dual citizenship "because it is allowed, for as long as it is allowed" but she followed up that "it can be withdrawn as well". Brexit is an ongoing process for LA15 and BD17 in a way that it isn't for many British voters included in this research. For these EU citizens, it is a process that continues to be drawn out, past the Withdrawal Agreement disagreements, past the date the UK officially left the European Union (as Botterill et al. (2019) also report).

In the cases of BD17 and LA15, then, we can see the intersectional impact of gender (for BD17 as a full-time mother homemaker and the primary caregiver for young children and for LA15 as the mother of a young son) and their citizenship (which they both felt would complicate the positions of their children, if the UK left the EU) on their attitudes towards Brexit. Both of these women described themselves as working-class, which is often associated with a vote to leave in the political science literature on Brexit (for example, Hobolt, 2016, and Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). In line with the previous chapter on attitudes to immigration, however, citizenship cuts across class for these women, and they supported remain regardless of self-identifications as part of the working class. Gender intersects here, too; if they felt included within the realm of EU membership prior to Brexit, for their own sakes as well as for their children's, it makes sense that they would support remain enthusiastically, to continue to be a part of something from which they had recently benefitted (Kuhn, 2015; Ferrera and Pellegata, 2018) and in light of their ongoing (at least in early 2022) worries over their children's citizenship. If citizenship is considered part of our embodied cultural capital, as I argue in this thesis that it should be, this section offers further support; citizenship and gender intersect in this way because they are both intertwining parts of our embodied cultural capital.

Meanwhile, for LA17, a middle-class, white British woman in her 50s, a slightly different combination of factors seems to play into her support for remain; but it is also in part related to the *opportunities available to* (rather than legal status of) her children. For LA17, it seems as though class and gender played a role – as did processes of social reproduction, where parents pass down class sensibilities and values. LA17's father was "massively into education... and languages... and [growing up] everybody always travelled a lot". Her mother's family had European roots and her maternal grandmother was half French and had lived and worked in France during the First World War. These values – of education and travel – which are inherently related to class (education is institutionalised cultural capital; languages are embodied cultural capital; and travel requires economic capital) were important to LA17's support for remain. She had also lived in Spain for a period of time and was due to move there a few months after our interview, too, with her husband for a year's sabbatical. She

wanted her sons to have similar opportunities to her and she explained that they had both lived abroad at various points. One son, who had been living in Italy when the pandemic started wanted to move back to Italy but couldn't (he was, however, now living in Berlin and had managed to get residency there via his partner and her family). The other, however, was living in Barcelona with his partner from Mexico. LA17 explained that his partner had residency for France but not Spain or the UK and her son didn't have residency for Spain but could, of course, live in the UK and, as a result of having no common ground, "they're fucked, you know!"

LA17's concerns for her children were, then, shaped more by her social class and gender. Her middle-class values, in terms of education and language skills, and those of her sons, were clearly a concern for her in relation to Brexit. She wanted the same opportunities for them that she had had and, as such, gender and social class played a role here in *not* leading her to base her vote on the British political elite, but wider concerns related to EU membership. The role of gender and middle-classness is clear when LA17 is considered alongside, for example, BD13, who was also concerned about her children but was concerned about more immediate, local issues, like their opportunities to find affordable housing in Barking.

LA17's case leads me onto another set of intersecting factors that drew attention away from the UK sphere and to the realm of the EU, specifically related to travelling and living in other EU member states. By drawing on the examples of LA11, LA13 and LA17, we can see how higher levels of economic and cultural capital allowed these participants to consider issues other than those right on their doorsteps, as was the case for LA21 and BD13. As mentioned above, LA17 had previously lived in Madrid for a couple of years and was preparing to move back to Spain at the time of our interview. She was going back to Spain "because we both speak Spanish, because we've lived there before, we're quite familiar with it". In order to get the 'non-lucrative' visa, though, "we've got to show we've got enough income – about 33,000 euros for one person...it's loads of hoops, you know, medical reports, a criminal record check. You have to get it all apostilled...you have to get it translated...and you have to pay for medical". She explained that she and her husband had the economic capital

available to jump through the hoops as they had recently downsized their home, “so [they have] got money in the bank”.

LA11, a white, middle-class actor in his 30s, also linked his vote to remain to similar reasons relating to travel and work abroad. When asked about his vote to remain, LA11 explained that freedom of movement (or potential lack thereof, if the UK left the EU) was the number one factor that shaped it; he appreciated “travelling around or feeling like ‘oh I might wanna live in Berlin [for a while]’”. He noted that there was a “selfish element to that”, in that he made the most of being able to travel in Europe, while others were not be able to.

For LA13, too, travel and living abroad was a central concern in relation to Brexit. She had grown up in Australia and had been living in Lambeth for 16 years at the time of the referendum. LA13 was also concerned by freedom of movement in relation to the Brexit referendum and knew that Brexit would limit the travel options of people with a British passport. She explained that her husband only had a British passport, and now, if “we wanted to go and live in Spain, which, or France or whatever, which I quite fancy, [laughs] um, yeah, I don’t know how that’s gonna work any longer”. She herself had an EU passport (and an Australian passport) and had settled status in the UK, and “felt sorry for people” who no longer had such freedom. She went on to explain that “I don’t understand why they’d want to give that [opportunity to travel and live abroad] away”. This quote in particular shines a bright light on the different experiences and priorities of, for example, LA13 and LA21, who lived a couple of miles apart but whose attitudes were shaped seemingly so completely by class (and went in opposite directions at the Brexit referendum). LA13 also saw the economic benefit of EU membership in terms of travelling and living in the EU. She said “the only other people who are allowed that luxury [to travel freely] are usually people with lots of money in their bank”. Of course, other factors shape mobility, for example, care responsibilities. However, post-Brexit, the case of LA17 who is able to move to Spain exemplifies the necessity of (a large amount of) economic capital in shaping an individual’s mobility.

These experiences had been enabled in different ways: by embodied cultural capital (language skills would allow LA17 to move to Spain more easily than someone without those language skills and, in fact, she said she would have considered moving to France but she didn't speak the language) and by institutionalised cultural capital. We can see the role that institutionalised cultural capital plays in terms of job flexibility: LA17's job as a counsellor would allow her to take a year away and LA11's work as an actor and LA13's work as an artist put them in a mobile position. This mobility was not felt by people like BD13, who worked as a cook in various London offices, or for LA21, who was struggling to find work, and both of whom voted to leave. Economic capital no doubt also came into the Brexit priorities for LA17, LA11, and LA13, and allowed them to consider issues unrelated to the day-to-day, local struggles which formed the basis of LA21 and BD13's votes to leave.

Just as citizenship shaped the Brexit attitudes of EU migrants, regardless of class, and *didn't* leave them feeling distanced from a socially liberal political elite, economic and cultural capital clearly also play a central role in leading people to feel included in the realm of EU membership and positively towards transnationalism. By considering these individuals' experiences in depth and looking at issues discussed and – crucially - *not* discussed, it's possible to see how feelings of inclusion and exclusion in the globalised world impacted on the issues that took priority, ultimately impacting on a preference to leave or remain.

6.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the ways in which disillusionment with the political elite fed into attitudes towards Brexit among my participants. I have drawn out the complex web of intersecting class and identity-related factors that led individuals to feel disillusioned with politicians, and how that subsequently shaped attitudes at the Brexit referendum. Largely, my findings support existing political science research into feelings towards politicians and the Brexit vote. It was generally found that a distrust of or distance felt from the political elite was linked to a vote to leave (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Ford and Goodwin, 2017; Hobolt, 2016). While there was a sprinkle of support for *some* politicians, both main parties and the political elite in general were considered out of touch in terms

of values and unwillingness or inability to provide financial support when needed. This was felt across party lines, Brexit lines, and class lines.

Social class did play a role in shaping feelings towards the political elite. Working-class participants, with limited economic capital and limited or devalued cultural capital, felt disillusioned reflecting Mckenzie's claim that, at the referendum, what "emerged was a shared class anger" (2017b: 201).

This also highlights the utility of Bourdieu's concepts and of cultural capital in particular. Limited economic capital no doubt left these individuals predisposed to feeling a lack of support from politicians who were unable (or unwilling) to provide the support that they felt they needed. By framing social class around cultural factors, like education and training that constitute *institutionalised* cultural capital, the ways in which class shaped attitudes towards politicians becomes even more clear. One participant described in detail his perception of an education system that had stopped him from accessing opportunities available to other children from middle-class backgrounds, and a job market later on that was made all the more difficult by Tory 'reforms' of, for example, the ways in which job centres operated. Bourdieu's concepts have, here, allowed to me take a broad view of these individuals' experiences and backgrounds and the complex web of factors that underlies political attitudes.

We can also see the role that class played on the flip side, for middle-class participants whose economic and cultural capital enabled them to be included within the realm of the EU. Seemingly, as such, this also meant these participants' priorities could move away from the existential, immediate, local and the domestic, to issues related to the EU sphere, such as travel and living abroad.

My research has therefore extended what we know about these issues by bringing depth to these class-related explanations, highlighting the various different ways in which economic and cultural capital shaped attitudes to politicians or, indeed, led some individuals to not have to worry much at all about the UK political elite. I have also shown how and why citizenship, and its intersection with gender, impacted on the issues with which an individual was concerned in relation to Brexit. As was the case in relation to immigration, when it comes to Brexit, citizenship overrides any expected

impact of social class. As was the case in relation to immigration, citizenship is not clearly theorised by Bourdieu, but I have argued that understanding citizenship as part of our *embodied* cultural capital will allow us to understand the intersectional impact of citizenship, alongside gender and race (see section 5.3.1. of chapter 5, pp151-157). The experiences of those participants highlight just how important it is to view citizenship as part of our intersecting identities.

In any case, I have shown, once again, how inclusion and exclusion can, and need to be, broadened to take into account those previously excluded from research into Brexit. Broadening the sample in this research has new and important impacts, showing how different spheres become the focus for individuals who feel included (into EU sphere) or excluded (from the domestic sphere). This is a framing that I don't believe has been explored in any great detail in Brexit research so far, which is surprising given how the leave campaign and its use of the 'NHS bus' (see p182) appealed very effectively to those concerned with what I describe as the 'domestic sphere'.

There doesn't appear to be a clear borough-divide among participants when it comes to their feelings towards politicians. Instead, class and identity more clearly defined participants' attitudes. Where borough did come into feelings towards politicians, it was down to personal experience. Class appears to be the dominant factor here, rather than borough; the feelings of those participants who had had personal contact with their MP appear to have been shaped by their own need for financial support (or lack thereof). That discussions of politicians instead generally centred around UK political parties or EU politicians as a bloc sheds light on the very limited contact individuals have with their local representatives. This in itself could of course be feeding disillusionment, if a lack of contact undermines the relationship between the represented and their representatives.

As explained in chapter 5 above, on immigration, the borough itself appears too large a space to describe as a 'field'; instead, I found the enduring impact of smaller social spaces which either celebrated immigration or viewed it as a threat. While immigration attitudes weren't cleanly split across boroughs either, there was *more* of a borough divide between participants when it came to immigration and that is unsurprising. The issues I found closely related to immigration (namely, levels

of *recent* migration and an area's history of migration) are inherently tied to a particular place. Issues that were related to feelings towards politicians, however, were far more closely related to class, explaining why there is very little difference seen between boroughs on this issue. The issues described in this chapter are less place-related than those connected to attitudes towards immigration which likely explains the different weights given to explanatory factors like class and field between this chapter and the previous.

While immigration and disillusionment with the political elite are two key issues related to the vote to leave, I have shown that immigration may have greater sway over Brexit attitudes. After all, being part of a field where immigration is celebrated, does not lead to a leave vote, even if an individual is disillusioned with the political elite. What's more, it's possible that Brexit was a turning point when it comes to voter attitudes towards the political elite. Brexit was a moment in which the working classes, *en masse*, criticised the political elite for being distant and for forming a socially liberal bloc. Now, in response to the Brexit campaign and the changes we've seen since, the middle classes, whose values broadly aligned with that socially liberal elite before, may increasingly be questioning whether their values do in fact align with an elite which they perceive to be increasingly amoral, right wing, populist and 'weird'.

If MPs and political leaders were to take one thing away from this thesis (should I send it to them?), it's that seeking support from a voracious yet small group of voters can only get you so far. As we approach the next general election, it seems as though voters are keener than ever for politicians to connect with them, whether that's in terms of party-level values or by taking a more constituency-based, personal approach to politics. Brexit as an event is stuck in a particular moment in time, but politics continues and new issues come to the fore. Throughout my PhD, I could have written here about the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, party-gate, Liz Truss's (failed) attempt at transforming the UK economy or the Tory government's asylum policy but by the time this thesis is examined, who know what will be on the agenda. This chapter has described how political disillusionment shaped the Brexit vote but it would be worthwhile to consider its effects on successive general elections or

attitudes to key policies. The need for connection is not going away and there is democratic justification for effort to be made by politicians to connect and by academics to understand how responsive governments are to voters. Doing so could inform how politicians connect with voters, something for which there is so clearly appetite, and that I am certainly not the first to discuss.

While politicians might zero in on voters from particular areas or demographics (the 'Red Wall' springs to mind, as do the various iterations of the 'left behind', including Theresa May's 'Just About Managings'), intersectional takes on Bourdieu's theories allow us to look at society and political events at a granular level. That's much needed in the case of Brexit and, more specifically, when considering the effects of disillusionment with politicians. Only when the complexities of voters' relationships with their representatives are contemplated and 'smoking beagles' or a slow shift in values are considered can we really begin to understand once-in-a-generation, cataclysmic political events like Brexit.

With the effects of identity on (mis)trust in politicians addressed, I'll move on to the final theme that arose in relation to Brexit attitudes among my participants: anxiety and uncertainty.

7. THE ROLE OF UNCERTAINTY AND ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ANXIETY

7.1. INTRODUCTION

“‘Uncertainty’ is...an accurate descriptor for actors of all kinds – be they politicians or private individuals – caught up in the Brexit whirlwind” (Diamond et al., 2018: 10).

There was often a palpable sense of anxiety when my participants talked about Brexit – from both leave voters who were anxious about their current situation and from remain voters for what *could* happen, on the “*potential* negative implications of Brexit Britain [and]...speculation about uncertain futures” (Knight, 2017: 241). This is not surprising given that anxiety is caused by cognitive uncertainty, and political events, like Brexit, can “increase that uncertainty in multiple ways that range from insecurity about future social status to economic prospects” (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2021: 82). This chapter is a “study of that uncertainty” (Diamond et al., 2018); it draws out the underlying economic and cultural anxiety that play into tropes of the so-called ‘left behind’ while also considering the uncertainties faced by EU migrants living in London, a topic which has seen such limited academic interest.

The uncertainty of migrants due to the disruption of Brexit is really all that is discussed in relation to their experience of the referendum and years that have followed, so there’s a base of specific research to use to begin to understand the experiences of the migrant women in my sample. The experiences and anxieties of UK migrants living in EU countries has been researched. Miller, for example, considered the position of older ‘lifestyle’ migrants living in Spain, and how post-Brexit even these ‘relatively privileged migrants’ are negotiating “an unprecedented shift in their status, their uncertain future as lifestyle migrants, and their [shifting] understandings of home” (2019: 1). I focus here, however, on discussions of EU migrants’ experiences of Brexit in the UK given the focus of my study, on individuals living in London at the time of the Brexit vote. Specifically, I focus on the experiences of those who are settled in the UK for the long-term, with their families, and do not have plans to move elsewhere, in the UK or EU, rather than, for example, students or highly-skilled EU

migrants, for whom Brexit created uncertainty and disruption, but who might be more mobile given the generally temporary and ‘intentionally open’ nature of their migration (Lulle et al., 2018: 4; Lulle et al., 2019: 9).

EU migrants “are particularly likely to have been affected by the Brexit vote” (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2021: 82) and to have felt emotional stress and anxiety due to the unsettling rupture that was the Brexit vote (Zontini and Però, 2019: 101). This can be due to social uncertainty and anxiety about social standing resulting from, for example, increasing racism and xenophobia towards migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (Fox et al., 2012; Rzepnikowska, 2018; Harris et al., 2022) and negative elite discourses about EU migrants (Mintchev, 2014; McGuire, 2019; Martins, 2021). Uncertainty also rose over EU migrants’ rights and citizenship post-Brexit (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Botterill et al., 2019), as citizenship rights became one of the more contested areas of Brexit negotiations, alongside Northern Ireland and the financial settlement. This was exacerbated by the lack of clarity of the ‘settled status’ post-Brexit immigration policy introduced for EU migrants already living in the UK, and the particular lack of clarity around the rights of children (Zontini and Però, 2019: 101)

The anxiety that my non-migrant participants described, however, is not generally reflected in the existing literature on Brexit, particularly that related to the ‘left behind’. I hadn’t focused on these themes early on in my literature review as the key analyses tend to focus on socio-demographics and geography, as my literature review shows. That alone highlights just how important it is to create a space to describe the ways in which my participants experienced anxiety in relation to the Brexit vote. Given the limited space given to these issues in the literature at large, I’m going to begin this chapter with something of a review of the literature on economic and cultural anxiety and how the measures and issues that arise can be used to draw out related themes in the current literature on Brexit. It’s also possible, using these ideas, to consider the many ways in which anxiety and uncertainty then play into patterns of inclusion and exclusion, which will be delved into throughout this chapter.

While the language of economic anxiety is not used in literature on Brexit, it can be easily applied to what we know. Economic anxiety is described as:

“broadly capturing subjective and objective assessments of how poorly an individual, or the individual’s community, performed in the production of goods and services in the immediate past and how pessimistic the respondent is (or could be) for future performance given past trends and present indicators”.

(Miller, 2020: 3)

As such, economic anxiety and insecurity are multifaceted concepts (Bossert et al., 2019), relating to an individual’s financial position: actual, perceived or subjective. Economic anxiety is likely to be more common among those who have limited economic capital, for example those who are unemployed (Vlandas and Halikiopoulou, 2019; Miller, 2020), in temporary work (Sipma et al., 2023: 9), or face uncertainties around their housing situations (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2019). Interestingly, under some circumstances, it is found that *perceived* economic insecurity, over actual economic insecurity that shapes political attitudes, like support for far-right parties (Sipma et al., 2023: 1). This highlights the additional importance of class self-identification, as part of the working class or lower class (as various participants identified), in understanding economic anxiety. Outside of individuals’ own financial situation, economic anxiety can also refer to sociotropic concerns, relating to the country’s financial stability. Distinctions between individual (*pocketbook*) or collective (*sociotropic*) economic concerns are made by many authors to understand perceptions of personal or national economic stability and economic anxiety (Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Chalmers and Dellmuth, 2015; Kates and Tucker, 2019).

These ideas reflect the numerous authors who link economic precarity, in one way or another, to a vote to leave as part of research into the so-called ‘left behind’ (for example, Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). Low household income and unemployment are associated with a vote to leave in the academic literature

(Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). Reflecting the relevance of perceived as well as actual measures of financial security, those “who thought that their household’s financial situation had got a lot worse over the previous 12 months were somewhat more likely to support Brexit” (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). Relatedly, those living on the economic periphery, with limited education or training opportunities (Hobolt, 2016) were more likely to vote to leave.

Economic anxiety is also linked into attitudes towards Europe over time (Alvarez, 2002) and support for far right and populist parties (Bossert et al., 2019; Carreras et al., 2019; Kates and Tucker, 2019; Sipma et al., 2023). Class-based analyses of attitudes to Europe are few and far between but have, for decades, found a link between lower social stratification (a measure that combines occupation status, education level and income) and lower support for membership of the European project (Alvarez, 2002: 66). When considering support for far-right parties and ideas, it has been found that those in a precarious financial position are more likely to develop anti-immigration or Eurosceptic views (Carreras et al., 2019) and support populist parties (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018), although, of course, UKIP also appealed to some “more affluent and middle-class ‘strategic defectors’ from the mainstream Conservative Party” (Ford et al., 2012: 204). It is so-called ‘pocketbook concerns’ about an individual’s personal financial situation that matter in increasing support, according to Kates and Tucker (2019: 509), while sociotropic concerns had no effect. These findings are relevant to Brexit given the role that far-right/ populist party UKIP had on the leave campaign, alongside members of the Tory party’s anti-Europe, right wing faction, the ‘European Research Group’ (ERG) (Kates and Tucker, 2019; Evans and Mellon, 2016; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a).

What we know generally relates to those with low levels of economic capital and their support for leave (highlighting, once again, the over-representation of these ideas in the literature on the ‘left behind’). It’s important to note, that on the flip side, a lack of economic anxiety, or financial stability, would play a part in creating support for remain, too. McKenzie’s framing of inclusion and exclusion refers mostly to cultural capital and feelings of exclusion are generally felt by those with lower skills levels, who are unable to ‘trade’ their cultural capital in the globalised realm of the EU project. Skill-

levels and economic anxiety are certainly linked, given the higher incomes associated with highly skilled work and ‘tradability’ of those professions. A purely economic conceptualisation of ‘exclusion’ is not what I’m searching for in this project; therefore I’ll consider the ways (if at all) economic anxiety fed into other kinds of exclusion.

Cultural anxiety is more obviously described in the existing literature on Brexit, given the attention paid to attitudes to immigration. Cultural anxiety can be seen in anti-immigrant attitudes which are underpinned by ethnocentrism, racism, and/or a strong English national identity, all of which have been said to feed into Brexit attitudes (Virdee and McGeever, 2018; Miller, 2020: 2). As explored in my literature review, the referendum took place within a particularly charged period of time, where *limiting immigration* was the goal of politicians across the spectrum (as is described in section 2.3.2.6., see pp38-39). Farage leading UKIP, Cameron leading the Tories, and Ed Miliband leading Labour, in speeches in the years running up to the referendum, all declared “that the population (more than themselves) [saw] contemporary immigration as a problem... [and insisted] that they and their party [were] distinctive in providing an effective response” (Portice and Reichner, 2018: 1362).

Cultural anxiety is likely to be felt by those white, working-class voters who feel excluded from processes like globalisation (Mckenzie, 2017b), and linked social progress, and who feel their dominance shifting as immigration increases (as already established in chapter 5 above), hence the relevance of cultural anxiety to this study. However, it’s not as simple to say that anti-immigration attitudes are necessarily a result of cultural anxiety; economic anxiety can feed into anti-immigration attitudes, too, through perceived *labour market competition* and the resulting impact on wages (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019: 808), and through a perceived *fiscal burden* (Miller, 2020: 3), which might include perceived ‘welfare tourism’. Hence, the two kinds of anxiety are not necessarily distinct, as I show in this chapter.

Economic and cultural anxieties have, at the macro level, been found to link into support for leave, or related issues like far-right identification and support for populist parties (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Kates and Tucker, 2019: 494) and many aggregate level studies of Brexit equally

find clear patterns around economic anxiety-related measures and a vote to leave (Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b).

At the 'micro-level' (i.e., in studies of individuals), however, economic anxiety has not been found to play such a role as it does at the macro level (Kates and Tucker, 2019) and we know that the broad picture of Brexit attitudes painted by 'left behind' explanations of the vote are only surface level, creating something of a puzzle. To understand these seemingly incongruous results, in this chapter I'm engaging with the literature on economic and cultural anxiety, and uncertainty over legal and social status reported among migrants. I use, as I have in previous chapters, Bourdieu's concepts of economic and cultural capital, and field, to understand how, if at all, anxiety fed into the Brexit attitudes of my participants at the individual level and to understand what's behind aggregate-level studies of Brexit, reflecting the wider goal of this thesis. Bourdieu's work continues to inform sociological research (see, for example, Skeggs, 2004b, Savage et al., 2015 and McKenzie, 2017b) and his concepts are, therefore, incredibly helpful in understanding various measures associated with different forms of anxiety, such as limited *economic capital* and devalued *embodied cultural capital* (as is shown throughout this chapter).

To avoid 'roughly casting' what is a long and contentious debate about the determinants of attitudes to Brexit, as binary and economic versus cultural factors (Kates and Tucker, 2019: 495) and, again, highlighting the complexity of these attitudes, I show in this chapter how cultural and economic anxiety, and anxiety related to uncertainty of rights and social standing, played different and intertwining roles among my participants, based on the varying effects of class, race and citizenship.

I include 17 participants in this chapter, all of whom discussed anxiety and/ or uncertainty in one form or another and I begin by outlining the ways in which economic anxiety *may have* shaped Brexit attitudes. There is no doubt that economic anxiety fed into some participants' attitudes; this is particularly clear in the discourse around the cost of living and gentrification. It is on gentrification that we see the starkest differences between the boroughs, and the ensuing 'exclusion' feeds into

patterns of shifting dominance already uncovered in relation to immigration in Barking and Brixton.

Economic anxiety also fed disillusionment with politicians.

Ultimately, though, I argue that cultural anxiety played a more significant role in explaining my participant's attitudes to Brexit than economic anxiety alone, supporting assertions that economic anxiety *alone* was not the predominant cause of the leave vote (Margalit, 2019; Sipma et al., 2023) or, more broadly, far right support (Kates and Tucker, 2019). Where participants described economic precarity, and voted to leave, their economic anxiety was translated through (a) cultural concern(s), like the shifting dominance of their social group, anti-immigration attitudes or a distrust of politicians, and it's on those issues that feelings of exclusion are built, and their leave vote was based. This finding backs up some of the claims I have made in previous chapters about the centrality of negative feelings towards immigration and politicians, and the importance of the intersecting roles played by economic and cultural capital, and field, in determining Brexit attitudes. It also provides further (and broader) support for the findings of Sipma et al., who find that economic anxiety only plays a role "when people already perceive immigrants as a threat" (2023: 10).

As such, my research reflects existing findings on issues like the disengagement between the working classes and the Labour Party (Mckenzie, 2017b; Whiteley et al., 2019) and the role played by xenophobia and/ or racism, and ensuing anti-immigration attitudes, in producing the vote to leave the EU (see, for example, Virdee and McGeever, 2018; Carreras et al., 2019; Miller, 2020). Through qualitative research I'm able to draw out some of the complex processes through which individuals' class backgrounds, gender, race and citizenship leave them more or less prone to experiencing economic and/ or cultural anxiety, and how that anxiety translated those attitudes into a vote to leave (or not). What's more, it's possible to see how, based on factors like citizenship, economic anxiety actually strengthened resolve to support remain, rather than feeding into support for leave.

Feelings of inclusion amongst my participants, due to their EU citizenship and their positive feelings towards transnationalism, for example, overrode the potential impact of feelings of exclusion due to limited economic capital and related economic anxiety. On this basis, my study supports work by

authors like Kuhn (2015) and Ferrera and Pellegata (2018) and extends their findings on the attitudes of EU migrants towards freedom of movement and the Union more widely to the realm of Brexit.

The conclusions of this chapter draw on a lot of what is said earlier on in this thesis but gives me a chance to see what's most dominant and to understand even more the context and emotions behind those issues. Looking at the role played by economic anxiety, in particular, brings to light an additional group of factors that otherwise would not have been found, like the impact of *recent* gentrification which is not generally discussed in relation to the Brexit vote in the political science literature but plays a very similar role in creating feelings of exclusion as *recent* immigration does.

I conclude this chapter by summarising key differences across the boroughs in question and how well Bourdieu's concepts help us to understand the various ways in which anxiety determined Brexit attitudes among my participants, which is, generally, quite well. While the arguments made in this chapter refer back to findings of chapters 5 and 6, I also highlight why and how it was important to consider issues like immigration and political disillusionment in amongst other factors causing or caused by anxiety and uncertainty; this chapter ultimately brings greater depth to the Brexit literature by providing important context to studies of the so-called 'left behind' and uncovering which issues mattered for which individuals and why.

7.2. ECONOMIC ANXIETY

As summarised above, various measures are used to understand economic anxiety, including whether an individual is unemployed, whether they perceive themselves to have a low income or believe the economy got worse over the last year, and will get worse in the near future (Miller, 2020: 3). It's possible to see how these measures relate to the findings of the political science literature and my participants' experiences.

To understand participants financial precarity, I drew on what I knew about my participants' economic and cultural capital to understand how their occupation and employment status might feed into economic anxiety. Low economic capital, through a low income or unemployment (an indicator of

economic anxiety for Vlandas and Halikiopoulou (2019) and Miller (2020)), would leave an individual feeling less able to weather an economic storm and, therefore, more likely to feel economic anxiety. An additional factor that seemed relevant in understanding my participants' feelings of financial security or economic anxiety is property ownership. An uncertain housing situation, on the assumption that renters are more likely to feel uncertain, is used to measure economic insecurity (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, 2018) and is particularly relevant to Brexit given the additional pressure that immigration was said to put on British people's housing situations during the Brexit campaign. Of course, it's not always the case that homeowners will feel more secure in their housing situation; anxiety about paying mortgage payments contribute to economic anxiety (Munford et al., 2020) and this is no doubt more and more common as the current cost of living crisis worsens.

Homeownership came up more frequently than I expected in my conversations, with participants discussing having been able to buy property decades ago in a way that would be impossible now, or choosing property in a relatively less expensive part of London to get onto the housing ladder. Generally, I got the sense that property ownership was a means to create financial stability (indeed, homeownership is used to measure wealth, which is found to lead to support for remain, in research by Bossert et al. (2019)).

These indicators are as *objective* as they can possibly be, although I'm assuming that participants' answers on an open-ended questionnaire will always be in some ways subjective. Passages from our discussions also helped me to understand whether or not participants felt economic anxiety. These passages helped me to get a sense of participants' subjective sense of their own economic stability. After all, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) find subjective measures more impactful in understanding individuals' vote for far-right populist parties than objective measures. I did not ask participants directly about economic anxiety, but I was able to get a sense of whether or not an individual did feel it, and how important it was to their Brexit vote, as our discussions were, for the most part, participant-led. My assumption is, therefore, that if economic precarity or anxiety was important to their support for leave or remain, it would have arisen in our discussion.

The people who were experiencing economic anxiety in one way or another discussed it in relation to two key issues: the rising cost of living and the gentrification of their neighbourhood. Equally, some participants' sense of financial stability was clear, based on discussions of similar issues. Based on class-related factors like property ownership, we might not expect some (middle-class) people (in a financially secure position) to bring up issues around economic anxiety or instability at all, and this is reflected in my interviews, too.

In the following section, I describe the ways in which economic anxiety came into discussions about Brexit attitudes and the various intersecting factors that fed into this anxiety. I begin with issues relating to the cost of living and move on to consider how gentrification was impacting on participants' senses of financial stability. On these issues, there is a divide between boroughs, and more so in the case of gentrification. Finally, I briefly return to what my participants told me about a perceived lack of financial support from governments over time. Each of these issues feed feelings of exclusion and negative feelings towards transnationalism and EU membership. However, the effect of economic anxiety on Brexit attitudes is somewhat indirect; I show how these financial concerns are translated through other issues, like shifting social dominance and disillusionment with politicians, and it is on the basis of those factors that feelings of exclusion arise, and votes to leave follow.

7.2.1. COST OF LIVING

The cost of living was discussed in personal terms, as a personal 'pocketbook' concern by participants in Barking and Dagenham. Generally, the cost of living has become impossibly high for some residents. White, working-class Irish woman, BD13, who had been living in Barking for more than 60 years, explained that nursery fees and private rents are out of reach for most families.

She had seen how difficult the cost of living had been for her daughter, explaining that "when my daughter had my first grandson, um, the nursery fees were £1000 a month". Thankfully, BD13 had been able to help with childcare, meaning her grandson only had to go to nursery for two days a week, which was 'affordable'. BD13's daughter was seemingly stuck between a rock and a hard place,

as “if she was on benefits, the nursery fees would have been free...but then if she packed her job in, how could she pay the mortgage?” BD13 is, in fact, the only participant I interviewed during the summer of 2021, before the cost-of-living crisis had become a regular mention on mainstream news, to describe her anxiety around rising costs. That she voted to leave fits patterns in the literature on the so-called ‘left behind’. Her family’s financial situation had got worse in recent years, as exemplified by her discussions of her husband’s redundancy in the previous chapter (see pp130) and of her daughter’s difficult financial position. *Perceived* changes to an individual’s personal financial situation, or *pocketbook concerns*, are related to a vote to leave (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Kates and Tucker, 2019).

BD21, a white British woman who took part in my March 2022 focus group, also frequently brought up the increasing cost of living. BD21 “thought that they would put the prices up because of the Brexit and then blame it on that”. During an exchange about social class in the focus group, BD21 concluded she was “underneath the working class!” along with other women in the group who didn’t work.

Given the devaluation of her economic capital and class identity, it’s possible to see how BD21 may have fit the bill for ‘economic anxiety’ at the time of the referendum. BD21 said she was living “on what you get” and living “day by day” and did not own a home. Her family’s financial situation may have improved ever so slightly since Brexit, in fact, as she described how, due to the shortage of lorry drivers which began in the autumn of 2021 (BBC News, 2021), “the only good thing is my husband’s wage went up...it was about £13, which for a class 2 driver is not that good for like driving a big lorry and all the deliveries and hassle of parking...and then it went up to £17, to £20, so a big [increase]”. If her family was living on a lone income of £13 an hour at the time of Brexit, it’s possible she felt economic anxiety at the time of Brexit. Yet BD21 is an interesting case: she didn’t tell me how she voted, if at all, at the Brexit referendum in response to my questionnaire or during the discussion. It’s not possible to say for certain (and all of this may simply reflect my rookie fieldwork error, not checking that both sides of the questionnaires had been filled in by all participants; see p82 of the methods chapter above for a discussion). Alternatively, she may have voted to leave in line with her

feelings of economic anxiety, but self-censored during the focus group when it came to Brexit attitudes due to the majority remain position held by other members of the group.

Two participants in Lambeth, whom I interviewed in the summer of 2022 when the cost-of-living crisis had taken stage, also described the rising cost of living in personal terms. LA21, a white working-class man in his 50s, had very low economic capital. The 'bedroom tax' limited his universal credit payments substantially and he had experienced financial precarity throughout his life, relying on government support which he viewed to be more and more restricted by the Tory government at various stages (see section 6.3.2. of chapter 6). What's more LA21 was seeking work and finding it difficult to secure a job. Being unemployed but seeking work is a key measure of economic anxiety according to Miller (2022) and, at the same time, limits LA21's institutionalised cultural capital that could help to weather financial storms. LA22, working full-time as a health care assistant but "struggling" financially, had also personally felt the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. While the rising cost of living is, at the time of writing, being felt widely, and was not taking place at the time of the referendum, through our discussions, it seems these participants' financial positions seem to have remained relatively steady throughout recent years. As such, it's possible to see current concerns for the cost of living as a reflection of economic precarity throughout recent years, and economic anxiety at the time of the Brexit vote.

Each of these individuals voted to leave, suggesting that some link might exist between economic anxiety and anti-EU attitudes (Alvarez, 2002), anti-politics (Bossert et al., 2019; Carreras et al., 2019; Kates and Tucker, 2019; Sipma et al., 2023) and Brexit (Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Hobolt, 2016). It also provided evidence for McKenzie's claims that economic exclusion will lead to a vote to leave (2017b). These findings also reflect the numerous authors who link economic precarity (through various measures) to a vote to leave as part of research into the so-called 'left behind' (for example, Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). The intervening factors, between economic precarity and a vote to leave are, however, what matter here and what will bring great depth to what we know about Brexit. For LA21,

economic anxiety no doubt fed into anger towards politicians and the Tory Party in particular. As described in chapter 6 on disillusionment and distrust of politicians, LA21 could map his entire life in terms of the negative impact that Tory governments in particular had had over time on his personal finances and access to financial support. There have been links drawn in the literature between economic anxiety and distrust of government spending (Lotspeich and Tolbert, 2019). It appears, in the case of LA21, again, that economic anxiety may have spurred on negative feelings towards politicians (rather than, say, ideological standpoint) but it was most certainly his disillusionment with politicians that motivated his vote to leave. LA21 foregrounded his discussion of Brexit attitudes with his 'hatred' towards the Tory Party and explained his use of the referendum as a plebiscite, voting against the Tory government. Therefore, it's necessary to highlight, as the primary motivation, negative feelings towards politicians in motivating LA21's leave vote, rather than economic anxiety alone.

The case of anti-immigration attitudes, and the underlying economic and/or cultural anxieties, is far more complex as economic anxiety can feed into anti-immigration attitudes in various ways due to perceived or hypothesised *labour market competition* (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019: 808), or the supposed *fiscal burden* of migrants (Miller, 2020: 3). BD11, BD13 and LA22 all describe the 'fiscal burden' of migration in their discussions of so-called (and, again, widely debunked) 'welfare tourism', as I describe in detail in chapter 5 (see pp128-144). So-called welfare tourism was used by right-wing political and media elites in the years and months leading to the referendum, as discussed in my literature above (see p40). They fed off economic anxiety that was, in fact, in large part a result of years of austerity and decades of cuts to services (Dorling, 2016). LA22's comments about EU migrants at her workplace and the animosity she experienced may in some ways reflect labour market competition between migrant groups. For these participants, then, it was not the economic anxiety that directly led them to vote to leave, but an additional intervening factor that has been described in great detail in chapter 5. All of this is to say, looking at the ways in which economic anxiety came up in

relation to Brexit brings greater support to the arguments I have already made, and brings greater context and depth to them.

Aside from those who did discuss cost of living as a personal concern and voted to leave, other remainers in Lambeth may have mentioned cost of living but it wasn't framed in personal terms. Rather, it was part of a discussion about what was happening in current affairs – it was *sociotropic*, which we know has less of a link to far-right identification (Kates and Tucker, 2019). Equally, others didn't bring up economics or personal finances at all. These participants provide evidence for the flipside of the economic anxiety argument, that those in a financially stable position, with sufficient institutionalised cultural capital, voted to remain; they were not swept up in the same patterns of exclusion as the leave voters just described.

For LA18, a middle-class man in his 70s, who had been living in Lambeth for 50 years, the cost-of-living crisis was one diversion away from Brexit and related immigration-related stories that had filled the news cycle since 2016, and a reason for which immigration had become less of a priority for the public, too, rather than as a personal concern. This may not be surprising given his middle-class background; he seemed to have valued and legitimised institutionalised cultural capital (given his part-time work as a freelance consultant) and economic capital (seen through his status as a property owner; he was able to get a 100 per cent mortgage through the Greater London Authority when he first moved to Brixton 50 years ago). This backs up Kates and Tucker's finding that "pocketbook concerns do seem to matter at least to some extent, while sociotropic concerns do not" (2019: 509), in increasing support for far-right parties. Given the role of far-right elites, like UKIP's Nigel Farage and the right-wing Tory 'European Research Group' (ERG) in the Brexit campaign (Woollen, 2022), it's very possible to see how this could feed into support for Brexit, too.

Other middle-class Lambeth residents didn't mention the cost of living at all. I spoke to LA11, LA12 and LA13 during the summer of 2021, well before the cost-of-living crisis had reached mainstream news, and to LA17 and LA19 during the summer of 2022, once it was being frequently reported on. None of these participants described personal, pocketbook concerns, and voted to remain. Their self-

identifications as middle-class, their *choice* to work part-time (in the cases of LA13 and LA19, suggesting a level of financial stability) and their status as homeowners, seems to provide evidence for the flip side of the economic anxiety hypothesis, where those who are in a position of financial stability voted to remain. Their concerns may, instead, be primarily ‘post-material’. This is, of course, documented across the Brexit literature, although discussions of middle-class remainers receive far less airtime than those in economically precarious positions, given the focus on the so-called ‘left behind’.

Indeed, during my discussions with remain-voting Lambeth residents in particular, post-material concerns, especially around the environment, came up in relation to their Brexit attitudes, rather than economic capital or economic anxiety. The ‘post-’ in the term ‘post-material’ highlights my point exactly, that these individuals were not concerned about their financial positions at the time of our interviews and could, therefore, focus on other issues. LA13 saw the post-Brexit trade deals with countries across the world, rather than those across the English Channel, as a “crime against humanity”. Because of climate change, such trade deals were, to her, “not really a sustainable approach to the future”. Similar themes show up in LA11’s discussion of the black and/ or working-class residents of his estate feeling separate to or excluded from the October 2019 Extinction Rebellion protests happening across the river in Westminster (Clark, 2019), within earshot of their homes in Lambeth. The protests may have been happening just around the corner but the chants being called appear to be very different to the day-to-day concerns of LA11’s neighbours. Whilst the shift in parts of Western European electorates’ priorities from economic to post-material concerns has been recognised since the late 1970s, Brexit has been described as “the epitome of the ‘postmaterial’ turn in contemporary Western politics, where issues on (national) identity, immigration, climate change, and lifestyle take centre stage” (Lindell and Ibrahim, 2021: 506). At least amongst those I interviewed, there are correlations with higher levels of educational attainment (or, in Bourdieu’s terms, the kind of *institutionalised cultural capital* associated with middle-class values) and a vote to remain at the Brexit referendum. Social class could be the defining factor here.

Similarly, BD12, a white middle-class woman in her 60s also didn't discuss the cost-of-living crisis as a personal concern at all. Like LA11, LA12 and LA13, I interviewed her during the summer of 2021, so timing of our conversation may have played a role. Having said this, BD12 had recently retired after a long career in the arts and culture industry and later in administration and also voted to remain. It's possible to see how her long career in the arts (and ensuing institutionalised cultural capital) and status as a homeowner (economic capital) could have left her in a stable financial position now, and avoiding the economic precarity which paves the way for exclusion and negative feelings towards transnationalism. This provides further evidence for financial stability leading to support for remain and in doing so backs up the idea that economic anxiety shaped Brexit attitudes.

7.2.2. *RECENT* GENTRIFICATION AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

With the cost of living addressed, I'll now move on to show how *recent* gentrification can feed economic anxiety and, again, when translated through an additional concern of an individual's shifting social dominance, might lead to exclusion and a vote to leave. This is not given the same amount of attention in the Brexit literature as is given to the impact of recent immigration and the geographical patterns of the referendum results. I find, however, that it feeds exclusion in very similar ways, related to embodied cultural capital, as was found in chapter 5 on immigration.

Recent gentrification (and, crucially, negative feelings towards it) is linked to economic anxiety among Barking and Dagenham-based participants. Lambeth residents, especially those who have benefited from gentrification of areas like Brixton, Streatham and Herne Hill, mostly due to the economic capital associated with property ownership in an already gentrified (but still gentrifying) area, did not seem to feel negatively towards gentrification as it had bolstered their financial stability. There is a clearer divide between boroughs in relation to gentrification than there is relation to the cost of living, however, the class backgrounds of my participants in both boroughs also played a role in this stark divide.

Barking and Dagenham participants commonly discussed their worries about gentrification and rising house prices. According to the Barking-based participants, the town has changed immeasurably over recent years. As BD13 explained, there's "so much history in this little town," it was included in the Domesday Book and, when BD13 moved to the town 60 years ago, "it was wonderful" because of the community. Barking, and the borough more widely, have, however, changed dramatically due to 'regeneration' and rising property prices as more and more people move to the area to capitalise on (relatively) low house prices. So-called 'regeneration' is expanding Barking but, to BD13, it is nothing more than "building, building, building," with "nothing put in place for the people who are coming in...or the people that live here." In line with the findings of Koch et al., (forthcoming), BD13 saw regeneration as a project providing for rich out-of-towners, maybe those moving out from London, devaluing existing communities, rather than providing for them.

What's more, BD13 was concerned that, generally, it was landlords buying up newly built flats in particular, rather than families. This was making it especially difficult for young families to afford to continue to live there. 'Riverside', a new development next to the Thames, is "like Armageddon", "soulless" and without any shops or facilities. In our conversation, BD13 drew distinctions between Riverside and Barking Town Centre, where she is very happy living; "I love the accessibility...of the town centre and the buses and the trains...our doctors is there, the chemist is there, the bus stops there".

Barking and Dagenham is attractive as it is "still fairly cheap" (BD13). Indeed, according to Rightmove data, properties in Barking and Dagenham in 2021 sold for an average of £347,675 (Rightmove, 2022), rising to £402,709 in 2022 (Rightmove, 2023a), just over half of the London-wide average of £734,478 (Rightmove, 2023b). The town is also "convenient" for the centre of London (BD13) given its London Underground connection, drawing in younger first-time buyers as is evidenced by many of my participants. Indeed, many of the participants in my March 2022 focus group in Dagenham discussed moving to the borough to get on the housing ladder. In addition to regeneration, just as LA18 suggested the buying up of property in Brixton to be one main cause of its gentrification, described

below, BD14 has noticed a similar pattern in Dagenham. People, like her and her family, moved to the borough from East London to get onto the property ladder. BD20 and her family also described similar series of events which led to them living in Dagenham: they had been renting “closer to London” but after her and her husband got married, they decided to buy a house and Dagenham was the place they could afford to do so. BD17, in fact, described moving “all around London...[until] finally settling in Barking and Dagenham because the houses were cheaper”. BD22, on the other hand, moved to Dagenham to get on the property ladder from Chadwell Heath, part of which sits at the north end of the borough of Barking and Dagenham. As such, areas of Barking and Dagenham are not just centres of migration from (more central) London but from more expensive neighbouring towns, too.

It was not only cost and convenience that brought people to the borough, though. BD19 “came here because the area was calmer and more quiet” than areas of London in which she had previously lived. While BD20 and her husband “didn’t even know Barking and Dagenham existed” while they were renting in London, they were drawn to the borough because “the garden was huge” and they could afford to buy a house, rather than a flat.

BD21, a white British woman in her 40s who also took part in the focus group, however, disagreed. She had lived in or near Dagenham since she was born and described rising housing prices. She suggested that, in fact, “even though Barking and Dagenham is cheap, it’s not really cheap...some of [the houses] in Barking and Dagenham are going for a million”.

What’s interesting is that it seems as though parts of Barking and Dagenham are now experiencing gentrification that Brixton did in the 1990s and 2000s. Brixton hadn’t changed much by the mid-80s when LA18, a white, middle-class man in his 70s, moved to Streatham; it was, according to him, the 1990s when gentrification “sort of accelerated...[due to a] growing obsession with house ownership after Thatcher and the right to buy”. Due to the ensuing reduction in social housing and the arrival of the ‘stormtroopers of gentrification’, the “artists, creatives, middle-class people, who can’t afford to buy in more expensive areas”, house prices in Brixton and surrounding areas like Streatham, Peckham

and Dulwich have continued to spiral upwards, according to LA18. LA19, a white British man in his 50s who identified as working-class, describes a similar story. Since moving to Herne Hill in the mid-1990s:

“it’s got posher, yeah, Herne Hill’s completely different...you have to have lots of money to buy there now - £2.5 million – I mean our road’s changed a lot, and we haven’t been here that long and it’s changed a lot since we were there”.

Tellingly, LA19 noted that Herne Hill “was changing when I moved here, maybe I was part of that”.

Involvement in processes of gentrification seems to limit these individuals’ anxiety about it - not least due to the resulting economic capital available to these participants due to their buying of properties in the ‘right place at the right time’.

Unlike people in Barking and Dagenham concerned by increasing house prices, Lambeth participants appeared unworried by gentrification, apathetic or accepting of it (LA11 and LA12) or openly benefiting from it (LA17, LA18 and LA19). LA17, a white, middle-class woman who had been living in Lambeth for 35 years described how downsizing and the sale of her house was allowing her and her husband to live abroad as it meant they had the economic capital to meet visa requirements. It’s possible to see how this similar economic benefit from gentrification could be felt by LA18 and LA19 who have lived in the area for decades and own their own homes, too. Gentrification has become an additional form of financial stability for many homeowners in Lambeth, rather than a source of anxiety. Their *lack of* economic anxiety may have fed into support for transnationalism and remain. This offers support for the research of Bossert et al. who find that homeownership, as an indicator of wealth, was related to support for remain (2019: 24), and for the flipside of research by Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2018), who link uncertainty over housing to economic uncertainty and a vote to leave. Here, then, it becomes clear that timing of gentrification is a key difference between the two boroughs and at the aggregate level, by looking at the borough-wide Brexit referendum results, it possible to see how it could have determined attitudes; those feeling the pressure of gentrification in Barking and Dagenham and the ensuing economic anxiety voted to leave, making it one of only four

London boroughs which did so. Lambeth, on the other hand, is an area that has already experienced a significant wave of gentrification in the 1990s and 2000s, possibly reducing the added pressure of rising house prices on the personal finances of those living there, leading to a significant remain vote. Having said this, the continuing house price and private rent increases in Lambeth even after the first major waves of gentrification (Brixton Blog, 2021), mean that, no doubt, class differences are at play here too.

Those I spoke to in Barking and Dagenham in 2022 when cost of living concerns were higher on the agenda, nearly all considered themselves to be working-class, while those in Lambeth I spoke to were generally middle class. As such, it could be that limited economic capital left these individuals in Barking and Dagenham pre-disposed to worry about cost increases and discuss cost of living with me as a personal pocketbook concern. This could coincide with the added pressure of living in a gentrifying area like Barking and Dagenham, where house prices had been increasing at higher rates for a longer time (house prices rose by 96 per cent between 2011 and 2021 (Corner, 2021)) than has been seen in general recently (even though housing costs in London have increased in 2022, after a fall in average rents during the first two years of the COVID-9 pandemic (BBC News, 2022)).

Gentrification appears, generally, to be considered in negative or challenging terms by those living in Barking and Dagenham. However, not all of those worried by gentrification (namely, those who took part in the Dagenham focus group in March 2022) voted to leave. Again, then, it appears that economic anxiety feeds a vote to leave if it transforms into another issue which *then* feeds exclusion and a vote to leave. *Recent* gentrification, it seems, feeds exclusion among the once-dominant white (British) group, as was the case made in chapter 5 on immigration. The attitudes of the migrant women described above, who all supported remain, it would seem, were based on entirely different factors, relating to their embodied capital, as highlighted in chapter 5 on immigration (see, in particular, pp151-157) and the discussion below of the uncertainties surrounding Brexit for these women, which fed feelings of inclusion and support for remain. Gentrification that had begun in the 1990s, and that was bolstering the financial stability of white middle-class homeowners in and around

Brixton, equally feeds into inclusion in an area that is becoming whiter and in which their embodied cultural capital might be considered increasingly legitimate. By considering these factors, the importance of changing social relations in an area, as uncovered using the concept of 'fields', is highlighted once again as a key pattern of inclusion and exclusion that determined attitudes to Brexit. Crucially, it's important to bear in mind at this stage that this is one layer of an increasing complex web of issues that fed Brexit attitudes. These trends appear to have shaped different individuals' attitudes, alongside multiple and different other issues. There is no one-size-fits-all explanation. What's more, attitudes to gentrification may be inherently tied to attitudes to immigration. In discussing regeneration that started with the Olympic Village in Stratford, BD13 went on tentatively to say "and unfortunately um... and again as an immigrant here myself, so many people just, because there's such an influx of all nationalities, people...are getting priced out" and used her identity as an immigrant to justify speaking negatively about immigration. As such, for individuals like BD13, specifically with low levels of economic capital to weather the increasing-house-prices-storm, it's possible to see how the 'soulless' developments like Riverside and rising prices of housing around her further cause feelings of exclusion. Rising house prices play into the exclusion from those fields in Barking in which she was previously part of the dominant group (discussed in chapter 5), due to the links she drew between gentrification and immigration, bolstering her negative attitudes towards immigration overall. For her, the gentrification of Barking may be another symptom of that globalised world so closely associated with EU membership, feeding exclusion in a similar way to that caused by increasing migration alone. Crucially, it was these anti-immigration views that BD13 brought up when describing her decision to vote to leave, which highlights how important the intervening factor, between economic anxiety and a vote to leave, is.

7.3. CULTURAL ANXIETY

While some participants' cases, on the face of it, fit patterns of economic anxiety, there's more to the story. For example, on economic anxiety measures, we'd expect LA16 (described in chapter 5 on

immigration attitudes, see pp130-131) to have voted to leave. She did describe increasing personal worries about the cost of living but stood by her vote to remain at the referendum. I interviewed LA16, a working-class white woman in her 30s, during the summer of 2022, when the cost-of-living crisis was well underway. She had noticed that prices had been rising and that the cost of living had taken centre stage in news reporting, after a number of years of Brexit and Covid-19 taking up the majority of airtime. LA16, who is also a care leaver (which she linked to limited opportunities and class mobility), described in detail her negative experience on universal credit. LA16 explained that “the first year or two on it, you’re always behind, because of how the payment is... so you’re often in rent arrears, you’re often in childcare arrears, like my first year on universal credit [in around 2016] I was working full time and I would have to go to the foodbank”. She has also been living in social housing for her adult life and described her job instability that was exacerbated by the pandemic. LA16 had taken part-time work in hospitality and had been working in special needs through an agency when the pandemic started and wasn’t eligible for furlough (those in temporary work are, as established above, more likely to feel economic anxiety and support far-right parties (Sipma et al., 2023)). Not surprisingly, as a single parent of a child who had required frequent medical appointments at a young age due to various health conditions, and as a part-time student, finding work that fit her schedule was difficult. I’d argue, all in all, if economic anxiety had played the key role in determining Brexit attitudes, LA16 would have been the first to drop her leave vote into the ballot box. However, quite the opposite is true; LA16 voted to remain as it was “the right thing to do”, and this seems largely to result from her having enjoyed living in Brixton for the past decade or so, for the convenience of the parks and cafes close to her son’s school, and because she was able to see through the leave campaign’s rhetoric that linked stretched public services to immigration.

Ultimately, it seems as though any economic anxiety that was felt by my participants only manifested in a vote to leave if that economic anxiety was translated into a different cultural or identity-related issue, like shifting social dominance also associated with negative feelings towards immigration or dissatisfaction with politicians. As previous chapters show, these issues shaped in a significant way

many of my participants' attitudes to Brexit. Economic anxiety may have played some underlying role, but to over-emphasise the role of economic anxiety based on the patterns I did find above would mean ignoring the key issues that my participants described as central to their support for leave or remain.

7.3.1. ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ANXIETY ARE NOT NECESSARILY DISTINCT

I made the point in the introduction of this chapter that economic and cultural anxiety are linked and difficult to necessarily view as distinct from each other. This becomes particularly clear when looking at immigration and what lies beneath those attitudes (Margalit, 2019: 153). The fiscal burden of migration described above complicates the picture, as does the additional factor of ethnocentrism, associated with cultural anxiety. Ethnocentrism has been found to be “reliably the largest and most precise predictor of attitudes towards immigration” (Miller, 2020: 1) and I did see ethnocentrism, a “tendency to divide the world into...in-groups versus out-groups...the bifurcation of in-groups and out-groups is not neutral [but individuals] assign virtuous assessments” (Miller, 2020: 5), enter the conversation at various points in relation to immigration, alongside undertones of xenophobia and racism (Virdee and McGeever, 2018). It plays a role in the attitudes of, for example, BD11, when describing the long-term Barking residents who are being pushed out. This is a sentiment so widespread that it is also discussed by remain-voting white British woman BD22 (who didn't know how to define her class on the questionnaire but later, during the focus group, defined herself as middle-class) and a working-class Romanian woman, BD14.

Reflecting Miller's (albeit US-based) research, chapter 5 shows, in detail, how both BD13 and BD11 described negative feelings towards immigration as key motivations of their Brexit attitudes. Their feelings of exclusion from globalisation, caused seemingly by their dominance as the white (British) group slipping away, are much more reflective of ethnocentrism than economic anxiety-fuelled anti-immigration attitudes. This is particularly important in understanding BD11's vote, given that he does not fit expected class-related voting patterns. My interview with BD11 took place in the summer of

2021, but as a middle-class student living in his family home, within commuting distance to his university, it's possible to see how BD11 may have felt relatively financially stable, (despite his status as a postgraduate student in London, who are often in precarious financial and employment positions, see, for example, UCU (2022)). BD11 discussed his Brexit vote in relation to cultural or identity-driven concerns alone (as is discussed in chapter 5).

7.3.2. LONG TERM GENTRIFICATION IN LAMBETH

Recent gentrification is, then, an additional force in BD13's feelings of exclusion, shared by BD11, and leading to their leave votes. By bringing gentrification into the discussion, we can see how embodied cultural capital and related cultural anxiety may have also shaped attitudes to gentrification for white, middle-class remainers in Lambeth and, again, the importance of 'fields' to understanding these attitudes. This highlights the value in considering economic anxiety, in bringing to light more pieces of the puzzle. Again, we see the link between economic and cultural anxiety. Previous waves of gentrification increased those participants' financial stability but have also led to cultural shifts in areas surrounding Brixton, legitimising their embodied cultural capital.

Gentrification was linked to the whitening of areas surrounding Brixton. As LA19 noted when discussing Herne Hill, gentrification had led his area to become posher and "it's got posher, it's probably got whiter", despite being "a bit on the border between Brixton, Railton Road, [which is] important for a lot of reasons, the riots etcetera" (for context, during the 'riots' in the early 1980s, "Brixton exploded in rebellion" (Sivanandan, 2008: 137) against state racism and system racial prejudice in the UK). Indeed, the gentrification and ensuing whitening of Brixton was not a problem for the white, middle-class residents to whom I spoke for this research. I am certain I would have heard a very different story had my sample been more diverse in terms of race and class in Lambeth; concerns and criticisms of the *continuing* gentrification of Brixton abound and are nothing new (see for example, Nelson (2012), Williams (2015) and Ahmed (2021)). LA19, describing the increasing whiteness of Herne Hill, could see the changes and label them but wasn't anxious about the changing

demographics of the area that were occurring at the same time as costs increased, about which he could be relatively apathetic given that he had the economic capital to weather the storm, as shown by the following passage of our conversation:

“The shops have changed, the bars have changed. The types of people who come to the bars have changed. It’s a lot more middle-class, it’s... the type of food, it costs a fortune, the bars are expensive. It’s just different. It’s still alright, it’s just not the same.”

LA17, a middle-class woman in her 50s who had been living in the borough for 35 years, while describing the ‘everything diversity’ of the area of Lambeth in which she lived (see p140), noted that she could appreciate the ethnic- and class-based diversity of where she lived given her privilege as a white person. In a similar way to LA19, LA17 did not need to worry about the changing demographics of the area as it continued to gentrify partly as she is part of that gentrifying group, one of those so-called middle-class ‘storm troopers of gentrification’. What’s more, unlike BD11 and BD13, who felt excluded on race (and citizenship, in the case of BD11) grounds as immigration changed the demography of Barking, LA17 (and LA19 for that matter) are part of the increasingly dominant group, given that gentrification has seen the whitening of areas in and surrounding Brixton (Marsh, 2016; Khan, 2022).

According to the 2021 Census, 55 per cent of the population of Lambeth classified themselves as white (ONS, 2022c), a fall of 2 per cent since the previous census in 2011 (Nomis, 2023). The whitening of particular areas of Lambeth in which my participants live may not be captured using borough-wide data. What is clear from the census data, though, is that the number of Black British, African and Caribbean people has fallen significantly in the same time period, from 25.9 per cent to 21.4 per cent, and the number of people who consider themselves to have mixed or multiple ethnicities had nearly halved from 7.6 per cent to 4.3 per cent (ONS, 2022d; Nomis, 2023). The whitening of the areas of Lambeth in which my participants live, then, might more so reflect the out-migration (or pushing out) of black British, African and Caribbean populations, whose presence in the

borough for decades has, as this thesis shows, led Lambeth itself to be considered a place that celebrates diversity.

Of course, issues as complex as Brexit attitudes cannot be explained through binary cultural or economic explanations, with ‘this is what mattered, this is what didn’t’, as my participants’ attitudes highlight. What is clear, however, is that taking economic anxiety, and economic factors associated with immigration alone, does not explain my participants’ attitudes fully but does provide important and additional context to what we know about their Brexit attitudes. What we see emerge are intervening factors, like attitudes to immigration, disillusionment with politicians and shifting social rules within ‘fields’ fed by cultural and economic anxiety, and *then* leading to exclusion or inclusion. Kates and Tucker describe their null results for economic anxiety measures on support for far-right parties as “important evidence in the ongoing debate about the degree to which “economic anxiety” truly plays a role” (Kates and Tucker, 2019: 496). They suggest a promising avenue of inquiry might be into the “degree to which economic crises might increase the salience of issues – such as immigration or crime – that are naturally beneficial to far-right parties, rather than driving support for far-right parties directly” (Kates and Tucker, 2019: 510). My research supports that idea. This is seen in the ways in which economic anxiety translated into anti-immigration rhetoric, negative feelings towards politicians or shifting social dominance in an area and it was *those issues* that participants described primarily in relation to their Brexit votes, as shown by chapters 5 and 6 above. What’s more, this provides support for and broadens the findings of Sipma et al., who find that economic anxiety only increased support for the radical right (which I’m using as something of a proxy here for support for leave) when an individual also held negative attitudes towards immigration (2023: 10). I’ve shown how economic precarity only appeared to result in a vote to leave when cultural anxieties were also present, in terms of (at least in part, xenophobic) anti-immigration attitudes, shifting social dominance or negative feelings towards politicians. There is a range, it seems, of factors that can moderate the effect of economic insecurities, using the language of Sipma et al. (2023), and this may

go a long way in explaining why my research has undermined class-related explanations of the leave vote.

7.4. UNCERTAINTY OVER LEGAL AND SOCIAL STANDING

The section above highlighted how economic and cultural anxiety entwined to create patterns of exclusion at the Brexit referendum. Some of these reflected issues already unpicked, some were new issues that had not previously come up. The EU migrants described in this chapter crucially didn't fit patterns of exclusion found among the white (British) residents. Once again, we see EU citizenship playing a defining role in the attitudes of these participants, but additional factors come into play, that are yet to be fully considered. The EU migrants I spoke to, and the uncertainty they felt in terms of their legal and social standing, is crucial to understanding their attitudes. Uncertainty around one's legal standing refers to the ways in which Brexit upturned the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and associated freedom of movement (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Botterill et al., 2019), while uncertainty over social standing relates to the processes of unsettling EU migrants' "sense of identity and belonging" (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 1).

7.4.1. LEGAL STANDING

This anxiety over legal and social standing is particular to the experience of EU migrants living in the UK but it was not felt uniformly and of course varied between individuals. An interesting case to begin with is BD13, who made her identity as an Irish immigrant very clear by reiterating, at the end of our interview, that she was offering me an 'immigrant's opinion'. She did not worry, however, about her legal status (given her 60+ years spent in the UK and her British citizenship). What's more, her uncertainties over her social status were not to do with her status as a migrant at all but in fact were more closely related to her status as a long-term white Barking resident. As a result of these factors, she is an anomaly in terms of the anxiety and uncertainty felt by other, more recent EU migrants in my sample.

BD17, a mixed-race Portuguese woman, who described herself as working-class during our focus group and who had been living in Dagenham for 17 years, felt ongoing anxiety about her children's legal status after Brexit – as did LA15, a working-class Greek woman living in Lambeth (see p182 for more detail). BD20, a middle-class Spanish woman who had been living in Dagenham for almost as long, agreed with BD17 that it was “frightening” when the issue of citizenship came up for her and her family.

MacLeavy argues that Brexit was “a critical moment in which gender relations [were] reshaped” (2018: 206). That didn't lead to exclusion and support for leave for my participants but to distance from the leave campaign and the effects of Brexit. The experiences of these women show fears around the impact of Brexit on their children's legal status led to a re-doubling of their support for EU membership. The key issues they discussed in relation to their attitudes were not those associated with the ‘re-masculinisation’ of politics during the Brexit period (MacLeavy, 2018: 211), like trade and defence, but of the issues that were not discussed, like EU citizens' rights, which had the potential to unsettle their own and their family's legal status in the UK. That side-lining of issues around equality and rights seemed to do the opposite of legitimising the position of these women. Rather than fostering feelings of exclusion and a vote to leave, in McKenzie's terms, it fostered feelings of exclusion from the leave campaign, resulting in ardent support for EU membership and transnationalism.

Interestingly, BD20 explained that, while her husband and children had the right to remain, she had chosen not to apply as:

“I have now to do an exam and all and its finding time to do all of that – it's not possible! And I don't know if I want to do it neither – even though I'm not a British citizen, I'm not um... I live here and I feel part of it, I'm a citizen, but I'm you know I'm Spanish, that's my identity.”

Deciding whether or not to begin the process to become a British citizen in itself, due to time constraints, very high costs, and/ or feelings of belonging, has been found to be a source of emotional

stress and anxiety for EU migrants living in the UK post-Brexit in and of itself (Zontini and Però, 2019: 95). BD20 also described how Brexit had impacted on her family's holiday home in Spain. She explained that they had been paying some tax for the rent they earned on the apartment, but that they were taxed as 'foreigners'. She went on to say that "we have to stop renting [it out] because we have to pay so much tax, it's not worth it".

Skills and wealth may have reduced the anxiety of some EU migrants post-Brexit (Lulle et al., 2019: 7), as migrants with high institutionalised cultural capital and valuable embodied cultural capital will be less restricted in terms of mobility. Not surprisingly, uncertainty was only exacerbated for those migrants who did not fit the 'young and mobile' description (Lulle et al., 2019), but "whose marginality and "otherness" were further exacerbated by Brexit...who felt in limbo, found themselves in difficult circumstances, and felt highly uncertain about their future" (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 6). It seems as though those who have limited economic capital and fit various economic anxiety measures were more likely to experience anxiety over their legal status. This could explain BD20's decision not to apply for British citizenship. Her self-identification as middle-class and her (previous) ownership of a second property is quite different to the decisions of both BD17 and LA15. With less economic stability, they may have felt more in need of the certainty of citizenship for themselves and applied for leave to remain as a result, while BD20's stronger economic position may have reduced the legal and social uncertainty ever so slightly (but certainly not completely).

Meanwhile, LA13, a middle-class Australian woman with EU citizenship, who had been living in Lambeth for more than 15 years, didn't discuss her anxiety about her legal standing at all. For LA13, Brexit still brought about uncertainty, but it was related to her husband's ability to live in Europe post-Brexit, rather than her own legal standing in the UK. LA13 had EU citizenship through one of her parents and had Australian citizenship having been born there, which also allowed her to vote at the EU referendum. It appears that LA13's legal capital and, by extension, valuable embodied capital, alongside her economic and institutionalised cultural capital, limited the anxiety she felt about her own legal standing in a similar way to which BD20 felt less anxious (but still nervous) about her legal

standing on class grounds alone. The cases of LA13 and BD20 show how migrants are not a homogenous bloc and each individual will be differently affected by social class, race, ethnicity, citizenship, and other inequalities (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Barnard et al., 2022).

It was possible to draw some continuity between participants' *current* levels of economic anxiety and how they may have felt at the time of the referendum, based on what they told me about, for example, their housing situation and their family's income. It's less easy to say whether these migrants felt anxiety about their legal situation prior to the referendum. Reflecting the findings of Ruiz and Vargas-Silva (2021) who found that uncertainty did exist beforehand (albeit in relation to social, rather than legal, standing), when citizenship issues naturally arose in the campaign, legal uncertainty not only defined LA15, BD17 and BD20's post-referendum period, but also fed into their support for remain prior to the referendum.

Having said this, uncertainty may not have been felt across the board. Some migrants in my sample were entirely shocked by the referendum, which may suggest that prior to the vote, they had not considered the possibility that their own legal status would be up for debate. This reflects Guma and Dafydd Jones' research, where "respondents' strong emotional reactions recorded after the vote indicated that many did not expect the outcome" (2019: 5). LA13, the middle-class Australian woman in her 40s just mentioned, who had been living in Lambeth for 16 years, described being "blindsided" by Brexit; surrounded by like-minded people in Brixton, she didn't see the vote to leave coming and thought "surely they won't vote for that, just ludicrous". LA14, an Italian woman in her 50s, who had been living in Lambeth for a decade said the vote to leave was like a "slap in the face"; she found the results a real shock and explained that she "didn't realise how conservative English people were".

LA15, a Greek woman in her 50s who had been living in Lambeth for almost a decade was equally shocked by the result. LA15 had been unable to vote at the referendum as a Greek national without British citizenship but spoke to me about her experience working at the polling station on the day of the referendum. She suggested that because of her accent "it was more than obvious that I am not British" but that people were "doing the victory sign to me...and they were pointing to the message

‘remain’ or ‘We are EU’ on their t-shirts, to show their support not only for the remain campaign but also of LA15 “being there as a European”. She said that she found that support “so sweet”. LA15 remembers celebrating, pre-emptively, on the night of the referendum, as she and her friends from across the EU living in South London felt so sure of the result. However, she woke up the following morning to find, too, that “we’re living in a bubble, which is in the greater bubble that is London, and we have nothing to do with everyone else in this country, and what they believe”. LA15’s case then reflects the “reduction in anxiety for EU migrants...in regions with greater support to remain in the EU” (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2021: 81) but then also the greater shock and deeper uncertainty after the referendum for those who did not expect to see a vote to leave, when Brexit became a “sudden and dramatic change that generated a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty about [EU migrants’ futures in the UK]” (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 5). Zontini and Però found Brexit ‘ruptured’ EU migrants’ senses of home and belonging in the UK (2019: 96). These findings are reflected in the post-Brexit sense of shock my participants felt, and this is especially the case for those women living in Lambeth, an area with a long history of migration and that I have shown celebrates migration. Living in such an area could have bolstered migrants’ sense of belonging, making Brexit even more of a forceful split, between pre-Brexit belonging and post-Brexit uncertainty.

While this uncertainty may not have directly fed into Brexit attitudes, it may have bolstered their support for remain in the years since. It is also a key difference seen between two boroughs, Lambeth on the one hand and Barking and Dagenham on the other, reflecting the impact of field and immigration attitudes at borough level (discussed in detail in chapter 5) and is, therefore, worth commenting upon.

7.4.2. SOCIAL STANDING

Uncertainty and anxiety played a role not only in terms of my participants’ legal standing, but about their life and place in the UK more generally, and their ‘social standing’. Not surprisingly, some migrants were “more concerned about the overall atmosphere in Britain, influenced by British

tabloids' coverage of immigration" (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 7), given the generally negative reporting, especially since the 2004 EU enlargement (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2021). After feeling settled in the UK, many EU migrants were "feeling like an outsider again" (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019: 7), after their sense of home was so suddenly unsettled (Zontini and Però, 2019: 96). This is reflected in the comments of LA13 and LA14 on feelings towards the UK. In fact, the Brexit campaign and vote have impacted directly on both LA13 and LA14's perceptions of London, England, and the UK. The vote to leave the EU led LA13 to wonder whether she wants to live in the UK long-term. She moved from Australia which "was cut off from the rest of the world...[and] thought [the UK was] connected to so much...and now it's kind of...retracting from the world". LA14, who had previously thought that life in London "was amazing" and that England, which she referred to specifically, rather than to the UK generally, was "a very forward nation" has also been dampened.

While we see class differences between these participants, uncertainty over both legal and social standing overrode economic anxiety as a determinant of support for leave in each case. By the spring of 2022, the cost of living was brought up by the majority of participants I spoke to in Barking and Dagenham. Working-class Portuguese woman BD17, who took part in my March 2022 focus group in Dagenham expressed concerns about the increasing cost of living, along with many other participants (BD18, BD19 and BD21 – it was a significant topic of discussion). BD15, an Albanian migrant in her 60s, had noticed that prices for things like food were higher than usual. She seemed quite isolated from the rest of the town, spending time at home and at the Albanian community group, she couldn't necessarily pinpoint any changes in the borough since the Brexit vote; "stay here, go home, I don't know". BD15 did, however, notice that prices were higher than usual – the rising cost of living was the sole change she had noticed in recent years, which seems significant in itself. Each of these participants, however, supported remain.

As an aside, BD14, a working-class Romanian woman whom I interviewed a few weeks prior to the focus group did not, however, describe similar concerns. The case of BD14 could back up the idea that what is crucial when it comes to economic anxiety is one's *perception* of their economic position

(Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). During the identity mapping exercise, BD14 described herself as 'lower class', explaining that, as a child, "we didn't have many things but, again, but we didn't need many things". BD14 explained how, since then, "I have married into a, I'd say, working-class, maybe even posh [family]". She described how *financially*, her circumstances had changed and "things are easier, the stress is not the same" as during her childhood which may be why she did not feel the same anxiety as BD15 and BD17 did as prices started to rise.

While BD15 and BD17 discussed rising prices at the time of our interview, rather than as related to their Brexit votes, it's possible to see how economic anxiety may be nothing new for these women. BD15 had been living in Dagenham for 7 years with her husband, first with the financial support of her son and, later, living on a pension. BD17 was a homemaker with NVQ-level qualifications (which signposts to relatively limited institutionalised cultural capital) and while we didn't discuss her family's income, she did describe herself as working-class and this may be an indication of her perceived economic status, too.

Both of these participants, however, supported remain. Their embodied cultural capital, as EU migrants, overrode economic capital and, for some, their understandable economic anxiety as gentrification, in Barking and Dagenham in particular, and the rising cost of living generally impacted on individuals' financial stability. The inclusion they felt as EU citizens prior to Brexit due to that embodied cultural capital then fed into uncertainty and anxiety as they realised their legal standing would be disrupted and their social standing would be unsettled. As was the case for feelings towards politicians, "for some residents of the United Kingdom the new normal of uncertainty has a very old and familiar feel" (Knight, 2017: 241) but for some, it was a new anxiety who previously felt included. It is based on the experiences of these participants that, once again, we see the enduring role that embodied cultural capital and citizenship, so frequently ignored in social sciences research, played in determining attitudes to Brexit.

7.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I've shown how economic and cultural anxiety, and uncertainty over rights and social standing, shaped attitudes to Brexit in different ways among my participants. When considering economic anxiety, I brought the gentrification of London's boroughs and the rising cost of living into the equation as they were consistently tied to participants' discussions of financial stability or increasing hardship. My findings generally support aggregate-level findings of the Brexit literature, that economic anxiety or precarity tended to manifest itself in a vote to leave (Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b). My findings also support broader patterns relating personal, *pocketbook* concerns (Kates and Tucker, 2019) to a leave vote, and the relationships between economic precarity and support for anti-politics, far right and populist parties (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Bossert et al., 2019; Kates and Tucker, 2019; Sipma et al., 2023), and Euroscepticism (Alvarez, 2002; Carreras et al., 2019).

This chapter has, however, brought important context to individuals' experiences of economic anxiety or financial stability and has elaborated on the relationship between the two; economic anxiety only led to a leave vote if it fed anti-immigration attitudes, disillusionment with politicians, or a sense that their social group's dominance was slipping away. This provides support for research that suggests that economic anxiety *alone* was not the predominant cause of the leave vote (Margalit, 2019; Sipma et al., 2023) or, more broadly, far right support (Kates and Tucker, 2019).

Importantly, in considering economic anxiety, issues related to gentrification came to the fore and fed into already established (in this thesis) patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Recent gentrification is not a key factor in the Brexit literature, but it appears to have very similar effects to *recent immigration* which is a key finding of that literature on the so-called 'left behind'. That so many participants described it during conversations about Brexit shows that it is an issue that deserves attention in relation to the vote.

While gentrification no doubt continues to change areas like Brixton and Herne Hill in Lambeth, it began in the 1990s. Participants in Barking and Dagenham, however, explained that the borough is in its first significant wave of regeneration and house prices are rising quickly. In limiting the availability of social and affordable private housing, gentrification was feeding economic anxiety and exclusion. It's important to note, however, that class differences play into this particular difference between boroughs; I spoke to more middle-class people in Lambeth, many of whom had owned their homes for decades, and more working-class people in Barking and Dagenham who were renting or recently got on the housing ladder in Barking and Dagenham specifically for its relative affordability, would, presumably, more likely feel the effects of increasing housing costs. Clearly gentrification across both boroughs is also shaping and changing who constitutes the 'dominant' group (in terms of race and citizenship and, in turn, embodied cultural capital) in different ways across Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham. It is here that we see the most significant differences *between* the boroughs in question. This pattern of *inclusion* among white middle-class voters in Lambeth, particularly in terms of the way in which gentrification in Brixton and the surrounding areas was legitimising the white middle-class population there, is not something I saw when I considered attitudes to immigration alone.

There are many ways in which economic and cultural anxiety are intertwined and feed Brexit attitudes, particularly in relation to immigration. Of course, it's also important to note, however, that cultural and economic anxiety aren't necessarily always distinct and economic anxiety can most certainly feed cultural anxiety. Even if, among my participants, issues related to cultural anxiety were most commonly directly linked to Brexit, there is an interplay between the two. This is seen, for example, in the ways in which declining social dominance and housing uncertainty fed anti-immigration sentiment. The predominance of anti-immigration concerns over purely economic concerns is, however, backed up by the literature; Carreras et al. (2019) illuminate the interplay between economic precarity and nativist or anti-immigration attitudes and Sipma et al. show how economic anxiety only plays a role "when people already perceive immigrants as a threat" (2023: 10).

It's also possible to see the interplay between economic anxiety and negative feelings towards politicians. It is this entanglement that the leave campaign managed to, so successfully, capitalise on during the Brexit referendum campaign, and as populist entrepreneurs like Nigel Farage (Dennison et al., 2020) and UKIP had been doing for many years previously by drawing together anti-establishment, anti-immigration and Eurosceptic ideas together (Crines and Heppell, 2017). On this point, it's crucial to highlight, once again, the role of the political and media elites in perpetuating anti-immigration views and scapegoating migrants from the EU and elsewhere, in order to shift blame away from themselves and their decades of funding cuts and austerity (see full discussion on pp36-37).

It is cultural issues that determined attitudes to Brexit, according to my participants, and those issues that were named by them first in relation to Brexit. In terms of the so-called 'left behind' explanation for Brexit, then, exclusion on cultural grounds is needed to combine with exclusion on economic grounds to create a vote to leave. To borrow a phrase, "an ounce of [cultural anxiety] is worth a pound of economic anxiety" (Miller, 2020: 2).

While at first, I considered economic and cultural anxiety as additional determinants of Brexit attitudes would only reproduce findings outlined in previous chapters, doing so has in fact taken my analysis down avenues I would not have otherwise gone down. Gentrification, especially, is an issue that otherwise has not been related to arguments about the Brexit vote. It also brought into the picture various additional ways in which EU citizenship – and associated uncertainties – shaped attitudes.

When it comes to uncertainty about their legal and social status, once again we see embodied cultural capital playing a role in terms of EU citizenship. That was seen across the two boroughs and was only mitigated by highly valuable embodied cultural capital or high levels of economic and institutionalised cultural capital. What's more, it's important to note the inherent difference between the uncertainty experienced by middle-class British people around their abilities to live abroad but who are not experiencing financial hardship, and by working-class EU migrants, with less financial stability and more to lose and fear as a result of the (potential) loss of their right to live in the UK,

dredged up by Brexit. Those who fit the latter description were much more likely to experience more fundamental insecurities around their family's abilities to continue living, as they were, in the UK.

Economic and cultural anxiety, and uncertainty about legal or social standing, relate to Bourdieu's concepts and feed into inclusion and exclusion in different ways, as is shown throughout the chapter.

Overall, my conceptual framework helped me to understand participants' objective and subjective economic anxiety (or lack thereof) very well, even though Bourdieu's framework is not used in studies of economic anxiety. Economic anxiety, not surprisingly, is inherently tied to economic capital. Limited economic capital – and individuals' perceptions of limited economic capital – will increase economic anxiety. This is highlighted through the various working-class participants (by subjective self-definition or occupation and education measures) who described their fears about the increasing cost of living and gentrification. Property ownership, which is the institutionalised form of economic capital according to Bourdieu (1986), also helped me to get a sense of whether an individual might be experiencing economic anxiety and helped me to understand how and why middle-class people who had been living in areas surrounding Brixton since before it started gentrifying, might not feel the disarming anxiety experienced by Barking residents, seeing their town change so rapidly. Instead, gentrification may contribute to their financial stability by benefitting from rising property values.

Limited or devalued institutionalised cultural capital, understood as occupation, is also likely to be reflected in individuals' levels of economic anxiety and perceptions of their personal future financial stability. Middle-class Lambeth residents who could afford to work part-time and have job flexibility were more likely to feel able to weather financial storms like the cost-of-living crisis, reducing any potential economic anxiety. Individuals with less job stability or who were unemployed and finding it difficult to find work were more likely to feel economic anxiety.

Given the straightforward translation between Bourdieu's concepts and economic anxiety measures, it's also easy to see how McKenzie's (2017b) ideas around inclusion and exclusion apply. Those who feel economic anxiety are more likely to feel economically excluded from the globalised world defined by EU membership while those who do not feel economic anxiety are more likely to be those

benefitting from EU membership and globalisation (for example, the Lambeth remainers who celebrated and benefited from freedom of movement and were generally financially secure with higher educational qualifications (as the literature suggests, see for example, Hobolt, 2016; Evans and Mellon, 2016; Mckenzie, 2017b)).

Of course, as this chapter has shown, often, economic and cultural anxiety combined in determining Brexit attitudes; economic anxiety may have predisposed an individual to vote to leave but cultural anxiety was necessary in producing that vote to leave. The effects of this, reiterating the findings of chapter 5 on attitudes to immigration, were most clearly seen in relation to some participants' embodied cultural capital, in the waning dominance of the white (British) population in Barking and the growing dominance of the white (middle-class?) population in areas surrounding Brixton.

By considering participants' embodied cultural capital, and the intersections with economic capital, it was also possible to understand how and why EU migrants in my sample felt uncertainty around their legal and social standing, and how that overrode any economic anxiety they may have felt. Again, the case to treat citizenship as embodied cultural capital is clear; the intersections between gender and citizenship and the impacts of both on embodied cultural capital led some migrant women to feel less able to weather whatever storm Brexit may have brought, and felt more concerned about the legal standing of their children. Those with other forms of cultural capital felt more able to weather the post-Brexit disruption. It is clear in the ways that gender and citizenship impact on these women's cultural capital that citizenship should, too, be viewed as a primary principle of societal division as gender is (McCall, 1992).

This deep dive into economic and cultural anxiety has allowed me to look in detail into different kinds of exclusion, economic and cultural, that help us to pick apart the so-called 'left behind' explanation. The interplay between economic and cultural anxiety wasn't apparent in my analyses of explanatory factors like immigration and disillusionment with politicians. Again, I have shown that when excluded groups are brought into the mix, and an intersectional and sociological approach to understanding

Brexit attitudes is taken, the web of factors that determined attitudes to Brexit is so much more complex than is described in studies of Brexit revolving around the so-called 'left behind'.

What's more, attitudes to gentrification need more attention, in London and across the UK, if they played so directly into Brexit attitudes in these very disparate parts of London. This is especially interesting post-COVID, during which the capital saw an exodus of Londoners to seaside towns in Kent and commutable rural counties. The ways in which this shift since Brexit shapes voting behaviour in those areas is yet to be seen, but it's worth considering as we move towards the next general election and beyond.

8. CONCLUSION

I asked, at the very beginning of this thesis, how useful the existing findings about Brexit really are when it comes to understanding attitudes at the referendum. The binaries used in academia, the media and by the Londependence campaign, which set London apart from the rest of the UK and England, specifically, do not, not surprisingly, tell us the whole story. Rather than rehashing my thesis chapter by chapter here, I begin by reflecting on the literature that my research supported and expanded on and go on to discuss my methods, as it seems worthwhile reflecting on what did and didn't work, and the implications for future social science research. Then I consider my theoretical framework, whether it was useful as a base from which to consider the issues central to my research and how my findings necessitate a re-consideration of Bourdieu's theories, to take into account citizenship, in particular.

8.1. LITERATURE

There exists a significant corpus of research into the Brexit vote, largely using quantitative methods, large-scale surveys and categorical or binary variables. This literature has brought to light key patterns of support for Brexit, generally explained on the basis of socio-demographic or geographic factors. Generally, it is found that leave voters were older, less educated, male and living in post-industrial areas (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2016; Becker et al., 2017; Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Henderson et al., 2017; Hobolt, 2016), and towns and regions which have experienced significant migration in recent years (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017). These explanations came together under the banner of the so-called 'left behind'; this group of people was not benefitting from globalisation and voted to leave in protest (Hobolt, 2016).

To be sure, my research does support some of these broad patterns. Most notably, I find those who considered immigration a threat voted to leave, mirroring a number of aggregate- and individual-level analyses of the Brexit vote that argue anti-immigration attitudes drove the leave vote (Clarke et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016b; Hobolt, 2016). Those who celebrate immigration and diversity, on

the other hand, generally voted to remain. There is a general divide between the two boroughs I focused my analysis on, although there are of course remain supporters in Barking and Dagenham and leavers in Lambeth. This supports the idea, further, that *timing* of immigration impacted on attitudes. Lambeth has a long history of migration; post-World War II, Brixton in particular became a cultural centre for the black Caribbean population (Lambeth, 2015: 14; Lambeth, 2016b: 10). There has also been for decades a significant Portuguese population living in and around 'Little Portugal', near Stockwell, slightly northwest of Brixton. Barking and Dagenham, on the other hand, experienced its first major wave of immigration more recently and has seen huge demographic change since the 2001 census. That the latter borough was one of only four across London which voted to leave, supports existing research about support for leave in an area being bolstered by sudden demographic change and significant immigration in the ten years prior to the referendum (Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017).

I also saw various class-related patterns arise among my participants; however, these described far fewer participants than did the borough divides related to immigration. These were seen, for example, in relation to participants' feelings towards politicians. Working-class participants with limited economic capital and limited or devalued cultural capital, were predisposed to feel unsupported by politicians who were unable (or unwilling) to provide the help that they needed. These participants felt disillusioned with the political elite and (generally) voted to leave (Hobolt, 2016; Ford and Goodwin, 2017). Middle-class participants, on the other hand, were able to see past existential, immediate, local and domestic concerns and instead consider issues related to the EU sphere, such as travel and living abroad. They did not feel so disillusioned with politicians at least prior to the vote and supported remain. What's interesting, though, is that the Brexit vote itself and the political implications of it have left these middle-class voters feeling increasingly distrustful of the political elite. By looking at economic anxiety, I was also able to draw out class related patterns that fit in line with the existing Brexit literature; economic anxiety or precarity sometimes resulted in a vote to leave (Hobolt, 2016; Clarke et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Goodwin and Heath, 2016a; Goodwin

and Heath, 2016b) - although, as I've argued, the predominance of cultural issues must not be ignored.

Throughout this thesis, I have, however, highlighted a number of gaps in this body of research. Some of these were clear to me before I began my research thanks to work by academics like Lisa Mckenzie (2017b), whose own research aimed to unpick exclusionary 'left behind' narratives, and Taulant Guma and Rhys Dafydd Jones (2019), who created space for those often excluded from research, like EU migrants. Mckenzie criticised the rhetoric of the so-called 'left behind' as perpetuating "narratives of a 'feckless poor' that will only exacerbate further social exclusion, and class distinction" (Mckenzie, 2017a: 272). This was most certainly reflected in my conversations with participants from across the class spectrum. A working-class woman who had lived in Barking (BD13) for more than 60 years found it 'offensive' when her town is classed as 'deprived' and felt politicians using such language were implying that people living there were 'sub-human'. Middle-class LA11 also saw this elite rhetoric as implying some link between economic precarity, working-class-ness and 'irrationality'.

Guma and Dafydd Jones' research, on the other hand, which makes so clear the lack of attention paid to the attitudes and experiences of EU migrants at the Brexit referendum, is also supported broadly by my findings. Most pertinently, an organiser of one of the few groups that agreed to act as a gatekeeper organisation for my research, Shpresa, in Dagenham, supporting Albanian migrants, agreed to do so primarily because they felt they had been so left out of any and all discussions on the Brexit vote and wanted to take the opportunity to give their attendees an opportunity to voice their anxieties. Guma and Dafydd Jones' research focuses on both social and legal uncertainty post-Brexit, both of which my findings support and provide further evidence for. The long-term anxieties of the EU migrant women, in particular about their children's legal status post-Brexit, were clearly still being felt years after the vote itself.

My work was also informed by numerous scholars who explained outright the long-term trends that fed into Brexit, that were largely ignored in existing research, whether those were linked to austerity

and cuts to local government funding (Dorling, 2018), or the racism and xenophobia perpetuated by political and media elites, which ultimately fed down to voters. To understand these relationships, it's crucial to look back to colonial norms institutionalised during the British Empire and since. Racism has existed for centuries in England and the rest of Britain; as Icaza and Vázquez explain, "the dynamics...of discrimination (along the axes of race, gender and geographical and economic inequality [that so shaped the Brexit referendum results]) are connected to the ongoing legacies of our colonial history" (2018: 113). In particular, racism was baked into the British Empire through this categorisation of the 'British subject' in opposition to the 'other', first institutionalised through the 1905 'Aliens Act' which imitated anti-immigrant legislation from across the British Empire but is based in long-standing imperial ideas (El Enany, 2020). As "elite actors have racialized and re-racialized the historical distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor" (Shilliam, 2018a: 7) through restrictive immigrations policy and in line with these imperial ideas, we have seen anti-immigrant rhetoric become increasingly commonplace. The deserving white, British group begin to view themselves in opposition to an undeserving non-white, immigrant other. These categories are racialised as "whiteness infers respectability" (Shilliam, 2018a: 4) and the perceived differences between groups are inherently racist and rooted in imperial ideology.

We can't ignore the impact of elite discourse; 'the people' don't "suddenly [revert] to racist [or xenophobic] attitudes" (Mondon and Winter, 2019: 523) and while, at first, British racism might appear "to have three faces – state, institutional, popular –...in effect, it has one face with three expressions, the face of the state" (Sivanandan, 2008: 225). There is no doubt that this elite cuing fed into the public's decision to vote to leave the EU (Clarke et al., 2017). While politicians like Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, and, of course, David Cameron, are often named in relation to the vote to leave, it's important to note that leaders of parties of all stripes, including Ed Miliband as leader of Labour, pushed now-widely-debunked welfare tourism rhetoric (Portice and Reichner, 2018) which added fuel to anti-EU fire for years prior to the Brexit referendum. Right-wing tabloid newspapers, like The Daily Mail and The Daily Express, also played a painful role, as Figure 1 (see p40)

highlights, by perpetuating similar rhetoric and calling on politicians to go further in the ‘crackdown’ against ‘welfare tourists’.

Possibly the clearest way in which such discourse shaped my participants’ attitudes was in relation to welfare tourism, which has been called out as inaccurate and a means for government to shift the blame of long-term public spending cuts (Mintchev, 2014: 5) and claims of stretched local services resulting from recent immigration in Barking in particular. For two leave-voting Barking residents that I interviewed (BD11 and BD13), migration was leading to stretched public services and was limiting the availability of housing and access to the NHS. BD13 had had personal experience of trouble securing social housing for her daughter, while BD11 spoke more generally of the older white British population in financially precarious positions who weren’t able to access housing or health services in the town. For BD11, recent migration to Barking was “a burden on [its] resources”. So-called ‘benefit tourism’ was seen as an issue across both boroughs. For BD13, there was some sense that migrants were asking for too much, while LA22, a black West African migrant in Lambeth, explained that the Brexit vote came down to people already suffering financially and with housing, and seeing new migrants from across the EU arriving in the UK purely for the benefits to which they could get access. While BD11 and BD13 did not discuss the origin of the migrants they perceived to be limiting their access to services, the discourse of LA22, who discussed her experience of tension with EU migrants does reflect the increasing xenophobia directed at EU migrants after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, when claims of benefit tourism became all the more widespread (Fox, 2013; Fox et al., 2015; Rzepnikowska, 2019). I don’t say this to label my participants as racist or xenophobic, or to perpetuate discourse around the white working class as inherently racist and xenophobic, as the ‘left behind’ implies (Isakjee and Lorne, 2020: 8), but to show how elite-led racism existed as a current running beneath the leave vote.

My inductive and participant-led research design allowed me to go down unexpected avenues to draw out key issues that fed Brexit attitudes, like uncertainties over legal standing, which get such

little airtime in the literature. I was also able to highlight those issues which are paid lip service in existing literature but deserve unpicking, like how a lack of trust in politicians can be routed all the way back in a 1970s animal rights campaign against the use of beagles to test cigarettes. A lack of trust in politicians is mentioned in relation to Brexit, but smoking beagles most certainly have not been.

8.2. METHODS

Some methodological innovation was needed for this research project. Brexit cannot be considered understudied but what we know is largely based on large scale survey studies. As has been reiterated throughout this thesis, the primary focus in academia and the media on the white, working classes has provided us with a lot of data on that group, but not much on any other, in particular, migrants, many of whom were unable to vote at all.

I settled on the generic inductive approach, which allows for methodological flexibility, the value of which is reflected in the bespoke research design I was able to build. Starting with inclusivity as my focus, I clearly defined each phase of my research process, with the aim of creating a congruent research design (Cooper and Endacott, 2007: 817; Kahlke, 2014: 39). As such, and following Lui's model (2016: 130; see Table 4 on p.79 above), inclusivity fed into each decision that followed on sampling, the research process and analysis.

The advantages of the approach are most tangibly seen in terms of sampling. When I began recruitment, aiming to include groups generally left out of Brexit research (namely, Londoners, women and people of colour), I was still only planning to speak to those who had been eligible to vote at the referendum. Through initial discussions with community leaders in Lambeth, it was made clear to me that my inclusion criteria were not inclusive enough; I was still excluding migrants – and EU migrants in particular – whose lives had been impacted immeasurably but who had not had a say on Brexit. On reflection, and by revisiting my initial motivations, I was able to broaden my eligibility

criteria to include all residents of Lambeth and Barking and Dagenham, as long as they had been living in the boroughs in question since before the vote itself. By doing so, citizenship became a central theme in my research, an aspect of our identities that is inherently tied to the Brexit debate, but which has received considerably less attention in mainstream literature.

A focus on inclusivity also shaped how I recruited in subsequent rounds of fieldwork, successfully interviewing Lambeth leave voters who had eluded me until the very end of my research. What's more, the cyclical research process allowed for participant-centred themes to feed into future interviews, so I could triangulate findings as I went. Key contributions of this thesis, on gentrification and the role of citizenship, were developed in this way, by drawing on 'findings' from initial interviews, and building them into interviews and focus groups later on to understand in more detail the range of views and experiences of my heterogenous sample of Londoners.

Of course, the generic inductive approach is open to critique; its name alone highlights a key criticism made against it. The 'generic-ness' leaves it open to questions of rigour and the flexibility it allows can lead to 'method slurring', the haphazard and unplanned mixing of methodologies can lead to atheoretical research (Kahle, 2014: 43-46). However, by thoughtfully building my research design, considering key research motivations at every stage, I believe I was able, generally, to avoid creating slap-dash, incongruent research. Instead, I worked with various different methods to gather rich material in ways that were most convenient to participants.

The unexpected and very personal 'material' I gathered to draw out Brexit attitudes of my participants was only possible thanks to their openness and willingness, but also the very qualitative methods I used. Identity mapping, a nascent method used in participatory research, which I adapted for my own research on Brexit, helped me to get a sense of the participants' lives. Crucially, this was conveyed in ways and words that went so far beyond what would have been possible using survey data, certainly, and even the conversational interviews that followed. As Figure 4 on page 110 shows, the topics that participants deemed important to themselves were incredibly wide-ranging. Some

focused on family relationships, others on where they lived or their work and hobbies. Often participants added details about their social class identities, but, more often than not, gender and race were not included, reflecting, I presume, the greater attention or time spent reflecting on class in comparison to other aspects of our identities. This is the advantage of identity mapping; it is an exercise that can *only* be participant-led. It allows the researcher to understand how participants perceive *themselves*. Even as I attempted to impose a framework of identity, related to gender, race and class, participants instead showed me what was most important to them.

This exercise was not meant to produce 'data' to be collected but to help me understand more about my participants when longer-term engagement was not possible and to act as a prompt throughout the interviews that followed. Ethnographic methods produce in depth material based on well-developed relationships with participants, and there is so much value in this. However, as the work of scholars like Mckenzie shows (2017a; b), material is gathered over time, sometimes a number of years which, rightly, would require significant resources for remuneration for participants and researcher time. Identity mapping requires a certain level of trust between researcher and participant, and I can't be certain how differently participants would have presented themselves to me had we been well-acquainted. However, the advantage of the method is in its simplicity; it was straightforward for me to conduct and for participants to understand, and only required ten minutes, some pens and a piece of paper. As such, identity mapping went some way in bridging a gap I perceived to exist in Brexit research; that we have a lot of data but it is generally disembodied and impersonal. Identity mapping provided an opportunity to understand and re-present participants' attitudes as fully as I could.

At times, the conversational interviews that followed went down avenues that were not entirely relevant to my research, but this was hugely beneficial in, for example, seeing multiple participants across both boroughs choose to bring up gentrification. This was not something I necessarily would have thought to ask about if I had used interview guides drawn up using my literature review and sticking to discussions of those topics alone. Discussions of gentrification did, however, bring to light

especially interesting findings additional to those discussed in the Brexit literature; *recent* gentrification appears to have shaped attitudes in a similar way to *recent* immigration. The conversations ranged in length from around 55 minutes to two and a half hours and were the part of the research process I enjoyed the most, sitting face to face with people and hearing about their everyday lives and Brexit (even when a transcript took a day to type up). This is hardly a scientific reflection on the value of qualitative methods but maybe an important reminder for me when I (hopefully) begin planning my next research project.

This combination of methods allowed me to put my research in participants' terms. I have tried to use direct quotes from the transcripts as much as possible to 're-present' rather than 'represent' my participants' words, the latter potentially leading to patronising and more extractive research (Agyeman, 2008). My research is still extractive, though; I didn't, for example, use identity mapping for co-production or community empowerment which could have allowed me to avoid such pitfalls of social science research. Having such detailed material available throughout analysis to understand my participants' views meant, also, that I was able to see the nuance between different factors that shaped their attitudes. Often there were multiple layers of issues and identity that went into their attitudes. BD13 is a prime example, and is by far the participant I have mentioned the most throughout this thesis. A whole world of factors seemed to shape her attitudes to Brexit: her personal financial position, immigration to Barking, disconnection from politicians, 'regeneration' of the borough, limited access to local services, the list truly goes on and on. By reading and re-reading BD13's transcript, and those of the other 22 participants I included in this study, there were issues for each which were described most importantly or most related to their Brexit attitudes. For BD13, it was immigration while for LA21, it was a hatred of the Tory party. LA21 told me, in no uncertain terms, that "the Tories, [I've] never been a fan of the Tories. Hate them" and that he voted to leave to "get David Cameron out of power". These were the bases of their votes to leave and to suggest anything else would not have done justice to their experiences of Brexit.

In the hopes of conducting research in the most convenient way possible for participants – and therefore also allowing me to speak to as many participants as I did – I ended up combining interviews and focus groups. I was able to gather incredibly rich material as a result, which I hope is reflected throughout chapters five to seven.

I was able to capitalise on the advantages of both interviews and focus groups. I used very minimal prompts in the semi-structured interviews I conducted, which are a key method in participatory research (the inspiration behind identity mapping) (Chambers, 1994: 959). As such, issues generally arose when participants wanted to discuss them, but I was still able to revisit key aspects of my research, including race, gender and class, and later follow up on additional issues like citizenship with participants. I was also able to speak in great detail to participants about, for example, their history in Lambeth or Barking, and how the area had changed.

The less active role of the researcher in the unstructured focus groups, on the other hand, drew on group dynamics to bring to the front and centre issues that would not have necessarily been accessible without group interaction (Taylor et al., 2019: 128). For example, the at-times very individual and personal ways in which Brexit had increased anxiety in terms of legal status for migrants in my Dagenham focus group, I think, arose from the vulnerability inherent to discussions between friends.

I did face challenges when mixing these methods, however; issues and dynamics were less straightforward to compare and, as a researcher, I will never know the kinds of material I *could have* collected had I conducted solely interviews or focus groups. What's more, due to time constraints, I was unable to conduct identity mapping with focus group participants. As such, I have less of an understanding of these participants' identities and have only been able to draw comparisons between views based on what I was told during focus groups, and demographic information I gathered through the questionnaire. In response to the limitations associated this mixing of methods, I've been clear

throughout this thesis where issues or participants were in a focus group and where discussions were led by me or a participant in an interview.

It is through this putting participants' views front and centre that I was able to build the structure of my thesis. Their attitudes and what they told me led me to centre my analysis around immigration, political disillusionment and anxiety and uncertainty, to then see how those issues played into existing literature or not. It also helped me draw out particular nuance. There's no escaping, for example, the clear impact that economic anxiety and, on the flip side, feelings of financial stability had on Brexit attitudes, the former leading (generally) to support for leave and the latter (generally) leading to support for remain. As I argue in chapter 7 above, however, "an ounce of [cultural anxiety] is worth a pound of economic anxiety" (Miller, 2020: 2). Economic and cultural anxiety can be intertwined, which is especially clearly seen in relation to immigration, but also in terms of disillusionment with politicians and it is those cultural issues that determined attitudes to Brexit, according to my participants, and those issues that were named by them first in relation to Brexit, whether they supported leave or remain.

This nuance helps to explain patterns found in chapter 5 on immigration, that so clearly did not fit expected patterns of working-class support for Brexit; economic precarity or working-class-ness is not alone a particularly useful indicator of support for Brexit. LA16, for example, a young working-class woman who supported remain at the referendum and explained how her experience on universal credit and being in receipt of benefits for many years, as is common, she explained, among care leavers, led her to see straight through the leave campaign's rhetoric linking immigration and stretched public services. She saw how stretched services were 'so obviously' a result of austerity and cuts to local government funding that she had experienced first-hand since the birth of her son in 2011, not due to immigration. It was her financial precarity, then, that motivated her support for *remain*.

With all of this said, the key lesson I have learned, which could pave the way for future social science research, is that with careful planning and consideration, we can expand what we know about key political events and attitudes in inherently valuable ways. The methodological flexibility of the generic inductive approach necessitates considered and thoughtful research, to avoid the traps of non-rigorous research. It provided me a means to turn a buzzword like 'inclusivity' into a tangible reality, threading it throughout the research process. By following the design described by Lui, I was provided with a digestible plan to think through each and every choice I needed to make when planning and conducting research.

To contribute to the knowledge base of very well-researched events like Brexit, future general elections or attitudes to contemporary policy issues, the generic inductive approach could help researchers to consider which *combination* of methods could best capture the phenomenon at hand, which I hope I have highlighted in my combining of identity mapping, interviews and focus groups. While challenges were presented in my own research when it came to comparing material gathered through interviews and focus groups, when we are thinking about expanding what we know, and how we research, these disadvantages are overridden by incredibly valuable material it's possible to collect. If I were to conduct this research again, I might consider more fully how I would combine focus groups and interviews at different stages to capitalise on the advantages of both methods and what they could tangibly bring to research, rather than primarily for the convenience of me (being able to speak to a wider range of people) and participants (to conduct research in pre-existing group circumstances). A two-stage approach, speaking first to participants alone and then with a group of local residents, which I initially planned for this research, but which was ultimately outside of my grasp due to resources available, would allow for more rigorous comparison of material collected. Such an approach would be feasible for researchers working as part of a team, or on a long-term, well-resourced project.

8.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I've just concluded, ultimately, that class-based explanations of the Brexit vote didn't go very far in explaining the attitudes of my participants. I haven't, however, reflected on the other aspects of identity that I set out to study, nor have I delved into the efficacy of my theoretical framework and Pierre Bourdieu's metaphors of capital that helped me to understand my participants' identities.

8.3.1. INTERSECTIONALITY

Bourdieu's metaphors of capital most certainly helped me to take an intersectional view of my participants' identities. This was possible, in particular, thanks to more recent critiques of his concept of cultural capital and its intersections with race, by Rollock (2014) and gender, by McCall (1992). Those authors begin by examining Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and find separately that race and gender are largely ignored in his work. In fact, as McCall argues, gender in particular is read as a secondary, rather than definitive, role in our lives and society more widely. McCall argues that by considering gender, instead, as part of our embodied cultural capital, it intertwines with measures of institutionalised cultural capital, like educational qualifications, and can be recognised as legitimate (or illegitimate) cultural capital. From a feminist perspective, this makes perfect sense given the explicit and numerous ways in which gender shapes our positions in society and feeds into our class position; cultural capital through, historically, fewer opportunities for women in education and work and economic capital as a result of the gender pay gap.

Rollock argues similarly that, while Bourdieu's theories do not explicitly mention race, "skin colour acts as a form of embodied capital that disrupts and lessens the worth of cultural capital held by black middle classes" (2014: 448). This is particularly seen in the 'whiteness' of the 'legitimate' form of cultural capital and is reflected tangibly in, for example, the whiteness of elite schools, universities and workplaces, and the disproportionately low pay earned by ethnic minorities (Living Wage Foundation, 2022). Race is, of course, not always devaluing; there are ways in which race can strengthen embodied cultural capital, as discussed in my theoretical framework (see pp65-70).

From these examples, the entwinedness between race, gender and class is clear. It's also possible to consider the multiple oppressions faced by some individuals, like black women (Crenshaw, 1989), who are proportionately overrepresented in low-paid care work roles (Bassel and Emejulu, 2018) and are, therefore, all the more likely to feel the negative financial effects of falling government spending during periods of austerity, like the one in which we have been living for more than a decade.

From this perspective and with the conceptualisations of Rollock (2014) and McCall (1992), I was able to begin to see how different identities were woven together and why, ultimately, citizenship, too, should be viewed in a similar way as race and gender, when it comes to Bourdieu's theories.

Citizenship is generally studied in legal terms (Siklodi, 2020) and this is reflected in Bourdieusian studies of it. Citizenship has been considered through the lens of legal capital, in terms of the passports and visas available to an individual based on their citizenship, or mobility capital (Moret, 2020). Those conceptualisations appear somewhat distinct from the framework I used and, at first, I was unsure as to whether I could bring citizenship into my analysis in the same way.

Citizenship clearly, however, shaped attitudes and intersected with other aspects of identity, most notably, in my sample, with gender, to determine Brexit attitudes. This becomes all the more clear when my operationalisation, based on McKenzie's ideas about exclusion, is brought into the picture.

The EU migrant women I spoke to for this project, and from across both boroughs, ardently supported remain. I suggest that this is down to their (general) feelings of inclusion within the realm of the European project. Where others, like BD13, may have felt *excluded*, as non-EU migration that was inherently linked to the EU by the leave campaign increased in Barking, and voted to leave as a result, the EU migrants in my sample felt included within and valued EU membership. For LA15, for example, this may have resulted from the very *European* social circle in which she and her son found themselves, speaking multiple languages at school and with friends. BD17, on the other hand, had made Dagenham home for her and her family; she and the women I spoke to during my March 2022 focus group all celebrated and enjoyed the diversity of their social group, as highlighted by the

positive memories of food sharing. Ultimately, also, these women had relatively recently migrated to the UK and all planned to stay in the UK. That they had benefitted from the EU's freedom of movement principle means that their support for remain was more likely but also could be linked to feelings of inclusion within the EU realm and transnationalism.

On the flip side, on leaving the EU, uncertainties over citizenship and the legal status of their children were anxiety-inducing and Brexit marked significant changes to the ways in which they lived. For example, BD17 and BD20 found it more difficult to stay connected with family in their home countries, as postage and customs restrictions had become problematic post-Brexit. In light of concerns around their children's legal status, the intersections between citizenship and gender, in terms of motherhood, become important to recognise, and, in turn, reflect their feelings of inclusion within the EU realm and exclusion from a post-Brexit Britain. I argue, then, that to understand more fully the multiple ways in which different groups of EU migrants, heterogenous in terms of institutionalised cultural capital, race and gender, it's important to view citizenship as inherent to us, with significant potential to shape our positions in society. Viewing citizenship as embodied cultural capital makes that possible.

In describing the many factors which combine to create patterns of class exclusion, McKenzie suggests that the participants in her study – working class communities in East London and Nottinghamshire – “could only ‘trade’ in social and cultural capital that had very little worth beyond the bounds of their own local communities” (2017b: 202). This devaluing of their capital led to feelings of exclusion amongst her participants and their support for Brexit. Cosmopolitan remain voters, on the other hand, were typically “middle class, urban, white-collar professionals and who possess economic, social and cultural capital of much broader value” (McKenzie, 2017b: 202), and who were able to ‘trade’ in the globalised symbolic marketplace defined by EU membership. This framing helped me to understand the numerous ways in which identity shaped attitudes and helped me to think about what might be going on beneath broad patterns, like those related to recent immigration and a vote to

leave. This was particularly the case when it came to considering changing societal dominance of the long-term white (British) population in Barking and why they voted to leave, while long-term white residents in Lambeth did not. It also helped draw out more individual-level patterns, for example, around race and citizenship for LA22. LA22 voted to leave at least in part as a result of experiences of animosity from EU migrants at her workplace. Understanding her experience in McKenzie's terms, it was possible to see how her position as a black West African migrant was very different to that of white EU migrants, some of whom may have been legitimised by EU membership. The animosity she felt from that group led her to feel excluded from the benefits of EU membership and, as a result, she voted to leave.

Outside of the intersectional nature of this thesis, it's important also to consider how useful the three aspects of identity, and 'field', were in understanding my participants' attitudes. I chose these three aspects of identity given the focus of the literature on the so-called 'left behind' on white, working-class men. I wanted to unpick those patterns that were found to understand in more detail how class, race and gender shaped attitudes for people who didn't fit the white, working-class male bill. This is particularly pertinent, given how, on expanding my project to include those previously left out of research, i.e., EU migrants, the three identity-related factors I started with were insufficient and could not, alone, meaningfully expand what we know about Brexit attitudes among this group. I'll finish this conclusion by reflecting on class, race, gender, citizenship and 'field' and the extent to which they helped me understand my participants' Brexit attitudes.

8.3.2. CLASS

Social class in the UK is a complex issue and motivation to identify with one class or another will vary from person to person, from cultural to economic markers, which presents difficulties around the use of self-identification as a measure. There is some disparity in the number of people who consider themselves, for example, working-class and those who would be considered as such based on traditional measures (Eddo-Lodge, 2017: 190). Various explanations exist for this disparity. The

connotations of middle-class-ness in Britain, which “can be, and often is, taken to mean to command claims to cultural snobbery and privilege” (Savage et al., 2015: 39), may be off-putting to some – as might be the associated ‘whiteness’. As explained in the theoretical framework above, cultural capital, in Bourdieu’s ‘legitimate’, middle-class form, is a racialised concept. An effect of this may be seen in Rollock’s work with the “black middle classes who “[perceived] that they [held] little economic and financial power relative to whites” (2014: 337), impacting on how likely they were to self-identify as middle class.

Class self-identification is also related to an individual’s economic position, as Bourdieu would agree. Therefore, the inequality that exists between people of different races in the UK surely has an impact on disparate class identifications; “black and minority ethnic people are more likely to live in income poverty than their white counterparts” (Eddo-Lodge, 2017: 193), and therefore may be more likely to identify as – or be classified as, based on traditional measures – working class. Even then, questions are raised as to whether, for example, a low income (less than £20,000 p.a.) would lead an individual to choose to identify as working-class (Snoussi and Mompelat, 2019: 37) – they may choose not to identify with any social class at all (Savage et al., 2015: 26).

As a result of those complexities, self-identified social class may be different to the social class someone might fit based on their occupation. My research was able to look into those incongruities, as I asked participants for their occupation, their highest level of educational qualification and their class identity. Conversations that arose in interviews naturally also dug into these identities. Indeed, some participants identified as working class, which did not match their occupations at all. LA15, for example, described herself as working class while working in a managerial position, and LA19 identified as working class, despite now being able to work part-time in a job that is associated with high institutionalised cultural capital. For LA19, class is about “cultural heritage and your history, not about necessarily, there is grades of it and you can delude yourself, but I’ll always see myself as working class, that’s just how I feel”. It was also part of his political identity as a Labour Party

supporter. This example alone goes to show how typologies of class like the NS-SEC schema, where social class is determined on the basis of occupation, cannot capture the very human feelings and identities that shape class background.

In this research, I have been able to understand class more widely than would have been possible using a large-scale survey with categorical measures of social class. By no means was my 'measure' of social class sufficient (as is discussed in my methods chapter, see pp108-110). I do think, however, that balancing those categorical measures of institutionalised cultural capital, like occupation and education, with self-identified social class and further discussions of class during my interviews and focus groups allowed me to at least understand class more broadly than would have been possible using survey data alone.

Given how my study expanded to include migrants from Europe and elsewhere, it's also worth reflecting on the social class identifications of the migrants in my sample here too. When I started research into this area, I (naively) thought I'd come across some large-scale studies on migrants and the social class structure in the UK, how well they 'fit' – or didn't – into the stratification. I didn't have much luck finding that kind of research. Migrants' social class or their experience of the UK social class system cannot be statistically observed. Doing so would necessitate a 'rucksack approach' that "reifies the cultural resources of migrants" (Erel, 2010: 656). The dynamics of migration and identity are simply too complex to be considered in such a static way. Cultural capital will be mobilised differently based on an individual's gender, class and race (Erel, 2010: 650) and "migrants do not carry fixed forms of capital with them that either 'fit' the new arrival context or do not" (Barglowski, 2019: 1973). Moreover, the value of cultural capital is socially constructed and changes over time as what is 'legitimate' shifts, "dependent on the prevailing ideological climate" (Cheong et al., 2007: 25) – and geopolitical shifts impact on power and economic relations between home and host countries and, as a result, migrant trajectories (Moret, 2020). Skeggs states this explicitly in relation to 'national cultural capital', which I argue should be considered as inherently tied to embodied cultural capital in chapter

5 (see pp151-157); it is the dominant group in the nation that decides what is 'legitimate' and directly convertible to symbolic capital (Skeggs, 2004). In the UK, that is Britishness and whiteness (although this of course will vary in smaller fields *within* the UK).

Individuals will also gain or lose cultural capital in unexpected ways over time (Erel, 2010: 654) and their cultural capital will be differently 'valued' from field-to-field. Cultural capital must be conceptualised in relation to the "variety of social fields that...migrants inhabit" (Smith et al., 2018: 862) to gain an insight into the intersectional impact of race, class, gender, and such, and the complex dynamics of migrants' trajectory and experience in the host country. While many studies of migration consider the impact of separate 'categories' of identity, for example, the impact of gender on migrant trajectory, Grzymala and Phillimore recommend thinking of these questions "from an anti-categorical perspective – which deconstructs existing analytical categories as not adequate for complex and fluid society" (2018: 189). Taking an intersectional approach that considers the relationships between different aspects of identity, and understanding citizenship as embodied cultural capital, it's possible to view citizenship dynamically.

Zhou argues that we should concern ourselves with the "fundamental question of how different the world may look if the experiences of the excluded are placed at the [centre] of our thinking" (Zhou, 1997: 981), a goal which has been a thread throughout this research. Doing so means that individual or group characteristics are not assumed to be inferior attributes to be left behind by migrants in order to assimilate into host country culture. It also means that individuals' identities can be considered dynamic, rather than fixed and allows us to take into consideration how, across nations, "some bodied [are marked] as more valuable than others" (Skeggs, 2004: 19).

With that said, I did my best to understand the complex and dynamic ways in which the migrants I spoke to experience the social class system in the UK while also keeping at the front of my mind that assimilation to host culture (including social stratifications and class systems) is not always the goal of migration. Migration is treated by some as a liminal stage of life, or part of the process of 'life-making'

(Carling, 2002: 18), where the focus is work (Scott and Visser, 2021: 112), rather than integration into local communities. Such work may be seen as a springboard to better-paid employment in the host country or a means to provide financial support to family in the home country (Scott and Visser, 2021: 113). Migrant workers' 'dis-integration' is evidenced across a range of sectors (Scott and Visser, 2021: 118) and may provide support for the idea that integration into UK society for some migrant groups is low down on the list of concerns when migrating.

All of this is to say that migrants' class identifications are complex and raise questions that an entirely separate 100,000 word-long research project could not answer in full (and one which I hope I might get to write in the future). Hence, I will not be able to pay it full attention to every aspect of the issue here. I am, however, able to reflect on the ways in which class came up in relation to the migrants in my sample (with the caveat strongly in mind that the picture might be murky because I spoke to a small group of migrant women in two parts of London and the issue of class itself might not matter at all to some of those I spoke to...).

Some found it difficult to identify with a certain class and only identified with a class after discussion. This was particularly the case in my March 2022 focus group of women in Dagenham, which led BD17 to re-evaluate and describe herself as working class, after initially answering 'don't know' to the questionnaire question. At times, the concept didn't translate at all. During my discussion of social class with BD15, via a translator, I found it very difficult to get across the concept of social class. The concept then became inherently linked to financial status and BD15 responded 'pensioner' to the question of social class. I don't doubt that I played some role in this, not explaining class in a digestible way, but it also shows that BD15 did not have an existing sense of the social class system in the UK, backing up the idea that assimilation is not all migrants' ultimate goal.

Migrants' social class identifications, like that of British participants, did not necessarily fit their occupation. This suggests that among British people and migrants alike, typologies like the NS-SEC schema and occupational measures cannot fully capture class identities. Instead, other factors,

including perceived class position during childhood, family history, and identity, must be brought into our understandings of class (something which Bourdieu's theories allow). While Greek migrant LA15 worked in a managerial position, she saw herself as working class. BD14, on the other hand, reflected on how her family's financial situation as a child differed from her and her husband's family life in the UK, noting the complexity of these two experiences when discussing her own social class identity.

Class did, however, tend to more closely reflect economic capital for these participants, with more of these participants bringing up their financial situations in relation to class and defining themselves as working class due to lower (family) wages. Could part of this be down to what Skeggs calls national capital, too? The 'dominant' group, white British citizens, may decide that white Britishness is the most legitimate (Skeggs, 2004:19; discussed in chapter 5, see p154). This has been institutionalised in the post-Brexit points-based immigration system which inherently gives anyone not British a more difficult time and doubles down on the legitimacy of (embodied cultural capital) factors like English language skills, given how a "number of immigration routes [have] an English language requirement (UK Government, 2020: 9). Such exclusionary systems devalue migrants' embodied cultural capital (see full discussion of how whiteness and citizenship shaped relations *between* migrant groups in chapter 5, p143 onwards). This devaluing could be reflected (if only in part) in these participants' self-identifications as working class. Of course, other factors are at play. Gender could play a similar role; with female labour so devalued and many of these women working as homemakers or full-time mothers, their institutionalised capital was also limited.

While this discussion might be necessarily rudimentary (thanks to my small sample and the scarcity of literature on migrants' social class in the UK), I hope it opens the doors to questions of how closely (if at all) migrants in the UK view themselves in relation to the social class system in the UK and, of course, how much any of this matters to those migrants I'm deciding to put at the centre of this particular discussion. Such issues would need to be studied among a far broader sample, including transient and settled migrants, and some consideration would need to be given to the reasons for

migration to the UK in the first place. Avoiding Erel's 'rucksack approach' concerns would require time and space given to such research, to carry out in-depth interviews from an intersectional perspective, to ensure that each and every one of those complex experiences was not put in a box and classified but given the due attention it required.

8.3.3. RACE

I set out, at the start of this research, to unpick the racialised nature of the so-called 'left behind' by speaking to a racially diverse sample of people, given the 'methodological whiteness' of research into Brexit (Bhambra, 2017). I did not achieve that goal, the majority of my participants identified as white, and, as such, I have no doubt amplified the voices of white people who already have a privileged position in research (Galpin, 2021: 7). This likely reflects my position as a white researcher and the recruitment methods I used. Using 'Next Door' in Lambeth led me to have such a significant number of offers of participation from white middle-class people that I had to politely decline their help and turn to in-person recruitment, which did, in fact, lead me to find two leave voters willing to talk.

Race mostly came up in relation to whiteness in my research, reflecting my sample. While this perpetuates the methodological whiteness of Brexit research, the findings relating to whiteness are still interesting. Considering how whiteness and shifting social dynamics of a place impact on Brexit attitudes allowed me to go much deeper into the links between recent migration and a vote to leave. It also led me to consider the histories of the two places I was studying, and the importance of historical migration to places like Brixton, outside of current headline figures on ethnic diversity.

While discussions of race and racism were not frequent, it did come up in interesting ways for two EU migrants in my sample. BD14, a white, working-class Romanian migrant, in a discussion of racist violence post-Brexit, described how she had some understanding of prejudice on the basis of race, given the xenophobia directed towards Romanian migrants. BD14 suggested, though, that "I think there's still a lot that we need to know about that we don't understand because again, how can you understand if you're not part of that culture? How can I, as a white person, understand what a black

person deals with?” While she felt she could understand to an extent the prejudice faced by other minoritised groups, she was aware she could not fully understand their experiences.

LA20, on the other hand, a second-generation German migrant, who closely associated with her family’s history during the Holocaust, told me that she doesn’t “subscribe to the notion” of race. LA20 had very specific reasons for this, rooted in her family’s history:

“to me race, it um, triggers alarm bells off in me because I uh, Jewish people were seen as a race, and that was what the excuse was for the oppression...so I’m very, very wary of things like race, even Jewish race, the black race, because I just think it can set up a ‘other’, a sense of ‘the other’, we’re different from them, and I think this Brexit business has really exacerbated that, and I think the way it’s been promoted, I find it really, really scary.”

I include LA20’s full explanation here as, on the face of it, not subscribing to the notion of race, could sound like racial colour-blindness. Racial colour-blindness is “the belief that racial group membership should not be taken into account, or even noticed...as a strategy for managing diversity and intergroup relations” (Apfelbaum et al., 2012: 205) and, in so doing, those who believe in racial colour-blindness are ignoring historical and pervasive systemic racism (Annamma et al., 2017). I’m not endorsing colour-blindness in any way, for those reasons just mentioned, but I am including LA20’s full explanation to highlight how her specific German migrant identity shaped her feelings towards race and potentially led her to choose some form of colour-blindness.

8.3.4. GENDER

Gender most certainly played a role in my participants’ attitudes to Brexit. This was most overtly the case in relation to legal rights post-Brexit, as already mentioned. However, Bourdieu’s own theorisations do not fully capture the ways in which gender plays into class. McCall convincingly argues for gender to be considered part of our embodied cultural capital and this understanding benefitted my intersectional analysis significantly. What I have found difficult to present in Bourdieu’s terms, though, are the many women who listed ‘homemaker’ as their occupations.

Institutionalised cultural capital, one of three forms it takes, is made up of educational qualifications and work experience. That conceptualisation does not do justice to the work that stay-at-home mothers (as was the case in my research) do, even though that often equates to 1.5 to 2.5 times the number of hours expected by a full-time job (Petter, 2018; Huang et al., 2021). Stay at home parents are, of course, a very heterogenous group in terms of institutionalised cultural capital and in terms of economic capital. In a family with significant economic capital, a parent might choose not to work because a second income isn't needed to run a household, while in a family with less economic capital, a parent might choose not to work because the wages they'd earn wouldn't cover the costs of childcare (Bates, 2022) (and, of course, this might not present a *choice* at all). In between those two examples are a whole world of variations, in terms of cultural and economic capital, which Bourdieu's concepts cannot explain, reflecting, ultimately, his less than "rigorous and often androcentric treatment of gender" (McCall, 1992: 839).

I have, therefore, considered the educational qualifications of the 'homemakers' I spoke to for this research, but this, again, suggests some kind of limited value of stay-at-home parenthood, which is not my intention at all. Digging down into Bourdieu's concepts to conceptualise the inherent value in stay-at-home parenthood, and move past initial conceptualisations that value 'men's work' alone, would be a useful avenue for future inquiry.

8.3.5. CITIZENSHIP

I've already mentioned how and why I ended up expanding my sample to include migrants unable to vote at the referendum, the implications of this for my theoretical framework and how citizenship can and should be understood as part of our embodied cultural capital, the most significant conceptual contribution of this thesis.

Citizenship – and EU migrants – have barely come into existing research on Brexit. My research has largely supported what we do know, about the social and legal uncertainty created for EU migrants during and since the Brexit referendum (see chapter 7, pp228-354). I have, in a small way, brought

greater attention, too, to the very different issues on which the migrants in my sample built their support (almost unequivocally) for remain (see, for example, chapter 6, pp192-197) and have shown how time spent in the UK drew migrants' attitudes more in line with those standard patterns of support outlined in the Brexit literature (see chapter 5, pp158-160). This is most pertinently the case for BD13, who identified closely with her Irish background but, after spending (nearly) all of her years in Barking, supported leave, it seems, on the basis of the declining social dominance of the long-term white (British) population in the town.

Brexit may have passed for some but what is clear from this research is that it remained a significant source of anxiety for migrants who had built their lives in London, than it had done for those whose legal status in the UK wasn't thrown into question. It's imperative to expand what we know to ensure that research isn't ignoring the attitudes and experiences of huge swathes of the population.

8.3.6. 'FIELD'

Given the geographical explanations of the Brexit vote, and the data available at borough level on Brexit support, it made sense initially for me to compare two boroughs, something I thought that Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' might help me understand.

Throughout the research process and in writing up my thesis, however, it became clear that stretching 'fields' to cover entire boroughs would not work. There were too many variations within the boroughs that shaped attitudes. Largely, this is seen in comparing Barking town centre and Brixton as two distinct parts of Barking and Dagenham, and Lambeth, respectively. The ways in which immigration and gentrification (one of the key empirical contributions of this study) shaped attitudes in those areas in particular highlights the need to look at areas more closely than borough-level.

The impact, generally, of location cannot be denied. It so closely shaped attitudes of a number of participants and was key in explaining why some participants' attitudes did not fit social class

expectations at all. BD11, for example, was young and middle-class but his upbringing in Barking led him to feel empathy towards the older residents who felt they were losing out due to immigration.

It is in these very local determinants of attitudes to Brexit that the utility of Bourdieu's concepts become so clear. It's possible to understand dynamics like immigration and gentrification on attitudes at the micro-level by considering class in terms of cultural capital and the various ways in which the legitimisation or devaluing of that cultural capital shaped attitudes to Brexit. By looking at the micro-level, I was able to pick apart helpful but limited large-scale correlations and understand what was happening for those who didn't fit the expected Brexit voting patterns (again, BD11 is a prime example).

I began this thesis with a discussion of London and its position in the Brexit literature. London and England were considered in binary terms and attitudinally in opposition to each other; London was the remain-voting island in a sea of English leave voters. This thesis has shown, however, that London and England cannot and should not be viewed in binary terms. London as a city and, indeed, the boroughs and constituencies that make up the city, are broad churches with a variety of views; in London, which was considered in the Brexit literature a Remain voting bloc, there were four boroughs that voted to leave. Barking and Dagenham was one of those boroughs but even within that 'high' leave-voting area, there were pockets of remainers (my March 2022 focus group of migrant women living in Dagenham highlights that). What's more, those pockets of remainers certainly do not always fit the 'cosmopolitan remain voter' description, and migration certainly shaped attitudes, but in quite the opposite way to the anti-immigration/ welfare tourism way perpetuated by the leave campaign and right-wing politicians. I uncovered what *else* it was about migration that was so important to those women; it was about commensality, empathy for friends' children's legal status and the insulting nature of the leave campaign.

Equally, in Lambeth, which would have been considered 'peak' land of the cosmopolitan remain voter, remainers didn't all fit the binary options perpetuated by mainstream media and academia

either, while some staunch leave voters perpetuated anti-immigration discourses that would never have been associated with a Lambeth voter. We can see these alternative views in the examples of LA16 and LA22. LA16, for example, a care leaver living in social housing, was able to critique the rhetoric on welfare tourism after her experience of the welfare system and universal credit during the ongoing period of austerity in which we live. LA22, a West African migrant woman who had been living in Lambeth for 30 years, on the other hand, had negatively felt the effects of EU migration, devaluing and delegitimising her cultural capital, leading her to vote to leave in response.

Similarly, patterns of gentrification, which had not come into discussions of Brexit at all, were so central to so many participants' discussions of their 'fields' and so tied up with class. Middle-class participants like LA17 and LA19 were able to capitalise on rising house prices in Lambeth, while BD13 and her family were struggling to keep up with so-called 'regeneration' in Barking. The dynamics which I saw in these boroughs very much mirror those of migration in terms of shifting social dominance; gentrification appears to be linked with the whitening of Lambeth and the strengthening of the position of white, middle-class residents there. A place can be many seemingly opposing things at once; Brixton can be celebrated as home of migration and diversity, and still be experiencing whitening of gentrification, that is no doubt being rocket-boostered by the private rental housing crisis. This is best illustrated by the attitudes of those white, middle-class Remainers in and around Brixton, who may be viewing the diversity of Lambeth through the lens of 'white multiculturalism' and such complex dynamics are ignored when London or its individual boroughs are considered as homogenous blocs.

Aside from reiterating, once again, the variety of views across and within London leave and remain boroughs, and the need to move away from binaries that defined mainstream research into Brexit, the question remains: is London so different from the rest of England? The answer, in helpfully vague terms, is yes *and* no. We can draw comparisons between leave and remain areas and London and other *parts* of the country – but, crucially, such an effort would require moving decisively away from

binaries. Each place – from borough to neighbourhood to social group level – is unique. At times, those places might be interlocking, at others, they might exist entirely separately to each other. For example, the impacts of the dynamics of migration and gentrification on attitudes might be comparable, depending on the pace and timing of each of those processes. Gentrification continues to have a hold in different ways in cities like Manchester and Liverpool and might have had similar impacts on attitudes there. Drawing comparisons to understand better the micro-level dynamics in these places, however, needs to be done carefully, and with a fine brush. Gentrification in areas of London like Lambeth in the '80s and '90s, and Barking and Dagenham more recently, has happened at a scale and pace unseen elsewhere, as reflected in the house prices and acute housing crisis in the city. That deserves attention and means comparisons will always need to be caveated.

This focus on the uniqueness of every place is what is largely missing from political science analyses of the Brexit vote and of voting behaviour more broadly, which generally finds country-wide patterns, and uses those to understand individual voting behaviour. This research has led me to consider how we approach the study of politics at all, and the need to give more credence to political attitudes and experiences related to where people live, on a micro-level, with the possibility of *then* drawing comparisons. By looking at place at a granular level, more closely than London and England, or borough to borough, and using different framings like inner and outer London to understand shared dynamics, it's then possible to understand the overlapping themes at play. Looking at 'place' in political science is particularly pertinent at the moment; it would make for an interesting area to explore at the 2024/5 general election, in light of potential Red Wall flip-flopping and pandemic-times mass exoduses out of London to Leave voting Kentish seaside towns. How have shared de-industrial histories shaped attitudes in former mining areas and, crucially, what else is at play? What are the issues we are missing according to those people who have been living in those areas for decades or who have recently moved to them? How is gentrification shaping attitudes and voting behaviour? How do the effects of those structural factors compare to parts of London or elsewhere with very different social and industrial histories and what does this tell us about changing voting behaviour?

These ideas are so present in the work of anthropologists and geographers who inspired this research: Lisa Mckenzie, looking at East London and the Midlands (2017a; 2017b), and Gillian Evans researching none other than Barking and Dagenham (!) (2020). As Anderson and Wilson, cultural and political geographers, put it:

“focusing on people’s ordinary ways of encountering, relating to, and living with, Brexit is necessary for understanding how the “big issue” transformations of politics and economy that Brexit might become are always-already everyday phenomena lived in the midst of other changes”

(Anderson and Wilson, 2018: 294)

By bringing Bourdieu into the mix, I hope I have gone some way in showing how it might be possible to draw a micro-focus on voters’ lives and experiences into the realm of mainstream social science, and the inherent value in doing so.

8.4. THIS THESIS WILL END BUT BREXIT MIGHT NOT

As Anderson and Wilson describe, the ‘event of Brexit’ is “the decision and process of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union after the referendum of 23 June 2016” (2017: 291). Brexit is not just the result of the June 2016 Referendum vote; Brexit continues to develop and change as its effects become embedded in people’s everyday lives, as the transition period ends and the UK’s new relationship with the EU is established. Rather than looking back at the event of the Referendum alone, this project also took into consideration how attitudes may have changed since the vote. I was able to ‘stay with the trouble’, as Anderson and Wilson (2017) put it, throughout this research, and to respect “the feeling of things in all of its messiness” (2017: 292), to understand the multiple and varied ways in which Brexit features in people’s everyday lives, seven (!) years on.

Interviewing allowed me to capture how people (reported that they) voted at the time, and how these attitudes may have shifted and changed. While it's not possible to know exactly how people were thinking at the time of the referendum five to six years after it took place, I did get the sense that participants had generally stuck with the decisions they made in 2016. Migrant women and British remain voters alike in Brixton and Dagenham, for example, still spoke quite categorically of supporting remain as a result of the fall-out of Brexit, for the enduring impact of Brexit on their children's legal status and for the negative impact of anti-immigrant rhetoric on friends and family. It is that range of underlying and interlocking motivations that this research has contributed to the knowledge base. Building on existing research, I found that, yes, class does play a role but that it is inherently intertwined with other parts of our identity, including gender, race and citizenship, and structural, place-related factors. The value of my analysis is in the nuance that it has brought to the Brexit debate; by understanding voting motivations and by viewing class through the lens of cultural capital, I was able to get a sense of why and how other aspects of identity disrupt class patterns, why 'class' alone can be so easily undercut among some groups like EU migrants.

Reflecting research into Brexit attitudes, which has found that Brexit "identities are both relatively stable over time and strongly held" (Tilley and Hobolt, 2023: 1), no participant included in this study described changing their mind on Brexit. There was certainly some empathy for the 'other' side; one Romanian migrant remainer, for example, described understanding why middle-class British people had voted for Brexit as a vote against immigration, even if she herself sat at the very opposite end of the spectrum. That Brexit attitudes among my participants were so 'stuck' is not surprising given that, as Hobolt et al. found in 2021, as I was conducting fieldwork, "Brexit identities are prevalent [and] felt to be personally important" (2021: 1476). Still, in 2023, "the vast majority of those who voted in the referendum and identified with one side of the debate have remained true to their chosen in-group" (Tilley and Hobolt, 2023: 5).

Reflecting the ongoing impact of Brexit on UK politics more generally, Brexit attitudes among my participants were tied to an evolving set of issues as my fieldwork progressed (a key contribution of this thesis, which could not of course have been captured by research that was conducted just after the vote). Interviewing over a period of 13 months allowed me to pick up on issues that were linked to Brexit in people's minds. Early interviewees, during the summer of 2021, discussed issues like the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests, both of which were tied up with Brexit directly and indirectly. The COVID-19 pandemic, for one leave voter in particular, was the reason the UK economy wasn't thriving post-Brexit; the government's efforts had been usurped by a pandemic, what could possibly be done? Black Lives Matter came up more indirectly, in relation to the importance of discussions of race, 'wokeness' and class, debates around which are inherently tied to Brexit, in light of the left behind discourse. Later on, discussions of the Rwanda asylum policy and the cost-of-living were brought up. Indeed, Brexit identities may not be so central to people's identities as they were, but they persist as they become "associated with policy norms that go beyond views on European integration" (Tilley and Hobolt, 2023: 5), picking up new issues as they arise.

I have no doubt that if I continued my fieldwork on a rolling basis, new issues would continue to stick to Brexit attitudes and that range of issues would be influenced by top-down decision making, too. Each Tory Prime Minister, since the Brexit referendum, has made promises to support those who fit the 'left behind' description. From Theresa May's efforts to support the 'Just About Managings', to the levelling up agenda, a thread that has run through the subsequent three premierships, the group that was so centred in Brexit rhetoric has been rhetorically the centre of policy agendas, too (Jennings et al., 2021). Indeed, 'left behind' communities are described directly in Government documentation on the levelling up agenda (UK Government, 2022c) and, arguably, Kier Starmer's 'ideological quietism' (Goes, 2021) is an effort to win back socially conservative Red Wall voters who were painted with the 'left behind' brush. Whether these minor symbolic policies have had any tangible effects is up for debate as reflected in the ongoing cost-of-living crisis; already existing inequalities are compounded by the crisis, rather than being reduced through effective government support. The

current cost-of-living crisis is understood by the public as “connected to years of austerity policies in the UK, as well as political and financial instability resulting from Brexit” (Haggar et al., 2023: 3), and is being felt acutely in London as a result of London-specific factors like the private rental housing crisis. Suggesting that the government’s efforts so far have not made a dent in supporting that group they rhetorically centred, the public has very little trust in national or local governments to support them through the crisis and still wants to see “long-term, ambitious spending programmes” to address the issues (Haggar et al., 2023: 26).

The ‘Brexit withdrawal deal’ may, on 27 February 2023, have been finalised with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak finally securing a new deal, bringing an end to questions over Northern Irish trade post-Brexit (BBC News, 2023b). Given the tumultuousness of these negotiations, and the re-entry of the UK into Horizon funding, only time will tell as to whether the relationship defined by the deal will stick or whether we’ll see uncertainty remain. What’s clear from the EU migrants in my research too is that Brexit is certainly *not* over, and questions continue to be raised around the government’s efforts to create certainty (or not) for EU citizens and their post-Brexit settled status (see, for example, the High Court’s February 2023 judgement that ruled the government’s regulations ‘unlawful’ (BBC News, 2023a)).

EU migrants seem only to have lost out from Brexit and what has come since; this is especially the case for those in precarious economic and legal positions, including migrants from the periphery of the EU, like BD16, an Albanian woman living in Dagenham, who didn’t hold EU citizenship but did have some legal standing and would have been able to travel without a visa in the Schengen area from 2025 thanks to a special agreement between the EU and Albania (ETIAS, 2022).

Of course, it was never part of the leave campaign or UK government’s aims since to include those groups in their decision-making; their categorical and rhetorical exclusion has only been perpetuated during the post-Brexit ‘polycrisis’ period (from Brexit to COVID-19 to cost-of-living and small boat crises). Brexit did not ‘solve’ the anti-immigration issue in the UK, as BD14 so succinctly questioned

when she asked what Brexiters expected to happen to all migrants living in the UK the day after Brexit, would they disappear? The hostile environment is alive and kicking under the rule of Suella Braverman's Home Office, as her bilious and dangerous speech at the 2023 Tory Party conference so perfectly illustrates. As the party draws further to the right, the Home Secretary attempted to mobilise support for her party as the only one that could or would attempt to solve the 'hurricane' of "uncontrolled and unmanageable" migration that the UK is facing, which will bring "millions more migrants to these shores" (UKPOL, 2023). So ironic is that this speech came at a time when the staff-starved health and social care sector was finally benefitting from a 'boom' in international recruitment (Migration Observatory, 2023) and hospitality staff shortages reached an 'all time high' thanks to Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis (Otte, 2023).

Brexit has no doubt had cataclysmic and long-term effects, even if it no longer takes centre-stage in the news cycle, and certain stereotypes and exclusionary narratives defined debates surrounding the UK's exit from the EU, in the media and in academia. I've attempted to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge and unpick existing and incomplete understandings of the Brexit vote, moving away from the stereotype of the 'left-behind' leave voter and the "pervasive 'methodological whiteness'" of Brexit research (Bhambra, 2017: 214). Is London all that different to the rest of the UK in Brexit attitudes? My data highlights that underneath the surface, Londoners are extremely diverse in their views on Brexit, and that a one-size-fits-all explanation cannot do justice to this complexity. Political scientists working on Brexit, and British politics more generally, can learn a lot from sociologists like Bourdieu who allow us to interpret society in a more comprehensive (and, I'd say, all the more intriguing) way.

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