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Political Discourse on EU Migration in the United Kingdom

A Comparative Analysis of 2016 and 2021

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Supervisor: Paul Arblaster
Academic year 2022-2023
Master en communication multilingue, finalité spécialisée : langue des affaires

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Aleksandras Brazauskas
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1. Introduction

> ***The suffering for millions of ordinary, decent British folk caused by EU open-door immigration may be a price worth paying for Mr Cameron and his friends so that they can attend fancy summits with the overpaid EU elite, but the social and financial cost of uncontrolled migration to British workers will never be acceptable to me. – (Farage, 2016)***

On June 24, 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). This was the result of a monthslong campaign baptized Brexit. It was a campaign led by various politicians and media organizations to plead for Britons to vote to leave the European Union. During the referendum, 51.9% of the electorate voted Leave, with most of such votes in England and Wales (BBC, 2016).

Even though polls predicted a very close race between the two camps (Financial Times, 2016), the fact that the UK was now leaving the European Union came nonetheless as a shock. Newspapers all across the world had their eyes turned towards the UK, showing disbelief at this historic vote's results. *The New York Times* headline read "British stun the world with vote to leave E.U." (Fidler, 2016), and that of *The i* read "Out, the global shock as Britain quits EU".

The so-called Brexit campaign opposed two camps – those who wanted to stay in the European Union and those who wanted to leave. Each party had created their own platform to promote their arguments and rally supporters to their idea. For Leave, the campaign was called *Vote Leave* and for those who wanted to remain, *Britain Stronger in Europe*. Intense advertising campaigns were led by each side. These campaigns were not only a matter of public opinion, but they were also much bigger political campaigns. As a matter of fact, the Referendum on whether Britain should remain or not in the EU was launched by David Cameron, Britain's Prime Minister from 2010 until his resignation in 2016. The vote itself was launched because of an election promise made by Mr Cameron, pledging to organize a referendum about the future of Britain in the EU if he were re-elected.

Even though the referendum occurred in 2016, the debate on Britain's membership in the European Union was a good thing had already been ongoing for decades. In fact, Britain's relationship was complex from the very beginning, as can be illustrated with the 1975 referendum or the various opt-outs from EU legislation (Tsoukalis, 2019).

During the Brexit campaign, many arguments for the UK to leave were uttered. The main point being that Britain needed to take back control of Britain, suggesting it had lost its sovereignty to the European Union. As we shall see, the discourse on sovereignty is one of the leitmotifs of the Brexit campaign and the discourse surrounding it.

The larger political context was also quite important during the Brexit campaign. A rise of right-wing parties and more nationalistic discourses was also noted all over the Western world, especially in the United States with the election of Donald Trump or with the unprecedented popularity of Marine Le Pen in France. Eastern Europe was not spared the rise of right-wing politics either, countries such as Poland and Hungary being prime examples of such political practices during the years preceding the Brexit vote (Bocskor, 2018). Brexit was thus very much in tune with the more general nationalistic turn that was happening in parts of the Western world.

Taking control of migration policies was a big topic at the time, notably due to the 2015 refugee crisis that hit Europe. Even though this crisis concerned primarily migrants from outside of the European Union, the freedom of movement of people in the EU was also questioned. The 2015 refugee crisis helped further fuel the nationalistic discourses mentioned above, creating a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. Border control and freedom of movement rose to the most discussed topics in politics. Some were calling for ending freedom of movement in the EU (Farage, 2013), others questioned whether the drawbacks outweighed the advantages (May, 2016).

Brexit was no exception: a quick glance at the vote Leave campaign's website lets us know that migration was one of the central topics that Brexiteers seek to target with the referendum. This wase further confirmed by a poll, conducted in the weeks before the referendum vote, which showed that 52% of respondents who were likely to vote Leave mentioned immigration as an issue. Immigration was in fact the most important issue, according to this poll, surpassing even the impact of leaving the EU on Britain's economy (Skinner, 2016).

There is no denying that migration is a very important and potent topic, as much in domestic as in foreign politics. Migration must be discussed and better understood in order to be able to make the most appropriate policy decisions. There are, however, ways in which migration tends to be discussed, which is quite problematic. This was seen with the discourse on migration

surrounding the Brexit campaign and the framing of the entire leave or remain issue. People in favor of Britain leaving the European Union utilized specific rhetorical and linguistic devices to convey a certain narrative of the migration problematic in the UK. Examples are rampant, a notable one being Nigel Farage's poster presenting a picture with mainly male non-white migrants and the slogan "Breaking Point" written in bold, red letters (Stewart & Mason, 2016). Just this one example shows us that not only facts were used as arguments to push for Brexit, but emotional triggers, amongst them fear mongering, inexact or even false information was utilized to push a certain agenda.

A distinction between migration from outside the European Union and from within should be made, as these are regulated by different mechanisms and above all, the discourse surrounding each category revealed itself to be quite different from each other.

It is important to look at different aspects of the political and public discourse surrounding this topic. There is no politics without language, thus language and the way it is used is of utmost importance to grasp the problematic as a whole and not be misled by discourses, which seek to do so. Analyzing the arguments put up by both parties, the narrative constructed around migration of EU nationals to and from the UK will be the main focus here.

This thesis will focus on how migration, and more specifically intra-EU migration was framed during the Brexit campaign in 2016, in the months surrounding the referendum and compare this discourse with the one in 2021, once the EU settlement scheme application was closed. This thesis seeks to bring to light several points. First, it seeks to show that the EU and the UK had complex ties from the onset and that migration was already an issue long before Brexit. Next, it seeks to show that Britain's view of the EU was narrowly utilitarian, something that will be seen during the analysis. I will then strive to show that the public and political discourse surrounding EU migration and freedom of movement utilized a series of frames throughout the Brexit campaign in order to seek out an emotional trigger from the voters, sometimes overshadowing facts and concrete figures. This thesis will also seek to show that the EU and uncontrolled migration were often mixed together, catching EU migrants in the crossfire. Finally, a comparison between the discourse on EU migrants in 2016 and in 2021 will be performed. This comparison will point out the place and utility they are given in British society in 2016 and subsequently in 2021.

In order to analyze the discourse surrounding EU migration at the onset of Brexit and when it came into effect, the thesis will first try to flesh out what is the European Union and how it came to be, trying to pinpoint its stance and powers over the migration policy of member countries. Following this, we will then look at Britain's relationship with the EU and its rocky history, showing that ties between both parties were complex from the very beginning. This part will be followed by an overview of Euroscepticism in Britain, to better comprehend the stakes and main points of friction between the EU and the UK.

Once the general context is established, we will take a closer look at migration in the UK in general, outlining the main sources and motivations of migration to Britain. As we shall see, Britain's migration landscape is quite a diverse one, EU migrants being only one part of the equation. This will then allow us to discuss Brexit, the main actors behind the campaign and the numerous problems it sought to bring forward.

Section 4 will outline the methodology of the qualitative research led, which will analyze the political discourse about EU migration in 2016 and 2021. The corpus analyzed will be the questions to the Prime Minster (PMQs) related to EU migration and freedom of movement. The dialogues will be contextualized, when necessary, to better explain what the issue is and to provide more context to the questions. The analysis will be performed separately for 2016, then for 2021 and will be followed by a discussion comparing discourses of selected time frames in order to see whether the discourse changed, evolved into something else or remained the same thus concluding the present thesis.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

A2 countries	Romania and Bulgaria. Countries who joined the EU in 2007-2008.
A8 countries	The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Countries who all share a similar ex-Eastern bloc background and joined the EU in 2004.
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEE countries	Central and Eastern European countries
ECSC	European Coal and Steal Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EPU	European Payments Union
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural Investment Fund
EU	European Union
EU15 countries	Countries part of the European Union before the 2004 enlargement
EU25 countries	Countries part of the European Union after the 2004 enlargement
EU27 countries	Countries part of the European Union after the 2007 enlargement
EU28 countries	Countries part of the European Union after the 2013 enlargement
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
HGV	Heavy goods vehicle
IPS	International Passenger Survey
LTIM	Long Term International Migration
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NINO	National Insurance Number
NHS	National Health Service
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Co-operation
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PM	Prime Minister
SNP	Scottish National Party
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
WWII	World War II

2. A Brief Historical Background of the EU

To better understand the issue of discourse on EU migration in the Brexit campaign, we first need to look at the European Union and its creation. This will allow us to grasp the EU's primary purpose as well as the potential points of friction that may arise with member countries. Subsequently, it will allow us to better understand why Britain chose to leave the Union with the 2016 referendum.

2.1. The Creation of the European Union

The origins of the European Union can be traced back to the late 1940s, early 1950s. Europe just recently emerged from World War II. There were four driving factors, which contributed significantly to pushing the creation of a common European project. The first one was a need to ensure peace throughout the continent, after two world wars, during the first half of the century, wars which brought unparalleled human casualties, followed by catastrophic economic losses (Loth, 2015, p. 2). The second motivation was to find a way to keep Germany in check. Indeed, there needed to be a way to prevent provoking Germany into another conflict. As a matter of fact, Léon Blum, the French Socialist leader had suggested that in order to eliminate Germany as a threat, it should be included in an international community (Blum, 1946, p. 116). Economic cooperation was thus seen as being a good way to lower the chances of another conflict erupting between western powers. The third reason was the economic imperative, driven by industrialization. Indeed, European powers very quickly realized that domestic markets were too small and that to preserve productivity and have a chance to compete with America, which was steadily industrializing and growing economically, they needed to adopt some commonly beneficial economic regulations. The fourth reason stems from the third, Europe as a continent had to impose itself to be able to compete and play in the same field as the two new world super powers, namely the United States and the Soviet Union. In other words, economic cooperation would be a gateway to mending political differences, which divided the European continent for a very long time (O'Rourke, 2019, p. 4). The ability to fend off the Soviet Union was more important to the common benefit of European nations. This would lead them to put their political differences aside.

The first European institution was created in 1948. It was the Organization for European Economic Co-operation or OEEC, which was superseded by the Organization for Economic Co-operation or OECD in 1961 (Griffiths, 1997, p. 3). The OEEC was an intergovernmental

organization, which had the purpose of managing the distribution of the Marshall Aid and to try to create a customs union in Europe. Seventeen countries were part of the project: Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Demark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Turkey. One of the great achievements of the OEEC was reinstating multilateral trade between France and Germany, which in turn lead to reinstating convertible currencies (O'Rourke, 2019, p. 42). This was the first major step towards a Europe trading more freely.

The success brought by the OEEC led to the creation of the European Payments Union (EPU), an essential institution in allowing the European common market to emerge. To strengthen the economic ties between European countries and continuing on the path set out by the OEEC, the European Coal and Steel Community or ECSC was established in 1951 with the Treaty of Paris and is the first European Community. The ECSC was born thanks to the vision of Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister at the time. In Schuman's own words, "this [the ECSC] will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace." (Representation in Luxembourg (European Commission), 2020, p. 42)

The ECSC consisted in pooling coal and steel resources together by 'the Six' Western European countries, which have become known as the founding nations of the European project. The United Kingdom was also invited to join in, though refused, mainly because the Labour government, which was then in power, had just nationalized the coal production in Britain. Collaborating with continental Europe's right wing governments did not seem appropriate, because Britain produced a lot more coal than 'the Six' and it would also interfere with the Imperial Trade Preferences tariff system with the Commonwealth (Grob-Fitzgibbon, 2016, p. 134). The other reason was that France had not invited Britain to discuss the terms and conditions of the ECSC, only proposing the done deal, a deal which Britain refused to take on. The policies and functioning of the ECSC would be supervised and implemented by the High Authority, which consisted of nine ministers from the member countries. Next to the High Authority, the ECSC is structured around a traditional power distribution among key entities, namely the Common Assembly, the Court of Justice, and the Council. Together, these components form what Jacques Delors referred to as the 'institutional square.' These measures would serve as a foundation for many of the future institutions within the Community, as we

shall see. The ECSC managed to establish a common market between France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy, "without tariffs, quotas, restrictive practices or discriminatory measures, with a common tariff on imports from the rest of the world." (O'Rourke, 2019, p. 46). Coal and steel were chosen for this first step of an economic integration on the European continent for several reasons. First, coal and steel are the two prime materials which were the main source of wealth for Europe. They are also the primary ingredient for arms manufacturing. Finally, preferential tariffs would encourage trade and thus stimulate the economy and contribute to rebuilding Europe after WWII. The project and its implementation were in no way perfect, though with the ECSC, 'the Six' managed to boost their countries' economies and make them more reliant on one another thus pushing the fear of another armed conflict further away.

The next step in the creation of the European Union as we know it today came about in 1957 with the Treaties of Rome, which established the European Economic Community (EEC) as well as the European Atomic Energy Community or EURATOM for short, which are, respectively, the second and the third European Community. From this point on, when referring to The Treaty of Rome, the one establishing the EEC is being referred to. The EEC promised a big change for 'the Six', it had the power to establish a customs union with internal free trade and a common external tariff (Usherwood & Pinder, 2018, p. 13). The EEC also covered the free movement of workers and the freedom of establishment. This lessened the chance that a war would arise between France and Germany, as this would mean catching German nationals living in France and vice versa in the crossfires. It also made it possible to balance out the workforce and allocate it more easily where it is most needed. For instance, when there is unemployment in Italy and a shortage of workers in Germany, the workforce can move freely from one country to the other to fill the gap. The notion of free movement of workers would be extended to all EU citizens with the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, an essential difference, as this will grant all EU nationals, not only workers, rights to move and live where they please (European Parliament, 2022).

The Court of Justice established the principle of primacy and the direct effect of Community law in 1963 and 1964, seeking to enact the obligation of the Treaty of Rome to see that the law is observed (Amato et al., 2019, p. 201). These judgements made sure that the treaties and the

legislation of the various institutions would be respected and subsequently bind the European Communities together.

It is important to mention the Common Agricultural Policy or CAP, because it is to be thanked for the emergence of new powers given to the Common Assembly or the European Parliament as we know it now. The CAP is based on price supports, meaning that significant amounts of funds are necessary. Naturally, member countries agreed that the financing of the CAP was to be paid for with the EEC budget. To supervise and allocate these funds, parliamentary control was necessary, and coordinating six different parliaments was not practical. Thus, the European Parliament was tasked of controlling and voting upon the budget of the CAP.

As with the ECSC, the implementation was not flawless. A conflict on the way to implement the treaty of Rome emerged between France and the rest of the member countries. France, with De Gaulle as its president as of 1958, did not share the view that the EEC should become a supranational institution; the vision of a more intergovernmental cooperation scheme was more in line with France's politics. This tug of war between a more federalist and a more intergovernmental project endure to this day and was also one of the main points of friction for Britain. It is also under De Gaulle that the first attempt of the UK to join the EEC occurred, alongside Denmark, Ireland and Norway. The French president had vetoed the enlargement of the union and the accession of Britain, something which will be discussed in section 2. 2..

Nevertheless, the EEC managed to implement a single customs union by 1968, even earlier than the Treaty of Rome had required. The external tariff allowed the EEC to become a comparable power to the US in the field of trade. The period became known as the 'swinging sixties. With steady economic growth and a prospective future, the membership of the EEC was prone to expansion to neighboring countries.

The year 1992, with the Treaty of Maastricht, was pivotal in creating the European Union as we know it today, with a deeper European political integration and the freedom of movement at the heart of the European project. This very freedom was put into question by Brexit and even before 2016. To understand the main points of friction, we must look at how the Union became larger.

Successive union enlargements

The first enlargement of the EEC occurred in January 1973, with the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland joined the Community. Only eight years later in 1981, Greece accessed the EEC, followed closely by Spain and Portugal in 1986 (Usherwood & Pinder, 2018, p. 21). This brought the total of member countries to 12. With Spain, Portugal and Greece being poorer than the rest of the member countries, the EEC sought to bring them up to higher economic standards through structural funds (ESIFs), the most well-known being the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This was made possible thanks to the cohesion policy enunciated in the Single European Act of 1987. The Single Act was pivotal in the European Communities' success, as it managed to strengthen both the powers and the various institutions of the EEC, consolidated the single market by 1992 and opened the way to the Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon Treaties.

All four treaties, Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon were extremely important for the shaping of the European Union. The changes these treaties brought were also facilitated by the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, opening a prospect for further enlargement. The most pivotal treaty is the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, or the Treaty on European Union (TEU) as it is often called. It provided the legal basis for the creation of a single currency, the euro and thus the European Central Bank, but also gave powers in various domains including culture, youth, education and public health. With the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union was officially established, merging the ECSC, EEC and EURATOM under the same roof. The Maastricht Treaty is the most important in the current research, as it is the one establishing the four freedoms of the EU: the freedom of goods, capital and services as well as the freedom of movement and residency for people of EU citizenship, consolidating the vision of the free movement of workers established with the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Steps were made to facilitate the free movement of persons with the Schengen Agreement of 1985, which came into effect in 1995. The Agreement abolished internal borders of the EU by suppressing systematic checks at the border of the country and reinforced international cooperation. Only two countries, Ireland and the United Kingdom, opted out of the Agreement, which was implemented in the main Treaty of the EU in 1997 in Amsterdam.

The Treaty also laid out two essential policy points, a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) as well as cooperation in justice and home affairs (Tizzano, 2023). This had as a result, the fact that almost no field of state policy was beyond the reach of the EU law, something that displeased federalist sceptics and Eurosceptics alike, Britain being amongst the main opposers of this new chapter of European integration (Grob-Fitzgibbon, 2016, p. 459).

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 mainly brought amendments to the Treaty of 1992, in the fields of freedom, security and justice, citizens' rights as well as reworkings of the CFSP to make it more efficient and coherent to better defend the Union's interests on the international stage (European Commission, 1999). Meanwhile, in 1995, the Union had enlarged once again, with Austria, Finland and Sweden joining. This brought the total of member countries to 15, with a prospect of a further enlargement to the East, including former Soviet countries as well as satellite states. Reforms had to be made to prepare for almost doubling the number of member states, notably in the fields of the CAP and that of structural funds. The EU tried to do so with the Treaty of Nice in 2001, which proclaimed the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which only entered into force in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty and the increase "Parliament's legislative and supervisory powers are increased and qualified-majority voting is extended to more areas within the Council" (European Parliament, n.d.).

As of 2015, a total of 28 countries constituted the European Union, having enlarged in 2004, 2007 and 2013 as can be seen in Figure 1. This brought the total population of the EU to 508.2 million people (Eurostat, 2015), all enjoying the four freedoms, the founding principles of the European Union.

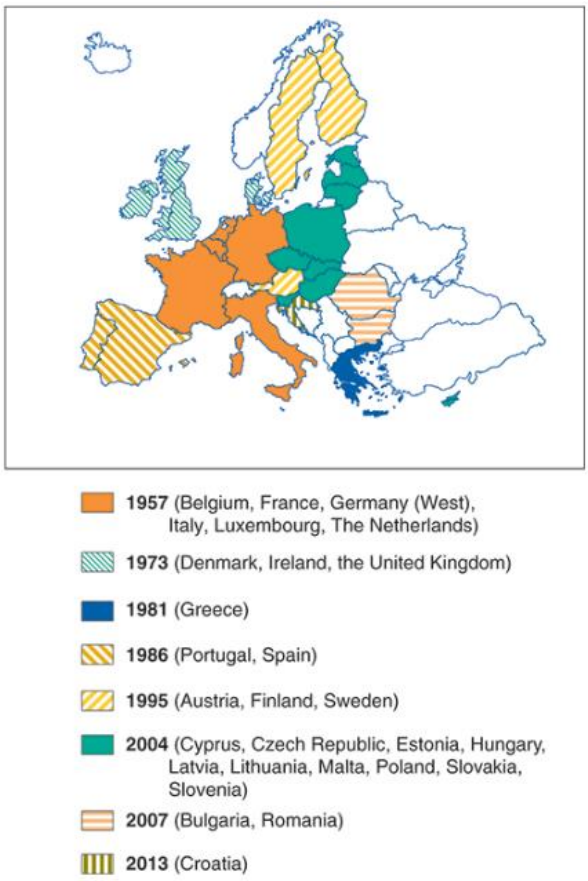

Figure 1 Usherwood and Pinder. 2018. The changing membership of the EU since 1957. In *The European Union: A Very Short Introduction (p. 24)*

2.2. Freedom of Movement for EU Nationals

Freedom of movement of people in the European Union is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the European Union. As we have seen, it was firstly implemented mainly for economic purposes in the EEC and so as to provide the European market with a more agile workforce, thus facilitating labor force allocation. The freedom of movement had very different proportions on a year-to-year basis. With the Treaty of Maastricht, the freedom of movement notion was extended to all EU citizens. This meant that a Brit could retire in Spain, a Swede could study in France and a German could work in Italy. Even though people did use the right of freedom of movement in the EU-15, it was nowhere to the same extent as in the upcoming EU-25 and EU-27.

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements were a big shock to this system. A big spike in intra-EU migration occurred from 2004, due to the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, granting 12 countries, albeit with some restrictions, the rights to the four fundamental freedoms (Usherwood & Pinder, 2018, p. 61). As an indicator of scale, between 2004 and 2007, almost 2 million Polish nationals were “temporarily residing” in another EU country (Galgóczi et al.,

2011, p. 21) and between 2004 and 2009, about 200 000 citizens from the Baltic states registered for a National Insurance Number (NINO) in Britain (Grabowska-Lusinska et al., 2013, p. 92). This new reality of the European labor market could be seen by an inflow of eastern Europeans to many Western countries, some of which recorded record numbers of inbound migration. One such country was the UK, recording the highest rate of labor migration in 2005.

To conclude this first section on the brief overview of the history of the European Union, let us summarize what we have established. The creation of the EU was a lengthy process spanning over almost seventy years. Through various treaties, the European project first took shape as an economic community, allowing for smoother economic cooperation through the ECSC and EEC. More competencies were given to the Union over the years, such as education, health and human rights. The balance between whether the European Union should be an intergovernmental or a more supranational endeavor was never truly struck, leading to discontent and skepticism towards it. Some degree of supranational rule is inevitable, the EU Court of Justice, for instance. The United Kingdom has always been at the forefront of hostile sentiment towards the EU, looking more often towards it in a pragmatic way, not sharing the supranational vision and trying to preserve its own interests, both economically with the US and the Commonwealth, as well as politically, wielding the notion of sovereignty at every step. Such discourse constituted Britain's stance from the beginning, allowing us to better understand the conflicts which emerged with Brexit, notably the free movement of people, which started posing serious challenges with the 2004 and 2007 enlargements.

2.3. The 2004 and 2007 EU Expansions

It is important to put into context the 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the EU, as they brought upon major challenges for the Union and for the freedom of movement and residency policies, leading to an emergence various policies against them like transitionary periods and an anti-immigration discourse, which was omnipresent in the Brexit campaign, the focus of this thesis. It is also from the countries of the 2004 and 2007 expansion rounds, that the majority of EU nationals' migration to the UK came from.

The 2004 expansion of the EU when ten countries were allowed to join the European Union as well as the 2007 expansion with Romania and Bulgaria, were by far the most significant

enlargements of the Union. Not only did these successive expansions altered the functioning of the European institutions, it also significantly changed the European labor market. These countries were: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia in 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania in 2007.

Countries that joined in 2004 are often referred to as the A8 countries, due to their similar history and economic situation. The two other countries, Cyprus and Malta, are not part of the A8 list, mostly because their overall economic situation resembled more or less that of Western EU countries. The denomination, which encompasses both the countries of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements is Central and Eastern European or CEE countries. The 2004 enlargement meant that the zone of the 'four freedoms' – free movement of capital, goods, services and people was enlarged. Several areas of debate emerged around this expansion, mostly around the pros and cons of free movement. There was the fear of a collapse of Western welfare states, because of overwhelming waves of immigration from poorer A8 countries as well as fear of welfare shopping (Grabowska-Lusinska et al., 2013, p. 119). Due to high unemployment rates in CEE countries, fears of massive waves of migration also arose as a subject of concern (Grabowska-Lusinska et al., 2013, p. 174), just as fears of some sort of social dumping on Western European labor markets (Ricci 2019).

In order to try to curb and control the predicted mass influxes into EU-15 countries, a seven-year transitional period was instated in most countries so as to limit the full access to EU-15 labor markets for A8 nationals. These measures set quotas and other limitations and were not compulsory for member countries to put in place. Three EU-15 countries decided to open their labor markets with no restrictions whatsoever. They were Ireland, Sweden and the UK.
The Labour party, the ruling party at the time, decided to not impose a transitionary period, in part because it thought that most EU-15 countries would do the same and thus allow for better distribution of migration and because of diplomacy. The UK was in favor of letting CEE countries join the EU which granted them freedom of movement rights because of potential economic prospects in that area (Consterdine, 2016).

The UK found itself welcoming a lot more people than it first expected. The first estimate of migrants from CEE countries was between 5 000 and 13 000 (Dustmann et al., 2003). In 2004 and 2005, the UK ended welcoming 129 000 A8 nationals (Salt, 2015, p. 18), a big overshoot

from initial predictions. This sparked anti-immigrant sentiment across the country, triggering a debate whether free movement of EU nationals is a wholly good thing (Peter, 2014). After the 2007 enlargement, Britain imposed a seven-year transitionary period, the longest transitionary period possible for A2 citizens. Let us now turn to the main reasons of intra-EU migration, which will allow us to better understand the stakes during and after the Brexit campaign.

2.4. Reasons for intra-EU Migration

Migration is not a process that happens spontaneously, it is thus important to understand the reasons for it. The freedom of movement of people is the one that allows for such easy migration for people and their families within the European Union. Not only is this useful for such things as tourism, but it is also this same freedom that allows EU nationals of one country to go to work and live in another EU country very easily. The fundamental argument advocating for this freedom was the will to create a mobile workforce, which would be able to answer demand in certain regions, to balance out supply and demand of the workforce, ultimately leading to more growth as a whole (Bonin et al., 2008, p. 52) and thus allow for a more agile labor force. Having said this, let us take a look at the main factors driving migration within the EU.

In the 2019 survey conducted by Fischer-Souan and Quasoli (2019), there are four broad categories of driving forces of intra-EU migration. The first factor is the higher standards of living than in the country of origin. This might be the most obvious reason for intra-EU migration. EU citizens tend to move abroad to seek a better paid job. This factor also ties into the working conditions which one must bear in their country of origin.

The second broad category identified by Fischer-Souan and Quasoli (2019) is the career opportunities and professional challenges. The respondents of the survey identified this as a driving force for migration. This force speaks more to highly skilled respondents, which are less motivated by the economic advantages of working a better paid job, than they are by the career opportunities, which they can better achieve abroad. Such migrants tend to target countries where a particular sector is particularly important.

> You have opportunities that do not exist in Italy...especially [when you consider] the career that you can [make for yourself] here in England as a nurse. The ability to decide in which [clinical] department you want to work, decide when you want to move. You can decide for yourself, it's not others who decide for you. (Italian woman in the UK, aged 25) (Fischer-Souan & Quassoli, 2019, p. 11)

Discontent with social, political, and cultural norms in the country of origin is the third factor identified by the research. This motivating factor is spread out thorough skill levels and countries and does not rely on the commonly understood economic and career factors mentioned above. People migrating for such reasons look for a way to escape some sort of oppression in their home country or to break away from measures they disagree with, such as family structures or religious views. One example of people who migrate for such reasons are homosexual people, who move to a country where they could live more freely, as was the case for a Bulgarian 36 year old man who moved to London (Fischer-Souan & Quassoli, 2019, p. 14). Such migration thus does not seek a more comfortable financial position abroad, they look for a different set of norms and values, which suit them better as individuals.

The last factor stimulating migration within the European Union is the wish to renew a previous mobility experience. This factor includes people who have already experienced some sort of living arrangement abroad and want to renew such an experience. This speaks to people the researchers call the "Erasmus generation" (Fischer-Souan & Quassoli, 2019, p. 14), referring to the EU's academic mobility program, which allows a student from one European university to study in another European university for at least a semester. People who have already experienced living abroad may be motivated to do it again by moving to another country.

The important thing to keep in mind is that most of the time, several of these reasons are articulated when talking about motivations for migration. To put it another way, rarely is the will to experience another culture the sole reason for someone migrating to another country.

It is because of the first factor, namely higher net wages than in their home countries, that a big chunk of migration from CEE countries to the UK happened after 2004. Around 86% of potential migrants from A8 countries cited a higher salary as their main motivation for migration (Grabowska-Lusinska et al., 2013, p. 98). Higher wages were thus the main driver of migration from CEE countries to the UK.

As for the nature of work being done abroad by EU citizens, it is most often in low skilled or semi-skilled working areas. Research conducted in 2007 shows that the vast majority of A8 migrants working in the Glasgow area, about 71%, were employed in manual work, 8% in clerical/secretarial work, 8% in junior technical/secretarial roles, 8% in senior technical or professional work and only 5% in supervisorial positions. This goes to show that the A8

nationals were mostly employed in low paying, low skilled positions. This is important to mention, as this will allow us to comprehend the framing used in the discourse on EU migration in Britain as well as the subjects of concern 2021.

2.5. Quantifying EU Nationals in Britain

Given that the focus of this thesis is discourse on EU migration in Britain, it is relevant to quantify the amount of EU nationals in the UK. To do so, the report on International Migration and the United Kingdom, made by Professor John Salt in 2015 will be used. The report was drafted using data from the International Passage Survey (IPS), a sample survey accounting for both inflows and outflows in the UK. The survey data is compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce Long Term International Migration (LTIM) statistics. In the survey, immigrants are defined as people intending of staying for a year or more in the country.

The survey shows that foreign nationals represented 8.8 % of the total UK population, of which, 60.7% or about 3.4 million people are European citizens. As aforementioned, a substantial wave of migration occurred in the UK, after the accession of the A8 countries in 2004 into the European Union. It is thus unsurprising that the bulk of European foreign nationals in the UK come from CEE countries. The A8 and A2 countries represented 30.6 % or 1.7 million of the total foreign population in the UK. Polish nationals account for 15.3% of the total foreign population in the UK, making them the largest foreign population in the country.

The European foreign population incidentally constitutes the biggest share of the foreign workforce, about 65% of the total. Given that the European foreign population is 60.7% and the workforce is 65%, the numbers seem off. This is easily explained by the fact that seasonal workers are not accounted for in the IPS. About 35.9% of the total workforce came from A8 and A2 countries. The foreign population as a whole represents 10.3% of the total workforce in the UK.

It is also important to mention the status of employment as well as the occupation of EU nationals in Britain. It is difficult to accurately sample unemployment rates by national group, as groups with cell sizes of over 10 000 are shown. Significant errors may thus occur. Nevertheless, the data suggests that EU15 nationals had an 8.1% unemployment rate, compared

to only 3.3% for the A8 population. The unemployment rate of EU nationals in 2015 gravitated around 5.5% or about 115 000 people and the rate has been falling since 2013.

When it comes to the occupation of EU nationals, the ONS divides it into three groups. Group A represents professionals, employers and managers, group B represents intermediate employment and group C accounts for routine or least skilled labor. About 30.8% percent of EU28 citizens were employed in group A jobs, 28.9% in group B and 37.3% in group C.

These statistics allow us to address a couple of key points. First, the foreign population in the UK represents only 8.8% of the total, compared to about 20% in Belgium as of 2020 (Biougre, 2021). Next, the bulk of immigrants in the UK, about 60% come from the EU and account for more than 65% of the foreign workforce. Lastly, the majority of EU28 nationals work in routine or low skilled jobs. This short overview of EU migrants in the UK will come in handy when analyzing the discourse surrounding freedom of movement.

2.6. Britain's Way to the European Union

As briefly mentioned in section 2. 1., Britain's way to integrating the EU was long and complex. The UK was only able to join the EU on the third application and always distanced themselves from EU's integration processes through various opt-outs, notably when it came to matters relating to migration, which goes to show the complexities and conflicts of this relationship. Opt-outs and exceptions negotiated by the UK also underline the narrow and utilitarian vision that Britain holds of EU membership, valuing first and foremost economic benefit, as will be clearly shown in the analysis in sections 5. and 6.. Thus, understanding this relationship helps us understand the arguments brought by the Brexit campaign, on matters of migration, sovereignty as well as financial arguments of the campaign.

After WWII, Britain was at the forefront of European unification. It was one of the main actors of the OEEC (O'Rourke, 2019, p. 62), but lost its leading role when it opted out of the ECSC and withdrew from the Spaak Committee in charge of drafting the Treaty of Rome in 1955, which led to establishing the EEC. These decisions were motivated by the fact that British politics were not interested in further integration and supranational institutions with the Six. Britain also had solid economic ties with the United States as well as with the Commonwealth

nations with preferential tariffs in place. This relationship would be hindered if Britain were to access the ECSC or the EEC.

There was thus no great motivation for Britain to pursue the track sought by the Six. In fact, Harold Macmillan, the Foreign Secretary at the time, tried to torpedo the EEC project, as this would put Britain in a disadvantageous position with the Six. These attempts were unsuccessful, and the project went along anyway. Britain had underestimated the will of the Six to pursue such integration (Kaiser, 1996, p. 27) for reasons stated in 2.2..

Britain's efforts to counter the EEC were met with a lack of trust towards it, especially when a reversal of policy by Macmillan himself, came in 1961, and an application to join the EEC was lodged in. Britain decided to apply because of shrinking exports to the now crumbling Commonwealth and because of American support for the EEC, indirectly encouraging Britan to join the European Communities too. Britain was left in a tight spot. Concerns of losing power and economic performance on the one hand, or losing sovereignty and having outside actors interfering in the British parliamentary process in various fields, like agriculture, transport or migration, (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 1971) on the other left Britain divided. Even though the application of 1961 and 1967 were vetoed by de Gaulle, Britain managed to join the European Communities in 1973. The third time round, the accession was not without its hurdles. Indeed, Britain had to resolve domestic divisions between Labour, which was anti-EEC and Tories, which were divided on the question within the party. Britain was due to vote whether to remain or leave the EEC in 1975, only two years after joining. The referendum's result was in favor of remaining in the EEC, by a margin of two-to-one. A somewhat unexpected result, considering the polls from six months earlier, where 55% of respondents said that they would vote against membership (Worcester, 2000, pp. 3–4). This referendum settled internal and popular divisions on the European question, though only for a while.

Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives came into power in 1979, which marked the beginning of new tensions regarding the European Communities. The first of which was the negotiations of lowering the contribution of the UK in the EEC's budget, which was estimated far too high by the ruling party, arguing that a *juste retour* was in order (Grob-Fitzgibbon, 2016, p. 416). The Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 was the main catalyst for Euroscepticism in Britain to settle in and was later exacerbated by the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007. Even though Thatcher

and her push for liberalism was thus implemented with the single market, voices at home arose, pointing out that Britain has lost some of its sovereignty in multiple matters.

Euroscepticism in Britain

As mentioned in section 2.1., The United Kingdom has a long history of Euroscepticism. A late joining of the EEC for reasons detailed above, various opt outs and integration oppositions such as the Schengen Agreement or the single currency, to the culmination of the Brexit referendum in 2016, Britain has shown many instances of a certain hostility towards the European project. A very broad term to encompass this hostility is Euroscepticism. Euroscepticism can be defined in many different ways, but the salient feature is "the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (Taggart, 1998, p. 366).

In the UK, fears of losing sovereignty to foreign bodies, economic loss through excessive contributions to the EU as well as immigration and free movement concerns constitute the main reasons for Euroscepticism. Not all Eurosceptics share the same worries and not to the same extent. It is thus better seen as a spectrum. For instance, some think that the single market is beneficial, though the free movement of EU citizens should be reviewed. Others think that the European Project is an abomination and should be abandoned altogether. An interesting distinction to make a distinction between hard and soft Eurosceptics (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008, p. 6). This distinction will come in useful when discussing the political discourse on EU migration during and after Brexit.

Most British political parties expressed Eurosceptic concerns at some point in time. The Labour party's official policy was against the EEC accession of Britain in 1973 (Grob-Fitzgibbon, 2016, p. 362) and the Conservatives were responsible for the 2016 referendum. However, the party which campaigned for Britain to leave the European Union since the 1990s' is the UK Independence Party (UKIP). The only party which did not share many Eurosceptic views are the Liberal Democrats, though they did side with the Conservative party, which became increasingly Eurosceptic, in 2010 to form a Coalition government. These four parties and their stances are instrumental in understanding the political discourse on EU migration. A more detailed overview will be provided in section 3.2. discussing the actors of the 2016 referendum.

3. Brexit

It is vital to contextualize Brexit, given the fact that it played an important role in shaping the discourse on EU migration, both in 2016 and in 2021.

3.1. Origins

As aforementioned, the referendum to vote whether to remain or leave the European Union was put in place by David Cameron, the Conservative party Prime Minister from 2010 to 2016, as an electoral promise made during the 2015 General Election campaign. The Conservative party would organize a referendum whether to remain or leave the EU by 2017, if they were reelected to lead the British government in the 2015 general elections (Perraudin, 2015). The Conservatives won the elections and as promised, proceeded to organize the referendum on Britain's future in the EU.

The main point of interest of this thesis is the discourse on freedom of movement and EU migration. It is thus important to mention that David Cameron promised to renegotiate freedom of movement laws with the EU already in 2013, in order to curb people coming to Britain to do 'benefit tourism' (Traynor, 2013). The proposal was quickly shot down by the European Commission, saying that the four fundamental freedoms are not to be tampered with (Mason & Oltermann, 2014).

Divisions on the European Union had already emerged long before, as covered in section 2. 6.. The general situation in Europe in the decade preceding the referendum, with two major crises, raised the UK's hostility towards the EU. The eurozone crisis of 2008 and which pushed Europe into a recession and the 2015 migrant crisis in the Mediterranean contributed to rising Eurosceptic sentiments across Europe and especially in Britain, as can be seen in figure 2. These crises had more severe consequences on one part of the population, which felt like they found themselves on the losing side of European integration. This sentiment can succinctly be summarized with the following sentence : "There is a growing divide, both economically and culturally, between those who feel left behind by the forces of globalization and those who feel they have benefitted from it." (Hobolt, 2016, p. 1272).

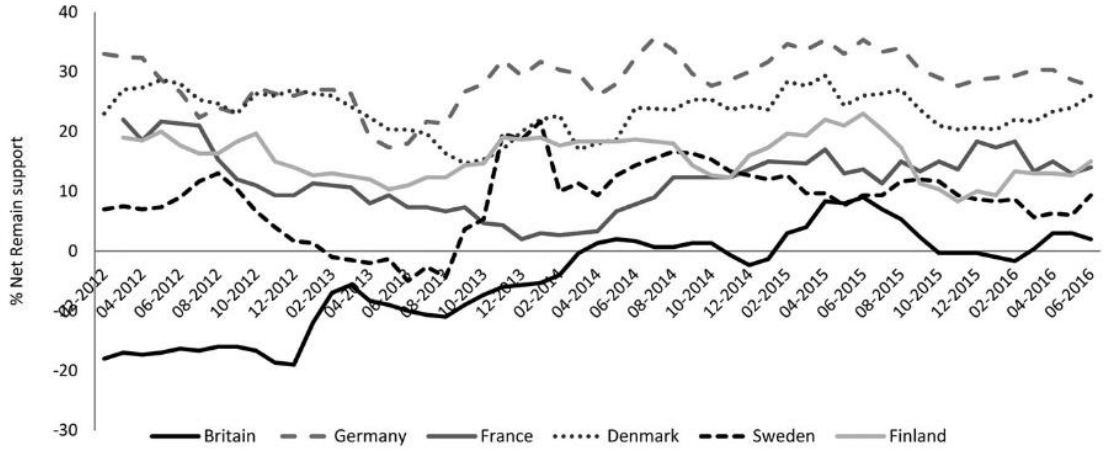

Figure 2 Hobolt. 2016. Support for EU membership across Europe. In *The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent (p.1272)*

Conservative party's divisions within also played a role in making Brexit happen. Already in 2011, under David Cameron, 81 Tory MPs voted in favor of holding a referendum for UK's membership in the EU (Watt, 2011). The motion was defeated by 483 votes to 111, though this set a dangerous precedent for the Conservatives, showing that a significant proportion of backbenchers shared Eurosceptic views.

The rebellion of Tory backbenchers was followed by a rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) popularity in opinion polls in 2013. The rate hovered around 17% of vote intention, only ten points below the Conservatives (Helm, 2013). This was yet another indication that the British public and political actors were becoming ever more Eurosceptic. This was further confirmed in 2014. UKIP secured the majority of votes in the European elections of 2014, earning them 24 seats in the European Parliament (Treib, 2014, p. 1544).

Brexit was therefore born from many factors which came together in the decade preceding it. On a European level, the 2008 eurozone crisis stalled European economies and the 2015 migrant crisis fueled fears of immigration across the UK. Domestically, the Conservatives won the general elections, with a referendum on EU membership as their main campaign promise and the support for UKIP was on the rise. UKIP, having campaigned for the UK to leave the EU since the 1990s really showed the hostility some felt against the EU. The end of the seven-year transitionary period set for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens also came to an end in 2014, fueling fears of receiving large amounts of migration, as was the case after the 2004 enlargement.

3.2. Political Actors of the Brexit Campaign

The Brexit campaign articulated itself around several distinct actors. First, there were two main camps advocating for their side in the referendum. There were several different campaigns both for leave and remain, though only one on each side emerged as the official one. Those who wanted to remain in the EU called their group *Britain Stronger in Europe.* The Labour Party had their own campaign called *Labour In,* though the former was the official remain campaign. The people wanting to leave rallied around the *Vote Leave* campaign. It is also important to mention the *Grassroots Out* or *GO* and *Leave.eu* campaigns, which also campaigned to leave the EU. In April 2016, *Vote Leave* was designated as the official leave campaign by the Electoral Commission (Stone, 2016). On both sides of the Brexit divide, the economic impact of the EU, be it positive or negative, was central in all campaigns. Such narrow economic concerns will be further reflected in the discourse analysis.

These campaigns were supported by various political and public actors and were cross-party alliances. It is difficult to name every public figure which supported one side or the other. Let us look at the stances of the most prominent political parties during the Brexit campaign, namely the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, UKIP, and the Scottish National Party.

The Conservative Party, led by David Cameron, officially supported the Remain campaign during the Brexit referendum. They argued that remaining in the EU was in the UK's best interests economically, providing access to the single market and benefiting from EU-negotiated trade agreements. While the party acknowledged concerns over immigration and sovereignty, they believed that leaving the EU would pose risks to the economy and diminish the UK's international influence. However, the Conservative Party was not entirely united on the issue. Prominent members like Boris Johnson and Michael Gove openly supported the Leave campaign (Gove, 2016). After the majority of UK voters chose to leave the EU, Cameron resigned, and Theresa May took over as Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader.

In contrast, the Labour Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, took a somewhat nuanced stance on Brexit. While officially campaigning for the UK to remain in the EU, the party's position was perceived as less wholehearted compared to the Conservative Party's pro-Remain stance. Corbyn, a long-standing critic of the EU, had a history of Euroscepticism and had voted against EU measures

in the past (Prince, 2019). Nonetheless, he advocated for remaining in the EU, highlighting the benefits of workers' rights, environmental protections, and access to the single market.

The Liberal Democrats, a historically pro-European party led by Tim Farron, took a clear and unequivocal stance in support of remaining in the EU during the referendum. Lib Dems strongly opposed Brexit, asserting that leaving the EU would have negative consequences for the UK's economy, job market, and international standing. They advocated for a second referendum on the final Brexit deal to give the public an opportunity to reconsider and potentially remain in the EU (Courea & Casalicchio, 2019). The party's pro-Remain stance was a central pillar of their campaign and remained a prominent aspect of their platform in subsequent elections.

The UK Independence Party (UKIP), led by Nigel Farage, played a crucial role in advocating for Brexit during the referendum, despite having only one seat in the House of Commons at the time. UKIP campaigned vigorously for the UK to leave, centering their message on regaining national sovereignty or “taking back control” (Hawkins, 2021, p. 105), controlling immigration, and redirecting financial contributions to the EU towards domestic priorities (Quinn, 2015). The campaign appealed to those who felt disillusioned with EU membership and its perceived impact on national autonomy.

On the other hand, the Scottish National Party (SNP) took a firm stance against Brexit, advocating for the UK to remain. Led by Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP believed that continued EU membership was in Scotland's best interests economically and politically. They argued that leaving the EU would undermine Scotland's access to the single market, disrupt trade relationships, and potentially harm key sectors such as agriculture and fisheries (Edgington, 2019a). The SNP highlighted Scotland's overwhelming vote to remain in the EU during the referendum and called for the UK government to respect Scotland's democratic choice. The party consistently voiced concerns over the impact of Brexit on Scotland's relationship with the EU and pushed for greater devolved powers in the negotiations. The SNP's strong anti-Brexit stance was a significant factor in their subsequent calls for a second independence referendum, seeking to maintain Scotland's ties with the EU (Brooks & Carrell, 2022).

The stances of various political parties on Brexit in 2016 showcased the diverse perspectives and divisions within the UK political landscape. The Conservative Party, while officially supporting Remain, had prominent members advocating for Leave. The Labour Party exhibited a nuanced position, with its leader Jeremy Corbyn reluctantly backing Remain despite past Euroscepticism. The Liberal Democrats took a resolute pro-Remain stance, calling for a second referendum. UKIP, with limited parliamentary representation, strongly campaigned for Brexit, emphasizing sovereignty and control. The SNP fiercely opposed Brexit, prioritizing Scotland's interests. These differing positions contributed to the complexities surrounding the Brexit referendum and shaped the subsequent political landscape, underscoring the significance of Brexit as a defining issue for UK politics.

3.3. Topics of the Campaign

During the Brexit campaign, a multitude of issues captured public attention and shaped the debate around the UK leaving the European Union. While there were numerous concerns raised, including trade, security, and legal implications, the primary focus was on three key areas: sovereignty, immigration policy, and economics. These topics emerged as central themes, driving the arguments put forth by various campaigners and political parties, as we have seen in the previous section (O'Rourke, 2019, pp. 171–172). Understanding the dynamics surrounding sovereignty, immigration, and economics is crucial to comprehending the underlying motivations and implications of the Brexit campaign.

As aforementioned, one of the main topics of the Brexit campaign was sovereignty. Proponents of leaving the EU argued that regaining sovereignty and decision-making powers were essential for the UK's democratic governance. They claimed that being part of the EU limited the country's ability to control its laws, borders, and trade policies (Farage, 2016). The debate surrounding this topic highlighted concerns about national identity, self-determination, and the desire for the UK to have full control over its affairs.

Immigration was another prominent issue in the Brexit campaign and is the one which interests us most for the present thesis. Advocates for leaving the EU argued that membership in the EU allowed for the free movement of people, leading to uncontrolled immigration and perceived strains on public services and job opportunities for Britons (BBC Wales, 2016). The campaign discussions around immigration were often polarized, with some emphasizing the economic

benefits of immigration and cultural diversity, while others expressed concerns about the impact on wages and public services. These frictions will be seen in the discourse analysis.
Next to sovereignty and immigration, economics played a crucial role in the Brexit campaign. Proponents of leaving the EU argued that the UK would benefit from escaping the financial obligations of EU membership and regaining control over trade and economic policies. They claimed that the EU imposed burdensome regulations on businesses, stifled innovation, and limited global trade opportunities. On the other hand, those advocating for remaining in the EU emphasized the economic advantages of access to the single market and warned of potential negative consequences, such as job losses and reduced investment, if the UK were to leave (Hobolt, 2016, p. 1262).

Trade agreements were also a significant topic in the Brexit campaign. Advocates for leaving the EU argued that the UK could negotiate its own trade deals with countries outside the EU, leading to enhanced global trade opportunities (Shipman, 2016, p. 329). They believed that the UK would have more flexibility and autonomy in shaping its trade relationships, tailored to its specific needs and priorities. The debate surrounding this topic included discussions on the potential impact on industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing, and the level of access the UK would have to the EU's single market in the event of Brexit.

The debate surrounding these topics was often heated and divisive, with contrasting views on the potential benefits and drawbacks of leaving or remaining in the EU. The outcome of the referendum ultimately resulted in the UK's decision to leave the EU, which has since led to significant changes in various aspects of the country's governance and relationship with the European Union, though this is not the subject matter of the present thesis.

With a comprehensive understanding of the European Union, including its history, functioning, and Britain's relationship to it, as well as the Brexit campaign's emphasis on EU migration as a central issue, it is now pertinent to transition into the analysis section of this thesis. The analysis will specifically concentrate on the framing of discourse surrounding EU migration during Questions to the Prime Minister in 2016 and in 2021.

4. Discourse Analysis

There are several ways to perform an analysis of the discourse on freedom of movement of EU citizens. Given that the discourse on migration in the media during Brexit has been extensively researched (Clarke et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2021; Koller et al., 2019; Mădroane et al., 2020; Rzepnikowska, 2019; Vasilopoulou, 2016), analyzing the discourse from another source may offer new insights. Furthermore, research comparing discourse on topics of Brexit over time is scarce. Thus, looking at the discourse on EU migration in 2016 and then in 2021 and see how it is framed, at two set points in time should reveal pertinent facts that an analysis of a single point in time would not.

4.1. Corpus

To offer these new angles of analysis a corpus containing questions for the Prime Minister or PMQs will be reviewed. Every Wednesday at noon when Parliament is in session, Members of Parliament or MPs are granted a valuable opportunity to hold the Prime Minister accountable by posing questions on a wide range of topics. This event, known as Questions to the Prime Minister, serves as a significant platform for political accountability and is often admired by citizens in less democratic nations for its transparency and the democratic principles it upholds (Bull & Strawson, 2020). In short, as succinctly summarized by Sealey & Bates, (2016, p. 19):

> It is perhaps the most publicly well-known forum in which government business is conducted, shown on television and broadcast on the radio by the BBC every week, with recordings available there and on parliament's own website.

PMQs provide a platform for MPs to directly engage with the Prime Minister and raise pressing issues of national importance. Furthermore, the public notoriety of PMQs means that members of parliament can and do use this time to address the general public, essentially providing less prominent political voices with a platform so as to be heard. As EU migration was a significant topic during the Brexit campaign, analyzing the questions asked during PMQs allows for an understanding of the specific concerns, perspectives, and framing of discourse around EU migration within the political landscape.

These weekly sessions also offer insight into the government's stance and responses regarding EU migration. By analyzing how the Prime Minister responds to questions related to EU migration, one can examine the government's policies, justifications, and proposed solutions. It

provides an opportunity to assess the rhetoric used, the information presented, and the positions taken by the government on this issue.

Another point is that PMQs not only reflect the broader political climate and public sentiment, but they also contribute to their shaping. Questions often reflect the concerns and interests of their constituents, giving an indication of the broader discourse and attitudes towards EU migration across different political parties.

The analysis will be based on the official transcript of parliamentary proceedings known as the Hansard (Hansard, 2023). The Hansard "removes repetitions and obvious mistakes, without taking away from the meaning of what is said" (UK Parliament, 2023). Even though it is not the verbatim transcript of proceedings and omits spoken language markers as well as body language, the Hansard is sufficient for the analysis as we will only focus on the framing of the issues discussed, not the way they are uttered.

The time span chosen for the analysis is from the 25th of May 2016, after the State Opening of the Parliament (UK Parliament, 2016) to the 14th of September 2016, totaling nine PMQs. This time frame was chosen for several reasons. First, the time frame surrounds the Brexit campaign, offering potent ground for finding questions on EU migration. Next to this, David Cameron resigned as Prime Minister after the UK voted to leave the EU (Stewart et al., 2016), leaving Theresa May to take up the role of Prime Minister. This allows us to observe the evolution of discourse on EU migration within the political arena during a period of heightened political activity and public engagement.

The time frame for 2021 spans from May 19th after the State Opening of the Parliament to the 22nd of September 2021. Eleven PMQs occurred during that time frame. Even though the UK officially left the EU on January 31st, 2020, 2021 was more suitable for analysis for the following reasons. First, the UK was in a transitional period until December 31st, 2020 (Edgington, 2019b). The chosen timeframe begins following the State Opening of Parliament, coinciding with the 2016 corpus. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the EU settlement scheme, which required EU nationals residing in the UK to apply for permission to remain in the country, concluded on June 30th, 2021. During the summer of 2021, shortages of workers in

various industries, which was partly due to Brexit and the end of free movement, was also noted. For all these reasons, such a time frame seemed the most pertinent for the analysis.

4.2. Methodology

In the realm of discourse analysis, there is a range of methodologies at our disposal to study and interpret communication. Each methodology offers unique insights into how language shapes meaning and influences our perception of the world. For the purpose of this analysis, discourse framing analysis has been chosen as the preferred methodology.

Discourse framing analysis, first developed by W. Russel Neuman (Neuman et al., 1992) and perfected by Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), provides a comprehensive framework for examining communication by identifying and studying different frames through which discourse in news can be interpreted. The five frames are as follows:

1. Conflict frame: This frame highlights conflicts among individuals, groups, or institutions to capture audience interest. Studies have shown that conflict is a common frame used by the media in reporting various issues, often simplifying complex political debates into simplistic conflicts (Neuman et al., 1992, pp. 61–62). For example, presidential election campaigns are frequently framed in terms of conflict. Critics argue that the media's emphasis on conflict can contribute to public cynicism and mistrust of political leaders.

2. Human interest frame: This frame adds a human element or emotional angle to the presentation of events, issues, or problems. Journalists and editors strive to capture and retain audience interest in a competitive news market, and framing news in terms of human interest is one way to achieve this. It aims to personalize news stories, evoke emotions, and captivate the audience.

3. Economic consequences frame: This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of its economic impact on individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries. It is a commonly used frame in news coverage due to the significant news value of an event's broad economic implications (Graber & Dunaway, 2017).

4. Morality frame: This frame places events, problems, or issues within the context of religious or moral considerations. Journalists often indirectly refer to moral frames by quoting or inferring others who raise moral questions. This frame may contain moral messages or specific social prescriptions. While more common in the minds of audiences than in the content of news, it is still among the frames used in reporting.

5. Responsibility frame: This frame presents an issue or problem by attributing responsibility for its cause or solution to the government, an individual, or a group.

> Although not explicitly measured, the news media have been credited with shaping public understanding of responsibility for social problems. For example, television news often covers issues episodically, focusing on specific events or individuals rather than the larger social context. This approach can lead people to offer individual-level explanations for social problems, holding individuals rather than the government or system responsible.

These frames serve as interpretive lenses that shape our understanding of events, issues, or problems discussed in the media. By analyzing the frames used in dialogues of PMQs, discourse framing analysis allows for the uncovering of underlying patterns and strategies employed in communication, revealing how different perspectives and narratives are constructed and conveyed.

In order to identify these frames in the dialogues of PMQs, a set of closed questions is given by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) that can be asked to identify the relevant frame for each dialogue. For every frame, the questions are as follows:

Conflict Frame

- Does the dialogue reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?
- Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?
- Does the dialogue refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
- Does the dialogue refer to winners and losers?
-

Human Interest Frame

- Does the dialogue provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?
- Does the dialogue employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?
- Does the dialogue emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
- Does the dialogue go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
- Does the dialogue contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy, or compassion?

Economic Consequences Frame

- Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future in the dialogue?
- Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved in the dialogue?
- Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action in the dialogue?

Morality Frame

- Does the dialogue contain any moral message?
- Does the dialogue make reference to morality, God, and other religious tenets?
- Does the dialogue offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

Responsibility Frame

- Does the dialogue suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
- Does the dialogue suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?
- Does the dialogue suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?
- Does the dialogue suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue-problem?
- Does the dialogue suggest the problem requires urgent action?

The selection of discourse framing analysis is motivated by its ability to capture the nuanced nature of communication. This methodology acknowledges that language is not neutral, but rather carries implicit biases and ideologies that can influence how individuals perceive and interpret information (Fairclough, 1995). By investigating the frames utilized in dialogues involving questions to the Prime Minister, the aim is to unveil the implicit assumptions, values, and power dynamics embedded within these interactions.

Discourse framing analysis, like any research methodology, has limitations and biases that should be acknowledged. Selection bias may occur when specific dialogues are chosen, potentially excluding important perspectives. Interpretation bias is subjective and can vary among analysts. Personal biases, beliefs, and preconceived notions may influence how frames are identified and interpreted in the analysis of EU migration discourse. Given the fact that I have been an EU citizen living abroad for a number of years now, freedom of movement is a fundamentally good thing in my opinion. Contextual bias may overlook broader contextual factors impacting framing choices. Researcher bias can influence the selection and interpretation of frames. Even though the influence of these biases can be reduced, it is nonetheless important to mention them and to have awareness of these limitations is essential for conducting a rigorous analysis.

5. Discourse analysis on EU Migration in 2016

The analysis will be presented frame by frame, as it will facilitate the comparison between 2016 and 2021. As can be seen in Table 1, nine PMQs occurred in the selected time frame from May 24th to the 14th of September. Unsurprisingly, questions overtly referring to EU migration and freedom of movement policies are asked in every one of them. This is explained by the context detailed in section 3. 3.. In total, 21 dialogues pertain to EU migration and freedom of movement and will thus constitute the corpus for our analysis.

Number of PMQs during the time frame	PMQs containing discourse on EU migration	Number of dialogues on EU migration
9	9	21

Table 1 Summary of the 2016 corpus

In the 21 dialogues selected for the analysis, 18 different speakers intervened. Table 2 summarizes all of the speakers. David Cameron and Theresa May, the two serving Prime Ministers during our timeframe as well as George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer under David Cameron, are highlighted in blue, as they are the ones at whom the questions are directed. Osborne was substituting David Cameron on May 24th, 2016, during the G7 meeting (European Council, 2016).

	Name	Constituency	Political Party
1	Angus Robertson	Moray	Scottish National Party
2	Anne Main	St Albans	Conservative Party
3	Barry Sheerman	Huddersfield	Labour and Co-operative Party
4	Bernard Jenkin	Harwich and North Essex	Conservative Party
5	David Cameron	Witney	Conservative Party
6	David Nuttall	Bury North	Conservative Party
7	Sir Edward Leigh	Gainsborough	Conservative Party
8	George Osborne	Chancellor of the Exchequer	Conservative Party
9	James Berry	Kingston and Surbiton	Conservative Party
10	Jeremy Corbyn	Islington North	Labour Party
11	John Baron	Basildon and Billericay	Conservative Party
12	Mike Freer	Finchley and Golders Green	Conservative Party
13	Neil Carmichael	Stroud	Conservative Party
14	Patrick Grady	Glasgow North	Scottish National Party
15	Philip Davies	Shipley	Conservative Party
16	Richard Drax	South Dorset	Conservative Party
17	Sir Roger Gale	North Thanet	Conservative Party
18	Theresa May	Maidenhead	Conservative Party

Table 2 Speakers of the 2016 corpus

As we can see in table 2, the majority of speakers in the dialogues are from the Conservative party. Their discourse on EU migration varies, as we shall see, confirming the divisions identified in section 3. 2..

Figure 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the distribution of various discourse frames within the 2016 corpus. While the primary objective of this thesis is not to quantify the frequency of these frames, the data presented in the graph offers insights into their prevalence and gives us the general trends of these dialogues.

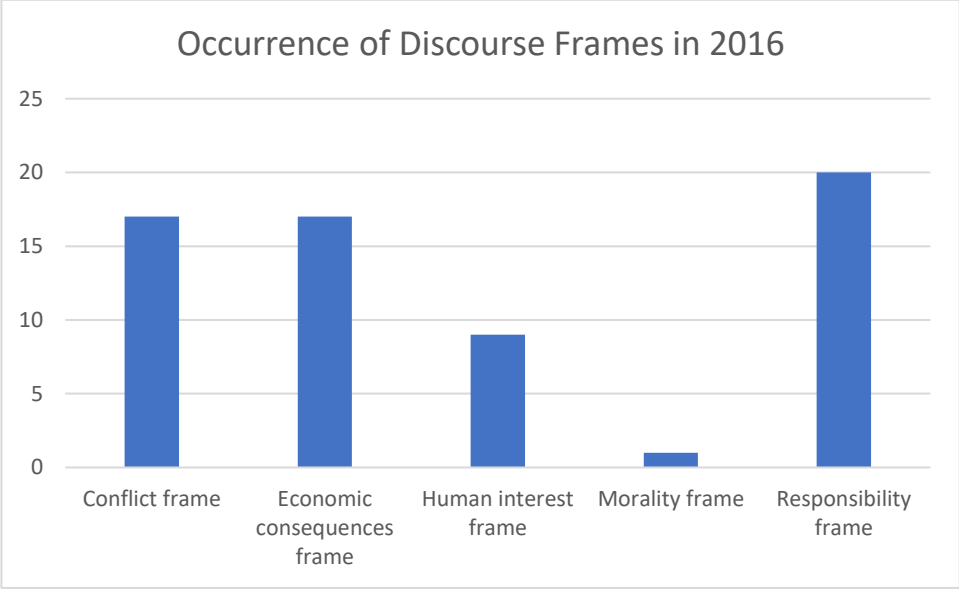

Figure 3 Occurrence of Discourse Frames in 2016

It is evident that the responsibility, conflict, and economic consequences frames dominate the discourse, emerging as the most prevalent frames within the corpus. These frames significantly shape the narrative, reflecting the focus on accountability and the economic implications of the issues discussed. In stark contrast, the morality frame is a rare occurrence, identified only once in the 2016 corpus.

The reasons behind the dominance of certain frames and the relative scarcity of others will be delved into in the subsequent sections. This analysis will shed light on the underlying factors influencing the narrative structure and thematic emphasis within the dialogues. The exploration of these frames not only enriches our understanding of the discourse but also provides a nuanced perspective on the dialogues within the 2016 corpus. It is important to mention that these frames are often intertwined and are thus difficult to completely isolate. Nonetheless, proceeding frame

by frame allows us to address various arguments and points in the EU migration debate. This will therefore be the way in which we will proceed.

Responsibility frame

The responsibility frame was present in all but one dialogue in the 2016 corpus. It is logical, given the inherent structure of PMQs, the overwhelming presence of the responsibility frame in questions directed at the Prime Minister can be attributed to their role as the head of the government, holding them accountable for government policies and actions. As a significant political leader, the Prime Minister's decisions have a profound impact on the country, making it crucial to assess their responsibility for the outcomes. Moreover, the media's focus on specific events or incidents in episodic formats simplifies complex issues, leading to the portrayal of responsibility as lying with individuals or groups, including the Prime Minister. This frame is also strategically used by political opposition to criticize government policies and actions, seeking public support for their own positions. Ultimately, questions framed around responsibility serve to gauge the government's responsiveness to public concerns and influence public perceptions of its performance.

As mentioned in the 4. 2., the responsibility frame suggests that a certain level of government has the capacity to alleviate the problem, indicating a potential source of solution. It also probes if the dialogue assigns blame to a particular level of government for the issue or problem, highlighting the perceived origin of the problem. Through these lenses, the responsibility frame helps in understanding the complex interplay of accountability, solutions, and urgency within a dialogue, which are all prominent features found in PMQs. These elements will become clearer whilst analyzing the other discourse frames, the underlying responsibility frame will then be more readily identifiable.

Economic consequences frame

The economic consequences frame was one of the most solicited in the PMQs regarding EU migration, both explicitly and implicitly. EU migration was framed both in terms of positive and negative economic consequences. The positive impact of EU migration was seen through mentions of their contributions to the British economy, like David Cameron’s following intervention: “Look at our NHS—there are 50,000 EU nationals working as doctors, nurses and care assistants” (dialogue 9 of Appendix A).

The positive impact of free movement for EU citizens, which also included British citizens, was also underlined in dialogue number 5, between Neil Carmichael and David Cameron on "the interests of young people's careers and research, and their opportunities in the future more generally" (dialogue 5 of Appendix A). This is an interesting perspective, given the fact that most of the discourse focused on EU citizens coming into the United Kingdom, forgetting to address the British nationals who were also profiting from free movement policies of the EU. Let us take a closer look at the exchange between Neil Carmichael and the PM and show how the economic consequences are presented in a positive light.

> Neil Carmichael (Stroud) (Con): Speaking at many universities, colleges and schools across England, and at events organised by Universities UK, University Alliance and the Russell Group, I have been struck by young people's strong interest in remaining in the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree that Britain should take a firm lead in the European Union to promote the interests of young people's careers and research, and their opportunities in the future more generally?
>
> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): I think our universities have been pretty much unanimous in recommending that we vote to remain in the EU. I think that is partly because of the opportunities young people will have from being part of a single market of 500 million people, but also because our universities do very well out of research funding that helps to create the businesses and jobs of the future. We contribute about 11% of the EU research budget, but receive about 16% of the allocated funding. Staying in Europe is good for students' opportunities, good for young people's opportunities and good for our science base. (Dialogue 5 of Appendix A)

The economic consequences aspect emerges as the dialogue highlights the potential benefits of being part of the EU's single market. David Cameron agrees that universities have been unanimous in recommending remaining in the EU, emphasizing that young people will have opportunities from being part of this large and integrated market, also through free movement policies.

Moreover, Cameron highlights the financial advantage for the UK's science and research base. He mentions that the UK contributes about 11% of the EU research budget but receives about 16% of the allocated funding. This statement emphasizes the financial support and opportunities that EU membership brings to the UK's research institutions, which can be crucial for creating businesses and jobs in the future. By focusing on the economic advantages of EU membership for young people's careers, research, and opportunities, the dialogue highlights the potential positive impact of free movement and cooperation within the European Union.

Nevertheless, EU migration was often depicted in a negative light, as something that needs to be controlled, curbed and which has a negative impact for the United Kingdom. The examples for such discourse are rampant, as John Baron's allusion to the pressure that EU migrants cause to British public services.

> Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Will the Prime Minister address an issue that the remain camp has so far fudged? Our present immigration policy, in all truthfulness, cannot control numbers coming in from the EU to the benefit of our public services, and also actually discriminates against the rest of the world outside the EU. (Dialogue 6 of Appendix A)

By highlighting that the present immigration policy "cannot control numbers coming in from the EU to the benefit of our public services", Mr John Baron implies that the influx of EU migrants may be straining public services in the UK. This suggests an economic dimension, as an increased population due to migration can put pressure on services like healthcare, education, and housing. Such claims have been made by other prominent Brexiteers, such as the Justice Secretary Michael Gove warning of higher pressure on health services due to EU migration (Pienaar, 2016).

Additionally, Mr Baron states that the current immigration policy "actually discriminates against the rest of the world outside the EU." This implies that the focus on EU migration may result in fewer opportunities for individuals from non-EU countries to migrate to the UK for work or other purposes. This aspect of the dialogue highlights the economic consequences for individuals and countries outside the EU, potentially affecting global talent flows and international relations. Although in a subtle way, the mention of discrimination might also hint at a moral reproach, framing the current immigration policy as morally lacking. This dialogue certainly illustrates the conflict frame and will be further analyzed in the next section.

Another example of the strain that EU migrants were supposedly putting on British housing and infrastructures can be seen in the exchange between Mrs Anne Main, a Conservative representing St Albans, and George Osborne, on May 25th, 2016:

> Mrs Anne Main (St Albans) (Con): St Albans and many other areas in the south and east value their green belt. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, 3 million people may come into this country if we remain in the European Union. Would the Chancellor like to suggest which bits of the green belt—about a quarter of a million

> acres—will be needed, and where they will be? We need to provide homes and infrastructure for those people.
> Mr Osborne (Chancellor of the Exchequer) (Con): We have made a clear commitment to protecting the green belt, and the planning laws that we have introduced, and propose to introduce, meet that commitment.
>
> My hon. Friend and I disagree on European Union membership—and I have seen no particular evidence from the leave campaigners that immigration would fall; indeed, they seem to be telling some communities that they would let more people in—but let us at least agree on this. We will have a referendum, and, in the end, it will not be up to my hon. Friend or me to decide. It will be up to the British people. (Dialogue 2 of Appendix A)

Here, Mrs Main raises concerns about the potential influx of people into the country if the UK remains in the European Union, citing figures from the Office for National Statistics indicating that 3 million people may come into the country if the UK remains. By highlighting this figure and linking it to the issue of the green belt, Mrs. Main implies that EU migration could lead to increased demand for housing and infrastructure, potentially encroaching on the protected green belt areas. This raises economic considerations related to housing availability, land use, and urban development.

In response, Mr Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, assures us that the government has made a clear commitment to protecting the green belt. He emphasizes that the planning laws introduced and proposed by the government are aimed at meeting this commitment. By addressing the concern about the green belt, Mr Osborne attempts to address the economic consequences of potential EU migration on housing and land usage.

The negative impact of EU migration on wages and the overall labor market was also mentioned during PMQs. The exchange between the leader of opposition Jeremy Corbyn and the PM (dialogue 7 of Appendix A) illustrates the point very well. Let us take a closer look.

Jeremy Corbyn raises concerns about EU migrant workers undercutting wages in the UK. He asks if the Prime Minister will commit to outlawing the practice of agencies which only advertise abroad for jobs in the UK. By formulating the question in such a way, Corbyn also frames the question through the responsibility frame, holding the government accountable for changing these practices.

> Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): Last week, the Prime Minister gave a welcome commitment to the closing of the loophole in the posting of workers directive. We will hold him to that, but we are concerned about the exploitation of migrant workers and the undercutting of wages in this country as a result. On that issue, will he today commit to outlawing the practice of agencies that only advertise abroad for jobs that are, in reality, jobs in this country?

In response, David Cameron acknowledges these concerns and states that the government has already done quite a few things and introduced policy changes to avert negative consequences of such practices.

> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): First of all, the right hon. Gentleman and I absolutely agree about the evils of modern slavery. That is why this Government passed the Modern Slavery Act 2015, with all-party support. We have doubled the fines that can be put on companies for exploiting labour in this way. We have strengthened the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, which has commenced and carried out a number of prosecutions, including in the east of England, where I was yesterday. We will continue to take action on every level to make sure that people are paid the wages that they should be paid and that protections are there on the minimum wage, and now on the national living wage. All those measures are vitally important, and we will continue with all of them. I want people to get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Jeremy Corbyn then reframes his question and also raises concerns about the pressure on public services brought on by migrant workers. Whilst Mr Corbyn acknowledges the work of EU migrants, he asks if the Prime Minister will admit that abolishing a fund to mitigate pressure brought on by migration was a mistake and points out that immigration is a concern for many constituents.

> Jeremy Corbyn: My question was about outlawing the practice of advertising by agencies only in other countries. Tens of thousands of EU migrants work in our public services and do a fantastic job. Many people in Britain, also, are concerned about the impact of immigration on their local communities. Surely what communities need is practical solutions such as the migrant impact fund set up Gordon Brown when he was Prime Minister to deal with extra pressure on housing, schools, and hospitals. Will the Prime Minister now concede that it was a mistake to abolish that fund, and will he work with us to reinstate it as a matter of urgency to give support to those communities that are facing problems with school places and doctors' surgeries?

In response, David Cameron acknowledges the concerns and states that the government is looking into the matter and considering banning the practice of agencies that exclusively advertise for overseas workers. Mr Cameron considers banning these practices "because we do not believe it is right", which could indirectly hint at a moral dimension, though the situation is

primarily framed in terms of economic consequences. The PM also addresses EU migration by saying that it needs to be controlled and that there are good ways to control it, thus opposing the notion of free movement, which is in line with the policies he proposed. Cameron raises the matter of welfare access, implying that EU migrants use this system mischievously and thus should not get access to it instantly. This subtly echoes the discourse that EU migrants are perceived as welfare shoppers (Consterdine, 2016).

> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. In answer to the question about employment agencies that only advertise for overseas workers, we are looking at that to see—we have announced this already—if we can ban that practice, because we do not believe it is right. Of course, the answer to so many of these questions is to make sure that we are training, educating and employing British people and getting them the qualifications they need to take on the jobs that our economy is creating. Today's unemployment figures are another reminder of that. In terms of funds to help communities impacted by migration, we have a pledge in our manifesto that we are looking forward to bringing forward, which is a controlled migration fund to make sure that we put money into communities where there are pressures. Of course there are some pressures and we do need to address them, and I am happy that we will be able to work on a cross-party basis to do that. As I have said many times, there are good ways of controlling migration, and one of them is the important rules we are bringing in so that people do not get instant access to our welfare system, but there are bad ways of controlling immigration, and leaving the single market and wrecking our economy is certainly one of them.

As we have seen, the economic consequences frame played a significant role in the PMQs discussions regarding EU migration. Both positive and negative economic impacts were depicted. On the positive side, EU migration was portrayed as contributing to the British economy, with examples such as EU nationals working in the NHS and universities benefiting from the single market opportunities. However, the negative aspects were also highlighted, focusing on concerns about migrant worker exploitation, wage undercutting, and pressures on public services and infrastructure.

Conflict frame

The conflict frame is also evident in the analyzed dialogues, as it emerges in 17 of the 21 dialogues analyzed. The prevalence of this frame is expected, considering the inherent structure of Questions to the Prime Minister, which intentionally fosters conflict by pitting the Prime Minister against other MPs with diverging views. These dialogues effectively capture and reflect the heightened tensions surrounding the issue of EU migration and mobility rights, showcasing the contentious debates between the ruling party and other MPs.

The conflict frame emerges on several points of discussion regarding EU migration. First, a conflict between David Cameron and MPs of his own party on the promise on reforming the treaty with the European Union and limit the freedom of movement of EU citizens, or the overall migration policy for short. This, as we have seen in section 3.1., was a promise of Cameron's campaign. The following conflict emerged twice, once with Richard Drax, a Conservative in favor of leaving the EU (Drax, 2016) and another time with John Baron (dialogue 6 of Appendix A), also a Conservative campaigner for Leave. Let us look at the dialogue between John Baron and David Cameron to better illustrate this.

> Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): Will the Prime Minister address an issue that the remain camp has so far fudged? Our present immigration policy, in all truthfulness, cannot control numbers coming in from the EU to the benefit of our public services, and also actually discriminates against the rest of the world outside the EU.
>
> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): Having spent my evening yesterday with Mr Farage—or Farridge, as I like to call him—I am confused about what the leave camp actually wants when it comes to immigration. I thought it wanted less immigration, but now it seems to want more immigration from outside the EU into our country. My view is that we should restrict welfare in the way that we have negotiated, so that people have to come and work here for four years before they get full access to our welfare system—no more "something for nothing"; people pay in before they get out—and then we should focus on proper controls on migration from outside the EU, on which we have made some progress over recent years and can do some more. That is the right answer. As for the alternative of an Australian points system, if we look at Australia, it has twice as much immigration per head as we have here in the UK. That is not the right answer for Britain. (Dialogue 6 of Appendix A)

Mr John Baron raises the issue of the present immigration policy's inability to control numbers coming in from the EU to the benefit of public services and how it discriminates against the rest of the world outside the EU. This statement sets the stage for a conflict by highlighting the perceived shortcomings of the current policy and its impact on different groups.

David Cameron responds by expressing confusion about the leave camp's stance on immigration. He suggests that the leave camp appears to want both less immigration from the EU and more immigration from outside the EU into the country, indicating a contradiction in their position. By highlighting this inconsistency, Cameron is subtly fueling the conflict between the two sides of the Brexit debate, implying that they are not presenting a unified and coherent plan on immigration.

Moreover, Cameron proposes his view on the issue, advocating once again for restricting welfare access for immigrants and focusing on proper controls on migration from outside the EU. By presenting an alternative approach to immigration policies, he indirectly challenges the position presented by Mr. John Baron, creating further conflict between different perspectives on managing migration. At the same time, framing the answer in terms of welfare access makes the economic consequences of migration emerge. The link established between EU migrants and welfare shopping is clear and was also found in the news (Rzepnikowska, 2019), underlining the supposed negative consequences of uncontrolled EU migration, as we have seen in the previous section.

The mention of an "Australian points system" and comparing the immigration rates of Australia and the UK further adds to the conflict frame. Cameron's dismissal of the Australian system as "not the right answer for Britain" serves to polarize the debate on immigration policies, suggesting that there is a clear difference of opinion between the two sides.

The conflict frame becomes evident in discussions about EU migration when focusing on workers' rights and how the free movement of workers can impact wages in the UK. The conflict is intertwined with dimensions of human interest and economic consequences to Britons. This is exemplified in the exchange between the former leader of the opposition, Jeremy Corbyn, and the Prime Minister.

> Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): The problem is that if someone is on a zero-hours contract, the minimum wage does not add up to a living weekly wage; the Prime Minister must understand that. May I take him north-east of Shirebrook to the Lindsey oil refinery? In 2009, hundreds of oil workers there walked out on strike because agency workers from Italy and Portugal were brought in on lower wages to do the same job. Just down the road in Boston, low pay is endemic. The average hourly wage across the whole country is £13.33. In the east midlands, it is £12.26; in Boston, it is £9.13. Is it not time that the Government intervened to step up for those communities that feel they have been left behind in modern Britain?
>
> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): We have intervened with the national living wage. We have intervened with more fines against companies which do not pay the minimum wage. We have intervened, and for the first time—this is something Labour never did—we are naming and shaming the companies involved. Those interventions help and can make a difference, but the real intervention that we need is an economy that is growing and encouraging investment, because we want the industries of the future. That is what can be seen in our country and that is why record numbers are in work—2.5 million more people have a job since I become Prime Minister—and why

> the British economy has been one of the strongest in the G7. (Dialogue 14 of Appendix A)

Jeremy Corbyn addresses the issue of zero-hours contracts and says that a minimum wage on such a contract does not provide a living weekly wage. He further brings attention to the Lindsey oil refinery incident in 2009, where oil workers went on strike because agency workers from Italy and Portugal worked on lower wages to do the same job.

By drawing attention to the alleged use of agency workers from other EU countries on lower wages, Corbyn sets the stage for a conflict. He suggests that this practice could be detrimental to local workers, contributing to low pay and potentially exploiting labor. This highlights a point of disagreement between the Labour party's concerns about the impact of EU migration on wages and the government's approach to addressing the issue.

In response, David Cameron, the Prime Minister, counters Corbyn's argument by stating that the government has intervened with measures such as the national living wage, fines against companies not paying the minimum wage, and naming and shaming non-compliant companies. He emphasizes that these interventions can make a difference and improve the situation for workers.

However, Cameron asserts that the key intervention needed for sustainable economic growth and better prospects for communities is an economy that encourages investment and supports industries of the future. By emphasizing the growth and employment figures under his leadership, he implies that the country's economic strength and job growth are more significant factors in improving the living standards of the population.

Overall, the prevalence of the conflict frame in these dialogues highlights the significance of the EU migration dimension in political discourse. The emphasis on free movement for EU citizens and its implications amidst the backdrop of Brexit and immigration policies serves as a focal point for debate and contention. Let us now turn to the human interest frame, which is, as we shall see, a potent type of framing of EU migration discussions.

Human interest frame

As aforementioned, the human interest frame tries to provoke some sort of emotional response in the audience, by making it more personal and individualized. There are several examples of such framing of EU migration in the 2016 corpus. First, an exchange between Mike Freer and David Cameron and the response of the Prime Minister exemplify this very clearly.

> Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con): Since the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, many of my constituents are worried that remaining in the EU increases the risk of terrorism, fears exacerbated by the disgraceful comments of people such as Nigel Farage. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me that our security services are helped, not hindered, by the EU?
>
> David Cameron (the Prime Minister): I would say very directly to my hon. Friend that I have done this job for six years and, working with the Home Secretary, I have seen how closely our intelligence and security services work with other services around the world. Of course we keep ourselves safe by investing in anti-terrorism policing and of course we keep ourselves safe by the way we work with the Americans and the "Five Eyes" partnership, but I am in no doubt that the increasing extent of Poles, Spaniards and the rest of it—so if you stop 100 people in the street, only five will be EU nationals. It is just as the hon. Gentleman said. Look at our NHS—there are 50,000 EU nationals working as doctors, nurses and care assistants. Look at our care homes—there are 60,000 EU nationals helping to look after our elderly relatives with dementia and other conditions as they come towards the end of their lives. Yes, we need to make sure that people who come here work and make a contribution, but we should celebrate the contribution they make. (Dialogue 9 of Appendix A)

In this dialogue, the human interest frame is depicted through the discussion of EU migration's impact on workers in the UK and their contributions to society. Mike Freer expresses the concerns of his constituents, who are worried about the risk of terrorism and the role of EU membership in exacerbating these fears. The human interest aspect emerges as he highlights the potential implications of EU migration on national security, invoking misplaced, though nonetheless strongly felt emotions and concerns of safety among the public. Such a link was established most notably by Nigel Farage, who suggested that "the free movement of people means the free movement of Kalashnikovs" (Smith, 2016).

The Prime Minister responds by emphasizing the positive contributions of EU nationals in various essential sectors, presenting a human interest angle in the dialogue. By mentioning the significant number of EU nationals working in the NHS as doctors, nurses, and care assistants, as well as in care homes looking after elderly relatives, the Prime Minister showcases the valuable role these individuals play in providing vital services and care to the UK population.

By framing the conversation in terms of the contributions and essential roles played by EU workers in these sectors, the dialogue humanizes the issue of EU migration, demonstrating its impact on people's lives. The focus on individual stories and experiences fosters empathy and understanding, which is characteristic of the human interest frame.

Another interesting example of such framing of EU migration is in a question asked by Sir Roger Gale, a Conservative MP, on British nationals living in the EU. This is quite an interesting exchange, as it is one of only a few, which acknowledges the fact that the rights to freedom of movement are possessed by British nationals too.

> Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con): I know that all Kent's Members of Parliament will wish to be associated with my right hon. Friend's tribute to the memory of Paddy Mayhew. He was a scholar, a gentleman and a great friend to his younger colleagues. There are hundreds and thousands of expat United Kingdom citizens living around Europe who did not vote in the referendum. Many are elderly and frail and live on UK pensions and benefits. Will my right hon. Friend seek to ensure that his successor defends their interests?
>
> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): Let me add to my hon. Friend's comments about Sir Patrick Mayhew. He was a wonderful man and a great public servant, and I know he meant a lot to my hon. Friend and many others.
>
> On the issue of British citizens living overseas, we should reassure people that until Britain leaves the EU, there will be absolutely no change in their status. In the coming weeks, this unit at the heart of Whitehall can go through these issues very methodically and work out what might need to change in all the different scenarios in order to give these people certainty about their future. It is obviously very important that we do that. (Dialogue 11 of Appendix A)

Sir Roger Gale raises the concern about hundreds and thousands of elderly and frail UK expat citizens living in Europe who did not have the opportunity to vote in the referendum. He highlights their reliance on UK pensions and benefits and seeks assurance that their interests will be protected by the Prime Minister's successor.

The human interest aspect emerges as the dialogue focuses on the real-life situations and vulnerabilities of these British citizens abroad. Sir Roger Gale's emphasis on their elderly and frail conditions invokes empathy and compassion, drawing attention to the potential uncertainties they may face post-Brexit. The mention of their reliance on UK pensions and benefits adds to the emotional aspect of the dialogue, as it highlights their dependence on these financial resources for their well-being and livelihood.

The Prime Minister responds by acknowledging the importance of protecting the interests of British citizens living overseas. He reassures them that until Britain leaves the EU, there will be no change in their status, providing them with a sense of immediate security. He also highlights the government's commitment to working through the issues methodically to determine the necessary changes and provide certainty to these individuals about their future.

The human interest frame effectively personalizes the issues of EU migration in the presented dialogues, evoking emotions and making the topic relatable to the audience. Through discussions about national security and the contributions of EU workers, as well as concerns about British expat citizens, the human impact of migration is highlighted, fostering empathy and understanding among the public. This framing technique humanizes the subject and makes it more accessible beyond statistics and policies.

Morality frame

The morality frame, used as the primary frame, was only found on one instance, in dialogue 12, discussing the discourse of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on migration and that it does not represent the United Kingdom.

> Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for his premiership and for the many achievements of his Government, of which we can be proud? I also commend his condemnation of the vile racist attacks that have been reported from all over the country. Will he take this opportunity to condemn the ridiculous and revolting behaviour of a certain MEP in the European Parliament yesterday and make it clear that that MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent—[Interruption.]
>
> Mr Speaker: Order. We cannot have people adding their own take on these matters. [Interruption.] Order. The hon. Gentleman has the Floor—[Interruption.] Order. I do not need any help from the Scottish National party Benches; I am perfectly capable of discharging my responsibilities. The hon. Gentleman will be heard, and that is all there is to it.
>
> Mr Jenkin: I am grateful, Mr Speaker. That MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent even the vast majority of patriotic and law-abiding people who voted leave in the referendum.
>
> David Cameron (The Prime Minister): Let me thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks and congratulate him on the role he played in the campaign. As for what MEPs and others have said, people should judge them by the remarks they make. I have made clear what I felt about Nigel Farage and that appalling poster in the campaign. I think the

> motive was absolutely clear and everyone can see what he was trying to do. (Dialogue 12 of Appendix A)

There is an indirect reference to the morality frame through the mention of "vile racist attacks" and the condemnation of a certain MEP's behavior in the European Parliament. These references bring the racist attacks, which occurred all over Britain (Parveen & Sherwood, 2016) and Nigel Farage's anti-immigraion discourse (Stewart & Mason, 2016) into the context of moral considerations. The phrase highlights the moral dimension of the issue, portraying it as unacceptable behavior. The mention of "condemnation" further emphasizes the moral stance taken by the speaker.

Additionally, when Mr Jenkin asks the Prime Minister to "condemn the ridiculous and revolting behavior of a certain MEP", it introduces the issue within the context of moral judgments, suggesting that the behavior in question is morally wrong or offensive.

The PM finally mentions the "appalling poster" which refers to Farage's leave campaign poster presenting migrants and the slogan *Breaking Point* written in bold letters.

Figure 4 Andrews K. (2016). *Ukip leader Nigel Farage and his 'breaking point' poster* [Photograph]. The Courier. https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/opinion/214051/four-brexit-fibs-lies-damn-lies-and-the-eu-referendum-campaign/

It is unsurprising that the morality frame was scarcely present, due to the format of PMQs, and the effectiveness of the other discourse frames discussed above. Let us now turn to the 2021 corpus and see how each frame was utilized to talk about EU migration.

6. Discourse analysis on EU migration in 2021

In 2021, the number of questions referring to EU migration and freedom of movement in general has fallen compared to 2016. This is not surprising, given the fact that Brexit occurred about five years prior and that freedom of movement was effectively stopped with Britain leaving the EU in 2020. Furthermore, the Coronavirus pandemic and its handling was the subject that was more often debated during PMQs. Nevertheless, questions referring to EU migration and freedom of movement policies were still asked. This can be explained by the fact that the EU settlement scheme application deadline was due in June 2021 and that labor shortages were severely felt in the summer of 2021, the end of free movement being one of the factors aggravating these shortages. In total, 13 dialogues refer to EU migration and freedom of movement in 2021.

Number of PMQs during the time frame	PMQs containing discourse on EU migration	Number of dialogues on EU migration
11	8	13

Table 3 Summary of the 2021 corpus

In the 13 dialogues selected for the analysis, 15 different speakers intervened. Table 4 summarizes all of the speakers. Highlighted in blue are the people at whom the questions are directed, namely Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister at the time and Dominic Raab, the Secretary of Justice under Johnson. Raab was answering questions on behalf of Boris Johnson on September 22nd, 2021, when the PM was at the G7 meeting hosted by the United Kingdom (GOV.UK, 2021).

	Name	Constituency	Political Party
1	Ben Lake	Ceredigion	Plaid Cymru
2	Boris Johnson	Uxbridge and South Ruislip	Conservative Party
3	Cherilyn Mackrory	Truro and Falmouth	Conservative Party
4	Chris Bryant	Rhondda	Labour and Co-operative Party
5	David Linden	Glasgow East	Scottish National Party
6	Derek Thomas	St Ives	Conservative Party
7	Dominic Raab	Esher and Walton	Conservative Party
8	Gerald Jones	Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	Labour Party
9	Ian Blackford	Ross, Skye and Lochaber	Scottish National Party
10	Katherine Fletcher	South Ribble	Conservatives
11	Layla Moran	Oxford West and Abingdon	Liberal Democrats
12	Sheryll Murray	South East Cornwall	Conservative Party
13	Sir Roger Gale	North Thanet	Conservative Party
14	Stephen Farry	North Down	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
15	Wendy Chamberlain	North East Fife	Liberal Democrats

Table 4 Speakers of the 2021 corpus

When it comes to the utilization of discourse frames in the 2021 corpus, we can notice that the responsibility and economic consequences frame are the main frames utilized to convey the discourse on EU migration. Figure 5 summarizes the distribution of discourse frames. As aforementioned, the identification of discourse frames is a qualitative process, the graph should not be taken as a quantitative analysis, but rather as an indicator of the general direction that the discourse is led in. Let us now perform a close review of the occurrence of each frame in the 2021 corpus.

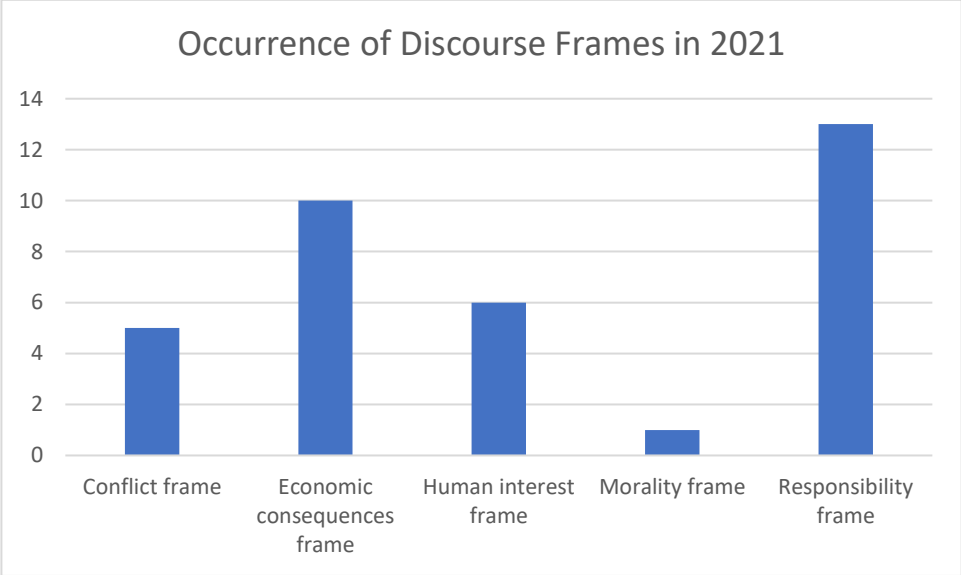

Figure 5 Occurrence of Discourse Frames in 2021

Responsibility frame

The responsibility frame dominated the framing of PMQs and was a completely expected outcome of the analysis. Given the inherent structure of PMQs, virtually every single dialogue answered positively to one of the five questions posed to identify the responsibility frame. Let us illustrate how dialogues respond positively to these questions.

A dialogue which suggests that some level of government is responsible and could alleviate the issue is dialogue 2, between Stephen Farry, an Alliance Party of Northern Ireland MP, and Boris Johnson. The dialogue goes as follows:

> Stephen Farry (North Down) (Alliance) [V]: The EU settlement scheme closes on 30 June. While the Home Office has finally published guidance on late applications the Government are failing to provide clarity. What will happen to those who miss the deadline and then fall under the remit of illegal working legislation? Can the Prime

> Minister assure the House that EU citizens or non-EU family members who miss the deadline will not face potential criminal liability if they continue to go into work?
>
> Boris Johnson (Prime Minister): I am sure the law will be extremely merciful to anybody who finds themselves in a difficult position, but I would just remind the hon. Gentleman that so far 5.4 million EU nationals have applied successfully for the EU settlement scheme, which as far as I remember is about 2 million more EU nationals than we thought we were in the country in the first place. (Dialogue 2 of Appendix B)

The Home Office, as a governmental department responsible for immigration and border control, plays a central role in the implementation and administration of the EU settlement scheme. The issue raised by Stephen Farry pertains to the closure of the scheme on 30 June and the lack of clarity from the government regarding late applications. By addressing the Home Office's role and actions in handling the scheme, the dialogue implies that the government has the capacity to take actions to address the concerns and provide necessary guidance.

Furthermore, the dialogue indirectly attributes responsibility to the government for any challenges or lack of clarity faced by applicants. By seeking assurance from the Prime Minister regarding the potential criminal liability for those who miss the deadline, Stephen Farry is holding the government accountable for its role in addressing the issue.

To illustrate how problems are framed to demand urgent action and how solutions are suggested, let us look at dialogue 3, between Layla Moran, a Liberal Democrat and the PM.

> Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD): Keith, a hotel manager in Oxford, contacted me last week because he is worried. Even if this country does open up in the next few weeks, he will not be able to run at full capacity due to chronic staff shortages. Local staff are leaving the industry because of the uncertainty caused by this Government’s bungled handling of the pandemic. The EU staff have already left because of the botched handling of Brexit and he cannot recruit from abroad because of the damaging new immigration policy. This is the Prime Minister’s wake-up call. Oxfordshire’s economy alone relies on the hospitality industry to the tune of £2.5 billion. Will the Government introduce a covid recovery visa to help Keith to recruit the staff he desperately needs?
>
> The Prime Minister: It is absolutely true that as we open up our economy there are more vacancies, which is great. We also have large numbers of young people in this country who need jobs and large numbers of people who are still furloughed. What we want to see is those people coming forward to get those jobs. Of course, we will retain an open and flexible approach towards allowing talent to come in from overseas. (Dialogue 3 of Appendix B)

Layla Moran proposes the introduction of a “covid recovery visa” to help businesses like Keith's hotel recruit the staff they desperately need in the EU. By suggesting this visa as a potential solution, the dialogue presents a way to address the labor shortage issue. Next to this, Layla Moran's mention of “this Prime Minister’s wake-up call” indicates a sense of urgency in addressing the labor shortages.

In the discussion of EU migration in 2021, the responsibility frame is evident in discussions about the government's role in managing immigration policies and settlement schemes. MPs hold the government responsible for providing clarity and guidance to EU citizens applying for settled status, and for finding solutions to labor shortages in sectors heavily reliant on EU workers. The frame emphasizes the government's accountability and the need for urgent action to address challenges in the post-Brexit landscape.

Economic consequences frame

In terms of economic consequences in the context of EU migration, 10 out of 13 dialogues were framed to highlight matters from that perspective. Labor shortages in various industries, such as hospitality, agriculture, healthcare, and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving were the primary focus of the selected dialogues. The framing conveyed the detrimental consequences of the end of free movement of EU citizens for the industries named above. Let us illustrate this discourse with several examples.

Four out of 13 questions in the corpus refer to the lack of HGV drivers in the UK. This is by far the most important economic consequence addressed and is tied to the end of free movement for EU citizens. Even outside of PMQs, the shortage of truck drivers in the UK was said to be at least in part aggravated by Brexit (Reality Check team, 2021). In the exchange between David Linden and Boris Johnson, the SNP MP directly links the shortage of HGV drivers to Brexit and consequently the end of free movement.

> David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): On Friday, I visited David McCutcheon, the chief executive of Bullet Express, which is a haulage firm in the Baillieston area of my Constituency. Everybody in this House knows that there have been huge problems with the shortage of HGV drivers in this country, and that has only been compounded further by Brexit. So I have a simple question for the Prime Minister: why can we not add HGV drivers to the UK shortage occupation list?

> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): I will certainly look at what the hon. Member is proposing, but I think the most important thing is to get our entire workforce back at work. There are currently millions of people still on furlough, and of course there are labour shortages at the moment, but we need to get people back into work, and that is why we have to continue to roll out the vaccines in the way that we are. (Dialogue 6 of Appendix B)

David Linden, an SNP MP, highlights the economic impact of EU migration changes on the shortage of HGV drivers in the UK. He draws attention to the significant problems faced by the haulage firm, Bullet Express, in his constituency due to the scarcity of HGV drivers, using the human interest frame, as we shall see. He attributes this shortage partly to Brexit, suggesting that it has compounded the existing problem.

By asking why HGV drivers cannot be added to the UK shortage occupation list, David Linden emphasizes the economic implications of such a decision. The shortage occupation list is a crucial tool used to address labor shortages in specific sectors (GOV.UK, 2023), and by proposing the inclusion of HGV drivers on this list, he aims to mitigate the economic consequences of the current shortage.

In response, Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledges the labor shortages and the importance of getting the entire workforce back to work. He mentions the millions of people still on furlough, indicating the scale of the economic challenges brought on by the pandemic. While he doesn't directly address the issue of adding HGV drivers to the shortage occupation list, his emphasis on getting people back to work and rolling out vaccines can be seen as an acknowledgement of the economic implications of the labor shortage and the need for a broader economic recovery.

In the following dialogue, Mrs Sheryll Murray questions the PM on staff shortages and how the government plans to address them.

> Mrs Sheryll Murray (South East Cornwall) (Con): Be it farm workers or lorry drivers, my employers are saying that they want more staff. What more can the Prime Minister do to increase the training and mobility of jobseekers to help them into the jobs they need?
>
> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): My hon. Friend is absolutely right to point out the problem of lorry driver shortages, which is affecting the whole world, from Europe to North America. What we are doing immediately is working to get out more licences.

> We are taking advantage of our post-Brexit freedom so that all the young thrusters on the Conservative Benches with a post-1997 driver's licence can now drive a vehicle with a trailer as well— everybody can drive a vehicle with a trailer as well. But after a long period of stagnation in wages for those in the road haulage industry, we are also seeing a long-overdue increase in wages. That is part of the same phenomenon that this Government are introducing and the Labour party is opposing. (Dialogue 10 of Appendix B)

By asking what more the Prime Minister can do to increase the training and mobility of jobseekers, Mrs Murray is highlighting the economic implications of labor shortages in these key industries.

The interesting element is the answer of Boris Johnson, who acknowledges the issue of truck driver shortages, but noting that this problem is not unique to the UK but is affecting countries worldwide. He then outlines the steps his government is taking to address the issue, such as making it easier for individuals to obtain driving licenses and increasing wages for workers in the road haulage industry. Contrary to David Linden in the previous example, the Prime Minister actually credits Brexit for the fact that it is now easier to obtain driving licenses in Britain by rejoicing about "post-Brexit freedoms". Such a discourse is in line with the PM's stance, which was already pro-Brexit five years prior.

The staff shortages in the agriculture sector are addressed by as well as by Derek Thomas (dialogue 13 of Appendix B) as well as by Roger Gale (dialogue 12 of Appendix B). Derek Thomas refers to the need of seasonal workers for daffodil picking and asks for the scheme to be renewed as quickly as possible. Roger Gale talks about rotting crops in fields, due to the lack of seasonal workers, which was proved to be partly due to the end of free movement of EU citizens (BBC East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, 2021). Let us look more closely at this dialogue:

> Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con): I know that my right hon. Friend wants to see the United Kingdom growing more crops. We are not going to blaze a trail to self-sufficiency by building over our finest agricultural land. That has to stop, now. On this, Back British Farming Day, we are in harvest time, and all is not safely gathered in. In three weeks, Thanet Earth in my constituency, which is one of the largest glasshouse companies in the country and grows tomatoes, has had to trash £320,000-worth of produce because there are no pickers and no drivers. Because of the lack of labour force, the crops are rotting in the fields and on trees. Will my right hon. Friend seek to introduce immediately a covid-recovery visa, so that this year's crops are not lost?

> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): My right hon. Friend is absolutely right in what he says about the importance of buying British and eating British. Our food is the best in the world. He is also right to address the problems that we are currently seeing in the supply chain, but we are taking steps. Of course, it has been a problem for a long time, but we will use the seasonal agricultural workers scheme to ensure that British farms get the labour that they need. (Dialogue 12 of Appendix B)

Sir Roger Gale highlights the issue of labor shortages and its economic implications on the farming industry by pointing out the lack of pickers and drivers that has led to significant financial losses, with £320,000-worth of produce being wasted. This showcases the economic impact on the agricultural sector, as crops are left to rot in the fields and on trees due to the shortage of a labor force.

In response, Boris Johnson acknowledges the economic challenges faced by the agricultural sector and emphasizes the importance of supporting British produce. He mentions the seasonal agricultural workers scheme as a measure to address the labor shortage and ensure that British farms have the necessary workforce to harvest crops.

Both utterances suggest that the short term worker's visa, which allows EU citizens to work in Britain for three months should be renewed. This underlines the detrimental consequences of the end of free movement for the British labor market and the need for labor mobility.

EU migration is depicted as a necessary aspect rather than a negative consequence or a threat to the UK. The selected dialogues emphasize the importance of EU migration in various sectors and advocate for measures to address labor shortages, suggesting that the UK needs labor mobility to sustain its industries and economic growth. Mentions of the negative consequences and pressure on Britain are omitted.

Human interest frame

Labour shortages were also framed through the human interest frame, which was identified in 6 of the 13 dialogues. We have already seen that the human interest frame tries to provoke some sort of emotional response by making more personal utterances. This can be found in dialogue 3 of Appendix B referring to Keith, the hotel manager, and his troubles of finding staff or when Mrs Shreyll Murray talks about "my employers" (dialogue 10 of Appendix B). Arguably the most poignant example of human interest framing was in Labour MP's Chris Bryant's question (dialogue 11 of Appendix B) which observes staff shortages in the healthcare system.

> Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): By the time my wonderful friend Lynda went to the doctor, the cancer was already so advanced that she had only a few weeks to live. Many hon. Members have been through cancer and they know well that early detection saves lives. Unfortunately, of course, long waiting lists will make it more difficult to save lives. The real problem we have is a massive shortage, in the thousands, in the number of pathologists and radiologists to catch the cancers in the first place, and a massive shortage of oncologists and dermatologists to do the treatment. So regardless of the money, how are we are going to make sure that we have the personnel, not in five or seven years' time, but now, to be able to save lives?
>
> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): First, I want to say how sad I am to hear about the hon. Gentleman's constituent Lynda. I think her experiences have been shared by literally millions of people in this country during the pandemic, because they have not been willing or able to get the oncology treatment that they need because of the pressure of covid on the system. The system is now coming back, trying to help everybody as fast as possible to fix the backlogs. So yes, it is necessary to hire more nurses and doctors, and there about 10,000 more nurses now and about 6,000 more doctors—
>
> Chris Bryant: Pathologists and radiologists.
>
> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): The hon. Gentleman is totally right in what he says about radiologists and pathologists, but may I respectfully say to him that that must be done by means of the big powerful package that we put forward last week to raise the funding necessary? I believe his party should have supported that and it is incredible that it did not. (Dialogue 11 of Appendix B)

Chris Bryant starts by sharing a personal story about his friend Lynda, who had advanced cancer and had only a few weeks to live. By sharing this emotional experience, he aims to personalize the issue of cancer detection and treatment, evoking empathy and understanding from the audience. Chris Bryant then highlights the impact of long waiting lists on people's lives and emphasizes the urgent need for more pathologists and radiologists to catch cancers early. This framing seeks to captivate the audience's attention and evoke concern about the current shortage of medical professionals in the healthcare system.

In response, Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledges the emotional weight of Chris Bryant's story and expresses sadness at the situation faced by Lynda and many others during the pandemic. He says that efforts are being made to address the backlogs in the healthcare system and emphasizes the need to hire more nurses and doctors, including pathologists and radiologists, to improve cancer detection and treatment. The dialogue employs the human interest frame to capture the audience's attention and evoke empathy towards the importance of timely and adequate medical care.

Even though the shortages were already being felt years before Brexit, Britain leaving the EU as well as the Coronavirus pandemic only exacerbated these shortages. Some figures show that over 4,000 European doctors chose not to work in the NHS because of Brexit and an end to free movement (Campbell, 2022).

The human interest frame was not only used to point out worker shortages, but also to talk about the EU settlement scheme. The scheme, for which every EU citizen wishing to remain in the UK needed to apply (BBC, 2019) was a big topic in the 2021 corpus, given that 5 questions referred to it. The human frame was used to discuss the scheme. For instance, Ian Blackford called for the scheme to be scrapped due to the stress and uncertainty it causes EU citizens living in the UK:

> Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): […] While the settlement scheme deadline falls today, we know there are hundreds of thousands of unprocessed cases. It is simply unacceptable that their rights will be diminished by the failures of this Government. Will the Prime Minister honour his word, give certainty, and scrap the disastrous settled status deadline before we face another Tory Windrush? […] (Dialogue 5 of Appendix B)

Others, such as Liberal Democrat Wendy Chamberlain, pleaded for more support navigating the application process for vulnerable EU citizens:

> Wendy Chamberlain (North East Fife) (LD): Funding for organisations helping vulnerable or hard to-reach citizens with the EU resettlement scheme is due to end at the end of this month. My own constituent tried to get assistance from the local citizens advice bureau in March, but the funding cuts meant that it could not help him. He has been unable to get support from the resolution centre either, and has now been refused settled status. Can I ask the Prime Minister what practical support will be provided to

> EU citizens still navigating this system, and what he would advise my constituent to do to ensure that he has the right to stay in his home of 47 years? […] (Dialogue 9 of Appendix B)

In conclusion, the human interest frame was used in several dialogues to add a personal and emotional touch to discussions about labor shortages and the EU settlement scheme. This approach aimed to evoke empathy and highlight the real-life impact of these issues. EU migrants were generally depicted in a positive light, emphasizing their contributions and well-being amid changing immigration policies.

Conflict and morality frames

Just as in 2016, the conflict frame was solicited multiple times, though to a lesser extent, the frames analyzed above being more readily utilized. The prevalence of this frame was expected, given the structure of PMQs. The subjects which were the source of conflicts were mainly the EU settlement scheme, as we have already seen in dialogue 5 of Appendix B, opposing Ian Blackford and Boris Johnson, as well as on the topic on the best way to mitigate labor shortages, notably through a temporary worker visa as proposed by Sir Roger Gale in dialogue 12 of Appendix B.

The morality frame is scarce, though not inexistant in the 2021 corpus. Let us take a closer look at dialogue 5, which clearly exemplifies both the conflict frame and the morality frame.

> Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): […] In July 2019, the Prime Minister gave an unequivocal guarantee to EU nationals living in the UK. He said that they "will have the absolute certainty of the right to live and remain." Less than two years later, hundreds of thousands of EU nationals have been left in limbo, including thousands of children. While the settlement scheme deadline falls today, we know there are hundreds of thousands of unprocessed cases. It is simply unacceptable that their rights will be diminished by the failures of this Government. Will the Prime Minister honour his word, give certainty, and scrap the disastrous settled status deadline before we face another Tory Windrush?
>
> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): I thank the right hon. Gentleman, and I just repeat what I said earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Katherine Fletcher): I think it is fantastic that 5.6 million people have applied. We are processing all the applications as fast as we possibly can, and clearly the most important thing is for anybody who still has not applied to get their application in today.
>
> Ian Blackford: The issue is that there is a backlog of hundreds of thousands of cases because of delays on decisions. Overnight, thousands of our friends and neighbours could become illegal immigrants. They are living in fear for their jobs, their families and their livelihoods, all because this Prime Minister will not keep his word. We know

> all too well the experience of this Government's Home Office: dawn raids, vulnerable people deported, and a hostile environment for the Windrush generation. Scotland's message to EU citizens is: you are welcome here, we want you to stay, this is your home, but this UK Government are causing EU citizens untold stress. One woman who has been in the UK for 44 years says she feels suicidal. Another says she feels like a third-rate citizen. This is shameful. Will the Government now do the right thing and scrap the deadline and introduce automatically granted settled status, or will the Prime Minister's legacy be the ridiculous removal of NHS staff, our local community workers, our teachers and many more who have made their homes here?
>
> Boris Johnson (The Prime Minister): It is obvious from the statistics I have already quoted that this is an outstanding success, because we have had huge numbers of people applying. There may be people who still have to apply—there have been several extensions; it is five years now since the Brexit referendum—but we have funded 72 organisations to help vulnerable EU citizens understand what their rights are and make the applications. Anybody applying within the deadline will of course have their case dealt with, and I urge them to get on with it. (Dialogue 5 of Appendix B)

The conflict frame is apparent in the exchange. Ian Blackford confronts the Prime Minister, accusing the government of failing to fulfill its guarantee to provide certainty and security for EU nationals living in the UK. He highlights the hundreds of thousands of unprocessed cases and the potential risk of many becoming illegal immigrants overnight. This creates a sense of conflict between the government's promises and the reality faced by EU citizens, with Blackford asserting that the government's actions are causing untold stress for EU citizens.

Furthermore, the mention of the Windrush generation, which refers to migrants from former British colonies in the Caribbean who were improperly held in custody, deprived of their legal rights, faced threats of expulsion, and in a minimum of 83 instances, were unjustly deported from the UK by the Home Office accentuates the impact of the comparison with the EU settlement scheme (Hewitt, 2020). The accusations of dawn raids and a hostile environment for vulnerable people add to the conflict frame by presenting a contentious issue of government actions and their consequences on different communities. This in turn hints at the morality frame, which is brought on the table through the discussion of human rights and ethical considerations. Mr Blackford refers to the UK government's failures as "shameful" and raises concerns about the emotional toll on EU citizens, including one woman feeling suicidal and another feeling like a third-rate citizen. This evokes a moral dimension by hinting at the ethical implications of the government's policies on human lives and well-being.

Additionally, the emphasis on Scotland's welcoming message to EU citizens and the call for the right thing to be done imply a sense of moral obligation and responsibility on the part of the government to protect the rights and well-being of EU citizens.

Overall, the conflict frame was identified in discussions about the EU settlement scheme and labor shortages during the period of analyzed PMQs. It created tension and urgency in the debates. The morality frame, though less prominent, appeared in dialogue 5 of Appendix B, questioning the ethical implications of the government's actions on EU nationals. EU migrants were more readily depicted as victims of unjust treatment and as an abandoned part of the population in 2021.

Sections 5 and 6 sought to analyze the use of the five frames of discourse both in 2016 and in 2021, section 7 will seek to compare their use in the debate surrounding EU migration and discuss the findings of the analysis.

7. Discussion of Findings

The discourse framing analysis gave us several insights into the evolution of discourse on EU migration between 2016 and 2021, as much in the topics addressed as well as in the use of the different discourse frames to address these very topics.

The most striking shift can be noticed in the use of the economic consequences frame. In 2016, the discourse on the economic consequences of EU migration presented both positive and negative impacts. Discussions during the PMQs addressed the potential benefits of EU migration to the British economy, such as the contributions of skilled EU nationals working in essential public services like the NHS (Dialogue 9 of Appendix A). Additionally, the positive impact of free movement for young Britons' careers and research opportunities was emphasized (Dialogue 5 of Appendix A). The negative impact imputed to EU migration was also heavily underlined in 2016. Problems such as wage undercutting, pressure on public services and infrastructure (Dialogue 2 and 6 of Appendix A) were pointed out as negative economic consequences of the free movement of EU citizens. MPs also raised fears of exploitation of migrant workers, which raised concerns about the economic well-being of both EU migrants and British workers (Dialogue 7 of Appendix A). EU migrants were depicted as having negative consequences for the UK overall.

In contrast, the discourse in 2021 took a different direction, focusing primarily on the aftermath of Brexit and the end of free movement of EU nationals. The discussions predominantly highlighted the detrimental impacts of the lack of labor mobility on various industries in the United Kingdom. Labor shortages in sectors such as hospitality, agriculture, healthcare, and HGV driving were central to the discourse (Dialogue 6, 10, 12, and 13 of Appendix B). The shortage of HGV drivers emerged as a critical concern, affecting the entire country and being attributed, in part, to Brexit (Dialogue 6 of Appendix B). MPs raised questions about introducing a covid-recovery visa to address the labor shortage and prevent loss of produce due to the lack of pickers, who, according to professionals of the industry, predominantly came from Eastern Europe before Brexit (BBC East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, 2021). The discourse underscored the need for labor mobility and acknowledged that the end of free movement had significant economic consequences for industries that relied on EU migrant workers.

The shift in focus of the two discourses is evident. In 2016, discussions centered around policies to manage immigration with the goal of addressing the perceived adverse economic effects of the free movement on Britain. However, by 2021, the narrative shifted, revealing that numerous UK industries heavily relied on foreign labor. While it was acknowledged that EU migrants did add some strain to the country's industries and public services, they also played a crucial role in easing these pressures.

Moving on, the use of the human interest frame was prominently used during both time frames, though the use has also evolved between 2016 and 2021. In 2016, this framing was used to discuss national security concerns related to EU migration (Dialogue 9 of Appendix A) or to show the damage it causes to British workers (Dialogue 14 of Appendix A). This framing was also used to emphasize the positive contributions of EU nationals in essential sectors like healthcare and care homes (Dialogue 13 of Appendix A). It aimed to humanize the debate and highlight the positive impact of EU migration on people's lives and UK society.

In 2021, this frame was prominent in debates on labor shortages and the EU settlement scheme and its shortcomings (Dialogues 2, 5 and 9 of Appendix B). MPs brought up real-life stories of individuals and the challenges they faced due to labor shortages (Dialogues 6, 11, 12 and 14 of Appendix B), particularly in crucial sectors like healthcare. By sharing personal experiences and emphasizing the urgent need for more workers, this framing technique sought to evoke empathy and concern about the consequences of labor shortages on society. The EU settlement scheme was a significant topic which was depicted through the human interest frame to highlight the stress and uncertainty faced by EU citizens in navigating the application process. Vulnerable or hard-to-reach citizens lacking support from organizations due to funding cuts were given as examples, shedding light on the potential difficulties faced by individuals in securing their right to stay in the UK.

The use of the human interest frame in both 2016 and 2021 dialogues indicates the persistent significance of emotions in political communication. We can see that the damage of EU migration mentioned in 2016 faded in the light of numerous shortages felt by many industries in 2021. In several dialogues in 2016, the EU migrant was depicted as an oppressor, meanwhile in 2021, notably in the discussion on the settlement scheme, the EU migrant was depicted as

the oppressed. These changes in perspective reflect the wider social and economic climate in Europe, from Brexit to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The use of the conflict and responsibility frames remained constant during both time frames. This, as it has been pointed out above, is inherent to the structure of PMQs, which encourages such framing. It is thus unsurprising that these frames were extremely prevalent in both corpora. Virtually every dialogue indicated some level of government responsibility and the ability to alleviate issues related to EU migration. MPs held the government accountable for the pressures of uncontrolled migration and the right policies to follow in 2016 and the EU settlement scheme and labor shortages in 2021.

The use of the morality frame, both in 2016 and 2021 remained scarce in both time periods. Other frames have been deemed more effective in shaping the narrative and influencing public opinion on EU migration during the time of the analyzed PMQs. It is also important to consider the format of PMQs and the constraints of time and space for each speaker. PMQs often prioritize quick exchanges and confrontations between the Prime Minister and other MPs, leaving limited opportunities for in-depth discussions on complex moral issues. As a result, the use of the morality frame might be constrained by the nature of the parliamentary debate setting.

In 2016, the morality frame was only identified once, and it revolved around the condemnation of racist attacks and the behavior of Nigel Farage in the European Parliament (Dialogue 12 of Appendix A). The reference to the “ridiculous and revolting behavior” sought to bring a moral dimension to the discourse, emphasizing the reprehensible and unacceptable nature of these actions. However, it is worth noting that this instance of the morality frame is rather indirect, and the focus remains more on condemnation and judgment of behavior rather than explicitly discussing moral principles.

In 2021, only Dialogue 5 of Appendix B presented a moral framing by discussing the EU settlement scheme. Ian Blackford accused the Prime Minister of not keeping his word and causing EU citizens untold stress, implying ethical considerations and moral obligations on the government's part. The mention of one woman feeling suicidal and another feeling like a third-rate citizen further brought a moral dimension to the discourse, questioning the ethical implications of the government's actions on the well-being and rights of EU citizens.

The analysis also confirmed the political stances of the parties presented in section 3. 2. and showed that stances on EU migration remained constant between 2016 and 2021 amidst political parties. The Scottish National Party (SNP) opposed Brexit and recognized the need and benefit brought by free movement of EU citizens, both in 2016 and 2021. The Labour party and the Liberal Democrats were in support of EU migration in both time frames, though the former acknowledged that practices such as advertising for British jobs exclusively abroad, were enabled by free movement of EU citizens. Jeremy Corbyn's ambivalent position on the EU was clearly seen in the way he asked questions in 2016. The Conservative party showed signs of division on the question of EU migration in 2016, though in 2021, every Conservative MP who spoke acknowledged the need for foreign labor in the British workforce. Boris Johnson was the only speaker in the 2021 corpus rejoicing about the opportunities that Brexit brings.

Overall, the analysis highlights the evolution of discourse on EU migration in the UK Parliament, reflecting the changing political landscape and societal concerns. Despite different framings, the economic aspect prevailed over others, that the UK has a utilitarian view of EU membership, both before and after the referendum. The framing techniques used by MPs played a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of EU migration and the policy responses to the challenges it presented. Understanding these framing techniques provides valuable insights into how political discourse can influence public opinion and shape policy decisions on a complex and contentious issue like EU migration.

8. Conclusion

This thesis explored the UK's complex relationship with the EU and freedom of movement by comparing the discourse on EU migration during the 2016 Brexit campaign and in 2021, coinciding with the EU settlement scheme application deadline.

The historical background of the European Union allowed us to better understand several key elements in today's migration debate in the UK. Initially conceived as the ECSC after WWII, the EU's primary aim was to bolster trade in Western Europe and avert another war on the continent. As the Union expanded, the European Economic Community aimed for deeper integration, emphasizing monetary and social policies. This led to the universal freedom of movement for goods, services, capital, and eventually, people, as enshrined in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. The concept of free movement, especially for labor, has been integral to the EU since the 1960s.

Conversely, the UK maintained a cautious stance towards the EU, joining only in 1973 and promptly holding a membership referendum two years later. Throughout their common history, the UK always maintained a pragmatic and utilitarian view of EU membership. A significant point of contention was the freedom of movement policy, further accentuated after the 2004 EU enlargement. The UK, being one of the few countries to not restrict its labor market, witnessed a surge in migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. By 2015, EU nationals constituted a majority of the UK's foreign population. Yet, when compared with countries like Belgium, the UK's foreign population, at 8.8%, seems modest.

Despite these statistics, anti-immigration narratives gained traction. To address this, Prime Minister David Cameron (2010-2016) initially sought to renegotiate the free movement policy with the EU. However, facing resistance from Brussels, Mr Cameron committed to a referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the EU, now widely recognized as Brexit.

During the Brexit discussions, EU migration took center stage, with EU migrants frequently depicted in an undeservedly negative manner. This was unexpected, given that labor mobility, enabled by the freedom of movement, represents the main type of migration within the EU. Importantly, many of these EU citizens played a crucial role in the UK's labor market.

Global events, such as the 2008 euro-crisis, the 2015 migrant crisis, and the ascent of right-wing politics, further intensified Euroscepticism in the UK.

The analysis of the political discourse surrounding EU migration in 2016 and 2021 through the Prime Minister's Questions revealed significant shifts in how EU migration was framed. In 2016, the discourse during the Brexit campaign centered around discussions of policies to manage immigration with the goal of addressing the perceived adverse economic effects of the free movement on Britain. In 2021, after the EU settlement scheme application had been closed, there seemed to be a shift in tone and approach. The discourse surrounding EU migration evolved, acknowledging the importance of EU nationals' presence in the British workforce and society, without mentioning the negative consequences they may cause. The focus shifted from the negative consequences of free movement to the negatives of its absence. The debate nevertheless focused on the economic impact of EU migrants, echoing the utilitarian view that the UK holds of the EU. During both time frames, emotional triggers and personalized discourses were utilized to convey ideas on EU migration, both from pro- and anti- free movement MPs indicating the significance of emotions in political communication.

The findings of this thesis emphasize the profound impact of language and discourse on molding public perceptions and influencing policy choices, while also shedding light on the UK's intricate and historically charged relationship with the EU. Throughout the Brexit campaign and beyond, language was used as a powerful tool to construct narratives, influence public opinion, and legitimize political positions. It is essential to recognize the impact of language on public discourse, particularly on topics as sensitive as migration, to avoid the pitfalls of misinformation and divisive narratives. Moreover, the study also revealed the importance of historical context and the complexities of the UK's relationship with the EU. Understanding the historical roots of migration debates provided valuable insights into the drivers of political decisions and the evolution of public opinion.

Moving forward, it is crucial for policymakers and society to engage in evidence-based and respectful discussions about EU migration and migration in general. The dynamics of migration are multifaceted, and any comprehensive understanding of the topic requires a nuanced approach that goes beyond emotional rhetoric.

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