Elusive Citizenship

European Citizens' experiences of naturalisation in Britain after Brexit

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: ……

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Acknowledgements

First, the thesis studies participants' relationships to their European citizenship in the context of Brexit and how it shapes their conceptions of home and belonging. Second, I explore how civic integration requirements shaped participants' definitions of British citizenship. Finally, I delve deeper into participants' acts of citizenship, framed within a moral economy of deservingness, and aimed at legitimising their claim to British citizenship.

Overall, the findings highlight the internal diversity within the group of 'Europeans' in the UK and challenge one-size-fits-all ideas that see naturalisation requiring cultural and affective elements as criteria for access to citizenship. I do this by providing empirical evidence of the impact the normative character of naturalisation had on participants' understandings of citizenship.

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Abstract

This thesis studies EU citizens' experiences of naturalisation in Britain after Brexit. It focuses on the affective and cultural requirements of the naturalisation process in the UK, expanding on the literature on affective citizenship. The study draws on data collected through interviews in Brighton and Hove, the analysis of which addresses the following research questions: How did EU citizens experience naturalisation in the UK after Brexit? What was the role of participants' European citizenship in those experiences? What was the impact of cultural requirements on participants' conceptualisations of British citizenship? How did participants legitimise their claim to British citizenship?

The theoretical frame of this research speaks to perspectives on affective citizenship, acts of citizenship and notions of deservingness. Traditionally, these bodies of literature have not been combined to study experiences of naturalisation. While literature on citizenship is often centred around the state, I focus on EU citizens' experiences. Additionally, I focus on a multi-scalar approach that draws attention to the local dimension of citizenship through the concept of community of value, moving away from approaches that consider citizenship as stable within national borders.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Citizenship is a legal status, and simultaneously it is far more than that. I see citizenship as a social construction that is complicit in the perpetuation of global inequalities (Shachar, 2009). It is a powerful political device of control, which can exclude and include individuals, it can provide certainty and security, while being uncertain (Fortier 2021). Certainly, my own condition as a citizen-migrant informs this conceptualisation of citizenship. I have experienced citizenship (and the lack thereof) differently at different moments and in different places. I have found myself fluctuating between locations of citizen and migrant repeatedly. This is the origin of my sociological curiosity about citizenship. How can a concept, legally and socially constructed, have such a great influence in the way we see ourselves? How does a socio-legal category evolve to become such an organising device, that it defines the way we see the world and our place in it? Moreover, citizenship is far from stable, and yet it is seen and spoken of as such.

In seeking to understand how a socially and legally constructed concept can shape our understandings of ourselves, I wanted to join in the task of (feminist) geographers who seek "to connect what they understand as the microlevel of everyday experience to the macrolevel of power relations" offering an analysis that "through the local, accesses larger power relations" (Rose, 1997, p. 310). "The local" here refers, initially, to my own experience, which shaped my intellectual curiosity. A local that has travelled with me across various locations and that is also fundamentally global, as it resides within my transnational life. Bringing this local out, into the world and anchoring it in Brighton, has allowed me to start making those larger connections with structures of power. Nevertheless, I have regarded each one my participants as a constellation of local and global, which speaks from a particular location, but refers to issues of "larger

contemporary politics of belonging" which are "at the heart of contemporary political and social lives, encompassing questions of identity and citizenship" (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, 2006, p. 10).

As a result, I am not only looking to understand the conditions of production of the citizen. I am also proposing that such conditions simultaneously produce the migrant. The alliance between immigration policies, citizenship definitions, and national identity has an effect in the *naturalisation* of differences between citizens and migrants. These ontological convictions led me to examine the 'place' where such differences (and inequalities) are most explicitly narrated: the naturalisation process. In defining the criteria for membership, naturalisation requirements confuse notions of national identity and citizenship and the role of the state, establishing the need to transform individuals from migrants to citizens in order to award them the privilege of citizenship and state protection (Kostakopoulou, 2010).

Moreover, naturalisation processes in Britain (and everywhere) mix adherence to the law with feelings of belonging and attachment (Fortier 2010). For this reason, scholarship on affective citizenship, which studies the official recognition of certain emotions as requirement for membership in any given state, is central to my analysis of naturalisation experiences.

Citizenship policies and conditions for membership in the state develop in "widely diverging discursive contexts, characterised by specific constructions of the relation between immigrants and the receiving nation-states. These discursive constructions have important consequences […] for the self-definition of the migrants" (Koopmans *et al.*, 2005). Thus, it is not only important to look at the national context but also the political, historical, and social context. These policies produce migrants as much as citizens through the institution of citizenship. Furthermore, they are deeply connected to global,

national, and local contexts. As a consequence, the context of Brexit[1] will be central to the findings of this research on Britain.[2]

To conclude, I develop a conversation between inward-looking and boundary conscious approaches to citizenship, following Bosniak's proposition that citizenship ought to be considered not only as the realisation of democratic rights and membership in the state, but also as practices of exclusion that reveal the edges of the community of belonging, focusing simultaneously on practices that maintain "community exclusivity and closure" (2006, p. 2), with which I aim to denaturalise it and draw "attention to the fragility and fluidity of groups and identities" (Clarke, 2017, p. 22). This approach resulted in three main decisions: first, a decision to focus on acts of citizenship, which draws attention to how individuals exercise membership through everyday practices before achieving full membership (Isin and Nielsen, 2008); second, to study EU citizens as they inhabit (or at least did in the past) the grey area between citizens and migrants in the UK, where rights and formal status allowed them a strategic location to undermine such a binary; and third, a focus on the concept of a community of value, which is composed of people who share values and ideals, but also display exemplary behaviour and represent the 'good citizen' (Anderson, 2013, pp. 2–3). The combination of these fields of study have seldom been used before to study EU citizens' representations of citizenship and experiences of naturalisation.

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[1] Brexit refers to the departure of Britain from the European Union. It is the abbreviated combination of "Britain" and "exit"

[2] The term "Britain" refers to England, Scotland, and Wales, along with their collective islands. However, it excludes Northern Ireland. I purposefully use this term when I want to refer to findings or socio-political contexts that cannot be attributed to Northern Ireland as well, given its own specificities. On other occasions, I use the term "UK" to refer to all of the above territories, when I consider the differentiation unnecessary

In this chapter I set out to present my research and provide a contextualised theoretical justification for it. In the next section, I present my main research questions. I then lay out my main goals and finish with an outline of the structure of this thesis.

1.1 Emotional Governance in Britain after Brexit

Citizenship and migration have been historically connected in Britain, where the construction of belonging and membership evolved along racial and colonial lines (Ho, 2009; McGhee, 2009; Mayblin, 2017; Bassel and Khan, 2021). Furthermore, British nationality law and the definition of citizenship historically followed an increasingly a restrictive trend (El-Enany, 2020) directly related to migration being regarded as a threat to "concepts of national identity and citizenship" (Home Office, 2002:9). According to Ho (2009) this trend is further problematised by official definitions of citizenship in terms of belonging and affect, as seen in the Cantle Report (Cantle, 2001b) or the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* (Home Office, 2002), two instrumental pieces for the reconfiguration of citizenship in Britain. The affective criteria for naturalisation has usually been studied from the perspective of the affective power of the state over naturalising individuals, that is, the state's requirement of individuals to feel loyalty, attachment to the nation, as well as belonging in, and identification with the national community (Fortier 2010; Di Gregorio and Merolli 2016; Merolli 2016). In this research, I focus on the role naturalising EU citizens played in resisting and perpetuating such affective requirements.

The inclusion of a citizenship test and ceremony in Britain is part of a larger European trend of inclusion of civic integration requirements for naturalisation (Joppke, 2007, 2017; Goodman, 2010). Such requirements bring along normative definitions of citizenship that include the appeal to an emotional identification with the nation. This is

an affective construction of citizenship and the citizen. The affective power of the state is most visible in these civic integration requirements. This research defines citizenship as a political project of belonging that is reflected in the naturalisation process (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018).

This political project of belonging also activates specific identification strategies, while marginalising others (Morrice, 2016). Therefore, this research hinges on a conceptualisation of the naturalisation process that incorporates notions of identity, belonging, rights, status, and moral values and that is *practiced* in different domains of social life (Bosniak, 2006; Morrice, 2016a).

According to Yuval-Davis (2013) citizenship is also about membership in several communities and "people's lives are shaped by their rights and obligations in local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, transnational and international political communities" (p.7). This interpretation expands the definition of affective citizenship to include the response of migrants to the state's affective power. Moreover, it deepens the scope of the research to include citizenship practices and the social world around them, particularly at a local level.

In this research I assume that migrants who have naturalised under the current nationality law have had to perform for the state institutions a specific script laid out by the current civic integration requirements (Anderson, Gibney and Paoletti, 2011; Fortier, 2013; Byrne, 2017; Prabhat, 2018a, 2018b; Bassel and Khan, 2021). The naturalisation process provides values and norms of behaviour to be internalised, articulating an ideological interpretation of Britishness, linked to mythologies of a (white) majority society with one common history, closely tied to national identity (Byrne, 2012). This restricts "the doorway to belonging and the claim to British citizenship and identity" (Morrice, 2016:4) and constitutes an example of a politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis,

2011), by determining who can belong to the national community and how. Thus, the current naturalisation process promotes an essentialist notion of (national) identity and belonging by constructing them "out of solidarity and loyalty to Britain and in particular to a set of shared and normative values […] around which the long-term settled population is already united, and that newcomers can be required to sign up to" (Morrice, 2016a, pp. 1–9). The process of resisting and conforming, perpetuating and contesting (Barrios Aquino, 2022), or even exceeding such requirements is what I set out to examine with this research.

1.2 Research questions and focus

This study focuses on European migrants' experiences of naturalisation and representations of citizenship in the UK after Brexit. There are three underlying assumptions here: the first suggests that citizenship is something that can be experienced differently by individuals (an important component of the social world); second, that European citizenship could have a significant impact on those experiences; and third, that the political context (Brexit) can shape individuals' representations and understandings of citizenship.

Thus, this research is mainly concerned with how EU citizens experience naturalisation in Britain after Brexit. I break down this research overarching question into three more specific ones:

1. What is the impact of participants' European identity and citizenship on their experience of naturalisation?

2. What is the impact of civic integration requirements on participants' sense of belonging and membership in Britain?

3. How do participants legitimise their claim to Britishness and British citizenship?

Each of the three empirical chapters in this thesis focuses one of these research questions in that order. The findings of this research aim to unravel the social, political, and affective struggles that are at stake in the definition of citizenship.

This thesis sets out to address these research questions through data collected from semi-structured interviews, conducted over 9 months in the city of Brighton and Hove, from March to November 2017.

Following the research questions, this study aims to unpack EU citizens' experiences of constructing British citizenship and their perception of Britishness. Citizenship, when understood as a potential source of power and security (Yuval-Davis, 2013), can have a significant impact on new and aspiring citizens' identities and relationship to the British state. Additionally, in setting out to examine representations of citizenship I aim to shed some light on the perpetuation of essentialising differences between citizens and non-citizens. The possibilities are infinite in this combination of stories of migration and belonging, of exclusion and membership, of identity and relations to the state; however, I am mostly interested in analysing everyday manifestations that reveal the conditions under which the state exercises its affective power over non-citizens and how they respond to this challenge.

Citizenship studies have long been concerned with the histories of exclusions, inequalities, hierarchies and securitisations that have been associated with citizenship and that make questions about its construction and architecture necessary (Brubaker, 1992; Nyers, 2007). However, responses to the state when it wields its affective power to distribute citizenship (and rights) have received less attention. This is simply because traditional definitions of citizenship tend to focus on its three main dimensions: status,

rights, and identity (Joppke, 2008). That is, when looking through the lens of the state, citizenship translates into a means for equality (status) associated with political, social, and civil rights (rights) based on common shared values and a sense of community (identity or national identity). This definition of citizenship emphasises the relation of the individual to the nation-state through rights and responsibilities in exchange for equality and security. However, it presents an important blind spot: it disregards the emotional and affective dimension of citizenship that mediates and shapes that same relationship. Thus, this research aims to add the affective as a crucial dimension of everyday practices of citizenship.

To better understand this relationship, I considered it crucial to go where citizenship is manufactured: the naturalisation processes. By focusing on naturalisation, I can also access the learning processes experienced at the intersection of all dimensions of citizenship (Delanty, 2003) and to examine the consequences for the identification practices of the new citizen.

1.3 Structure of thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter Two provides a discussion and analysis of the relevant literature and scholarship on affective and moral citizenship, acts of citizenship and the moral economy of deservingness. The chapter starts by defining citizenship as a political project of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It then focuses on literature on access to citizenship, here mainly influenced by critical citizenship studies (Bosniak and Shachar, 2011; Anderson, 2013; Badenhoop, 2017; Byrne, 2017; Fortier, 2017). Sections two and three discuss the wider implications of this conceptualisation of citizenship for access to citizenship. The final section provides a discussion of such definitions of citizenship and conditions of access to it for aspiring citizens, focusing on notions of deservingness and the importance of taking the social location of the individual into

account. The chapter concludes that the normative frame within which citizenship is conceptualised results in the development of a moral economy of deservingness based on narrow moral and affective definitions of the ‘good’ citizen (Anderson, 2013).

In the third Chapter I present my research methodology, where design, sampling, data generation and analysis are discussed in that order. The chapter starts with my ontological and epistemological positions, which are anchored in constructivism, interpretivism and feminism. The second section is dedicated to discussing my positionality, where I explain the implications of my adherence to feminist epistemologies and interpretivism. Next, I outline the sampling, recruitment, and interview design processes. The fourth and the fifth sections, discuss fieldwork and data analysis.

Chapter four discusses the context of the research. It starts with a detailed presentation of citizenship policies in the UK, which highlights the importance of connected histories and using a historical frame to understand citizenship policies today (Bhambra, 2007; Mayblin, 2017). This first section of the chapter focuses on four landmarks in British legislation about nationality and immigration to provide a background for the introduction of civic integration requirements in the early 2000s. It also addresses how the Home Office defines citizenship with discourses of deservingness and how these relate to civic integration requirements implemented in Britain since 2004. The chapter continues with a commentary about the impact of Brexit on the changing meaning of European citizenship in Britain. The next section introduces the importance of the local context to understand experiences of naturalisation policies and representations of citizenship. The chapter concludes that national citizenship policies, the supra-national context, Brexit, and the characteristics of the interactions of national and supranational factors at the local level, are essential to understand the naturalisation

experiences of participants of this research. This chapter sets a clear socio-historical frame to engage with the research questions and the empirical material of the thesis.

The first research question is answered in Chapter Five, which is the first of three empirical chapters. Here I explore: What is the impact of participants' European identity and citizenship on their experience of naturalisation? I do so by exploring how participants experienced and narrated their European identity and citizenship in our interviews. These narratives necessarily developed within discussions of Brexit and how it unsettled participants conceptions of home and belonging (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019)

In this chapter, a clear divide is starting to appear between participants from "Eastern" and "Western Europe"[3], and that will remain relatively stable throughout the thesis. Following the narratives of European identity formation and Brexit's impact on it, I present how belonging is starting to emerge in participants narratives of membership in a polity. The next section of the chapter engages with participants' redefinition of the territories of attachment, to match their sense of being at home and its disruptions. Here the concept of translocality (Appadurai, 1996; Verne, 2012; Anthias, 2018) emerges as essential to understanding EU citizens experiences of naturalisation in the UK after Brexit. The last section of the chapter engages with the reasons behind participants decisions to naturalise, which are indicative of how they think of citizenship as protection and security. I conclude this chapter proposing that defensive naturalisation (Aptekar,

[3] "Eastern" and "Western" Europe or Europeans are presented throughout this thesis in quotation marks to problematise the essentialising tendencies that such a label may suggest regarding individuals coming from different regions in Europe. Nevertheless, their use is justified as it responds to a jargon repeatedly used by participants in interviews. Furthermore, this categorisation simultaneously serves to problematise homogenising tendencies within the label of European citizenship. East Europe refers to post Soviet societies that entered the European Union in 2004 and 2007, whereas West Europe refers to the states that made up the European Union before those enlargements. This distinction is based on participants perceptions of Eastern and Western Europe.

2015, 2016) constituted a new homemaking strategy (Brun and Fábos, 2015) for participants; one developed in the context of Brexit.

Chapter Six picks up the narrative here to first hone in on participants' expectations of citizenship, in which they reveal their own definitions of citizenship and the citizen. A more ambiguous picture then forms, where membership in the state and affective requirements for membership complicate the relationship between participants definition and experiences of citizenship. This complexity is unpacked in the second and third sections of the chapter, where I specifically focus on their reactions to civic integration requirements. The final section engages with how participants' narratives reveal a hierarchy of belonging, where Anderson's (2013) concept of the community of value is essential to explaining the way official definitions of membership have permeated participants' definitions and experiences of belonging. I conclude that British citizenship policies and the naturalisation process emphasise nativistic expressions of national identity and belonging, narrowing down the possibilities of full inclusion in the national community for aspiring citizens. With this, I answer the second research question 'What is the impact of civic integration requirements on participants' sense of belonging and membership?' Engagement with civic integration requirements revealed the illusion of belonging hidden in naturalisation policies.

Chapter Seven is the final empirical chapter and in it, I focus on affective citizenship and dimensions of deservingness (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014), by looking at the narratives participants used to legitimise their claim to membership in the national community or the community of value. These narratives highlight the importance of discussing notions of moral citizenship in Britain, tying normative official definitions of citizenship with participants' development of a moral economy of deservingness, in which they display emblems of good citizenship (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin,

2012). This was key to addressing the last research question of the thesis ‘How do participants legitimise their claim to Britishness and British citizenship?’. The next section of the chapter moves from discourses to practices, by presenting acts of Britishness as clear examples of the complex everyday definitions of citizenship participants develop when they go through the naturalisation process. The last section of this chapter focuses on learning as a key element for the production of the citizen in Britain today (Delanty, 2003; Byrne, 2014), as it condenses all aspects of citizenship discussed thus far: cultural, moral and affective.

Chapter Eight presents the overarching conclusion of this research, drawing together the answers to all three research questions and findings from each empirical chapter, summarising its thematic contributions to knowledge and setting the agenda for future research in this field. Here, I argue that affective elements of citizenship constitute new technologies of exclusion that perpetuate inequalities at a global scale and hide behind liberal democratic values, while contributing to ethnonationalist definitions of citizenship and membership in the polity.

2 THEORY

In this chapter, I provide the theoretical concepts I used to analyse the naturalisation experiences of EU citizens in the UK after Brexit. I start by defining citizenship within the frame of a politics of belonging; advancing an understanding of citizenship as a productive device, which produces both the citizen and the migrant (Anderson, 2021). This definition of citizenship aims to encompass the significance of its political and cultural construction as well as the importance of status, rights, political participation and belonging. However, in this research I propose to go beyond them (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2008; Aptekar, 2016) by highlighting citizenship's affective dimension.

With this conceptualisation of citizenship, I emphasise its processual character and focus on the naturalisation process to accentuate the affective aspect of constructing citizens. For that purpose, I examine the impact of citizenship policies on experiences of access to citizenship, focusing on everyday practices.

Everyday practices are observed as acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), and serve as a theoretical tool for interpreting how EU citizens experience naturalisation requirements in the UK in that they expose the ways in which citizenship definitions translate into actions in participants' representations of citizenship.

The first section of the chapter focuses on a definition of citizenship against the background of the literature on politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2010; Wood and Waite, 2011; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018). In the second section, I hone in on the literature on access to citizenship, focusing on acts of citizenship, affective citizenship, and moral citizenship, to provide a lens through which to examine current official definitions of membership and belonging. Here I define citizenship as a moralising and civilising project (Favell, 2001; Houdt,

Suvarierol and Schinkel, 2011). Following that, in the third section, I explore the resulting relationship between naturalisation and learning and propose it constitutes a sign of the culturalisation of citizenship in the UK (Schinkel, 2010; Anderson, 2013; Fortier, 2021). Finally, in the fourth section I suggest that the naturalisation process and its transformative learning requirements, constitutes a site where a moral economy of deservingness is developed (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021). This refers to a complex trade system through which aspiring citizens and states assess their own moral valence, using official criteria for access to citizenship as currency.

I conclude that notions of affective and moral citizenship are key to understanding the experiences of EU citizens in the UK today and close the chapter with a discussion of how these conceptualisations are going to be carried out throughout this thesis, setting the agenda for the methodology employed in my research.

2.1 Politics of belonging, and a definition of citizenship

Politics of belonging refers to "specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197). Within this frame, citizenship is understood as a political project, whose goal is to construct belonging to the nation state. Such construction is steered by, but not limited to, cultural interpretations of liberal democratic values that the new citizen needs to conform to. These cultural interpretations produce concrete forms of belonging, which in turn, are central to the state definition of citizenship, most visible in naturalisation regulations (Lähdesmäki *et al.*, 2016, p. 239).

Here, I see belonging as a socially and politically constructed apparatus, designed to draw and maintain boundaries (Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021) between members and non-members, insiders and outsiders, citizens and aliens, etc. It follows that I focus on

the state politicisation of belonging (Bhambra, 2006; Wood and Waite, 2011; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021), which shapes how membership is constructed, distributed, regulated and managed through policy. This approach depicts the discursive construction of belonging as essential to a state's formulation of what it means to be a member of the political community.

Citizenship is thus first and foremost conceptualised as the institutionalisation of a politics of belonging, inasmuch as it is shaped by state definitions of who has access to membership in the political community, excluding those who the state constructs as not belonging. This focus on inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of citizenship considers the state as the "architect and guarantor of […] forms of closure", insofar as it "governs access to the status of citizen" with the naturalisation policies (Brubaker, 1992, p. 23).

2.1.1 Citizenship, the state, and a politics of belonging.

Yuval-Davis and colleagues (2018) define citizenship as the "most common political project of belonging" (p. 230), because state discourses and citizenship policies mobilise notions of belonging to establish who is included in, and who is excluded from, the political community. There are two sides to any political project of belonging, namely the inclusive and the exclusionary side. They are both mutually constitutive and inseparable since to determine who belongs, the state needs to also designate those who do not. Furthermore, the naturalisation process is where all the criteria for determining who belongs and who does not belong are made explicit, coded in law, legitimised, and officially established for any nation-state. This definition purposefully emphasises both belonging and legal status as well as discrimination and exclusion because they are all mutually constitutive and inseparable. Moreover, this points to a more open definition of policies and experiential accounts thereof, in an attempt to move "beyond top-down and

bottom-up approaches in favour of “studying through” (Fortier, 2021, p. 22; Wright and Reinhold, 2011) citizenship, seeing it as an ongoing process rather than a status to achieve.

One of the goals of this definition of citizenship is to address the call for more research examining “more deeply how all dimensions of citizenship interact”, rather than compartmentalising citizenship into its inclusionary or exclusionary aspects (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2008, p. 154; Barrios Aquino, 2022). Official definitions of citizenship have increasingly become intertwined with notions of belonging and national identity (Secor, 2004; Morrice, 2016b). Arguably, this has been done with the explicit objective of helping citizens “feel safe by keeping those who do not belong out”, however, this “can undermine feelings of safety for everyone through raising a sense of precarity” (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018, p. 230) and uncertainty (Fortier, 2021). As a result, legal rights and obligations are increasingly concealed behind their cultural interpretations and citizenship has become more mediated by culture and values (Schinkel, 2010). Paying attention to this evolution in official definitions of citizenship allows me to expand the focus to encompass rights, status, behaviour, and values.

2.1.2 Citizenship, a divided concept

There is a dialectical relationship between inclusion and exclusion at the heart of citizenship (Barrios Aquino, 2022). While recognising this dilemma, scholarship has often tended to separate these aspects of citizenship for analytical purposes (Bosniak, 2006). Bosniak (2006) argues that separating these aspects of citizenship is misleading and can be overcome by not focusing on either of these approaches, rather taking them both into account as co-constitutive of citizenship. She proposes the development of a deeper "conversation between inward-looking and boundary-conscious approaches to citizenship, in the interest of illuminating the dilemmas of inclusion and exclusion that

are implicated by the concept" (2006, p. 2). Here, I want to answer this call by grounding my research on a definition of citizenship that emphasises its divided nature and cuts through it.

Turning the focus towards international migration is useful to highlight this 'basic ethical ambiguity' (Bosniak, 2006, p. 1), which is that citizenship is both inclusionary and exclusionary, because while citizenship's exclusionary practices are visible within the political community too, they are "felt most sharply by those who move across borders" (Shachar, 2017, p. 793). Through a restrictive approach to immigration and nationality laws, the state sends a message of protection and belonging to its citizens (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012), addressing those who do belong and protecting them from those who do not. The "immigrant is 'the other, the stranger' the protection from whom is the whole purpose of the political association" (Schmitt, 1996, p. 27 in Joppke, 2010, p. 4). Along with women, individuals from ethnic minorities, certain social classes, sexual orientations, and any other intersecting categories that can highlight the uneven access to rights and protections; migrants are instrumental to understanding the exclusionary aspect of citizenship present in inclusionary discourses.

According to Brubaker (2010), citizenship is defined as social closure and is designed to keep some people out and allow some others in (depending on class, gender, nationality of origin, ethnic background, sexuality, etc.). Moreover, from this perspective, citizenship also acts as protection against those who the state defines as not-belonging (Brubaker, 1992). That is, "citizenship functions above all as a device of external exclusion, and one that is far more robust and immune to the charge of 'discrimination'", because it is anchored in the legal construction of the modern state (Joppke, 2010, p. 14). This is because the state's need for a "permanent population" is perceived as a need for closure (Vink and de Groot, 2010, p. 715). When considering this perspective, the state's

inner hierarchies are exposed as privileging some citizens (by birth, class, race, etc.) over others as well as over non-citizens (Badenhoop, 2017, p. 412). The wider implications of these elements of current definitions of citizenship is that the need to produce citizens and differentiate them from non-citizens is considered common sense (Fortier, 2021) and has important consequences for notions of equality, rights, etc.

Here I have presented how citizenship is an essential element in the architecture of the modern state, the foundations of which are rooted in inequalities among citizens and between citizens and non-citizens. Although much more could be said about inequalities linked to citizenship, my intention here was simply to complicate the discussion of the meaning and purpose of citizenship, as well as denaturalise its links to kinship, territory, culture, rights, democracy, etc. Furthermore, this approach shows the need to examine citizenship as practices of everyday discrimination and privilege, belonging and exclusion.

2.1.3 Community of value, everyday bordering, and home

Inequalities *among* citizens and *between* citizens and non-citizens begin to blur when we dive deeper into the divided nature of citizenship, as we are forced to consider the specific location of each subject and the intersection of factors that hinder or facilitate her access to rights, equality, etc. The aim of considering such boundaries as blurry is to look more closely at the exclusionary implications of certain inclusionary measures. In other words, taking a deeper look at those who are supposed to belong, may reveal a great deal about the contours of such belonging.

A useful concept in examining these blurred boundaries is the one of “community of value”, developed by Anderson (2013). She defines the community of value as being “composed of people who share common ideals and (exemplary) patterns of behaviour

expressed through ethnicity, religion, culture, or language" (p. 2). The first key element of this concept is that it defines citizens as sharing values rather than a legal status (Anderson, 2013). Secondly, the community of value is made up of "good citizens" (p. 3) who display that exemplary behaviour, which is not only visible through their actions and practices, but is also associated with ethnicity, culture, or language. A third and final key element of the concept is that it nationalises certain practices by describing them as practices of good citizenship and attributing them national identity, in this case, British identity. For example, a good British citizen volunteers in local charities, and therefore belongs in the community of value. The act of volunteering has thus been nationalised and confers belonging to the doer. This provides the possibility of flexible borders of belonging, shifting from local to national communities and providing fertile ground to emphasise "the importance of daily practices" (p. 3) while nationalising certain everyday practices and values by describing them as British.

Actions are then conferred value. Volunteering, for example, could be a sign of active citizenship, a key term in British citizenship policy circles (Home Office, 2002, 2008). But what are those values? More than values, they are the cultural definitions of liberal democratic values, which are useful in defining the "conceptual borders of the political community" (Hampshire, 2011, p. 963). British citizenship policies define citizenship in terms of legal rights and British values. This combination results in cultural interpretations of liberal democratic values (gender equality, tolerance, political activity and activism, active citizenship, etc.). At times liberal democratic values like equality, tolerance and protection conflict with the need for closure mentioned earlier. This constitutes the liberal paradox, "where an economic logic of openness comes into conflict with a political logic of protective closure" (Goodman and Schimmelfennig, 2020, p. 1106). This conflict between a need for openness and a push for closure often results in

a violation of one of the key provisos of classic liberalism, which is “the liberal ideal of public neutrality”, which establishes that “liberal states cannot legitimately promote or impose a specific conception of good” (Hampshire, 2011, p. 962). This violation undermines the validity of liberal democratic values as a justification for any measure of inclusion or exclusion. Furthermore, this Rawlsian proviso is almost never fully respected, as most liberal states promote specific conceptions of good through their interpretation of liberal democratic values (i.e., values of personal responsibility, economic performance, equality, secularism, democracy, etc) (Goodman, 2010; Joppke, 2010; Erel, 2010). Finally, those who identify with and represent the state’s cultural definition of those values belong to the community of value.

The emphasis on the community of value is important to understanding citizenship in Britain as transcending legal status and excluding citizens and non-citizens on the basis of their language skills, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, etc., as and when they do not match the description of the ‘good citizen’. In this sense, the community of value shines a light on the exclusion of those who do not clearly represent certain principles, values, race, etc. regardless of legal status. However, it is also inclusionary, as it welcomes non-formal members who match the description of the ‘good citizen’ due to their language skills, skin colour, gender, class, religion, etc.

This expansion of the focus onto everyday practices distributing the right to belong, regardless of legal status, emphasises the importance of values. By way of example, let us, on the one hand, consider a British citizen who is a single mother, unemployed, of a minority ethnic group and receiving benefits. On the other hand, let us consider a white, male, German citizen, working in the financial market, who speaks English fluently, is highly educated and who does not hold British citizenship. According to the definitions of the community of value presented here, the former would be less likely to see herself

reflected in official descriptions of good citizenship (e.g., civic integration requirements) than the former.

Now, it can be argued that in legal terms, the British single mother would have more rights and be legally entitled to more protections from the British state than the German citizen. However, the ubiquitous nature of the state and its shifting borders and boundaries make her legal rights irrelevant at times. This is because discourses that construct the community of value as the legitimate container of belonging in the state and source of rights and entitlement to protection, would send a message of exclusion to the British citizen and one of gratitude and welcome to the German citizen. Furthermore, the boundaries and borders of the community of value are present in everyday life and encounters with the state will tend to cement each of these imaginary individuals in their locations. The single mother will potentially feel continuously excluded from the community of value and this is likely to be highlighted in her encounters with state intermediaries (e.g., benefit officials, employment office employees, etc.). Whereas the German citizen, in his (potentially fewer) encounters with the state, will see his position as a member of the community of value confirmed. For example, when narrating himself and his life for settlement or immigration applications (Fortier, 2021) he will see how the description of the good citizen included in such documents perfectly matches his life story in terms of economic performance, work stability, language skills, etc.

To conclude, the community of value is constructed in ways that could simultaneously alienate formal citizens and welcome non-citizens into its centre, further complicating the nature and character of belonging in the political community and highlighting the racial, gendered, sexualised, ableist, and economic connotations that define who is the ‘good citizen’ (Bhambra, 2006; Shachar, 2009; Anderson, 2013; Mhurchú, 2014; El-Enany, 2020; Fortier, 2021).

2.2 Regulation and access to citizenship

In the previous section, citizenship was defined as the institutionalisation of the politics of belonging and essentially a divided concept. In this section I shift the focus towards access to citizenship, to provide a theoretical discussion of how criteria for access to citizenship can reveal ongoing and ever-changing political definitions of citizenship. By looking at what it is necessary to become a citizen we can better observe and examine the contours of citizenship and belonging. I begin the section arguing for the case of an approach to the concept to citizenship that regards its substantive and formal sides as co-constitutive and inseparable. I then turn to the three elements that I consider key to understanding the way the British state currently regulates access to citizenship: practices, affect and morality, in that order.

2.2.1 Formal and substantive citizenship

Formal citizenship emphasises a legal status that bestows rights and duties on the holder (Brubaker, 1992, p. 70), to whom the state owes protection (Joppke, 2010; Bloemraad and Sheares, 2017). This aspect of citizenship is directly linked to laws and regulation specific to each state. Therefore, citizenship is often defined in terms of formal citizenship, and therefore as full and equal membership in a democratic political community (Bellamy, 2008). Civic, political, and social rights are traditionally considered to be the content of formal citizenship (Marshall, 1950).

Formal citizenship tends to be associated with inclusion and equality, as it speaks only of those included in the national community and reflects their rights and duties as citizens, as well as those of the state towards them. Here, citizenship is seen from an "internal or endogenous perspective" (Bosniak, 2006, p. 1) as everyone who is a formal citizen of a state is (in theory) equal to other citizens of the same state before the law.

However, this aspect of citizenship can obscure societal inequalities with this illusion of legal and political equality (Fouberg, 2002, p. 82) if not complemented by the substantive aspect of citizenship.

On the other hand, definitions that focus on the substantive aspect of citizenship speak of equal access to rights and experiences of belonging (Bloemraad and Sheares, 2017). Access to rights rather than possession of rights takes centre stage here, and has been defined as "the ability of citizens to act on rights and responsibilities within the context of their material and ideological conditions" (Fouberg, 2002, p. 82). This focus on access and material conditions refers to how realisable rights are, and to the individual's ability to act as a citizen and be regarded as such. Such access is influenced by much more than a set of legal conditions (Staeheli, 1999, p. 64) and that is why it is often argued that substantive citizenship transcends formal citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, p. 2). This perspective highlights the importance of taking into account the variety of obstacles that prevent the full realisation of rights especially when studying oppressed groups (Lister, 1998, p. 323).

In this research, both formal and substantive citizenship are considered to exist in a dialectical relationship, which is essential to understanding citizenship, not as a possession but rather a process which is constructed and experienced as a political project. Indeed, dismissing status as a legalistic technicality runs the risk of disregarding experiences of citizenship that refer to exclusion and discrimination. It is those experiences that enhance and highlight the importance of the status of citizenship and its political and social consequences (Brubaker, 1992).

It follows from the discussion above, that formal citizenship is closely tied to the state and a liberal approach that defines citizenship in terms of rights and obligations, while substantive citizenship is linked to the citizen's experiences and practices that

reveal access to such rights. However, this analytical dissection of the concept would not serve the multilevel analysis that I aim to engage in. Following my definition of citizenship as central to the politics of belonging due to its simultaneously inclusionary and exclusionary nature (Barrios Aquino, 2022), I want to suggest that formal and substantive citizenship also need to remain inseparable for the purposes of this research, which is situated between Europe, Britain, Brighton and Hove, and the individual, and engages with a variety of scales of citizenship experience: global, national, local, and individual.

But what does it mean to consider the substantive and formal aspects of citizenship as inseparable? In this research, it points to the immense variety of ways in which the substance of citizenship can transcend the value of its formal status, while also acknowledging the affective and emotional value of legal criteria that grant access to citizenship. Furthermore, legal access to citizenship is contingent on the aspiring citizen's ability to demonstrate that she has the tools (gender, language skills, ethnicity, class, religion, etc.) to realise all her rights. Finally, following Isin and Nielsen (Isin and Nielsen, 2008) this approach aims "[t]o investigate citizenship in a way that is irreducible to either status or practice, while still valuing this distinction" (p. 2).

2.2.2 Acts of citizenship

For Isin and Nielsen (2013), studies of citizenship often focus on the "doer rather than the deed" (p. 2) arguing that the best way to investigate citizenship transcending the division between formal and substantive citizenship, is by focusing on the actions and practices, through which "regardless of status and substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens or, better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due" (2013, p. 2). In their proposal lies the definition of acts of citizenship: actions through

which individuals enact or claim citizenship, regardless of formal or substantive membership. Furthermore, acts of citizenship here are also considered as the "production of subjects, whether citizens, strangers, aliens or outcasts" (*ibid: 6*). That is, by examining individuals' actions we can ascertain their access to belonging (Anthias, 2002; Lähdesmäki *et al.*, 2016).

Acts of citizenship are a particularly useful concept when focusing on individual experiences of citizenship. A focus on acts of citizenship reveals the hidden seams within and around the collective of citizens and migrants, undermining long standing binaries such as migrant/citizen, public/private, personal/political. The result is a greater emphasis on the 'exemplary behaviour' Anderson (2013) refers to when defining the community of value. Thus, the interpretation of everyday actions can tell a rich story of what membership means in Britain. These will shed light on how formal citizens are being included or excluded from the community of value on the basis of class, gender, sexuality, nationality of origin, etc.

The actions through which subjects constitute themselves as citizens and, in doing so, influence definitions of citizenship, is key to research such as this, which draws on a diverse range of participants. Just as in the group of citizens, there are countless (in)visible divisions within this group labelled Europeans. Differences between East and West, Northern and Southern European, socio-economic location, education level, occupation, degrees of whiteness, language skills, etc. (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012; Rzepnikowska, 2019) will all place individuals in different locations and give them unequal access to the same rights. A focus on their conceptions of belonging, their aspirations of citizenship and rights, and their experiences of naturalisation, can tells us a lot about their place within or access to (or exclusion from) the community of value. Furthermore, focusing on the way participants in this research acted and spoke about their

actions, as well as the claims they made, also reveals the ways in which they resisted certain definitions of citizenship and accepted others.

Acts of citizenship are also defined as moments of making claims and a form of conduct that transgresses the legal status of citizenship and blurs the boundaries between members and non-members of a polity, highlighting practices of formal exclusion and informal inclusion (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, pp. 10–11). Furthermore, acts of citizenship need to be complemented and expanded by a recognition of the political nature of some emotions. This counts both for the individual experience and for the institutional frame, since they both mobilise emotionally charged discourses to claim legitimacy and to produce notions of belonging and non-belonging, to define the political community in terms of a community of value and to define the good citizen. Essential to this positioning is the understanding of affect as central to the production "of regimes of inclusion and exclusion" (Di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016, p. 934).

2.2.3 Affective citizenship

The concept of 'affective citizenship' attaches affect to citizenship. The reference to affect enables the exploration of how emotions are mobilised, validated, recognised and encouraged by the state to define good citizenship and the community of value and manage access to it (Fortier, 2010; Johnson, 2010).

Scholarship on affective citizenship has helped our understanding of the intimate and emotional nature of different conceptions of citizenship (Berlant, 1997; Plummer, 2003b; Fortier, 2010) and offered an "understanding of contemporary conditions of personal life and subject formation, and how they relate to citizenship" (Fortier, 2016, p. 1042). Thus, it helps us to observe the way citizens (ought to) feel and perform to be

considered good citizens while simultaneously looking at the way citizenship is distributed and managed.

Therefore, rather than focusing on legal or emotional aspects of citizenship as two sides of a coin, I propose to see these as co-constitutive and deeply intertwined. Emotional geographies invite us to understand "emotion in terms of its socio-spatial dynamics of movements and relations rather than as entirely interiorized subjective mental states" (Zembylas, 2011, p. 151). By bringing emotions out into the landscape of political projects of belonging and experiences of inclusion, or exclusion, mobility, and otherness (Glaveanu and Womersley, 2021, p. 629) I want to blend the legal aspect of citizenship with its affective and emotional side.

From the above definition it transpires that a focus on acts of citizenship with an understanding that affect is deeply implicated in those actions, necessitates an analysis of the affective power of the state. The direct consequence of this is an understanding of acts of citizenship being mediated and influenced by affective governance or the mobilisation of emotions by the state to justify certain policies (Wilińska and Bűlow, 2020, p. 59). Through citizenship policies, the state promotes certain emotions as the right ones to attach to citizenship, producing normative ways for citizens and non-citizens to relate to themselves, the nation, and others (ibid, p. 39); "favouring some affects over others" (Fortier, 2010, p. 23). This expands the political authority of the state to encompass emotions as well as rights.

This approach has methodological implications, as it focuses on the individual and contextual character of 'the citizen'. The lens of affective citizenship forces the focus onto a more "personal membership" (Fortier, 2010, p. 25) and how it is regulated and administered by the state.

In her analysis of affective citizenship, Fortier (2010) argues that "governments and politicians draw on the register of emotions to define good citizenship" (p.19), and other scholars state that migrants are exclusively measured against criteria of 'good citizenship' (Johnson, 2010; Anderson, 2013; Byrne, 2014). This is the reason why Anderson has called migrants the "guardians of good citizenship" (Anderson, 2013, p. 6). The affective side of citizenship is key to examine migrants' experiences and representations of citizenship.

The mobilisation of emotions can be seen as bi-directional, with affect being mobilised both from the top-down and the bottom-up. From the top-down, citizenship policies demand an emotional attachment to the nation (Jones, 2005; Fortier, 2008) and establish the boundaries and conditions of good citizenship and the community of value. From the bottom-up, citizens and aspiring citizens interpret and experience those demands in particular ways. This twofold composition of affective citizenship reveals its potential as a site of formal exclusion of certain sectors of the population but also one of resistance to those forms of exclusion (Fortier, 2021, p. 1039; Vrasti and Dayal, 2016).

Following this interweaving of actions with emotions, citizenship is further defined as a site of emotional investment not only on the part of applicants and 'new' citizens but also on the part of the state (Fortier, 2013; Di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016). The purpose of the concept of affective citizenship in this research is to point at the various spatialities of citizenship, that is, to look at the way citizenship takes place in everyday life, at the most micro level, as well as in state's regulation of access to it, at the most macro level; and everywhere in between.

One of the main ways in which the state exercises what has been termed its affective power (Wilińska and Bűlow, 2020) or affective governance (Fortier, 2013) is through determining cultural and affective requirements for the granting of citizenship. In doing

so it constructs and puts forward “the structural and legal preconditions for intimacy, forms of sociability, belongings, and affections” (Simpson, 2014, p. 18; Berlant, 1997). Furthermore, affective governance is exercised through moral regulations that determine who is the ‘good citizen’ by establishing which behaviours and values are awarded access to belonging and which are not.

2.2.4 Moral citizenship

Moral citizenship can be most clearly associated with the assessment of ‘good character’ in naturalisation processes, in which the “moral valence” of aspiring citizens is measured and assessed (Aptekar, 2016, p. 1147). Thus, access to citizenship has often been studied as a site of construction of the good citizen, who, as has been argued before, belongs in the community of value. The evaluation of migrants’ adherence or suitability to the description of the good citizen is a way in which the state exercises its affective power. Access to citizenship is thus a site of production of regulations that will shape and constitute good citizens.

According to Favell (2001) citizenship is not only about a general universal understanding of belonging to a bounded national community, but is also an entire legal and political apparatus that is there to regulate behaviour and to contextualise the “civilising process” of becoming a citizen (p. 100). This civilising process is the alignment of the alien to a pre-existing “way of life and cultural heritage” (p. 124). This phenomenon reveals how norms, values, and acts or behaviours increasingly take centre stage when it comes to the definition of citizenship and the good citizen, highlighting the increasing relevance of the concept of acts of citizenship to study citizenship.

Thus, citizenship is transformed into a social artifact imbued with moral virtue and a specific behavioural repertoire. This transformation results from the moralisation of

citizenship, and it should not be seen as a monopoly of the state as this also is a bi-directional process; moral citizenship is simultaneously constituted from the top-down and also from the bottom-up. From a top-down perspective, the state constructs the naturalisation processes as *civilising processes* (Favell, 2001) "capable of measuring affect" (Di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016, p. 959) and producing a citizen worthy of the virtue of citizenship. Furthermore, emotional attachment and willingness to adhere to certain values are turned into moral obligations associated with the nation and national identity, that will reveal the moral valence of the aspiring citizen. Thus, the connection between morals, actions and affect starts to surface in the regulation of access to citizenship as aspiring citizens are bound to an ethical and moral project that determines that certain feelings are legitimate and valid and certain feelings are not, reflecting "the state's project of moral regulation" (Morrice, 2016b, p. 2).

Civic integration requirements such as language tests, evidence of good character, citizenship tests and ceremonies are the most visible arm of the moralising policies that regulate access to citizenship for non-nationals. From a bottom-up perspective, aspiring citizens will interpret such civic integration requirements in particular ways, that will inform their behaviour and how they narrate their own lives in their naturalisation applications (Fortier, 2021). Linked to this, individuals will perform certain behaviours, adhere to certain values, and contest others, to come up with their own definitions of citizenship, based on their experience of requesting access to it. As a result, naturalisation is turned into a site of narration of the self, following a script written by the Home Office through its definitions of good citizen, good immigrant, belonging, integration, Britishness, etc.

Access to citizenship is important in understanding individuals' interpretations of what it means to be a good citizen. This will necessarily be informed, among numerous

other factors, by their aspirations to citizenship and the institutional requirements needed to *earn* it (de Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016).

2.3 Access to citizenship, civic integration and learning to belong

Citizenship policies produce narratives with which to construct the community of value, blurring the boundaries of membership in the polity. This is because, as we have seen so far, citizenship is primarily a divided concept that is both inclusionary and exclusionary and that is constructed on the basis of an unequal distribution of belonging and membership among the population. The focus on access to citizenship, places an emphasis on understanding this distribution.

Naturalisation policies are based upon an assumption of linearity in the transition from non-membership to membership; a journey to citizenship (Fortier, 2021). In the UK this transition involves a learning process that is meant to provide the aspiring citizen with an array of legal (rights and duties), cultural (language skills, customs, etc.), moral (values), and emotional (belonging) resources. This learning is meant to facilitate attachment and commitment to the community of value.

In this section I elaborate on the importance of learning processes included in the British naturalisation process and their implications for the aspiring citizen. I start by developing the concept of culturalisation of citizenship (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010) and how it gives learning of cultural requirements a central role in the access to citizenship. Next, I discuss learning processes mobilised to implement the culturalisation of citizenship and their connection to acts, emotions and morals. In the final section I discuss the implications of learning processes for conceptualisations of belonging (Delanty, 2003).

2.3.1 Culturalisation of citizenship & civic integration

The culturalisation of citizenship is the "process in which more meaning is attached to cultural participation (in terms of norms, values, practices, and traditions), either as an alternative or in addition to citizenship as rights and socio-economic participation" (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010, p. 237). This signals a renewed focus in the regulation of access to citizenship on culture, values, and everyday practices, which come to play a central role in the construction of what it means to be a citizen of a given nation (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010, p. 237). The most evident implications of this emphasis can be seen in the inclusion of civic integration requirements in naturalisation processes, such as citizenship tests, integration contracts, loyalty oaths, language requirements (Goodman, 2012; Baldi *et al.*, 2016). In the UK civic integration requirements ask aspiring citizens to provide evidence of their good character, pass a citizenship test and swear a loyalty oath at a citizenship ceremony.

The shift towards giving more weight to *culture* makes it necessary to shift the focus of the study of citizenship as well, towards a more elastic understanding of the actors and discourses involved in the production of citizens and definitions of citizenship (Fortier, 2021), as well as on the impact those definitions and regulations have on individuals' aspirations of citizenship, and definitions of belonging, home, and identity.

The naturalisation process in the UK puts forward a narrative that defines culture "as a closed, timeless, and conflict-free whole, carried by citizens who all basically share the same beliefs, norms, and traditions" (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010, p. 233). Based on this narrative, naturalisation is highly normative as it defines the "ideal image of the citizen" (Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel, 2011, p. 416). Furthermore, the moral content of the definition of (good) citizenship takes precedence over its legal

content in these cultural requirements. That is, increasing emphasis has been placed on moral (British) values and cultural assimilation, combined with an increased omission of rights and duties both of the state and the citizen.

In addition to the moral content in terms of values, beliefs, norms and practices promoted by the naturalisation process in Britain, there is also an underlying moral assumption in the very existence of such requirements, and that is "that resident 'aliens' must learn and appreciate the traditions and values of the majority community, and must earn their membership by showing commitment" to them (Kostakopoulou, 2003; Fortier, 2021). In short, learning and affect are core elements to be performed and mobilised when aspiring to become a citizen of Britain.

According to Delanty (2003) cultural requirements turn citizenship into a "cognitive competence" (p. 599), which the state can measure and test in order to assess the aspiring citizen's ability to be *transformed* into a citizen. Civic integration requirements are the tool through which the state undertakes such calculations, giving culture centre stage, and measuring non-citizens' ability and willingness to integrate. This results in what Fortier (2021) calls *citizenisation processes*, which construct the moral valence of the aspiring citizen based on calculations of individual efforts to *learn* about the national culture, to perform (at citizenship ceremonies) adherence to a set of values in order to earn membership in the community of values, etc. Moreover, understanding citizenship as citizenising allows us to see how naturalisation and integration are not "discrete events on a same continuum" (Fortier, 2021, p. 24)

Scholarship on the culturalisation of citizenship has mostly focused on its institutional character (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010; Mouritsen, 2013; Recchi, 2014). The concept of citizenisation broadens the spectre of analysis of

citizenship, because it "functions both institutionally (as a process, as conditional, etc.) and socially (as experienced, enacted, lived)" (Fortier, 2021). However, my intention here is to focus on the common element to both: the learning process.

In British naturalisation policies, learning processes are considered central to the transformation of the migrant into citizen. Simultaneously, the migrant needs to learn moral values (or cultural definitions of liberal democratic values, as stated earlier) that are the bonding agent of the political community, epitomized in Anderson's (2013) community of value. This production of citizens is what Delanty (Delanty, 2003, p. 599) calls the "governmentalization of citizenship", which is the particular coding of citizenship included in the cultural script migrants have to learn and perform in order to become citizens. Such coding is a key opportunity for the state to narrate itself in specific ways, to be learned by the aspiring citizen. Thus, culture becomes a virtue that is rewarded with the prize of citizenship.

2.3.2 Learning processes and access to citizenship: national identity and learning to belong

The naturalisation process engages in the formulation of a uniform national identity (Andreouli and Dashtipour, 2014; Prabhat, 2018b) as a part of the governmentalization of citizenship (Delanty, 2003). This national identity is coded as the combination of cultural elements (language, traditions, historical facts, etc.) and values that participants need to learn to become citizens. Thus, aspiring citizens are learning a particular script that constitutes the outline of a national identity meant to ensure community cohesion (Kalra and Kapoor, 2009; MacGregor and Bailey, 2012).

Attached to this discursive construction of a uniform national identity are emotional resources that need to be mobilised in a sophisticated system of learning. Learning within

naturalisation is complex because it combines experiences (such as citizenship ceremonies) and formal learning (in books, courses, and through tests, etc.) with the goal of transforming the migrant into a citizen. This structure transcends and disregards (and therefore devalues) the informal everyday learning, which is more significant in the lives of migrants.

The aspiring citizen must "apply state power to themselves and participate in their own governing (Menjívar and Lakhani, 2016) by demonstrating the right knowledge, values and willingness" to be loyal to the nation, as well as their deservingness and becoming a desirable citizen (Bassel, Monforte and Khan, 2018, p. 227). In short, the nation is constructed as an object of attachment and desire (Fortier, 2013), a construction that is developed and strengthened through learning for naturalisation.

Concerns about integration of ethnic minorities and social cohesion were at the origin of requiring immigrants to learn "about everyday behaviours" in the UK (Home Office, 2008, p. 14). This learning is meant to strengthen a sense of belonging in the community (Home Office, 2002, p. 11), both for citizens and non-citizens. Citizens are also called to have a strong sense of belonging and be secure within it "to be able to reach out and to embrace those who come to the UK" (ibid.). Learning requirements are a symbol of the value of the nation, resting on the shoulders of the migrant, who signals such desirability to native citizens. Furthermore, the focus on cultural requirements is really a focus on learning, shifting the responsibility of social cohesion onto non-citizens; pointing to the assumption that they have a "citizenship deficit" (Fortier, 2021; p. 51) but that learning to belong will redress this deficit (ibid.). Learning the language, learning about history, traditions and behaviours, learning to love the country is also part of a shift towards the migrant bearing the weight and responsibility of her own integration (Home Office, 2008, p. 15).

The learning process is presented as the necessity to 'know' (the language, the facts, the customs, etc.) but it encompasses a more "subterranean or hidden curriculum of beliefs, expectations, norms, tacit assumptions and behaviours to be apprehended and learned as part of the transition process" (Morrice, 2011:117) which reveals the contours of naturalisation as a moralising or civilising process through which the migrant transforms into a good citizen or a member of the community of value. Through this citizenising (Fortier, 2021) and civilising (Favell, 2001) process the state demonstrates the 'choiceworthiness' of citizenship, while non-citizens have to demonstrate their own individual 'choiceworthiness' (Honig, 2001). Learning, in short, has become a moral and legal obligation of the aspiring citizen.

2.3.3 Migrantising the EU citizen. Civic integration and defensive naturalisation

The concept of the process of migrantising (Anderson, 2019) or migratisation (Fortier, 2021; Tudor, 2018) refers to the "ascription of migration to certain bodies, and the construction of certain people as 'at home' (see also Ahmed, 2000) while others are constructed as migrants" (Tudor, 2018, p. 1058). According to Anderson (2019), it is not only citizens of colour who can be migrantized "but also [to] those who support non-citizens or who are the partners of non-citizens" (p. 1). Here, I expand on this concept (henceforth migrantising or migrantization) to argue that non-citizens can also be migrantized in as far as they can be expelled from the community of value, after having been constructed as 'at home' (due to their skin colour, language skills, etc.). The implications of this for the community of value are twofold: first, it shines a light on the composition of the community, which does not always include all citizens and exclude all migrants. It also emphasises the unstable contours of belonging and membership in the community, clearly vulnerable to socio-political contexts.

The failure of the state to define clear boundaries between migrants and citizens, has given way to the process of migrantising. A process that, according to Anderson (2019), is useful "not only to look at the ways in which immigration controls affect citizens, but also how we might begin to make connections between the formal exclusions of noncitizenship and the multiple, and sometimes informal exclusions within citizenship" (p. 1). This hinges on the further erosion of a liberal understanding of citizenship conceptualised as being limited to rights and legal protections, turning it into uncertain and uncharted territory that is contingent of political and moral definitions of what it means to belong or to be a 'good citizen' and what is necessary to earn or deserve citizenship. Therefore, this concepts aids in the task of 'studying through' citizenship and naturalisation experiences of EU citizens in the UK.

The promise of safety, protection and belonging that is put forward by naturalisation processes and citizenship discourses can only be fulfilled in some (racialised, sexualised, gendered, classed, etc.) instances and this erodes the conceptualisation of citizenship as a safe haven, undermining its liberal mandate (Orgad, 2010; Hampshire, 2011; Joppke, 2019a). The lived experiences of access to citizenship are thus essential to understanding the way citizenship is constructed and how it perpetuates both in-group and out-group inequalities.

According to some scholars, anxiety (Fortier, 2017) and neurosis (Isin, 2004; Byrne, 2013) are close companions to naturalisation processes, as citizenship carries in itself the seed of exclusion and the state always retains the power to alienate, discriminate and migrantize on the basis of values and norms, behaviours, ethnicity, etc. Such values and norms will necessarily change over time. In times of anti-immigrant politics, the stakes will be much higher and, according to Aptekar (2016) non-citizens will pursue naturalisation to "protect themselves from criminalisation and anti-immigrant policies"

(p. 1148). Furthermore, in times on anti-immigration politics, the community of value may shrink and expel non-citizens who otherwise fulfil all other criteria for membership.

Furthermore, the acquisition of the status is highly volatile because the ideals that define access to it are contingent on the political atmosphere. Naturalisation thus can become a strategy to counter these uncertainties and get back into the community of value or enter it for the first time. Thus, citizenship is pursued to flee a precarious status that threatens deportation and a sense of being at the mercy of the state. This is what has been termed *defensive naturalisation* (Van Hook, Brown and Bean, 2006). The experience of naturalisation is thus fraught with emotions that emphasise the citizenship deficit of all involved, even of those who had once enjoyed de facto membership (as I will demonstrate some EU citizens did), due to the construction of citizenship as a privilege rather than a right.

2.4 Deservingness and good citizenship

This final section of the chapter focuses on the moralising aspect in official definitions of citizenship in the naturalisation process. More specifically, I discuss here how privilege and deservingness interact and form new and varied definitions of citizenship, based on two key elements, namely: the moral economy of deservingness (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin, 2012; Chauvin, Garcés-Mascareñas and Kraler, 2013; Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021), referring to complex trading systems of narratives and evidence, through which migrants narrate themselves and negotiate their moral valence by curating their stories through documents, experiences, moral values and norms, behaviours, acts of citizenship, etc. (Fortier, 2021); and the social location of the subject (Grüneil and Saharso, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 2010), which is needed to emphasise that this moral economy varies from migrant to migrant and from citizen to citizen. I discuss these elements in that order.

2.4.1 Moral economy of 'deservingness'

The moral definition of the citizen affects the way non-citizens access and experience citizenship. Moreover, the ensuing moralisation of citizenship and learning processes set in motion a system of evaluation and 'auditing' of migrants' lives and choices, their values, beliefs, and behaviours. This complex system of assessing and performing, narrating the nation and curating one's own experience, resembles what Garcés-Mascareñas & Chauvin (2012) call a *moral economy of deservingness,* referring to a system that "encourages irregular migrants to accumulate official and semi-official proofs of presence, certificates of reliable economic and legal conduct, and other formal emblems of good citizenship" (p. 243). The authors use this concept to reflect on the 'trading system' undocumented migrants engage in, hoping to achieve legality at some point in the future or to legitimise their presence in the present. The moral calculations involved are revealing of the migrants' understanding of rightful presence, rights, (good) citizenship, etc.

In this research, I use the same concept to explore how naturalising EU citizens interpret civic integration requirements, experience the naturalisation process, and legitimate their claims for British citizenship. Furthermore, the idea of a moral economy of deservingness allows me to focus on a complex subterranean trading system in which aspiring citizens negotiate their narratives with official requirements for membership.

In this context, a moral economy of deservingness allows the exploration of how new citizens and aspiring citizens interpret and/or internalise discourses of a community of value, good character, and good citizenship, and ultimately, how they come to define themselves and their experiences within the frame of a moralised account of citizenship. This trading system is most visible in the combination of interpretations of official

discourses and everyday practices through which migrants legitimise their claims to citizenship.

Such claims are often closely intertwined with ideas of integration (Schinkel, 2010), belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and good citizenship (Goodman, 2021). All of which can be interpreted as *emblems of good citizenship* (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin, 2012) that aspiring citizens point to in their narratives as a part of their naturalisation process and which constitute evidence of their deservingness of citizenship. The moral economy of deservingness that results reveals a spiral that simultaneously makes migrants desire citizenship and assert their desirability, a complex equation that can be observed in the moral negotiations involved in the naturalisation process and that have a deep impact on how the state will come to define citizenship in the future. This, in turn, has a lasting impact on the definition of and access to rights.

2.4.2 The social location of the citizen

When looking at the complex relationship between the state and the aspiring migrant, it is essential to regard the crossroads of social categories such as gender, education level, religion, previous nationality, class, etc. as key factors that determine the location from which the migrant is *transforming* into a citizen. According to Yuval-Davis and Werbner (1999) it is important to enquire how "the specific location of people in society (…) mediates the construction of their citizenship" (p. 5). It is thus essential to remember that the interaction between the state and the aspiring citizen takes place from specific social locations, which contribute to highlighting the simultaneously inclusionary and exclusionary implications of the moral constructions of the citizen.

Power relations are necessary to understand the way in which the state defines the good citizen, and the hierarchy of belonging which results from that definition. Moreover,

the experiences examined here will reveal the new categories aspiring and new citizens were entering or aspiring to. Consequently, the way in which an individual *performs* citizenship will be determined by the variety of categories (citizenship of origin, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, etc.) that locate her within the fabric of society.

Recognising the different ways in which citizenship can be mobilised to access rights or to give meanings to rights is essential to understanding the full scope and relevance of citizenship. This recognition of the different 'uses' and meanings of citizenship reveal that citizenship is not only constructed institutionally or by "citizens in the conventional sense" (Isin, 2017, p. 501). Rather, in being multidimensional and multi-layered, citizenship is experienced, performed and constructed from a variety of locations, by a variety of actors (Fortier, 2021). This notion is key to understanding the impact of policies on aspiring citizens.

Directly relevant to the social location of the migrant is the experience of borders, in as far as "citizenship today is a tool of everyday bordering" (Fortier, 2021, p. 203; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018) that shifts borders from being between states to appearing within states and in everyday life. Moreover, the intersection of certain attributes will contribute to encountering more or fewer borders, or these borders being more or less permeable.

The ascription of migrant status to European citizens (Guma, 2020), who arguably hold 'the right' passport, have the 'right' skin colour, language skills, etc. is proof that not all "bearers of the same passport are equal" (Byrne, 2013) and that privilege is also to be studied intersectionally. Paying attention to the social location of the aspiring citizen is key to countering simplified notions of membership, inclusion, exclusion, privilege,

etc., which disregard the inbetweeness experienced by many EU citizens in the UK (Light and Young, 2009; Botterill and Hancock, 2019; Hall *et al.*, 2020).

While EU citizens enjoy(ed) more rights in the UK than non-EU citizens before the UK left the European Union, they have not been free from racialisation (Fox, Moroșanu and Szilassy, 2012) and migrantization. Their experiences anchored in their individual social locations are thus an excellent springboard to explore the variety of manifestations of citizenship in both its inclusionary and exclusionary aspects.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter defined the theoretical concepts that frame this research and provided an overview of its theoretical and analytical resources beginning with a definition of citizenship as a political project of belonging. After defining citizenship policies as the institutionalisation of a politics of belonging, the focus moved on to access to citizenship. This built on theories of acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), affective citizenship (Fortier, 2010) and moral citizenship (Schinkel, 2010) to discuss how the state distributes access to citizenship and the implications of such regulations. In this discussion I proposed that it is important to look at official citizenship definitions to understand experiences of citizenship and naturalisation, beyond definitions of status and rights.

We need to move beyond those elements (rights, status, political participation, etc.) in order to understand the wider implications of and "study through" citizenship, rejecting "linear temporalities and spatialities of citizenship" (Fortier, 2021, p. 45) that link it to immigration or official membership status, territory, ancestry, race, among other things. I believe this approach emphasises the impact that certain narratives that sustain citizenship have on the various definitions and experiences of citizenship (Delanty, 2003,

p. 602) and allows me to denaturalise and contextualise citizenship as something more than a status charged with rights and obligations. That is, a focus on citizenship as a political project of belonging guides my research towards the consideration of the affective and ideological elements of citizenship, that is, its normative and moralising components.

When studying EU nationals in the UK, it is important to take a critical approach because otherwise we run the risk of overseeing that some "are more equal than others" (Weber, 2008, p. 129), since they held most of the rights of British nationals. However, looking at the emotional, experiential, and moral constructions of citizenship allowed me to move beyond the dichotomy of formal and substantive citizenship, to expand our vocabulary of experiences of citizenship and the impact of policies and politics on everyday life.

But how do I observe this politics of belonging in action? In this thesis I address the elements presented here from a historicised and contextualised perspective. For example, moralising discourses on belonging are readily available for examination in policy papers and key pieces of legislation. In Chapter four I dig deeper into key elements of the history of British citizenship and its evolution, to fully understand the context within which today's policies came to be.

Belonging is much harder to investigate in everyday life and this necessitates a focus on acts of citizenship has been essential, as it allowed me to shift the focus from status and its meaning for the aspiring citizen, towards their performance and claim making related to citizenship. When migrants speak of where home is, when they claim their country of residence as their home, when they speak of their feelings of justice and injustice, their experiences on the bus or at work, they are speaking of their interpretations

of citizenship, in as far as they are claiming the right to be, the right to have rights and to be considered an equal and contributing member of society. I found that most forms of legitimising claims came accompanied by actions to back them and illustrate them. Acts of citizenship will be the key to translating EU nationals' experiences of naturalisation into their representation of citizenship. This constitutes the bulk of my research's empirical material.

These experiences and performances will be observed under the light of civic integration requirements and the learning mandate they bring about. Such requirements, I argue, will necessarily have an impact on migrants' representations of their own citizenships, their sense of belonging and their social location in the host country. The emphasis that current naturalisation processes place on learning is essential to anchoring experiences of citizenship of migrants within the moralising discourses that define citizenship in essentialist terms of personal responsibility and a way of being, rather than in terms of rights. Such a shift in the focus of citizenship, forced me to situate my research in a space where the interaction between the state, transnational identities, local communities, and individual subjectivities were intertwined in the experiences of citizenship. Therefore, in the methods chapter, I lay out the steppingstones that I followed to construct a multi-level, intersectional research project and provide a guide to unpack the complexities and practical consequences deriving from this approach.

One such consequence is the development of a moral economy of deservingness, in which aspiring citizens mobilise all forms of capital (personal, cultural, economic, social, etc.) to legitimise their claim to citizenship and to re-tell their story, following official criteria. This frame is also useful to highlight the ways in which the study of naturalisation can help expose the way citizenship perpetuates and essentialises inequalities at a global

scale in terms of access to rights and to resources, perpetuating a racialised human hierarchy (Shachar, 2009; Mayblin, 2017; Fortier, 2021).

Everyday practices of citizenship thus constitute a theoretical tool to explain why I looked at naturalisation requirements and how they are experienced by aspiring citizens. I have shown how such practices expose the ways in which citizenship exists as an institutionalised political project of belonging that is both inclusionary and exclusionary at the same time. Thus, naturalisation or "the way in which non-citizens become citizens, or acquire citizenship are not simply legal details and technicalities but indicate and shape foundations of how membership is imagined" (Anderson, 2013, p. 99; Honig, 2001; Cole, 2010), how belonging is distributed and how inequalities are justified and perpetuated, currently narrated in terms of more or less deserving individuals.

Throughout this thesis, I shine a light on these conceptualisations when and where they are present in participants' narratives of their experiences of the journey to citizenship, be that in the way they refer to their contributions to society (acts of citizenship), their sense of being at home or belonging to their communities (affective citizenship) or their values and claims of deserving rights and recognition (moral citizenship) within the frame of the British naturalisation process.

3 METHODS

Central to the organisation of this chapter is the distinction between methodology and method (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005; Castles, 2012), where the former refers to epistemological implications of the research while the latter refers to the technical details of generating and analysing data. Therefore, this chapter starts by engaging with epistemological issues such as ontological implications and positionality before moving on to the technical aspects of sampling, data generation and analysis.

The first two sections of this chapter focus on feminist epistemologies and intersectionality as the ontological and epistemological pillars of this research. They have concrete implications for this research, and it is essential to consider these to understand how I interpreted my data and generated my empirical findings. In the second section I reflect on my positionality and the importance of keeping a record of my thoughts and reasonings as a form of acknowledging my impact on my research. In the third section I move on to the technical details of my data generation and analysis, that is, the methods section. Here I start by focusing on sampling criteria and composition, as well as the process of recruitment and designing my interviews. The fourth section provides a detailed discussion of fieldwork, with a focus on pilot interviews which led to a revised form of conducting interviews, and the non-participant observations that were part of my fieldwork. Finally, in the last section I discuss the process of transcription and coding of interviews, as well as the final analysis and interpretations that led to the findings of this research.

3.1 Ontological and epistemological perspectives

This research is mainly concerned with how individuals experience naturalisation in Britain after Brexit. This research question implies that I consider individuals as holders and builders of realities and the social world (O'Reilly, 2005) and has two main implications for this study: first, it reveals my constructivist lens, through which I see the world as socially, politically, and affectively constructed; second, it necessitates an inductive approach, focused on the particular cases and opening up from them onto theory and analysis. This process is "highly iterative and tightly linked to data" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 532). Therefore, by its very nature, this research is interested in understanding and explaining how the world is differently experienced and imagined through methods that seek to "embrace complexity in the account and analysis of practice which is itself complex" (Miles, 2015, p. 311).

Such complexity has epistemological consequences that refer to access to it and the process of producing knowledge about it. According to interpretivist researchers, even if reality exists outside of individuals' experiences, the only way to access such a reality is through our and their (participants of any given research) own interpretations (McHugh, 2014). This points to the inevitability of subjective knowledge, which is the best way to approach knowledge about social reality (Kvale, 1996). Since reality is experienced and interpreted differently by individuals, it is those interpretations that I consider valid knowledge, and they are found in everyday life, "where social actors cognitively construct their world" (Delanty and Strydom, 2003, p. 353)

These ontological and epistemological perspectives are the main elements of the substructure of this research (Leavy, 2014, p. 2). As such, my ontological perspective informed and preceded my research questions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 107) in as far as they refer to the way I see the world and shape my sociological imagination and

curiosity. In essence, this implies that access to knowledge about that world can only be achieved through the collective interpretation of researcher and researched.

I unpack these assumptions in the following two sections. First, I discuss how these assumptions shape my position within feminist epistemologies and next I discuss the relevance of an intersectional lens.

3.1.1 Feminist epistemologies and constructivism

I analyse the impact of official definitions of citizenship in the naturalisation process and the role non-citizens play in perpetuating, resisting, and shaping definitions of citizenship and belonging. The intellectual puzzle behind this analysis originates from my own complex relationship with national identities, citizenships, and mobility. Feminist approaches to research argue that there cannot be a clear separation between the researcher, her interests, and her analysis (Hawkesworth, 2006; McHugh, 2014). I adhere to this approach, as I consider it important to acknowledge my methodological and analytical choices, as well as in my interaction with my participants.

A feminist epistemology thus sustains that interpretations or subjective knowledge are inevitable and objectivity is unachievable (Collins, 2008; Haraway, 2008; Harding, 2008), but rigour and transparency in research are still essential. These approaches advocate for a “usable doctrine of objectivity” which Haraway (2008) calls “embodied vision” (in McHugh, 2014, p. 149), and which is anchored in notions of situated knowledge and collective, rather than individual, productions of knowledge (ibid). This means that “knowledge is about communities not individuals” and our “capacity for knowing” is “limited by our body in a physical location” (Haraway, 2008 in McHugh, 2014, p. 150). For me, the most important consequence of this collective approach to

knowledge production is that the researcher co-constructs knowledge about the world with participants (Hoffmann, 2007, p. 319).

Underlying this approach is a conviction that our individual knowledge is always limited and partial and is related to our own intersectional position in the world, which is also related to our physical body (we cannot be in two places at the same time). Feminist epistemologies are the root of this approach because they emphasise the importance of situating knowledge in social research. From this follows that this study is the result of my interactions with my participants during interviews and *my* ability to critically engage with *their* narratives, as such, all research findings should be considered a collaborative construction (Nast, 1994; Rose, 1997).

This conviction guided my approach to interviews with participants and, more importantly, my data analysis. As a feminist scholar, an embodied vision has meant for me that I placed myself in the middle of the knowledge production along with participants. Furthermore, the sociological implications of their narratives were imbued with my own understandings of the world and my own experiences (informed by my ideological beliefs) of the same political context my participants were in.

During the analysis of interviews, I dialogued with the data in an open process where participants provided me with an aspect of the social reality under study that I would have otherwise not had access to, adding to a variety of perspectives in the findings (McHugh, 2014). I specifically paid attention to signals that may suggest that gender, class, sexuality and race could inform participants' experiences. This is directly linked to the way I understand my own experience as being shaped by the intersection of those categories. Finally, my participants' views and narratives are also embodied visions of the world, which are the product of their experiences in the moment of our interview, and which can change with time. Such visions ought to be considered intersectionally, and as

a result of complex crossovers and interconnections between categories such as race, gender, education level, nationality, etc. (Cho, Crenshaw and Leslie, 2013, Lykke, 2011).

3.2 Positionality

It follows from the philosophical supporting structure presented above that I agree with some scholars who have advocated for an increased awareness of the roles of the researcher in the research process (Rose, 1997; Haraway, 2008; Botterill, 2015; Van Ramshorst, 2020; Moret, Andrikopoulos and Dahinden, 2021). This approach has led feminist scholars to emphasise the importance of including the researchers' multiple positionalities in the research discussion (Katz, 1994; Mullings, 1999; Kohl and McCutcheon, 2015; Whitson, 2017).

A particular characteristic of positionality is that it is complex and intersectional (Roegman, 2018, p. 837) and therefore, the extent to which I will be able to fully disclose all of my characteristics as a researcher impacting on this research is limited. In what follows I lay out my positionality as a female researcher from the Global South and of a mixed ethnic background, considering three key elements: the situated nature of the knowledge I produced, my position as both insider and outsider in relation to my sample, and my gender. These categories are the pillars that sustain my reflections on positionality, although they are inevitably fluid and influenced by the intersection of all the other social categories I inhabit.

3.2.1 Situated knowledge and reflexivity

In this section I reflect on my positionality in the research process. This is often referred to as reflexivity and is a means to "avoid the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge" (Rose, 1997). In fact, my aim was never to produce a universal neutral truth that would subjugate (or even replace) other knowledge (ibid.) about

naturalisation experiences in Britain. Thus, this section is mostly a place of honesty and transparency, where I take notice of my influence, of my decisions and reflect on the knowledge I am producing.

I am a female researcher, an immigrant in the UK since 2015, with dual nationality (Paraguayan/Spanish) and whose mother tongue is not English (but Spanish). At the time of doing my interviews (between March 2017 and November 2017) I was pregnant. Being a woman, immigrant, pregnant, of a mixed ethnic background, conducting interviews with a foreign accent are all characteristics that are immediately available to my participants. These characteristics have inevitably shaped our interactions beyond my control (Song and Parker, 1995), they shaped the stories participants told me and the ones they did not.

Some participants enquired about my background, and then proceeded to either identify with me as a fellow immigrant or to offer explanations about the meanings of European citizenship (disregarding my own European citizenship) or of living in Britain for a longer period (considering that I had lived in the UK for a shorter period). I found these were opportunities for me to connect with my participants and develop a rapport that resulted in rich interviews.

Owing to that, all knowledge produced in this research is anchored to particular locations of production that are physical, cultural and emotional and always partial to the researcher (Haraway, 2008) as well as the result of a collective effort involving me and my participants.

These reflections are relevant to my approach to ethics, which is one where accountability and situatedness are essential guiding principles. That is, a recognition that researchers are responsible for the wellbeing of participants during the time they are

collaborating with research, because ultimately, the main (or most tangible) benefits of this collaboration were for the researcher. Developing an ethical research vocabulary (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012) was key for my research design, which follows relational (Ellis, 2007) and critically conscious ethical approaches (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). These approaches are complementary in that the former refers to the need for mutual respect in the intimate connection between researcher and researched (Ellis, 2007), while the latter refers to being aware, reflective and to critically question one's consciousness openly during the research process (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012, p. 67).

According to Freire (1993) this allows the participant and researcher to collectively participate in the meaning making. Freire's work was designed to empower the oppressed, but his radical approach to reflexivity and openness is useful also for the study of other collectives, as it reflects the need for transparency in the research process. Finally, a radical openness needs to account for the possibility of making decision 'on the spot' (Childers, 2012), which are the result of interactions taking place during the interview (in the case of this research) and highlighting the more relational and intimate nature of qualitative research, where the ethical research vocabulary needs to be fully developed before entering the field and needs to involve, alongside the knowledge of institutional regulations, a deep self-awareness and a developed reflection on positionality .

3.2.2 Moments of insiderness and outsiderness

Participants related to me in a variety of ways. At times the same participant would talk to me woman-to-woman, migrant-to-migrant, EU citizen-to-migrant, man-to-woman, etc. Often switching back and forth depending on what aspect of their experience they were focusing on. For example, if a female participant with children was talking to me about the value of raising children, she would often assume I knew what she was talking about

and would use phrases such as *"you know how it is"*. If later she was talking about her interpretation of what it meant to be European, she would explain in detail what Europeans felt like or stood for, expressed in forms such as *"for us things have changed"*. This revealed how that person would consider me non-European, due to my dual nationality or to me having mentioned that I was brought up in Paraguay. Thus, it soon became clear to me that I was experiencing what some scholars call "moments of insiderness and outsiderness" (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015 in Moroşanu, 2015, p. 13), and led me to question the validity of the insider/outsider divide and to highlight the importance of interaction and positionality in the context of an interview (Song and Parker, 1995; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Carling, 2012; Moroşanu, 2015).

During interviews, most participants asked me about my origin and nationality, and when I answered that I grew up in Paraguay and had dual nationality, Paraguayan-Spanish, all participants reacted to that information in the same way: I was a Paraguayan citizen who would know little of what it meant to be European. There were moments when our common migration experience was central and drew us closer to each other, and there were moments where perceived ethno-national differences were pervasive and the distance between us seemed larger. As a result of that perceived distance, I was often offered more explicit information about representations of European citizenship.

Inevitably, some of these reflections will result in a blurred divide between researcher and researched (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Botterill, 2015) as both are actively collaborating in the production of data through their interactions. These blurred lines are exacerbated within the context of migration research, where migrant researchers interview migrants (Moroşanu, 2015). Furthermore, as an immigrant interviewing non-British citizens, I often assumed participants' predisposition to trust me and identify with me as migrants, something that was not always true (as many interviewees did not see

themselves as migrants). Still, this gave me confidence in the relationship I would be able to build with participants and, at the same time, reveals how my self-understanding and my understanding of collective identities influenced the way I conducted my research.

To conclude, the insider-outsider continuum (Nowicka and Cieslik, 2014; Nowicka and Ryan, 2015) is especially useful here because it explains how I was simultaneously inside and outside and anywhere in between over the course of one single interview (Moroşanu, 2015; Van Ramshorst, 2020) and throughout the entire research process. This meant that participants went into depth in regards to some aspects of their experiences while skirting others, depending on their assumptions of what I already knew and what I could not know or did not know.

3.2.3 Gender

Most participants to this research were recruited through social media, emails, advertising in local businesses, and other online platforms. In most cases, except three interviews, I had not met the participants before. In all cases I offered participants the option of choosing the location of our interviews, which most frequently took place in public spaces such as cafes, libraries, pubs, etc.

The first thing to notice here is that I only specified the need for the interview to take place in a public space to male participants. I made no specification of any type to female participants. I only became aware of this decision when reading Moroşanu's reflections on interviewing coethnic migrants (Moroşanu, 2015) after fieldwork had already finished. This means that these were "spontaneous decisions [that] illustrate the importance of gender-related considerations in relationships with male and female participants" (ibid., p. 20)

On four occasions I was invited by female participants to do the interviews at their private residences. I gladly accepted and even felt honoured that I was invited to (literally) step into their lives. However, on the single occasion when one of the male participants stated that we could meet at his private residence, I rejected the offer and suggested we rescheduled to a time when we could meet in a public space. After a few attempts at rescheduling, we met at a public space but soon had to move the interview to his residence.

The interviewee was a respectful, kind, and open person who provided me with a candid and rich interview. Still, the interview only lasted 43 minutes, which is considerably less than the four interviews conducted at the female participants' homes, neither of which lasted less than one hour and a half. After the interview at the male participant's home, I wrote in my fieldwork diary that I had not taken the necessary precautions in the context of doing research with unknown participants (Moroşanu, 2015: 7) although this thought had not occurred to me in the case of the female participants with whom I had taken the same approach.

Another important gendered factor that influenced many of my interviews was the fact that I was visibly pregnant for more than half of my interviews. This fact triggered a series of reactions from participants, from apologising for suggesting a place that was far from my residence to frequently offering me refreshments and enquiring about how comfortable I was, which resulted in a constant reminder of my condition and their awareness of it. This experience is a sign of the ubiquitous presence of our gendered bodies and their impact in everything we do, including doing research (Kannen, 2013, p. 184).

3.3 Sample and interview design

In this section I start by looking at sampling criteria and presenting the context in which the sample was designed. Next, I go deeper into the recruitment process and how it shaped the final composition of my sample. I finish with a detailed account of the semi-structured interview's schedule and its design process.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria and the local context

Sampling not only involves decisions about "who" will be studied, but other dimensions which must also be considered, such as location, temporal dimension, socio-political context, etc. The details of fieldwork design were finalised between October 2016 and January 2017. A key decision was to conduct this study mainly in Brighton and Hove, over the course of the year 2017.

There were two main reasons that determined my choice of Brighton and Hove as a place to conduct my interviews: first, it was mine and my young (growing) family's place of residence and I had no funds to commute or travel elsewhere; secondly, Brighton and Hove has a particular identity as a "an art-loving city, home to members of the LGBTQ+ community" (Mazzilli, 2018, p. 29) which has an impact on the people that live there and their identities (Stedman, 2002; Hernández *et al.*, 2007; Cross, 2015). Residents of Brighton and Hove often speak of this exceptional character of Brighton and Hove and how it is not representative of Britain. Since the local community will be a key element in my analysis of citizenship, it is advantageous to conduct research in a locality with a distinct identity, which can aid in highlighting the relevance of a sense of place and attachment to place (Hay, 1998; Mazzilli, 2018). It follows that the location of this research is key to understanding its results. In addition to location, it is also noteworthy that sampling decisions and recruitment took place in the immediate aftermath of the

referendum that decided that Britain would leave the European Union in June 2016. The effect of this temporal and political dimension shaped my findings significantly, because naturalisation rates in EU citizens started to rise before the referendum (Fernández-Reino and Sumption, 2021) which contributed to my growing interest in their (potentially) changing representations of citizenship. This suggests that the referendum results affected EU citizens significantly, turning them into an ideal group to study naturalisation practices against the backdrop of significant political changes, because it would allow me to examine the liminal spaces between political and personal aspects of citizenship representations and practices.

Brighton and Hove was a clear outlier in the UK and within the South East of England, when it came to referendum results, with 68.6% voting to Remain in the EU (The Electoral Commission, 2019). This is of particular importance for this research, as it seems that the referendum results affected the way EU citizens experienced citizenship and naturalisation in the UK.

Finally, the label of European national refers to citizens of 26 countries that are members of the European Union and that enjoy the right to live and work in all other member states. This group resists any essentialist notions of homogeneity (Bastia, 2014) and serves the purpose of making in-group diversity more explicit. In the case of "Europeans" this is particularly true because, among other things, nationals of EU member states have become European at different times in history and not all Europeans are perceived (or see their EU citizenship) in the same way. Several studies have shown that the group of Europeans is a highly differentiated one, with various inequalities operating between its members, ranging from negative media coverage and immigration policies (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012) to market penalties and privileges (Favell, 2008a; Favell and Nebe, 2009; Johnston, Khattab and Manley, 2014).

One of the requirements to apply for naturalisation in the UK is to hold a permanent resident card for at least one year prior to applying for citizenship. For this reason, the naturalisation process is here considered as starting before the applicant submits the citizenship application and includes the decision-making process that leads the applicant to want to acquire permanent residency. The direct implication of this is that my sample includes participants who would not have gone through the naturalisation process yet, as well as those who are in the middle of the process and those who have already successfully acquired British citizenship.

To sum up, the sampling criteria was as follows: participants had to be citizens of an EU member state, residing in the Southeast of England, ideally living or working in Brighton and Hove, and be in the process of applying or having already applied for British citizenship after 2005, which was the year the current naturalisation process was implemented.

3.3.2 Recruitment and sample composition

I started recruiting participants by contacting my own social circles. At the beginning of 2017 I had lived in Brighton for just over a year but was able to build a social circle relatively quickly, mainly through my older son's nursery. I started my interviews here, although almost simultaneously started recruiting people outside of my own social circle, to avoid the risk having a less diverse reach (Barglowski, 2018). For that purpose, I designed a poster (Annex A) to share on social media and hang in local businesses, as well as an invitation letter (Annex B) to send to more targeted institutions or groups. I also joined several Facebook groups to recruit participants. Those groups were: UKCEN (UK Citizenship for European Nationals) with 46k members; Polacy w Brighton & Hove with 9k members; Hungarians in Brighton, UK with 2k members; Italiani a Brighton with 8k members, among others. These efforts provided me with the great majority of my

participants. I also tried other online platforms such as MeetUp, Call for Participants or Helpfulpeeps, which were less successful. I also sent some email invitations to mailing lists that I am a member of at the University of Sussex.

Additionally, I searched online for any courses that may be running in Brighton and Hove, which would prepare people for the Life in the UK test or for the English test for naturalisation and found one that was provided by the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College. I contacted the teacher of the course and met with her for coffee to discuss my project. I interviewed two of her students soon afterwards.

One key factor for my sampling criteria was the assumption that European nationals would feel differently about their European citizenship. Therefore, I wanted to interview European nationals whose countries had accessed the EU at different times. I also sought an even split in terms of gender and tried to maximise the diversity of my sample in terms of type of occupation, employment, length of stay, "Western" and "Eastern Europeans", etc. These decisions were based on an assumption that naturalisation experiences will be impacted by the social location of the participants (Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman, 2005; Ríos-Rojas, 2011). These assumptions constitute the three research sub-questions that guide the collection of empirical material that informs this thesis:

1. What is the impact of participants' European identity and citizenship on their experience of naturalisation?

2. What is the impact of civic integration requirements on participants' sense of belonging and membership?

3. How do participants legitimise their claim to Britishness and British citizenship?

The response rate was high initially, although the characteristics of the initial respondents was relatively homogenous: mostly highly educated women from France or

Germany or other "Western European" countries, who had lived in the UK for more than 10 years. This was an unexpected phenomenon and after a few interviews, I decided to put in some quotas in the recruitment process. This decision responded to two concerns: first, the narratives of the first interviews under those criteria were quite similar and I considered I was approaching saturation (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Flick, 2014), and second, I wanted to honour the sample diversity I was looking for with my initial sampling criteria. Consequently, I started to actively seek more male participants and to diversify in terms of citizenship, looking for participants from newer European countries.

Recruiting male participants was more difficult than female participants. The same is true for citizens of countries from the EU14[4], who were easier to recruit than participants from EU8[5] or EU2[6]. The reasons for this may vary from my ability to reach individuals from these countries, their employment status and therefore availability, their desire to share their story, the demographics of Brighton and Hove, etc.

These recruitment experiences allowed me to emphasise the intersectional lens through which I looked at my sample, as it called my attention to the variety of elements that could influence a participants' response, such as education level, class, gender, language literacy, nationality, political ideology, etc.

My sampling strategy relied on people volunteering to be interviewed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) which suggests that participants had reflected on their naturalisation process, and wanted to talk about it, providing me with richer interviews.

Table 1 presents a detailed description of the sample composition. I interviewed 32 European citizens residing in the southeast of England, mostly in Brighton and Hove. One participant was interviewed twice, once at the beginning of the process and once after she

[4] Countries that were members of the EU prior to 2004
[5] Countries that joined the EU in the 2004 enlargement
[6] Countries that joined the EU in the 2007 enlargement

had acquired British citizenship. The gender composition of my sample was almost equally split, with slightly more women (18) than men (15), although gender did not seem to provide a clear pattern in the results of the research. The final split by nationalities included a larger amount of "Western European" nationals (20) than "Eastern European" nationals (12), despite my efforts to obtain an even split. This, in itself, could be an initial hint of the level of identification of participants with the label "European", as in my advertising and recruitment resources, I stated that I was looking for Europeans who had naturalised.

The great majority of participants were highly educated and in stable employment. These two categories are important because participants referred to them as elements of privilege that shaped their experiences of naturalisation. Finally, although most participants were either in the process of naturalising or had already acquired British citizenship, it is also interesting to see how participants who had considered naturalising and decided not to, wanted to tell their story. These stories were central to my findings, which refer to representations and acts of citizenship in Britain, although they were partly produced by participants who had ultimately decided not to become British citizens.

These categories are relevant to my research findings, but due to the intersectional lens through which I conducted my analysis, it is impossible for me to identify the ways in which they all interact with each other. Moreover, not one category is consistently the most important one for any given participant. For these reasons, this table is useful to provide a snapshot of an aspect of participants' social locations rather than to explain every aspect of their naturalisation experiences or definitions of citizenship. The main criteria for selecting these categories responded to participants' narratives. That is, all the categories in the table were mentioned by participants at any given point in our interviews to narrate their experiences.

Table 1: Sample Composition

Pseudonym	Gender	Age*	Education level	Profession/Occupation	Country of Origin	Time in the UK*	Naturalised? *
Thomas	Male	31	MA	Social worker at a charity	PL	7 years	In process
Sofie	Female	25	MA	Research Assistant University	BE	5 years	In process
Sebastian	Male	40	BA	Cyber Security Consultant	ES/GB	10 years	Yes
Sabrina	Female	34	MA	PhD Student	ES/PE	9 years	In process
Pauline	Female	50	BA	Teacher at college	FR/GB	30 years	Yes
Noelia	Female	41	BA	Teaching Assistant / Lunch supervisor	ES	5 years	No
Nina	Female	53	MA	Consultant	DE/GB	37 years	Yes
Mikolaj	Male	38	BA	IT	PL	6 years	In process
Mario	Male	45	GCSE**	Hospital Housekeeper	ES	10 years	In process
Marika	Female	43	GCSE**	Cleaner	PL	9 years	In process
Anne	Female	34	A-Level**	IT Project Manager	FR	25 years	In process
Lena	Female	46	BA	Systems' analyst at a University	DE	26 years	In process
Lazar	Male	33	BA	Multinational Corporation / Tourism	BU	10 years	No
Kinga	Female	37	BA	Translator	PL	14 years	No
Kaiden	Male	34	BA	Local Farmer	MA	10 years	No
José	Male	42	PhD	Academic position at University	ES	10 years	No
Jens	Male	47	MBA	Banking	DE	6 years	No
Inês	Female	25	BA	Pharmacist	PT/GB	7 years	Yes
Ina	Female	40	PhD	Biologist	DE/GB	22 years	Yes
Hannah	Female	43	MA	Works at the Ordnance Survey	HU/GB	11 years	Yes
Francisco	Male	28	BA	Engineer Automotive Industry	ES/PY	8 years	No
Elvira	Female	42	MA	Lunch Supervisor Primary School	ES	20 years	No
Elías	Male	34	MBA	Hedge fund manager	ES/PT/GB	13 years	yes
Edda	Female	38	BA	Early Years Educator (Volunteer)	GR	20 years	In Process
Dimitri	Male	26	BA	Programmer	LAT	11 years	No
Claire	Female	38	BA	Freelance Translator	FR/GB	29 years	Yes
Balázs	Male	33	BA	IT Engineer / Graphic Designer	RO/HU	8 years	In process
Anne	Female	55	BA	Customer Service	FR / DE	19 years	No
Alvar	Male	37	GCSE**	Courier / Delivery Driver	EST	13 years	No
Aleksander	Male	41	BA	IT Self Employed	PL	5 years	No
Aino	Female	39	BA	Academic Position at a University	FIN/GB	21 years	Yes
Agnieszka[1]	Female	29	BA	Design / PR	PL/GB	6 years	Yes

* At the time of interview

** Equivalent in the British system

3.3.3 Interview design. Pilot interviews and Semi-structured interviews

I initially planned to conduct unstructured, open-ended interviews, to allow participants to choose the most important aspects of their naturalisation experiences, which I could not know in advance (Brinkmann, 2014). To test this approach, I conducted two pilot interviews, to help me determine if it presented any avoidable limitations. This would allow me to adjust my method of data collection in time should it be necessary (Kvale, 2007; Turner, 2010).

These pilot interviews revealed that an open and unstructured interview gave me little opportunity to explore certain aspects of the naturalisation experience, because participants mainly focused on their experiences of Brexit. They were fascinating accounts of the impact of political events on everyday lives and attested to the difficulty of separating political from personal. However, participants drifted away from the naturalisation experience into their experience of Brexit time and time again.

I found myself in a dilemma, because on the one hand I found these accounts illustrative of representations of European and British citizenship and of the impact of political events on people's experiences of citizenship; on the other hand, I still wanted to know more about the experience of naturalisation and found that if I brought up the topic after an hour or so of interview, the naturalisation process was dismissed in 20 minutes.

In transcribing these pilot interviews, I realised I had asked more direct questions towards the end of the interview. I was trying to direct participants towards their experience of the naturalisation process. Therefore, I decided that semi-structured interviews were best suited for my research in this particular socio-political context. Thus, I changed the style of interviews and designed an interview schedule with some questions that could be organised around some major topics, such as identity, belonging, home, affective citizenship, European citizenship, etc. (See Table 2 below)

Table 2: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Semi-structured interviews are ideal for combining a set of topics and the subjective accounts of each participant's experience (Flick, 2002, p. 74). Furthermore, I could ask

Semi-structured questions (non-directive, specificity, range, and depth)	**Major Topics**
What is your current citizenship/nationality? How do you feel about it? What does it mean for you to be …?	**Affective citizenship** (This question will serve to elicit notions of belonging and identity in relation to the citizenship of origin)
What does it mean to be (EU citizenship) for you? What/who is a citizen for you?	**Affective citizenship** (To elicit representations of (national) identity/citizenship and of the citizen)
What does it mean to be British for you? Do you feel British? How would you describe being British?	Representations of British citizenship Perceived notions of **Britishness** and **belonging** to another country.
In what ways do you feel: attachment to locality (Brighton and Hove), European, gender, etc.) Which would describe you better? How would you describe yourself?	Explore **self-identification** and identity informers/identifiers, **substantive citizenship**, **local** attachments
Would/Have you consider/ed acquiring British citizenship? Why? What are the advantages and what are the disadvantages?	**Reasons for applying**. Perceived advantages and disadvantages Possible reference to formal and substantive citizenship
Do you feel more (EU citizenship) or British? How do you feel about each and why do you think that is?	Potential differentiation of **formal and substantive citizenship** Representations of **Britishness**/**citizenship** of origin/citizenship in general
Do you know there is a test called Life in the UK? And language test? What do you think about it?	To discuss the perception and opinions about the "**cultural requirements**" to acquire citizenship. **Perceptions of the naturalisation process**
Have you taken any steps to acquiring British citizenship? Which ones? How do you foresee the process or how do you feel about the process?	Accounts of **experiences of naturalisation** in the UK
What do you think about Brexit? Has it affected the way you see living in the UK?	The political landmark is **Brexit**, therefore, an explicit question about it will position the subject in relation to that event and can help explore certain topics that were central during the referendum campaigns (immigrations, notions of Britishness, sovereignty, what is Europe, etc.?)
Have you taken the Life in the UK /English test? How did you prepare? Who helped you? How did you feel?	**Experiences of naturalisation**
Do you know there is a citizenship ceremony? Have you been to one? How do you feel about it?	Experiences/representations/expectations of the **naturalisation** process

some specific questions while allowing for their order or the way they were phrased (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) to vary, finding a balance between openness and structure.

The topics I wanted to explore were shaped by some of my readings in the field of affective citizenship (Johnson, 2010; de Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016; Fortier, 2016; Yanasmayan, 2016) and by conceptualisation of citizenship as a malleable and central element of the naturalisation experience (Ersanilli and Koopmans, 2010; Fortier, 2013; Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020). Moreover, pilot interviews revealed some interesting relations between emotions, political events, and representations of citizenship that I wanted to explore further.

Trying to separate experiences of citizenship from migrants' everyday experiences in turbulent political times, became a challenge and Flick's (2002) account of the four elements of the focused interview was instrumental in this instance. According to Flick (ibid.) an effective application of semi-structured interview requires the following four elements to be present in the design of the interview: non-direction, specificity, range, and depth and personal context. I would like to spend a couple of lines describing these elements and how they were achieved in this research:

Non-direction: questions were unstructured, asking general questions like "Tell me about your experience in the naturalisation process so far" or "How was it for you to become British?". This type of question was used to start the interviews as well as to focus on certain aspects of the experiences that I wanted to know more about.

Specificity: here the questions "should bring out the specific elements" (ibid., p. 75) of the naturalisation process. There were some aspects of the experience that I wanted every participant to reflect upon: the Life in the UK test, the citizenship ceremony, and the political context (Brexit). These questions were specific to the events, but general in nature (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956).

Range: the objective is to make sure "all aspects and topics relevant to the research question are mentioned during the interview" (Flick, 2002, p. 76). I had a list of specific topics and concepts that I wanted to make sure were addressed.

Depth and personal context: I tried to move away from general statements and try to "raise the degree of depth" by "focusing on feelings" (Flick, 2002, p. 77) and emotions and directing the interviewees to explore their experiences with me.

All but three interviews were conducted in English, as most participants were fluent in English. The three interviews that were not conducted in English, were done in Spanish, as it was the participant's and my mother tongue, and participants showed preference for Spanish. On these cases, I translated the interviews myself for the analysis. There was one interview done in English, where the participant had difficulties expressing herself in English. On this occasion, although language initially seemed like an obstacle, the participant and I took our time and were able to communicate well after a few moments, thanks to a particular rapport that was initiated talking about kids and motherhood.

After conducting 32 interviews, I was satisfied with the depth, range, and the high level of complexity in the data generated. Finally, I feared that too many more interviews would affect my ability to engage fully with the complexity and depth of the data already generated.

3.4 Fieldwork

In this section I revisit some of the key events of my fieldwork, which include some notes on the political context and the specific way it posed a challenge for my fieldwork and non-participant observation of citizenship ceremonies in the Brighton City Hall.

3.4.1 Fieldwork diary for reflexivity and the political context

After Brexit, European citizens in the UK experienced high levels of media attention (Botterill and Burrell, 2019; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Rzepnikowska, 2019; Sigona and Godin, 2019; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021; Kilkey and Ryan, 2021). Furthermore, many experienced and interpreted the results of the referendum as threatening to their European citizenship and its value (Lulle, Moroşanu and King, 2018; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019). This context is essential to understanding anxieties around citizenship and belonging that some EU citizens may have experienced in the UK. This resulted in many participants being deeply troubled by the political climate and finding it difficult to separate their personal anxieties from their political ideologies (Hanisch, 2006).

Furthermore, the complexity of my own background as a European citizen from the Global South added to my concerns around reflexivity, subjectivity and positionality and how they overlap, impacting of my interactions during fieldwork (Whitson, 2017). Keeping a fieldwork diary helped me keep a record of key elements that would frame the moment of data generation such as my own reflections prior to and after interview.

The political context in the UK after Brexit was characterised by anti-immigrant rhetoric (Brubaker, 2017) that stirred up xenophobic sentiments, increasing the levels of anxiety experienced by migrant populations including a rise in the number of hate crimes reported by the police (Henley, 2017; Lulle, Moroşanu and King, 2018; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019).

While Brighton & Hove had a majority of votes in favour of remaining in the EU; most of the surrounding towns and counties were in favour of leaving the EU (The Electoral Commission, 2019). This would influence how participants felt at the time of the interview as well as how I felt, as a non-white immigrant in the UK.

Keeping a record of my impressions, thoughts, reflections, and interpretations of events that took place during fieldwork, was essential to understanding my role in the data generation as well as to keep me aware of my own social, cultural, and political location, while also responding to my commitment to relational and critically conscious ethics.

3.4.2 Observing Citizenship Ceremonies

As I started interviewing participants, I attended a citizenship ceremony in the Brighton City Hall because I wanted to gain some insight into some of the experiences participants were talking about. I had read the Life in the UK Handbook (Home Office, 2013b) and had taken some mock tests online, to familiarise myself with this phase of the process. I had also studied the entire naturalisation's legal requirements, forms, etc. All these efforts represent my attempt to familiarise myself with the naturalisation process to better understand what participants were telling me in the interviews.

I contacted the city council and they responded inviting me to attend the next ceremony. As I arrived, I was invited to join the "new citizens" (as they were referred to) in the centre of the room, separated from the guests. I recorded my observations in my fieldwork diary as follows and one of the entries reads:

guests are separated from the new citizens upon arrival, having to go through two different doors. The ceremony officiant moves a British flag forward with the help of the photographer, and addressing everyone present she says, "to give it more colour". As they are moving the flag, she almost touches a new citizen with it. When the photographer brings that to her attention, they both smile, and she replies audibly "I was blessing her!" Everyone laughs audibly (Field note, 8 May 2017)

My annotations of the event are quite detailed, with time entries, details of how the room is arranged and decorated, what my impressions are of how people feel and act, referring to their manners, face expressions, clothing, etc. These observations were useful as fieldwork developed as they provided me with a clear idea of what participants who had gone through the process were describing. Furthermore, coincidentally I interviewed two participants whose ceremony I had attended months earlier. This was of particular interest to me because I had extensive notes about the same place and time they were referring to and could clearly appreciate the difference between my impressions and theirs.

I found the experience of attending the ceremony especially important because my research focus was the lived experiences of applicants, and this ritual is key to understanding representations and experiences of British citizenship (Byrne, 2012). Once I had conducted all the interviews and while I was in the process of transcribing and coding them, I decided to attend another citizenship ceremony. Data revealed that ceremonies were an important transformative element of the process (as is discussed in Chapter 6) and I wanted to have a first-hand experience of the ever-changing official representations of citizenships that I had read about in the literature (Byrne, 2012; Badenhoop, 2017; John, Blume and Saggar, 2020) and heard about in most interviews. Therefore, in January 2019 (almost two years after I had started fieldwork) I attended another citizenship ceremony. These decisions reveal the iterative process of data generation and analysis, and emphasise the inductive design of my research, where my research questions guided the generation of empirical material, which in turn, influenced the progress and development of fieldwork, maintaining an open approach to the research process and blending the lines between fieldwork and data analysis.

At the second citizenship ceremony, I wrote in my fieldwork diary:

"I had a chance to see the reception room and it is very different from almost a year ago.[7] *Much fancier and nicer. The Mother's Union*[8] *are in charge of the reception now. Also, the Lieutenant's discourse was much shorter this time. There were no mentions of British symbols and/or duties or privileges like last time" (Fieldnote, January 2019).*

Attending two citizenship ceremonies was illuminating in several ways; it allowed me to reflect on some things I had not considered when designing interviews and therefore, it gave me a deeper insight into my own data, and it also allowed me to experience the changing nature of citizenship representations in Britain. These were key elements for my analysis and conclusions.

3.4.3 Conducting Interviews

According to Hoffman (Hoffmann, 2007) interviews are moments of intense emotional labour during which the researcher needs to be aware of a variety of issues, such as power relations and emotional states of both herself and the interviewee, making it a "complex task" (p.p. 318-320). A key reason for this complexity is the acknowledgement that the interview is a moment of collaboration between interviewee and interviewer (Kleinman and Copp, 1993), in which both together are producing the data that will constitute the empirical material of a research. This approach to interviews responds to my ontological and epistemological commitments as well as to my approach to relational ethics (Ellis, 2007), where self-awareness is key for my accountability towards participants to this

[7] Mistake in the fieldnote, as it is supposed to read two years

[8] A British Christian non-profit organisation, focused on stopping poverty, inequality and injustice (*Mother's Union*, no date)

research and a critically conscious ethics (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012) invites participants into the meaning making process that underpins this research.

During fieldwork, I conducted interviews with this perspective in mind. This was often a challenge when participants expected a list of specific questions to answer to. For example, most participants would start with a passive role, revealing that they perhaps assumed their position would be a more passive one. This was often the case at the beginning of each interview when I discussed key information about participating in my research and gave them a copy of the information sheet (Annex C), asked participants to sign the consent form (Annex D), and turned on the recorder. Immediately participants would fall silent and await my question. Often, we had already spontaneously started a conversation on our way to the café or place where the interview would take place, but these actions would interrupt that conversation and start a new one. Nevertheless, these were brief moments that we were able to quickly overcome once we forgot about the recorder (I always made a point of taking it out of sight).

During fieldwork, the semi-structured interview schedule that I had designed was implemented in the form of an open-ended interview, because I never limited my exchanges with participants to the schedule that I had designed, constantly allowing the interviews to develop into areas I had not anticipated (Hoffmann, 2007, p. 323). Nevertheless, the interview schedule was a good resource to keep with me, to make sure that all participants touched on those topics I had pre-selected. Although I rarely needed to ask all the questions contained in the schedule, as the topics seemed to arise spontaneously. This way I ensured depth while respecting the themes I set out to examine.

3.5 Data analysis

Faced with an overwhelming amount of data of high complexity as the stories and

experiences of 32 individuals constitute, I needed to "impose some form of organisation and order" on it (Mason, 1996, p. 107) and decided to do so by looking at each individual interview first, identifying themes that would emerge from them as well as those that I had predetermined with the interview. This phase of my empirical analysis took place while I was transcribing interviews, while still on fieldwork.

After this case-by-case coding during transcription, I compared the themes across cases with cross-sectional indexing. As a result, empirical analysis was a combination of inductive and deductive processes. Inductive because themes were dictated by the empirical material and went in depth from there, and deductive, because I had pre-determined some themes with my interviews.

3.5.1 Transcribing and initial coding

I transcribed all interviews for two purposes; firstly, for the sake of usability (Connell *et al.*, 1995, p. 95), that is to be able to systematically dissect, order and code the data generated; and secondly, for the sake of transparency, that is to make the content of my interviews both available to participants and analysts for their review, should they require it (Du Bois, 1991).

The first six interviews were transcribed verbatim. However, seeing how time consuming this task was, I decided to do a more selective transcription. I transcribed the sections I considered relevant verbatim, and the sections I thought were less important, with keywords or a summary of the discussion in my own words, with minutes and seconds assigned to that section. This would help me quickly go back to such sections should I need to in the future. This resulted in an exhaustive transcription and coding of all sections of all interviews.

This initial coding of material was done using NVivo, following the topics that were included in the interview schedule and adding other themes that arose in each interview. I started transcribing interviews directly after the first interview took place, however, as fieldwork progressed, it became impossible to fully transcribe each interview before the next took place. Thus, transcriptions carried over until well after fieldwork was over, often transcribing some interviews many months after they had taken place. The gap was especially long at times, as I gave birth right at the end of fieldwork and took a year of maternity leave, during which transcription and coding was significantly reduced. My fieldwork diary was very useful in this case because it transported me, in a way, back to the time of the interview.

This initial coding left me with more topics that I would be able to work with, with overlapping categories that were hard to systematise and that might not be present in more than one interview, due to their contextual nature, i.e., divorces, salaries, perceptions of the welfare state, etc. These are some challenges that Mason identifies for this form of simple indexing and the reason why she suggests implementing a cross-sectional indexing (Mason, 1996: 111), which is what I did in the next phase of my data analysis.

3.5.2 Cross-sectional indexing

Cross-sectional indexing constitutes a "consistent system for indexing the whole of a data set according to a set of common principles" (Mason, 1996, p. 111) and it was the ideal method to work with my interviews and the initial coding I implemented while transcribing. This form of indexing allowed me to create various levels of categories, assign them to a variety of sections of various interviews and to create a diversity of gateways to access some interviews from different perspectives, Mason refers to it as "different ways of slicing your data set, for different purposes" (ibid.).

NVivo was key for this part of the analysis, as I could create themes and sub-themes to systematically organise my data. For example, the initial coding had given me themes such as “Rights”, “Acts of Citizenship”, “Affective citizenship”, “Claim to citizenship”, “Cultural citizenship”, “Formal citizenship”, “Hierarchy of citizenships”, “Neoliberal citizenship”. In this phase, I converted them into sub-themes of the theme for “Citizenship”. This method of coding was mainly based on two specific criteria to assess the importance of a theme: first, I used the themes I had addressed in my interviews, as I had discussed those themes with all participants; and second, commonality of emerging topics. There were themes that emerged spontaneously in many interviews, such as “Ceremony” or “East-West divide”. The final list of themes included 8 themes and 28 sub-themes (see Annex F for the full list).

Using software allowed me to integrate fieldwork notes from my diary, interview transcripts, literature research and recordings. Having this variety of data in one place and coded with the same themes allowed me to have a better understanding of the data I had collected, the elements that influenced the conditions of such collection, as well as the ways I interpreted the empirical material I had produced with my participants.

The result is a combination of both inductive (themes emerging from the interviews) and deductive (pre-selected themes to discuss in interviews) approaches to data analysis that started in the second coding phase and lasted for the entire empirical analysis and writing up of results.

3.5.3 Empirical analysis

The combination of an inductive and a deductive approach in this phase was essential to bring some order to the fuzziness of conceptions of belonging and home, while still considering some more rigid aspects of citizenship and the naturalisation process (Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018, p. 706). While digging deeper into the material generated

with participants was essential to understanding the complexity of the experience of naturalisation in UK; having certain themes to focus on (affective citizenship, experiences of naturalisation, Brexit, belonging, etc.) allowed me to create a frame and thread to weave participants' stories and experiences together.

The experiences of naturalisation revealed a wealth of complex emotional, political, and contextual layers intrinsic to each participant's experience. These layers constitute the interpretations of my participants of their everyday lives. The inductive approach was key to accessing these elements. However, with my predetermined themes and interpretations I also aimed to provide a link between the everyday experiences of participants and a sociological analysis of the structure and social reality that frames those experiences. This link is essential to allowing my research to go beyond the individualistic level and directly address the impact of social structures on individual experiences (Mills, 1967, p. 5 in Castles, 2012, p. 8). For that reason, I explored in detail how gender, sexuality, class, and race influenced participants' experiences of naturalisation. Here, the deductive approach has helped me to codify and consider elements on the structure with pre-set categories.

The focus of the research is mainly on participants' experiences of naturalisation, therefore key policy documents like Secure Borders, Safe Heavens (Home Office, 2002), the Crick Report (Crick *et al.*, 2002), Community Cohesion (Cantle, 2001b), guidance for caseworkers (Home Office, 2015; Home Office, 2022) as well as relevant and state of the art research that focuses on policy, work as a frame for those experiences. This justifies the absence of in-depth analysis of policy documents as empirical material and their use as a part of the analytical framework.

After an exhaustive study of my data, I extracted the three overarching themes that I considered most important and representative of the experiences of all my participants, these were: narratives of home and European citizenship, notions of membership and belonging, and conceptions of good citizenship and deservingness. The three empirical chapters in this thesis are organised around these themes.

4. THE BRITISH CITIZENSHIP REGIME

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the socio-political and historical moment marked by the referendum to leave the EU in Britain on 23 June 2016, that informed the design, implementation, and findings of this research. I also present a discussion of landmark pieces of legislation that shaped British citizenship policies today.

The focus of this research lies in a multi-level analysis of the individual experiences of naturalisation in Britain. Therefore, in this chapter I go beyond an outline of formal membership in the United Kingdom, to provide a snapshot of the contextual worlds my participants were navigating at the time of our interviews.

Thus, the main aim of this chapter is to provide the historicised context necessary to analyse participants' experiences, highlighting their situated character of (Walsh, 2012, p. 57), which is essential to understanding how they are "classed, raced and gendered bodies in motion in specific historical contexts, within certain political formations and spaces" (Walsh, 2012, p. 57; Smith, 2005, p. 238).

For this purpose, I start by discussing the British national context, landmark citizenship regulations, and their historical implications as well as origins. With this I intend to reflect on some of the "concrete events and political processes" (Mayblin, 2017) that continue to shape British citizenship regulation in the UK today. In the second section, I discuss the relevance of the European context. Concretely, I focus on the implications of European citizenship, perceptions, and identity for migrants' experiences of naturalisation in Britain.

Following this I introduce the political context surrounding my fieldwork by focusing on the referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union, in June 2016

as a political landmark. The fourth and final section focuses on the local context of this research, the city of Brighton and Hove in the Southeast of England. The local context was a key element in the narratives of participants, shaping their experiences and providing an added layer of analysis to my examination of experiences of naturalisation in the UK.

The result is a chapter structure that runs through all relevant levels of analysis of this research; that is, historical-global, supranational, national, and local, all of which are key to understanding EU citizens' decision-making processes regarding naturalisation in the UK after Brexit.

4.1 British immigration and citizenship policy

A historical account of how citizenship has been constructed and regulated in the UK is essential to understanding present legal frames. For this purpose, I believe that it is key to take into account "global histories of inclusion and exclusion" and examine what Mayblin calls "connected histories which have contributed to the framing and understanding of the deserving and the undeserving, the familiar and the 'other' in Britain" (Mayblin, 2017). Therefore, I start by briefly discussing the histories of citizenship construction in the UK, hinging around four landmark pieces of legislation. The plural form of histories refers to the ways in which dimensions of citizenship have evolved over time, seen from two main points of view: the critical academic analysis and the official policy discourse, which are in dialogue in this section. Next, I examine the integrationist agenda that resulted from the connection between the history and the political context in the early 2000s. In the third section, I focus on the implementation and justification of civic integration requirements in the naturalisation process since 2005. I then finish with a reflection on the Home Office construction of a good citizen who has earned or 'deserves' citizenship.

There are three main purposes in this section, namely: to provide a discussion of the historical construction of "the citizen" in Britain, to denaturalise categories of (racial) hierarchies that result from current definitions of citizenship and that are anchored in historically relevant definitions of the human being (Mhurchú, 2014), and to provide a critical reflection on the legal frames that constitute British citizenship today.

4.1.1 A historical evolution of the British citizenship regime

The British citizenship regime is a complex one due to a series of transitions related to a move from defining its members as imperial subjects to nationals and (currently) citizens

(Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Once a multitudinous regime, with around 500 million members (including British subjects and protected persons), British citizenship offered membership to individuals in remote parts of the Empire. Subjects would carry a UK passport but would have differential access to rights (ibid). As such, official definitions of membership in the British polity have undergone significant changes over time.

It is my intention to briefly discuss the four pieces of legislation most pertinent to this study that, arguably, have shaped official definitions of the citizen in Britain today, namely the British Nationality Act of 1948, the 1971 Immigration Act, The British Nationality Act 1981, and The Nationality, Immigration, and Asylum Act 2002 in turn.

The British Nationality Act of 1948

Implemented by Attlee's Labour government, the 1948 British Nationality Act introduced the category of citizenship for the first time in British legislation. This was a response to "Canadian legislative changes that introduced the concept of Canadian citizenship as a prerequisite for British subjecthood" (Prabhat, 2018b, p. 10), which undermined the value of British citizenship (El-Enany, 2020). This piece of legislation was an attempt to maintain Britain's "status as an imperial power in the international stage" (Fortier, 2021, p. 62). This Act, introduced the category of citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC), which was simply a category to define citizens of the Commonwealth in general (Karatani, 2003). In the 60s the Act started to undergo certain reforms to restrict the access to the UK of colonial subjects with citizenship status; first with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and afterwards with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 (Isin and Nielsen, 2008).

Restrictions to accessing British citizenship continued to grow as a result of movements of independence in Africa, where governments "sought to expel the ethnic minority Asians living there" and who would seek to enter the UK with their British passports (Prabhat, 2018b, p. 11). A new concept was introduced by the 1971 Immigration Act, that of 'patriality', where patrials enjoyed unlimited access to the UK and non-patrials became subject to immigration controls (Isin and Turner, 2007).

The 1971 Immigration Act

With the preoccupation of maintaining a nationality law that recognised as native those who no longer belonged to the British Empire but retained citizenship, laws began to restrict access to citizenship by creating various categories and status. "The intersection of nationality with immigration is clear, especially when one considers that CUKC was a citizenship status whereas *patriality* was an immigration one" (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). This was further ratified with the 1971 Immigration Act, which transformed former citizens and subjects into immigrants.

In the years that led to 1981, a "complete overhaul of citizenship categories" took place (Prabhat, 2018b, p. 11). Attempts to limit the scope of British citizenship to white Britons (El-Enany, 2020) were consolidated with this legislation, which "limited the right of abode in the UK to individuals whose parents were born in the UK" (Fortier, 2021, p. 62)

The British Nationality Act 1981

The British Nationality Act 1981 converted all CUKCs into three types of citizenship: British citizenship, British Dependent Territories citizenship and British Overseas citizenship. The last two have no rights attached to them, in line with the ever-restricting

trend, which is directly related to racialised issues concerning citizenship and immigration to the UK (Bhambra, no date; Mayblin, 2017; Prabhat, 2018b; El-Enany, 2020).

Here the British citizen is defined as anyone whose "mother or father is a British citizen or settled in the United Kingdom" (British Nationality Act 1981, para. 1(1): p.1 in Fortier, 2021, p. 63). Moreover, it is the first to separate British citizenship from the colonies (Hansen, 2000) and to tie British citizenship "to genealogical blood lines and ancestry which is firmly sutured to territory" (Fortier, 2021, p. 63). This Act is the basis for definition of citizenship in Britain to this day, although it separated citizenship from immigration, which "were to be governed by different legal regimes, and this continued to be the case for over twenty years" (Anderson, 2013, p. 41).

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

The 2000s saw a series of reforms in the discursive construction of citizenship as a response to social unrest in the north of England (McGhee, 2009) and to the increasing tendency to construct racial diversity in Britain as problematic (Mayblin, 2017). That is, multiculturalism in Britain was starting to be constructed as a consequence of immigration and not of Britain's colonial past, concealing the fact that colonial subjects had once been British citizens. The result was a stronger focus on community cohesion and social inclusion.

In 2001, Ted Cantle chaired the Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT), which was meant to issue policy recommendations for the improvement of social inclusion at the national level as a result of the social unrest in the north of England during the summer of 2000 (Cantle, 2001b). The resulting report came to be known as the *Cantle*

Report and included a strong emphasis on social inclusion and on the behaviour that leads to it, stating that "common moral principles and codes of behaviour" constitute one of the important domains of community cohesion (p. 13)

In 2002 the Home Office published a White Paper called "Secure borders, Safe havens" which brings back the link between migration and citizenship by stating that a "strong civic and citizenship foundations are necessary if people are to have the confidence to welcome asylum seekers and migrants […] They must have a sense of their own community or civic identity – a sense of shared understanding, which can both animate and give moral content to the benefits and duties of the citizenship to which new entrants aspire" (Home Office, 2002:10). Fundamentally, this White Paper attempts to define citizenship in a way that will appease the fears of a population anxious about ethnic diversity with a promise of more strict citizenship regime, that requires of aspiring citizens an adherence to British values. It is, therefore, concerned with preserving a shared sense of belonging for the majority population and confirms that the definition of "citizenship along the lines of immigration was once again firmly grounded in governmental discourse and policy" (Isin and Nielsen, 2008, p. 11)

That same year, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 significantly changed nationality law, introducing a test of language and society knowledge and a ceremony, among other things, making "the entire process of naturalisation more visible" (Isin, 2008:13). These new measures were meant to correct problems of the former naturalisation process, which was considered "a bureaucratic exercise, with almost no effort made to engage new members of the community with the fundamentals of our democracy and society" (Home Office, 2002, p. 11) since it consisted of a postal application.

This legal blurring of boundaries between immigration and citizenship helped Britain narrate itself as a white postcolonial state, providing a concrete and racial definition of what it means to be British, in terms of belonging and ancestry. The relation to its colonial past is essential to understanding the specific paths that have led Britain to define Britishness through civic integration requirements today.

Citizenship and migration have historically been interlocked in Britain and more significantly since the 1960s (El-Enany, 2020). During the time of imperial decline, the construction of migration as a threat, and of citizenship as a privilege was of particular relevance in Europe (Huysmans, 2005; Humphrey, 2013). The result was a shrinking definition of Britishness, first focused on the geographical dimension (1948 Nationality Act), then on race in the 60s and 70s, and finally on morality from the 80s onwards, peaking in the 2000s.

A focus on community cohesion and values results from the assumption that certain (non)citizens were not sufficiently committed to or familiar with the national values and needed to learn. Furthermore, the Cantle Report in 2001 and the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* in 2002, rest on the assumption that it was the responsibility of minorities (non-citizens, or racialised citizens) to assimilate and *learn* to be British "at a deeper level" (McGhee, 2009, p. 51). The theme of moralisation underwrites the reforms to citizenship acquisition in the early 2000s. The attribution of moral content to citizenship (Home Office, 2002) and the anchoring of community cohesion on moral principles (Cantle, 2001b) reveal a stronger focus on morality that came to redefine naturalization in the UK.

4.1.2 Moralisation of citizenship. Becoming British at a 'deeper level'

As mentioned above, anxieties around ethnic diversity in Britain reached a peak in 2001 with the social unrest in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford (Cantle, 2001a; Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman, 2005; McGhee, 2009; Kostakopoulou, 2010; Byrne, 2017). Following this, and based on the *Cantle Report* (Cantle, 2001b), a renewed effort was placed on the construction of the political community in Britain, based on the conviction that certain multicultural policies had resulted in the segregation of communities based on religion, education, housing, culture, employment, etc. a segregation that would inevitably "lead to the growth of fear and conflict" (Cantle, 2001b, p. 30)

The result was a call for a strengthening of the definition of British citizenship that would promote community cohesion (Brown, 2006; McGhee, 2009). In relation to naturalisation, this translated into an understanding of citizenship as having to be earned through a series of tests and performances (Home Office, 2002; Kostakopoulou, 2003; Byrne, 2017). Thus, naturalisation is seen as a process that will lead to the crystallisation of common values, norms, civic identity, etc. through civic integration requirements. These, in turn, will enhance community cohesion.

In her work on citizenship tests in the UK and Canada, Paquet (2012) defines civic integration as measures that focus on alignment of the individual with a set of national values, which are instrumental for the verification of aliens' "commitment to the tenets of a country's citizenship values" (Goodman, 2010 in; Paquet, 2012, p. 244).

Citizenship ceremonies and the Life in the UK test thus offer an "insight into the national psyche" (Bassel and Khan, 2021, p. 586; Löwenheim and Gazit, 2009). They produce a citizen that is morally defined because she needs to prove she deserves citizenship (Bassel, Monforte and Khan, 2018). Citizenship is no longer regarded as a

right but seen as a privilege (Home Office, 2014; Mamdani, 2018; Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019).

Deservingness of citizenship is performed in everyday life, through active citizenship and acts of citizenship. However, naturalisation is the best place to examine the interaction between those moral definitions of the citizen and the impact of such moralising on everyday acts of citizenship. This is simply because it is in the naturalisation process that such deservingness is performed and assessed.

The current naturalisation process in the UK establishes that an EU-applicant must prove 3 to 5 years of continuous residence in the country to apply for a permanent residency card or Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). After retaining this status for a year, she can apply for citizenship. Once applicants are eligible to apply for British citizenship, they need to provide a certification of having passed the Life in the UK test, a certification proving their knowledge of the English language at least at B1 level (if they do not hold a degree issued by a British education institution), along with a series of other documents proving their continuous residence in the UK, employment history, days spent outside of the UK in the past five years, proof of good character, etc. and pay a substantial fee (currently £1330[9]). If the application is approved, an invitation to a citizenship ceremony is sent, to take place within 90 days of the receipt of the letter. The new citizen receives her naturalisation certificate at the ceremony and only then becomes a British Citizen. The citizenship ceremonies started to take place in 2004 and the Life in the UK tests entered into force in 2005. In what follows, I discuss these two additions to the naturalisation process. Requirements for non-EU citizens differ in length of stay, time and purpose of the Life in the UK test, among other things.

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fees-for-citizenship-applications/fees-for-citizenship-applications-and-the-right-of-abode-from-6-april-2018

4.1.3 Life in the UK test

In 2002, Home Secretary David Blunkett stated in the aforementioned White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* (Home Office, 2002) that it was necessary to move away from the citizenship regime model that was but a "bureaucratic process, with a certificate being sent through the post at the end of it" (ibid., p.:32). According to Blunkett, introducing a test about life in the UK would help "develop a sense of civic identity and shared values" (p.32) and help naturalisation become a "significant life event" and "an important step towards achieving integration into our society" (ibid).

Similarly, the *Crick Report* (2002), which was commissioned to design the content of the first test, stated that the main goal of the test was to promote active citizenship and "a sense of belonging to a wider community" (p. 8). Furthermore, the report discusses the advantages of such a test for integration purposes (p. 12), highlighting the emotional attachment that results from holding British citizenship (p. 9).

The test consists of a 45-minute, computer based, multiple-choice questionnaire, which needs to be booked online at least three days prior to taking the test. There is a £50 fee to be paid and there are thirty testing centres around the country. The test consists of twenty-four questions, of which 18 answers, or 75%, need to be correct to pass. After passing the test, the applicant receives a certification that is valid indefinitely. Moreover, in the event of not passing, applicants can take the test an unlimited amount of times.

The content of Life in the UK test has changed considerably since its implementation. The 2004 and the 2007 versions of the handbook contained information about history, demographics, laws and government, employment, housing, childcare, human rights, childcare, etc. (Home Office, 2004, 2007) following the recommendations made in the Crick Report. However, there was a general sense that the focus of these

handbooks was not on community cohesion. Minister of Immigration Mark Harper MP, stated that former versions of the handbook did not focus enough on "values and principles" and simply taught "people how to claim benefits" (Brooks, 2016, p. 9). As a result, the coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats published a new version of the handbook in 2013, with a new focus on values, principles, history, and traditions and virtually no information about the welfare state. This reveals a stronger focus on British history and values, exploiting the power of history to construct the nation (Bhabha, 1990; Byrne, 2012).

Paradoxically, the Life in the UK handbook opens with the remark "passing the life in the UK test is part of demonstrating that you are ready to become a permanent migrant to the UK" (Home Office, 2013:7), suggesting an inherent contradiction at its heart; where the migrant is supposed to learn this information to become a citizen, while never abandoning the label of migrant to the UK and cementing the idea that new citizens are forever to be in a "position of less-than-equal citizenship" (Byrne, 2017, p. 325).

The test has often been criticised for providing a monolithic view of history and culture (Andreouli and Dashtipour, 2014; Prabhat, 2018b) and for unevenly excluding more disadvantaged migrants (van Oers, 2013) constituting yet another obstacle on the path to citizenship. These criticisms contribute to the idea that the Life in the UK is a significant element in the ever-shrinking construction of membership in the nation.

4.1.4 Citizenship ceremonies

As part of the integration project devised by the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens* (Home Office, 2002), citizenship ceremonies were introduced in the UK in 2004 to "promote the importance of British naturalisation" (Home Office, 2002:11). The ceremony is meant to provide an opportunity for the state, the local community, and the

new citizen to meet and celebrate the acquisition of British citizenship as a particular landmark in the individual's life. The frequency of the ceremonies varies depending on each local authority and the population they serve, in Brighton and Hove, the city council organises a monthly ceremony.[10]

Applicants can take up to two guests with them (although they can pay additional fees to bring more). In Brighton and Hove, upon arrival at the ceremony, applicants and guests are separated. Applicants are greeted as 'new citizens' and shown to the place they will occupy during the ceremony. The ceremony usually lasts around 30 minutes. It starts with a speech by a representative of the Queen, followed by the oath of allegiance and the affirmation of allegiance. New citizens can choose between the Oath of Allegiance, by which they swear by God that they will be loyal to the Queen and the UK, and the Affirmation of Allegiance, which is the non-religious commitment of loyalty to the Queen. Regardless of their choice, new citizens will collectively repeat the words of the Oath or Affirmation, after the registrar in charge of the ceremony. They also must state a citizenship pledge, with which they declare their commitment and loyalty to the UK. Directly after taking the Oath/Affirmation, each new citizen is called to receive their naturalisation certificate from the ceremony officiants. The ceremony ends with everyone in the room singing the national anthem. Experiences of the ceremony will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

In her analysis of citizenship ceremonies, Byrne (2014) interpreted the ceremonies as attempts to constitute a sort of rite of passage signalling a transition from one life-stage to another (van Gennep, 1960 in Byrne, 2014, p. 51) in which the new citizen is now celebrating having been 'accepted' into the national community, because they have

[10] At the time of fieldwork and before the COVID-19 Pandemic

earned their right to belong (Fortier, 2008, 2013; Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019). Citizenship ceremonies are the place to perform deservingness of citizenship and to publicly affirm a new sense of (emotional) attachment to the nation.

In 2002, Crick and colleagues stated in their report (Crick *et al.*, 2002) that ceremonies "should have a local tone" (p. 71), which I consider to emphasise the local aspect of civic integration requirements and of the construction of a relationship to the community. Moreover, this points to the importance of analysing the local implementation and experiences of national policies. They recommend that "at the ceremony a presentation pack of local information should be given as a memento including brochures to continuing education courses" which are meant to "encourage new citizens to pursue new studies for occupational and self-improvement" (p. 31). This signals a recognition of how local communities shape "migrants' perspectives on citizenship" (Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019, p. 31).

If we regard the ceremony as "a moment in which the state creates a narrative of what a citizen is" as well as constructing citizenship and the nation (Byrne, 2014, p. 2), then it is relevant to look at the role "the local" has in those narratives. Local communities and attachments are central to this aspect of the naturalisation process not only because they are organised locally and vary greatly depending on when and where they are taking place, but also because the local community is central in the speeches that welcome citizens into full membership.

4.1.5 Discourses of deservingness in the Home Office definition of good character

The historical evolution of the legal frames of citizenship in the UK have been increasingly based on the idea that citizenship is a privilege to be earned. Above, I

presented two elements of the naturalisation process that I interpret as contributing to such an idea. Here, I add a third element to complete such an interpretation, which is that of the good character requirement. This is not a new requirement, as it was already present in the 1870 Naturalisation Act (El-Enany, 2020), but is one of increasing significance in the shaping of citizenship in Britain today (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019).

Although "there is no definition of 'good character' in the British Nationality Act 1981", the "requirement applies to anybody over the age of ten who applies for naturalisation" in Britain (Home Office, 2014, p. 3). Additionally, the number of people being refused citizenship on the grounds of good character has been steadily increasing since the mid-2000s (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019, p. 659). Today, failure to comply with good character requirements are the number one reason of application refusals in the UK (Home Office, 2013a; Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019; Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020)

Also according to Kapoor and Narkowicz (2019), the definition of good character has been narrowing to accommodate a variety of vague and discretionary elements, making the process of assessing an applicant's good character less transparent (Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020). The Home Office regularly updates its guidance for caseworkers to assess if applicants to British citizenship meet the good character requirements. It is telling that the Home Office calls this resource "Naturalisation as a British citizen by discretion: nationality policy guidance" (Home Office, 2022). In its initial guidance, the Home Office calls caseworkers to consider "all aspects of a person's character" (Home Office, 2020b, p. 8). The guidance is divided into 7 sections, some of which I present here with reference to the good character requirements guidance (Home Office, 2019):

1. **Criminality**, referring to the migrant's relation to the law, including his *willingness* to abide by the law. Here, the guidance establishes a broad "assessment of community behaviour and standing" within an "ever expansive notion of criminality" (Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019, p. 653), which disproportionally affects those of ethnic and racialised minorities (ibid.) and that is expressed in the assessment of one's *willingness* to obey the law.

2. **International Crimes and terrorism and other non-conductive activity**. This has been one of the driving elements of ever restrictive naturalisation and immigration measures of the past fifteen years (Howard, 2009; Paquet, 2012; Kapoor and Narkowicz, 2019) as a response to the securitisation of migration which makes immigration control a matter of national security (Huysmans, 2005).

3. **Financial soundness**, more directly related to taxes and debts with the state, but also extending to declarations of bankruptcy or generally assessing "if their financial affairs have not been in appropriate order" (Home Office, 2019, p. 10)

4. **Notoriety**, looking at whether the aspiring citizen's activities "have been notorious and cast serious doubt" (Home Office, 2019, p. 10) on her standing in her local community

5. **Deception** and dishonesty, evaluating whether the applicant has made false claims to obtain benefits from the state (Home Office, 2019, p. 24).

6. **Immigration related matters**, such as any possible visa overstays, breaching working conditions, etc.; and finally,

7. **Deprivation**, referring to whether the applicant has previously been deprived of citizenship.

After presenting the main areas of scrutiny, the guidance also states, "if the person does not clearly fall into one of the categories outlined above but there are doubts about

their character, you may still refuse the application" (p. 4). According to these criteria, the good character criteria distinguishes the deserving from the undeserving (Kalra and Kapoor, 2009), strengthening the idea that citizenship is a privilege to be earned. On the basis of these criteria, the nation is constructed as a 'community of value' (Anderson, 2013), that is, a community made up of 'good citizens'.

This section addressed what I considered to be the main sociolegal, historical and political frames that shape British citizenship policies today. British citizenship has historically been defined in racial and moral terms, the latter being the driving force of civic integration requirements. The essentialist and monolithic view of everyday life in the UK is more concerned with the perpetuation of an ethnonationalist vision of the nation, that is, among other things, defined in terms of culturally specific interpretations of liberal democratic values. Both the racialised and essentialist visions have been presented in this section through the historical evolution of nationality laws and the emphasis on the need for civic integration requirements, respectively. In the first instance, this section revealed how legislation attempted to equate Britishness with whiteness, for example with the introduction of patriality in the Immigration Act 1971, increasingly targeting racialised colonial subjects. Regarding a monolithic vision of everyday life, the justification of civic integration requirements have introduced a sharper focus on national values, proposing more specific notions of the 'good citizen' and emphasising some aspects of everyday life in the UK over others, thus promoting the idea of a unity in the national community.

However, it is important to also consider the wider context within which they developed. The meaning and shaping of European citizenship have been running parallel to the construction of Britishness over nearly the past three decades. The European context is, therefore, important to completing the picture.

4.2 European context

The European context, in this research appearing as intra EU migration and EU citizenship, adds a transnational layer to British citizenship and provides the opportunity to explore experiences of citizenship from multi-scalar perspectives, revealing how local, national, and global contexts are interconnected.

I start this section with a discussion of the European context and its advantages for the purposes of this study. I then examine some aspects of the discursive construction of EU citizenship in the UK. Finally, I reflect both on the legal and affective elements of European citizenship in the British context, focusing on processes that regulate access to modes of belonging and formal citizenship.

4.2.1 EU citizenship exceptionalism. What is special about EU citizenship?

The European context is a unique model for studying migration and citizenship since it is the only example of a widely accepted and implemented "post-national citizenship within a transnational regional political order" (Favell and Recchi, 2009, p. 1). Furthermore, this particular example of transnational citizenship resulted in the creation of a transnational space, turning Europe into the most relevant model for the study of international and regional migration (Favell, 2008).

The particularism of the European context is centred around European citizenship[11]. Scholars agree that freedom of movement is at the core of European citizenship (Favell and Nebe, 2009; Bellamy, 2019). The relevance of this right resides in the way in which it turns immigrants (individuals who move across international borders) into "*regional*

[11] Henceforth, European citizenship will be used as a shorthand for European Union (EU) citizenship.

free movers" who are more likely to engage in a wider variety of transnational behaviour and experiences (Favell, 2008b, p. 703). Furthermore, these are citizens with some of the highest variety of citizenship practices available, simultaneously experiencing the local, the national and the supra-national levels of individual membership in political communities (Bauböck, 2014).

European citizens have emerged at different times and in different contexts, and had varying reception depending on location, this results in an uneven development of European identity for all citizens. Furthermore, access to rights has also been uneven for European citizens. For some it meant freedom of movement since birth whereas others were not immediately granted that right with membership in the Union. From this follows that European citizenship is a construct that is inevitably "poly-vocal, articulated in different languages and through different cultural models and repertoires of justifications and occurs in very different institutional contexts" (Rebel, 2016, p. 58). Thus, the status is unambiguously diverse in its representations and experiences. This is because each nation-state interprets, enforces, and constructs European citizenship within its own context, providing at least 28[12] (p. 57), varieties of institutional interpretations of this membership status.

Britain's connected histories are closely related to and developed jointly with European conceptions of citizenship and belonging (Mayblin, 2017). The driving force of such conceptions was the hierarchical organisation of human beings along racialised lines, which included affective aspects of citizenship, in as far as they referred to belonging and privilege. Intersectional examinations of these hierarchies have revealed further hierarchies within, which confirm conceptions of citizenship as beyond equality

[12] Number of EU member states before Britain left the EU in 2020

and rights, but as a gendered, classed, racialised, etc (Currie, 2009; Blauberger and Schmidt, 2014; Ivlevs and Veliziotis, 2018; Brahic, 2022). Over the past 20 years, this has become increasingly more relevant in the UK, where the gap between Europeans and non-Europeans have been narrowing in public discourse (Favell and Nebe, 2009; Guma, 2020).

4.2.2 The politicisation of EU migration

British immigration regulation regarding the EU has been greatly affected by a politicisation of EU migration over the past 10 years (Roos, 2019). In 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron argued that the largest immigration to the UK was "predominantly caused by migration from outside of the EU" (Cameron, 2011), but only three years later, in 2014 he was convinced that the "bigger issue today is migration from within the EU" (Roos, 2019, p. 642; Cameron, 2014). This marks the beginning of Europeanisation of British migration concerns, where "the public anti-immigration animus has moved from non-European to European migrants" (Joppke, 2020, p. 3).

European migration started to be transformed into a question of poverty and problematic migration since the early 2000s, with the accession of various "Eastern European" states (Roos, 2019). In 2013, the then Home Secretary Theresa May, along with Austrian, Dutch and German authorities, wrote a letter to the Presidency of the European Council expressing their concern with 'new migrants' who *abuse* their freedom of movement rights (Mikl-Leitner at al., 2013). According to the signatories of the letter, the rights conferred to EU citizens by the Freedom of Movement, in particular the provision about non-discrimination on the basis of nationality had become "an affront to common sense" with an urgent need to be reviewed (Mikl-Leitner et al., 2013).

By 2015 the debate had shifted from EU immigration policy to the EU polity (Roos, 2019). In a letter to the President of the European Council, Prime Minister David Cameron declared that the freedom of movement had put pressures "on our schools, our hospitals and our public services" because the numbers of European citizens arriving in Britain far exceeded "anything the EU's founding fathers ever envisaged" (Cameron, 2015, p.3). As a result, the Prime Minister stated the desire "to end Britain's obligation to work towards an 'ever closer union'" in a "formal, legally binding, and irreversible way" (ibid.). With this, Britain had consolidated the process of breaking away from the EU.

Discourses around intra-EU migration started also to dominate media and political addresses. This discursive construction of EU migration would influence the experiences of those living in Britain and their attachment to their Europeanness (Favell, 2017). In the following two sections, I examine the specificities of formal European citizenship and the aspects of Europeanness or substantive European citizenship, respectively.

4.2.3 Formal and affective aspects of European citizenship

European Citizenship was born in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty, as an attempt to "mark [s] a new stage in the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe" (Commission of the European Communities, 1992, p. 5). The creation of a citizenship of the Union was to complement national citizenships adding extra levels of protection. One of the main changes of the legislation was that it would allow free movement of citizens across the territories of the Union. This was a major development, as until then movement was tied to employment (Favell and Recchi, 2009, p. 6).

Additionally, EU citizens enjoy the right of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality. This may seem a universal right at first sight, however, in the case of

European citizenship this right turns transnational migrants into “quasi-citizens”, where they have the right to be treated the same as a national citizen of another member state and to have no disadvantage resulting from their nationality. A powerful institutional and legal apparatus consolidated in the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights safeguards this right.

European Citizens in Britain enjoyed (until December 2020) the same rights as British citizens in the areas of labour market, education, health care, welfare, and local and regional elections. The only missing right was the national franchise, as EU citizens in Britain could not vote or stand for office in national elections. There are also some restrictions in terms of security clearance that would prevent non-nationals from accessing certain professional positions. Most of these differences are at the national level. However, considering the other two dimensions of individual membership in political communities proposed by Bauböck (2014), that is the local and the transnational, the rights of EU citizens and British citizens are virtually equal.

Nevertheless, some are more equal than others (Marion, 1989; Weber, 2015; Matiluko, 2020) and, as has been discussed earlier, other hierarchies operate also within the status of EU citizen. According to Geddes immigration in Britain has always been represented both socially and politically as involving race and racial difference (Geddes, 2005, p. 731), as well as a ‘problem’ to deal with due to its multicultural, multiracial implications. These racial implications are never only related to race or skin colour, but also to culture (Mayblin, 2017) and so, it was no different for citizens of ‘newer’ European countries. Despite imperceptible phenotypical differences, some “Eastern European” migrants became racialized on the basis of cultural differences (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013).

The rights of citizens of EU8[13] countries were determined by their employment status, rather than their newly acquired European citizenship (Currie, 2009; Cook, Dwyer and Waite, 2011; Osipovic, 2015). That is, citizens of these countries could only access all the rights afforded to citizens of older European countries once they had been in employment for a period of time, and they were subject to immigration controls in as far as they were obliged to register with the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) due to concerns over "influx of 'poorer' economic migrants" (Brahic, 2022, p. 2172). Additionally, public opinion and national reception of these European citizens were often tainted with negative views (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013; Balch and Balabanova, 2016; Ivlevs and Veliziotis, 2018). The result is expected to be a variety of experiences, emotional attachments, and representations of EU citizenship in Britain, despite common legal status.

Thus, the label of European is considered here as an umbrella term for a variety of transnational experiences (Rother and Nebe, 2009). The socio-political context that EU citizens encounter in the UK will vary according to the way their membership in the Union was constructed, or how the media and public opinion have presented them. Furthermore, how they have internalised those elements will also be intersectionally influenced by their perceptions and experiences of Europeanness.

After examining European citizenship as a frame for migration and naturalisation experiences in Britain, I conclude that the particularities of European citizenship (freedom of movement, political rights at the local level, protection against discrimination on the basis of nationality, etc.) triggered a set of reactions in the UK that uncover an

[13] A8 countries are Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

inner hierarchy within this status. This is a process that started in the early 2000s and that culminated in Brexit.

4.3 Brexit: the political gets personal

According to the 36th British Social Attitudes Survey, Brexit created a series of identification lines and positionings that were not there before and that have sedimented both in the British citizens' imaginary as well as that of European citizens (Curtice and Montagu, 2019). Thus, Brexit has become an inescapable political landmark in the UK, and in the context of this research, it is a clear frame for participants' decisions to naturalise.

In this section I focus on the political constellation that surrounded the experiences of naturalisation of the participants of this research. First, I briefly discuss the affective components of Brexit and their impact on EU citizens living in Britain. Next, I focus on a process of ascribing migrant status to all European citizens in the UK, which was the culmination of a longer process of Europeanising 'the problem' of migration. Last, I present the idea that Brexit emphasised the significance of a European community of value, which existed long before Brexit, to which "Eastern" and "Western" Europeans had unequal access. Overall, this section aims to provide a reflection of the political context, highlighting the blurred lines between personal and political landmarks that are key to examining everyday practices of citizenship.

4.3.1 Brexit

In June 2016 Britain voted to leave the European Union in a referendum called by the Conservative party. The people decided to leave (51.9% votes)[14] the European Union and this triggered a political crisis, that saw three prime ministers take office within the space of four years. This political crisis is a good indicator of the level of change and transformation that was to come.

According to Moreh and colleagues (2020) Brexit is an "emotionally charged discursive and historical moment of heightened uncertainty" (p. 149) that made of Britain a unique context to "explain social attitudes and behaviour in conditions of radical sociolegal transformation" (ibid.). Following this, looking at citizenship representations within this concrete political context is of particular interest, as such an analysis would highlight the role of emotions, perceptions, and political opinions in personal decisions. This is of particular relevance for non-citizen residents, as they tend to pay more attention to sociolegal transformations at the national level (Menjívar and Lakhani, 2016). Thus, decisions about citizenship could occupy a larger proportion of people's everyday lives in moments of such intense uncertainty, as was the immediate aftermath of Brexit (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Hall *et al.*, 2020)

Brexit and its polarising identity politics, its anti-immigrant rhetoric, chaotic consequences and the uncertainties it stirred, had been brewing already since the expansion of the EU in the early 2000s and has had a significant impact on the lived experiences of naturalisation of EU citizens living in the UK (Graeber, 2016). It also had a significant impact on their self-definition, on their understandings of home and feelings of safety and security which sparked profoundly affective responses to the results of the

[14] https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum

referendum (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021; Kilkey and Ryan, 2021) as I will demonstrate in Chapter 5.

Studies on the affective impact of Brexit (Lulle, Moroşanu and King, 2018; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021) provide a clear picture of how political decisions and emotional responses are deeply intertwined. Therefore, an intersectional lens will help examine decisions and experiences of naturalisation in Britain after Brexit, which will necessarily combine political events and personal responses in ways that are impossible to isolate from one another.

4.3.2 How Brexit migrantized the EU citizen

In Chapter 2, I defined migrantising or migrantization as the ascription of migrant status to citizens (Anderson, 2019) and argued that I wanted to expand this term to include EU citizens, given their quasi-citizen status and their right to free movement. I do, however, recognise the contested nature of the issue of free movement (van Ostaijen, 2020) and that is why I do not present EU citizens as citizens, rather as quasi-citizens.

In a speech given on the 16 September 2013, the EU Commissioner for Justice Viviane Reding stated “to make it absolutely clear: free movement is a fundamental right, and it is not up for negotiation. Let language not betray us: European citizens exercising their right to free movement are not “immigrants” (Reding, 2013). However, official messages from the EU contrasted with the vision the Conservatives had been constructing in the UK since 2010, which was one of the EU being detrimental to immigration control and domestic justice. As a result, the contested nature of the status of EU citizens in Britain make them a unique collective with which to observe socio-legal processes that turn citizens (or quasi-citizens) into migrants, that is, to observe the migrantising processes (Anderson, 2019)

A more polarised Britain turned European citizens into immigrants (Charteris-Black, 2006; Light and Young, 2009; Guma, 2020), stripping their EU citizenship of much of its' value. Although the process had been in place for "Eastern European" migrants since 2004, Brexit contributed to narrowing the East/West divide in terms of perception and regulation of European migration.

According to Moreh and colleagues (2020) the direct effect of this dramatic change in the political context of Britain was an imposition of "traditional forms of integration" for EU citizens (p. 148). A good indicator thereof is the rise in the number of applications for permanent residency (EEA Residence) directly after the referendum[15] as well as a significant increase in citizenship applications (Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020; Fernández-Reino and Sumption, 2021). Both of which have been closing the gap between EU and non-EU citizens. The most important aspect of this trend in EU citizens behaviour, which resembled those of non-EU citizens, is that it reveals the changing power relations that "ascribe migration to certain bodies" (Tudor, 2018, p. 1058). This concept helps to unpack hegemonic discourses that construct some foreigners, but not only foreigners, as migrants (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991; Tudor, 2018). Some EU citizens were not considered migrants in the UK before. Moreover, they did not act like migrants, in that they did not engage in traditional forms of integration (Moreh, McGhee and Vlachantoni, 2020). Brexit was starting to change that, and EU citizens were starting to respond. When they started being labelled as migrants, they started acting as such as well.

Another policy reform resulting from Brexit was the EU Settlement Scheme, which required that all EU citizens and non-EU family members apply for settlement status to

[15] EEA table ee 02 q Home Office Immigration Statistics 2020

continue to live in the UK by June 2021 (Walsh, 2020). The introduction of the Settlement Scheme in March 2019 was the first official legal step towards the abolishment of EU citizens' right of free movement in Britain. According to the Home Office (2020a), the Settlement Scheme "enables the EU resident (…) to obtain an UK immigration status" (p. 3). Therefore, this scheme consolidates the label of migrant being applied to all EU citizens officially, for the first time.

4.3.3 European community of value

As has been discussed in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, the community of value is a moral community that is comprised of *good citizens*, a sort of VIP club of which only 'the best' citizens are members (Anderson, 2013). Membership in the nation, argues Anderson, does not "neatly map on to membership in the community of value" (p. 93) because it takes more than formal membership in the state to become a member of the community of value. Anderson's concept of the community of value focused on national political communities, however the concept could also be applied to transnational ones such as the European Union. The reason is that the concept simply reveals the impermeability of membership in a political community, to which certain people will never be granted full access or in which some will only have access to less-than-equal citizenship (Anderson, 2013; Byrne, 2017).

The earlier discussions on migrantization emphasise the internal hierarchies within EU citizenship, revealing that even at the transnational level, citizenship is not equally accessed and practiced. For example, "Eastern European" citizens did not have the same access to rights and treatment as "Western European" citizens. This is not only true in the UK as European citizens in other member states also suffer discrimination and unequal

access to rights and free movement, something that has been true since the expansion of the EU in 2004.

The case of European migrants in Britain is of particular interest, however, because it complicates the concept of national community of value with a parallel community of value at the transnational level. However, the British community of value and the European community of value do overlap in various respects, namely: the good citizen is the "Western European" and those with less-than-equal citizenship are the "Eastern Europeans". In this research, I demonstrate that Brexit and the naturalisation process in the UK shrank the overlapping aspects between these two communities of values.

The interesting add-on to this transnational community is that it simultaneously loses and gains value. Arguably, naturalisation rates in Britain have increased due the lack of value (in terms of rights) that EU citizenship will have in the near future. In other words, Brexit migrantized EU citizens in the UK and led them to seek security in British citizenship. Furthermore, attachment to local communities and transnational ideals were central to the rescaling of belonging from a European community of value, to aspiring to the British community of value while embracing local identifications in their communities of residence (Osipovic, 2015).

To conclude, EU citizens construct their belongings at the local, national, and transnational level. This translocality is necessary to understanding how migrants' everyday experiences are anchored in multiscalar spaces and "localized contexts" (Brickell and Datta, 2011; Verne, 2012; Botterill and Hancock, 2019). Similarly, when proposing a solution for some of the issues that EU citizenship faces, Bauböck (2014) argued that we should take into account three interconnected regimes of membership: "[a] birth right-based one at the Member State level, a residential one at the local level, and a

derivative regime with residence-based rights at the supranational level" (p. 761). The British and European levels presented so far leave me with one last regime of membership: the local level.

4.4 Brighton and the Southeast of England

In this section, I focus on the local context, looking at the exact location within which participants are engaged politically, socially, and economically. My aim is to reveal a sense of agency in participants' construction of belonging (Smith, 2004; Botterill and Hancock, 2019). As I have shown earlier in this chapter, the local was also essential in the narration of the nation in ceremonies and is key to understanding everyday experiences of citizenship in Britain.

I start by looking at the importance of considering local contexts for full examination of naturalisation and therefore, focus on Brighton and Hove and its surrounding region as an additional place of attachment, with a politics of belonging of its own that runs parallel to the national and transnational. I then move on to speak of what Anderson & Wilson (2018) call "everyday Brexits" in Brighton and Hove, examining the way the city is responding to Brexit. Finally, I present a clear illustration of the interpretation of national citizenship policies in Brighton and Hove, by looking at some of the characteristics of its ceremonies.

4.4.1 Brighton & Hove. A 'European' city

How citizenship policies narrate the nation, and the citizen is but one side of the story; one that needs to be complemented with the local implementation and interpretation of such policies. This is essential to understanding the context within which such policies are being experienced at the individual and local levels. Furthermore, cities take a different approach when it comes to immigration and citizenship policies, focusing less

on national identity, nationality and representations of citizenship and more on everyday life, manoeuvring national policies often with a large degree of freedom (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 176).

The relevance of the local context is also evident in the access to rights and statuses of non-citizens, which are determined at the national level, but administered and implemented at the local level (ibid., p. 173-4). Immigrants' categorisation is also renegotiated at the local level (ibid., p. 175). As a result, experiences of citizenship necessarily need to be examined within the local context as well.

Bauböck's (2010) concept of *citizenship constellations* designates "a structure in which individuals are simultaneously linked to several political entities, so that their legal rights and duties are determined not only by one political authority, but by several" (p. 848). That is, rights and duties of EU citizens currently naturalising in Britain are regulated by a variety of political authorities at the three main levels of membership in the union: transnational, national and local, also proposed by Bauböck (2014, p. 753).

Participants in this research resided mainly in Brighton and Hove, with some participants residing in a few other locations in the southeast of England but working in Brighton and Hove (excluding one, who lived and worked in Eastbourne). Understanding their local communities is essential to contextualising their experiences, because the way they see and experience the world is informed by a variety of "local resources - the media, everyday talk, friends" (Plummer, 2003, p. 108), that is, in interaction with people and public discourses.

East Sussex has received increasing numbers of international migrants over the past 10 years[16] with the vast majority (62%)[17] coming from another EU member state. This context might influence the way citizens experience their presence in the towns and cities of the region. Furthermore, Brighton and Hove often describes itself as a city tolerant of diversity and the unconventional (Mazzilli, 2018). As a result, this is a city with a marked identity in people's imaginary that can influence or facilitate emotional attachment (Williams *et al.*, 1992; Mazzilli, 2018).

In 2018, the Brighton and Hove city council commissioned a survey of the city's residents to find out their opinion in regard to the city as a place to live. The report results show that the great majority of residents (88%) are satisfied with the city as a place to live and consider it a diverse place, where everybody, regardless of their background "get on well together" with 94% of respondents agreeing with this statement (Brighton & Hove Connected, 2018). This became part of an ongoing discursive construction of the city as tolerant of lifestyle diversity, especially in terms of gender and sexuality, turning the city into a 'hospitable' and even 'migrant friendly' place (Mazzilli, 2018).

In 2020, Councillor Marianna Ebel said: "We market our city as a cosmopolitan, European destination and we want EU citizens to continue living, working and visiting our city" (Brighton and Hove City Council, 2020). The Brighton and Hove City Council Website constantly references its reputation as an open, diverse, and cosmopolitan city, now with the added label of "European".

Results of the referendum saw 31.4% voting to Leave the EU, and 68.4% voting to Remain in the EU in Brighton and Hove and the City Council openly endorsed the

[16] Data from ONS mid-year estimate components of change, published June 2018

[17] Based on the Department of Work and Pensions' data on NiNo Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-insurance-number-allocations-to-adult-overseas-nationals-entering-the-uk

People's Vote campaign, that called for a second referendum (Humphreys and Newell, 2018). Such results were used to put forward an explicit welcome to EU citizens on the city council's website, which acknowledged the anxiety that the referendum results may have caused and reassured EU citizens that Brighton

> *(...) is your home and you will always be welcome here. You contribute to our diversity and help make our city unique. You are our family, our friends, our neighbours, and our colleagues, and have been valued members of our communities for decades. We hope you will continue to make Brighton & Hove your home. (Brighton and Hove council website)*

Brighton and Hove can be considered a haven for those who wanted to remain in the EU, because most other constituencies in East Sussex voted to leave the EU. However, this 'inclusive' city also makes a clear distinction between European migrants and splits its numbers into citizens of "old" European countries and "accession countries" (Humphreys and Newell, 2018, p. 828).

In their report about the EU citizen population in the city, Humphreys and Newell (2018) state that "the city has a larger pool of Western European workers to draw from and may be more strongly affected by any Brexit driven impact on the supply of those workers" (p. 829). This is presented against the context of national and regional numbers, where Brighton and Hove have more citizens from 'old' European countries (3.3%) than England (1,7%) and the Southeast (1,9%), suggesting this as an added value. Additionally, in the same report, the authors refer to the high educational level of the work force in Brighton and Hove, with 36.9% holding a degree or higher, as opposed to the national (27.4%) and regional (29.9%) percentages (ibid.).

This identity of the city and the region will necessarily influence who is more likely to identify with the city, feel interpellated by such diversity discourses (Althusser and Brewster, 2001; Bassel, Monforte and Khan, 2018). Moreover, since Brexit had such an impact on the discursive construction of the city's identity, it can be expected that it would have had an impact on the way Brexit was and is experienced locally.

4.4.2 "Everyday Brexits" in Brighton and Hove

Brexit is not only an event that took place in June 2016 and that has had an impact on the way citizens and non-citizens felt about themselves and the state or Europe. It is not only something that has created uncertainty in the present and will have consequences for the future. According to Anderson and Wilson (2018) Brexit is something that currently takes place in everyday life and it continues to happen, becoming "the background of ordinary life" and being "greeted" with a variety of emotions and reactions (p. 294).

This idea of Brexit being part of everyday life leads these authors' to call for a sharper focus on the way such an political event shapes life and decisions already here and now, and not only an uncertain future that will come (Anderson and Wilson, 2018). In answer to this call, I present here a brief commentary on the ways Brexit is already "shifting relations that make ordinary spaces" (ibid., p. 294) in Brighton and Hove.

The Brighton and Hove City Council created a monitoring group called Brexit Resilience and Planning Group (BRPG), whose aim is to monitor the potential impact of Brexit both at the national and local levels (Brighton and Hove City Council, n.d.). The group has produced a series of documents that are in the public domain, which are meant to provide information about the council's initiatives to mitigate the damage that Brexit is expected to cause both nationally and locally. The committee is made up of staff from across the council and works in collaboration with the Sussex Resilience Forum, which is a multi-agency partnership that works to "prepare, respond to, and recover from,

emergencies and major incidents" (Sussex Police, n.d.). This suggests that the council considers Brexit as a major incident, which it defines as "an event or situation with a range of various consequences which requires special arrangements" (ibid.)

The BRPG identified 15 potential areas of impact, among which are: trade, tourism, migration, workforce, community cohesion, waste, food safety and standards, universities, air quality, etc. (Humphreys and Newell, 2018, p. 830). This perspective is related to the city's identity as a European city, which influences how it continues to construct Brexit as a disruptive force. A perspective that been predominant in research about Brexit over the past few years (Mckenzie, 2017; Ivlevs and Veliziotis, 2018; Botterill and Burrell, 2019; Goodman and Schimmelfennig, 2020; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021; Kilkey and Ryan, 2021), and an important one as such.

However, there are infinite ways in which Brexit is also a force that "continues to (re)produce and (re)animate relations of power" (Anderson and Wilson, 2018, p. 294) and looking at Brighton and Hove's self-definition and reputation reminds us that the diversity the city prides itself on is indirectly also referring to socio-economic status and education level, as seen in the previous section.

The clear distinction between old ("Western") and accession ("Eastern") Europeans presented in the previous section reveals that the city is proud of a specific section of its population and that the narratives both of Brexit as a major event and the city's inclusive nature, may only be *interpellating* the more privileged sector of its population, or the Brighton community of value, inhabited by good citizens (Old Europeans and British alike) with high education levels.

In conclusion, even an event such as Brexit could not destabilise certain inequalities within the European population and between residents from varying education levels, who are less visible in the way the city narrates itself. Finally, Brexit should be interpreted

as being simultaneously a disruptive and a reproductive force that "oscillates between the foreground and background of the" city and its residents' lives (Anderson and Wilson, 2018, p. 292). It is against this background and foreground that citizenship policies are being interpreted and implemented in Brighton and Hove. Local citizenship ceremonies are an exceptional place to examine such interpretations.

4.4.3 Citizenship Ceremonies and the Mother's Union

Local citizenship ceremonies are a good example of how national policies are interpreted locally. In 2017 and in 2019 I attended two ceremonies in Brighton and Hove. The staff in charge of organising the ceremonies were proud of the significant level of influence they had on their organisation and format. They identified with the message of local welcome the ceremonies were meant to send to new citizens.

Both ceremonies were significantly different, revealing the level of influence the local administration and staff have in the shape and form of the ceremonies. One of the members of staff told me that since she and her team took charge, they had tried to "make it more special" and that ceremonies before then were "funeral like" (Field-note, May 2017). Also, they mention how through the National Checking Service they had been running (a service through which local civil servants would help applicants reviewing their applications before submitting for a small fee) they got to know many of the applicants' "entire lives" (Fieldnote, November 2019), often "happening right here in Brighton" and this made them feel closer to them.

At the first ceremony I attended, there were many references to the local community, to how great the city of Brighton and Hove is, the "typical English villages" of Sussex and to how "today this country is warmly welcoming you" into the community (Field-note, May 2017). The representative of the Queen also mentioned that the ceremony was meant to be a rite of passage, through which new citizens were welcomed

into “our family, our common values” and conferred “the honour of citizenship” (Field-note, May 2017).

At the second ceremony I observed in Brighton, the speech was shorter, with no references to the local or national community, little reference to common values and only a brief reference to welcoming new citizens into the community. Additionally, the reception offered by the council after the ceremony had changed significantly.

At the first ceremony, “the refreshments consisted of a humble assortment of one litre bricks of juice, some plastic glasses, and a few unopened packages of digestive biscuits” (Field-note, May 2017). During the second ceremony, the refreshments included tea and juices, homemade baked goods, and a beautifully presented table, served by the volunteers of the Mother’s Union, who volunteered to bake and serve the refreshments after the citizenship ceremonies in various locations of the southeast. The Diocesan President of the Mother’s Union, Kathryn Anderson wrote me in an email:

> *After first of all meeting Peter Field, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, at my Commissioning Service in March 2016 he contacted me a few months later to invite Mothers’ Union to provide the refreshments for Citizenship Ceremonies in Eastbourne, Lewes, Crowborough, and Hastings - because of cuts, refreshments had been withdrawn.*
> *We feel very privileged to take part and offer tea/coffee, cake, and savouries to our new citizens! The citizens and their families appreciate it and so do the Town Hall Staff (who usually finish the leftovers).*

National Policy had cut funding for refreshments and the response of the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex was to contact a group of volunteers to enhance the ceremonies. The Mother’s Union they produced a vignette (Annex E) with their own interpretation of the meaning and value of the ceremonies, which they see as a welcome for “new citizens, with cake, tea and God’s love”. The volunteers sit at the ceremony along with new citizens and are introduced as a part of the ceremony. They take part in the refreshments and have “the opportunity to talk to citizens from so many different countries” (see vignette). This vision reflects the double categorisation that runs through the entire

naturalisation process, which welcomes new citizens as full equal members of the political community and as 'citizens of other countries', continuing to highlight the difference between new and old citizens.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides a socio-historical and political context to this research, with a description of national citizenship policies, the supra-national context, Brexit, and the characteristics of the interactions of national and supranational factors at the local level. These elements are essential to understanding the construction of citizenship and naturalisation experiences of participants of this research.

Studying citizenship and belonging in such tumultuous times is and exceptional opportunity to reveal the relevance of the local sphere in citizenship definition and the impact that political events as well as institutional narratives can have on people's representations of citizenship. Brexit was also an excellent opportunity for highlighting the diverse nature of European citizenship. With virtually the same legal status, EU citizens are constructed and likely to experience citizenship differently. That is why the local community is relevant to decisions to naturalise and greatly influences naturalisation experiences as well as everyday practices of citizenship.

The situation of EU citizens in Brighton and Hove and their relationships to the local community will be essential to understanding the way citizenship is defined and performed differently at the supranational, national, and local levels.

The empirical material that follows, presents a combination of uncertainty at the transnational level, hostility at the national level, and friendliness at the local level and contributes to a better understanding of complex everyday experiences of citizenship as they are amplified by a politically sensitive context.

Finally, despite the multiple levels of analysis and the interpretation of national policies at the local level, it seems that even in places that seem to be welcoming of diversity, the historical and socio-political forces that discursively construct migrants or non-residents as others or aliens, remain intact (Bassel and Khan, 2021, p. 588).

5 NARRATIVES OF HOME. TALES OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

This chapter examines participants' experiences of Brexit, their representations of European citizenship and identity, as well as the reasons for their decision to naturalise. The research question that guides the empirical explorations of this chapter is: what is the impact of European citizenship on participants' experiences of naturalisation? An answer to this question needs to take the political context into account, as over the past 5 years Brexit has had a significant impact on what it meant to be a European citizen in Britain.

All participants to this research have European citizenship in common, however, they relate to, and define it in different ways. Some participants speak of European ideals and identity, while others refer to Europe as a territory that contains, but is not limited to, the European Union. Here I consider those who speak of ideals as members of the European community of value, while those who speak of the geography of Europe are not.

The empirical data focuses on how participants narrated themselves and developed home-building strategies as a result of the disempowering experience of being European in the UK after Brexit. The result is an analysis of narratives that speaks of the meaning of home and how it is closely tied to representations of citizenship, while simultaneously revealing the relevance of the notion of community of value.

I start the chapter exploring the different representations of Europe and European identity, to mark the trends in participants relationships to their European citizenship and of their membership in the European community of value. A clear division emerges in

the sample, where "Eastern Europeans" tend to have more varied definitions of Europe and what it means to be European than "Western Europeans", who almost without exception limit it to the EU.

Identification with European citizenship (or the lack thereof) had an impact on the way participants experienced Brexit. Those with a stronger identification (mostly "Western Europeans") felt a stronger sense of loss than those with little identification with their European citizenship (mostly "Eastern Europeans"). I discuss how this is related to their membership in the European community of value in the second section. In the third section I focus on participants' homemaking strategies devised to combat the disempowering experiences of marginalisation brought about by Brexit's migrantising process (Anderson, 2019). Finally, in the last section I focus on participants' acts of citizenship and the vulnerabilities and anxieties that led them to seek British citizenship. The concept of defensive naturalisation (Aptekar, 2016) is central to understanding participants' decisions in this final section. This chapter concludes with a reflection about the destabilisation of participants' identities and definitions of home and the relevance of membership in the community of value, which led them to naturalise, conceptualising citizenship as safety and turning naturalisation into a homemaking strategy.

5.1 Narratives of European identity

In this section, I explore participants' accounts of what it means to be European. Their accounts divide the sample into two groups: the first group is mostly composed of "Eastern European" citizens (EU8, EU2, EU Other[18]), who felt no strong identification with their European citizenship but recognised its importance for their migration story.

[18] Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus and Malta, Croatia

These individuals had a broader understanding of Europe that transcended the European Union. The second group is mostly composed of "Western European" (EU14[19]) citizens, who felt a strong sense of European identity, and associated it mostly with the rights and entitlements afforded to them by the EU. This distinction is relevant to understanding what it meant to be European in Britain in 2017 and the impact this had on decisions to naturalise and later experiences of naturalisation after Brexit. Furthermore, this distinction reveals the inner hierarchies within the European community of value.

5.1.1 *"I find that concept of being European a bit too big".* On broad definitions of Europe and European identity

The experiences that I present here are those of participants in the first group, mostly "Eastern Europeans" who spoke about what Europe meant to them. These participants identified themselves mostly as European migrants or immigrants and felt a certain distance between conceptions of European identity and themselves. While these participants recognise the advantages of holding European citizenship, they do not claim a sense of European identity related to it.

Agnieszka, who was born in Poland, considers that the various dimensions of Europe make it impossible to pin it down to a single identity or even a form of attachment

> *[Europe] It's a difficult concept again, isn't it? I guess I don't know, because I always felt like I was from Europe but then there is the European Union, and what do you mean with Europe, do you mean Europe just like the European Union or do you mean in a wider sense? Or … So it's difficult and then you have so many differences between the countries in Europe as well, you know like Scandinavians are going to be different from Southern Europe and I don't know, I find that concept of being European a bit too big.*[20]

[19] Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

[20] For all subsequent excerpts from interviews, I refrain from adding the pseudonym and country of origin of participants at the end of the quote, simply because country of origin is not always a good descriptor of the individual and I wanted to stay true to their own self-definition.

(Agnieszka, Poland)

Her answer reveals a distinction between the territorial and the institutional dimensions of Europe (Salovaara-Moring, 2011), making it impossible for her to imagine it as one thing. In trying to answer my question 'Do you feel European?', Agnieszka is looking for a definition of Europe. She is looking for an answer to 'What is Europe?' The concept of European is too vague for her, this could be because she was born in Soviet Poland and has a different historical understanding of Europe. Agnieszka was already a young adult starting university when Poland joined the EU in 2004. Perhaps this historical context contributes to her interpretation of Europe as transcending the European Union and being a broad cultural, historical, and geographical concept.

Lazar's definition of Europe also differentiates between EU institutions and ideals linked to the European Union and the territorial aspects of Europe:

> *Let's not forget that there are countries outside of the EU and they are still European.*
>
> *(Lazar, Bulgaria)*

Like Agnieszka, Lazar was an adult when Bulgaria joined the EU, and perhaps here lies the reason of his imagining Europe as a territory shaped by a common history and the European Union as a different, while related, economic and political pact that includes only some part of Europe. Lazar identifies with this broader understanding of Europe, where the boundaries are along cultural, historical and religious fault lines (Heffernan, 1998). He speaks of the link between cultural and religious identity and territory in Europe, and how these have shaped European morals and values.

> *Europe is where the oldest civilizations are, so I believe it's the place with the most history, I believe the Europeans share some similar values, so by that I mean what's right and wrong for someone in West or East or Northwest or Southwest Europe, would be somewhat similar to someone in Northeast or Southeast Europe and that would pretty much mean that what's wrong and*

> *right is pretty much the same. Now that's because of historical reasons, Christianity… I mean the main reason being Christianity and cultural and let's not forget that Europe is not that much of a massive big place, but there is many different nations and many different people and loads of history and …*
>
> *(Lazar, Bulgaria)*

In his definition of Europe linked to Christianity, Lazar acknowledges the diversity within Europe. However, he also links a common culture and values to Europe's historical roots in religion. His definition of European identity explicitly transcends EU citizenship or the European Union and reveals the importance of morals in his definition of European identity.

For both Agnieszka and Lazar, European citizenship is a recent addition to their sense of belonging and self, and this is true to all citizens of countries that accessed the European Union in the past 20 years (Light and Young, 2009). This recent access to European identity contrasts with longer histories of migration (Consterdine, 2023) and social construction of Eastern Europe as Western Europe's alter ego (Wolff, 1994a).

Another relevant element of definitions of Europe that transcend the EU, refers to the western character of European identity. In his account of the privileges earned with European citizenship, Alvar, originally from Estonia, associates the EU and European citizenship with western privileges that, according to him, "Eastern European" countries are happy to forgo, to regain sovereignty over their borders. According to Alvar, "Eastern European" countries lost sovereignty when joining the EU and this became evident when the EU forced them to take on refugees in 2015-2016

> *Some Eastern European countries are getting together and considering what the EU does an act of war, in regard to the refugees' countries. Coalition against the Brussels bureaucrats (…) we are happy to give up the privileges of southern beaches and the Eiffel tower and all that, we are fine, we don't need to see that.*
>
> *(Alvar, Estonia)*

Alvar claims to have no sense of European identity, which he considers to be something *"absolutely big time secondary"*. For him, European citizenship meant he could see some landmarks in France or Spain, but not much else. Alvar rejects European identity and speaks of an "Eastern European" coalition, revealing a sense of belonging to a different group. Similarly, Aleksander, a Polish citizen, thinks of European identity as a western identity, but unlike Alvar, he adheres to it. When I asked him if he felt European, he answered:

> *Yes, 100%! Well, I was born when Poland was a communist country, I was born and was living when we held first free elections that was 1989, so I was 13 at the time, I remember… I think I first went to vote (…) that was Soviet Union, uhm… so … I always felt connected, felt as European identity is part of my identity. Even though I am Eastern European, and I've got lots of similarities in the less conscious level to Ukrainians for example, as a whole, I still feel part of bigger Western European identity*
>
> *(Aleksander, Poland)*

These "Eastern European" citizens have often mentioned the communist origin of their countries as an important element of the context from which they were defining Europe and their European identity. In general, these participants spoke of European identity as a western construct that they can conform to or contest, but all coincide with a definition of Europe that transcends the European Union. I interpret this as signalling that these participants were not members of the European community of value, because they did not adhere to the definitions of the 'good European', as they (among other things) did not feel attachment to the European project (Jones, 2020). Furthermore, "Eastern Europeans" citizens lack of identification with Europe responds to longer histories of exclusion in Britain, that predate Brexit (Wolff, 1994b; Ranta and Nancheva, 2019; Kilkey and Ryan, 2021)

5.1.2 *"My connection with a European idea is also an emotional one"*

On feeling a strong sense of European identity

Here I present participants from the second group, those that strongly identify as European and tend to equate European identity with their European Union citizenship. Some participants that deeply identified with European ideals referred to the divide between East and West that started to emerge in the previous section. Such is the case of Nina, who was born in Germany and moved to the UK 39 years ago

> *there is like an East and a West, or like an Old and a New… And the old guard, the original countries, Western European countries feel much more entitled as European citizens, and much more equal and probably came for different reasons and different circumstances than the Eastern, the new wave of you know, Polish and Rumanians…*
>
> *(Nina, Germany)*

Interestingly, Nina was born in the German Democratic Republic, also a communist country. However, she does not feel like participants who mention the Soviet Union as the historical context that framed their childhoods. This highlights the importance of subjectivities when considering historical contexts as frames for identity. Moreover, it points to the value of an intersectional approach that sees a social location as the result of the interaction of various elements.

Nina's comment on the divide between "Eastern and Western Europeans" will become clearer in this section, in which "Western European" participants speak of a marked sense of Europeanness, closely tied to the rights and entitlements afforded to them by the European Union. The narratives in this section are less about defining Europe and the content of European citizenship, and more about the formation of an attachment to Europe or what "made them feel European" (Recchi, 2014, p. 119). It is interesting that the same question 'Do you feel European?' prompted different answers with such clear

patterns that resulted in my sample being split almost in half: “Eastern and Western Europeans”.

Ina was born in Germany and grew up in Brussels, because her parents both worked for EU institutions. She also went to school with children whose parents all worked for the European Union and acknowledges that her education and the context of her childhood and youth, as well as her parents’ ideology make her more likely to ‘feel’ European

> *I always felt European, I didn’t feel particularly German, because people would always ask 'ah, so where in Germany are you from?' ... and I didn't have that connection really with Germany, whilst at the same time it was my native language, so right from the start there was that disconnect between what I was told my nationality was and what... you know, how I grew up. […] And we grew up in quite a sort of expat bubble I think, because the school was for the people whose parents worked at the Commission and the Council*
>
> *(Ina, Germany)*

Ina mentions how she experienced the European Union from early childhood, which permeated every aspect of her education and everyday life. This reference to childhood is also present in the previous section, where participants mention being born or growing up in the Soviet Union, suggesting that several of them consider childhood experiences as key to developing a strong sense of European identity.

This feeling European is common to other participants like José who recognises the importance of ‘feeling European’ and states that identification at a deeper level was something he was taught from early childhood

> *But I think my connection with a European idea is also an emotional one […] we celebrate ‘el día de la Constitución Europea’*[21] *… and I think that’s what is different here in the UK, in Spain, through the education system, we have been taught about this ideal of the European Union and what it represents.*
>
> *(José, Spain)*

[21] European Constitution Day

Spain joined the European Union in 1985, shortly after José was born and he feels that the education system was key in inculcating a Europe identity. His connection to Europe is presented as an emotional connection to the EU ideals, which he learned about at school. Sofie also has a strong sense of European identity, she even founded the European Society as soon as she arrived in her British university, because it was very important to her to be able to meet other European students

> *I do feel connected to people that are international in general, but I think there is a closer connection to someone who is from the European Union, just because… I think a lot of the people in the European society, they do all identify as European*
>
> *(Sofie, Belgium)*

A Belgian citizen who grew up in Germany, Sofie speaks of a European society and the European Union as one and the same, which inform her identity and that of anybody who is from the European Union. Elías, also from Spain, shares this personal and emotional connection to the European Union. He explicitly talks about how he was born into Europe and learned, throughout his life, to be a part of it

> *I feel European and I do feel... and people are... part of it, and there is (...) a sense of being European in the sense of how in Europe is where we have most of the time championed civil rights, where we have achieved a number of freedoms, where we have had a history together, that there is a sense of belonging and all these years or all my life the EU was... well Spain joined in 86 so it's actually my entire life*
>
> *(Elías, Spain)*

The reference to childhood or early life in the accounts presented here refer to what is called "political socialisation" which links "collective identities to the exposure to influential messages" which often occur in childhood "through schoolteachers, peers, books, and media discourses" (Recchi, 2014, p. 120). This is what Recchi calls the culturalist model of collective identification (ibid., p. 121)

Favell (2005) criticises the simplistic "comeback" of political socialisation, calling for more bottom-up approaches to the study of European identity (1109-1110).

Interestingly, this research shows that when taking a bottom-up approach, participants' themselves consistently brough up political socialisation to discuss European identity. Participants tend to present their representations of Europe as the result of the intersection of childhood memories, early education experiences, historical context and socio-political definitions of East and West. I interpret their compound effect as demonstrating that participants in this section belonged to the European community of value. They felt they were the right kind of citizens, the good ones, the old ones like Nina said; and therefore, they felt a stronger sense of belonging. This would have consequences on how participants from these two groups experienced Brexit.

5.2 Brexit '*migrantizes*' the citizen?

This section turns to participants' reactions to Brexit, clearly linked to the different forms of imagining Europe, discussed in the previous section. The more participants identified with Europe, the stronger their reaction to the referendum results. The main organising device here will be the migrantization process, which differentiated participants who had identified as EU citizens (more likely to be "Western Europeans") from those who did not (more likely to be "Eastern Europeans").

These experiences are essential to understanding the disruption of a sense of being at home some participants felt as a result of Brexit, their decision to naturalise, and the changing meaning of British citizenship. Concretely, Brexit impacted participants lives in two main ways: first, it highlighted the inner hierarchies of European citizenship in Britain; and secondly, it destabilised "Western Europeans" sense of belonging and being at home in Britain and changed the way they saw themselves, turning them into 'migrants', that is, it migrantized them (Anderson, 2019).

The direct consequence of this was a general reassessment of the participant's place in Britain, accompanied by new reflections on belonging, homemaking strategies and the meaning of citizenship. The effect of this was lesser on "Eastern Europeans" sense of identity and of being at home in Britain, because Brexit did not change their place in the hierarchy of migrants and nationalities that is the result of the ascription of migration (Tudor, 2018) as they had been considered (and considered themselves) migrants all along (Fox, 2016). Although this represents a general pattern in my sample, there are some important outliers that emphasise the ambiguities of citizenship.

5.2.1 Unsettling representations of home

Conceptualisations of *home* varied greatly among participants, as is to be expected from a concept so broad and laden with emotional connotations (Staeheli and Nagel, 2006,). Brun and Fábos (2015) define homemaking as those processes we engage in to gain a sense of control. Brexit disrupted some participants perceptions of being at home in Britain (Guma, 2020; Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021).

During interviews, discussions of membership often landed in conceptions of home through notions of belonging, both of which reflected the same complexity observed by scholars who study the intersection between home and migration, revealing their fluidity and the way they transcend places and spaces (Fortier, 2003; Brickell and Datta, 2011; Boccagni and Brighenti, 2017). Aino was born in Finland and moved to the UK over 20 years ago. In her case, home is fragmented, located in a variety of places, between Finland and Brighton, and the world

> *It's weird, it's that thing of being stuck between two homes. It's going back home and then you come back home. And you are always in this weird limbo where you sort of feel like one and like the other. And I travel a lot as well, so I kind of feel global…*
>
> *(Aino, Finland)*

Aino finds it difficult to pin home down to one single place, because of the variety of dimensions on which she has developed her understanding of home and belonging, as a result of migrating and traveling, but also as a result of maintaining ties with Finland. Her sense of inbetweeness (Brahic, 2022) expressed in the notion of being in limbo speaks to the importance of a translocational lens. Such a lens sheds light on "the differential placing of actors within and across national borders and the often contradictory and complex processes involved" (Anthias, 2018, p. 154). Aino's experiences take place simultaneously in different locations, because of the translocational character of her experiences, which "denotes differential positionings and belongings across intersecting locations, and that these are not static" (ibid.). Aino's home is an ongoing process of being grounded in different locations.

Jens, originally from Germany, gives another good example of the translocality of home (Appadurai, 1996; Zembylas, 2012). He has lived in Britain for 9 years and prior to that, lived in Australia, China, Spain and intermittently in Britain since 1987. As a result, feeling at home is something that he no longer takes for granted

> *And I think the big risk is if you change countries too many times or too often let's say, you lose your ties to any particular country, so at the end you go like 'right, where do I… yeah, I've got a German passport OK, is that where my natural home would be after so many years abroad?*
>
> *(Jens, Germany)*

Jens' is an example of how migration de-naturalises the home. His account emphasises how attachments become deterritorialized for individuals who are highly mobile (King, 2002; Boccagni, 2016). Aino and Jens have imagined their homes as containing their experiences of mobility and not only their experiences of being stationary in one place.

Similarly, Claire struggles to decide where home is. She was born in France, moved to the UK at the age of 5 and went back to France for her teenage years, only to return to study the university and stay (she is now in her early 40s)

> *My home country I'd say is France… this is a tricky one actually, no… I'd say it's here, it's here, this is my home. My country of birth is France, but I haven't lived there for so long… and I struggle actually to, when I think about it… where home really is, but I think it is here (…) But I suppose home… no, home is here, this is where my daughter was born, she has got British nationality*
>
> *(Claire, France)*

Her confusion further points to the complexity of the concept of home within the migration context. Elements like territory, space, time, memories, relationships, etc. all intersect to *decide* where home is. Thus, for migrants like Claire, Aino and Jens, home involves varied homemaking strategies. Ultimately, Claire decides home is the UK, the key factor being that her daughter is British. Having a daughter in the UK has sedimented her relation to Britain and made of it her home, revealing how home is not only about places and spaces, but also about personal relations.

Unlike Aino, Jens and Claire, other participants spoke of a more stable and taken for granted home in the UK. Such is the case of Ina, a German citizen who has spent all her adult life in Britain, and who refers to Britain as her home

> *(…) because prior to that [the referendum] you know, I just sort of felt really at home in Britain and you know, I have been very happy here and you know, obviously we've made it our home and we've got a nice flat and a nice job and lots of friends and we live in a great place*
>
> *(Ina, Germany)*

For Ina, their physical home (their *nice flat*, as she puts it), their city, jobs, and friends, make of Britain her home. With Ina we start to see how the relationship between home and migration is further complicated in the context of Brexit, which seems to have destabilised an already complex sense of being at home for some participants.

Despite the complex nature of these participants' homemaking strategies, Brexit had a great impact on their sense of being at home. Both Aino and Jens speak of needing to regain a sense of being at home in Britain

> *I'm not going anywhere and I just want to secure my place, so that's the reason that I applied. I can move back home and I would still have the option to come back, you know there is still that movement, (Aino, Finland)*

> *[Do you think the UK is your home?] I used to say yes, but after the Brexit vote and followed the discussion at the political level I'm not so sure anymore. If you asked me in 2006 or 2011, it certainly felt like a different country. (Jens, Germany)*

Aino has incorporated her mobility into her sense of being at home and is seeking British citizenship to retain that freedom of movement, while simultaneously stating that she is '*not going anywhere*', claiming her right to stay. Like Jens, Ina also felt that her sense of being at home had been undermined by the political context,

> *and suddenly with the referendum, it just… it changed in terms of Britain, you know it just makes you think like 'god, 52 % of the people have voted that they don't want EU migrants here'*
>
> *(Ina, Germany)*

Similarly, Kinga talks about being at home in terms of being wanted or unwanted, again borrowing from the rhetoric around immigration of the political context. However, for her, nothing has changed

> *And I never felt like I didn't belong, from day one I always felt at home, I never felt like I wasn't wanted, or I wasn't welcome and that hasn't changed, you know I've always felt at home here*
>
> *(Kinga, Poland)*

Kinga is a Polish citizen who moved to the UK over 10 years ago and who did not feel affected by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the times. She seems to resist a force to uproot her by stating that she still (despite all the anti-immigrant discourses in the media) feels at home in Britain. Kinga constitutes an exception in the East/West divide presented

here, which highlights the relevance of the concept of community of value, access to which is not exclusively linked to citizenship (Anderson, 2013)

For Kinga's sense of being at home, Brexit meant nothing. For Ina, Aino, and Jens, Brexit was a sudden change in how they felt living in Britain and it constitutes a unique context in which to examine their relationship with their country of settlement (Zontini and Genova, 2022). Lena, also a German-British dual citizen, has lived in the UK for 26 years, and for her the referendum changed everything. Like Jens she thinks that Britain *'is not the same place'* anymore and that what she experienced as her home in the past years was a *'smoke screen'*, something to distract her from a reality that had always been there

> *I have learned that this isn't the country I thought it was. So that was the biggest disappointment, I think. (…) because I don't feel like home anymore. I felt very settled and then this happened and now I am not settled.*
>
> *(Lena, Germany)*

Lena questions her own feelings of being at home and says she feels betrayed. These participants tended to speak of Brexit as having 'undermined their personal commitment to residing in the country' in emotional terms as presented in Zontini and Genova's study (2022, p. 645).

> *I just felt like I didn't really want to live here anymore. So… it just felt like people, people don't want me here anymore. It was like… I don't know, being treated like … playing games, you were cheated.*
>
> *(Lena, Germany)*

Unlike Zontini and Genova (ibid.) I did not observe any gender divide, all participants who mentioned an emotional response to Brexit, spoke in "a language of love and intimacy" (p. 645). Jose, for example, tells me how Brexit left him '*heartbroken… it's a breakup'*.

This is partly due to the emphasis both referendum campaigns and media put on EU immigration (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021) and partly due to the way in which many "Western Europeans" equated their European identity with the EU. Participants presented in this section were being expelled from the European and national community of value simultaneously, and they felt this as a betrayal.

This equating of European identity with the European Union ideals is essential to understanding the effect Brexit had on some participants' sense of belonging. Although the xenophobic nature of the political campaigning for the referendum was destabilising for all non-citizens and exacerbated the "otherness" of all migrants (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019, p. 6); all participants presented in this section felt a strong identification with EU ideals, which informed a strong European identity and signalled that they were members of the European community of value. The referendum has unsettled their sense of home and security, in part because it shrunk the intersections between British and European communities of value.

Nationalistic rhetoric and negative stereotyping of immigrants in political campaigns is not new to Britain. The novelty lies in that it was the first time that anti-immigrant rhetoric affected the European community of value and 'good Western Europeans citizens'. The sense of loss was most likely to be true for "Western Europeans" than for "Eastern Europeans" (Kinga was an exception). This is related to a new experience of being labelled a migrant for "Western Europeans".

5.2.2 "Migrantization" process

The unsettling of a sense of home was the result of a change in the perception of participants' place in society. Moreover, the failure of the European project in Britain (Jones, 2020; Barrios Aquino, 2022) which was manifested in a rejection of everything

related to the EU was felt also as rejection of much of what "Western European" participants identified with. The xenophobic discourses of right-wing political parties triggered most "Western European" participants to start questioning their place in Britain, encountering the label of migrant for the first time. I interpret this as a shift of the national and transnational communities of value.

José, from Spain, is a good example of this reaction of "Western Europeans", who overnight, became immigrants. For José, this new label makes him feel the loss of citizenship status

> *So basically, they took the rug out from under my feet, I was in European soil and now I am not in European soil. So basically, by virtue of doing that they have taken my citizenship and my right to belong here.*
>
> *(José, Spain)*

This equating of the right to belong with European citizenship is common among those who felt their sense of being at home slipping away. José has lived in the UK for more than 10 years and sees Brexit as a concrete form of exclusion that has redefined not only the institutional aspect of Europe, but also its geography. With this redefinition, he has lost all his citizenship rights, including his right to belong.

Pauline is a French citizen, who has lived in Britain for more than 30 years and strongly identifies as European. She, like José, feels the referendum has unsettled her identity and sense of being at home, depriving her of her citizenship and leaving her feeling anxious and angry.

> *there will not be any more European, I will be a non-citizen. I may as well be a flower on the wall and that angers me a lot.*
>
> *(Pauline, France)*

Her sense of loss of citizenship feels like a punishment to her and she has a strong emotional reaction to it.

> *You know, I don't come from the other side of the world. You know, I come from Europe… yeah? This is just the neighbouring country, it's not Argentina (…) so… I don't… what I … I feel quite strongly about this whole application thing is that: first, I have done nothing wrong, nothing has changed about my situation, yet… everything is going to be taken away from me for what reason?*
>
> *(Pauline, France)*

Pauline feels the need to distance herself from what she considers to be a migrant, somebody who comes from a place like Argentina, not someone who comes from neighbouring France. This comparison of herself to an Argentinian citizen refers to boundary making between herself and other migrants. Pauline is signalling the contours of a community of value that she used to belong to and that is disappearing in front of her eyes. She was being expelled from a community of good citizens and becoming an immigrant, just like an Argentinian citizen, and that felt like a punishment.

Most "Western European" (EU14) participants felt that the label of migrant did not apply to them and seemed to never have thought of themselves as migrants. This explains why the referendum results would be so destabilising for them. In chapter 4, I mentioned the EU Settlement Scheme as the consolidation of the migrantisation process for all European citizens, as it established that EU citizens would officially need to acquire "immigration status". However, participants to this research did not mention the scheme specifically during our interviews. I expect this is due to interviews being conducted before substantial information about it was made public. The Home Office published a statement of intent in June 2018 (Home Office, 2018), six months after the last interview was conducted. This early in the migrantisation process, discussions were centred around concepts of home and European identity, rather than specific legal requirements.

Most "Eastern European" (EU8 and EU2) mention Brexit and concepts of home and European identity significantly less (if at all), arguably because Brexit was not the first instance in which they were labelled migrants in the UK (Fox, Morosanu and

Szilassy, 2012; Fox, 2016; Ranta and Nancheva, 2019; Kilkey and Ryan, 2021) and therefore, they may have not experienced Brexit as destabilising in the same way as "Western Europeans". I interpret this as a result of the fact that (most) "Eastern European" citizens were never members of the European community of value (of which some British citizens were also members) and therefore, do not notice it shrinking in Britain. Furthermore, according to Tudor (2018) the ascription of migration to certain bodies should not be understood as merely a description of a status, but as producing hierarchies that re-order individuals independently of their migration history (p.1059). In this case, the place of "Eastern Europeans" in the hierarchy did not change after Brexit. This does not mean that they do not suffer the negative consequences of being migrantised or undermines such experience. However, it acknowledges that "Eastern Europeans" experiences and homemaking strategies in Britain were already undertaken within the context of being migrantised, reducing the impact of Brexit on them.

In previous sections, participants and I interpreted this lack of European identification as a result of their political socialisation as well as their historical migrantization in Britain. From that follows that their definitions of Europe and their attachment to their European identity transcends the EU. Owing to that, they could consider Brexit to be less disruptive than "Western Europeans", as it disrupts only the institutional aspect of their definition of Europe and not its entire geography, as mentioned by José.

In the previous section I showed how Kinga resisted anti-immigrant rhetoric that aimed to unsettle her sense of being at home in Britain, stating that she still pays no attention to such discourses

> *first of all, I don't believe The Sun and [The Daily] Mirror and you know I don't read these papers so I don't worry that suddenly everybody is going to be made packing their bags and leave. I've heard all those stories about people*

> *who got letters in error, but I don't perceive it as some kind of racist kind of craziness, I just think that nowadays a lot of people get jobs and they don't always know how to do their jobs properly […] so I just don't perceive it as something like we are being targeted.*
>
> *(Kinga, Poland)*

Kinga dismisses anything related with anti-immigrant rhetoric as being a product of tabloids that should not be trusted and, instead, tells me that Brexit was about "*the money that goes to the EU".* Like Kinga, Thomas, who is also originally from Poland, is not worried about himself or his place in Britain. Both see the impacts of Brexit to be worrying at a more institutional level, rather than personal

> *now I am actually worried about my field of work, like how… how it can affect like other people. Because we already… we have a changing medical system, in the country, which is going to be more complicated, or less complicated but we could have more complications now to have access to benefits. For British or non-British, but obviously if you are not British it's going to be harder and harder. And obviously… NHS and stuff… things that Europe was protecting in some ways (Thomas, Poland)*
>
> *I'm worried about education, I'm worried about the grants that universities get, that worries me a lot, I'm worried about all those programmes for non-profit organisations that are losing… that are going to lose the money, this is what I am worried about. I'm not worried whether I'm going to be kicked out or.. it just doesn't worry me. (Kinga, Poland)*

Both Thomas and Kinga affirm that Europe is something that transcends the EU. Kinga speaks of being European *'in an ethnic kind of way'* and Thomas says that even though he feels European, he is aware that the EU *"may not exist anymore in 20 or 30 years".* This relationship to Europe is, I think, at the core of their reaction to Brexit.

Finally, the ascription of migration to certain bodies as a form of alienating or disempowering them (Tudor, 2018; Fortier, 2021) as a result of Brexit took place mostly for "Western European" participants. The effect was different for "Eastern Europeans", for whom the migrantization – while as disempowering and destabilising – had been the frame of their experiences and homemaking strategies in Britain all along.

5.2.3 What does it mean to be an EU citizen in Brexit Britain?

Here I present the ways in which participants related to the label of migrant to explore how the political context contributed to closing the gap between "Eastern and Western Europeans" by migrantizing some and not others. Furthermore, I reflect on the implications of this migrantizing process.

Interestingly, despite both groups experiencing Brexit differently and some experiencing migrantizing processes while others did not, they define migration and what it means to be a migrant in Britain in 2017 similarly. I expect that their definitions coincide because both borrow from political discourses and xenophobic rhetoric dominant at the time of our interviews (Statham *et al.*, 2005). Such is the case of Nina, who feels that the label of migrant has a negative connotation that she associates with precariousness and with *'a need to look for a better life'.* She confesses that her rejection of the label made her feel a bit affronted by the title of my research [22]

> *I've never felt like an immigrant here. In fact, it's quite interesting how the language has changed, uhm… the word migrant, like in your research title… and I was like 'grr' I don't like the word migrant at all.*
>
> *(Nina, Germany)*

Nina dislikes the title of my research because *'language has changed*' pointing to the fact that perhaps in another time, it would have been ok to use the word migrant in my research, but not now. She goes on to define what it means to be a migrant now to explain why the label does not apply to her

> *Because with migrant you think of that poster of Nigel Farage and the line of refugees behind, that's what you think of the word migrant. Immigrant, you think of … I don't know, Ellis Island in New York, you know… a Jewish family arriving with three suitcases, you know… that's an immigrant. I'm a European citizen … you are equal, it shouldn't matter where you are, it doesn't matter if*

[22] At the time of our interview, my research had the provisional title: "Migrating into citizenship. EU migrants' journey to citizenship"

> *you are in London or Rome, or Copenhagen. If you use the word migrant, it kind of puts us in the Us and Them*
>
> *(Nina, Germany)*

Even though Nina is drawing a distinction between herself and those in the line of refugees on the picture on the side of the bus[23], she is simultaneously rejecting any exercise that would draw a distinction between her and British citizens. Nina's reflection using the Leave campaign bus symbology, reveals how citizenship and migration are highly sensitive to political and discursive constructions of membership and exclusion. Inês, originally from Portugal, also speaks of the definition of being an immigrant while simultaneously referring to its negative connotation, although for her, the term is not inherently negative, rather it has been weaponised

> *I am one. You know, I left my country at the end of the day! I don't take that as an offense, you know. I just feel like it's offensive when people use that word to sort of blame us for their problems, or for the country's problems.*
>
> *(Inês, Portugal)*

Like her, Lazar refers to the negative connotations of the label, while borrowing from political discourses to define not only what it means to be a migrant, but himself. Lazar has lived in the UK for more than 10 years. While he has always considered himself an immigrant in Britain, he regrets the increasingly negative connotation of the term and considers that Brexit has had an impact on what it meant to be an immigrant in Britain

> *Well, if you look at the definition of what immigrant is, yeah I guess I moved from one country to another and started living there that makes me an immigrant… I think immigrant and immigration has unfortunately kind of a negative … baggage. You see it depends on the context, I mean if they were meaning… calling me immigrant in terms of trying to insult me, then I guess I would get offended, but if you were reading facts about immigration like the ones I was taking earlier, controlled and uncontrolled, I mean… I'm one of*

[23] The Leave campaign displayed a picture of a key of refugees on the side of a bus, with the words "Breaking Point" written across the picture

> *those guys, I'm the uncontrolled immigration so that makes me an immigrant and that's the definition of the word*
>
> *(Lazar, Bulgaria)*

During the Brexit campaign, all EU citizens were stigmatised because they were not subject to immigration controls upon arrival in the UK, turning them into 'uncontrolled immigration'. Thus, Lazar regrets that the advantage of not being subjected to immigration controls has increasingly more negative connotations. Moreover, that Lazar uses right-wing political discourses to define himself is essential to understanding the context within which these participants experienced their naturalisation, as we will see later on. Thomas also refers to the political context and how it has influenced the way he sees himself

> *I do think nationality informs what I think of myself, especially in this political atmosphere*

For both groups, the discussions of being a migrant or being turned into one, that is, being migrantized, also revealed their constant attempts to escape the negative stigma of being an immigrant (Sigona and Godin, 2019; Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020; Fernández-Reino and Sumption, 2021). Whether participants rejected or accepted these labels, whether they experienced being migrantized or not, they all agreed that being a migrant signified a lack of rights and a form of precariousness, a state of vulnerability that was exacerbated by the referendum results and campaign (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Guma, 2020; Zontini and Genova, 2022).

To escape the negative stereotyping, participants engaged in a series of home-building strategies to negotiate their migrant status and regain a sense of belonging in Britain. These strategies included a redefinition of spaces and places and reassessing their attachment to British and European territories.

5.3 Territory, Attachment, and Bordering Strategies

Evolving conceptualisations of home produced new understandings of territory and attachment, which further revealed the complexities of defining home in transnational spaces. Here, I show participants' definitions of territory, home, and borders. Memories, life experiences, local communities, everyday interactions, all intersected to produce these definitions of home, which in turn redefined the inhabited space (Sandu, 2013, p. 497). Thus, more fluid and deterritorialized definitions of Europe, Britain and the local community start to emerge.

I start by analysing participants' redefinition of what and where Britain is, followed by a resistance to nation-building discourses manifested in the anchoring of home in the local community. I finish with experiences of everyday bordering. The goal of this section is to provide an overview of the deeply destabilising and restructuring effects Brexit had on participants' conceptions of home, which not only affected individuals and their identities, but also their definitions of territory and borders.

5.3.1 Britain is Europe

In discussing the negative connotations of the labels migrant and immigrant, participants started to redefine the territory around them. An example of this is Lazar's reflections about what it means to be a Bulgarian citizen in Britain. He argues that although 'technically' he is an immigrant because he moved from one country to another, the fact that both countries were members of the EU means that he should be counted as a regional or internal migrant, his migration to Britain thus being similar to having moved to another city in Bulgaria because he crossed no borders, in line with Reding's (2013) speech presented in the previous chapter

> *Because Europe is one place, and I… that's not me saying that, first of all it feels like one place. But number one the European Union is Economic Union,*

> *it makes it one place, let's not forget, as soon as you enter it, it becomes a free economic area, its capital, people, and services can flow across freely, so I … and in that sense you can contend whether moving within the EU is classed as immigration or not.*
>
> *(Lazar, Bulgaria)*

In the previous section I presented Lazar's self-definition as being part of the uncontrolled immigration. However, as he goes on to discuss Britain's membership in the European Union and how the decision to leave affected him, he finds himself contesting that *'definition of the word [immigrant]'* he mentioned before arguing that he did not move across politically separated territories, and therefore, he should not have been considered an immigrant. I interpret this shift in his definition of an immigrant as a home-making strategy, where Lazar is trying to escape the stigma of the label and regain a sense of belonging by constantly negotiating the meaning of home and citizenship, both of which are "actively made in political and ideological contexts" (Staeheli and Nagel, 2006, pp. 1601–1604). In a moment of heightened anti-immigrant politics, Lazar is trying to redefine the scope of borders to escape the negative stereotyping that is associated with immigrants in the UK.

Yuval-Davis and colleagues (2018) call these practices "bordering" and they constitute the "everyday construction of borders through ideology, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of transnationalism" (p. 229). In the case of Lazar, bordering can be interpreted as a home-making strategy that is manifested in his redrawing of the borders of Europe.

This consideration of the territory also is present in Lena's affirmation that Britain is Europe and Europe is Britain. Lena's definition of British territory as European territory facilitated her sense of being at home for 25 years before the referendum

> *… because this is like where I grew up… so, I was born in Europe. And that is something that I always thought it was weird about here, people always talk about Europe as if it was something else. But it's not, it's the same thing…*

(Lena, Germany)

This understanding of Europe as a territory of attachment that included Britain is persuasive and seems to have enabled some participants to feel at home in the past. In the context of Brexit, this relocation of borders between Britain and Europe enables participants to claim that sense of belonging back and to contest nationalistic rhetoric with transnational discourses of home and belonging. Interestingly transnational and local attachments became allies against the nationalistic rhetoric in participants' homemaking strategies.

5.3.2 Translocal belongings

Soysal's (2000) prediction that practices of citizenship would be "increasingly decoupled from belonging in the national collective" and take clearer forms in the local communities (p. 4), became true in participants' narratives, who were in a process of redefining themselves and their homes as a result of the political context.

Participants' definitions of home shifted after we discussed the labels of migrant and immigrant. Initially, varying understandings of Europe featured strongly in their definitions of home. Participants started by mentioning a deterritorialized sense of belonging, anchored in European ideals, personal relationships, etc. However, these definitions shifted towards the inclusion of a particular local community. For example, for Francisco, his siblings are central to his sense of belonging and he declares that he feels at home both in Brighton and London, where his sisters live

> *Home would be here in Brighton when I come and see my family here, or if I am in London where my little sister is. It's not like… it's more feelings base*
>
> *(Francisco, Spain)*

Francisco does not mention Britain at all. Similarly, Kaiden's idea of home includes a reference to Brighton, rather than the UK. He mentions arriving in Brighton after being away on holidays as a key signal of his attachment to his city

> *… literally, when I go away on holiday like 10 days somewhere, and I come back to Brighton as soon as I come into the train station you walk down the street and you are like 'yeah, this is a great place to live!' I am home and I never felt not home here.*
>
> *(Kaiden, Malta)*

Kaiden feels at home when he arrives at Brighton's train station, not at the airport when he arrives in the UK. Similarly, Aino says she feels attached to Brighton and if somebody asked her where she is from, she would say Brighton

> *If somebody phrased the question and they said 'where are you from?' I would probably say Brighton*
>
> *(Aino, Finland)*

These shifts from transnational to local attachments reveal a great deal about the narratives of home of these EU citizens, who are negotiating the geographies of their attachments at a variety of levels (Zontini and Genova, 2022). Dimitri offers a great example of this when he reflects on what makes him feel at home. Like Francisco and Kaiden, Dimitri considers relationships as paramount for his sense of being at home

> *It's the people I'm spending my time with. Like I said many of my friends here in Brighton now are Spanish speakers so … again, it's because they are from a different country and then that's how I feel, like European I suppose, rather than necessarily British or Latvian even*
>
> *(Dimitri, Latvia)*

This quote shows a clear negotiation between the various dimensions of attachment for Dimitri, who speaks of Europe and Brighton as key to his sense of belonging. His home-making strategies are being defined between the transnational and local levels, and they are both explicitly emphasised against the background of national identities and belonging. This process has been termed translocality and it describes the ways in which

migrants become regrounded in spaces through "daily lives, activities, and social relationships" (Appadurai, 1996 in Zembylas, 2012, p. 165)

Dimitri's understanding of his position as an immigrant and of what it means to be an immigrant changed when moving south in England, revealing how certain boundaries and opportunities to be included or to be excluded are "redrawn locally" (Guma, 2020, p. 2649). He claims this is because he has found other fellow immigrants he could identify with, whereas in the north most of the immigrants he knew were from Pakistan or Poland, who had come to the UK "*to work in the factories*". According to him, the reason that brought immigrants to the Brighton is more related to learning languages and studying, which according to Dimitri, creates "*different dynamics*".

Sabrina is another example of the translocational nature of belonging. According to Anthias (2018) translocational "denotes differential positionings and belongings across intersecting locations, and that these are not static" (p.154). This fluid and multi-scalar description of belonging is clear in the case of Sabrina

> *When I was living in Germany towards the last few years, or towards the last maybe 5 years or so they [Germans] used to ask me where in Germany I was from, assuming that I'd been born in Germany, but my parents were foreign. Which was nice, I liked that because by then I felt I was kind of a German with foreign parents, a child of immigrants in Germany, that is how I felt. Nowadays, because it's been almost 9 years that I moved away and I have new influences coming in, especially the British one and the Chinese has improved as well due to my personal interests. This has changed. It's diluted. The most you let in, the more diluted the one single identity becomes.*
>
> *(Sabrina, Spain)*

Sabrina's migration stories have shaped her identities. She identifies mainly as a foreigner now, because she is surrounded by foreigners; whereas in Germany, she felt German while being surrounded by Germans. Sabrina was born in Peru and has lived in several countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Her belonging is a central issue for

her sense of identity. When I asked her if she wished her life story was different, she answered: *"To belong! Yes, sometimes I wish that!"*

Sabrina's life elapsed in transnational spaces, and the complexity of her belonging has left her feeling like she needs to simplify her story, her identity, she longs to belong, and for that she turns to the local level

> *[In Brighton] I have been always surrounded by many many foreigners, so I have always felt like a foreigner amongst foreigners, so I think that's one of the reasons of why I am so comfortable here.*
>
> *(Sabrina, Spain)*

Relationships at the local level were important for participants' homemaking strategies and to contest the nationalistic rhetoric that exacerbated the negative connotations of the migrant/immigrant labels.

A final phenomenon that highlights the political and ideological constructions of place and space is that of everyday bordering, where border controls move in on immigrants, affecting their homemaking strategies.

5.3.3 Everyday bordering and the hostile environment

Over the past 8 years, British governments have made an effort towards building a hostile environment extending immigration controls into everyday life and involving the wider population in the border controls and policing of immigration matters (Murray, 2016; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Guma, 2020; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021)

It is no surprise that everyday bordering was starkly felt among some participants. Such is the case of Inês, who constantly feels British citizens are watching over her shoulder and questioning her presence. She tells me that the nature of her work, a front desk position where she has a great deal of contact with people, exposes the ways in which some question her presence. In her account of a recent experience, she describes

how a client asked her where she was from, and when she said she was from Portugal, he proceeded to ask her if she was going to leave because of Brexit and declaring that he didn't want her to leave, telling her *'we need you here'*. Inês felt offended because, in her opinion, he was drawing a line between her and him, through an evaluation of the value of her presence

> *I feel like he didn't notice he was being rude but to me it was rude to just assume I am going to go back and that 'oh we really value you here'… like I need you to value me for me to feel valued? You know I feel like a valuable member of society… I don't expect you to come to me and be like 'oh we really want you here, please stay here we need you!*
>
> *(Inês, Portugal*)

Hannah, a Hungarian and British dual citizen, also speaks of how her condition of immigrant makes her feel observed and evaluated, like she is a representative of the migrant collective in the eyes of native citizens and needs to prove her worth and, therefore, the worth of all migrants

> *If I go into a charity shop you know in Wokingham … and there is an old retired lady there, and then I always just try to act… extra politely because I know I am an immigrant and I have an accent and I don't want British people to think 'oh immigrants are so rude or whatever'*

Claire also shares that feeling of being observed although she has lived in the UK for over 30 years. She says that Brexit changed everything for her, that she now feels uncomfortable in a way she never felt before, and that she is surprised sometimes by the form this discomfort takes in her everyday life, in mundane things like taking the bus

> *after the vote I felt quite uncomfortable, speaking in the bus with my daughter and stuff like that.*
>
> *(Claire, France)*

Claire speaks French with her daughter, but her fears of being put in an uncomfortable situation has made her switch to speaking English when she is public

spaces. This effect of the media on EU citizens has been widely researched and it links a sense of vulnerability with a rise in the number of hate crimes (, participants felt more vulnerable. Marie links the surge in the hate crime rate in some areas to xenophobic feelings exacerbated by the referendum

> *You know some of my peers that do have an accent or look obviously non-British, or what some people think, they were targeted and they were you know, and they were told to leave and get back and you know but it wasn't even people... of European origin you know, it was for all kinds of background that weren't typically white that ... you know that hate crime... you saw probably in the news report that there was a massive spike in the racial hate crime…*
>
> *(Marie, France)*

Marie's account of people 'sending' migrants away is another example of how ubiquitous border controls have become, enabling the general population to take part in the policing of borders anywhere and everywhere. This perception of one's presence being constantly observed and assessed resulted in a stronger feeling of alienation for participants. Consequently, some after 30 years of living in Britain and some as soon as they could, they all sought to overcome the precariousness and stigma of a migration status by seeking protection and security through naturalisation.

5.4 Defensive naturalisation

I have so far explored the impact that Brexit had on participants conceptions of home in Britain. I have also pointed at the bordering (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018) strategies that participants developed to regain a sense of security and as homemaking strategy, which redefined borders and territories of attachment. Here in this section, I want to focus on naturalisation as a homemaking strategy originating in the anxieties resulting from the political context. This has been termed "defensive naturalisation" and refers to immigrants seeking "citizenship to protect themselves from criminalisation and anti-immigrant policies" (Aptekar, 2016, p. 1148).

In this section, I start by unpacking the sense of protection that participants were after. In the second part of the section, I present the shift from a resistance to the migrantization process to an embracing of it, in what I interpret is an act of citizenship. Moreover, here I dig deeper into the ongoing negotiation that was taking place in the definitions of home and belonging through citizenship.

5.4.1 Protection from and not of the state

Participants in this research, whose identity and representations of home were disrupted by Brexit, sought naturalisation to get protection from Britain, the British state and its citizens (El-Enany, 2020; Fortier, 2021) given the sense of vulnerability this disruption provoked, which was linked to the status of migrant (Blachnicka-Ciacek *et al.*, 2021).

Marie (34) was born in France but has lived in the UK since she was 4. She says that the state's power to disrupt her life is what makes her want to acquire British citizenship. Marie speaks of the risks associated with being a migrant

> *For me it's more about just ... you know, my preference is to stay here, my preference is to keep my life here and what I can control is reduce the risk of ... getting shipped out, so that's why I am applying, it's damage control!*
>
> *(Marie, France)*

Being '*shipped out'* is one of her biggest fears and refers to the state's power to deport her. In her opinion the state could disrupt her life in a wealth of different ways, from imposing a minimum salary in order to justify her presence to outright deportation

> *there are so many discussions about a minimum salary that you'd have to be otherwise... and that's, they introduced that with the non-EU immigrants two years ago, that you had to be above 35k... which I am cleared now, but in the future I want to actually stop that right, so I don't want to work in London, I want to have more options you know, locally should we say. And I don't want the fear over my shoulder that maybe we don't earn enough and that basically you can get kicked out.*
>
> *(Marie, France)*

Marie feels that her personal freedoms to choose where to live and work, as well as what to do for work are in danger, and that only with citizenship can she control the *damage* the British state could cause her.

Pauline also who fears being sent back to her country of birth. Going back to France *'would be like moving to a foreign country'* for her, that is why she is pursuing British citizenship

> *I do it for my own security in the future because I sense that things will get much worse before they get better. I think we will go… they will make it much more difficult, for EU citizens*
>
> *(Pauline, France)*

Although Pauline doesn't think the government would just say *'well, Pauline you need to go home now'* but she tells me that 't*hey can make it really difficult for me to be here'*. Pauline and Marie have a general understanding of the everyday workings of the state and of its anti-immigrant policies, which could affect their ability to remain settled in the UK. According to Wacquant (Wacquant, 2009) the state is becoming more punitive with the most vulnerable (migrants and refugees in particular), something clearly expressed in the most recent Nationality and Borders Act 2022 (Qureshi and Mort, 2021) and that participants to this research perceived to be true.

For Aino, the government could do anything to her from the day after the referendum and confesses to have entered a state of panic and regret, wishing she had not left it for so long

> *I had this wave of panic; you know it's just that thing of 'what's going to happen' and you just think… I am such a pessimist as well that I think the worst, and I thought wow they are going to kick me out, so I am going to get this done*
>
> *(Aino, Finland)*

Aino's fear of being 'kicked out', like Marie's and Pauline's, was the main catalyst for her naturalisation application. The fear of deportation shows that participants interpret

being a migrant as having a precarious status, devoid of rights and guarantees. Moreover, some of the ways in which participants spoke of the strong desire to stay contradicted some accounts of feeling uprooted and therefore no longer wanting to live in a country that does not accept them. These contradictions are evidence of the ongoing process of redefining home captured in these interviews.

Sabrina rejected the idea of citizenship, citizens, or nations, she said she did not identify with any country, that she did not have a nationality

> *I avoid saying 'I am from' because I am from nowhere. If I said 'I am from' I would be lying to myself and to them*
>
> *(Sabrina, Spain)*

Despite her being detached from any particular citizenship, Sabrina tells me that she wants to become British because she does not '*want to have any uncertainty about what might happen'*. Her dismissal of citizenship does not strip citizenship from its emotional value. Sabrina tells me she wants British citizenship for her emotional wellbeing

> *Emotionally it will make me feel safer, because I know I will the same rights as the other citizens, but identity wise it will not change anything*
>
> *(Sabrina, Spain)*

These participants speak of desiring citizenship as a form of security. Fortier (2013) captured this phenomenon in her definition of naturalisation as the place where the state constructs itself as desirable, portraying citizenship as equivalent to stability, protection and certainty. Such is also the case of Marika, originally from Poland, who has lived in the UK for 6 years and wants British citizenship to be able to stay

> *Because I want to stay here, no come back to Poland, because life here for me and my family is better. And I like English and… yeah, definitively I stay here.*
>
> *(Marika, Poland)*

Another form of earning protection from the state is through the acquisition of political rights. Elías and Ina both speak of the importance of being able to be part of the decisions of their country of residence

> *I mean first of all, the voting thing makes a big difference to me, being in this country all this time... Uhm, and not being able to vote it's a particular thing (Elías, Spain)*

> *I would be able to vote in election, because it did feel wrong to live somewhere and have no influence on politics, well I could vote in local elections but not in the general one (Ina, Germany)*

However, earning political rights seemed to be considered a 'bonus' of citizenship and not necessarily the main reason for applying. Jens expresses this clearly

> *We've paid enough taxes to be honest, so it would be nice to be able to vote here, that's really the practicality, but that's not the main problem, the main problem is the uncertainty about our status after [Brexit]*
>
> *(Jens, Germany)*

Brexit and its destabilisation of people's sense of belonging resulted in the undermining of participants' "confidence in the stability of institutional structures, and influenced their relationship with and trust in British society" (Hall *et al.*, 2020, p. 3). It is with, and as a result of, this distrust that most participants embark in the naturalisation process. Where traditional definitions of citizenship speak of the protective role of the state against external threats, these participants were seeking protection from the British state itself.

Once the journey to citizenship is underway, participants start to feel a sense of security that allows them to contest negative stereotyping from a new position, and some start to appropriate the label they rejected earlier, in what I consider to be an act of citizenship.

5.4.2 ‘I am an immigrant’. An act of citizenship

Although participants mostly rejected the immigrant label, some of them, later in the interview, reclaimed it as a form of political activism. The main idea behind this act was to challenge (negative) stereotypes against immigrants. Participants who were unlikely to have been identified as migrants before Brexit, because of the way they looked or their lack of a foreign accent, would make statements like “*I am an immigrant*” amongst their friends and family, to challenge their preconceptions about immigration. This exact sentiment is captured by a campaign organised by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), launched in 2013 with the slogan ‘I am an immigrant’ which aims to challenge the negative rhetoric against immigrants and common stereotypes associated with the status.

Marie, for example, expressed her condition of ‘migrant’ with friends and family, as a form to combat their negative stereotypes. Marie ‘*speaks and looks like a Brit*’ and therefore, she uses her identification as a migrant to stand up against the anti-immigrant rhetoric

> *(…) the first time I ever labelled myself an immigrant is when I made a... just before the Brexit vote and so many of my friends or acquaintances were going the wrong side, or not the wrong side but voting on the opposite viewpoint, etc. and I just made statements like, ‘I'm an EU migrant in the group, just saying' because I just wanted to say that all this stuff that they were really talking really badly about it's about me as well. And I just wanted people to realise that all these negative views...they were like 'oh, yeah, that's not you, you're alright' and I was like "NO, you know... it's not, why am I different?' You know that was my way of challenging people's thoughts basically.*
>
> *(Marie, France)*

Ina, who also professes to ‘*speak and look like a Brit’*, stresses that, for her, saying ‘I am an immigrant’ is a political statement and a way of educating people around her about the positive sides of immigration

> *I wanted them to understand that maybe they didn't really understand the issues, you know, actually if you think about it, I am a migrant as well, so are you saying I should leave? Are you saying that me being here is bad for the economy, is bad for the country? But unfortunately, it didn't make people feel like actually that means the EU is a good thing they just compartmentalised it in 'no no, you are one of the good guys'*
>
> *(Ina, Germany)*

I interpret these claims as acts of citizenship, as they "invent new ways of becoming political subjects as citizens" (van den Boogaard, 2017, p. 47). Participants here are reinterpreting the political context and using new strategies of identification as ways to "redefine, decentre, or even refuse citizenship" (Fortier, 2016, p. 1039).

Both Ina and Marie make claims of belonging (speaking and looking like British citizens) and non-belonging simultaneously and work to contest simplistic, linear notions of membership and belonging. Furthermore, they rely on their membership in the community (given their ethnicity and language skills) to make these claims, showing that they have the "symbolic resources" necessary to make political claims in general (Statham and Gray, 2005, p. 881). They consider themselves members of the European community of value and believe in the efficacy of their claims to rely on that. They present themselves as emblems of good citizenship, something that is confirmed by the responses their actions receive. When Marie is told '*no, not you, you're alright'* or Ina is told '*you are one of the good guys',* they are being recognised as members of the community of value by some people. This is why they are able to act as citizens and make claims in this way, using themselves as symbols of the positive aspects of immigration. Interestingly, they use the notion of whiteness and language skills to define Britishness and contest it at the same time.

Both Marie and Ina have spoken before about the advantages of being able to '*pass'* as British. One of those advantages was to be able to engage in conversations about

immigration with native British citizens in a way an immigrant would not be able to. Marie and Ina do not pass as British by mimicking or copying British citizens (Goffman, 1990; Daniel, 2002) as the traditional literature on 'passing as' would suggest (Bhabha, 1994). They are speaking of the racial and linguistic attributes that they have and that other British citizens recognise in them as symbols of Britishness. Ina tells me that British citizens see her as one of them, and therefore, are candid with her about their negative views of immigration

> *They specifically tell me they don't mean me. I think I look and sound British so most people don't realise I'm [not] British, which means that particularly since the referendum I have been discussing with people 'why on earth did you vote Leave?' and they feel they can*
>
> *(Ina, Germany)*

For them this act of citizenship is possible because they regard their position to be safe and to protect them from being '*targeted*' as immigrants (in the words of Marie). The act of labelling oneself as immigrant is a form of performing their citizenship, because they are members of the community of value, since they pass as British.

Reclaiming the label immigrant for themselves was a form of resistance to the disempowering experience of being migrantized and losing a sense of belonging, as they were challenging "essential boundaries of ethnic identity and encourage us to think of ethnic identities as the product of cognitive social construction" (Sasson-Levy and Shoshana, 2013, p. 451). However, in this act of resistance there is also an element of perpetuating ethnic divides because both Ina and Marie could act as citizens, because they were members of the community of value, thanks to their racial and linguistic attributes.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how participants narratives of home were changing and being redefined after Brexit, highlighting the relevance of national and transnational

communities of value. This had a significant impact on their decision to naturalise and the ways in which they would enact their newly acquired British citizenship.

I have shown that perceptions of European citizenship were generally different for "Western" and "Eastern Europeans". This was visible in that in most cases "Western Europeans" had identified with a strong European identity and associated it with the EU and its ideals, while "Eastern Europeans" presented a more ample variety of definitions of Europe and no strong sense of European identification.

I have explained this division as resulting from the compound effect of historical and geographical factors, like being born in the EU or the Soviet Union, having been taught European ideals in early education or in childhood, or having experienced discrimination and exclusion before in Britain. Although the Brexit referendum disrupted this dividing line, the differences between participants' perceptions could still be traced back to the Eastern and Western divide.

I have explained this divide by arguing that "Western European" participants were members of the European community of value and tended to experience the referendum campaign and results in more personally destabilising ways than "Eastern European" participants, who were not. I have used the term 'migrantising' here to explain the expulsion of "Western Europeans" from the community of value, turning them into immigrants. That is, participants who had been considered and considered themselves members of the community of value, were turned into outsiders by Brexit. "Eastern European" participants were not migrantized by Brexit, since they never belonged to the European community of value and were more used to the idea of being immigrants in the UK. However, both groups had in common that these were not static definitions, but ones that changed and shifted throughout the interview. In this fictional division of East/West, which is analytically useful but necessarily simplistic (as they also leave out Southern

Europeans and many other intersecting categories), I have tried to present clear outliers to signal the limitations of the divide I used to identify certain patterns in my sample.

Thus, despite the differences, both "Eastern" and "Western Europeans" reacted to the referendum in two similar ways: first, they engaged in 'bordering' practices, redefining the borders and territories of the EU and the UK following cultural, historical, and ideological discourses as well as personal experiences. Bordering practices here take on a more expansive meaning from the usual exclusionary creation of boundaries (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018) because they are used to re-draw the borders in order to be *included* within the community of value. That is, their use here expands the political belonging towards a larger variety of dimensions (personal, political, translocal, etc.).

I have interpreted participants' decision to naturalise as defensive naturalisation (Aptekar, 2016) because most of them decided to naturalise to achieve a sense of security as a solution to the precariousness of the migrant status.

Once naturalisation is underway, some "Western European" participants present a paradox in their acts of citizenship: while they resist the label of migrant, they also wield that label as a form of political activism. At the core of this paradox is a fight against the negative stereotyping of a condition that has now been partially appropriated: that of being an immigrant.

A further and more complex paradox also begins to show in this chapter: on the one hand, most "Eastern" and "Western" European participants claim to be transnational citizens, not bound by a single national citizenship. On the other hand, the redefinition of the national borders that resulted in Britain being removed from the European Union, destabilised their sense of belonging or exacerbated their sense of vulnerability, launching them onto the pursuit of safety in national citizenship, ultimately recognising that belonging and national membership are related.

Citizenship is about recovering a lost sense of belonging and being at home for some participants. This chapter elaborated on experiences of being European in Britain and the effects of Brexit, to highlight the role that the pursuit of citizenship played in regaining a sense of security and of being at home. After Brexit, many participants put all their hopes of a return to the lost home they had made in Britain, in acquiring British citizenship.

In the next chapter I delve deeper into their experiences of the naturalisation process they have decided to embark on.

6 CIVIC INTEGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND THE ILLUSION OF FULL MEMBERSHIP

Participants of this research placed expectations of security on their acquisition of British citizenship. However, the idea of true and equal full membership was often questioned as they immersed themselves in the process.

In this chapter, I focus on the two most prominent civic integration requirements of the naturalisation process: the Life in the UK test and the citizenship ceremonies. By looking in detail into participants' experiences of these requirements, I want to unpack everyday definitions of citizenship according to participants' understandings. Civic integration requirements are useful for this purpose, because they reveal the *Janus* face of citizenship (Fortier, 2016), highlighting its inclusionary and exclusionary sides as well as the interwoven complexities of legal membership in a political community and membership in a community of value (Anderson, 2013). This distinction is important because it exposes a mismatch between participants' expectations of membership, equality and protection, and what the naturalisation process delivers.

Legal membership in a political community, refers to a legal status and set of rights and protections achieved through formal affiliation with a legal community (Brubaker, 1989, 1992). Membership in the community of value, refers to a sense of belonging in an exclusive community of 'good citizens' (Anderson, 2013), something like access to a VIP

club for citizens. This distinction is relevant to understanding naturalisation experiences as happening in spaces where boundaries are being redrawn and privileges and inequalities are being reproduced (Fortier, 2021, p. 47).

The first two sections of this chapter pick up the concept of defensive naturalisation introduced in the previous chapter by delving deeper into participants' expectations about citizenship. Thus, I start by looking at participants' expectations of safety and security that speak of participants' definitions of citizenship in terms of legal status. Participants' accounts sometimes blur the lines between formal and substantive citizenship, and other times highlight "the separation of formal citizenship acquisition from other meanings of citizenship" (Aptekar, 2016, p. 1158). Next, I present their experiences of the naturalisation process. The chapter finishes with participants' views of their newly acquired citizenship.

The chapter concludes that civic integration requirements reconfigured the new citizens' perception of membership in the state. The content of cultural requirements had an impact on participants' understanding of citizenship and highlighted their location in the hierarchies within British citizenship. In short, I conclude that their disillusionment with the type of membership they were being given access to through naturalisation did not match their expectations of full membership and equality.

6.1 Expectations of new citizenship

In this section I present participants' expectations of citizenship embedded in their decision to naturalise. Of particular interest is the way participants' ideas interact with the naturalisation process and its requirements, as these narratives unpack their conceptions of rights, the state, culture, and national identity as well as privilege.

First, I look at how participants recognised the right of the state to make certain demands of them before they became citizens. In the second part, participants spoke of their aspirations to membership and/or belonging to the nation through the acquisition of British citizenship, providing a deeper reflection on what led them to want to naturalise. Finally, I present participants perceptions of their own privilege and how it shapes both their aspirations and definitions of citizenship.

6.1.1 "How can you develop a culture if it becomes diluted with others" Civic integration requirements as protective measure

Participants at times described citizenship as something that needed to be earned in a transaction with the state. This was often presented as a trade-off that requires the aspiring citizen to acquire some knowledge to earn citizenship, in what Fortier (2021) calls the "'new common sense' around citizenship" that reveals the acceptance of "the expectation that migrants should learn and speak a national language and learn and know about national values" as an "incontestable requirement that 'makes sense'" (p. 23).

Such is the case of Jens, who at the time of our interview was studying to take the Life in the UK test. Jens had lived in the UK for 6 years and he thought that requiring some 'knowledge of the country' represents some sort of negotiation with the state, where it is fair that the aspiring citizen should have to offer something in return for citizenship

> *I think the reason is that you basically want somebody to become a citizen of your country to have at least a basic knowledge of how things work and I think there are things around (...) how the legal system works, how police and everything else works and the culture, the traditions, a little bit of history, I think it's actually only fair, that people can't just show up and say 'oh I'd like a passport, how much do I have to pay?' And have no knowledge of the country.*

For Jens, it makes sense that the state would require not only economic and political integration of aspiring citizens but also an "individual commitment to characteristics typifying national citizenship, specifically country knowledge" among other things

(Goodman, 2010, p. 754). Similarly, Elvira considers that knowledge of the country represents something greater than effort, it is about gratitude and respect. Elvira is a Spanish citizen who has lived in the UK for more than 25 years, and she has a very patriotic view of citizenship

> *To acquire some knowledge as a sign of respect for that country. A gratitude towards that country… acknowledging that you are grateful for being a resident of this country, that everything that you have achieved has been thanks to the country, to the crown of this country. It's a demonstration of gratitude for that.*

Elvira tells me how she came to the UK many years ago to do a Master's and how she owes who she is and who she has become to the UK, "*I found myself in this country"* she tells me. Hers is an emotional attachment to Britain, and her interpretation of civic integration requirements is meant to signal her loyalty and respect to this country.

Jens and Elvira both recognise the need to learn about the country, and mention that in their countries of origin, Germany and Spain respectively, this is also the case, emphasising Fortier's (2021) argument that such is simply a matter of 'common sense' in "Western Europe". In fact, most participants tend to acknowledge the right of the state to put civic integration requirements in place to "ensure the eligibility of immigrants seeking permanent residency or citizenship status" (ibid., p. 23).

Official discourses like the ones found in the Crick Report (Crick *et al.*, 2002), present civic integration requirements as necessary to promoting a 'patriotism of values' to develop a sense of belonging to the nation and a sense of becoming British (Home Office, 2002; Johnson, 2007; Murray, 2016) . There is thus some overlap between these official discourses and participants' narratives of naturalisation. Both coincide in the recognition of the state's right to establish civic and cultural requirements, the consensus is around the need to protect the nation's culture rather than as a form of developing a sense collective allegiance and solidary based on common values.

Dimitri, a Latvian citizen, sees civic integration requirements as an effort to keep culture and traditions intact, protecting them from the threat of other cultures

> *I suppose one concern the countries have is that they still want to preserve the culture, because how can you develop a culture if it becomes diluted with other cultures? … so that's I suppose a challenge*

Dimitri understands the efforts of the state to promote the knowledge of British culture through civic integration requirements, as a solution to the challenge of "too much diversity" (Mouritsen, Kriegbaum Jensen and Larin, 2019, p. 19), which has come to be accepted as a threat to the country's national identity and security (Fortier, 2021).

In the next section, I hone in on how this approach to civic integration requirements has influenced the meanings of citizenship for participants.

6.1.2 New citizens for Britain: membership or belonging?

Questions about their opinions and experiences of the civic integration requirements prompted a reflection on what the state is entitled to require of them. In this section I look at how participants' understanding of citizenship started to become more complex and to include notions of belonging, beside the more concrete aspects of rights, values, and knowledge presented in the previous section. With this, I am investigating to what extent participants' expectations were shaped by the criteria they were asked to fulfil or by their previous understanding of citizenship.

Nina speaks of the whole process as a bureaucratic one that would allow her to achieve equality and security. In her description of why she wanted to become a British citizen and how she thought about it in the past, Nina mentions rights. According to her, the naturalisation process has had no impact on her expectations or definition of what it means to be a citizen. She sees citizenship and belonging as unrelated. When asked whether she feels differently about Britain now that she is British citizen, she answers

Not really. I don't notice the difference at all. I get to vote in the next election.

She only mentions her newly acquired political rights. Nina has lived in the UK since she was sixteen (she is currently in her late fifties) and says she always had a sense of belonging

Britain is my country. Now that I am British, it makes no difference.

For Nina, it is the landmarks in her life and the fact that they happened in the UK, that make the UK her country. She establishes her sense of belonging as preceding her citizenship

> *This is my country, this is where I have lived, this is where I got married, got divorced, got a new partner, where my kids where born and went to school. And now university. This is where I belong… definitely. And the passport was never an issue*

Belonging and citizenship (here symbolised in the passport) are two separate things for Nina. This separation between belonging and formal citizenship is important to understanding her expectations when applying for citizenship. Like Nina, many participants had a strong sense of belonging in their immediate communities before they applied for citizenship (Barrios Aquino, 2022). This is crucial to assessing the impact of civic integration requirements and the idea of a community bound together by affection through the cultural interpretation of, and individual commitment to, values and ideals.

However, there were also other instances in which belonging, and citizenship were seen to go together. This is the case of Elías' definition of a citizen

> *somebody (…) who has a sense of belonging with the rest of people who share that citizenship and... is familiar with the laws, rules, customs of that country.*

Elías defines the citizen in similar terms to the Crick Report: a mix of rights, values, customs, etc. Gitlin (2007) in the Crick Report, defined such terms as "interlocking beliefs that bind all members of a society" (p. 18) or civic patriotism. However, Elías does not count himself among the citizens he describes. While belonging was central to his

understanding of citizenship, once he achieved citizenship; this did not affect his own sense of belonging. When speaking about himself (not the abstract citizen he described before), citizenship is about rights, not about belonging. Naturalising means achieving rights, so when I asked him about his feelings of belonging and identification with the British nation after receiving British citizenship, he said

> *for me nationality ... naturalisation is not necessarily like I feel British as I feel my own place, because that is going to be a lie. I don't think anybody would...*

It is interesting to see this contrast between his definition of the citizen and his definition of his own citizenship. Citizenship was something he could acquire, while he could not speak of having become a citizen. For Elías, a citizen is something linked to *'his own place'* and this connection cannot be achieved through naturalisation.

However, he struggles with this contradiction in his own definition of citizen. In his confusion he tells me that it is a hard question, because he knows that he is wrong in thinking Britain is not his place, but he *feels* that way

> *Yeah, it's just I'm trying not to ... you know, yeah... it is more... maybe it shouldn't... but yeah... probably the right thing to do when I get it is to say I am British and I am as British as everybody else, because under the law you are. But it's not...it's not how I feel. I probably feel British enough… I certainly feel more British than a lot of people who are British, but yeah, it's difficult*

Elías continues to speak about how he feels and his lack of sense of belonging in Britain, drawing a distinction between him and other British citizens and pointing towards a hierarchy of belonging, where he feels more belonging than others. I come back to the concept of hierarchies of belonging at the end of the chapter. For now, I want to spend more time discussing the dilemma Elías presented, which equates belonging with citizenship, because the two are bound together in the naturalisation regulation but are not comfortable partners in participants' experiences. This dilemma reveals how the British naturalisation process leads to an oversimplification of the experiences of migrants in their host communities, seeing integration, belonging and membership as

stages in a linear journey; a linearity that participants' narratives presented here contests and interrupts (Fortier, 2021)

From Nina's and Elías' accounts, we can see that citizenship is often emotionally defined, even when participants refer to its legal aspect, complicating notions of formal membership with affective elements. Nevertheless, both separate their sense of belonging from conceptions of British citizenship, opening a discussion about the elements that inform their definitions of citizenship. Another element, central to such definitions was privilege.

6.1.3 Privilege and the 'birthright lottery'

In some accounts of participants' experiences of naturalisation and their definitions of citizenship, privilege was a recurrent topic, that reveals an increasing awareness of their own privilege vis-à-vis other non-nationals during the naturalisation process. One element of privilege refers to the financial aspect. For Inês, a Portuguese and British dual citizen, her privileged position is the result of luck

> *But you know, at the end of the day, I'm European so I'm paying the lowest fee, you know? If you are from outside of Europe, you are paying much more than £1200 and it's not just 5 years in the UK, for some people is like 10 years of residence. So, I can't complain, so this is my attitude, I can't complain, because if I wasn't lucky enough to have been born in Europe, because it is a matter of luck where you are born isn't it? If I wasn't lucky then I would have to spend much more money*

Inês refers to her European citizenship as a *'matter of luck'* which reminds us of Shachar's account of "the moral arbitrariness of this state of affairs" (Bosniak and Shachar, 2011, p. 621) which contrasts with the ideas of earning citizenship accepted by most participants when referring to naturalisation. Similarly, Aino speaks of luck when she talks about how her savings allowed her to make a quick decision

> *And I am in a very… I know that many people aren't, but I am in a very lucky position in that I had enough savings to be able to pay for it.*

Elías puts it more bluntly when he speaks of the cost of citizenship as the first hurdle that non-nationals must jump, and of his own privilege of not experiencing it a hurdle

> *because I can afford it. Because there is a privilege there. Not everybody can afford all that money. It's not... I mean a thousand something pounds and maybe a lawyer if you are not able to sort it yourself; it is a lot of money.*

Most participants in this research, excepting a handful, considered themselves financially comfortable and didn't consider the cost to be influential in their decision or ability to naturalise as soon as they made the decision.

Another element of privilege was language proficiency. For example, Aino tells me of her privilege when taking the Life in the UK test; which allowed her to consider it a game

> *And it's just a memory game and for me again it was really easy because my grasp of the English language is good. But I can imagine … the test being there as a hurdle for a lot of people if you haven't got the language skills*

Ina also considered her language skills as something that afforded her a privileged position, but for her, the notion of privilege was much more ubiquitous than linguistic and financial resources. She speaks of the privilege of having an *'ordered life'*

> *I have had a very ordered life, in that I … I started my job 15 years ago and I am still in the same job. So that makes it really easy and that made so many things so much easier, but some people have got much more complicated lives, they've been moving around. But even with my understanding of the English language being perfect and you know, I work in the legal profession, so I deal with legal forms a lot. And I had a fairly straight forward life and lots of documentation …*

Along these lines, Aino speaks of having kept a single job for most of the twenty years she has lived in Britain

> *for me it was easy in a way because you know I had the same job*

The reference to job stability is related to the requirement of providing a detailed employment history for the application, something fairly straightforward when there is only one or two jobs to list. The same task can become quite strenuous with a larger

quantity of jobs, which tends to be the case when employment is temporary and/or precarious. Aino's and Ina's accounts represent instances in which the naturalisation process rewards a particular type of life: financial and employment stability, speaking English fluently, etc. The state rewards stasis, as migrants need to provide proof of every single address they lived in, every job they did and every time they left the country.

At the end of the process, the ceremonies were also a place where privilege was highlighted, because participants encountered other new citizens and spoke of what they thought their journey to that day might have been like. For Aino, the ceremony was the catalyst of her self-perception as privileged

> *But there were people there… there was a Brazilian woman where it kind of hit was how much, how privileged I was to be able to do this so easily and sort of how streamlined... how streamlined for me the process was, despite it being an emotional… stressful, very upsetting … But anyway, there was this Brazilian woman at the ceremony, and it obviously meant so much to her to have this, and she was just flood to tears the whole time, she was all dressed up with a hat… and then I thought you know I felt like such a piece of shit for thinking … it's the privilege, thinking that you are so much more privileged than somebody else, which I've never experienced before… you know as a sort of… you just feel like 'god I'm so… I don't know, privileged'*

Aino sees this Brazilian woman, wearing a hat and being very elegantly dressed, '*flood to tears*' and obviously experiencing the ceremony as an important life event, and she is confronted with her own reality and the privilege of dismissing the entire event, of feeling cynical about it, because it wasn't that difficult, or perhaps even that necessary (Harpaz, 2019; Spiro, 2019) to get there. Agnieszka reflects on this, when I asked about her ceremony, because for her it was not a major event either

> *Different people have different stories to tell. And different backgrounds and different ways they got there, right? Like it might be that I don't know someone was a refugee or something, so obviously it would be completely different for them*

These narratives of privilege contest the linearity suggested by the term 'journey' and refer to different ways to get there, where some may 'need' British citizenship much more than others, and therefore, experience the entire process differently. Civic

integration requirements were experienced from different locations and led to changing definitions of membership in the state.

6.2 Membership in the State. Only a matter of rights?

Participants' expectations of citizenship reveal how they use concepts of security and certainty to define citizenship and justify their desire to acquire it. This first engages with the way British citizenship was imagined in relation to safety and rights. Next, I offer a reflection on the symbolism of the passport for migrants who are seeking citizenship to maintain mobility rights. The objective of this section is to focus on what participants referred to as the practical advantages of acquiring British citizenship, which will reveal their understandings of membership in the state.

6.2.1 Security, equality, and rights

For many participants, the acquisition of political rights was central to the decision of taking up British citizenship, especially against the backdrop of Brexit. However, for Aleksander, a Polish citizen, acquiring British citizenship was more than that, it was a matter of human rights. He tells me that as a homosexual his Polish citizenship affords him no rights to have a family, as his marriage is not legally recognised in Poland. Aleksander's and Mikolaj's (his husband) entire project of migration was based on the idea of acquiring rights that were denied to them in their country of origin. Their journey to citizenship started in Poland when they decided to move to a place that would eventually allow them to naturalise and grant them human rights.

Initially they planned to move to Spain because of its recognition of LGBTQ+ rights, but professional opportunities presented themselves in the UK. For Aleksander, British citizenship is going to make it easier '*to get all the rights, human rights'*. His and Mikolaj's quest to be recognised as a couple is linked to their desire to raise a family

> *That [having British citizenship] would mean that I can have … let's say, I can have a wider family, like kids for example… because the Polish consulate refuses to issue passports for same sex parents. Even if the child would be adopted according to British law, they would not be eligible to get the Polish passport, because according to Polish law it has to have two Polish parents, unless it would have a mother and no father. In our case we would have children with a British passport and … single nationality, and we would only have Polish nationality.*

Aleksander experiences his process of preparing to acquire British citizenship as having started even before he left Poland, some 10 years ago. His and his husband's is yet another example of the complex temporalities of citizenship (Fortier, 2021). For both, Aleksander and Mikolaj, the legal aspect of citizenship is essential to understanding their decision first to migrate and then to naturalise.

Similarly, the legal aspect is key to understanding Nina's decision to naturalise. For her, citizenship is about rights and equality: *'if you want to be really equal you have to have citizenship'*. However, while Aleksander and Mikolaj started the naturalisation process as soon as they became eligible and were well-informed about the legal requirements even before migrating; Nina waited more than 30 years to seek that equality. Her reason is that she never felt unequal before, whereas Mikolaj and Aleksander are on a longer journey to equality due to their sexuality.

The importance of rights is evident in these accounts, but expectations of equality are tangled up with other elements that at times precede migration and that transcend the legal aspect of citizenship.

A handful of participants use the term '*being targeted'* to refer to the danger they need protection from. Such is the case of Inês

> *You know, there is all this hostility going on against immigrants (…) and now I just feel like … now you can't target me with regards to that because (…) now I've got a paper to prove that I've done my bit. You know my passport… so I hope I'm now less likely to be targeted*

She then goes on to tell me about an occasion on which a couple of teenage girls followed her, asking if they could hit her because she was 'foreign'. For Inês, this was one of the scariest experiences in her life and she says that citizenship has given her peace because if somebody tells her again to go back to her country, she can now reply "*Excuse me, I am British!"* In a way, similar to Mikolaj and Aleksander, Inês is seeking protection based on previous experiences of discrimination.

Besides expectations of equality, participants were looking to retain or enhance their mobility rights, while considering the value of a British passport.

6.2.2 A passport that travels well?

Amongst other rights that new citizens were expecting to acquire is the right to travel more easily around the world. This reference to mobility does not only refer to traveling for leisure, but it also refers to opening opportunities for further migrations and possible returns. In sum, the naturalisation experience sparked a series of calculations about the value of a British passport and its position in a global hierarchy of citizenships (Shachar, 2009; Bauböck, 2019a; Harpaz and Mateos, 2019). Here I present some participants' reflections about how British citizens are regarded internationally, pay less or no fees at all for visas, and have the protection of more powerful embassies abroad. Nevertheless, for some, it is not all positive about stepping out into the world with a British passport. Three patterns of ideas about the acquisition of a British passport emerge from the interviews: first, the higher value of the British passport in countries outside the EU; second, the loss of value of the British passport within the EU after Brexit, and third, British passport as a liability consequence of British foreign policy.

An example of the perceived higher value of a British passport is Elías; a Spanish and Portuguese dual citizen who has travelled extensively and sees an advantage in acquiring British citizenship, especially in situations where you may be put at risk

> *I mean if you have problems overseas, one day, there is another embassy that is supposed to help you. You know, depending on the country you are, the English embassy can help you much more than the Spanish and Portuguese.*

The second set of perceptions refers to the loss of value of a British passport in the current political situation. After Brexit, the British passport is perceived as having lost value because it only provides rights and guarantees in the UK, while other European passports continue to provide rights and guarantees in 27 other member states. For example, Elvira has decided not to naturalise due to this loss of value of the British passport and sees no point in acquiring a passport that is worth less than her Spanish one

> *I see no benefit. And I think the English passport has lost quite a bit of value lately. At some point I considered it [becoming British] because I thought it might be positive, but after Brexit it just has lost too much value*

As we saw before, Elvira found naturalisation to be excessively costly. In addition to that, the current political situation devalued British citizenship to the point of making it a bad investment. Similarly, for Dimitri and Noelia, Brexit has changed things and even though they are eligible for citizenship, they feel that British citizenship would not be a major advantage, especially if they have to choose

> *If I stay in the UK after Brexit, then actually my Latvian citizenship becomes for me more valuable than British citizenship (Dimitri)*

> *If I had to lose the Spanish one [citizenship] maybe I wouldn't do it, because nowadays I think the Spanish one is better, because at least you are European, but if you only have the British one, you are no longer European (Noelia)*

Finally, there are several participants who are sceptical of the actual advantages of travelling on a British passport. Jens is one of them, for him, the UK, like the US, has engaged in too many questionable foreign policy decisions, which turn a British passport into a potential liability

> *Around the world you travel quite… I think it's a bit easier to travel on a German passport than with the British passport. So… US and British passports in some countries, they're the enemy*

Inês speaks of the same liability attached to the British passport. For her, the UK relations with the rest of the world have made British citizens more vulnerable to terrorist attacks

> *The thing that scares me the most about using a British passport or saying 'I'm British' is terrorism (…). I don't know, I read somewhere in an article a long time ago something saying that if you are in a hostage situation, you are more likely to be lucky if you are not British (…). Like British and Americans are the people that they want to target (…) So being Portuguese is safer than being British*

Inês tells me how this is not only related to foreign policy decisions by the UK, but also to a global hierarchy of citizenships, where Britain is well placed. This turns British citizens into potentially desired targets for terrorist groups who want to make a statement. In her opinion, terrorists know that their statement will receive much more attention, if there are American or British casualties, *"and all the other lives is like they don't matter"*.

In the previous examples, the quoted participants have deployed a vision of British citizenship in relation to other citizenships. They have shown that even the legal aspects of citizenship are affectively defined and experienced through notions of fear, anxiety or trust in the institutions. Furthermore, notions of protection and security are complicated with ideas of hierarchy of nationalities and risks.

To conclude, the complexity of participants' expectations and definitions of citizenship, reveals that formal elements are also affectively defined and experienced, to reveal how the naturalisation process taps onto the affective elements of citizenship, sending participants into a series of emotional calculations to assess the value, advantages, and disadvantages of acquiring British citizenship.

In the following section I hone in on the two main civic integration requirements, namely the Life in the UK test and the citizenship ceremonies, to assess their role in shaping participants' everyday representations of citizenship.

6.3 Civic integration and the erosion of belonging

For almost 20 years now, naturalisation policies have incorporated civic integration elements and a historical perspective that insists on the existence and specificity of the British national community (Byrne, 2014). The most prominent of these are the inclusion of the citizenship ceremonies in 2004 and the Life in the UK test in 2005. In this section I focus on how these two elements of the naturalisation process shaped participants' reflections on citizenship.

I start by discussing participants' perspectives on the Life in the UK test. These accounts reveal a tension between the acceptance of the measures expressed before and the legitimacy of the cultural requirements introduced by such measures. I then focus on the experiences of the citizenship ceremony, an event that seems to be profoundly transformative for these participants.

6.3.1 Life in the UK test

The goal of the Life in the UK test is to demonstrate that migrants have acquired knowledge about everyday life, history, and the law in the UK. The emphasis on knowledge stems from a belief that it will help immigrants to "integrate effectively" (Home Office, 2008, p. 48, 2013b); to "strengthen community belonging" (Home Office, 2002, p. 11) and to "ensure that only those who pass a high bar can become fully British" (Murray, 2016, p. 23).

When speaking about the content of the test participants tend to dismiss its importance. For example, Nina expresses a feeling that is common to the great majority of the participants of this research: the content of the test is no reflection of life in the UK.

> *I'd love to know who designed the questionnaire… loved to know that. Because if you took that test and I'm sure 80% of Brits wouldn't pass it. Probably more.*

Aino joins Nina in questioning the relevance of the test content, however she states that the content applies to Brighton but is unlikely to be true elsewhere

> *Well, in Brighton… Brighton is its own bubble, it's very accepting and so all the phrases in the book about you know… freedom of speech and being accepting and integrating people and all this sort of stuff it kind of… well, it is like that in Brighton but I know that if you go up… you know my partner's parents… you know his father voted for Brexit and he is in Yorkshire, you go there and there are various areas where it is a complete different world to the south of England*

Aino is contesting the way the Life in the UK handbook flattens out the differences between regions within England, denouncing how the content of the book does not reflect the reality of all British citizens. In fact, many participants decide to test this notion with their British friends, families, and colleagues, and are happy to report that their assumptions were correct, most of them wouldn't pass. For example, when Balázs was studying for his test, he took his book to work

> *Because [at] the company where I work (…) everybody is British, and they knew that I was preparing for this exam, and I brought down the test and I asked a few questions and there were quite a few ones that they found were like… 'Nobody knows that!'. And I'm not blaming them because you I can't … you know 'how tall is the Big Ben?' Why would you need to know that? I mean it is quite tall, but I don't necessarily need to know how [tall]!*

Balázs mentions that it was quite amusing to share the test question with his work colleagues because it gave him some perspective about the actual relevance of the test. For him, it became one more step in the bureaucratic process rather than an actual milestone in his naturalisation process. For Hannah it was similar, she also used the handbook to entertain herself and her British friends

> *I had two feelings about it. Feeling one was 'this is silly' because you have to memorise a bunch of things (…) but I also understood and I played by the rules and I did… get the book, did the studying… went to the exam centre and I didn't complain, because you know… there should be some level of… there should be some entry criteria, you know… but the questions were so silly that I had an evening out with my partner and our British friends, so we went to the pub and I brought my book and said 'would you know the answer to these questions?' And they didn't*

Participants are not conforming or exceeding policy guidelines (Fortier, 2021), but simply 'playing by the rules' while not taking them seriously. In confirming that the questions were not common knowledge for their native British friends, the test lost relevance and became something 'silly' they *had* to do, turning the test into something equated with a trivia game, filled with *"Mickey Mouse questions"* (Nina).

Some participants interpreted this leisurely interpretation of the test as yet another sign of privilege, which pointed at how the test constituted a form of exclusion for certain immigrants, something often mentioned in research on British citizenship policies (Sawyer and Wray, 2012; Morrice, 2016a). For example, Elías sees the test as a barrier for some and refers to his privilege, stemming from his education level, to tell me that his experience is not indicative of what happens at a test centre

> *I mean it is easier for me because I have a degree of privilege from my studies and my things…But also … I mean there is a number of people who really struggle with it, there is people that (were) failing really badly, and you can see, you could see, it's because they maybe didn't have the chance to be put through that.*

Elías describes how he could '*see their struggle'*, which was manifested in spending a long time to finish the test, hearing that they failed, seeing the worry and disappointment in the expressions of their faces.

Mario expressed another form of privilege that for him was highlighted by the test, namely his cultural and geographic proximity. As a Spanish citizen, he believes that his European origin made it easier for him to learn about British history. He was initially scared about the test, but when he saw the book and started studying, he felt more

confident. Mario compares himself to other migrants from other places and tells me about his privilege, because the history of Spain is closely tied to the history of the United Kingdom. This reveals that barriers can also be perceived as geographic and cultural

> *Who was Henry VIII, of course if they ask you (…) I know that for sure, but a foreigner from Asia obviously doesn't know that, so I understand that they have to have a test.*

The attitudes towards the test presented here reveal two important findings: first, that the test is perceived as a silly device that has little to do with the general knowledge of the majority population in Britain and second, that the test served to highlight the privilege of participants to this research, which was linked to their European citizenship, their level of education, their linguistic skills, etc. Here, Mario is drawing on his perception of belonging to a European community of value, which puts him closer to the British community of value than immigrants from other countries.

These interpretations of the test as a hurdle for particular collectives is in line with some of the goals of civic integration requirements, which is to signal that citizenship is not "given away", and that the requirements and policies are "tough enough" (Byrne, 2014:74). However, they also counter the objective of providing a more enhanced feeling of belonging or contribute to a more effective integration, as the test was very seldom taken seriously, especially by participants who are aware of their privileges.

6.3.2 Citizenship ceremonies: a rite of passage?

The current citizenship ceremonies, implemented in 2004, narrate the nation and the citizen in a ritual that seems to suggest it is an ancient tradition. National symbols, such as flags, a picture of the Queen, traditional costumes of some dignitaries representing the Queen, etc. contribute to it resembling a historical tradition. One of the goals of the ceremony is to "add significance to acquiring citizenship" (Home Office, 2002, p. 34)

and to "celebrate and encourage" new citizens' commitment to the UK (Murray, 2016, p. 34).

Kaiden, originally from Malta, has never attended a ceremony and asked me to describe one to him. After I had done so he commented

> *That seems like one of those sort of things they used to have in the past and they never removed it […] What?! In 2005?! That's so bizarre, that's so bizarre… it doesn't make… why?! You have to sing the national anthem? I bet you most English people don't know that. From the sounds of it I don't think it's something I would be happy doing, all these oaths and giving allegiance to… I don't know, I think it would make me more angry than being part of something… it just makes me feel like you are trying to force feed… it's just ancient, it doesn't make sense to me really!*

Ina, who had already attended her own ceremony at the time of our interview, had a similar reaction to the one Kaiden describes; she felt alienated

> *Yeah with the national anthem you know, obviously I've been in the UK and you now in football matches and stuff they'll play it and I've sort of started singing along to it and it almost felt like… it's not quite my country, but almost, it's always sort of felt like quite a nice thing and you know, I sort of felt mostly part of it and at the ceremony I think the whole thing I just felt so annoyed with it and then the national anthem played and I just thought I'm really not feeling this at all, and now that I am actually a citizen and yet with all that had happened with the referendum I don't feel like 'tada! I'm British and this is all great! And so I was just in tears because this wasn't really quite the Britain that I wanted to feel part of*

For Ina, in addition to the emotional baggage that she carried since the referendum and which overwhelmed her at her ceremony, the language used by the representative of the Queen emphasised a divide between native citizens and new citizens in the way that it welcomed the new citizens to the community inviting them to become full members of it

> *She just sort of said oh how is really lovely, there is this village in Ditchling that's got a duck pond and we should all go there and I just thought, well you know… people have come here for the jobs or you know, relationships… no one has come here for the duck pond! It just seemed totally removed from anyone's sort of experiences and needs. But what really, really got to me was that she was then talking about how now that we were British citizens, we were encouraged to become a part of our community and maybe consider*

> *volunteering for a charity. And I thought: I have been here 20 years! I've been volunteering for charities for many, many years and many different charities and I just found it so offensive that suggestion that 'well you've been a migrant so clearly so far you've not made a contribution but now that you are British you can be part of the community' (...) And the thing is that everyone would have been in the UK for many, many years (...) then sort of not acknowledging you know that we've clearly become a part of our community already*

The frustration that Ina feels when being welcomed into the community reflects her understanding of the citizenship ceremony as an event that constructs her as an outsider, a newcomer. Byrne (2012), in her study of citizenship ceremonies, already pointed to the ways in which "touristic descriptions inhibit the presentation of new citizens as 'fellow locals'" (p. 537) and further situate them outside of the national community, signalling the contours of the community of value, to which new citizens do not necessarily gain access with citizenship (Anderson, 2013).

In contrast to Ina's experience, Inês gave her ceremony little importance, seeing it as another *silly* aspect of the process. She attended on her own, taking a couple hours off and going back to work afterwards. She joked with her colleagues about it, who - on her return - made comments like '*you look so British!! Hahaha!'*. For her, it was nothing more than a pleasant moment

> *And it was actually quite nice, it was a nice feeling. You have so many more people there, you know is a nice room where you are at. And there were some people talking about being British, the values you have to follow, etcetera; and you swear your oath, you do your pledge of affirmation or whatever and then you all sing the national anthem and then we stand up and go and get our certificates, take a nice picture with the lady that is handing out the certificates*

Aino expected to feel quite indifferent at her ceremony, like Inês. However, she was surprised at the wealth of emotions she felt

> *Well, it was weird because I actually felt quite emotional, it was so embarrassing hahaha! I just thought oh… because it became such a chore and it felt like such a … just a pain to do and the whole process was so painful, I had this sort of bitter attitude a lot of the time*

Except for the case of Inês, the ceremony had a transformative effect on most participants. It prompted reflections about belonging and membership, traditions, rights, and privileges. When speaking of privilege earlier in the chapter, I presented Aino's interpretation of the Brazilian woman and her emotional reaction and attire. Similarly, Ina interpreted people's attitude and clothing at the ceremony as a reflection of the value that British citizenship had for them. Those who she thought had to jump through more hurdles or whose status was more precarious, valued it more and were more smartly dressed

> *And you could also tell some people were really dressed up and for them it was a real occasion, and you could spot all the EU citizens just kind of go … So, there wasn't… certainly, for the EU citizens there didn't seem to be a sense of celebration, just a sense of grudging, I am here because I have to.*

The naturalisation process culminates with the ceremony, which for many participants was the culmination of a process filled with emotions. The diverging boundaries of the political community and the community of value are starting to enter into sharper focus, and some participants were starting to realise that membership in the former did not involve membership in the latter.

6.4 Membership in the community of value. A matter of belonging

Once rights and legal protections were achieved, something else started seeping into participants' narratives, something that I interpret as a sense of incomplete membership. Similarly to ethnic minority British citizens, whose feeling of belonging is disrupted by the constant requirement to prove they are "British enough" (Prabhat, 2018b, p. 57), some participants experienced naturalisation as a bureaucratic process to prove they were British enough to belong to the 'community of value'.

In this section I reflect on some participants' perceptions of *an acquired* citizenship as not enough. To investigate this point, I start by exploring notions of hierarchies of belonging, where participants spoke of some being deemed to belong 'more' than others. Next, I look at the limits to the ability of the state to bestow membership on all levels, highlighting the importance of fellow citizens in the construction of belonging. Finally, I end with an interpretation of how civic integration requirements impacted participants' initially legalistic understanding of citizenship, turning it towards a more moralised perspective.

6.4.1 Hierarchies of belonging

Narratives about naturalisation experiences elicited a discussion about hierarchies of belonging and the importance of recognition. Participants' often spoke of what I call a 'scale of belonging' between native British citizens and naturalised British citizens. This scale was often considered impenetrable and was born out of an understanding of belonging that was closely related to participants' own citizenship of origin. Francisco and Aino clearly express this difference between being a native citizen and being a naturalised citizen

> *I'll never be British, I'll always be Finish and I wouldn't have done if I couldn't have dual citizenship, there is no way on earth that I would have let go of my Finish citizenship (Aino)*

> *An acquired nationality is not as heavy as a… like a birth given one, in my opinion. There might be terms… like right now wherever I go, I am going to be Spanish forever, there might be terms... like you have to stay here if you live abroad for more than 3 years you lose your nationality or something like that that I don't know (Francisco)*

For Aino and Francisco, their birthright citizenship has more value than any citizenship they could acquire over the course of their lives, signalling to nativistic understandings of citizenship that precede naturalisation. For Francisco, it is mainly the conditional nature of an 'acquired citizenship' that affects its value. According to Fortier

(2021) this understanding of citizenship as being something conditional or provisional is a direct result of the naturalisation process, which in combination with integration measures (which she calls citizenising processes) “embed the conditionality of citizenship in popular consciousness” (Fortier, 2021, p. 39; Bhattacharyya, 2015, p. 15)

Inês also seems to be aware of the conditional nature of her new citizenship, hoping she will not lose it in the future and telling me how now that she has it, she will take the time to read about the conditions of deprivation to make sure that she can keep it

> *I heard somewhere that if you want to leave the UK for longer than 2 years or so you have to let the Home Office know. I’m not sure if this is right information, I’m just hoping they wouldn’t be like ‘we’re going to revoke your nationality’*

This understanding of the new citizenship as something that can be lost reveals the inherent uncertainty that some participants associated with being a naturalised citizen, which contrasts with their associations of safety and protection in their earlier definitions of citizenship. The membership that naturalised citizens have access to seems to be differentiated from the one they hold from origin and that native British citizens hold. They perceive their newly acquired citizenship as a less-than-equal citizenship, always “at risk of being discursively (if less often legally) revoked” (Byrne, 2017, p. 323).

Elías thinks that he simply cannot fully become a true British citizen, because he ‘merely’ naturalised as one

> *I mean I don't know a lot of people naturalising as adults that really go and identify ... it's a bit ain't it... I mean I'm not going to say I identify as British with a view of not offending all the British who are born here, you know they'd be like 'what the fuck' you know, 'he's not as...'?*

This perception of perhaps offending the citizens who are truly British, those who are *more* British than Elías can ever be, stems from the acceptance of an ethnonationalist understanding of citizenship, which sees the naturalised citizen as a quasi-citizen, with a lesser status than the native citizens (Morrell, 2008; Redclift, 2013; Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018). The figure of the naturalised citizen appears in several accounts, where

the line dividing the native and the alien does not allow for any crossings. The former aliens, regardless of their new legal status, regard native citizens as the original and legitimate category. The citizenship they acquire is not the same that native British citizens hold but a less valuable one. This further emphasises the consolidation of a perceived community of value, to which participants had no access to, and which gave birth to reflections on the illusion of belonging.

6.4.2 Collective boundaries

Other British citizens were key for participants understanding of their own newly acquired citizenship. The recognition of now fellow citizens is key in the participants' understanding of their own membership, as suggested earlier in Elías' caution not to offend native British citizens. This form of belonging that is closely linked to collective recognition cannot be earned through the naturalisation process and is influenced by participants' everyday experiences, which inform their definitions of citizenship and belonging.

For Aleksander, there is a stark difference between life in the US and life in the UK. He perceived the US to be more inclusive, something that would enable him to self-identify as American, and which would be impossible in the UK

> *I used to live in the US, that was only a year but, US society is very inclusive, and I can imagine myself telling everyone, no matter how funny it may sound especially for Polish people, but after a few years of living in the US or maybe 10 years definitely… in the US, I could say I am American… I cannot imagine myself telling everyone I am British after no matter how many years I would live here.*

He attributes his lack of identification to the UK to British people, who *are not that inclusive to let me feel British*. For Aleksander, 'the British' are essential to his ability to self-identify as British. He assumes that British citizens would not regard him as a fellow

citizen and therefore, has little expectations of any enhanced feeling of belonging. Similarly, Mario feels that British people do not let him integrate

> *Yeah, they don't let you integrate, you can be sure of that! Some people are nice so maybe it's 50-50, because some do let you integrate, and they accept you even when they see you are a foreigner*

Mario and Kaiden share the belief that their language skills are an insurmountable barrier to their feeling or being considered British.

> *I am not British, you know… everyone knows as soon as I open my mouth! (Kaiden)*

> *Here, or you say exactly what you have to say with a good pronunciation o at the second or third time they [British people] start making faces like "I better be quiet, because I don't want to talk to you anymore" And it is noticeable! (Mario)*

For both their foreign accent makes it difficult to talk to British people without them *'knowing'* they are not British and can never be. For Anne, the same is true in terms of being able or allowed to identify as British

> *[Why don't you want to be British?] I just don't feel … I have not reached that level of language … that I reached in France, even after 19 years. First time I say something, people ask me where are you from? So even if I have the passport, people will always consider me a foreigner, because they can hear me.*

Anne was born in Germany and moved to France when she was 19 years old, following her boyfriend at the time. She took on French nationality there and lost her German citizenship in the early 80s. Anne identifies as French, and her language skills were also key there, because she *"completely assimilated"* which meant that *"people didn't think [she] wasn't from there".* For Anne, this is essential for her being able to feel French

> *In France people always thought I was French and that helped me feel more French*

These experiences attest for the relevance of collective boundaries and the impact they have on identification processes. Furthermore, they point to the existence of a

national community of value to which citizenship is not the entry ticket, one which one can only access through the acceptance and recognition of fellow citizens (among other things). Another form of entry into the British community of value is contact with British citizens. Mario explicitly says that a lack of social contact prevents him from feeling British

> *I don't know if I feel British… you see I am not very attached to England, because I don't have any [British] friends, I might have one or two Spanish friends and so… but I don't really have a social life, and so feeling British is not… you can feel British either if you are very integrated in England or if you were born here, and that's it*

Narratives presented here attest for the need to conceptualise citizenship as more than the contract between the individual and the state, but also "between the person and all the other people whose access to social rights are being threatened by her/him" (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, 2018, p. 240). Furthermore, I interpret their perception of not being allowed to feel British as the result of everyday bordering practices.

Additionally, Mario alludes to the need of being born in Britain in order to feel British because this is *"a completely different culture"*, signalling a nativistic understanding of citizenship that precedes his naturalisation experience and points to the community of native citizens being closed to him. This hierarchy of belonging is collectively, culturally, and emotionally constructed.

For Ina, the naturalisation process has highlighted the complexity of her emotions in relation to citizenship, leaving her with a paradox. For her, being a citizen used to be about a sense of belonging but that is no longer the case

> *Suddenly the moment that I feel really disappointed with Britain and feel like there is a lot of British people that I am frustrated with, angry with, is the moment that I am saying 'hey, can I become British?' So, it feels like a real paradox*

This link between being frustrated with British people and wanting to become British reveals that, for Ina, citizenship is not merely something between her and the state, but it also involves the British people.

Marie has lived in the UK since she was four years old. She feels that her British manners and accent allow her to jump in and out of her Britishness. This has proven to be an asset for her, because whenever she felt unsafe, she could perform as British and be safe

> *You know, even though I am proud to be French, it is also very easy for me to mould and not be targeted, you know. Because I sound English, I don't sound French, I don't look French … you know, I sound English, you know I can easily pass … people wouldn't assume otherwise. So, if ever I feel in a position where I feel threatened for my safety or whatever, you know what I do? I just switch and I am English (…) Not that I often feel that I have to hide but you know, I have the option and I have had to use it*

Marie is not yet a British citizen, but her ability to pass as British make her a member of the community of value, her language skills (*I sound English*), her ethnicity *(I don't look French*), having been raised in the UK, etc. have turned her into somebody who can 'pass' as English and allow her to blend in and be protected from prejudice and discrimination. Regardless of her legal status, Marie is a member of the community of good citizens.

A new layer appeared in participants narratives of citizenship, which refer to the recognition of other British citizens. In the interview excerpts presented here, I showed how participants' perceptions of what other British citizens would recognise as British also determined their ability to belong in Britain. Citizenship granted them rights and certain protections, but now a fog is starting to form over their newly acquired status, where citizenship does not ensure belonging.

6.4.3 Integration and citizenship. A virtualisation of citizenship

Citizenship ceremonies and the Life in the UK test are the result of placing culture at the core of debates about integration and citizenship (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010, p. 237). Schinkel (2010, p. 265) calls this mixing of integration with citizenship, the virtualisation of citizenship, while Fortier (2021) calls it a citizenisation process, which is a "shorthand for a range of pro-active 'integration' and 'naturalisation' measures" (p. 23). In this section I elaborate on the impact that the integrationist agenda of the naturalisation process has on participants' everyday practices of citizenship.

The green paper *The New and The Old* states that integration is "the basis of good citizenship" (Home Office, 2002:12). This way of understanding integration as good citizenship and citizenship as a sign of integration is visible in some of the ways participants narrated their own experiences of naturalisation.

Aleksander's accounts of one of the reasons why he decided to naturalise is a good example of that conflation of citizenship and integration. He understands citizenship as a measure of integration and says that from the moment they decided to move to the UK, they knew they were going to apply for citizenship as soon as they could

> *When we moved here, we wanted to have citizenship as a proof that we are actually involved in this community.*

For Aleksander, their citizenship will reflect their involvement in the community and act as a proof of integration. Integration here precedes citizenship and, simultaneously, citizenship is where his integration is consolidated.

Similarly, Mikolaj says that his desire to acquire British citizenship is tied to his original desire to assimilate into British culture

> *And our goal was to try to assimilate as well, we heard about some Polish districts in London as well, but we tried to avoid it, we wanted to see the culture, (…) So, in this sense we found that we could apply for citizenship.*

Mikolaj and Aleksander's desire to acquire citizenship was present from the moment they left Poland. This was also a reason to try to 'integrate more', which in their minds meant to assimilate. When they decide to move to the UK, their desire to integrate influences their choice of neighbourhood, highlighting the importance of the local aspect of their concept of integration. Similar to this, Noelia speaks of feeling *"more integrated"* because she knows *"many people in the neighbourhood"*. Noelia works at a primary school in her neighbourhood, and this has contributed to her neighbours greeting her on the street and making her feel like she is part of something

> *Or they invite your kid to their house, of they [the kids] come for dinner and to play with my son. And then you feel like… 'well look at that! They don't consider me weird or strange, they treat me like everybody else*

The local community plays a key role in influencing participants' sense of belonging, which is tightly linked to citizenship. Elías also considers citizenship as a sign of integration. He has lived in the UK for over 13 years and says that naturalising simply was the logical thing to do. Elías feels *'very integrated'* into his community and acquiring citizenship for him was a way of consolidating this

> *Once you are in a place on a long term [basis] it is easier to… you know, go all the way and try to integrate fully*

This idea of integration and citizenship as overlapping is an exact reflection of the current conception of integration and naturalisation being connected and interwoven in "Western Europe", where learning about the country, signals a desire to integrate, and the connection between the two is considered 'common sense' and taken for granted (Fortier, 2021).

In line with this conception, Lazar, who is considering applying for British citizenship, thinks that only people who are integrated in the country should be granted citizenship. In his opinion, integration should be a requirement for citizenship and the problem of measuring integration could be resolved simply by testing language skills. He

considers that granting citizenship to non-nationals with little knowledge of the English language is "*not acceptable because you can't integrate in the society properly if you don't speak the language"*. His understanding is that integration should be a pre-requisite for citizenship.

According to Schinkel (2010)(2010) this virtualisation of citizenship, turns citizenship into something more than the acquisition or possession of rights, it is rather the performance of a virtue, for example, speaking English well, or being willing to assimilate as was Mikolaj's case, or even 'feeling integrated' as stated by Elías.

This results in an assessment of migrants' "linguistic, ideological, and religious allegiances being increasingly scrutinised as indicators of integration" (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010 in; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014, p. 427) and justified with a cultural interpretation of liberal democratic values, that transcends legal rights and obligations to include moral values and cultural traits, as well as feelings of attachment (belonging) to the nation.

This new focus on citizenship, brought about by policy, highlights a confusion at the heart of it: is citizenship supposed to be a reward for being integrated? Or is it a process through which to become more integrated? Judging by the experiences of those participants included in this section, both seem to be true. Integration and citizenship are closely related both in policy and in the experiences of participants.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the ways in which the naturalisation process influenced the expectations participants had of their new citizenship, revealing a hierarchy of belonging. This hierarchy was intersectionally constructed with elements of privilege and discrimination, intertwined with complex nativistic and affective definitions of belonging. This results in definitions of citizenship and what it means to be British being

formed at the intersection between the wider community, civic integration requirements, and participants' everyday lives in Britain.

It was widely accepted that citizenship had to be earned through the performance of a certain commitment (emotional, personal, or intellectual, etc.) to the nation. However, belonging and citizenship, although initially defined as deeply intertwined, became increasingly differentiated in participants' reflections.

Participants presented here associated citizenship with a sense of security, but also with cultural and nativist perceptions of belonging. They saw citizenship as a promise of equality and full membership, which was central to their aspirations. They regarded British citizenship as an asset because the UK was perceived to be well positioned in the international hierarchy of citizenships and citizens. Earning a higher position in the hierarchy of citizenships or maintaining mobility rights at the global level were some of the elements of British citizenship that these aspiring citizens were looking to achieve. However, at the national level, a new community of value was emerging, one to which they had little access, given narrow perceptions of culture and linguistic skills either that they found around them or which they held themselves.

Participants start drawing lines between themselves and British citizens when assessing their knowledge about Life in the UK. This comparison is, on the one hand, comforting, because it reassures them that the test is not to be taken seriously. This is explored in section three, through participants' accounts of the Life in the UK test and the citizenship ceremonies, which revealed a more behavioural notion of citizenship. These two requirements were at the core of further reflections on citizenship, belonging and privilege.

Finally, it is precisely the intersection between citizenship, belonging, and privilege that make up the concept of community of value, that is a community of good, true British

citizens. Participants suggest that membership in that community could only be achieved through the recognition of such citizens and some, like Kaiden, Aleksander or Elías, had no expectation to be recognised.

The naturalisation process became demonstrative of the erosion of their sense of belonging that started with Brexit, as we saw in Chapter 5. This is perhaps because the learning required by naturalisation tried to manufacture a different and more streamlined performance of Britishness and belonging, that did nothing but highlight the existence of a pre-existing British community of value, made up of people 'born' in, or with a 'significant attachment' to the UK as Mario stated. This is one of the main consequence of the culturalist shift in naturalisation processes, which essentialises culture and belonging, through narrow definitions of the nation and leaves aspiring or new citizens feeling as less-than-equal citizens (Byrne, 2017).

For many participants, becoming British responded to a need to acquire rights and feel safe. However, their experiences of the cultural requirements in the naturalisation process raised questions about their feelings of identification and belonging. This dissonance between participants' accounts of their initial expectations and their experiences within the process creates a sense of disenchantment, because new citizens felt othered, the process told the story of a reality that was unrecognisable and unachievable and therefore, secluded them to the group of quasi-citizens.

Thus, it emerged that participants' defensive naturalisation had guided their expectations toward a legal membership in the community, but after coming in contact with civic integration requirements, a new hierarchy of belongings became visible, which led to reflections on the moral elements of citizenship and highlighted the impenetrability of the British community of values. In the next and final empirical chapter, I explore the ways participants made claims for a recognition of a variety of forms of belonging,

through a moral economy of deservingness. Their local community of value is key for this regrounding process.

7 AFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND DIMENSIONS OF DESERVINGNESS

In this final empirical chapter, I discuss how participants' complex and shifting understandings of belonging and citizenship were complicated by official definitions of good character and affective citizenship, all of which influenced how they narrated themselves in response to official terms. Concretely, I focus on the way participants' narratives reveal discourses of deservingness and earned citizenship. That is, how participants legitimised their claim to citizenship based on the fulfilment of official definitions of the ideal citizen, which includes notions of attachment to the nation, moral worth, and transformative learning experiences.

In order to address these issues, I first explore the emotional narratives of participants' experiences of the naturalisation process and definitions of citizenship. These are a good indicator of how the definition of citizenship in Britain rests on the production of "affective subjects" (Fortier, 2010), since it appeals to the feelings of citizens. Affective subjects are here understood as individuals whose conduct is guided by concrete emotions, such as "desires, fears, anxieties, insecurities, affection, care, dis/trust, un/ease and so on" (Ibid. p. 19).

These emotional narratives are the source of discourses of deservingness because they are presented as proof of their worth. For this purpose, in the second section, I

explore how official definitions of citizenship overlap with personal narratives of good citizenship. Here, the literature on moral economies of deservingness (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin, 2012, 2014; Chauvin, Garcés-Mascareñas and Kraler, 2013) is useful to examine how official conceptions of good citizenship and interpretations of earned citizenship overlap.

In the third section, I look at how participants performed those ideas of good citizenship and used these actions to claim their deservingness of citizenship. I have called these 'acts of Britishness' to demonstrate that they highlight interpretations of moral and affective citizenship in participants' everyday life in Britain. In the fourth and final section, I look at learning as a proof of deservingness. I present the way participants considered cultural requirements as an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the nation through their willingness and ability to learn.

This chapter concludes that discourses of deservingness are useful in examining how the naturalisation process influences participants' identity narratives. This results in participants proving they earned citizenship through an exposition of their acts of Britishness, revealing everyday practices of citizenship. Moreover, I argue that even when participants resist some aspects of the naturalisation criteria, they also simultaneously reproduce official discourses of Britishness.

7.1 Affective citizenship and how feelings attach themselves to citizenship

In this section, I focus on participants' emotional language to speak about their experiences of naturalisation. For example, a participant would discuss how becoming a citizen was about *feeling pride for the country* (Francisco) and another would speak of her anger at the naturalisation process, which does not recognise the fact that this is *her country*, where she *feels at home* (Nina). In examining this mobilisation of affect, my intention is to reveal the salience of emotional definitions of citizenship and the impact on participants self-narratives. In what follows, I first establish how the naturalisation process evoked concrete feelings of entitlement, belonging and security in participants and how those feelings influenced their conceptions of citizenship.

Some participants expected the process to be a 'mere' bureaucratic task. However, and often to their surprise, the naturalisation process was charged with a variety of complex and contradicting emotions. These are hard to summarise and codify, since emotions are not discrete variables that can be neatly separated from one another. Fear, anxiety, and a desire for security are constituted intersectionally; just as belonging and entitlements overlap. However, participants at times claimed to feel uprooted and to belong at the same time. They spoke of safety in their local communities, while feeling excluded in the national community, etc. The intersectional, ambiguous, and contradictory nature of emotions complicated the task of codifying the empirical material to produce a narrative that would reflect participants' experiences. Furthermore, the political context in Britain at the time of these interviews made it impossible to disentangle emotions that were attached to the naturalisation process from those triggered by Brexit.

Nevertheless, while recognising that emotions tend to intersect and overlap, for the sake of analytical clarity, I present them here in three main groups: rights, belonging and security. This division is based on Weber's (2008) work on the official design of citizenship, Fortier's discussion of how feelings attach themselves to citizenship (Fortier, 2021, p. 1040) and Vrasti and Dayals' (2016) ideas on the politics of rightful presence. This codification, although necessarily narrow, allows me to highlight the link between participants' identity narratives and to map certain emotions onto official constructions of good citizenship.

7.1.1 Feelings of Rightful Presence

Most participants in this research spoke of their right to be here, to feel at home here and, perhaps more importantly, to feel that their presence should not be questioned. These feelings are what I call here feelings of rightful presence and are often attached to citizenship (Weber, 2008; Vrasti and Dayal, 2016), especially for some European citizens who, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, experienced both their European membership and their migration as an exercise of *their right to be here.* Moreover, some participants feel their transnational citizenship is interwoven with their notions of national and local belonging, as we will see developing in this chapter.

Pauline, a French national that spent most of her adult life in the UK and who is going through the process of naturalisation at the time of our interview, extensively discusses this entitlement in our conversation.

> *I have the right to be here, like you have the right to go and spend three months of holidays in Spain you know?*

Pauline's experience of naturalisation has been charged with negative emotions because the result of the referendum shattered one of the fundamental bases of her life in

the UK: her right to be here. This entitlement ran so deep in Pauline's narrative, that it constituted an important part of her identity. This is clear in the way she says she always felt equal to a British citizen, because both could enact their rightful presence everywhere in Europe. Although it may seem that Pauline is talking about rights rather than a feeling of rightful presence, the depth and scope that she attributes to that right suggests that she is also referring to a way of being, a combination of privilege and rights, that resembles more an entitlement. This sense of entitlement was shattered by the referendum and the naturalisation process further contributed to its erosion.

Lazar's feeling of rightful presence has also changed in light of the referendum result, because his legal right to reside and work in the UK has acquired negative connotations, as we saw in chapter 5 (5.5.3). Lazar is a Bulgarian citizen, in his mid-thirties, who arrived in the UK some 10 years ago, after attending a recruitment talk by Student Finance England in Sofia in 2007, two weeks after Bulgaria had joined the EU. He tells me how they were told to *'come to the UK, be students, you are going to get loans and so on and so on, the doors are open, be our guests'*, so he decided to come and try. Consequently, Lazar always felt like he was here because he was *'pretty much invited'* and had the right to be here. However, immediately after the referendum this feeling of rightful presence had disappeared (although the right itself remained intact for a few years after our interview) because (as shown in Chapter 5) he saw himself as "*one of those guys"* that constituted *"the uncontrolled immigration"*. The referendum and our discussion of what it meant to be British or to be European in Britain brought a new light to how he sees himself. It is interesting how the narrative shifted from being invited to being part of uncontrolled immigration.

In the past, his right to live in the UK and the fact that he was invited to come had created a self-protective bubble against xenophobic and discriminatory discourses for Lazar. However, now this entitlement had become a double-edge sword and had led him to consider acquiring British citizenship, in order to regain that feeling of rightful presence that he lost. This suggests to me that while Lazar is talking about rights, it is not specifically legal rights he is after with naturalisation, but a feeling of having the *'right to be here'*.

Contrasting with Pauline's and Lazar's experience is Hannah's, a British Hungarian dual citizen, in her mid-forties who has been in the UK for 11 years and naturalised over 5 years ago. Hannah moved to the UK from the US, following her (at the time) British husband. She had different ideas about her right to be in the UK as a European citizen, influenced by her experience of migration in the US, where she had had issues with her immigration status. Hannah's previous migration experience emphasised her belief that only citizenship would allow her to feel an entitlement to be here. In her opinion, her rights as an EU citizen were a contingency of the times. She never felt she could rely on those rights; she even mentions feeling paranoid about it. Those fears lead her to acquire British citizenship as soon as she could.

> *So just because I can live in this country this year it doesn't mean that's going to be true in 5 years and because I had that experience in the States, I was very kind of hyperaware of … it seemed in 2010 it was so easy to be a European in the UK, but I knew very well this could change and I was kind of almost paranoid*

Hannah is perhaps the clearest example of the affective subject or neurotic citizen, whose desire to naturalise arises from feelings of uncertainty and insecurity (Isin, 2004; Fortier, 2010) and which is also informed by her previous migration experiences. Her

experience is also a testament to the relevance of affective understandings of citizenship and how it is deeply related to migration experiences.

Pauline's, Lazar's, and Hannah's stories also provide a good representation of a range of feelings attached to rights, which make it difficult to separate legal aspects from affective definitions of citizenship. Such feelings of rightful presence ranged from extremely important for their identity narratives (Pauline), through feelings of mere disappointment at their loss (Lazar), to feelings of disbelief and distrust (Hannah). However, in these three cases (as in all other interviews) participants aspired to feelings of rightful presence through the acquisition of British citizenship and were naturalising, had naturalised, or were considering doing so because of such feelings.

In these stories the right to live in the UK is experienced in a variety of ways, but what matters is that all those stories point to the relevance of feelings of rightful presence for participants' interpretations and claims to citizenship.

7.1.2 Citizenship as Belonging

Another feeling that participants often attached to citizenship was that of belonging, which they also often associated with notions of home and home-making (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2018; Hall *et al.*, 2020).

José, a 40-year-old Spanish national who has been in the UK for over 10 years equates citizenship to a sense of belonging. For him, belonging and citizenship go together, and where one is missing the other cannot exist

> *I think they… I think they have to come with it, so in a sense, unless your rights are not being upheld, you will never have a proper sense of belonging to a place. So I think they go together (…) ideally they should go together*

This interpretation of rights as a pre-condition of belonging is interesting. European citizenship gave him the right to belong, it allowed him to root himself in the UK and make it his home, however, Brexit changed all of this as we saw in Chapter 5, when José stated that Brexit took his citizenship away, and with it, his right to belong.

Nina is another example of seeking citizenship to recover a sense of belonging. In Chapter 6 I showed how she claimed Britain as her country and her belonging as untouchable, while simultaneously stating that she felt uprooted

> *I felt in the last year that that [feeling of belonging] was taken away and I needed to get the citizenship to give me that again. And I think there are a lot of people feeling like that.*

Nina is looking for citizenship to recover a sense of belonging, after living in the UK for almost 40 years. However, she also tells me that she experienced the naturalisation process as a mere formalisation of her feelings of belonging

> *If you want to be really equal you have to have citizenship, there is nothing to do with how you feel emotionally, and where your loyalties are, it's purely paperwork. I don't feel patriotic, at all. It's a country that I've lived in and that I feel at home in, and that I know better than any other country and all that.*

Her rejection of any emotional attachment to Britain is telling, as she is contesting any attempts of 'governing through affect' and the process's attempt to influence her feelings about Britain (Fortier, 2010; Johnson, 2010). However, her rejection of any emotional component attached to citizenship is in conflict with her desire to acquire citizenship to regain a sense of belonging, articulating her claim to citizenship in emotional terms that relate to feelings of belonging and being at home.

Nina's and José's represent the two main ways in which belonging was associated with citizenship in my interviews. On the one hand, belonging was essential to articulating any claim to citizenship, as was the case of Nina. On the other, belonging was

a form of defining citizenship, as José does. Overall, the theme of belonging was present in most participants' discussion of their experiences of naturalisation and expectations of citizenship.

Constructions of belonging "reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202) and this is particularly true in the case of naturalisation, where citizenship and belonging are closely linked in the ways aspiring citizens see themselves and the way they want to be seen. For example, Aino's reflection on how she defines herself is entirely constructed around her feelings of belonging. She sees herself as a *citizen of the world* because she *felt like [she] didn't belong anywhere.*

Nina and Jose were trying to recover a lost sense of belonging. For Inês, acquiring citizenship awakened feelings of acceptance and recognition that she had not felt before. Inês is a 25-year-old Portuguese British dual national, who moved to Britain some 8 years before I interviewed her. Initially, she had attributed no emotional value to her British citizenship and naturalisation. But over the course of our interview, she increasingly refers to feeling proud, empowered, accepted and joyful, and after a while, she told me she felt she finally belonged in Britain. What prompted this feeling was a form she had to complete at work

> *I feel like… the moment when it actually sank in… that my nationality changed was actually a few weeks ago when I was at work filling an application form […]and then it came to the bit of ethnicity or 'White British … white other' and I was like… 'oh… I can put that I am white British now!? Can't I?! And I was … I looked at my boss and I said 'I'm white British! I'm not White Other!*

Inês glows in joy when she relates the event, explaining to me how these feelings were the reward for so much suffering and stress that she had been under during the entire naturalisation process, stress and hardship associated with worries, fears of failure, effort to put together the amount of money necessary for the fees, etc. This particular example

is illustrative of the impossibility of accurately aligning isolated emotions to the naturalisation process. Over the course of our interview, Inês spoke about indifference, belonging, and pride; but she also talked about hardship and suffering. This hardship is a conglomeration of how much money the application cost her, the time-consuming application form itself, and past experiences of discrimination in Britain. For Inês, citizenship felt like a reward for the hardship and suffering she associated with naturalisation.

Her understanding of citizenship as a reward, overlaps with official discourses that construct citizenship as 'a hard-earned privilege' (Murray, 2016, p. 3). Her sense of belonging to an ethnic group and her delight in being able to officially be *white British*, abandoning the category of *white other*, can be aligned with official efforts to promote a sense of an ethnic community and an understanding of Britishness as whiteness (Breslin, 2007; Sawyer and Wray, 2012). In that small act of stating her newly acquired ethnicity, Inês is able to abandon the precarity of the container "white other" and arrive in a safe zone, where the citizens live.

> *I feel like if someone came to me with like 'you bloody immigrants coming here and stealing my jobs or whatever' if someone came to me with that sort of attitude, I would go like 'excuse me, I'm British'*

Inês naturalised to gain feelings of belonging and safety. Now that she can say that she is *white British*, she feels she is entitled *to be here*. The feeling and the right are inseparable for all of them.

While belonging can be defined in many ways and can take a variety of forms, it can safely be argued that it always refers to ideas of who we are and where we have *the right to be*, in other words, what it means to be a member of any given group (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). Nina's and José's accounts of their decision to naturalise are fraught

with their ideas of who they are and where they feel at home, revealing also where they want to belong. As such, they are a good example of how belonging and citizenship are not only politically constructed as inseparable in official discourses, but are also experienced as such, perhaps as a result of this discursive and political construction.

7.1.3 Safety in uncertain times

Participants in this research expected that British citizenship would help them feel safe and in control of their lives, perhaps even to regain a sense of belonging. The political context at the time was key in highlighting this aspect, as it created conditions of extreme uncertainty that would have set in motion any strategy with which to combat that uncertainty (Hall *et al.*, 2020). Edda, originally from Greece and who has lived in the UK for more than 20 years tells me that it is this uncertainty that worries her

> *I am [worried] now, I wasn't like a year ago, because you know I pay my taxes... I ... do everything else as I could do... as I should do... and I wasn't worried because I know that my kids actually have a British passport as well... but I am now yes. And it is not a worry that 'oh they are going to kick me out of the country" no, but it's the pressure... you know, it's like living ... or what's going on? And this whole mess... It's because I don't know as well... it's because nobody knows what's going to happen, that's made me uncertain.*

What is most interesting in Edda's case, is that it is not only her British citizenship that would help her feel safe, but also her children's' British citizenship that acts as a protective layer. This is something that most participants who had children with British citizenship mentioned in our interviews (Claire, Nina, Marika, Elvira, Anne, Sebastian and José). Interestingly, both men and women agree here in the way they draw on their children's citizenship to feel safe, presenting no differences in terms of gender.

Naturalisation was a prominent strategy among EU citizens in the UK, with an unprecedented amount of European citizens naturalising between 2016 and 2020

(Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020, p. 7). Such is the case of Lena, a German national, who has lived in the UK for over 20 years and is in the process of becoming a British citizen, for whom the decision of naturalising was the result of a desire for safety and control

> *Because you feel really uncertain, just to make it sure for myself. And then we can decide whether we want to stay here or… and then it doesn't matter what they do. Then I am in control, as opposed to someone else.*

For Lena, feelings of control, safety and security were key for her decision to naturalise. She feels that being a foreign national in Britain makes her vulnerable to the whims of politicians and a volatile public opinion that could potentially undermine everything she has worked for her whole life. In her expression *"and then it doesn't matter what they do"* it is unclear whether she is referring to government or British citizens with their political decisions, for example, that of leaving the EU. The fear of losing everything comes through when she tells me *"because I have worked here all my life. I have got my pension and my mortgage"* and this fear exacerbates her emotional and material insecurity to a degree that only citizenship and naturalisation can appease, turning her into a clear example of the affective citizen, whose definition and perception of citizenship is guided by strong emotions. She turned to naturalisation to appease feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

Similarly, to Lena, Marie speaks of her naturalisation as '*damage control'* and sees it as the only way she can '*reduce the risk of getting shipped out'*. She has lived in the UK since she was 4 years old, in her early forties now, she starts to fear being deported because of Brexit. Two things are starting to surface with these cases: first, that citizenship is defined by feelings of safety and control in an uncertain political context; second, that the lack of citizenship is a considerable risk few participants are willing to run.

Sebastian has lived in the UK for over 10 years and obtained his British citizenship before the referendum because he interpreted citizenship to be about security, safety, and control: it's *'an insurance policy you know if Brexit goes wrong, uhm I don't have to worry about that'*. By now, many scholars have documented the emotional and affective responses that were consequence of Brexit (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Hall *et al.*, 2020; Moreh, McGhee and Vlachantoni, 2020) and participants in this research have all confirmed what these studies argued: the sense of uncertainty was to be countered with citizenship.

An exception to this sense of anxiety was Noelia, who saw citizenship and the naturalisation process as something relatively unimportant, more like a chore. She compares it to switching *electricity providers*, it's a hassle and something that she always procrastinates, and she is doing the same with the naturalisation process, just procrastinating it but feeling nothing else in particular about it

> *I feel laziness, I feel a bit lazy about everything … I don't know, I feel lazy like when I say I am going to change our electricity provider, because that one is better. And then I think oh no! now I have to find out which one is better, and then change my data online and go get my card, decide if I want to do a direct debit, ugh… it is exactly like that with this, I start oh no! and now they will want this or that paper, how many times do I have to go online and send this or that and ask for that paper… it's pure laziness.*

Noelia's case contrasts with other cases presented here in that she not only does not feel anxious about her future in Britain, but she also belittles such anxieties that she so commonly sees in fellow EU citizens

> *I don't feel anxious or worried, because I don't think anything bad can happen, because bad things already happen elsewhere, really bad things and I think worrying like "oh I am so anxious!" about something that… you are in a very civilised country, there is no war, you have enough to eat, you have your house, work… what's going to happen to you!?*

Nevertheless, she acknowledges that there is a common sense of uncertainty heightened by Brexit, that led people to apply for citizenship. She herself started the

process but is procrastinating it. These accounts contribute to the notion that rights and entitlements are also emotionally constructed and understood, and that this is a phenomenon that is more easily observable in times of political fervour, such as Brexit. Furthermore, these emotional narratives were at the source of participants' claim to deserving British citizenship.

7.2 Moral citizenship and deservingness

The emotions presented in the previous section led me to a clear conclusion: all participants desired and valued citizenship as a source of rights, belonging and safety. To fulfil this desire, participants themselves needed to prove their desirability (Fortier, 2017) by drawing on official discourses to prove they were 'good citizens'.

7.2.1 Citizenship as a moral space

As shown in Chapter 4, the main reason for citizenship refusals in recent years has been that the applicant was not considered to be of good character (Sumption and Fernandez-Reino, 2020). This a revealing factor since the 1981 British Nationality Act does not contain a concrete definition of 'good character'. However, the Home Office regularly publishes a guidance for workers' discretion in their assessment of the applications (Home Office, 2020).

The good character requirements have, in the past, been interpreted as a manifestation of the "moral boundaries of citizenship" (Isin, 1997; Morrice, 2016b). They are a good example of how legal and substantive aspects of citizenship are "inextricably linked" in the naturalisation process, where citizenship becomes a "moral space" to assess the values (and adherence to values) of all citizens (Anderson, 2013, p. 99). In this section

I present how participants interpreted these moral boundaries and incorporated them into their own identity narratives in order to claim citizenship.

Lazar, who as we saw before, does not base his claim to citizenship on his rightful presence in the country or even on the fact that he was invited by the Student Loans Company to move to the UK, but rather on his compliance with notions of good character

> *I respect the local culture, the local rules, try to be what at the Home Office is described as a person of good character, that's it, I try to be that. That means basically that you are a nice guy, hahaha! It means that for example you don't get in trouble, you obey with the rules, you are a nice neighbour, you are a good student, that you don't have trouble with the police, that you help when for example you are asked to help and so on and so on, so all of that together*

During our conversation, Lazar often referred to British and Britishness in a variety of contexts, so I asked him 'What is British?', the above excerpt is part of the answer he gave me. What started as a general discussion of items and landmarks adopted by the tourism industry, ended in a definition of Britishness in moral terms. Furthermore, a definition of what is British resulted in a definition of himself.

Interestingly, Lazar was still considering whether to start the naturalisation process at the time of our interview and had not engaged with the process or had much contact with the Home Office. However, he has already incorporated official representations of deservingness into his self-definition. This speaks to the pervasiveness of moral conceptions of citizenship.

Aleksander came to Britain 6 years before our interview because *being a gay person in Poland is not recognised by the law*. These words echoed the official construction of citizenship as a moral duty towards fellow citizens and the immediate community and as a sign of full integration (Home Office, 2002, 2014; Murray, 2016). This further strengthens the argument that citizenship is a moral space inhabited by good citizens.

7.2.2 Moral economy of Deservingness

In order to examine the ways in which official and self-definitions of good character overlap, I refer to the notion of a moral economy of deservingness (Watters, 2000; Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin, 2012). As described before, the idea of a moral economy evokes a system of valuation and trade in moral valence, in which each trader needs to assess their moral value at the same time as it is assessed or validated by others.

Following the definition of citizenship as a moral space, the concept of a moral economy of deservingness helps me reveal the ways in which new and aspiring citizens interpret and perform discourses of good character, in order to demonstrate that they are morally deserving of citizenship. The moral economy of deservingness thus refers in this context to the ways in which aspiring citizens trade in moral values to prove their own desirability (MacGregor and Bailey, 2012; Fortier, 2017) to the state. In exchange, they would receive the rights and entitlements, as well as protection, that they are looking for through defensive naturalisation.

From the side of the state, British citizenship policies regard citizenship as a reward for integration and good behaviour (Ersanilli and Koopmans, 2010; Goodman, 2010, p. 766; Orgad, 2010), both of which are assessed in moral terms. Therefore, the state enters the negotiation as a rewarding and awarding body, offering recognition and protection as a reward for good behaviour. This results in a spiral in which participants simultaneously instrumentalise citizenship as well as legitimise their claim to citizenship with discourses of deservingness based on moral values. This double process of the state rewarding aspiring citizens and of new citizens recognising and celebrating that reward is at the core of the concept of a moral economy of deservingness. Elvira's interpretation of the citizenship ceremony and what it is for is a good example to illustrate such transaction

> *The ceremony is to celebrate that this country has accepted you as a citizen. I think it is a mutual thing, both for immigrants that want the citizenship and for the country, that gives the opportunity to integrate those people who now hold a passport of this country*

For her, naturalisation is an act of generosity on the side of the state, which grants the opportunity of acquiring citizenship to those who are able to show they deserve it. However, Elvira has decided not to naturalise after living in the UK for more than 20 years. Her decision is based on the idea that she doesn't feel the system truly recognises her value and *her contribution to the country, to the society and with taxes for so many years*. Similarly, Pauline speaks in terms of complying with the moral and legal regulations to contest her need to naturalise, *I have not broken the law, you know, I have complied, I've been useful to society, I have volunteered*. Here the legal requirements (not breaking the law) and the moral requirements (being useful, volunteering) constitute proof of deservingness. Pauline sees herself as a deserving citizen, because she *has complied*, she examines her own experience and values by incorporating certain aspects that the Home Office considers to be criteria for demonstrating good character, like volunteering and being useful to her community, etc. (Goldsmith, 2008; Morrice, 2016b; Home Office, 2019). Pauline is looking for a lost sense of home and belonging, as seen in chapter 5. Therefore, she is trading her good citizenship for the state's protection and recognition, which should return her sense of belonging.

These are examples of how concepts of good citizenship can have an impact on the lives of migrants (Anderson, 2013; Di Gregorio and Merolli, 2016; Badenhoop, 2017), because moral regulations are internalised and mobilised also to engage in self-evaluation. Hannah gives a very good example of how ideas of good character have compelled her to exceed certain standards, turning her into a "guardian of good citizenship" (Anderson, 2013, p. 6)

> *When I go into another country I always… I make a point of behaving very respectfully, as… I was very aware of 'this is somebody else's country' and I have to (…) behave much better and more polite and I think I still do that*

Hannah is trying to comply with expectations of good behaviour that reflect what most participants revealed in their performance of deservingness (volunteering, complying, being 'nice', etc.): that moral discourses of citizenship have significant impact not only on experiences of naturalisation, but on migration experiences. Lazar's self-assessment as a 'good guy', Elvira's contributions to society, Pauline's volunteering experience or Hannah's *good behaviour* when traveling abroad all originated in a diversity of personal experiences but related to their trade in a moral economy of deservingness. Within the context of our conversations, these were the emblems of good citizenship (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014) revealing how official discourses can shape and frame personal narratives.

7.3 Acts of Britishness

In this section, I present the ways in which participants performed Britishness or their understanding of what British culture and citizenship were, following the concept of acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008), through which subjects are able to act as citizens, even when they do not have formal status.

What I present here as acts of Britishness will refer to any action that participants interpreted as symbolising British culture and their adherence to it. This is relevant here, because these acts were often used to claim the legitimacy and recognition of their *de facto* membership (Kostakopoulou, 2003; Baldi *et al.*, 2016). That is, they prove their deservingness of citizenship based on their actions (and feelings) which reveal they are good British citizens. For the sake of clarity, I classify some of those acts into two main groups: financial and material, and cultural and emotional.

7.3.1 Financial and Material Acts of Britishness

One of the most common legitimising practices participants referred to was paying taxes. Participants felt that the fact that they had fulfilled their fiscal obligations in the same way native British citizens had, should earn them a recognition they lacked. In paying their taxes, participants had acted just like any other good citizen.

Aino mentions the fact that she hadn't thought much about citizenship or rights before Brexit, but that once she started the naturalisation process, she became aware of how much she already was a citizen and how much more she had already *given* the UK than she felt she received. Aino talks about all the years she studied, researched, worked, and paid taxes in the UK

> *Personally, I think that there should be a thing where (...) if you have been paying your taxes and working and whatever else you should have a voice [whether you are British or not]*

Aino explicitly calls for paying taxes, working, etc. to be recognised as acts of citizenship and therefore, to bestow rights. Thus, Aino is contesting current understandings of citizenship that do not award rights in compensation for fulfilment of legal obligations (paying taxes, working) which result in a quantifiable contribution to the country. In Aino's experience, her access to duties (paying taxes, working) has been less restricted than her access to rights (voting) in line with how Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin describe migrant civic incorporation (2012, p. 246). This results in her thinking, for the first time, about how migrants and citizens often act similarly and still, have differing entitlements, highlighting the important implications of formal membership.

For Balázs, paying taxes made him feel safe, like a citizen. Balázs describes his life in the UK as one closely related to his professional development and feels that his

financial contribution will provide him with protection from the state, just like any other citizen. His security is based on the notion of a good (economic) migrant, rather than a good citizen

> *I always felt like I am safe you know because I have been paying taxes and been working here for years, years and years. I would be probably one of the last people they would send back (...) I think I am quite valuable to the country*

Both Aino and Balázs tell me how their work and taxes meant that they acted as citizens, recognising their actions as contributions to the country. However, these acts of citizenship had different implications for each of them: it made Aino aware of the uneven access she, as a non-citizen, had to rights and resulted in her contesting the way political membership is awarded. Whereas for Balázs, the same actions resulted in him feeling a stronger sense of belonging and a more loyal adherence to a state from which he was certain he would receive protection.

The association of citizenship with paying taxes is pervasive among my participants and has been prominent in the definition of good character both in policy and citizenship literature (Kostakopoulou, 2003, 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2013; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Home Office, 2014). This close relationship between financial contributions and membership applies also to Nina's citizenship of origin. Nina has lived in the UK for almost 40 years, and she tells me how she no longer considers herself German and how Germany should not be considered her country

> *I never paid taxes; I've never worked there [Germany]. So this is my country*

For Nina, her formal citizenship is less legitimate than her "active citizenship" (Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel, 2011, p. 413). Consequently, Nina feels more British than she feels German, amongst other reasons, because she has paid taxes and worked in the UK and not in Germany.

While financial and material conditions and practices take the first place in the claims for deserving citizenship that participants mentioned, there has also been a myriad of other practices and interpretations of the British way of life that participants mentioned as evidence of having earned citizenship.

7.3.2 Cultural Acts of Citizenship

Some everyday practices that participants had taken for granted in the past, started to take on the meaning of their Britishness in the context of our interviews and the naturalisation process. Such is the case of Marika, a Polish citizen in her mid-forties who moved to the UK some 10 years ago with her family. I interviewed Marika at the time when she was taking an English course in preparation for the English test.

Marika repeatedly mentioned that she *belongs* here, that this is her place and that she doesn't want to go back to Poland. So, when I asked her if she feels British, Marika responded '*Yes!'* without hesitating, proof of that feeling for her was in her daughters' food preferences

> *My house we eat (…) English. And my daughter… better like English, because eat in the school and (…) she have problem in the Poland to eat*

Marika cooks English meals for her youngest daughter because that's what she likes best, influenced by the meals she gets at school. For her, this is a sign that England is her place and where she belongs. Thus, the ability and frequency with which she cooks English meals serves to validate her feelings of belonging, because she has incorporated such an important cultural attribute (gastronomy) into her daily life. Marika performs her Britishness through cooking.

Agnieszka also has a clear view of what is British and how to perform that Britishness herself. She associates Britishness with a lack of affection in everyday interactions, as opposed to overtly affectionate people like "Southern Europeans". She tells me how she loves to go to Southern Europe on holidays but how Britain *suits her* better because she needs *personal space* and enjoys her interaction with people in Britain more, because she identifies with them

> *For my character I need more order, and my personal space, you know, people not being too affective and things like that, it just suits me*

Agnieszka also says she likes people *standing in queues* and being *polite*, because she does that herself and that constitutes another proof that she adheres to *British values*.

In my two conversations with Agnieszka I found that her narratives reproduced an essentialising of cultural differences and communities (Bauman, 1996; Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, 2006; Johnson, 2007) that is very present in policy papers and official discourses about earning citizenship by fulfilling cultural requirements (Crick *et al.*, 2002; Home Office, 2002, 2008; Goldsmith, 2008). For example, she specifically highlights the fact that she has always been *like this* and that British culture, through all those acts and practices, simply fit her as if she was *made* for it, naturalising her belonging by claiming a genuine and authentic adherence to British culture from birth. Additionally, Agnieszka narrates her identity as being out of place in

> *[How do you feel about being Polish?] I don't know, I have mixed feelings about it… because Poland is so cut out from… it's a very religious country (…) and it is just completely opposite to everything that I believe in, I am not religious at all and I am probably as liberal as they go…*

For Ina, language is also a key factor in the ability to *act British.* Ina has lived in the UK for more than 20 years and tells me how everybody thought she was British even before she got British citizenship. For her, language was a key part of being recognised as a fellow citizen, which contributed to her feeling she belonged here

> *Language is something that makes you feel connected (…) I think language is massive in making you feel part of something*

However, in her case Ina makes sure to clarify that this is not simply because she is able to speak English, but she is able to do it without a foreign accent. This signals the importance of daily negotiations over national membership, which are not only managed by the state but are also negotiated in regular interactions with ordinary people (Brubaker, 1992; Bloemraad and Sheares, 2017; Erdal, Doeland and Tellander, 2018; Birkvad, 2019) as we saw in the previous chapter. Accent is one of the main barriers to feeling British for Kaiden or Mario for example, who discredit any potential claim to national belonging and reveals any hidden ethnic background (Birkvad, 2019, p. 809). Similarly, Aleksander also feels that he would never be able to identify as British, because of his accent

> *I don't feel this society is inclusive enough even though people are friendly, but there are still some boundaries which no matter how good my English would be, I would still have an accent and (…) I would be put immediately to the migrants' drawer*

Having an accent can have a negative effect on the experience of migrants who feel they could otherwise truly become British. Alvar, an Estonian citizen who lived in the US for four years before moving to the UK, more than 15 years ago, feels that his accent has an impact on his ability to feel British

> *I don't feel that I am British at all, even the fact that I speak fluent English and I still don't feel that…you know, yeah… I've been living in an English speaking country for a long time, I still find words that I don't understand, I still have you know, that accent*

For others, like Claire and Marie, both French citizens who moved to the UK when they were 4 and 5 years old respectively, it is the lack of an accent that enables them to be and feel part of the British culture. They both strongly identify with their French heritage and explicitly say that they are not British but are able to feel British because people treat them as such, due to them speaking without an accent, revealing the power of ordinary people to influence feelings of national belonging and inclusion (Brubaker, 1992).

There are assimilationist undertones in the incorporation of these official discourses. That is, ways of performing Britishness go beyond mere acts and can include a way of being such as in Agnieszka's case or a way of thinking, as Pauline says.

> *I have assimilated to this society here… I think in a more British way than sometimes in French, I … what do I do? I do British things, I do Yorkshire puddings and I do Sunday roast and I go for picnics with a basket and what else do I do? That's British?*

Assimilation and citizenship in her case are linked through a desire of recognition of her sense of belonging. Pauline not only does British things, but she also thinks in a British way. The interpretation of Yorkshire puddings and Sunday roasts, etc. as symbols of her Britishness signals that belonging, attachment, membership and national identity are closely linked and often expressed in terms of concrete everyday experiences (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010).

These acts of Britishness reveal how interactions with ordinary people in everyday life are essential for determining inclusion and exclusion in the political community and the community of value. They also constitute learning experiences that are not recognised in the learning requirements included in the naturalisation process. In the next section I discuss how learning itself became another emblem of good citizenship.

7.4 Learning as virtue

In the previous sections I demonstrated how participants' narratives of identity and discourses of belonging were turned into emblems of deservingness and overlapped with official forms of narrating the nation. In this section I add learning as a third component of their narratives of deservingness.

Participants mentioned learning as an integral part of the process of becoming a citizen, although not only within the naturalisation process. Learning is considered here as a bottom-up process of constructing the subject, where aspiring citizens "apply state power to themselves and participate in their own governing (Menjívar and Lakhani, 2016) by demonstrating the right knowledge, values and willingness" (Bassel, Monforte and Khan, 2018, p. 227) to be loyal to the nation.

By adding a layer that takes into account participants' interpretations of learning, I aim to reveal how cultural requirements and the concomitant expectations of transformations in the aspiring citizen were included in their discourses of deservingness. Here, I propose the argument that the trend toward expansion of civic integration criteria in naturalisation processes has turned learning into a virtue and a symbol of deservingness. This section discusses how participants have incorporated these narratives into their claims to membership and belonging.

I start by addressing the link between learning cultural requirements and deservingness, before turning to the notion of civic or constitutional patriotism (Markell, 2000; Gitlin, 2007) to illustrate participants incorporation of official values into their narratives of belonging.

7.4.1 Culturalisation of citizenship

The culturalisation of citizenship refers to the increasingly central role given to culture in definitions of social integration, which are in turn a requirement for access to citizenship (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010). In their work on culturalisation of citizenship, Duyvendak and colleagues (2010) refer to the emotional components that permeate the definition of citizenship, which promote a "need for feelings of loyalty to the nation state and demands feelings of loyalty and belonging from immigrants and proof of such feelings." (p. 239)

Participants in this research often mentioned learning in general terms, with no clear distinction between formal learning (studying for the Life in the UK test) and informal learning (in everyday life in the UK). Here I would like to stay true to that blurred differentiation between formal and informal learning, assuming that the learning experience doesn't always split neatly into formal and informal learning experiences (Lave, 2019) and that they tend to be mutually constitutive. Therefore, I refer here to a general concept of learning rather than focus on a particular form of learning.

In this conception of learning there is a key component: the process of self-making. Participants consider that the learning experience must have a transformative (but not necessarily positive[24]) impact on them and position themselves within these narratives. Thus, learning reveals much more than just the content of what was learned, it reveals a particular subject in the making, and the imperative to learn in order to belong (Ong, 2003; Menjívar and Lakhani, 2016; Morrice, 2016b).

[24] See Morrice, 2012 for a broader discussion on the problems of assuming a general theory of transformative learning as a positive

For Elías, learning and knowing the things that he knew about the UK, revealed a level of integration that he was proud of

> *there is a number of friends of mine or people in my social circle who aren't as ... integrated in the community as I think I am and they are already British, so they give you this sense... of "if they are then why shouldn't I be" in the sense that they... 'cause these people don't even know you know, between English and British and they have the passports.*

Elías sees the specific things that he *"knew very well"* about the *"four nations that make up the British state"* or *"geography, history and politics"* as a sign of his integration in the community. Furthermore, he resents that so many people who acquired British citizenship, who do not know enough about Britain, i.e., are not as integrated as he is. Lazar feels the same, he disapproves of British citizens who are not 'fully integrated'

> *I know there is out there, there are British citizens that don't really speak English and I think that's terrible. I think that's terrible*

Lazar and Elías are reproducing official discourses about good citizens and earned citizenship, which highlight the need to create an "expectation that all who live here should learn the language, play by the rules, obey the law and contribute to the community" in the words of Jacqui Smith, former Home Secretary (Home Office, 2008, p. 5). They see knowledge and learning as symbols and proof of civic integration.

Balázs is another good example of the importance of learning processes in his journey to British citizenship and his perception of who he is. For him, learning about Britain and Life in the UK was useful and it is something he *would recommend to everyone*, not just those applying to citizenship. He feels pride in becoming British, in living in Britain and in having learned to speak English without a foreign accent. The result is a sense of attachment to British culture. His attachment is closely linked with the things that he has learned, which are not limited to formal learning in the form of the Life in the UK test, but expands into his everyday experience and reflects who he is

> *I'm pretty good at catching up quite quickly to people and I'm always ready to learn, I always felt like I was quite good at it*

He considers learning in itself to be a virtue and this has been a key part of Balázs experience of becoming British, which expanded to learning English, learning about customs, etc. He tells me how at the beginning he was quite self-conscious about his English being the *worst one in the company*, because he was the only foreigner; but that he took that contact with native English speakers as an opportunity and a challenge to learn more. The entire experience of learning English has *opened up the whole world* for Balázs, who tells me that all this learning in England has *opened up his eyes a bit wider*, something he is *quite grateful* for. In Balázs's case, this feeling of being transformed and grateful for that transformation is tied to his perception of what Britain represents. For him, Britain is the centre of the world, and this made him *want to be part of it*. As a result, having to show he had learned to be a British citizen was a transformative and validating experience

> *It gives you sort of … you feel confident and you feel like… I won't say you feel like a British citizen, because that's not a matter of exams or stuff like that, but you definitely feel more like you know, more like… a part of this country, like you are a member of this country*

Elías and Balázs are good examples of how notions of learning, culture, and identity are deeply intertwined with representations of citizenship and belonging in Britain. Both valued the knowledge they gained (Byrne, 2017) and regarded the cultural requirements as an opportunity to perform their integration.

The cultural components serve multiple purposes here: testing knowledge about the country, showing loyalty and adherence or conformity to dominant values (that is, to specific cultural interpretations of certain liberal democratic values, etc.) (Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel, 2011, p. 416)

This interpretation of civic integration requirements overlaps with their justifications in policy papers, such as that they will reveal aspiring immigrants commitment to the nation and desire to integrate into their communities (Home Office, 2008, p. 16). Balázs feels more part of the country, and therefore his efforts to integrate could be said to have enhanced community cohesion, through his sense of belonging and his new bond with native British citizens (Home Office, 2002, p. 11).

Both participants and policy thus attribute a power to learning that transcends acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, there is a call for transformation through learning in the naturalisation process, that both Elías and Balázs seem to respond to. A transformation necessary to become a good citizen and that can be achieved through learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This is a key symbol of the culturalisation of citizenship, where learning of cultural elements and values is required by law to earn citizenship.

7.4.2 Civic patriotism

In 2007, the Smith Institute published a Report on Britishness, which aimed to engage with the interaction between notions of Britishness and issues of diversity and equality (p.3) by proposing that British national identity could also be defined as "a progressive national feeling" (p. 3). In the introduction to this report, the Director of Policy and Public Sector at the Commission for Racial Equality[25], Nick Johnson, regrets that Britishness is not sufficiently spoken about in terms of belonging (2007, p. 4) . In the same report, Todd and Gitlin argue that progressive politicians need to embrace patriotism and discuss the importance of Britishness, otherwise they are "leaving it to the right to promote a narrow

[25] Now the Equality and Human Rights Commission

and exclusive view of national identity" (2007, p. 5). This report is a good example of the driving force behind the culturalist turn in citizenship policies in the UK in the early 2000s. It refers to the need of a 'patriotism of values' understood as an "affection for country, where the country stands for shared, decent values", where "the nation state matters because it is a concrete embodiment of values, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (p. 15). The report thus proposes that 'civic patriotism' is the affirmation "that to live in the community is to receive its protections – and to respect its right to expect an attachment of spirit in return" (p. 18). This definition of the state in terms of emotional and affective elements is central to the increased emphasis on values and culture that has been defining British citizenship policies throughout the past twenty years.

The emotional language with which this patriotism of values is presented in the report has an extraordinary resemblance to the way participants discussed their impressions of the civic integration or cultural requirements which make up part of the naturalisation process. Emotional attachment seems to be central in the understanding of Britishness as a composite of common values and is equated with a commitment to the nation, both of which were closely intertwined with learning processes.

In relation to the recommendations of the Crick Report, the Home Office suggested that the learning needed to be about more than rules and legislations, but also about everyday behaviours (2008, p. 14). Following this, learning and a willingness to learn continues to be seen as a virtue. And this willingness to learn does not only apply to a good citizen but is also a sign of a good nation. Proof of this is that the Home Office portrays Britain as a learning nation, that is aware of other countries having implemented tests and learning requirements in their naturalisation processes, and willing to "learn from the experience of others while remaining aware that each nation is unique" (Home

Office, 2002, p. 79). Thus, both citizen and nation can mobilise the notion of learning to display their desirability (Fortier, 2017)

What is striking here is that even on occasions when participants contest the naturalisation process for its cultural requirements and for putting forward particular interpretations of official values, they also incorporate such discourses of values, attachment, and commitment in their own narratives. A good example of this is Elvira, who feels that (formal) learning is necessary and is the symbol of a series of emotions such as respect, deference, gratitude, etc. that the nation has the right to expect from aspiring citizens

> *Because if you want to acquire the nationality of the country or the passport, you have to previously have a series of information about that country. To have knowledge about that country. To show you are grateful to that country…*

For Elvira, who has lived in the UK for almost 30 years, learning is a gesture of respect and gratitude, and it is reasonable that the nation would require it to assess the citizen in this light when deciding whether she deserves citizenship or not. Similarly, Francisco considers that being a citizen means that *you have pride and support your country* and believes it is important to learn certain things about a country before being awarded its citizenship

> *I think it's important that if you are going to be from a country that you know the history of the country, so… obviously you represent that country once you become a citizen, so history has a weight…*

For Francisco, the state has the right to choose aspiring citizens who have made the effort to learn something about the country to better represent it. Jens agrees with what has been termed a "cherry-picking process" (Morrice, 2016a)

> *I think the reason is that you basically want somebody to become a citizen of your country to have at least a basic knowledge of how things work, and I think there are things around the constitution, I'm sorry this country doesn't*

> *have a constitution, at least not a written one. But to know how the legal system works, how police and everything else works and the culture, the traditions, a little bit of history, I think it's actually only fair, that people can't just show up and say 'oh I'd like a passport, how much do I have to pay?' And have no knowledge of the country*

Jens' perception that 'it is only fair' reflects the idea that it is common sense (Fortier, 2021) to expect that migrants will learn about the country, as we saw in Chapter 6. Similarly, Lazar considers that cultural requirements are important, and that the naturalisation process should be designed to only allow those who *are integrated* and who truly feel attachment and *respect* for the national community to become citizens

> *if you want to become a citizen ...you need to know about the history (...) but one thing I tell you for sure (...) I think everyone that's becoming British needs to speak the official language, in whichever country, which is English here*

This is what I interpret as an incorporation of ideas of civic patriotism, where feelings of loyalty, gratitude, pride, etc. reveal an "attachment of spirit" that the nation has a right to expect. Nevertheless, neither Elvira nor Francisco feel the attachment strongly enough, and therefore they have decided not to naturalise. Francisco and Elvira comment on how certain things cannot be formally learned and how feelings are not born out of tests. This leads both of them to a self-selection process that excludes them from citizenship, because of their inability to fulfil the nation's legitimate expectation for attachment. In Francisco's words, *because even if I studied the whole history I still wouldn't feel British.* This self-selection process is presented as a sign of honesty and integrity and, most importantly, as a genuine rejection of that "pretended patriotism" Gitlin speaks about in the report on Britishness. In a way their decision not to naturalise is a sign of civic patriotism.

7.5 Conclusion

The variety of experiences and perspectives presented here attest to the relevance of understanding citizenship as a moral space when studying naturalisation processes, as it presents "the rich content of citizenship, with its sets of duties, rights, and activities" (Anderson, 2013, p. 8) shaped by moral discourses of deservingness.

I have shown how the official construction of the "good citizen" through civic integration and cultural requirement criteria has a significant impact on the way participants narrate themselves and interpret the naturalisation requirements. They often either mentioned the Home Office definitions of good character (Lazar) or being integrated (Elías), speaking English, volunteering, paying taxes, making an effort (Elvira), etc., as proof that they are worthy citizens (Byrne, 2017). These narratives of deservingness revealed that these aspiring citizens were not only speaking about the naturalisation process and what it required of them but had extended their claims to citizenship to who they were and even how they thought and felt. This reveals that the naturalisation process triggered an intimate identity assessment in participants of this research.

The definition of citizenship in Britain puts forward a concrete notion of citizenship as reward, as something that needs to be earned through a deep emotional and personal attachment to the nation. In interpreting those notions, aspiring and new citizens in this research developed their own discourses of deservingness to legitimise their claims to citizenship, most of which seemed to be deeply influenced by the same ideals put forward in policy papers. From this follows that the instrumentalisation of citizenship does not exclude the attribution of emotional and moral values to it.

Here, the development of a moral economy of deservingness revealed that citizenship is represented as a moral space, where aspiring citizens need to prove their moral worth or suitability to earn the privilege of full formal membership. They do so by displaying emblems of good citizenship, among which learning plays a central role.

Civic and cultural integration requirements provided a platform for discussing these issues with participants because it led them to talk about citizenship in the context of their everyday lives. The notion of acts of Britishness helped me to link participants actions to their representations of citizenship and reveal the trading and bargaining that was part of that moral economy, where participants listed a series of behaviours, tasks, ways of thinking or acting or feeling which proved their belonging and deservingness. These actions were the currency participants were trading in in the moral economy of deservingness.

Finally, the relevance of "learning" and its association with notions of good citizenship in participants' accounts of their experiences of naturalisation, highlight the importance of conceptualising the journey to citizenship as a learning process, that goes beyond the formal learning involved in the English and Life in the UK test. The learning requirements expand to encompass an understanding of learning in broader terms, with transformative undertones, where aspiring citizens need to prove that they have learned to "be British".

8 CONCLUSION

At a time when immigration is increasingly seen as a threat to national identities and sovereignty and citizenship is constructed ever more as an expression of nationalist myths and an inherent category of individuals (Kundnani, 2007; Joppke, 2010, 2019b; Spiro, 2019); I set out to analyse the various experiential levels at which the intersection of these two social phenomena, migration and citizenship, play out. To do so, I focused on three key research questions, all organised around the naturalisation experience, which explored first, the impact of European citizenship on participants' naturalisation experiences; second, the role of civic integration requirements in shaping such experiences, and finally, the resulting discursive constructions of deservingness on participants representations of citizenship and belonging. All three of these research questions were traversed by the political context (Brexit) and multi-scalar understanding of citizenship and belonging that blended local, national, and transnational levels.

Naturalisation processes are key to understanding the complex relationship between citizenship and migration because they produce the citizens (Byrne, 2014). In defining criteria for membership, citizenship policies and naturalisation requirements mobilise instruments of inclusion and exclusion in a mix of legal, political, economic, cultural, and affective requirements. The main goal of these requirements is to transform individuals from aliens to citizens, through a variety of learning processes and experiences (Delanty, 2003). Moreover, the local context is essential to understand the impact of such requirements on aspiring citizens' experiences and representations of citizenship. Primarily, because it was in their local communities where participants encountered

Britain, developed their understandings of what it meant to be British and came to define Britishness in particular terms.

The curating of everyday citizenship practices that takes place within the process of naturalisation does not occur in a vacuum (Fortier, 2021), rather it is substantially influenced by the socio-political and historical context within which it is embedded. Therefore, it is essential to consider the design, implementation, and findings of this inquiry within the context of Brexit and its immediate aftermath, between 2016 and 2017. The same research today, could produce another variety of affective definitions of citizenship, although I propose that notions of identity, belonging, home, and deservingness would continue to constitute key elements of the naturalisation experience. This is because, as I have demonstrated here, they often precede the naturalisation process and are a sign of a general turn in Britain towards affective and cultural definitions of state citizenship.

The results presented here are evidence of a topography of inclusionary and exclusionary measures that define citizenship in impenetrable ways (Mhurchú, 2014). From this follows that citizenship is defined as an organising device, in which liberal democratic values and notions of rights and equality conceal the struggles behind the legal categorisation of individuals (Redclift, 2013; El-Enany, 2020). This topography, which reveals various layers (transnational, national, and local) and ambiguous experiences, contributes to an understanding of citizenship as perpetuating divisions that are socially and politically constructed.

State definitions of citizenship and their related rules of access are important because they are "an influential expression of the receiving country's vision and philosophy in relation to the inclusion of immigrants" (González-Ferrer and Morales,

2013, p. 456). However, it is also important to go beyond such definitions and look at their impact on everyday experiences of citizenship, because those definitions shape "normative arguments about naturalisation" (Hampshire, 2011, p. 957) that ultimately shape access to rights and equality.

This research provides a clear representation of how EU citizens exercised membership through everyday practices based on their assumptions of what it meant to be a citizen, regardless of their legal status. Moreover, those assumptions often replicated official discourses revealing the deeper impact that official definitions of citizenship and Brexit had on participants' self-definitions.

I have shown here that naturalising as a British citizen in the context of Brexit was experienced in multiple ways, from a response to unsettled notions of home and belonging (Chapter 5), as a disillusionment (Chapter 6) and as a dimension of deservingness and moral valence (Chapter 7). These experiences revealed a paradox at the heart of EU citizens' experiences of naturalisation in Britain, where the search for rights and belonging was often experienced as a complex affective journey (Barrios Aquino, 2022).

Through the study of these affective responses to the naturalisation process, I provide an original and in-depth analysis of the conditions in which the affective power of the state was received. Furthermore, the specific consideration of the variety of levels in which migrants' everyday experience of citizenship takes place, contributes to an original perspective in which transnational, national, and local geographies and attachments overlap to provide a clearer picture of the topographies of citizenship and belonging. In doing so, I critique the current British naturalisation process for its essentialising and moralising definitions of citizenship. With the case of EU citizens naturalising in Britain after Brexit, I contest notions of citizenship as a universal and legal

category that promotes democratic values and equality. Moreover, I argue that current definitions of citizenship as something to be earned contribute to widening the divide between those included and those excluded; producing everchanging technologies of exclusion manifested in affective, cultural, and moral requirements.

In this chapter, I draw together the most relevant findings of this thesis and summarise the answers to the original research questions it set out to investigate. I start with a discussion of the context of this research and how it contributed to answering its research questions. Next, I present the limitations that hindsight revealed and how they can inform future research. Thirdly, I discuss the contributions to knowledge organised in five main thematic areas. In the final remarks I provide a reflection how I believe this research could inform policy.

8.1 Affective citizenship in Britain after Brexit

The main research question of this inquiry sought to investigate the impact of the naturalisation process and the political context on everyday European citizens' practices and representations of British citizenship. The findings presented here revealed that both Brexit and the civic integration shaped participants' experiences and narrowed their opportunities for belonging and feeling as full members of the polity.

By focusing on the experiential aspect of British citizenship in the context of Brexit, I was able to expose the aspects of the naturalisation process where the state focuses its affective power in times of political fervour. That is, its power to govern individuals' lives through affect. A key finding that derived from this was that individuals' experiences of citizenship are useful in exploring the conditions through which the state creates citizens. Moreover, I have suggested that non-citizens are instrumental to the perpetuation of

certain ethnonationalist representations of citizenship rather than merely passive receivers of them (Tonkiss and Bloom, 2015; Fortier, 2021).

Three further research questions contributed to the breakdown of the main research question into three empirical chapters. The first referred to the relevance of European identity and citizenship for naturalisation processes in Britain in the aftermath of Brexit. In Chapter 5, I showed how European citizenship was differently experienced (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) and the impact these identifications had on conceptions of home and belonging (5.2.1 and 5.3.2). Furthermore, here I demonstrated that transnational notions of citizenship did not conflict with the importance of national membership and that both coexisted in harmony with local conceptions of home and identity, lodged in different levels of belonging. I analysed this multi-scalar sense of belonging with a translocational lens (Anthias, 2018) to highlight the various ways in which naturalisation criteria flattened and essentialised notions of belonging.

The second research question referred to the role of civic integration requirements and their power to influence participants expectations of citizenship. In chapter 6, I discussed how civic integration requirements constructed an idea of a homogenous, pre-existing community to which all aspiring citizens had to "sign up" and become emotionally committed to (Morrice, 2016b, p. 4). Furthermore, they construct the national community as a safe place, outside of which there are few guarantees. Yuval-Davis argues that citizenship is a critical factor of what she calls "security special rights" referring to a right "to plan a future in a more or less secure manner" (Yuval-Davis, 2013, p. 57). The link between safety and citizenship was present in all participants' expectations of citizenship (6.1 and 6.2), as all considered the status of migrants as precarious and holding negative connotations. Therefore, for participants in this research, the main reason for

naturalising was precisely that desire for security. Such expectations were confronted with civic integration requirements that forced participants to revisit and question their place in society (6.3), revealing hierarchies of belonging and eroding past certainties (6.4), given how such requirements flattened the complexity of everyday life and multi-scalar belonging they had experienced before.

The right to plan a future is complicated with a sense of loss that "Western European" participants were more likely to feel as a result of the uncertainties brought by Brexit. These "old European citizens", as they were labelled by the Brighton and Hove city council (Humphreys and Newell, 2018), were also looking to regain a sense of being at home through naturalisation. In Chapter 5, I used the concept of defensive naturalisation (Aptekar, 2016) to conceptualise naturalisation as a homemaking strategy. Here, it became clear that Brexit had a different impact on "Western" and "Eastern" Europeans. Furthermore, although it is impossible to separate its destabilising effect from participants' aspirations to safety through citizenship; those aspirations were more likely to have originated in the political context for participants who saw themselves as more privileged.

These differences point to the unequal access to European identity and citizenship that "Western" and "Eastern" Europeans enjoy in Britain today, and to the existence of a European community of value that tends to favour "Western" over "Eastern European" citizens, and which presents some overlap with the British community of value. The concept of community of value (Anderson, 2013) highlights British citizenship's "histories of exclusions, inequalities, hierarchies, securitisations" (Nyers, 2007, p. 2).

Moreover, any interpretation of participants' narratives presented here needed to consider the socio-political and historical context in which this research took place. Brexit

was disruptive for everyone's sense of certainty and belonging, and this is not only true for EU citizens (Bauböck, 2019b) although it could be argued that they experienced such uncertainties more acutely, by being the main focus of media attention. Although the severity of the removal of rights from EU citizens as a result of Brexit is unquestionable, in providing a historical context of official definitions of British citizenship I demonstrated that this is far from an exceptional case in Britain. Rights have been increasingly and periodically removed from British subjects since the 40s, affecting non-white subjects disproportionately (Mayblin, 2017; Anderson, 2019; El-Enany, 2020; Fortier, 2021). This historical context was key to interpreting participants experiences of the naturalisation process, thus emphasising that citizenship, migration, and the political context need to be considered within a historical context.

The third and final research question, served to analyse the moral economy of deservingness (Garcés-Mascareñas and Chauvin, 2012) that was fostered by citizenship policies and political discourses. In Chapter 7, I demonstrate that acts of citizenship became currency to prove the legitimacy of participants' claims to British citizenship. I called these acts, acts of Britishness. Participants' mobilisation of moralising discourses in legitimising their claim to British citizenship and equality revealed a variety of new (to them) forms of homemaking strategies that included many of the narratives they encountered in citizenship regulations and naturalisation requirements. However, through these processes, participants were also constituted as moral agents willing to resist state definitions of belonging through acts of citizenship. For example, Marika spoke of her cooking skills to prove that she had raised a British daughter and to signal that she felt a strong sense of belonging in England. Before moving on to the specific thematic contributions of my research, I briefly discuss some limitations and suggestions for future research.

8.2 Limitations and challenges to address in future research

While citizenship has been the central concept in this research, its practice and meaning has been presented in elastic ways to accommodate the everyday experiences of citizenship, which surpass the defining ability of the idea of "the citizen". Such a slippery concept begs for boundaries and such boundaries, although theoretically informed, artificially reduce the scope of the concept and limit its resemblance to its presence in 'the real world'. Therefore, conceptual limitations referring to my approach to the study of citizenship, which leaves out the impact that rights have on participants' political behaviour or the connection between citizenship and social mobility, among others, were necessary and inevitable, given the focus of this research on affective aspects of citizenship.

Within the context of migration research, it is a challenge to address citizenship as experienced and practiced, because it runs the risk of obscuring the material and emotional significance of a given citizenship for those who set out to earn it. However, the importance of taking up the challenge is clear; the naturalised and nativistic divide that is perpetuated by legalistic views of citizenship runs an even higher risk than this challenge poses.

Participants in this research provided a rich and ambiguous account of the legal, material, emotional, and social values of British citizenship; and this is one of the key findings of this research. However, this phenomenon was exacerbated by a volatile political and historical context, in which some of the personal consequences of Brexit (uprootedness, uncertainty, etc.) spilled over into all dimensions of participants' representations of citizenship and experiences of naturalisation. Although the impact of the political context was in itself part of this inquiry, it has introduced an element of distortion that might not be present as I write these lines, when political fervour has been

significantly reduced around these topics. I regret not having the time or resources to provide my participants with the opportunities to provide their input into my interpretations, as that would have improved the depth of my findings. In future, I will make sure to plan in some time to set some evaluations in dialogue with any available participants.

Thus, this research is limited to my interpretation of a snapshot of a personal and political moment for participants. Furthermore, the complexity of the content of the interviews begged for a small sample, from which conclusive results can be drawn, but fewer policy implications can be reliably extracted. Importantly, however, this research had no intention to be generalisable or to provide a longitudinal view of the evolution of citizenship practices. Much to the contrary, it was designed to provide evidence of the complex, ambiguous, and multi-scalar dimension of citizenship practices, based on participants' naturalisation experiences.

The location of my research was essential to producing these findings, however, the unique identity of Brighton may have exacerbated the significance of local belongings.

To overcome some of the challenges mentioned in the previous section, in future, research on the affective character of citizenship among aspiring citizens could be conducted in times of less political instability, as well as in different locations simultaneously and over longer periods of time, to provide contrasting results. Longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of the effect of political context on affective practices of citizenship. The changing nature of emotions begs for research that would follow participants over a longer period, to assess the various aspects that could influence their everyday practices of citizenship. The transnational character of European citizenship opens up possibilities for the study of other forms of transnational

belonging and citizenship, for example within the Mercosur in Latin America or with postcolonial subjects that claim belonging to a variety of locations and histories.

Although my own complex relationship with citizenship could never be completely excluded from my research endeavours, during the course of this research I myself, lost my European citizenship and was forced to begin a prolonged process of recovering it. This may have influenced my analysis in ways that are unpredictable and that were not accounted for in the research design, which in future could include autoethnographic aspects, to improve transparency and reflexivity.

8.3 Contributions to knowledge

In this section, I offer a reflection on what I believe are the main contributions to knowledge of this thesis according to each of its thematic pillars.

8.3.1 Everyday Practices of Affective Citizenship: Acts of Britishness

Inspired by Engin Isin's work on acts of Citizenship, I set out to analyse my data through a lens that regards citizenship as more than status and practice (Isin and Nielsen, 2008) and defines such practices as affectively informed. In the literature that develops and applies the concept of acts of citizenship, practices are mostly understood as explicitly enacting rights and constituting citizens through their practices (Aradau et al., 2010; Byrne, 2017; Fortier, 2016; Isin & Nielsen, 2008). This shift of focus from the "doer to the deed" (Isin & Nielsen, 2008, p. 2) leaves the individual's interpretation of such deeds outside of the scope of the action, which is prima facie defined as an act of citizenship. This research has expanded the concept of act of citizenship through the concept of acts of Britishness, which include the individuals' motives and interpretations of such actions, as well as the emotional and affective aspect behind the act, so that we

can broadly analyse *how* and *why* citizenship is practised from outside the confines of legal membership in Britain and as shown in this research, simultaneously co-constituting such legal frames. Hence the relevance of them being conceptualised as acting as citizens while not holding the status. This definition as 'being outside' is key for the boundary-conscious approach used here (Bosniak, 2006), which resulted in an emphasis on the emotional value of the legal status, shedding light on the constitution of the citizen before naturalisation.

This perspective finds fertile ground in the literature on affective citizenship, which refers to the ways in which citizens are encouraged to interact with each other or to feel about citizenship and the state (Fortier, 2010, 2016; Merolli, 2016; Wilińska and Bűlow, 2020). This body of literature calls for more focus on how guidelines are received and internalised. I answered this call by further developing an empirically based reflection on how civic integration requirements are appropriated and further utilised to (re)produce and simultaneously contest narratives of national identity. An example of this was Elvira's deferential interpretation of the Life in the UK test requirement, which she considered an opportunity to show *gratitude* to this country (6.1.1) or Dimitri's understanding of it as a device to protect British culture, which would otherwise become *diluted* (also 6.1.1). While accepting the requirement on the one hand, neither Elvira nor Dimitri naturalised, because both considered their feelings of belonging were enough and could not be enhanced by naturalisation. Thus, they simultaneously adhere to and resist, conform to and act outside of, the civic integration requirements and the realms of legal membership in the state. A similar example is Pauline, who rejects the existence of all affective requirements while simultaneously claiming to already feeling more British than French, because she goes on picnics and bakes Yorkshire puddings (7.3.2). These are examples of acts that exceed official definitions of citizenship (Fortier, 2021).

Emotions are thus presented as sites of reproduction of the nation and nationalistic processes as well as potential sites of resistance to certain definitions of citizenship. Elvira's, Dimitri's, and Pauline's appropriation of what it meant to be British and how they felt that belonging to Britain was a *repackaging* of the same narratives put forward by citizenship policies. Pauline for example speaks of being European "not Argentinian", claiming a place in a hierarchy of migrants to the UK, that is, referring to an internal hierarchy within migrants as well. A boundary-conscious approach, in conversation with the inward-looking perspective, could reveal the complexity and ambiguities within these experiences, which simultaneously resist and reproduce affective definitions of citizenship and their resulting hierarchies.

Affective definitions of citizenship were ubiquitous and revealed the impact that civic integration requirements have on participants' self-definitions and definitions of citizenship. This is not to say that alternative definitions of citizenship are not possible or present in participants' narratives. Nina, for example, defined her experiences of Brexit and the naturalisation process in emotional terms, but resisted the affective definition of her formal membership in the state: "*Britain is my country. Now that I am British, it makes no difference" (6.1.2).*

These narratives serve to highlight how an analysis of the affective elements of official definitions of citizenship can shine a light on the role aspiring citizens play in reproducing affective requirements, such as knowing the language, being 'integrated', being a 'good citizen', etc. Moreover, the interpretation of such requirements can be incorporated into various versions of geographical and emotional attachment, belonging and homemaking.

In a nutshell, it is not only the act that makes the citizen. The incorporation of emotions also significantly contributes to the production of citizens. I have shown with this research that individuals internalise notions of national attachment and belonging in different ways, while complying with the official state requirements and often reproducing the emotional requirements. However, this does not preclude the possibility of the same participants promoting, simultaneously, alternative definitions of citizenship, once naturalised both from the centre (as citizens) and the periphery (as less-than-equal citizens). This recentring of the migrant subject is essential to undermining the citizen/non-citizen divide, which is primarily done here by showing that nation-building is not only a matter of citizens and the state, but also takes place outside political membership.

By expanding and combining the meaning of both acts of citizenship and affective citizenship to encompass the emotional definition of rights and membership, I found that work done on the virtualisation of citizenship (Schinkel, 2010) and moral citizenship (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens, 2010; de Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016; Morrice, 2016b) was useful to further focus on a bottom-up approach. This revealed a complex structure of belonging and membership which included new layers of discrimination and essentialising differences.

8.3.2 Hierarchies of belonging and deservingness

The combination of acts of citizenship and affective constructions of citizenship under the moralising discourses of civic integration requirements (Schinkel, 2010; de Wilde and Duyvendak, 2016) resulted in the use of a conceptual frame little explored in the study of European citizens: the literature on the moral economy of deservingness (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019). This frame has been

primarily used to refer to undocumented migrants and their attempts to gain legality by signalling their desirability through emblems of good citizenship, which are, in my understanding, nothing other than acts of citizenship. This is an original contribution of this research, which has helped to expand our understanding of moral citizenship as practice.

In Chapter 7, I showed how participants in this research entered into a transaction of deservingness with the state, where they resisted the power of the state to define itself as desirable and yet countered it with their own self-definition of what was desirable using the same desirability indicators: race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language proficiency, cultural elements, etc. Good examples of this are Marie and Ina, who saw themselves as de-facto members of the state due to the colour of their skin and their language skills, stating they can pass as British because they "look and sound British" (5.3.3 and 5.4.2). Similarly, Lazar's statement declaring to always trying "*to be what at the Home Office is described as a person of good character"* (7.2.1) reveals that he borrowed terms from official narratives to define himself.

The moral economy of deservingness trades in a combination of normative definitions of the citizen and acts of Britishness, which inevitably located the participant within a hierarchy of belonging in which the native British citizen occupies the highest level. Wherever participants saw themselves in this hierarchy, their location was the result of a combination of intersecting categories such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, language skills, employment status, etc., as well as affective elements, such as feelings of belonging, ways of thinking, personality, tastes, and opinions.

The moral economy of deservingness also unveiled a paradox regarding belonging. While participants claimed legitimate belonging on a variety of terms based on values

and acts, there was also a general consensus around the fact that full membership was an illusion (Barrios Aquino, 2022). This consensus arose from the discovery of a hierarchy of belonging and deservingness within the national community. Concretely, participants could not claim to feel the level of belonging that someone who was born and bred in Britain would feel. The hierarchies of belonging developed by the economy of deservingness revealed that participants could not ever belong in that way, and often observed that even if they felt that way, this could offend those higher in the hierarchy: the true British citizens. Elias caution to not offend British born citizens (6.4.1) or Francisco's conviction that "a*n acquired nationality is not as heavy as a birth given one" (6.4.1)* are key examples of this.

Over the course of a single interview, the position of the interviewee in that (not so) imaginary hierarchy of belonging, could change. There were moments when they felt at the bottom of it, as was mostly the case when we discussed Brexit, and moments when they felt at the top, where they set their own terms for belonging and membership. This movement within the hierarchy of belonging was often sparked by a conversation about what it meant to be a citizen or to be a British citizen. Here is where I suggest the formation of an economy of deservingness, manifested in a rhetorical negotiation with the state, in which participants signalled how they fit the description of the good citizen while simultaneously dismissing some elements the naturalisation process considered as emblems of good citizenship.

A paradox was more likely to arise in "Western European" participants, who passionately condemned any discrimination against migrants they saw during the referendum campaigns, while – at times – being themselves offended by the label migrant. Additionally, some "Eastern" or "Southern" Europeans recognised the right of

the state to require of them to learn about society while protesting the uselessness of the knowledge requirements. The complex picture is completed in the convergence of most participants' emotional investment in the naturalisation process, revealed in their desire to become citizens to (re)gain a sense of belonging and security that they associated with citizenship. Nevertheless, they also contested the ability of the state to provide that affective sense of safety. Inês felt safer in her new ethnicity of white British while highlighting the conditional nature of her newly acquired citizenship (6.4.1). These contrasting experiences were the result of an ongoing negotiation within the hierarchy of belonging, within which some participants (like Elvira and Francisco) were certain of their position and others (Like Nina and Ina) were not.

The negotiations within the hierarchy of belonging did not merely involve a display of emotions and feelings of belonging. At times, it also involved calculations. For example, Noelia and Aino considered their Spanish and Finnish passports to be more valuable than a British one, as Britain had lost its claim to European citizenship. In contrast, Inês and Jens consider the British passport a liability, due to British foreign policy and the amount of enemies it accrued (6.2.2). Others like Marie and Lena, were eager to acquire political rights, expressing a desire to take control over their lives. Brun and Fábos (2015) define homemaking as those processes we engage in to gain a sense of control and this is why in Chapter 5 I designated naturalisation as a homemaking strategy for some participants.

This thesis has, therefore, expanded the conceptual value of the concepts of deservingness and the economy of deservingness proposed by Garces-Mascareñas and Chauvin (2012) to encompass the actions of aspiring and new citizens of a given nation-state, who actively produce and reproduce (at times unknowingly, as was the case of some

of my participants) the same essentialising structures of naturalisation processes (Kostakopoulou, 2010). This conceptual stretching contributes to widening the tool of economy of deservingness in combination with moral citizenship which provides a better understanding of the complex interstices between citizenship and migration without reproducing the essentialist divide between migrant and citizen (Schinkel, 2019).

This critical approach necessitates a new perspective on citizenship; one not limited to the national or transnational; or the personal and individual manifestations of a citizen, but one which includes the local authorities and their participation in the production of citizenship within very specific political contexts.

8.3.3 Citizenship, the Political Context, and the Local Community

Another key contribution of this research is that it considered the local community as essential to understanding everyday practices of citizenship. In doing so, I responded to calls to contextualise experiences of citizenship to counter universalising accounts that consider rights and obligations, as well as values, in a vacuum without a clear and explicit reference to the local context in which they are being offered or withheld by citizenship policies (Lykke, 2011; Mhurchú, 2014; Barglowski, 2018).

Considering the political context without paying attention to the specific location within which it plays out may not be sufficient. Examples of the relevance of looking at the intersection between local and political contexts were Thomas' self-identification being influenced by Brexit, when his nationality came to inform what he thought of himself (5.2.2). Dimitri and Aino also speak of the differences between Brighton and the north of England (5.3.2 and 6.3.1 respectively) or Noelia's sense of integration stemming from her son's playdates in the neighbourhood (6.4.3). These accounts reveal the impact of the local context on participants' self-definition, their experiences of being at home

and of feeling integrated in Britain. When it came to speak about the ways in which Brexit affected their decisions to become British or what it meant to be a foreign national in Britain it was not the same to live or work in Leeds, London, Brighton, or Worthing. A focus on the local community became clear rather quickly and was present in all interviews in this research. Therefore, the relevance of the local context cannot be highlighted enough, and contributing to an understanding of citizenship, its formations and experiences as taking place primarily in the local level.

Citizenship ceremonies and their focus on local communities are also evidence of the importance of the local in the social and political construction of the nation and of the citizen. Participants' attachment to Brighton was often voiced over attachments to their own citizenship of birth or their European identity, using a similar scaffolding of hierarchies of belonging.

The originality of this approach lies in its multidimensional approach and its in-depth analysis of the various levels of belonging that co-exist in migrants' everyday experiences of citizenship. The concept of translocality and the use of a translocational lens (Appadurai, 1996; Brickell and Datta, 2011; Verne, 2012; Zembylas, 2012; Anthias, 2018) has been used here to speak of affective acts of citizenship across various levels and dimensions of belonging, widening the spectrum of possibilities to explore various scenarios of production of the nation and the citizen. This concept contributes to further eroding methodological nationalism in migration and citizenship research (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003; Nowicka and Ryan, 2015; Sager, 2016; Barglowski, 2018) as it calls for attention to be paid to the locations where citizenship and belonging are being practiced and how they are being granted and accessed at local levels.

8.3.4 Community of Value and Defensive Naturalisation

Drawing attention to the relatively privileged condition of my participants in comparison to other migrants in the UK runs the risk of undermining the material differences between those who have access to rights and those who do not, as well as the differences within my sample. Moreover, their relative privilege is a legal one (they all hold European citizenship), but their perception of that privilege is varied and leads to a variety of different acts of Britishness as well as to different reasons for and experiences of naturalisation. However, their privileged condition also serves to highlight that citizenship itself does not solve the problem of inequality and exclusion, as my participants revealed over the course of our interviews.

I considered studying EU citizens because I thought this shared status exemplifies best a social location where the line between membership and exclusion is fainter, and because EU citizens inhabited a unique space between transnational and national communities of value, which accentuates the usability of this concept. I used here the status of European citizenship to draw attention towards the different dimensions of belonging and how they contribute to the construction of a community of value that is not defined only in terms of rights and obligations, but also in terms of race, gender, sexuality, (western) values, etc. (Anderson, 2013; Byrne, 2015).

The concept of community of value plays a key role in eroding the divisions between citizens and non-citizens, focusing on inequalities within a citizenry that are concealed by a focus on the legal aspect of citizenship, where rights (as citizens and non-citizens) are considered in a vacuum, without context. Furthermore, there were certain emotions that mattered more than others when it came to examining the contours of such community. For example, “Western European” citizens were more likely to feel alienated

and indignant about the process. They tended to feel expelled from a community they used to belong to, hence their feelings of having lost the right to belong (Jose) or of being unsettled (Lena). They used a language of love and intimacy to speak of their reactions to Brexit (Zontini and Genova, 2022). I interpreted these affective responses as a signal that "Western European" citizens, or those who saw themselves as most privileged (Ina, Nina, Pauline, Elias, Jose, were some of the clearest examples), were migrantized (Anderson, 2019).

It is paramount to understand migrantization here in connection with the concept of community of value, because migrantization refers to the ascription of migrant status to citizens. I expanded the term to further erode the divide between citizens and migrants and to highlight the fact that those who 'technically were migrants' (Lazar) also could be migrantized, because they were expelled from a community of legitimate belonging. Furthermore, participants like Nina, Lena, or Pauline, 'felt migrantized' because they associated the European community of value they had inhabited all along with the British community of value.

Such emotions were not present in most "Eastern European" citizens, or in some "Southern European" citizens (Inês, Mario, Elvira, Noelia). I interpreted this as a sign that "Southern" and "Eastern" European citizens do not have equal access to the European community of value and therefore, did not tend to feel a loss of status or the sense of being expelled. This is not to say that they were not aware of the negative connotations that the status of migrant carried in this political context. In fact, this was much to the contrary, they spoke of experiences of discrimination and feeling alienated, but did not tend to associate such experiences with Brexit.

These diverse emotions resulted in a variety of reactions to Brexit. “Western Europeans” naturalised to flee the precariousness of the migrant status. “Eastern Europeans” did the same, but most of them naturalised as soon as they were eligible to do so. The ones that did not naturalise as soon as they became eligible, also did not naturalise directly after Brexit. This points to the fact that “Western Europeans” were more likely to feel a stronger emotional reaction to Brexit, given their higher levels of identification with Europe and the European Union (5.1)

These differences start to blur when participants talk about the naturalisation process, which points to a distinction between emotions caused by Brexit and emotions caused by the naturalisation process. However, such a thin distinction was impossible to clearly identify, given the ambiguous nature of emotions and the pervasiveness of the political context in interviews.

“Eastern” and “Western” European participants alike engaged in what has been defined as ‘defensive naturalisation’ and refers to immigrants seeking “citizenship to protect themselves from criminalisation and anti-immigrant policies” (Aptekar, 2016, p. 1148). Moreover, I interpreted their defensive naturalisation as a homemaking strategy since it aimed to regain a sense of control over their lives (Brun and Fábos, 2015). However, the naturalisation process burst their expectations of regaining a sense of membership, because it confronted them with a hierarchy of belonging included in the definition of citizenship, that meant they would never ‘truly belong’, because it was ultimately exclusionary of everybody who was not born on British soil, with a particular skin colour, in a particular socio-economic situation, with specific language skills, etc. This was best illustrated in Aino’s words ‘*I’ll never be British*’ (6.4.1).

This realisation sparked a series of reflections on deservingness for the most privileged participants, perhaps because their sense of loss was much greater. The more likely participants were to consider themselves members of the community of value, the higher they placed themselves in the hierarchy of belonging and the more they resisted the affective power of the state (although they often reproduced it in their resistance). For example, Ina claims to have always felt at home in Britain, she tells me how she has a stable, well-paying job, owns her flat, and even used to sing the national anthem at football matches. Ina was affronted by the naturalisation process and tells me that she hated "*every minute*" of her ceremony because she felt that she had done enough to prove she deserved citizenship and found the welcoming speech given at her ceremony insulting, as it addressed her as a tourist that was "*here to see the duck pond*!" (6.3.2) In the examples given here, I present the ways in which Ina both contested the naturalisation requirements, while borrowing from official definitions of the good citizen to define herself and claim deservingness as the good citizen she is. In doing so, Ina is reproducing the language of the state to narrate the nation, the citizen, citizenship, and herself.

The fact that many who share a legal status nonetheless experience naturalisation in a variety of ways depending on their levels of privilege suggests the obsolescence of legal status as a useful term for defining citizenship. Instead, this research calls for citizenship to be defined as a complex, historically, and contextually specific combination of emotions, rights, and access to rights.

Finally, the community of value is itself a multi-scalar phenomenon, that takes on a variety of shapes at the transnational, national, and local levels. The European community of value tended to exclude "Eastern" and "Southern" European citizens in similar ways to the British community of value. However, at the local level, there seem to be different rules for inclusion or exclusion. Dimitri speaks of relating to Spanish

speakers who have come to Brighton to learn English, while finding it harder to relate to other European citizens he met in the north, who mostly had come to "*work in the factories*". Kaiden and Francisco declared belonging to Brighton and Aino spoke of how Brighton was "*its own bubble"*, a true reflection of what she saw in the Life in the UK test and that she doubted existed in other places of the UK. Similarly, Noelia feels part of her neighbourhood and her integration is linked to her son having friends over and being invited to other classmates' houses to play.

Communities of value take place at a variety of levels and distribute belonging according to different values and criteria. The same participant could feel part of the local community of value in Brighton, but not of the British or European communities of value (Noelia and Dimitri). Moreover, these communities of value can also overlap, with people like Nina claiming and appropriating the rules for belonging at all three levels.

Finally, all participants in this research draw a clear line between belonging to their own nationalities of origin and the newly acquired British one. Some participants take this perception for granted, having never had different expectations (Kaiden, Francisco, Elías). Others, those who placed themselves in the higher levels of belonging, because they looked, sounded, and thought like British citizens (Marie, Claire, and Ina), experienced this realisation as alienating and unjust. Despite these differences, there was a tendency to reproduce the language of the state to narrate the nation, the citizen, and citizenship, as well as themselves.

8.3.5 Ethnonationalism, learning, and liberal democratic values

Liberal democratic values take on a particular interpretation in Britain, which defines the symbolic and emotional elements of the status of citizen as somebody who: is tolerant, feels attachment to the nation, is willing to learn the customs of British people, etc.

(Cantle, 2001b; Fortier, 2005; Goldsmith, 2008) This context dependent and historically specific interpretation of liberal democratic values reveals that they do not exist independently of such interpretations and, therefore, are never value-free.

According to Delanty (2003) the evolution of our understanding of citizenship as going beyond the abstract vessel of rights (p. 597) has led to a sharper focus on cultural citizenship and learning processes. Such learning processes assume that liberal democratic values need to be learned and that such learning will be transformative. The implications of this shift towards a transformative learning experience are that citizenship is slowly being turned into a "cognitive competence" (ibid., p. 599). Signalling the ability and willingness to perform this cognitive competence was central to participants' discourses of deservingness. For example, Elias speaks of how his having several university degrees aided him in the process (6.3.1); the same applies to Ina or Aino, who both claim to have mastered the English language and that this was an advantage when applying for citizenship (6.1.3). Mario also speaks of his advantage when it came to studying for the test, as Spanish and British history are deeply interconnected (6.3.1). His perception of 'cultural proximity' gave him an advantage in front of his Asian classmates (Ford, 2011; Brahic, 2022).

These participants understood that some learning had to be required but disagreed that it should be required from them due to their cultural proximity. These assumptions rest on ethno-nationalistic understandings of culture. As a result, I conclude that aspiring citizens also contribute to promoting a normative nationalistic notion of the citizen, regardless of their status and place in the hierarchy of belonging. Lazar, for example, is affronted by the idea of English citizens who do not speak the language (6.4.3) and Inês feels her ethnicity has changed with her nationality (7.1.2). The deep internalisation of

the transformative learning has permeated the self-identification of some participants, revealing the power of official discourses and narratives to shape non-citizens' identities.

Delanty (2003) calls this the governmentalisation of citizenship, which in a Foucauldian sense refers to the ways in which "the immigrant becomes a citizen by participating in a discourse that redefines social relations according to fairly fixed categories" (p. 599). Such fixed categories create the script that aspiring citizens follow, a script that is not questioned despite being considered a "silly" "Mickey Mouse game" (Nina in 6.3.1). Francisco, for example, decides that no amount of learning history will make him feel British and therefore, he decided not to naturalise. However, he accepts that the state has the right to choose who will represent it, as that is what citizens do; represent the state. Knowledge of history is essential for this task according to him.

The nation-state thus finds the opportunity to narrate itself in the learning or civic integration requirements (Byrne, 2014). This narrative has been interpreted as a myth that constructs national identity as something other than "inherently fractured, contested, and unstable" (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2021, p. 117). This myth of the nation also promotes the idea that there is a cohesive community into which the aspiring citizen needs to integrate. Furthermore, there is an assumption that learning is necessary for such integration. Mikolaj and Aleksander internalised this idea and refused to move to neighbourhoods with a high proportion of Polish migrants in London, because they wanted to see the British culture (6.4.3)

Civic integration requirements are the text of the myth of the nation, and their main official goal is a functional one which is defined in terms of promotion of integration, active citizenship, socio-economic mobility, equality, etc. These goals are often coated with discourses around liberal democratic values which promote integration, equality,

participation and protection of a democratic state, however, they tend to conceal that such values are also instrumental for the “nationalising practice, that is premised on the belief that ‘resident aliens’ must learn and appreciate the traditions and values of the majority community, and must earn their membership by showing commitment and working hard in order to familiarise themselves with (…) the nation’s traditions” (Kostakopoulou, 2003, p. 102). As a result, liberal democratic values are deeply involved in the perpetuation of the state as an organising institution, and the legitimation of an idea of traditions and values of the majority.

The link between emotions and learning, facilitated by liberal democratic values that refer to integration and a willingness to integrate, created new forms of exclusion. As a result of this, participants experienced the naturalisation process after Brexit as fraught with emotions such as anxiety, hope, fear, optimism, etc. It was a transformative experience, that served to highlight the areas where the state was exercising its affective power with the greatest strength: in the production of a nativistic view of citizenship, to which participants to this research (both “Eastern” and "Western” Europeans) had no access. As a result, this research showed how the experience of a naturalisation process based on affective conditions participants could not fulfil produced 32 citizens who felt less-than-equal (Byrne, 2017), rather than new good British citizens.

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Annexes

Annex A Poster

My name is Marianela and I am a PhD Student at the Sussex Centre for Migration Research of the University of Sussex.

I'm studying experiences with the citizenship process in the UK.

If you are a European citizen living in the UK, entitled to applying for British citizenship; if you are thinking of applying or if you have applied already, I would like to interview you for my research.

If you can help me or know somebody that can, please contact me per email at

M.Barrios-Aquino@sussex.ac.uk

Thanks!

Marianela

sussex centre for migration research

University of Sussex

Annex B Invitation Letter

sussex centre for migration research

University of Sussex

{Name}
[Address line 1]
[Address line 2]
T: +44 (0) 1273
E:

Hove, 15th June 2017

To whom it may concern,

My name is Marianela Barrios Aquino and I am a Doctoral Researcher at the Sussex Centre for Migration Research of the University of Sussex.

My research is about migrants' experiences with the naturalisation process in the UK.

For my research I am planning on conducting interviews in Brighton with EU migrants who are eligible to applying for British citizenship, whether they have applied already, are in the process of applying or are thinking of applying. I believe they can help us understand the process from the migrants' perspective better.

Since your organisation provides support for people in this situation, I was wondering if you could help me recruit participants for my research by circulating my contact and a small introduction of my research amongst your members.

If you are interested in finding out more about my research, please feel free to contact me at M.Barrios-Aquino@sussex.ac.uk or one of my supervisors: Prof. Paul Statham at Paul.Statham@sussex.ac.uk or Dr Linda Morrice at L.M.Morrice@sussex.ac.uk.

Thanks!

Marianela Barrios Aquino

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Annex C Information Sheet

sussex centre for migration research

University of Sussex

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

STUDY TITLE
Migrating into citizenship. The migrant's journey to citizenship

INVITATION PARAGRAPH

'*You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully*'.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?
This study aims to observe how migrants experience citizenship and their journey to it. What is the impact of becoming a British citizen in the everyday lives of migrants. To answer those questions, I would like to interview 30-40 migrants about their experiences and how applying for citizenship impacts on their lives.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?
You have been chosen to participate because you are eligible to applying for British citizenship. If you have applied already or are in the process of applying, I would like to learn more about your personal experience of the process. If you are thinking of applying I would like to know what your expectations are and what are your reasons for applying.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?
Participation is fully voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any given moment (until November 2017), without any particular reason and with not negative consequences of any sort for you. If you decide to participate you will be given a consent form that you need to sign, to make sure that your information will be treated confidentially and that you are aware of the implications of taking part in this research.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?
If you agree to take part, I will arrange to meet with you at a mutually convenient time and place. I will ask you questions about your personal experiences regarding the citizenship process in the UK. You are free to answer only the questions that you want to. At a later stage, if you agree, I may approach you again to ask you to take part in a group interview with people similar to you, where topics regarding the citizenship process in the UK will be discussed.

WILL WHAT I SAY IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?
All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Once the interviews are being transcribed, pseudonyms will be used. Also the data will be stored securely and protected by password in my own personal computer as well as hard copy. Any material published will not allow for any individual to be identified.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?
If you want to take part you need to contact Marianela Barrios Aquino at M.Barrios-Aquino@sussex.ac.uk and let her know that you want to participate, providing contact information for her to contact you and schedule an interview at a time and place of your convenience.

Annex D Consent Form

sussex centre for migration research

University of Sussex

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE: **Migrating into citizenship. The migrant's journey to citizenship**

Project Approval Reference: **ER/MB642/1**

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. The project has been explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio recorded

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

If I agree, I might be contacted in the future and invited to take part in a group interview for the same research project.

I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in the focus group/s / group interviews.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Annex E Mother's Union Vignette

Annex F List of cross-sectional codes

Topic / Subtopics		Description
1. Brexit		Socio-political context. However, it can also refer to a reason to naturalise, impact on wellbeing or on identification practices of political events, political opportunities structures.
2. British Citizenship		All references to meanings, feelings, emotions, content, advantages, or disadvantages
	Britishness - British values	Representations of Britishness found in everyday life, in the naturalisation process, perhaps in the socio-political context.
	Illusion of membership	In relation to feelings of belonging and of failure to feel integrated or included in the community of value after naturalisation.
3. Citizenship		Reference to European, British, or other national citizenship, either in terms of rights or in any other form.

Topic / Subtopics		Description
	A matter of rights	Reference to rights, entitlements, etc.
	Acts of Citizenship	
	Affective citizenship	Reference to emotions that arise from the naturalisation process, or that were made visible by the process
	Claim to citizenship	Reference to reasons why they could/should get British citizenship?
	Cultural citizenship	Reference to cultural requirements, such as language skills, Life in the UK test, ceremonies, or any other reference to cultural interpretations of citizenship.
	Formal citizenship	References to rights, and general material advantages of citizenship, either British, European or any other.
	Hierarchy of citizenships	References to value of citizenships
	Neoliberal citizenship	Workfarist nature of citizenship, where work is fundamental. The process also seems to punish those who didn't have the 'luck to have one good job the whole time'. So,

Topic / Subtopics		Description
		if you have a precarious existence, where you must move a lot due to temporary accommodation or have low paying jobs which change a lot, completing the process can be extra painful
4. Europe		Representations of Europe, European identity, European citizenship, Migration within Europe
	East-West	Reference to differences between Eastern and Western Europeans, in terms of perceptions, experiences, identity, etc.
	European citizenship	
5. Good citizenship		What does it mean to be a good citizen? Mentions of expectations, of performance, of compliance or other discourses relevant to a general understanding of the good citizen and good citizenship. Mentions to the good character requirement. Ideas of integration, deservingness, privilege, super citizen, etc.
	Deservingness	Claims to deserve citizenship on the basis of any performance, nature, contribution, etc.

Topic / Subtopics		Description
	Integration	References to integration, practices that integrate or reveal integration
	Privilege	References to acknowledgement of privilege in themselves or in others. Perceptions of inequalities.
	Super Citizen	Migrants as guardians of good citizenship (Anderson, 2013) Mentions of transformation (or requirements thereof) of naturalised citizens through the naturalisation process
6. Home		References to home, and to belonging
	Identity & Belonging	Any mentions of identity, identification, senses of belonging or lack thereof.
7. Identification		References to identity traits, to forms of collective and individual identification. Personal characteristics that relate to one's identity would also be included here.
	Accent - Language	References to language skills, perceptions of ability.
	Gender	Any gender differences perceived by either researcher or participant.
	Identity	Direct and explicit references to identity

Topic / Subtopics		Description
	International Family Background	References to international background
	Migrant	Representations of migration, migrants, etc. Stories of migration
	Transnational experiences	Stories of migration, international experiences, and identification
8. Naturalisation process		Narratives directly related to the naturalisation process, at any point of the process (from decision-making to culmination) including landmarks like the Life in the UK test and the Ceremony; but not limited to these. Any other landmarks mentioned would be included here.
	Ceremony	Reference, impressions, emotions, représentations
	Life in the UK test	References to it, representations, experiences, emotions, etc.
	Money - costs	References to fees

Topic / Subtopics		Description
	Political Opportunities Structure	References to the socio-political context in any form
	Reasons for applying to British citizenship	Explicit references to reasons for naturalisation