

The heart of an outsider at the heart of the European project. The 1975 and the 2016 Brexit referendums: An analysis of the 'Outsider Tradition' on the national and a local level.

Jasper de Leede

S1178695

[jasperdeleede@gmail.com](mailto:jasperdeleede@gmail.com)

06-14210425

Galgewater 12,

2311 VZ, Leiden

MA Thesis

Dr. J. Augusteijn

27.063 words

## Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
Historical debate .....	4
Methodology .....	6
The National debate during the 1975 referendum.....	10
The political debate in the 1975 referendum .....	11
Economy, Jobs and Trade.....	13
Sovereignty and democracy .....	16
Food Security and production .....	19
Conclusion .....	22
Media coverage and Public opinion .....	24
Conclusion .....	27
The national debate during the 2016 Referendum .....	30
The Political Debate .....	31
Sovereignty and Democracy.....	31
Economy, Jobs and Trade.....	35
Immigration .....	37
Conclusion .....	39
Media coverage and Public opinion.....	41
Conclusion .....	45
Local politicians during the referenda .....	48
Why these regions, and voting percentages during the referenda.....	48
Cornwall.....	50
Derbyshire .....	53
Mid Scotland and Fife.....	55
Lincolnshire .....	57
The city of Manchester.....	58
Conclusion .....	60
Demographic developments in the UK between the 1975 and 2016 referendum .....	62
Populations age and ethnic diversity .....	63
Economic situation .....	67
Level of education .....	69
Conclusion .....	70
Conclusion .....	73
Bibliography.....	77

## Introduction

When the Article 50 procedure was triggered on March 29, 2017, almost a year after 52% of the British people voted to leave the EU, the reactions given by high-ranking officials were often: "how could this have happened?". One could sense the melancholy in mainland Europe about a past when Britain was still enthusiastic about the EU. Donald Tusk, the President of the Council of Europe, said: "There is nothing to win in this process - and I am talking about both sides. In essence, this is about damage control.....We already miss you. Thank you and goodbye."<sup>1</sup> In the UK itself, the division that could be expected when looking at the result of the referendum was prevalent as well. Those who had campaigned for the Leave campaign, such as Nigel Farage, the leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), who said that the impossible dream of leaving the EU had become a reality.<sup>2</sup> Those who wanted to remain felt that the scenario that had to be avoided at all costs had just become a reality plunging the UK into uncertainty.<sup>3</sup>

Since Prime Minister David Cameron promised a referendum in 2014, if the Conservative Party won a majority in parliament, there has been a growing interest in the referendum of 1975 and what the differences and similarities between the two were. This did not limit itself to the historical discourse, but was also mentioned in articles by mainstream media such as the BBC.<sup>4</sup> At first glance the similarities are striking. In both cases, there was to be a referendum because the ruling party had been split over the subject. In both cases, the PM went to Europe for renegotiations and gave the people a vote on the newly negotiated agreements. In this way, they tried to quell the internal debate in their party once and for all. While the gamble of a referendum paid off for PM Wilson, it backfired spectacularly for PM Cameron. Wilson was able to quell the split on the subject inside Labour by winning the referendum with 67% of the popular vote. Cameron, on the other hand, lost the referendum by a narrow margin, with 52%

---

<sup>1</sup> "In quotes: Reaction to Article 50 being triggered", *BBC*, 29 March 2017, link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39431645>.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Farage, twitter, 29 March 2017.

<sup>3</sup> "In quotes: Reaction to Article 50 being triggered", *BBC*, 29 March 2017, link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39431645>.

<sup>4</sup> "EU referendum: 1975 and 2016, a tale of two campaigns", *BBC*, 24 March 2016, Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-35811941>.

of the people voting to leave the EU. With the two-year process after the trigger of Article 50 drawing to a close in a couple of months, and a no-deal-Brexit appearing ever more likely, this research has significant social relevance. It will focus on explaining how the two referenda could result in such vastly differing outcomes. By doing so, it will provide some clarification into how the political instability in the UK over the recent years, with new elections, a minority Government, and an even more divisive split in the Conservative Party that resulted in a confidence vote, came to be.

### Historical debate

The relation of the UK with the EEC, and later the EU, has been a point of interest to historians and social scientists ever since the first foundations of what would become the EU were created in 1957. Since it has been an ongoing development, it has been a relevant subject for several decades, which is noticeable in the amount of literature written about the UK's relationship with Europe<sup>5</sup>. This research focusses on the two referenda as points in time where changes can be seen, by looking at primary sources. Secondary literature will be used when looking at the period in between the referendums, since there has been extensive research into the developments of this period. Extensive studies focussing on the two referenda, however, have not been conducted. The reason this has not yet been done is that the second referendum was a very recent event, with the ultimate effects of the result still being unclear, as of writing. This is where this research adds to the current historical debate. It uses the developments between 1975 and 2016, which have extensively been looked into by other historians, and it applies them to the more recent developments.

In the historical debate, there has been a long tradition of looking at the way Britain has positioned itself as different from the continental Europeans the so-called 'outsider tradition'. Possibly the most essential modern contributions in recent years are from Oliver Daddow, an Assistant Professor at the University of Nottingham. He has published multiple

---

<sup>5</sup> Amongst others:

Oliver Daddow, *Interpreting the Outsider Tradition in British European Policy speeches from Thatcher to Cameron*, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53:1 (2015).

Robert Saunders, "A Tale of Two Referendums: 1975 and 2016", *The Political Quarterly* 87:3 (2016).

Peter Dorey, "Towards Exit from the EU: The Conservative Party's Increasing Euroscepticism since the 1980s", *Politics and Governance* 5:2 (2017).

times on the relation of the UK with Europe and focusses primarily on why this relationship has been a troubled one. The research he has done focusses on a variety of subjects, such as the media and the central role of Rupert Murdoch in making them Eurosceptic<sup>6</sup>, and how history education has influenced the way British people look at Europe and themselves<sup>7</sup>. At the centre of his research, however, it is always the same, the perception British people have of Europe and why the relationship between them is a strained one. His research concludes that the main reason the relationship is so strained is because of this 'outsider tradition'. It causes the British public to feel like an outsider in the EU, being a member while not wanting to be one. Daddow's theory on the British psyche will be used as a basis for explaining why the British people react to certain developments differently than their continental European counterparts. This research will expand on that and look at the developments, measurable at the referenda, that may be causing this Euroscepticism. Another valuable study has been done by John Todd. Todd is a PhD. candidate at Oslo University and his research shows some similarities with this research. Todd has looked at the way the political discourse has changed over time. His focus lies with the 1975 referendum, the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and the announcement by David Cameron of a possible referendum in 2014. The conclusions he draws from his research are that Europe has continuously been discussed in a negative tone, immigration has become a relevant subject in the debate, and party divisions have changed significantly. According to him, these changes have all led to David Cameron promising to have a referendum if he was re-elected. He also states that these changes might make it difficult for the Remain campaign to get the same result Wilson had in 1975.<sup>8</sup> This research will expand on the foundation Todd has put in place by including the political and public debate during the actual referendum in 2016 and whether his prediction became a reality. The focus will not solely be on the political discourse, but will also include the demographic and political developments at a local level. By doing so, this research can test Todd's prediction and see which local developments have played a role in the changes that occurred. This is particularly valuable since research up to this point has focussed explicitly at the national level.

---

<sup>6</sup> O. Daddow, "*The UK media and 'Europe': from permissive consensus to destructive dissent*", *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 88:6 (2012), 1236.

<sup>7</sup> O. Daddow, "*Euroscepticism and History Education in Britain*", *Government and Opposition* 41:1 (2006).

<sup>8</sup> John Todd, *The British self and Continental Other*, Oslo, 2015, 106-107.

## Methodology

As stated, this research will try to move away from the national level since that is where the focus of most prior research has been, and instead focus on the regional changes and differences that caused the UK to become a divided nation. The central question of this research focusses on this: how did the 1975 and 2016 referendum campaigns differ from one another, and in what way can differences in the ways the campaigns were structured, as well as demographic developments, explain the shift towards voting Leave, which some regions experienced, while some remained pro-EU?

This research will be divided into four chapters, each focussing on a different aspect of the main question. The first two chapters will look at the way the two referenda were shaped by both public and political discourse, and media coverage. The first chapter will focus on the 1975 campaign. Primary sources are used predominantly in this chapter, while secondary literature is used to place them in the current debate. The primary sources that will be used are the Parliamentary debate on the White Paper on the Membership of the European Community in 1975, the three main campaign leaflets, and editorials of *The Times*, *the Daily Express*, *The Guardian*, and *the Daily Mirror*. The political debates used in this research will be the whitepaper debates from 7-9 April 1975 and the debates that commenced at the end of June, since those were the final debates before the referendum. These debates can be found in the Hansard Millbank's database and offer a balanced view of the arguments made by politicians voting for and against membership of the European community. To determine the public debate, the aforementioned newspapers will be used in combination with books by Anthon King, David Butler and Uwe Kitzinger, and Roger Liddle. The newspapers are a reliable primary source that ensures that the way the public perceived the debate is understood, while the books provide specific background information and statistics that show what people thought to be the essential subjects during the referendum. By combining the two, a more transparent image of the public debate is obtainable. The risk of only looking at the political discourse is that this might represent the way a small part of society looked at the referendum — namely politicians.

The second chapter has the same layout as the first chapter, with the first part focussing on the political debate and the second part on the public debate. The sources used to determine the political discourse are parliamentary debates from this period, speeches made by David Cameron, speeches and columns by Boris Johnson, the speech given by Nigel

Farage at the UKIP party conference in 2013, and the campaign leaflets produced by the Remain and Leave campaigns. The reason Labour politicians are not included in this research at the national level during the 2016 campaign is that, to a large extent, they remained in the background. The reason behind this is that its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, had been against the EU for most of his political career.<sup>9</sup> Because of that, the most influential campaigners at the national level were not Labour politicians. Despite Labour being the second largest political party during the referendum, it was unclear to the public what their stance on the subject was, because of Corbyn.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore acceptable to exclude them from this research. To get a clear image of the public debate, a similar approach as in the last chapter will be used, by combining newspaper coverage of the political debate, and what the public perceived to be the central subjects of the campaign. Statistics by the University of Loughborough provide insight into how the newspapers reported on the referendum and whether this was biased. Polls by Lord Ashcroft show what the public saw as the central issues while casting their vote. Despite the rise of social media, they will be excluded from this research. They are less relevant for this study because things published on social media often originate from the traditional media. Moreover, it goes the other way around as well: things that have a large enough relevance on social media eventually find their way to traditional media. Tweets made by prominent politicians are often showcased online on their websites. By including the traditional media, social media are already included indirectly and therefore not incorporated on their own as well.

The third chapter focusses on the campaigning done at the local level during both campaigns. Local MP's were at the centre of the campaigns done below the national level. The reason for this is that the British electoral system works with constituencies. This ensures that there is a strong connection between an MP and the region he represents. Since they represent the interest of the region at the national level, these MP's are relatively approachable to voters. It works both ways, however, with the MP defending the policy at the national level to his or her constituency. Because of this relationship with their constituents, the local MP's are exemplary for determining how the local debate was shaped. The reason

---

<sup>9</sup> "Jeremy Corbyn 'would be campaigning for Brexit if he was not Labour leader', says long-time ally Tariq Ali", *The Independent*, 16 May 2016.

<sup>10</sup> "Labour voters in the dark about party's stance on Brexit, research says", *The Guardian*, 30 May 2016.

only the chosen MP's will be examined is that their opponents, who lost the election, hold regular jobs since they are not in Parliament, and therefore often lack the time or public recognition needed to campaign. The regions under examination in this research are Cornwall, Derbyshire, Mid Scotland and Fife, Lincolnshire, and the city of Manchester. The reason these regions are chosen is because they have a geographical spread, most are rural (where the biggest shift in the vote occurred), one is from Scotland where the majority voted Remain, and the last one is a city which voted Remain with the exact same percentage as in 1975. From every region, two MP's and the way they campaigned will be examined more closely. When picking the MP's, it is preferable to get one from both the Leave and Remain campaign, ideally members of different parties. This will provide the most precise image of all aspects of the campaign. When this is not possible as a result of the region being less politically diverse, MP's from the same party or campaign will be chosen, since they still might have different approaches. The reason these regions are chosen is that they are large enough to have multiple MP's, are spread all over the country, and have different local interests and parties representing them. Because of these differences, it is possible to see how local interests varied from the national interest during the referenda.

The last chapter looks at the demographics of the regions where the local campaign has been investigated in the previous chapter. This will be done by examining the regional developments that can be gathered from the census data. The census takes place every ten years, with the last one having taken place in 2011. The factor that is most limiting in this chapter, since it relies heavily on census data, is that the data from the 1971 census are not available at the regional level. The first reason the census data are still used, however, is that they provide a complete dataset with which to look at the regions, and ask the same questions each time, which makes the data easy to compare. The second reason is that the 2016 data are more interesting when looking at different regions. This is because in the 1975 referendum, the results per region differed far less than in 2016. It might be concluded that demographics were more influential in 2016, and since the data for that time period are complete, the data will still be used and are still relevant, though more difficult to compare. The regions have been chosen in a way that they were relevant in both chapters. The reasons why specific regions are demographically interesting will be given in the chapter itself. Generally speaking, however, these regions have seen significant changes between 1975 and 2016.



Though the two campaigns were similar in structure, there are some differences in terminology that require further clarification. During both referenda, there was a campaign for leave and remain. For the sake of continuity throughout the research, they will be referred to as Leavers and Remainers, or the Leave and Remain campaigns, since that is what they were called during the 2016 referendum. While those terms were not used during the 1975 referendum, I have deemed them accurate and will use them throughout the research, mostly because it simplifies the comparison by not having a different terminology. It is also important to note that the EEC was less integrated than the EU and, while they are related, the terms are therefore not interchangeable.

## The National debate during the 1975 referendum

In this chapter, the research will focus on the question: did the eventual results of the 1975 EEC membership referendum correspond with coverage of the argumentation in the political debate and its influence on the public? While Todd has already looked into this referendum to a certain extent, new sources will be added to create a broader image of the developments. The added sources will be extra newspapers, other parliamentary debates than the whitepaper debate, and the inclusion of public opinion as a relevant factor. By including these sources in the research, it can give a more comprehensive view of the developments compared with the research more focused on the political aspect as given by Todd.

The primary sources that will be used are the Parliamentary debate on the White Paper on the Membership of the European Community in 1975, and the three main campaign leaflets and editorials of *The Times*, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mirror*. To ensure new insights this thesis will add the inclusion of *the Guardian* for articles on the subject and the relevant debates in the weeks before the referendum are included. The debates used in this research will be the whitepaper debates from 7-9 April 1975 and the debates that commenced at the end of June, since those were the last debates before the referendum. The whitepaper debates comprise over 150.000 words in the Hansard Millbank's database and can give a balanced view of the arguments made by politicians voting for and against membership of the European community.

When looking at public opinion the research done by Todd is still marginal; this chapter will expand and outline this development. The expansion of this previous research is made by using available statistics and the way several newspapers reported on the referendum. By adding this to the existing research a complete image is created of the public debate, its most important topics and the development of the public opinion. It may help explain the outcome of the referendum.

## The political debate in the 1975 referendum

During the 1960s the UK had applied for membership of the European Community twice, but President De Gaulle had blocked its entrance. The anti-Anglo-Saxon sentiments that were persistent caused De Gaulle to vote against British membership. De Gaulle's decision was motivated by several factors, which were underpinned by French nationalism. He viewed Britain as a 'Trojan horse' that would bring the US into the community.<sup>11</sup> After the second application, under a Labour government led by Wilson, in 1967 had failed, the UK tried again in 1970. It was expected that Wilson would opt for a third application in 1970 after he had won his third election and De Gaulle would be forced to leave office. In a surprise outcome, the Conservative party won the election, which ensured Edward Heath, their leader, became PM. Heath was staunchly pro-Europe, and it was widely expected that he would re-apply for membership as well. In 1973 the UK joined the European Community after a parliamentary vote in its favour. Once the law had passed both Houses of Parliament membership of the EEC was achieved. The law had been passed under a conservative government led by Ted Heath, while the MP's staunchly opposed to the newfound membership would, primarily, be found in Harold Wilson's Labour.<sup>12</sup> The year after the accession had been passed there were two elections. The first of those elections resulted in a hung Parliament, with no party gaining a majority of seats in Parliament. The second election saw the rise of a Labour majority with their leader, Harold Wilson, becoming Prime Minister for the second time.

One of the first problems he faced was the division in his party concerning Britain's membership of the EEC. With his party divided he needed to come up with a solution to this division. He did so by promising to renegotiate the membership terms, followed by a referendum which would ensure the British people would have the definitive vote. The decision to have a referendum was therefore intertwined with Labour's policy towards Europe. The division in the Labour party and their internal struggle were the reason a referendum was held. The Conservative party played no part in the decision, and had they won the 1974 election, no referendum would have been held.<sup>13</sup> Wilson had resisted earlier

---

<sup>11</sup> N.J. Crowson, *Britain and Europe: a political history since 1918*, Abingdon (UK) 2011, 87-88.

<sup>12</sup> Todd, *British self*, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony King, *Britain Says Yes: The 1975 Referendum on the Common Market*, Washington D.C. 1977, 55.

calls for a referendum, but the division in the Labour Party forced him to take action. He was especially pushed by those who were against membership of the EEC, as polling suggested they would come out on top.<sup>14</sup> As Prime Minister, he had discretion over the handling of the European issue. One of the reasons he might have been opposed to the referendum was that he took a positive stance towards the common market. When a referendum on the matter became a serious possibility, those who were anti-European were in favour of holding one, while those who opposed the referendum held a positive stance towards Europe.<sup>15</sup> Another reason for being against the referendum was that to opt for a referendum was, to a considerable extent, to abdicate the role of political leader in a parliament-based system, to the general public. It meant that the institutions which had made someone, and in which one had one's political being, were inadequate to solve one of the nation's most difficult tasks.<sup>16</sup> Wilson made crucial decisions concerning the principle of membership, how to address the public, the timing of the campaigning, willingness to campaign, professed strength of European commitment, and the scale of campaigning.<sup>17</sup> He led the Remain campaign from his position as PM and therefore might have undermined himself if the public voted against membership. By associating himself with the pro-EEC campaign in this way and indirectly acknowledging the shortcomings of the parliamentary system that had made him PM, his position as PM was directly dependent on the outcome of the referendum. He most likely felt that by having a referendum he had no other option but to commit himself fully to it. The question that was ultimately asked at the referendum was:

**“Do you think the UK should stay in the European Community (Common Market)?”**

The referendum leading up to the vote was primarily shaped by the government, and specifically Wilson. Wilson was reluctant to propagate the European issue, which was at the centre of public debate after Britain had announced they secured a “new deal” in March 1975. Wilson did not comment on the outcome until both the cabinet and Labour Party had discussed it. Nonetheless, in 1975 with the referendum on his doorstep, he accepted that he

---

<sup>14</sup> King, *Britain Says Yes*, 89.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, 55-56.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 59.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Martin Gliddon, “*The Labour government and the battle for public opinion in the 1975 referendum on the European Community*”, *Contemporary British History* 31:1 (2016), 94.

had to make a case for the EC. He did, however, leave much of the work to others, only adopting a high public profile late in the campaign. The reason he did so was that he was anxious to commit himself to the outcome of the referendum too much.<sup>18</sup> But as said earlier this was impossible since he was directly associated with the campaign to remain.

Looking at the campaign literature regarding the referendum it is quickly noticed that several subjects are mentioned in most of them, and were, therefore, the central subjects during the campaign for the referendum. This campaign literature consisted of three booklets that were sent to every household in the country. These included a booklet by Britain in Europe (pro-EEC- membership), a booklet by the National Referendum Committee (against EEC- membership), and a booklet written by the government (pro-EEC- membership). Specific themes are put forward by all three of the booklets and can be seen as the most critical political subjects of this referendum. The reason is that several political stakeholders issued the booklets and therefore show much overlap concerning the subjects.

The booklets also show the subjects that were important during the campaign, both for the remain and leave camp. The themes come forward in the literature and are to be investigated in this research. The themes are: Economy, Jobs and Trade; Sovereignty and Democracy; and Food Security.<sup>19</sup> These three themes are repeated continuously by both the Remain and the Leave camp. The conclusions they come to, however, are completely different, as will be shown in this chapter.

### **Economy, Jobs and Trade**

The first critical theme is the implications that EEC membership will have on the economy. Both the pro- and anti-Marketeers addressed the subject in significant detail and were concerned about the implications the EEC membership would have on the economy and, in the extension thereof, on jobs and trade. That makes sense, as these three subjects were at the heart of the EEC and what it aimed to achieve. The goal, from its creation onwards, had been to ensure economic growth in those areas of society. When looking at the arguments made by both sides, a pattern emerges, with both sides stressing the frailty of the British economy. The argumentation of the politicians who want to stay in the EEC concludes from this that leaving the EEC will cause the benefits of membership to cease. It comes down to:

---

<sup>18</sup> David Butler & Uwe Kitzinger, *The 1975 referendum*, London, 1976, 94.

<sup>19</sup> HM Government, *"Britain's new deal in Europe"*, 1975.

‘why risk it?’ Those who opposed membership of the EEC also emphasised the relevance of the economy, but the conclusion they reached was different. According to them the weak state of the British economy could be ascribed to the membership of the EEC. As is often the case with figures that relate to trade and economy, politicians and the media will present the same statistics but come to completely different conclusions. Alternatively, as it was put by Winifred Ewing (SNP),” these are the conclusions on which I base my facts.”<sup>20</sup>

The Remain camp’s stance towards Economy, Jobs and Trade was that Britain would benefit from staying in the EEC. Many of their arguments stated that Britain should not risk leaving the EEC. Alternatively it can be said why you should vote YES:

“Jobs depend upon our industries investing more and being able to sell in the world. If we came out, our industry would be based on the smallest home market of any significant exporting country in the world, instead of on the Community market of 250 million people. It is very doubtful if we could then negotiate a free trade agreement with the Community. Even if we could, it would have damaging limitations, and we would have to accept many community rules without having the say we now have in their making.”<sup>21</sup>

Margaret Thatcher outlined this as well when she stated that 50% of Britain’s trade took place with Western Europe. She found it highly unlikely that there would be another way of gaining tariff-free entrance to its largest export market.<sup>22</sup> A deal like Norway, with access to the Common Market with low to no tariffs, was not a realistic opportunity according to those in favour of staying in the community. The reasoning behind this was that Norway with 3.5 million inhabitants, and with an economy based on export is incomparable with Britain’s 55 million inhabitants, and an economy based on services. Where Norway’s economy was complementary to the Common Market, Britain’s economy was a competitor.<sup>23</sup> It is also noted that the less prosperous parts of Britain are those that would benefit the most from access to

---

<sup>20</sup> Winifred Ewing, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 899 col. 1111.

<sup>21</sup> Britain in Europe, “*Why you should vote YES*”, 1975, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Thatcher, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 1025.

<sup>23</sup> Nigel Spearing, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 889 col. 854.

ECC funds.<sup>24</sup> In the Government issued 'Britain's new deal in Europe', it is stated that the renegotiations ensure more jobs and higher wages.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, according to those who wanted to remain: "The new terms ensure that Britain will pay a fairer share. We now stand, under the Dublin agreement to get back from Market funds up to £125 million a year."<sup>26</sup> The new terms mentioned here were the result of the renegotiation done by Wilson. They also pointed out that there would be no movement towards an Economic and Monetary Union. Which in hindsight is a false assumption, but could then not be foreseen. The fixed exchange rates that were paired with these developments could harm growth and put jobs at risk and did therefore not seem viable to the Remain campaign.<sup>27</sup> Regarding economic independence John Mackintosh (L) states that this form of independence is an illusion. "We would have to go to the IMF for a loan, and then our sovereignty would be at stake."

The leave campaign came to a different conclusion in their campaign booklet: Why you should vote NO. When Leavers looked at the economy, they saw problems created by the common market. According to them, jobs were at risk because the British Government would no longer be able to prevent industry leaving British shores and moving to mainland Europe. According to them, it would be especially damaging to the poorer regions of the UK: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of the North and West of England. These areas had already been struck by unemployment in recent years and would only suffer more by staying in the EEC.<sup>28</sup> The reasoning behind that fear was that the industrial competition of the other EEC countries might prove too much for Britain. Alternatively, as it was put by an MP, "I believe that Britain's industry is not in a fit state to take on the Common Market and that, unless changes are made in that industry, it will be stamped into the ground."<sup>29</sup> It is also pointed out that the UK has a "huge trade deficit with the EEC".<sup>30</sup> This is because the Common Market pattern of trade was never designed to suit Britain. The trade deficit Britain had with the EEC has only risen since their admission. Which, according to those who advocated leaving the

---

<sup>24</sup> *Why you should vote YES*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Britain's new deal in Europe*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 6

<sup>28</sup> National Referendum Campaign, "*Why you should vote NO*", 1975, 5

<sup>29</sup> Donald Stewart, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 899 col. 884.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

European Community, could only be ascribed to joining the Common Market. As an alternative to EEC membership, they proposed the EFTA programme. Contrary to what the arguments of the Remain camp suggest, the anti-marketeters are sure that the Norway model is more appealing than full membership of the EEC. In their eyes, Norway now enjoys free entrance to the Market for their exports, without having to carry the burden of the Market's food policy or suffer rules made in Brussels. It can be seen in this argumentation that it has strong links with sovereignty and the devaluation of the British democracy by transferring some of its power to Brussels.

The overall tone of the economic debate was a negative one. Both sides tended to agree that the British economic situation at the time was critical, which is interesting because that shows that there seems to be a consensus on the problems Britain faces. The difference was the perspective both sides had regarding a solution. The main struggle between both sides is to frame Britain's membership of the EEC as either the solution to or the cause of its fragile economy. Which side had the most convincing arguments is arbitrary as both sides interpret the same statistics. This causes neither side to be dominant in the debate since both sides are confident that their interpretation is correct. Though neither side had a dominant stance in the political debate, dominance can be determined by the perception of the public. This perception will be important later in this chapter when public opinion is the central subject.

### **Sovereignty and democracy**

As shown in the argumentation of the economic debate, the diminishment of Britain's sovereignty because of the transfer of power to the EEC, and how it would affect the workings of its democracy, was an important topic of debate. The British had always been proud of their constitutional democracy and its exceptionalism. They did not consider themselves a part of continental Europe with its revolutions and absolutism, but linked themselves 'outsider tradition', which shaped a large part of their foreign policy towards Europe.<sup>31</sup> Britain had long held the view of Splendid Isolation, which meant that events on the continent mattered to a lesser extent, they were focussed on their Empire. In their minds, they had been separated from continental events for a long time with both World Wars as important exceptions. What

---

<sup>31</sup> Daddow, *Interpreting the outsider tradition*, 84-85.



is surprising is that the debate here shows two sides agreeing on what was happening, other than the debate in the build-up to the 2016 referendum. The debate tends to show an agreement by both sides that some sovereignty is lost or at least transferred because of Common Market membership. The focus of the debate was whether this transfer was a sacrifice worth making or not. What is remarkable is that the tone of the debate is a lot less frenetic than the debates currently taking place.

The Remain campaign decided to go against the isolationist views that had persisted up to the World Wars, and a part of the population felt this was still true. They argued that, while it may sound attractive to pull up the drawbridge, it is not possible to do so in the modern world. According to the Remainers it had even been impossible forty or sixty years previous.<sup>32</sup> It was argued that the argument for sovereignty made by the Leave campaign was a false one, since sovereignty is not a dry legal theory. The only way Britain's influence in the world could be maintained would be by working together with friends and neighbours. "Together we are stronger than alone."<sup>33</sup> While being phrased differently by Roy Hattersley, a Labour politician and then Minister of State for foreign affairs, he came to the same conclusion. "I do not believe that when the people of Great Britain discuss sovereignty, they are thinking of the rights and responsibilities of the House of Commons, whose literal and material powers have diminished as Great Britain has moved from the role of a world Power to the position of a medium-sized Power. Sovereignty is the right or the ability of the British Government to take what decisions seem right to them on behalf of the British people. Those decisions, and the ability to take them are much more conditioned by economic power and our political influence in the world than by the procedures of this House."

It had already been showcased by the way oil-producing Arab countries caused energy and monetary crises in large parts of the world. Britain could not overcome obstacles of this magnitude by itself.<sup>34</sup> By not being part of the Community, it was impossible to take part in the decision-making process of this economic bloc, but Britain still had to deal with the decisions made by it. "We would be clinging to the shadow of British sovereignty while its substance flies out of the window."<sup>35</sup> Sovereignty is also never truly lost because there were

---

<sup>32</sup> *Why you should vote YES*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Britain's new deal in Europe*, 9.

<sup>35</sup> *Why you should vote YES*, 4.

no decisions that could be made in Brussels without British consent.<sup>36</sup> That was due to the unanimity of the vote being required. The reason this is so important is that it ensures that nothing can be done without British consent.

The leave campaign took a different stance on the subject. According to the leavers, the fundamental question was whether Britain remained free to control itself. If Britain were to remain in the Common Market Parliament would no longer be the supreme law-making body. It would have to adhere to the laws made by the community without having direct influence via a vote.<sup>37</sup> It is put forward by them that the real goal of the EEC is to merge the different European nations into a single large nation. Under the treaty of Rome, there are already policies being devised without the British parliament having a say in it.<sup>38</sup> Donald Stewart, a Scottish MP, summed it up as follows:

“If the United Kingdom remains in the Common Market the English people for the first time will learn what it is like to be at the receiving end of decisions taken elsewhere. It is a situation, which the Scottish people have faced for a long time. The fact that the United Kingdom will have a one-ninth say in decisions will not make all that difference. There were 71 Scottish Members in the House when the decision was taken on the Common Market, the majority of whom voted against, but it did not make the slightest difference. That is the situation which the United Kingdom will face if we continue to stay in the EEC.”<sup>39</sup>

In the eyes of the Leave campaign, this was merely the first step of the process. Also, while they felt that “This may be acceptable to some Continental countries. In recent times, they have been ruled by dictators or defeated or occupied. They are more used to abandoning their political institutions than we are.”<sup>40</sup> Every quote used had the same explicit nationalist tone. They felt that a long British tradition of democracy is being exchanged for an authoritarian one. When looking at British history and the shaping of society, the idea of parliamentary sovereignty appeared to be particularly important in shaping the British attitude towards Europe, which was an extension of ‘common law’ which differs from European ‘civil law’. It was argued that this lay at the core of the British identity and therefore

---

<sup>36</sup> *Britain’s new deal in Europe*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Edward Short, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 934-935.

<sup>38</sup> *Why you should vote NO*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Donald Stewart, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 899 col. 883.

<sup>40</sup> *Why you should vote NO*, 3.

caused more opposition to European integration than in any other member states.<sup>41</sup> As seen in the quote above they also referred to the Second World War and felt that the sacrifices had been made to protect the British sovereignty during the war. According to them, this should not have happened in vain, and the same kind of sovereignty should still be protected. They felt power was slipping away from elected officials in Britain to European bureaucrats. Enoch Powell added to that during his statement in Parliament. He argues that Britain has a distinct identity, as does every other nation. This identity defines the nature of the institutions present in the said nation. Because the identity and institutions are so intertwined, it is impossible to alter a nation's institutions without danger of destroying the nation itself. He continues by arguing that a sovereign and independent Parliament corresponds with the British national identity. To give some sovereignty to European institutions would undermine these institutions and therefore the nation.<sup>42</sup>

The debate about sovereignty aligns more with the debate during the second referendum than the other parts of the discourse. Those opposing British membership focussed their arguments on the grave loss of sovereignty and therefore a sovereign British self at risk from a continental other. Overall, the EEC is portrayed as anti-democratic, authoritarian, and a threat to Britain. The supporters of membership, on the other hand, try to explain that the EEC will merely be enhancing British sovereignty.

### Food Security and production

The last subject that was constantly addressed by both the leave and remain camp was food security. While it might seem like a certain given in modern Western Europe, that food shortages are something of the past, and when they occur, they do so in faraway countries, during the referendum of 1975, it was one of the most important subjects. That was the case because of the subsidies the EEC had placed on farming, as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The subsidies are still to no small extent in effect today. During the renegotiations, the CAP had been one of the subjects the government had deemed most important. In looking at the debate about the CAP, a clear view of the way the renegotiations were perceived by both sides emerges. The reason it was so important, was that before Britain

---

<sup>41</sup> Atsuko Ichijo, *"The uses of history; Anglo-British and Scottish views of Europe"*, *Regional & Federal Studies* 13:3 34.

<sup>42</sup> Enoch Powell, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 1303-04.

joined the EEC, everyone feared that membership would mean paying more for food, compared to being outside the EEC.<sup>43</sup> The CAP was, therefore, a contested subject of the debate that took place before the referendum. Most opponents feared that the way Britain had been able to protect herself from outside competition would be no longer an option.

The renegotiations that took place were not an outright success, as the Prime Minister himself pointed out as well. "We have not secured the objectives we there set out – I am being perfectly fair about this – for example in the fundamental alterations we called for in CAP."<sup>44</sup> While many others tried to make the best of it, by showing that there had been achievements in the negotiations, the Minister for Agriculture Food and Fisheries argues that the changes in flexibility of the CAP were positive for Britain. It assured in special circumstances, not Brussels, but the individual countries would be the ones to decide.<sup>45</sup> The same was also put forward in the campaign booklet that stated: "as a result of these negotiations, the Common Market's agricultural policy (known as CAP) now works more flexibly to the benefit of both housewives and farmers."<sup>46</sup> According to the Remain campaign, this was "Not just by accident, but because stronger world demand had meant that the days when there were big surpluses of cheap food to be bought around the world, have gone, and almost certainly gone for good..... Britain, as a country which cannot feed itself, will be safer in the community which is almost self-sufficient in food."<sup>47</sup> The government added to that that food prices in the world had risen fast, and the higher prices had nothing to do with joining the common market. The new deal the government had secured had ensured improvements and the tendency to have further reviews of its policy.<sup>48</sup> The improvements had ensured that the CAP met the requirements of British agriculture and the export of food to the Commonwealth.

The leave camp was less impressed with the concessions made by the EEC during the renegotiations and felt its policy was still harmful to British farmers and consumers. Despite the promises made by the government, that there would be significant changes in CAP policy, they felt no change had occurred.<sup>49</sup> Despite the assurance that a significant change in the CAP

---

<sup>43</sup> *Why you should vote YES*, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Heath, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975 ,889 col. 822.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> *Britain's new deal in Europe*, 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Why you should vote YES*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Edward Taylor, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 898.

would be vital if Britain were to remain in the Common Market, we have had no change whatsoever”<sup>50</sup>. They argued that before Britain joined the EEC food could be bought from the cheapest most efficient producer. Since joining the EEC, it was no longer possible to buy food from the place that suited Britain best. John Ovenden explained the impossibility of the CAP technically ensuring cheaper food. “It has been argued, strangely enough, that the CAP can be used to provide cheaper and assured supplies of food. That is a gross distortion of the whole purpose of the Cap and inconsistent with the machinery of import levies and denaturing which form the framework of the CAP.”<sup>51</sup> Aside from the effect it would have on British agriculture and food prices in Britain, it also shaped the public image of the CAP. They showed the effect CAP could have in the world, with people suffering because of an uncaring system. Insinuating that no reasonable, civilised person could be positive towards this system.

“On our television screens, week after week in the past few months, we have had pictures of starving people in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Vietnam and other countries; and here we are saying that it is very desirable for us to tie ourselves, hook, line, and sinker as it were, to a system which believes in building up big stocks of meat, butter, cheese and milk and destroying and denaturing wheat. How can we as a so-called civilised Christian people ever defend the regulations and rules of a system which, on the one hand, puts into storage millions of tons of food and, on the other hand, does nothing at a time when stomachs are empty to carry that food to those empty stomachs?”<sup>52</sup>

While at it, they even saw an opportunity to have a go at France and its agriculture. “Let nobody suppose that the French Government would for one moment remain within the Common Market if anyone threatened the CAP”<sup>53</sup> This is because there are taxes on food being imported from countries outside the community.<sup>54</sup> Their view is that it is impossible to keep prices down with Common Market authorities because they are ineffective, and besides that, the Common Market would be unfavourable to small farmers.

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>51</sup> John Ovenden, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April, 1975, 889 col. 1095.

<sup>52</sup> Ernest Fernyhough, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 1075.

<sup>53</sup> Frank Hooley, Hansard Millbank System, 7 April 1975, 889 col. 1048.

<sup>54</sup> “*Why you should vote NO*”, 4.

When looking at the debate, it is remarkable that while food security should typically be a pragmatic subject, it is not the case here. Both sides want to ensure that the supply meets the demands, but while having a part of the debate being somewhat technical, other parts are more focused on principles. The principles mainly focus on people in poorer countries who endure food scarcity while the ECP causes perfectly eatable food to be discarded. This is often countered by the pro-marketeers, who point out that this is the only way to ensure a steady supply of food at a low price. Which is something Britain cannot provide on its own, being a net importer of food.

### Conclusion

When looking at the three points that are regarded as the most important in the public debate, the difference in the way each subject is handled by proponents and opponents of the EEC membership immediately shows. While the argumentation of each side of the debate shares the same critical points between the different subjects, the difference between the sides at times appears more significant than the subjects. Most argumentations flow back to either the economy for Remainers or sovereignty for Leavers. That might be attributed to the way the politicians that supported each side shape the campaign — the majority of MP's, including the leaders of both Labour and the Conservative party, supported remaining in the EEC. This and the fact that the Government backs the Remain campaign, give this campaign a competitive edge. Because they have a competitive edge in numbers and government backing the Remain campaign, they appear to stick to the economic interests of the people. By doing so, they seem to try to apply to their reason, focussing on the contents of people's wallets and hoping that voters find this the most critical issue as well. They combine this with a fear of the unknown, which leaving the EEC would be in their eyes. This includes fears of an economic meltdown, fear of Britain's diminishing role on the world stage, and fears of unstable food supplies and prices. Interestingly this inability or unwillingness to sell a positive case for the European Community persists to this day, and not just in Britain.

The leave campaign had a smaller number of backing MP's and focussed on Britain's sovereignty, and in what way membership of the EEC caused Britain to lose it. Because they were campaigning for a change, their focus could not stick to economic benefits in the way the Remain campaign could and did. Therefore their appeal was less focussed towards reason and more to a gut feeling. By including Britain's history and the national identity that comes

with a shared history in the debate, they emphasised people's gut feelings even more. This was combined with positivism and hope that their option provided the best future, instead of stating that the future provided by the opposing side would lead to chaos. This hope focusses on a glorious past and says the future can be just as bright.

## Media coverage and Public opinion

In this part of the chapter, we will look at the way public debate and opinion developed in the period leading up to the referendum. This will be done by looking at the way the newspapers reported on the referendum and looking at polls of the public opinion on several subjects relevant to the referendum. To understand the way the public developed its opinion we must know the issues that shaped them the most and how well informed the population was. By looking at both an attempt will be made to show how public opinion was influenced by both the reporting of newspapers and the political debate. First, we will look at the way the media covered the referendum followed by the development of public opinion. By looking at the coverage, it is possible to see which points of the political debate are deemed the most important by the various newspapers. The reason the focus will be on newspapers is that they were and still are an essential news source for a large part of the population. Because of this, their influence is significant and its coverage is likely to affect the perception of the population on different issues. Primarily because no campaigning was done at the local level, newspapers were able to exert a more substantial influence in the way they reported on the campaign. After this we will look at the development of the public opinion. This will be done by focusing on polls conducted in the build-up to the referendum. Polls are the most personal insights that can be found of this period, without having to interview individual cases.

From the start, the press had disliked the idea of a referendum. The common market had been an issue during the past three election campaigns. They had covered it dutifully over the years, but to them, it was a historical subject, more than a current one.<sup>55</sup> The common market was a bad news subject. It was foreign, impersonal, its details were too complicated and did not have clear-cut decisive moments of importance, acting more on the background. Perhaps the most important reason that they felt it was not worth their headlines, was that they saw it as a way to resolve the division of the Labour party on the subject. Multiple newspapers on both sides of the political spectrum displayed their view on the subject this way. Some examples are: “the real reason for the referendum was to cover up a split in the Labour Party”<sup>56</sup> “The common market has been made an issue by the left wing in the Labour

---

<sup>55</sup> Butler, *The 1975 Referendum*, 214.

<sup>56</sup> Editorial, *The Guardian*, 5 June 1975.



Party's internal controversy."<sup>57</sup> "The next stage of the struggle for the Labour Party. This, after all, is what the referendum is really about."<sup>58</sup> The last example has quite some predictive value as well: "If Mr Wilson can go for a referendum to solve the Labour Party's internal difficulties, others will do the same."<sup>59</sup> The focus of the reporting that took place tended to be on the political, not the economic considerations. Throwing around numbers and statistics would not be appealing to their readers.<sup>60</sup> The pro-Marketeters had a favourable relationship with the press, which reacted positively towards them. This was partly because most of all the familiar faces in politics were in favour of remaining, and the press reported on them the most. According to research done by Butler and Kitzinger, especially *the Guardian*, *Financial Times* and *the Times* provided a clear overview of the political situation. However, their most important conclusion is that the press played a more powerful role than in regular elections. Since nothing was happening in constituency campaigns, the things that came closest were media campaigns. In a certain way, the press *was* the referendum. In the absence of a clear, single, organised leadership and official orthodoxy on each side the press could decide what the issues were.<sup>61</sup>

Before the referendum, public opinion in the UK had been negative towards joining the EEC. This can be traced back to the previously mentioned historical nationalism and anti-European sentiment this nationalism was based on. Polling done by Gallup showed it was quite persistent and that the majority of the public had a negative stance towards joining the common market in the period leading up to the joining of the EEC. In the period 1960-1973, the percentage of people who took a positive stance towards joining the common market declined while those who opposed it grew in numbers.<sup>62</sup> Most voters were aware of the European issue. The past ten years had increased the attention spent on the subject by both the Government and the newspapers. However, they were not interested enough in the subject to have done further research into it. The data<sup>63</sup> suggest that insofar as most voters held opinions about Europe at all, these opinions were very lightly held. They were not based

---

<sup>57</sup> The Financial Times, May 12 1975

<sup>58</sup> Sunday Times, June 5 1975.

<sup>59</sup> Daily Express, May 15 1975.

<sup>60</sup> Butler, *The 1975 Referendum*, 229.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, 245.

<sup>62</sup> King, *Britain says yes*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem 22.

on a solid conviction based on research, but subject to small fluctuations in opinion. When those who had a positive stance towards the common market were asked, “Do you happen to know which European nations are full members of the Common Market? If yes, which?” Only 13% could name all the member countries. Less than one third could name Italy while they were voting to become part of the treaty of Rome.<sup>64</sup> Because the majority of the population was uninformed, at least to a certain extent, as the example above shows, the media and politicians had more influence in the debate and shaping the countries stance. Most people could be considered susceptible to new arguments made by politicians and in the newspapers. In sum, most people eligible to vote were capable of giving a response in the polls conducted. The data, however, are misleading as they implied a higher level of attitude formation and stronger feelings about the issue than actually existed. Most British voters did not have strong views about the common market. They mostly followed the party lines of the party they supported at that particular moment. The majority of them were mostly worried about rising prices if membership to the common market was obtained.<sup>65</sup> One thing is clear though. The British public showed no enthusiasm towards being part of a united Europe. When a poll of this was made, out of all the countries that were members of the EEC, Britain was dead last regarding enthusiasm towards a Federal Europe.

A significant development could be seen in polls that asked about the renegotiations and whether Britain should remain part of the EEC if they succeeded.

**Q: If the Government negotiated new terms for Britain’s membership of the Common Market and they thought it was in Britain’s interest to remain a member, how would you vote then- to stay in or leave it?<sup>66</sup>**

	Stay In	Leave	Wouldn’t vote	Don’t know
August 1974	54	24	5	16
October 1974	57	22	7	14
January 1975	53	22	6	19

---

<sup>64</sup> King, *Britain Says Yes*, 23-24.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, 30.

<sup>66</sup> George Horace Gallup, *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Volume 2*, London (1976).

The reason why this statistic at first does not seem to comply with the lack of enthusiasm towards the EEC, is that different questions were asked. As remarked earlier in this chapter politicians were against a federal Europe as well. It is likely that because of this stance people felt that a renegotiation would secure a federal Europe would not occur, therefore they were more likely to be positive towards membership.

By the time the renegotiations became a reality in March 1975, one could conclude that the Remainers at least had a head start concerning the referendum. A large part of the arguments that were made in the debates, and found their way to the public by choices of the media, were cited as being the most important reason to vote one way or the other. When asked for a reason to stay a part of, or leave the Common Market, the reasons given were those put forward by the politicians and the media. The most important reasons for staying were, in that order: *Can't go at it alone, Bigger markets/more trade, and economic advantages because of being part of a bigger group*. The most important reasons for leaving were: *Prices would be lower, better off before joining, and independence*.<sup>67</sup> Most of these are economic arguments and therefore more in line with the Remain campaign. They also share many similarities with the political debate, which shows the influence it had on the public debate. What should be noted is that this question was open-ended and each of the reasons for staying obtained a significantly higher percentage than those opposing membership. The development of public opinion shows a gradual rise of people who want to stay a part of the common market. This ensured that once Election Day was around, the result had become somewhat more predictable than people might have thought 2 years prior.

## Conclusion

The British perception of the EEC and their membership of it fluctuated a lot over the years leading up to the 1975 Referendum. Both politicians and the British people themselves had a historical view of Europe that was both negative and part of their national identity. They thought of themselves as different from mainland Europeans, valuing their freedoms and anti-radicalism. When they joined the Common Market, this was after a lengthy procedure, which had divided the nation and its politicians. When they eventually joined, this division was still

---

<sup>67</sup> King, *Britain says Yes*, 108.

in place. Especially in the Labour party. The ensuing campaign showed the division to its full extent.

The question asked at the beginning of this chapter was, “Did the eventual results of the 1975 EEC membership referendum correspond with coverage of the argumentation in the political debate and its influence on the public?” In answering this question, we first looked at the political debate and the arguments made there. The most prominent subjects of discussion were Economy and Trade, Sovereignty, and food pricing and production. In the political discourse, the Remainers have a slightly stronger position. The government and most of the opposition, which ensured that most of the argumentation came from those who wanted to remain part of the Common market, backed them. This combined with a bigger budget, and therefore more ways of campaigning, ensured that the Remain camp had the upper hand in the political discourse.

The media possibly had an even more significant role to play than politicians did during the campaign. Because both parties largely agreed on remaining a part of the Common Market, they left the media in charge of the subjects they deemed relevant. Both sides had no permanent leadership that would shape the campaign, a big difference compared to regular campaigns. However, even if they would have liked, this might not have been possible, because this election was composed of only one question. The media were pivotal in the way the argumentation was portrayed, and most of them favoured remaining part of the Common Market in their coverage. This ensured an even more significant advantage for those who wished to remain part of the EEC.

The public opinion was largely influenced by both the Political Debate and the way the media covered the referendum. The Government was more easily trusted to know what was best, mainly because most people knew very little about the subject. Because of this, there were many swing votes for a long time in the campaign. While looking at the stance of the British public a distinct development can be seen. While they were against membership of the Common Market at first, as the date of the Referendum pulled closer more people supported it. The arguments put forward by most people as most relevant in the polls show the influence the politicians and the media had. The argumentation overlapped almost entirely.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that the eventual results did correspond with the political debate and media coverage. In both the Remainers had the upper hand, which translated into a positive result in the referendum. People were inclined to follow both

institutions because they trusted them to know best, especially with this kind of complicated matter.

## The national debate during the 2016 Referendum

In the period between the two referenda, the British political situation regarding the EU had changed substantially. The build-up to the referendum in 1975 was characterised by the schism that was taking place in the Labour Party. Harold Wilson successfully countered the schism in his party by winning the referendum. This ensured that the internal friction was calmed within the Labour Party. When a financial crisis started in 2008, the resistance against the EU grew in Britain. Where it grew most and came to dominate the debate, was in the Conservative Party. During the decades in between the two referenda, the Conservative Party had become much more critical of first the EEC and then the EU. This research will not dive into the how and why of this development too much. However, the biggest issue in the Conservative Party and the source of this turnaround, was the perceived further integration into the EU and loss of sovereignty, combined with an aversion against social laws put forward by the EU. The Conservative Party had always been known for its loyalty to the party leadership and internal discipline, which had started to wane under John Major. The reason behind this was that the majority with which the party governed was relatively small and shrank because of left-wing pro-European dissidents defecting to other parties. This development enhanced the relative power of the, increasingly confident and coherent, Eurosceptic MP's and Ministers.

It is against this background that this chapter will focus on the national debate in the UK during the build-up to the second referendum. The question that will be answered in this chapter is: What arguments were used in the political debate and how did the media coverage of the debate influence the public debate and outcome of the referendum? The debate about the referendum began in full earnest when, on 23 January, Prime Minister David Cameron made a speech which would alter the course of the debate on membership of the EU. In this speech, he announced his intention to renegotiate the British terms of membership with the EU and hold an in/out referendum on Britain's membership before 2017. The only thing that needed to happen to ensure said referendum was his re-election at the 2015 general election. The period under investigation in this chapter will be from the speech above up to the referendum itself on 23 June 2016. By looking at both the political and the public debate, it will become clear what the most important subjects were, both to politicians and the

populace. By doing so a clear image can be distilled that shows how the result of the referendum came to be.

## The Political Debate

The political debate in the build-up towards the 2016 referendum, even though it had some overlap, differed significantly from the debate that had taken place in 1975. This showed itself in a variety of ways. The most significant difference can be seen with the subjects that were considered the most important by politicians. The central subjects this time were Sovereignty and Democracy; Economy, Jobs and Prosperity; and Immigration. The difference between the 1975 discourse, and that in 2016, concerns the subject of immigration. It replaced food security as a factor of relevance in the public debate. Food security had lost its importance as a subject in a country, part of a continent, which had an abundance of food on the shelves of its supermarkets. The sources used to determine the political discourse are parliamentary debates in this period, speeches made by David Cameron, speeches and columns by Boris Johnson, the speech given by Nigel Farage at the UKIP party conference in 2013 and the campaign leaflets produced by the Remain and Leave campaigns. The reason Labour is not included in this research is that they, to a large extent, remained in the background during the campaign. The reason behind this is that its leader Jeremy Corbyn had been against the EU for most of his political career. Many Labour Supporters and MP's, on the other hand, had supported British membership. This situation caused Corbyn to keep his cards to his chest and not wholeheartedly support either the Leave or Remain campaign. This resulted in the Labour campaign being fragmented, with high ranking MP's actively campaigning. Regarding the political debates, emphasis will be put on the debate after PM Cameron's speech on the EU in 2013 and the debate after the terms of membership renegotiations with the EU.

### Sovereignty and Democracy

The first theme that will be analysed is Sovereignty and democracy. As shown in the previous chapter the British political debate was focussed on we versus them, because of the 'outsider tradition' as mentioned by Daddow. Britain (we) was distinctly different from the rest of mainland Europe (them). This tradition emphasised freedom and moderation.<sup>68</sup> Both the

---

<sup>68</sup> Ichijo, *The uses of history*, 39.

Remainers and Leavers agreed that Britain was different from the rest of Europe. The most significant difference was the conclusion they draw from stating it. Since 1975 European integration had gone further, despite what some politicians said during the previous referendum. There was a general feeling that the past referendum had not been fair since the consequences of the result to remain were different than promised. This caused the debate, which had been rather civilised during the 1975 referendum, to become very heated.

The Remain campaign focussed on the special status Britain had in Europe in their campaign leaflet. By doing so, they tried to show that British sovereignty was still safe, as they would not have to be part of further integration. It was stated that the UK would not have to join the Euro and did not have to be part of further European integration.<sup>69</sup> This is emphasised even more when the leaflet states : “We have ensured that no UK powers can be transferred to the EU in the future without a referendum. The UK will keep full access to the Single Market, with a say on its rules. For every £1 paid in tax, a little over 1p goes to the EU.”<sup>70</sup> Especially the fact that no further UK powers can be transformed to the EU without a people’s vote, via a referendum, shows that sovereignty and the transfer of power are still hot topics. The leaflet’s aim appeared to mostly ensure people that no further transfer would take place. It also emphasises that in order to remain a leading force in the world the UK needs the backing of the EU. It magnifies its abilities on the world stage.<sup>71</sup> In his speech in 2013 Cameron immediately mentioned this and he made an explicit link between identity and foreign policy.

“We have the character of an island nation – independent, forthright, passionate in defence of our sovereignty. We can no more change this British sensibility than we can drain the English Channel. Moreover, because of this sensibility, we come to the European Union with a frame of mind that is more practical than emotional. For us, the anchor of freedom and democracy both within Europe and beyond her shores is not an end in itself.”<sup>72</sup>

What is slightly ironic is that Cameron emphasises sensibility and a practical rather than the emotional state of mind. Since the Brexit debate, as will be shown further on in this chapter, it was mostly emotional.

---

<sup>69</sup> HM Government, *“Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK”*, 2016, 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> David Cameron, *David Cameron’s speech on the EU*, 23 January 2013, Link: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/01/david-camerons-speech-eu-full-text>.



The Leave leaflet by the Leave campaign tapped into the same sentiment as the Remain campaign. They emphasised having to be able to hold lawmakers to account. According to them, the laws made by the EU were made by unelected bureaucrats; no one had ever voted for them or could vote them out of office.<sup>73</sup> Boris Johnson emphasised that when he made a speech at the leave campaign headquarters. He stated that:

“You only have to read the Lisbon Treaty – whose constitutional provisions were rejected by three EU populations, the French, the Dutch and the Irish – to see how far this thing has moved on from what we signed up for in 1972. Brussels now has exclusive or explicit competence for trade, customs, competition etc. The EU already has considerable powers to set rates of indirect taxation across the whole 28-nation territory, and of course it has total control of monetary policy for all 19 in the Eurozone. In recent years Brussels has acquired its own foreign minister, its own series of EU embassies around the world, and is continuing to develop its own defence policy. We have got to stop trying to kid the British people; we have got to stop saying one thing in Brussels, and another thing to the domestic audience.... We need to look at the legal reality, which is that this is a continuing and accelerating effort to build a country called Europe.”<sup>74</sup>

As his remarks here show, the way the EEC was presented to the British public in the 1975 referendum had been a lie, according to Johnson. There had been an integration that had gone further than was considered a possibility in 1975. This resulted in the gap between the EU and its citizens growing drastically in recent years.

Other members of parliament went even further in pointing out that the EU was on a mission to become a country. They fell back on bringing the Second World War back into the argument. The hard-won sovereignty as a result of the outcome of the Second World War was being handed over to the EU. Other wars were also included with the means of establishing how the hard-fought British freedom was being threatened by Europe over and over again.<sup>75</sup> They also argued that the strength of Britain’s voice in Europe was less than the Remainers stated. The Eurozone has a permanent majority in the EU voting system. Therefore it did not

---

<sup>73</sup> Vote Leave, “*Why should we vote leave on 23 June?*”, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Boris Johnson, *Speech on the EU referendum*, May 9, 2016, Link: <https://www.conservativehome.com/parliament/2016/05/boris-johnsons-speech-on-the-eu-referendum-full-text.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Gordon Henderson, Hansard Millbank System, 29 November 2013, 565 col. 1232.

matter what Britain wanted. If the Euro countries wanted to, they could outvote the UK every time. This came forward in Johnson's speech as well. The fact that they did so on several occasions only strengthened the Brexiteers views.<sup>76</sup> They underline this by stating that the British taxpayer had already paid £2.4 billion that was used for things the UK had voted against.<sup>77</sup> It is not further specified what kind of projects these were and how the money was spent. Where the Remain campaign stated that the UK was still a significant force on the world stage because of the EU, the Leave campaign disagreed. They pointed out that by being the fifth largest economy and fourth largest military power in the world, Britain had an essential place on the world stage. As one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, they would remain so in the future as well.<sup>78</sup> Even Nigel Farage, who held the same political views on the EU, uses the same rhetoric to place Britain outside of Europe with its unique traditions and notions of democracy. When addressing his party, he points out:

"The fact is we just don't belong in the European Union. Britain is different. Our geography puts us apart. Our institutions produced by that history put us apart. We think differently. We behave differently."<sup>79</sup>

When summarising the debate, it becomes clear that the overall argumentation of both the Remain and Leave campaign are somewhat similar. Both point out that Britain is different, with a soft (remain) or hard (leave) variety. Their arguments show similarities with those used in the 1975 campaign. Drawing on the historical threat, Europe has posed???????? to British values. Both sides call for a transfer of power from the EU back to the UK. Sometimes absolute, as with Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Sometimes focussing on specific areas, like David Cameron. It is clear though that there is a clear continuity from the last referendum. The EU was demonised once more as anti-democratic and as a threat to the sovereignty of the British parliament and the UK as a whole. The anti-EU sentiment is dominant when it comes to sovereignty.

---

<sup>76</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 8.

<sup>77</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 8.

<sup>78</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Nigel Farage, *Nigel Farage's speech at the UKIP conference*, 19 September 2013, Link: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/nigel-farage-2013-speech-to-ukip-conference/>.

## Economy, Jobs and Trade

The economy has always been a hot topic in the political debate, regardless of a referendum taking place. Brexit proved to be no exception to that especially since the EU was conceived as an economic union with the purpose of facilitating trade and economic growth. Both sides explicitly shared their views on the subject, both in the leaflets, and in debates and speeches. Often directly linked to the economy is the amount of jobs the UK would gain or lose (depending on which side of the debate you would ask). Both sides seem to agree that changes need to be made to ensure the functioning of the system.

The Remain camp made the case that the UK economy would be better off when Britain remained part of the EU. They emphasised that the EU was the UK's biggest trading partner. Forty-four per cent of everything that was sold abroad was sold to the EU, from services to cars. Remaining inside the EU would guarantee full access to the Common Market, leaving it would create uncertainty and had significant risks.<sup>80</sup> David Cameron said:

“Continued access to the Single Market is vital for British businesses and British jobs. Since 2004, Britain has been the destination for one in five of all inward investments into Europe. Moreover, being part of the Single Market has been the key to that success.”<sup>81</sup>

He also remains critical of the way the EU functions at the moment and thinks it is limiting British economic possibilities:

“Complex rules restricting our labour markets are not some naturally occurring phenomenon. Just as excessive regulation is not some external plague that has been visited on our businesses.”<sup>82</sup>

As the Single Market has 500 million customers, more products can be sold without difficulty; this creates more jobs in the UK. Being part of the single market with its multitude of customers also makes the UK more interesting for foreign companies to invest in. Over the last decade, these foreign investments have accumulated to £540 billion, equivalent to £148 million every day.<sup>83</sup> According to the Remainers, Britain should not end up outside the trading block. They use leading companies that oppose Brexit to bring home their point. Wayne David stated during a parliamentary debate that:

---

<sup>80</sup> *Why the government believes*, 4.

<sup>81</sup> Cameron, *EU speech*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>83</sup> *Why the government believes*, 4.

“The Smiths Group of advanced technologies, the Weir Group of leading engineering businesses, easyJet, Ford and Toyota have all expressed concerns at the idea of the United Kingdom not having access to the single European market. As the *Financial Times* stated in January, “many” entrepreneurs “strongly support” Britain remaining part of the European Union. We would be profoundly mistaken to put at risk this country’s economic well-being for the interests of the Conservative party.”<sup>84</sup>

The Leave campaign focusses on showing why any possible benefits were outweighed by the strains it put on other parts of the economy. Only 5% of British businesses export to the EU, but all of them share the burden of EU laws. These laws and regulations were perceived as very damaging to the economy by the Leave campaign. Mainly small businesses supposedly lost millions of pounds every week because of them.<sup>85</sup> British export to the other EU nations had been waning as well. It was pointed out by MP William Cash that the trade deficit had only increased in recent years.

“With respect to our trade deficit, as I have said on a number of occasions, in 2012, according to the Office for National Statistics, had a trade deficit of £70 billion with the other 27 member states. To give the point some substance, Germany, on the other hand – no wonder there are two Europe’s, which are increasingly becoming German-oriented – had a trade surplus with the other 27 member states in 2011 that has now gone up to £72 billion.”<sup>86</sup>

Adding that there was no possibility to make free trade deals with other countries, outside those struck by the EU. The leave camp felt they could do better, with deals more focussed on UK interests instead of the EU as a whole.<sup>87</sup> Boris Johnson also points this out by stating that a negotiation with the EU as a whole is almost impossible.

“But it has failed to conclude agreements with India, China or even America. Why? Because negotiating on behalf of the EU is like trying to ride a vast pantomime horse, with 28 people blindly pulling in different directions. For decades deals with America have been blocked by the French film industry, and the Current TTIP negotiations are stalled at least

---

<sup>84</sup> Wayne David, Hansard Millbank System, 29 November 2013, 565 col. 1237-8.

<sup>85</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 9.

<sup>86</sup> William Cash, Hansard Millbank System, 29 November 2013, 565 col. 1211.

<sup>87</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 9.

partly because Greek feta cheese manufacturers object to the concept of American feta. They may be right, aesthetically, but it should not be delaying us in this country.”<sup>88</sup>

The debate regarding the economy deploys continuity with the previous referendum as well. Those wanting to remain in the EU point out the risks of leaving, making their arguments based mostly on fear. Because the EU is the UK’s largest trading partner, it would be unwise to leave the union and face an uncertain future. The leave campaign, on the other hand, focusses on the opportunities they perceive if the UK leaves the EU. They see endless, albeit not always viable, opportunities for the UK, should they leave the EU. Pointing out that one size fits all policy is less practical than being able to make specific deals that are good for the UK.

### Immigration

The last important subject in the 2016 campaign was Immigration. Immigration had not been a factor of importance during the 1975 referendum, but became exceedingly so in the decades in between. One of the reasons the subject gained more importance was because of the free movement of people in the EU, combined with the increase in EU member states. Most new member states had a GDP and standard of living much lower than those in the UK and the rest of Western Europe. This coincides with safety and the feeling of safety, as many people are afraid of new things. Moreover, immigrants and the consequences their coming might have for the position of those already a part of society. The debate was dominated by the Leave campaign. The Remain campaign focussed less on this subject.

The Remain flyer emphasises that the UK is not a part of Schengen, which ensures the right to check every person who enters the country including EU nationals. By ensuring a new deal with the EU ahead of the referendum, they were able to ensure that no benefits would have to be paid to those who had not worked in the UK in the four years prior.<sup>89</sup> They also point out that in exchange for the economic benefits Norway, for instance, has had to accept the right of all EU citizens to live and work in their country.<sup>90</sup> By remaining in the EU safety in Britain is also better safeguarded. It allows cooperation on intelligence, which is useful in keeping out criminals and terrorists, and that would make immigration less of a threat to

---

<sup>88</sup> Boris Johnson, *EU referendum*.

<sup>89</sup> *Why the Government believes*, 10.

<sup>90</sup> *Why the Government believes*, 10.

British society. David Cameron also emphasises that the new deal struck with the EU makes regulation of immigration easier.

“After the hard work of the Home Secretary, we have secured new powers against criminals from other countries, including powers to stop them coming here in the first place, and powers to deport them if they are already here. We agreed longer re-entry bans for fraudsters and people who collude in sham marriages, and an end to the frankly ridiculous situation where EU nationals can avoid British immigration rules when bringing their families from outside the EU.”<sup>91</sup>

The leave campaign takes a broader approach regarding immigration. They vowed to take back control of the British borders and ensure that dangerous people could be kept out. The EU court was preventing that according to them. Boris Johnson stated that one of the problems is that politicians want to slash immigration numbers, but the EU does not enable them to do so. This allowed the people to become frustrated, as promises were not being kept.<sup>92</sup> This was especially true for those who voted for the Conservative party, as explained by MP Hollobone:

“Is this not the crucial point for people who voted Conservative at the last election on the basis of that manifesto pledge to cut immigration to tens of thousands? The truth is that that objective will simply be unattainable while we remain a member of the EU, so the only way to solve this is to vote to leave on 23 June.”<sup>93</sup>

According to the Leave campaign, it was even possible for convicted criminals to enter when they wanted to and did not allow deportation of dangerous terrorist suspects.<sup>94</sup> This is substantiated by quoting former head of Interpol, Ronald Noble. He states that:

“Europe’s open-border arrangement... is effectively an international passport-free zone for terrorists” and “hanging a sign welcoming terrorist to Europe”.<sup>95</sup>

On regular forms of immigration, it is put forward that a quarter of a million EU immigrants arrive in Britain every year. Making its number easier to visualise by comparing it to the population of Newcastle. This would put a strain on the public services in place, like the

---

<sup>91</sup> David Cameron, Hansard Millbank System, 22 Feb 2016, column. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Boris Johnson, *EU referendum*.

<sup>93</sup> Philip Hollobone, Hansard Millbank System, 26 Feb 2016 column. 602.

<sup>94</sup> *Why should we vote leave*, 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, 7.

NHS and schools.<sup>96</sup> This problem would only increase as more countries will become part of the EU. The wanted immigrants from the Commonwealth who could contribute to society, however, could not enter the country quickly because of EU regulations.<sup>97</sup> They implied countries would become member states of an EU superstate who would not be able to regulate their immigrants, even if they wanted to.

When looking at the complete debate, a dominant position for neither side becomes directly evident. However, the Leave campaign played into the sentiment of the people to a more considerable extent than the Remain campaign. The image that waves of unwanted immigrants are washing up on Britain's shores appeared predominant. According to Leave the numbers behind immigration were high and directly linked to the UK's membership of the EU. Especially immigrants from Eastern Europe were considered unwelcome as a significant share of society felt they caused more problems than they contributed to British society. By tapping into the fears of people on losing their national identity and linking it to the EU, they succeed in making the EU appear as a threat to the national identity. The Remain campaign is unable to counter it with a convincing alternative. Partly because they have the same stance, that immigration should be restricted. Partly because they focus on the rules and how they could be improved. This leads to less change than the complete overhaul the Brexiteers wanted.

### Conclusion

The political debate in the build-up to the referendum of 2016 was more one-sided than the debate had been in 1975. Pro-EU voices did not have the vast majority in numbers they had had in 1975. While this time even most Remainers tended to be sceptical towards it. The debate is not between advocates of the EU and those who oppose it; it is between those who oppose it to a varying degree. Of the three subjects, Sovereignty and Immigration appear to be the most important ones. As these subjects are linked to one another, they appear in the debate more often, with primarily the Leave campaign focussing on them and linking them to the national self-image. This is exploited by focussing on the EU as undemocratic and a threat to British sovereignty. It is interesting to see the nationalism that the Remain campaign thrives on, and it can also be seen in the word used to describe the society. The Remain campaign usually refers to the UK, while the Leave campaign predominantly used the more

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Boris Johnson, EU referendum.

nationalistic Britain. This aligns with the appeals on national identity by the Remain campaign, but would make it less likely that they would focus on a local campaign with the argumentation fixed on specific regions. As we will see in the chapter on the local campaign, this was not the case, however. Another interesting development that can be seen is the addition of immigration as a relevant subject and how it shows the upper hand of the Leave campaign. The Remain campaign was unable to square off on the subject because the room for manoeuvring was limited within EU politics.

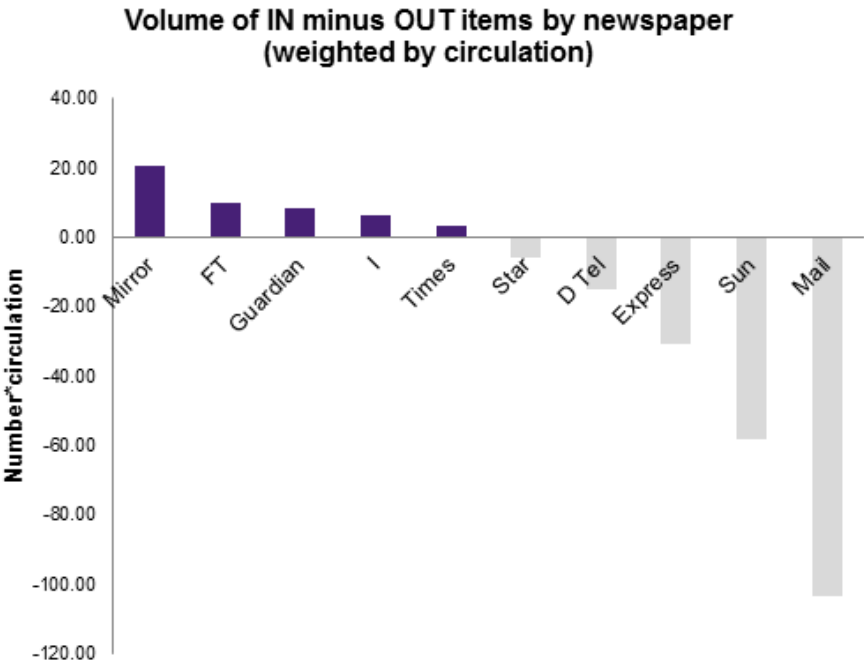


## Media coverage and Public opinion

This part of the chapter will focus on the way the media covered the build-up towards the referendum and how public opinion developed in the same period. This will be done by both looking at the way the newspapers reported on the subject and by looking into different polls that were conducted during the period. These polls show what the public thought the most important subjects were, on deciding which way to vote. To understand the way the public developed its opinion we must know the issues they cared for most. By knowing this, it is possible to understand the way public opinion was shaped by both the newspapers and the political debate. First, we will look at the way the media covered the referendum, followed by the development of public opinion. When looking at the coverage, it is possible to see which points of the political debate are deemed the most important by the various newspapers. The reason the focus will be on newspapers is that they were also present during the first referendum, which makes the comparisons between both referenda more valuable. One could argue that social media might be included. The reason they are less relevant for this study is that the things published on social media often originate from the traditional media. The other way round, things that have a large enough relevance find their way to traditional media as well. Tweets made by prominent politicians are often showcased online on their websites. After this, we will look at the development of public opinion. This will be done by focusing on polls conducted in the build-up to the referendum. Polls can make researchers look into the mind of a large group and what they deem important. Since this focusses on the national debate, this adds a lot to the research.

The media coverage had changed in the decades between the 1975 and the 2016 referendum. As stated before, it remained significant, regardless of the rise of social media. There were still close ties between politicians and the traditional media, and politicians were able to spread their stance on the referendum quite easily. A prime example of this is the weekly column in *the Daily Telegraph* that Boris Johnson had throughout the campaign. By providing politicians with a platform, it becomes easy to see which newspaper supported which side in the debate. When looking at the media landscape, the first thing that appears significantly different is that many newspapers show support for Brexit, albeit some more openly than others. Large newspapers that actively supported the Leave campaign were *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Telegraph*. The newspapers that backed the Remain campaign were

*The Times*, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror*. Newspapers on both sides of the campaign proclaimed their advice in editorials, making it clear to their readers what they considered important. These newspapers are used during this research because they reached a significant portion of the population. An estimation by The Huffington Post UK adding up the print circulation of newspapers which had declared their positions, shows that papers supporting Leave had an audience of around 4.8 million, while those who backed Remain reached just over 3 million.<sup>98</sup> When looking at the graph below it can be seen that the articles that supported the Leave campaign outnumbered the articles for remaining by a large number. Especially the *Mail* and the *Sun* had a significant impact in tipping the scale towards Leave. Partially because of the more considerable amount of newspapers in circulation, partially because they apparently made less of an effort to stay impartial.



99

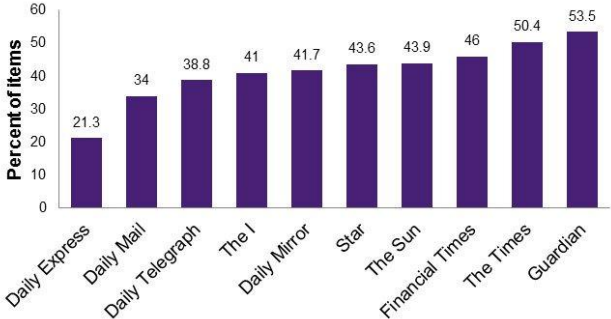
The same research also showed that the newspapers that were considered remain, tended to have more balanced coverage of the campaign. The graph below shows how balanced the

<sup>98</sup> "Which Newspapers Support Brexit In the EU Referendum?", *the Huffington Post*, 22 June 2016, Link: [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/which-newspapers-support-brexit\\_uk\\_5768fad2e4b0a4f99adc6525?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer\\_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xllm5sLw&guce\\_referrer\\_cs=i8fklbUtclG4Hwf8HOqkmg](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/which-newspapers-support-brexit_uk_5768fad2e4b0a4f99adc6525?guccounter=1&guce_referrer_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xllm5sLw&guce_referrer_cs=i8fklbUtclG4Hwf8HOqkmg).

<sup>99</sup> University of Loughborough, *Media coverage of the EU referendum*, 27 June 2016, Link: <https://blog.lboro.ac.uk/crcc/eu-referendum/uk-news-coverage-2016-eu-referendum-report-5-6-may-22-june-2016/>

articles were, with *The Guardian* having the most balanced approach and the *Daily Express* having the least balanced approach, by quite a margin.

**Figure 1.1: Percentage of items presenting a balanced or neutral discussion of the campaign**



blog.lboro.ac.uk/crcc/eu-referendum

Loughborough University

100

When combining both graphs what becomes clear is that the Leave campaign had more coverage during the campaign and the coverage they received was less balanced and therefore more favourable to their cause. This ensured them a considerable advantage during the campaign. Ensuring that undecided voters were more likely to follow the news coverage and follow their stance.

When looking at public opinion and the subjects that were most important, Lord Ashcroft Polls provide a good overview of the situation. His polls asked people to fill in the issues they felt were the most important while deciding what to vote. Lord Ashcroft has been a reliable source of independent polling ever since he left politics. He has done extensive polling during and after the Brexit referendum. One of the first things that nearly half of the electorate, both those who voted leave and remain, decided what to vote in the last month. 10% of those who voted remain, and 9% of those who voted leave even only decided on the day of the vote.<sup>101</sup> These numbers show that a large part of the electorate was susceptible to the way the campaign developed. Their mind was made up by what they heard in the media.

<sup>100</sup> Loughborough, *Media coverage*.

<sup>101</sup> Lord Ashcroft Polls, *How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why*, 24 June 2016, Link: <https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>.

Please can you rank the following in order of how important they were in your decision?

### Why Remain voters voted Remain



### Why Leave voters voted Leave



102

The reasons people gave for voting the way they did can be seen in the figure above. The most important reason for leaving the EU was “the principle that decisions about the UK should be taken in the UK”. Nearly half (49%) of the correspondents gave that as an answer. One third (33%) said the main reason was that leaving “offered the best chance for the UK to regain control over immigration and its borders.” In third place, with just over one in eight (13%) people finding it important, is that remaining meant little to no choice about “about how the EU expanded its membership or its powers in the years ahead.” For remain voters, the single most important reason for their decision was that “the risks of voting to leave the EU looked too great when it came to things like the economy, jobs and prices” (43%). Just over three in ten correspondents (31%) felt that remaining would mean the UK is holding on to “the best of both worlds”, having access to the EU single market without Schengen or the Euro. Just under one in five (17%) said their main reason was that the UK would “become more isolated from its friends and neighbours”.<sup>103</sup> The way people answered this question shows that the issues mentioned in the political debate were essential to them as well. When people voted remain, economic reasoning seemed most important, with the biggest reason to remain to be economical by nature and the other reasons both having an economic side to them. When people ultimately decided to vote to leave this was not because of economic reasoning. They felt more strongly about the sovereignty and the need to take back power from the EU, as all their most important reasons for voting leave were related to that. Immigration was also a

<sup>102</sup> Lord Ashcroft, *How the United Kingdom voted*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*.

significant subject but could be solved once the UK had the power to make their policy again. When comparing the public debate with the political debate, it becomes clear that the same issues were significant in both debates. The issues considered to be the most important by both sides of the debate differ, however, with those supporting the Leave campaign more focused on sovereignty and national identity while the Remain campaign felt that the economy was the most relevant subject of debate.

An interesting side note is that in the political debate the “we versus them” rhetoric was also persistent. It is interesting to see a clear division there as well. In England leave voters were twice as likely as remain voters to describe themselves as more English than British. Two-thirds of the people who considered themselves more English than British voted to leave. On the other hand, two-thirds of those who considered themselves more British than English voted to remain.<sup>104</sup> The results of this poll seem contradictory to the public debate. In the political debate the focus is put on being British, poised against the European others. People more likely to vote to leave, however, felt less British than those who voted remain. This appears counter-intuitive but might be explained by linking both to nationalism. It is entirely possible that leave voters are still more nationalistic than remain voters, and therefore more perceptible for said arguments. Their nationalism is focused mostly on England, not the UK.

## Conclusion

The British perception of the EU and the role Britain had to play in it, changed a lot between the 1975 and the 2016 referenda. When looking at polls done around the time of the vote, it becomes clear that the issues put forward in the political debate dominate the public debate as well. The most important thing about the public debate is only 30% of the people knew what they were going to vote in advance. Every other voter was influenced by the political debate and the way the media reported on the campaign. It is, therefore, possible to say that the media had a significant influence on the result of the referendum. Most people voted, not out of principle, but because the debate and corresponding media coverage had taken place.

There are several continuities and changes between both referenda. The most essential continuities were: the persistence of Sovereignty and Democracy as a significant

---

<sup>104</sup> Lord Ashcroft, *How the United Kingdom voted*.

theme in the debate, the continuing presence of the Economy in the debate, and lastly the tone of the debate, which was negative. The persistence of debates regarding Democracy and sovereignty is understandable, since the EU arguably has some democratic deficit, and this debate has not only been held in the UK. What appears to make it different however is that the UK has the 'outsider tradition' that has been mentioned earlier. It possibly affected both the political and public opinion. That economic issues were included in both debates is less surprising, since the economy was at the core of the European integration process. Lastly, the tone of the debate is perhaps most important. A negative approach was present in both periods and on both sides of the debate. While the Leave campaign had been extremely negative during both campaigns, the Remain campaign became gradually more negative in tone. The stance of the Remainers had also changed from "the EU is the best option for Britain but..." to "The EU is not great but leaving it would be even worse." References to historical invasions and threats to the national identity are seen during both campaigns.

The three changes that come to the attention when looking at the 1975 and the 2016 campaigns are: the addition of immigration as a subject of debate, the shift of the schism from Labour to the Conservatives, and the media becoming more Eurosceptic. First immigration went from being almost absent in the 1975 referendum to a significant theme in the 2016 campaign. There are two possible explanations for this, the first being that it could be bound to the current time as more countries in Europe have this debate. The other option is that it is part of the 2016 debate because it has its roots in the negative tone of the debate mentioned above. It appears likely that it is a combination of both. While the discussion might be held all over Europe, it appeared enlarged in the UK. It seems likely that four decades of negativism on the European project and the migration that is paired with this. The second change requires less extensive analysis, since the fact that the Conservative party was split on the EU, and Labour was not, is easy to see. As it had worked for Labour before, it might have caused Cameron to take the gamble for his party too. The last change is growing Euroscepticism in the media. When looking at the coverage in the media, it stands out that the media, while indeed divided, appear to favour the Leave campaign. This was a significant change with 1975 when the media were overwhelmingly pro-EEC. While covering the campaign, the newspapers that were most likely to write balanced and factual texts about the campaign, tend to be less well read than the newspapers that write more one-sided stories. The newspapers with the more balanced stories tend to recommend their readers to vote

remain. The more frequently read, but less factual newspapers, recommended their readers to vote Leave. Because of the above, the media as a whole tended to be negative towards the EU and recommended voting leave. The media not being pro-Remain, as they had been with the previous referendum, ensured the Leave campaign had a competitive edge over their opponents, they did not have the last time around.

## Local politicians during the referenda

During both referenda, the political debate at a national level was one of the most important influencers of people, who were unsure what to vote. In the previous chapters, the national debate during both referenda has been looked into extensively. The results were that both referenda were different in several ways. Not just in the way they were conducted, but also the role of the politicians themselves. This chapter will look at the way local politicians, from the different regions mentioned in the previous chapter, campaigned during the build-up to the referenda. What were the regional differences in the campaign during the 1975 referendum and the 2016 referendum? Can they explain the different outcomes of the regions?

When looking at the different regions during both periods, one thing immediately becomes clear. During the 1975 referendum, there was hardly any local campaigning. As shown in the first chapter party discipline was a lot stronger, and the senior politicians of both Labour and the Conservative Party supported the Remain campaign. This caused the campaign to focus mainly on the national level, which might be because of the new membership of the EU. Because the membership was a relatively recent development, there were no significant regional differences that could be ascribed to the membership. This could only be done for nationwide developments. Because of the strong party line, the national debate during the 1975 campaign was the regional debate as well. The arguments made can be assumed to be the same as those at a regional level. The 2016 referendum had a debate that was less defined by party lines, which caused more outsider politicians to speak out during the campaign. This chapter will look at two different MP's from each region and what their argumentation was for either remaining or leaving. When they are both present, one MP who supported remain and one who supported Leave will be examined. Possible changes in MP's and the party they belonged to will be taken into account as well.

### Why these regions, and voting percentages during the referenda

As mentioned before there is a reason why the counties and regions were selected. As a means of introduction, every county or region used in this research will receive a short introduction and why it was selected, and the voting percentages of both referenda will be mentioned. These percentages were provided by the electoral college and can be consulted



on a significant number of websites including the BBC and even Wikipedia.

Cornwall is chosen as one of the four constituencies to investigate because of the change that took place between both referenda, regarding its inhabitants' views towards the EU. The negative stance towards the EU had grown significantly. Furthermore, it is located outside of Northern England, which made it possible to gather data from across the whole of the UK. As it has never been an industrial centre, Cornwall has been less affected by the outsourcing of production that has taken place in between the referenda. Cornwall, on the other hand, thrives primarily on the skilled trades occupations. This includes agricultural, electronic, construction, textile and printing trades. Cornwall is therefore not necessarily associated with the unemployment that has left a distinct mark on the other regions. When looking at the outcome of the 1975 referendum, the data show that 68.5% of the people of Cornwall voted to remain in the ECC. In 2016 that had shifted to 53.4% of the populace wanting to leave the EU, while 46.6% wanted to remain.

The second county included in this research, Derbyshire, located in the East Midlands, has an economy that has for a long time depended on the available mineral resources. Due to its natural resources and many fast-flowing streams, it was one of the regions where the Industrial Revolution took off. It was, therefore, a region where the industry was the predominant sector people worked in until the 1980s. Currently, the unemployment is low, compared to the national average, which makes Derbyshire interesting to include in the research data. It ensures we will have to look at other causes as well. When looking at the data of the 2011 census, the city of Derby is excluded from the data. Since all other areas are also rural, this will not affect the research done. It will provide a county that is easier to compare with the other rural areas. During the 1975 referendum, the people of Derbyshire voted to remain in the EEC, with a majority of 68.5%. In the 2016 referendum, this had changed, however. This time between 59.1% of those eligible to vote, voted to leave the EU.

The next region we will look at is Mid Scotland and Fife. Unlike the other regions, it is not situated in England, but in Scotland. The other major difference with the other counties, as is seen in Manchester too, is that it became more pro Europe, instead of against it. Both times the region voted to stay in the EEC and the EU. This is not the same as the rest of Scotland which as a whole voted against membership of the EEC in 1975. The reason it is included in this research is the percentage of people who voted to remain rose, as it did in

Scotland as a whole. A second important reason that it is included is that it is rural, as the other regions are. This makes the comparison more valuable. In 1975 58.2% of the people wanted to Remain in the ECC, whereas the second time between 60.4% voted Remain. The Scottish census, as the English census, takes place every ten years????????? the region, like the others, is also rural, lacking big city's that can change the data too much.

The last rural county included in this chapter is Lincolnshire, and there are two reasons for that. First Lincolnshire is an agricultural county, with a large number of seasonal workers. These workers often come from the European mainland, most notably Poland. In the past, there were tensions between the local population and the immigrant workers in a county not accustomed to large-scale migration. Second, the county overwhelmingly voted to leave the EU during the 2016 referendum. The two voting districts with the highest percentages of its population voting to leave, Boston and South Holland, are both located in Lincolnshire. Overall, the shift between the two referenda was significant. In 1975 74.7% of the people wanting to stay in the ECC, whereas in 2016 66% of the people voted to leave the EU. This enormous shift from Remain to Leave makes Lincolnshire so interesting for research.

The last region to be included is the city of Manchester. In contrast to the other regions it is a city that voted to remain in the EU. The reason the city of Manchester is included is precisely that it differs from the other regions that are included in this research. By including a city in the research, a comparison can be made. This gives us the possibility to look into factors that show a certain overlap between the rural areas and the city. Those which do not differ can be dismissed as being influential, which makes it possible to draw more precise conclusions based on the data. At the 2016 referendum, 64.5% of those eligible to vote in Manchester voted to remain a part of the EU. In 1975 this percentage was the same, with 64.5% voting to remain in the EEC.<sup>105</sup>

### Cornwall

The first region that we will look at more closely is Cornwall. Cornwall has historically leaned toward the Conservative party and the Liberals, after fusing with the Social Democrats in 1988 known as the Liberal Democrats. When the 1975 referendum took place 3 MP's were

---

<sup>105</sup> "How the regions voted in the referendum", *The Guardian*, June 7, 1975.

Conservatives, and 2 MP's from Cornwall were Liberals. By the time the referendum of 2016 took place all 6 MP's from Cornwall were part of the Conservative Party. When the 1975 referendum's campaign took off both leaders of the parties representing Cornwall in Parliament were part of the group 'Keep Britain in Europe'.<sup>106</sup> As shown in the first chapter backbenchers were not very influential during the 1975 referendum. Party line, while being less rigid than during national elections, was still influential. The campaign was shaped by the leaders of the political parties and other high ranking politicians. With the leaders of both parties supporting remain and no influential party member opposing this line in Cornwall, it can be assumed that the MP's for the region supported the party line. From these data, it is possible to assume that politicians in Cornwall supported the Remain campaign. This aligns with the way its people voted during the 1975 referendum, with 68.5% of the popular vote Remain had a clear majority. This aligned with the national outcome, which was only slightly lower at 67.3%.

The 2016 referendum had a different kind of campaign. As stated in the second chapter this was partly due to a much weaker party line, which resulted in more MP's actively campaigning. This inclusion of a more significant share of MP's in the campaign makes it interesting to look at the local politicians in Cornwall. As stated before all MP's from Cornwall were part of the Conservative party. Two of them, Sarah Newton and George Eustice held a Cabinet function. The focus will be on these two politicians because they both held a Ministerial function during the referendum, but while Newton supported Remain, Eustice supported Leave. This shows that party line was indeed less rigid, as even cabinet members were able to campaign according to their personal preference. Newton was the only Cornwall MP to support the Remain campaign. Since both Fishing and Farming are essential industries in Cornwall and gained massive subsidies by the EU, they are likely to be essential subjects to both MP's.

Eustice, while being part of the cabinet, with its leader David Cameron supporting Remain, supported the Leave campaign. Eustice was a former member of UKIP, the anti-Europe party avidly campaigning to leave the EU for several decades. Eustice as junior minister

---

<sup>106</sup> "EU Referendum: Parallels with 1975", *BBC*, 10 June 2015, Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33045935>.

for food, farming and the marine environment focussed his campaign on farming and its subsidies. He stated:

*"I have taken a view, having wrestled with all sorts of EU regulation over the last two and a half years, that we would do far better as a country if we ended the supremacy of Europe and shaped new fresh thinking policies that really deliver for our agriculture."*<sup>107</sup>

He plans to do so by using the money that is no longer paid to Europe in membership costs. The loss of farming being subsidised by the EU could easily be compensated that way, according to Eustice.<sup>108</sup> He also takes a stance against the environmental laws made by the EU. By no longer having to uphold EU laws the 2 billion Pounds could be used to help farmers, while protecting nature could be done more cost-efficiently.<sup>109</sup>

When looking at the referendum and its implications Newton holds a different view. She states that the UK should remain a part of the EU. Not only will Britain be stronger in the EU, it is also of great importance to Cornwall. She states:

*"Vote Leave say they'll walk away from the single market and negotiate a new deal, but they can't explain what it would be and how long it will take. Vote Leave can't guarantee that the funding Cornwall currently receives from the EU will continue. The truth is if we left, the EU would not give us a better deal than they have for themselves."*<sup>110</sup>

Further on in the same publication, she states that independent experts have stated that the harm that would be done to the economy by leaving the EU only causes new spending cuts. Because of these cuts, there is no room to replace the subsidies by the EU with UK subsidies.<sup>111</sup> This would especially harm Cornwall since it is so dependent on them.

When looking at the debate and the role local politicians from Cornwall played in them, the sources show that a majority of the MP's supported the Leave campaign. This aligns with the way the people of Cornwall voted during the referendum, namely leave. It was, however, with a much smaller margin than might be expected with 53.4% voting leave. With five out of six

---

<sup>107</sup> "UK environment ministers at odds over Brexit impact on farming", *The Guardian*, 24 feb 2016.

<sup>108</sup> "EU referendum: Farming support 'to continue on Brexit'", *BBC*, 20 June 2016, Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36575503>.

<sup>109</sup> "Brexit would free UK from 'spirit-crushing' green directives, says minister", *The Guardian*, 30 may 2016.

<sup>110</sup> <https://sarahnewtonmp.wordpress.com/2016/05/>, consulted November 2018.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*.

MP's supporting Leave, that margin was expected to be larger. Local interests play a role, though it is difficult to pinpoint the reason the region voted to leave. With the remain and leave campaigns both claiming that the local interests of subsidies were better off with the result they pursued.

## Derbyshire

Derbyshire has a number of MP's representing its interests, who differ a lot from those of Cornwall . During the 1975 referendum, 7 MP's were from the Labour party, while 3 Conservative Party members represented the region. By the time of the 2016 referendum, there had been a significant shift, with Labour only having 4 MP's and the Conservatives 7. This shift is significant and appears to show dissatisfaction towards Labour that occurred over the decades in between the referenda. As stated in the second chapter, it has for a long time been the industrial centre of the UK, but as of the latest census, a significant amount of industry has disappeared. This is possibly the reason why this shift has taken place since the people of the region are disappointed in the Labour politicians who failed to protect their jobs. In this region, we will look at Dennis Skinner, a Labour MP during both referenda, and Patrick Mcloughlin who was Secretary of State for Transport during the referendum and became Chairman of the Conservative party immediately after the referendum.

Dennis Skinner has been a Labour MP since 1970 and had been one of the longest sitting MP's during the 2016 referendum. He is known to have views that are on the left-wing of the Labour party.<sup>112</sup> His focus has been on workers' rights throughout his entire career, and he has been against the EU since his entrance into politics. He is seen as representing the working class Labour heartlands.<sup>113</sup> When asked why he supported the vote for Brexit he stated :

---

<sup>112</sup> "Profile:Dennis Skinner,The Beast of Bolsover, 5 of his Best Quotes", *The Star*, 24 November 2014, Link: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dennis-skinner-the-beast-of-bolsover-five-of-his-best-quotes-1-6968531>.

<sup>113</sup> "Labour MPs John Mann and Dennis Skinner back Brexit", *PoliticsHome*, 10 June 2016, Link: <https://www.politicshome.com/news/europe/eu-policy-agenda/brexit/news/75992/labour-mps-john-mann-and-dennis-skinner-back-brexit>.

*“My opposition from the very beginning has been on the lines that fighting capitalism state-by-state is hard enough. It’s even harder when you’re fighting it on the basis of eight states, ten states and now 28.”<sup>114</sup>*

His focus was on economic developments, and he found that the supranational system of the EU caused a significant disadvantage for workers. The above is in line with the needs of his constituents, who had lost the certainty of the time the region was still the industrial centre of the UK.<sup>115</sup>

Conservative MP McLoughlin, who was transport secretary at the time, campaigned to remain in the EU. According to him leaving the EU would have catastrophic consequences for the remaining British industry, which can be directly linked to Derbyshire. He feared that by leaving the EU the industry and the lower classes employed by them would be hurt the most. He said:

*“When I was young, people didn’t think mining would ever end. I hear the Brexiteers make the same case about car manufacturing and farming today. Just as the under-educated and least well-off suffered worst from Labour’s great recession after 2008. So, they would be first to feel the pain of our departure from the EU.”<sup>116</sup>*

While saying that the depression of 2008 was completely Labour’s fault is at the least unfounded, the important thing is that by linking leaving the EU to the coal industry, he tried to visualise the possible prospects for those who felt the EU had only caused their finances to worsen. He said the unknown risk would likely be felt by those who cannot afford it to take the risk.<sup>117</sup>

Overall Derbyshire showed the same pattern as Cornwall. The focus of its politicians was on the working class employed in the industrial sector, who made up a significant part of their constituents. Interestingly Skinner opposed the EU because it did not protect workers, while McLoughlin wanted to stay in the EU to protect the same working class. While the means of the politicians might be different their goal, namely protecting the working class, is the

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>115</sup> “EU opposition to socialism ‘why I voted against every European treaty: Dennis Skinner’”, *the Morning Star*, 9 May, 2018.

<sup>116</sup> “Brexit could spell end for farming and car industry, says transport secretary”, *The Guardian*, 13 May 2016.

<sup>117</sup> “Patrick McLoughlin interview: Brexit would push up ticket prices and threaten our car industry”, *The Telegraph*, 21 May 2016.

same. It is interesting to see that this is the case since it appears to show that the debate is not based on facts but on opinions. This could also be seen at the national level, as shown in the previous chapters. Where there is more focus on opinions, the Leave campaign gets a better result.

### Mid Scotland and Fife

The Scottish region of Mid Scotland and Fife had a different composition of MP's representing the region in the British parliament in 2016 from the one it had in 1975. It is important to note that, while Mid Scotland and Fife counts as a region in the Scottish parliament, it does not in the British parliament. For the elections the constituencies have different borders, so the numbers of people per constituency in the UK and in Scotland differ. The most significant change that has taken part in the period between the referenda is the distribution of MP's from the different parties. In 1975 the region had 5 Labour MP's, 2 SNP MP's, and 1 Conservative MP. By 2016 all the MP's were of the SNP. This significant shift had taken place due to the increased calls for Scottish self-governance. The founding of a Scottish parliament, which meant an increase of self-governance, and the independence referendum that took place in 2014 are other displays of this will to separate themselves from the UK. While a large part of the population wanted to leave the UK the percentage of Scottish people wanting to leave the EU was much lower. The percentage of leave votes in Scotland shrank between 1975 and 2016, as shown in the previous chapter. With the SNP supporting the Remain campaign and all the MP's being part of that party it is likely that they all supported remain as well. The two MP's are Peter Wishart, who is the longest serving MP of the SNP, and Stephen Gethins, who is the SNP spokesperson on Europe. When asked about the line of the SNP Gethins answered:

*"The SNP will make the positive case for Scotland and the UK's continued membership of the EU - but Scotland must not be dragged out of the EU against its will."*<sup>118</sup>

Being the spokesperson, he played an active role during the campaign, in which he expressed that the Remain campaign in Scotland was a lot better organised. The lack of Scottish MP's that wanted to leave caused the Remain campaign to have the upper hand. According to him,

---

<sup>118</sup> "Scottish politicians outline views on EU referendum", BBC, 10 January 2016, Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-35276306>.

the Remain campaign should focus on the environmental benefits of the EU because it should focus more on the benefits of the EU which were not debatable. He said:

“That means highlighting the positive impact that the EU has when it comes to issues like the environment and the development of energy policy, social policy and being part of the largest trading bloc in the world.”<sup>119</sup>

By focussing on the positive side of the EU, he might want to prevent what had happened earlier in the campaign, when his words were twisted by the Leave campaign. This made it appear as if Gethins was pro leave, for which he filed a complaint with the election watchdog.<sup>120</sup> Wishart’s most crucial moment during the campaign, was as chairman of the Scottish affairs committee. This committee mainly focussed on the implications, of leaving the EU, for Scotland. This was his most visible moment during the campaign, wanting to ensure the best option for Scotland where a majority of the people in Scotland wanted to remain.<sup>121</sup>

The focus of the political debate was less focused on the region itself in Scotland. Because the SNP had a vast majority and its main focus was Scottish interests, they were less focused on the region they represented as MP’s, and more on the broader interest of their party. This became even clearer after the referendum, when Wishart stated that the SNP should accept the reality of leaving; he was afraid that people who voted Leave, would leave the party, and thus make the goal of leaving the UK even more difficult.<sup>122</sup> Because of interests utterly different from those of the rest of the UK, the campaign at a local level was shaped differently and mostly positive by nature, emphasising the things that were positive about the EU instead of entering a campaign, where it was not clear what was true and what was a lie. This is different than in England, where the focus was more on feelings associated with the EU. Possibly this is because the ‘outsider tradition’ was less prevalent in Scotland. The result was that every Scottish region voted to remain in the EU, without the significant differences between the cities and rural areas, that were present in England.

---

<sup>119</sup> “Remain campaign should highlight environmental benefits of EU membership, says Stephen Gethins”, *Holyrood*, 13 May 2016.

<sup>120</sup> “SNP MP Stephen Gethins reports Vote Leave to election watchdog”, *The Courier*, 7 June 2016.

<sup>121</sup> Scottish Affairs Committee, 25 May 2016, Link: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?410136-1/uk-scottish-affairs-committee-considers-british-eu-membership&start=160>.

<sup>122</sup> Pete Wishart: SNP must ‘face reality’ that Scotland is leaving EU, *iNews*, 9 Februari, 2018, link: <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/pete-wishart-snp-must-face-reality-scotland-leaving-eu/>.



## Lincolnshire

The region of Lincolnshire also had a significant change in the distribution of its MP's between 1975 and 2016. In 1975 it had 6 Conservative and 3 Labour MP's, while in 2016 it had 7 Conservative MP's and none from the Labour Party. Besides having only seven MP's instead of nine the shift to the Conservative Party is visible here as well. Of these MP's the majority voted to leave the EU, though certainly not all of them.<sup>123</sup> We will look at Matt Warman, who supported the Remain campaign, but as MP for Boston and Skegness he had the constituency with the highest percentage of leave voters in the UK. On the other hand, there is Karl McCartney. He was one of the MP's who supported a referendum back in 2011, when it was far from political reality, and backed the Leave campaign from the start.

Warman spoke out for Remain several times during the campaign. When asked why he favoured remaining in the EU his answer showed that he did so with his constituents in mind. He focusses on the seasonal labour that is common in Lincolnshire and says:

*'In an area where, like it or not, we now rely heavily on immigrant labour, no deal will undo the social challenges of community cohesion, but this one will make it more likely that only those who want to work and work hard will come to Britain.'*<sup>124</sup>

With this, he acknowledges that the region he represents is reliant on immigrants to work in agriculture. The deal made by Cameron has won him over, however, as he later says:

*'As I've said previously, I'd leave the Europe we are in today; but this hard-won deal changes it significantly and for the better.'*<sup>125</sup> While trying to persuade people to vote Remain he tries to get technology firms to speak out for remain as well, hoping voters will listen to them, because as he states: *'If you guys believe this stuff, get out there and say it. It's a hard task for politicians because we are often not the most trusted people in the room.'*<sup>126</sup> This seems to be a strange thing to do, however, because one of the reasons people voted Leave is that they felt multinationals were getting more benefits, while they were pushed into a corner. It might

---

<sup>123</sup> "Majority of Lincolnshire MPs and East Midlands MEPs back Brexit", *the Lincolnite*, link: <https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2016/02/majority-of-lincolnshire-mps-and-east-midlands-meps-back-brexit/>.

<sup>124</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>125</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>126</sup> "Conservative MP Tells Tech Firms to 'Speak Up' Against EU Brexit, *Silicon*, 19 April 2016, Link: [https://www.silicon.co.uk/e-regulation/governance/brexit-eu-referendum-matt-warman-190356?inf\\_by=5c0ab553671db848748b4a73](https://www.silicon.co.uk/e-regulation/governance/brexit-eu-referendum-matt-warman-190356?inf_by=5c0ab553671db848748b4a73).

be a possibility this would only move more people to vote Leave. It would only strengthen the feeling that politicians were there for the rich, not for them.

Karl McCartney has been a supporter of the Leave campaign from the start. It is interesting to see that he ticks all the boxes that are the most critical points of debate, as shown in the second chapter. On migration, he stated: *"We need to have complete control over our borders and also who lives and works here. By remaining a member of the European Union we cannot gain that control."*<sup>127</sup> Another point he made was about decisions made by the EU that were not in the interest of the British people. These unnecessary rules were often used in the argumentation by the Leave campaign. Lastly, he stated it had to become clear who governs Britain- the British people or the EU.<sup>128</sup> Being so outspoken for Leave he was included in the committee overseeing Brexit after the referendum had taken place.

When looking at both Lincolnshire politicians something interesting seems to be happening. The way the Leave campaign was held was not focussed on the local developments and needs. It just repeated what was being said at the national level, while it did appeal to its inhabitants. This is because it states that control must be taken back, which appeals because it says it is doing everything for the people. The Remain campaign, on the other hand, did focus on the local issues of Lincolnshire, emphasising the benefits the region had because of the EU. The reason that it probably did not appeal so much, is that it remained abstract, and while he did state the new deal by Cameron won him over, the last deal made by PM Wilson had not ended up giving the wished results. The example of wanting multinationals to endorse the Remain campaign is in strong contrast with the framing of the Leave campaign as well. So while probably more focussed on the local needs, it appeared to focus on the interests of the rich, which may have contributed to 66% of people voting Leave.

### The city of Manchester

The city of Manchester, being a city, has a strong link with the Labour Party historically. This is true for Manchester as well, with all of its MP's being members of the Labour Party since the 1960s. All 5 MP's for the city of Manchester supported the Remain campaign, which aligns

---

<sup>127</sup> "Why I will be campaigning and voting to leave the EU", *the Lincolnlite*, 22 February 2016, Link: <https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2016/02/why-i-will-be-campaigning-and-voting-to-leave-the-eu/>.

<sup>128</sup> Ibidem.

with the way the inhabitants of the city voted in the referendum. The city of Manchester voted to remain with a majority of 64.5% of its inhabitants voting to remain part of the EU.

The interesting thing, when looking at the campaigning done by the Manchester MP's, is that they hardly seemed to campaign at all; especially when compared with the other regions in this chapter. Where others made public statements about the way they thought their constituents should vote, this was only done by Mike Kane. In an interview, he stated that he would vote remain. When doing so, he focussed on the EU funds that helped the region develop. These funds have helped museums and rebuilding the Metrolink network. What he considers most important, though, is:

*“As a Labour Member of Parliament, workers' rights are at the centre of the Labour movement. European laws on guaranteed maternity and parental leave rights, health and safety protections, equal rights for eight million part-time workers and paid holidays are just a few of the reasons why staying in the EU is essential in playing our part to protect British worker's rights through the introduction of the European social chapter and other EU directives.”<sup>129</sup>*

There is material available of Lucy Powell, another MP who focussed on students and tried to win their support by making an appearance at Manchester University. The specific points she emphasised there are unclear, but she made clear she wanted to ensure young people took the effort to vote.<sup>130</sup>

Looking at the rare material that is available from this region, it is possible to conclude that the debate followed the national debate to a large extent. Kane emphasised that the EU had helped secure rights for the people in society who were most vulnerable economically. Apart from the funds, he did not specify any advantages specific to the district. It is noticeable that the campaign held here is different from those in more rural areas. This might have to do with Manchester being a city, which aligns its interests to a more considerable extent with the national interest. The other option being that all MP's were of the Labour Party. Labour played

---

<sup>129</sup> “The EU Referendum – how Trafford's MPs will vote”, *Messenger Newspapers*, 14 June 2016, Link: [https://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/14555038.The\\_EU\\_Referendum\\_\\_\\_how\\_Trafford\\_s\\_MPs\\_will\\_vote/](https://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/14555038.The_EU_Referendum___how_Trafford_s_MPs_will_vote/).

<sup>130</sup> “On Brexit, British youth ask: What's in it for me?”, *Reuters*, 18 May 2016, Link: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-turnout/on-brexit-british-youth-ask-whats-in-it-for-me-idUSKCN0Y91J2>.

second fiddle during the entire campaign, because of hesitance by party leader Jeremy Corbyn to be outspoken on the subject early on, and many MP's supported remain, while the white working class people were less supportive.

### Conclusion

When looking at the way local politicians campaigned during the referenda of 1975 and 2016, it becomes clear that, while they hardly did so during the 1975 referendum, they were active during the 2016 referendum. There are significant differences between the regions in this chapter as well.

	% vote in 1975	% vote in 2016	MP's 1975	MP's 2016
Cornwall	68.5% Remain 31.5% Leave	46.6% Remain 53.4% Leave	3 Conservative 2 Liberal	6 Conservative
Derbyshire	68.5% Remain 31.4% Leave	40.9% Remain 59.1% Leave	7 Labour 3 Conservative	4 Labour 6 Conservative
Mid Scot & Fife	58.2% Remain 41.8% Leave	60.4% Remain 39.6% Leave	5 Labour, 2 SNP 1 Conservative	8 SNP
Lincolnshire	74.7% Remain 25.3% Leave	34.0% Remain 66.0% Leave	6 Conservative 3 Labour	7 Conservative
Manchester	64.5% Remain 35.5% Leave	64.5% Remain 35.5% Leave	5 Labour	5 Labour
UK	68.7% Remain 31.3% Leave	48.0% Remain 52.0% Leave	Labour majority 319	Conservative majority 331

As the table above shows in the 1975 campaign, the way MP's were distributed in a region did not affect the outcome of the referendum. This probably had to do with the lack of campaigning at a local level and that the parties involved all supported the Remain campaign. Looking at the 2016 referendum, it shows that the regions are more likely to vote Leave if they have more Conservative MP's, though their numbers do not directly correlate with the result. It might be that certain demographic groups in the regions were more susceptible to local campaigning, or to issues like immigration which were larger in the 2016 campaign.

One of the significant differences is between the rural English areas, and the city of Manchester and Mid Scotland and Fife. While the local rural areas have a local campaign that focusses on the benefits the region will gain by remaining or leaving, whereas in the national debate the other areas do not do so. Manchester tends to follow the national debate and have very little local campaigning, which resulted in the following results in the referendums.

There are two explanations for this lack of a serious campaign. The first is that the MP's coming from Manchester are Labour and therefore less involved in the campaign. The

campaign has its origin in the split in the Conservative Party, and the effort of Cameron to keep it together. Labour played a less active role in the campaign. This was partly because it was not their internal struggle and their leader, Jeremy Corbyn, had been against the EU during his entire career. This prevented him from wholeheartedly supporting the Remain campaign, which might have resulted in the rest of the party doing so as well. Another possibility is that the interests of people living in a city aligned more with the general argumentations. This could also explain why a more significant percentage of people in the cities voted Remain than in the countryside.

Mid Scotland and Fife has a different reason for having a campaign that differs from the rural areas of England. Scotland as a whole was still influenced by the urge to gain independence from the UK, which caused all other issues to be subordinate to it. Because of this, the local campaigning in Scotland focussed on the needs of Scotland as a whole, and not on smaller regional needs.

Concluding it can be stated that the local campaigns differed a great deal from one another, with some overlap. This can be ascribed to both parties having the upper hand in the region, and the stance they had taken towards the referendum or the interests of the region which differed from the national campaign. What is certain is that rural regions with a Conservative majority had active local campaigning by their MP's, which focussed on the needs of the regions during the 2016 campaign. In regions that were neither rural or in possession of Conservative MP's this kind of campaigning was absent.

## Demographic developments in the UK between the 1975 and 2016 referendum

The focus of the previous chapters has been the debate that took place in the build-up to the 1975 and the 2016 referendum. The referendum asked the population whether they wanted to remain in the EU or discontinue being a part of it. In this chapter, the focus will be on the demographic changes that have taken place in the UK between these referenda. The reason we will look at the demographic changes is that changes in demographics might attribute to a change in the popular vote. Since no data from 1975 and 2016 are similar and therefore easily comparable, census data close to both referenda will be used. Trying to look at all the demographic developments that have taken place between both referenda would be unrealistic; there are just too many to treat in this research. The research will therefore only look at the demographics related to the main argumentation in the political and public debate. This chapter will, therefore, focus the information at the census moments closest to the referenda on:

- the economic situation,
- the percentage of minorities in the population
- whether the population is ageing
- the qualifications of its inhabitants

The counties or regions in this research are Cornwall, Derbyshire, Mid Scotland and Fife, Lincolnshire and the City of Manchester. Four of them are chosen because they are a rural county or region. The last one, the city of Manchester, is chosen because of it being a city.

The reasoning behind this choice is that the counties that voted for leaving the EU are mostly rural. The city of Manchester is included to compare the developments in the rural areas with an urban one. It serves as a check to the data of the rural areas and the developments that have taken place there. That makes it possible too look at the demographic changes that have taken place in the rural areas, and how they differ from those in the city of Manchester. The five regions/counties have not been chosen at random by any account. The reasoning behind choosing them is that they provide a diverse image of the referenda. Three counties voted to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum but have a broad geographical range. One is situated in Scotland and voted to remain, and the last one is a city that also voted to

remain. In 1975 however, they all voted to stay in the ECC. This allows us to see what kind of demographic developments may have resulted in this change. Most cities tended to vote Remain during the 2016 referendum; including them would distort the statistics of the region. By focussing on only rural areas the differences and similarities between them become clear, which allows us to focus on the most critical points. The last important reason they are chosen is that they appear average at first, but as stated in the previous chapter, all of them have their unique local outliers. This makes it possible to see if there are different causes for the same outcome.

By looking at the demographic developments in these regions/counties, this chapter will try to answer the following question: What were the local developments, aligned to the political debate between 1971 and 2011 in districts of Cornwall, Derbyshire, Mid Scotland and Fife, Lincolnshire and the city of Manchester which could have influenced the significant shift in votes between the 1975 and the 2016 referendum?

The demographics will be put forward thematically. This is because it gives a more accessible overview than putting the findings forward per region or county. The chapter focusses on the comparison per demographic item, not on the counties themselves.

### **Populations age and ethnic diversity**

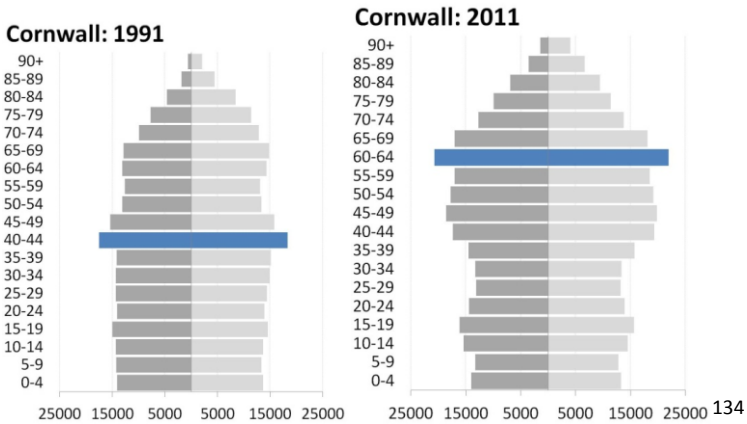
One of the most notable links between the way a region voted and its demographics was put forward by several newspapers immediately after the 2016 referendum is the build-up of an area's average age.<sup>131</sup> This will be broadened by also looking at the ethnic diversity of the regions. When looking at the statistics regarding the population of Cornwall, it becomes clear that for the most part, it has no extreme values.<sup>132</sup> The values tend to fluctuate around the UK average, sometimes being higher and at other times being lower. When looking at its total population of 532,273 people, it is relatively small. This is mainly due to the lack of a large city to bulk up the number of inhabitants. When looking at the age of the population, it can be seen that the population of Cornwall has aged. The age group that makes up the majority of the population are people between ages 40-44 in 1991 to the age group 60-64 in 2011. The graphs below show how the age demographic has a larger group of people over 40, while the

---

<sup>131</sup> "EU voting map lays bare depth of division across Britain", *the Guardian*, 14 June 2016.

<sup>132</sup> Cornwall Council, *2011 Census An overview of the Headline figures for Cornwall*, February 2013.

number of people under 40 shrank. The amount of people aged 40 and over has grown, while the amount of people aged 39 and under has shrunk considerably. The average age in Cornwall was 43 in 2011, significantly older than the 39 years on average for the UK. In the period 2001-2011, this was especially noticeable in the age group 30-39. This group showed an overall decrease of more than 5%, even though the general population increased with 6.7% over the same period.<sup>133</sup> The census also showed that the percentage of people with an ethnicity other than British was low, with only 4,3% of the population being of another ethnicity. The shift can be seen in the graph below. It shows that the big group in their forties in 1991 will be pensioners in 2011, without a more substantial group taking their places in the active workforce.



When looking at the 2011 demographics the 2011 Census atlas of Derbyshire is very helpful. When looking at the demographics by age, it becomes clear that the average population in Derbyshire is older than the average in England. The active workforce is a somewhat smaller part of the population: 69.9% compared to 64.8%. The percentage of old people on the other hand is more significant in Derbyshire than on average in England. In Derbyshire, they make up 18.6% of the populace while in England they only make up 16.3%. The average age is 41.6 years, which is above the UK average. When further delving into the demographics it becomes clear that the percentage of black people, and other minorities, is also well below the national average. The national average being 20.2% while in Derbyshire they only make up 4.2% of the populace. Overall it can be concluded that the Derbyshire population was ageing and with a more predominantly 'white' population than the rest of

<sup>133</sup> Cornwall, *Overview*, 2.  
<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*, 1.



England.<sup>135</sup>

When looking at the 2011 demographics on the site of the Scotland census, it becomes apparent that its demographics differ from the English averages. The reason the English and not the Scottish average is used, is that the English average is used as a benchmark throughout the rest of the chapter as well. The Scottish average is less relevant because all other demographics are compared to the English national demographics. Using the Scottish demographics would make them incomparable. The population tends to be a little bit older than that of England, with 18% of the people being 65 years or older.<sup>136</sup> The average in England is 16.3 per cent, though the counties we have looked at have similar percentages as Mid Scotland and Fife. The percentage of people between 16 and 64 is roughly the same as in England with 64.5% to 64.8%. The average age is slightly higher with 41.2 years. Looking at ethnicity 93.9% of the people are white, being from either Scotland or another place in Britain. Other ethnic groups only make up 2.4% of the population with the remainder having a Western- European background.<sup>137</sup> This is far lower than in England, where 20.2% of the people have a different ethnic background. By comparison, in Scotland, this is only 4%.

When looking at the population of Lincolnshire, it immediately stands out that the population has grown by 10.4% since 2001, which is well above the English average of 7.9%. Looking at the numbers more closely reveals that these numbers are more differentiated than they appear at first glance. The majority of the population growth has taken place with people aged 60 and older. The demographic change of the population between 30 and 40 years showed that its numbers have declined; the group comprised of children between 5 and 14 showed a similar decline. The population was, therefore, ageing rapidly.<sup>138</sup> The population has changed in other ways as well, primarily through immigration. Ethnic minorities had grown by 155.6%, more than doubled between the referenda, now making up 10.6% of the population.<sup>139</sup> This rise can be ascribed in large part to seasonal workers that came from Eastern Europe after countries there joined the EU in 2004.

---

<sup>135</sup> Derbyshire County Council, *2011 Census Atlas of Derbyshire*, July 2014, A1-A9.

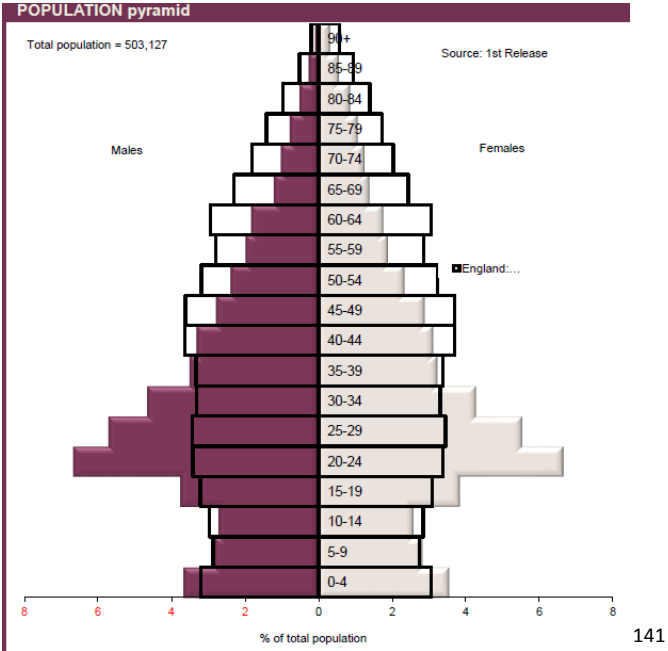
<sup>136</sup> <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/area.html>, consulted October 2018.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>138</sup> Lincolnshire Research Observatory *2011 Census population Estimates Lincolnshire*, 1-5.

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.justlincolnshire.org.uk/resources/race-ethnicity/>, consulted October 2018.

The city of Manchester has a demographic build-up that is likely to differ a lot from the rural areas we have looked at before. Cities are commonly accepted to have more pull towards immigrants. It would, therefore, make sense if Manchester had more inhabitants with a different ethnic background than the rural areas. Another well-known development is the migration of youths coming from rural areas moving towards the cities. Cities, therefore, are likely to have a younger population than rural areas. The overall population of Manchester has grown significantly from 422,925 in 2001 to 503,127 in 2011.<sup>140</sup> The difference in the build-up of Manchester’s population compared to the rest of England is shown in the population pyramid below. The pyramid clearly shows that the population of Manchester is relatively young when compared to the rest of England. Especially the age group 20-34 is a lot larger than the country’s average.



The ethnic diversity in Manchester is also different from the rural areas we have looked at earlier. White people of British origin only make up 59.3% of its inhabitants. Combined with white people of a different background they only make up 66.6% of the population, a significant drop from 81.0% in 2001.<sup>142</sup> With 33.4% of the population having a different

<sup>140</sup> Manchester city council, 2011 census dashboard.  
<sup>141</sup> Ibidem.  
<sup>142</sup> Manchester city council, 2011 census ethnic group summary.

ethnicity this is well above the national average of 20.2%. The population overall is younger and more diverse than the rest of the country, especially the rural areas.

### Economic situation

The third aspect of the regional demographics looked at in this research concerns the economic situation in the regions. When looking at the economic situation of the residents of Cornwall, it shows the number of working age (16-74) people has increased by 8.6% to 388,858 people. During the census, this age group, and not the more commonly used age group of 16-65, is used to describe this group. However, 33.3% of the people regarded to be the working age did not participate in the workforce. The majority of them did not participate because they were already retired, making up nearly 20% of the 33%. For those who were economically active chances of being employed were high. Only 3.3% of the workforce was unemployed, with a slight rise in absolute numbers, but the percentage being down from 2001.<sup>143</sup> Tourism has been one of the most important economic sectors in Cornwall, along with agriculture. The average income in Cornwall is £20,301, lower than the UK average of £27,273.

Economically Derbyshire differs from the rest of England in quite some aspects, though not in the percentage of economically active people. In both cases, this is 69.9% of the populace. The most significant difference is found in the number of people working in manufacturing. With 14.9% this is a lot higher than the national average of 8.8%. The reason this figure is so much higher in this area is probably that the region has a history of construction and industry, going all the way back to the industrial revolution. This number is still a lot lower than what it used to be, declining by eight percentage points since 2001. Because the number of people working in manufacturing is high, fewer people work in the service industry than the national average, though the number of people employed in this sector has risen. Currently, 73.7% of the people work in the service industry in Derbyshire, compared with 81.2% nationally. Despite the changes that occur in the industries that the people work in, unemployment is lower than the national average, by 3.9% to 4.4%. The average income in Derbyshire is £24,779.<sup>144</sup>

When looking at the economy of Mid Scotland and Fife, the statistics show it is

---

<sup>143</sup> Cornwall, Overview, 4.

<sup>144</sup> Derbyshire, *Census Atlas*, F1-F3.

comparable with the other counties the research focusses on. The unemployment rate is 4.7%, slightly higher than the English average with 4.4%. The percentage of people who are economically active is 68.4%,<sup>145</sup> lower than the average in England 69.9%, though not by much. Most people who are employed work in the services industry, like everywhere else in the UK. The average income in the region is £21,888, below the national average.

The economic activity of the region shows that unemployment in Lincolnshire is relatively low at 3.8% of the workforce.<sup>146</sup> This is lower than the national average 4.4%. As stated before the agricultural sector accounts for a large percentage of production in Lincolnshire, the amount of people working in this sector is however just 3.1%, with wholesale and retail trade being the largest sector with 15.9% of the people working in it.<sup>147</sup> The average income in Lincolnshire is £ 22.342. The reason the agricultural production levels are high in the region, yet few people work in it, is seasonal labourers. Seasonal labourers tend not to show up in a census because they have not permanently settled in the region.

The city of Manchester shows a different image when looking at the economic situation of its inhabitants. There are relatively more economically inactive people in the age group 16-74 in Manchester than there are in England, 36.5% to 30.1%.<sup>148</sup> The most significant difference is found in the reason behind their inactivity. Of the economically inactive people, the majority are students, and a relatively low percentage are retired. The retirees account for 20.9% while the students account for 38.7%.<sup>149</sup> This difference is likely due to the university located in Manchester. While looking at the group of people who are economically active and the percentage of unemployment, unemployment rates are found to be high. The unemployment rate in Manchester is 9.0% while nationwide it is only 6.3%.<sup>150</sup> The other regions investigated have even lower unemployment averages whereas that of Manchester is above average. The average income is below the UK average as well with £22.157.

---

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/area.html>, consulted October 2018.

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/lincolnshire-e10000019#sthash.CDaINU0q.dpbs>, consulted October 2018.

<sup>147</sup> Ibidem

<sup>148</sup> Manchester city council, 2011 census dashboard, link:  
[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/25548/q02\\_2011\\_census\\_-\\_manchester\\_dashboard.pdf](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/25548/q02_2011_census_-_manchester_dashboard.pdf).

<sup>149</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>150</sup> Manchester city council, 2011 census Manchester dashboard.

## Level of education

The last subject to be looked at more closely in this research is the level of education in different regions. When looking at the level of education of the selected regions, a distinct system of measurement is used. This system is used in every census in the UK and divides the people into several levels of education. This ranks from no qualifications for people only having a primary education, up to level 4 for people who have a Bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>151</sup> While observing the level of education of the population, these are the two most important ones since they are the extreme values and will, therefore, provide a more distinctive overview.

The overall qualifications of the people of Cornwall had grown since the last census. In 2011, 25% of the people had a level 4 qualification; this was still lower than the national average at 27.4%. This meant that they had either a bachelor's degree or higher. On the other hand, the percentage of people with no qualifications had shrunk to 22.4%, which is almost exactly the national average. These people had no academic or professional qualifications. For the first time, the group with a level 4 education had surpassed the group with no qualifications in numbers.<sup>152</sup>

When looking at the level of qualification enjoyed by the population of Derbyshire, it becomes clear that the percentage of people with level 4 qualifications or higher is significantly lower than the national average. In Derbyshire, only 23.7% of the people are in possession of a level 4 qualification, almost four per cent lower than the national average of 27.4%. The percentage of people with no qualifications, on the other hand, is higher than the national average. In Derbyshire, it is 25.7% of the populace while in England as a whole it is only 22.5%.<sup>153</sup>

The level of education in Mid Scotland and Fife appears relatively high compared to the other rural counties with 26.4% of the people having at least level 4 qualifications. Though this is

---

<sup>151</sup> Office for national Statistics, *2011 Census: Key Statistics for England and Wales*, December 2012, consulted October 2018, Link: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011censuskeystatisticsforenglandandwales/2012-12-11#qualifications>.

<sup>152</sup> Cornwall, *Overview*, 15.

<sup>153</sup> Derbyshire, *Census Atlas*, H1-H2.

still lower than the English average of 27.4%, it is higher than the percentages in the other rural areas researched so far. On the other hand, the percentage of people that do not have a qualification is higher than the British average with 26.4% to 22.5%. It is important to note that the Scottish overall percentage is even higher, with 26.8%.

When looking at the level of education in Lincolnshire, the data differ from the English average quite a lot. The level of people with no qualifications is high at 26.1% against the English average of 22.5%, which makes sense since for most agricultural jobs there is no need for a university degree. The amount of people who have a level 4 qualification or higher is a lot lower than the national average. In Lincolnshire, only 21.3% of the people have this qualification while in England as a whole the percentage is 26.4%.<sup>154</sup> Lincolnshire overall has a population that has a lower level of education than the English average.

The city of Manchester shows a different spread of education levels. The levels tend to be much closer to the national average than those in the rural areas looked at before. When looking at the group with no qualifications, this is higher than the national average, though not by a large margin. In Manchester, 23.1% of the people are not in possession of a qualification against 22.5% nationally. When looking at the group who have a level 4 education, however, Manchester has an above average percentage of people who are in possession of it. 28.9% of the population rank level 4 or above compared to 27.4% nationwide.

<sup>155</sup>

## Conclusion

When looking at the demographics of the various regions, it becomes clear that not all the differences in demographics between the areas have the same importance in explaining the way they voted to remain or leave the EU in the referendum. In the previous chapters, we have looked at the campaigns held both nationally and locally in these regions. Having looked at the demographics of the regions, it is possible to link specific demographics and the susceptibility to the campaigning done. The factor that appears to be the least important is the state of the economy. A lower unemployment rate and higher average income, which are important indicators of a strong economy, did not contribute to a more positive stance

---

<sup>154</sup> <http://www.ukcensusdata.com/lincolnshire-e10000019#sthash.CDaINU0q.dpbs>, consulted October 2018.

<sup>155</sup> Manchester, *dashboard*.

towards the EU. This is surprising since the economy is an essential subject in both the political and the public debate. Moreover, all regions are economically behind compared to the national level when it comes to the average income. There is probably no conclusion to be made that a region with a local economy that has high unemployment is not more likely to ensure a vote for leaving the EU. Both Manchester and Mid Scotland and Fife had a higher level of unemployment but voted to remain in the EU. The regions with the lowest average income did not have the highest percentage of Leave voters, which shows no probability of a direct correlation.

The level of education appeared to influence the way people voted during the 2016 referendum. When the percentage of people without a basic level of education is higher than the national average, the region tended to vote Leave in 2016. This is not a requirement for voting Leave, as Cornwall has a percentage that is practically the same as the national average, they still voted to leave the EU. Manchester, on the other hand, has a percentage that is higher than the national average, but it voted to remain in the EU. The percentage of people with a level 4 education or higher seems easier to link to the way a region voted during the referendum. When the percentage of people that have this level of education is higher than the national average, the region voted to remain. If the percentage is lower, they are likely to vote Leave. To be sure this is indeed directly linked, research with a focus on this specific subject should be conducted across the entire UK at a local level. What can be concluded is that, with the current spread of the research, this would be likely. When looking beyond the initial data, the most likely explanation is that people with a high level of education were influenced by different parts of the public debate and the media, more than those without an education. The reason for this could be that people who have enjoyed a higher level of education are likely to read different newspapers than those who lack education. In the second chapter, it was noted that the 'quality newspapers' were less biased towards leaving or remaining. It is possible that this lower level of bias led to more readers of these newspapers to vote remain.

The last demographics that was looked at and one that seems to have had a significant influence on the way people voted, is the age of the people living in a region and the ethnic diversity of that region. The regions that had fewer youths and more people of over 50 years of age favoured to Leave the EU. The regions that had this demographic tended to be rural since youths mainly go to the cities to study and work, which could explain why the percentage

of uneducated people is higher in those regions. The only city used in this research is the City of Manchester, which has a relatively young population, voted to remain in the EU. Therefore, there is probably a link between age and the way people voted in the referendum. This confirms statements that older people tended to vote Leave more often, while younger people voted to remain. Ethnic diversity as the last subject of comparison is especially interesting because, while migration is a vital subject in the public and political debate, it is most important for those who appear not directly affected by migration. The rural areas in England that have a lower percentage of people with a different ethnic background voted Leave. The city of Manchester shows a great diversity concerning ethnic backgrounds but tends to vote to remain. The data suggest that people who have fewer day to day contacts with people of different ethnic backgrounds, think immigration is a bigger issue than people who live in a more diverse region. The interesting thing with the age and ethnic diversity is that they strengthen each other. Lincolnshire, which had the most significant shift from Remain to Leave, had both a high age and ethnic diversity.

It is important to note that Mid Scotland and Fife does not necessarily follow the pattern above. This pattern fits the English regions in this research. The reason it does not follow the same pattern is that the Scottish political situation differs from the situation in England, as stated in the previous chapter. Scottish politics have seen a rise of Scottish nationalism, which focusses against England and stresses that Scotland is part of Europe. When the independence referendum took place in 2014, those favouring to leave the UK stated they did want to be part of the EU. It does make sense that a Scottish majority voted to remain in the EU, even though demographically many regions align more with rural English regions than English cities. The Scottish region was less susceptible because they felt the EU could help them become a separate nation; this made the other arguments that influenced the other regions less relevant there.



## Conclusion

The historical debate regarding the 2016 referendum, and by extension the 1975 referendum, will probably intensify in the upcoming years. With the actual Brexit on everybody's doorstep and its implementation causing a lot of debate, both inside and outside the UK, the current relevance of this research is high. Combined with Brexit currently being seen as a watershed moment, historians are likely to look back on the recent events in the future, trying to place them in the larger frame of developments in the UK and in Europe. This research has aimed to laying a foundation on which future historians can continue to build.

In the introduction of this research, the current state of the scientific debate has been explained and how this research will try to help further it along. Where the previous research into the subject focussed on the, mainly political, national developments during the referenda and the intervening period, this research has included public opinion and regional developments. By doing so a more precise image of the developments has been obtained. This research has combined these several aspects in order to know how the 1975 and 2016 referendum campaigns differed from one another, and in what way the differences in the way the campaigns were structured, and demographic development can explain the shift towards voting Leave which some regions experienced, while others remained pro-EU. Looking at all the data that were acquired regarding the national debate, local debate, and the demographics at a local level, it is essential to see what the most important developments were and how these developments influenced the way people voted.

First, there are significant developments that took place at the national level. The most apparent difference is that the party that had a schism, which their leader tried to solve by having a referendum. In 1975 it was Labour, while in 2016 the Conservatives called for the referendum. Other notable differences are the tone of the debate, immigration being an important issue, and Remain no longer being so dominant in the discourse campaigns. The tone of debate became more negative, with even Remainers stating that the EU was not ideal, just better than the alternative: Brexit. Immigration rose in relevance since the arrival of Eastern European immigrants, with people fearing the immigrants might replace them. The absence of Labour in the discourse and the growth of the anti-EU sentiment among Conservatives only further tipped the scale towards the Leave campaign. All of these changes can be traced back to the 'outsider tradition' that was present in the UK. In turn, these changes

in the political debate all influenced the way newspapers reported on them. As the media are the most direct influencers of the public debate, deciding what to report and how to report it. When looking at the campaigns of the referendums, there are clear differences between the way they were reported. The first referendum had almost every newspaper supporting the Remain campaign and appeared to try and give a balanced report of the campaign at hand. In the second referendum, this had changed drastically. 'Quality newspapers' had a balanced coverage of arguments during the campaign, while tabloids were more likely to support Leave and only show that side of the debate. The newspapers' coverage of the campaign had become polarised in the same way as the political debate had. Research done on the public debate in both referendums showed that the political arguments were almost precisely the same as those the public felt to be important. This shows the importance of the media in shaping public opinion, especially since, during both referendums, there was a large part of the population that was not sure what to vote in advance of the campaign. The shift that took place resulted in the public opinion shifting towards leave as well.

The added value of this research, as stated in the introduction, is the way local developments are included when looking at the reason why the debate and result of the referendum changed the way they did. Local campaigning, being absent in 1975, took place during the 2016 campaign. This local campaign used to focus on the local needs of the people in specific regions. These regions do not necessarily correspond with the ideas of the MP they had elected a year earlier. Rural areas tended to have more active campaigning by MP's trying to state what the region had to win or lose by the referendum. This was not the case in the city included in this research. Because only one city was included, it is impossible to say whether this was due to it being a city or having Labour MP's, since they were less visible during the campaign at a national level, as mentioned above. It is clear, however, that rural areas in England were more likely to vote Leave than a city and regions in Scotland. The demographics of these regions can help in explaining why these regions shifted from Remain to Leave.

The above has shown the ways in which public opinion was influenced, which resulted in the different outcomes in the referendums. By looking at the local demographics,, it is possible to see what demographic differences made people more susceptible to the different ways the campaigns were structured. The demographic differences that seem to show a correlation with the way the campaign is structured and the result of the referendum, are age,

level of education, and ethnic diversity. The economic situation of a region appears to have a marginal effect on the result of the referendum. Young people appear to be less likely to follow the stance of the media and vote Leave in the 2016 referendum. This might be related to how often they read newspapers, which are the only media used in this research, and that young people who had not been present in the past which the Leave campaign referred to. Without the emotional link, this argument might appear less attractive to voters. The most likely link that can be found between the demographics and the result of the referendum is the level of education people enjoyed. It is likely that people with a higher education are inclined to read 'quality newspapers' rather than the tabloids; with people without a higher education it is likely to be the other way around. Because they read different newspapers, the way they voted differed in both referendums. During the 1975 referendum, all newspapers had supported the Remain campaign, which ensured that the public debate was influenced in their favour, regardless of the level of education. The way the media reported on the 2016 referendum, however, caused a split between people with a higher and a lower level of education. This was because the reporting done by the media differed significantly, with a more differentiated image being shown to the higher educated, whereas the lower educated were shown an image more outspoken in supporting Leave. Ethnic diversity is harder to link to the results of the referendums. Possible explanations are that people are more likely to be afraid of people, or groups of people, they do not know, or that immigrants themselves are not afraid of immigration and in that way influence the results. Both could explain why the regions with more immigrants were less likely to vote Leave, though it is impossible to know for sure with the data used in this research.

Concluding: the way the political debate influenced the public debate and the corresponding results during the referendums, seems to be through the media. The way the media changed along with the political debate caused the public debate to change too. The reason why there was less difference between regions during the 1975 referendum, is that the political debate and the newspapers supported Remain. This had changed during the 2016 referendum and resulted in a divided nation. The way the media covered the campaign ensured a difference in the way people voted, relating to the media as a source of the political and public debate. The change in the political debate, as stated in prior research, is likely to be due to the 'outsider tradition'.

Throughout the entire research, Scotland has been an outlier, with a public debate that related to the national political debate differently than the English regions. This was because the Scottish political debate in the last decade focussed on independence as the main issue. This can be seen by looking at the local debate and the number of SNP MP's elected at the time the referendum took place. It is likely that this caused the result to differ from regions with similar demographics in England, since this research shows that the way this debate is shaped, probably correlates with the results of the referendum.

When looking at the historical debate, this research has added to it by trying to explain how developments have taken place when looking at local developments and differences. This way it has tried to provide a foundation for the 'outsider tradition' at a local level. Though this can be an important first step in doing so, there is room for new research to expand on this one. First of all the limitation of regions in this research provides an opportunity to include more in the future. In that way the question could be answered if the conclusions drawn are true for all regions or not. Another possibility to expand on this research is to focus more on Scotland, as this research mainly focusses on England and the developments in Scotland have been underexposed. New research might provide new insights by looking at it more closely. What this research showed, however, was that the 'outsider tradition' influenced the results at a local level and held up an overarching theory.

# Bibliography

## Archives

Hansard Millbank System  
Parliamentary debates 1975 & 2014-2016.

### Several newspaper archives, including:

ProQuest Historical Newspapers, linked to the Leiden University catalogue  
The Guardian, 1975 & 2014- 2016, Manchester, England.

Archives by the Newspapers themselves:

Daily Express, 1975, London, England.  
The Financial Times, 1975, London, England.  
Holyrood, 2016, Edinburgh, Scotland.  
The Morning Star, 2016, London, England.  
The Sunday Times, 1975, London, England.  
The Telegraph, 2016, London, England.

## Articles

Daddow, O., *'Interpreting the Outsider Tradition in British European Policy Speeches from Thatcher to Cameron'*, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53:1, 2015, 71-88.

Daddow, O., *'The UK media and 'Europe': from permissive consensus to destructive dissent'*, in: *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, 88:6, November 2012, 1219-1236.

Dorey, P., *'Towards Exit from the EU: The Conservative Party's Increasing Euroscepticism since the 1980s'*, in: *Politics and Governance*, 5:2, April 2017, 27-40.

Gliddon, P.M., *'The labour government and the battle for public opinion in the 1975 referendum on the European Community'*, in: *Contemporary British History*, 31:1, October 2016, 91-113.

Ichijo, A., *'The Uses of History: Anglo-British and Scottish Views of Europe'*, in: *Regional & Federal Studies*, 13:3, March 2008, 23-43.

## Books

Butler, D. & Kitzinger, U., *The 1975 Referendum* (London, 1976).

Crowson, N.J., *Britain and Europe: A political history since 1918* (Abingdon, 2011).

Gallup, G.H. , *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls, Great Britain, 1937-1975, Volume 2*, (London 1976).

King, A., *Britain Says Yes: the 1975 Referendum on the Common Market* (Washington DC 1977).

Liddle, R., *the Europe dilemma: Britain and the Drama of EU integration* (London 2014).

Todd, J., *The British Self and Continental Other: A Discourse Analysis of the United Kingdom's Relationship with Europe* (Oslo 2015).

### **Campaign Leaflets**

Britain in Europe, "Why you should vote YES", 1975.

HM Government, "Britain's new deal in Europe", 1975.

HM Government, "Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK", 2016.

National Referendum Campaign, "Why you should vote NO", 1975.

Vote Leave, "Why should we vote leave on 23 June?", 2016.

### **Published Census Data**

Census data from the 1971 and 2011 census:

Cornwall Council, *2011 Census: an overview of the headline figures for Cornwall*, 2013.

Derbyshire County Council, *2011 Census Atlas of Derbyshire*, 2014.

Lincolnshire Research Observatory, *2011 Census Population Estimates Lincolnshire*, 2012.

Manchester City Council, *2011 census dashboard*, 2013.

### **Websites**

Admin, "Nigel Farage – 2013 Speech to UKIP Conference", *UKPOL*, 30 November 2015, <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/nigel-farage-2013-speech-to-ukip-conference/>.

BBC news, "In quotes: Reaction to Article 50 being triggered", 29 March 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-39431645>.

BBC news, "EU referendum: Farming support 'to continue on Brexit'", 20 June 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36575503>.

BBC news, "Scottish politicians outline views on EU referendum", 10 January 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-35276306>.

Broomhead, M., "Dennis Skinner, the Beast of Bolsover – five of his best quotes", *The Star*, 24 November 2014, <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dennis-skinner-the-beast-of-bolsover-five-of-his-best-quotes-1-6968531>.

Casalicchio, E., "Labour MPs John Mann and Dennis Skinner Back Brexit", *Politicshome*, 10 June 2016, <https://www.politicshome.com/news/europe/eu-policy-agenda/brexit/news/75992/labour-mps-john-mann-and-dennis-skinner-back-brexit>.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-turnout/on-brexit-british-youth-ask-whats-in-it-for-me-idUSKCN0Y91J2>.

Conservative Home, "Boris Johnson's speech on the EU referendum: full text", 9 May 2016, <https://www.conservativehome.com/parliament/2016/05/boris-johnsons-speech-on-the-eu-referendum-full-text.html>.

C-Span, "British European Union Membership", 25 May 2016, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?410136-1/uk-scottish-affairs-committee-considers-british-eu-membership&start=160>.

Green, C., "Pete Wishart: SNP must 'face reality' that Scotland is leaving EU", *iNews*, 9 February 2018, <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/pete-wishart-snp-must-face-reality-scotland-leaving-eu/>.

Langdon, J., "EU referendum: Parallels with 1975", *BBC news*, 10 June 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33045935>.

Lord Ashcroft, M.A.P., "How the United Kingdom voted on Thursday... and why", *Lord*





21 June 2016, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/which-newspapers-support-brexit\\_uk\\_5768fad2e4b0a4f99adc6525?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer\\_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLm5sLw&guce\\_referrer\\_cs=i8fklbUtclG4Hwf8HOqkmg](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/which-newspapers-support-brexit_uk_5768fad2e4b0a4f99adc6525?guccounter=1&guce_referrer_us=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLm5sLw&guce_referrer_cs=i8fklbUtclG4Hwf8HOqkmg).

Robertson J., "EU referendum: 1975 and 2016, a tale of two campaigns", *BBC news*, 24 March 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-35811941>.

Scotland's Census, "Area Profiles", used October 2018, <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/area.html>.