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Who to blame and for what?

The discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign

Master's thesis

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Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

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Kristine Graneng
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1. Introduction

> For too long in the minds of many people, the European question has been over here [points to his left], and the immigration and borders question has been over here [points to his right]. Increasingly, people are beginning to see them as one and the same. – Nigel Farage, 29 April 2016 ([liarpoliticians2], 2016)

24 June 2016. Newspapers all over Europe report of continental politicians waking up to what is described as a 'nightmare' (De La Baume & Palmeri, 2016): a majority of 51,9 % has voted for the United Kingdom (UK) to leave the European Union (EU) in the so-called Brexit referendum. The Brexit vote shocked Europe, even though there were many elements suggesting that such an outcome was not very unlikely: First, the UK has historically had high levels of Euroscepticism (European Commission, n.d.). Second, it has a history of conflicted relations with the EU, illustrated through the 1975 referendum, the rebate of the 1980s and various opt-outs. The polls in advance of the referendum also suggested it would be a close race (Financial Times, 2016). Still, when the referendum results were announced, it came as a surprise to many.

Although some of the political developments of today's Western world may seem unbelievable to many, one cannot overlook the fact that many feel the need for change. The Brexit vote has been seen in connection to a more general movement against globalisation in the Western world, manifested in the rise in popular support of parties of far right in Europe and most recently, the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America. In the literature, this has been ascribed to a rise of new cleavages or "social conflict" (Teney, Lacewell, & De Wilde, 2014, p. 576) between the winners and losers of globalisation.

In this new conflict, Euroscepticism[1] and anti-immigration sentiments seem to go hand in hand. Both Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments are central elements to many of the newcomers in the European political landscape, such as the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands and National Front in France. This was also the case in the Brexit campaign. Hobolt (2016) identifies anti-immigration and anti-establishment sentiments as the main

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[1] Euroscepticism can be defined in different ways, ranging from opposition towards EU membership to opposition against only parts of European integration (see for example Szscerbiak & Taggart, 2008 on soft vs. hard Euroscepticism). In the case of the Brexit, Euroscepticism is here defined as opposition towards membership of the EU.

arguments of the Leave voters. Furthermore, she points to a study conducted by Loughborough University that finds immigration the most central issue of the Leave-camp and also the dominant issue in the latter weeks of the Brexit campaign (Hobolt, 2016).

How has immigration gained such a prominent position in the discourse on European integration in the UK? Although immigration has been a salient issue in British politics for a long time, the link between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments is not a given. Immigration has long been an issue in British politics. In 1968 Enoch Powell gave his famous *Rivers of Blood* speech to a Conservative Association meeting, in which he addressed concerns about the growth of the immigration population, referring to the British immigration policy as "a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre" (Powell, 2007 [1968]). On the other hand, there are also several examples showing how the connection between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments has only recently been established. In the 1975 referendum on the renegotiation of British membership in the EU, immigration was apparently not seen as a relevant issue (Butler & Kitzinger, 1976). Even in the early 1990s anti-immigration sentiments were not explicitly tied to the EU and Euroscepticism in the same way as it is today. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) was founded already in 1993, but as immigration generated little interest at the time and the Conservative Party retained ownership of the issue, there was little room left for the UKIP (Ford & Goodwin, 2014a, p. 64). First in the late 1990s-beginning of the 2000s did immigration become an issue of higher salience with the British public opinion as the EU freedom of movement was extended to Central and Eastern European countries and instances of terror, like the London bombings in 2005, and other disturbances connected to immigrants (Ibid., p. 131).

It is not given that the heightened salience of immigration in domestic politics automatically leads to immigration also being important in an EU referendum. Thus, in order to better understand why the voters voted as they did, it is necessary to ask how the connection between Euroscepticism and immigration was established, in this case by studying the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign. Who was defined as causing the problem, and what was the problem? Was immigration in the campaign tied to more rational notions, like the effect on competition in the labour market for workers in low-skilled jobs and strains on the welfare state, or more ideational notions, like the impact on identity and culture? Does it even make sense to make such a distinction?

This thesis will aim to shed some light on how the connection between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments was established through asking: *What was the discourse on immigration of the Leave camp in the Brexit campaign?* Assuming that discourse is essential to understanding the formation of attitudes and accordingly, political behaviour, asking what form the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign took will contribute to our understanding of the outcome. The thesis aims to uncover which frames were used in the discourse by the Leave Camp through asking two sub-questions: 1) Who was(/were) the Other(s) constructed in the discourse? and 2) How was immigration framed as a threat? In addition to this, it discusses the findings in terms of the conflict between rational and ideational understandings of Euroscepticism and immigration, particularly in relation to the theory on the new conflict of winners and losers of globalisation.

The thesis finds that EU as an Other and as a threat to sovereignty constituted a greater framework within which different groups of immigrants from both the EU and outside the EU were seen to pose a threat to culture, economy and security. In addition to this, the identity construction of 'the ordinary people' versus 'the elites' added to the frame as a whole, and said something about who is affected by immigration and how their concerns are met – I argue, that this clearly links these findings to the literature on winners and losers of globalisation.

The thesis consists of nine chapters. The second chapter is a review of the existing literature, arguing that this study fills a gap both in terms of the methodology chosen, its focus on anti-immigration sentiments and Euroscepticism, and the Brexit as its case. Chapter three introduces both the conceptual framework of frames and identity and the theoretical expectations, based on earlier studies of British framing of European integration and the theory of winners and losers of globalisation. Chapter four discusses the methodology of discourse analysis and the research design. The next three chapters present the analysis. Chapter five gives an overview of the findings on immigration in general. Chapter six presents the findings on identities in the discourse, whereas chapter six presents the findings on the threats immigration poses. Chapter eight summarises the findings on identity and frames in the discourse and how they relate to each other. It also discusses them in relation to the globalisation literature and the notions of rationality and identity. Chapter nine concludes the study, but also raises some questions that are left unanswered by this thesis.

2. Connecting Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments: an assessment of the literature

This chapter gives an assessment of the three different strands of literature that are most relevant for this study: the existing literature on framing of referendums, on Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments, and on Brexit. The first section reviews the existing literature on the framing of referendums, arguing that it does not only show how frames are important in determining referendum outcomes, but also that the discourse analysis offers another theoretical approach to understanding voter behaviour. The second section assesses the literature on how immigration has become relevant to the issue of European integration, with a particular emphasis on its role in referendums. It finds that this literature does not explain in-depth how anti-immigration sentiments has been connected to Euroscepticism. The third and final section looks into the literature on Brexit. It finds that there also in this field is a gap in the research on how the connection between immigration and the British EU membership has been established. All three sections also show how discourse analysis is a method that is little used in the study of this topic.

2.1. The framing of referendums

A central starting point for an analysis of how voters cast their ballot in the Brexit referendum is asking why voters vote as they do in EU referendums. The debate in the literature on EU referendums has traditionally been divided in two camps: those claiming that EU referendums are best understood as second-order elections, voters casting their votes based on domestic political considerations (see for examples Franklin, Marsh, & Wlezien, 1994; Franklin, Van Der Eijk, & Marsh, 1995), and those claiming that they are best explained through issue-specific voting, such as individual attitudes towards European integration (see for example Downs, 2001; Svensson, 2002; Worre, 1995).

One example of the debate between these two camps is the case of the Danish referendums on the Maastricht treaty, the 1992 Referendum in which the Danish electorate rejected the Treaty, and the 1993 Referendum in which the Danish voted yes to the Treaty. Franklin et al. (1994; 1995) argue that the Danish rejected the Maastricht Treaty in the 1992 Referendum due to party loyalties and lack of public support for the government. This

explanation received opposition from Svensson (2002), who argues that Franklin et al.'s analysis was based on misinterpretations of the Danish political context and that it is difficult to identify a congruence between the votes and party voting. The alternative explanation offered was that there was a shift in the framing of the proposal, from *political* integration to *economic* integration. An economic framing apparently made the proposal more acceptable for a Danish electorate, who is considered fairly Eurosceptic but not completely against European integration. This was also the case in later Danish referendums such as that on the Euro in 2002. (Downs, 2001; Siune & Svensson, 1993; Worre, 1995) Another explanation raised by Worre (1995), was the impact of different perceptions of risks connected to rejecting referendum proposals. In other words, the framing of the referendum proposal, either related to the issues concerned or the consequences it would entail, has been central in explaining previous EU referendums.

The theoretical debate on EU referendums has shifted in the recent years from focusing on *which* of the aforementioned logics are important for explaining referendum outcomes to *when* they come into play (see Franklin, 2002). The main argument is that voters vote according to their individual preferences when the issue is of high salience and the voters are well-informed, whereas second-order matters such as party positions and government constellation may be increasingly important factors when this is not the case.

Two of the contributors to this strand of literature are Hobolt and Dvořák, who integrate both these aspects in their models for projecting voting behaviour in EU referendums. Hobolt (2006) argues that voters' perceptions of "relative proximity of the [referendum] proposal and the reversion point to the voter's ideal point" determine their vote choice (p. 628). The framing of the referendum proposal – and also the parties as the main actors contributing to the framing (Ibid., p. 628) – thus becomes important for the outcome of referendums, dependent on how well informed the voters are in advance (Ibid., p. 629). Unlike Hobolt, Dvořák (2013) assumes that voters' preferences are not ordered, but can be "inconsistent, unstable and ambiguous" (p. 373). Hence, information plays a mediating role as voters balance and weigh their values and "use available contextual information to find out how their preferences relate to the issue at stake" (Ibid., p. 374). Building on this assumption, Dvořák argues that qualitative shifts in value interpretation may also lead to shifts in the public opinion, independent on how well informed the voters are beforehand, and that there is an interplay between this mechanism and the mechanism concerning the amount of information voters are exposed to as seen in Hobolt (Ibid., p. 383).

Both Hobolt and Dvořák thus claim that the framing of referendum proposals matters and both of their models are rational choice models, assuming that voters' make utility-maximizing considerations based on a set of preferences. This strengthens the argument that it is useful to look at framing in order to better understand the outcome of EU referendums, but it also opens for a wider debate on how voters' preferences are formed and which preferences are determinant for vote choice in EU referendums. This thesis, unlike the rational choice approach, is based on the assumption that referendum proposals are not only framed and interpreted in discourse, but also that discourse is important in constructing individual preferences. This assumption is further elaborated in chapter four.

The existing literature on framing in referendums nevertheless underpins the argument that it is important to consider how an issue is debated in the campaign leading up to the referendum in order to understand this outcome, regardless of the way in which preferences are formed. It is difficult to see the Brexit referendum as anything else than a high-salience issue. The Brexit referendum can principally be seen as a response to both the conflict on the issue of European integration inside the Conservative Party, and to the surge in popular support of the UKIP. Though initiated and issued by the political elites, it was to a great extent an answer to a rise in the salience of the EU in British public debate, which again underlines the importance of turning to discourse for finding explanations for the result.

2.2. Euroscepticism and immigration in EU referendums

The literature establishing a connection between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments is fairly new, but already quite extensive. The more overarching literature in this field covers topics such as Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments in party politics (see Ford & Goodwin, 2014a; Hobolt & Tilley, 2016) and anti-immigration sentiments as explanatory variable for opposition towards European integration (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). Recently, quite a few scholars have also tied Euroscepticism and immigration to the impact of globalization and developed concepts such as "winners and losers of globalization" (see Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Teney et al., 2014). Ford and Goodwin's (2014a, 2014b) theory of the "left behinds" is also related to the latter strand of literature, although it also focuses on the particular British context in which the UKIP has been able to gain support on issues such as opposition towards European integration and immigration

(2014a, pp. 211-213). The thesis will return to the literature on globalisation in the chapter three.

There are however not that many case studies investigating the connection between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration in referendums. Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments first became relevant in the context of referendums as immigration became part of the argument to reject the Constitutional Treaty in the 2005 referendums in France and the Netherlands. Fear of loss of work to foreign workers was the main reason for the No-vote in France (Hainsworth, 2006, pp. 108-109), whereas the more identity related issue of Turkish membership of the EU was important in the Netherlands (Lubbers, 2008). In general, immigration has become a more significant part of the debate on the European Union (see also Taggart, 2006). Lubbers (2008) studied such arguments more in-depth in his case study of the Dutch referendum. He makes a distinction between the perceived economic threat and the perceived cultural threat of immigration. His findings suggest that identity and the perceived cultural threat of immigration, linked to a threat from ethnic minorities, to a large extent explained the outcome of the referendum, whereas the economic factors were not as important.

Most of the literature thus focuses on anti-immigration sentiments in general and establishes a connection to Euroscepticism. Some studies also identify anti-immigration arguments in referendums on European integration in the last fifteen years, but few studies explicitly explain how this link is constructed and how anti-immigration becomes important to the electorate in an EU context. Hence, to better understand EU referendums it is important to look further into the role anti-immigration sentiments play in the politicization of European integration. This thesis will do that, both through looking at a specific and novel case, the Brexit referendum, but also through using a method previously not as commonly used, the discourse analysis.

2.3. The Brexit referendum and immigration

Approaching the one-year anniversary of the Brexit referendum, the literature on the referendum is still fairly limited. Most of the literature is concerned with what happened before the referendum or what would happen in case of the two scenarios of either a Leave or Remain vote. Kroll and Leuffen (2016) have written about the renegotiation of the EU-UK relationship. Cardwell (2016) has written about how the renegotiated deal between the EU

and the UK would have been integrated into the legal framework of the EU had the UK remained with the EU. Some scholars have researched the legal, economic and political consequences of a Brexit (Butler, Dagnis Jensen, & Snaith, 2016; Dagnis Jensen & Snaith, 2016; Łazowski, 2016). Henderson et al. (2016) have studied the likely impact of English identity on the Brexit vote. Oliver (2016) has written about the European and international discourse on a possible Brexit.

There are however some exceptions. The main article on the outcome of the Brexit referendum identifying a link between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration sentiments is that of Hobolt. She identifies anti-immigration and anti-establishment sentiments as the main motivation of the Leave voters (Hobolt, 2016, p. 1260). Additionally, she refers to a media analysis done by Loughborough University identifying immigration as the dominant issue in the British media in the last weeks of the campaign (Ibid., p. 1262) and a survey, where British citizens were asked to summarize the main arguments of the campaign, finding immigration and economy to be the dominant arguments (Ibid., p. 1263). Leave voters, unlike the Remain voters, also thought "there would be less immigration into Britain" if the UK would leave the EU, whereas they viewed the economic costs of a Brexit to be minimal (Ibid., p. 1263). This implies that there has to be some factors shaping the public's perception of the Brexit proposal, and as I have argued earlier, I believe discourse to play a crucial role. I argue that these perceptions build on frames found in the discourse and, building on this, aim to identify the frames on immigration in the campaign.

Hobolt finds in her study that the "less well-educated" and the "less well-off" were much more likely to vote in favour of Brexit than those more educated and more wealthy (Ibid., p. 1260). She ties this onto the previously mentioned debate regarding "winners and losers of globalization", identifying a connection between socio-economic factors and identity and attitudes towards European integration (Ibid., p. 1265). A similar explanation can be found in Goodwin and Heath. They tie the results to their formerly formulated theory of "left-behinds", finding that areas more "economically left-behind" were most in favour of a Brexit (Goodwin & Heath, 2016, p. 330). This does, however, not explain why these voters found immigration the most important issue when casting their votes in favour for the UK to leave the EU. Another finding of Goodwin and Heath underlines this, namely that there is "a negative relationship between the level of EU migration in an area and the level of support for leaving the EU" (Ibid., p. 328). Additionally, they find that "those places which experienced an increase in the EU migration over the last ten years tended to be somewhat more likely to vote Leave" (Ibid., p. 329). This makes it less clear that there is a causality between

immigration measured in numbers and anti-immigration sentiments and more likely that this connection is established on a discursive level – and therefore implies that discourse is important in shaping perceptions of immigration and tying these to attitudes towards the EU.

Furthermore, in an article written in advance of the referendum on the factors likely to be key to understanding the referendum results, Vasilopoulou (2016) argues that "utilitarian concerns related to whether the UK has benefited from EU membership" and "issue-specific preferences related to EU freedom of movement" are the most important in explaining the voting behaviour in the referendum (p. 219). Interestingly, in contrast to Hobolt and Goodwin and Heath, she finds that "socio-demographic characteristics […] are not related to attitudes towards EU freedom of movement" (Ibid., p. 225), whereas both cultural ideational factors, such as opposition towards multiculturalism and ethnic diversity and identity, and utilitarian factors, such as the perceived benefit of the EU freedom of movement, are factors with higher explanatory power. It is important to note that this article was written as a prediction of the referendum, not an analysis of the actual votes, and thus does not have the same empirical weight as the aforementioned studies. It nevertheless raises an interesting issue in making the division between cultural ideational factors and utilitarian factors regarding the EU freedom of movement in the specific case of the Brexit, which this thesis looks further into.

The literature on Brexit thus establishes a connection between Euroscepticism, expressed through votes for the UK to Leave the EU, and anti-immigration sentiments. It does, however, not address the question of *how* such a link comes into being, which will be the main concern of this thesis. Building on the existing literature, I argue that it is necessary to go beyond the socio-economic factors and the overarching arguments previously explored in relation to the Brexit. Quantitative methods do not suffice. To truly understand how anti-immigration sentiments and Euroscepticism was linked in the Brexit campaign, it is necessary to study discourse and what the frames on immigration and the EU were in the campaign. The next chapter introduces the conceptual framework that will be used to investigate these frames, and it also looks deeper into how British identity has been constructed in relation to the EU earlier and the theoretical expectations of the literature on winners and losers of globalisation.

3. The framing of the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign: concepts and theory

The fundamental theoretical assumption of the discourse analysis is, that it is not enough to rely on our senses in order to make sense of the world. Or as Neumann (2001) puts it: "[I]t is not possible to sense the world directly, this has to be done through models"[2] (p. 30 [my translation]). Models – or "representations", as Neumann also calls them – are "things and phenomena in the way they appear to us, in other words, not the things in themselves, but the things filtered through what comes between us and the world: language, categories, etc."[3] (Ibid., p. 33 [my translation]).

There are, however, several concepts that are used within discourse analysis to analyse such representations – which again underlines the point of the social world being constructed, as there is no given categorisation of such concepts. This thesis will focus on the concept of framing and tie this to another concept, namely identity.

The following section will first give some definitions of framing and identity and explain how these are understood and put to use in this thesis. Section 3.2., building on these concepts, will discuss which frames one can except to find in the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign and how they may relate to each other based on previous studies of British framing of the issue of European integration and the literature on winners and losers of globalisation.

3.1. Frames and identities

When we interpret the world, we focus on certain things and leave other aspects of an issue out of the debate. This "emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic" is what is understood as framing (de Vreese & Semetko, 2004, p. 92). Frames fill several functions. Frames, according to Entman, "construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution" through the "selection and highlighting" of different elements

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[2] Original text in Norwegian: "verden kan ikke sanses direkte, men krever modeller"

[3] Original text in Norwegian: "Representasjoner er ting og fenomener i den tapning de fremstår for oss, altså ikke tingene i seg selv, men tingene silt gjennom det som kommer mellom oss og verden: sproget, kategoriene osv."

(1993, p. 53). They are used to organise different "symbols, images, and arguments" in a coherent framework (Gamson, 2004, p. 245) and "contain encrypted information about […] causes" (Medrano, 2003, p. 7). Thus, analysing frames can be very helpful in understanding attitudes towards certain issues, in this case European integration.

Immigration itself is a framing of the Brexit issue, but in order to better understand this frame, this thesis sets out to explore the 'sub-framing' of the issue. It is clear that immigration has been defined as a *problem* to which leaving the EU is the *solution*. It is however unclear in which way immigration was seen as a problem in relation to European integration and why the Brexit was seen as the solution. This thesis will first and foremost focus on the problem definition part of the framing through asking not only *how* immigration was seen as a problem – which aspects of immigration were highlighted in this frame? – but also through asking *who* was causing the problem. In order to better understand how someone can be seen as the problem, the thesis builds on the concept of identity.

Identity, according to Hansen (2006), is seen as the construction of Self in relation to Other(s): "identity is always given through reference to something it is not" (p. 6). Identities are representations that are characterised through signs. But identity is not constructed through ascribing signs to the Self, but it is relational: "meaning is established not by the essence of a thing itself but through a series of juxtapositions, where one element is valued over the opposite" (Ibid., p. 19). A very simplified example may be that the Self is constructed through the sign *good*, whereas the Other is seen as *evil*.

Whether one is seen as part of the *Self* or the *Other* may have various political consequences: Who is defined as part of an in-group and not is likely to have a great impact on the discourse on political issues, not only in questions of a foreign policy character, such as Cold War relations, a popular research object in the field of foreign policy discourse analysis. Also on issues of a more domestic character, such as who is entitled to various rights in a welfare state, identity is likely to matter. Brexit, arguably an issue covering both the field of domestic and foreign policy, should be no exception. McLaren (2006) claims that there are "two different realms in which citizens differ in their feelings about national versus European identity" (p. 7), the first being the strength of their national identities, the second being whether Europe is seen as a threat to the national identity. Through defining someone as Other, as part of an out-group, it is possible to depict this Other as representing a threat to the Self and thus as being an essential part of the problem. This may also apply to other identities than the European identity, as by McLaren. It thus becomes relevant also to cover the concept of identity when analysing the framing of immigration, as who was defined as Other in the

discourse could matter in the frame as a whole. The out-group in the identity construction, I assume, is seen as causing the problem, and hence is a central part of the causal chain of the frame, as depicted in figure 1 below.
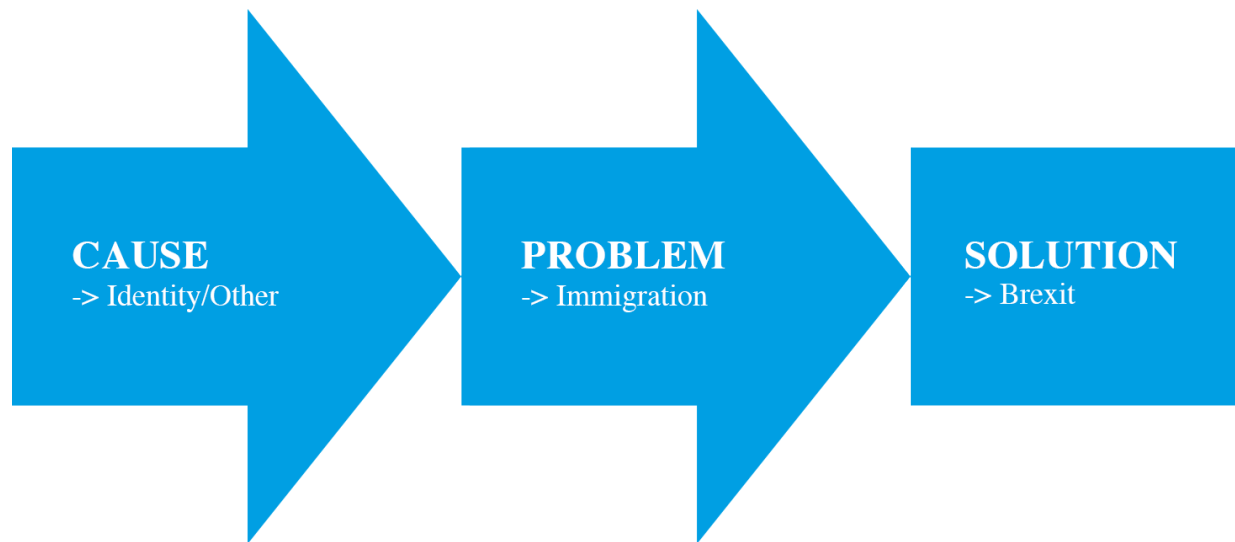
By combining the two concepts of identity and framing, this thesis will try to find answers to particularly two questions: Who were seen as causing the problems related to immigration, and what was seen as the threats posed?

3.2. Theorising Euroscepticism and immigration in the Brexit campaign: who to blame and for what?

The aim of this section is to introduce and discuss theories to what one can expect to find when analysing the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign in terms of the conceptual framework. It will first look into how British identity formerly has been constructed in terms of Self and Other. It shows how Europe, and so the EU, over time has been defined as the Other, the out-group, in British discourse on European integration, but also how the EU has been perceived as a threat to British sovereignty. It also discusses other potential Others: EU immigrants, immigrants from outside the EU and immigrants in general. The second part looks into what kind of threat the(se) Other(s) is/are seen to pose to the British. It does so by drawing on the theory of "winners and losers of globalisation",

according to which three types of frames are likely to appear in the discourse on immigration and European integration: immigration as an economic threat, immigration as a cultural threat and immigration as an issue of sovereignty. Figure 2 integrates these identities and threats into the causal chain depicted above.
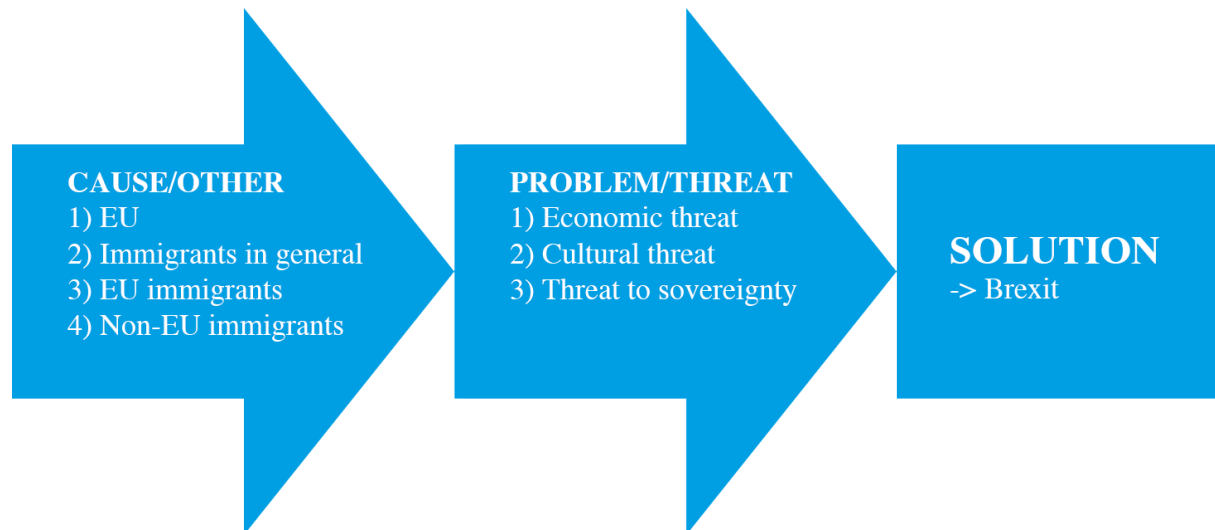
CAUSE/OTHER
1) EU
2) Immigrants in general
3) EU immigrants
4) Non-EU immigrants

PROBLEM/THREAT
1) Economic threat
2) Cultural threat
3) Threat to sovereignty

SOLUTION
-> Brexit

Figure 2: Overview of the elements of the causal chain

3.2.1. British discourse on European integration: The EU as the Other

Europe, and the EU, as the *Other* of the British is central in previous studies of British discourse on European integration. One of the most extensive studies of how the issue of European integration has been framed in British discourse is Medrano's *Framing Europe* (2003). In his study, which also covers Germany and Spain, Medrano found that the framing of European integration in the UK greatly differed from the two other countries. Unlike the German and Spanish citizens, sovereignty and national identity were particularly prominent in the way the British respondents thought of European integration. The Commonwealth past and the notion of "Great Britain" was used to construct an image of the British identity as set apart from the rest of Europe, which made it difficult to see the EU as anything else than a threat to the national identity. 'Sovereignty' was also seen as essential to the British identity and thus constituted another element of the identity to which the EU posed a threat. This is supported by Daddow (2006), who claims that Europe has been constructed as a threat to "British sovereignty, identity and nationhood" through history education and public history in the UK (p. 77). It thus becomes difficult to win over the public in favour of European

integration because this conflicts with the perception of its past as greatly divergent from the rest of Europe (Ibid.).

An even more recent study by Hawkins (2012) on the framing of the Lisbon Treaty process in British media identifies two main frames in the Eurosceptic press: "the EU as a *foreign power* and the EU as a *bargaining forum*" (p. 565). Both frames place the UK outside of Europe and are based on narratives centred on the national state (Ibid., p. 569). In addition to this, also the words used to describe the EU and the UK-EU relations in British media create a duality (Ibid., p. 566), strengthening the framing of the UK as something set apart from continental Europe.

Neither of the mentioned studies address the issue of immigration directly, something that should not come as a surprise, given that the studies, except from that of Hawkins, are not of a very recent date. What may be directly transferred to the case of immigration in the Brexit campaign is the imagery of the EU threatening British sovereignty, in the case of immigration, through its policy of freedom of movement within the EU borders. It is thus likely that the construction of the EU as an Other also figures in the discourse on immigration.

This does by no means exclude the possible construction of additional groups of Others in the discourse. Particularly with the increased salience of immigration following the enlargement and increased flow of migrants in the EU in the 2000s, as shown in the assessment of the literature on the referendums on the Constitution Treaty in the previous chapter, it is reasonable to think that EU immigrants would be one of the central groups defined as Other, either building on the identity construction found in the existing literature referred to or through other constructions. Also non-EU immigrants are a likely out-group in the discourse. The so-called refugee crisis has to a great extent been debated as a European issue, even though the formal competency of the EU on refugee and asylum policy is very limited compared to the freedom of movement within the EU. It may therefore very well be that non-EU immigrants were defined as an Other in the Brexit discourse. A last possibility would be that the references to immigrants in the discourse are of a more general character.

3.2.2 Winners and losers of globalisation: Immigration as a threat

"Winners and losers of globalisation" is a concept that has received considerable attention recently (for examples see Azmanova, 2011; Ford & Goodwin, 2014a; Grande & Kriesi, 2012; Hobolt & Tilley, 2016; Teney et al., 2014). Although some of these scholars use different names for the concept, like the "left behinds" of Ford and Goodwin, the core

argument of this perspective is essentially the same: new conflicts have arisen in Europe as a result of globalisation. Whereas the poles of these conflicts[4] have partly been ascribed to socio-demographic factors such as education, there is an increasing focus on "subjective factors" such as perceptions of the threats globalisation poses (Teney et al., 2014), which is the aspect also this thesis focus on.

Grande and Kriesi (2012) argue that there are three types of conflict that contribute to polarisation between the winners and losers of globalisation: "economic competition, cultural diversity, and political integration" (p. 12). The conflict of cultural diversity, or "cultural competition", is seen as a consequence of immigration that "leads to a perception of ethnic competition for scarce resources (such as jobs) and of threat to the collective identity and lifestyle of the native population" (Kriesi et al. 2008 cited in Teney et al., 2014, p. 577). Accordingly, both the cultural and economical frames may be subordinated perceptions of identity. This is an interesting approach seeing as it combines the traditionally more rational issue of economy with the more 'irrational' of culture and identity. Nevertheless the conflicts suggested by Grande and Kriesi make for a good starting point for analysing the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign. The next part discusses how economic competition, cultural diversity, and political integration may relate to immigration as a threat.

The first conflict Grande and Kriesi (2012) address is that of economic competition. New risks, as a result of distributional effects of globalisations, may lead to increased social and economic risks for particularly some members of advanced welfare states. There are two macro-economic models used to identify distributional effects of globalization, either "comparative advantages of certain industries and sectors" or "relative factor endowments" (Ibid., p. 12). According to these models, it is likely that globalisation lead to higher economic uncertainty for some citizens, particularly workers who are low-skilled. (Grande & Kriesi, 2012, pp. 12-13; see also McLaren, 2006) Additionally, in an economy where jobs are scarce – or in which unemployment is perceived as a problem – immigration may intensify this conflict (Grande & Kriesi, 2012, p. 13). Although such a narrative may easily be contested – and often is (see for example Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007) – the framing of immigration as an economic problem may of course lead to the perception of such a problem and consequently the formation of negative attitudes towards immigration.

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[4] These poles are also labelled under different terms such as "integration-demarcation" (Grande & Kriesi, 2012), "sovereigntism-cosmopolitanism" (Azmanova, 2011) and "communitariansm-cosmopolitanism" (Teney et al., 2014). In this thesis they will simply be referred to as "winners and losers".

Many studies find that it is not the threat to the economy that best explains the opposition toward European integration, but rather immigration as a cultural threat that has the most impact. Grande and Kriesi point to a study conducted by Hainmueller and Hiscox, in which they find "that 'anti-immigration sentiments are far more powerfully associated with cultural values that have more to do with conceptions of national identity than they do with concerns about personal, economic circumstances" (Hainmueller & Hiscox cited in Grande & Kriesi, 2012, p. 13) They therefore assume that immigration first and foremost is a question of a cultural threat rather than a threat to the economy (Grande & Kriesi, 2012, p. 14). This is a valid point for this thesis insofar as it concerns the *perceived* threat and is not based on material economic factors. This is not the case by Hainmueller and Hiscox, who build their argument on the observation that whether the immigrants have the same skills and competency as the respondents does not have an impact on the respondents' attitudes toward integration. Such an analysis does not address how the conflict is interpreted, but only looks at the material facts. However, there are also empirical studies finding that the *perceived* cultural threat is more dominant than *perceived* economic threat of immigration. Höglinger, Wüest and Helbling (2012) find in a study of the framing of public debate on immigration, that the cultural logic is dominant, particularly on the right side of politics, but that the economic logic also is highly present, in form of "labour and social security" frames. Additionally, as mentioned in the literature review, Lubbers (2008) found that the cultural threat of integration was dominant in explaining the outcome of the 2005 referendum in the Netherlands. There are however also studies indicating that economic considerations may be dominant, as in the aforementioned study of the 2005 referendum in France (Hainsworth, 2006), in which fear of loss of work to foreigners was the main reason for the no-vote.

It is thus also likely that the conflict of cultural diversity, how immigration may constitute a threat to British identity, culture, and way of life, is a dominant frame in the discourse on immigration, especially since the Leave camp to a great extent was dominated by right wing politicians. The claim that the cultural frame dominated the discourse is not only supported in the literature on the globalisation cleavage. According to Medrano, the British expressed a fear of losing "the nation's identity, culture, or way of life and the desire to protect the nation's identity or culture" (2003, p. 49). However, identity is a rather vague term. Which part of the identity and culture they are likely to fear for, is not particularly clear. Is it the religion? Is it the educational system? Is it fish and chips? Is it the monarchy? This is obviously dependent on what is seen to constitute the British identity, but also dependent on the way in which the Other representing the threat differs from the British. Hopefully, it will

also be possible to shed some light on this through this study, although it is likely that identity is used as a rather vague term also in the Brexit discourse.

Sovereignty may be linked to British identity, as seen in the studies of British discourse on European integration, but it is also interesting in the way it may constitute a threat on its own. Grande and Kriesi's (2012) conflict of political integration concerns the concept of sovereignty. They define it as "the transfer of political authority to institutions beyond the nation state" (Ibid., p. 15), and claim that it has two implications. First, it may lead to "material losers", for example through reduction of the public sector, but second, and most important, it has to do with the how strong the "identification with the national community" is (Ibid., p. 15). Hence, the conflict of political integration may be relevant to both the framing of immigration in the Brexit discourse as an issue related to economics *and* culture/identity. Grande and Kriesi subordinate the political integration conflict to a cultural logic (Ibid., p. 16), but it is interesting to treat it as a somewhat overarching frame of its own. Statements such as 'Brexit makes it possible to determine the immigration policy on our own' would otherwise be hard to categorise, although it clearly is a statement related to immigration.

As has been shown, the literature on the new cleavage due to globalisation identifies at least three possible frames. It may be that other frames, such as immigration as a threat to security, may also have played a role in the discourse, but there is a clear weight in the literature in favour of economic, cultural and identity frames being the dominant in the discourse on both European integration as a whole, and discourse on immigration and European integration.

4. Analysing discourse: methodology

In this chapter the methodological choices of this thesis are presented. It first discusses the theoretical assumptions of the discourse analysis and the choice of discourse analysis as opposed to content analysis. Second, it discusses some of the main challenges of discourse analysis and how these have been addresses in the study, particularly the challenge of making a selection. The third section presents the sources used and describes how they have been collected and coded.

4.1. Why discourse analysis?

With the linguistic turn of the 1970s, *discourse* received considerably more attention than what it had previously done in social sciences. The most essential assumption of the theoretical approach is that one has to look at discourse to understand the social world. In other words, material substance is first given *meaning* in a social reality through discourse, which then is the foundation for *action*. Leading from this assumption, one can assume that attitudes on European integration are formed in a discursive context. Studying discourse thus becomes necessary for understanding attitude formation and the behaviour based on attitudes. It is then meaningful to look into the discourse on Brexit – and even more narrowed down, the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign – in order to get a deeper insight into how the opinions of the Leave voters were formed.

I have previously argued that analysing the frames that appear in the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign adds to the existing literature. Another possibility, not too different from the discourse analysis would be using content analysis as the method for analysing different frames in the debate. Choosing content analysis, a more quantitative and positivistic method than the discourse analysis, would however entail other assumptions than the discourse analysis. Most importantly is that I assume that there is no immediate connection between how many times a frame is repeated in the discourse and how the voters react to the frame. As Entman (1993) writes, "an increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory" (p. 53), but also "because salience is a product of the interaction of texts and receivers, the presence of frames in the text, as detected by researchers, does not guarantee their influence in audience thinking" (p. 53). A hypothetical example: Voter 1 reads an article,

completely unrelated to Brexit, about a crime conducted by a foreigner and reacts strongly thereon, and shortly thereafter reads an article framing the Brexit proposal as a way of hindering immigration to the EU. Voter 2 may read an article about how a foreigner saved a life, and shortly thereafter reads the same article. It is likely that voter 1 would be more open and positive to the framing in the Brexit article than voter 2. This is meant to illustrate that it does not matter how many times a frame appears, because it may be read in totally different ways, and even be ignored – the main purpose is therefore to identify the existence of frames, not the quantity of them.

4.2. Challenges of discourse analysis as method: making a selection

The example above does also illustrate the "intertextuality" of discourse. Representations are continuously re-represented (Neumann, 2001), and texts continuously build on interpretations of other texts (Hansen, 2006, p. 56). This makes the selection of material for the analysis one of the main challenges of the discourse analysis – how does one make a selection without possibly leaving out texts that provides vital context for understanding what underpins the representations in the discourse? Although hard to admit as it may be, the capacity of the researcher is always limited, making it impossible to conduct an analysis without making a selection. In this thesis the focus is on the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign, and it can thus only identify those identities and threats directly expressed in the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign. As Hansen (2006) writes, "[d]iscourse analysis has […] a discursive epistemology, and its methodology is, as a consequence, located at the level of explicit articulations." (p. 41) Still, it is important to keep in mind that the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign is not detached from other discourses, and while trying to avoid drawing conclusions that cannot be underpinned by evidence found in the data, I will comment on some of the *possible* connotations and discourses that may be relevant for the one I am studying. Such an approach may affect the validity of the research negatively, as it may overlook important cues given to other readers of the texts based on the greater context in which the discourse takes place, but it increases the reliability, as it is made very explicit what material the analysis is based on and how it is interpreted.

There will however always be some interpretations that have to be made when studying this discourse, and this raises another issue of the discourse analysis, namely the role of the researcher. Neumann (2001) argues that "[c]ultural competency is a necessary

condition for conducting a good discourse analysis"[5] (p. 50). This is particularly relevant when studying discourse in a foreign language and a different culture than one's own, as is the case of this study. The role of the researcher may however also differ even when one is a 'native' to the culture and language analysed, because one is always coloured by the discursive environment in which one acts, independent of whether it is within a nation or within a social class. It is therefore very likely that I would have read and interpreted the data differently if I had another socio-cultural background than the one I have. Although the aim is to do it as transparently as possible, one ultimately has to accept that conducting a discourse analysis is a very subjective exercise.

When making a selection, one does not only have to limit the discourse, but also have to make a selection of which data to study *within* the discourse. The aim of the selection is to represent the discourse as a whole as well as possible. One then stands before several choices. To which actors contributing to the discourse should one look to best analyse it? This is an essential question, but one that stands without a unified answer in the literature. According to Hopf, one should make a selection of texts that is both as vast and as close to the grass root as possible (Hopf cited in Bratberg, 2014, p. 55). On the other hand, Hansen (2006) argues that when analysing discourse with the aim of explaining political decision-making, foreign policy in her case, one should start with focusing on official discourse, thereafter "wider foreign policy debate", "cultural representations" and finally "marginal political discourses" (p. 64). To focus on the grass root would require conducting a fairly large number of interviews of voters. In the time of social media, another possibility would be to analyse platforms through which everyone is encouraged to participate, such as discussion forums and comment fields. I would however assume that this would not be representable for the whole of the discourse on immigration and the Brexit referendum as not all voters are represented in such spheres. Therefore, I have chosen to focus on the political actors.

Hansen's methodology is however not directly transferrable to my case, seeing as it is not the political behaviour of the elites I want to explain, but that of the voters. It is although likely that the political actors, who are closest to everyday decision-making, have been prominent advocates of the frames that figure most often in the discourse (see Entman, 1993, p. 57). Because the immigration issue first and foremost was raised by the Leave camp, I have chosen the Leave Camp as the starting point for my analysis. In addition to the political

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[5] Original text in Norwegian: "Kulturell kompetanse er en nødvendig betingelse for å utføre en god diskursanalyse."

actors, I have also chosen to focus on a newspaper promoting the Leave position. The salience of anti-establishment sentiments may suggest that there are other perceptions dominating among the elites than in the general public, but through focusing on the political actors of the Leave camp and the media promoting Leave argument, I hope to identify the frames that are closest to the dominant frames among the Leave voters. Also, previous studies, like the extensive study of Medrano (2003), find that frames among the grass root and the elites, as represented by the journalists in Medrano's study, are coherent, which also supports the assumption that the gap between popular discourse is not far away from the discourse as seen in the media and through analysing arguments made by politicians. When deciding to focus on the Leave camp, I also omit the Remain camp as a discursive actor in the analysis. This leave possible counter-discourses and the interaction between the two camps out of the analysis, but it makes it possible to focus on the anti-immigration discourse to a greater extent. The different actors of the Leave camp that have been included in the study are discussed in the next section on sources.

4.4. Sources and coding

To get the best possible overview of the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign, I have based the analysis of the discourse on three different sources: first, printed campaign materials distributed to the public; second, speeches, interviews and other TV appearances; and third, newspaper articles. Table 1 gives an overview in numbers of the different sources used in the analysis.

Printed materials	12
Newspaper articles	52
Speeches, interviews and debates	10

Table 1: Overview of the sources

The first source the analysis of this thesis is based on is printed campaign materials as a source through which the different arguments of the Leave camp is widely distributed to the public. Because I started my work after the campaign, the campaign materials unfortunately were no longer accessible through the organisations' web pages. I therefore contacted the two largest organisations, *Vote Leave* and *Leave.EU*, and asked whether they had used any printed

materials in the campaign and whether they could send them to me. I received nine leaflets and posters from the *Leave.EU* campaign, of which some were published by a connected organisation, *Grassroots Out*. In six of these immigration was mentioned as an issue and these have been used for the analysis. I also received an answer from the *Vote Leave* organisation, but they unfortunately did not have any electronic copies of their campaign materials and sent me a bad quality photo of one of their pamphlets. I found another version of this same pamphlet of better quality on the website of the BBC. Additionally, I contacted the UKIP, as they were the only party united in their stand for the Brexit, and asked whether they had any printed materials. From them I received three documents, of which two are used in the analysis. In addition to the challenge that the material I received is not the complete catalogue, it may also be problematic that the selection of materials used in my analysis was a selection made by the organisations and the party themselves. To reduce the impact of this on my study, I have included two additional documents by the UKIP and Vote Leave that received considerable attention in the media.[6]

The second source used in this thesis are speeches, interviews and other TV performances by the leading spokesmen of the Leave camp. First and foremost I focused on Boris Johnson, the most prominent Leave supporter of the Conservative Party and Nigel Farage, leader of the UKIP, although when other Leave supporters were present in TV debates, I have also included their statements. The sample consists of four speeches by Nigel Farage in the European Parliament, in which he addresses the issue of Brexit and immigration; two TV debates; one morning show appearance; and three national speeches. Whereas some of the speeches were found of in text versions, most of the material has been transcribed from videos on YouTube. Measured by number, there is an inclination towards Farage, but measured by length, the sources should be rather balanced.

The third source the analysis builds on, is the *Daily Mail*. Although newspaper articles are not the direct outcome of political campaigning, the media is an important tool for conveying frames to the public. The media is, according to Hawkins, "citizens' principal source of information on EU affairs" (2012, p. 562). Medrano also found when interviewing people, that they often referred to the press when asked for further justification for their arguments (2003, p. 28). The *Daily Mail* was chosen because it is a pro-Brexit newspaper. It is thus likely that the frames prominent in the campaign could be found there. In addition to

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[6] These are included in the appendix.

this, it was the printed newspaper that had the highest reach in the period of the campaign.[7] Initially, I wanted to use a sample from more newspapers, to get a broader coverage, but the access to databases which contained British newspapers within the time frame of my research was highly limited in Trondheim, and the *Daily Mail* was thus the only practical solution available. An additional argument for choosing the *Daily Mail*, is that the coverage of the Brexit referendum in the *Daily Mail* was more extensive that in other comparable newspapers (Levy, Aslan, & Bironzo, 2016, p. 14). I conducted a search in the database Factiva with both the *Daily Mail UK* and the *Scottish Daily Mail* as sources in the period of the campaign, 20 February 2016 – 23 June 2016. The search string used was "Brexit" in the combination with either "freedom of movement" or "immigration". The results of this search was 309 articles, 238 when the duplicates were automatically omitted. I read briefly through the articles to sort out any additional duplicates and articles which did not contain anti-immigration arguments expressed by the Leave camp. This left me with a total of 158 articles. Further, I coded a sample by choosing every third in chronological order. In the process a few more articles were also omitted, which I had overlooked in the first round. The final sample consisted of 52 articles.

In the process of analysing the gathered material, I used NVivo to collect the data and to code it. The main goal of the coding process was to identify examples of different frames that could later be used for the qualitative analysis, but I did at the same time identify other aspects of the discourse that would be relevant to answering the research question, such as *the wording of immigration* and *not racist* claims. The units coded vary from paragraphs to word phrases. Because the coding unit varies, it is not adequate to use these data for quantitative comparisons.

Identity	
EU	23
EU immigrants	24
Non-EU immigrants	18
Immigrants in general	6
People-elites	5

Threats			
Culture	11		
Economy	36	Jobs	17
		Welfare	28
Environment	2		
Security	19		
Sovereignty	33		

Table 2: Overview of codes

Table 2 gives an overview of the number of sources that contained references to identity and threats. This will however not be given much weight in the analysis because of

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[7] According to Statista it had a montly reach of 12 418 000 in the period July 2015 – June 2016 (Statista, n.d.).

the theoretical assumptions made earlier in this chapter and also because it would require a more thoroughly process of rereading the material to make sure that references in other sources than those that have been listed have not been overlooked. It nevertheless gives a hint to what the general findings are, which will be presented over the next three chapters.

5. Immigration in the Brexit campaign

Immigration was an important issue in the Brexit campaign. Not only, as has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, did Leave voters name anti-immigration sentiments as one of the main reasons for voting Leave (Hobolt, 2016), but it was also an issue that gained considerable attention in the media. According to a study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 16 % of the arguments presented in the press were about migration, whereas the corresponding number for arguments in favour of Leave was 20 % (Levy et al., 2016, pp. 21-22). Another sign of the importance of the immigration issue was that *The Great Debate* on the BBC, which the channel itself described as "the biggest debate of the EU referendum campaign" (BBC, 2016), two days before the referendum devoted a section of the debate to immigration, alongside issues such as economy and Britain's place in the world. The broad coverage of immigration as an issue of the Brexit campaign does not only indicate that it would be important to the voters, as has been argued earlier, but also provides a vast amount of material to analyse in order to better understand the connection between anti-immigration and Euroscepticism. The following chapter gives an overview of immigration as an issue in the campaign, starting with addressing how immigration was talked about and characterized in the campaign, then moving on to a short comment on another issue, the 'not racist' claim, that is not directly relevant for the questions asked in this thesis, but does provide some relevant context.

The way in which 'immigration' as a more general term was used and characterised in the Brexit campaign says much about the issue of immigration as a whole and the way in which it is framed as a problem in the campaign. In general, one can say that the words chosen to describe immigration paint a picture of something out of control, emanating over Britain in great numbers. Phrases such as "uncontrolled immigration" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016), "uncontrollable scale of immigration" (Daily Mail, 2016a), "unlimited EU immigration" (Aitken, 2016), "unlimited numbers of people" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016) and "total loss of control" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016) are used to describe the current situation of the British immigration policy. Other words associated with something that cannot be controlled, such as nature, are also found in the material. "I think we're struggling. I think we're sinking. How do we deal with the increased demands on our public services given the never-ending, it feels like, *stream of people* arriving from Europe?" (Slack & Groves, 2016b [my italics]) is one example of this, spoken by a member of the audience at a debate on Sky TV.

Additionally, there are several references to an "open door" policy ([liarpoliticians2], 2016; Doyle, 2016b), a metaphor for *someone* having left the door wide-open to immigrants. "Our doors are open to 500 million people" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016c) declares one of the pamphlets of the Grassroots Out movement. The most radical example of this imagery is a citation of Lord Michael Howard: "The former Tory leader said Schengen was akin to 'hanging a sign welcoming terrorists to Europe'" (Slack & Cohen, 2016).

The use of numbers in the context of immigration rather than referring to individuals is also interesting. One often talks of people being the face of an issue, providing an issue with a more human, identifiable wrapping. In the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign there is a striking lack of such faces – quite the opposite, immigration is generally spoken about in terms of numbers and masses. The most obvious example of this is the term "mass immigration" (Slack, 2016b; Slack & Groves, 2016a, 2016b) or "mass migration" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a; Oborne, 2016), which is frequently used to describe the situation of groups of people moving across borders. Other examples are the comparisons of the numbers to other measurements, like the size of British cities. "Immigration from the EU in the last 3 years is greater than the population of Leeds" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016d; Leave.EU, 2016) was a simile used both by the Grassroots Out and the Leave.EU campaigns. "More than a quarter of a million people came to the UK from the EU in the 12 months to September 2015 – the equivalent of a city the size of Plymoth or Newcastle in just one year" (Vote Leave, 2016b) is found in a Vote Leave pamphlet, and this same comparison was repeated by Boris Johnson in one of his speeches (Johnson, 2016). However, there are also examples where immigrants are described in more detail, mostly as part of a group, or where immigrants are identified through references to particular persons. I will come back to this in chapter six on identity.

The greater picture, the reference to immigration as uncontrollable and massive, may be interpreted as a rather negative imagery – not being in control and facing something perceived as massive is seldom seen as very positive. It is however important to note that positive depictions of immigration do also occur, although it is much less common than the negative. Examples are the following statements made by Boris Johnson in the BBC debate:

> Why, I think the first thing we should do tonight in a discussion about immigration is celebrate immigrants and immigration, everything they do for our country. […] I'm passionately a believer in immigration, but it's got to be control. ([UK Election 2015], 2016)

The argument is seemingly that immigration itself is not a bad thing. It first becomes a problem when it is uncontrolled. The main depiction in the discourse is nevertheless that it *is* a problem because it is uncontrolled. Interesting then, is in what way it is a problem, apart from it being uncontrolled.

Another interesting part of the discourse that is not directly relevant to the concepts of identity and frames, but may nevertheless play a role in answering it, is the references to racism. The 'not racist' claim is one that figures often in the discourse:

> [The] Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has given an interview in which he says it is 'absolutely outrageous' to brand Britons worried about the impact of immigration as racists. (Daily Mail Comment, 2016d)

> Yet for decades, politicians and the BBC censored debate, branding as 'racist' those who voiced anxieties about the erosion of our national identity or the pressure on jobs, housing, schools and healthcare. (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a)

> So I think it's a bit rich that this, that the Remain side are so devoid of any arguments that they have to smear us as racists and bigots. Because we're not. ([UK Election 2015], 2016)

Such claims do not tell us that the immigration discourse is devoid of racists, but it does point to the fact that immigration is a delicate issue in which one may be interpreted as racist if one expresses concerns about a negative impact of immigrants. When discussing immigration the limits to what is considered politically correct are probably narrow, as the above quotes suggest. This may again lead to constraints on the way in which people talks about immigration in public.

This chapter has shown how immigration in general was depicted as a problem through it being spoken of in terms in the line of 'uncontrolled' and portrayed as massive, both through references to numbers and through comparisons. It has also shown how the 'not-racist' claim was raised in the discourse, which illustrates that immigration is a sensitive topic. It remains to be investigated in detail who were seen to cause the problems of immigration and what the problems were. The next two chapters present the findings on identity in the discourse and on what kind of threat immigration poses towards the United Kingdom.

6. The Other in the Brexit immigration discourse

This chapter analyses how someone – or something, as in the case of the EU as an institution – has been constructed as the *Other* in the Brexit immigration discourse. First, it looks at how the EU has been seen as the Other and as the initial cause of the problems resulting from immigration. Second, it identifies other representations of Others in the discourse that are not so explicitly constructed in relation to the British self through signs: immigrants in general, EU immigrants and non-EU immigrants. Third, it identifies and discusses another identity construction, namely that of the 'ordinary people' versus the 'elites'.

6.1. The EU as the Other

As shown in the theory chapter, the EU has formerly been constructed as the Other to the British self in British discourse. This is also the case in the discourse on immigration and Brexit. The EU is constructed as an Other prominently in two ways: First, as a subject opposing unwanted immigration policy upon the UK – and doing it badly. Second, as representing juxtaposing values that are depicted as vital to British identity.

The way in which national politicians blame the EU when things go wrong domestically is in no way a new phenomenon, but it is interesting to see how this may construct the EU as an Other in the discourse. This is very clear in the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign, as the EU is not only depicted as something that takes control over British immigration policy, but also as doing this badly.

> The UK joined the European Union in 1973. Back then, it was known as the Common Market. But over the past 43 years, *the EU has taken control over more and more areas which don't have anything to do with trade – such as our borders*, our public services, and whether prisoners have the right to vote. (Vote Leave, 2016b [my italics])

> The EU is a 'ratchet' constantly increasing its power over member states […] (Doyle, 2016a)

The above quotes, the first from a pamphlet distributed by the Vote Leave campaign and the second a paraphrase of Ian Duncan Smith in a *Daily Mail* article, show how the EU is depicted as something that actively *has taken* control over the British border policy. There are

several more examples of such depictions of the EU as an Other trying to gain ever more control over the UK. An illustrating quote is this by Boris Johnson: "That is the choice on June 23 […] Between deciding who we want to come here to live and work – or letting the EU decide" (Johnson, 2016). This opposition is heavily underlined by a choice of words usually associated with war or conflict. "We have *surrendered* that to Brussels. We have *surrendered* that to the new concept of EU citizenship" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016 [my italics]) was uttered by Nigel Farage in one of his speeches. "They say you have no choice but *to bow down to Brussels*. We say they are woefully underestimating this country and what it can do" ([UK Election 2015], 2016 [my italics]) is another example by Boris Johnson in the BBC debate. Such word choice clearly emphasizes a gap between the UK and the EU as it constructs them as two parts of a conflict. In addition to such examples that portray the UK and the EU as opposing poles, the discourse also builds on international examples that characterise the EU as an Other taking control. In one of Farage's speeches, he makes a link to the Hungarian referendum, which he refers to as a referendum on "whether they should be forced [by the EU] to accept mandatory quotas for migrants" (European Parliament, 2016b). Again, the EU is portrayed as imposing unwanted policy upon the nation state.

The EU is also depicted as an immigration-loving institution, both in terms of its internal freedom of movement and its response to the refugee crisis. References are made to "[t]he EU's cherished freedom of movement for people within its borders" (Slack, 2016b) and the "EU's obsession with freedom of movement and insistence on an open border policy" (Drury, 2016b). It is also referred to through statements such as "Brussels wants to tackle the migrant crisis by inviting yet more people into the EU" (Stevens, 2016). The EU's policies on freedom of movement and asylum are additionally characterized as a "failure" (MacLeod, 2016) and "grievous errors" (European Parliament, 2016b). A Falklands veteran, Major General Malcolm Hunt, is cited in the *Daily Mail*: "If the EU was up for a job interview involving foreign policy and defence, they wouldn't get the job... the present mass immigration cataclysm shows that the EU is not fit for purpose." (Daily Mail, 2016b) With a depiction of the UK as a country struggling with immigration problems initially caused by the EU and the EU failing to address this issue properly, this also is part of constructing the EU as the Other in the discourse.

The juxtaposition of values also plays an important role in the construction of the EU as the Other in the discourse. As mentioned earlier, sovereignty has been seen as an essential part of British identity that the EU has threatened. What has been discussed above, the EU controlling British immigration policy is essential to this value of sovereignty. However, one

can also find more explicit references to British values in the discourse, especially pertaining the more overarching concept of democracy, particularly concerning representative democracy, and how the EU is constructed as an Other representing the opposite of this value. A prime example of this is found in this quote:

> But if Cameron succeeds in scaring us into staying, we will never again be masters of our own destiny and will continue to have our laws, trade deals and immigration rules dictated by unelected, unaccountable foreign apparatchiks and anti-democratic judges whom we are powerless to remove. (Littlejohn, 2016)

The conception of the EU as foreign politicians (in the above quote "apparachiks") and judges that are unrepresentative of the British citizens because they are "unaccountable" and "unelected" is a dominant one in the discourse. The EU is not only represented through the people representing it, but the EU as an institution is also characterized, with words and phrases such as "dictatorial" (Williams, 2016) and as "an unfair, arrogant system of government" (Aitken, 2016). Through using such negative characteristics, one also constructs a conception of the UK as the opposite as it would not make much sense to talk of the EU in such negative terms if the characteristics also applied to the UK. This is also done in more explicit terms as in the following quotes:

> It still is. And I think that, really, is at the heart of our problems with Brussels. Because our way of doing things, the British way, doesn't chime with the culture of stitch-ups and murky back-room deals that characterises the way the EU is run.
> Ours is an unequal alliance with Brussels. It's not that we don't know how to play the game; it's that we don't even know there is a game — let alone understand the rules of engagement. Our system of open and honest government has little currency in Europe; indeed, if anything, it's a handicap. (Vine, 2016 [my italics])
>
> [A] Brexit vote would take power away from judges and unaccountable bureaucrats and restore it to elected MPs. (Doyle, 2016a [my italics])

"The British way" of doing things is here directly contrasted with the EU, which again strengthens the notion of the EU as the Other in British discourse.

At the same time, the construction of the EU as an Other in the immigration discourse of the Brexit campaign does not rule out the construction of other Others. The EU often appears alongside other groups of people who are also characterised in a manner that establishes a gap between them and the British. Thus the EU can be seen as the first actor in a chain of identity constructions. This will be further elaborated on in chapter eight.

6.2. Immigrants in general as the Other

Who is responsible for the problems of immigration is often not directly mentioned in terms of groups on a lower level than the general term 'immigrants'. What is *not* explicitly being said is also important as it leaves people free to make their own associations and cognitive connections. Such characteristics as those mentioned in the previous chapter do not leave us with many indications of what association the receiver will get and do not to a great extent, if any, contribute to the construction of identities. It does however often happen that immigrants are referred to without referring to a particular group of people or to where they come from, but instead through more general characteristics.

The use of signs to describe immigrants as a group of its own is very limited in the immigration discourse asides from the depiction of immigrants, without referring to a particular group of immigrants, as a threat. The only characteristic on the general level that I found in the data analysed, was the use of the phrases "dangerous foreign criminals" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016b, 2016d; Leave.EU, 2016), "foreign criminals" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a; Doyle & Drury, 2016) and "terrorist" (Slack & Cohen, 2016). It is however difficult to know how to treat the terms 'criminals' and 'terrorists' – are they signs ascribed to the identity of immigrants or does it constitute an identity? The answer most certainly depends on who you ask. Whereas some may say that foreigners in general are criminal, other may look at this as an identity separate from immigrants in general. In this thesis I have decided to treat 'criminals' as an identity of its own, which, in my view, is the least radical position of the two, because it does not ascribe the sign 'criminal' to the whole group of immigrants. Regardless of how one chooses to interpret this, it is clearly linked to immigration as a threat to security, which I will return to in chapter seven on the threats of immigration.

6.3. EU immigrants as the Other

Most often in the sources analysed, the immigrants referred to are limited to EU immigrants. This is quite clear through references to, for instance, "500 million people" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016c), "immigration from the EU" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016b, 2016d)

and "the stream of people arriving from Europe" (Slack & Groves, 2016b), or through the example of Nigel Farage and his passport:

> And I think, that the reason in this referendum, why we have to talk about this, is all the while, all the while, *that* [shows off British passport], which is a British passport, or should be, but the first two words on it is European Union. That is available to 508 million people. And any of those people, if they wish, can come to this country. (BBC News, 2016)

The signs ascribed to the EU immigrants are however very limited. They are mostly spoken about in economic terms, either as workers or welfare benefiters. On one side, EU immigrants are referred to through phrases such as "EU-born workers" (Drury, 2016a) and described as "the biggest winners in the UK jobs market" (Slack & Doyle, 2016). On the other side, though, they are also spoken of as people coming to the UK without a job – as 'free-riding' on the British welfare system. In an appearance on *This Morning*, Boris Johnson emphasized the numbers of EU immigrants without employment in Britain prior to migrating: "[…] last year, as you saw in the figures, we had 184 000 net from the EU, 77 000 who came across without even having a job to come to." ([This Morning], 2016) Other examples are the two following quotes, effectively contrasting immigrants possibly contributing to the welfare system to immigrants from the EU who possibly is a strain on this very system:

> And look at the, the way that we are forced by our imbalanced system to push away people who might contribute mightily to our NHS in favour of uncontrolled access to 510 million people from the rest of the EU. ([UK Election 2015], 2016)
>
> […] we find ourselves hard pressed to recruit people who might work in our NHS, as opposed to make use of its services because we have absolutely no power to control the numbers who are coming with no job offers and no qualifications from the 28 EU countries. (Johnson, 2016)

The characterisation of the EU immigrants as workers does however not fit very nicely into the identity framework – it is difficult to say that the attribute of 'worker' in some way is in juxtaposition to some trait ascribed to the British identity. One may claim that the 'welfare benefiter' sign is in juxtaposition to that of a 'welfare contributor', but it is hard to find such a construction directly expressed in the discourse as related to a juxtaposition of British and EU immigrants. Instead, one may argue that national identity is linked to the economic aspects of both the labour market and the welfare system, and that the conception of EU immigrants as either workers or welfare benefiters is part of immigration representing a threat to the

economy without directly being part of an identity construction. Rather, such a conception is based on already existing identity constructions used to decide who are and who are not entitled to rights within the borders of the British national state.

The EU immigrants are also subdivided into another group in the discourse. Although most of the references to EU immigrants refer to the groups as a whole, there are multiple references to geographical areas in Europe, mostly connected to the Eastern enlargements of the EU in 2004/2007:

> We warned in 2004 that letting in the former communist countries would lead not just to a total loss of control, but to an unprecedented flow into Britain. ([liarpoliticians2], 2016)

> With the in-out referendum only five weeks off, the total exploiting free movement rules hit 2.2million. More than half are from Eastern Europe. (Drury, 2016a)

> Immigration from Romania and Bulgaria is increasing, with some 55,000 arriving in the year to last September (Doughty, 2016)

This is interesting, seeing as one could expect the identity construction to be more related to the continent as a whole, based on the existing literature on British versus European identity. This has seemingly changed with the Eastern enlargements in the 2000s. This also sheds some light on how the issue of immigration has increasingly been connected to the issue of European integration. What is also interesting, is the way in which these Eastern European immigrants are characterised in the discourse. The one reference I found which clearly fits into the Self-Other concept, is this statement by Nigel Farage: "We warned in 2004 that letting in the former communist countries would lead not just to a total loss of control, but to an unprecedented flow into Britain" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016). Here, Nigel Farage describes these countries as "former communist countries", depicting them as having a fundamentally different background than the history of the UK as a liberal democracy. In another speech he talks of them as countries "with human rights records that are frankly shocking and abysmal, and others in which corruption is so rife that these countries have not made the transition to being full Western democracies" (European Parliament, 2016c) and also refers to the enlargement countries as "much poorer" (European Parliament, 2016c).

References to the economy are also found in the specific references to Eastern European immigrants. An example is the comparison by Vote Leave of "weekly take-home

pay" of Britain, Romania and Bulgaria as a result of Cameron's negotiated deal with the EU (Slack, 2016a). Other examples are the mentions of numbers of workers coming to Britain "from Poland and seven other former Eastern bloc countries that joined the EU in 2004" (Drury, 2016a) and "Romanians and Bulgarians, whose residents have had full freedom of movement and access to work since January 2014" (Drury, 2016a). Again, such a characterisation of the Other – here of the Eastern Europeans – as workers does not make much sense in the identity framework of this thesis, as there is no counterpart to this sign in the construction of a Self. However, it is clearly connected to immigration as a threat to the economy, which I will elaborate on in the next chapter.

Similar to the case of the general references to immigrants, there are also references to European criminals and terrorists, as in "Europe's criminals" (Batten, 2016) and "Europe has plenty of its own home-grown terrorists" (Batten, 2016). Again, I have chosen to treat this as an identity, not a sign characterising the greater group of EU immigrants. As mentioned in the previous chapter, immigrants are most often referred to in numbers and seldom personified. A rare case of the opposite can be found in the personification of the European criminals. An article in the *Scottish Daily Mail* presented a catalogue of 50 European criminals that "were let in under EU rules" (Doyle & Drury, 2016) and who had committed crimes in the UK. The list was first found in a report by Vote Leave:

> Among those on the list of 50 drawn up by Brexit campaign group Vote Leave are Arnis Zalkalns, the Latvian who murdered his wife before moving to the UK where he killed 14-year-old Alice Gross. It also names Ireneusz Bartnowski, a Polish burglar who murdered elderly couple Guiseppe and Caterina Massaro within weeks of arriving in the UK. Five of those on the list have gone on to commit crimes, including rape and murder, in Scotland. (Doyle & Drury, 2016)

Such a presentation creates a vivid image of someone from the outside, an Other, coming to the UK to break the common rules, which again may be seen as part of the British identity, although this is not necessarily transferred to the rest of the group of EU immigrants, and it therefore here treated as a category of its own: criminal EU immigrants.

6.4. Non-EU immigrants as the Other

The last Other identified in the discourse is the non-EU immigrants. This is however not as clear-cut as the Others discussed above, as it covers a wider range of groups of people, most prominently immigrants in connection to the refugee crisis, the prospect of migration for the accession countries, and skilled workers from the rest of the world. These groups are also treated in two different ways in the discourse: first, as a threat; second, as a group being discriminating against in favour of EU immigrants.

The immigrants, often specified as "asylum seekers" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016b) or "refugees" (Daily Mail, 2016a), coming to EU – and in the extension of that, to Britain – in connection to the refugee crisis are talked of in terms of "migrants from Africa, the Middle East and beyond" (Batten, 2016). As in the case of immigrants in general, also these are often referred to in terms of numbers, as shown in these examples:

> UP to 480,000 refugees could settle in Britain from 2020 as the migration crisis intensifies, a report has warned. (Daily Mail, 2016a)

> Figures showed the EU has granted citizenship to five million migrants since 2009 - giving them free access to the UK (Slack, 2016c)

As with the EU immigrants, it is difficult to find concrete evidence of a Self/Other construction in the discourse other than in the way that they pose a threat. They are mostly conceived as a threat by being portrayed as criminals and terrorists:

> [Boatloads] of migrants are picked up by British rescue teams off the Kent and Sussex coast. Asylum seekers smuggle themselves to East Lincolnshire aboard ships from Germany. Calais's chief coastguard says the Channel is becoming 'the new Mediterranean'. A confidential National Crime Agency report warns that small, unpoliced ports and marinas around the country are now a wide-open back door into Britain. (Daily Mail Comment, 2016b)

> Frontex, the EU's own border agency, has admitted that mass immigration is allowing terrorists to slip into the EU - including two of those behind the devastating attacks in Paris. (Slack, 2016a)

> Is it safe to stay within an organisation whose own police boss tells us there are 3 000 to 5 000 terrorists who have now come into our continent through the migrant crisis,

or is it safest to take back control of our own borders and our own democracy? (European Parliament, 2016b)

Here, non-EU immigrants are depicted as "smuggling themselves through the back door into Britain", a criminal act, and also as "terrorists". Again, I will argue that it makes most sense to treat this as an own identity, not as a sign ascribed to all non-EU immigrants.

An example of how signs are ascribed to non-EU immigrants is the 'Breaking Point' poster of the UKIP[8]. The poster shows a queue of people, seemingly of Middle Eastern origin, with the text "Breaking Point / The EU has failed us all / We must break free from the EU and take back control over our borders" (UKIP, 2016). Arguably, this poster explicitly plays on skin colour. There are however very few explicit signs ascribed to the non-EU immigrants. One can nevertheless argue that it is very likely that such images and references to the origins of immigrants carry with them already established connotations.

Another group mentioned frequently are the so-called "accession countries"[9] with a particular emphasis on Turkey. Although immigrants from these countries are also not described in discourse in explicit terms that fit into a Self-Other framework, it is very possible that also the mention of these countries functions as cues for already existing identity construction[10]. In the sources analysed, they are mostly mentioned in terms of posing a threat to the UK in different ways. First, as possible future member states and thus representing the same threats as the EU immigrants. Secondly, the possible enlargements are tied to the refugee crisis and the terrorist threat, through, for instance, a controversial pamphlet issued by the Vote Leave campaign that shows a map where the accession countries are numbered and the names of Syria and Iraq are highlighted (Vote Leave, 2016a), both of them countries bordering Turkey and associated with conflicts related to Islamic fundamentalism[11].

However, non-EU immigrants are not only portrayed in negative terms. They are also set up against the EU system, and thus in a way also the EU immigrants, through the claim that the current immigration system of the UK is "unfair" ([This Morning], 2016) and that the British through their system "discriminate against 92 % of the world" ([UK Election 2015],

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[8] See poster in the appendix, p. 65.

[9] There are several references to which the countries set to join are. Most of them include Turkey, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (Vote Leave, 2016a), but some also Bosnia, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (Batten, 2016; Coleman, 2016).

[10] For an example of literature on how Turkey has been constructed as the Other to Europe in terms of religion, see Risse (2010, pp. 53-54)

[11] See pamphlet in the appendix, p. 66.

2016). An "Australian styled points system" is proposed as the alternative to "get the right people coming to Britain in the right numbers" (BBC News, 2016). A line is drawn between "the best and the brightest in the world" (Doyle, 2016a), "the people that we actually need to do the jobs" ([This Morning], 2016), and those who only come to the UK as a strain on the system. Great examples of this are found in the following quotes by Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson:

> We want good people to come to our country, we don't want to discriminate against them because they're from India or New Zealand in favour of Romania and Bulgaria. ([liarpoliticians2], 2016)

> […] we find ourselves hard pressed to recruit people who might work in our NHS, as opposed to make use of its services – because we have absolutely no power to control the numbers who are coming with no job offers and no qualifications from the 28 EU countries. (Johnson, 2016)

Here, the non-EU immigrants of India and New Zealand are clearly set up against the Romanians and Bulgarians, and the people contributing to the National Health Service (NHS) are set up against those who "make use of its services", evidently those "who are coming with no job offers and no qualifications from the 28 EU countries". Again, there is no concrete evidence of a Self-Other construction in the material analysed in terms of the British versus immigrants. It is possible that references to countries that have ties to the Commonwealth holds rather different associations than some of the poorest countries of the European Union and thus fits better into the British perception of Self than the possibly more diverging identities of Eastern European countries.

6.5. The ordinary people versus the elites

The different identities present in the discourse that have been discussed above are all concerned with identity in terms of nationality. However, there is also another identity construction present in the discourse that works both within and across the borders of the nation state, namely that of 'ordinary people' versus 'the elites'.

Anti-establishment sentiments were, alongside anti-immigration sentiments, the main reason for the Leave vote. Such sentiments are also highly present in the immigration discourse. Elites are referred to in general terms such as "the cocooned elite" (Scottish Daily

Mail, 2016) and "the political elite" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016b), as well as in terms of both national and European elites, such as "the wealthy boroughs of London" (Platell, 2016) and "Europe's ruling classes" (Doyle, 2016b). Interestingly, they are also clearly defined in juxtaposition to 'the ordinary people', and thus as a kind of Other in the discourse of the Leave camp, which is clearly directed towards a Self here understood in terms such as "ordinary working families" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016b). The identity of the elites are constructed through signs such as "wealthy" and "bleeding-heart liberals" (Platell, 2016), "power" and "influence" (Vine, 2016), whereas the 'ordinary people' are described as living in "poorer towns" (Platell, 2016), struggling with problems caused by immigration.

In most instances where this Self-Other construction is used, it is used in a way that argues that 'the elites' do not understand the concerns of 'the ordinary people' because they are not affected themselves:

> The timing made it a virtual referendum on Germany's refugee policy. It will also be seen as an indictment of the failure of Europe's ruling classes to acknowledge the public's fears about migration. (Doyle, 2016b)

> Because this referendum campaign has, without question, been an exercise in those with power, wealth and influence telling the rest of us to know our place. The EU suits the elites and the establishment. (Vine, 2016)

> But then the cocooned elite don't have to compete with migrants for low-paid jobs, housing, school places or NHS appointments. Nor are their children held back by classmates who don't speak English, in communities changed beyond recognition. (Scottish Daily Mail, 2016)

This Self-Other construction does therefore not function in the same way as those discussed earlier, as the elites do not directly cause the problems of immigration. It is instead used to say something about who is affected and how those in charge, 'the political elite', understand and respond to the problems.

This chapter has identified several Others, although they fill different functions. The EU is clearly defined as an Other in relation to values such as sovereignty and democracy, and one can argue that the EU functions as the first part of the chain defining immigration as a problem in the context of the Brexit – it is the restrictions the EU sets for British immigration

policy that ultimately lead to the problems connected to other groups defined as the Other in the discourse.

Whereas the EU is clearly constructed as an Other through juxtaposed signs in the discourse, this is not as clear in the cases of neither foreigners in general, EU immigrants or non-EU immigrants. Both EU immigrants and non-EU immigrants are defined as groups in the discourse and seen as representing different threats, but they are not directly constructed as Others through references to values and characteristics juxtaposing the British in the same way as the EU has been. The most significant characterisation found, is the one of criminals and terrorists, but I have argued that it makes more sense to treat these as an own group rather than as a sign ascribed to the different identities. Other groups, such as the immigrants from Eastern Europe, are also tied to signs, but this is not done as explicitly through juxtapositions as is the case with the EU. It may be that the reason for the lack of characterisations of the different identities is that it is not as politically correct to characterise groups of people as it is to characterise and criticise aspects of an institution. There are most certainly signs that are associated also with these identities, but that are not brought into this discourse. It would be necessary to look at a broader range of sources to identify how these identities are constructed in relation to the British, for instance how Eastern Europeans are conceived in British discourse. As it is, the material analysed mostly suggests the existence of such identity constructions.

Another more unexpected identity construction found in the discourse is that of 'ordinary people' versus 'the elites'. This construction does not fit into the chain of framing proposed in chapter three, but works more like an interpretation of the immigration frame as a whole. The elites are presented as a group that do not understand the problems of immigration, which may contribute to increase the conflicts related to immigration additionally.

This chapter has briefly touched upon how these identities are connected to the threats they are seen as posing to the UK. Both the EU and the various groups of immigrants are linked to different kinds of threats. The next chapter will present the findings on how immigration has been framed as a threat in the discourse.

7. Immigration as a threat

The identification of the various Others in the immigration discourse has already touched upon some of the ways in which immigration has been framed as a threat to different aspects of the British society. This chapter will look deeper into the various ways immigration was framed as a problem in the discourse: immigration as a threat to sovereignty, culture, security, and economy.

7.1. Sovereignty

As mentioned in the previous chapter, immigration as a threat to sovereignty was one of the central frames in the campaign, illustrated by the use of slogans such as "take back control" ([This Morning], 2016; Doyle, 2016c) and "regain control over our own borders" (Grassroots Out Movement, 2016a) by the Leave camp. The referendum was spoken about in terms of being a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to become independent again" (Doyle, 2016a) and uncontrolled immigration was explicitly tied to the EU membership:

> We have to in this campaign make people understand that EU membership and uncontrolled immigration are synonymous with each other. We have to make people understand that what this referendum is about is taking back control of our lives, our laws and our borders. ([liarpoliticians2], 2016)

Much of the campaign revolved around showing how the British EU membership made the UK unable to decide over its immigration policy. This was illustrated by pointing at the failed promises of Cameron of decreasing immigration numbers:

> [The] Tory war over the EU escalated last night with Boris Johnson accusing David Cameron of corroding public trust in politics by failing to curb mass immigration. […] The Tory leadership contender also hammered Mr Cameron for his failure to get a grip on immigration - which he said was impossible while Britain was an EU member. He said: 'It is deeply corrosive of popular trust in democracy that every year UK politicians tell the public that they can cut immigration to the tens of thousands - and then find that they miss their targets by hundreds of thousands.' (Slack & Groves, 2016a)

This also shows how sovereignty is tied to the greater concept of democracy, as previously discussed in relation to identity. Here, Boris Johnson is cited as arguing that the lack of

sovereignty may lead to less public trust in the elected representatives of the British democracy. The questioning of the effect of the deal Cameron negotiated with the EU is another part of the argument that uncontrolled immigration is an unavoidable consequence of British EU membership and thus limits the British sovereignty. Again, it was argued that the negotiated deal "will do nothing to reduce the level of immigration from the EU" (Doughty, 2016). It was also argued that the deal would possibly not pass the European Parliament. In a TV debate, David Cameron was accused of being "'a 21st century Neville Chamberlain', hailing an agreement with a dictatorship that would soon be overruled" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016c). The Brexit was depicted as the only way in which the UK could regain sovereignty over its immigration policy.

Arguably, phrases such as "take back control over our immigration policy" ([This Morning], 2016) also hold other connotations than mere references to sovereignty. There are instances in which the sovereignty issue is singled out from the argument that immigration has to be restricted, as in this quote by Boris Johnson: "It is not that we object to immigration in itself ... It is about who decides; it is about who is ultimately responsible; it is about control." (Martin, 2016)[12] However, in most cases it is linked to the notion of restricting immigration for various reasons. Thus, references to sovereignty do not necessarily only entail that there is a lack of sovereignty, but may also entail that one wishes another direction for the immigration policy than the existing one. In this sense, the sovereignty frame in a way functions as a greater framework for how immigration is framed as a problem.

7.2. Culture and identity

There are very few instances of frames that address questions of culture and identity directly and explicitly in the material analysed, but there were some instances where immigration was framed as a threat to British identity and culture. As has been argued, other frames, such as security and economy, most probably also build on and are very much influenced by notions of identity, but here I have been most interested in instances in the material where concerns about culture and identity are explicitly expressed and where immigration as a threat to culture thus exists as a frame on its own.

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[12] This was said by Boris Johnson in a speech to Tory conference in October 2015, but cited in the *Daily Mail* 22 February 2016

A *Daily Mail* comment presents a scenario of the British white population becoming a minority in the UK, possibly having to adapt to the newcomers:

By all means, let those who welcome mass migration make their arguments. But those who see it as a threat to Britain's way of life must have a fair hearing too.

Meanwhile on long-term trends, the white British population will cease to be the majority in the UK by the late 2060s - or much sooner should current high levels of migration persist. And this takes no account of plans to admit Turkey to the EU, which would give 80million more the right to settle here.

As David Coleman, the brilliant Oxford professor of demography, points out: 'As numbers in different groups increase, their need to integrate into British society becomes less and less… As the balance of numbers changes, the question arises as to who will adapt to whom.' (Scottish Daily Mail, 2016)

The references to culture and identity are however not particularly explicit on the specific constituents of the British identity to which immigration poses a threat, but refer mostly to general concepts such as "the erosion of our national identity" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a), the "danger of losing its [the UK's] identity" (Daily Mail, 2016c) and the sense of community in the following statement by Nigel Farage:

Now, there are many other things that we simply can't put a cost on. Social cohesion, a sense in our cities or market towns that we are one community living together, that of course has become increasingly divided, fragmented, segmented within our towns and cities because the sheer pace of people coming has been to great to integrate. ([liarpoliticians2], 2016)

There are only two ways found in the material in which specific aspects of the identity are addressed. The first concerns the sexual attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve, Nigel Farage linking this to "cultures where women are at best second class citizens" as opposed to British "modern liberal traditions" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016). The second concerns the British language, a voter in Kent being cited having said the following:

The big parties don't treat us right on immigration. They couldn't care less that our kids are growing up with foreign accents because they have to go to a local school where 21 languages are spoken. (Aitken, 2016)

Although there is not much to build an analysis on in the material analysed, it is difficult to exclude such concepts as identity and culture altogether from the discourse as a result of the lack of findings in the sources analysed. It may be that other sources would have been better

suited to identify concerns over the threat of immigration to national culture or identity as addressing such concerns publicly may be seen as politically incorrect. It is likely that conceptions related to culture and identity are present as associations in the discourse without being directly presented. As mentioned in chapter six on identity, references to Turkey for example may depend heavily on identity or cultural connotations, even when it is impossible to find these in the sources analysed, because they pre-exist and are reformulated in a broader context than the discourse on Brexit.

7.3. Security

Immigration is also framed as a threat to security in the discourse, both in terms of criminality and terrorism. In a *Daily Mail* comment, the situation is described as "[p]risons packed with foreign criminals we can't deport, thousands of others on our streets..." (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a). Another article claims that the "EU free movement rules have let dozens of foreign criminals commit horrific offences in Britain" (Doyle & Drury, 2016). In one of his speeches Nigel Farage points to criminality rates in London: "The fact that 41% of registered crime in London is now committed by foreign nationals is, I would suggest, a source of concern" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016). More specifically, the problem is defined as the inability to control the British borders and to deport criminals, and the Brexit is ascribed as the solution to both parts of the problem. There are many references in both pamphlets and articles to the former head of MI6 Sir Richard Dearlove who is cited as having said that "Britain could be safer out" because it "would make it easier to deport terrorists and control our borders" (Slack & Cohen, 2016). Additionally, European Convention of Human Rights is portrayed as problematic because it overrules British courts, hindering deportations:

> It is very worrying that the European Court of Justice – Luxembourg, not Strasbourg – should now be freely adjudicating on human rights questions, and whether or not this country has the right to deport people the Home Office believes are a threat to our security (Johnson, 2016)

> It's all about security for all of our children, for all of us. Free movement does not allow us to even ask people if they have a criminal record. The European Court has overruled British judges in being able to deport criminals. We know, Ron Noble, former head of Interpol, has said that the Schengen free area in Europe is like hanging

out a sign welcoming terrorists to Europe. Free movement is creating enormous problems. ([UK Election 2015], 2016)

Although terrorism is also an act of criminality, it is an aspect of the security frame that is worth a focus of its own. As seen above, Ron Noble is supposed to have said that the Schengen free area in Europe is like hanging out a sign welcoming terrorists to Europe. Even though the UK is not part of Schengen, the problems that are relevant to the Schengen area are also seen as relevant to the UK:

> Open borders also aid terrorists. We have seen terrorist attacks in a number of European capitals made by terrorists who can easily cross borders under the EU's Schengen open borders system. Britain is not in Schengen, but any EU citizen has the right to come to Britain if he or she so wishes. (Batten, 2016)

The terrorism threat is not only linked to the EU freedom of movement and attacks in other European cities, but also to the refugee crisis in the sense that terrorist may "slip into the EU" or that some of the refugees coming may carry a "terrorist virus"*:*

> Frontex, the EU's own border agency, has admitted that mass immigration is allowing terrorists to slip into the EU - including two of those behind the devastating attacks in Paris. (Slack, 2016a)

> He added that 'millions' of migrants from the Middle East and Africa are set to head to the continent in the next five years - many of whom will then be able to take advantage of Brussels' free movement rules. He said it was inevitable that a few of these would carry what he called a 'terrorist virus'. (D. Martin, 2016)

This message is also repeated several times by Nigel Farage, who shows to the head of Europol when claiming that "[ISIS] have now managed to put 5 000 of their operatives into the European continent" (European Parliament, 2016a). This again shows how EU membership supposedly opens up for immigration of criminals and terrorists to Britain.

7.4. Economy

The most prominent argument in the discourse measured by the number of sources that contains such references, is that of immigration as a threat to the economy. According to Nigel Farage and others, it is the "hard working Britains out there" that "are the ones who paid the price for irresponsible open-door migration" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016). The framing

of the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign as a question of economy is however two-sided. Immigration is framed as both a threat to the labour market and wages in the EU, but also as a threat to the welfare state.

EU immigrants as workers, particularly Eastern Europeans, has already been addressed in the previous chapter, and we will now see how it has been presented as affecting the British labour market. In the discourse, immigration is frequently depicted as leading to "pressure on jobs" (Daily Mail Comment, 2016a). EU immigrants are presented as "taking jobs" through for example numbers showing how many European immigrant workers there are in the UK: "Foreign-born workers now hold one in six jobs - 5.2million in a labour force of 31.5million". (Drury, 2016a) These immigrants "filling many of Britain's low-skilled jobs" (Slack & Doyle, 2016) are also presented as part of the problem. Ian Duncan Smith expressed it as follows:

> The truth is that it is British people on low pay - and those out of work - who feel the consequences of uncontrolled migration. They are forced to compete with millions of people from abroad for jobs, and they suffer downward pressure on their wages. (Drury, 2016a)

Immigration of low-skilled workers is depicted as creating competition in the market for low-skilled labour, "pushing down working-class people's wages" (Roden, 2016), and may ultimately also lead to British citizens "draw[ing] benefits when they could be in work" (Drury, 2016a). The challenge of limiting immigration of low-skilled workers – as a consequence of defining it as a problem – is also linked to the 'unfair immigration system', discussed earlier, through statements such as this one by Michael Gove:

> In my view our immigration policy means that we have some people who can come into this country who we might want to say no to and others, who we might want to attract, who can't currently come in. (Slack & Doyle, 2016)

In addition to this, national instruments that are drawn on in order to prevent downward pressure on wages are also seen in light of the EU freedom of movement, as shown here: "Tory MP Philip Hollobone said the Government's national living wage - due to hit £9 an hour by 2020 - would turn the UK into a 'land of milk and honey'. He pointed out that the average wage in Turkey was just £6,500 a year." (Slack & Doyle, 2016) Immigration, particularly from Eastern Europe, is thus framed as a great threat to the British working class because they take their jobs and push down their wages, and the EU membership leaves little room of manoeuvre for solving this problem.

The other aspect of immigration as a threat to the British economy is its impact on the welfare state. In the discourse of the Leave campaigners, immigration is "putting 'unsustainable pressure' on public services" (Doyle, 2016a), making it impossible to plan ahead:

> Because any government with the best will of the world, when it has to plan it's public services, whether it's the school, whether it's the NHS[13], whether it's the training how many nurses and doctors we need, housing, to get on the housing ladder. All those things are impossible with the best will of the world, if you have got uncontrolled numbers coming in. ([UK Election 2015], 2016)

The pressure on the public services is referred to in various contexts. It is seen as something that will have a great impact on the future, through making connections to the next generations, as in this statement by Gisela Stuart: "I'm also a mother and a grandmother. And I think it's important that as we plan for our public services, like the NHS, like the schools, like housing, that we actually can plan ahead properly." ([UK Election 2015], 2016) Also, it is seen as a challenge linked to great uncertainty in terms of current numbers: "MPs say the gap suggests huge numbers of incomers may have been missed by the ONS - leaving officials in the dark about the true scale of the pressure being placed on hospitals and schools." (Slack & Martin, 2016)

As is also shown in the quote cited above, the public services mentioned as affected by immigration cover a range of different services, primarily the NHS, schools and housing. In relation to schools, it is claimed that "immigration has contributed to a shortage of places" (Groves & Fryer, 2016), the schools are characterised as "over-crowded" (Platell, 2016) and "full or over capacity" (Doyle, 2016c), and it is argued that "children [are] held back by classmates who don't speak English" (Scottish Daily Mail, 2016). It is thus not just a case of economy and capacity, but also a question of a cultural conflict in terms of language, as previously addressed. In terms of housing, the issue is described both as a problem of increasing rents and "the inability of young people to get on the housing ladder" (BBC News, 2016), but it is also occasionally linked to the more environmental issue of the London "green belt" ([liarpoliticians2], 2016). Finally, the situation of the NHS is not as thoroughly described in the discourse, but mostly referred to as a service under "extra and unfunded pressure" (Johnson, 2016) because of immigration, which again makes it difficult to get an appointment with a doctor or at the hospital (Slack, 2016b).

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[13] National Health Service

According to Andrea Leadsom, a Leave campaigner of the Conservative party, "every family in this country knows how difficult it is to get the primary school place of your choice, to get a doctor's appointment, and yes, to afford rents or to get on to the housing ladder" ([UK Election 2015], 2016). The pressure on the public services is indeed depicted as something especially problematic to families and, drawing on the framing of immigration as a threat to the labour market, also to British citizens with lower income.

The British EU membership has been depicted in the discourse as constituting several threats towards the UK. First, the EU immigration policy is seen as a threat to the British sovereignty. This sovereignty frame makes it possible to address other frames of immigration in relation to the Brexit referendum. As has been shown, immigration is depicted as having an impact on several areas of the British society. It is seen as a threat to culture, mostly through general references to the "British way of life", but also in relation to issues such as language and respect for women. It is seen as a threat to security, both in terms of criminality and terrorism. It is also conveyed as a threat to economy, both in terms of immigrants "taking jobs" and pushing down wages, but also as putting pressure on the public services, particularly the NHS, schools and housing. In the next chapter these findings of immigration as a threat will be directly linked to the identities identified in the previous chapter. The findings will also be discussed in relation to the literature on winners and losers of globalisation.

8. Who to blame and for what? A discussion of the findings

It makes little sense to look separately at the identity constructions and the framing of immigration as a threat. If anything, the two previous chapters have shown that they are closely entangled. In this chapter I will first present a refined version of the causal chain proposed in chapter three and give an overview of the findings and how they relate to each other. Thereafter, it takes a step back and discusses the findings in relation to the literature on winners and losers of globalisation, primarily focusing on the relationship between the economic and ideational aspects of the discourse.

8.1. The Others and the threats in the Brexit immigration discourse

As in most cases, the reality seems to be more complex than at first glance. The model proposed in chapter three (figure 2) is in need of some refinement to reflect the findings of the analysis. Figure 3 shows a model integrating the new dimensions that have been identified in the analysis. The frame constituted by the EU as an Other posing a threat to the British sovereingty may function as a frame of its own. It may however also be extended to include the immigrants and the threat they pose (see also figure 4). At the end of the chain, is the Brexit as the solution to the problem. What is the greatest change in this model, is the integration of the anti-establishment sentiments aspect, referring to the identity construction of 'ordinary people'-'elites'. All the different elements of the chain will be elaborated on in this section.

Anti-establishment sentiments
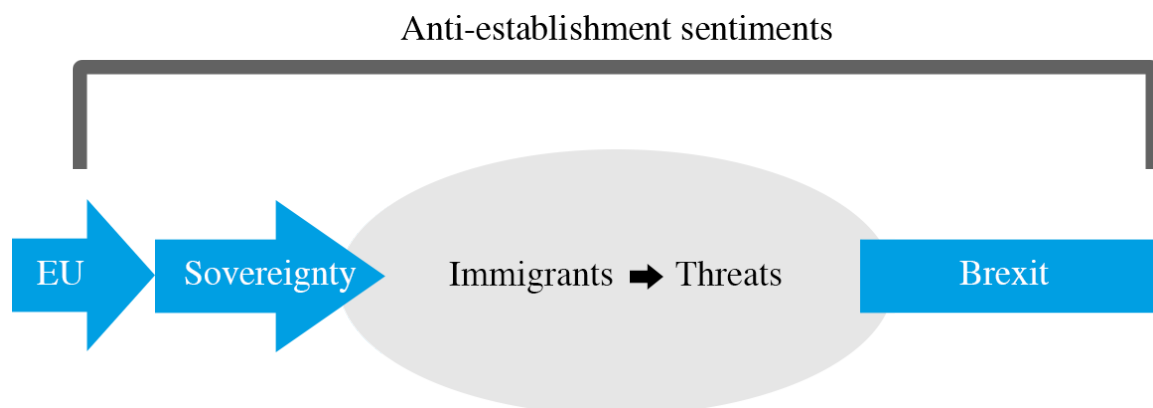
EU ➤ Sovereignty ➤ Immigrants ➡ Threats   Brexit

Figure 3: Findings integrated in the causal chain. See also figure 4.

The EU as an Other that poses a threat to sovereignty seems to be a consistent frame in the British discourse on European integration. It is identified in previous studies on framing of European integration in Britain, and it is also highly present in the discourse on immigration in the Brexit campaign. However, it does not make sense to place this frame in the same box as the rest of the ways in which immigration is conveyed as a threat. This frame functions as a frame on its own – if sovereignty is presented as a goal on its own, it needs no further justification. At the same time, the construction of the conflicting identities of Britain and the EU and the EU as a threat to the British identity is a necessary condition for the framing of Brexit as the solution to other problems related to immigration. If it were not for the British EU membership limiting the room of manoeuvre on immigration policy, the immigration issue would not have been discussed in this context, which makes the EU-sovereignty frame function a framework for the different frames on immigrants and the threat they pose. This also explains how the connection between Euroscepticism and anti-immigration is established.

The identity construction of the 'ordinary people' versus the 'elites' is also a construction that does not fit into the originally proposed causal chain of the frame. Rather, it is used to say something about the frame as a whole, about who it concerns and how it is dealt with by the politicians and the rest of 'the elite'.

Immigrants are defined as a spectrum of groups in the discourse that are linked to different threats, as shown in figure 4.
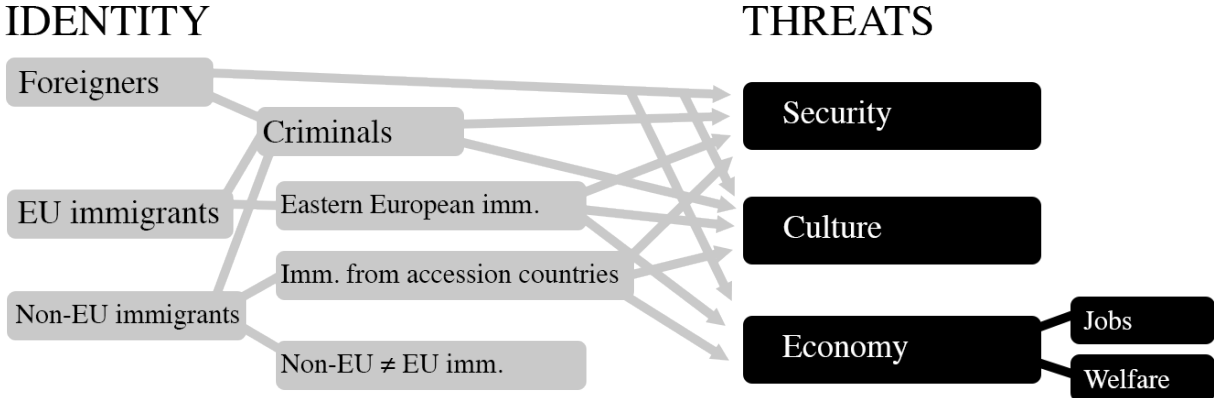

Figure 4: Identities and threats in the discourse

Immigrants in general/foreigners are referred to mostly through what I have classified as a 'subgroup' of *criminals*, but may also be tied to all of the threats identified in the discourse when nothing else is specified. The *criminals* is an Other which may cover both immigrants in general, EU immigrants and non-EU immigrants, but which in all instances is framed as a

threat to security, but potentially also culture.[14] The EU immigrants, and the subcategory of Eastern European immigrants, are framed both as a threat to economy, security and culture. The non-EU immigrants are split into two categories, when excluding that of criminals. First, those from the accession countries, who are seen as a threat to economy and security, but also possibly culture. Second, as non-EU immigrants as opposed to EU immigrants, which is the only group of immigrants who are not depicted as a threat in the discourse.

8.2. Winners and losers of globalisation?

The findings of this study do to a great extent comply with the theory of winners and losers of globalisation. First, there is a clear reference to the winners and losers of globalisation in the discourse. This conflict is addressed through the references to 'the ordinary people' versus 'the elites'. As discussed above, 'the ordinary people' are defined as those negatively affected by immigration – in other words, as the losers of globalisation – in opposition to 'the elites'. The next part of this section will discuss how they are depicted as losers and compare this to the expectations set out in the theory chapter. As expected, the political integration conflict is only relevant in terms of the threat the EU is seen as posing to sovereignty. It is difficult to find other ways in which immigration directly concerns political integration. Most interesting is then the question of whether immigration is framed as a problem in economic or cultural terms.

If one takes the immigration discourse at face value, there is clearly a majority of the sources that refers to issues related to economy. The economic framing resembles what is found in Grande and Kriesi: Immigrants are seen as competing with the British over the scarce jobs in the labour market, which again drives wages down. In addition to that, they are also competing over another scarce resources, namely the services of the welfare state – most prominently the services of the NHS, school places and access to the housing market.

However, I would argue that one cannot take the discourse at face value. Although few, the references to culture and the "British way of life" in the discourse shows that the cultural conflict is also present even if the signs constituting identity are not explicitly expressed in the text. It may however be, that this frame is not as apparent in the discourse

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[14] An example of how security is tied to culture is the reference of Nigel Farage to the Cologne assaults.

because it is a very sensitive matter – one can easily be accused of being 'racist' if one raises concerns over the cultural impact of immigration in public.

In addition to this, the framing of immigration as a threat, independently of what it poses a threat to, would make no sense if identity constructions did not exist. This study has shown that it is difficult to identify the exact way in which identities related to the immigrants in the discourse are constructed by only looking at the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign. There are probably connotations that are not explicit in the discourse. At the same time, it has shown how different groups of people, mostly in geographical terms, are linked to threats of immigration. As pointed to in the theory chapter, Kriesi et al. argue that immigration is linked to a "cultural competition". The findings of this thesis show how this happens in practice. It thus does not make sense to talk of immigration in terms of "rational" or "irrational" arguments, as a case of either "sense" or "sensibility", to use an expression rooted in British literature. The economic and cultural aspects are intertwined in the discourse on immigration by the Leave camp – framing immigration as an issue of economy does not make sense without the cultural aspect, even though economy constitutes an important and extensive part of the way in which immigration was conceived as a threat in the discourse. It also shows how another frame that is not mentioned by Grande and Kriesi figure in the discourse; immigration as a threat to security is another frame that may also be subordinated the conflict of "cultural competition".

9. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to answer the question of *what was the discourse on immigration of the Leave camp in the Brexit campaign* in order better understand how anti-immigration sentiments were linked to opposition towards British EU membership in the referendum. The thesis has proposed a conceptual framework for analysing frames in a way that also looks into how identity is constructed in the discourse as part of the frame. Through analysis of the main actors of the Leave camp – politicians and the press – it has shown how EU is depicted as an actor threatening British sovereignty on immigration issues and in that way established a connection between anti-immigration sentiments and Euroscepticism. Also, it has found that there are multiple identity constructions that play a role in the immigration discourse. Some of these are explicitly formulated in the discourse, such as the 'Britain'-'EU' and the 'ordinary people'-'elites' constructions. Other identities are only used as representations that assumingly bring with them connotations, but are not directly constructed through signs in this particular discourse. It has also shown how these identities are tied to the defining of immigration as a problem: as a threat to sovereignty, economy, culture and security.

The theory of winners and losers of globalisation has been used to explain some of the movements in Western politics, and this thesis has also discussed the findings against this backdrop. As expected, based on the theory, conflicts of political integration, economic competition and cultural competition are present in the discourse, but so is also the issue of security. The thesis has elaborated on the relationship between cultural and economic conflicts. Building on the theory of Kriesi et al., I argue that one cannot clearly distinguish between the cultural and economic aspects of the immigration discourse: It does not make sense to talk of immigration as a case of either sense or sensibility. The economic and cultural aspects are clearly intertwined.

Throughout the study several limitations have been identified. It has shown that it is necessary to look beyond the discourse of the political actors and the media in the Brexit campaign to better understand how identities are constructed and how they play a role also for frames, such as economy, that are generally seen as less dependent on ideational factors. The racist debate in the discourse shows how delicate an issue immigration can be, and it is likely that this influences the way in which immigration is debated publicly. To expand the insights provided by this study, it would be interesting to conduct interviews with the so-called 'grass

root', covering a broader range of the voters and possibly detecting identities and frames that are not as explicitly addressed in the media and by political actors. Additionally, looking into other discourses to identify the construction of identities that are not as explicitly expressed in the immigration discourse in the Brexit campaign, such as 'UK'-'Eastern Europe' and 'UK'-'Turkey', would also be an important supplement to better understand how immigration is defined as a problem.

As anti-establishment sentiments and the immigration issue gain ever more prominence in European and Western politics, it becomes increasingly important to understand the concerns of the people and how attitudes are formed in order to prevent high conflict levels and divisions. This thesis has contributed to providing detailed insights into how immigration has been debated in the context of the Brexit and discussed this in the wider context of the impact on globalisation on Western politics. However, though there most certainly are resemblances in the way immigration and European integration are discussed in the various European countries, one cannot make generalisations based on this study. Nevertheless, this thesis has shown how it is possible to look into national discourse in order to better understand the formation of popular opinion and how this can lead to the people rejecting European integration as the British did in the Brexit referendum.

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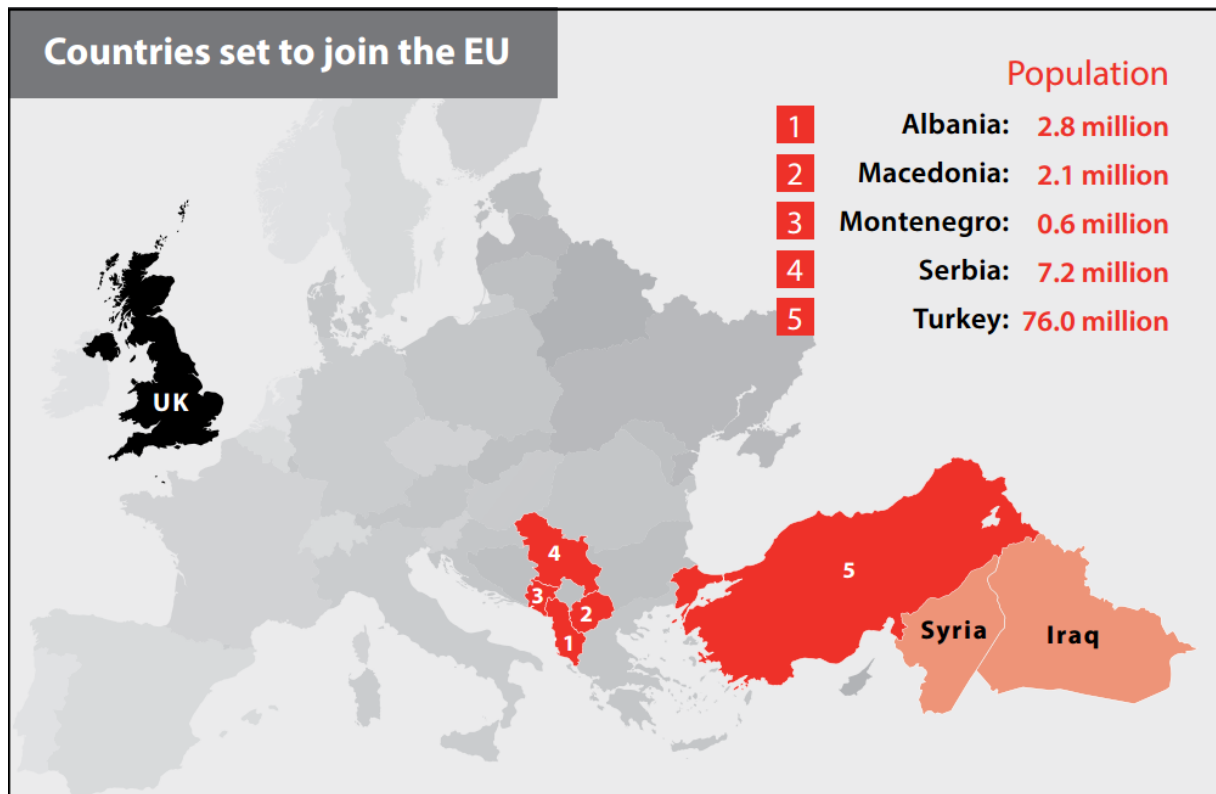   1992 and 1993. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *33*(2), 235-257.

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2.

Countries set to join the EU

Population

1	Albania:	2.8 million
2	Macedonia:	2.1 million
3	Montenegro:	0.6 million
4	Serbia:	7.2 million
5	Turkey:	76.0 million

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