

Post-Brexit  
Cultural  
Interactions of  
Polish and German  
Nationals in the  
UK - The  
Intersections of  
Language and  
Space in the  
Leeds City Region

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I dedicate this thesis to my late grandma, Jean Thompson, who will sadly never see me complete the PhD I started in 2018, but who always supported me to be curious, and to travel. From trips around Scotland as a child, to meeting up with me on my year abroad, falling off trains (safely) while I improved my German, I am eternally indebted to the open-mindedness she helped instil in me.

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## **Abstract**

This multilingual doctoral research analyses the reactions of Polish and German nationals to Brexit through the lenses of language and space, highlighting the importance of linguistic interaction and sociocultural diversity in shaping their lived experiences of Brexit in the Leeds-York region.

Twenty participant-guided, multilingual, walking interviews were conducted across the region, from the city centres of York and Leeds to outlying towns and villages. Participants were invited to guide the interviewer through spaces important to them and their everyday routine, allowing in-depth analysis of participants' micro-level interactions with space. These were supported by three stakeholder interviews.

Bourdieu's notion of the habitus is used to elucidate novel research on the impact of language and culture on participants' interpretations of hostilities and their approaches to everyday placemaking. Micro-level interactions between participants and their local communities are explored through language and space, highlighting the differences in lived experiences between localities across the Leeds City Region. Each national community is demonstrated to have unique place-making strategies in terms of integration, highlighting the importance of treating EU nationals as separate cohorts in integration and migration research in the UK.

This thesis argues for greater acknowledgement of the impact of language and culture on everyday placemaking practices, demonstrating a greater need for local research and more community-focused responses to political ruptures such as Brexit. It builds upon the Bourdieusian ideas of the habitus from a linguistic perspective, highlighting the potential for the habitus to help explain linguistic, sociological and geographical phenomena in the field of migration. Germanophobia is demonstrated to be particularly salient and governmental hostilities post-Brexit are systematic, through both the hostile environment and the management of the EU Settlement Scheme. This research establishes the knowledge gap of local government and academia alike which surrounds the German community in the UK.

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**Abbreviations:**

LCC	Leeds City Council
LCR	Leeds City Region
LL	Linguistic Landscape
L1	Mother tongue or first language; plural if bilingual
L2	Additional language (learned)
NINo	National Insurance Number
ONS	Office for National Statistics
WYCA	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Brexit: a juncture of policy, language, and culture

The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, 'Brexit', voted for in a referendum on 23rd June 2016, and followed by the eventual exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 31st December 2020, signified a rupture in British society and politics. The ramifications of this rupture are far-reaching, with thousands of laws, legal precedents and social norms affected by this seeming sudden change in political direction. This research situates itself as part of the growing body of literature around Brexit and its consequences. There is already much research on the political consequences of Brexit, with Brussels' and the EU Parliament's loss of jurisdiction in the UK affecting policies ranging from freedom of movement, to EU nationals' voting rights in local elections in the UK. Where the extant literature is more sparse, however, is in investigating the links between language and Brexit; links which are unique to each language group of EU diaspora. Although the broader effects of Brexit on EU nationals in the UK have been extensively discussed (i.e., Benedi, Lahuerta and Isumen, 2021; Guma and Jones, 2019 and Ranta and Nancheva, 2019), each national group will experience its own Brexit reality as a product of domestic politics in the country of origin, relative economic circumstances and cultural differences between participants' countries of origin and the Leeds-York region. It is the associated cultural and linguistic differences I wish to analyse in greater depth in this current investigation, asking how German and Polish nationals specifically have responded to Brexit in unique ways which demonstrate the intersectionality of their linguistic and cultural heritage and its convergence with Brexit. These responses can, and likely will, differ from the demonstrable effects of Brexit insofar as a response is unique to each participant, influenced by their individual circumstances and worldview. The effects of Brexit, as I am terming them here, can be defined as more rigid, legal effects

which affect each EU National in the UK in similar ways, such as the removal of the right to freedom of movement, or denial of their EU citizenship.

Using language, and thus culture (see the section on language and culture, literature review chapter), as a starting point for interpreting the interactions of EU nationals with space draws this investigation into areas that link geography and sociolinguistics, applying some of the theories and literature of the latter to the former. This unique perspective offers an important contribution by combining with geography the linguistic perspectives that allow me to prioritise and differentiate the lived experiences of different EU nationals, based upon their own unique lived experiences of language in public space. Trudgill (2003) defines applied sociolinguistics as applying sociolinguistic concepts to solve societal problems; intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication and language conflict are all key features of my thesis. Here, I am less interested in micro-level dialect phenomena such as Voice Onset Time (see, for example, Watt, 2014), and more focused on the potential consequences of linguistic differences between migrants and the societies with which they interact. Throughout the investigation, I distinguish between language (as a spoken medium of communication), linguistic (relating to language and its underpinnings in linguistic science) and sociolinguistic (the social aspects of linguistic research). I do, however, use the terms L1 and L2 to denote mother tongue and associated culture (L1) and (any) second language and associated culture (L2), expanding the strict linguistic definition of the terms slightly to encompass aspects of the cultural habitus I associate with language.

This investigation addresses the diversity in cultural experiences between UK and EU nationals residing in the UK. Observing the interactions of the participants with the public spaces they frequent, allows an analysis of the cultural idiosyncrasies of each participant as an individual with a deeply ingrained understanding of a non-UK culture and a language other than English. This approach implies unique post-Brexit experiences, based not only on practical and political

factors, but also on cultural interpretations: both Germany and Poland adopt very different stances in EU politics and policy agenda, influenced by each nation's unique cultural history and current domestic politics. It is the potential for these differing understandings to influence the post-Brexit experiences of respective German and Polish nationals that I wish to investigate.

## **1.2. Research Aims and Objectives**

The research aims for the current investigation will now be discussed. These highlight the aims of the project in elucidating language-oriented responses to geographical and sociological questions around Brexit. By placing cultural and linguistic perspectives at the heart of the research, I intend to go beyond the political arguments of Brexit, their consequences and implementation through policy. Whilst these political debates provide the backdrop for this research, it is the social consequences of them which rather interest me here. Moreover, through a methodology informed by the principles of Participatory Action Research, it is hoped that not only will the anxieties of participants be better accounted for, but that the power imbalances present in conducting research 'on' EU national groups within a politically sensitive time-frame will be diminished.

### **Research aims:**

1. To clarify the extent of post-Brexit anxieties within the German and Polish communities in Leeds, York, the Leeds City Region, and the hinterlands thereof, orienting their anxieties through mobile interviews in spatially-relevant contexts and semi-structured interviews with civil society stakeholders.
2. To spatially situate and differentiate interactions between mother-tongue and destination languages and cultures of German and Polish minority ethnic communities.

Research aim 1 highlights the expected differences in

participants' lived experiences of Brexit and anxieties associated with it, both between the Polish and German cohorts, and amongst individuals in those groups. There is no aim of comparison here, rather an acceptance of difference and an exploration of the diversity that this allows and highlights. Research aim 2 intends to situate participants' experiences linguistically and culturally within the LCR, uncoupling German and Polish nationals' experiences of space from a larger understanding of the experiences of EU nationals more widely.

**Research objectives:**

1. To gain an understanding of how cultural and linguistic perspectives affect perceptions of public space by investigating interactions between mother-tongue culture and second-language culture using interview data.
2. To differentiate EU national minorities' experiences of Brexit relative to their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
3. To clarify the extent of post-Brexit anxieties, hopes and sense of belonging within the German and Polish communities in the Leeds-York region, orienting their anxieties through mobile interviews in spatially-relevant contexts.

Objective 1 allows a focus on public space during a period of monumental change for participants. EU nationals are moving from living as near-equals in legal terms since the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty in the UK in 1993 (Council of European Communities, 1992), in terms of their rights to vote, healthcare, education and other daily activities without the complications now imposed by legal documents and status beyond those demanded of UK nationals under the same circumstances. Although the exact extent of EU Citizenship as outlined by the Maastricht Treaty is hotly debated (see, for example, Kochenov, 2013; Maas, 2014 and Bellamy, 2015), Brexit removes these fundamental rights, transitioning to a system which has the potential to demand that EU nationals' reliance on

documentation of their Pre-/Settled Status to prove their eligibility to rights and services previously unquestioned. This differentiates them from compatriot EU nationals in the UK without (Pre-)Settled Status. Furthermore, objective 2 allows a dissection of these experiences in direct relation to their mother tongue culture, using this as a mechanism to attempt to explain, as unique events, the lived experiences of participants. Objective 3 addresses the role Brexit continues to play in participants' lives and the extent to which it influences their decision-making. By employing mobile interviews, I am able to situate these fears in micro-level local contexts, demonstrating the huge intra-regional differences between participants' experiences.

### **1.3. Situating the Research**

This investigation is inherently interdisciplinary, blurring the boundaries of Geography, Sociology and Sociolinguistics. By bringing together disciplines from across the social sciences, I aim to expand upon the traditionally geographical field of public space. These are three disciplines that are rarely brought together, yet Bourdieu's sociological framework of the habitus allows me to introduce the dimension of language and culture to geographical conceptualisations of space.

#### **Motivations:**

My motivations for conducting this research are deeply personal. A trained linguist, I studied languages (French and German) at undergraduate level, spending time abroad in Munich as part of my degree. I was working in Munich Central Station when the German refugee crisis of 2015-2016 came to a head; seeing how refugees interacted with German administrative systems, often struggling to access basic services because of linguistic and cultural barriers, fomented in me an academic interest in the interactions between language and space. This was further peaked when I visited Ukraine only two years after the initial Russian occupation of Crimea and the Donbass in

2014. Here, the micro-level implications of language and language difference are apparent, forging different ideas of national identity (Hrytsak, 1998). Despite Etkind arguing that it can 'safely be said' that Russians and Ukrainians speak the same language (2022:14), there are differences as to physical and social situations in which language is spoken, and the social consequences of speaking each language or Suržyk, a mixture of the two languages (Hentschel and Palinska, 2022). Putin, however, has repeatedly used the rhetoric of protecting Russian-speakers as grounds for the occupation which in 2022 evolved into total war (ibid.). It is the minor differences in linguistic perspective which have such a demonstrable impact on the spaces, interactions and lived experiences of a population, that I wished to explore further in the context of Brexit and my own experiences of growing up and living in York and Leeds for the last three decades.

As I was abroad when the Brexit vote was scheduled, working in Germany as part of my rights as an EU citizen, I had to fly home specifically to vote in the referendum. Being, at that point, part of a national diaspora in Germany and navigating the challenges myself presented by linguistic and cultural differences, my mind was again focused on the interactions of language and space, this time with the ever-present issue of Brexit in my mind. Continuing this interest through my Masters, I investigated the effect of dominant culture on refugees in Hamburg, in Germany, through the media of government-produced information brochures; I discussed the impact of language on a governmental level in shaping the everyday experiences of refugees in Germany. These experiences shaped my prior understandings of language and space in a unique way, allowing me to combine the two into a PhD project which introduces novel perspectives on EU national communities in the UK, using language and culture as a lens for analysis. This unique approach applies my own lived experiences of the intersectionality between language and culture in everyday, intra-EU migration.

The following sections will situate this research within each of the disciplines from which it draws core ideas.

Inherently interdisciplinary, the research spans a plethora of different disciplines across the social sciences, drawing arguments from everything from geography to politics. It is from geography, sociology, and linguistics, however, that the core frameworks of this work emanate. What follows is a brief discussion of how this research interlocks with each of these core disciplines.

### **Geography**

As this research focuses on the Leeds-York region, it is automatically differentiated from the extensive literature which focuses on European migration in Leeds (see, for example, Gawlewicz, 2016). Leeds has a rich migration history, with a large number of different community groups and spaces represented in the city.

By contrast, despite York being a major transport hub and tourist destination in the North of England, very little research has been conducted in York which has a focus outside of tourism, history or transport (for example, the work of Paddison and Walmsley, 2018; Chrystal, 2015). Such is the historical significance of York that others such as Leach et al. (2010) have used York as a starting point to discuss race and ethnicity in historic English contexts, yet modern discussions of race or ethnicity in York are absent.

When discussing the intersectionality between the geography of left-behind places, Brexit and race, Burrell et al. (2019) provide an excellent analysis with significant sections of the discussion relevant to the current investigation's analyses of race, nationality and Brexit. Similarly, Nayak (2022) conducts an in-depth analysis of the place-based stigma, but from the perspective of UK residents who have grown up in deprived parts of the North-East of England, rather than the marginalisation of other EU national groups in these places. Moreover, the Leeds-York region cannot be described as one of the most deprived in the UK, again shifting the focus away from that of this investigation.

### **Sociology**

This research borrows heavily from sociological theoretical frameworks, particularly those of Bourdieu on the habitus. Here, I focus on the worldview perspective provided by the linguistic habitus and the linguistic 'choices' (Bourdieu, 1991:51) afforded by a particular habitus, in this case the Polish and German habitus in relation to the English. Bourdieu (1991) exemplifies varied pronunciation as a habitus marker, with tailored linguistic exchanges for divergent audiences, a phenomenon which is also deeply cultural, based on dialect, geography and sociocultural factors.

Methodologically, this investigation takes as its inspiration O'Neill's Participatory Action Research (PAR) work on marginalised groups, particularly O'Neill (2010; 2018), who used walking interviews to ground the research in local spatial contexts. O'Neill does not, however, engage with issues of language and culture in the same way as the current research: language is seen as a key barrier in their work with asylum seekers, but this research works with participants whose language skills cannot frequently, if at all, be seen as a barrier to their interactions with the destination society.

### **Sociolinguistics**

Sociolinguistics, and linguistics more widely, has as its primary focus the evolution of language, its cultural associations and the acquisition of language. Chomsky (2014) firmly grounds discussion of language here within the remit of linguistics, rather than the social sciences more widely, by affirming that linguistic theory is grounded in the notion of ideal linguistic interlocutors, acting in a homogenous speech community. To this effect, it is important to note that the sociolinguistic disciplinary perspective lacks a primary focus on the triangulation of the politics of space, migration policy and the role of language and culture therein. Kerswill (2022) discusses the importance of Multicultural London English, a dialect of English which has developed through evolving multiculturalism in London and the concurrent development of the city's dialect through large-scale global immigration to the

city. This research, however, is much more focused on these linguistic phenomena present in the evolution of language and dialect: Kerswill (ibid.) discusses at length the vowel system of Multicultural London English, and certain morphosyntactic changes associated with the dialect. Llamas (2007) offers an interpretation of Middlesborough dialect that more closely approaches the positionality of the current research, linking language, identity and place, yet it still has as its focus the glottalisation of voiceless stops in urban dialects. Again, this situates their research clearly within the realms of linguistics without analysing the practices of place-making with which the current research engages. This work takes sociolinguistic interpretations of dialect, language, identity and space and applies them to geographical interpretations of space through the Bourdieusian lens of the habitus.

### **Concepts and contexts**

The literature review for this research aims to guide the reader through discussions on whiteness, language and culture, and space. The chapter on 'whiteness in a British [English?] context' commences with a discussion about the very definition of what it means to be British, highlighting a particular focus here on Englishness, as the geographical focus of the research is the Leeds-York region of Northern England. Here, links are made between historical definitions of national identity in the UK and the simultaneous evolution of parallel regional identities which are difficult to disentangle from the concept of a British identity. This identity is then explored through the lens of 'whiteness', questioning what defines whiteness in twenty-first century Britain, and how this has evolved over time through the building and dismantling of empire and into the modern context of Brexit. The relationship between whiteness and racism directed towards EU citizens is explored, leading to a discussion of multiculturalism in the UK and the specificities thereof. A British definition of multiculturalism is highlighted before the discussion moves on to the role of citizenship as a tool of division to differentiate those with social agency and those without. This again converges with Brexit policy through

the ongoing Hostile Environment framework and its concurrent implementation with the EU Settled Status scheme.

The focus of the discussion then shifts towards language and culture. This is initiated with a discussion of Bourdieu's habitus, and the development of an English or British habitus, the latter of which is problematised through a discussion of 'whole Britishness' (Sevimli, 2019:1) and the difficulties encountered when trying to group together such disparate outlooks and identities as can be found across Britain. Conceptualisations of post-colonial British cultural doctrine are then applied to the habitus, differentiating, again, the experiences of a purely English conceptualisation thereof, and others, particularly in Northern Ireland, where the realities of Brexit border-making are more keenly felt. The discussion then moves on to the role of the English language within the construction of this 'habitus', and the interplay between colonialist notions of English as a *lingua franca*, and the realities of Brexit reinforcing a contradiction thereto of declining British influence abroad. This narrative is framed as a further part of the cultural and linguistic habitus of the UK, which is then briefly contrasted with overarching notions of the German and Polish habitus respectively. I then discuss ownership of the habitus in an English context, and how this is conceptualised through hostility to immigration, education and inequality. Discussions of the habitus conclude with an interrogation of the evolution of the English habitus, in the context of Brexit, using notions of the habitus to help explain the Brexit vote as a failure in the reimagining of the English habitus and the adaptation of national culture and identity for an evolving post-colonial society.

I then instigate a deeper analysis of culture and the role language has within it, discussing the culture and habitus into which a social agent is born, thus addressing the importance of cultural and linguistic worldview. I discuss the basic principles of language acquisition from a linguistic perspective and how, when paired with the notion of a cultural habitus, this scientific process can help us understand the relative positionality of an immigrant in their destination society.

Here, ideas of fluency, both linguistic and cultural, are important as they offer an explanation for cultural alienation even when an immigrant has high levels of linguistic fluency.

The final section of the literature review focuses the discussions outlined above and frames them in a spatial context. I discuss the inherent politicisation of space, particularly in the contexts of Brexit and religion; outlining how interactions with space can be forged and changed by the daily realities of Brexit, but also the religiosity of many Polish nationals. The religious element to Polish migration is one factor which has repeatedly influenced participants' experiences of space, most significantly Polish community spaces which are shaped and governed by diaspora connections to the Polish Catholic Church, a theme which returns later in the empirical chapter on space. This leads to a discussion of the intersectionality between language and space where I lay out the ways in which the Linguistic Landscape governs attitudes to and interactions between foreign-language speaking communities and the spaces they inhabit, whether it be those created to serve the communities themselves or the interactions of these communities within wider public space.

### **Assessing the contribution**

This investigation develops interactivity and collaboration across geography, sociology, language, and linguistics by introducing a multilingual research framework to the much-researched subject of Brexit. By conducting research in German and English and bringing cultural and linguistic knowledge of Polish to the investigation (the reasons for which are discussed in chapter 5.3), I attempt to bridge the knowledge gap between English- and England-oriented research on the consequences of Brexit. Equally, I address and expand upon the notion of mother tongue-oriented conceptualisations of space for participants living in a largely monolingual space, despite the Leeds City Region's inherent multiculturalism. By defining notions of the English habitus as being in constant flux and potential conflict with the Polish and German habitus of my participants, I bring new understandings of the meaning of

culture and language in immigration contexts. This dyadic framework of flux and conflict is demonstrated to be both internalised by participants and operationalised in their external everyday surroundings, expanding the number of factors affecting foreign nationals' perceptions of English society and participants' interactions therewith.

Moreover, by involving the German community in my research, I am contributing to a very scarce body of literature on German nationals in the UK in current or recent contexts. Much of the research which focuses on individual EU nationalities assesses the situations of EU8+2 nationals as a larger cohort, as is demonstrated by the bibliography for this research. Where individual nationalities are studied, it is tendentially the Polish or Romanian communities that are researched as these represent the largest groups of non-UK countries of birth and nationalities in the country, excluding Irish nationals (ONS, 2021).

## **1.4. Methods and COVID-19**

### **Methods**

This research engages with some of the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR); within the bounds of this research, I define these as follows:

1. Participants lead the direction of the research; there is minimal guidance from the researcher as to research topics beyond the aims and objectives of the investigation.
2. Reduce researcher bias by giving more power and autonomy to participants; increasing their participation and interaction with the research to give a more accurate and authentic dataset informed by lived experiences.

PAR is discussed more extensively in chapter 5.1, and it is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic heavily influenced my ability to fulfil the original methodological aims of this project in complete accordance with the above principles.

A participant-guided methodology was deemed appropriate for this investigation as I hoped to mitigate some of the power imbalances inherent to researching the experiences of EU nationals in the current political climate of Brexit. Whilst constraints of the PhD format, and in particular responses to COVID protocol, have necessitated a departure from the original aims of the project, which was to embrace a PAR-informed research design more fully, the data collection was nonetheless informed by the principles of PAR where possible. Moreover, participant-guided, unstructured walking interviews were used to allow participants to play a pivotal role in presenting their relationships with public space in a manner they deemed important, thus embracing the guiding principles of PAR in this element of the research.

The dataset consists of twenty-three interviews: twelve with Polish nationals, eight with German nationals, and three stakeholder interviews. Three participants of each national cohort were interviewed in person before the first COVID-19 lockdown in April 2020, with the remainder interviewed between October 2020 and March 2021. In addition, three stakeholders were interviewed over December 2020 and January 2021. This dataset therefore presents a multifaceted challenge of temporality: given the focus of the research on participants' interactions with public space, COVID-19 has shaped the relationship of participants with outdoor space and their interactions with other members of the public, specifically during in 2020 and 2021. Moreover, this timeframe covers the period when Britain formally exited the European Union and the transition agreement was implemented, further complicating the relationship between participants and wider society.

### **COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a definitive and measurable impact on this research, particularly as fieldwork had just commenced in January 2020. The original methodology involved face-to-face interviews which were then to be followed by a collective group-led analysis workshop with the same participants. This would have been a more accurate

representation of the principles of PAR that this investigation originally aimed to embody, yet it became apparent in late 2020 that, having only just been permitted to restart outdoor face-to-face interviews with individual participants, an indoor workshop with a larger group of participants was going to be ethically difficult and potentially illegal depending on the COVID restrictions in place at the time. The decision was therefore made to adapt the analysis side of the data collection methodology to a more traditional approach of thematic analysis carried out by myself. Unfortunately, this had the additional consequence of inherently weakening the degree to which the investigation was informed by PAR methodologies, as the group analysis represented a key part of the co-produced research design. Furthermore, as we moved into 2021, it became apparent that using zoom for certain interviews was going to be necessary in order to be able to complete the research on time: whilst I was given special dispensation and ethical approval to conduct face-to-face interviews in public, some participants were still reticent about meeting people with whom they did not have regular contact face-to-face for extended periods of time. As a result, one Polish and two German participants were interviewed over zoom in early 2021. Similarly, the three stakeholders interviewed for this investigation were also interviewed over zoom in December 2020 and January 2021, although their role in the research negated the need to meet face-to-face for the investigation to remain authentic to the principles of PAR.

COVID-19 also had a demonstrable impact upon the size of the dataset itself: the research design had originally anticipated fifteen interviews from each nationality group, and a further ten stakeholder interviews, for a total of forty interviews. This had to be reduced over the course of the pandemic as recruitment became more difficult and the ethical and logistical concerns increased (see the methods chapter for more information).

Furthermore, the remit of the research was also expanded as a direct result of COVID-19. Whilst the original research focused just on Leeds and its immediate environs, this became more and more difficult to operationalise as the pandemic

progressed. It was therefore decided, in consultation with Leeds City Council, to expand the fieldwork area to the York-Leeds region. As I already lived in the centre of York, this was a practical consideration considering restrictions on public transport, its usage, and physically accessing Leeds as a research area.

### **COVID-19 in participants' lives: upheaval and restrictions**

COVID-19 has propagated stricter border regimes around the world; as limiting the spread of the virus was prioritised, the pandemic became a biopolitical tool to control border regimes in novel ways (Chaulagain et al., 2022). What was deemed essential travel has been exhaustively debated, both through mass media and political scandal, yet this renegotiation of what was and was not deemed 'essential' has redefined the travel industry. As Luo and Lam (2020) reiterate, there is continued travel anxiety across society, a phenomenon which necessarily affects several participants in this investigation, particularly those who travel(ed) frequently. Although no participants mentioned travel, or restrictions on travel, as an issue in their personal lives, this may simply be a question of interview timing. Similarly, as border hostilities increased, so have those directed towards perceived outsiders, particularly Asian minorities in light of the probable provenance of COVID-19 (Gover et al., 2020).

The potential for further hostilities has been heightened by the initial incompatibility of the UK and EU COVID pass schemes. In the summer of 2021, major discrepancies remained between the validity of UK vaccination passes in the EU and vice versa. This may have led to significant hurdles for participants wanting to visit family in the EU over the summers of 2020 and 2021, a problem recognised by the Irish government to such an extent that a scheme exists whereby Irish citizens can have their UK-issued vaccinations certified by the Irish government as being compatible with the wider EU scheme (Department for Health, 2021). Whilst this problem is, again, not reflected in this investigation's dataset, the data collection process largely being completed before such issues became more apparent

in 2021, it is a further issue that is likely to have caused significant disruption to participants' daily lives as economies across Europe began to open up after the pandemic. To this effect, it is important to note the differing counter-COVID regimes across the continent and the extent to which they affect daily life: Germany still had a mask mandate everywhere in April 2022, with full vaccination required to use public transport and restaurants. Britain, by stark contrast, abolished most COVID-19 related restrictions in January 2022 (Jackson and O'Connor, 2022), with the legal requirement to self-isolate after a positive test following in March 2022 (ibid.).

## **1.5. Thesis Structure**

### **Literature Review and Context Chapters: 2-4**

Chapter 2 forms the literature review for the thesis, which, as previously discussed, broaches a range of subjects from Whiteness to Language and Culture and finally Space. Chapter 3 moves on to discuss the specific regional and spatial contexts of this research. Here, I review literature relating to the Leeds City Region and the different spatial contexts of Leeds, York and the hinterlands thereof. This provides essential additional information for the later empirical chapter on the discrete nature of the various research locations. In chapter 4, I then discuss the immigration contexts of the Polish and German communities in the UK, highlighting their respective histories, mobilities and the extant literature researching them as communities.

### **Methods: Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 is the methods chapter. Here, I lay out the research aims of the investigation before explaining the role of Leeds City Council as a stakeholder in the research process. I then define 'participatory' in the terms of this research, discussing the impact this will have on my approach to the research. The concept of Language as Methodology is then broached, highlighting the role of language in the data collection process, and the overarching role of the linguistic

landscape throughout the project. Finally, I discuss the methodological process, from the participant sample, through data collection and ethics to the analysis. Here, I highlight the particular importance to this research of translation and transcription.

### **Empirical Chapters: 6-10**

Chapters 6-10 form the empirical chapters of this thesis. The first empirical chapter engages directly with hostilities experienced by participants living in the Leeds-York region. A section on Brexit analyses participants' experiences of governmental and administrative hostilities, such as the EU Settlement Scheme, and the fact that EU nationals were ineligible to vote in the referendum. The section on discrimination then breaks down the different forms of discrimination as experienced by each participant: each lived experience is deeply personal and unique. Discrimination will be broken down into different forms, with what I term discrimination through curiosity; gender-based discrimination and more directly racist- or xenophobic discrimination discussed separately.

In chapter 7, I directly engage with research aim 2, presenting an in-depth analysis of the relationship between potential anxieties of difference experienced by participants and contextualising these within an analysis of language and culture. This analysis commences with a discussion of how language is used by some participants as a means of communication with minimal emotional attachment therewith. I then go on to discuss the contrasting position to this, one taken by the majority of participants here, of language and culture being a marker of identity, both linguistic and cultural. This then propagates a discussion of the mother tongue and its importance, both to participants more generally and in specific child-raising contexts. Finally, multilingualism is then explored as a tool for understanding different social environments and national cultures, contrasting the largely monolingual situation of most British citizens (61% could solely speak English in 2012; European Commission, 2012).

Chapter 8 then takes some of the issues highlighted in chapter 6 and applies them to spatial contexts. Here, I discuss the Linguistic Landscape of the Leeds City Region, tying this empirical chapter closely to the Language as Methodology approach used in this research and detailed in chapter 5.3. I analyse participants' experiences of multiculturalism, broaching the subject of minority status in Britain from participants' perspectives. The role of their diaspora communities, where extant, and the importance of cultural spaces forming key themes are then discussed.

I proceed in chapter 9 to discuss the participants' relationships and experiences with space. This commences with a discussion around how people altered their behaviour in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to offering a consideration of space on national and regional perspectives relatively. I discuss the intricacies of participants' interactions with and experiences of space in York, Leeds and the more rural hinterlands of both cities, offering an interesting exploration of the contrasting experiences bound by location and location shift.

Finally, in chapter 10, I engage with participants' conceptualisations of more personal, private spaces. Here, I explore notions of homemaking, using Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) work as a frame for the discussion. I then go on to discuss the administrative differences between origin and destination societies in relation to labour market conditions, a subject about which certain participants were particularly passionate, highlighting the ease of doing business in the UK compared to Poland, for example.

### **Concluding remarks**

Chapter 11 forms the conclusion of this thesis, providing a summary and discussion of the findings presented in the empirical chapters 6-10. Here, I evaluate the research findings and assess their contribution to interdisciplinary research, particularly between Geography, Sociology and Sociolinguistics.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

This research builds on ongoing and already published research regarding the impact of Brexit on the cultural frameworks of British society. Clearly the impacts of Brexit are multifaceted and complex in both their production and aftermath. To this effect, Dorling, Stuart and Stubbs (2016); Dorling and Tomlinson (2019); Wincott, Peterson and Convery (2017); Dennison and Carl (2016) and Becker, Fetzner and Novy (2018), among others, have interrogated potential causes of Brexit, with Pickett and Wilkinson (2010) providing further detailed analysis of the ingrained inequality pervasive in British society. Simultaneously, Brexit demonstrates the eventalisation of a neo-colonial 'domestic habitus', or pervasive national cultural methodology (Weiniger, 2002), which follows the ideological desires for Britain as a resurgent colonial power. This trope pervades the mass-media in Britain, with BBC commentator John Humphreys suggesting that Ireland 'throw in their lot with [the UK]' (O'Carroll, 2019a), or Nigel Farage maintaining that the Republic of Ireland would also leave the European Union (Evans, 2019). Such statements highlight the extent to which the English habitus (Bourdieu, 1997; 2002) impacts migration discourse in the UK, a key theme of this investigation.

This literature conceptualises Brexit as a problem which is economic, social and cultural in nature. A wealth of literature, as demonstrated above, discusses the various Brexit ideologies and their impact on modern social frameworks, but there is a significant gap regarding the relationship between language, culture, identity and space. It is in this context that I intend to investigate the cultural tropes of Brexit, using the habitus as a framework to dissect the psycho-cultural problematisation of Brexit among Minority Ethnic EU national communities.

## **2.2. Whiteness in a British [English?] context: a multicoloured phenomenon**

### **2.2.1. British? A definition.**

The very idea of 'whiteness in a British context' relies on an unanimously defined concept of 'British' itself, yet the politics and policies surrounding the Brexit debates are in constant contradiction to one another. This suggests that the foundations of Britishness and British society are, at best, a perfunctory idea. The juxtaposition of the political and the legal, the geographic and the cultural, makes defining Britishness a complex web of contradictions and multiplicity, a problem which is exemplified by Brexit. While Kellner (2009) dissects Britishness dyadically in terms of 'white' and 'non-white' through the use of quantitative survey data, 'whiteness' itself remains intangible in multicultural Britain. Here, I aim to briefly negotiate the basic principles of 'Britishness' which are particularly enlightening with regard to race, multiculturalism and national unity. While likely to be far from systematic, this approach will provide a base from which the concept of 'whiteness' can be explored, highlighting the currents and counter-currents of race- and ethnicity-based social anxiety in post-Brexit-referendum Britain.

Pro-Brexit media has played a crucial role in propagating Britishness as a uniquely positive global influence, constant in its role as a force for good in Europe (the continent) against the successive incursions of the Kaiserreich, the Third Reich, and now the EU. In December 2018, The Sun published the headline 'D-Day for Brexit [...]' (Dunn, Hawkes and Dathan, 2018), implying the need for the country to be ready once again to bear the brunt of an empire on the continent intent on destroying Britain's status and national unity. Bowd (2015), however, dispels the myth of a united Britain which pervaded the notion of 'Britishness' during the Second World War, highlighting Scottish wartime desires to 'fortify the Cheviots' in preparation for a possible liberation from English control aided by Nazi Germany. Despite this, the Second World War remains continually exemplified as a time when Britain 'stood alone',

united in the fight against fascism, by sources ranging from state broadcaster the BBC (2014), to popular opinion in Broadsheet newspapers (Knowles, 2018). That British exceptionalism with regard to the EU (see Baker, 2002) has become a foundational discursive element in the Brexit debate serves to paper over the deep divisions at the heart of British society made apparent by the geographic distribution of the Brexit leave/remain dichotomy (Jennings and Stoker, 2018).

Stark differences in regional identities, a recurring theme in this investigation covered extensively in chapters 6-10, politics and histories complicate any discussion around ideas of 'whiteness' as a national British concept, with national policy emanating from Westminster tendentially viewed as Anglo-centric and disputed by the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies and the Scottish Parliament. Immigration is not a devolved power, and thus England, with the vast majority of seats in Westminster, can be deemed to govern other regions. This process is clearly evidenced through the anti-Brexit campaigning of the Scottish government in the post-referendum environment, emphasising the undemocratic nature of Scotland being taken out of the EU against its wishes (with the Scottish vote leaning 62% to remain within the EU; BBC News, 2016a).

To this effect, this research aims to define whiteness in a British context, focusing in particular on England. This presents multiple lexical challenges as there are clearly differences between Britishness and Englishness, yet the former is more commonly discussed than the latter. This discussion will lead to a definition of 'whiteness' which is intrinsically Anglo-centric, highlighting the different trajectories of immigration-related political ideology in different parts of the United Kingdom. Parties both within Scotland itself and further south have long maintained Scotland's subaltern status within the British legal and political system (Keating, 1996), and thus notions of whiteness linked to power and control are likely to contrast significantly.

The evolving notion of rule of law in Britain has provoked a continual fluidity in the definition of 'British'. Rabin (2017) demonstrates this concept as completely one-

dimensional in the late eighteenth century by discussing and defining the social conflict between the 'British' and the 'internal others'. This binary narrative is dissected in its ambiguity by Zriba (2018), yet few would now suggest that 'English women', 'Catholics', or the working poor (Rabin, 2017) cannot be described as 'British' in the twenty-first century. Here, this concept has evolved in line with the expansion in voting rights across sections of British society. As the right to vote is no longer tied to the possession of property, and universal suffrage and a seismic shift in gender roles have taken place, so has an expanded idea of Britishness. This does not, however, explain the racism shown towards British citizens over the course of the Windrush scandal of 2018, and the lack of regard for the rights of British citizens living within the EU and their status now Britain has left the EU. The inherent duality of conceptualisations of Britishness adds a further dimension to the simplistic binary nature of 'Britishness' as described by Rabin (2017): there are multiple axes which govern a person's right to 'Britishness', and these cannot be simply delineated by race, gender, class, voting rights or nationality. The disregard for British citizens abroad, as well as those whose identity is completely intertwined with the concept of the EU, suggests that locality and politics also play a role in defining who may or may not be described as 'British' in modern Britain.

To dissect a concept of this complexity, the following sections will draw upon the historic interactions between the 'British' and the people(s) of the island of Ireland. Whilst this research does not investigate the lived experiences of Irish nationals in the UK empirically, the journey taken by Irish nationals over the preceding decades and centuries is extremely useful when situating the empirically-derived lived experiences of both Polish and German nationals. This is particularly the case given the relative positionality of Ireland to Britain historically, and the opposition expressed towards EU8 migrants, and the perceived power of Germany within the EU, throughout the Brexit campaign.

### **2.2.2. Whiteness as a social construct**

De Genova (2018) forewarns us that, in engaging to any extent with debate on the subject of migration, migration scholarship automatically reinforces the notion that migrants are an 'other'. This social practice is deeply ingrained, conditioned by the limitations of bureaucratic systems which rely on census data to inform government about the make-up of their countries' populations. Williams (2010) and Pierce (2014) both highlight the fluid nature of the census and their arbitrary ability to categorise citizens according to pre-assigned racial categories. To this effect, the census questionnaire is a powerful tool for examining the production and propagation of racial constructs through official means. The dualistic nature of a citizen self-describing as 'British' but otherwise being labelled as 'Asian/British' (ONS, 2022a) is intrinsically linked to the construct of race being tied to nationality and passport ownership through census data (ONS, 2022a).

The extant literature base details the constructionist critique of race theory and the social construction and reproduction of it. The purpose of the current investigation, however, is to build upon these theories to ascertain the directionality and purpose of the 'whiteness' construct in Britain, contextualising this within the bounds of the habitus. Here, there is an assumption that 'white' skin colour is the primordial controlling mechanism of 'whiteness' ideology. The former is intrinsically linked to the ideal British Person by extreme political factions such as UKIP and the National Front before it. Here Sykes' (1977) photography clearly illustrates the racial tensions in multicultural Britain in the 1970s; National Front supporters are seen to show allegiance through use of the Nazi salute, emphasising their racial superiority. This investigation disputes the notion of 'white' skin colour being socially understood as a marker of whiteness, however. As I demonstrate in chapter 6, 'Whiteness' can also be linked with geographic identity and the continuum of social inclusion and exclusion, rather than skin colour.

### **2.2.3. Evolutions of UK contexts of whiteness: The Irish**

#### **Irishness in the UK: a demonstration of whiteness in flux**

The relationship between Britain and the island of Ireland highlights the concept of whiteness as a multi-faceted paradigm which encompasses concepts broader than race, relating to dynamics of power, control, colonialism and counter-currents to these. A discussion of Irishness and whiteness simultaneously highlights the complexities of British notions of whiteness which are played out in Brexit debates. Sevimli discusses the concept of 'Whole Britishness' (2019:1) and the difficulties encountered therewith when discussing Ireland and Irish experiences. Dissecting historical evolutionary experiences of British whiteness from an Irish perspective is useful when situating the positions of other white EU nationals: although neither Poland nor Germany has a comparable modern immigration relationship to that between Ireland and the UK, both nationalities have, and continue to experience levels of racism and hostility which can be linked to British notions of whiteness, particularly those linked to colonialism and imperial identity. Vonberg (2020) highlights the role that 'Kraut-bashing' in particular played in the formation of post-war identity in Britain: by situating Germanness as a post-combative other, the British unity forged during the war was capitalised upon long after 1945.

The island of Ireland occupies a unique position in British colonial history, to which a parallel is that of Algeria to France. Both colonies were incorporated into the 'metropolitan' territories of the coloniser, contrasting with the control exerted over other overseas territories governed at arm's length. Hechter (1995) negotiates this position through the concept of 'internal colonialism', whereby the colonised territory has a dualistic identity, governed as part of the UK like any other county, yet retaining territoriality. It is the former which highlights important questions of 'whiteness' in an Irish context. Allen (1994:90) notes the progressive assimilation of the 'Anglo-Irish' settlers who then became problematic for the colonial administration yet are not treated

with the same disdain as the native population.

Allen further highlights the later suggestion by some colonisers of mass enslavement as a means of absolute oppression (1994:90) in tandem with the resistance of the English colonists to power-share with 'an inferior race' (ibid.:85). This mirrors the American plantation system and would have provided free labour to the newly instated English landlords while suppressing Irish national identity and assimilating the population. Ignatiev (2008) reiterates the racial standing of the Irish Catholics as parallel to a 'white negro' under imperial control, with Protestant privilege extending to civil rights, inheritance law and basic economic mechanisms. Similarly, Lumbley (2019) highlights the concept of the 'dark Welsh' in medieval England, reinforcing the trope of the 'negroisation' of none-English white nationals as part of the hierarchical nature of colonial rule in our understanding of 'whiteness' in an imperial context.

From the colonisation and control of Ireland, we can draw parallels with later nineteenth century colonial expeditions led under the guise of 'civilising'. Missionary foundations of colonising expeditions are popularised through mass-media such as Hergé's 'Tintin in the Congo' (2005), whereby native populations are subjugated to expansive and forceful proselytisation by the colonial powers. This, again, mirrors the governance of Ireland and the omnipresent segregation of Protestant and Catholic populations. A similar approach is evident with regard to the Irish language and its denunciation in favour of English. Here, Ignatiev (2008) again notes the use of English as the language of colonial rule, a classic imperialist control mechanism across the European empires.

This normalisation of the Irish as an 'inferior race' typifies the ethnocentricity present under a colonialist doctrine, with Allen (ibid.:93) further commenting on the similarities between English control in Ireland and other historical control mechanisms across the colonised world

There is a clear link between colonialist doctrine, the Windrush generation and the 'hostile environment' policy framework, whilst the debate on intra-EU migration tendentially focuses on the loss of low-paid employment or positions

considered to be *de facto* for people of 'British' ethnicity (Raupp, 2022; Hughes, 2019). Griffiths and Yeo (2021), however, posit that there could be a significant convergence between the hostile environment, which tends to focus on suspected illegal immigration, and EU-national immigration, as Britain has left the EU. Moreover, few counter-narratives dispelling the myth that immigrants are tendentially responsible for destination-population job losses (see Legrain, 2006) exist in the mass-media mainstream. By contrast, anti-Polish, -Romanian and -Bulgarian sentiments in particular have featured heavily in the mass-media at pivotal moments in immigration discourse (see Rzepnikowska, 2018; Advertising Standards Authority, 2013; Kishtwari and Bradley, 2014).

There is, however, a distinct absence of an 'Irish problem' in immigration debate. While Eastern European communities have suffered a tirade of abuse, there is no evidence to suggest the estimated 503,288 (UN, 2015) Irish migrants in the UK have suffered similar levels of abuse to their fellow EU citizens from EU8+2 countries. This phenomenon is further complicated by definitions of Irishness and Northern Irishness in Northern Ireland (Trew, 2019) and the segregation still enacted and experienced in Belfast (Herrault and Murtagh, 2019). There is a clear disparity between the lack of negative focus on Irish nationals in immigration discourse and the prejudice Eastern European nationals often endure in the media. To this effect, the Irish Embassy recorded no hate crime incidents against Irish citizens in the first three months after the Brexit referendum (Staunton, 2016), displaying a stark contrast to attitudes towards Polish migrants in the UK (BBC News, 2016b; Chehab, 2016). Similarly, the 'Turkish Problem' propagated by the British media in the weeks prior to the referendum (see McKinstry, 2016; Hall, 2016), placing emphasis on untruths relating to terrorism and visa-free access to Britain, has fuelled anti-Turkish sentiment (Watson, 2018) despite the comparatively small (100,956; UN, 2015) number of Turkish migrants in Britain.

Current discourse therefore highlights a distinct volte-face in sentiment towards people of Irish heritage: once

considered 'white negroes' (Ignatiev, 2008:40), it is apparent that the Irish population of Britain has 'become' white. Whilst the role of the cessation of hostilities in *Na Trioblóidí*, the Northern Ireland Conflict, should not be underestimated in this regard, the evolving meaning of 'Irishness' in the Britain evidences the fluidity of 'whiteness' in a British context, highlighting the perfunctory nature of 'white' classification. This is demonstrated to be a process under constant evolution and, with the Irish 'becoming white', we could expect to see further nationalities expected to be considered 'white British' and thus less likely to be subject to vilification.

#### **2.2.4. EU immigrants in the UK: paradoxical dualism in whiteness**

For the purposes of the investigation, 'EU national' will encompass nationals of any European country whose automatic rights to live and work in the UK were withdrawn following Brexit. This includes nationals of the European Economic Area, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. I use the term 'EU nationals' here as both Germany and Poland are full members of the EU, making references to the EEA superfluous in this instance and thus the term 'EU nationals' is completely accurate for describing the specific participants of this study.

Many Polish immigrants to the UK in the immediate post-War period felt alienated by the allied powers with whom they had fought. The outcome of the Yalta conference, in deciding the post-War fate of Poland, proved critical in fomenting the deeply-rooted trope of the betrayed soldier among Polish migrants in Britain (Burrell, 2018). These sentiments found significant commonality with the arguments posited by significant Brexiteer factions in the Leave debates. Polish immigrants were ostracised and effectively exiled from their homeland by the allied powers they had fought to protect, with pro-Brexit discourse emphasising the loss of sovereignty to a Europe which Britain had 'stood alone' (Knowles, 2018) to defend. This phenomenon encapsulates the generational divides in Britain and in the Anglo-Polish diaspora itself: Garapich (2008)

evaluates at length the generational differences between post-War and post-1989 Polish immigrants, positing that the former have tendentially deeper ties to their home identity, language and culture, while the latter adopt a more pan-European identity.

Post-War Polish immigrants may no longer therefore be considered minority outsiders, but rather an integral part of the British social fabric, and their subsequent categorisation as 'white' in a British sense is therefore more appropriate. If Moore's extensive research on 'shades of whiteness' (2013:300) is taken into consideration, the post-War generation of Polish immigrants can be seen to exhibit a lighter 'shade' of whiteness.

In stark contrast, the recent influx of Polish immigrants are, at times, seen as a direct challenge to British society (see, for example, Knowles, 2018; Rzepnikowska, 2018; Advertising Standards Authority, 2013; Kishtwari and Bradley, 2014) despite the greater similarities in identity and outlook between them and their young British counterparts. The exponential increase in the population of Polish-born nationals between 2002 and 2011 is noted by Okólski and Salt (2014). This trend continues through the 2021 census period (ONS, 2022a) and is not only indicative of the large influx of post-EU Accession Polish migrants, but also supports the notion of the external 'other', challenging the established social order. Current and recent historic migration to Britain can therefore be considered a dualistic system in terms of conceptualisation of 'whiteness'. Migrants from the commonwealth and former colonies and the post-colonial era, here including those from the island of Ireland and the Windrush generation, among others, form a parallel migration network and could be considered 'white', whereas migrants from third countries, now including EU member states, may still be classified under the unknown external 'other'. These themes will be later explored in the empirical chapters, particularly in relation to the 'othering' of German nationals as a result of historical contexts.

### 2.2.5. Multiculturalisms: an alternative perspective

Discussions on multiculturalism were a demonstrable part of the Brexit debates, with highly-charged and often opinionated input from across the political and media spectra, exemplifying the polemic nature of mass media debate on multiculturalism in the UK as the Realpolitik of Brexit evolves (see Booth, 2018; Demir, 2017; Nair, 2016 and Watson, 2017). This relevance to Brexit is further grounded in participants' lived experiences, as will be discussed in the empirical chapters of this research. Moreover, debates on multiculturalism have a symbiotic relationship with discussions of whiteness in a British context, particularly as whiteness, as has been discussed, is so deeply embedded in Brexit discourse.

It is important to acknowledge the fluidity in any definition of multiculturalism, a notion also linked to the habitus (Bourdieu, 1997, 2002) of the society in question. Some German scholars (see Tibi, 2016, for example) are heavily critical of the notion of multiculturalism, supporting instead the notion of *Leitkultur* of dominant culture. Zelinsky (1990) argues that the dominant culture can only be modified superficially in a trivial way: the predominant rules, regulations, and ways of arranging space are fixed and immobile. Of the comparable American model of multiculturalism, newcomers have not the same privilege to shape their new environment as did the first European settlers: a fixed model is encountered, and the heritage of newcomers cannot be easily superimposed onto it. This is replicated in Britain, where the fluidity that would be afforded by true multiculturalism is rejected, and immigrants are expected to adapt and assimilate to a certain extent. Exemplified through the Brexit debate, proponents of this system are seen to argue that the minority cultures, while subservient to the majority, enrich the latter and create a multicultural society. Both Legrain (2006) and Dustmann and Frattini (2014), among others, argue about the benefits, economic and otherwise, of immigrants confirming the positive effect of their presence in society, yet still constructs the immigrant as an 'other', rather than an additional resource.

### **Multiculturalism as a British cultural concept**

The complexities of migration, integration, and whiteness in a British (English) context highlight the difficulties in juxtaposing the needs of multiple populations through a system of '*kommunale Minderheitenpolitik*' [communal minority politics] (Baringshorst, 1999). Despite being written twenty years ago, his comments on the structure of British integration strategies in comparison to its German (and others') counterparts are enlightening. While Baringhorst's notion of 'communal minority politics' upholds his assertion that Britain has embraced multicultural tolerance and co-existence (1999), it does not denote a system of multiculturalism. The power and control mechanisms of multiculturalism, through the objectification and governance of the 'other' are encapsulated by Hage (2000). He demonstrates both racially-motivated ethnocentric monoculturalism and the plural tolerance of *multiculturalism* [my emphasis] to lie on the same continuum. Advocates of both assume the position of 'governors of the nation' through righteousness and mastery of control (ibid.:17). Here, it is necessary to preface any discussion of multiculturalism in Britain by dissociating the notion of *British* multiculturalism from *London* multiculturalism. I posit that the capital region exhibits such diversity in its multiculturalism, and resultant global connectivity, that cultural governance in Britain has developed into a dualistic, parallel system. Falcoux and Silk highlight London's 'monumentality' (2010:171) as a symbol of British multiculturalism: a monument it is, yet typify it does not.

As pyramidal monoculturalism has become normative for British integration policy, it has become symptomatic of some of the insecurities, such as a stark increase in social and economic inequality (see Pickett and Wilkinson, 2010), which fuelled the Brexit referendum and the ensuing divisions in policy directionality. What demonstrably unites many leave and remain voters over immigration, however, is the idea of immigrants as 'objects to be governed' (Hage, 2000:17). This system of control governance, more akin to the German notion of *Leitkultur* [dominant culture] (see Tibi, 2016; also referenced

throughout the empirical chapters) rather than a potentially more organic framework of multicultural coexistence. This has clear ramifications for the concept of 'whiteness' in a British context as both ethnocentric and pyramidal monoculturalism are exclusionary systems designed to propagate elite, ideal, and other societal stratifications. Consequently, the British notion of whiteness is intrinsically linked to the idea of nationality and British cultural identity, confirming the exclusion of white Central and Eastern European minorities and the inclusion of established non-white British communities. As previously demonstrated, certain non-white communities who have British citizenship are now excluding new immigrants from Europe from their conceptualisation of Britishness. In unpacking whiteness, we therefore uncover an enigmatic web of race-relations both deeply rooted in culture and deprived of it. On the one hand, Finlay et al. (2020) highlight the importance of Britishness in the conceptualisation of Sunderland, or Northern English regional, identity, cementing a cultural idea of whiteness inclusive of peoples of minority groups who consider themselves 'of Sunderland'. On the other hand, Sunderland is nonetheless emblematic of an area which voted strongly to leave the EU based upon a UKIP-framed anti-immigration rhetoric which, in a paradoxical situation, will undoubtedly affect some of those immigrants considered 'of Sunderland' and thus 'white'. Here, there are potential similarities between Sunderland and specific areas of the Leeds City Region which is the focus of this research. Again, Finlay et al. (2020) look at specific race relations in a local context; in the empirical section of this research, chapters 4.1-4.3, the focus will be on the interactions between the Polish and German communities and the local societies participants inhabit.

## **2.3. Language and culture**

### **2.3.1. Focus**

This section will focus on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of 'habitus' as a cornerstone of social interaction and societal order. Grounding the habitus as a conceptualisation of a social

actor's worldview, Bourdieu (1977; 1991; 2002) highlights the multifaceted nature of the concept. From cultural import to classism, xenophobia, racism and discrimination, the sociological remit of the habitus is extensive. Moreover, in *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu highlights the utility of the habitus as a tool to help bridge the disciplinary divide between linguistics and sociology, an issue also faced by this investigation. Bourdieu (1977:86) defines the habitus as the following:

Habitus is 'a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class'.

This extract relates intimately to the structures that permit communication through language and culture. A subjective system, language is both unique in terms of an individual idiolect, and a more rigid system emblematic of group membership. It is this duality which presents a bridge across the disciplinary divide. By using the habitus as a linguistic and sociological tool in tandem, Bourdieu provides a unique toolset for this investigation which allows the interpretation of my participants' lived experiences from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Datta conceptualises the 'habitus' as a web of interactions in which migrants partake, defining their 'situatedness' (2011:76) within a particular space. Here, the normative framework of the 'domestic habitus' (Weiniger, 2002) will be discussed as a mechanism to explain some of the language-based prejudices of post-Brexit society. When viewed holistically, these prejudices come to symbolise deeper desires for cultural stability in the face of rapid change, yet these anxieties are productive of discriminatory measures against those who cannot, or choose not to, speak English in the public sphere. Finally, Berger's (1977) theories of sacrifice will be applied to the Brexit paradigm, analysing the practice of what I term 'restorative habitus' through the mechanisms of the Brexit

vote and its aftermath.

### **2.3.2. The habitus: a social performance**

#### **2.3.2.1. The habitus: rekindling colonialist doctrine**

The neo-colonial tropes of Brexit can be examined through the lens of the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977). In his original French-language work, Bourdieu (2002) highlights the imposed directionality of the social habitus, remarking that social actors' '*racisme de class*' Bourdieu (2002:41), 'class racism; classism' is influenced by looking at the world through the lens of their habitus. The performative nature of the social habitus is highlighted here, demonstrating its conceptual applicability as a worldview paradigm with wide-ranging consequences. The concept of classism, while less applicable to the current investigation, is nonetheless grounded in attitudes of othering, cultural difference and alienation, themes which feature heavily in this investigation throughout the empirical chapters. Indeed, Yacine (2013) highlights the notional similarities between Bourdieu's early work '*Esquisses algériennes*' 'Algerian Sketches', and Bourdieu's later conceptualisations of the habitus. Despite preceding Bourdieu's ideological formulations of the habitus by several decades, 'Algerian Sketches' employs theories such as culturalism and structuralism, laying the equivocal foundations for work on the habitus. The import of 'Algerian Sketches' to the current work is its closer relatability to the themes of this investigation. The ultimate transferability and applicability of Bourdieu's habitus, whether on issues of language (see chapter 2.3.2.2), or neo-coloniality and discrimination lend it great theoretical utility to the current investigation.

It succinctly demonstrates the eventalisation of a neo-colonial 'domestic habitus' (Weiniger, 2002) which follows the ideological desires for Britain as a resurgent colonial power. This narrative is key to the construction and propagation of a 'restored' colonial habitus within English national identity. Moreover, the Brexit campaigns and negotiations eventalise desires for coloniality through repetitive dialogue with

European partners who refuse to engage with the vocalisation of a perceived colonial desire. The notion of 'red lines' (Hancké, 2017; Richards, Heath and Carl, 2018) within the debating framework of Brexit is important here. This tactic was previously employed by Britain when it was an EU member state to exploit the 'joint-decision trap' (Hancké, 2017:2) of EU governance protocol, outlining a number of policy no-go areas with which Britain would not engage. It takes on a different sociological meaning in post-Brexit contexts, however. Here, it contributes to the social construction of a habitus which essentialises a colonial narrative of dominance and self-importance. It reinforces the notion of 'cultural backlash' against the post-materialist culture of typically younger, more educated voters which marginalised more 'traditional' values (Richards, Heath and Carl, 2018), thus itself eventalising the modern concepts of pan-Europeanism (Lowenthal, 2002) through culture and cultural practice. The no-deal narrative is crucial here, having played a fundamental role in the construction of the 'stand alone' (Todd, 2016) trope of British national identity. This theorises the EU as a security threat to Britain similar to that of Nazi Germany, the significance of which reasserts itself in the empirical chapters of this research through its shaping of Germanophobic sentiment in England. Through the campaigns to 'go it alone', no-deal supporters eventalise the concept of an all-powerful country which no longer needs external support in order to prosper, reinvigorating the doctrine of a colonialist habitus through neo-colonial discourse.

Similarly, if we refer again to language, Brexit can be considered an eventalisation of the English-language narrative. English has been a dominant force in global affairs and, due to the decisive influence of the United States, remained so beyond the end of the British empire. Present forces of globalisation are, however, reshaping the narrative of English as a *lingua franca* (Ostler, 2011). With the end of the Cold War and the rise of China, other languages are growing in importance on the international stage, and even English language teaching in China is entering into a challenging symbiosis with Chinese-language-

oriented cultural education (He and Teng, 2019). This, coupled with the simultaneous weakening of Britain's international power and status (especially when combined with that of the US), is, in Lefebvrian terms, an eventalisation of the 'mental' modality (Butler, 2012) of social space: the weakening of English's dominance as a *lingua franca*, a phenomenon intrinsically linked in time and space to Britain's decline as a colonial power, as both language and country have to find new identities as a stage of regeneration (Ostler, 2011). The traditional English habitus of dominance and colonial power is outmoded, triggering forces in opposition to the changes in identity of state and language through the Brexit process. Furthermore, Jenkins (2018) suggests that L1 English speakers in the UK are at a particular disadvantage here: they lack the skills to adapt not only to other languages, as many L1 English speakers are monolingual, but also that they can ill-adapt to uses of international English which may sound odd or incorrect to a native speaker. To this effect, despite English being spoken by foreign nationals in the UK, L1 English interlocutors may struggle to comprehend the nuances of others' L2 English speech. Although now published over 40 years ago, Galtung's (1981) analysis of differing cultures' intellectual styles can help explain Jenkins' (2018) findings. As Galtung (1981) maintains, interlocutors from different linguistic backgrounds have differing styles of discussion and ways of forming an argument. These are quantified in non-linguistic terms, implying their ability to transcend linguistic barriers: just because an L1 German or Polish speaker constructs an argument or frames a discussion in a particular manner in their L1 does not mean they are likely or able to easily adapt to typical English forms of argumentation. Particularly if an interlocutor is monolingual, as per Jenkins (2018), their exposure to different forms of discussion and argument is likely to be limited, leading to potential confusion and misunderstandings when a more international form of English is used by foreign nationals in the UK.

This has potentially profound implications for a 'Speak English!' narrative, as it could lead to the ostracisation not only of non-English speakers but also of international English

speakers. These linguistic difficulties and cultural realities translate into a desire to hear 'the correct' (English, in this case) language spoken, a problem which is neither Anglo-centric nor unique to Britain. Davies (2012) highlights the operationalisation of a superiority complex whereby Spain is considered both of and above its Maghreb neighbours. Asad (2000) reminds us that Spain was once not even considered part of 'Europe', and therefore, I assert, was potentially not considered 'white'. This leads to the construction of a Spanish identity assertive of its Europeaness, rejecting the influence of its immediate neighbours to the south, whilst nonetheless relying on migrant labourers from North Africa who are subject to higher levels of discrimination, tendentially in low-paid occupations, and are at greater risk of health problems (Arici et al., 2019).

#### **2.3.2.2. Language and the habitus**

In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu (1991) argues that the linguistic model is mapped onto sociological concepts with relative ease as sociology as a discipline accepts the purpose of linguistics as treating language as an 'object of contemplation, rather than an instrument of action and power' (ibid.:1991). By conceptualising language as an instrument of action, Bourdieu lays the foundations for the linguistic habitus which I use as a key analytical lens for this investigation.

I define the linguistic habitus as a model of the habitus based on the Bourdieusian definition (see chapter 2.3.1) as a subjective system of communication which is governed by a set of principles and rules (or culture), and sociolinguistic factors such as accent and dialect. Bourdieu (ibid.) further argues that the socially-constructed nature of the linguistic habitus supports individual and community-generated propensities to act and speak in distinct ways, providing mechanisms productive of accent, dialect and culture.

Another key concept here is that of the 'linguistic market' (Bourdieu, 1991:39), defined as a circulation of not language, but discourses, which are transformed into the idiolect of the speaker; the meaning of such discourses being

transformed by sociological factors such as class, religion, or race. This aspect of Bourdieusian linguistic analysis is key to this investigation, representing a core concept which I use to differentiate participants' interpretations of (sometimes the same or similar) discourse in very different directions. The Bourdieusian interpretation here goes beyond issues of language and language difference, embracing instead the ability of interlocutors to communicate in their own idiolect. The import of the connotative meaning of language here is further underlined by Bourdieu; even the meanings of common words can become disputed through, for example, 'revolutionary situations' (ibid:40). These revolutionary situations can, however, prove to be daily in occurrence and relative importance. The interaction here between connotative meaning, language and the habitus is conceptually critical in explaining the phenomena experienced by participants in later empirical chapters, but I also further explore the notion of connotative meaning and its import in translation ideology and methodology through chapter 5.4, Language as Methodology.

Contextualising the linguistic habitus within the research remit of this investigation, Trechter and Bucholtz (2001) note the extensive literature which examines the dyadic nature of race discourse, highlighting the social production of the white/other binary racial dynamic in discussions of race and ethnicity. However, they underline the fact that this binary distinction is rarely applied to language. Kallen (2017) examines the micro-level impact of state language policy on the topography of the Irish border regions, demonstrating both the public and private links between identity and language on the island of Ireland. Here, in a region blighted by sectarian conflict, the convergence of religion, language and identity is striking and unequivocal. With both states on the island of Ireland at the centre of some of the biggest political issues in post-Brexit Britain, it is unsurprising that language is also a key marker of identity in the region. However, through multicultural politics, ethnic identities, international institutions and businesses, the 'language-problem' is becoming increasingly prominent in England. I therefore maintain that the

politics of language and identity, in the subconscious 'habitus' of Bourdieu (1977; Weininger, 2002), translates into a greater desire to preserve 'English' in the UK.

The consequences of this are clear, with proponents of the 'English' agenda deriding those who fail to speak English in the United Kingdom (Wright and Brookes, 2018). This aligns with Fortier's (2018) argument that understandings of English as a national language, and subsequent disdain for multilingualism in the UK, were developed as part of a colonial agenda. This notion remains problematic in its neglect of other native languages of the UK such as Gaelic: there are ongoing discussions and disputes over the historical extent of the Gaelic language across Caithness and the Far North of Scotland, for example (Rosie, 2012).

Unpacking further the Bourdieusian concept of 'habitus', Weininger (2002) denotes rationality as a socially-bounded concept with the 'habitual' organisation of thought taking precedence. Language plays a fundamental role in the habitus of people's relationship to space and place, providing normative frameworks of both linguistic and cultural communication which are inexorably bound together: if language is a marker of identity, then it is also one of culture, that is, the systems of bureaucracies, communications, customs and traditions which make up the social fabric of a society. The 'domestic habitus' in England is delineated through the English language, defining therewith a set of cultural practices which are enacted in public space. I stand with Norton (1997) and West (1992) in their negotiation of identity as a desire for recognition and positionality in an inhabited environment. In sociological and geographical terms, therefore, language denotes agency to move around and participate in that environment and society; thus, the importance of language is critical in symbolising the agency of a social actor. As significant factions within the Brexit debate promoted a Leave vote on condition of taking back control and sovereignty, this 'social protectionism' is designed to reinforce and redefine the ideals of the English 'domestic habitus' through a promulgation of what I term the 'English agenda' in public space. The role of othering in the Brexit

debate further supports this notion: the idea that the traditional English 'domestic habitus' is being eroded by the EU through immigration and a loss of sovereignty has gained much traction.

### **2.3.2.3. The habitus, space and the field**

The utility of establishing the habitus as a system of linguistic and cultural identity has been established in the preceding sections 2.3.2.1-2.3.2.4, yet the habitus also has significant import when discussing space. Bourdieu (2017) argues that one cannot discuss the habitus in isolation. Rather, the habitus is applicable in relation to the *field*, a conceptualisation of 'a space of *forces* or determinations, every field is inhabited by tensions and contradictions which are the origin (basis) of conflicts' (Bourdieu, 2017:47). Moreover, Bourdieu (2017) underlines that the struggles which take place within these fields are marked by the position, history and, most importantly, the habitus of the agents undergoing the struggle. In the context of this research, this clear link between the habitus and the field can be conceptualised into critical links between the habitus and the localities under investigation as part of this research (for more detail, see chapter 3). The Bourdieusian suggestion that each *struggle* in a *field* is influenced by the habitus supports a key finding of this investigation, as detailed in chapter 9, that local spaces, or *fields*, exhibit local habitus and local *struggles* between agents. Moreover, in chapter 11, I conclude by discussing the importance of the merging habitus, evidencing the argument that the *field* is also constructive of the habitus, with both field and habitus productive of one another in concert to create new systems of linguistic and cultural understanding.

The link between space and the habitus continues in chapter 10, where I examine participants' conceptualisations of personal spaces (chapter 10.2, 10.4) and their status within them (10.2). Here, Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) work on homemaking has import in highlighting the intangible nature of personal conceptualisations of space, constructed through participants' unique notions of a habitus. Heidegger (2022)

highlights the importance of lexicon in home-making, for example. He demonstrates the shared linguistic evolution of the verb *bauen* [to build, German] and the German conceptualisation of 'being'/'dwelling' through the verb *sein* [to be]. Whilst in modern contexts, the meaning of the latter has evolved, losing some of its associated notion of dwelling, Heidegger highlights that building without the capability to dwell is impossible (2022:221). These subtle differences in lexicon between English and (in this example) German mark a departure from English-language notions of 'to be', firmly linking the habitus not only with language, as noted in *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1997), but also notions of space, place and homemaking (Bourdieu, 2017). The importance of lexicon here highlights the need to embrace a methodological 'thought-for-thought' translation (Nida and Taber, 2012), a concept further discussed in chapter 5.8.1.1.

#### **2.3.2.4. Habitus in context**

The idea of an English 'habitus' must, I maintain, be treated simultaneously using the mechanisms of cultural identity and demographic change. These factors clearly influence one another yet provoke distinct responses to change within society. Regarding cultural identity, it is worth making a comparison between the ideals of the English 'habitus' and those of the German and Polish groups which will be central to this research project. While on one level these could be considered perfunctory stereotypes establishing a certain level of national 'obviousness' (Buchowski, 2010), the tropes of *Krew i ziemia* [Blood and Soil] and *das Land der Dichter und Denker* [the Land of Poets and Philosophers] in the Polish and German respective national identities is revealing when compared to the English equivalents. In treating what I will deem the Polish 'habitus', Buchowski (2010) demonstrates the notion of 'land' as critical in maintaining a Polish consciousness. This has clear historical causes rooted in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the subsequent partitions of Poland. By contrast, the German trope of *Land der Dichter und Denker* has no such attachment to land or earth, with a unified Germanic state being a relatively recent

phenomenon (1871). To this effect, the notion of Blood and Soil in a German context is more reminiscent of Third Reich ideologies than it is of national identity, this rather being formed through a process of cultural exchange between micro-states (MacGregor, 2014). Given the historical role of empire and communication, language, as previously discussed, is left as the dominant symbol of English national identity. This allows a greater understanding of the current role of a language-based 'habitus' in performing Brexit in public space and the role which the 'Speak English' narrative plays within this.

The 'Speak English' narrative of the English 'habitus' and the production of internal bordering processes through the implementation of the Hostile Environment governance regimes are demonstrably linked to the conceptualisation of place within both public and private spaces. The implementation of the Hostile Environment creates anxiety around migrants' status, thus destroying connections within Datta's (2011) web of 'habitus' which root them in a particular space and community. By de-constructing these webs of community interaction, a process further enabled by the implementation of the Windrush and EUSS settlement schemes, Brexit is productive of community division and anxiety. Here, however, we must differentiate the effect of the 'Brexit habitus': whereas other phenomena can be demonstrated to disproportionately affect minority ethnic groups in an incidental manner, the design of Brexit strategy deliberately targets those spaces inhabited by minority groups.

#### **2.3.2.5. Nationalism and the habitus**

The notion of nationalism within the context of the habitus must also be acknowledged in order to explain the reprogramming of the English 'domestic habitus' (Weiniger, 2002) toward policy frameworks hostile to immigration. Crines, Hepple and Hill (2016) demonstrate the influence of Enoch Powell and changing attitudes of the time which foreshadowed his infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech. We can draw parallels with the present here: Brexit is a synthesis of anti-immigration and 'othering' sentiments operationalised as a counter-current to the embracing of post-materialist values (Richards, Heath and Carl, 2018). As

an exercise in taking back control, nationalism promoted by Brexit privileges the notion of an English habitus for the English populace, with the customs and traditions this has typically embodied. Hartmann (2017) notes that the UK has the third-highest number of foreign CEOs anywhere in the world, a phenomenon which is enforcing substantive change in the domestic habitus of managerial positions being dominated by 'Etonian elites' (ibid.). If we consider the Brexit campaign from this perspective of wealth and class preservation (a standpoint rooted in the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of the habitus as having the potential to confer '*racisme de classe*', or classism; Bourdieu 2002:41), these 'Etonian elites' (ibid.) are attempting to preserve their status in face of the globalisation of wealth in Britain, as exemplified through institutionalised discrimination. Here, the education system plays a significant role through its failing attempts at equality. It has been denounced as 'learning to labour' (Dorling, 2017:35), with ability-driven division inducing pupil anxieties and leading to a system whereby those perceived to have academic ability succeed. Education in Britain is, moreover, inextricably linked to language. As English has become internationalised with a global population of second-language English speakers (L2 speakers) now outnumbering native speakers, the English domestic habitus continues to assert ownership of the language, including that of L2 speakers. Yoo (2014) discusses the problem of different L2 speakers with different dialects exerting 'ownership' of the English language, yet the problem is also pertinent among native English speakers in Britain. The English domestic habitus propagates ownership of the English language through tropes related to national identity, class and dialect.

#### **2.3.2.6. Brexit: restorative habitus through sacrifice**

The events of 1989 marked a clear juncture in the politics of Europe east of the Berlin Wall. With decisive changes in government came the accompanying societal changes which transformed economies from managed state-run systems of varying degrees to players in the capitalist system of the West. From 1990 onwards, market-oriented reforms took precedence and, as

Feffer (2017) writes, economically destructive measures were deemed necessary as part of the 'transition' process built upon the hopes of a populace to become 'equals' of their Western European neighbours. Economies in 'transition', however, had profound consequences for the enactment of public space: from societies built upon a collective identity which valued 'the people' above 'the person', *homo economicus* (Urbina, 2019) took over. Through almost overnight privatisation, state assets throughout the Soviet sphere were liquidated through a push to compete through so-called 'shock therapy' (Sachs, 1995; Klein, 2008). The prevailing neoliberal ideologies of their western competitors induced market-driven reforms which, in many instances, dismantled valuable economic infrastructure in order to reduce competition and centralise the profits of Western MNCs (Ther, 2018) in new and emerging markets. This had a profound effect on the workforce which is extensively documented by scholars focusing on regions across Europe (see Feffer (2017); Huygen, 2012). Even in the richer areas of the former Soviet space, unemployment reached catastrophic levels whilst wages stagnated.

It is through this lens that I can draw important conclusions between the emergence of the Soviet sphere from Communism in the 1990s, and Britain post-Brexit. Here, Berger's 'pyramids of sacrifice' (1977:165) analogy is particularly useful with reference to policy frameworks. He proposes that:

'It is presupposed policy should seek to avoid the infliction of pain. It is further presupposed that, in those cases where policy does involve either the active infliction or the passive acceptance of pain, this fact requires a justification in terms of moral rather than technical necessity.' (Berger, 1977:165)

Berger maps this theoretical framework onto the development of both China and Brazil up to the 1970s. It can, however, be equally applied to the intertwined political U-turns represented by the collapse of the Soviet and Yugoslav

governments, and by Brexit. In this context, Brexit can also be considered an experiment in generational sacrifice: the freedoms of the EU were tendentially utilised to a greater extent by younger generations, the majority of whom voted Remain for this reason (Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019). These freedoms are being sacrificed to service the desires of many among the older generation for a return to a time in the country's history when inequality was less prevalent (Dorling, 2017), in opposition to perceived pervasive social damages wrought by the European Union through a pursuit of neoliberal ideologies.

To this effect, this can be considered a procedure of the 'restorative habitus': the neoliberal experiment as implemented in the Anglosphere by successive governments since the 1980s is being decisively rejected in Britain. Brexit is a marker of desires to return to the past, yet what this actually means is elusive. While neo-colonial tropes are pertinent in this regard, Brexit can also be considered as a rejection of the deindustrialisation and the process Dorling (2017:35) denounces as 'learning to labour' which has become a by-product of globalisation in Britain. The fact that this process has the potential to cause similarly catastrophic consequences to the UK economy as Sachs' (1995) 'shock therapy' appears to be accepted or ignored in order to restore the status quo of the pre-EU English habitus.

As Britain transitions from a globalised system of multilateral co-operation with its immediate neighbours to one of theorised protectionism and selective globalism, it remains to be seen if immigrants from the European Union who obtain Settled Status experience the same levels of discrimination, social crisis and ostracism as their compatriots of previous generations.

### **2.3.3. Culture: The Innateness of Identity**

#### **2.3.3.1. The Universality of Culture**

I argue that culture, when viewed through the lens of language, is of equal importance in shaping agents' worldview as is the verbatim language they produce. Nida and Taber (2012)

argue that the linguistic worldview is of vital importance when we abandon a 'word-for-word' approach and embrace instead a 'thought-for-thought' conceptualisation of translation and understanding of language. I apply this further to culture and the cross-cultural translation of processes which form part of the habitus. Moreover, Shirinzadeh and Mahadi (2014) highlight the tendency of some authors to assume knowledge of a concept or event as it is omnipresent in the author's worldview, yet this is not the case across different cultures. As Rahal (2019) reiterates, cultural methodologies are similarly not universal in their ontological conceptualisations of history. The inter-war and post-war periods, for example, are defined around events for which the foci were Europe and the now-Western World. Rahal (2019) argues that 1989 is not seen as the start of a new post-war period, yet from the ontological interpretation of national culture centred in the former Soviet Union, for example, it could be. Applying this ontological framing to the current research suggests the Anglo-centric worldview is culturally bounded by significant dates in Anglo-American culture such as 9/11. Here, Kowel (2017:1) comments on a 'rare' look at Polish cultural responses to 9/11, framing the narratives discussed as divergent from simply looking at the psychological impact of 9/11 on the West, to a wider historical interpretation of events. Moreover, the fact that the exercise in and of itself can be considered 'rare' immediately differentiates Polish ontological perspectives on 9/11 to those of the West. In a similar vein, from a Polish perspective, the death of Pope *Jan Paweł* [John Paul] II on 8th April 2005 was hugely significant in Poland; the Pope was a figurehead in resistance against the previous communist regime (Weigel, 2009), and Pope *Jan Paweł* also signified the continuing decisive role the Church plays in Polish society. It is these ontological differences which I wish to explore throughout this research - that the habitus is productive of a worldview which represents a tool-set of moral, ethical, behavioural and linguistic identifiers which codify the actions of the agent as 'of' a specific culture.

### **2.3.3.2. The Acquisition of Language and Culture: A Linguistic**

## Perspective

In explaining the acquisition of culture, we must look toward the field of child language acquisition, a field fiercely divided over the extent and precise nature of the toolset of language learning genetically present in humans. Some argue that the brain has some form of language 'acquisition device' (Chomsky, 1967), and others maintain that language acquisition is performed by a part of the brain which is not dedicated to language acquisition specifically, but is a more general tool (O'Grady, 2005:187). In whichever form it is argued to take, this language acquisition tool is considered time limited. The skillset is lost according to the Critical Period Hypothesis (Birdsong, 1999) of language acquisition. First conceptualised by Penfield and Roberts (1981), this dictates that a loss of neural plasticity in the brain restricts the availability of the neural substrate required for language learning after a period of ageing in children. Indeed, Johnson and Newport's (1989) landmark study suggests a decline in language acquisition ability beginning as young as age 7. The exact nature and extent of a Critical Period is disputed, with Friederici, Steinhauer, and Pfeifer arguing that the cognitive process of acquiring a second language 'strongly resembles' (2001:1) L1 language acquisition. This would suggest that commencing language acquisition at a later date in adulthood can nonetheless result in native-like fluency in the second language. Here, it is, however, important to note that the study in question used a constructed artificial language, which will significantly diverge from the experience of acquiring natural language due to the impact of specific cultural methodologies.

Using Bourdieu's habitus framework, as earlier in chapter 2.3, I apply the concepts of language acquisition to that of culture. This is supported by Nicholas's (2009:322) notion of 'effective acculturation'. It is this which I maintain is the essence of a cultural habitus which differentiates people across the globe; language combines with innate cultural norms, rules and hierarchies (as supported by Bourdieu, 1991; 2002) to produce an individualised cultural habitus specific to an individual's background. When trans-located from their 'culture

of acquisition', this habitus can have significantly divergent characteristics from that employed by a society's majority. This has the potential to then contribute to processes of othering and alienation which a migrant may experience in their destination society.

### **2.3.3.3. Fluency: Linguistic and Cultural**

The role and importance of linguistic fluency in facilitating participants' abilities to communicate abroad is indisputable, with employers and academic institutions often requiring a certain level of fluency before offering employment or enrolment onto a higher education course. What demands less attention, however, is the role and relevance of culture in this regard. Whilst less important in academic or employment contexts, a foreign national's understanding of the relevant culture can have a decisive role in facilitating their interactions with it. Mourey, Lam and Oyserman (2015) term this competency 'cultural fluency'.

#### **Linguistic Fluency**

Linguistic, or language, fluency has a clear definition in linguistic science, where Housen (2012) outlines the two main schools of thought: temporal fluency, measured by the rate of speaking; and vocal fluency, which can be indicated by the rate of pointless repetitions, false starts and other similar errors. For the purposes of this investigation, participants' precise levels of linguistic fluency (for example, in accordance with the EU framework (europass, 2023)) are unimportant, but their linguistic fluency will clearly influence their interactions with English society and the English national habitus.

#### **Cultural Fluency**

Mourey, Lam and Oyserman define cultural expertise as 'what feels right or wrong 'goes without saying'' (2015:613). By borrowing a linguistic concept and applying it to the cultural interactions migrants have with their destination societies, I demonstrate ways in which migrants' cultural methodologies can differ from autochthonous ones. Previous discussions have

outlined the importance of Bourdieu's (1977) habitus (see chapter 2.2) in discussions around social values, yet the same applies to foreign nationals' cultural fluency in those values; to be versed in the English habitus denotes a high degree of cultural fluency which will be evidenced through participants' social interactions.

#### **2.3.4. Language Governance and Public Space**

The UK's attitude to language governance can be described as *laissez-faire*; an attitude which is mimicked in the UK's attitude to language learning (see Lanvers, Cunningham and Hall, 2021). This leaves Britain in the position of having a very poor language policy framework for its *de facto* official language, English, whilst simultaneously failing to implement decisive, quality language teaching in the education system. These vague policy frameworks are mapped onto public conceptualisations of language. These frameworks, or lack thereof, can then be considered spatially by exploring the relationship between accent and public space: Bishop, Coupland and Garrett (2011) highlight the problem of stereotyping from which English-language accents suffer in the UK. Here, the linguistic concept of 'labelling' is important, highlighting the huge variation in the perceived 'prestige' (ibid.:138) and 'social attractiveness' (ibid.:140) of accents, with Received Pronunciation (RP) being considered the most prestigious and socially attractive when the study was conducted in 2004, and also matching previous results of Giles's 1970 paper quoted by Bishop, Coupland and Garrett. The problem with RP being seen as the most prestigious form of English, however, lies in the fact that, again, it is vague in definition: Britain underlines the link between 'gentry aesthetics' (2017:288) and RP, but goes on to highlight the huge variation even within RP. RP has no concrete linguistic definition: no defining characteristics exist for RP as they do for *Standardhochdeutsch* [Standard High German, referring to Standard German based upon the High German dialects of North Germany]. To this effect, the *Rat für deutsche Rechtschreibung* (2023) [The Council for German Orthography] is responsible for

standardisation of German spelling in Germany and public institutions must adhere to its guidelines. Moreover, although not official, the *de facto* standard of *Bühnendeutsch* [Stage German] is used for pronunciation. These guidelines promote the teaching and learning of a cohesive German accent that can be expected to be spoken and heard in public spaces across Germany, despite the plethora of regional dialects. Consequently, and unlike in the UK, immigrant language learners are taught a specific schema of spellings and pronunciations.

## **2.4. Space: a sociological and geographical construct**

### **2.4.1. Focus**

This section explores the theme of space through a geographical and linguistic lens, situating the previous section on language (chapter 2.2) in spatial contexts through a discussion of the linguistic landscape of public space. I then go on to discuss the role of community in the social construction of space, and the subsequent potential for public space to be politicised. Finally, I discuss the notion of internal segregation, highlighting issues that can be currently faced by EU nationals accessing public space through processes of internal bordering.

### **2.4.2. Community and Space**

#### **What is a community**

This section defines 'community' within spatially relevant contexts of this research. Studdert and Walkerdine (2016) argue that the dispersal of a community does not equate to its destruction. Kelly and Lusic (2006) elevate this discussion, highlighting the continual culture of exchange transnational migrants construct between their destination society and the society of origin. Using Bourdieu's habitus, Kelly and Lusic (2006) argue that a transnational community is formed with a transnational habitus; the community is a product of both national spaces and both cultural contexts to which the transnational migrant is party, highlighting the role evolving

habitus play in forming new communities.

This notion is particularly applicable to the delineation and definition of a migration-resultant community such as the Polish and German communities of the LCR. In this instance, communities have dispersed from their countries of origin to the LCR, diversifying in the process as the local element of Massey's Kilburn High Street (1991), for example, is subdivided and merged with many other fragments of Kilburn High Streets from across Poland or Germany. Moreover, the Polish and German communities in the LCR are themselves dispersed across a larger region, resulting in further fragmentation. This does not, however, preclude the formation of a community. Per Studdert and Walkerdine, these communities now exist in the state in which their existence is possible. As will be further contextualised in later chapters, these reconceptualisations of community differ hugely between the German and Polish national groups. Similarly, different communities will create alternate trajectories, constructing their own Massien 'stories-so-far', particularly when engaging with community spaces which are co-created.

For the purposes of this research, it is important to delineate between 'public space' and 'community space'. Here, the former will be described as publicly accessible space, such as a station or street, which is accessible to all without affiliation or membership. I will therefore use the term 'community space' to describe spaces accessible only, or usually, to members of a community. This could include community centres such as the Polish Community Centre in Leeds, but also spaces which are deemed centres of a community. Here, markets, shops, cafes and venues are relevant. There is clearly significant crossover between the two conceptualisations of space, yet there is an important need to distinguish between them. The use of public space, as noted by Carmona (2021), has a temporal dimension, with spaces being used differently according to temporal, seasonal and weather changes. Equally, debates around the definition of public, in opposition to semi-public (see Peterson, 2017, among others) and private, space are extensive. Rivlin and Gonzalez's (2017) analysis of Kirkgate

Market, another significant space in this research where the joint interview with PL2 and PL3 took place, highlights the fluid definition of community in spatial terms. Kirkgate market represents a multicultural co-existence that is not bounded by the needs of a single community, but multiple communities in simultaneity, a Massien idea that will be explored again in the next section of this chapter. Smit and Máté (2015) investigate the boundaries of the public realm in shopping centres, highlighting their role in Australia as an evolution of marketplaces and arcades. As the specific urban geography of Leeds consists of marketplaces, Victorian arcades and contemporary shopping centres, many of which featured as significant locations for participant interviews, discussions of these liminal spaces between the private and public spheres provides important context for this research.

These spaces provide important substrates within which local communities develop; the public or private nature of a space and the mechanisms through which it is developed is demonstrated by Michialino (2010) as catalysing different local development pathways for urban spaces. To this effect, Michialino (2010) discusses the co-production of public spaces by their inhabitants who actively partake in the construction of their public realm. Here, where the community is creating public space in a decisively active manner, the boundaries between public and community spaces are blurred. Again, Eizenberg (2011) suggests psychological ownership of a community space to be an important fact in the building of connections between people and spaces. In terms of community space, Eizenberg (2011:107) deems the development of such ownership to be a 'function of the level participation' in its construction. There is further crossover here between 'community' spaces and 'cultural' spaces, a dynamic which becomes a recurring theme in chapter 8. Chatterton and Unsworth (2004) extensively detail some of the intricacies inherent to cultural spaces in the city of Leeds itself, but these spaces have, along with the communities and cultures present in Leeds, evolved significantly since 2004. The complex relationship between the German and Polish communities, and their respective 'community spaces' will, again, be explored in

depth in chapter 8.

### **Trajectories and stories-so-far**

Given the multiplicity of spatiality inherent to this research, it is important to address the fundamental literature which engages with and defines space as a 'plurality of trajectories, a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005:12). By trajectories, Massey elaborates to mean a process of change which a space can undergo; story, she explains, implies 'the history, change and movement of things themselves' (ibid.). Lagendijk et al. (2011) go further, employing Massey's concept of trajectories to highlight the differing paradigms inhabited by different groups in simultaneity. In this research, I explore, through the spaces shown to me by participants, their role in the trajectories of different places across the LCR and the different stories they produce. Here, there is, again, no aim at comparison, but rather one of explanation and demonstration that different EU national diaspora use spaces differently with different consequences. Zielińska (2012), for example, demonstrates that the ways in which Polish migrants in Iceland have very little impact on the visual landscape; their only contributions being two relatively hidden Polish shop-fronts in Reykjavik and the satellite dishes through which they can receive Polish media. This scenario highlights another unique complexity in migrant place-making, as permission must be sought from neighbours in order to erect a satellite dish. This has caused intra-community conflict, leading to two potential different trajectories for a Polish home in Iceland. Returning to Massey (2005), these differing trajectories highlight the potential difference in lived experience of Polish migrants in Iceland. In the first trajectory of Zielińska's (2012) example, if permission is sought and granted for the erection of a satellite dish, then links between the place of dwelling for a Polish migrant in Iceland, and their community of origin in Poland, are preserved. By contrast, the second trajectory could be that these links between places of migration are lost. Both of these trajectories are possible in simultaneity within the same community: one satellite dish may have a lower visual

impact than another, and thus be granted planning permission. This, in turn, highlights Giellis's (2009) conceptualisations of spaces in simultaneity, appreciating that migrants inhabit transnational spaces simultaneously, but differently, further supporting Massey's theory of simultaneity of 'stories-so-far' (2005:12). This multiplicity allows the current research to simultaneously evaluate the differing functions, significances, and relevance which the Polish and German communities may ascribe to the same spaces. This is particularly relevant for those interviews which will spatially overlap, in Leeds and York city centres for example.

### **Religious spaces**

The importance of religious spaces to the Polish community is a theme in the analysis, accordingly, addressed in chapter 4.3.3.5.2. In the dataset, this debate does, however, focus purely on the Polish community; religion was not mentioned in an important way in German participants' interviews. Trzebiatowska (2012) highlights the difficulties faced by Polish Catholics when confronting English religiosity in public space. Whilst they maintain that English Catholics consider their religion to be 'universal' (ibid.:1055), Polish Catholicism is representative of a national catholic culture which governs, among other things, shop opening hours, dress codes in religious spaces that also serve as tourist attractions, and national holidays. Similar arguments can be made for those parts of Germany which identify as Catholic. Taking Bavaria as an example, Springer (2020) highlights the interweaving of Catholicism and other cultural traditions into modern Bavarian culture as a motto of 'Laptop und Lederhosen' [laptops and Lederhosen, traditional Bavarian cultural dress] (ibid.:2020). Laxer (2018) highlights the convergence of religiosity and public space through a discussion of nationhood as produced by religious debate. This dichotomy forms the basis of heated discourse across Europe: from the legal requirement for public buildings to display the crucifix in Bavaria (Wolff, 2018) and Italy (Ferrari and Pastorelli, 2012:141), to the separation of the church and the State in France through a production of the

*laïque*, or secular, habitus (ibid.:142). As Joppke (2010) highlights the further nuances of this debate, the salience of religion and its impact on urban public space becomes apparent. Religion and the changing nature of religion in the UK is intrinsically linked to discussions around immigration, nationalism and public space. The re-purposing of the derelict church of St John's, Longsight, Manchester into an Islamic Centre highlights the strength of political feeling produced when the nature of a religious space is changed. The British National Party denounced this move as a 'bloodless genocide' of the British people by 'Third World colonisers' (BNP, 2009).

Trzebiatowska (2010) further argues that this discord between the relative secularity of British society, and Polish migrants' 'catholic habitus' (Trzebiatowska 2010:1055) fuels 'religio-nationalism' (Trzebiatowska 2010:1056) in Polish communities in Britain, a concept which undoubtedly needs further research. It is therefore important to contextualise the potential meaning of the church for Polish diaspora: depending on how each individual considers their residence in Britain, whether it be a hiatus of a home life in Poland, or the adoption of a new home, the importance of such national cultural markers as the Polish Catholic Church may vary enormously.

Similarly, there is also precedent for anti-Catholic sentiment, relevant to both nationality groups in the current investigation. Wolfe (2020) explores the long history and subsequent decline of anti-Catholicism, noting its symbiotic relationship with exposure to Irish Catholicism and subsequent immigration. Webster (2022) underlines the pro-Brexit, anti-Catholic sentiments of the 'Orange Order Ethno-religion' (ibid.:18). Although tendentially localised across the UK rather than a pan-national organisation, the Orange Order nonetheless represents a persistent radical effort to maintain the presence of religion in public space through both parades and continued efforts to expand. These radical religious elements in British society which continue to politicise the nature of religion in the UK stand in stark contrast to the increasing diversification of religion across the country, as demonstrated by the 2021 census (ONS, 2022b).

### 2.4.3. The Politicisation of Space

Power can be seen as instrumental for defining the 'political' in space. The wider Brexit-oriented context of this research cements power as a key element of this research through its participatory approaches and its aim, to the extent possible within the research framework, to mitigate the power dynamics inherent to the political solutions and policy implications of Brexit. These dynamics, inherent to the methodology of the research, are further discussed in chapters 3.1, 3.2 and 3.6. The basis of the 'political' in urban public space discourse is underlined by Thuma (2011) as having its roots in the Arendtian concept of plurality: the 'political' is an enactment of plurality in urban public space. If we take this definition of 'political' as the basis for an exploration of urban public space, it becomes immediately apparent that the latter is itself a means of political production. To this effect, urban public space becomes a means to produce a political and cultural identity where actors can seize urban public space in order to acquire agency within the identity fabric of space. This, in turn, is productive of a cultural habitus specific to a location and those who inhabit it.

Marcińczak et al. (2023) maintain that cities in the UK are more segregated than their German, Dutch and Spanish counterparts, suggesting that there is the potential for migrant communities in the UK to be 'banlieuised', or to paraphrase Lefebvre et al. (2009), ostracised to the periphery in a form of exile. The Polish community in post-Brexit referendum Scotland, as documented by Botterill and Hancock (2019) serves as a useful example of this: its micro-level 'mundane' (ibid.:4) interactions are analysed as a counterweight to grander-scale visions of the causes and consequences of Brexit on a macro- or national level. The authors further describe the ostracism felt by some participants from their European identity in Scotland. Here, a 'spatial imaginary' is discussed (ibid.:10), highlighting the parallel 'otherness' of the 'European', pan-European identity, and their juxtaposition and integration with

the local population. Nussbaum (1994) further highlights the dualistic notion of community: belonging on a 'local' and a 'human' level. The intersection of these two communities can be productive of political identity and habitus when one identity, one world-view, differs from another, more established, set of traditions.

This phenomenon of social development through spatial agency can further be explained by the 'subject-position' concept (Rätzel and Hieronymus, 2000:32), whereby a specific context can lead to people acquiring agency and becoming actors in public space. Circumstantially dependent, this behaviour permits self-determination through action. The Polish community in Leeds has produced its own identity through collective cultural ownership of urban public space, challenging the dominant cultural habitus while integrating with it. Leeds further exemplifies the Lefebvrian phenomenon of urban 'implosion-explosion' (Lefebvre et al., 2009:8), with inner-city districts such as Harehills becoming more transient communities to which 'new' migration groups first move, with many then moving further out of the city as they become established and grow in wealth.

Miah, Sanderson and Thomas (2020) underline that there are also contested integration experiences across the M62 corridor, a region which closely aligns with the York-Leeds region under investigation here. They note that space and spatial segregation are key to integration experiences in a region where post-war housing estates of largely white working-class populations tend to be sited away from areas better known for their ethnic heterogeneity. This, combined with employment tendencies of different groups, can lead to clashes: taxi drivers in the area are largely of Pakistani heritage, serving more isolated white communities at times when alcohol is involved and drunken incidents could occur, leading to a heightened sense of territoriality (ibid.: 43). Power is crucial here: communities with power through citizenship and voters dispersed with relative equality across a region wield far more power than segregated communities.

#### 2.4.4. Internal segregation

To account for the variation in foreign nationals' experiences of public space, I must recognise the process whereby borders are internalised and 'domesticised'. The concept of a border extends far beyond the rigid dictionary definition of a 'line' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2019), metamorphosing into a social institution; a space without the legal boundaries of the states it encloses. However, this conceptualisation of space can also apply *intra*-nationally. Whereas Mezzandra and Neilson (2013), Khosravi (2010) and others focus on the *internationality* of the border institution, literature applying this methodology to internal borders remains elusive. Indeed, it is interesting to note the former's lack of discussion on this issue. While their work is entitled 'Border as Method', they fail to acknowledge the internalisation of border debate which has, in recent years, been much publicised by Donald Trump (among others) through his denunciation of apparent Islamic radicalisation in the United Kingdom inciting fear in the police force (Perraudin, Dodd and Chrisafis, 2015). If we look beyond the possible issues of radicalisation and consider again what defines a border, this comment exemplifies the fact that people expect borders to govern the rule of law. To this effect, British borders can be defined as the area within which British law is applied and practised. If, however, certain parties believe that there is an absence of the rule of law in certain bounded areas, then this suggests the production of 'border' phenomenon within specific, sometimes self-segregated areas. These internal divisions can be represented by physical geopolitical boundaries or socially-constructed by economic or political factors. Authorities wishing to segregate or divide and rule populations under their control have fostered the ghettoisation of communities across the globe, leading to the erection of internal borders which are often physically non-existent or invisible, but socially prevalent in bordering the peoples on either side of them.

One example of linguistic bordering practices which could lead to the potential ostracism of foreign nationals from public

space is the NHS's 111 non-emergency service. NHS documentation underlines the right of any caller to an interpreter in the native language of the patient, but NHS Scotland (2023a) provides 'Language Line' services to 111 callers in a limited number of languages, including Polish but not German. The Language Line is a service which ameliorates foreign-language accessibility of the NHS 111 helpline. This virtual space, and engagement therewith, is crucial to accessing healthcare in Britain. A template document (NHS Scotland, 2023b) written in Polish details how a Polish speaker can access 111 with limited English language skills, yet there is no such German document. Moreover, the Polish document instructs service users to state, 'I speak Polish. I need an interpreter. My telephone number is xxxx.' (ibid.), thus neglecting the fact that service users with low enough proficiency in English for this document to be relevant are unlikely to know the numbers 0-9 in order to correctly recite their phone number. This argument is underlined by the variation present in the pronunciation of telephone numbers between Polish and English, as Polish numbers can be pronounced as 'seventy-nine' rather than 'seven, nine', for example, something which could significantly impede the speed of comprehension in an emergency situation.

Whilst the participant sample in this research happen to speak English fluently enough to be unlikely to need services such as these, language fluency beyond the ability to communicate through the interview (in the case of the Polish cohort, where interviews were only conducted in English) was not used as a sampling frame. The example above therefore remains useful as an example of the sort of raciolinguistic bordering-making that Khan (2021) discusses. Language tests do not have to be formal, or framed as a language test, but by *de facto* demanding a certain level of language ability in order to be accepted into British spaces, migrants are automatically exposed to processes of internal bordering. Processes of raciolinguistic bordering are, like the EU Settlement Scheme (to be discussed extensively in chapter 4.1.2.2), relevant to the construction of potential anxieties of difference between mother-tongue and destination cultures, speaking to research aim 2 of this

investigation.

This evidence suggests substantial duality within the paradigm of what is defined here as an internal border. Later analysis, particularly in chapters 4.1 and 4.2, aims to account for potential difference in experience between the Polish and German nationality cohorts. While EU citizens with settled or Pre-Settled Status retain *de jure* legal and political rights, whether or not these are respected is disputed in chapter 4.1. Moreover, the ad-hoc, temporary nature of Pre-Settled Status has the potential to involve greater scrutiny by immigration officials. As such, EU citizens remain vulnerable to policies such as the hostile environment framework and were especially vulnerable at the time of interview. This vulnerability is further exacerbated due to the pitfalls and vulnerabilities of the EUSS (discussed in chapter 4.1.2.2); they could at any moment lose their recourse to public funds, leaving them potentially open to the threat of abject poverty and destitution (O'Neill, 2018).

## **Chapter 3: Leeds–York region: a geographical context**

### **3.1. Leeds–York City Region - embracing fluidity**

The conceptualisation of regionality and its relative importance in Geography is in constant flux, with the notion of 'region' being used both on national and international levels interchangeably. As Paasi, Harrison and Jones (2018) highlight, the term was of paramount importance during the colonial era in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where it was intrinsically linked to notions of coloniality, conquest, control, topography and climate. Here, the 'region' was heteromorphic, yet regions as they are understood today are tendentially rigid in geography, demographics, governance or a combination of the above: they are '"invented" in planning offices' (ibid.:4) to facilitate the development of specific projects.

The notion of a City Region (CR) is frequently used in Transport, Planning, Economics, amongst other disciplines (see, for example, Kozina and Clifton, 2019; Scott, 2019), yet its conceptualisation in the field of migration is less developed. The study of migration within particular cities or conurbations is commonplace, but it can be argued such conurbations are focused less on a 'growth pole' (Parr, 2005:556) and more on combined authorities of similarly-sized cities, towns and their environs such as Nord-Rhein Westphalen in Germany (see Didero and Pfaffenback, 2013) or Tyneside in the UK (see Puddu, 1997). By re-calibrating the approach onto the Leeds City Region (LCR), with Leeds at its centre, we are better equipped to integrate the lived spatial experiences of participants into a story about migration which may expand beyond the limits of just Leeds the city, embracing the fluidity that the wider CR allows. No city society can be considered purely in isolation without accounting for its regional connectivity: Leeds has strong industrial connections with both York and the rest of metropolitan West Yorkshire. York is, however, distinctly more isolated, with an extensive rural sphere of connectivity to the North, South and East. These dynamics have decisive impacts on the functioning and social fabric of the different spaces under investigation here. In this respect, participants came from across the LCR, where significant parts of their lives focus on the urban localities of Leeds or York, two of the primary settlements.

Moreover, whilst I have an intrinsic and intimate knowledge of the geographies of Leeds and York, that of Bradford (for example) is unfamiliar to me. This local knowledge will allow me to access unique micro-level interactions between my participants and the spaces they publicly inhabit, knowledge which remains inaccessible to me as an outsider in other areas. The investigation of extreme local-level spaces remains crucial to the counter-topographical nature of this research in the contouring and detailing of the spaces through which co-researcher participants guide the interviews. It is therefore important to confine the research area to those known spaces where interactions, events and phenomena important to participants can be contextualised through a lens of familiarity

by me, the researcher.

Robertson (2011) highlights how one Ugandan Asian refugee to move to York defined the 'local' area as the street on which she lived, noting at length the fact that when she was first settled in York, she was the only Asian on the street, and one of the few in the entire city (ibid.:259-260). The importance of this should not be underestimated: this project will focus on the micro-level environments of their everyday. The 'local' will therefore vary considerably within the region and likely between participants who inhabit places in geographic proximity. To this effect, the 'local' Polish Catholic church may be considered such by one participant, as it is their most geographically local place of worship, but it may similarly not be considered 'local' by another who is more accustomed to living in extreme geographic proximity to their place of worship in Poland.

This approach therefore loosely bases this research on the LCR, acknowledging the fluidity of participants' lives and the spaces with which they interact. In investigating micro-level interactions of participants and their cultural, linguistic and spatial environment(s), it is crucial to highlight the polycentric nature of modern urban life; participants may consider themselves Leeds-based whilst living in the suburbs and having links to Wakefield, York or further afield, for example. Indeed, this fluidity can be interpreted as the micro-level equivalent of the transnational Schengen agreement, with EU citizens enacting their rights to live, work, and commute trans-nationally. In the same way that looking at the Belgian-Dutch cross-border town of Baarle-Nassau in a purely Belgian or Dutch concept, examining the minutiae of EU nationals' lives in a strictly Leeds-based framework would be an oversight.

The PAR methodology of the current research also embraces a loosely LCR-based framework, rather than a more rigid, Leeds- or York-based investigation. In utilising a PAR approach, this research recognises the often geographically dispersed nature of participants' lived experiences: they are only representative of themselves, not of a city or region directly. We hereby acknowledge the 'multiple, circular, return or provisional journeys' (Pratt and Yeoh, 2003:159) which encapsulate participants' individual topographies of the LCR. These may overlap with each other, in area and in similarity of interaction or experience.



Figure 3.1.1: A map of the LCR (West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 2023)

### **3.2. Spatial similarities in local contexts**

Leeds and York, despite their evident differences in size, have several key socio-economic institutions in common. When discussing 'local' contexts, this has to be situated in that locality's variation from its surroundings (Datta, 2011:73). I take this a step further, applying the term to an area functioning in contrast to others within the same system. Here, the 'system' is the Leeds City Region (LCR) areas of York and Leeds, functioning as a set of systems within the greater

geographical area of Yorkshire, or even the entire LCR, as a whole. In this respect, whilst there may not be many apparent similarities between Hyde Park in Leeds and Tang Hall in York, both are intrinsically linked by their proximities to the respective Universities in both cities. Both districts have relatively high student populations which in turn shape the sociospatialities of these districts and across the wider area. As Datta (2011) highlights, the changes in sociospatial dynamics catalysed by high numbers of students can have far-reaching consequences, from community cohesion to transport links and employment sectors beyond academia.

Moreover, both cities have rich industrial heritages with heavy industrial sectors which have suffered chronic decline over recent decades, evidenced by the ruined Mills of Hunslet and Holbeck in Leeds, and the site of York Central, one of the biggest brownfield sites in the UK at 45 hectares (York Central Partnership, 2018). Indeed, similarities in post-industrial decline are one of the five parameters used by Çaglar and Glick Schiller (2018) in their multi-centred analysis *Migrants and City-Making*. It must be noted, however, that York's tourism and Leeds's financial sectors are now booming, mitigating the decline of heavy industry and reshaping the cities once more.

### **Leeds**

Leeds has a population of circa 810,000 according to the 2021 census (ONS, 2022a). It has a rich migration history, and with this comes a huge variety and geographically-spread number of community spaces for different minority ethnic groups. Among European diaspora, these include: the Irish Community Centre (membership 1150; 2020); a branch of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (The Leeds AUGB Branch, 2023); the Deutsche Samstagschule Leeds [German Saturday School, Leeds] (NHS, 2023); and the *Polska Parafia Rzymsko-Katolicka w Leeds* (2023) [Polish Catholic Diocese of Leeds, which functions as the main Polish community centre in the city], among many others. These are often accompanied by religious services and the Leeds Polish Catholic Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa and St Stanislaw Kostka has up to three daily services (Diocese of

Leeds, 2020). These religious services and community centres could be considered the focal points of their respective communities in the city, yet this can be misleading. Although I began the participant recruitment process by contacting both the *Deutsche Samstagsschule* and the Polish Community Centre, subsequent participants not recruited through these avenues have expressed at some length their disconnect with such centres.

EU migration, particularly from A8 countries more specifically, has been studied in Leeds. Cook, Dwyer and Waite (2008) highlight the impact of A8, and specifically Polish migration to the city as early as 2008, underlining the role A8 migrants have played in taking lower-paid roles in hospitality. To this effect, employers were already 'very reliant on them' (ibid.:9) despite the short amount of time that had elapsed between the accession of A8 countries to the EU in 2004. Gawlewicz interviews 32 Polish nationals in Leeds, choosing the city as their research location as it was relatively representative of the national average in terms of percentage of minority ethnic inhabitants (2016:262). Furthermore, they underline Leeds as an interesting study site as it presents a rich and varied population with numerous possibilities for 'encounters with difference' (ibid.), a claim also supported by Piekut et al. (2012). Piekut et al. (ibid.) also conduct a comparative study outlining the numerable differences in immigration histories between Leeds and Warsaw, demonstrating the former's position as a post-colonial city with complex immigration stories, particularly in comparison to Warsaw. These arguments again underline the diversity of Leeds, not only as a regional hub for encounters of difference, but also as a cosmopolitan European city with a role in the Eurocities project, influencing EU migration and integration policies (Gebhardt and Güntner, 2022).

### **York**

York has a population of circa 200,000 according to the 2021 census (ONS, 2022b). Its migration history is distinctly different from that of Leeds. As Robertson (2011) highlights, York is not tendentially multicultural or multi-ethnic to the

same extent as Leeds and many other parts of the North of England. On the contrary, despite its links to empire through the chocolate and railway industries (ibid.), York's identity is rooted in its Viking and Roman histories. To this effect, its reputation is not that of a multicultural melting pot, as per Leeds, but rather as a tourism-focused historical city. In this regard, York has only the York Irish Association (2020) as a non-religious community centre for its minority ethnic communities. This is disregarding any societies and community organisations purely associated with the universities, as the reach of such societies is unlikely to go far beyond the Universities themselves. Its universities are, moreover, modern or historically specialist and, with the exception of York's long history with chocolate, York does not have the same international importance as Leeds, other areas of West Yorkshire, or the wider M62 corridor. In this regard, it is an outlier in not sharing a history of textile manufacture with these other regional centres. Here, the city and its history are more acutely focused on the railways, distant Viking and Roman past, and on the power of the Church exemplified through the Minster and the Archbishopric. The public spaces of York city centre are highly centred on these historical aspects, buildings and street names. This contrasts starkly with other regional cities in the West Yorkshire conurbation, creating a very different atmosphere in the city.

This does not mean, however, that multicultural identities are not manifest throughout the city: despite its small size, it boasts Polish Catholic, multinational neo-Pentecostal, and Greek and Russian orthodox church services (St. Mary Bishophill, 2020). Polish shops and restaurants are also present, as will be discussed further in chapter 8.5.

### **3.3. Hinterlands**

#### **Framing through existing research**

Building upon the work of De Goei et al. (2010), who argue that traditional central-place conceptualisations of a space and place are outmoded, I use a polycentric analysis frame; despite

the Leeds City Region nomenclature suggesting a central point of Leeds, there are many other significant city settlements within the region (Wakefield, Bradford, York), and others in the geographic near-distance (Sheffield, Rotherham, Manchester). By re-orienting the Leeds City Region (LCR) around a polycentric conceptualisation of space, the 'other' spaces outside of the city of Leeds itself, but within the City Region, are given greater importance.

Nagy (2020) offers a new contextualisation of urban development, that of the 'hinterland hypothesis', developing evidence for an argument which forefronts the importance of the hinterlands in an urban development. Similarly, Partridge et al. (2008) analyse the effect of urban agglomeration on hinterland areas in the US, thus intrinsically linking the notion of hinterland development with city development. Here, arguments for using the terms periphery, suburban or commuter belt do not suffice; a number of my interviews took place in outlying areas of Leeds. Guiseley, for example, has fast and frequent links to the city centre while others mentioned include North Lincolnshire, Hull and Sheffield, located considerably further away. Hinterland in the context of this research therefore encompasses not only the obvious commuter belts of York and Leeds, but also places beyond that circle of immediate economic influence that nonetheless have ties, through participants, to one or both cities through transport and social links.

These interurban connections coagulate to form an interconnected fabric of lived experiences across the region, providing a snapshot of the interconnectedness of city-societies to others and their more rural hinterlands. To this effect, no city-society can be considered purely in isolation without accounting for its regional connectivity: Leeds has particularly industrial connections with both York and the rest of metropolitan West Yorkshire. Meanwhile, York comparatively rural setting leaves it more isolated. These dynamics have decisive impacts on the functioning and social fabric of the different spaces under investigation here. Although North Lincolnshire is geographically removed from both York and Leeds, its transport links are focused towards Doncaster, West Yorkshire and York.

With the Transpennine intercity railway linking South Humberside directly to industrial Yorkshire and few other intercity connections to the region, its inclusion here is valid and important. There is also significant crossover in the commuter belts of Leeds and York respectively, with Harrogate and Selby being significant examples. This crossover strengthens the argument for a region of investigation that covers both cities, strengthening the polycentric arguments of De Goei et al. (2010). O'Connor et al. (2007) posited, nearly two decades ago, that development of a city-region rationale in Yorkshire could lead to three potential planning outcomes: the prioritisation of the city, leading to a monocentric region; investment in the region, rather than the city; or an effort to implement polycentric discourse. It is the latter, polycentric discourse, coupled with conceptualisations of the hinterlands mentioned above, that I intend to use as a framework for this research.

#### **Framing through Participatory Action Research analysis principles**

A further argument for choosing to frame the dialogue of this research through the conceptualisation of hinterlands is rooted in the participatory analysis of participant data. As mentioned in chapter 3.2, and again in chapter 3.9, the guiding principles of this research are those of Participatory Action Research. To this effect, it will be noted in chapter 3.9 that the original analysis framework for this research involved participatory group workshops to feedback on my, the researcher's, analysis of interview data. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this plan had to be altered and the workshops were deemed unworkable due to legal restrictions and lockdowns. However, participant DE7, one of the participants who critically engaged with their own extensive lived experiences of the hinterlands, used the German word *Einzugsgebiet* to describe the spaces outside of York and Leeds which they frequented. The best way, amongst several listed below, to translate this term is hinterland. Other translations are 'metropolitan periphery', 'urban periphery' or 'commuter belt' (Langscheidt Wörterbuch, undated), but considering the research highlighted above and

translation methodology I use throughout the entire investigation (detailed in chapter 3.8.1.1), hinterland is also the best fit here.

As mentioned above, commuter belt, and metropolitan/urban periphery do not fully encapsulate the spatial realities of the regions discussed by participants. Moreover, periphery is, I argue, a loaded word. Just as Higbee (2007) underlines the political loading of the French *banlieue* [suburb], as it is frequently used to describe deprived areas on the outskirts of cities with high levels of deprivation, so I maintain that 'periphery' centres the idea of the city as the centre of space. As per O'Connor et al. (2007), this privileges ideas of mono-centrism within the city region, rather than the polycentric interconnected system which better accounts for participants' lived experiences in this research.

## **Chapter 4: Immigration contexts**

In this chapter, I discuss the immigration contexts of the Polish and German communities in the UK. Given the lack of population registers in the UK, however, (unlike Germany and Poland), key statistics are missing from these histories. As will be discussed in chapter 5.5, precise population sizes are unknown for both communities, and precise migration data is not collected systematically in the UK.

### **4.1. Polish immigration and the Polish diaspora in the UK**

The differences between the Polish and German communities' respective manifestations in public space can clearly be differentiated across the region, noting the greater presence of both communities in Leeds in particular (although it is unknown whether this greater presence translates into a greater percentage of the wider population, as the data is deficient). However, there are important distinctions to be made between the Polish and German diaspora in the way in which they interact with British society more generally. First, it needs to be

acknowledged that outward migration (particularly to the UK) has been normalised by many in Polish society (White, 2016). This is not widely present in German society due to the significantly fewer instances of German migration to the UK, a situation amplified by Germany's population being twice the size of Poland's. It is important to underline here Belloni's (2019:38) assertion that a culture of migration does not have to be a traumatic event but is often a normative reality. Whilst Belloni specifically evaluates migration in an Eritrean refugee context, the notions of normativity and social acceptance are more widely applicable to non-forced migration, particularly in the current context. This is further evidenced by White's (2017) extensive work examining the nature of Polish out-migration to the UK. Of particular interest here is their assertion that Polish society's flexible attitude to migration, including the granting of unpaid leave from employment to such effect, has enabled Polish society more broadly to 'experiment' (ibid.: ch. 5:14) with migration. This conceptualisation does, however, have the potential to converge with toxic Brexit-related, anti-immigrant sentiments which demonise Polish immigrants in current British society. Any normalisation of migration in a Polish context could easily be interpreted as opportunistic and exploitative of the British state, one of the core arguments of the pro-Brexit movement. It is important not to conflate these issues here: the normativity of which we speak here is that of out-migration to Britain in Polish society, and an acceptance of the constant cross-border mobilities which this creates, a sentiment enhanced across the EU by the right to freedom of movement. This must be delineated from any anti-immigrant sentiments towards supposed mass-immigration from the A8 2004 accession countries, or Central and Eastern Europe more generally.

Moreover, I note White and Ryan's (2008) assertion that Polish migrants prefer to establish themselves in Britain through networks of personal contacts, rather than more official channels (such as job agencies) due to a nurtured distrust of official channels developed throughout the communist dictatorship in Poland. Furthermore, Trzebiatowska (2010) underlines the importance of Polish Catholicism to Polish

communities in Scotland: the meaning of Catholicism to Polish migrants is so intrinsically linked to feelings of national identity that the 'Polishisation' of Catholicism in the UK can be observed as a nationwide phenomenon. The Polish centre in Leeds is based in the *Polska Parafia Rzymsko-Katolicka* [Polish Catholic Parish] and, whilst York lacks a Polish community centre in any format, it does have a Polish Catholic congregation, with church services conducted in Polish.

This 'Polishisation' of a British experience suggests that Polish communities may in fact reject any notion of liminality in their move to a geographically Britain-centred social world. Defining structures of life in Poland, the spatial and psychological connotations of the 'Easyjet Priest' (Trzebiatowska, 2010), are transplanted to Britain. These practises automatically raise the visibility of the community as a whole; any Polish Catholic congregation manifests itself as a 'physical' realisation of Polish society in Britain that is visible to the wider host society as part of a tangible Polish cultural footprint. It is currently unknown to what extent institutional religion represents the entire Polish diaspora in Britain, and it is beyond the scope of this investigation to address it. It is likely, however, that given the significant generational and psychological divides across Polish communities in Britain, sections of the Polish community are less accessible to UK society than others; they do not interact culturally with anchor institutions in the community such as the church.

Beeckmans (2019) highlights that, whilst migration is tendentially viewed through the dyadic paradigm of a migrant's presence in either the destination society or the society of origin, their context of 'mobile worlding' (2019:89) allows us to better consider the interconnectedness of global migration communities, made possible by advances in technology. The new accessibility of affordable air fares (in a European context, at least) have had an understated impact on the lives of many migrants: dual, and parallel, lives in both countries are now possible simultaneously (ibid.), again aligning with Massey's work on simultaneity of stories-so-far (2005:12). This applies to the Polish community in Britain: the aforementioned 'Easyjet

Priest' (Trzebiatowska, 2010) equally applies to the 'Ryanair Father'; the 'Wizz Air daughter', such is the accessibility of Poland from UK airports. Badcock and Burrell (2022) argue these connections play a decisive role in Polish immigrants' trajectories in the UK. As per Massey (2005), we can see the potential for duality of migration spaces and contexts in the UK. For Polish migrants, where links to Poland are frequent, accessible and geographically ubiquitous, migration to the UK can be an attractive option. This same high-frequency, low-cost connectivity does not exist with Germany, where flights tendentially focus on the bigger cities. Moreover, the 7.9 million passengers who flew between the UK and Poland accounted for 22% of Poland's total air traffic in 2018 (Urząd Lotnictwa Cywilnego [Polish Civil Aviation Authority], 2019, as cited Owsianowska and Banaszekiewicz, 2020).

#### **4.2. German immigration and the German diaspora in the UK**

The German community in the UK has been neglected by academic researchers, particularly in comparison to the plethora of peer-reviewed literature that exists which focuses on the A8 countries, including Poland. The Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, Cambridge (2014) has produced a pamphlet on 'Germans in Britain' which provides basic information about the historical connections between Britain and Germany and details the number of German-born British living in the UK in 2011 (estimated at 273,654). The publication of the 2021 census data in 2022 updates this data, stating there were 347,000 German nationals in the UK (ONS, 2021) Even with this data, however, there are significant discrepancies as it includes those British nationals who were descendants of Armed Forces personnel based in Germany, for example, who otherwise have no connection to German language, culture and habitus, key criteria in this investigation.

One work which discusses migration from Germany to the UK in a general context is Panayi's (1996) 'Germans in Britain since 1500'. Whilst a substantial work, this only briefly covers

the period post-1945 and even then is mostly focused on the immigration of prisoners of war who stayed after the end of World War Two; 'representatives of the Federal Republic [West Germany] plc.' (ibid.:193) including professionals coming to London for work but only remaining in the UK for relatively short periods of time, and au-pairs. Moreover, the work does not discuss the impact of the EU on German to the UK migration and remains largely journalistic in style. Other academic work on German immigration to the UK does exist but is either focused exclusively on specific aspects of German migration which are adjunct to this research (see Hirschfeld et al., 1991 for work on Jewish migration; Beerbühl, 2012, for work on eighteenth century German merchants in the UK). More niche studies which study German nationals in the UK focus on the specific issues of visiting friends and relatives in Germany (Mueller, 2015) and the reasons behind graduate migration to the UK (King et al., 2014).

Only Teichert and Meister (2022) treat German migration to the UK in a context directly relevant to this investigation, researching the post-Brexit circumstances German nationals and reflecting on themes such as *Heimat* [Home] and the workplace, amongst others. The work is, however, only available in German (with English abstract), precluding its utility to anglophone academia where multilingual methods are not employed (see chapters 5.4 and 11.3 for more detailed explanations).

Consequently, information and peer-reviewed literature on the German community in the UK is scarce. Whilst Statista (2023) estimate there are 135,000 German nationals resident in the UK, this again tells us nothing about the potential size of the communities in the LCR. Unlike the Polish community, the German community also lacks the intensive regional connectivity between the LCR and Germany more widely, with no direct flights to Germany from Leeds Bradford Airport (2023), compared to six destinations in Poland (ibid.). The absence of these connections which are so valued by Badcock and Burrell (2019) in relation to the Polish community suggests the German community is both much smaller (indicated statistically above) than the Polish, but also underlines the fact that links between the LCR and Germany

are less discussed than those between the UK and Poland.

To this effect, it has been noted in the previous section that the Polish community has hubs across the LCR, something which cannot be stated in the same manner for the German community. There is a German language school in both Moortown (NHS, 2023) and York (The German Academy, 2023), both of which are frequented by participants of this study, but neither of which offer the same number of services as, for example, the Polish Community Centre in Leeds. How each nationality cohort conceptualises community is a key discussion point in the analysis, particularly in chapter 9, as the different levels of interaction between the Polish/German and English communities helps demonstrate the different cultural habitus of each group.

## Chapter 5: Methods

### 5.1. Research Aims and Objectives

#### Research Questions

The research questions for the current investigation will now be discussed. These highlight the aims of the project in elucidating language-oriented responses to geographical and sociological questions around Brexit. By placing cultural and linguistic perspectives at the heart of the research, I intend to go beyond the political arguments of Brexit, their consequences and implementation through policy. Whilst these political debates provide the backdrop for this research, it is rather the social consequences of them which interest me here. Moreover, through a methodology informed by the principles of Participatory Action Research, it is hoped that not only will the anxieties of participants be better accounted for, but that the power imbalances present in conducting research 'on' EU national groups within a politically sensitive time-frame will be diminished.

The research aims and objectives of the investigation, as discussed more extensively in chapter 1, are listed below:

#### Research aims:

1. To clarify the extent of post-Brexit anxieties within the German and Polish communities in Leeds, York, the Leeds City Region, and the hinterlands thereof, orienting their anxieties through mobile interviews in spatially-relevant contexts and semi-structured interviews with civil society stakeholders.
2. To situate and differentiate interactions between mother-tongue and destination languages and cultures of German and Polish minority ethnic communities.

**Research objectives:**

1. To gain an understanding of how cultural and linguistic perspectives affect perceptions of public space by investigating interactions between mother-tongue culture and second-language culture.
2. To differentiate EU national minorities' experiences of Brexit relative to their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
3. To clarify the extent of post-Brexit anxieties, hopes and sense of belonging within the German and Polish communities in the Leeds-York region, orienting their anxieties through mobile interviews in spatially-relevant contexts.

## **5.2. The Role of Leeds City Council as a Stakeholder**

Leeds City Council (LCC) played a significant role in this research project as stakeholders. The role as (intended) stakeholder participants is further discussed in chapter 5.5, but their role in the research design phase is detailed here.

This PhD research project was originally designed within the framework of the New Insecurities network (Brexit Aftermaths: Contesting Insecurities, undated), a White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership research network that involved stakeholders from across the region with the aim of producing three PhD projects. This was also the mechanism through which LCC became involved in the project: due to the localities

forming the foci of this research, and the decision to research nationality groups impacted by political and local government processes throughout the period spanning the Brexit referendum up to the present time (2023).

In initial meetings with LCC, we discussed potential nationality communities to form the research foci; at this early stage, potential groups also included the French and Ukrainian communities (groups with which I also have personal connections - the rationale for nationality group selection is detailed in chapter 5.4). The German and Polish nationality groups were eventually chosen; after explaining to their Communities' Team my rationale, they understood the importance of the cultural and linguistic perspective, and explained that they knew relatively little, if anything at all, about the German community in Leeds. This prompted a more extensive discussion about the apparent split in EU diaspora and their relative contact with local government. I was informed that Eastern European national groups have tendentially more contact with Leeds City Council's Communities' Team, allowing the Council to better understand their needs and the current issues they face post-Brexit. An example highlighted here was the Roma community which is largely eastern European in origin: there are mechanisms within LCC's policy structures to specifically aid this group, with targeted support programmes in place at the time of meeting in 2019. Conversely, I was made aware that western European nationals tend to engage far less with local government support systems, and LCC therefore has little idea how large these communities are, what issues they face, and how the council can best assist them in a post-Brexit context. It was therefore decided that investigating the German and Polish communities would be useful on two fronts: firstly, an investigation into the Leeds German community (which then became the Leeds-York community as the scope of the research expanded) would assist authorities in better understanding that community. Second, it was acknowledged that the German community may prove difficult to find and thus complicate data collection. As a counterbalance to this, it was decided that the Polish community would also satisfy my research objective of an investigation through the lens of intersectional

triangulations of language, culture and space, using my own extensive cultural knowledge of Polishness and Poland, whilst being able to use LCC's contacts in the Polish community and greater knowledge thereof to speed up the data collection process and maintain a reasonable schedule for the research.

Methodologically, LCC ensured I was DBS-checked (Disclosure and Barring Service; a UK verification system to ensure my suitability to work with vulnerable groups). This was deemed a precautionary measure on their part as there are groups within the Polish diaspora in particular who can be considered vulnerable according to LCC (such as victims of human trafficking). Given the eventual direction this research has taken, however, participants' potential vulnerability was never a point of contention or discussion.

### **5.3. Participatory: a definition**

The following sections aim to situate the current investigation within the realm of Participatory Action Research (PAR), outlining the reasons why a PAR-informed approach was used for the data collection of this research.

Kalsen frames participatory action research as a dualistic paradigm of participant-oriented research trajectories. Here, 'participant based' (1991:4) is taken as involving research participants in the decision process. Similarly, 'participant controlled' (ibid.) places participants at the heart of the decision-making process for the research outcomes and potential recommendations or implementations. This rejection of researcher-centred methodologies allows for greater fluidity in the acceptance of co-researcher experiences, especially if these are unique or atypical. Given the unpredictable nature of many of the debates and policy areas explored by this research, particularly regarding immigration circumstances, unique experiences of EU nationals cannot be discounted. March, Sproull and Tamuz's (1991) 'sample of one or fewer' approach provides a framework through which the importance of singular experiences can be acknowledged while retaining research validity.

This emphasis on lived and unique experiences which embody

the fluid approach being taken is further mirrored by Wicks, Reason and Bradbury (2008). They afford equal or greater importance to practice, rather than theoretical underpinnings, in framing participant action research. The experience gained through contact with community stakeholders and participants as co-producers of research is seen here to be fundamental to ensuring flexibility in the research dynamic, allowing experience in the field to shape research design as it is conducted in line with participant contributions. To this effect, the current investigation has been adapted according to field experience. COVID-19 lockdowns imposed their own restrictions on the research, particularly temporally, but the subsequent reluctance of participants and/or their caution to meet in groups in public spaces have then led to adaptations of the research design accordingly, removing the originally planned group-led participatory analysis workshop.

Embracing a participatory-informed approach of cultural equivalence allows participants' experiences to be 'lived' and 'experienced' rather than simply heard, documented, and analysed, as would be a typical qualitative framework which could use walking interviews. This has particular salience in the current Brexit context, as voices of EU nationals living in the UK have been de-voiced throughout the Brexit referendum and subsequent negotiation processes. There is a pressing need to 'revoice' EU nationals not only through research centred on their experiences of Brexit, but research which is ultimately conducted *with* them, rather than *about* them: as Brexit is often designated as a revolt against EU migration, I as a researcher have an ethical duty to publish research which, where possible, empowers this group marginalised by current government policy and political directionality.

Similar approaches are well-utilised in health sciences research, with their significance (and mandatory nature, see NHS, 2018) noted by Marks et al. (2018). Indeed, the universality of the Patient Public Involvement framework, which includes the use of co-researchers to aid the research design and analysis phases of the research, is striking given the novelty and inefficacy often assigned to participatory

approaches outside the health sciences' remit. Why this remains the case must be questioned, as pioneering research by O'Neill (2010; 2018) has proven the efficacy of participatory approaches within sociological research. Moreover, this research involved co-researchers in vulnerable situations, either as medical patients or socially vulnerable groups. This demonstrates the unique ability of participatory action research to uncover new knowledge yet remain methodologically ethical despite the challenges associated with more fluid participatory research designs. Bochner (2012) posits that alternative methods may challenge the rigidity of accepted norms in social science research, yet this socialisation in research 'grooms' (ibid:160) researchers into only exploring questions that fit the established normative frameworks. By using a participant-guided approach to interviews, I challenge the established frameworks from the very beginning in order to construct new ideas for the radicalisation of post-Brexit discourse whilst nonetheless promoting flexibility in research design.

#### **Democracy in Research and Action-Oriented Interviews**

This research frames the interview as a tool not in the realm of call and response, with an answer being given to a question posed by the interviewer, but as a tool to create a common learning experience for participant and interviewer alike. **Nielson and Lyhne (2015)** summarise the links and inspiration for action-oriented interview in three key ways. First, the interview moves from one structurally defined by the researcher towards a 'free space' (ibid.:60) moulded by the participant. This research embodies such an approach; participants were invited to choose the location and precise topics they wished to discuss (within the bounds of the broad research aims and objectives of the research).

Second, the interviews were democratically empowering, enabling me to reach more marginalised voices (such as DE7's experiences of the justice and benefits systems in the UK); a practise which mirrored Leeds City Council's stakeholder approach in ensuring I undertook an enhanced DBS check prior to commencing the research. Changing the normative workings of an

interview framework produced participant-centred research which allows a wide range of lived experiences to be captured.

Each interview presented a different view of a participant, their community, and the spaces they frequent. As such, the role of each participant was unique. In the mobile interviews (see section 5.6), some participants used the walk to act as a tour guide through specific spaces, explaining their significance (i.e. DE1); others used space as a means to elucidate conversation (i.e. PL10) that was not necessarily spatially-oriented. For the interviews on zoom, the role of space tended to be more abstract, with spaces defined more loosely as a 'border control' or a 'rural village', rather than a specific café or street. This organic flexibility promoted original discussions which allowed participants to shape the research, its topics of interest, and the knowledge it produced. There are numerous topics in the empirical chapters which emanated directly from interviews such as the difficulties of entrepreneurship in Poland, or the status of LGBTQIA+ rights in both countries. These issues were not originally topics of import or interest, but the participatory approach to this research allowed the flexibility to discuss such topics as they arose, providing rich discussion which may have otherwise been overlooked. Moreover, taking the example of entrepreneurship in Poland, the fact that the interview with PL2 and PL3 took place in Kirkgate Market, a space important to small business owners in Leeds, likely brought this discussion to the fore as both participants worked in the market.

### **COVID-19 and its impact on the interview process**

The third way in which Nielsen and Lyhne (2015) differentiate a qualitative interview and an interview inspired by action research is participant validation of the data collected. In this instance, as explained in chapter 1.4, I had planned to hold participatory analysis workshops with participants, during which they would have been able to validate the data collected. As previously explained, however, COVID-19 made this approach unfeasible.

The pandemic and associated lockdowns also impacted the

interviews themselves. Post-lockdown face-to-face interviews were required to be walking interviews, rather than in a stationary setting such as PL1 (a pre-lockdown interview). This increased the mobility of the interviews, but also enabled certain participants (such as PL4) to use COVID-19 and lockdown as a framing for the routes they chose to walk during the interview. Rather than creating additional barriers, COVID-19 presented an additional research opportunity here by elucidating the micro-level relationships with public space which participants developed over the course of 2020 and 2021. Moreover, lockdown forced participants to reflect on their relationships with other, then inaccessible, spaces; PL4 talked extensively about their relationship with the Polish church in York, commenting on how this had also changed during the pandemic.

## **5.4. Language as Methodology**

### **5.4.1. The role of language in reviewing the literature**

Pillar (2020) highlights the need to shun monolingualism in academic research, particularly in environments relating to language, arguing that foreign-language literature is underutilised by anglophone academia. Taking Teichert and Meister's (2022) paper as key literature in this context, it is only accessible in German, yet provides the first discussion of German nationals in the UK in contemporary contexts. Despite being published after the data collection stage of this research, it provides crucial insights into my participants' experiences, supporting, for example, some of my participants' lived experiences of the German and UK labour markets (see chapter 10.5). Given the dearth of research on German populations in the UK, this paper provides critical insights which would otherwise be inaccessible to me, strengthening the validity of my own research. To this effect, I embraced language as a methodological tool to find literature itself, as a preliminary phase to using my language skills in the data collection process (discussed in the following section). To find literature such as Teichert and Meister's (2022), I had to use

'*Deutsche*' rather than 'Germans', changing the search result language to German, to find the paper. Here, using language as a methodological approach, rather than a research criterion, enabled me to use embrace a greater breadth of literature to support the findings of this research, and has furthered my understanding of participants' experiences.

Sivertsen (2018) further supports the critical role of language in the communication of science, highlighting that although English serves as a useful lingua franca in communications amongst the academic community, science also needs to communicate with society (ibid.:88), thus heightening the import of other languages in situating scientific research within the communities researched and affected by it. Referring again to Teichert and Meister (2022), their use of German as the language of publication respects this requirement for communication between research and researched, a concept which, again, speaks to the overarching principles of Participatory Action Research. These principles have, as previously discussed (see chapter 1.4), informed my research to the greatest possible extent whilst working within the constraints of the PhD framework and the impact of COVID-19 (see chapter 1.4). By choosing German as the language of publication, Teichert and Meister (2022) are enabling direct L1 communication with their German participants. Although a publication in English could have clear utility, I argue that German-language publication was likely a deliberate choice. The tendentially high level of English-language fluency in German academia, and the prevalence of English-language references in the bibliography of the paper, suggest there was a language-related decision behind publishing in a German-language journal (*MedienPädagogik: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis der Medienbildung*).

#### **5.4.2. The role of language in data collection**

As previously discussed, my language skills and cultural knowledge were central in the decision-making process when deciding upon which national groups to focus this research. The practical methodological consequences of this knowledge are that

I wanted to be able to give German national participants a choice of interview language and be able to exchange greetings and introductions with Polish participants in their mother tongue in order to help put them at ease with the research, should this be desired. In total, two German participants decided to conduct the interview mostly in German, with the odd English interlude where appropriate (but not based upon my linguistic ability). Moreover, many more participants from both cohorts were able to express sentiments to me in Polish or German that I understood thanks to my linguistic and cultural knowledge. This was particularly the case where participants wanted to use German slang, for example, which cannot be easily translated with the help of a dictionary post-interview.

Furthermore, it is important to note the potential impact on participants' perceptions of space that language choice could have. Inevitably, as supported by notions of the habitus, participants' responses may differ depending upon the language (L1 or L2) which they use to communicate their thoughts. For further discussion of the habitus, language and its impact on social interaction, see chapter 4.2. Language choice, and my language use, could also influence the Linguistic Landscape (see chapter 4.3.4). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to mitigate or control for these factors as the research aims of the project focus on participants' lived experiences, as they are told to me, the researcher, it is important to be aware of these factors when analysing participants' experiences.

### **5.4.3. Linguistic Landscape**

In this section I will outline the role language plays in public space, highlighting the role multilingualism can play within it and the ways in which language can shape interactions with and in public space. There is extensive scholarship around multilingualism in spatial contexts, whether that be in nations or areas with multiple national languages (for example: Quebec, Lamarre, 2014; Belgium/Brussels, Vandenbroucke, 2015), or multilingual information in monolingual national contexts

(Schuster, 2012). I will discuss participants' experiences of multilingualism in empirical chapters 4.2 and 4.3, but what is relevant here is a brief contextualisation of the dialectic opposition between multilingualism and monolingualism in some spaces.

### **The Linguistic Landscape of the UK**

In England, the Linguistic Landscape (LL hereinafter; Colomé and Long, 2012) is relatively simple. With English as the only officially recognised language for the majority of the country, including the area of study, the LL takes a monolingual form for an overwhelming majority of the urban population in particular. Irish, Gaelic and Welsh do all, however, have official status in those parts of the UK where they are spoken. In these regions, varying status is attributed to the minority language and varying importance attached to it. Whilst a discussion thereof is not relevant to the current research, differentiations in the LL in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are useful to consider when situating the monolingual LL of the Leeds-York region.

Welsh, Gaelic and Irish all have national (or in the case of Irish, island-wide) institutes for the promotion and implementation of language policy in their respective regions. To this effect, the *Foras na Gaeilge* [Irish Institute] and the *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* [Gaelic Institute; my translation as no official translation is given; Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2023] have differing levels of governance responsibilities over their respective languages. In Wales, despite the official status of Welsh, the *Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg* [Welsh Language Board] was disbanded in 2012, highlighting the disparities in governance between important minority languages of the UK with governmental status.

There is, however, no singular body in the UK that oversees language governance on a national level, as is present in France (the *Académie Française*, French Academy) or the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (Canada). Moreover, English, although the *de facto* official language of the United Kingdom, has no legal status to this effect: only Welsh has *de*

*jure* status as an official language in Wales. The unique role of English as a language of the UK can therefore have some interesting and decisive impacts on the makeup of the LL in the UK.

The monolingual LL of England is important when considering foreign nationals' interactions with public space. When two or more languages have a role in creating the LL, there is less alienation for those who do not speak the dominant language or languages of the public sphere: in Colomé and Long (2012), those who do not speak Catalan are less likely to feel excluded as there is a choice of languages presented, embracing linguistic diversity. Probyn (2009) provides a real-world example here of when multilingualism helps to lessen the effects of alienation on those who do not speak the same language as the majority of their society. They explain that teachers in South Africa 'Xhosalise' (ibid.) English-language terms, not for reasons of comprehension, but to 'reduce the alienation of the subject matter' (ibid.) for students who may feel ostracised from curricula taught to them in an L2. This discussion has interesting ramifications for the current debate on the LL of public space; if simply acknowledging the existence of other languages in situations of multicultural communication helps community cohesion, per Probyn (2009), then the very monolingual LL of the LCR is likely to promote the alienation of those who do not have English as their mother tongue. Moreover, English is used as part of the LL in countries where it is not the L1 for the majority of the population. Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau (2009) provide a visual demonstration of this in Majorca, where a tobacconist shop front is shown to have a monolingual English sign, rather than the expected Spanish. This underlines the socially constructed nature of the LL: if a Spanish island chooses to have a multilingual LL for reasons other than native multilingualism (such as Belgium/Brussels, Vandenbroucke, 2015), then a LL that is monolingual is equally a societal choice.

Faulk (2020) underlines the recent shift in the field of sociolinguistics, in light of increased global migration, to expand the focus of LLs to encompass how cities and spaces are semiotically constructed to account for their use by

increasingly multilingual communities. In a study of the LL of Coventry, Faulk (ibid.) further explores the relationships between different landscapes on that city's signage, finding that, despite official acknowledgement of the intensely multilingual nature of the region, English dominates the LL, particularly towards the centre. This dominance decreases slightly towards the outskirts, but nonetheless creates a very monolingual LL environment in a very multilingual society.

## **5.5. Participant Sample**

### **National Groups: German and Polish: a personal choice**

The choice of German and Polish nationals as the focus was deliberate. My background is in languages, as I have a French and German degree, and I speak roughly C1 level German, having spent extensive time in the country. Although my Polish is only about an A1 level, I have a number of contacts in Poland and have quite a high level of cultural understanding for someone who neither lives in Poland nor speaks fluent Polish. I am therefore in a relatively unique position in being able to apply my extensive linguistic knowledge and cultural understanding of both countries to the current research. Through this knowledge, I aim to elevate the relationship between interviewer/researcher and participant to one of greater understanding given the context of research on matters of migration. This is particularly relevant in the UK which is known for having low levels of multilingualism amongst native English speakers and an overinflated public perception of the importance of English globally (Copland and McPake, 2022).

### **Sampling**

#### **Snowball sampling - participant-centred sampling**

There is considerable precedent within Participatory Action Research frameworks for adopting participant-centred sampling and recruitment methodologies, thereby maintaining a co-produced research design. To this effect, Snowball sampling gives participants significant control over the recruitment process, ensuring that their voices continue to be heard

throughout the entire research process. As participants pass on details of the project to others in their networks, any resultant research is more likely to represent participants' lived experiences and those of the communities studied in this research.

A potential caveat with this approach is in regard to the 'initial' sample from which the cohort of participants snowballs, in that it assumes that the entire sample is representative of the communities to be studied; in other words, I could assume that the initial community gatekeepers also represent the interests of a relevant community. This attitude, however, assumes that the current investigation has as its goal the creation of a representative sample. This is not the case: here, the aim is to prioritise individual experiences which may then coalesce into intra- and inter-group commonalities.

#### **Sampling and recruitment during a pandemic**

Snowball sampling through participants recruited pre-pandemic greatly assisted participant recruitment when social distancing during the pandemic dictated minimal social contact. Whilst the interviews themselves could be conducted in a socially-distanced manner, as they were walking interviews to take place outdoors, pubs and university campuses had thus far, pre-pandemic, been used to successfully recruit participants. By allowing the community to co-recruit, the effects of being in public space during a pandemic could be better mitigated, thus avoiding an additional layer of contact between the researcher and the community.

#### **Limitations of extant data frameworks**

One of the objectives of this research being in partnership with Leeds City Council (LCC) is to collaborate with them so that they are better informed on the post-Brexit needs of Leeds' EU citizens. Through initial discussions with LCC, it became apparent that existing data regarding population sizes of individual EU countries is deficient. The Office for National Statistics only provides estimated data on the UK population sizes of different nationalities, with the last dataset

available being from 2014 (ONS, 2015) at the time of the research design phase of this investigation. Similarly, the Leeds Migration Map (Leeds City Council, 2020), one of LCC's primary resources for mapping migrant populations across Leeds, relied on National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations or data from the 2011 census for the majority of the project, until the 2021 census data was published. Government-led or -acquired data on migration populations are therefore tendentially weak at representing and locating different 'white' communities who are neither 'British' nor 'Irish', a problem further highlighted by Rzepinowska (2018). This is reinforced by weak census data, replicated throughout other local authority research frameworks, which only permit the 'White - Other' classification for all other 'white' Minority Ethnic communities. There is therefore a complete lack of a cohesive sampling frame which adequately depicts size and location of the German and Polish communities within Leeds. This shortfall is recognised by LCC, however, and this was one of the reasons chosen for engaging with the German community in particular, as LCC has very little knowledge of it.

There is a similar issue with the data for York, as the primary measure of population size is again through NINo registrations, which thus excludes any migrants not seeking work or other services which require one. This is likely to particularly affect the reliability of the population size in York, as a proportionally large number of York residents are students who are less likely to need a NINo. Moreover, York City Council's (YCC) migration data does not describe 'White - Other' populations as Minority Ethnic. This could have further potential ramifications as to YCC's awareness of the issues faced by these communities.

The lack of a sampling frame thus complicates any sampling and recruitment process, as it has not been possible to access participants in a centralised manner. Sampling for this research has therefore relied on contacts LCC has within the Polish community, and word of mouth. LCC's knowledge and awareness of the German population in Leeds is extremely limited, and the German population is furthermore not as engaged in community-based activities as the Polish community, per LCC.

### **Whiteness in sampling**

Throughout this research, I have assumed Polish and German nationals to be white. This position has been deliberately taken to avoid potentially complicating discussions around whiteness - neither Polish nor German nationals have self-declared to be identifiable as any ethnicity other than 'white'. Numerous participants disclosed to this effect that they were considered to be outwardly British whilst in public spaces by those with whom they did not interact. Germany in particular has a large immigrant population for whom this would not necessarily be the case, but these factors are not relevant to the current investigation due to the nature of the participant sample.

## **5.6. Data collection**

### **Logistics**

As I already live in the Leeds-York region, there were no logistical challenges to data collection, with interviews carried out in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions and participants' availability. Given the complexities presented by COVID-19 restrictions, I was permitted to travel to interviews by private car when data collection resumed in late 2020. This further allowed me to access spaces that would have been complicated to reach by public transport.

### **Mobile Interviews**

The study employed mobile interviews to provide rich spatial data which, in combination with verbatim discussion, permitted the co-construction of multi-level, multi-dimensional representations of Brexit-resultant cultural interactions, anxieties and their manifestations in public space. Here, the inherent mobility of the data collection methodology allowed the construction of geographies of cultural difference within the daily lives of EU national communities in Leeds and the surrounding areas. 'Mobile' is therefore defined as a participant-guided exploration of a normal activity where interaction with wider society may highlight issues and

anxieties of integrational difference. Moreover, the potential for identity-related duality in EU nationals' construction and production of the spaces they inhabit demands a mobile approach to better ground the spatial relations of participants to their immediate surroundings and not, for example, their place(s) of origin. In this regard, Holton and Riley (2014:59) highlight the 'familiar/unfamiliar dichotomy' of student populations' relationship(s) with place given the potential for residency to be sporadic and temporary in nature. Whilst in this research participants are required to have long-term residency in the UK, there remains potential for significant dichotomies in their construction of UK and place of origin spaces. Familial bonds which could potentially tie them to specific places in Germany or Poland, may alter their perspectives of the places they experience on a daily basis in the UK. Mobile interviews which tour spaces in the LCR that are significant to participants therefore provide a richer environment for discussion than a home or other static non-public interview setting which could be co-constructed from UK and place of origin influences.

The mobility was guided by participants themselves (as proven successful in terms of walking interviews by O'Neill: 2010; 2018), who were encouraged to reveal the social dynamics of the public spaces they inhabit to enable the analysis of migrant-destination community interactions. The interview questions were very open-ended, allowing participants to guide the conversation and discuss post-Brexit intercultural interactions pertinent to them. As is consistent with a participant-led approach, the exact route(s) and nature of the interviews were decided by the participant(s) in situ.

### **Interview Process**

The process of conducting a mobile (usually walking) interview usually began with agreeing a meeting point with a participant. These meeting points were agreed in advance and, whilst chosen by the participant, also had a practical element insofar as they needed to be easy enough to find for me without help from the participant. As such, they tended to be stations, markets or street corners, particularly in areas of Leeds and

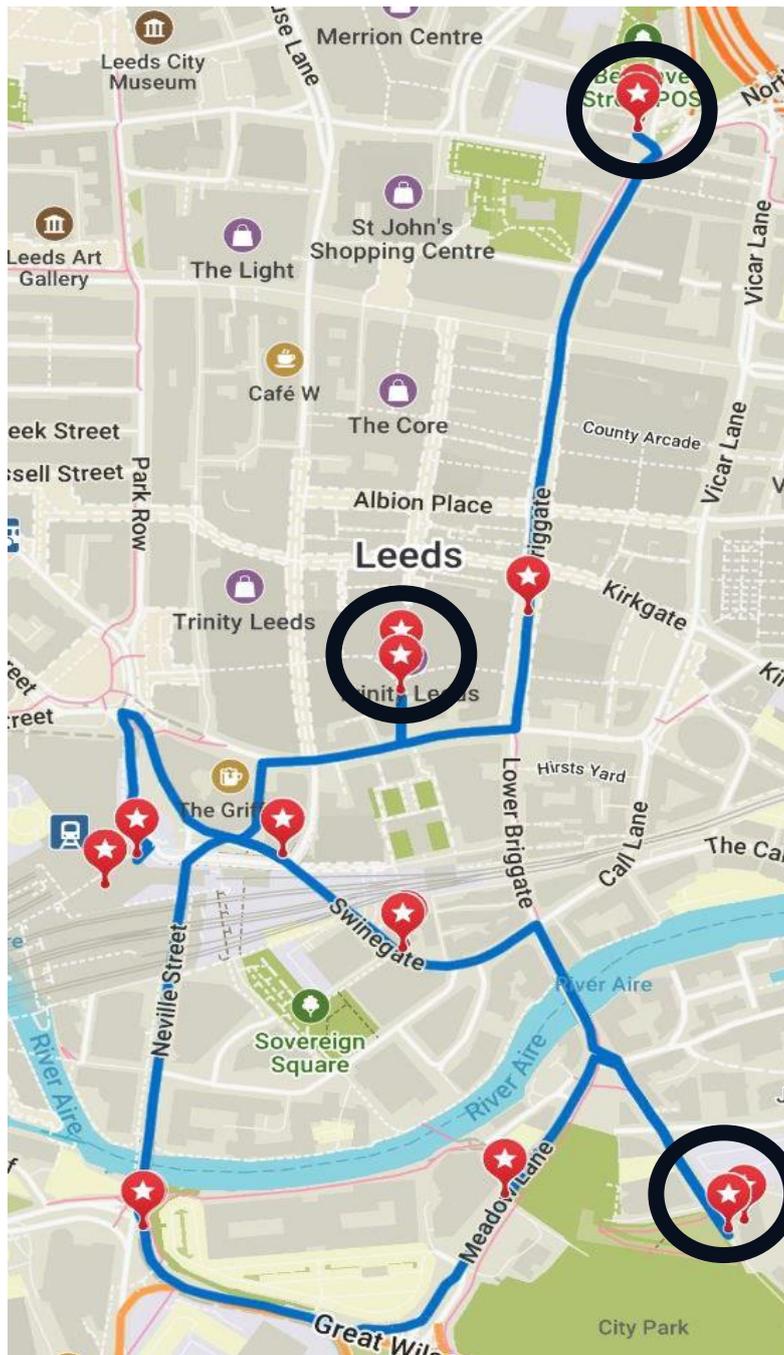
the Hinterlands with which I was less familiar. Once a meeting time and place had been agreed, participants were given a choice of picking a route or just walking organically on the day. It was not important for me to know the route in advance, and as such I did not ask for it, but some participants (i.e. PL4) wanted to show me specific places along a route around the chosen location. We typically then walked for 45 minutes to an hour, although sometimes interviews were slightly shorter or significantly longer. Longer interviews tended to be those where participants chose to walk organically (such as DE1), showing me places and spaces important to them as we walked, but without a prior plan to do so.

In total, I conducted 17 mobile interviews out of a total of 21 interviews with Polish and German participants. Of these, 12 were walking and 5 were more stationary in nature. The stationary interviews variously took place in cafés, a pub and the National Railway Museum in York (a free museum with large open spaces). In these cases, each space was chosen by the participant, and its importance discussed during the interview. As will be discussed in the next section, PL1, for example, chose a café as it was their primary place of relaxation. PL2 and PL3 (a joint interview) also chose to have their interview in Kirkgate Market, a space important to them as entrepreneurs in the UK. Entrepreneurship subsequently became a key theme of their interview, serving as the basis for many of their comments on workplace culture in the UK.

### **Interview Routes**

The following section provides maps for a interviews DE1, PL1 and PL6. I have chosen to provide these specific interviews with guiding maps as they help demonstrate the rootedness of participants within micro-level spaces, highlighting the differences in lived experience between localities, points which will be further elaborated in chapters 8 to 11. These maps have been provided here in the methodology as a sample of the cohort; individual walks are discussed throughout the analysis chapters in more depth.

DE1 provided a very rich recounting of the spaces important to them, whereas the interview with PL1 was interesting in its study of a singular space. With PL6, the interest was in the micro-level rootedness in space provided in a 'Hinterland' area not part of a suburban Leeds or York.

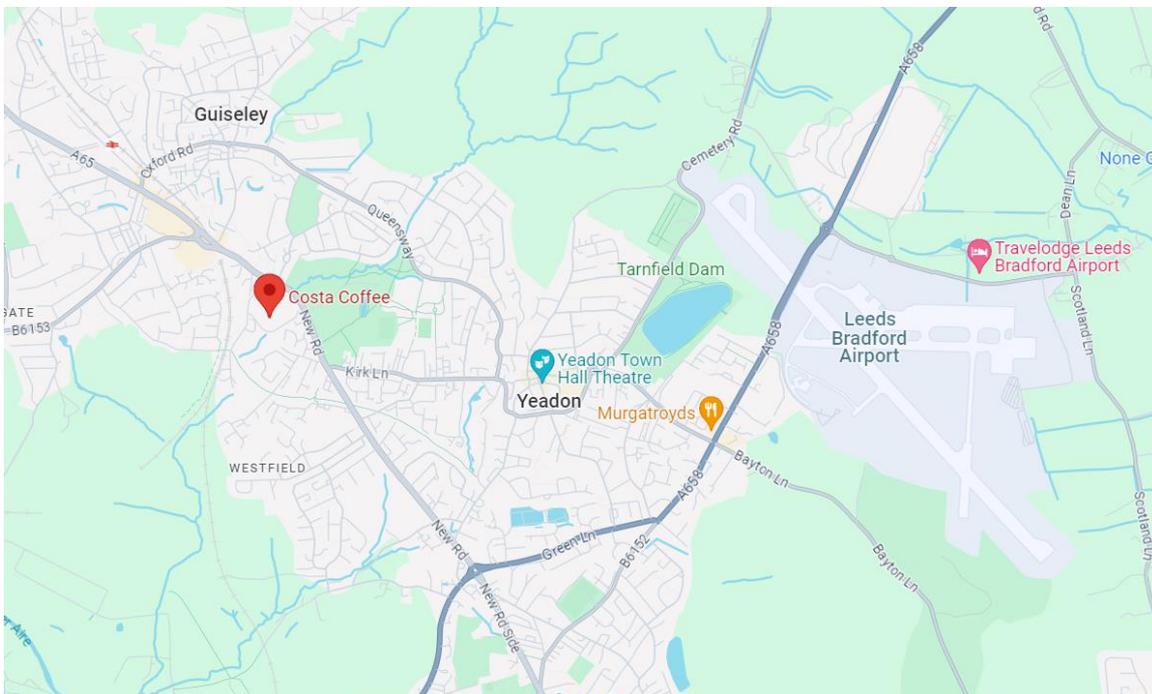


Map 5.6.1 (left) illustrates the route walked with participant DE1 across Leeds City Centre. As will be further discussed in empirical chapters 8 and 9, DE1's route is particularly interesting as they highlighted micro-level spaces of import which they frequent. These are marked on the map from top to bottom as The Belgravia Music Hall (where we met for the interview); a pop-up café and the now-closed Tetley Gallery.

Image 5.6 and Map 5.6.2 below depict the Costa Coffee outlet (inside Next) within which the interview with PL1 took place. Here, the interview did not consist of a walk per se, but an investigation of a specific place significant to the participant.

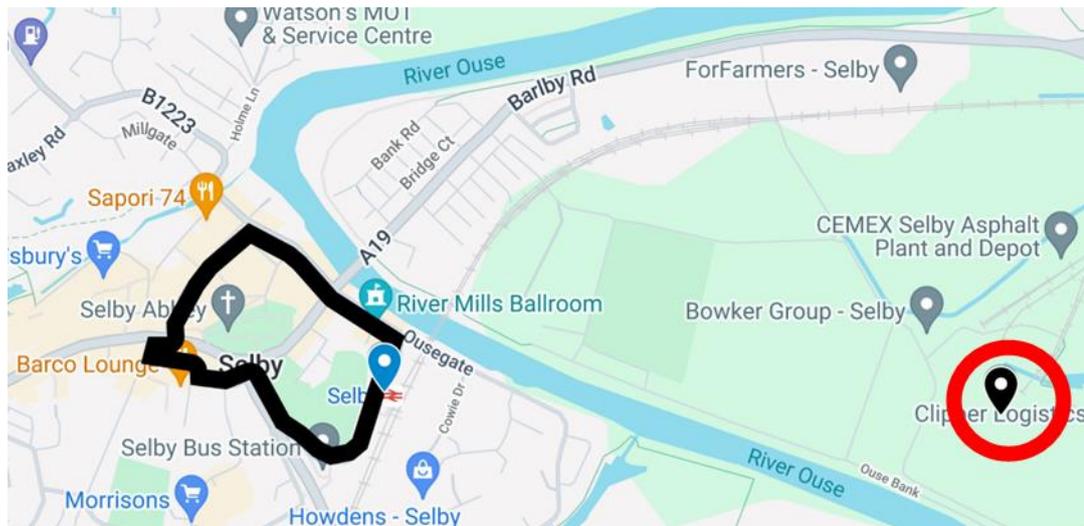


**Image 5.6:** (Google, 2023)



**Map 5.6.2:** Location of the Costa outlet in Guiseley, North-West of Leeds (Map from Google, 2023).

Map 5.6.3 below depicts the route of the interview conducted with participant PL6 in Selby. This interview was particularly interesting to note as an example of a 'Hinterland' interview, which did not take place in York, Leeds or their immediate suburbs. Selby is (currently) characterised by numerous light industrial units in the form of warehouses for online textile companies. It is also well-connected by bus and train to Leeds, York, Hull, Doncaster and London.

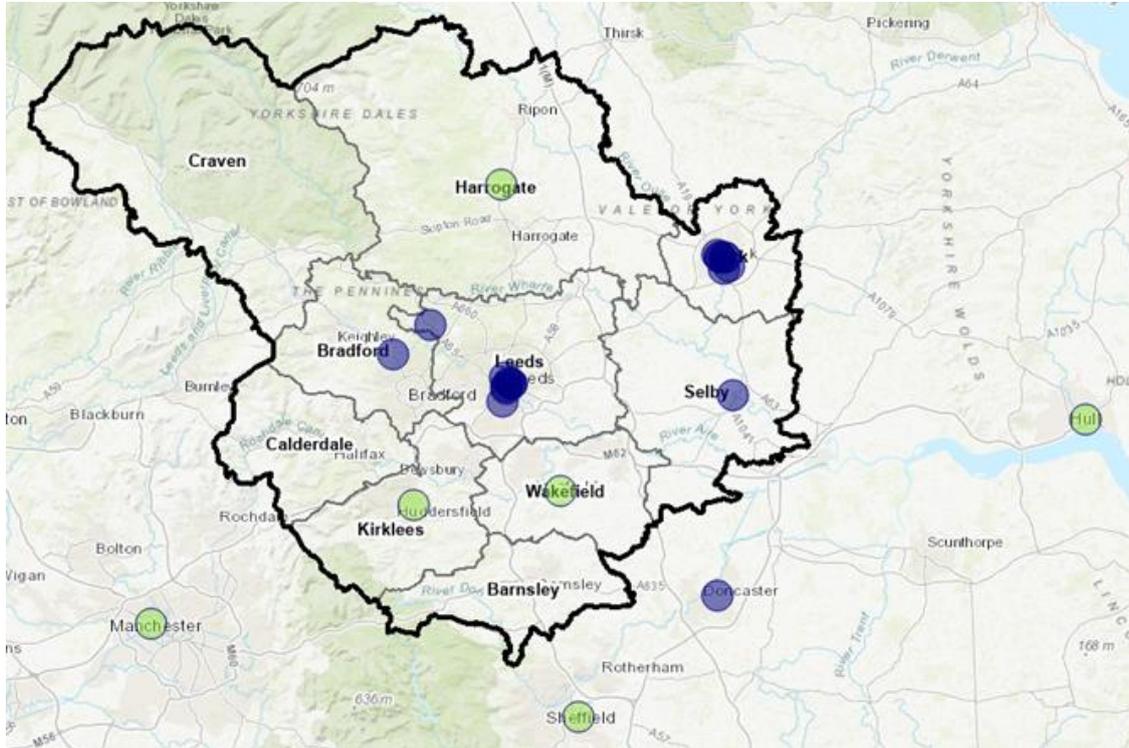


**Map 5.6.3:** Map of Selby town centre with the walking route undertaken with PL6 overlaid in black. In red is the ASOS and Clipper Logistics industrial unit discussed in the interview, highlighting the proximity of industrial units to Selby town centre (Map from Google, 2023).

### **The Participant Sample**

In total, twelve Polish and eight German participants were interviewed. Six participants (three German, three Polish) were interviewed before the first pandemic-induced UK national lockdown in March 2020. The remaining participants were interviewed between Autumn 2020 and March 2021. In accordance with ethical guidelines and legal restrictions, some participants were interviewed during subsequent COVID-19 lockdowns after special dispensation to do so was acquired. Given the scale of the impact of COVID-19 upon the investigation, it was decided to interview DE6, DE7 and PL12 over zoom.

Map 5.6.4 below displays interview locations across the LCR, including further places mentioned by participants which had significant impacts on their lived experiences.



Map 5.6.4 overlays interview locations: the Doncaster interview (purple) was over zoom but deemed important enough to use as a location in itself, onto a map of the LCR, combined with other places in the wider region to which participants have links (green) (West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 2023).

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

The aim of including stakeholder perspectives was to provide an expanded context for participants' interviews. Due to the fluidity of the Brexit negotiations, governmental structures and other civil society campaigns in areas of Brexit-related policy were (at the time of fieldwork), and sometimes remain (in 2023) under constant flux. Whilst co-produced mobile interviews aim to illuminate the situation(s) of EU national communities, the usability of this data is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of stakeholder context.

A target of five stakeholder interviews was originally set, but this was reduced to three to account for limitations to

the project imposed by COVID-19. These interviews further supplement and situate the primary data from the mobile interviews. The three stakeholders, who each waived their anonymity as discussed in chapter 5.8.1.3, each represented key policy areas that would form the basis for the analysis of EU national participants' data, as can be seen from table 5.6 below:

**Stakeholder Expertise and themes discussed**

Thomas Jochum-Critchley	Language teaching, bilingualism and cultural acquisition: insights into language learning and how interlocutors acquire both linguistic and cultural knowledge.
Dr. Jan Rybak	Questions of identity and the individuality of identity. Discussed the inter-language barriers to the discussion of minority identities.
Dr. Alexandra Bulat	Discussed the administrative processes of Brexit and the accessibility of these to different EU national groups.

**Table 5.6: An overview of the stakeholder interviews**

It is important to note, however, that, while Thomas Jochum-Critchley and Dr. Jan Rybak provided useful contextual discussion, their interviews were not used in the final analysis. Dr. Bulat's comments on the operationalisation of the EUSS, in particular, were important in the contextualisation of participants' lived experiences of government hostilities in chapter 6.2., for example.

**COVID-19 impact**

These initial targets proved difficult to achieve in light of the pandemic; Leeds City Council's (LCC) role in the research has been discussed more extensively in chapter 5.3 and I had intended to interview a member of their communities' team, with whom I worked closely in designing the project, as a stakeholder. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic made contact with LCC much more difficult, and it is possible that members of the team with whom I closely collaborated in the early stages of

the project moved on to other roles in the council. Similar issues were encountered trying to recruit a stakeholder in York City Council in a similar position to the Communities Team at LCC. Given the difference in governance structures present between the councils, it was difficult to find the relevant person to contact in York. This issue again demonstrates the different immigration contexts of the two cities (see chapter 4): as York is a smaller city with a smaller migration footprint, there may not be a need for an equivalent of LCC's Communities Team. Issues around finding the relevant local government representative were then compounded by COVID-19 as government priorities were adjusted to deal with the immediate threats posed by the pandemic.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Format**

These interviews were semi-structured in format, following a schedule with open-ended questions which aimed to provide extensive context for the primary mobile participant-led interviews. The interview schedule elucidated information about governmental and civil society projects which aim to respond to the precarity of EU nationals' circumstances post-Brexit. These included, for example, campaigns for the registration of EU nationals under the EUSS scheme and activist movements supporting the reciprocal guarantee of EU nationals' rights in post-Brexit Britain.

## **5.7. Ethics**

### **Ethics as Methodology**

Participant-led research poses fundamental challenges for institutional ethics boards given the methodology's inherent fluidity. To this effect, the struggle for PAR researchers, for example, to conform to standardised ethical processes is well documented (see Banks and Brydon-Miller 2018, among others). Flexible mobile interviews allow the integration of potential ethical problems such as accessibility and participant anxieties into the methodology itself: through participant-led interviews, participants momentarily become co-researchers who will guide

the geographical setting and academic direction of the interviews. They had the agency to determine what content is comfortable to discuss and which locations are appropriate. A participant-informed approach, therefore, serves as a methodological mitigation of harm through the potential discussion of painful experiences.

Furthermore, given the collaboration with Leeds City Council, there is the potential that participants could be ostracised from their community if they are seen to be communicating with the authorities. Here, embracing ethics as a methodological tool will ensure participants' awareness of potential risks associated with the research, and their direct agency over the analysis process will help ensure truthful representation of their experiences. The post-Brexit environment repeatedly denies agency in decision-making to EU nationals, leaving any potential participants in 'limbo' on the margins of society (Remigi et al., 2017): while the status of EU nationals was protected when we remained part of the EU, any sudden withdrawal or withdrawal agreement could have instantly rendered participants' residency illegal (problems with the EUSS are discussed later in chapter 6.2.2). Embracing ethics as a methodological tool here will enable a 'revoicing' of participants' views through their direct participatory involvement in the directionality of the data collection and the subsequent analysis processes.

#### **Mitigation of Harm**

Data confidentiality ensured that any data where participants are potentially identifiable is kept securely within the research environment, encrypted and stored appropriately, and only used in the participatory analysis process if the participant wishes to do so after being made aware of the potential risks.

Moreover, as the personal situation of individual participants may evolve and radically change over the course of the research (given the Brexit context), they could withdraw from the study completely up to 14 days after the mobile interviews have taken place.

As the doctoral researcher I must be aware of the potential dangers, to both myself and the participants, of discussing sensitive issues in a public environment, especially if the mobile interviews revisit places of social discord or ethnic tension. Similarly, I must be aware of the inherent risks of lone working in locations unknown prior to the interviews themselves.

### **Power Dynamics**

The research must follow a negotiated process of truthful representation, rather a requirement to portray topographies of racism. Here, the need to remain politically neutral and include scope for counter-topographical methods throughout the research process is important: while it is thought likely that extensive discrimination against EU national groups is present, the data must be valid. This is especially important when it comes to the thematic analysis and here, again, the input from participants will ensure that any of my personal analysis does not impose discrimination onto incidents where participants did not feel threatened.

I must be aware of the power hierarchies present, especially where stakeholder interviews are involved in situating participant data for analysis. As previously highlighted, there is potential for participants to fear government reprisals when interacting with local authority systems, so there may be a need for me to provide reassurance that I am not connected with immigration authorities in any regard. Similarly, my position as a majority ethnic interviewer could affect my positionality within the research, a problem which I need to be aware of and attempt to mitigate where possible. Mitigation thereof will, however, be aided by the research design itself looking from a minority ethnic perspective in understandings of cultural methodologies - something I am unable to access.

## **5.8. Analysis**

### **5.8.1. Data processing**

The methodology produced two concurrent and co-existent datasets. I am not, however, looking to directly compare them. They will be presented as different ways of interacting with post-Brexit society emanating from two distinctly different cultural groups. Similarities and differences between the two groups will undoubtedly emerge, yet the primary purpose of the investigation is rather to (re)enfranchise both national groups, allowing them to contribute their own experiences and their own cultural methodologies to the research. This marks a decisive step-change from much on the present discussion of EU nationals in the UK media, which assumes their homogeneity, when this is clearly not the case: Irish nationals can, for example, already vote in British national elections, whereas others cannot.

In this section I will discuss the methodologies I employed in processing the data. This will include discussions on translation of German- and Polish language data and terms, both from participants and also from the literature which supports my observations. Similarly, the role of transcription in producing a more truthful account of the walking interviews will be discussed, highlighting the importance of ancillary information to the transcription process.

#### **5.8.1.1. Linguistic and Cultural Translation**

##### **Translation: an intermittent knowledge gap in migration research**

As a linguist with training in translation methodologies and the extensive process of checks and balances applied to commercial translation, whether it be instruction manuals or at an international court, for example, I am aware of the vital role translation has in multilingual research. This linguistic multidimensionality is highlighted by Chen and Boore (2010), examining the factors which effect a satisfactory outcome for cross-lingual qualitative research. They reinforce the notion that the researcher takes translation-related decisions which directly impact upon the credibility of the research. The act of

translation is an act of data-processing in and of itself, rather than a simple means of accessing the data in a format that affords its processing. Filep (2009) further explains the complications of translating in an interview setting. Being able to assess the degree of freedom allowed the translator when translating the documents is thus crucial in assessing the internal validity of a questionnaire or interview schedule. If there was no common translation policy in terms of the freedom allowed in the process, then there is a possibility that participants answered questions that differed from one another slightly, thus undermining the commonality of the questionnaire across participants.

Many papers (see Mulvey, 2015; Cheung and Phillimore, 2016; Mawson and Kasem, 2019 and Bichani, 2015) do not, however, account for any sort of translation methodology in their research design. This remains the case when extensive translation is necessary as a fundamental part of the research process: Bichani (2015), Cheung and Phillimore (2016) and Mulvey (2015) all interview participants in languages other than English, yet do not address the issue of translation style and format. The resulting data is therefore of more questionable validity, as, as explained further below, one or more of any number of translations for a particular concept may have been used to translate a specific definition. The theoretical implications and underpinnings of a translation methodology are explained in some depth by Hervey, Loughridge and Higgins (2006); connotative meaning (associations beyond a literal translation of a term) and attitudinal meaning (a definition denoting a specific attitude to the referent, such as 'expat' instead of immigrant') in particular form a significant part of the translation process for this investigation.

Al-Amer et al. (2015) provide an extensive discussion of this issue and its ramifications in healthcare science research, highlighting the pitfalls of translation as it is reliant on three main, variable factors. First, the translation style used to translate the data in question, a point I aim to address below for the current research. Second, the translator themselves and their implementation of the style adopted. This I

to address by including source-language quotations as the primary data source, with a translation supplied in addition for readability. Finally, Al-Amer et al. question the trustworthiness of translated data. Given the context of this work, this should not present a huge challenge to the current investigation and will also be mitigated by my comprehension of the source-language data in the first place, rather than having to rely on a translator for this critical step and agree on an appropriate translation methodology with them.

### **Translation Process**

As discussed in chapter 2.3.3.1, this research takes as its ethos a 'thought-for-thought' based approach (Nida and Taber, 2012) when considering the translation of not only language, but also cultural concepts from German or Polish into English. Evia and Patriarca (2012) highlight some of the difficulties inherent to translation in a work-based scenario, in this instance the communication of health and safety protocol to Spanish-speaking construction workers in the US. This scenario is not too dissimilar to that presented here: I need to communicate a series of phrases and concepts accurately and objectively to an English-speaking audience when the concepts have originally been communicated to me in German (and very occasionally Polish, although participants have always given an explanation here, transferring the process of translation to themselves). Equally, even when communication does take place in English, concepts from participants' L1 cultural habitus frequently do not directly translate onto English cultural concepts (for example, see chapter 6.3.2 for the complexities of cross-cultural humour).

Solutions to translation problems cited by Evia and Patriarca (2012) as commonplace include English-Spanish construction dictionaries, for example. Such an approach would clearly be inappropriate here as it forgoes the cultural meaning associated with concepts described by participants. I have therefore decided to adopt a translation process which leaves the original German (or Polish) term quoted in the analysis. I have then translated this according to the sense which I believe

it portrays based upon the contexts and discussions of the original interview. Clearly, these are open to interpretation, an issue highlighted by the fact that my own translations have occasionally differed slightly from those given to me by the company which erroneously translated the German-language interviews instead of simply transcribing them. I address this issue by attempting to keep any translation of raw data as close to the original source as possible and explaining my own translations where appropriate if there is potential for numerous 'correct' translations. This further better aligns the research with PAR principles as far as possible: by preserving the original German or Polish, the reader is allowed to interpret participants' responses for themselves, being presented with raw data, rather than data which has been externally processed. Moreover, by having one German or Polish quote and then its translated equivalent side-by-side, the words of participants are preserved to the greatest possible extent.

The practical formatting of this data will proceed as illustrated in the following example:

[Original extract] *DE7: als Deutscher oder Ausländer gehänselt*  
 [Translation] DE7: teased for being German or a foreigner

Here I use an indentation to signify what was actually said by the participant in question, with the text italicised to indicate a non-English utterance. The translation of the quote is then stated in square brackets to allow for easier understanding on the part of the reader. This quote is also a useful demonstration of the potential complexities associated with translation, underlining the importance of the approach detailed above. The German verb '*hänseln*' of which '*gehänselt*' is the past participle, has the following possible translations according to the online dictionary dict.cc (2023):

1. To tease somebody
2. To bait somebody
3. To razz

4. To josh
5. To quiz somebody
6. To pick on somebody

Whilst these definitions are clearly only superficially different in this instance, there is the potential for other translational contexts to have more important differences between translations, particularly in immigration contexts where subtle differences in wording can have very different outcomes.

#### **5.8.1.2. Transcription**

I did the majority of the transcription work myself, with only the two German language interviews and limited English-language interview transcription outsourced for time-saving reasons due to the amount of work and time involved in second-language transcription. To nonetheless maintain a similar methodological framework when translating the transcribed German-language data, the transcription company was instructed to leave any language mistakes by either myself as the interviewer, or participants themselves, unedited, with the errors left in the transcription. This was particularly important for the English-language data that was then also transcribed professionally: participant discourse across both nationality cohorts did contain linguistic errors, and I deemed the preservation of these important as, in certain instances, they may have altered the meaning of what the participants were trying to convey. Here, again, my linguistic and cultural knowledge was important in being able to decipher these potential errors. Moreover, the inclusion of such errors or idiosyncrasies has allowed me to better assess the extent of participants' language and cultural competencies in English, something which has been important when situating their experiences in other areas of the analysis process. One example of this is a note on the transcription of DE1's interview, which states that they pronounced London in a very German, rather than English manner. Whilst clearly not an 'error', this is a linguistic idiosyncrasy that could allude to the fact that they

are not a native English speaker when communicating with members of the public.

Similarly, factors external to the interview process were added as notes to a number of transcriptions. These often-highlighted particular encounters with space or members of the public that occurred over the course of the interview, again adding additional spatial context to the interview transcriptions. One example of this is when the interview with DE2 was interrupted by someone asking for directions. This caused DE2 to lose their train of thought momentarily, potentially impacting on the trajectory of the interview as they remembered what it was that they had originally wanted to discuss.

These ancillary details have provided additional important context to the analysis process which would not have been present had the interviews been undertaken in a more traditional format. Indeed, those interviews which did have to take place over zoom due to COVID restrictions have markedly fewer annotations, particularly in relation to external interactions, as these were not possible within the format of a zoom interview.

Similarly, there are numerous instances where what the participant says is unclear from the recording. This usually affects those recordings taken outside, with traffic or wind noise. Here, I have added 'unclear' with a timestamp in brackets in the following format:

(unclear 39.18)

#### **5.8.1.3. Censorship and anonymisation**

In line with the PAR-informed methodology of this research, and the approaches to translation and transcription outlined above, I have not censored participants' language if it could be deemed vulgar or offensive.

Throughout the analysis chapters, German and Polish participants are referred to by a unique code related to the nationality cohort to which they belong (DE for German, PL for Polish). I have decided to anonymise participants in this way for reasons of language: while giving participants pseudonyms

would have been possible, the pseudonyms would have been English as my knowledge of common Polish and German names to give participants is limited. Giving participants English names, however, feels inherently manipulative given that the premise of this research is to attempt to mitigate the loss of power over their own circumstances that participants have experienced as a result of Brexit. Moreover, some participants have extensively discussed the problems they have around mispronunciation of names and the Anglicisation of them by members of the British public. In light of this, I cannot give participants pseudonyms that are of English origin. I thus decided that the easiest way to solve this issue was to simply continue using the codes I assigned participants during the fieldwork for administrative reasons as these are both anonymous and linguistically neutral.

I have not anonymised stakeholders; the roles in organisations such as the3million, about which Dr. Bulat, for example, speaks extensively, would render any anonymity I would give them perfunctory, as they would likely remain identifiable. This was discussed in the informed consent process. Equally, none of the stakeholders are representing personal positions, but rather the position of work they have conducted, or organisations they work for. The data they provide to the project is thus not personally identifiable beyond the figurehead role they play in their professional lives.

### **5.8.2. Thematic Analysis**

Liebenberg, Jamal and Ikeda (2020) remind us that in its most basic form, when engaging with qualitative research data, analysis invokes the sorting and arranging of the research data. The way in which this process is carried out tends to differ hugely if the research design is one which is aligned to participatory action research principles, these demanding that participants are also involved in the analysis process. Such was the original aim of this research, with a planned workshop based upon Brown's (2010) World Café format. In light of the pandemic, however, this was deemed unfeasible as it would have involved a larger group of strangers in close proximity indoors. These

changes have been outlined in the COVID-19 impact statement in the introductory chapter, but it is in the methodological research design that the impact of the pandemic was most keenly felt. The analysis stage therefore no longer re-engages with the cyclical nature of PAR methodologies (McTaggart, 1991) by acting upon the data extrapolated from the initial analysis through observing co-participant engagement with it and their re-evaluation of the thematic data obtained; ethical permission to carry out analysis workshops during the time-frame of the PhD would have been extremely difficult to obtain and would have been illegal at various points.

These circumstances forced me to re-evaluate the methodological underpinnings of the research. Whereas the original research aims had involved embracing a PAR-oriented research design throughout, it was necessary instead to adopt thematic analysis as the analytical framework for this investigation. As it was no longer possible to have participants themselves directly inform the analysis process, a grounded theory approach allows themes to emerge from the data in a more organic manner; whilst not participatory, it does not impose a pre-existing framework onto the data.

Due to the nature of the PAR-informed data collection process, themes emerged from the data as participants led me on walks around the region being studied, or retold experiences over Zoom. As Alhojailan and Ibrahim (2012) demonstrate, thematic analysis is well-suited to research that aims to analyse interpretative experiences; the nature of the coding process allowing for a multitude of 'stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005:12) to emerge from the same spaces. Unlike other thematic analyses (i.e., Buchowski, 2010), the themes in this analysis are grounded within the data, rather than representing an abstract phenomenon which the data represents. This, I believe, is more appropriate for a discourse analysis of this nature, which focuses not just on the interpretative variability of the data, but the data itself. In this regard, fact-based themes are supported by data.

Furthermore, recalling March, Sproull and Tamuz's (1991) sample of one or fewer approach, the analysis of absent data is

given equal importance to extant. To this effect, the themes and codes described below reflect the lived experiences of participants. Coding was conducted in Nvivo for ease of organisation, with the codebook detailed in table 5.8.2:

<b>Name</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Hostilities</b>	0
Brexit	17
Brexit attitude detachment	1
Hostile GB government	9
Inability to vote	1
Post-Brexit anxieties	2
Settled status	4
COVID	5
Discrimination	16
Curiosity	5
Gender	1
Germanophobia	9
<b>Language</b>	2
Accent	12
Identity through language	19
Learning English and the utility of the language	2
Linguistic differences	4
Mother Tongue	8
Speak English!	13
<b>Life in the UK</b>	0
Cultural differences	21
LGBTQ+ and sexual deviance - cultural differences	1
UK work life	9
Family life	9
Lifestyle improvements in COD compared to COO	2
Links to country of origin	7
Better in country of origin	2
Home	1
Involvement with COO communities	10
Nationality	14
When arrived in the UK	4
<b>Social interactions outside the interview setting</b>	1
<b>Space</b>	<b>1</b>
Hinterlands	1
Leeds as a city	8
Markets	1
Spatial segregation	12
York as a city	23

**Table 5.8.2:** analysis codebook from Nvivo, highlighted in bold are the head nodes. The number of references is approximate.

Initial coding was conducted simultaneously to the transcription of the interviews, with the key themes of each interview highlighted at this point and inputted into Nvivo when transcription was complete. Additional, more detailed, coding was then conducted when the majority of the transcription had taken place, with more specific codes induced inductively upon this deeper analysis of each interview. As can be seen from the references column of table 5.8.2 above, some of the codes were mentioned by only one participant, perhaps only in a singular instance. To refer back to March, Sproull and Tamuz (1991), however, this does not mitigate their importance. Particularly with topics such as personal experiences of discrimination being discussed, a singular experience thereof can have a dramatic effect on a participant's perception of life in British society.

As more codes were discovered, I grouped them based on broad overlying themes. Taking the hostilities node as an example, this became an overarching theme for discussions around racial discrimination, COVID-19, gender-based discrimination and interactions with British authorities as a result of Brexit. In each of these broad themes, there is a hostile experience of something, whether that be border force interactions post-Brexit, or the more widely 'hostile' environment created in public spaces by the numerous COVID-19 lockdowns.

The chapter titles for my empirical chapters were then originally chosen in line with the 'head' nodes of the above codebook, although they have since evolved significantly; I had four relatively distinct 'head' nodes which each described a particular aspect of participants' experiences. Moreover, these head nodes could be mapped onto the research aims for the investigation. 'Hostilities' thus discusses particular anxieties around Brexit itself, helping clarify the extent of post-Brexit anxieties among German and Polish nationals in the Leeds City Region. Equally, 'Language' situates participants' experiences within the context of their mother-tongue language and associated cultural habitus, with 'Life in the UK' detailing the administrative and organisational differences between the UK and the society of origin. The node 'Social interactions outside the

interview setting' was originally intended to form part of the discussion around linguistic differences, but I decided that this took the research in a more linguistic direction than was appropriate given the core aims of the study. Finally, the 'Space' node includes experiences of specific places within the LCR, becoming an empirical chapter that engages with the different trajectories and 'stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005:12) which participants have presented as part of their individual experiences.

## **Chapter 6: Hostilities**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter situates and differentiates participants' experiences of hostilities, exploring the links between these experiences and Brexit, space, and language. I illustrate the diverse and multifaceted range of hostilities facing participants over the period we can loosely define as 'Brexit'; participants of this research discuss both pre- and post-referendum experiences here. I therefore define the period of 'Brexit' as from the 22nd of January 2013, when then Prime Minister David Cameron announced the potential for a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU as a future election promise, up until the end of March 2021, the date of the final interview for this research. Some participants have related experiences that are now temporally distant, before the pandemic, but the links between the pandemic, Brexit and hostilities are now apparent through both this investigation and others (for example, Bartoš et al., 2021; Leith and Slim, 2022). Given the timeline of this investigation, experiences of the pandemic and related anxieties, particularly concerning travel (such as are investigated by Luo and Lam, 2020), are largely separate from issues associated with the privation of EU citizenship rights from Polish and German nationals living in the UK. Here, I concentrate on two broad, but heavily interrelated, types of hostility: Brexit and discrimination, the latter as an interrelated but separate issue from the former. It is crucial

here to make the distinction between Brexit and its associated hostilities, whether that be governmental hostilities (chapter 6.2.2) associated with applying for Settled Status, for example, or discrimination in a wider, more social sense that is deeply rooted in the English habitus (chapter 6.3). Each of these sub-chapters will now be expanded upon in greater depth.

The operationalisation of Brexit-related hostilities can be further categorised. First, we have the government-led hostilities towards EU nationals, whether that be the enactment of new travel and border regulations by border control at airports and ports, or issues surrounding settled status or pet passports. These government-driven hostilities are not, however, a new phenomenon. There is a continuity of government hostility towards immigrants or residents of non-British nationality more generally, with the hostile environment policies having significant historical and current precedent, as discussed extensively in the literature review. The change here, then, is the application of hostile environment policy to EU migrants, something which was previously difficult under EU law (although not impossible, as shall be later discussed). Here, it is important to note that we are only talking about passive hostilities committed by the government to the studied groups, not discrimination by the general public as that deserves wider discussion in a chapter of its own, the contexts also being drastically different. The 'Hostile Environment' policy agenda is inextricably linked with institutional racism, the immigration policy of the UK and therefore the Brexit agenda. All of the above converge in our discussions of Brexit-related government-led and -initiated hostilities to EU migrants, and thus form an important chapter of the thesis.

I then discuss the hostilities enacted towards participants by members of the British public. Here, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the British public holds more tendentially diverging attitudes towards EU migrants than governmental hostilities towards migrants would suggest. I therefore question why members of the public have remained so welcoming to participants in spite of the hostile environment created by government policy. Equally, a worthy discussion here

is one of the British habitus leaning towards an avoidance of direct conflict, whilst nonetheless holding hostile views or actively voting for hostile government policies. Again, this can be seen as a passive hostility towards participants, as the way they are treated by the British public is a multifaceted convergence of history, politics and habitus, all of which are beyond their control.

The issues surrounding Settled Status and the operationalisation of the EUSS scheme will also be acutely examined. Most participants have an opinion on Settled Status, its accessibility and potential hostility. These have varied greatly between participants - perhaps something to be expected of a digital process with no physical counterpart. Disorganisation around its operationalisation has caused significant worry to participants across the spectrum, however, and for such reasons, it must be treated as a hostile process, particularly as, again, participants had no active role in its construction or governance. Some of the hostile experiences noted by participants were, at the time, theoretical. This is particularly the case for those interviewed in early 2020, as Britain had not yet left the EU, nor had the EUSS scheme come to a conclusion and closed to new applicants. However, because of the extended time-frame of the research, as well as early application difficulties experienced by many participants, there will also be a discussion of participants' experiences of hostilities with the scheme. Again, it is important to note here that there will be significant convergence with these issues and those caused by COVID-19, and some of these will go beyond the scope of this research. Only after fieldwork for this research had concluded have we seen the widespread introduction of COVID-19 vaccination requirements in tandem with new requirements on EU citizens to produce Settled Status documentation when travelling to the UK.

## **6.2. Brexit**

### **6.2.1. Governmental and administrative hostilities**

In this section, participants' experiences of governmental

and administrative hostilities will be discussed in greater depth. Due to the timeline of this research, and its convergence with the COVID-19 pandemic, the bulk of these experiences is limited to a small number of participants, particularly DE7, who states the following:

[Original extract] *Nach dem Referendum habe ich die Grenze nicht mehr überquert*

Translation: Since the referendum, I no longer cross the border.

Most participants have experienced some form of bureaucratic hurdles related to the EUSS, however, and these shall consequently be treated separately. Two participants have noted changes in the way in which they are treated crossing the border post-Brexit and, again, it is notable here that very few months of relatively COVID-free travel had taken place at the time of the majority of the interviews. DE4 discussed how the attitude of border guards, even at Leeds Bradford Airport, a minor international airport by comparison to Manchester or the London airports, has become more hostile in recent years:

When you come in at Leeds, then they would always just wave me through or just look at the passport. And then after the referendum several times, oh, how long are you gonna visit for? I was like 'I live here'

Similarly, DE6 commented the following, underlining the hostility of the new rules and their impact on the ability of EU nationals to work in the UK:

I have a lot of colleagues at the University who have pre settled status. Some of them are now living here in the UK, and they have a restriction of going home, have you know, more than three years ever? And that impacts on their research capacity that they might need to go for instance, you know, it's just, it's mind blowing.

This has the potential to seriously undermine their research capabilities in the future. On a personal level, PL7 experienced problems with applying for student finance as they had returned to Poland for a short period, despite growing up in the UK:

The difficult thing is that I was away in Poland for like, half the year in 2013. Due to like health reasons. And honestly, like even when I was applying for student finance, like I was stupid enough to tell him that that was the case. And I couldn't apply it as a, like a [interviewer: home student?] Yeah, as a kind of EU student because I wouldn't get a Maintenance Loan. I had to I had to apply as a child of EU migrants had to apply literally through my parents to get like the full thing.

This incident also took place in 2013, prior to the Brexit referendum being announced, evidencing the existence of hostilities towards EU nationals across government departments long before the referendum itself and, although, PL7 goes on to acknowledge the bureaucracy of student finance in general, they still felt ostracised by them.

Whilst the experiences discussed above appear in their respective interviews as isolated incidents, participant DE7 portrays a much more pervasive framework of hostilities enacted against them, reaching across multiple government departments:

[Original extract] *...vor fünf Jahren, als ich versuchte, einige Leistungen zu beantragen. Und da begann das Innenministerium mit seiner feindseligen Atmosphäre. Sie weigerten sich, irgendetwas zu zahlen, weil ich EU-Bürgerin war, verstehst du? Und ich musste deswegen vor Gericht gehen, vor das Magistrates Court in Doncaster. Ich habe gewonnen, aber die Leute vom Arbeitsamt haben es trotzdem nicht zur Kenntnis genommen, und es war nicht durchsetzbar. Ich hatte also immer noch nichts.*

Translation: 5 years ago, when I tried to apply for some benefits. And then the Home Office started with their

xenophobic environment. They refused my application because I was an EU citizen, you understand? And I had to go to court, to the magistrates court in Doncaster. I won, but the DWP ignored the ruling and it wasn't enforceable: I still didn't get anything.

While this could be interpreted as stigma towards a potential benefit claimant, a well-documented phenomenon (for example, Baumberg, 2016), rather than direct hostility towards an EU citizen, the Child Poverty Action Group (2020) reports a court ruling codifying the rights of EU citizens with pre-settled status to apply for benefits in the EU, a continuation of previous rights under EU law. Moreover, the UK government was, by denying benefits to an EU national, directly undermining the rights conferred through EU citizenship (Your Europe, 2022). This experience is a clear demonstration of the creation of a hostile environment by the UK government, with a court ruling that, in this instance, DE7 must be allowed to apply for benefits as an EU citizen.

However, DE7 was not necessarily targeted because they are German or an EU national. This speaks to discussions around racism and xenophobia more generally, to be discussed in a later chapter, where it is noted that PL6 maintained that some of the racial tensions experienced by EU diaspora may, in fact, be more normative social tensions present in the United Kingdom, interpreted as racism. Here, and referring to Bourdieu's (1997) conceptualisations of the habitus, it is particularly important to consider the differing cultural habitus of participants of EU origin to those who have lived in the UK since birth or shortly thereafter: by growing up in Britain, their habitus will have evolved, with cultural norms from both their culture of origin and Britain ingrained within it. Using DE7's experiences above, for instance, we can see some confusion between the remit of the Home Office in a British context, and the German *Innenministerium*, and the overlap between the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions: it is the Home Office which initiated the hostile environment framework, yet the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for benefits in

the UK. This differs from the German system, and it is important to note the potential importance of differing cultural worldviews when discussing issues such as the welfare state, the operationalisation of which is likely to differ even on a micro-level between local authorities within the UK.

Interactions with other government departments, such as the Border Force arm of the Home Office, lack some of the cultural complexities associated with systems as unique as the welfare state. Here, boundaries, policies and rules are more easily translated on an international level, making participants' experiences therewith easier to analyse in relation to governmental hostilities. To this effect, DE7 has also experienced significant hostilities at the border, in this instance the sea border at Hull, noting the following:

[Original extract:] *Als die feindliche Umgebung begann, fingen die Fragen an der Grenze an. Wohin wollen Sie? Und ich sage, nach Hause. Dann sagt er, nach Hause, wo ist das? Oder vor zwei Jahren, als ich das letzte Mal mit der Fähre in Hull ankam. Er schaute sich das Auto an und sagte, oh, da ist ja eine Menge drin. Und die Dinge waren ein bisschen schief, weil meine Mutter gerade gestorben war. Ich hatte ein paar Sachen von zu Hause mitgebracht. Alle möglichen Dinge. Aber das habe ich ihm nicht gesagt. Stattdessen habe ich ihm nicht geantwortet. Aber diese Bemerkungen kamen in der Vergangenheit nicht vor. Das fing erst mit dem feindlichen Umfeld an.*

Translation: When the Hostile Environment started, so did the questions on the border. 'Where are you going?' And I said 'home'. Then he said 'Home? Where's that?' Or two years ago, the last time I came into Hull with the ferry. He looked at the car and said 'oh, there's a lot of stuff in there'. And things weren't tidy, as my mum had just died. I had brought a few things from Home. All kinds of things. But I didn't tell him that. Instead, I didn't answer him. But those comments didn't occur in the past. That only started with the Hostile Environment.

Finally, it is important to note the impact of other regulation changes post-Brexit. Whilst the data have heretofore demonstrated the increase in hostilities experienced by EU nationals when exercising their rights of EU citizenship, DE7 also demonstrates the impact of the abolition of pet passports between the UK and the EU with the following statement:

[Original extract:] *Jetzt gibt es keinen Hundepass mehr. Früher habe ich immer die Fähre mit meinen Hunden genommen. Aber jetzt ist es eine Katastrophe.*

Translation: There is no longer the pet passport. I have always taken the ferry with my dogs. But now it's a catastrophe.

The invalidation of pet passports as a means to move pets easily between EU countries is noted by Wright (2021). Not only does this now make the process of travelling between the EU and UK more complicated if travelling with pets, but it also presents a further hostile barrier with which to contend. Brexit-related administrative barriers thus increase participants' anxiety, with administrative and governmental hostilities playing a key role in situating and clarifying the extent of such anxieties, per research aim 1.

### **6.2.2. EUSS**

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is something that has affected all participants, even if only by demanding that they complete the application for it. Reactions to it have been varied; most participants have not expressed any particular problems with the idea of the scheme itself (having reserved these strongly-worded opinions for the Brexit ideology more generally), but a large proportion of participants have significant misgivings over the administration of the scheme, in particular its digitisation and the fact that there is, as yet, no physical document to prove their entitlement (unlike a permanent residency card, for example).

Here, it is useful to reflect on the professional

experience of Dr. Alexandra Bulat of the3million (at time of interview). Through her campaigning for, and direct contact with, EU citizens throughout the Brexit process, Dr. Bulat is in an excellent position to raise awareness of the issues currently (pre-30th June 2021) faced by EU citizens as the deadline for applying for pre-settled and settled status expires, and any concerns about future problems with the scheme and its impact on EU citizens' family life, among other issues. Here, Dr. Bulat outlines the fear and confusion faced by many EU citizens in the current climate in relation to the EUSS:

In terms of the EU settlement scheme, the immediate concerns, I would say, what one of the key concerns that people have that users have, is the fact it's how to prove their settler status and all this, because it's one thing to, you know, get your pre settle or settle status, and that's fine. But there's another question about Okay, now we know how to use it. Do you know who needs to check it? Do you know what rights you have with it? And here is one of the main issues is the lack of physical proof of status, that obviously is a good organisation, we're campaigning going. But that is not only because we think it's nice to have a campaign on this actually, the vast, vast majority of EU citizens when we surveyed them, in collaboration at the project in collaboration with Northumbria University last year and had a survey of users and their concerns. And this lack of physical proof was the top concern of people in terms of the issues they wanted to say about the EU settlement scheme. So, of course, many people are, you know, unaware how to use it any pullback, the skills about how to use it, and many people are just not, you know, they're even people who know how to use it, a lot of them feel mistrust in the home office with their data. And therefore, they would like to have a physical proof of status. Then, of course, many people are concerned about, you know, EU citizens actually getting status on time.

Whilst many (although not all) EU citizens have applied to the EUSS scheme (Fernández-Reino and Sumption, 2022), there is significant confusion over what rights the scheme affords them; how these rights can be exercised; how proof of settled status is acquired and to whom it must be demonstrated. The levels of confusion around the scheme's implementation are illustrated by the following extracts:

DE8: the fact that here it was, scan in a passport and punch in some words into a mobile phone and then you get an email. It almost also makes it look, feel more flimsy, as in, okay, if all that I have is a print-out PDF that is supposed to show somebody else that somewhere in some government database, I'm now registered as pre-settled, compared to, I don't know, a piece of paper that looks hard to forge.

PL7: I got pre-settled status. I still need to like I still need to apply because it's very...

Interviewer: How did you get pre-settled status? You've been here forever?!

PL7: Yeah, I've been here forever. But the difficult thing is that I was away in Poland for like, half the year in 2013. Due to like health reasons.

DE6: Well, I've got it [Settled Status]. And I think the, the way it's being dealt with it reminds me all over with what's happening was North Northern Irish border at the moment. It's, it's shambolic. It is superficially, it is trying to find the easiest administrative solution to a problem that actually runs much, much deeper.

DE6 has personally campaigned for a better recognition of EU citizens' rights after Brexit and further highlights the salience of COVID-19 in potentially disrupting the apparently whimsical nature of the implementation of the EUSS:

I've got some newly employed colleagues who are European,

but they haven't been able to come to York [because of COVID], and that kind of pre settled status thing. So, it's just shambolic. Somebody has devised this was sort of pea sized brain and come, come up with a technological solution that allows the cases like mine to be processed really, really easily. And then all of these other ones that need a little bit of thinking time.

The disruption presented by the pandemic will be further discussed in terms of the impact it had on participants' everyday lived experiences, yet here DE6 highlights how the constantly changing border regimes of 2021 could even contribute to the frustration of EUSS applications. This represents a new level of pandemic-induced complications to a scheme participants believe to already be beset with problems. Stakeholder Dr. Bulat also voices concern that a lack of physical proof of status could lead to discrimination against EU citizens within the job market:

I think, you know, the bigger employers and institutions actually have more communication with the home office even because if you look on the home office page, they have community toolkit. So, like any, you have an employer toolkit, so at any employer can go in the home office page, I mean, you know, there's criticisms of the information. It's not, you know, comprehensive enough or not perfect. [...] So you can go as an employer and download toolkits, translated materials and stuff and then disseminate it. But yeah, the question is, if you're like a small, you know, Romanian cafe in, you know, a small town or a small employer in any kind of, or I don't know, you're a farm or a factory, like, what would the, you know, would even have, like, HR structure? And the second thing, if you have HR structure, would you, would this be on your mind in the first place? Because, of course, universities or, you know, international companies are exposed to those ideas in different contexts? [...] we're very concerned about especially how people will prove

their settled status [...] we see already happening a lot, we see already employers asking for status when they shouldn't really until the deadline of the EU settlement scheme. But right after it will be a legal requirement for anyone who starts employment and so on to have their immigration status checked.

This extract demonstrates a further lack of co-ordination and raising of awareness on behalf of the government. Åhlberg and Granada (2022) underline that inconsistencies around EU citizens' status and rights post-Brexit could also increase human trafficking, illegal immigration and associated issues. This converges with Dr. Bulat's comments above insofar as there is significant potential for misunderstanding and misuse of the scheme, and thus EU migrants, in post-Brexit employment contexts. These issues coalesce with EU nationals' personal concerns around documentation and its validity, expressed both through participant quotations above and Dr. Bulat's extensive community engagement with the perceived weaknesses of the EUSS. Participants' feelings of being 'in limbo' (DE1) are confounded by O'Brien's (2022) demonstration of the potential consequences of the EUSS's operationalisation and its ability to transform EU nationals' status overnight.

Of all participants interviewed, only PL11 explicitly expressed a lack of concern around the EUSS, as they assume everything is going to run off a centralised digital database anyway:

I have a settlement status for my family, and that was going through websites with the [unclear] which you send to the employer. That works, fine with me. I assume we'll all be moving as soon as there's some sort of central, digital database, so I think that's how we're going to work, [unclear]. So, no issues, really, with that. I didn't expect them to stop in the middle of the street. I don't think that's going to happen.

This divergent opinion which contests and contrasts those

of other participants and experts above presents an interesting counter-current to the discussion. PL11 self-declares as being very comfortable with technology, an issue which Barnard et al. (2022) specifically acknowledge as being problematic in the application process for EUSS, with digital illiteracy proving to be a barrier to application on a digital-only platform.

The issues surrounding the EUSS are clearly complex and far-reaching, with the potential to cause, possibly unwittingly until it is too late, irrevocable harm to EU nationals in the UK. These issues clearly demand further investigation but represent a considerable cause of anxiety to EU nationals from all backgrounds, as demonstrated not only by participants here, but by Dr. Bulat and Barnard et al. (2022). These issues will likely continue to develop as awareness of the EUSS grows (or fails to grow), and issues relating to the right to rent, employment and the continuation of EU citizenship rights for EU nationals through the EUSS scheme manifest themselves in continued discourse and heartache. The impact of potential failures of the schemes cannot be underestimated here, ranging from denial of employment rights to denial of British citizenship to offspring of EU nationals who failed to get their EUSS before the birth of their children (stakeholder Dr. Bulat).

The EUSS, its administration and further confirm the role of governmental hostilities in situating and clarifying the extent of participants' anxieties.

### **6.3. Discrimination**

#### **6.3.1. Racism and xenophobia**

A discussion of racism and xenophobia is clearly necessary here, as numerous participants have reported lived experiences of it. It is important to note, however, that instances of generalised, non-specific racism, discrimination and xenophobia towards participants have been comparatively rare. This is particularly true of Polish participants, who have reported only isolated incidents of racism directed at them because of their nationality or the language they have spoken. This does not exclude them from governmental hostilities, as previously

discussed, but despite widespread media coverage of anti-Polish vitriol in the aftermath of the referendum (Rzepnikowska, 2019), this has not been regularly experienced by my Polish participants.

Despite this, one issue common to both groups but more prevalent in the Polish diaspora for linguistic reasons is participants' names and their pronunciation. Polish can be particularly difficult to learn as a second language (hereinafter L2), particularly with its use of non-palatal alveolar sibilants, a type of consonant which can be particularly difficult for native English speakers to pronounce (Pluta-Wojciechowska and Sambor, 2015). These issues apply equally to the spelling and pronunciation of Polish names, yet participants also appreciate this and often shorten their name to something more anglicised. PL9, having a relatively easily understandable name themselves, discusses the situation of a colleague:

She asked to be called Agnes. That's not exactly it would be more like Agnieszka.

The name Agnes has a place in the British cultural habitus through its precedent as a literary name in, for example, Anne Brontë's 'Agnes Grey' (1905). That the Brontës are authors local to the LCR further cements the name's stature in the local cultural habitus. Agnieszka, on the other hand, could present pronunciation difficulties to English speakers as outlined above (Pluta-Wojciechowska and Sambor, 2015). To this effect, PL9 detailed the following problems experienced with a manager at work:

[I said] I can write it [my name] down for you phonetically. And he's no, no, I'm fine. I'm fine. I'm fine. And he still got it wrong. And I mentioned that to, to, to a friend of mine, a Polish guy, the one that you might actually, you know, end up talking to, okay. And, and, and he said, look, he is just a fucking English racist, let's face it. I said, no, no, let's give him the

benefit of the doubt. No, he is a fucking racist, because if you couldn't lend, learn your name, that means he wasn't even bothered, he doesn't get done. And I thought, well, actually, maybe one of the defects of character of mine is that, you know, very low assertiveness and maybe that, you know, giving somebody benefit of a doubt is basically allowing somebody to effectively rape me and not even, you know, not even protesting, whereas this guy was straight you know, look, if he really cared, especially the all the others manage, you know, yeah, no problem if you really cared and it's not a hard name to pronounce. And he actually said he actually opened that friend of mine, he opens his opening suggested that he's not that he, he doesn't know how to pronounce it, or he kind of find a way to learn how to pronounce it. He consciously pronounces wrong, yeah, to kind of send a message that, you know, I'm so low in in his in his eyes, that he's not even bother to learn how to pronounce my name.

This extract demonstrates the extent to which PL9's manager went to demonstrate their dislike for the perceived foreignness of PL9, alienating them at work in the process. Moreover, this impacted PL9's sense of self-worth, with them questioning their own personality traits in light of their manager's actions. Again, we see markers of a pervasive Bourdieuan cultural habitus which lead to a 'Speak English!' narrative whereby social actors in the UK are expected to speak English in public.

Similarly, DE7 expressed their discomfort at having a German name in the UK:

[Original extract:] *Ich benutze auch nicht meinen deutschen Nachnamen, sondern den dänischen Nachnamen meines Mannes.*

[Translation:] I also don't use my German surname, but rather my husband's Danish one.

Both DE7 and PL9's experiences suggest the potential for

'CV whitening' (Özkaynak, 2023:2) when considering the impact having an international name has on migrants' lived experiences of the job market. Moreover, this further supports Dovchin's conceptualisations of translingual discrimination and Foreign Language Anxiety (2023): the 'Speak English!' narrative as a pervasive consequence of the British habitus is again demonstrated through participants' lived experiences.

### **Notions of racism and xenophobia**

To evidence the variegated nature of how racism and xenophobia are perceived within the Polish community, PL6 expresses discomfort around the terms 'racism' and 'xenophobia':

How can you say how can you you know, if you can say racism, if there is something between me and you, you know, I you know, that concept of race is a little bit unclear for me.

This is interesting as it engages directly with academic discussions that argue the differences between the two terms. Tafira connects the concept of xenophobia with cultural racism, arguing that xenophobia is cultural racism 'heavily entrenched in cultural differences enunciated by dissimilarities in nationality, ethnicity, language [...] and accent' (2011:114). In the context of the current investigation and the notions of whiteness discussed in chapter 2.2, it is clear that, even from the perspective of a participant, post-Brexit racism directed at white EU nationals is nuanced; participants have experienced incidences of both xenophobia, potentially influenced by the English habitus (chapter 2.3) and racism (discussion to follow in this chapter). Referring back to Ignatiev's notion of 'white negroes' (2008:40) in historic depictions of the Irish population in the UK, participants' lived experiences once again point to a personal evolution of this concept: from Irish to Polish.

PL6 prefers a more precise definition of what is happening and being directed towards their community, and they do not feel completely comfortable with the lexicon used here:

I had a situation where I, I was called the names just soon after the the referendum it was in Bradford and then in York, I also had a situation like like this [right] in Tang Hall, but nothing really happened. So, but but after the referendum I have to say within you know working class people. I actually think that the most the time where I felt most that there was some kind of hostility was more or less around the referendum or before and later on, I would actually feel... I actually spoke with my parents about it after after, you know, you invited me [Yeah] experiment and we came to an opinion that we actually feel that the hostility to be less, not increased but rather decreased after the referendum.

#### **Anti-Polish sentiments**

Anti-Polish sentiment is complicated by sentiments expressed by participants that there are different 'classes' of Polish immigrants, some of whom are perceived by the community itself to fit certain stereotypes often attributed to the Polish diaspora as a whole. This phenomenon will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 8.3, as is it discussed by Garapich (2008), but its ramifications for the discussion of racism and xenophobia are nonetheless important. If the diaspora community is divided enough to agree with some common stereotypes levelled at the wider community, then, whilst some acts of racism and discrimination can clearly be described as such, other indirect xenophobia is evidently more complex. This diversity in attitudes around racism and xenophobia within the Polish community is further evidenced by participants' experiences of it. These differ significantly from the experiences of the German cohort, both in form and substance, but also frequency and the effect they have had on participants. As shall be discussed later in the chapter, some German participants have been profoundly affected by the racism directed towards them, particularly those experiences that relate to interactions with governmental organisations in the UK. By contrast, some Polish participants reported that they had not experienced any racism

at all (PL4, PL7).

The incident most overtly recognisable as direct racism against a Polish participant is the following exchange related by PL1 in the following exchange:

I was once called a Polish c-u-n-t [sic] hahaha!

In isolation, this is shocking. It took place in a school and, as Thomas (2020) further explores, power dynamics between teaching staff and students can be problematic, particularly when there is potential for a xenophobic element. Whilst Thomas (2020) investigates the problems faced by faculty of colour in U.S. universities, a situation with more potential for racially charged power dynamics, PL1 does have a Polish accent in English and their heritage was known to students. By secondary school age, the choice of words here is without a doubt of racist motivation. Interesting to note, however, is that this incident was also reported to senior staff by another (English) student, demonstrating the discomfort felt by others in the classroom at the racist outburst and evidence of significant solidarity within the school community against racist and xenophobic acts. The preceding discussion with PL1 actually detailed the level of support they felt they received at work:

Mr X [senior leadership in school] is absolutely brilliant when it comes to embracing that multiculturalism, so it's not unusual to have that conversation there, it's what makes me quite comfortable there, because I know I can have that conversation with the kids without experiencing prejudice, and when there is a bit of prejudice, it is, I don't want to say it's stamped on, but it's quite, you, know there are these authoritative chats going on around that, so, yeah, I was once called a Polish c-u-n-t hahaha!

One further incident of anti-Polish sentiment was recounted, but by DE8:

I've been discriminated against once by our neighbours,

who fully drunken at 2 am on a Sunday, when we told them to turn the stereo off, and came over and shouted into our doors what we think, how we dare tell them how to live their lives, if we even pay council taxes, and we should piss off back to Poland.

Clearly DE8 was mistakenly identified as Polish, which supports a very stereotype-laden understanding of EU migration on behalf of the perpetrator and does reinforce the arguments presented previously about the universality of the vilification of Eastern European immigrants.

### **Anti-German sentiment**

Throughout the German cohort, there was greater reporting of racist encounters. Participants have reported extensively on numerous experiences of targeted discrimination and othering by members of the general public (DE7, DE1) and, in one instance, extended family (DE4). Whilst some of these sentiments have been previously discussed as curiosity, they are nonetheless othering and, in this cohort, demonstrably affect German participants more than Polish. Similarly, a number of German participants have reported shocking racist incidents that exhibit pointed and targeted Germanophobia, some examples of which are exhibited below. These Germanophobic sentiments are demonstrably underreported, both in academia and the media, as both tendentially focus on racism and xenophobia directed towards Eastern European immigrants, as evidenced by chapter 2.2. The scale of Germanophobic sentiment experienced by participants is extensive, with a major component being anti-war and anti-Third Reich doctrine which is evidently still deep-rooted in certain communities. This intersects with significant issues around *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or the management of historical memory, in modern Germany (see Reichel, 2001, for a comprehensive treatment of the subject). Götz highlights the issues that the singular word *Volksgemeinschaft* (variously national community or people's community, 2010:58) creates, its association with Nazism pervasive despite the term predating that movement.

The plethora of racist interactions participants have experienced which have anti World War Two and anti-Third Reich sentiments at their core are the most shocking. The convergence of association between Nazism and modern Germanness is interesting, particularly as it does not seem to be confined to older generations who may have first-hand experiences of the Second World War themselves. In this regard, DE7 reports the following:

[Original extract:] *Der kleine Junge sagte: Ich hasse Deutschland. Er war erst 10 Jahre alt! Das kam von seinen Eltern oder Großeltern.*

[Translation:] The young boy said: I hate Germany. He was only about 10 years old! That came from his parents or grandparents.

That this hatred of Germany is evident even amongst children is shocking. As highlighted in the literature review, experiences of German nationals in the UK are little studied; Conversi (1998) argues that anti-German sentiment is on the rise across Europe as early 1998, attributing this to a triangulation of the following factors:

1. A re-emergence of anti-European attitudes.
2. An increasing sense of threat posed by imagined German post-unification expansionism.

More recent work on Germanophobia is difficult to find, although Gilroy (2005) alludes to its existence in discussing troubling chants of 'The Dambusters' theme tune by crowds at England football matches (specific incident undated). Conversi's (1998) sentiments remained, however, core threads in Brexit discourse, an argument supported by articles such as that of Millar (2015) in the Daily Express, one of the largest pro-Brexit newspapers in the UK.

Continuing the theme of children, DE7 reports the following encounter:

[Original extract:] *Ich habe in der Schule in Doncaster gearbeitet. Ich habe den Unterricht aufgegeben, weil ich weinend aus dem Klassenzimmer gerannt bin. Sie machten den Hitlergruß für mich und so weiter.*

[Translation:] I worked in the school in Doncaster. I gave up teaching because I was chasing out of the classroom crying. They performed the Hitler Salute for me and so forth.

Interesting to note here is that this experience also took place in a school, similar to PL1, yet in this instance DE7 does not elaborate on the aftermath of the interaction or any support, or lack thereof, they received from the senior leadership team at the school. They note this themselves, continuing by commenting on the importance of space to the specificities of an interaction:

[Original extract:] *Das erlebt man nicht in allen Bereichen, oder? Es kommt darauf an, wo man ist.*

[Translation:] You don't experience that [direct continuation of the previous quote] everywhere, do you? It depends where you are.

Similarly, DE6 notes told of the experiences their children had at school:

My children were teased at school when they were tiny. And they were called Nazis. And they wouldn't have a trace of German accent when they're young. And unlike me, you know, but because they're the English first kind of children. It was just through the indirect knowledge that there was a German mum hanging around somewhere.

Anti-German discrimination in school settings has also been noted by Cole and Stuart (2005) when interviewing a German PGCE student undergoing teacher training: temporal differences between this investigation and Cole and Stuart's indicates that

classroom-based racism is an established problem that is not solely the result of Brexit-related hostilities.

Away from the scholastic environment, DE6 maintains that there are deep-rooted identity problems at the source of anti-German sentiments in the UK:

Anti Germanus comes up very easily. As soon as any opportunity lends itself. For instance, with the recent issue around the distribution of the AstraZeneca [COVID-19 vaccine]. Yeah. It's, it's really one of the conundrums of the British mentality and not having come to terms yet with the, the combination of the loss of the Empire. And having won two world wars and being quite a lot materially poorer than Germany. There's a lot going on, which just hasn't been digested. Yeah, there's there's a lot of internal conflict.

These sentiments hint at and align with some of the discussions covered in the literature review; evolutions of whiteness in relationship to colonialism and dualistic understandings of whiteness are demonstrably linked to post-Empire social attitudes. Gilroy argues that Churchill's Post-War triangulation of Britishness as being under attack from 'Americanisation, Europeanisation and non-specific subsumption by immigrants' (2005:25) demonstrates the potential here to link British identity politics to Germanophobia. Here, there is also a link with Bourdieu's (1997) cultural habitus, as grounded in chapter 2.3. Here, Gilroy's triangulation of Britishness under attack has become engrained in the English cultural habitus, provoking Germanophobia as a cultural attitude of Englishness.

In a similar vein, DE4 also experienced racism rooted in National Socialist stereotypes:

So, her granddad, first of all, said why did you have to go out with 'one of them'? So, I get on very well there with her parents, but the next generation who still remembers the war vividly, [Yeah.] They were a little more reserved. Yeah, and then the first Christmas dinner when

we all sat down with a turkey then stood up and said 'Sieg Heil'. And they all sighed and went What is this idiot doing? So, I took no offence but, I just, the others were badly embarrassed.

Although this incident could be passed off as a 'dad joke' or teasing, as other participants have reported (see DE2, 'Humour and Curiosity' section), DE4 underlines the embarrassment felt by all other family members present, suggesting the family also saw these attitudes as inappropriate. This is especially relevant as the experience relayed was some years, if not decades, in the past, and the 'grandchild' referred to would now be approaching 50. These experiences do, however, suggest something much more insidious than could be explained by racially-informed humour akin to the teasing experienced by DE2. Whilst DE2 describes this teasing as friendly and benevolent, DE4 does not attribute the same descriptors to their experience, despite maintaining that they took no offence from it.

### **6.3.2. Humour and curiosity**

This section aims to treat experiences participants have recounted which have racial difference at their root yet are self-reported by participants as either not discriminatory or racist (but humorous, amongst friends), or based in a curiosity to know details about participants which could be considered private, thus having the potential to offend or discriminate. It is important to analyse these experiences as the distinct encounters participants maintain they were, rather than grouping them in the previous section on racism and xenophobia.

#### **Humour and 'teasing'**

Humour is a contested issue within discourse on racism; Weaver (2016) maintains that it has both the potential to offend and support racial stereotypes, as was construed by both Charlie Hebdo and Jyllands-Posten in their depictions of the Prophet Muhammad. Sammut (2017) argues that Islam now represents the new

'Face of Evil' in light of the War on Terror and the fall of Communism. This is equally relevant to participants' experiences of Germanophobia, particularly where this is rooted in anti-Nazi sentiment: clearly there is continued humour to be found in the vilification of Nazism (Lee, 2018), yet comedies such as *Blackadder* and *Dad's Army* continue to maintain the presence of Nazism as a representation of Germany in popular culture. This embodiment is demonstrated through DE2's experience:

I was out with the kids, there was like a little event in the woods near us where we were doing something in the woods. I don't know what we did, something, anyway, so it was obviously organised by a group, by a local sort of like a group, you know, doing that. And at the end of the event, we were walking home and then my older son was running off and I was like '[child] *STOP, WARTE!*' it was really loud, yeah. And then suddenly complete silence and somebody said 'oh, we only normally hear that in old films'.

In the context of the English habitus, such 'old films' would be films about the Second World War, and the person shouting *Warte!* is usually a Nazi soldier or guard. Here, viewing the encounter through the lens of Language as Methodology is important (see chapter 5.4). The encounter here has occurred as a consequence of the language DE2 has spoken in public. Although not as clearly definable as discriminatory or racist in manners similar to the experiences recounted in the preceding section, this curiosity and continual association between German (the language), Germanness and Nazism has the potential to become harmful to or be perceived as such by participants. Moreover, DE2 interpreted the interaction as hostile, demonstrating the potential fluidity of the habitus in interpreting cross-cultural interactions. If I now examine the experiences of DE3, who maintains their experiences were based in teasing, largely from people known to them, we see a different type of humour expressed through xenophobic discourse:

[Original extract:] *DE3: Ich habe eigentlich keine Diskriminierung bemerkt. Gelegentlich wird man als Deutscher oder Ausländer gehänselt, aber das ist alles nur zum Spaß.*

[Translation] I haven't actually noticed any discrimination. I've sometimes been teased for being a German or a foreigner, but that's all just for fun.

Here, again, Weaver (2016) comments: this form of humour, can help build bridges between communities, rather than increase tensions. This encounter, however, suggests an almost playful exchange between close acquaintances or friends and, whilst theoretically it could be ascribed as offensive by third parties, it is clearly seen as a humorous encounter by the participant.

### **Curiosity**

Most participants have experienced some form of othering that could be ascribed to curiosity, whether a broadly negative experience resulting in discomfort, or a more positive one. Whilst clearly not based in a desire to be racist or discriminatory, these experiences are othering to participants. It is possible to categorise some of these encounters as based in the curiosity of members of the public towards participants: an inquisitive look of wonderment or surprise or an attempt to speak the participant's mother tongue unexpectedly, or a desire to know private information about participants. The response to these incidents by participants is also highly individual, ranging from amusement to discomfort. Here, there is significant scope for participants' cultural habitus to shape their reactions to such curiosity. This plethora of experiences can be roughly assigned to a spectrum of motive, from pure curiosity and friendship, to quietly hostile. The following examples will therefore be discussed according to this loose framework, commencing with those experiences that are assigned by participants to be signs of friendship, leading to those which participants found alienating, verging on hostile.

DE2, they and their children being unexpectedly spoken to in German:

We went to that shop, the little shop on the steam railway, and obviously I was chatting with my kids in German, cos they wanted to buy something, cos that's what we do, you know? So, I went to pay, and I gave [child A] the money, the little one, and says, 'oh! you go pay' and stuff, and then the man tried to speak to [child A] in German and stuff and I was like [gasps with surprise] and he was really nice, he tried. Oh! I said, erm, I think then he asked me if I wanted the receipt, and so I said, 'oh yeah, alright' and answered in EN, and he said 'oh!' and I said 'oh! We live here, we live in Leeds, we're not visitors', and that's never happened to me before. But bless him, the guy really tried, you know!

PL2, recounting a typical situation at the supermarket with their children:

We have that whole bizarre conversation where I say something in Polish and they reply, and people look at us wondering 'how does this work'. But because there's that English, with a very natural English accent from the boys, it's straight away a more 'at home' situation because at least 50% of that conversation is in the language that it's supposedly meant to be.

DE6, detailing a perplexing interaction with a member of the public:

So, it can come up in completely unpredictable places like that. I was once accused of having a dog. The notion was I was walking my dog and the person that knew me approached me and said, how come you have a dog? You're German? And I don't really kind of can you explain this thinking to me? Oh, yeah. But I stopped because you're German. You must go back to Germany anytime. So, you can't have a dog. Yeah, so it's just kind of weird things that happen. And they are very unpredictable.

DE4, being asked where they are from:

But no, I really don't feel discriminated because of my...  
But I still when I meet somebody new after a sentence or two, they are like 'where are you from?' They don't necessarily guess it's DE, but they know it's not native. So, I used to get upset about this. But now we shouldn't notice anymore what they do.

Any number of these interactions could potentially be seen as hostile, and as previously stated, participants' reactions range from bemusement to confusion to, in DE4's case, historically being upset over the comments but now just accepting them, rather than interpreting them as hostile. None of the interactions above can be definitely said to be discriminatory; indeed, speaking to someone in their mother tongue is demonstrated by the methodological approach of this investigation (Language as Methodology, chapter 5.4) as having communication advantages (see, for example, Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004), and the same benefits can be applied to social communication. Equally, the act of speaking to a participant in their native language in the UK in public others them in a public setting. Likewise, DE6's interaction assumes there must be a constant tie to the country of origin for anyone who chooses not to reside there. This particular interaction demonstrates the alien nature of migration to the English cultural habitus. Unlike, as previously discussed in chapter 4, in Poland, where out-migration is normalised, emigration is not normalised in English cultural contexts. While Poles in the UK often have established networks before they move (see White, 2012), the average English resident has no concept of migration and the everyday consequences thereof.

Again, this is clearly not xenophobic, but does indicate a separation or divide between communities residing in the UK. This will be touched upon in later chapters discussing space and class, but these factors are also potentially relevant here: such misunderstandings are potentially linked to the spaces tendentially inhabited by diaspora communities and those who misunderstand them.

### 6.3.3. Experiences of LGBTQI+-based discrimination

An additional element to participants' experiences of discrimination and hostilities is that of gender and sexuality. This clearly transcends both nationality groups, with numerous participants maintaining that it is not their nationality which could make them reconsider a particular action or inhabiting a particular place, but their gender. These experiences of fear and hostility against women are interesting as they complicate what could be a simple 'us' and 'them' framework of hostilities. Whilst same-sex marriage and adoption have been legal in Germany since 2017, DE5 describes below how public opinion and behaviour ostracises them when in public with their adoptive family in Germany. Here, there is no particular incident of discrimination, but rather a broader, more subtle pattern of othering. DE5 notes here that, whilst they love to holiday in Germany with their family, life as a same-sex couple with adopted children in the UK is easier and more welcoming:

Clearly, we're a gay couple, and even on that front, I must say, when I came to the UK, and the fact that we pretty soon were able to get civil partnered, and now we're married, that we were able to adopt children, the way this works. I always thought, this is incredibly progressive, and far, far, far more advanced than Germany. If you sit in a streetcar, and [partner] and I and then the two children, and then [child] will say, Papa, look at this, and then you see all these old ladies looking up, and they try to figure out what's the situation. You get stares, right? I have never, ever, ever, ever had any kind of homophobic encounter here, ever, or any, sort of, looks. I don't feel that I'm different at all. So, that's a really, really big bonus of this country, and I still think it existed, not in Berlin, but in Karlsruhe, you'd still find very conservative attitudes.

The following extracts note, either through direct

experience or sociocultural norms, the levels of othering experienced by LGBTQI+ minorities in Poland:

PL1: I mean the latest thing, honestly the latest thing is, I was talking to my sister yesterday, apparently gay people are coming into nurseries and teaching people how to masturbate... I was like?! Why is it bad, for one thing, second thing, it's not just gay people, it's gay men, so are they just teaching boys? Hang on a minute, why not girls? But they don't do anything about girls so why, where are the lesbians in this? But, that whole concept of, you know, 'The West is bringing this open [unclear]. I think it was a Priest in PL who used, erm, 'rainbow disease' in one of his quite high profile sermons and, and you do, and you listen to it and you think, 'hang on, how can a country who, who, I mean, there was so many people ostracised in Poland just for who they were, that had absolutely nothing to do with, like, it was not their choice, and now do the same to other people who, because of who they are and they have nothing, no choice over that.

The acceptance of LGBTQI+ minorities in Germany and Poland is likely to vary hugely by region, particularly as levels of religiosity also vary. Of particular note here is that PL1's family resides in the highly religious south-east of the country, a region which provides a bedrock of support for the current far-right, anti-LGBTQI+ government. Indeed, entire



regions of Poland have declared themselves *Strefy wolna od LGBT* or 'LGBT-free zone' (Knight, 2022).

Image 6.2.3: a sign at the entrance to the village of Świdnik, Lublin Voivodeship [region], South-Eastern Poland (Bart Staszewski, National Geographic Poland, 2020).

Image 6.2.3 is particularly interesting when considered through the lens of Language as Methodology, a theme that is more extensively discussed in chapter 5.4. In this image, the proclamation of Świdnik's *Strefy wolna od LGBT* or 'LGBT-free zone' is multilingual, a notion which may appear counter-intuitive to the monolingual Linguistic Landscape (for further discussion of the Linguistic Landscape, see chapters 5.4 and 8.1). Świdnik's location is important here: it is the village adjoining Lublin International Airport, the main international gateway to the Lublin Voivodeship [region]. Importantly here, given the perceived context of LGBTQI+ rights in Poland by the family of PL1, the only destinations reachable from Lublin airport outside of typical holiday destinations are the UK and Ireland, with twice-daily flights to London for most of the week (Lublin Airport, 2023).

Moreover, the choice of languages here supports PL1's assertions that LGBTQI+ ideology is seen by their family to be a Western import; one which has the potential to significantly damage the religious habitus of the region. PL1's quote directly links the Polish religious habitus to anti-LGBTQI+ political agendas; Przybylska and Czepczyński further introduce the concept of 'linguistic sacralisation' (2017:23) as a means by which religion begins to influence the Linguistic Landscape. Clearly, there is an important link between (in this instance LGBTQI+) politics and policy, regional religiosity and the linguistic landscape which heavily discriminates against those who identify as LGBTQI+. Other participants have spoken at length on local and spatial differences in acceptance of them in Britain (i.e., DE7, chapter 9.6), yet the blatant levels of anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in the Polish Linguistic Landscape, at least in Lublin Voivodeship [region], are displayed publicly to a greater extent than other discriminatory sentiments discussed by participants of this research.

PL2 further clarifies the extent of discrimination in Poland, highlighting the stigma suffered by many minorities, including LGBTQI+, across Polish society:

No *chav* [sic] is as dangerous as a PL equivalent, but they

are more in your face. Because in Poland, if they've got a problem with you, oh you will know. But if you're not doing anything, or you're from neighbourhood, you're good. Or if you're just walking through. But of course, there's a stigma and a bias, because if you are looking different, especially LGBT minorities, dyed hair, subcultures, they will be prone to be more hostile towards that kind of people. Because they hate people who are not like them.

These discussions are notable because, unlike DE5, other participants were not outwardly members of the LGBTQI+ community in public (PL1 and DE8, for example, are both married to a partner of the opposite sex), yet participants still feel strongly about these issues. LGBTQI+ acceptance and rights in Poland is much discussed, from academia (for example, Mole, de Zavala and Ardag, 2021; Chowaniec, Mazierska, and Mole 2021; Council of Europe, 2020) to the mainstream media (i.e., CNN, 2020). In Germany, the situation is less clear-cut: Germany, and particularly Berlin, are widely acknowledged as being a centre for LGBTQI+ rights and freedoms (Andersson, 2023). Here, then, the situation may be heavily dependent on location and a particular location's religiosity and habitus, a notion supported by DE1's comparisons between Hamburg and Leeds (chapter 9.5).

#### **6.4. Conclusions: (re)new(ed) hostilities in unlikely communities**

Investigating participants' lived experiences of hostilities immediately forefronts issues of difference, discrimination and othering in my discussions around post-Brexit anxieties. This research highlights, however, that there is no universality to post-Brexit hostilities. In relation to research aim 1, I can begin to clarify the extent of these anxieties, but the nature and extent of post-Brexit hostilities themselves have been demonstrated to rely on a host of different and divergent factors.

To this effect, I highlighted the salience of governmental

hostilities as anxiety-inducing for participants. Such levels of anxiety vary from uncertainty and annoyance at bureaucracy associated with the EUSS, to the outright fear preventing DE7 from crossing the border and travelling internationally. Here, the lived experiences of my participants go beyond any discrimination that could be perceived as purely deriving from the administrative policy burden of Brexit. What I have evidenced is a clear and pervasive set of discriminatory policy ideals, set in motion by the Hostile Environment framework, which targets EU nationals specifically. Moreover, it does not singularly target EU8+2 migrants; the evidence I presented here demonstrates the pervasive nature of government hostility towards EU nationals from wealthier states. Explanations of government hostilities towards EU citizens that are framed in discussions around Central and Eastern European nationals are, I argue, insufficient. Here, Bourdieu's cultural habitus again provides a critical explanation for English cultural and governmental hostilities. As demonstrated in chapter 2.2, Britain has an established history of culturally-sanctioned discrimination and xenophobia, a phenomenon now, I argue, deeply engrained in the English cultural habitus of governance and society.

When participants experienced social hostilities, I demonstrated the importance of language and culture. Major incidences of othering, those which prompted extended discussion, frequently involved discrimination based in language and culture: whether spelling of names, or the perceived sound of the language itself, cultural discrimination played a greater role than expected. Discrimination which focused on the issues salient in Brexit debates featured less prominently in this sample, with only one discrete example of discrimination explicitly linked to economics. This is significant as much of the xenophobia of the Brexit campaign was rooted in the notion of attempting to combat perceived excesses in immigration from Eastern European countries, primarily those who assented to the EU post-2004. This speaks to discussions in the extant literature (chapter 2.3.2) of the English habitus and the paradoxical dualism in the English construction and definition

of 'whiteness'. In this vein, immigration from more westerly countries in the EU, or, perhaps more accurately, those perceived to be wealthier, should pose less of a challenge to ideological conceptualisations of immigration stemming from the English habitus.

I argue that participants consistently evidence lived experiences of cultural discrimination, suggesting the role of the habitus, language and culture in debates around discrimination is under-researched. What my research data demonstrates are significant Germanophobic lived experiences, both institutionalised in governmental settings and amongst the British public. There is a clear spatial divide here in terms of where participants appear to be more likely to encounter such xenophobia (a theme that will be explored further in chapter 9), yet the presence of Germanophobia as a key theme of import over and above anti-Polish vitriol is surprising. The root of the societal dimension of this phenomenon appears to relate back to events of the Second World War; events which are only remembered first-hand by an ever-shrinking minority of the British public. This is surprising, suggesting deeply-ingrained attitudes which pervade the English habitus: there are contemporary explanations for potential Germanophobic discrimination (such as the key role Germany plays within the power structure of the EU), yet these do not feature highly amongst the lived experiences of participants.

The current investigation highlights a key counter-topographical trend: Germanophobia is actually more widespread, when considering the experiences of my participants, than anti-Polish sentiment, demonstrating a clear gap in academic literature relating to discrimination against EU nationals in the UK. Moreover, there is significant import in the context of these arguments: anti-Polish sentiment is understood to be relatively widespread in Britain for a variety of reasons, as previously discussed (see chapter 2), but there is no precedent for academic discussion on the prevalence of Germanophobia in the UK as the academic research does not exist.

I argue that the English habitus is productive of specific types of cultural discrimination in specific contexts. As

participants have demonstrated, Britain is seen to be welcoming to LGBTQI+ minorities relative to Germany and, particularly, Poland. In contrast, the levels of Germanophobic vitriol can be seen to emanate from key themes of the English habitus such as Todd's (2016) notion of the 'stand alone' prerogative, or Gilroy's (2005) triangulation of Britishness under attack.

## **Chapter 7: Language, Culture and Multilingualism in Personal Contexts**

### **7.1. Focus**

This chapter aims to explore the role of language in the interactions of participants with the destination society. Here, I interrogate research aim 2, reconstructing participants' lived experiences of linguistic and cultural difference, situated within the framework of Bourdieu's habitus. I will investigate participants' relationships with language and culture, both in their mother tongue and English, and how these relationships shape and define aspects of their life in the UK. These investigations seek to support research objectives 1, 2 and 3 (see chapter 1.2). The idiosyncratic nature of participants' experiences will be highlighted in the context of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Equally, I aim to touch upon the extent of the Brexit-related anxieties discussed in the Hostilities chapter, situating these in their language and cultural contexts. In their most basic forms, language and culture are tools for communication. This must be acknowledged from a functional perspective, to be considered through both L1 (mother tongue, or first language) and L2 (second language) paradigms. Language is universally acknowledged as a tool for communication, and differences in language clearly present barriers to this effect. The role of culture here, however, is more obscure, if equally as important. Newmark (1988) highlights the following aspects of culture which can cause linguistic difference. Clearly, these apply equally intra-linguistically as between languages, as even communities across the Leeds City

Region will understand the following phenomena differently to one another Newmark (1988):

- 1) Ecology
- 2) Material culture
- 3) Social culture
- 4) Organisations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts
- 5) Gestures and habits

As I will explore throughout the course of this chapter, participants' unique experiences of language use and their attitudes towards their L1 and L2 languages and cultures differ radically. Context is usually the key here, with parental responsibilities, career choices and identity just a few of the most important aspects of participants' cultural experiences. As I have explored in the literature review, this investigation is specifically adopting a stance which blurs the lines of distinction between language and culture, considering them to be inexorably linked and indivisible from one another. Here, I follow guidance from Nida and Taber (2012), Newmark (1988) and Akbari (2013) who map out the binding relationship between language and culture, highlighting the intersectionality of language and culture when engaging in translation work, for example. This does not preclude, however, participants discussing particular aspects of their mother tongue or their culture of origin in discrete contexts. Whilst I am choosing to consider language and culture as having blurred boundaries to one another, that does not negate specific language or culturally-grounded experiences as being described as such.

## **7.2. The role of the mother tongue**

### **7.2.1. The meaning of a mother tongue**

The following section aims to examine the issue of maintaining the L1 and potential for losing it within the social context of participants' everyday experiences. Here, I will touch upon some of the linguistic theories behind language loss

amongst immigrants but concentrate on the social consequences as evidenced by participants in their contemporary contexts of parenthood and their multilingual lives. This discussion speaks primarily to research aim 2. Participants' L1, in flux with their perceived competency levels in English, and cultural fluency in the English habitus, will play a decisive role in shaping any anxieties of difference participants may exhibit, particularly in a post-Brexit context.

Discussions about the meaning of a mother tongue were extensive throughout most of the interviews in the dataset. Responses were, however, varied, with participants with parental responsibilities tending to elucidate more animated discussions about identity and the need to pass on their mother tongue to their children. This is in stark contrast to other participants, who view their mother tongue as a means of communication with considerably less emotional attachment. This viewpoint was, however, relatively rare as the majority of participants who are not parents had a significant emotional investment in their mother tongue as a signifier of their identity and cultural ties to their country of origin. Some of the evidence for this will be discussed in chapter 8, with the discussion on Polish-language church services in particular cementing the relationship between mother tongue, identity and space.

Such is the complex meaning of a 'mother tongue' to participants, however, that few mentioned using their mother tongue as a tool for communication as its primary purpose. As will be discussed, its meaning in terms of participants' identity tends to form a more extensive point of discussion than as a means of communication without some form of emotional attachment.

One exception here is DE1, who answered the following when asked what the German language meant to them:

Err, ooh, it's just another language to me, to communicate with friends and family at home and, actually not just friends and family - I read the news as well, don't I? Erm... I see it as, erm, like being bilingual, I see it as an advantage sometimes, like when I was studying for

example and I had to research for my papers, erm, I could access so many more sources for my information that I needed... that was, that was really helpful.

This suggests a certain emotional indifference when speaking German as opposed to English or another language: it serves as a means to an end; bilingualism is an exploitable resource for DE1. However, DE1 also states elsewhere that they communicate with their parent in German, suggesting that there could be an emotive aspect that is not adequately explained here. Given other participants' emotional attachment to their L1, DE1 certainly presents an interesting viewpoint here.

Another possibility is that DE1 sees themselves as less attached to German and Germany more generally: as will be discussed in later chapters, they are self-described as less settled in the UK, and are also child-free without familial attachments in the UK, negating the emotional impact upon many other participants of trying to raise bilingual children. Moreover, they self-identify as having a 'travelling gene', being a mobile citizen with few attachments generally:

I'm always open to moving somewhere else because that's just my travelling gene, I'm always looking at flights. My dad, for example, he lives in Spain now, and he just bought himself an apartment.

This suggests that DE1 may have a much more 'European Identity' (see Risse, 2011, among others) than other participants. Indeed, Risse's statement that 'if there is an emerging lingua franca in the EU, it is English' (2011:39), particularly amongst younger, highly educated and middle-class generations, supports the notion of a European identity which could lessen the emotional attachment to an L1, as is apparent in the case of DE1.

### **7.2.2. A marker of identity**

This section will interrogate participants' relationships

with their mother tongue in terms of personal identity, questioning the extent to which the L1 is a marker of identity, and habitus, when participants conduct their daily lives in environments and spaces where their L1 is not the lingua franca. Participants who had parental responsibilities, for example, took the process of L1 maintenance much more seriously. They also demonstrated greater emotional attachment to their mother tongue compared with other participants who were not parents, or who self-reported as less settled in the UK. When asked questions along the lines of 'What does Polish/German mean to you?', participants often had to think deeply, some stating that they'd never considered a potential response to such a question before. Indeed, PL1 went as far as remarking the following:

oooh, big guns... erm, I dunno, just, it's part of my identity.

This highlights the extent to which language and identity are intertwined to my participants. The following comments from PL4 demonstrate that such is the expectedness of assuming an identity grounded in their mother tongue for these participants, that the standard response to such a question is a variation of 'normality':

It's [Polish] just so normal to me, I don't think I've ever thought about what it means to me, it's just, well it's... Obviously Polish, it just comes naturally for me to speak.

PL7 further comments the following, emphasising again the nature of the question:

Um, that's a verrrry deep question... No, I still find I it's obviously my mother tongue. So, it still feels very important. And it does connect me to obviously, not just my family, but to like my culture.

PL6 shares a similar sentiment but this time touches on

the emotional connection they feel through their mother tongue:

I wouldn't really feel any other language.

PL5 further posits that, in a care-giving environment, speaking Polish around their (English) patients is 'fucking abusing'. They argue that, speaking a language other than a patients' L1 is an abuse of power, leading to potential insecurities, particularly among the elderly. This notion also supports Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's notion of 'more "theirs" than the rest' (2021:155). By maintaining an English-language environment, patients are afforded a more homely environment which has a greater sense of being 'theirs' by ensuring the language spoken in this environment has familiarity, despite the circumstances of a hospital visit being ephemeral and (often) without control on behalf of the patient. Moreover, this discussion coalesces conceptualisations of whiteness in a British context, discussed in chapter 2.2, with the English cultural habitus. Here, habitus familiarity through language is seen as key to patient care by PL5. Notions of home-making will be further discussed in chapter 10.2, but the link between mother tongue and emotional wellbeing has particular import in the present context.

That participants may find it easier to emotionally connect and communicate with others in their mother tongue is a well-documented concept. Ivaz, Costa, and Duñabeitia (2016) discuss the emotional distance associated with foreign languages, finding that communicating in a foreign-language environment can affect emotional processing.

Participants' attachment to language also varied based upon their parental status (discussed in the next section) and the length of time they had been in the UK. PL6, who moved to the UK relatively recently, feels a strong attachment to Poland, actively maintaining friendships in Poland and visiting for extended periods, even in 2020 with COVID-19 travel restrictions in place:

I have to say that I still have most of my friends are are

in Poland and I I speak to them often. So, then Yes, yeah. And I do speak through the internet and I, I quite often go to Poland for example this year {2020}, I've gone for almost the whole of July and August.

By contrast, PL7 and PL1, who have both spent large parts or all of their adult life in the UK feel differently. Here, there is still a strong sense of Polish identity, but with an English aspect too.

PL1 demonstrates this with the following statement:

I don't want to describe myself as Polish in the first 'who are you, where are you from...' you know? But then it always comes out, it's almost like the first thing it's, it's quite a big part of who I am and where I'm from and why I'm the way I am [M: yeah] so it's really weird, because sometimes I'm trying to fight it and then, but then I'm thinking why should I? I don't have to... [M: what would you say then?] Well, I would say I'm from Menston but I'm originally from Poland.

This suggests that time spent in the UK is an important factor to participants' relationship with their cultural identity. Nuance is, however, needed here as participants' experiences discussed in the Hostilities chapter, particularly those of DE7, demonstrate that time spent in the UK can also have a limited effect when considered in a wider context. PL7, in a manner similar to PL1 above, states the following:

I do identify strongly with Yorkshire now. Especially that both East North... especially like my boyfriend's from Hull so, erm, And his whole family's here. And I have spent most of my adult life here, so, erm, so it's like, I would say, Polish but Yorkshire bias.

German is a less homogeneous language than Polish, with a large degree of regional variation and change. Standard High German has various iterations dependent on country, with

differing national standards for Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Schneider-Wiejowski, Kellermeier-Rehbein and Haselhuber, 2013). Moreover, Standard High German as spoken in Germany has a large number of regional dialects and lexical variations, leading to the dialect of German spoken being an important marker of regional identity. DE6 supports this with the following sentiment:

I have a passive knowledge of the local dialect of Germany, where I come from, and right, not to lose that because that's in the actual lexicon. It's really different to High German right, yeah, I find it really kind of quaint and sweet and old fashioned and lovely. And all of these things. And I'm keen not to lose it.

Moreover, DE7 notes that, as their parents were refugees in Germany forced to move westwards by the Soviet authorities, their dialect (and culture) made DE7 and their parents a minority in Germany, marking them with a specific identity due to their Silesian German dialect:

[Original extract:] *Sie waren auch dort eine Minderheit. Und diese Flüchtlinge wurden schon damals nicht positiv gesehen, weil Millionen von Menschen nach Deutschland kamen in einer Zeit, in der alles zerstört war. Das konnte man an ihrem Akzent erkennen, und man konnte sofort am Nachnamen erkennen, woher diese Menschen kamen.*

[Translation] They were a minority there, as well. And those refugees were even back then not looked at positively because millions of people came to Germany at a time when everything was destroyed. It was discernible from their accent, and you could immediately recognise from where these people came by their surname.

The link here between regional identity, accent and dialect is clear, but what is noticeably absent from the data is those participants who are parents wanting their children to speak a particular dialect of German. Indeed, DE2 simultaneously

describes the attachment they feel to their specific dialect of German, whilst acknowledging the flaws of dialect as a tool of national communication:

I've got more of an emotional attachment to the dialect, not to standard German as much [oh ok, yeah] but I speak to, you know, but I'd speak standard German to ma kids you know - there's no point them speaking dialect cos no-one will understand them.

In the case of DE7, their personal attachment to regional dialect is heavily influenced by the discrimination they faced as someone who spoke a trans-located dialect that was not local to where they lived. This is notable as attitudes towards English accents and dialects spoken by their children are readily offered, with PL11 stating the following:

My daughter has a really nice accent, like a posh one, because we were living in Kettering, because it was closer to down south. Here, she went to school with all the Yorkshire kids, and is talking like that. It's like, my God, it's the school. My God, she's losing it after three months (unclear 40.00).

Beyond just an awareness of their daughter's English accent, this comment also suggests a deeper understanding of the role of identity accent has in the English habitus. Suggesting that a more Southern, Kettering accent is posh immediately implies knowledge of the North-South divide stereotypes associated with regional identity, wealth and accent in the UK, and thus a developing knowledge and understanding of the UK habitus. This is an important nuance to the debate around the significance of accent in identity: whereas DE2 saw their children's German accent as less significant, beyond their ability to speak German, the idea that PL11's children's accent in English, the L1 or mother tongue of their child, is important, provokes further questions around the transferability of the English habitus to foreign nationals in the UK. Accent is

more intrinsically associated to economic status in English than in both German or Polish, and accent discrimination is a concept rooted in the English habitus. The adoption of attitudes by participants which privilege the importance of accent in English, when such an importance is not assigned to accent in Polish or German, suggests a transfer and acquisition of elements of the English habitus by participants.

As previously noted, Polish, on the other hand, exhibits a much higher degree of homogeneity than German (Berlinska, 2005). Moreover, Kamusella (2012) highlights post-war Central European nationalism as being a key factor in the political and sociological homogenisation of the Polish language.

As a result, regional dialect is only noted once by participants as an identity marker:

PL2: we don't have a much of a different dialect in Polish.

PL3: yeah, but the thing that varies, there's some extreme areas like, erm, there's people who usually live in mountains who have a very distinctive dialect.'

This exchange then starts an animated discussion between PL2 and PL3 which results in the following conversation:

PL2: You've got 3 dialect and subnational dialect, which is Kashubian, which is like not the nationality even, they recognise themselves as a separate entity within the country.

PL3: Yeah, with one in the mountains and the second one in Wroclaw I would say.

PL2: Oh well, yeah, you've got the Silesian [...]

PL2: [...] so all our dialects are similar. That's why as Polish we are received similar, even if my Polish does not pierce you through my English [yeah], it's still there, and I'm still recognised as Polish [yeah]. '

Clearly, despite some disunity here regarding the precise

extent and number of Polish dialects, Polish is seen by these native speakers as relatively homogeneous, lessening the importance to them of regional accent as a marker of identity. Even amongst the Polish dialects mentioned here, Kashubian is seen as endangered and a minority language in its own right (Zienukowa, 2015); and Kamusella (2012) defines Silesians as a speech community with a unique language. There is a critical link to space and regionality here; in a post-Brexit Leeds-York region, there remain marked differences in local dialect, adding another layer of cultural complexity for those participants who are not used to local huge variations in language and dialect. England's linguistic diversity is engrained in its cultural habitus through mechanisms including class, socioeconomic status and regionality: Baratta (2018) dissects linguistic variety and their associated prejudices in Britain. That the Polish cultural habitus does not consider language and language use in the same way is a marker of difference between Polish L1 speakers and other English residents.

In discussing the differences between regional and national identity, PL7 displays their strong regional attachments whilst simultaneously keeping national, country-wide universal identity at a distance:

I think Britishness, it's just to do with because, like, it's a thing, having that kind of the same look like, if I felt more Polish and more like, Lodz. So, I think it's to do where they'd like a sense of identity with like, a bigger than me like, country, [Yeah.] comes in with a lot of ideology. Kind of like, enforced.

Although this is in the context of British identity and not, in this case, Polish identity, PL7 also claims their own identity to be 'Polish with a Yorkshire bias', implying that both cultures form significant parts of their identity. This attachment to a region rather than a nation repeats itself across both the entire cohort, and all language and cultural backgrounds. This is a key finding of this investigation: one linguistic or cultural identity does not usurp another in

participants' lived identities, rather a merging of the two to an extent individual to each participant is demonstrated. The following excerpts demonstrate the variety of regional identities which participants present which go beyond a national cultural identity, embracing instead regional identities of Germany, Poland or Northern England.

PL7: if I was in Poland, I would probably feel less Polish, and I would just feel more strongly related to my city. But since I'm here, I probably feel more Polish in some sense.

PL1: Well, I would say I'm from Menston but I'm originally from Poland.

DE7: [Original extract] *Als ich hierher kam, war ich sehr stolz darauf, dass ich aus Hannover stamme.*

[Translation] When I came here, I was very proud that I came from Hannover.

Amongst the German cohort in particular, a number of participants also underlined that they felt their identity was more European than German, particularly through discussions of the concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or the management of historical memory, overcoming the past. This is a particularly important issue in contemporary German sociology and identity politics as the German Nation is still navigating the hurdles and problems associated with a national identity as a remnant of the Third Reich (see Wittmann, 2006, for example). That no Polish participants mentioned having a European identity that usurped or augmented their national Polish identity highlights just how divergent the two nationality groups are here, with the following comments made by German participants:

DE8: It's any remainder of nationalism, again, in certain parts of German society, it's really been scrubbed out with a metal brush, and then try to replace that with either regional identity, so from this part of Germany,

and then, at the same time, with a European one.

DE3: [Original extract] *Ich würde mich als Europäer bezeichnen und nicht als Deutscher. Wir sind Europäer, weil wir geografisch in Europa leben.*

[Translation:] I would describe myself as a European instead of a German. We are Europeans because geographically we live in Europe.

That the UK does not have a similar convergence of identities between Britishness and Europeanness is clear given the political context of this investigation, yet DE3 also hints at an existence of an '*Angst vor Europa*' [fear of Europe] in the UK (see Conoscenti, 2019), which underlines the marked differences in attitudes towards Europeanness found in Germany and the UK.

To conclude, the relationship between language, culture and identity is complex and multifaceted; some participants associate their L1 language and associated culture with their identity to a greater extent than others. Each experience outlined above is unique, with some being relatively contradictory in their conceptualisations of identity linked with language and culture (particularly DE4 and their desire to move away from other Germans). Moreover, regional and local scales are significant in determining the relationship between language, culture and identity. Here, it is useful to refer back to the five markers of culture highlighted by Newmark (1998); locality and regionality all effect diversity in ecology, material and social culture, customs, gestures and habits as these emanate from the cultural habitus. In a society where regional identity has significant import, these factors play a defining role in local experiences of local interpretations and practices of the (English) cultural habitus. In triangulating the regional dimensions of participants' experiences of the Leeds-York region, the cultural habitus they trans-locate from their society of origin, and linguistic diversity of English in England, the role of local and regional scales becomes vital to our understanding. In the following sections, the meaning of

language and identity will be explored in more specific contexts related to language learning and acquisition.

### **7.2.3. Maintaining the mother tongue**

The scope of literature which treats the subject of L1 maintenance and loss is extensive, with the theory of linguistic assimilation (i.e., Alba et al., 2002) explaining the gradual loss of an immigrant's mother tongue over three generations. This commences with an immigrant who predominantly speaks in their mother tongue, to their children being bilingual and finally the third generation being largely English-speaking. This concept is, however, dated according to Lee (2018), as it is largely based upon the experiences of European immigrants to the New World. It is also flawed in the case of my participants' experiences as they all speak English with high levels of fluency, and some also communicate with their children largely in English (i.e., PL12). This challenges the accepted stages of language assimilation, with participants also demonstrating a high level of awareness around potential language loss and many have taken steps to address this problem. Moreover, the theory of linguistic assimilation (Alba et al., 2002) is too long-term to be applicable for many of my participants who have self-described as not being permanently settled in the UK. It also only follows the perspective of immigrants with familial ambitions, negating those who want to maintain their language but have no parental ties to children.

Whilst I have discussed some of the numerous reasons participants have expressed for maintaining their mother tongue, the ways in which they do this also vary. Many participants continue to engage with media in their mother tongue, whether that be in written form or television and current affairs. Interestingly, this engagement does not seem to depend on family ties or child-raising, unlike some of the aforementioned discussions on the emotional importance of participants' mother tongue. DE1, for example, is young and without children and with a parent living in a third EU country, but highlights the following:

I do read the German news almost every day [...] I also read the English news every day, erm, mainly I do both because [...] I think sometimes there's just contradicting information that comes out, so I try and keep minds open and try and be as, erm, as un-influenced by either or.

This attitude towards both German and English media appears to be guided purely by a desire to remain politically informed by appraising a wide range of media. The choice, however, to engage with German media when living in Britain clearly demonstrates a link that DE1 wishes to maintain with both Germany and the German language.

PL12 also demonstrates an attachment to Polish-language media that diverges from any sentimental desire to maintain a link with their country and culture of origin. Indeed, they comment explicitly on the political situation in Poland, stating that it prevents them from harbouring any desire to return to Poland in the future:

Also, currently of the political situation that's not a place that I would want to live. Yeah. I do I do. So, I'm not interested in kind of watching movies or listening to Polish music, but I do read news in Polish some I do read Polish books that have been written in Polish. So, I guess I'm keeping up with the language in that way.

They do, however, nonetheless read Polish media and express a desire to read media that is Polish in origin, rather than translated into Polish from other languages. This suggests a certain level of interest in original Polish-language content, despite their obvious distaste for the political direction of the country, and previous comments on communicating with their children in English rather than Polish, having abandoned the latter as the children cannot speak it adequately.

Family ties also featured heavily as a reason for and a means to participants maintaining their mother tongue. DE3 points out that, because of increased contact with their family

in Germany, they are frequenting German *Stammtisch* cultural groups in Britain less frequently, as they do not need to in order to maintain their German:

Because I've had more contact with my family in Germany, I didn't need to go [to the German cultural groups] that often.

PL1 uses their engagement with Polish politics as a means to maintain their mother tongue and ties to Poland:

I can vote in Polish elections even though I don't live there and don't work there and again, it's a bizarre paradox because technically I don't think that I should vote for Polish, reality in Poland laws and government because they don't affect me, but then I can't make any decisions here, so I at some point at least I'm making decisions about something!

Despite wanting to impart the language to their children, as previously discussed, PL1's Polish family are mostly competent English speakers anyway so there is no compelling need to speak Polish to communicate with relatives:

It doesn't help that all my family speak English.

They follow this up, however, with the following statement, demonstrating that maintaining their Polish language skills remains a key part of their familial identity:

I think with my mum we joke that if I start speaking Polish with an English accent, she'll disown me.

This discourse demonstrates the continued importance of participants' L1, even if they can and do communicate effectively in their L2. The L1 still holds significant import to many participants in spite of its utility in everyday life assuming a cultural, rather than a communicative role. This

importance again demonstrates the key role the L1 assumes in situating participants and contextualising their lived experiences, even when they are communicating in their L2 in their daily lives. Further, this helps contextualise participants' potential anxieties of difference, as per research aim 2, by highlighting the role of the L1 as an ongoing marker of difference, irrespective of the ability an immigrant possesses to communicate in their L2.

#### **7.2.4. Language in child-raising contexts**

I will now examine the intricacies of how multilingual households navigate bringing up children to satisfy the language desires of both parents (and grandparents in some cases) and the destination society. Participants who were parents made up at least 50%, or 6 participants, of the Polish cohort, and 38%, or 3 participants, of the German cohort. Others may have been parents and just not mentioned or talked about their parental role in the interview, although I find this relatively unlikely given the length to which other participants went to engage with discussions around parenthood and language.

As I have previously demonstrated, participants with children have talked about stronger bonds with their L1, noting the import of language as a marker of familial identity. The desires for children to speak the parental L1 in addition to English has been well-documented from both nationality groups throughout this dataset. These wishes can often lead to participants feeling as if their identity is being eroded, as their children do not necessarily share the same passion for a language and culture as their parents. DE7 demonstrates this from a pedagogical perspective, as someone who teaches at the German school in York, with the following sentiment:

[Original extract:] *Zu Hause sind die Kinder oft nicht in der Stimmung, mit ihren Eltern Deutsch zu sprechen. Sie sind an Englisch gewöhnt und empfinden es als zu viel Zwang. Und die Eltern haben Schwierigkeiten.*

[Translation:] At home, the children often aren't in the

mood to speak German. They're used to English and think it's too much effort, and then the parents have difficulties.

Those participants who discussed, often at length, their parenting strategies with regard to language learning, can be split into two groups. I will first discuss those participants whose children are bilingual, then move on to cover those whose children primarily speak English, with limited abilities in the L1 of their parents. In this instance, I also define bilingual in the linguistic sense. That is, having equal competencies in two languages.

Discussions with parents of bilingual children tended to focus on maintaining links to the country of origin and the children maintaining the ability to communicate in the other language. This was particularly prevalent in familial contexts where grandparents could not necessarily speak adequate English to otherwise effectively communicate with their grandchildren. PL1 exemplifies this situation where the children do speak Polish, and maintaining it is seen as the primary concern:

I speak Polish with the boys and [partner] speaks English although I've found myself speaking English more and more, which I keep trying to kind of claw back, cos I can't imagine them not being able to understand.

PL1 reiterates their desire to bring up the children bilingually:

I wouldn't say we're a fully bilingual household but definitely with the boys I'm trying to bring them up bilingually.

For PL10, the wording of their remarks suggests that passing their mother tongue on to their children is more of an obligation rather than a desire:

I have to pass Polish on to him, so (unclear 18.24) I

speak, and yadda, yadda, yadda, all the time in Polish, at [de-identified], yes, because there is nobody in our environment he can speak, and so it's very important, because otherwise he won't be able to speak to my mum, my dad and my cousins, yes. So, absolutely.

Similarly, DE5 observes the following on the significance of German to them:

The significance is also manifested in the fact that both my daughters, primarily my oldest, I insist that we speak German, that's a recent thing, a year and a half, two years ago, I forced, I always spoke German to them, but she now has to answer back in German. I get easily frustrated, because I don't see much progress, it's still quite pidgin German, but we're getting there.

Despite these evident difficulties, DE5 clearly believes that their children are going to develop German language competencies to a level which satisfies DE5's desire to promote their identity and pass it on through their children.

I now move on to discuss those participants who are parents of children who are not bilingual, that is to say that English is their L1, and they have varying, but limited, abilities in the L2, or the L1 of their parents (none of the children discussed by participants spoke limited English and shared the L1 of their parents). PL12 comments extensively on the language-learning journey they have experienced with their daughter, emphasising the difficulties experienced despite mitigating factors:

My daughter went to Polish school, last, so she's in the year one now so when she started reception, she also started going to Polish school in York on Saturdays. She didn't like it, so didn't do it for very long. She didn't like it because she can't really understand Polish. Because my husband is British, we speak English at home. because I don't really use [Polish] because I don't have

Polish friends and I don't read Polish unless it's been written in Polish. So only the books that I bring from back home. I don't use Polish very much, so I don't think about it. And I use English to my children so unlike most of the families most children in Polish school could at least understand Polish my daughter can't my children can't really understand anything except for a few words. So yes, so we didn't keep up with that either.

The lack of child language acquisition can also have a direct impact on the relevant parent, with PL12 expressing the following sentiments:

I just feel a bit like a failure in terms of I knew kind of what I have to do to make sure that they bilingual but it's hard work.

The internal conflict here is clear, with the parent expressing guilt at their children's lack of language ability, yet the implied reasons are relatively simplistic in comparison to relevant literature on the subject. Lin (2018) highlights the oppression that is present in certain multilingual familial environments where male spousal prejudice oppresses female parents' abilities to impart their foreign-language cultural and linguistic skills to their children. That is clearly not the case here, with phrases such as 'I gave up' (DE4) being the primary reason for a perceived failure in multilingual parenting. Here, then, there is an internal conflict between the identities of the parents and the reality of bringing up children in a non-native linguistic environment.

DE4 also reports a self-perceived failure with regard to their children's language ability:

So, I made a big effort for my children to speak German, and I failed. Because, well, my wife's English so we met in English, so we speak English at home, it killed the children going to school in English. So, they cottoned on very quickly, that when I tried to speak this funny other

language, it was out of place. And I ignored it. So, I tried quite hard and then I gave up. But also, I didn't want to stand out in a public record, I wouldn't, I would find it difficult in the supermarket, to speak to them in German. And that's, I think this is partially I didn't want to stand out as a foreigner. And I wanted to integrate, which is what we talked about earlier.

Interesting here is DE4's perception that their desire for their children to speak German conflicts with a desire to move away from German society and be perceived as doing so. This sentiment is not shared by other participants. Whilst I have previously discussed in the chapter on hostilities how certain participants are reluctant to publicly present themselves as foreign, DE4 also remarks that they moved abroad to avoid other Germans:

Lots of, sort of, immigrants, tried to stick with their own kind. Yeah, I left Germany for the very reason I didn't want to do.

This sentiment is supported by DE2 and DE3:

DE2: When I went to university back in Huddersfield, there were a lot of nationalities, they seemed to stick together. The Germans didn't. The Germans seemed to socialise with other people.

[Original extract:] DE3: *Wenn Deutsche im Ausland leben, habe ich festgestellt, dass sie das nicht tun. Es ist nicht ihr Stil, so zusammenzuhalten wie zum Beispiel die Polen oder die Inder oder Chinesen. Die Deutschen integrieren sich mehr, egal, wo sie sind.*

[Translation:] DE3: When Germans live abroad, I've noticed they don't do that. It's not their style to be tight knit as the Polish are, for example, or the Indians or Chinese. Germans integrate more, regardless of where they are.

This presents a particularly interesting argument with regard to child language acquisition as it widens the breadth of the discussion from being a marker of parental identity. DE4 presents language acquisition as an almost political choice, being held in balance with other social factors and destination society pressures.

Finally, whilst all other participants who detailed their experiences as parents have younger children, DE6 offered an insight into how their children's relationship with language has evolved over time now that the children are adults:

They [the children] never felt comfortable speaking German to me in public. And that was a bit of a bone of contention, basically, ever since. [...] But now they are grownups, and they live in their own places and so forth. And I would say they don't have they don't have an issue with speaking German with me. They only that the German isn't good enough. Which is rubbish.

This opens an interesting discussion by demonstrating the evolution of child language learning from an initial reluctance to learn and speak German into a scenario where they can converse comfortably. In the case of DE6, this is particularly interesting given the following statement:

And [as a] general rule. I try to avoid speaking English with other first German speakers.

By this, DE6 means they avoid speaking English with those who have L1 German. This clearly underlines the importance DE6 places in speaking to German speakers in German, something which could be translated to a parental environment, although they did not elect to conduct the interview in German, suggesting that the emphasis is on L1 German speakers here. Moreover, they still noted a lack of German proficiency in their children, suggesting a continuing desire for them to maintain and improve their German language skills, as is also evident in those participants whose children competently speak German or Polish respectively.

This offers a valuable insight into the potential evolution of language ability amongst participants' children in the future.

The difficulties highlighted here by participants in teaching their children their own language are further supported by Tseng and Fuligni (2000) who maintain that the relationship between child and parent can be affected depending on their relative L1: if children communicate with their parents in a language that is the mother tongue of both, the authors found the relationship to be more cohesive in the long term. In the case of multilingual households, this notion clearly poses a problem for at least one parent in each household. All of my participants who are parents were in relationships with others whose L1 is English, placing the emphasis of the problems described by Tseng and Fuligni (2000) on the participants themselves as the only party in the parental household with an L1 other than English. This aligns with DE2's experiences of teaching German to their children, and maintaining a high level of fluency:

Cos to speak it [German], to read and write it you need to erm, you know, it's different because they go to an English school, so they will pronounce the words in an English way. But obviously the letters are, they're just slightly, you just have to learn how to read and write etc, I mean, you know, you know German... like e-i for example. In German you say 'i', but if you're speaking English you say 'e', you know, things like that, they have to learn it, so I've, yeah that's why I wanna, I just want them to have the opportunity to be able to be able to use that language more, not just speaking.

Haman et al. (2017) further evidence the difficulties children can have in acquiring L2 language knowledge as bilingual children. Studying Polish-speaking children of immigrants to the UK, they discovered that monolingual Polish L1 children had stronger Polish language skills than bilingual children in most areas. This highlights the barriers to language learning in a bilingual parenting context, reinforcing

participants' fears about their children's acquisition of their non-English L1. Moreover, it contextualises participants' anxieties of difference, both in the context of English society and their society of origin. Per research aim 2, it is evident that participants' anxieties of difference extend to their children's acquisition of Polish and German, suggesting a manipulation and merging of cultural habitus between L1 (Polish and German) and L2 (English) contexts.

### **7.2.5. The problems of code-switching**

Code switching is the concept of speaking multiple languages within the same sentence or context, switching between each language seemingly at random (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). This can occur despite temporal distance from speaking one of the languages, as is again evidenced by Gardner-Chloros and their description of Greek-Cypriot immigrants' use of Greek in third generation immigration contexts (2009:2). This phenomenon also affects my participants to varying degrees, with DE1, for example, describing certain slang concepts in German rather than English:

In German, people say 'Kanake' [M: right, yeah] oder, erm... you've put me on the spot here now... [laughs] erm... oder digga, eida/oida, things like that, that's kind of a Hamburg thing, I don't know why.

These words are neither Standard German (see chapter on identity and regionality), nor easily translated to English, although code switching can also occur in much more translatable contexts, as evidenced by PL9's experience:

When I split with with that Hungarian girlfriend, and I met another one, she was Polish. She used to live in London back then. And so, I remember one occasion, I came to just almost every weekend to visit her. And, and we were supposed to kind of be on a little project, but I was just so tired. I was just literally falling asleep. And I

said, you know, I'm sorry. But let's just put it for over  
 Let's postpone for for later because I'm just so you know,  
 so sleepy. And she said, 'stop talking to me in English'.  
 Or she said that because I was like, whoa, you know, it  
 was just so almost subconscious. Yeah. So that that was  
 kind of weird feeling.

This exchange clearly surprised PL9 themselves, as they  
 did not expect to automatically switch to English in this  
 context. In the case of PL9's girlfriend, this again speaks to  
 the discussions had by many participants around emotional  
 language, and an ease of communicating emotions in the L1 which  
 often does not exist in the L2.

### **7.3. Multilingualism as a tool to habitus understanding**

Participants throughout this investigation have  
 demonstrated their continued use of their mother tongue  
 alongside English (and, in the case of PL6, Spanish). Language  
 preference has varied between participants, with DE3 and DE7  
 conducting the interview in German. When asked, some  
 participants preferred to conduct interviews in English, with no  
 Polish participants expressing a hypothetical wish to conduct  
 the interview in Polish, even if my language skills had made  
 this a possibility. The dialectic opposition here between mother  
 tongue and the lingua franca of the destination society, in this  
 case English, is clearly evident. In accounting for the impact  
 of the cultural habitus, I argue each language creates its own  
 paradigmatic interpretation of the world about which it speaks;  
 the multiplicity and interpretative qualities of social and  
 spatial worlds are exhibited through the variability of  
 linguistic production. As a common thread to link lived  
 experiences, language is crucial. Taking the previously  
 discussed example (see chapter 6.3.2) of the German *Warte!*  
 [wait!; DE2] only being heard by English-speakers in the context  
 of World War Two histories; its homophone in English has a  
 different definition. These linguistic variances create

differential conceptualisations of language. Here, the role of the habitus is again key; monolingual English speakers, for example, can only access one singular language habitus, that of English. By contrast, speakers of multiple languages can access the programmed habitus associated with that language. As has already been demonstrated in chapter 7.2.2, one habitus framework, developed from a set of cultural and linguistic understandings, does not usurp another, rather they merge together. This merging creates new understandings of societies guided by the specificities of the root habitus of the speaker: a German L1 participant is likely to create different, and novel, understandings of English society based upon the merging of their lived experiences of German and English habitus understandings and practises. A Polish L1 speaker living in England will, accordingly, create alternative novel understandings of the same social scenarios based upon their lived experiences of Polish and English habitus understandings. The following example from PL4 demonstrates one specific, novel, understanding that a comprehension of Polish and English habitus could create:

PL4: In Poland you have two separate, in Polish, two separate words for like, really close dear friends and your friends. Which is very handy because in here to say friends about pretty much anyone you know. And like, we're just guessing you sometimes you will just want to separate those two, groups of people what they will mean to me.

Interviewer: What do you say in Polish then?

PL4: So, it's 'Przyjaciel' - it's like close close friends. And 'kolega' which is similar to colleague here. It's just someone you know, you like, you can go out for a drink with, but you're not like you know, in a maybe like a constant contact and you don't share your deepest feelings with, you just hang out with those people. Though you do still, you still like each other and you can meet up once a week or whatever.

This quote suggests that PL4, and possibly other L1 Polish

speakers in England given the common nature of *przyjaciel* and *kolega* as everyday vocabulary, have potentially novel (to English speakers) understandings of friendships. These are not subject-specific or technical terms; friendships are everyday conversation, yet English does not, according to PL4, have exact equivalents for *przyjaciel* and *kolega*.

The suggestion that *kolega* approaches colleague but is not synonymous with it (you can dislike a colleague), underlines the importance of accurate, culturally-informed translation here. As I discussed extensively in chapter 5.8.1.1, translation methodology is significant here. Whilst a linguistically-equivalent translation could use 'colleague' or 'friend' here, that does not mean that the potential for meaning to be lost is eliminated. Here, PL4's understanding of the English habitus has been shaped by discussions around friendships and working relationships and the differences in language used between English and Polish. PL4's multilingualism is a tool for understanding the English habitus as it is produced by the English language. This is supported by Pike (2015) and their schema of 'etic' and 'emic' translation. The origin of 'etic' being 'phonetic' (representation of sound) and 'emic' being 'phonemic' (representation of meaning). What is critical, however, is Pike's assertion that 'emic' refers to:

A physical or mental system treated by insiders as relevant to their system of behaviour and as the same emic unit in spite of etic variety. (Pike, 1990:28)

In the case of the *przyjaciel/kolega* paradigm, this idea of translation would suggest that a translation of colleague or friend would be equally appropriate, being the same 'emic' unit of describing friendship. In PL4's case, using an 'emic' translation, as highlighted here, would induce some cultural loss by imposing the Polish habitus onto the English habitus. By contrast, PL4's multilingualism provokes an 'etic' translation where the outsider to the English habitus (PL4) partially superimposes their Polish habitus onto the English habitus. The key here is partially. PL4 thus interprets the English habitus

understanding of friendships with reference to their learnt Polish habitus przyjaciel/kolega paradigm, increasing their understanding of the English habitus by referencing it to their own Polish understandings. This is a key finding of this research which is demonstrated repeatedly over the course of this investigation: this example using PL4 is convenient, with the participant explaining their new understandings of the English habitus in their own words, but similarly novel understandings are alluded to by others elsewhere.

A further example of this is DE1's discussion of regional slang, and the difficulties experienced in trying to translate this not only into English but also standard German and not local Hamburg dialect:

*Digga*, it's like an, erm, how can I translate it? It's... it's like a, it's mainly men using it, approaching other men, erm, but in like an 'ohh what'cha lookin' at' kind of way

Here, DE1 acknowledges that they cannot think of an English equivalent for *digga*, yet they also do not provide a standard German equivalent. This demonstrates the extent to which their Hamburg habitus also inflects their understanding of German: as will be discussed in chapters 9.3, Regional Spatiality, the importance of region to participants, particularly German participants, is significant. In this instance, like the example of PL4 above, there is a convergence of multiple habitus in a process provoked by multilingual understanding.

PL4's understandings of the habitus may also be influenced by regional variation here but given the inherent differences in regional dialect which are present in German (see chapter 4.2.2) and not Polish, this is less likely. PL4's understandings of English vocabulary are, however, governed by their operationalisation of the Polish habitus. Likewise, DE1 introduces a novel concept into English. It may be possible to translate *digga* as 'chav' or similar, yet 'chav' has other class connotations that may or may not apply to *digga*. Both of these

examples highlight the key critical analysis that multilingualism brings to understanding habitus.

I previously discussed the emotional value of an L1 to participants in chapter 7.3.1 underlining the emotional value they place in communication in their mother tongue, over and above the communicative role of the L2. This emotional importance also reasserts the importance of multilingualism as a tool to understand the habitus: a participant with Polish L1 will have a better understanding of the nuances of emotive discourse in Polish and in the context of the Polish habitus than they will in English. This phenomenon is highlighted by PL6 in the following extract:

I don't feel like I ever really think in... obviously, I can speak with you, and I don't, I'm not translating anything from Polish now. But I wouldn't really feel any other language. And actually, if we talk about language stuff, I have to say that probably, probably, expressing emotions.

PL6's English abilities are beyond doubt; they studied for their degree in the UK, yet they still do not feel emotionally at ease in English. I posit that their greater emotive understanding of the Polish habitus, Polish idiom and greater linguistic knowledge underpin their abilities and confidence to better converse in Polish on emotional subjects. This, therefore, suggests a further individualised aspect of multilingual understanding: that an individual's merging of habitus from across different languages and cultures also speaks to their emotional communication in languages other than their L1.

#### **7.4. Conclusions**

This chapter begins to elucidate answers to research aim 2 and research objective 1 by demonstrating the importance of language and culture to the migrant experience. Participants' interwoven experiences of these two concepts demand their

discussion together, as a fluid singularity with differing constituent parts.

I argue that participants demonstrate the continued importance of the L1 language and culture when it is not necessarily employed as a tool of everyday communication. The importance of the L1 in the formation of the habitus defines the leading role it continues to take in many (but not all) participants' interactions with English society; expressing emotion in particular is seen as something more easily achieved in the L1. Participants make a concerted effort to communicate with strangers who share their own L1 in that L1, suggesting a continued privileging of L1 communication despite high levels of English fluency.

Participants' understandings of their own L1 also highlight the failure of language assimilation theory to account for the experiences of participants without familial ambitions in the UK and their ability to account for and mitigate L1 language loss. Participants consistently highlighted ways in which they maintain their L1, even if they also expressed no concrete emotional attachment to it. There is constant striving to maintain language ability and, I argue, cultural ties with the L1 linguistic and cultural habitus.

There is a clear link between participants' conceptualisations of the importance of their L1, and parenthood. Where participants are parents, they demonstrated a desire to transfer their German or Polish habitus to their children through continued development of their children's Polish or German language skills. Participants demonstrated a clear desire to maintain and build upon their own cultural and linguistic habitus, passing this on to their children to preserve links to Poland and Germany in their children's identity. This synthesis of multilingualism and habitus is a marker of identity that is also expressed through regionality; German participants in particular privileged regional over national identity, expressing a divergence in cultural habitus between German regions. To this effect, the notion of a German national identity and, I argue, habitus, does not exist in the same context as that of other cultures and nationalities as a

result of the historical specificities of the German-speaking realm.

The role of multilingualism as a key tool to migrant understandings of the destination society habitus has, I argue, significantly more import than tendentially acknowledged. In being multilingual, participants have demonstrated abilities to juxtapose and evaluate L2 cultural concepts through the lens of their L1. Here, the ability to apply the context of the L1 habitus to that of the L2 elucidates, I argue, deeper understandings of the L2 language and culture through participants' dialectically oppositional analysis. The role of etic translation here is key - as demonstrated, participants partially superimpose L1 conceptualisations of a particular context onto the L2, thus constructing a new understanding of the L2 (English) using the information available to them through their L1, in addition to the cultural contexts apparent in the L2.

To this effect, I argue that one linguistic or cultural identity does not usurp another in participants' lived identities, rather a merging of the two to an extent individual to each participant is demonstrated. This is a key finding of the investigation as a whole. Migrants who live multilingual, multinational lives also support the notion of an individual, unique, multinational and multicultural habitus. From participants' diverse experiences of multiple cultures and languages emerge new combinations of different national and regional habitus, culminating in novel habitus unique to the lived experiences of each participant.

## **Chapter 8: Language and Culture in the Landscape**

### **8.1. The Linguistic Landscape in Focus**

The following discussions relate directly to the methodological notion of this research I have deemed Language as Methodology (see chapter 5.4), where I use language and culture as methodological lenses through which to explore participants'

lived experiences of the LCR, directly relating to research objective 1 (see chapter 1).

This chapter serves as a bridge between those empirical chapters 7 and 9. In chapter 7, I laid out the importance of language and culture to participants in terms of their personal identity. I now expand on this context, examining how participants' use of language shapes the interactions they have with English society in the Leeds City Region (LCR). Participants highlight particular aspects of English multiculturalism and multicultural co-existence, locating their experiences within Polish and German contexts of multiculturalism.

I then move to discuss cultural spaces of import to participants. Here, participants demonstrate how they navigate not only Polish and German cultural spaces in the LCR, but also the significance of any what I term 'English' cultural spaces - those which are not linked to participants' German or Polish identities. Finally, I broach the importance of the Polish Catholic Church to Polish participants. This was a subject discussed in depth by 6 participants, or half of the sample, such is the role the Church plays in everyday life in Poland and continues to play in participants' lives in the UK.

## **8.2. Multicultural Environments**

The contested definitions of multiculturalism were previously discussed in chapter 2.2.5; here I present the Polish and German contexts to debates around multiculturalism as seen through the lens of participants' lived experiences of multiculturalism in the UK, Poland and Germany. The notion of multiculturalism is contested across all three nations discussed here. In Germany, with arguments between forms of multiculturalism, or rejection thereof, heated and frequent (see for example Esser, 2004; Tibi, 2016; Bozdağ, 2014), the idea of '*Leitkultur*' [dominant culture], frequently resurfaces. In contrast to other multiculturalist integration models in Sweden and Britain (Zetter et al., 2002:14), modern Germany has evolved to propagate a nationality and citizenship debate that is rooted

in an ethnoculturally exclusionist *ius sanguinis* citizenship policy. Similarly, Polish debates on multiculturalism tend to focus on the rejection of Western ideas of multiculturalism (Wiącek, 2019), usually from an ethnonationalistic perspective, yet the multiplicity of cultures present in Poland is still represented through its toponymy (Czopek-Kopciuch, 2021). The multicultural diversity and level of integration experienced by participants in the UK is seen as demonstrably more welcoming than in either Germany or Poland. Four participants commented on the fabric of British society presenting itself as openly multicultural:

DE2: where I'm from, I remember when, you don't have that. You know, at school there, they're all Germans from the area, so they're not used to multiculturalism as much.

DE2: I think it's quite a safe place, you know, it's quite a good place to work, as a human being, because obviously it's just such an international community here.

DE8: the fact that I'm not born in this country is also super normal, that's just how it is.

PL1: Mr [leadership at work] is absolutely brilliant when it comes to embracing that multiculturalism.

PL5: the NHS is so multicultural community.

### **Multiculturalism: The Polish Context**

That participants have specifically chosen to comment on the nature of British multiculturalism in comparison to that of their country of origin is interesting as it has a demonstrable impact on how comfortable participants feel as foreign nationals settled in the UK. PL8 explicitly states this feeling of comfort in the following statement:

I say tolerance, tolerance, means exactly the definition

of it. And many people say they know but it actually means something different to what is what it said. It is. And, but accepting and being happy about other people like living here in UK, like other nationalities and feeling comfortable living here.

British multiculturalism contrasts, for example, the doctrine of *Leitkultur* [leading, or dominant, culture] which is frequently discussed in German integration dialogue (see, for example, Tibi, 1998; Pautz, 2005 and Ohlert, 2014). This prioritises assimilation with 'German' dominant culture as a means to integration. In Britain, participants are able to more easily mould and adopt a personal identity and integration pathway which feels appropriate to them, tailored to their individual circumstances, and without (as much) prejudice from external social pressures. Participants were not asked any questions relating to multiculturalism, integration or interpretations thereof: these are organic responses which underline the diversity of the communities in which the participants live. As previously noted, Polish society is particularly impacted by the ongoing Ukrainian crises which commenced in 2014; otherwise, there is minimal immigration to the country. In fact, the ruling *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* [Law and Justice] party has a fiercely anti-immigration narrative (Saputra, Wagenaar and Orzechowska-Wacławska, 2021), a narrative that PL7 underlines with the following comparison between the UK and Poland, illustrating the right-wing nature of Polish immigration discourse:

Immigration in Poland is, I think it's much more of an issue than in the UK? I think in the UK it's kind of like, you know, given, that there are immigrants, UK is much more multicultural. There's nothing you can do about it. It's like it's been, it's been an in like, an empire so... Yes. So, people just come in here. And it's, like, yeah, so it's like, I mean, obviously, I know that like, weirdly enough, after Brexit, people of colour started to be attacked more, which was like, it was just like, they lived here for generations. Like I mean, first fucking

curry house was open at like 1850 or something like get over yourself.

These comments highlight the widespread notion that Britain's colonial past situates its particular immigration history. It is against this backdrop of a global multiculturalism, as seen across the York-Leeds region, that Polish participants situate their thoughts on British interpretations of multiculturalism. PL4 comments the following:

I could get ashamed and maybe a little bit embarrassed of being foreign, but the awareness that there's so many foreign people here. It makes me like feel more confident about that because I know I'm not the only one. It's just so common that nobody's gonna pay attention to that that much.

That they note shame and embarrassment as potential sentiments as Polish nationals in the UK suggests that this may have been what they expected to feel but did not. There are two interesting notions here. Firstly, that someone of Polish origin, a country which, as highlighted by White (2018), is typically a sending country where 'almost everyone has family and friends abroad' (ibid.:1) feels embarrassment over their identity. Secondly, whilst feelings of embarrassment are frequent in immigration contexts, as touched upon by Fona and Dreby (2011), these feelings are usually rooted in intergenerational conflict between children of immigrants and their parents or relate to economic success in the destination country. PL4's comments relate to neither of these scenarios; they rather comment directly on British multicultural co-existence being a factor in their public confidence being an immigrant, aiding clarification of the extent of their post-Brexit anxieties (research aim 1) and situating their anxieties of difference (research aim 2). Meanwhile, they discuss the fear of being embarrassed when speaking in public (in either English or Polish) elsewhere in the interview, suggesting that these sentiments are maybe linked to language acquisition and ability, but that the multicultural context of British society mediates

the level of embarrassment felt. The following exchange provides some evidence for this:

Interviewer: Has, do you ever feel, how, how does your accent make you feel when you're talking to...

PL4: In public? Right. Well, it depends. I mean, I think sometimes I'd rather, hmm, maybe I wouldn't. Hmm, how do I put it? If I speak English or like Polish, or like, if I make obvious by speaking to the foreign. I just like not to behave embarrassed in embarrassing way.

Interviewer: Right. Okay.

PL4: I don't know if it makes sense that like, if I'm here, and I'm like, kind of errr, someone from outside, I just don't want to make I don't know like, do stupid things. I wouldn't want to make anything to make this place worse than it was when I came here.

These comments on British society and the multicultural nature of the UK contrast starkly with participants' comments on Polish society and its acceptance of other cultures, immigration and diversity. Although Polish society lacks the ethnic diversity of Britain, participants paint a clear picture of a society which wholeheartedly rejects any notion of multiculturalism through the following comments from interviews with PL7 and PL2 and PL3's joint interview:

PL7: But I think [immigration] in Poland is [more of an issue] because it's just so much more right wing and stupid. Like polish right-wing people, they have this belief that they're saving Europe from the East.

PL3: And on the other hand you have independent as we said, who always show nationalists which is true and all march is chanting about, you know, getting the Jews

PL2: It's true, but, oh yeah, it's pretty antisemitic and stuff like that yeah

PL3: Out of the country, blacks out of the country, you know, all that stuff. It's, it's pretty awful...

Interviewer: Yeah, cos bits of Poland are so multicultural anyway!

PL3: Exactly...

PL2: It's like they ever needed to kick anyone out...

PL3: Exactly.

PL2: Soon enough they will be kicking out people of a certain type of colour...

PL3: Yeah, yeah

PL2: ...of hair. Just because the colour of skin will be not enough because it will be no difference... and if you get too tanned, you'll be extradited No but that's another spectrum.

### **The German context**

German interpretations of multiculturalism are significantly complicated by recent German history: both the Third Reich and subsequent division of Germany into West and East until 1989 have impacted the way in which Germany has navigated increasing immigration. As is acknowledged by Kellerman and Winter (2019), there is a large division between the former West and East German regions in terms of multiculturalism, immigration and ethnic diversity. Much of the former East Germany is more similar to Poland in terms of limited diversity, yet West Germany is much more diverse, particularly Nordrhein-Westphalen and Berlin. This discussion therefore converges with discourse on whiteness, as examined in chapter 2.3, but in a German context which contrasts from British conceptualisations of whiteness as per chapter 2.2. Here, whiteness in Germany needs to be approached from the angle of the German cultural habitus which emanates from events of significant import to German history (such as the Third Reich). As the following discussion is limited to participants' lived experiences, it is also limited to discussing regions which were once part of West Germany, as these are participants' home regions. To this effect, DE2 comments on the rural/urban divide in German multicultural co-existence, something which does exist in the UK, but is comparatively much more nuanced than this account of the German context suggests:

I suppose, where I'm from, you didn't really see it [multiculturalism or multicultural interaction] as much,

because obviously, again, there's such a quiet area where my parents live, I don't really notice it as much. You notice it on the trains, for example, if you go on a train, you see more people from different backgrounds on the train, whereas before it was all Germans and stuff, erm, but people do tend to be worried about, about it I think, over there, more than here. When you see the discussion, I say 'look, in Leeds you've got people from all different cultures, all different religions. It does work, and over there, everyone's all 'mmm I'm not sure' and all this. So, you know, they've still got this, they're not there yet I think.

DE3 supports this idea of multiculturalism in the LCR being more functional than Germany with the following comments:

I think the British have done integration much better than the Germans. So, I was reading about these Turkish people who, who came up with the first vaccine. And all the politicians are making a big deal about a success with a German integration and it's bollocks. They're one of very few, some are very few who've succeeded. The majority is not integrated. Whereas, here, arguably all the sub-Continental? I mean, they're British.

This 'immigration success story' was underlined across both German- and English-language media, yet *Die Zeit*, a German broadsheet newspaper, has an article entitled 'Turkish Lives Matter' (Ther, 2021), highlighting that most *Einwandererbiografien* [immigrant biographies] look quite different, implying a wider failure of immigration to procure success. A similar discourse around sport resurfaces at major sporting events such as the football World Cup of 2018: Mesut Özil is a German footballer with Turkish heritage, and van Campenhout and van Houtum (2021) use the complexities of Özil's immigrant heritage to display the potential duplicity of German integration success. Whilst Özil was supported as a German citizen when successful professionally, he was likewise criticised, and his mistakes blamed on his immigration and

integration failures when victories on the field did not materialise.

### **8.3. National Communities**

Previous sections and chapters have touched upon the role played by Polish and German communities in the lives and experiences of participants, but not in any concrete manner. This section aims, therefore, to treat in greater depth the experiences that participants have in their own national communities, their problems and assets, and their importance to participants' everyday lives. Here, it is worth highlighting that the analysis which follows presents two highly disparate communities, yet there are occasional shared traits between participants, even if these traits cannot, with the current sample, be argued to apply to the whole cohort. DE4, PL2 and PL3 all commented in one way or another that they did not want to be part of the diaspora community for their nationality; they came to Britain to 'not just be a part of another Polish [diaspora] society' [PL3].

#### **Polish community**

Polish participants tended to report greater embeddedness in their national communities than their German counterparts. This is likely in part due to the greater size of the Polish community and its geographical distribution throughout the area being discussed. There is a large, dedicated Polish community in Leeds, with Polish church services providing community focal points across the region. Three Polish participants (PL2, PL3 and PL5) were, however, also keen to discuss what they perceived to be large divisions within the community, something not mentioned by German participants. Marked generational differences between Polish immigrants and their ambitions and motivations for moving to the UK highlight the uniqueness of the Polish immigrant context. Garapich (2008) believes there to be at least three different generations of Polish immigrants to the UK, a conceptualisation supported by participants here, firstly through the following discussion between participants PL2 and

PL3:

PL2: Polish society, Polish communities tend to be really cohemetic [sic, I believe together in isolation is meaning intended], they are cohemetic to the point that for 10 years living here, they may not need to feel the need to speak English

PL3: Yup

PL2: and they refuse to do that because they think that they deserve what they got, despite not putting any effort into socialising with the native society. Which is really toxic, and I don't want to be this Pole, I don't want to be associated with them.

PL3: I have exactly the same point as him - I don't want to be part of the diaspora basically. I came here to work, to study, to.... not be just a part of another Polish society, it's awful.

PL2: Yeah, if, if I'd wanted to have a Polish society, I'd have stayed in Poland. And that's exactly why I left Poland, because I didn't like society. [PL3 agrees through non-verbal communication]

Trevena (2011) coalesces these divisions in the Polish community in the UK with the more widely acknowledged problem of Polish immigrants to the UK not finding employment commensurate with their education level (see Drinkwater, Eade and Garapich, 2011), underlining potential class and status issues as the route of these divisions. This is, however, a Polish definition of 'class', giving it a wider, more literal meaning than traditional British sociological understandings of class, as per the Polish cultural habitus. Here, participants speak of two 'classes' of Polish immigrants: one to which they belong (in the case of PL2, wealthier homeowners), and another, which they associate with crime, poverty and unemployment in Poland. Discussions around participants' experiences of this 'other' class of Polish immigrants were occasionally heated and exhibited similar 'othering' rhetoric towards participants' compatriots as has been shown towards Polish nationals in the UK

more widely, previously discussed in the hostilities chapter.

PL2: ...there's a lot of negative stereotypes that I actually also agree with. As that they just drink, they have no aspirations

PL3: Yep

PL2: They look for skiving not for working, cos that's, that's... the minority's saturated with that kind of people as well. So, because we, talking about minorities we need to take into account what wave of immigrants are there. We've got separate, different waves of people, and the most recent wave is now the people with interests in being part of a bigger society. Most of the previous ones did not desire that, they wanted money. Or they wanted to escape...

PL3: Yeah, exactly like the way...

Interviewer: Like the post-EU [accession migration]...

PL2: Yes, just after EU, there was a wave of criminals as well, that just went out of prison and they just wanted a new start because they were burdened in Poland. So you have that kind of wave of people here as well, and they are part of minority until this day, if they are not in prison. It's, err, not great. That's why I am really careful of associating myself of any minorities of sort. And I usually don't want anything to do with that, it's just not my vibe. I prefer to forge my own stereotype. If, I would be honoured, if I would be a stereotype for someone, because I'm giving a good testament in my opinion.

PL5 also expresses similar sentiments, clarifying that they also share similar frustrations towards certain parts of the Polish diaspora as PL2 and PL3, and potentially parts of the wider British population:

Not all fantastic people came from Poland here. Yeah. And I at some point, I do understand that British actually

might be a little beat. Except, right? Because it's different quality of people, right?

These arguments introduce a further dimension to the loyalties and conflicts of the Polish community in the UK. Whereas Brown (2011) clearly differentiates the differing diaspora cultures of post-war and post-accession immigrants, participants' lived experiences here demarcate a further boundary within the post-accession immigrant cohort. Unlike in Brown's research (*ibid.*), where participants are temporally and culturally divided, these novel divisions suggest a more accurate, micro-level reflection of some of the problems experienced by Poland over the last few decades. These internal divisions within the community could represent a crystallisation within the Polish community of attitudes represented on both sides of the Leave/Remain Brexit referendum debate, providing context to, and helping respond to, research objective 2: differentiating EU nationals; experiences of Brexit relative to their cultural background. Moreover, such a diversity in attitudes is also present in other established, multi-generational immigrant communities such as those from the Indian subcontinent. Here, there is clear 'othering' of those from the Indian subcontinent who aspire to migrate to Britain, as exemplified by the comments of Suella Braverman in October 2022 (Syal, 2022). Here, therefore, the Polish community, unlike the German, is demonstrably stratified, both temporally by pre- and post-EU accession migration, and by attitudes towards other members of the community, and immigration more widely.

### **German community**

Perhaps one of the most obvious disparities between EU national cohorts in this research is the differences apparent in how each group interacts with their respective diaspora community. Whilst the Polish community is established and well-organised, offering voting, administrative and religious services from its hub in Leeds and, to a lesser extent, Acomb (in York, the location of the Polish Catholic church), the German community is small by comparison. Two participants (DE2

and DE7) interact with the German community through German language schools, yet these do not provide the range of services offered by the Polish equivalent. Despite participants being asked about their relationship with diaspora communities, with the exceptions of DE2, DE5 and DE7, German participants stated that they did not interact with it. Below are some quotes from participants illustrating this:

DE4: I left Germany not to spend more time with Germans.

DE3: [Original Extract] *Ich habe einige deutsche Freunde, aber nur zufällig, nicht weil ich sie gesucht habe.*

[Translation:] I have some friends who are German, but that's only by chance, not because I sought them out.

DE8: I have not actively sought out the German community here.

DE8: I'd say, at least in educated German middle class, where once you're abroad, we try not to be found out as a German, and that then includes not hanging out with other Germans. So, there's something where your nationality is something to erase, not something to celebrate and cluster around.

This latter sentiment raises the prospect of an active *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [a German cultural concept, the process of overcoming the past, usually in reference to the Third Reich] on the part of DE8 and their lived experiences in the UK and it is important to note its potential role here as a mechanism in the German cultural habitus in shaping participants' relations with diaspora communities. DE8 further states the following:

The regional identity was always strong, and then you just took the national out, so they, by comparison then just (unclear 10.46), again, I'm conscious around (unclear

10.51) latch onto regional one. So, for me, that's been another part where I haven't reached out to German community here, because I feel like my mental outlook is very much shaped in that mould.

The recording here was muffled due to the weather and background noise, but they made it clear that regional identity in Germany usurped national identity in their view. This can also help explain why German participants appear to engage less frequently with, or even actively avoid, diaspora community groups. Here, the importance of regionality as a marker of identity, as discussed in chapter 4.2.2, is again demonstrated. Moreover, both DE2 and DE7, despite having concrete links with German communities in the York-Leeds region, had interesting comments on the makeup of German-speaking communities in the area. DE2 noted the following, which aligns with earlier comments from DE4 about how Germans do not seem to seek out one another to form a cohesive community to the same extent as other national groups:

DE2: I've noticed that generally I think the, like, when I went to university back in Huddersfield, there were a lot of nationalities, they seemed to stick together. The Germans didn't. The Germans seemed to socialise with other people [yeah], I think it's not so much that 'ohhh we wanna speak our language and we wanna just stick with people from our country' but I think...

DE7: [Original Extract:] *In Doncaster fand ich heraus, dass es ein Treffen von Deutschen gab. Ich ging hin und fragte, ob ich daran teilnehmen könne. Und man sagte mir, dass ich nicht teilnehmen könne, weil diese Gruppe nur für Briten und die Partnerstadt sei. Sie haben eine Partnerstadt in Deutschland - Herten. Entweder muss man aus Herten kommen, oder man muss Brite sein. Und ich war beides nicht! ... Später haben sie es bereut, mir das gesagt zu haben. Aber trotzdem.*

[Translation:] In Doncaster, I found out that there was a

meeting of Germans. I went and asked if I could participate. And they told me that I couldn't not take part because this group was only for Brits and the partner city. They have a partner city in Germany - Herten. Either you have to come from Herten, or you have to be a Brit. And I was neither! ... Later on, they regretted telling me that. But still.

This experience is particularly interesting as it also underlines the surprise DE7 felt at being excluded from a community that they felt a part of. The rigid membership criteria of this group created feelings of alienation here, despite being a tangible and organised cultural link between Britain and Germany with fixed goals and a constitution that claims to be open to all (Doncaster-Herten German Society, 2022). Furthermore, DE7 remarks that they still feel isolated and without a community, despite playing a very active role in the German language school in York:

There are Germans who came here when they were very young, and then they married a Brit. They are now established in their community, and they have a good network. Me, for example, I'm all alone here. I don't have any English relatives and so on. For me, the situation is completely different, much more difficult.

The positionality of the German community is thus demonstrated to be radically divergent from that of the Polish community, underlining the import of research objective 2 in appreciating the different relative cultural and linguistic background of EU nationals in the UK. The radical diversity demonstrated between these two communities further underlines the importance of understanding how cultural and linguistic perspectives affect perceptions of community.

#### **8.4. Cultural Spaces**

This section will begin to look at the spaces of cultural

significance which participants frequent. The following arguments cover both specific cultural spaces such as community centres and schools and more general Polish- or German-related spaces which participants frequent. Later sections will discuss shops and restaurants oriented to immigrant communities; dissect participants' experiences of the Polish Catholic Church, and its continued importance to Polish nationals in the UK, and what I am terming 'English' cultural spaces: those spaces that participants frequent for cultural purposes that are not inherently linked to their nationality or cultural background. These are both treated separately as participants discuss them so extensively, and in such unique contexts, that they cannot be covered by a more general overview of cultural space here.

First, I will discuss those spaces that EU nationals have created to meet a specific need within their community. Participants from both communities use specific cultural spaces to achieve particular cultural objectives. The larger Polish community has a large, well-established community centre in Leeds (Newton Hill Road, Harehills) with not only a Polish Catholic parish, but also a Polish school and other community services such as financial advice. Other Polish community centres in the region are situated in Wakefield, Bradford and Scunthorpe. Many participants refer to their relationship with diaspora communities, but engagement with them on some level is much higher amongst the Polish cohort than the German. Whether it be attending church, voting, or engaging with Polish cuisine through the large network of Polish supermarkets across the region, Polish participants are more likely to engage with culturally significant places than their German counterparts. For Germans in this sample, there is a lack of distinct community centres per se, with German schools, both in Moortown and York, being the only German-specific cultural spaces present in the region.

### **Language schools**

Three participants from the German cohort detailed involvement with or links to the German schools in Moortown and York. DE2 and DE5 have children enrolled in the schools in

Moortown and York respectively, and DE2 was recruited through the German school in Moortown itself. Both participants, being married to British nationals, express the importance of the schools in helping to build an identity and improve German-language skills for their children, particularly in bilingual home environments:

DE2: Since I've got the kids, I want them to be able to speak it, simply because it's their roots, it's where they come, well where I'm from. It's half of their heritage. Obviously, they are British, and their dad's GB and they live here and everything, but they should also be able to know about where I'm from.

DE5: I wanted to create an opportunity for my kids to immerse themselves in German language, because otherwise it's just one to one. And [daughter]'s very much used to how I speak in German, but often I ask her, when we watch (unclear) or something, I say, do you understand this? No. Because there's different dialects, and there's different... So, I wanted a great exposure of the different variance.

DE7's involvement in the German school in York is as a tutor, rather than a parent of a pupil. Their experiences detail the difficulties inherent to maintaining a functional school for such a small community (in York):

[Original extract:] *Nur weil ich jetzt die Kinder unterrichte, habe ich herausgefunden, dass es in Leicester eine große deutsche Gemeinde mit vielen Kindern und vielen Klassen gibt. In York habe ich nur eine Klasse. Ich muss alle Kinder im Alter von 6 bis 10 Jahren in einer Klasse unterbringen, was schwierig ist.*

[Translation:] Only because I'm now teaching the children did I find out that in Leicester, there is a huge German community with many children, and a lot of classes. In York, I only have one class. I have to take all children

from age 6 to 10 in one class, which is difficult.

This demonstrates that, even where German-specific cultural spaces do exist, they can be difficult to maintain when the community, or the section of community that utilises them, is comparatively small. This is further complicated by the socio-educational context of the space in question. Wei (2015) demonstrates the importance of the 'translanguaging' space offered by the multilingual classroom in bringing together aspects of migrants' geographical environment, personal history, culture and language, yet this is also complicated by the inherent difficulties associated with code-switching (see the Language and Culture chapter). Moreover, the multilingual classroom is limited in its usefulness to members of the wider community who do not have children, naturally excluding younger participants such as DE1 who have not yet started a family and do not feel the same attachment to language as a result.

#### **Non-specific spaces**

Moving beyond specific cultural spaces founded by EU nationals for EU nationals, DE7 also offers some interesting insights into other German-oriented spaces across the region, and the problems therewith:

[Original extract:] *In Doncaster fand ich heraus, dass es ein Treffen von Deutschen gab. Ich ging hin und fragte, ob ich daran teilnehmen könne. Und man sagte mir, dass ich nicht teilnehmen könne, weil diese Gruppe nur für Briten und die Partnerstadt sei. Sie haben eine Partnerstadt in Deutschland - Herten. Entweder muss man aus Herten kommen, oder man muss Brite sein. Und ich war beides nicht!*

[Translation:] In Doncaster, I found out that there was a meeting of Germans. I went and asked if I could participate. And they told me that I couldn't take part because this group was only for Brits and the partner city. They have a partner city in Germany - Herten. Either you have to come from Herten, or you have to be a Brit. And I was neither!

This interaction is baffling, introducing elements of exclusivity and alienation to a city twinning project designed to foster collaboration and co-operation. Jayne et al. (2011) highlight the benefits to economic innovation and co-operation that city twinning can lead to, using the example of Manchester as a focus city. To refocus this on Doncaster, a city without the international and historical economic prowess of Manchester, makes the apparent lack of understanding of the core concepts of a twinning project to those who are leading it from the Doncaster side fascinating. It reinforces the argument that there is a significant level of ultimate hostility to the German community in Britain through an integration of pervasive Germanophobia (both cultural and linguistic) into the English cultural habitus; this is one of the foci of chapter 6 of this investigation (Hostilities).

Another problem DE7 has experienced with German-speaking spaces is their lack of German linguistic skill:

[Original extract] *In York und Leeds gibt es ein regelmäßiges Treffen, aber es waren natürlich nur wenige Leute da. Und zum Teil waren auch einige Briten dabei, die Deutsch lernen wollten. Aber die waren nicht auf dem gleichen Niveau wie du [i.e. me, the interviewer, and my level of German competency]. Es war nicht möglich, mit ihnen zu sprechen. Das war in Leeds und York.*

[Translation:] In York and Leeds there is a regular meeting, but there were few people there, of course. And in part, there were some Brits there who wanted to learn German. But they weren't at the same level as you [i.e., me, the interviewer, and my level of German competency]. It wasn't possible to talk with them. That was in Leeds and York.

Accordingly, this makes it more difficult for German nationals to converse with one another exclusively in German, as the language level of others present is tendentially poor. This phenomenon was not reported by Polish participants, although it

would be interesting to see if further research reported similar findings in diaspora groups where British nationals take a more vested interest, either through mass tourism or the school system. Whereas Polish is rarely taught in British schools, Western European languages such as French and Spanish are. This, combined with Western Europe providing popular holiday destinations, potentially impacts the accessibility of cultural spaces for those national groups.

### **Political space**

In the context of Brexit, it is also important to acknowledge the development of cultural spaces that EU citizens have developed, or helped to develop, to combat the political movement of Brexit itself. To this effect, DE6 speaks about their involvement in the 'York for Europe' political campaign group:

Interviewer: what was your sort of reasoning for, for getting involved with that [York for Europe]?

DE6: Well, at the time of, by basically, within at least 18 months, after the first referendum or the only referendum, it was clear that the democratic opinion had shifted in favour of remain and I, you know, strongly believe that an EU referendum would reverse that awful decision. And that's what we campaigned for.

Although this is a Brexit focused group born out of the aftermath of the referendum, it nonetheless provides EU citizens with a means to access support from others in similar situations whilst campaigning for improved rights and a second Brexit referendum. This is very much a transnational organisation which provides mutual support for EU nationals post-Brexit and such groups have specific goals that are not linked to the establishment or maintenance of diaspora communities.

## **8.5. Shops and Restaurants**

### **Shops**

A discussion of Polish supermarkets is also necessary in establishing the Linguistic Landscape (LL) of the LCR and were part of the conceptualisations of urban public space which three Polish participants explicitly discussed. Here, the Polish (in this instance) language is enmeshed in public spaces frequented by participants, but only in particular local contexts. By treating Language as Methodology here (see chapter 5.4), I link local spatial contexts back to the habitus of their inhabitants, reinforcing the notion of the individual habitus explored in depth in chapter 7. Language is the tool here which allows access to divergent experiences of public spaces which are co-constructed by and for the (again, in this instance, Polish) community.

Shops selling traditionally Polish (or Eastern European) produce are tendentially small and local, unlike out-of-town superstores. No participants discussed a reliance on Polish supermarkets for their weekly shopping, but rather shop there for a limited selection of goods that cannot be acquired elsewhere, again highlighting their appeal to only a particular segment of the Polish community. PL6 also underlined that their use of Polish supermarkets was not because of any potential connections to Poland or their desire to frequent a Polish cultural space, but rather to 'get the products there [...] that I need'. This is mirrored by PL4 who states the following:

[They visit Polish supermarkets] For like polish products and things like that yeah. Especially for some buckwheat grains which I love that are only available like Polish shelves inside big Sainsburys or something, or Polish shops.

PL5, however, underlines that Polish shops are now no longer particularly important to them:

Interviewer: Are Polish supermarkets still quite important spaces then?

PL5: not really no, because you can buy Polish books now even in Tesco.

The availability of Polish books in some chain superstores in the UK signifies an evolution of traditional understandings of the importance of Eastern European supermarkets to Polish migrants in the UK. If, in accordance with previous discussions around the cultural habitus made in the Language and Culture chapter, I acknowledge that food is an inherent part of culture, then the fact that Polish food and cultural products are now available in mainstream UK supermarkets such as Tesco and Sainsbury's suggests a shift in the British cultural habitus to adopt Polish cultural products into it as part of a multicultural food availability network. Nowicka (2010) argues that people would not think twice about bypassing a curry on a shelf in a British supermarket, yet they may notice *Bigos*, a traditional Polish stew, if it occupied the same space. Whilst this may be true, I argue that the very existence of *Bigos* in a British supermarket implies a shift in acceptance of Polish cuisine and its integration into the British habitus. As Nowicka (2010) states, curries made from recipes from the Indian subcontinent are widely available as ready meals in the UK, yet Caribbean equivalents are not, despite the age and size of the Caribbean community in the UK.

It is important here to acknowledge the importance of ethnic shops in the multicultural spatiality of the city: Wang and Lo (2007:685) conceptualise the experience of using an ethnic shop as an 'economically shaded cultural experience', suggesting a greater level of complexity in the role of such spaces in the dynamics of their neighbourhoods. This suggests that, despite the lack of more formal community structures in York for minority ethnic communities in general, and the Polish and German communities in particular, communities served by ethnic shops and religious services retain some visibility in public space. It should also be noted here that, given the proximity and size of Leeds' community centres, many minority ethnic inhabitants of York may travel to Leeds to visit relevant spaces there. This aspect of the multicultural sociospatiality of the city needs further investigation.

Moreover, York's importance as a renowned international

tourist destination exposes the city's residents to a further spectrum of (hyper-) transitory, temporary residents. Whilst the effects of tourism are distinctly different from long-term migration, a phenomenon most easily exemplified by tourism in rural Scotland (i.e., MacLellan and Smith, 1998), local services can face similar pressures. York's population is therefore exposed to a particularly multicultural environment in the city centre. Here, it must also be acknowledged that York's size makes the city centre of greater importance than larger cities such as Leeds, where suburbs themselves have well-developed shopping facilities. The only suburb of York which could be seen as having its own 'High Street' in this regard is Acomb. This increased dependence on the city centre by its inhabitants magnifies the abilities of the tourism industry to mould inhabitants' attitudes and perceptions of other cultures. Clearly this is an evolving phenomenon as a greater number of Polish nationals embed themselves, their culture and food traditions more deeply into the British multicultural habitus.

### **Restaurants**

None of my participants initiated discussions around restaurants or food, although PL4 did previously work in a Polish restaurant and, in other contexts, describes their experiences thereof and the importance of that space in initiating their social connections in York. I maintain, however, that a discussion of Polish restaurants in the LCR provides a crucial context into both the Linguistic Landscape (LL) and the habitus of York and Leeds.

The variety of ethnic foodscapes present in the LCR is huge (from Ethiopian in Harehills, Leeds to Korean in York), yet the social status of the cuisine tends to denote its relative attachment to its parent immigrant community (see Park, 2017). Polish cuisine is not a popular ethnic cuisine in the UK and is thus relatively confined to its parent communities. In turn, this can lead to foreign-language only menus in immigrant community restaurants across the LCR.

In York city centre, for example, 'The Blue Barbakan' (2023) Polish restaurant displays a menu that is very

anglicised. As is illustrated in figure 8.5.1 below, the menu is anglicised and monolingual English, with Polish only used occasionally for certain names of certain dishes. As the Blue Barbakan is in central York, with a high volume of tourist foot traffic, it demonstrates the monolingual nature of the LCR's LL; the menu is mostly in English, suggesting a particular preference for a monolingual LL in the LCR, despite, like Coventry in Faulk's (2020) example, a very diverse community.

FINEST POLISH CUISINE	
<i>The Blue Barbakan</i>	
STARTERS	
SOUP OF THE DAY <i>Homemade soup. Please ask your waiter for today's choice.</i>	7.50
BARSZCZ Z USZKAMI (V) <i>Borscht soup served with wild mushroom pockets.</i>	8.00
DESKA WĘDLIN <i>A variety of Polish fragrant and juicy hams, sausages and pickled wild mushrooms.</i>	8.50
OSCYPEK (V) <i>Grilled smoked cheese made from salted sheep's milk exclusively in the Tatras mountains. Served with cranberry jam.</i>	7.50
COURGETTE FRITTERS <i>Tasty light and fluffy fritters of courgette with a touch of coriander, chive and Grana Padano. Topped with sour cream.</i>	8.50
FISH CAKES <i>Homemade fish cakes with preserved lemon aioli. Served with homemade sauerkraut.</i>	8.50
PIEROGI <i>Pan-fried dumplings topped with crispy bacon and sour cream with filling of your choice:</i> - beef - fresh pot cheese & potatoes - spinach & oscypek (polish smoked cheese) - lentil & sundried tomatoes with chimichurri sauce <i>VEGETARIAN / VEGAN OPTION AVAILABLE - please ask our staff</i>	8.50
CROQUETTE & BORSCHT (V) <i>A thin rolled pancake stuffed with mushrooms (V) or beef. Covered in breadcrumbs and pan-fried. Served accompanied by a clear beetroot soup 'borscht'.</i>	9.00
FRESH SCOTTISH MUSSELS OF YOUR CHOICE <i>Cooked with white wine, cream &amp; garlic OR white wine, tomato, garlic &amp; chilli sauce.</i> <i>AVAILABLE AS A MAIN COURSE £17.95</i>	10.50
PRZEGRZEBKII <i>Pan-fried King Scallops wrapped in pancetta. Served with cider reduction and parsnip crisps.</i> <i>AVAILABLE AS A MAIN COURSE £22.00</i>	10.50
MAIN COURSES	
<i>Evening Specials</i>	
COD LOIN <i>Oven baked in a bag with buckwheat &amp; mushrooms. Served with roast potatoes and salad.</i>	17.95
LAMB SHANK <i>Slow cooked juicy shank served with horseradish mashed potato, juniper sauce and cucumber &amp; mint raita.</i>	20.50
BEEF CHEEK <i>Meltingly tender &amp; soft braised cheek, smooth plum gravy, horseradish mashed potato &amp; mixed vegetables.</i>	21.50
PLACEK PO WĘGIERSKU <i>A potato pancake with Hungarian style beef goulash topped with sour cream. Served with mixed salad.</i>	17.50
GOŁĄBKII <i>Oven baked cabbage leaves stuffed with spiced minced pork and rice OR with buckwheat &amp; oyster mushrooms (VEGAN). All served with tomato sauce.</i>	17.50
PIEROGI <i>Pan-fried dumplings topped with crispy bacon and sour cream with filling of your choice:</i> - beef - fresh pot cheese & potatoes - spinach & oscypek (polish smoked cheese) - lentil & sundried tomatoes with chimichurri sauce <i>VEGETARIAN / VEGAN OPTION AVAILABLE - please ask our staff</i>	17.50
VEAL MEDALLIONS <i>Medallions of veal in wild mushroom creamy sauce. Served with Silesian dumplings (potato dumplings) and sautéed spinach.</i>	21.00
WIENER SCHNITZEL <i>Thin cutlet of veal breaded and fried in clarified butter. Served with fried egg, horseradish mash potato and braised carrots.</i>	22.50
BIGOS <i>Polish hunter's stew made from cabbage with various cuts of beef, pork and sausages, tomatoes and wild mushrooms. Served in a bread bowl.</i>	17.50
SCHAB Z MORELĄ <i>Pork loin marinated with marjoram and garlic. Slowly oven cooked. Served with apricot and shallot gravy, horseradish mashed potatoes and braised red cabbage.</i>	18.50
RABBIT LEG <i>Pancetta wrapped rabbit leg, butternut squash, braised red cabbage &amp; roasted potatoes.</i>	21.00
CIDER BRAISED PORK BELLY <i>Cider braised pork belly served with apple &amp; black pudding hash, sauerkraut and tarragon sauce.</i>	18.50
SZASZLYK <i>Skewers of marinated chicken, red peppers, courgettes, mushrooms and red onion. Served with roasted potatoes &amp; mixed salad.</i>	17.50
ZAWIJANIEC (V) <i>Pancake stuffed with buckwheat and vegetables, topped with smoked cheese and baked in tomato sauce (V)</i>	16.00
SIDES & SAUCES	
ROASTED POTATOES / HORSERADISH MASH OR CHIPS	3.50
MIXED SEASONAL VEGETABLES	3.50
MIZERIA cucumber salad	3.50
DILL PICKLES	3.50
MIXED SALAD	3.50
HOMEMADE SAUERKRAUT	3.50
<small>Our dishes may contain allergens. Talk to the member of staff if you have any special dietary requirements.</small>	
<a href="http://www.bluebarbakan.co.uk">www.bluebarbakan.co.uk</a>	

Figure 8.5.1: the menu at 'The Blue Barbakan' (2023), York

Figure 8.5.2 below is a menu for Qchnia Agi, a Polish restaurant in Bradford. While it does also provide an English version for some of its menu, this section is purely in Polish. In addition, the typography error of '£7.00£' is an error imported from Polish; when writing prices in Polish,

orthographical convention states that the currency symbol is placed after the price: 7.00zł.

**NIEDZIELA 19 LUTEGO 🕒 12:00-17:00**

**MENU**

Cena zestawów £15.00 z zupą £12.50 drugie danie bez zupy  
Zupa £4.00 Dodatkowa porcja mięsa £7.00£

👶 Menu dla dzieci - zapytaj 👶  
🥗 Danie wege - zapytaj 🥗

**STARTER**  
NASZ chleb na zakwasie / SMALEC z mięsem i cebulą

---

**ZUPY**

- ROSÓŁ niedzielny na wielu mięsach i jarzynach, makaron krajanka, mięso i warzywa z rosóło, zielenina
- MYSŁIWSKA gulaszowa na wołowie z grzybami i boczkiem
- POMIDOROWA z ryżem
- KRUPNIK babuni z grzybami

**DANIA GŁÓWNE**

- NIEDZIELNA PIECZEŃ - delikatny schab z polędwiczką w środku/ sos rozmarynowy, puree ziemniaczane z młoda kapustą i boczkiem
- POŁĘDWICZKA wieprzowa w sosie ziołowym/ kluski śląskie bez dziurki
- GOLONKA inaczej - bez kości faszerowana mięsem, sos musztardowy z warzywami korzeniowymi, pierogi wiejskie z kapustą i ziemniakami
- GOŁĄBKI w młodej kapuście z sosem pomidorowym, kwaśna śmietana
- WĄTRÓBKA kurczaka smażona z cebulą i jabłkiem
- PLACEK PO WĘGIERSKU - duży placek ziemniaczany/ pikantny gulasz wołowo wieprzowy z papryką, ser cheddar, kwaśna śmietana
- PIRAMIDKA z placków - gulasz węgierski/ sos pieczarkowy, ser cheddar, kwaśna śmietana
- MLYŃSKIE KOŁO - placek po góralsku / duży placek ziemniaczany, grillowana karkówka, wędzony boczek, ser jak oscypek, sos czosnkowy, żurawina
- KURAK między kartoflami - placki ziemniaczane, pierś kurczaka w sosie pieczarkowym, ser, sos czosnkowy
- TAWERNA RYBAKA - placki ziemniaczane z rybą i sosem pieczarkowym, zielenina
- BIGOS STAROPOLSKI z mięsem, grzybami i swojską kielbasą

**KOTLETY, RYBKA, PIEROGI** - na drugiej kartce

DODATKI / ziemniaki puree z koperkiem, frytki, kasza kuskus, ryż/ zestaw surówek/ domowy kompot lub woda z cytryną

**ŻYCZYMY SMACZNEGO !**

Figure 8.5.2: the menu of 'Qchnia Agi' (2023), Bradford.

Similarly, Figure 8.5.3 is the menu for Mniam Mniam, a Polish restaurant in Leeds. Here, the only English on the menu is advertising English Breakfasts, rather than the Polish dishes they also serve.



**Figure 8.5.3: menu of 'Mniam - Mniam' (2023), Leeds.**

These menus suggest a diverse array of Polish restaurants across the LCR, yet they also align with participants' discussions on hostilities and the habitus in Leeds and York. Whilst the sample of menus above is clearly small, it must also be remembered that, for York in particular, there is a sample of one Polish restaurant in the entire city - the Blue Barbakan. In terms of the multilingual habitus of York and Leeds, the menu of the Blue Barbakan provides a facade of linguistic Polishness; as per DE7's comments that York's welcoming nature is a facade (to be discussed in more detail in chapter 9.3), so, too, is the Blue Barbakan's performance of the Polish habitus through language when seen in the context of other establishments elsewhere in

the LCR as illustrated above in figures 8.5.2 and 8.5.3.

### **8.6. The importance of Polish Catholic churches**

Church and religion are aspects of Polish daily life that are intrinsically linked to space, culture and language (see Carlton, 2015). Kupari further links religion to the Bourdieusian habitus, adapting it to encompass a practical worldview stemming 'active participation' (2016:16) in a particular religion. I further expand on this, denoting Kupari's (2016) interpretation of 'active' as having a wider social remit than active (weekly, for example) churchgoing. In the bounds of this investigation, I discuss the Polish Catholic church in terms of space. It is apparent that the 'Polishness' of the church space is a significant factor for participants: unlike in Leeds, the Polish church in York is not large enough to require a church of its own, but rather borrows space in other institutions. PL4 comments that it uses a travelling priest based outside the city:

Every Sunday he goes to York and somewhere else in another city or town on the way as well.

This reinforces the interregional connectivity vital to the communities discussed in this research. I have already demonstrated the wide-reaching networks participants have, spanning right across the LCR, yet this demonstrates another important facet of participants' lives that is mobile. PL7 supports this notion with the following discussion comparing the Polish Catholic communities in Leeds and York:

Leeds obviously has a much bigger [than York] and almost like community, parish community, and also from what I've heard from my dad cos I haven't been to a mass with him, the community there is also not just the EU wave of immigrants, but the kind of several previous waves.

Moreover, the scattered nature of Polish Catholic churches

across the region may be one of the reasons why no participant guided me towards their church in the walking interview, although COVID-19 restrictions could have been a contributing factor here. PL4 does, however, further underline the problems with the location of the Polish Catholic Church in York, before discussing possible conflict between it and the spaces it uses in the city:

PL4: I used to go for a Polish service to church. There is one, but... [where] it used to be at St George's church, which is just off Walmgate. If you go like Fossgate, then up Walmgate and then a bit to the right, just just near the...

Interviewer: ohh next to the carpark?

PL4: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Between Walmgate and Piccadilly. It's sort of, yeah. So, it used to be there and because I'm a Catholic, and I'm like, actually practising it. So, I used to go into the service. But we kind of got kicked out of this church. It's not that what actually happened is because, like, the Priest from this church, because it's, well, it belongs to the English parish. And they were quite well, they were kind of unhappy with the way the Polish community was using it. I'm not sure what it was about. So, I'm not blaming anybody. So, I have no idea what happened. But maybe from what our priest said it was very vague because he didn't want to, you know, make a big deal out of it. So, he said something like we were no like putting things back where they were and stuff like that. [...]. So this Polish priest, he moved to the church somewhere in Acomb but, because it's so far away. I actually wanted to go there once but I forgot that because it's a different church the hours and service might have changed. So, I think that our on my way there and does actually just have this have started so by the time I had got there it had...

Interviewer: ...finished?

PL4: Yeah. So, I just, I just went back home. And I didn't quite get there yet. Even though it was like a year ago.

This passage is lengthy, yet it also demonstrates the potential conflict in space between different branches of the church operating within the same physical spaces. Trzebiatowska (2010) emphasises the differences between the Polish Catholic habitus and the predominant attitude of the British to religion, highlighting the ingrained cultural nature of Catholicism in Poland. The Catholic influence on the Polish habitus has been forged through the aforementioned influence the church has on everyday life in Poland; Gillman (1990) further argues that the communal ritual of religion is productive of community. Here, the Polish Catholic church is seen as important by participants because it is *Polish, Catholic* and *Polish Catholic* simultaneously. PL9 underlines the importance of the Polish-language aspect of their religiosity, positing this as a key factor in the importance of the church in their life:

I've got no problem saying those prayers or even even in my own privacy in English Why not? Although actually on that level I have to admit that if I pray in Polish I kind of feel a bit more contact with God right with English it just feels like a little word artificial you know?

This reiterates the importance of the mother tongue in terms of religiosity: for a part of participants' identity that utilises such a mass of emotional energy, the language in which the practice conducted is seen as important. PL9's maintenance of the linguistic connection to their religion may offer some insight here. As the Catholic church plays such a huge role in Polish everyday life and experiences, a desire or perceived necessity for cultural continuity may be a deciding factor in church attendance for some participants who self-declare not to be particularly religious. PL10 speaks of the ostracism they faced by not attending church, and of being forced to attend

church by a family member in Poland:

I would go into church in Poland, you know, because it was just like, my dad was demanding for me to go to church in Poland, despite I was 35 and I told him, yes, everything, you know, dad, I'm not into this too much, yes, I don't get it, I don't take it, I don't think that, if there is a God, it has to pass in another way, it cannot be, you know, (unclear 07.53), and I had to, because my father has the strokes, yes, he's elderly guy, and he's started (unclear 08.03), so I didn't him want to (unclear 08.07), I just didn't want to go against the grain so badly, yes? But it was also, so yes, and even, imagine, despite I'm not Catholic at all, yes, and I do not believe in this, I probably can explain, despite I do not believe it, yes, I baptise my child, because I realised that for my parents, they're just dooming him to hell, yes, straight away.

The fact that PL10 still felt it necessary to baptise their child into a religion in which they neither believe nor partake demonstrates the social power the church still holds in Polish life, even transcending borders. If PL10 feels that their parents would have such a strong fear for their grandchild's future salvation if they were not being baptised, then it is unsurprising that so many Polish participants have commented on their relationship to the church.

As a further potential indicator of the intrinsic link between churchgoing and social ostracism, PL1 notes that they have had to use the facilities of the community centre of which the Polish church in Leeds is a dominant part, and have questioned whether they belonged in that space because of the influence of the church upon it:

PL1: Voting was actually quite crazy cos it was, erm, in, in the church at Chapel Allerton and there was a PL centre there by the Catholic church, and it was bizarre cos it was rammed. It was absolutely rammed, we couldn't find a parking space, driving up was absolutely heaving, and we

thought it was just a Sunday, cos voting is always on a Sunday in PL

Interviewer: they probably just go straight from church and then haha

PL1: oh yeah, one duty then the other hahaha! erm, so yeah, but it was kind of, it was weird because there were suddenly so many PL people and I was like, I dunno whether I feel part of that. But then, you know, it was bizarre, absolutely bizarre.

The entrenchment of the Church and religion in Polish daily life is undoubtedly an influence on other cultural differences to be discussed later around LGBTQ+ rights and societal racism. However, it may also be a factor in how and to what extent Polish nationals view their culture more widely. In the following exchange, PL10 links religion intimately to culture in Poland, codifying their response to a question about being settled in the UK in terms of religion and spirituality:

Interviewer: Do you feel settled here now?

PL10: No, not yet. Not yet, but I feel good, I feel better here, I don't need the Poland which is there now, yes? I still, for sure I'm missing some spirituality here, (unclear 05.11) also, I miss my culture, probably. But it's just, and also, like, miss my culture, yes, which is unpleasant, I don't, (unclear 05.26) the opposite. Proper disadvantages, yes?

Interviewer: Yes. So, when you say spirituality, do you mean religion or...?

PL10: I use this word, because I'm not Catholic. I mean, I would say it's, like, everybody, probably in Poland, in terms of (unclear 05.52), and this is, you know...

Interviewer: Catholic in inverted commas?

PL10: Yes.

Here, PL10 links religion and churchgoing more to culture than space, demonstrating the intersectionality of the subject and its relevance across the investigation. Moreover, the link

they demonstrate between belonging and spirituality again supports the notions put forward by Gillman (1990) and Trzebiatowska (2010).

### **8.7. Traditional Cultural and Community Spaces**

I will now discuss the more intimate, micro-level uses of public space by local community groups across the LCR. These are not dissimilar to diaspora-oriented community groups, only they are tendentially hobby- or interest-focused groups. Participants mentioned these groups infrequently, although two participants did discuss engagement in them. DE1 discussed extensive involvement in these community spaces, whilst simultaneously elaborating that they do not seek involvement in diaspora-focused groups. These interests were demonstrated through their chosen interview route, which encompassed various 'pop-up' community spaces in central Leeds, Kirkgate Market as a community focal point, and the Tetley Gallery to the south of the river Aire in Leeds city centre (all detailed in map 5.6.1). Moreover, the desired meeting point for the interview was Belgrave Music Hall, a local community music venue, and the walk encompassed an area of Leeds south of the river known for its LGBTQ+ spaces. Equally, DE1 was recruited as a participant whilst working at the Space Invaders community pop-up space in York in late 2019. The interests of DE1 align closely with very specific subcultures in both York and Leeds which, whilst very welcoming spaces, are not necessarily easy to find or engage in, particularly for foreign nationals. These spaces are hidden: the Space Invaders site was a temporary space behind the railway station in York serving food and drinks with political talks and live music. It is currently being redeveloped into an apartment complex.

Regular attendance at what I describe as English social or hobby clubs and societies is not something participants frequently discuss, with the exception of DE2 who has attended an English book club for a number of years:

I go to a book club, and I've been going there for years,

and that's sort of, you know British friends, we've been friends for years and, erm, she's going to that book club and then I'll go to that, for example, that's once a month.

By contrast, numerous participants discuss frequenting other traditionally English spaces, most notably a love of English pub culture (see Harvey et al., 2023). Many participants cherish English pub culture as something not present in either Germany or Poland. To this effect, PL1's first and formative experiences of England and English culture were of working in a very rural pub in Northumberland:

When I was in my first year of high school, erm, there was an exchange organised with some people in Morpeth through the Lions club, and I ended up actually staying with those people who organised it all, so then we became friends, and they invited me back two years later to work in a friend's pub [in Allendale Town]. And that's when I met, for the first time, my now husband.

They then go on to provide this insight into working in the Allendale pub over Christmas and New Year, when Allendale has an annual Viking festival:

I never actually saw it because [husband]'s parent's erm, well, towards the end of them being in Allendale, they actually owned the pub there, erm, so the 1st, well, they took over the pub probably about the 10th Dec and that Christmas they asked us to work for them, but the Christmas we were in Poland and then we came back for New Year's Eve, so we basically worked in the pub whilst everyone else was outside with the barrels on their heads and stuff so I never actually seen it, but I've seen pictures, and every time we go everyone always tells you about it, if you go over for New Year's Eve people have barrels on their heads and... you know, I don't know how people still do it with health and safety and all that

jazz.

This, compared with city-centre establishments, represents a traditional pub culture in a rural environment that is not ordinarily very tourism-focused, nor does it experience high levels of inward migration. Rural Northumberland (including Allendale) is, however, associated with high levels of rural poverty (Breamish Valley, 2023). These factors could coalesce into a hostile environment for Polish immigrants in particular, for reasons previously outlined in discussions of North Lincolnshire's migrant workforce, yet this was not the case for PL1 as they met their now-spouse in this space. To this effect, Cabras and Mount (2019) highlight the importance of the local rural pub as a facilitator for community cohesion in rural neighbourhoods. PL1's experiences demonstrate the level of acceptance which can be experienced in very rural areas of the UK, in stark contrast to DE7 (see earlier discussions of racism and xenophobia).

Other participants also frequent spaces which can be seen as particularly English. PL5 was interviewed in the National Railway Museum (NRM) in York, a mixture of indoor and outdoor public space dedicated to celebrating the history of Britain's railways. A major tourist attraction in its own right, the NRM is a busy and significant local landmark with free entry. PL7 chose the NRM as the location of the interview on the basis of a family member working there, but this does not make the choice any less interesting: this was a very public space to have intimate discussions and an interview which did not involve as much continuous movement as others. They did not choose any particular route around the railway museum, ignoring the exhibits, which suggests they view it simply as a good place to talk, rather than a spatial demonstration of a hobby or passion, for example.

These experiences, and participants' integration into traditional cultural spaces, further evidence the argument that participants merge the Polish/German and English habitus. No participants reported that they solely visited Polish/German community spaces when socialising, and the propensity of some to

frequent monolingual English spaces (such as DE1 and their book club) which embody the English cultural habitus, underlines the fluidity necessary when understanding transnational, transcultural and multilingual understandings of the habitus. No participants demonstrated singular conceptualisations of the habitus in line with their L1, culture and society of origin; many participants highlighted their ability to retain aspects of their Polish/German habitus, whilst also adopting new understandings thereof through traditional spaces.

### **Markets**

Participants' visitation and use of markets provide an interesting nexus for the merging of the Polish/German and English habitus. Gonzalez (2012) argues that Kirkgate Market exemplifies both a traditional market, upon which low-income residents of the city rely, yet is also becoming gentrified through regeneration. This conflict of socio-economic status in the conceptualisation of the market highlights the in and of itself the potential for the merging of habitus, yet participants' discussions do not focus on wealth or economics, but on community, culture, and language. Markets offer a very different use of space which is inherently traditional in an English context, but have a distinctly practical focus through the operationalisation of a community in public space, as underlined by PL4:

This whole community of the shambles market of different stores different places. It was good to have some, some food. But no, I just like this kind of sense of community within all these people, but they are also close and friendly to each other which look alive.

Both Kirkgate Market in Leeds and the Shambles Market in York are spaces frequently used by participants of both nationalities. Most significantly, PL2, PL3 and DE1 were interviewed in whole or in part in Kirkgate Market, with PL4 and PL8 both working, or having worked, in the Shambles Market in York. This affinity with market spaces is interesting as both

markets have characteristics not shared by other spaces in their immediate environs. Both are multicultural spaces, particularly Kirkgate market, where food offerings vary from Chinese to Tunisian at time of writing. The Shambles market is significantly smaller, yet still offers a variety of international cuisine which differs from the rest of York city centre. It is also worth noting that both spaces are also intensely traditional in their heritage and can also be considered very English spaces, exemplifying traditional aspects of the English cultural habitus. Kirkgate market still has the first Marks and Spencer market stall which opened in the early 1900s, yet Marks and Spencer now represents an established high street brand that is uniquely British. In light of these expressions of very traditional notions of the English cultural habitus, it is therefore surprising that traditional parts of both markets, in addition to their international food courts, are so enjoyed by participants who have expressed discomfort at certain ideals of the social construct of Englishness. Here, again, we can refer back to Massey's (2005) understandings of multiple trajectories of a singular space.

## **8.8. Conclusions**

This chapter frames the importance of language and the interactions between language and space. By underlining the importance of language as a tool for spatial analysis, previous discussions around the development of the inter- and multilingual habitus are situated in spatial contexts. Language is used as a methodological tool here to uncover the diverse intricacies of participants' lived experiences of the LCR. Once again, these experiences demonstrate the diversity of EU nationals as an overarching cohort, and my participants in particular. Their lived experiences demonstrate the intra-community diversity across the region. Although divisions in diaspora communities are not a new concept, the linguistic spatiality of these divisions sheds new light on the cultural spaces created by diaspora communities, and the activities which take place within them.

Multicultural co-existence is a clear feature of the LCR, and wider British society. Without seeking to again explore the extensive extant scholarship on multiculturalism, and definitions thereof, this research nonetheless highlights the participants' experiences of multicultural co-existence in the LCR, and their perceptions of its success in comparison to their countries of origin. This is particularly interesting in the case of Germany, where the German government has a self-imposed social responsibility to be performatively welcoming to all, as evidenced by then-Chancellor Angela Merkel's '*wir schaffen das!*' [We'll manage this!] discourse during the 2015 refugee crisis. Participants' experiences of multiculturalism in Germany, however, challenge this account. Despite the Germanophobia experienced by participants in the LCR, as discussed in chapter 6, I therefore argue that in the LCR, at least, multicultural co-existence is demonstrated by participants to be practised to a greater, and more successful, extent in the LCR than in either Germany or Poland. Here, I situate and differentiate participants' cultural interactions between mother-tongue and destination languages and cultures of German and Polish minority ethnic communities per research aim 2.

A key finding of the data examined in this chapter is the different levels of engagement and involvement of Polish and German participants with their relative diaspora communities. Participants' lived experiences of their own diaspora communities confirm discussions that were had with Leeds City Council (LCC) at the preliminary stages of the research design: LCC was unaware of the size and scope of the German community, yet German participants of this research suggest that there is little to no German community in the LCR. There is little community cohesion beyond the two language schools, and some German participants actively choose to disengage from their community. I argue this, again, represents the unique nature of each EU diaspora; the German and Polish communities differ hugely from one another, despite being geographical neighbours, a narrative which becomes obscured in discussions around EU nationals in the UK.

The data also present key issues in the provision of

community spaces and the interpretations thereof by British society. The Polish community has dedicated community spaces across the region, providing key networking opportunities for diaspora, yet the same cannot be said of the German community. Beyond the aforementioned language schools, aimed at the children of German diaspora and thus of limited wider community utility for those who are not parents, German cultural spaces are infringed upon by other members of society who wish to create language-learning opportunities for themselves. This impedes the ability of the German diaspora to communicate with other members of their community in German at an appropriate level, demonstrating a key aspect of place-making which privileges UK nationals and reduces the availability of what could be understood as 'German' spaces to German citizens. Clearly, diaspora communities are unlikely to engage with community spaces if those spaces are designed to simply facilitate basic foreign-language learning, rather than allowing cultural links, relationships and events to grow and support those members of diaspora communities who wish to engage with them.

## **Chapter 9: Spaces of the LCR**

### **9.1. Focus**

This chapter closely relates to chapter 8, Language and Culture in the Landscape. Whereas in that chapter I looked at the Linguistic Landscape through the paradigm of Language as Methodology, I will now explore participants' geographical conceptualisations of space. Here, I examine the minutiae of participants' lived experiences of the LCR and their day-to-day activities within it. Here, participants' lived experiences of the LCR represent the first contribution to migration literature with York and the hinterlands as foci for over a decade, as highlighted in chapter 3. Moreover, this chapter also combines sociolinguistic and sociocultural perspectives with those of geography, illustrating specific differences in the cultural habitus of the places and spaces inhabited by participants, underlining the importance of micro-level localities.

I orient participants' micro-level experiences of specific localities within wider contexts, highlighting the spatial diversity of the region, and speaking again to research aim 1 by contextualising participants' lived experiences spatially within the LCR.

I will explore participants' differing lived experiences of public space, commencing with the overarching impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns had on how participants inhabit space (the overall impact of COVID-19 on the research is discussed in accompanying documentation and in chapter 1). I then move to a general discussion of participant perspectives on space, focusing on their experiences of public space in Leeds, York and the hinterlands of the region. Leeds and York will be treated as discrete entities as the primary data collection sites and will be contrasted with each other only to the extent to which participants have compared them. The aim here is not to compare Leeds, York and the hinterlands, but where participants have initiated the comparison, I will examine this. A more extensive discussion of the research locations is broached in chapter 4.

I then move on to discuss participants' notions of homemaking in the UK and how they relate conceptualisations of home to both the spaces they frequent and their experiences. Similarly, a discussion of the workplace and spatial conceptualisations thereof will follow.

## **9.2. COVID-19 and changing behaviours**

It is again worth noting the restrictions and impacts that COVID-19 has had on participants' use of space. Many of the walking interviews took place under varying levels of COVID restrictions, with only five of nineteen predating them entirely. This not only restricted the spaces available to participants in their daily lives, particularly in 2020 and early 2021, but also altered their lived experiences of spaces they would normally frequent. Despite this, however, most participants did not mention COVID-19, the pandemic or lockdown restrictions in their interviews, a fact made more surprising

given that several interviews (such as PL6) took place during a lockdown. Whilst the research process was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, participants did not discuss its impact on their lives in ways unique to their community, habitus or mother tongue. Moreover, participants were asked few specific questions and were thus not questioned about the impact of the pandemic upon them.

PL4 (being the first permissible post-lockdown interview in 2020) underlined the evolving importance to them of public spaces and the walk we undertook throughout the interview:

During the lockdown. I used to go for longer walks. It would start, probably at the left bridge, I'd go this way down here, through the bridge that we crossed, and I would go around the Minster, go to Monk Bar and go home. I really enjoyed that walk so, kind of the other way around, I thought we might just walk here.

This importance of outdoor spaces during the pandemic has been underlined by Noszczyk et al. (2022). The walked route of the interview represented a walk that PL4 used to undertake as their daily lockdown walk, permissible even under the strictest lockdown in spring 2020. To them, this walk represented a peaceful time in which to enjoying seeing what is ordinarily a very busy York city centre, and to call family and friends. Recalling the use of walking as a method of interviewing, it is important to highlight the role of choice in the walking route (O'Neill and Roberts, 2019). Here, previous impacts of COVID-19, coupled with the constantly changing throughput of people in York city centre are informing PL4's choice of walk. York is such a popular tourist destination that it can be difficult to 'enjoy' the city centre at weekends or bank holidays due to the number of stag and hen groups which frequent the city (see Golby, 2015 and BBC News, 2022). As is evident from the dates of these sources, this is a long-running issue that goes beyond local news to reach national media outlets. PL4 has clearly acknowledged this through their choice of walking route for the interview, alluding to the hectic nature of York with the

following statement:

I'd probably have said Shambles [to meet]. But I think it's just maybe too busy today because it's bank holiday and stuff and it's just no point of doing that.

PL4's experiences illustrate the rupturing by the pandemic of everyday geographies. Van Eck et al. (2020) demonstrate the impact that COVID had on marketplaces, just as PL4 reminisces about the quietness of the city centre during lockdown, when the Shambles market became dormant, vastly altering the ways in which people could interact with the space. When this interview took place, in Autumn 2020, the UK was moving towards a gradual reopening and, as PL4 indicated, the Shambles market was once again too busy to contemplate being used as a location for the interview.

### **9.3. York**

The next sections of this chapter will examine the spaces where data collection has taken place and about which participants have spoken. This will be roughly divided into three sections: York, Leeds and the Hinterlands, although for most participants there is significant crossover: DE1, for example, studied in York and now lives in Leeds; DE5 has lived in both and now works in one and lives in the other, demonstrating considerable intra-regional mobility.

The very nature of the geographical mobility experienced by my participants means their lived experiences of the LCR (Leeds City Region) are inherently polycentric. This does not, however, preclude deeper analysis of the two main urban centres of this investigation: Leeds and York. This section aims to dissect participants' experiences of York and situate them in a wider regional context. York is a centre for tourism and academia, both of which contribute to the spatial character of the city. It is, however, a comparatively small city (population circa 200,000; ONS, 2022b) and this provokes certain reflections with regard to diversity and affordability, especially when

situated in the wider region. In turn, discussions around class and wealth inequality also influenced participants' experiences of the city: despite being a comparatively wealthy city, participants regularly remark on its lack of affordability for those who do not share in this wealth.

In Craig et al. (2010), a report commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the authors underline that a comprehensive migration history of York is yet to be written. They posit, however, that York's migration history could be described as a pattern of 'accidental settlement' (ibid.:17), arguing that there is no clear pattern to migration to the city. This is reflected in PL4's comment on multiculturalism in York:

I don't think York is very multicultural,

although they quantify this by stating that it is still very multicultural in comparison to their (small) hometown in Poland. PL7 makes the following comment:

On campus [the University of York], we do hear loads of like different languages, like for example, Chinese. And obviously when you go to like, specific places as well around in the city centre.

These comments are perhaps rooted in the fact that PL7 is a student, and the University of York has a very diverse student population, with roughly 39% of the student population identifying as BME (University of York, 2023). Here, it is, however, important to note the problems discussed in chapter 4.1 around the designation of EU nationals as minorities - in the University of York data, there is no 'white - other' or EU national category, thus the true diversity of the campus, as perceived by PL7, may be underreported.

As PL4 is not a student, and was awarded their degree in Poland, this suggests a divergence in experiences between York as a student, frequenting places and spaces inhabited by students, and York as a member of the public not affiliated with a university. This notion is also alluded to by the following

statement from DE7:

[Original extract:] *Im Laden an der Universität gibt es chinesische Gerichte und so weiter. In der Uni-Mensa gibt es alles, was chinesisch ist.*

[Translation:] In the student store at the university, they have Chinese dishes and so on. In the university canteen, you can have all Chinese things.

Moreover, tourists, an integral part of York's economy, complicate this situation further, seemingly creating two parallel cities. Again, DE7:

[Original extract:] *Das ist natürlich ein geschickter Trick des Fremdenverkehrsamtes. Sie haben es geschafft, sich als eine besondere englische mittelalterliche Stadt zu präsentieren. Das ist ein Marketing-Trick. Die Universität ist auch ein Trick.*

[Translation:] That's a clever trick from the tourist office, of course. They managed to present themselves as a special English medieval city. That's a marketing trick. The university is also a trick. I thought the university was as old as a medieval city.

This simultaneity in trajectories of the city echoes Massey (2005) once again; we have two alternative spatial realities inside the same city and, as is thus proven, the same cafés at the University:

[Original extract:]

*DE7: Ich vergleiche es gerade mit der Mensa in Hannover, wo die Preise wirklich günstig waren, so dass sich die Studenten das leisten können. Und hier kostet der Kaffee mehr als bei Costa Coffee. Das verstehe ich nicht.*

*Interviewer: Und teurer als in der Rathaus-Mensa in München. Und München ist nicht Hannover.*

*DE7: Ja, genau. Das funktioniert nur bei den reichen Studenten, die viel Geld haben. Die anderen müssen einen*

*Studentenkredit aufnehmen und ihn später zurückzahlen. Aber für mich als Angestellter dachte ich, ich würde zusätzliche Leistungen bekommen, weil ich weniger Geld habe als die Studenten. Aber sie sagten, nein!*

[Translation:]

DE7: I'm just comparing it [University of York] with the canteen in Hannover, where the prices were really cheap so that students can afford it. And here, the coffee costs more than from Costa Coffee. I don't understand that.

Interviewer: And more expensive than at the Rathaus canteen in Munich. And Munich isn't Hannover.

DE7: Yes, exactly. That only works with the rich students who have a lot of money. The others need to take out a student credit and then pay it back later. But for me as an employee, I thought I would get extra benefits, because I have less money than the students. But they said, no!

There are, however, other stories to be told about York. Whilst there is undoubtedly an economic divide between university-associated inhabitants and locals, the middle-class, international environment that York can present also has its benefits. DE5 comments on the socio-spatial environment of York, in comparison to Leeds, where they have also lived:

It's very white middle class place. It's a great place for kids to grow up. It's nice and flat for me riding my bike, but it doesn't have the grit of Leeds.

PL12 expresses similar sentiments comparing York to London

PL12: absolutely love living in York in comparison to London. The size of the city is much closer to the size of my hometown back home, so I think Yeah, just feel more more comfortable being able to drive with children as well I have two children now.

Similarly, PL7 confirms that York represented a welcoming environment even after the Brexit referendum:

York wasn't so bad because York didn't vote for Brexit as much. So perhaps it's awareness that there's some kind of [unclear] I know and it's... Yeah, I feel that, even though it's middle class it's got like, a high standard of living and just generally been somewhat more welcoming

Clearly, participants' experiences of York are quite varied. Whilst the city is well-liked, its student- and tourist-oriented geography seems to represent a facade in particular areas. This notion of both simultaneity of trajectories, whether that be student- and tourism-led, or the 'local' trajectory of York for the wider public, and differing realities in the same spaces, support Massey's theories as previously discussed in the literature review. Moreover, York clearly diverges from the 'big city' realities posed by Leeds and London, creating instead an experience of historical importance and academic grandeur. Participants' unique lived experiences here highlight the importance of the 'local'; York is an under-researched city in terms of migration, yet despite being part of the LCR, its' migration realities contrast starkly with other cities in the region.

#### **9.4. Leeds**

In stark contrast to York, I have previously noted Leeds' history as destination city for migrants from across the globe. As one of the largest cities in the UK, Leeds presents a unique set of experiences to participants in this research. Gone are the conversations of tourism and students, despite Leeds' large student population and the associated emergence of the '(student)hood' (Sage et al., 2012:1), replaced with insights on spatial segregation and city life. Leeds is noted by DE1 to be much more representative of a city than is York, Leeds' greater size and population changing the dynamic of the city radically by comparison:

I do enjoy the grunginess of Leeds and the cultural

offering that you get here in comparison to York. Not saying that York isn't cultured at all, which, you know, obviously it is, but I like the city vibe a little bit more and having lived in York for 4.5-5 years; I worked in hospitality, I studied, it just got a bit small after a while. Because everyone is in each other's business.

Similarly, whereas, as has been previously discussed, York is seen as a medieval historic city, DE1's interpretations of the space in Leeds are directly compared with Hamburg, their city of origin:

What I miss also from home, or from Hamburg specifically when I'm in Leeds or York, erm, is the, erm, the diversity of subcultures, so you have, in Hamburg you have, like, the 'snobs' and then you have the hipsters, and the hip-hop people, and the punks and the goths and this is, like, very very apparent when you go there and you look around whereas here, I sometimes feel like it's all a bit too much of the same sometimes, erm, it goes with all the frickin' chain restaurants as well, erm, all the shops, like, every city is the same except for, you know, a few little exceptions, it gets too, it's very monotone.

This demonstrates the unique nature of the cultural habitus through micro-level analysis, on behalf of DE1, of the differences between Hamburg, York and Leeds. A Hamburg neighbourhood that epitomises DE1's reported diversity of subcultures in Hamburg in Sankt-Pauli, historically a centre for dock workers that has now evolved into a multifaceted centre for leisure, tourism and counter-cultural movements, as Luncă (2016) posits:

Sankt Pauli is an area of stark contrasts, with luxury hotels and office buildings, with chic apartments, grocery shops, kindergartens, hairdressers, ice cream parlours, jewellery design ateliers and small cafés, as well as with many bars, clubs, BDSM studios, sex shops and brothels.

Such cultural diversity within a small area (Sankt-Pauli remains a relatively small part of Hamburg city centre, see Luncă, 2016) does not exist in Leeds except, perhaps, in the diversity of ethnic restaurants on offer in suburbs outside the city centre.

This is interesting because Leeds and Hamburg have similarly colonial and industrial histories. Where in Hamburg there are struggles to redefine the HafenCity through the construction and maintenance of urban landscapes that are a product of colonialism (Prinzleve, 2022), Leeds' rich industrial heritage and colonial legacy are still spatially relevant in institutions of the modern city such as Tropical World. Tzanelli (2021) deems this tourist attraction to be a reproduction of colonial taxonomic doctrine reimagined for modern mass-tourism. The markers of Leeds' colonial heritage reach beyond architecture and into its infrastructure. Beswick, Parmar and Sil (2015) note that the city's grand Victorian arcades cannot, however, erase the associated colonialism, whether that be rooted in migration or politics.

From spatial realities born as a consequence of colonialism to the regional realities of British politics, DE1 then proceeds to underline the presence of the North-South divide in the UK, something which they maintain does not exist in the same way in Germany:

Here, you have a clear North-South divide, all the Northern, all my Northern friends, say, you know, London is this big, smokey shithole they don't want to go to but yet everyone has been there, everyone has found something they absolutely love down there, whether it be a museum or a restaurant or a cafe or whatever, erm, I don't know how the people feel down South about up North, because I've never spent enough time down there, but I know that the Northern people have this, you know, or, or English people in general have a problem with the Welsh or a problem with the Scottish or, you know, there's kind of this friendly rivalry, for the most part friendly I would say, I would

hope, erm, whereas in Germany you have the, there's, there's this friendly rivalry between Hamburg, Berlin and Munich but they, they're all very confident cities.

These comments reiterate the regional differences in the UK (see for example Balchin, 2021), yet do not acknowledge that some regional differences in socioeconomic power are also present in Germany, particularly between regions that were formally East and West Germany respectively (Rensmann, 2019).

Leeds is seen as a socially welcoming city, with only DE2 describing what could be designated as direct discrimination having taken place in Leeds, and that in the stressful environment of an Accident and Emergency department (see hostilities chapter for more detail). Other participants do describe instances of xenophobic and discriminatory behaviour but put emphasis on this being something that has not happened to them in Leeds, but rather in Manchester or elsewhere. DE1 does comment on the crime they witness in Leeds on a regular basis however, but states that this is not connected to their Germanness:

DE1: not because I'm German, but because... I live on a corner of Roundhay, Oakwood and Harehills; so Harehills is really close and, like, looking out of our window, we're kind of perched up on a hill, our house, so looking out of the window

Interviewer: like Oakwood Clock then?

DE1: I can see a lot of stuff going on and I would never, by myself, walk up Harehills lane for example. But that's [M: yeah], that's not because I'm German but just because I think it's dangerous.

This interpretation of Harehills contrasts starkly with their interpretation of Sankt-Pauli, despite apparent similarities between the two areas. Bradley and Simpson label Harehills as a superdiverse area that is referred to by some as the '(landlocked) Leeds "port"', (2019:2), such is its reputation as an entry point for migration into the city. Leeds

is reported by participants as having a certain 'grunginess' (DE1), whereas Hamburg more generally, and Sankt-Pauli in particular, is negotiating its way through the gentrification process (Striedieck, 2021), something which is less evident in Harehills' continued reputation as a superdiverse entry point to the city of Leeds. Whilst the comparison between Sankt-Pauli and Leeds is not directly necessary for this investigation, it provides a useful and fascinating lens through which to assess the spatial development of the city, viewing it in a wider context than can be provided by any comparison to other areas in the LCR. It allows me to isolate the unique experiences of DE1 in relation to social segregation, cultural diversity, and transient culture. These issues offer a contrasting sociocultural and sociospatial examination of a 'local' Leeds to other participants' experiences of York and the hinterlands, as will be demonstrated in the next section.

## **9.5. Hinterlands**

This section builds upon the discourse of chapter 3.2, Hinterlands, where I discuss the rationale behind using the term, and its basis in both extant literature and participant data. Here, I will discuss participants' experiences of space in terms of the wider region, relating and enmeshing participants' experiences of the cities of Leeds and York with the hinterlands of these two key population centres in the LCR. As has already been demonstrated, York and Leeds represent divergent spatial realities, with differing experiences and influencing factors between the two cities. As I now move to discuss the outlying hinterlands of both cities, these experiences change once again. It is important here to note, however, the differences between different outlying areas as presented by participants. I will focus on Doncaster and North Lincolnshire (DE7) and Selby (PL6) as towns linked to York and situate discussions around these areas against more urbanised areas of Guiseley (PL1), Huddersfield (DE2), Bradford (PL6) and Hull (PL7). Participants' experiences of different hinterland areas diverge considerably, suggesting a need for micro-level explanations for different

locations and interactions; I argue that simply extrapolating a rural-urban divide within the LCR and mapping it on to locations in the city and the hinterlands is not sufficient here. Schoene (2018) and Feffer (2017) expertly broach the subject of EU-European rural/urban divides. Feffer (2017) even argues that there are two parallel conceptualisations of Europe, A and B, where A is represented by the modern interconnected city, and B the forgotten peripheral areas, yet these arguments do not fully explain participants' lived experiences in this sample.

Some of the conversations detailed below have been previously discussed in chapter 6, *Hostilities*, but here the spatial element of the discourse is also key. The hinterlands are where some of the more distressing (according to participants) experiences of discrimination have taken place. Whilst previous discussion centred around the discrimination in and of itself, building a narrative around, for example, Germanophobic sentiment in England (chapter 6.3.1), the following discourse links this discrimination more closely to hinterlands spaces.

This discussion is vital in elucidating and formulating a response to research aim 1. By spatially situating the discrimination experienced by participants between the cities and the hinterlands, Neal et al.'s (2020) conceptualisation of the rural-urban divide in Brexit imaginaries is underlined: communities with no lived experience of migration are the most anti-migration. Whilst the communities discussed by participants here remain part of the hinterlands of the Leeds City Region and are thereby connected to the systems of migration and multicultural co-existence exemplified by other areas in the LCR, in Doncaster, for example, the notion of being English, rather than British, still holds significant political power; Thorliefsson (2016) interviews a UKIP politician who remarks that 'not being an immigrant. And being proud of that' is what differentiates Englishness from Britishness. As has previously been discussed in chapter 6, it is these sentiments which form the basis of many of the hostilities experienced by participants.

Many of the hinterland locations shown in map 5.6.4

(chapter 5.6) as being the location of an interview are also economically less developed than other regions of the LCR. Thorliefsson (2016) highlights the struggles Doncaster has undergone, both economically and in terms of identity, since the shuttering of the coal mining industry. A UKIP stronghold (ibid.), Doncaster was also strongly pro-Brexit (Electoral Commission, 2019), a characteristic it shares with Selby, Wakefield, Hull, Harrogate, North Lincolnshire and Huddersfield (Electoral Commission, 2019), all areas mentioned by participants within the remit of the hinterlands context in this investigation. The hinterlands, therefore, represent a starkly conflicting spatial contrast to York and Leeds which voted remain in the Brexit referendum (Electoral Commission, 2019).

Some of the differences between the hinterland *Einzugsgebiet* [DE7] and the cities themselves are highlighted in detail in the interview with DE7. Here, they describe parts of Doncaster that are particularly *feindselig* [hostile], citing examples of everyday hatred expressed towards Germany and Germans:

[Original extract:] *Es gibt einen Unterschied im Einzugsgebiet, wie man es nennt. In bestimmten Gegenden von Doncaster ist es relativ feindselig. Ich habe zum Beispiel in einer schwierigen Gegend gewohnt. Die Nachbarskinder kamen oft zum Spielen zu mir. Und dann fragte mich der Junge: Wo kommen diese Steine her? Ich hatte wunderschöne Steine in meinem Garten - Rosenquarzkristalle. Ich sagte, dass ich sie aus Deutschland mitgebracht habe. Darauf war ich sehr stolz. Und sofort gab es eine negative Reaktion. Der kleine Junge sagte: Ich hasse Deutschland.*

[Translation:] In certain areas of Doncaster, it's relatively hostile. For example, I lived in a difficult area. The neighbouring children often came to play to me. And then the boy asked me: Where do these stones come from? I had beautiful stones in my garden - rose quartz crystals. I said that I brought them from Germany. I was very proud of that. And immediately, there was a negative

reaction. The small boy said: I hate Germany.

Similarly, both PL1 and DE7 describe instances while teaching (in hinterlands areas) of what could be classified as hate crime towards them from students. Again, for extended discussion of these incidents, refer to the hostilities chapter 6, although the hinterlands element of these lived experiences will be discussed here shortly.

Doncaster is linked to York through the experiences of DE7 (although it could easily be classified as the hinterland of either city, as could Selby). Doncaster airport and Hull ferry terminal provided important connections for migrants across the region: with a largely rural catchment area, the airport served migrant communities in Poland and Romania and became a key terminal for UK-based EU8+2 migrants (Burrell, 2018). It should be noted, however, that at the time of writing, Doncaster airport has closed down. Hull ferry terminal and its associated border crossing is noted by DE7 as a space of anxiety and conflict through fear of a hostile reception to the extent that they now choose not to travel. This demonstrates a unique sense of anxiety linked to the political climate of DE7's home locality, and the border institutions of Hull ferry terminal. These anxieties are both spatially and politically induced - no other participant mentioned a refusal to travel due to border hostilities. Equally, DE7's aforementioned (chapter 6) hostile interactions with government institutions have likely influenced the levels of anxiety DE7 experiences when interacting with officialdom.

DE7 outlines a number of factors for their differing views of Doncaster and rural Lincolnshire compared to York:

[Original extract] *In Doncaster gibt es keine Touristen. Sie verlassen Doncaster, aber sie gehen nicht dorthin. Auch die Erfahrungen sind unterschiedlich. Die Leute kennen kaum jemanden aus einem anderen Land. In meiner Straße in Doncaster zum Beispiel wurde die Polizei oft gerufen, weil dort pakistanische Taxifahrer wohnten. Und die hatten oft einen Krieg mit anderen britischen*

*Taxifahrern. Das ist nur ein Beispiel dafür, wie es dort zugeht.*

[Translation:] In Doncaster, there are no tourists. They leave Doncaster, but they don't go there. The experiences are also different. People hardly know anyone from a different country. For example, on my street in Doncaster, the police were often called because Pakistani taxi drivers lived there. And they often had a war with other British taxi drivers. That's only one example of how things are there.'

These ideas of rural hostility to multicultural co-existence are not, however, as universal as DE2 suggested could be the case in Germany (see chapter 4.2.5.1); the location where DE7 currently lives is seen as less hostile:

[Original extract:] *Jetzt lebe ich zum Beispiel in einem kleinen Dorf, das als besser angesehen wird. Dort erhalte ich keine direkten feindseligen Kommentare.*

[Translation] For example, now I live in a small village that is seen as being better. There, I don't receive any direct hostile comments.

The wider area remains nonetheless potentially hostile through its overwhelming support for Brexit, with DE7 noting the following:

[Original extract:] *Hier in den Midlands gibt es viele Kartoffelfarmen, in denen die Menschen in kleinen Häusern zusammenleben. Alle Arbeiter quetschen sich da zusammen. Und das ist nicht sehr beliebt. Sie arbeiten für wenig Geld, und dann nehmen sie ihr Geld mit nach Hause. Ich glaube, das war ein Auslöser für den Brexit.*

[Translation:] Here in the Midlands, there are many potato farms where people live together in small houses. All the workers squeeze in together. And that's not popular. They work for little money, and then they take their money back home. I think that was a trigger for Brexit.

Through DE7's experiences, we can see the marked differences in how participants may inhabit spaces depending on their rural or urban nature. DE7 is more cautious about openly projecting their identity as a German national in particular areas; their levels of anxiety in public spaces in the hinterlands are increased, whether directly attributable to Brexit or otherwise.

Selby and Guiseley represent an 'in-between' space in terms of rural-urban divisions. Whilst Selby is in a relatively rural setting, it has fast and frequent links with cities across the region, being a major railway junction and lying relatively near the M62 motorway. It is also a logistics hub (Logistics Hub Data Observatory, 2023). In connectivity terms, it has much in common with Saltaire and Guiseley, small towns of the Leeds commuter belt which are frequently and quickly connected to Leeds and Bradford by rail, and the Aire Valley and Harrogate by road. To this effect, PL6 states that they worked in Selby at a major distribution centre:

I would several times work doing like warehouse work first in Leeds Bradford area and then also here in Selby, as I told you in [logistics company] for ASOS.

The interview with PL1 took place in Guiseley retail park, representing a different aspect of suburban life that starkly contrasts with PL6's example above. Here, PL1 visits the retail park for leisure:

Interviewer: So, how, why have we come to Guiseley shopping centre?

PL1: Cos this is the closest, biggest retail place to our house, and we buy lots of things here for the kids and, and a bit of retail therapy when daddy is looking after the kids ahahaha. I do sometimes just sit here and have coffee, just for half an hour of peace.

These are micro-level interactions with spaces that are

inherently more local to the suburbs than the city, and often part of the regeneration process of those areas (Rice, 2020). They form part of the micro-level economic activity of everyday life. That a participant wanted to guide me around these spaces and detail their experiences of them demonstrates a desire to portray the everyday, rather than the day out.

Finally, Huddersfield, Hull and Bradford are large urban centres in their own right. They therefore present a similar breadth of experience as do York and Leeds. Bradford is known for its ethnic diversity, yet PL6 also experienced discrimination there in the aftermath of the referendum:

I was called the names just soon after the referendum it was in Bradford.

By contrast, PL7 comments on the manifestation of Polish migration in Hull's public space through a proliferation of Polish supermarkets:

Because Hull is very, you have literally streets when you have like Polish five, like Polish shops, like five Polish shops in a row. Yeah. So but obviously, Hull is much more industrial. That's why you do have larger Polish community. Whereas York is, erm, I don't think yeah, it's not it's not as visible in like, let's say outside space.

Moreover, DE2 links the complexities of second language (L2) dialect with the hinterland space of Huddersfield. This is an interesting observation; it validates ideas of multicultural co-existence in hinterland spaces, an argument, in the case of Huddersfield, supported by Hopkinson (2019) and Huddersfield's rich migration history in comparison to other hinterland areas. In addition, DE2 explicitly links their acquisition of L2 English to hinterland spaces; like PL1, DE2's first encounter with English while living in the UK was in hinterland spaces, not a city. These unique juxtapositions make Huddersfield (and Allendale, Northumberland - PL1) constitute rare, if not unique, accounts of linguistic placemaking in more remote locations

(whether geographically - Allendale, or politically and in terms of volume of academic research - both Allendale and Huddersfield). DE2's comments are the first in this research to link a multicultural geography of placemaking to the difficulties they experienced understanding the spoken English of the strong Yorkshire dialect whilst simultaneously living in a multicultural environment. Here, despite Huddersfield's multicultural co-existence, there is no reported Huddersfield dialect that has grown through multicultural influence, unlike Multicultural London English (Kerswill, 2022), which has emerged as a combined dialect influenced by its constituent parts, local and international. In Huddersfield, the local dialect remains distinctly local.

With such contrasting experiences of other cities in the region, it is important to remember that participants' experiences of language and space in York and Leeds themselves are equally diverse: participants have been welcomed and discriminated against in both Leeds and York. Equally, both cities provide different stories of diversity yet remain closely linked with their hinterlands, and each other.

## **9.6. Conclusion: The Importance of Local**

In this chapter, I have further clarified research aim 1 and research objective 3, grounding participants' lived experiences in the geographical diversity of the LCR, York, Leeds and their hinterlands. These spaces have been shown to be under constant flux, with participants partaking in and shaping their own communities across the region. The uniqueness of participants' experiences highlights the critical importance of local spaces, policies and experiences to regional or national agenda. I argue that the minutiae of local interactions build more intricate perspectives on regional and national issues than is possible when the micro-level is ignored or subsumed into more regional or national approaches.

Participants' divergent, and often opposing, experiences of different localities within the LCR and its hinterlands demonstrate the need to maintain an awareness of the diversity

of cultural experiences and backgrounds of different EU nationals and their differing experiences of and interactions with different localities. York and Leeds, despite being within close geographical proximity to one another, offer very different experiences for EU nationals. While this can be prefaced by remembering that both cities voted remain in the Brexit referendum and continue to offer multicultural environments which foster positive lived experiences for EU nationals interacting with English society, this statement must be nuanced by acknowledging differences in diaspora community provision and levels of multicultural co-existence between the two cities. I argue that the economic profile of each city also has an influence here: with York's economy relying heavily on tourism and academia, short-term migration to the city plays a much greater role in the city's demographics and socio-spatial structures, influencing the behaviour of participants in ways which differ from their compatriots who live in Leeds. Here, the multicultural diversity and size of the city play a greater role, with extant social infrastructure more oriented to the diverse range of diaspora communities in the city. In Leeds, participants have expressed feelings of partaking in a larger multicultural system where their presence is normalised to a greater degree, whatever their nationality.

The hinterlands present a much more diverse set of experiences than York or Leeds individually. Participants' experiences of hinterland spaces contest possible (mis)interpretations of Brexit referendum voting patterns as geographies of intolerance. While North Lincolnshire has been described as hostile by DE7, Huddersfield and Harrogate have not, despite all voting leave in the referendum (Electoral Commission, 2019). Accepting the counter-topographical diversity in attitudes towards EU nationals in leave-voting hinterland spaces is crucial, I argue, to understanding the micro-level local relationships that inform local attitudes to migration and multicultural spatiality, as influenced by local constructions of the English cultural habitus. Using localised conceptualisations of the English habitus here allows us to situate and differentiate the micro-level interactions between

participants and wider society through the lens of Bourdieu's habitus, thus demonstrating its utility in differentiating experiences of different local spaces.

## **Chapter 10: Participant conceptualisations of personal spaces**

### **10.1. Focus**

This final chapter builds upon previous investigations of the use of Language and Culture in the Landscape (chapter 8), and Spaces of the Leeds City Region (chapter 9) to interrogate the role of the habitus in socially constructed private, or restricted, spaces participants make of the Home and the Workplace. These spaces are shaped by exterior forces, yet also remain individual and etymologically constructivist in their conceptualisation by participants.

I then discuss participants' personal conceptualisations of themselves within space. The debate as to whether participants wish to be seen as a 'minority', or part of the 'majority' is included here as it diverges from discussions of multiculturalism (chapter 8.2), focusing instead on personal desires and representations of space, rather than lived experiences of public life.

### **10.2. Homemaking in the UK**

I will now discuss participants' conceptualisation of 'home' and being 'settled' in the UK; the question 'do you feel settled in the UK?' being one of the questions I frequently used to start the interview conversation. This section underlines key discourse around post-Brexit anxiety, whether induced by Brexit or otherwise. Participants express experiencing varying levels of settledness in the UK, helping to clarify and situate their lives in the UK in current social contexts; as previously discussed in chapter 6, Brexit has the potential to cause clear disruption to participants' lives in the UK through increased hostility, yet as demonstrated in chapter 6, these hostilities

have the potential to affect participants differently, altering their personal conceptualisations of the LCR as a place to call home. This chapter builds upon this discourse and previous discussions of participants' conceptualisations of space by broaching the notion of 'home' as a space; whereas many of the previous discussions on space focused on public spaces, this now focuses on the intimately private spaces, and notions thereof, which participants inhabit.

Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) work on homemaking, its portability and definitions in new emotional and physical spaces, in tandem with extant discussions around Bourdieu's habitus (1997) and its relationship with language and culture, is a useful lens through which to analyse participants' experiences here. Firstly, it underlines the intangibility of practised culture and emotional attachments to 'home', and migrants' manifestations of this intangibility through claiming and creating a lived environment as 'more "theirs" than the rest' (Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's 2021: 155). Secondly, Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo (ibid.) discuss the importance of the social, material and environmental circumstances under which migrants settle and claim some space of their own, both literal and symbolic, to call home. Participants' feelings of settledness varied hugely. Some participants, especially those with families in the UK, felt settled, whereas others expressed desires for continued mobility (i.e., DE1), or the ability to move elsewhere if required. The following excerpts, which contrast to those discussed later in this section, underline participants' feelings of settledness in the UK compared to elsewhere:

PL8 (young entrepreneur, in the UK for a number of years, other members of their Polish family are also in the UK):  
I do [feel settled]. Well settled as how do I put this?  
First of all, I don't really think there is much for me to come back to obviously this is very individual.

PL11 (professional with family in the UK): I came to England, how many years ago? Nearly 15 years ago. That was

the decision back then. Do I feel settled, yes, definitely, there's no intention to go anywhere else, only if I win the lottery, I'd probably just travel around the world, then.

These statements, compared to those which will be examined shortly, give a very straightforward answer to the question of settledness. Both participants here acknowledge their desire to remain in the UK without, however, presenting a Brexit-related caveat. This is interesting as it implies that, despite Brexit, from a personal perspective they consider their place in the UK to be uncontested.

There is no expression from PL8 or PL11 here of post-Brexit anxieties related to their ability to remain in the UK indefinitely. In the case of PL11, who has a family in the UK, this is particularly enlightening as they maintain the following:

PL8: I need to either accept it the way it is. Do whatever they want. And I'm completely okay with that. Or I can just go back to somewhere else. I don't like yeah, I accepted. That was it. That was the only thing like affected me. When it comes to Brexit. I need to do this.

Interviewer: So, has Brexit affected how you feel, then?

PL11: Not at all.

I will now examine more closely the feelings around settledness which are expressed by DE2, PL1 and DE1, all of whom gave more complex answers to the initial question around settledness than did PL8 and PL11. To this effect, DE2 stated the following:

I think [I feel settled here], I suppose, as I say my partner is from Leeds, kids go to school, I think that's what it does really. You know, once you get children and they go to school and then it's like, as I say, we did work, obviously this is the University, I've worked at the

University for, urgh, 8 years, it'll be 8 years this year, and, erm, it's quite a good place to, I think it's quite a safe place, you know, it's quite a good place to work, as a human being, because obviously it's just such an international community here.

DE2's explanation here was further explained by pointing out the physical landscape associated with feeling settled. The walk took us around the campus of the University of Leeds, their place of work. They pointed out and then visited the café where they normally purchase lunch, then took me to a nursery on the edge of campus which they also use. Here, their feelings of settledness were grounded in the physical landscape as a way of framing the entire interview: unlike other walks, such as that of DE1, this walk was a representation of their daily routine. As has been already mentioned in the language chapter, the impact of having children on the importance of one's L1 is great; here, the impact of having children on the spaces visited during DE2's daily routine was illustrated. Such conceptualisations of social, material and environmental circumstances again support Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) ideas around homemaking. The following quote from DE2 further cements the importance of the links between government hostilities, language and their geographical surroundings:

When my son goes to school, you've got, my son's obviously German, or half German, and then you've got, one's child's Mexican, you've got a boy, his parents are, erm, they're Spanish, then you've got a lot of people from Poland. It's like, it's already so, so, mixed where, people are so used to it, you know what I mean? You know, you talk about Brexit, actually, I think they talked about Brexit, this is a primary school, so they talked about Brexit in school so then, there was a British mum who spoke to me and said 'oh, you know, she said, how are your children? Because my children, they got really upset because they thought we needed to move house and how can they do that at school and...' so they're sort of really positive about us and

how we feel and yeah, yeah, yeah, so you know, so I, I suppose it's, d'you know, I think it's just, you know, I think the social circumstances where I socialise with these people are just quite open anyway.

These experiences allude to feelings of settledness even when not explicitly signposting them. Vahti (2015) discusses the importance of parenthood in the identity of first-generation immigrants, positing that the parenthood identity tendentially usurps ethnic identity. Linking again to the chapter on identity and the importance of the mother tongue in child-raising contexts, the privileging of parental identity in this instance is potentially a precursor to DE2's feelings of settledness: where children become the priority, as is demonstrated by the discussions around Brexit and moving house, and the physical locations visited on the walk, feelings of rootedness and permanency are likely to follow. Here, the following quote from PL1 becomes important:

I feel very settled, in as much as I didn't actually come with a Polish contingency, I came to be with an English guy, which is slightly different because I was never actually part of the Polish community here, I already straight away had, kind of, English friends, got a job in a school, then got a job in another school which is where I am at now, and then, err, I kind of, so we always had straight away his friends became my friends and then we were a couple, so, erm, at the moment I feel quite settled, although you never know what might happen, cos you just don't. That's the biggest problem with the whole last 3 years, nobody still knows nothing.

This again underlines the importance of family and relationships as a stabilising factor. Moreover, arguments around Brexit uncertainties are again undermining those feelings of settledness developed over a long period. This quote speaks to both the second and third layers of Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) 's framework, detailing micro-level social and

environmental circumstances which helped PL1 to feel settled in Leeds, and representing the work and adaptation that PL1 had to do to feel more integrated. By stating 'I already straight away had, kind of, English friends', they acknowledge that the homemaking process was, in this instance, made easier by their relationship which created a support network around them without necessarily demanding the input of building a social network abroad more organically.

Returning to the impact of Brexit uncertainty, DE1 again underlines the significance of anxieties around Brexit, and their interplay with the participants' ability to feel settled in a post-referendum environment:

I'm always playing with the idea of maybe, leaving again, but for right now, or for, say the next 2 or 3 years, I won't move. Unless they get me kicked out, which I think is... I've got my settlement [sic] status all done.

The differences in experience here between DE1 and PL1 and DE2 lie in family circumstances. Whilst DE2 and PL1 have families in the UK, DE2 still speaks of their German home:

I've still got a home [in Germany] ... I've still got my German passport; I would never give that up.

Or the potential for their parents to move around the EU, exercising their rights as EU citizens, and thus unravelling some of the commonality between a specific sense of space, place and 'home' location:

DE1: I'm always looking at flights. My dad, for example, he lives in Spain now, and he just bought himself an apartment for 40,000 EUR, so I'm thinking well... it's not so bad, maybe I could afford that.

As previously stated, DE1 experiences a different set of circumstances which shapes their understanding of settledness and home-making. Referring again to Boccagni and Hondagneu-

Sotelo's (2021), we see the intangibility of DE1's conceptualisations of 'home' directly impacting on their attitude to their life in the UK. Without a clearly defined space and place to call home, as per DE2 and PL1, DE1 creates a lived environment that is 'more "theirs" than the rest' (ibid.:2-3) in that it embraces the ephemeral nature of travel and the freedom to move around the continent. Moreover, the spaces they visit over the course of their walk are similarly ephemeral and lacking permanence:

DE1: I wanna go and check out Black Box, cos there's a new pop-up in there, I think there's a cafe... So, have you heard about these? So the Black Box, erm, is in the Trinity Centre here, and they have this unit, erm, that they rent out to, pop-up or, erm, local new ventures and stuff who want to try out what they're doing, like sort of market research or to try out their concept, erm, I think this is one, and then, so the first time I got involved, well, not really involved but, erm, there was the Monika art fair which is like an, an urban art gallery and show, erm yeah these are the guys here, wanna get a coffee?

The difference in experiences here (particularly between DE1 and DE2 as they both refer to Leeds itself, whereas PL1's interview took place in an outlying town) again speaks to Massey's (2005:12) notion of simultaneity of trajectories and stories-so-far. Whilst you can argue that the University of Leeds and the city centre are different places, their interconnectedness is considerable, especially when considering the proximity of the University to the city centre, and the huge numbers of students in Leeds. Moreover, Simpson, Sturges and Weight (2010) reiterate the transient nature of the University experience; if students' lives are transient as they occupy a space 'in-between', then the spaces they occupy have similar potential for transience, thus narrowing the difference between the city centre and the transient University in the current analogy. That two participants experience adjacent spaces in such divergent manners, in relation to home-making and being

settled, demonstrates once again the diversity in experience between participants who have been in Britain for a number of years.

### **10.3. The Question of Minority Status**

This discussion connects participants' views on minority status to the theme of whiteness discussed in chapter 2.2, as well as empirical discussions of hostilities (chapter 6) and multiculturalism (chapter 8.2). Participant perspectives here, however, ground the issue of minority status firmly within larger discussions around settledness, daily life and participants' everyday life in the UK. Participants' theoretical discussions of minority status as a concept thus diverge from their tangible lived experiences of hostilities as discussed in chapter 6.

The relationship between minority status and whiteness is self-evident for BAME minorities, yet there is also an interesting discussion to be had around the significance of shades of whiteness (see Moore, 2013). This coalesces with research presented in the literature review around the 'white negro' (Ignatiev, 2008:40) and Irish nationals' struggles with racism, discrimination and status in the UK.

Stakeholder Dr. Bulat offers an insight into the technicalities of being ascribed minority status in relation to government engagement with the following extract:

There's an argument that the Roma community is more organised as a group, perhaps because there's organisation specific work with Roma communities and specific programmes, whereas if you think about EU citizens, [...] although we are like, what 5/6% of population, is not thought about as a minority group, and therefore there's no real [government] engagement.

This highlights the importance ascribed to minority status when access to community support is considered. Moreover, it supports the statements by LCC illustrated in chapter 5.2 when

discussing which nationality groups would form the foci of the research. Here, it was highlighted to me by LCC that they have more engagement with the Polish community than the German as the former can more commonly also include members of vulnerable minority communities (Roma, victims of human trafficking and modern slavery).

Three participants discussed EU nationals in relation to minority status in British society. I do not attempt to analyse the extent to which EU nationals belong to a minority group, I only seek to voice participants' experiences and sentiments on the subject. Clearly, minority rights are subjective, something which has been outlined by participants below. Some have treated the notion of a minority in a relatively simple, statistical fashion, whilst DE8 and PL9 have extensively debated the meaning of 'minority' in relation to their personal circumstances.

DE8 begins by outlining their status on a micro-level as socially part of a minority, yet not being a minority at their place of work. This dichotomy points to the diverse work environments of participants. As DE8 works in academia, they are part of a wider community that is internationally diverse. By contrast they maintain their minority status in specific social settings:

In a very specific sense, yes. Sort of, in the very specific sense that I am an immigrant into another country, and that, in this country, still, (unclear 39.18) still is a minority life situation to be in. Even if globally, that's a larger and larger percentage of the global population, but here, relatively, population around me, it's a relative minority position. The moment I'm into the bubble of my workplace, it's far less of a minority position, even though I still think a majority of the working staff is national, but I think that's, sort of, balanced out by the fact that I say, in most other regards, if I'm part of a minority, then I'm still part of a, I don't know, culturally and socially dominant minority. I'm white, I'm male, I'm well educated, I'm a university professor, I have so many other parts of status

that are, sort of, I don't know, culturally and societally understood to be dominant, that I go, okay, it's very hard to feel minority relative to that.

There follows a wider discussion of being 'outed' as a minority. Similarities can be identified here with discussions in the Hostilities chapter, racism section, on participants being discriminated against for their nationality, whether directly (i.e., PL1, DE7) or indirectly (i.e., DE2). Here, we have another example of a passive hostility, but one that is more directly the result of a bureaucratic system and not intended to alienate foreign nationals. The following excerpt from DE8 underlines the nuance necessary when discussing the minority or majority status of (white) EU nationals in other majority-white societies: DE8 does not feel part of a minority in the UK until interacting with the qualifications category of the census form:

So, it's the only point where that, kind of, was reinforced was when I was filling out the census document for us, and I was, okay, tell us about your educational background. And I'd look at it and say, these letters, A and G and whatever, mean nothing to me. And then the instruction was just, if this doesn't apply, try to take the one that comes closest to you, and I go, I don't even know what comes closest to me. So, the little 'i' button on the website just gives, contextual information was just not rich enough in order to spell that out for me, and that was when I noticed, okay, this particular government system is not designed for me. Here, I can very clearly tell, here is a part of the state apparatus that is not designed with me in mind.

Equivalence of qualifications and problems associated with receiving recognition for one's qualifications is something many participants have experienced. Here, we see further evidence of the hurdles this can present in convincing potential employers of the merits of qualifications gained abroad. These differences

lead to a minority in the UK workforce of foreign-educated employees, all having to separately navigate the idiosyncratic differences between their qualifications and employers' expectations of British standards. The quotes above present us with two distinct issues to note. First, there is some debate around whether EU nationals can or wish to be considered a minority. As has been noted above, DE8 self-describes as 'majority' given their 'white' structural privilege. Second, if EU nationals are not to be considered minorities, then certain forms of civil engagement and social assistance can be harder to provide, ascertain and operationalise. Here, Dr. Bulat of the3million underlines the engagement gap between EU national Roma, who are extensively supported by the state due to their minority status, and other EU citizens, who are not socially considered minorities:

There's organisation specific work with Roma communities and specific programmes, whereas if you think about EU citizens, the idea of users is not, you know, a minority in the UK, although we are like, what 5/6% of population is not thought about as a minority group, and therefore there's no real engagement. So, when the council engage with engages with, you know, diversity of communities, they will engage with Somali community or Roma community or not an EU citizen, because it's not a minority in the, you know, public discourse.

Despite not being considered minorities on a social level, there is, however, an argument that EU nationals are considered minorities through the attribution of 'minority rights' through the EUSS and, prior to Brexit, the intrinsic rights bequeathed through EU citizenship. Balint and Lenard (2022) underline that the minorities are often denied voice through a lack of political inclusion, a problem now applicable to those EU nationals moving to the UK post-Brexit, or those who do not have settled or pre-settled status. Going forward, as post-Brexit society evolves, EU nationals will have to carefully negotiate their status on both an individual and societal level as members

of society in a minority due to their lack of British citizenship. In this regard, PL9 offers a robust refute of the treatment they believe is already afforded to some BAME minorities in the UK.

And this is almost like discrimination. And I honestly can't understand in in this light, why is it that the black people not even so much Indians but those from around Muslim countries like Pakistan and things like this, it's almost like the holy cows, they can do whatever they want, it's disproportional. So, I don't want to be treated as a minority in the way that you know, I can be totally you know, incompetent in something, and for instance, yes, still get the job just because I'm a minority. Because I in my mind, my reality that's just not fair. I don't want it even offer that to me. I just, I would refuse. It doesn't work like this, but in the same time that we're disproportionately treating various minorities.

This is the result of UK policy which starkly contrasts the policy of 'affirmative refusal' (DaCosta, Dixon-Smith and Singh, 2021:7) to categorise population data according to ethnicity adopted by much of continental Europe. PL9's argument is clearly also a comment on the multicultural nature of British society, as was discussed in the previous section. It again highlights some of the tensions between different minority groups as well as the way minority populations perceive their treatment within British society. Furthermore, it once again highlights the desires of participants not to be considered a 'minority' in a national context. The racialised tones here cannot, however, be ignored. Clearly PL9 feels strongly about the position of some minority groups in British society and perceived privileges they are afforded, particularly in the labour market. That these feelings contrast so strongly with PL9's own assertions that they do not wish to be seen as a minority suggests that they may equate minority status as usurping meritocratic social values. This potential link between

the erosion of workplace meritocracy and minority groups, however, ignores the discrimination that such ethnic monitoring is designed to combat, particularly in the UK and other anglophone countries (DaCosta, Dixon-Smith and Singh, 2021). PL9 does not, however, represent a view articulated by other participants. Whilst others made comments, as have been discussed above, on the nature of being a minority, none suggested that (specific, in PL9's argument) minority status advantaged them in ways which outweighed their meritocratic achievements when job-seeking.

The notion of minority status for EU citizens, or lack thereof (whether through choice or bureaucratic agenda), is clearly important, both to participants and those whose services interact with citizens of non-majority background. There is, in addition, a cultural aspect to this debate. As highlighted by DaCosta, Dixon-Smith and Singh (2021), the UK practises ethnic monitoring through workplace diversity programmes, and society is thus acquainted with the standardised questioning used to collect this data. This data is not, however, collected in Germany for legal reasons. This is about to change in 2023, but as of the time of writing it is illegal for employers to discriminate against employees in any way as outlined in the *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* [German General Equal Treatment Act], 2006. There is, therefore, an intercultural difference in the collation of ethnicity data, and potentially the cultural conceptualisation of a minority in and of itself; 'any other white background' remained a category in a question in the 2021 census.

#### **10.4. The Workplace**

The final conceptualisation of space to be discussed under the remit of this investigation is the workplace. Whilst not an area which provoked the same levels of emotionally charged discussion as previous chapters, some of the comments discussed below provide vital context to the migration histories of my participants. Work, and economic factors, remain a key factor in intra-EU migration (see, for example, Lafleur and Stanek, 2017),

with differences in earning potential between EU nations remaining stark (Eurostat, 2022). These conversations therefore provide key insights into the contextualisation of other anxieties presented in this investigation, relating to both research aims, and specifically research objective 1, focussing on the cultural differences of the workplace. The job market and economic climate were key motivators in the Brexit referendum, and EU nationals' rights, including the right to work, in the UK remain a key issue in post-Brexit Britain (see, for example, chapter 4.2). Labour market conditions and understanding them are clearly an issue closely linked to any working-age migrant. Both nationality groups have discussed the differences between the UK, Poland and Germany, but the two nationality groups have very different perspectives, priorities and experiences. As previously discussed in the hostilities chapter, all participants acknowledge the loss of working rights post-Brexit, with many complaining about the EUSS scheme and the problems they fear may occur in the future through its implementation. DE6 again exemplifies this with the following, blunt, statement:

Somebody has devised this was sort of pea sized brain and come up with a technological solution that allows the cases like mine to be processed really, really easily. And then all of these other ones that need a little bit of thinking time, like, like my husband, who is entitled to an EHIC card, but there is no e card on the horizon coming for him. I just have given up on that.

There are, however, more systemic and long-standing differences around workers' rights, gender discrimination and bureaucracy.

### **The Polish Perspective**

Another potential cause for division in the Polish community is the discontinuity Polish nationals can experience when moving to the UK. It is well documented that EU nationals from post-2004 accession countries suffer from 'migration penalties' to a greater extent than EU-15 nationals (Sirkeci et

al., 2018:1; Jonhston et al., 2015), with Polish nationals often suffering from over-qualification for jobs in the UK. Polish nationals struggle to get their qualifications recognised in the UK, as related here by PL2 and PL3:

PL3: I gave them my GCSE equivalent from Poland. Of course, they didn't know about that, they didn't even recognise it, even though it's an equivalent.

PL2: There's no acknowledgement of foreign-language education, no acknowledgement.

PL4's experiences differ slightly insofar as they have a degree that is standardised across Europe, yet they still had difficulties securing employment for which they were appropriately qualified:

My degree is commonly recognised in Europe. Because it's like, yeah, if we did something like, uniform degree system across Europe, and all, so that was alright. But to be honest, when I was looking for this job, and I made a few applications, and I found that, especially like big companies, I'm not sure why maybe it was because of my lack of experience. But I think, they didn't quite, they weren't so keen on getting back to me.

If Polish nationals are unable to get their qualifications recognised easily in the UK, this could lead to frictions within the diaspora community as Polish nationals have to take on jobs with a lower economic status. Moreover, the social rupture of moving abroad but nonetheless having a very large community which continues to practise its L1 habitus, in contrast with the cultural and linguistic requirements of the L2/English habitus, has the potential to cause significant conflict within the community. Trevena (2011) comments on the social prestige enjoyed by university graduates in Poland, with graduates tending to become part of the 'intelligentsia', a term with uniquely Polish cultural significance as defined by Libelt, translated by Trevena (2011:75):

Those who have received a versatile and careful education at institutions of higher education and lead the nation as scientists, civil servants, teachers, clergymen, industrialists, who lead the nation for the reason of their higher enlightenment.

The social position and prestige of university graduates in Poland is therefore elevated above that of graduates in the UK. O'Leary and Sloane (2016) suggest to this effect that there are increasing numbers of graduates in the UK performing non-graduate roles. This labour market environment will doubtless influence the ability of Polish nationals to follow their desired career paths, despite participants also noting the vast improvements to working conditions and workers' rights in the UK. This is noted by both PL1 and PL2:

PL1: I really like the ease of living here in as much as, things like workers' rights, and general idea about, erm, the rights being protected. My parents for instance, both engineers, both working in the places where there are forever and it's very much still 'who you know, not what you know' still in Poland. And there's none of that here, well, maybe in some circles.

PL2: I felt not rewarded by my w... for my work, in Poland and, given that, in Poland, the, erm, contract system is completely broken.

Moreover, the differential status of the university graduate within the English cultural habitus has the potential to cause conflict between members of the Polish diaspora; those with degree qualifications who were considered part of the 'intelligentsia' (Trevena, 2011) will potentially no longer be considered such within the realm of the English habitus.

The labour market is frequently seen as a motivating factor for EU8+2 nationals' migration to the UK, to the extent that economic factors remain one of the driving forces behind

the backlash against immigration in the UK, and Europe more widely (Lesinska, 2014). With the differing economic backgrounds of Poland and Germany, it is not surprising that Polish participants have frequently noted key factors such as pay, workers' rights and contract security, whereas the German cohort have not. PL2 and PL3 comment extensively on the difference for business owners between the two countries, arguing that Poland stifles small business owners with excessive regulatory and financial hurdles:

PL3: If you wanna be a developer of the growing companies, you cannot do that in Poland

PL2: Because you're paid less, you have less tax deduction towards your retirement, and there is no such thing as third pilot, pillar, like a nest or something like that helps you contribute further [towards your retirement]. There's no such a thing in Poland unless you do it privately.

There is a resignation here that this is a long-standing issue in Poland, one which White (2012) underlines, positing that the Polish labour market has an oversupply of graduates without the jobs to support them and a system that is 'seemingly protectionist, non-meritocratic and anti-business' (Eade et al. (2006) cited in White, 2012:46). This presents a contrasting set of workplace-related issues in the context of the habitus to the previously discussed difficulties in transferring qualifications between countries. As PL2 and PL3 note above, the Polish cultural habitus presents significant cultural hurdles to business ownership, unlike the reported English habitus' approach to small business.

### **Germany**

The German labour market is very different from both the UK and Polish markets. These differences form a key insight in situating participants anxieties of difference, particularly after the Brexit campaigns, referendum and negotiations which have repeatedly focused on EU nationals' right to work in the

UK.

In Germany, the labour market is largely based on consensus, with a huge emphasis placed on Unions and *Tarifvertraege* [collective bargaining agreements] forming an [essential part of collective bargaining and employment law] '*Bestandteil des kollektiven Arbeitsrechts*' (Wien, 2009). The scale of difference between workers' rights in Germany, the UK and Poland will necessarily alter participants' perceptions of the UK labour market. No participants bemoaned the lack of workers' rights, in contrast to the Polish cohort. DE7 does, however, comment on the emphasis put upon learning your craft in Germany compared to the UK:

What's a Man-With-A-Van here would be a self-employed person in Germany, who will have undergone training. In Germany, you can only become self-employed as a craftsman if you have completed your vocational training, if you're a Master Craftsman.

Additionally, DE6 makes some interesting comments on the inflexibility of the German labour market in comparison to the UK, however:

So, the big difference is in the UK, people move around. There's such a big difference in the way that you can buy a house, sell a house, get a new job, move to a different part, and so forth. And one of the issues with the German labour market, even though you know, generally Germany is doing very well, but it's the lack of the people to be more the willingness to be mobile, to go for a job.

Moreover, they state that misogyny in the workplace is a less significant issue in Britain:

Unfortunately, that includes quite a lot of gender issues. I mean, I know who are in my position and who are professors at a German University. And it's almost like the first question they get asked is, but who is going to

cook your husband a meal when you do this job sort of thing? In Britain, you would be taken to court if you said that.

Ahrens, Ayoub and Lang (2022) argue that Germany has caught up with other European countries in terms of gender equality: during the 'Merkel era', Germany is argued to have made rapid progress in enacting measures to improve gender equality in the workplace. Unfortunately, DE6's comment was not temporally situated, so it is unclear when the relayed interview took place, although it is shocking, nonetheless. That DE6 still feels the need to recount this story underlines their conviction in its validity; there is no historical marker relayed by DE6 to imply that they do not feel this could be repeated in Germany in the current timeframe. Here, two points of interest are noted. First, gender inequality in Germany is demonstrably still a feature of the cultural habitus to the extent that a participant with an academic career feels the need to underline its significance. Second, as March, Sproull and Tamuz (1991) theorise, the absence of examples of a problem does not preclude its existence. This level of gender discrimination is still clearly acknowledged as part of the German cultural habitus.

## **10.5. Conclusion**

This final empirical chapter draws together ideas and experiences from across the key themes of hostilities, language and space. These themes of homemaking, the question of minority status, the workplace and personal conceptualisations of spaces of care once again, speak to both research aims 1 and 2, situating participants' experiences in different cultural contexts. The importance of the home and the workplace as critical intersections of hostility, convivial co-existence and language acquisition and use, forms a key part of the migration experience in the LCR. Whilst other activities and interactions participants have, such as those at the UK border (chapter 6.2), are ephemeral, the nature of the home and the workplace is more permanent.

A desire and ability to settle in the UK is a personal trajectory for many, if not all, participants. Here, their desires intersect with the hostilities enacted by Brexit, particularly around the EUSS. The ability to lead a settled family life in the UK, bringing up children in line with their personal interpretations of the English habitus in concert with the importance of their own identity and mother tongue, for example, is threatened by the spectre of Brexit. Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's notion of a home as 'more "theirs" than the rest' (2021:155) has the potential to be continually threatened when the uncertainties of immigration status and ability to travel play a greater role.

The notion of 'more "theirs" than the rest' (ibid.) is again fore-fronted when considering debates around the definition of minority status. Whilst stakeholder Dr Bulat has underlined the importance of this definition in terms of administration and bureaucracy, something which has particular import in light of the hostilities faced by participants from governmental sources (see chapter 6.2), participants have demonstrated the complex emotional labour that comes with a discussion of minority status. I argue that these debates are important, particularly as English society grows beyond the limits of other categorisations such as the 'any other white background', as this categorisation, by including the structurally privileged status of whiteness, eliminates ideas of discrimination which remain pervasive in participants' lived experiences of the LCR.

Experiences and conceptualisations of the English workplace present similar challenges. Participants experience a labour market less riddled with bureaucracy and sexism than in Poland or Germany respectively, yet they are also confronted with hostile interpretations by English employers of their personal qualifications and worth. Hostile work environments are not a novel concept in migration communities. Whilst the concept of the 'Polish Plumber' is perhaps grounded in theories of globalised neo-liberal labour (see Noyes, 2019, for example), the consequence is often one of reduced opportunity despite qualification. This hostility of the workplace then proceeds to

impinge on desires of home-making, with the potential to limit the social and geographical mobility of an EU national who, in their society of origin, would be highly-qualified.

The coalescence of participants' experiences of these more unique, 'personal' spaces, each with their own microcosms of spatial interactions, hostilities and linguistic significance, contributes to, and ties together, overarching discussions of hostilities, language and space.

## Chapter 11: Conclusions

### 11.1. Focus

In this chapter, I respond to and resolve the research aims and objectives outlined in chapter 1.2. I draw together the key themes of the preceding empirical chapters on Hostilities, Language and Culture, and Space, collating key evidence from each that supports new arguments to explain the multifaceted enmeshing of post-Brexit anxieties, language and space experienced by my participants. In the first section, I discuss how using language as a methodological tool has implications for the whole investigation, from research design to results. I underline the importance of embracing a linguistically-grounded approach, highlighting the research potential which, particularly in the anglosphere, could be realised through an appreciation of the import of language in migration contexts.

I then move on to evaluate participants' experiences as supporting the notion of a merging habitus; one which is defined by a merging of themes of the English habitus with, in this instance, aspects of the Polish and German habitus. In appreciating the multicentric nature of the migrant habitus, it becomes easier to situate anxieties of difference such as those expressed by participants in relation to Brexit.

In chapter 11.4, I discuss the role of hostility in diaspora spaces, and links between hostile spaces and the habitus, particularly in relation to the specific roles diaspora spaces fulfil for their communities.

In the following section, I reiterate the importance of

the national specificity of participants' lived experiences. I link their relative experiences of the L2 (English) habitus, and their own conceptualisations of their L1 (German/Polish) habitus to discrimination, and the potential here for variations in participant experiences of discrimination which go beyond being German or Polish.

Similarly, in chapter 11.6, I discuss the importance of micro-level, local spaces and interactions therewith in participants' lived experiences of the LCR, arguing that there is a need to re-evaluate the notion of liminality and forefront these micro-level experiences as it allows us to better situate national issues such as post-Brexit policy frameworks and interregional mobility.

Finally, I highlight the lack of empirical research (especially in anglophone academia) which investigates the German community in the UK. This is of particular import: given the reported prevalence of Germanophobia in the LCR, it is a subject which is clearly under researched.

## **11.2. Language as Methodology**

Research aim 2 of this project was to situate and differentiate potential anxieties of difference between mother-tongue and destination cultures of German and Polish minority ethnic communities.

I have demonstrated the critical role language plays in forming the habitus in specific national cultural contexts. By using language as a core methodology of this research, I have re-evaluated its role in research in an original way. Language plays a key role in both the analysis and data collection stages of many research projects, particularly within qualitative migration research, yet its role is often, I believe, misunderstood as a barrier to overcome, rather than a data-enriching key, critical to unlocking participants' differing perspectives and lived experiences. In chapter 5.8.1.1, I discussed the problematic nature of treating language as a barrier to research, rather than a tool in data co-creation.

Throughout this investigation, my own use of German and,

to a lesser extent, Polish has allowed me to better situate participants' anxieties and lived experiences of difference through shared lexical interpretations between myself and participants. As I highlighted in chapter 5.8.1, there were data processing considerations around transcription and, in particular, translation which I have used as a tool to better understand participants' experiences. In chapter 5.8.1.2, I outlined my reasoning behind fore-fronting the original German-language data from interviews with DE3 and DE7, providing both the original extract and a translation. In doing so, I am preserving the multilingual context of this research and maintaining it for future readers who may also speak German (or Polish, as in as chapter 7.4), allowing them to understand the root of my interpretations of the German- or Polish-language data provided by participants, by inspecting the source-language material.

Here, I operationalise language as method; my discussion in chapter 8.3 around definitions of class in Poland, for example, demonstrates a key tenet of this approach. By using language, linguistic and culture-focused understandings of class, I bring new understandings of the internal divisions of the Polish diaspora. These divisions are unique to the Polish community, and Polish understandings of class. By applying language as a methodology here, I can see beyond a more British interpretation of PL2 and PL3's comments on the play between class and migration in a Polish context.

Instances such as these underline the new understandings of lived experiences of migration, which using language as methodology brings to the fore. In demonstrating the importance of multilingualism in academia, Mocikat (undated:2), writing in German, states the following:

[Original extract:] *Während des Prozesses der Erkenntnisfindung spielt für den Forscher die jeweilige Muttersprache eine besondere Rolle, da es der semantischen Vernetzung des Lexikons sowie des Bewusstseins für die kulturell-historische Aufladung des Wortschatzes bedarf, um das intuitiv oder durch Analogie Gefundene zu*

*präzisieren.*

[Translation:] During the process of finding knowledge, the researcher's respective mother tongue plays a special role since it requires the semantic networking of the lexicon and the awareness of the cultural-historical significance of the vocabulary, in order to specify what is found intuitively or by analogy.

Although my mother tongue is neither German nor Polish, this analogy underlines the role of multilingual understanding more generally, particularly in the remit of the habitus and situating anxieties of difference between mother-tongue and destination cultural and linguistic habitus in the migration context of this research. It is not my mother tongue and habitus which is of import here, but that of my participants. It is their experiences which I am examining and their discoveries of new cultural knowledge through interactions with English society in the LCR. It is therefore their networking of lexica between their L1 and L2 and their situating of the intersectionality of Language and Space in the LCR which, through expression in either their L1 or English, results in the novel findings of this research. Through employing language (and the habitus) as methodology, I have revealed participants' lived experiences, such as those of DE2 in chapter 6.3.2 (German language being understood as representative of films about the Second World War). This evidences the contrasting, and sometimes oppositional, habitus understandings of language, particularly in reference to Bourdieu's (1997) notions of the linguistic marketplace and the economics of language. To this effect, it demonstrates the applicability of the habitus to both language and cultural interaction simultaneously, further supporting the notion of their inseparability.

Being able to communicate with participants in their mother tongue was a key element of this discussion. As I highlighted in chapter 5.4.2, language played a key role in the data collection, hence the Polish and German communities were chosen as participant groups because of my ability to communicate with them. This was first discussed with Leeds City

Council as part of the research design phase (see chapter 5.2), cementing the importance of language as methodology even at this early stage. In researching communities with whom I can communicate in their L1, I privileged language at the forefront of the methodological and etymological framework for this investigation: I argue that, had I chosen other EU national cohorts in the UK to research (such as Romanian or Spanish, for example, two languages I do not speak and cultures with which I have no experience), then resulting insights to the key themes of hostilities, language, space and the habitus would have been radically different. Speaking participants' L1, even if not fluently in the case of Polish, and having a clear understanding of the cultural and historical context of the relevant country, put me in a position to be able to understand the complex web of interaction between the key themes of this investigation, particularly the enmeshing of the L1 and L2 habitus which is a key finding of chapter 7.

Finally, accessing bibliographic material for this research in a range of languages (but particularly German, and, for Bourdieu's material, frequently French) employs my conceptualisation of language as methodology across the research process. Whilst I have spoken frequently above of the import of language in methodological, data collection and analysis contexts, my ability to synthesise source language material, whether Bourdieusian, from the German government, or Polish advertising, cements this research in a wider context of multilingualism. Using language as an overarching methodology permeates every stage of this investigation, allowing new insights and interpretations of established concepts at every step of the research process.

### **11.3. The Merging Habitus**

In this section, I argue in support of merging habitus, a migrant- and migration-focused interpretation of Bourdieu's habitus which embraces the fluidity of migrant lives and experiences. It encapsulates the multiple identities of a migrant who lives in a different cultural, linguistic or

national environment from that to which they are accustomed. It accounts for the experiences of many participants of this research who feel they simultaneously present language, linguistic, cultural and social aspects of the different cultures to which they are exposed.

This interdisciplinary conceptualisation of the habitus forefronts language as a key factor. It accounts for the micro-level, local interactions which govern my participants' everyday lives, as discussed in chapter 11.2. I argue that the notion of merging habitus is a key factor in situating and differentiating potential anxieties of difference between mother-tongue and destination cultures of participants, thus helping to resolve research aim 2 of this investigation.

There is extensive literature (Pigot et al., 2009; Garcia, 2015) which discusses the Bourdieusian notion of the *habitus clivé*, such as could present in communities experiencing split identities. Friedman (2015) (2016?) further highlights this conceptualisation of *habitus clivé* in the context of social mobility. He argues that when social mobility is experienced too quickly, it can cause what Bourdieu terms 'hysteresis' (Bourdieu, 20018:160), as a disconnect between 'field and habitus' (ibid.), or, reality and expectations, is experienced.

In Burns, Andrews and James (2023), discussions focus on the notion of split personal identities in a static society; Aboriginal communities can experience *habitus clivé* through negotiating Australian and Aboriginal Australian identities simultaneously, often in direct conflict with one another. Both scenarios of *habitus clivé* represent a passive change enacted upon the actors concerned, whether that be somebody experiencing social mobility through a fixed system of class or caste, or the complex relationship between (in this instance) Aboriginal identity and Australia.

That is not the case for my participants, however, for whom the extent to which their identities compete in real time to govern every aspect of their daily lives in simultaneity is reduced. Using either of the examples detailed above, the contested identities develop in tandem whilst simultaneously diverging and creating conflict. With my participants, their

German or Polish cultural habitus is already formed. Although this clearly does not negate the potential for competition between the L1 and L2 habitus, as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, it is conflict between a learned habitus and one that is being imposed or learned as the conflict progresses. I argue that the notion of *habitus clivé* is attritional; it implies a loss of identity. This is not the experience of many of my participants who are combining additional elements of the English cultural habitus into their identity, their habitus. It is this key difference, I maintain, that differentiates the *habitus clivé* from the notion discussed here of the merging habitus.

In chapter 7, I investigated the role of language and multilingualism in personal contexts, concluding in chapter 7.5 that multilingualism is used by migrants as a tool to help them unlock cultural understandings of the destination society habitus. Here, participants use their L1, both linguistically and socio-culturally, as a key to accessing complex notions of Englishness present in the habitus of the LCR. A particularly salient example of this is the notion of 'etic' translation (Al-Masri, 2009; Pike, 2015) where the outsider to the English habitus partially superimposes the habitus developed from their society of origin onto the English habitus in order to correctly ascertain the meaning of a lexical term. In a migration situation, the migrant thus creates new understandings of the English habitus by creating an evolution thereof which combines understandings of L2 (English, in this instance) cultural concepts with those of the L1 (Polish, German) to create a unique habitus which is multicentric in nature, exhibiting fluidity of understanding between the L1 (Polish/German) and L2 (English) habitus and merging aspects of both.

I argue that, as demonstrated by participants of this research, language is the habitus. While others have argued that language plays a key role in the habitus and its formation (see chapter 2), I argue that this does not go far enough. In chapter 2, I discussed the blurred boundaries present between language and culture, with one merging into the other; in light of the dataset from this research, I argue the same blurred distinction

can be applied to the habitus. If language and culture are inextricably linked to these notions, then so is the habitus. This process culminates in the formation of an individual habitus which shapes a person's worldview in concert with their mother tongue. This is supported by Nicholas's (2009:322) notion of 'effective acculturation'. It is this which I maintain is the essence of a cultural habitus which differentiates people across the globe; language combines with cultural norms, rules and hierarchies to produce an individualised cultural habitus which is specific to the individual's cultural background, mother tongue and lived experiences. When trans-located from the environment and circumstances in which it developed, this habitus can have significantly divergent characteristics from that employed by a society's majority.

Participants demonstrate employing different and unique aspects of their L1 habitus in their understandings of the L2 habitus, supporting the notion that not only does one habitus not usurp another, but also that, given the prevalence of cultural discrimination, as discussed in chapter 6, links between the habitus, culture and discrimination are under-researched. This can be seen through differing interpretations of English society not only between the different nationality cohorts, but also within them. Participants' interpretations of the English habitus are personal, in concert with the importance of their own habitus, identity and mother tongue.

I argue that these individual habitus, as markers of unique lived experiences, are developed through complex systems of social interactions throughout participants' lives. Wacquant (2011) recounts his gradual transition from an outsider wondering how to access the Chicago boxing ring as a research site, to becoming a core member of the boxing cultural scene in the same club. His worldview demonstrably changed between his initial interactions with the community and the culmination of his research, yet they were still shaped by his lived experiences thus far as a 'white Frenchman' (ibid.:84). His native language, culture and education shaped his worldview, his habitus. Similarly, the mother tongue of my participants and the associated cultural identities define their lived experiences of

the LCR.

Participants with parental responsibilities highlighted differing aspects of their own L1 to those without children, privileging those aspects they wished their children to embody with an emphasis on language ability. This demonstration of habitus development is further supported by Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2021) notion of homemaking (chapter 10.2); parenthood radically altered participants' views of their L1 and, I argue, alters the trajectory of their personal habitus. The meaning of participants' L1 is so clearly linked by participants to parenthood that this suggests a further juncture in the habitus beyond language, culture and geography. In comparing the emotional importance of language to participants in chapters 7.2-4, I highlighted not only the greater emotional investment that parenthood brings to maintaining the L1, but also other aspects of the habitus that participants without children privilege: while DE1 declared they did not to have an emotional attachment to German, they saw themselves as very geographically mobile, European. Here, then, DE1's habitus is divergent from that of other participants who are parents, yet nonetheless embodies key features of the German habitus as a citizen free to move, live and work throughout the Schengen Zone.

These interpretations of the habitus are demonstrably threatened by elements of the habitus productive of, and reinforced by, Brexit, as underlined in chapter 6, again linking the key concepts of this research: language, culture, space and hostility. Freedom of movement for EU citizens in the UK who do not have settled or pre-settled status has come to an end. Simultaneously, the Germanophobia discussed, again in chapter 6, threatens key aspects of the German habitus which participants value as frameworks in bringing up their children. This threat emanates from the hegemony of the English habitus which inhibits German participants to maintain aspects of their learned habitus, including speaking German in public, for example, as demonstrated by DE2.

#### **11.4. Diaspora Spaces, Habitus, and Identity**

In chapter 8, I discussed extensively participants' divergent experiences of, and allegiance to, places and spaces of cultural importance to them and their diaspora communities. I evidenced different levels of engagement with diaspora community spaces, both between communities and within them. In this section, I argue that participants' lived experiences of the LCR also evidence their respective habitus, and its basis in language and culture. This nexus of habitus, space, language and culture and finally hostilities coalesces through participants' individual experiences of migration and associated anxieties. This speaks to both research aims of the project; anxieties of difference are mapped through space, language and culture, and the extent of these anxieties is further clarified through the habitus and space.

The role of the Polish Catholic Church in the Polish habitus is inherently cultural, as well as linguistic. In chapter 8.6, I explored the meaning and importance of religion and religious spaces to the Polish community, as this was deemed to be a cornerstone of some participants' lives. Extant literature, detailed in chapter 2.4.2, highlights the role of religious spaces in Poland and in Polish diaspora communities abroad, situating religion and religious spaces as a key part of national identity, a theme which was further supported by participants, even those who were not religious (again, see chapter 8.6). The habitual nature of the church and religion within Polish society not only further demonstrates the link between culture and the habitus, but also the role of space within the latter. I argue that a key aspect of Polish experiences in English spaces is the ability of those communities to merge the cultural habitus of Poland and England, as discussed in chapter 11.3, but to also then map this habitus onto the English landscape. Eade and Davis (2007) argue for a reinterpretation of the relationship between central and peripheral spaces in terms of sacred spatialisation in the Polish and Congolese communities in the UK; I argue that this sacralisation of space amongst Polish populations in the UK,

evidenced in chapter 8.6, supports the notion that the Polish habitus is being mapped onto English spaces in ways which echo significant themes of Polish culture, the cultural importance of religion, if not its theological import, being a key example. These differences between the Polish and English habitus are being further coded into the landscape of the LCR through the merging of the two habitus by the Polish diaspora community; this phenomenon not only supports the assertion that the habitus is a unique construct, but also that the habitus is spatially mapped.

In considering the nexus between the habitus and space, the lack of German community spaces can also be better explained. As previously highlighted in chapter 8, the German community in the LCR is less cohesive than the Polish; some participants desire to have a more limited involvement with their diaspora community, a notion also supported by Teichert and Meister's (2022) research on German nationals in the UK. Moreover, discussions around national identity in Germany, and German nationals' tendency to privilege regional identity above national identity (see chapter 7.2) again support the argument that German cultural spaces are less viable for German diaspora as they fail to account for the variations in German regional identity, and the comparative weakness of German national identity.

This research evidences the existence of German cultural spaces, but they privilege the German language rather than other aspects of German culture. One difference here, I argue, is that participants expressed their relationship with language as a relatively unifying concept in terms of German national identity (chapter 7.2). To this effect, it will be recalled that DE2, for example, remarked that there would be little utility in their children learning a regional dialect of German, rather than High German, as they would have difficulty being understood outside that specific region. The concept of a German cultural space remains elusive, by comparison to established Polish centres across the region (see chapter 8.3). Some German participants even expressed a desire to have as little to do with the German community as possible (DE4, for example), strengthening the

argument that German participants' sense of place relies on, as I argued in chapter 11.3, the key notion of merging of their own habitus with the English habitus. It will be recalled that English society was considered more tolerant of LGBTQ+ minorities, a characteristic of the English habitus embraced by a number of Polish and German participants, even those who did not declare themselves part of the LGBTQ+ community. A similar dynamic was demonstrated by reported differences in expected gender roles between the German and English habitus (DE6); that participants adopt critical components of the English habitus into their own, despite not having grown up in the UK or having English as an L1, points to the effective merging of habitus conceptualisations between Poland/Germany and the UK.

The language-learning spaces for the German diaspora highlighted in this research include both German schools used exclusively by diaspora communities to educate their children, passing on German language, culture and the habitus to their offspring, and language-learning spaces which are used by both diaspora and others who want to learn German. This adds further complexity to the notion of German community spaces, I argue, as their presence and stature is eroded by other users who have different objectives in using these spaces. This is evidenced in chapter 8.4 in the case of language-learning spaces; it will be recalled that DE7 was frustrated by the level of German spoken by other (British) members of such spaces to the extent that it was 'impossible to speak [German] with them [British users of German-language spaces]'. As I assert in chapters 11.5-6, the import of geographical connections in the construction of the habitus is critical in determining migrant experiences; here, there is little geographical connection between the German habitus and spaces of the LCR for those participants who are not parents, suggesting the German cohort exhibits a very different migration experience in terms of the nexus between space, identity and the habitus to the Polish.

### **Futures thinking in localised policy**

The interactions and lived experiences discussed throughout this research highlight the paramount importance of

location. The intersection of diaspora spaces, habitus and identity as analysed in this research is intrinsically local, uncovering new knowledge about the fluidity and local specificity of spaces within local community contexts. These contexts are individually unique, specific to the local area inhabited by those who experience them. Again, this micro-level analysis presents the coalescence of language, habitus and space on a local level. The analysis of this research, while transferrable in its broader message of inherent local specificity, is not transferrable in its specifics for precisely this reason: it highlights the true individual contexts of a local area, its culture and inhabitants.

These findings have clear policy implications for regional and national organisms of government: as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities pursues a devolution agenda, signing an increasing number of funding deals with local and regional authorities across the country, recognition of locals, local spaces and communities is gaining political traction. Devolved decision-making inherently puts decision-makers closer to the communities about which the decision is being made, and this research clearly demonstrates the import of micro-level understandings of space and community.

In this research, I have demonstrated not only differences in habitus and participants' interactions with public between urban and rural settings, as might be expected, but that each locality has its own cultural context. Each locality has its own history, migration context and political Brexit aftermaths. To reset the post-Brexit political agenda, levelling up local areas to maximise their potential, requires futures thinking centred on the extremely local. The Norwegian government paper 'Report to the Storting' (Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2023) highlights that, for small rural communities to survive and flourish, both local influence from local people, and developing the uniqueness of individual towns are crucial; I take this a step further, arguing for a focus on local communities, regardless of their rural or urban context. The participants of this research are local residents, they also need agency in shaping their local areas to highlight the rich

specificities of communities across LCR and the UK more widely.

## **11.5. National Specificity in Post-Brexit**

### **Realities**

A key finding of this research has been the intricate specificities of individual national contexts and their import in the post-Brexit lived experiences of my participants. Each participant has recounted unique personal lived experiences which occurred as a direct result of their nationality, national, cultural and linguistic identity. It is crucial, however, to ground these experiences in the national context of post-Brexit England. Many of the hostile post-Brexit realities experienced by participants were deeply-grounded in English national identity. Whilst some of these experiences were additionally specific to the LCR, the national context is unavoidable. Without the historical connotations of anti-German sentiment in the UK, for instance, DE7 is unlikely to have experienced such virulently anti-German attitudes in their daily life. These experiences are, then, a unique product of English national identity, history and historical and current politics. These factors have coalesced to contribute to a very specific type of English post-Brexit reality that would not occur in the same form elsewhere in the EU. Moreover, discrimination rooted in the alienation of other languages, such as was experienced by PL9 when their name was deliberately mispronounced, is specific to Britain as a country with English as its L1. Here, monolingual English speakers are often unaware of the difficulties of speaking English as an L2 (see, for example, Jenkins, 2022).

Thus, I maintain that the post-Brexit realities here as demonstrated through participants' lived experiences are uniquely post-Brexit; if Nexit (a potential exiting of the EU by the Netherlands; Otjes, 2016) were to pass, there would, I argue, be little scope to generalise the national context of post-Brexit to post-Nexit. The post-Brexit reality is grounded in the contexts of the English national habitus, the English language and British historical and political contexts which, I

argue, allow distinct forms of hostility to be formed and experienced.

### **Hostility Through the Habitus**

In this section, I posit that each nationality group is vulnerable to specific forms of discrimination, rooted in language, language use, culture and their habitus. In chapter 6, I discussed the hostilities participants faced in their daily lives across the LCR. I now further resolve the extent of these anxieties as reported in this research, answering research aim 1. In chapter 6, I argued that the tendential framing of government hostilities towards EU citizens in discussions around Central and Eastern European nationals is insufficient. Despite Favell (2008) labelling western European EU nationals as 'Eurostars', this is clearly not a view shared by wider society in the LCR. I have evidenced significant lived experience of Germanophobia amongst my participants, although this phenomenon is under-researched in anglophone academia, again underlining the importance of language as a methodology for academic research (chapter 11.2).

### **Identity, the habitus and discrimination**

I have previously mentioned the role of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [the management of historical memory in Germany] in situating German participants' interpretations of xenophobia, racism and discrimination (see, for example: von Bieberstein (2016); Garsha (2020)). *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is a useful tool to aid understanding of the complex relationship between Germany and England, and thus the German and English habitus. In chapter 7, German participants reported numerous instances of historically-rooted Germanophobic discrimination, a theme that was absent in the lived experiences of discrimination amongst Polish participants. By contrast, Polish participants reported greater levels of discrimination linked to language, pronunciation and spelling (PL9), and economics (PL6). The latter of these is a theme particularly well-grounded in extant literature investigating anti-Polish sentiments in the UK, specifically in Brexit contexts (see chapter 2.2.4). Equally,

residents of the LCR with names of non-British origin are not the only populations to have difficulty in this regard: the dispute over the difference between Derry and Londonderry as the correct name for the Northern Irish city is deeply felt, and only in 2023 is the Brecon Beacons National Park re-branding itself in Welsh, a UK language. Just as I argue that racism directed towards white non-majority populations remains significant, so too are the issues around pronunciation and language that pervade the English habitus. Moreover, participants from both cohorts also discussed situations where they have been subjected to, or have witnessed, anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in Germany or Poland, but not in the UK (misogyny in Germany (DE6); anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in both countries (DE5, PL1, PL2)).

The reported lower levels of anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in the LCR by comparison to Germany and Poland support the notion that the hostilities investigated and uncovered by this research go considerably beyond the scope of Brexit and EU nationals' anxieties towards it. In chapter 6.3.3, I discuss the potential roots of anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in Poland as being part of the Polish habitus, considerably influenced by the role of the church in Polish society (also discussed in chapter 8.6). Similarly, misogyny in Germany remains a pervasive issue to the extent that Boulila and Carri (2017) argue its racialisation (framing gender equality as a normative German social ideal against the perceived values of non-German others) is used not only as a mechanism for racial discrimination, but also as a measure to silence feminist discourse.

These specific issues, whether the lingering nature of racially-motivated generalisations of Germany stemming from Nazism, or anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination in Poland, support my argument that there is a link between the habitus and discrimination; participants from each nationality cohort have experienced different forms of discrimination. The habitus, as discussed in chapter 2.3, is demonstrated to encompass a worldview combining language and culture, customs and environment. German and Polish history, politics and culture, as they are understood in English habitus contexts, provoke

specific understandings and responses. Due to these respective English habitus perceptions of Germany and Poland as countries, and their current and previous relationships to England, discrimination against Polish and German nationals in the LCR will differ accordingly. German participants have been exposed to discrimination which is anti-Germany, yet Polish participants suffered from discrimination rooted in broader arguments about economics, EU expansion and associated policy, and perceived language complexity. Similarly, different participants also demonstrated varied interpretations of potentially discriminatory interactions: what one participant may interpret as humour could be taken differently by another participant with the same L1 (see chapter 6.3.2).

As cultural and political issues that have developed over time, these barriers are elements of the English national habitus that do not recognise the problems faced by white non-majority populations. This, again, reiterates the importance of the English habitus in shaping the experiences of my participants, representing a key difference in European nationals' understandings of post-Brexit Britain, from English conceptualisations of whiteness to attitudes towards language and accent, and the role of local regional spaces in the English habitus.

## **11.6. Localities of the Leeds City Region:**

### **Reconceptualising Liminal Spaces to the Centre**

In this section, I underline the importance of micro-level, local spaces in clarifying the extent of post-Brexit anxieties amongst my participants, a key factor in resolving research aim 1. Through discussions of micro-level interactions between participants and English society in the LCR, I spatially orient participant anxieties, underlining the importance of research on local spaces in resolving key questions around national policy frameworks such as the implementation of Brexit and its impact on EU nationals' lives.

The concept of liminality has its roots in van Gennep's (2019) and Turner's (1987) work exploring the liminality of

rites of passage, yet Banfield (2022) argues that liminality in the geographical sphere is increasingly becoming further detached from this original interpretation. She further argues that the term liminal is increasingly having political connotations which I argue are closer to definitions of marginalised or in-between spaces. Similarly, I find the definition of liminal as used in a spatial context unhelpful; I rather support the notion that so-called liminal spaces are, in fact, the centres of anxiety, habitus evolution and socio-cultural linguistic interaction. In this research, I have engaged with participants and spaces which occupy the aforementioned increasingly political definition of liminality, yet their experiences are at the centre of, I argue, some of the most important post-Brexit social realities in the UK.

With the LCR as its focus, this research also sheds new light on the post-Brexit Polish and German communities in an emerging, in the political sense, region which is only likely to grow in importance as the local authorities of the LCR become further enmeshed under the guidance and leadership of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). The WYCA has developed over the course of this research; the first elections for a West Yorkshire Mayor were held in 2021. These developments position this research temporally during a period of change for the local authority areas which are the spatial focus of this research. Whilst York, and parts of the hinterlands, are not part of the remit of the WYCA, some of WYCA's transport initiatives extend beyond these boundaries, again highlighting the importance of regional connectivity outlined by participants and supported by Hebbert (2000) over two decades ago.

The local significance of this research presents additional insights to the often more generalisable work of civil society actors such as the3million, represented in this research by stakeholder Dr. Bulat. The3million focuses on national issues, such as the EUSS (discussed here in chapter 6.2.2), rather than the minutiae of local interpretations and experiences of these national issues. Participants' experiences of government hostilities, for example, are highlighted in the local context of the LCR in this research; I combine the

sociological investigation of a broader national political issue with local experiences of it at the Humber Ports or Leeds Bradford Airport. Moreover, it highlights the changing nature of these local spaces, and the role which they play in presenting experiences of hostility. Doncaster Airport was mentioned by DE7 as a gateway for EU nationals to the region, yet it permanently closed in 2022 (Doncaster Council, 2022). Similarly, the Hull-Zeebrugge link between Yorkshire and Belgium has been cut following the pandemic (BBC News, 2020). Knowledge of the importance, and existence, of these geographical links between the LCR and the EU can, therefore, be ephemeral. The fluidity of these local links compared to, for example, nationally important infrastructure in Dover or Heathrow Airport demonstrates the importance of local research and the role it has within national post-Brexit geographic mobility.

Micro-level, local spaces are frequently treated as liminal (see Taylor, 2017; Mitchell, 2012 for example), yet this designation, I argue, is counter-productive. Whether liminal in terms of geographical locality, as could be ascribed to some of the interview locations in the hinterlands, or liminal in terms of relevance to political centres of power in the city, such as a pop-up shop or market (DE1, PL2, PL3, for example), this definition is unhelpful as it rejects such 'liminal' spaces as the centre of focused community interaction. Through this research, I forefront participants' experiences in local, 'liminal' spaces as micro-level hubs of cultural and community exchange; no participants of this research led me to Parliament Street (the largest shopping street in central York), despite some interviews taking place in the city centre. Equally in Leeds, whilst I met DE3 at the railway station, the interview did not take place here, but in a quiet backstreet in the vicinity, again highlighting the importance of the local despite the city-centre location.

Designating spaces as liminal also has the potential to ignore their role in the construction of the habitus. Participant data supports the notion of a unique habitus constructed through learnt cultural experiences, linguistic approaches and spatial factors. The role of so-called liminal

spaces in the formation of participants' habitus is clear (for example, DE2's experiences of multiculturalism, chapter 8.2; DE1's conceptualisation of cultural spaces in Leeds, chapter 9.4), further underlining their importance as key spaces at the centre of localised habitus formation.

As this research explores the post-Brexit anxieties of the Polish and German communities in the LCR, it gives import to communities in geographical areas which are not frequently the subject of research in the field of migration. As discussed in chapter 3, even research on migration communities in Leeds is not as frequent as those with other areas of West Yorkshire as their focus. A key contribution of this research, therefore, is giving a voice to migrant communities in general, but Polish and German communities in particular, in other, less-researched geographical areas of the LCR and its hinterlands.

York and the hinterlands are particularly under-researched (see chapter 3), with this investigation forming one of the first treatments of migration in the city of York since 2010. For a city of 200,000, this presents a major gap in the literature, particularly as issues around levelling up, and the northern powerhouse, grow in political importance. As I discussed extensively in chapters 3 and 9.3, considerations of York in migration contexts require a multifaceted approach. Given the city's prowess as a university city and tourist destination, transitory residents to the city are high in number comparative for its size. This, as mentioned by DE7 in their framing of York as having a facade for tourists and students which masks other issues, is felt more keenly through a triangulation of the cost-of-living crisis, post-Brexit economic policy and post-COVID recovery. Participants already hinted at York's comparatively high cost of living, and the proliferation of Airbnbs, student housing and tourism-related infrastructure, as supported by DE7, has the potential to cause further divides between 'locals', 'migrants', 'tourists' and 'students' in the city. These issues are clearly long-established in York, having previously been researched by Mordue who highlights the contested nature of 'Olde York' (2005); the city centre within the medieval walls representing a very different spatial reality

from the rest of the city.

This diversity in spatial infrastructure is also present in the hinterlands (chapters 3 and 9.5). Here, participants' experiences were demonstrated to be heavily dependent on micro-level environmental factors, factors which were elucidated through using walking interviews as a methodological approach. Across the whole region of study, the diverse localities in which participants elected to conduct their interviews, a core element of the participatory nature of the empirical research in this investigation, highlights the situational nature of participants' anxieties and the local factor in their lived experiences. By embracing local approaches through walking methods, I privilege local experiences.

By focusing this research on areas less studied in the field of migration (in a British context, as discussed in chapter 4, these are typically London, Bradford and select others), I have produced novel findings on traditionally more (academically) marginalised spaces. By interrogating the migration realities of the LCR, I have highlighted the import of widening the scope of migration research in the UK away from traditional centres of research. Local spaces need to be recognised for the local realities they present, and this extends to understanding the specificity of local migration contexts. York has a hugely divergent migration history to Leeds, despite the geographical proximity. This research recognises these differences and the challenges they present in a post-Brexit context which differs by locality. Outside of London, with its community diaspora infrastructure of cultural institutions (such as the Goethe Institute), the post-Brexit reality for EU national communities is diverse and divergent from centralised understandings of diaspora relations post-Brexit. By highlighting the local context of the Polish and German communities in the LCR, this research presents new understandings of communities which have been subject to little-to-no research to date.

## **11.7. Germany, Germans and Germanophobia: A Research Opportunity**

A key empirical finding of this research is the insight into Germanophobia in the LCR, and England more widely, which participants' lived experiences provide. As previously discussed, research on the German community in the UK is very limited. Teichert and Meister (2022) represent a significant contribution to literature on Germans in the UK, but its date of publication limits its utility in the design of this research, which commences in 2018. Moreover, Teichert and Meister's work (2022) is published only in German, with a bilingual abstract in English and German, limiting its significance for researchers who do not speak German despite its focus on the German community in the UK.

By contributing to the very limited data looking at the German community, this research seeks to provide a dataset which evaluates contemporary problems in a contemporary community. As previously asserted in chapter 2, one issue with the extant English-language literature is its historical focus; Germans and Germany are tendentially treated in the context of pre-1900 mercantile migration and World War 2. The knowledge gap around Germans in the UK, and Germanophobia more specifically (something not covered by Teichert and Meister, 2022) has been a consistent theme of this research, highlighted by the disparity in chapter length between chapters 4.1 (Polish immigration in context) and 4.2 (German immigration in context). The shorter length of chapter 4.2 was forced by the lack of extant literature, particularly literature, which is not of a more journalistic, non-academic style. As a result, several key empirical findings of this research focus on the German community, the community which does not tend to frequently form the focus of academic research.

## **11.8. A vessel for further research: concluding remarks.**

As I write this conclusion, King Charles III is in Hamburg, making a historic and conciliatory visit to further help in the decades-long process of rehabilitating German politics and German foreign relations with countries involved in the Second World War. In the same fortnight, the Conservative government's Illegal Migration Bill (UK Government, 2023) passed through the House of Commons, paving the way for the UK government to further tighten the Hostile Environment framework through the undermining of the legal right to asylum of those who arrive in the UK on small boats from across the channel. Despite provoking international outrage and potentially breaking international law, the UK government is still promoting such policy as an instrumental tool for operationalising a reduction in immigration to the UK.

This neatly summarises the arguments I have developed over the course of this thesis: the UK is still considered a multicultural country, even in comparison to Germany, yet governmental hostilities lie at the core of the Hostile Environment framework and the Windrush scandal (among others), in contrast to the relative tolerance discussed here as being socially present in the LCR. Whilst multicultural co-existence more generally, and multiculturalism more specifically, has been researched extensively in a UK context, there remain opportunities to use research of this nature using a language-centred methodology. Large parts of the LCR have not been thoroughly researched in the context of multicultural co-existence, and there is significant scope for additional research to employ the tools of linguistically aware models of the habitus to further geographical and sociological research in this area.

Academia is engaging and re-engaging with problematic discussions around decolonising research and the curriculum yet, as I have just argued, recognising the different shades of decolonisation is a critical step with which both academia and wider society need to better engage. There is, perhaps, now

greater awareness of racism against Eastern European minorities than there was when Moore (2013) conducted their research, yet there is still more development needed to fully recognise the consequences wrought by the development of a habitus which has, over generations, provided the opportunity for oppositional preconceptualisations of peoples from all over the world. As Dianne Abbott demonstrated through her recent comments of 23rd April 2023 (Allegretti, 2023), minimising both the extent of antisemitism and the breadth of racism which non-majority white populations face, discrimination, racism, and xenophobia are neither black and white, or grey, but all of the above. In Germany's case, the focus on antisemitism needs no explanation; in the UK, there needs to be an equivalent focus on other white populations, including Irish and other EU nationals, political parties' current issues with antisemitism notwithstanding (see Klaff, 2016; Gidley, 2018 and Gidley, 2020, for example).

The German community remains an outlier in this discourse, although there will doubtless be others. The tolerance and prevalence of Germanophobia is absent from discussions around racism in the UK, which tend to focus on issues around traditional notions of decolonisation or, in the context of Brexit, of Eastern European minorities and the racism faced by those communities. As I have demonstrated, there is a lack of research on the German community in the UK in general and, for such a relatively large cohort, this has led to a minimal level of understanding of the community from policy-making perspectives (see the Methods chapter).

Moreover, the meaning of a language to its respective community, and its utility as a research paradigm, is still often overlooked, particularly in anglosphere academia. Piller (2015) outlines the ways in which multilingualism can be and is reduced to an impingement or irrelevance when conducting academic research. Quoting a linguistics-related social media page, they cite the following opinion of a UK-based academic (Piller, 2015:26):

Asking a linguist how many languages they speak is like asking a doctor how many diseases they have.

This exemplifies some of the assumptions I have encountered over the course of writing this thesis, both through procedural necessities and conference presentations. This, again, speaks to the issues discussed above around the problematisation of decolonising the curriculum without fully understanding the extent of what is required to engage with the relevant issues more successfully. It also, again, speaks to the English habitus and its alignment with reductionist monolingualism as a tool for social co-existence; until these barriers have been dismantled, there is much work to be done.

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