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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

**Exploring European narratives of belonging in  
a city landscape: place-making in Southampton,  
UK**

by

**Jayne Love**

ORCID ID: 0009-0002-5375-4124

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2025

# University of Southampton

## Abstract

Faculty of Humanities

Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### **Exploring European narratives of belonging in a city landscape: place-making in Southampton, UK**

by

**Jayne Love**

My project investigates how EU nationals in Southampton construct a sense of belonging, examining their identification to the city as a place, the reasons driving their belonging, and how this is expressed through their narratives. This 18-month in-depth study seeks to contribute to the field of linguistic ethnography, and collected data via a participant-produced creation about how they came to be in Southampton, followed by online ethnographic video interviews, participant journaling, and a WhatsApp focus group. My work is particularly timely, set against the backdrop of heightened hostility towards those originating from outside of the UK and a significant pro-Leave sentiment in Southampton.

The results provide insights into how 10 female lifestyle migrants use English as a Lingua Franca to navigate through their daily lives in Southampton as well as through the specific challenges of Brexit and COVID-19. A sense of belonging goes beyond the notion of a group or speech community to a more complex understanding that incorporates both physical and virtual spaces, extending geographically much further than just Southampton, and changing over time too. It acknowledges the complexities of individual experiences and highlights the role of English language as a tool for communication, identity formation, and social practice in a dynamic and changing sociopolitical landscape.

The adaptation of my research to the online sphere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has questioned the need for solely using traditional face-to-face participant observation and has opened up opportunities for more ethnographic research to take place remotely. A significant aspect of the study revealed everyday accent discrimination, leaving participants grappling with perceptions of not fitting in. Their narratives challenge media-driven generalisations, emphasising their valuable contributions to society and defying preconceived notions about their place within it. Further, I put forward the notion of ordinary belonging, which underscores the significance of pragmatic, everyday actions in fostering connection and integration within society, which is often overlooked.

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## List of Accompanying Materials

Interview transcripts available at: <https://doi.org/10.5258/SOTON/D3005>.

# Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: JAYNE LOVE

Title of thesis: Exploring European narratives of belonging in a city landscape: place-making in Southampton, UK

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Date: 07.01.25



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## Definitions and Abbreviations

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
APPG	All Party Parliamentary Group
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BNP	British National Party
CA	Conversation Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CLEAR	City Life Education and Action for Refugees
CoP	Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998)
EASA	European Association of Social Anthropologists
EDL	English Defence League
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
EMF	English as a Multilingua Franca
EMTAS	Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
FLP	Family Language Policy project
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LL(s)	Linguistic Landscape(s)
MFL(s)	Modern Foreign Language(s)
NASA	The National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NHS	National Health Service
OWRI	Open World Research Initiative
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

## Definitions and Abbreviations

SPEAKING	Setting/Scene, Participants, Ends, Acts, Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre (Hymes, 1974)
SQM	Southampton Quaker Meeting
SU	Solent University
SWVG	Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
TLANG	Translation and Translanguaging project
UBL	Usage-Based Linguistics (Ortega, 2014)
UHT	University Hospital Trust
US / USA	United States / United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UoS	University of Southampton
YIS	Young Interpreter Scheme

# Chapter 1 Introduction

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### 1.1 Preamble

Picture an open-plan office with desks for around twenty colleagues. The office comprises a mix of teaching and administrative staff. The number of people in the office at any given time fluctuates throughout the day as the teaching staff go to and come back from their classes. Sometimes everybody is focused on their computer screens, and nothing can be heard other than the click of a mouse or the tap of keys on a keyboard, or perhaps a skateboard rolling along on the street outside, or a bus rumbling past. At other times, conversations may occur quietly in a corner of the room...or occasionally, not so quietly!

One morning, two colleagues return from the kitchen with freshly made coffee and are heading towards their desks. They can be heard speaking together in English about their current workload. After a while, they switch to French as they talk about their families, and the tone of the conversation becomes more upbeat, providing a pleasant, musical-sounding backdrop as others continue to work at their computers. Once they have caught up on their news, each sits to their own desk and focuses on their screen quietly.

Later in the day, one colleague asks another, “have you completed the marking for this module?” The response is negative, and the lecturer who initiated the conversation then switches from English to Spanish to deliver a tirade about why the colleague should have finished the marking already. An argument ensues and their voices get louder and louder, accompanied by finger-pointing and arm-waving. Even though not everybody in the room understands Spanish, it is clear they are using unpleasant language, and this loud outburst is a distraction for all. Some try to ignore the argument, perhaps inserting headphones or using some other technique to block it out of their mind. Others exchange glances with colleagues sitting nearby and roll their eyes, whilst a few direct pointed looks at the speakers, hoping this will give them a polite hint to be quiet. Eventually, the commotion subsides, and everyone can resume concentration.

Sometime later, an email pings up on everybody’s screen from the head of department, who is sitting in a separate office next door. The contents of the email announce a decision which is unpopular with the teaching staff, and two colleagues mutter critical comments about him in German. Soon afterwards, the manager walks through the open-plan office towards the kitchen, and these colleagues

## Chapter 1

continue to talk about him in German without any qualms, as it is common knowledge that he speaks English and Spanish and so does not understand their negative remarks.

Towards the end of the day, a colleague is overheard speaking in Greek on the telephone. It is evident the person he is calling is female, as the pitch of her voice can be heard drifting across the office. Some colleagues assume he is speaking to his newly acquired girlfriend...or maybe his mother. A few know he is looking for promotion and so wonder if he could be enquiring about a job or if he could be doing an interview over the phone. However, no one knows for sure because nobody else in the office speaks Greek.

This was my working environment for five years and for me it was a situation which I was accustomed to. As a linguistics graduate who is a native speaker of English but has studied other languages and has worked both in the UK and abroad teaching English, hearing other tongues around me feels familiar and natural to me. When I hear other languages, I feel curious about them, and I like to go on holiday to places where I do not understand the language, as I can use my imagination to guess what people might be talking about. A language I do not speak seems exciting to me, often sounds like music to my ears, and can enable me to relax; in contrast, I can find journeys on public transport in the UK stressful as I am forced to listen to banal and sometimes unpleasant conversations just by virtue of understanding English.

It was not until an intern began working in my team that I realised that not everybody shared my curiosity and enjoyment of other languages. I noticed after a few weeks of working in the office that the intern seemed uncomfortable and rarely spoke to other colleagues unless she needed to. One day, I saw she was leaving the office to have lunch and so I joined her to find out what was going on. As we shared our sandwiches together, she expressed her unease about the working environment, how she felt excluded from the conversations that were taking place in languages other than English, that she considered it rude, and how she felt anxious - even paranoid - that colleagues might be talking about her.

The students I was teaching also reported incidents to me that happened to them as they went about their daily lives in Southampton. One student was walking down the high street speaking in her native language on the phone to her mother when a stranger approached and said, "you should speak in English!" Others reported incidents which had occurred due to judgements made about their appearance; for

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example, a Chinese student had fries thrown in her face at McDonalds, and a Muslim student wearing a hijab and modest dress was asked if she had a bomb under her clothing. Whilst the latter two incidents were not related to language, there was still a commonality in attitude towards the unknown - the other: someone who is not viewed as part of the norm and is perceived to look or speak differently (Utlu, 2011, pp.94-95). How we view ourselves - 'self-ascription' - is different from how others perceive us - 'ascription by others' (Barth, 1969, p.13), and in this case, these students experienced othering - being grouped or labelled in a particular way by others through processes of social categorisation (Blommaert, 2004, p.205). In a similar way, the use of different languages in my office environment created groups, and colleagues saw themselves and others as either belonging or not belonging to these groups.

It was this realisation of differing attitudes towards languages and the other - particularly within the UK context - that led me to embark on this PhD. Previously, during my MA research, I focused on the construction of student identity through English in the UK, and discovered that while some students focused on British English as their preferred model, others viewed English as a tool for communication and did not identify with a specific English-speaking culture (Whistance, 2015). Although my MA research focused on attitudes towards English since the UK is a predominantly English-speaking country, my experience of other languages in the office environment I described earlier in contrast with that of the intern has encouraged me to consider the wider context of globalisation and the perception of languages as a whole within the setting of the UK where English dominates. In particular, I am interested in how those language speakers feel a sense of belonging, or a lack of belonging, to Southampton as a city, as shown not just through their linguistic practices but through their whole and everyday lives.

### **1.2 From linguistics to linguistic ethnography**

In my MA research, I used questionnaires and interviews to explore international students' attitudes towards learning and using English at a UK university, focusing on how their motivations shaped their identities and views on different varieties of English (Whistance, 2015). Originally for my PhD I had planned a similar study but on a larger scale, including other languages, combining linguistic landscaping with



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focus groups and interviews. However, upon further reading, I found recent research favouring ethnographic methods, which sparked my interest.

Shortly after, I learnt about the Debating Ethnography research group at the University of Southampton, which convenes multiple times per year to discuss assigned ethnographic texts, host guest speakers, and exchange ideas on individual projects (University of Southampton, 2024). Attending these sessions proved invaluable as I engaged with texts from diverse disciplines and explored practical considerations inherent to ethnographic research, regardless of field. Although initially uncertain about the feasibility of conducting ethnography as a part-time PhD student due to its intensive observational nature, I became intrigued by its interdisciplinary appeal. This prompted me to participate in an intensive ethnography training course in April 2018, where I had the opportunity to undertake practical work and reflect on theoretical concepts, focusing on Southampton as my research site. Despite initial concerns about data collection, the course affirmed the viability of ethnography for my project, solidifying my commitment to this approach.

Ethnography involves fully participating in people's lives while simultaneously observing them from a critical distance (Howell, 2018, p.1). The key method of participant observation entails prolonged immersion with a group of individuals who were initially unfamiliar to us to understand their world comprehensively (Shah, 2017, p.51). Despite its time-consuming nature, this approach allows researchers to bridge the gap between verbal assertions and actual behaviours (ibid, p.52). I was drawn to this method for its depth, surpassing my initial approaches by considering broader contextual factors, as advocated by Geertz (1973) through 'thick description.'

With my focus on language-related inquiries, my approach aligns with linguistic ethnography, melding linguistic theories and ethnographic methods to explore social issues intertwined with language (Rampton et al, 2004, p.2). Since human communication is fundamentally a social activity (Baird et al, 2014, p.184), language extends beyond the linguistic domain, encompassing non-verbal, material, visual and other sensory mediums. Thus, the term linguistic ethnography is employed in an open and inclusive manner, understanding linguistic as more than just language, and considering communication in its broader sense. Linguistic ethnography is at the heart of my enquiry, examining the post-Brexit narratives of 10 women originating from EU countries living in Southampton.

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The sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted my plans, rendering face-to-face engagement with participants unfeasible due to widespread restrictions and uncertainty about the duration of the situation (Kuiper, 2020, p.300). Despite these challenges, I endeavoured to preserve the essence of ethnography within the constraints I faced, recognising its capacity to offer distinctive insights into daily social and cultural dynamics (Rampton et al, 2004, p.2).

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift to virtual interactions, prompting a re-evaluation of humanity's relationship with technology and language's connection to individuals, objects, and places (Pennycook, 2016, p.445). Consequently, I conducted my research entirely online, leveraging the framework of 'digital ethnography' (Varis and Hou, 2019, p.230) and 'netnography,' which utilises computer-mediated communications as a data source for understanding cultural phenomena (Kozinets, 2010, p.60), in conjunction with linguistic analysis. Although this was a departure from my original plan, the 'socially distanced' fieldwork methods I developed in response to the pandemic constraints proved to be unexpectedly 'ethnographically rich,' as suggested by Magnani and Magnani (2020, p.312).

Ethnography has been criticised for its subjectivity, though ethnographers argue that this type of research emphasises the significance of contextualised experiences and situated meanings as the foundation for elucidating and comprehending social behaviour (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.5). The issue of subjectivity is addressed directly by ethnographers, since the practice of ethnography also entails the quality of reflexivity, whereby the researcher considers their own perspective and cultural background and how this affects their view of others (Roberts et al, 2001).

Regarding reflexivity, I continue to reflect on how my own identity and background impacted on my research, particularly my status as an English native speaker and my positive attitude towards other languages and cultures, which is at odds with the recent rise in nationalism within the UK (Winlow et al, 2017). Furthermore, I reflected on how others might perceive me throughout the research process. I am particularly aware of my high level of openness and curiosity compared to others; when taking personality tests, the result for openness is always higher than average and often off the scale, so it was important I considered this and how I would maintain boundaries with my participants. During the ethnography course,

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Professor Marion Demossier declared, “But you look like an ethnographer...you have to do it!” I am still wondering what an ethnographer looks like.

I see ethnography as more than just a methodological approach – it is simultaneously a way of viewing life and a way of being. I like the reflexivity of the approach, and this helped to develop my self-awareness, both professionally in terms of the PhD as well as personally. Whether I like it or not, I am an ethnographer of myself and my own life - it is unavoidable. Whilst others can observe my life and talk with me about it, no one else can experience life as I experience it; it is a unique lived experience. At the same time, this phenomenon is also a shared experience, as everyone else - including my participants - is experiencing their own lives and sharing their experiences with others through communication, traditions, rituals, and so on. I believe this connection unites us, both as human beings and as ethnographers, and it is this interest in people that makes my life meaningful and drove my passion for this research project.

### **1.3 The city of Southampton as field site**

I have lived in Southampton since 2008 and originally thought about carrying out my research at the University of Southampton as I considered my insider status as a postgraduate student useful for gathering data. However, I decided to change my focus to Southampton as a city as it is a site more appealing to me in terms of its diversity, and the intensive ethnography training course highlighted to me that data collection would be possible in this context. I also considered Southampton as a city may be a more inclusive site with respect to class and educational background when compared with the university setting, though it is difficult to access data around this.

The University of Southampton (2024) boasts over 10,000 international students from 130 countries, indicating a diverse study environment. However, specific data on languages spoken within this context was unavailable. In contrast, statistics regarding language diversity were readily accessible for Southampton as a city, proving valuable for my research. For instance, data from the 2021 Census revealed the top 10 languages spoken in Southampton (excluding English) were Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Persian/Farsi, Arabic, Greek, and Bulgarian (Southampton Data Observatory, 2024). Additionally, 6.1% of residents are non-English speakers, double the national average of 3.1% (ibid). The city's high levels

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of long-term migration, with more international incomers than leavers, likely due to its status as a port city, make it an ideal location for study. Despite the potential for a broader examination of all nationalities in the city, the relative invisibility of Europeans and the significant pro-Leave sentiment following Brexit made EU nationals a compelling focus for investigation. Chapter 2 delves deeper into this context, first discussing the wider European and UK situation before focusing on Southampton as a city.

### **1.4 The contribution of this PhD**

Sociolinguists pioneered the study of language in relation to space and place, often using linguistic landscaping to examine signs in urban settings (Shohamy et al, 2010). However, Wells (2020, p.151) points out that signs offer only a partial view of narratives associated with territory, potentially overlooking residents' interactions with these signs and the local community's identity. Through ethnography, I delve deeper into the 'system of meanings' that shapes identity and actions, particularly at the intersection of language and place-making (Demossier et al, 2019, p.16).

Ethnography takes an interdisciplinary approach, which is a unique way of producing knowledge across disciplines, acknowledging complexity, and defying departmental schisms (Wells et al, 2019, p.4). This provided a broader perspective in my work, bringing together the fields of linguistic ethnography and sociolinguistics as well as sociology, human geography, and politics amongst others to incorporate the wider context – not just the linguistic but the social, cultural, and political, since language is more than just words - it is a 'cultural practice' (Duranti, 1997, p.1).

My work is particularly timely with the backdrop of Brexit. The focus on the migration 'crises' from an official perspective within the UK has been to limit immigration, stop free movement and regain border control, where immigration is defined as 'entry and stay into a foreign country' (Chetail, 2014, p.2). This placed EU nationals at the centre of broader discourses but failed to consider their reactions to Brexit and how they navigate daily public life within the context of uncertainty and hostility (Botterill et al, 2019, p.1).

I therefore focused on EU nationals themselves and investigated their sense of belonging expressed through their language narratives following the Brexit vote.

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Southampton as a multicultural city offers an original backdrop to investigate how Europeans position themselves in relation to English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which is the utilisation of the English language by individuals from diverse first-language backgrounds where English serves as the preferred and sometimes the sole means of communication (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7).

Research in UK urban areas has predominantly centred on cities such as London (Baynham, 2003; Block, 2006a), Leeds (Bradley et al, 2018) and Manchester (Matras and Robertson, 2017) - little has been done in Southampton. Whilst Cadier and Mar-Molinero's (2012) study concentrates on institutions and language policies in Southampton, my research centres on the people themselves: EU nationals as local residents, focusing on their meaning-making practices. Winkworth et al (2007) studied Eastern Europeans in Southampton pre-Brexit, while Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021) focus solely on the Polish community's feelings before and after the referendum. McGhee et al (2015) concentrate entirely on post-accession Poles in Southampton regarding social identity practices, while Hilmarsson-Dunn et al (2010) studied the language use and employment opportunities of both Portuguese and Polish communities in the city. My research offers a distinct contribution, focusing on the everyday experiences of EU nationals negotiating a sense of belonging amidst increasing hostility towards outsiders, particularly following Southampton's 53.8% Leave vote, which was higher than the national average of 51.89% (House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2017, p.7).

In addition, the study was in-depth - over the course of 18 months - in order to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings. I took an interdisciplinary approach, acknowledging the complexities of individual experiences and highlighting the role of the English language as a tool for communication, identity formation, and social practice in a dynamic and changing sociopolitical landscape, demonstrating how belonging goes beyond the traditional notion of a speech community (Hymes, 2005). The individual experiences of everyday accent discrimination highlight my participants' own views of themselves not fitting in (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, pp.10-11) and challenge the generalisations made by the media, showing they have something to contribute and are part of society 'whether someone else wants it or not.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.54.

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Belonging is ‘vaguely defined’ and ‘under-theorized’ (Antonsich, 2010b, p.645), often concentrating on one aspect such as place (Relph, 2016) or one identity characteristic such as national identity (Ranta and Nancheva, 2019). My thesis seeks to contribute to this field by adopting a broader, more intersectional (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p.325) and interdisciplinary approach (Nissani, 1997, p.213), bringing together linguistic and social contexts (Echeverría, 2017, p.17) to explore the dynamic place-making narratives of 10 European women in Southampton. Additionally, whilst some research has examined specific, extraordinary moments in time, such as Brexit (Botterill et al, 2019), my study explores everyday narratives, and the linguistic evidence enabled me to coin the term ordinary belonging. My investigation reveals that the pragmatic endeavour of individuals to integrate into their local area, emphasising their civic identity and adaptability to change, along with their everyday actions fostering connections is key to an ordinary form of belonging, largely overlooked in the literature. Chapter 3 outlines my conceptual approach around this, whilst the theory is seen in action through my participants’ narratives which are explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Further, the adaptation of my research to the online sphere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has questioned the necessity of solely relying on traditional face-to-face participant observation, opening up opportunities for more remote ethnographic research.<sup>2</sup> This PhD not only builds on existing knowledge of place and multilingualism but also aims to make practical contributions, potentially influencing local language policy and improving community cohesion in Southampton through public engagement initiatives.

### 1.5 Research questions

Whilst different definitions of language and multilingualism put forward by academics are useful, they have not been driven by everyday language users, and so my study interrogates how my participants relate to language in terms of their day-to-day experience of being multilinguals within Southampton and how this behaviour impacts on their sense of belonging.

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<sup>2</sup> See 4.1.2.

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I view language as socially constructed; hence, although I focus on EU nationals' linguistic practices, my main emphasis is their narratives - how they make meaning through and position themselves vis-à-vis the English language. This includes how my participants position themselves with relation to Brexit and the broader UK context with English as the dominant language and their need to apply for the Settlement Scheme, as well as the more local focus on Southampton as an urban area and their sense of belonging to the city.

Based on both my literature review and the ethnographic fieldwork, I started my investigation on the basis of how EU nationals experience and construct a sense of belonging in Southampton. More specifically, I focused on the following sub-questions:

- i) How do my participants identify to a place such as Southampton?
- ii) How is English language central to their identification to Southampton?
- iii) What are the reasons driving their sense of belonging?
- iv) In what ways is belonging shown through the ordinariness of the participants' everyday actions?
- v) How do they articulate this discursively?

### **1.6 Overview of thesis**

Chapter 2 provides background on the broader European and UK context, encompassing Brexit, nationalism, hate crimes, and linguicism, before delving into Southampton's history, demographics, political landscape, and linguistic diversity.

In Chapter 3, I consider previous research into language and migration in urban areas in the UK as well as notions of belonging, setting out the concept of ordinary belonging which I have coined and reflecting on my participants as women, intersecting with space and place, notions of home, and national identity in the context of Brexit.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology regarding linguistic ethnography and the adjustments made due to the COVID-19 constraints. It details the research methods which included a participant-produced creation about their journey to Southampton, online ethnographic video interviews, participant journalling, and a WhatsApp focus group. Ethical considerations, reflexivity, and limitations are also discussed.

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Chapter 5 presents data on Southampton, exploring participants' initial impressions of the cityscape, changes over time, perceptions of its port status, cultural diversity, and multilingualism. Place-making activities, including the use of language, relationship to food, and to local and global communities, are also examined.

Chapter 6 focuses on participants' mobility narratives, considering homemaking and the impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, before concluding in Chapter 7.



## Chapter 2 Context of study

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## 2.1 Introduction

Belonging very often relates to place, which includes geographical space and the social relations embedded there, leading to one feeling at home (Antonsich, 2010b, p.645). This interaction between place and space creates spatial belonging (Vallentin, 2019, p.26), to be examined in the next chapter.<sup>3</sup> Since the historical, political, and local context shapes place-belonging, this chapter provides background to the wider European and UK context in the era of Brexit, a rise in nationalism and hate crimes as well as linguisticism. It then examines Southampton as a city, including its history, population and migration statistics, political composition, and presence of languages. This context enables me to situate my participants within the global and local milieu whilst capturing their journeys into feeling at home, to be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 2.1.1 The politics of belonging: the UK and linguisticism amidst Brexit

The term 'Brexit' encompasses three different meanings: the referendum held on 23 June 2016 regarding the UK's departure from the EU, the actual exit on 31 January 2020, and the broad political developments triggered by the referendum's outcome (MacClancy, 2019, p.369; Reed-Danahay, 2020, p.16). Brexit as an event took place historically but continues to impact on lives; this links with the notion of temporal belonging (Vallentin, 2019, pp.35-36), as my participants use Brexit as a frame of reference that is significant to them in terms of time but also regarding how it affected and continues to affect their feelings of belonging to Southampton and to the UK more broadly. In addition, Brexit brought to the fore groupness, or social/political belonging (Vallentin, 2019, pp.27-35), as those who voted or affiliated themselves with the Leave or Remain groups became apparent. Since my participants tend to reference Brexit using all the various interpretations embraced in this one term, I do the same here.

#### 2.1.1.1 A rise in nationalism and hate crimes

Before looking at Brexit and the UK, I first consider the global and European context. Worldwide in Anglophone contexts, there has been a spotlight on languages other than English and the fear of the other (Lanvers et al, 2018, p.776). In the US, shortly

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<sup>3</sup> See 3.3.1.

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after Donald Trump's inauguration as the President in 2016, the White House website's webpages in Spanish were removed, despite the US being the world's second-largest Spanish-speaking country after Mexico (Sharman, 2017). Similarly, across Europe, Postelnicescu (2016, p.204) states we are now observing a resurgence of innate nationalistic feelings after a prolonged period of integration. As evidence for this, they cite the increased popularity of far-right political parties and the increase of populism, extremism, and radicalisation across countries including Austria, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Slovenia, as a response driven by fear to situations like the refugee crisis (ibid, p.203).

Concurrently, there has been an increase in nationalistic fervour within the UK, particularly amongst the working class (Winlow et al, 2017, p.1). This growing focus on the role of the nation state – defined as ‘the indissoluble tripartite bond linking *one* people, *one* land and *one* language’ (Saraceni, 2015, p.27) - was seen following the result of the EU referendum which took place on 23 June 2016, where the electorate were asked ‘should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?’ The triumph for the Leave campaign represented 17.4 million votes to 16.14 million by a margin of 51.89% to 48.11%, which the government declared as ‘momentous’ (House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2017, p.7).

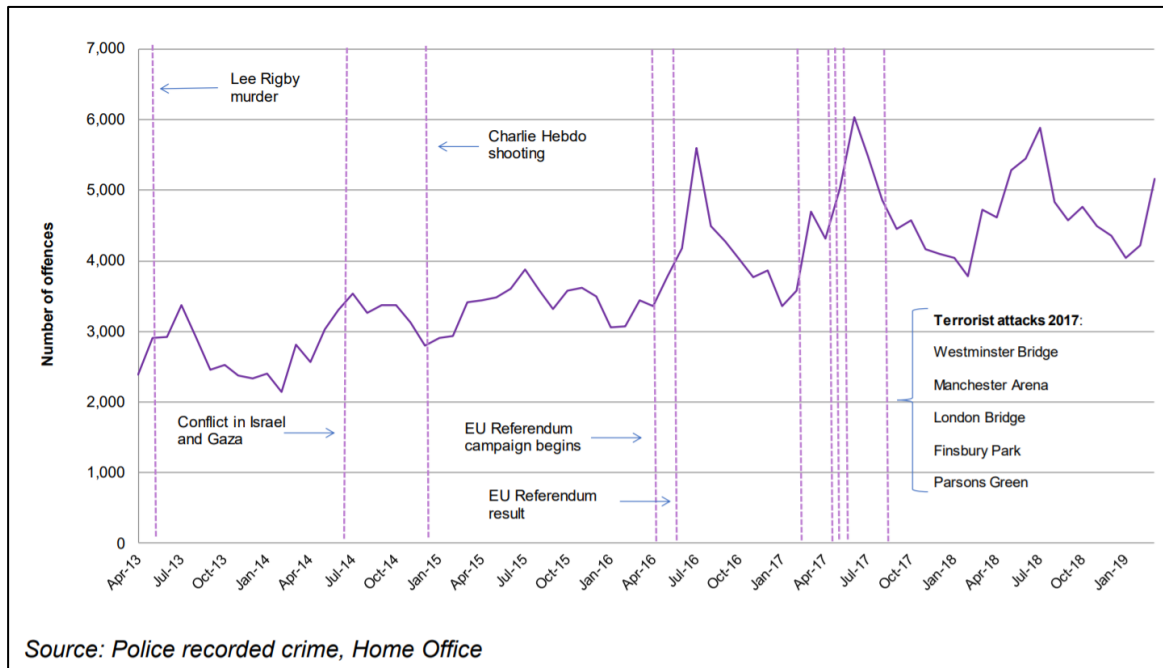
Alongside this growth of nationalistic tendencies, there has also been a surge in hate crimes. Home Office (2018, p.4) statistics relating to hate crimes in England and Wales in 2016 to 2017 showed a 29% increase in offences since the previous year. Hate crime data was collected from 2011 onwards, with the figures from 2018 affirming the most significant annual percentage increase recorded since 2011. Further, Home Office (2019, p.1) statistics relating to hate crimes in England and Wales in 2018 to 2019 showed a 10% increase in offences compared with 2017 to 2018.

During the time of the EU referendum campaign from April to June 2016, there was a noticeable spike in hate crime, which included ‘offences with a xenophobic element (such as graffiti targeting certain nationalities)’ (Home Office, 2018, p.5). In the week after the EU referendum vote, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) publicised that 331 hate crime incidents had been reported to the national online portal True Vision, compared to the weekly average of 63, representing five times

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the usual level of this type of crime (Payton, 2016). In Figure 1 taken from the Home Office (2019, p.8) report, a spike in hate crime can clearly be seen around the referendum campaign, the result, and aftermath.

Figure 1 *Number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by month by the police between April 2013 to January 2019*



Guma and Jones (2019, p.4) documented incidents in Wales immediately after the Brexit vote, including verbal abuse, physical violence, and vandalism. Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021, p.284) conducted mixed-methods research on Southampton-based Poles before and after the EU referendum, finding that the Polish community experienced heightened vulnerability post-referendum, with qualitative data revealing instances of verbal abuse, derogatory comments, difficulties with neighbours, and vandalism of Polish shops (ibid, pp.292-293). Overall, experiences of discrimination have left people feeling unsafe in Southampton and across the UK (Buelmann, 2020, p.42; Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen, 2021, p.284).

Winlow et al (2017, p.76) highlighted an increase in support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and involvement in far-right groups like the English Defence League (EDL). Their research participants believe government policies now favour minority groups, leading them to join the EDL (ibid, p.110). Pupcenoks and McCabe (2013, p.176) describe the EDL as a movement aiming to protect the English working class from perceived threats posed by multicultural policies and

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Islamisation. EDL members include dissatisfied citizens, football club supporters, and former affiliates of far-right parties like the National Front and the British National Party (BNP). Braouezec (2016, p.643) notes EDL members strongly identify with borders as a vital aspect of national history and contemporary national security. This sentiment is reinforced by anti-immigration discourse in right-wing newspapers like the Daily Mail, the Mirror, and The Sun (ibid, p.645). In July and August 2024, the UK experienced its 'worst unrest' in more than 10 years, with violence erupting in towns and cities across England and Northern Ireland; this was driven by misinformation online, far-right groups, and anti-immigration sentiment (BBC, 2024). Additionally, Kuhn et al (2016) suggest growing Euroscepticism, especially among the less educated, is fuelled by increasing economic disparities.

The recent trends around the fear of the other<sup>4</sup> is not new, as Vertovec (2007, pp.1026-1027) illustrates, giving the example of shops and homes of foreigners being burnt during riots in the early sixteenth century. Later, in the mid-eighteenth century, there was a split between those who held 'populist xenophobic attitudes' and those who held 'culturally cosmopolitan' views, perhaps reminiscent of the feeling around the EU Referendum campaign. Further, there is evidence of microaggressions towards EU nationals occurring prior to Brexit, where microaggressions 'exclude, negate and nullify' (Piller, 2016, p.151). For example, Block (2006a, p.133) mentions that their French-teacher participants had all experienced nationalist or xenophobic remarks from students, parents, and even acquaintances.

Additionally, Huc-Hepher's work on the French community living in London shows that microaggressions are historically embedded and humour is often used to trivialise xenophobic attitudes, as they are 'disguised beneath a veneer of light-heartedness' (2019, p.17). Further, discrimination occurred not just regarding the participants' nationality but also at the intersection of nationality and gender, since female participants reported sexual objectification (ibid, pp.18, 29). Similarly, Rzepnikowska's (2019, p.74) work on Polish nationals in the UK found xenophobia and racism were firmly entrenched prior to the Brexit vote. Further, McDevitt (2014) highlighted a surge in xenophobic hate crimes against Eastern Europeans in 2013, with 585 arrests for hate crimes against Poles, a tenfold increase from 2004,

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<sup>4</sup> See 1.1 - Utlu's (2011, pp.94-95) definition of 'the other.'

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resulting in severe assaults and vandalism. This was thought to be related to the recession, cuts to benefits, and stereotyping by politicians.

### 2.1.1.2 Linguicism and UK language policy

The term ‘linguicism,’ coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, p.94), applies to instances of racism directed at individuals based on the languages they speak. Blommaert (2010, pp.26 and 173) highlights that language is used as a tool to discriminate against transnationals, particularly in cases where people have been displaced due to forces outside of their control, as in the case of refugees; for example, Rühlmann and McMonagle (2019)’s work revealed racism via linguistic othering in Germany.

Accent discrimination, a form of linguicism, was explored by de Souza et al (2016) among Brazilians in Portugal through a simulated job recruitment scenario. First, Portuguese participants rated candidates' likelihood of being hired on a 4-point scale to measure discrimination. Researchers then used items from the Portuguese version of the blatant and subtle prejudice scale (Lima-Nunes et al, 2013) to assess bias against Brazilians. This data was cross-referenced with post-interview evaluations, revealing even when Brazilian candidates performed equally well, those with existing prejudices cited accents as a reason for denying them employment. Similarly, Blanchet (2016) has used the term ‘glottophobia’ to define prejudice against regional accents, in which speakers experience discrimination based on their pronunciation and tone based on the belief that certain linguistic forms are inferior.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst some attitudes towards others are expressed in public discourse such as through the media (Lanvers et al, 2018), they are not always visible, as Noble (2011, p.158) draws attention to the fact that individuals have the capacity to behave in both cosmopolitan and racist manners depending on various situations and contexts. Valentine (2008, p.334) concurs, advocating ‘convivial encounters’ may be a sign of ‘a culture of tolerance’, hiding ‘privately held views and values’ (ibid, p.329). Indeed, people seem to position themselves and others in relation to cultural conventions and the social meanings or models associated with them (Pérez-Milans, 2016, p.4).

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, France has since banned *glottophobie*, discrimination based on a person's accent, with the government citing it as a form of racism (Willsher, 2020).

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The fear of the other, as shown by the increase in hate crimes and increased activity by far-right groups as well as ongoing discrimination towards EU nationals, may not be helped by the fact that language skills in the UK are declining. Lower numbers of pupils are taking a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) up to GCSE level, with there being 'steep declines' in French and German (British Council, 2017, p.9) and this has had a knock-on effect at university, where there is a low enrolment rate for language degree programmes (ibid, p.10); as a result, there's a scarcity of MFL teachers. In the business sphere, the decreased number of graduates equipped with language proficiency means employers either seek these skills overseas or settle for conducting business primarily in English (ibid). The British Council laments just over one in three Britons can engage in a conversation in a language other than English, emphasising ongoing concerns regarding the UK's language proficiency, underlining the growing 'language deficit' within the country (2017, p.10).

With regard specifically to European languages, Lanvers et al (2018, p.787) suggest that students seem to have developed a perceptual connection between Euroscepticism and a fear of or aversion towards languages. This is at odds with the fact that throughout history, Britain has consistently been a land where multiple languages have been spoken (Schendl and Wright, 2011, p.18). Kelly (2018, p.255) argues that the UK requires language proficiency to engage on a broader international scale. UK language policy may not have helped the situation, as there is no overall policy on language learning in the UK, since education is devolved to the four nations of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The strategy for language learning for England states: 'languages are a lifelong skill' (Department for Education and Skills, 2002, p.5). The government has reiterated its goal of 90% of students taking a GCSE in a language by the year 2025 and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages has requested a languages National Recovery Programme (British Council, 2019, p.2). Vertovec (2010, p.87) claims the growth of multilingualism in the UK has drawn attention from social scientists and policymakers; however, policymakers often fail to respond adequately, viewing multilingualism with suspicion and questioning the use of public funds for translation services. In contrast, the government portrayed a sense of pride in acknowledging the diversity of languages spoken in London, notably highlighted during the city's successful 2012 Olympic bid.

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Despite the lack of national level funding, there have been some local initiatives around languages, such as the Young Interpreter Scheme (YIS), developed by the Hampshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS). This scheme has trained children at more than 40 schools across the county as interpreters to help pupils who have arrived from other countries (Hampshire County Council, n.d.) and reinforces the need for the use of different languages within the UK.

Now the UK has left the EU, there is no longer a need to adhere to initiatives such as the EU (2005) framework strategy on multilingualism, so the UK is at a crossroads in its shaping of the future of its languages (Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2005). Crossbencher Baroness Coussins from the Modern Languages APPG has advocated for the importance of languages post-Brexit, stating they are crucial for enabling the UK to innovate, trade effectively, prosper, and lead in the global economy, arguing that 'in the 21st century speaking only English is as much of a disadvantage as speaking no English' (HL Deb 08 January 2018).

The Lord Bishop of Derby has also drawn attention to the diverse nature of humanity, residing within numerous language groups, presenting a choice between conflict or cooperation, and emphasising the importance of utilising language creatively as the key in navigating this reality (HL Deb 18 January 2018). In the same debate, Lord Watson of Invergowrie contended the decline in language studies among youth will not change if the government continues its rhetoric, emphasising the 'hostile environment' post-referendum (ibid).

Alongside this inhospitable linguistic attitude, there has been the contentious obligation to endorse British values in English, Scottish and Welsh schools and Further Education Colleges, brought in by the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (McGhee and Zhang, 2017, p.937). This has been described by Joppke (2014, p.288) as a withdrawal from multiculturalism, and similar movements have occurred across Europe (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010, p.1). However, McGhee and Zhang put forward the claim that educational establishments are using the duty creatively at a local level in line with existing value systems to cultivate liberal British citizens and to combat the rise of extremism; schools and colleges are doing this by reducing their focus on security issues and by 'celebrating the UK as a multi-racial, multi-faith and multi-cultural society,' which contrasts with the mainstream



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discourse presented in the media (2017, p.937). Further, Vertovec (2010, p.90) argues the trends opposing multiculturalism paired with the new challenges arising from superdiversity have led to a time of post-multiculturalism and believes social cohesion and national identity can exist alongside an appreciation for diversity within the public sphere (ibid, p.94).

### 2.1.1.3 EU nationals and the Settlement Scheme

The EU-born population living in the UK was estimated to be around 3.5 million in the year ending June 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Net EU migration notably declined between 2016 and 2018 following the Referendum, but has since stabilised (Office for National Statistics, 2020). The EU Settlement Scheme launched on 30 March 2019 and the deadline to apply was 30 June 2021. Up until 31 July 2020, 3.81 million applications were received (Crown Copyright, 2020) and more have been submitted since the deadline. The processing of applications continues, with variable outcomes (Crown Copyright, 2023), demonstrating the uncertainty around EU nationals' legal status (Botterill et al, 2019, p.3).

As time progresses and as EU citizens living in the UK will enter different stages in their Settlement Scheme application process, they will not all share the same experiences of living in the UK, as varied immigration statuses bring different entitlements and restrictions, diverse experiences in the job market, varied residential patterns, and differing responses from local service providers and residents (Vertovec, 2007, p.1025). Sigona et al emphasise the downgrading in social status from being an 'EU citizen in the EU' to becoming 'an immigrant in Britain' (2022, p.10). A further recent complicating factor has been the COVID-19 climate, in which transnationals were additionally perceived as possible threats to public health (Della Rosa and Goldstein, 2020, p.258) with 'the *body of the other*' contributing to the fear of others (Roy, 2020, p.343), perhaps due to their perceived mobility.

Oliver and O'Reilly (2010, p.62) claim that people might well relocate to start a new life but may find divisions between themselves and others as forms of capital divide them, as is the case with Brexit. As an example of proactivism, MacClancy (2019, p.368) shows how a lack of rights motivated British people who had relocated to Spain to become politically active as anti-Brexit activists or even to be elected as councillors in town halls. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p.1013) suggest people in

## Chapter 2

transnational social fields navigate multiple power dynamics, being influenced by them whilst also having the ability to exert their own influence.

### 2.1.2 The city of Southampton

Before looking at Southampton, it is important to consider the concept of city. Consensus around a universal definition of urban remains elusive, although most definitions incorporate interconnectedness between people and space (Repko, 2008, p.9). Mar-Molinero (2020, p.15) highlights the city is dynamic and in a state of constant flux. Sassen (2005, p.38) positions this within the process of globalisation, explaining the global city and its network of interconnected cities form a space rooted in specific and strategic locations while also transcending traditional territorial boundaries, linking sites that may not be physically close but are intricately and intensely connected to one another. Further, cities are perceived as vibrant and open environments where continuous interactions between diverse individuals, languages, cultures, and ideas occur both in daily life and within a transnational framework (Wang and Lamb, 2024, p.10).

Considering the movement of people within a globalised context, Abrams and Vasiljevic (2013, pp.14-15) characterise four types of city according to their level of cohesion amongst different groups, which Gidley et al (2018, p.34) summarise, as in Table 1.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This will be revisited in 6.5 in the light of my materials.

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Table 1 *Abrams and Vasiljevic's (2013) four types of city*

	High prejudice	Low prejudice
<b>Good relations</b>	<b>"Parallel lives": THE SECTARIAN CITY</b> <i>Rivalrous cohesion</i>  In-group cohesion, hostile and exclusionary to competitor groups	<b>"Big Society" THE INTERCULTURAL CITY</b> <i>Harmonious cohesion</i>  Tolerant, engaged, open and flexible in relation to outsiders
<b>Few good relations</b>	<b>"Broken Britain" THE REVANCHIST CITY</b> <i>Malign antipathy</i>  Fragmented, discontented, disengaged communities of people who feel hostile both to internal and external agencies	<b>"Together Apart": THE ORDINARY CITY</b> <i>Benign indifference</i>  Atomised, disengaged and unconcerned about others either within or beyond the community

*Source: Gidley et al (2018, p.34)*

The connection between language and the city has always been closely interwoven, and these concepts pose challenges due to the continuously expanding city boundaries, the contrast between megalopolises and micro-localities, and the significant role of language in creating a sense of home and belonging in the urban environment (Mar-Molinero, 2020, pp.13-14). Further, Barthes (1997, p.168) comments that the city functions as a discourse, a language in itself: it communicates with its residents, and in turn, we articulate our experiences of the city simply by existing within it, by exploring its streets, and observing its essence; urban texts are understood and reshaped in connection to our individual narratives and histories.

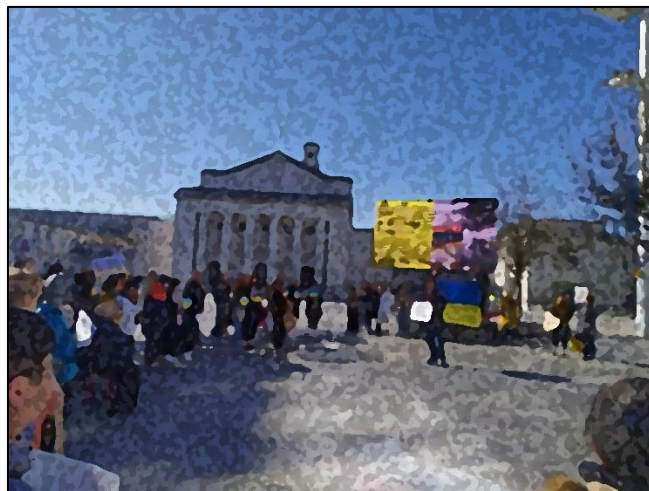
Southampton is located on the south coast of the UK and is described as a 'smaller urban area' (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.1), a representative example of an average medium-sized city in the UK (ibid, p.12), but still drawing people from across national borders. It gained City Status on 24 February 1964, after being granted a Royal Charter (Brisland, 2022). The reasons for seeking city status included Southampton's growth – to which the university had played a significant part in this – as for the first time, the population was over 200,000 residents. Shipping and economy had also developed, and the city had a history of public administration, efficient municipal services, and a record of public and voluntary service. Other

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factors included charity work, preservation of historical records and customs, and fostering citizenship (Neal, 2014, pp.495-201).

Southampton has recently celebrated 60 years of City Status (Southampton City Council, 2024). As with many other cities which have been the focus of research, it is located within the Global North, where numerous processes of globalisation that shape the world's economy and geopolitics are centred, thus producing an environment of superdiversity (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.1). This introduction to the city of Southampton provides a better understanding of its urban specifications, as highlighted by my participants. With this in mind, this section of the chapter includes some photographs relevant to the context which have been provided by my participants as part of this co-production of knowledge, as advocated by de Koning et al (2019, pp.171-172) and Pink (2013).

Figure 2 *Photograph posted by Beata in the WhatsApp group on 27.02.22 showing a protest she attended in Guildhall Square against the war in Ukraine<sup>7</sup>*



### 2.1.2.1 History and development

On arriving in Southampton by train, one of the most prominent visual features is the urban landscape of concrete grey buildings of social housing and drab warehouses along the roads up to the high street. During World War II, the Blitz destroyed many buildings. Reconstruction plans of the time mirrored global

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<sup>7</sup> You will note that an artistic effect has been applied to this photograph to protect the identity of my participant and others attending the protest. More detail is provided about artistic effects and ethical considerations in 4.3. Here, Beata demonstrates social/political belonging in support of Ukrainians but also connection to others in Southampton who hold the same view (Vallentin, 2019, pp.27-35).

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modernist concepts, and the newly appointed Minister of Works and Planning, Lord John Reith, endorsed ambitious development, though London's approval for city plans was required to obtain funding, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 (Diefendorf, 2016, p.90).

Adshead and Cook's (1942) report on 'The Replanning of Southampton' was not fully implemented. One reason for this was due to a difference in opinion between the Councillors at the time, who consisted of a mix of the Labour Party and the Ratepayers' Party (a coalition of Conservatives and Liberals), and there were further delays due to local elections taking place. Aside from political tensions, there were also post-war shortages of materials and labour as well as a priority need for housing, which meant the Council had to take account of economic conditions (Hasegawa, 1992, pp.64-65).

Much later in 2000, West Quay shopping centre opened in the city centre at Above Bar, renowned for being one of the south coast's premier shopping hubs, and in 2016, the Watermark centre opened, known as 'Westquay South,' containing restaurants, a cinema and bowling alley (West Quay Shopping Centre, n.d.). Furthermore, Ocean Village Marina, a 20-minute walk from Above Bar, has been developed over time with more housing, restaurants, and a cinema, described as 'so much more than a marina,' with a 'bustling and sophisticated' waterfront (MDL Marinas, 2024).

Figure 3 *Photograph received from Pilar on 15.10.21 showing the grey buildings of the central shopping precinct brightened slightly by the Christmas Market in 2010*



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To mark the centenary of RMS Titanic's departure from the city, the SeaCity Museum opened on 10 April 2012 within the Civic Centre buildings. Previously, the Southampton Maritime Museum housed nautical history exhibits, situated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Wool House in the Old Town. The more aesthetically pleasing buildings of this part of town are more noticeable if arriving by ferry or cruise ship but can still be easily missed if you are just passing through the city.

In contrast to the city's buildings, the second key visual aspect is the parks and green spaces, particularly obvious if approaching from the north side of the city by bus or car and traversing down the Avenue, a long tree-lined road adjacent to Southampton Common, which dates back to 1228. It is the largest of Southampton's open spaces, covering an area of 365 acres and containing a mixture of 'woodland, rough grassland, ponds, wetlands, lakes and parkland'; it supports a variety of wildlife, which led most of the Common to be designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1988 (Southampton City Council, n.d.). Southampton Common has recently scored highly on a tranquillity index, according to some researchers (University of Southampton, 2024).

Figure 4 *Photograph posted by Beata in the WhatsApp group on 09.02.22 showing Southampton Common*



Between 1854 and 1866, Southampton's Grade II\* listed Central Parks (Watts, East, Palmerston, Houndwell, and Hoglands) were established on former grazing land, as the Victorians strongly believed in the benefits of open spaces for overall wellbeing (Brisland, 2019, pp.58-60). These five parks cover 52 acres and are all on the



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Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens for their historical importance (Historic England, 2024).

Figure 5 *Photographs received from Pilar on 15.10.21 showing East Park*



Today, Southampton boasts a significant amount of public parkland, with one of the highest percentages of green space among major cities in the UK (Pinch, 2002, p.76), second only to Sheffield (Brisland, 2019, pp.58-60). Southampton residents (known as Sotonians) use the spaces for informal leisure activities, and they are also utilised to host large events (Southampton City Council, n.d.). In 2023, Southampton was awarded National Park City status (Reddin, 2023). The National Park Cities initiative is a grassroots movement urging individuals to transform their cities into greener, healthier, and more natural environments (Southampton National Park City, 2024). The crucial role green spaces within cities play in the daily lives of urban residents is immensely significant as they make places more pleasant and attractive to live, offering free access every day, contributing to residents' wellbeing (Swanwick et al, 2003, p.104).

Figure 6 *Photograph received from Pilar on 15.10.21 showing Watts Park*



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Thus, decades of urban planning following World War II - typical of industrial British developments - along with the landscaping of green spaces during the Victorian era, have shaped the Southampton of today, bringing together a contrast of features which will be explored more in Chapter 5.

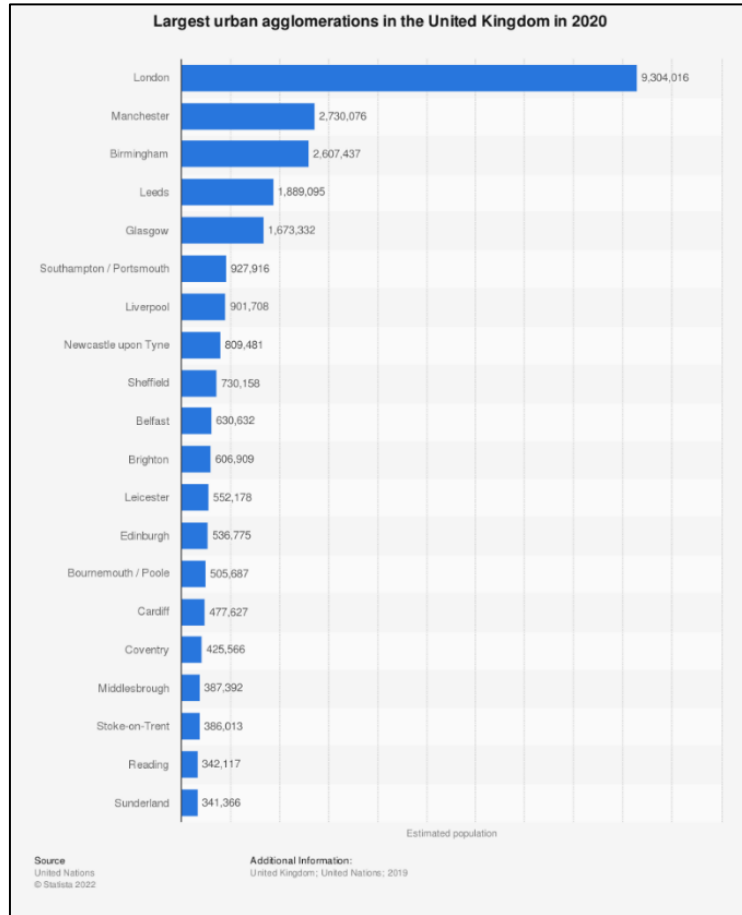
### **2.1.2.2 Population and migration statistics**

The resident population of Southampton was estimated to be 248,922 in 2021 (Southampton Data Observatory, 2024). Figure 7 shows it was one of the largest urban agglomerations in the UK in 2020 (Statista, 2022), where 'urban agglomeration' is characterised as the population residing in a connected area with urban population density, irrespective of administrative borders (United Nations, n.d.). Further, Southampton city centre has experienced a rapid growth in population over the past 20 years, making it the eleventh fastest-growing city centre in England (Quinio and Swinney, 2021).



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Figure 7 *Largest urban agglomerations in the United Kingdom in 2020 (Statista, 2022)*



Data from the 2021 Census shows 75.9% of Southampton's population were born in the UK, whilst 24.1% were born outside the UK.<sup>8</sup> Since the 2011 Census, there has been a 44.3% increase in the number of people born outside the UK living in Southampton; in contrast, considering internal migration, more people left Southampton than arrived up to the end of June 2020, with many residents moving to Eastleigh, which is a town close to Southampton (ibid).<sup>9</sup>

As a port based on the south coast of the UK, Southampton boasts a rich history as both a global entry point and a place where diverse communities have settled over time (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012, p.152). Mar-Molinero (2020, p.9) explains, the city is home to a sizable population of people who have come from various

<sup>8</sup> According to ONS comparator areas, Coventry is the only city which has a higher percentage of its population born outside the UK (27.9%).

<sup>9</sup> Although Eastleigh is next to Southampton, it is not considered part of the city as it is governed by its own Borough Council (Eastleigh Borough Council, 2024).

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corners of the globe over the last century, each bringing their linguistic resources with them. This is not dissimilar to many other port cities such as Valparaíso in Chile whose identity has been shaped by numerous international movements over many years (Wells, 2020, p.131). As Kushner states, Southampton is ‘a city made and re-made by those who have passed through and sometimes settled permanently - people from every part of the globe’ (2021, p.92). The city celebrates its diversity through events such as the Mela Festival, a long-standing annual summer event bringing together traditional and modern Asian culture through family activities, music, and dance (Art Asia, 2021).

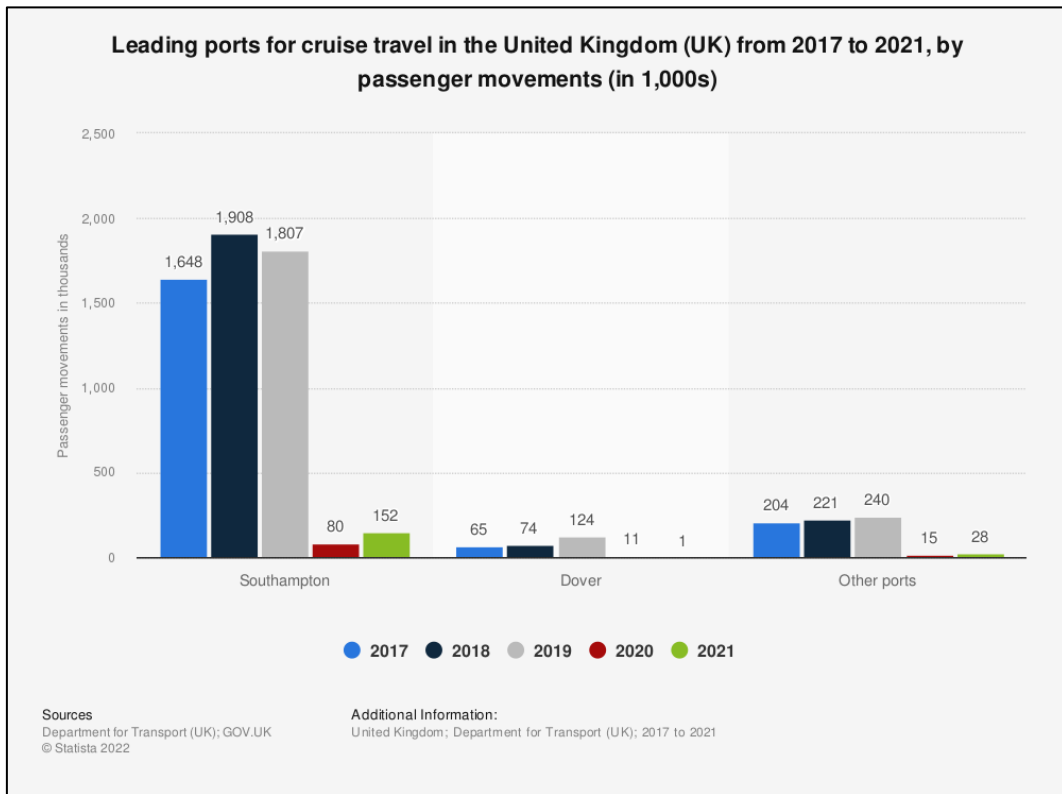
Southampton is recognised as a City of Sanctuary for asylum seekers and refugees, reflecting its dedication to providing refuge and support (City of Sanctuary Southampton, 2024). For generations, refugees have made substantial contributions to Southampton's society and have been embraced by Sotonians. For example, during the 1930s Spanish Civil War, the city welcomed 4000 Basque children, cared for by volunteers (University of Southampton, 2024). Today, various organisations like the Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group (SWVG), City Life Education and Action for Refugees (CLEAR), Two Saints, and Southampton Action, assist asylum seekers and refugees. Refugee Week events are also held annually (Counterpoints Arts, 2024). Whilst my participants come from a more well-off background and have exercised choice in their journey to Southampton, the dynamics of the city's diversity plays an important role in how they construct a sense of belonging here, investigated further in Chapter 5.

### **2.1.2.3 Economy and transport**

In line with Southampton's openness to diversity, its economy is intrinsically linked with its status as a port. Southampton was the leading port for cruise vessels in the UK between 2003 to 2021, despite the sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as Figure 8 shows (Statista, 2022).

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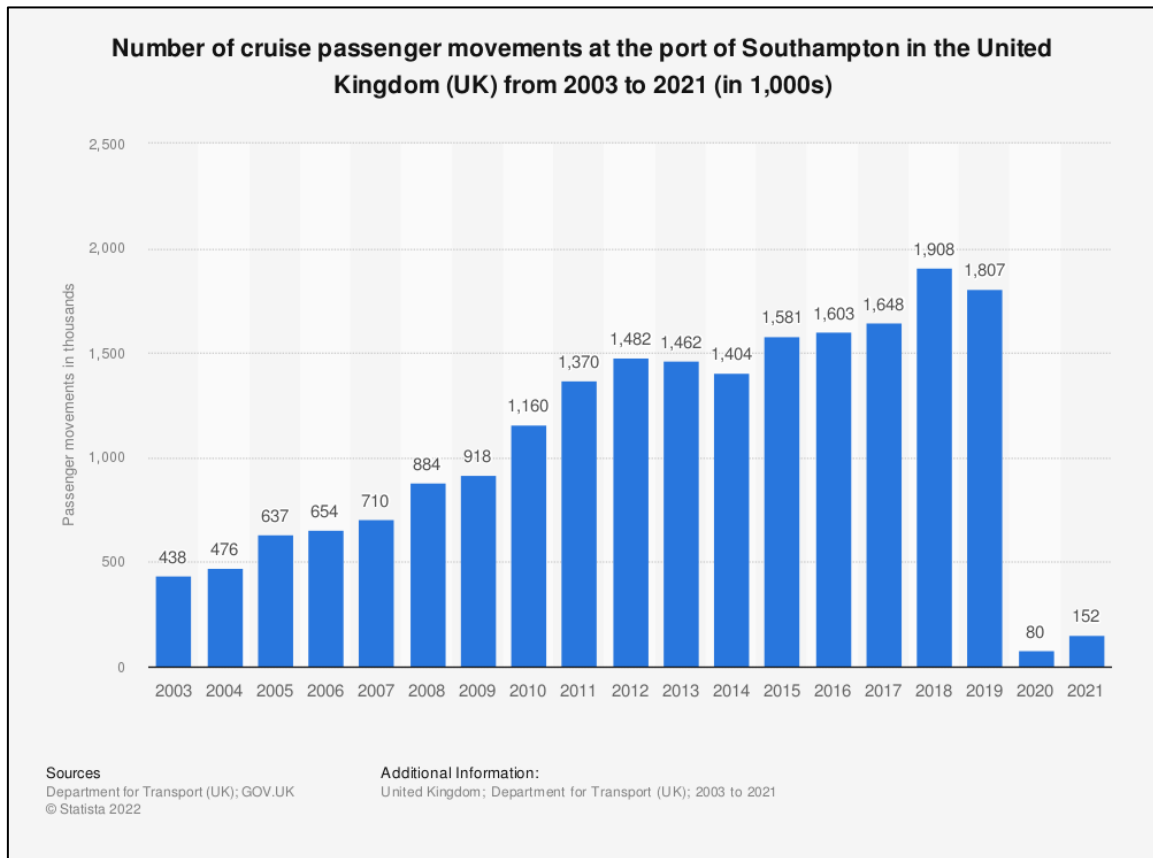
Figure 8 *Leading ports for cruise travel in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2017 to 2021, by passenger movements (in 1,000s) (Statista, 2022)*



Apart from the pandemic years, Figure 9 shows increasing cruise travel from Southampton over a period of 18 years.

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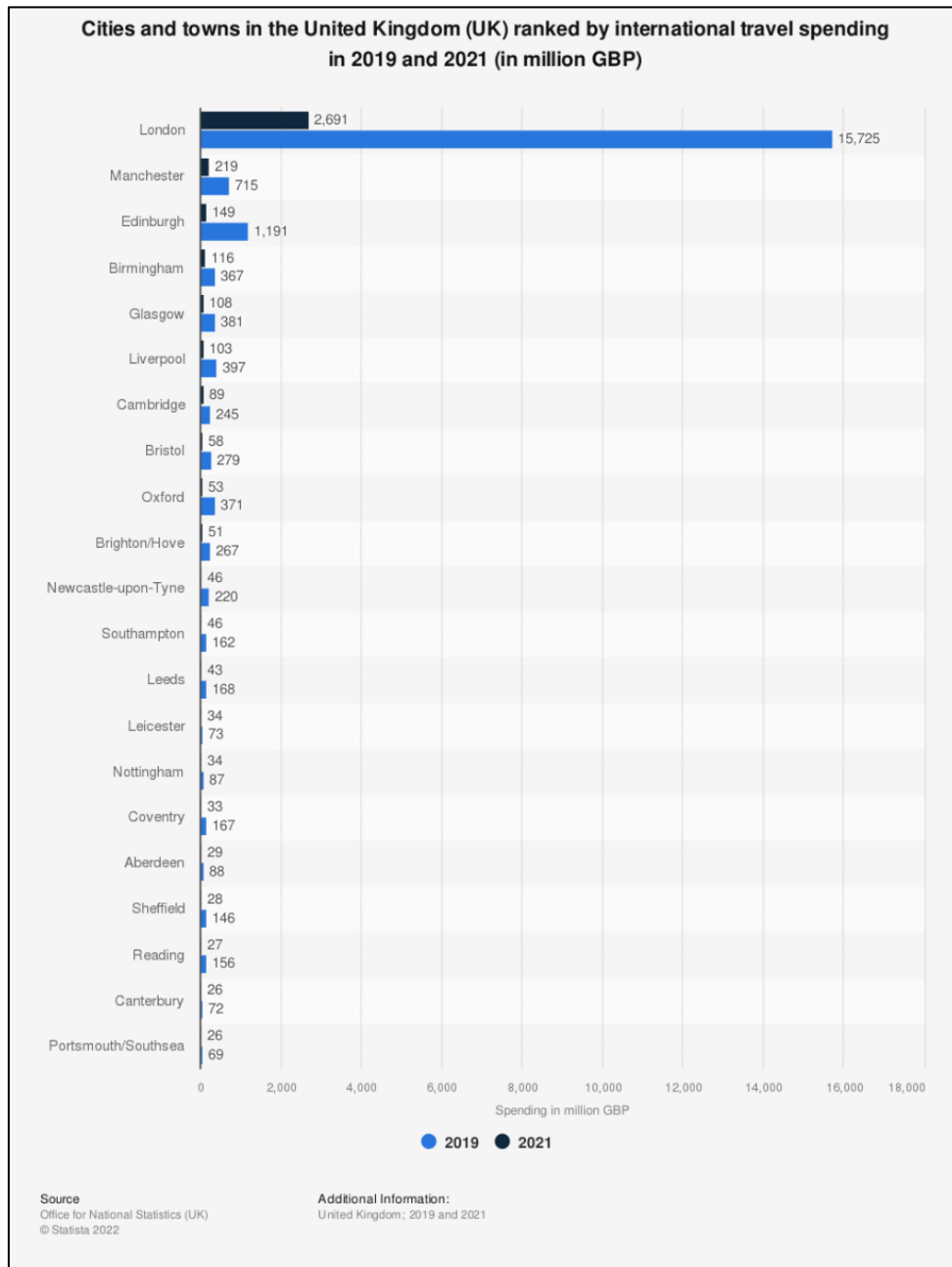
Figure 9 *Number of cruise passenger movements at the port of Southampton in the UK from 2003 to 2021 (in 1,000s) (Statista, 2022)*



Looking at Figure 10, we can see Southampton is in the top 20 cities in the UK after London for international travel spending, so it is clearly a profitable tourist destination (Statista, 2022), drawing tourists from the cruise ships as well as elsewhere. This attractiveness also relates to a constant mobility, with people coming and going, which links with my participants' ability to travel.

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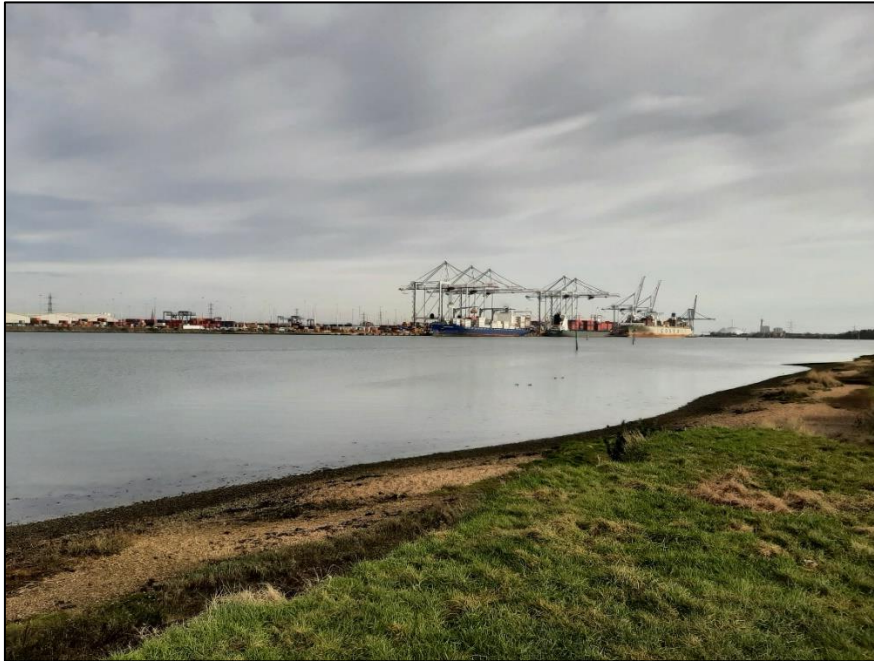
Figure 10 *Cities and towns in the United Kingdom (UK) ranked by international travel spending in 2019 and 2021 (in million GBP) (Statista, 2022)*



Southampton's cruise industry activity takes place at the Eastern Docks, whilst shipping activity occurs in the Western Docks (Figure 11).

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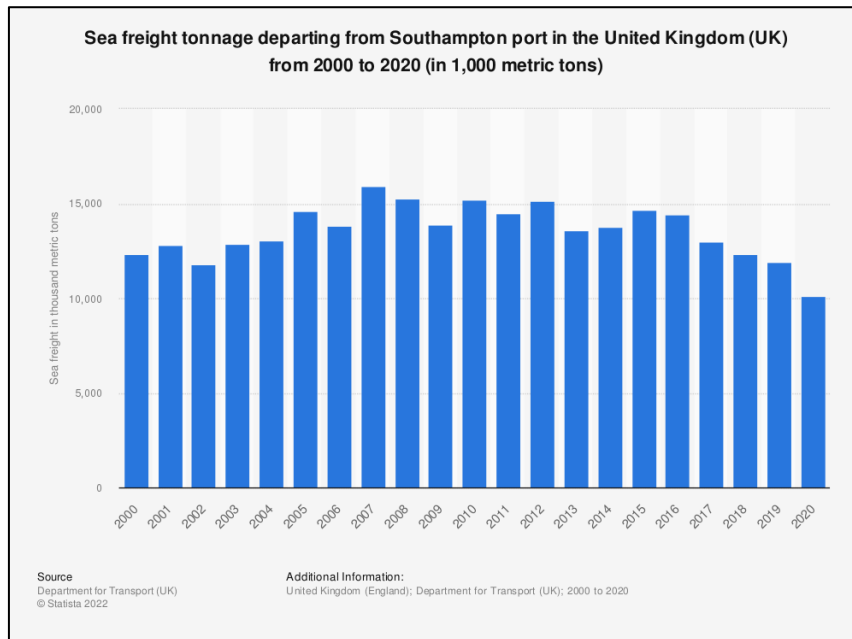
Figure 11 *Photograph taken by Jayne Love on 10.02.23 showing the Western Docks viewed from Goatee Beach, Eling*



As Figure 12 illustrates, millions of metric tons of sea freight depart from Southampton every year (Statista, 2022). Looking at tonnage across the UK as a whole, as of 2020, Southampton port was the third main maritime hub with approximately 10.1 million metric tons, behind the ports of Tees and Hartlepool, and Grimsby and Immingham, even though this was a decrease in comparison to the previous years. Figure 12 shows a peak in 2007 at roughly 15.9 million metric tons (Statista, 2022).

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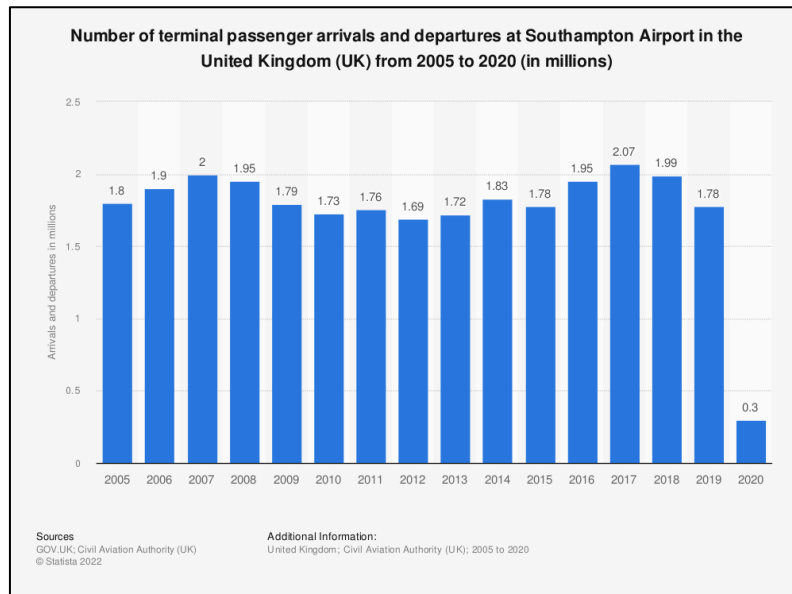
Figure 12 *Sea freight tonnage departing from Southampton port in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2000 to 2020 (in 1,000 metric tons) (Statista, 2022)*



Alongside shipping transport, Southampton boasts an airport, which has a constant flow of an average of around 1.8 million passengers a year, as shown in Figure 13, with 2020 being significantly lower for passenger numbers because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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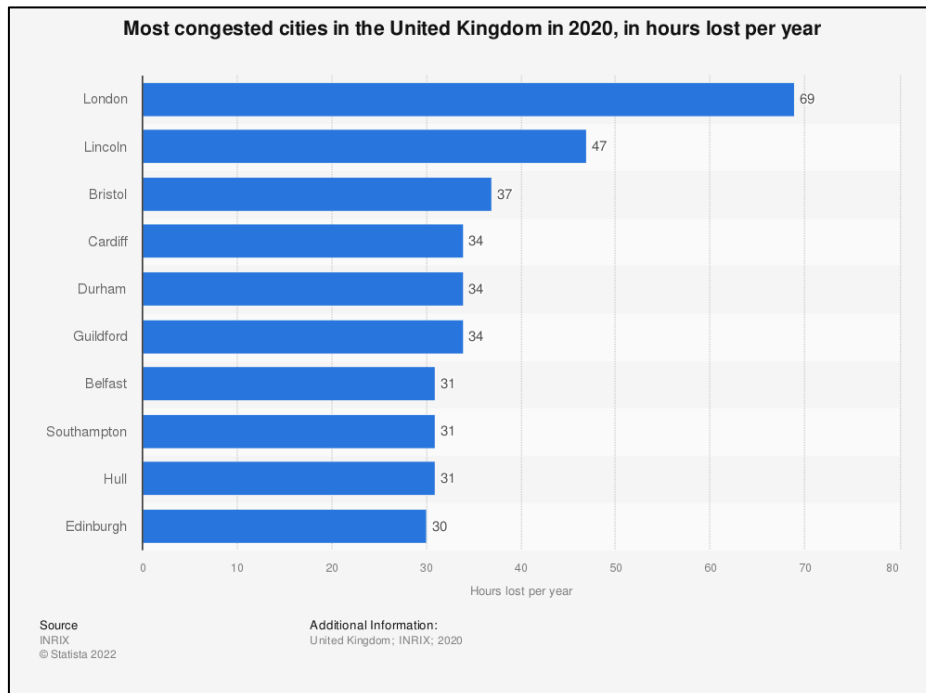
Figure 13 *Number of terminal passenger arrivals and departures at Southampton Airport in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2005 to 2020 (in millions) (Statista, 2022)*



A disadvantage of Southampton's port status is congestion, as shown in Figure 14 (Statista, 2022). Additionally, it is an expensive place to live, since house prices in 2021 were 10 times workplace-based annual earnings (Centre for Cities, 2022).



Figure 14 *Most congested cities in the United Kingdom in 2020, in hours lost per year (Statista, 2022)*



Linked with its maritime history and activity, the Southampton International Boat Show is ‘Britain’s biggest and best festival of boating’ (British Marine Boat Shows, 2024). The show has been held annually in September since 1969 in Mayflower Park, excepting 2020 when it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic (BBC, 2020; 2021). Despite its location by the water, due to the activity in the docks, Southampton’s waterside is only accessible in a few places – at Mayflower Park, Ocean Village, and Weston Shore. This highlights the economic focus of the city around the port and the shopping centre, West Quay.<sup>10</sup>

#### 2.1.2.4 Political composition

Since 1996, Southampton has been a unitary authority, responsible for all local services within the city. Southampton is an exciting place to live politically, as who has control over the Council and individual wards can change quite dramatically, particularly in more recent years. For example, in the late 1990s, Labour had the majority of the seats on the Council but lost control in 2000 with no party having a majority. There continued to be no overall control until 2008 when the Conservative Party gained the majority. There followed a programme of privatisation of council

<sup>10</sup> See 2.1.2.1.

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services and implementing pay cuts to council jobs, which led to disputes with UNISON and Unite, and I can still recall the piles of rubbish that were all over the city following strike action by refuse collectors (Smith, 2011). Perhaps then, it is no surprise that Labour took back control in 2012. They stayed in power until 2021 when the Conservatives won, but then just a year later in 2022, Labour regained control. The most recent elections in 2023 and 2024 saw Labour remain in control, but the Liberal Democrats and Greens gained significant seats in some wards (Southampton City Council, n.d.). Currently, Southampton has a total of 51 Councillors as shown in Table 2 (Southampton City Council, n.d).

Table 2 *Current political composition of elected councillors in Southampton*

<b>Political party</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>
Labour	35
Conservative	10
Liberal Democrat	5
Green	1

Southampton is made up of three parliamentary constituencies: Romsey and Southampton North (Conservative), Southampton Itchen (Labour), and Southampton Test (Labour) (BBC, 2020), each with their own Member of Parliament (MP), elected to Parliament for a five-year period. Along with political volatility at Council-level, Southampton constituencies are often targets in national elections as they can swing the vote significantly. Indeed, a swing in Southampton Itchen from Conservative to Labour was predicted for this year's General Election (Davey, 2023), and this turned out to be the case (BBC, 2024).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> As usual, I leafleted and canvassed for the Labour Party in the run up to the General Election - see Appendix M for some ethnographic notes on this experience.

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Figure 15 *Photograph taken by Carol Bunday on 25.03.23 showing Jayne Love (far right) and others leafletting and canvassing ahead of the May 2023 local elections*



Regarding the 2016 EU Referendum, the Southampton Area had a turnout of 68.14%. 53.8% voted to leave the EU whilst 46.2% voted to remain in the EU (Southampton City Council, n.d.), which marked a slightly higher leave vote than the national figures, which were 51.89% to 48.11% (House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2017, p.7). The frequent change of political affiliation locally mirrors the ever-mobile population within Southampton and its diversity, both in terms of people and their politics. The diversity had created a sense of openness and cosmopolitanism (Wardle, 2010, p.386), which made the pro-Leave result even more unexpected.

### 2.1.2.5 Presence of languages

The last national census in the UK was in 2021, revealing that of people aged three and over, 91.1% reported English (or Welsh in Wales) as their main language (Office for National Statistics, 2022), whereas in Southampton this figure is slightly lower at 84.6% (Southampton Data Observatory, 2024). Nationally, the most popular other main language was Polish, with 1.1% of the total population reporting this, and in Southampton, Polish is also the most common other main language but with a higher percentage of people speaking it, at 4.34% (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Further, Polish was the most requested language within the University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHT), as reported by the Volunteer Interpreting Service which received an increase in callouts of 243% from 2005 to 2010 (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012, p.153). Additionally, there are services catering for the Polish community, such as a Polish-speaking lawyer (David Ebert

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Solicitors, n.d.) and Catholic Mass services in Polish (Polish Catholic Mission Southampton, 2023). After English and Polish, other languages within the top ten spoken in Southampton are Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Persian or Farsi, Arabic, Greek, and Bulgarian (Southampton Data Observatory, 2024).

Figure 16 *Photograph posted by Beata in the WhatsApp group on 16.02.22 showing a 'no fishing' sign in Polish*



Figure 17 shows how the main languages in use in England and Wales have changed over a period of 10 years between 2011 and 2021. Whilst Polish has retained its status at number one, other languages have fluctuated in use. Romanian has seen a huge increase, moving from 19<sup>th</sup> place to 2<sup>nd</sup>; Portuguese, Spanish and Italian have also seen significant rises, whilst French has declined, moving from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> position, suggesting more French nationals are leaving the country than arriving.

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Figure 17 *The top ten main languages spoken in England and Wales excluding English (or Welsh in Wales), 2011 and 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2021)*

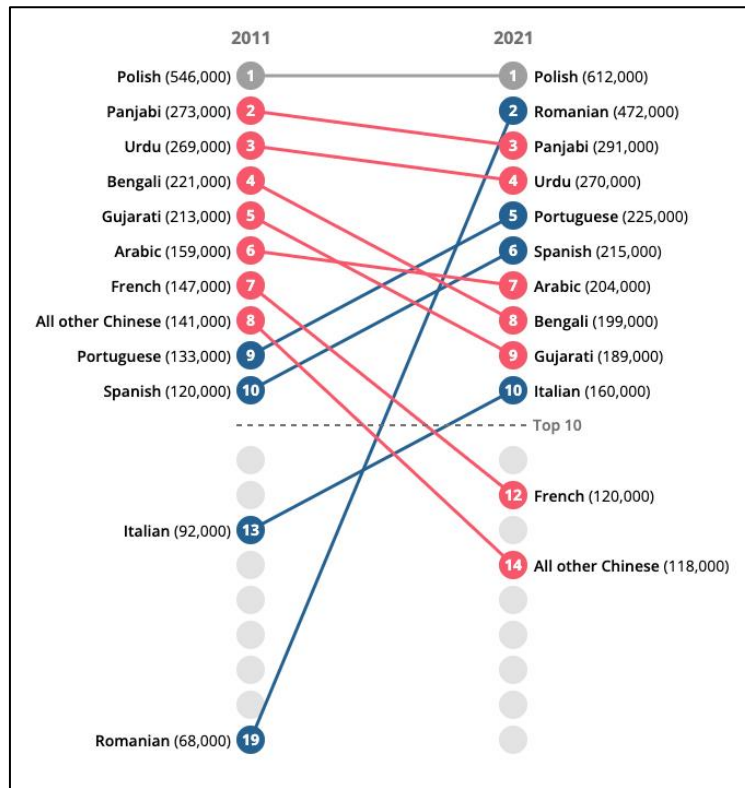


Figure 18 looks at the same period but in Southampton. Romanian has seen the most dramatic percentage change, and this is in keeping with the national picture. Similarly, Bulgarian has increased in prominence in Southampton, concurrent with the national position, where it has moved from 29<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> place in the rankings (Office for National Statistics, 2022). The rise in Portuguese and Spanish also mirrors the national figures; likewise, Greek has seen a 51.5% increase in Southampton, whilst nationally, it has moved from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> place (ibid).

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Figure 18 *Languages spoken in Southampton (Office for National Statistics, 2021; Southampton Data Observatory, 2024)*

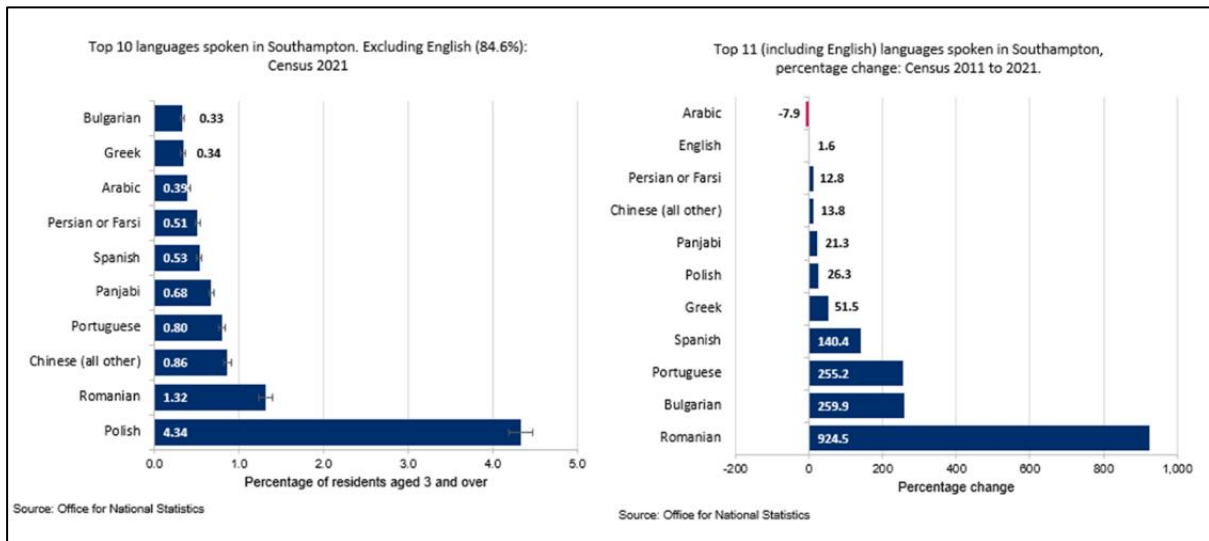


Figure 19 *Photograph received from Sophia on 13.10.21 showing Greek knick-knacks in a charity shop*



Matras (2013) warns that census data is ‘way out’ and ‘woefully inaccurate’ as he believes respondents could be ‘under-reporting’ their use of languages, perhaps due to ‘lack of awareness’ or ‘fear of stigmatisation.’ He also wonders if there could be misunderstanding of the question ‘what is your main language?’ as this would be English for most of the day if spent at a place of study or work but would not necessarily be the same language spoken in the home environment. Likewise, Duchêne and Humbert (2018) caution that official statistics can reflect the ideologies of those who collect them. To address inaccurate census data, some

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research in Manchester has included the development and use of data mapping tools (Matras and Robertson, 2017; Gaiser and Matras, 2020). Although there are criticisms around the census data, it does give us some idea of languages in the UK and in Southampton as a starting point and for comparison purposes.

In terms of other data relating to languages in Southampton, Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012, p.160) found that while the UHT and Southampton City Council have 'loosely defined' language policies, drastic reductions in government funding have affected the provision of language services and the production of language-specific resources. In contrast, in the private sector, language policies at Southampton Airport were not in existence when their research study began but were later incorporated into existing documents once the profitability of linguistic skills was realised (ibid, p.161). Generally, Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012) found those in authority took a default stance of monolingualism in relation to planning (ibid, p.162) which is also reflected in the signage within the city predominantly being in English (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.9). In contrast, Cadier and Mar-Molinero's observations at all the sites revealed multilingualism as the '*de facto* linguistic situation' (2012, p.162). However, they also noted 'ongoing prejudices and obstacles' at different levels of the workplaces they investigated, which they believe is due to 'ignorance, inexperience or fear of the Other' (ibid, p.163).

### **2.1.2.6 Southampton's image: from 'Crap Town' to UK City of Culture 2025 finalist**

An important recent shift has been the efforts made by the city to transform its image. In 2013, Southampton was voted the UK's 'fourth crappiest town' (Upshall, 2013), and appeared in a book entitled '*Crap Towns Returns: back by unpopular demand*' in which the city was described as 'a cultureless abyss' (Jordison and Kieran, 2013, no pagination). Then in 2021, it was ranked the worst city for a short break by Which? members (Edwards, 2021), and not long afterwards in early 2022, Southampton was listed in the top 50 worst places to live (Jones, 2022). Further, it is rated as the most dangerous city in Hampshire (CrimeRate, 2022).

The notion of civic pride is a fundamental aspect of cities, contributing to what defines and moulds their identity (Collins, 2016, p.175). The political value of civic, or local, pride was highlighted in the 2021 Levelling Up Fund prospectus (Crown Copyright, 2021) and subsequent 2022 white paper (Crown Copyright, 2022). One of the aims of the government's Levelling Up agenda is to re-establish local pride,

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and they proposed for many people, 'the most powerful barometer of economic success is the positive change they see and the pride they feel in the places they call home' (Crown Copyright, 2021, p.2).

With this backdrop, the Southampton 2025 Trust put in a bid for the UK City of Culture 2025 and Southampton was one of four places shortlisted alongside Bradford, County Durham, and Wrexham (Crown Copyright, 2022). Unfortunately, the city was not selected as the winner but received a grant of £125,000 from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (Southampton 2025 Trust, 2022). As a result, the Council has started to work more closely with the University of Southampton, and councillors and university leaders pledged to drive economic growth and tackle social challenges in the city together (Southampton City Council, 2023).

### **2.2 Summary**

This chapter introduced the historical, political, and local context of this study, which sketches out some of the features attached to spatial belonging (Vallentin, 2019, p.26). First, I showed how there has been a rise in nationalism and hate crimes in the UK amidst Brexit with linguicism - language-specific discrimination - being experienced. This has been driven by the ongoing processes of globalisation which has created a desire to return to the local for some people who see multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism as a threat. The lack of consistent UK language policy and a hostile environment towards those from overseas has not helped, with there being superficial pride in diversity when it suits, such as to promote the Olympics, but suspicion towards other languages (Vertovec, 2010, p.87), and the promotion of British values in schools (McGhee and Zhang, 2017, p.937).

Second, I examined Southampton as a city, looking at its history and development, including the impact of the Southampton Blitz in World War II on its buildings, and the legacy of the Victorian era on its parks, leading to it now having the second highest percentage of green space among major cities in the UK, and to the award of National Park City status in 2023 (Reddin, 2023). I also covered key population and migration statistics as well as information about the city's economy and transport, political composition, and its presence of languages. Finally, I showed how Southampton's image has changed over time, moving from a 'crap town' to



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become a UK City of Culture 2025 finalist. The next chapter will pick up on some of the themes around belonging in relation to my research questions.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See 1.5.

## Chapter 3 Conceptual Approach

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### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature in relation to language and belonging, given the focus of my research questions.<sup>13</sup> First, I set out key terms relating to my conceptual approach, covering language narratives, linguistic ethnography, transnationals, and mobility. Second, I look at previous research into language and migration in urban areas in the UK, highlighting the need for a focus on smaller cities like Southampton, and on other UK-based EU nationals rather than just East Europeans. Third, I cover concepts of belonging, paying attention to space and place, the notion of home, and national identity in relation to Brexit, since the transnational journey brings together all three of these types of belonging – spatial, temporal, and social/political – and encompasses shared practices (Vallentin, 2019, p.2). As my participants are all women, I also discuss women and belonging, before conceptualising ordinary belonging as a meaningful linguistic and ethnographic category, which brings together a broader perspective on belonging with the ordinariness of everyday practices in the individual lives of my participants as they narrate it.

#### 3.1.1 Language narratives, linguistic ethnography, and interdisciplinarity

Here I consider the term narratives since one of my research questions focuses on how a sense of belonging is discursively articulated.<sup>14</sup> Defining language presents a challenge due to the lack of consensus among scholars regarding its nature, functions, and delineations of its existence (Baird et al, 2014, p.173). However, from a linguistic perspective, language serves as the medium through which individuals make sense of their lived experiences. Language is not merely an entity but a social construct (Otheguy et al, 2015, p.283), and people's identities are reflected in the personal stories they share, since identity formation is influenced by language, and language, in turn, contributes to constructing identity (Norton, 2006, p.24). When individuals speak, they are not just imparting information but continuously shaping their understanding of themselves and their social connections (Norton, 1997, p.410), thus intertwining linguistic and social contexts (Echeverría, 2017, p.17). Moreover, language is performative; it serves as a means

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<sup>13</sup> See 1.5.

<sup>14</sup> See 1.5.

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for self-expression, reflecting autonomy and reflexivity, and providing a platform for discourse (Burr, 2015, p.67). Additionally, language acts as a tool for action and influence, allowing individuals to present their perspectives and even effect change (Bourdieu, 1991, p.37).

Linguistic ethnography combines theories and methodologies of linguistics and ethnography, exploring social issues interconnected with language in diverse ways (Rampton et al, 2004, p.2), and my research sits squarely in this domain given its focus on how belonging is articulated discursively among EU nationals. Language extends beyond communication, embodying cultural practices (Duranti, 1997, p.1). Wells (2020) argues that solely focusing on language would not reveal one of her participant's 'Italianness.' Instead, shared cultural elements emerged through local environments and embodied practices. For example, preparing pasta highlighted how language habits intertwined with sensory experiences. This shows that language goes beyond the linguistic, encompassing non-verbal, material, visual and other sensory mediums, as well as other forms of communication, since human communication is inherently a social activity (Baird et al, 2014, p.184). With this in mind, I use the term linguistic ethnography in an open and inclusive way, apprehending linguistic as beyond language itself, considering communication more broadly.

My project draws on sociolinguistics, multilingualism, and linguistic ethnography, along with related fields, to explore communication beyond language. This can be seen as an interdisciplinary approach, marked by a focus on interconnections and a broader perspective, challenging established norms and structures (Nissani, 1997, p.213). Interdisciplinary research can lead to creative breakthroughs, stemming from an outsider's perspective (ibid, pp.204-205). It can also assist with complex or practical problems by avoiding compartmentalisation, bringing together a unity of knowledge, building bridges across disciplines, and making greater impact on society (ibid, pp.209-212). This approach is common within ethnography, since it is a distinctive form of transdisciplinary and hybrid knowledge production that addresses complexity, and actively counters fragmentation and the segregation of disciplines (Wells et al, 2019, p.4).

Regarding language as 'cultural practice' (Duranti, 1997, p.1), ethnographic research fosters a deeper comprehension of culture (Wells et al, 2019, p.3), focusing on the complex system of meanings that shapes our identity and influences our

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thoughts and actions (Demossier et al, 2019, p.16). The present interdisciplinary approach is aimed to provide a more holistic account (Shah, 2017, p.51) of EU nationals' sense of belonging in Southampton that is 'additive to knowledge' (Repko, 2008, p.11), by bringing together the fields of linguistic ethnography and sociolinguistics as well as sociology, human geography, and politics amongst others since they all relate to place and belonging.

### **3.1.2 Exploring migrants, transnationals, superdiversity, and multilingualism as linguistic terms**

Anderson and Blinder (2019, p.2) illustrate the term migrants encompasses various meanings, including individuals born in another country, foreign nationals, or those who relocated to the UK for at least a year. This variability must be considered when interpreting statistics, given inconsistent official usage. Additionally, the term is politicised, especially post-Brexit, and may not resonate with all participants. Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez (2010, p.49) found participants did not universally identify as migrants, preferring to emphasise their unique life experiences over their migration status - an approach echoed in this study.<sup>15</sup>

Lundström (2014, pp.1-2) notes the common perception of migrants tends to focus on non-white, non-Western individuals, subjecting them to discrimination and marginalisation, even if they hold citizenship in their country of residence. In contrast, white migrants are often labelled as tourists, expatriates, or mobile professionals, allowing their presence to go unquestioned. This highlights how whiteness serves as a form of capital, reinforcing privilege and advantage through migration, intersecting with transnational processes (ibid, p.9). This underscores the power of whiteness internationally, representing race privilege and structural advantage (ibid, p.10; Frankenberg, 1993, p.1).

Horner and Dailey-O'Cain (2019, pp.10-11) note how mainstream media and societal perceptions often judge newcomers based on their assimilation into society.

Botterill and Burrell (2019, p.24) observe that many immigrant groups in Europe are

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<sup>15</sup> Whilst the terms 'immigrant,' 'migrant,' 'expat,' 'foreigner,' and 'outsider' were evident in my data, they were employed in a variety of ways by participants to describe themselves and others. For example, Pilar expressed that she was very proud of the fact that she is an 'immigrant' and used this term in a positive way, whilst for Marieke and Marianna, it was definitely a negative term. 'Immigrant' and 'migrant' were always negative when referring to the media, but when relating to themselves and others, it did not always have such a negative connotation. Some participants completely avoided using any such terms. My data was very rich and so I was unable to explore these terms further in the writing up of my thesis, but they could be revisited in future.

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portrayed as 'not quite white' in public discourse, where whiteness encompasses factors beyond race, including status, class, and language (Colic-Piesker, 2005, p.622). Botterill and Burrell's (2019, p.23) study on Polish individuals in the UK pre- and post-Brexit finds that while being white affords some privilege, it does not fully shield against anti-immigrant sentiments. This highlights that immigration narratives extend beyond media and public discourse, impacting individuals personally as they negotiate their sense of belonging in different spaces (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, pp.10-11).

Given the multifaceted meanings of the term migrant and its intersection with preconceived notions of race, I will use EU national to refer to individuals who have relocated to the UK from a European Union country, and transnational more broadly to describe those who have moved from one country to another, whether within the EU or not. According to Glick Schiller et al (1995, p.48), a transnational's daily life involves continual, diverse connections across international borders, shaping their public identities in relation to more than one nation-state. I therefore employ these terms irrespective of legal status or the temporality of stay. Nonetheless, I retain the term in direct quotes from participants and academics who use it to describe themselves or others. Linked with the term transnational is transnational practices, which involve 'connecting, moving and acting across national borders' (Armbruster, 2002, p.19). These practices link people in different nation states through specific relationships at particular times (Smith and Guarnizo, 2017, p.11), bringing together 'those who move and those who stay behind' (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1003), for example, through communicating across borders.

Considering migration, Southampton draws people from around the world (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.1), producing a 'superdiversity' which 'gives rise not to the creation of communities or groups but to a churning mass of languages, ethnicities and religions all cutting across each other' (Modood and Meer, 2012a, p.31). Concurrently, terminology around multilingualism is changing, moving away from the traditional view of language as a systematic entity tied to the ideology of the nation-state (Blommaert and Rampton, 2011, p.4) and an idealised notion of the native speaker (Gill, 2007, p.41)<sup>16</sup> to embrace repertoires in flux (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010),<sup>17</sup> complex individual differences (Bailey, 2007, p.258; Jaspers and

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<sup>16</sup> See also Bloomfield (1933) and Macnamara (1967a).

<sup>17</sup> See also Heller (1988); Anderson-Finch (2011); Sharma (2011); Li (2011a); Blackledge and Creese (2014); García and Li (2014); Otheguy et al (2015); Li (2017), and Mar-Molinero (2020).

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Madsen, 2019), and the influence of globalisation on language use (Jacquemet, 2005; Jørgensen et al, 2011; Jenkins, 2015; Li, 2017; Cogo, 2018).

Sociolinguists and critical linguists emphasise the role of context and social relations in language use, showing how language is constructed socially (Wolfram, 1974; Fairclough, 2015),<sup>18</sup> whilst research specifically into multilingualism has profoundly impacted linguistics (Franceschini, 2016), challenging monolingual ideologies (P. Stevenson, 2017, p.54; Blackledge and Creese, 2014), and offering broader perspectives on language functionality in the world (Habermas, 2001a; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Pennycook, 2010; Block, 2014b; Baker, 2015).

Whilst engaging with research into multilingualism has influenced my PhD journey, it is not the primary focus of my thesis; rather, it is place-making and belonging, and so I am interested in my participants' identities as multilinguals and how they position themselves within Southampton from this perspective. Since I take the view - in line with Duranti (1997, p.1) - that language is a cultural resource and practice, I will therefore be focussing on how my participants make meaning through their narratives rather than on how they (or linguists) perceive the use of linguistic structures. As mentioned in 3.1.1, I understand the linguistic to be beyond language itself, so will be considering communication more broadly, taking into account different modalities.

### **3.1.3 Mobility, lifestyle migration, globalisation, and superdiversity**

Bastia and Skeldon (2020, p.3) define mobility as a 'change in habitual place of residence,' whilst Van Hear describes it as a movement or 'transition from *immobility* to *mobility*' (1998, p.38). Blommaert (2010, pp.4-5) highlights the movement of individuals also encompasses movement of linguistic and sociolinguistic assets. Human mobility is not a recent phenomenon but is considered particularly abundant in connection with the rapid global processes that define the late modern era (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, p.8). People may move from one country to another and stay there long-term, they may move to many countries during their lifetimes, or even return to their country of origin after living

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<sup>18</sup> See also Trudgill (1974a, 1974b); Bourdieu (1991); Romaine (2000); Nguyen (2012); Baird et al (2014); Wright (2016), and Tusting (2019).

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elsewhere for a significant length of time; some people may regularly travel back and forth from one country to another (ibid, pp.8-9).

Van Hear identifies five dimensions of movement, varying in degree of force and choice: 'moving out' (outward movement), 'coming in' (inward movement), 'moving on' (onward movement), 'moving back' (returning) and 'staying put' (not moving) (1998, p.40). Migration may be 'forced' or 'involuntary' where there are limited options available, or 'voluntary' where there is 'more choice' (ibid, p.10; p.44). Frequently, family dynamics play a significant role in driving individual mobility (Thompson, 1993, p.8), and past migration experience increases the likelihood of future migration Czaika and Vothknecht (2014, p.17). Individuals with a transnational background exhibit notably elevated levels of future aspirations compared to others, demonstrating greater ambition for the future (ibid, p.1). Others move for family reasons (ibid, p.6).

In terms of 'mobility capital', Murphy-Lejeune (2002, p.51) puts forward four factors indirectly influencing migration: family history, experience of (foreign) travel/language, experience of adaptation, and personality. Further, Czaika and Vothknecht (2014, p.5) argue 'aspiration-enhancing characteristics' contribute, such as being young, well-educated, and from a more favourable socioeconomic background, along with being unmarried (ibid, p.17). Mobility is increasingly sought after, and the freedom to move - a limited and unevenly distributed asset - quickly emerges as the primary factor stratifying our late-modern or postmodern era (Bauman, 1998, p.2). Weinar (2019, pp.44-45) believes international mobility is now regarded as a European value, viewed as a significant aspect of the lifestyle of educated elites in Europe.

Linked with this, Benson and O'Reilly (2009a, p.621) outline lifestyle migration as relocation in order to pursue a desired lifestyle, prioritising factors like quality of life, culture, and personal fulfilment over traditional economic motivations. Lifestyle migration is an active choice made by an individual to move abroad (Korpela, 2014, p.29), often emphasising concepts of individualism and freedom, particularly where countries of origin are considered 'restrictive and oppressive' by the person moving (ibid, p.32) and usually involves self-reflection (ibid, p.30). Lifestyle migration is typically pursued by middle class individuals who have the financial means and skills to do so (ibid, p.42); it is not available to everyone, and many people move for



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economic reasons, particularly where the financial climate is worsening in their countries of origin (Beswick, 2020, pp.73-74).

When a person is 'dislocated' from their homeland and their sense of belonging to a community or group is disrupted, this can create an 'out of place' feeling (Preece, 2016, p.2). However, more recent views on migration recognise the importance of transnational interconnectedness, rather than focusing solely on uprootedness (Beswick, 2020, p.28). As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p.1012) emphasise, transnational migration is not an 'event' but a 'process.'

Globalisation is a collection of processes facilitating the swift integration of the world into a unified economic space, through heightened international trade, the globalisation of production and financial markets, and the spread of a commodity culture driven by an increasingly interconnected global telecommunications system (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.120). Further, it is a 'phenomenon' defined in various and sometimes conflicting ways, though it is generally agreed it 'has picked up speed, become large scale and increased in intensity' (Wright, 2016, pp.202-203).

Blommaert (2013a, p.193) emphasises how globalisation has led to heightened migratory movements, resulting in unparalleled levels of social and cultural diversity, particularly noticeable in major urban areas worldwide. Blommaert argues that our current understanding of the symbols and meanings within culture and identity should be described in terms of complexity rather than simply focusing on multiplicity or plurality (2013b, p.613). Pennycook (2007, p.5) connects complexity to novel methods of resistance, transformation, adaptation, and the shaping of identity. These processes of migration and complexity have been described by Vertovec (2007, p.1024) as 'super-diversity.'

Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012, p.151) define superdiversity as a complex network of movements disrupting conventional ties among ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and territorial characteristics. In places like Hackney, London, this diversity is perceived as 'commonplace diversity,' integrated into everyday life (Wessendorf, 2013, p.407). However, in other areas, diversity is viewed with suspicion, with a lack of English proficiency seen as indicating 'separateness,' and English emphasised as the language for societal 'integration' (Simpson, 2019, p.32). Wessendorf (2013, p.419) notes, people observe shared public spaces to determine whether others are 'mixing' or living in 'separation,' with a preference for an 'ethos of mixing' (ibid, p.417). This connects with Sennett's (2005, p.1) concept of 'civility,' where

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individuals with differences can coexist. While promoting civility can mitigate tensions (Wessendorf, 2014), receiving respectful treatment is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging (Wessendorf, 2017, p.135).

Flores and Lewis (2016, p.97) criticise the term superdiversity for ignoring history and neoliberalism as well as perpetuating certain beliefs about language. For example, work on codeswitching inherently positions monolingualism as the norm (ibid, p.101). Similarly, superdiversity overlooks the ideological aspect found in all language categorisations (ibid, p.105). Instead, Flores and Lewis (2016, p.97) propose the term sociopolitical emergence which they believe addresses these limitations. They contend that their emergentist viewpoint shifts from considering universal linguistic categories as objective facts, instead focusing on how linguistic practices and categories are socio-political creations, emerging through social interactions influenced by historical and present micro and macro processes (ibid, p.111).

Ndhlovu (2016, p.28) condemns superdiversity for reinforcing the very concepts it aims to challenge; specifically, it perpetuates the inclination to generalise cultural and social groups while uncritically adopting elitist neoliberal notions of culture and identity. Further, superdiversity faces criticism for depicting a phenomenon that has existed for many years, if not centuries (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.15) as well as being 'sloganization' (Pavlenko, 2018). Although the term is contentious and has faced significant opposition, Mar-Molinero argues that superdiversity in today's context is different due to smaller groups of people moving to the UK from a wider range of countries as well as its transitory nature (2020, pp.15-16). Likewise, Vertovec (2007, pp.1027-1028) has remarked on the emergence of smaller, less structured groups with varying legal statuses which have fundamentally altered the social fabric of Britain, linking with the participants in my study.<sup>19</sup>

Added to the increased migratory flows and superdiversity, modern technology has led to greater interconnectivity (Mar-Molinero, 2020, pp.15-16). The development of new electronic tools means we can now communicate multimodally, allowing the same code to be used in multifarious ways with communicative features being used beyond language. Indeed, Jacquemet (2005) emphasises how digital communication removes the constraints of face-to-face communication, drawing positively on

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<sup>19</sup> See 4.2.2.

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language mixing. In addition to this, Blommaert (2010, p.9) clarifies how communication can be collaborative, bringing together skills and resources of numerous people. This allows linguistic resources to be both the medium and the site of creativity, enhanced by the 'embedding,' 're-embedding' and 'disembedding' of technology (Coupland, 2003, p.468).

The processes of globalisation and superdiversity have not been viewed positively by everyone, as 'the key issues of integration and what it means to be French, British, Italian or German have been called into question,' argues Demossier (2007, p.2). A variety of factors have created this soul-searching process including shifts in the economy and society, the emergence of new risks related to global terrorism, rising influxes of migration, and the effects of modernity, including social division and individualistic tendencies linked to consumerism (ibid). Harris (2016, p.243) cites poorly handled geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, the worldwide economic downturn, and the process of European integration as other issues generating anxiety, putting forward that whatever the concern, the response includes a surge in nationalism.

Wright (2016, p.227) concludes, the immense scope of globalisation makes it more probable that people will turn to local connections for a sense of belonging, identity, and community, which may even be a psychological need for some. This contrasts with cosmopolitanism which is concerned with openness, individual expression, and diversity of human freedom (Wardle, 2010, p.386), where there is inclination and readiness to interact with difference, accompanied by receptivity to varied cultural encounters (Hannerz, 1990, p.103). Overall, someone who is cosmopolitan sees themselves as 'a citizen of the world,' acknowledging connections to wider humanity as opposed to just a local community (ibid, p.150), which is apparent in the narratives of my participants and will be explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **3.2 Previous research into language and migration in urban areas in the UK**

Sociolinguists were the first to study language and place, with early research tied to geographical locations - for example, contrasting people living in the city with those in rural locations (Williams, 1975) or investigating accents in specific locations, such as Labov's (1986) study of the pronunciation of 'r' in New York department stores.

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Traditionally, sociolinguists have focused on the speech community, defined as 'a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety' (Hymes, 2005, p.6). The speech community is a social concept, in which variation naturally exists and diversity is of interest (Duranti, 1997, p.51), as is inherent within Gumperz's (1968) term 'verbal repertoires.' Related to this is the concept of social networks, a 'structure of relationships linking social actors' (Marsden, 2000, p.2727).

Speech communities are now being examined in a broader sense, since as people move away from familiar contexts and enter new spaces, they find their discourses have become disconnected and governed by different norms and regulations (Blommaert, 2005, p.223). This has led to some studies focusing on notions of 'connection' and 'connectedness' regardless of geographical location. For example, Hine (2015, p.24) argues, research does not have to focus on a particular place but can instead observe connections. Crow and Mah (2012, p.9) explain these connections might span across communities defined by physical location, shared interests, habitual practices, virtual spaces and time, identities, alternative forms of 'community,' or even a blend of these elements. In my research, although I focus on Southampton as a city and geographical location, it is also a community that has become increasingly virtual due to COVID-19, so I am combining the physicality of Southampton with the virtual.

Wenger (1998, p.76) utilises the term Communities of Practice (CoPs), comprising three dimensions: mutual engagement, joint negotiated enterprise, and shared repertoire of negotiable resources. This links nicely with Crow and Mah's (2012) aforementioned themes of 'interest' and 'practice.' Due to the increasing use of technology, Jenkins argues that interactions between people may now be 'transient, ad hoc, and even fleeting' (2015, p.76), suggesting Pratt's (1991) notion of 'contact zones' could account for these exchanges, particularly in cases online where communication is 'co-constructed' among individuals from diverse multilingual backgrounds who participate in occasional or infrequent interactions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, I would argue that these encounters were not so 'fleeting' as Jenkins (2015) proposed, since meetings previously taking place face-to-face moved online, ranging from workplace meetings and classroom teaching to exercise classes, religious services, and social gatherings, providing a platform for maintaining and developing relationships in a wide range of contexts.

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Further, our lives are now more hybrid, with in person and online activities being linked, as shown by Lane's work on the networked street life of teenagers in Harlem, New York, revealing that some interactions can only be understood by considering what happens online as well as offline, since 'the life of the street is embedded digitally' (2016, p.46). Similarly, Adami and Kress (2010, p.189) argue that life online and offline is interwoven.

Now considering Southampton as an urban area, we turn to urban studies, where researchers from a variety of different fields ranging from applied linguistics to psychology to cultural geography have used Linguistic Landscapes (LLs) to investigate various contexts, often in conjunction with other methods. This involves the study of linguistic tokens such as signs, often in urban settings and public spaces, to build up a picture of the presence of languages (Shohamy et al, 2010). LLs highlight the visibility of languages within an area and are a way of 'making presence' (Sassen, 2005). They index language use in certain areas, and by making the languages tangible, they also 'transform the social landscape' (Vertovec, 2007, p.1028). For example, Matras and Robertson's (2017) research in Manchester included the development of the app *LinguaSnapp*, allowing anyone to contribute to a virtual linguistic landscaping tool by submitting a photo and location of where more than one language is in use (The University of Manchester, 2018).

It is generally considered the symbolic construction of public space takes place in the city, illustrating the variety of economic, political, social, and cultural situations (Shohamy et al, 2010, p.xi). For example, in the UK, Creese et al carried out linguistic landscaping in Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds and London, as part of the AHRC-funded *TLANG* project. They used linguistic landscaping alongside linguistic ethnography, and a key theme from participants at all the sites was learning as 'a consequence of social practice' (2016, p.8). This learning was not just confined to businesses but involved interacting with 'the discourse of the superdiverse world' and was about recognising difference and perceiving it as 'commonplace,' 'through the unavoidability of everyday encounters' (ibid, p.17).

One disadvantage of LLs is that they can be difficult to analyse and are not always straightforward, as Van Mensel et al discovered. They contrasted LLs from different locations in Brussels, Belgium, and found the visibility of a language in public spaces does not necessarily directly correlate with its vitality or prevalence due to the complexity of the modern city; rather, 'language use in the public sphere reflects

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the outcome of a complicated interplay between various factors of ethnic, political, ideological, commercial, or economic nature in a particular societal context' (2016, pp.7-8).

Wells (2020, p.151) also brings to the fore that signs offer only a limited view of officially approved stories, which are closely related to symbols or customs originating from within a specific national boundary. This means LLs can overlook how residents interact with these signs, and the presence of specific areas or activities symbolising a local community's existence or identity. Some research approaches have addressed these limitations, such as Pennycook and Otsuji's (2015) ethnography of a multicultural suburb in Sydney, which focuses on the sense of smell in terms of how people relate to place and emphasises the importance of sensory signs. Some creative approaches with participant interaction have also been explored, such as Bradley et al's (2018) practice-led research in Leeds, where participants took photographs and videos, interviewed community members, created collages, creative writing, and performances, and finally showcased their work at an open event in the local area.

Multilingualism research has generally focused on qualitative research approaches, using verbal description (Punch, 2005, p.58), assuming relativity of knowledge and acknowledging subjectivity (Nunan, 1992, p.3). Driven by globalisation and processes linked with this such as the movement of people across borders, these approaches oppose structuralism (Gardner and Martin-Jones, 2012, p.1). In critical Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies, Ortega (2014, pp.40-45) advocates for Usage-Based Linguistics (UBL), which focuses on people's experiences, moving beyond languages and labels to how people use language and refer to their own linguistic development.

In superdiverse urban contexts, language research tends to be qualitative and ethnographic (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.2). Ethnographic methods offer a naturalistic approach, studying contexts sensitively to understand human behaviour as continually constructed based on people's interpretations of situations (Punch, 2005, pp.150-151). This holistic approach considers all relevant aspects of the research context (Mackey and Gass, 2012, p.184); data collection methods include observations, field notes, artefacts, photographs, and soundscapes (ibid). Notable studies in linguistic ethnography include Pennycook and Otsuji (2015), Creese et al (2016), and Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012). Other significant works explore

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reflexivity and teamwork (Creese et al, 2017), nexus analysis in educational linguistics (Hult, 2017), language policy (Johnson, 2017), multilingualism online (Lenihan and Holmes, 2017), reflexivity (Martin-Jones et al, 2017), and multi-sited ethnography (Zimmermann, 2017).

In sociolinguistics and critical multilingualism, language biographies have been used since the late 1990s, making use of in-depth interviews to create narrative autobiographies (Franceschini, 2016, p.100). Findings from early language biographies revealed the language acquisition process is more complex and individualised than had originally been assumed (ibid, p.101). Regarding research in urban areas, Stevenson (2017, p.xviii) examined the lives of five residents of a block of flats in Berlin who had ‘‘found a place’ for themselves in this highly diverse and cosmopolitan city’ (ibid, p.154). Related to language biographies is Busch’s (2017, pp.53-54) work on ‘language portraits,’ a multimodal method, creating both visual and narrative data around how someone views their linguistic repertoire as they map their languages and how they speak onto a silhouette of a body.

Language biographies make use of narrative data such as with the ‘life story interview’ (Atkinson, 1998). In a narrative, a person’s identity evolves through a dialectical process, merging various, diverse, and sometimes conflicting circumstances and experiences into a cohesive timeline or structure (Wodak et al, 2009, p.14). The narrative is one of the preferred methods of sociolinguistic ethnographers working on migration issues (Patino, 2020, p.11). It is also used in the social sciences, as Rzepnikowska’s (2019) study on racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish nationals in the UK shows. Related work including narrative is Linde’s (2001, p.163) research, focusing on narratives within institutions, specifically an insurance company, and NASA. Narratives are particularly effective in conveying aspects of social knowledge related to history, values, and identity.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, narrative analysis has been used to examine transnationals’ identities and processes of relocating (Baynham and de Fina, 2017, pp.31-32). In this approach, the emphasis ‘is on storytelling as a meaning-making practice’ (ibid). Linked with this, Khan (2017, p.65) advocates for case studies, providing ‘a holistic account’ of a person’s experience, such as with Nguyen’s (2012) study of a Vietnamese American multilingualing in South Philadelphia.

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<sup>20</sup> See also 3.1.1 on language narratives.

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Research in UK urban areas has included focus on transnationals and students in London. For example, Baynham (2003) looked at the life stories of Moroccans living there, whilst Block (2006a) carried out an in-depth study of four distinct groups: Japanese graduate students, foreign language teachers from France, a Spanish-speaking Latino community and second generation British Asian university students. Matras and Robertson's (2017, p.8) research in Manchester was much larger scale, using participatory inquiry, whereby undergraduate students worked in groups on aspects of multilingualism in Manchester which led to an archive of material being created, containing around 130 project reports authored by 500 undergraduate students. Part of this work included developing the aforementioned linguistic landscaping app *LinguaSnapp* (The University of Manchester, 2018).

UK-wide ventures include the ESRC-funded Family Language Policy (FLP) project which focuses on language use by transnational families in the UK and involves a national-level survey of family language policy types and language practices as well as document analysis, focus group interviews and event surveys at the local level focusing on Chinese, Polish, and Somali communities (ESRC, n.d.). In addition, the researchers are observing selected families and collecting audio recordings of events, interviews, and digital communications. Further, the AHRC funded four key research projects in the UK as part of the Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) 'to demonstrate the value of modern languages in a globalised research environment' (UKRI, 2023). The interdisciplinary nature of these projects and the level of public engagement meant the scope was wide, collaborating with more than one hundred partners across the UK and internationally, including government departments, the BBC, and educational establishments. The overarching theme of the work centred around superdiversity and impact mainly related to policy and education.

In the fields of migration and belonging, research is predominantly qualitative. For example, Ranta and Nancheva's (2019) research on EU nationals' sense of belonging in the UK used mixed methods including a survey, interviews and focus groups, whilst Guma and Jones's (2019) project on EU nationals' experiences of hostility, anxiety and (non-)belonging during Brexit in Wales used interviews. Further, Baran's (2018) study on belonging and identity among former fellow refugees on Facebook used narratives. Some research crosses the boundaries of migration studies and linguistics, such as Wessendorf's (2017) research on belonging in East London and Birmingham, which places transnationals at the centre, through a focus on social interactions using case studies.



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Wessendorf (2013, p.408) conducted 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork, incorporating participant observation, 28 in-depth interviews, and 3 focus groups. Similarly, Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez (2010) conducted a heavily qualitative sociolinguistic study on Portuguese and Spanish migration to the south coast of England, employing ethnographic methods, participant observations, and interviews, triangulated with documentary sources. Huc-Hepher's (2021) study of French citizens living in London was based on several years of ethnographic fieldwork.

Winkworth et al (2007, pp.12-13) conducted qualitative research in collaboration with the charity advice service EU Welcome, focusing on Eastern Europeans in Southampton. The study found Polish migration to the city was primarily driven by employment, with many intending to stay briefly but becoming more established over time. They also noted an undercurrent of racism, particularly among the working classes. In addition to Winkworth et al's (2007) research, other work focusing on language and migration in Southampton includes Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012) and Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021), already discussed in Chapter 2.<sup>21</sup> Further, McGhee et al (2015) examined the social identity practices of post-accession Poles, whilst Hilmarsson-Dunn et al (2010) studied the language use and employment opportunities of both Portuguese and Polish communities in the city.

In sum, all methodologies provide useful insights, and the general current trend in the fields of sociolinguistics and multilingualism as well as migration studies has been towards an increasing focus on the interaction between language and the contexts in which it is used as well as the lived experiences of the people using language and their sense of belonging, and my project fits into this area. Given that the majority of existing migration-related research focuses on those from outside of the EU and/or on larger cities in the UK, such as London or Manchester (Matras and Robertson, 2017; Creese et al, 2016), and that within research on UK-based EU nationals there is an emphasis on Polish and Romanian people (McGhee et al, 2015; Romocea, 2012), this thesis makes a valuable and timely contribution to the field by conceptualising the ordinariness of belonging.

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<sup>21</sup> Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012) – see 2.1.2.5; Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021) – see 2.1.1.1.

### **3.3 From connection to ordinary belonging: the EU national in Southampton**

Here, I delve into concepts of belonging, focusing on space, place, the idea of home, and national identity in the context of Brexit, as well as women and belonging. This exploration is significant because the transnational journey intertwines spatial, temporal, and social/political forms of belonging, incorporating shared practices (Vallentin, 2019, p.2). Further, it relates to my research questions<sup>22</sup> around identification to place, and to reasons driving a sense of belonging.

Belonging can have different meanings in a variety of contexts. For example, Vertovec (2007, pp.1031-1032) highlights that while migration data typically emphasises people's country of origin, the diversity they bring encompasses various elements such as ethnicity, religious beliefs, regional identities, familial connections, political affiliations, linguistic differences, and more, all contributing to a sense of collective belonging. Botterill et al (2019, p.3) underscore that belonging encompasses both formal, legal, and political inclusion, as well as informal, emotional, and affective bonds formed in everyday interactions; they also note variations in belonging across different generations and life stages. Further, belonging links an individual's personal identity to a collective identity, which is not dependent on external recognition but is evidently connected (Ranta and Nancheva, 2019, p.1).

Baran (2018, p.265) notes transnational identity is achieved discursively through narratives around the journey. Wells et al (2019, p.8) assert that ethnography's commitment to sustained community connections challenges prevailing global narratives. They argue that proficiency in multiple languages is not viewed as detachment but rather as valuable cultural assets enabling integration into specific local environments and communities, both domestically and internationally. Additionally, belonging is not fixed; rather, it is a dynamic concept subject to negotiation, reinterpretation, and even rejection by individuals engaging with the notion of belonging (Eckersley and Vos, 2023, p.15).

Following Degnen et al (2024, p.24), a sense of belonging encompasses feelings of ease, comfort, and connection in daily social interactions, including relationships

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<sup>22</sup> See 1.5.

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with peers, family, and the environment, while its absence may lead to alienation and unease. Moreover, belonging is linked to overall wellbeing (Miller, 2003, p.218). Below I focus on five key areas in relation to belonging: space and place, concepts of home, national identity in relation to Brexit, women and belonging, and ordinary belonging. I have chosen to focus on space and place as this is pertinent for my research questions<sup>23</sup> in terms of how my participants identify to Southampton as a place as well as concepts of home as these aspects are both closely linked with spatial belonging (Vallentin, 2019, p.2) and came to be articulated by my participants. I include national identity in relation to Brexit given the background to the context provided in the last chapter, especially regarding the Settlement Scheme which is of relevance to my participants as EU nationals. This links with both temporal and social/political belonging (Vallentin, 2019, pp.35-36; pp.27-35).<sup>24</sup> The transnational journey brings together all three of these types of belonging – spatial, temporal, and social/political – and encompasses shared practices (Vallentin, 2019, p.2), covered in Chapter 6.<sup>25</sup> Thinking about my participants as women, I then discuss belonging in relation to this aspect of their identity before moving on to outline the concept of ordinary belonging which I have coined, combining a broad perspective on belonging with the everyday practices that shape the lives of my participants.

### 3.3.1 Space and place

Tuan (1977, p.34) defines space as a conceptual term to explain how people split up and measure their world such as by using maps (ibid, pp.48-49), whilst places are ‘centers of felt value,’ involving people ascribing meaning to them (ibid, p.6). However, for Relph (2016, p.1), space and place are more closely linked, since our comprehension of space is intertwined with the locations we occupy; places derive significance from their spatial context, shaping our understanding and experiences. Relph explains, our practical knowledge of places is vital for our survival but is ‘quite superficial’; however, places are also ‘sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups of people’ (ibid, p.6). Relph argues, we need to therefore examine how people interact with, generate, and sustain significant places in their lives (ibid).

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<sup>23</sup> See 1.5.

<sup>24</sup> See 2.1.1.

<sup>25</sup> For a definition of transnational practices, see 3.1.2; 6.3 and 6.4 show my participants’ transnational practices according to the materials.

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People use landmarks to orient themselves physically in a place as they are spatially prominent, able to be viewed from many locations, or are different when compared with the surroundings in height (Lynch, 1960, p.80). Additionally, historic landmarks may have key physical characteristics - 'singularity' - making them 'unique or memorable' (Lynch, 1960, p.78). Names of places help to situate people geographically as a navigational aid, but they are also an organising concept for space, as an anchor for understanding local spatial relations (Golledge, 1999b, pp.15-16).

Individuals ascribe meaning to places (Tuan, 1977, p.6; Seamon and Sowers, 2008, p.44), and Relph (2016, p.147) expounds that doing so is a fundamental need. Further, places 'are the present expressions of past experiences and events and of hopes for the future,' 'bound up with flux or continuity' (ibid, p.33). Savage et al (2004, p.103) put forward the notion of 'elective belonging,' an emotional attachment to an area not necessarily stemming from a lengthy history of living in a specific place or being native to it; instead, it involves individuals connecting their personal stories by recognising and cherishing places holding significance to them. In this way, without having much history of residence in an area or contact with other residents, people can feel at home.

A sense of belonging may extend beyond the locality where somebody lives, since the significance of a place and sense of belonging are not solely defined by physical, local communities but are shaped by the interconnected relationships individuals have with various locations through their networks (Savage et al, 2004, p.106). Further, a person may feel a sense of belonging 'to different places at different times, or to several places at once' (Jones and Jackson, 2014, p.5). This ties in with Blunt and Dowling's (2006, p.199) idea of multiple homes crossing both physical borders and perceptual boundaries being possible due to translocal connections and practices, where 'translocality' is characterised as a range of persistent, dynamic, and non-linear processes fostering intimate connections between diverse locations and individuals; these connections arise from ongoing migration flows and networks that are constantly re-evaluated and adjusted (Peth, 2014, p.2).

Spatial belonging links space and place, where social elements are embedded into a geographical location (Vallentin, 2019, p.26). Connected with this, Relph (2016, p.49) put forward the notions of insideness and outsideness, distinguishing places in space and delineating a specific arrangement of physical attributes, activities, and

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meanings. Being inside a place implies a sense of belonging and identification with it; the deeper the connection to that place, the stronger the identity and sense of belonging to it (ibid). Seamon and Sowers explain, a person who is inside a place feels settled, secure, and relaxed. This contrasts with outsidership, where people experience a 'separation between themselves and world' such as when feeling homesick in a new location (2008, p.45). Relph posits insidership and outsidership are on a continuum, with the intensity of our feelings ranging from 'emotional participation in and involvement with a place' to 'profound alienation' (2016, p.50). The idea of belonging as familiarity is central to existential renderings of the meaning of place and community, as with Bourdieu's (1990, p.52) conception of habitus and of 'structuring dispositions.' Similarly, Gidley et al (2018, p.3) state, although belonging is usually associated with place, it embraces an emotional aspect.

Some conceptions of place and belonging emphasise how people appear to integrate into society from the perspective of others. For example, Wessendorf (2013, p.417) shows the importance placed on the level at which people are seen to participate in a community locally in 'public and associational space' such as institutions, shops, and other places where informal contact occurs. Wessendorf's research focuses on whether communities are seen to mix or to keep themselves separate, with an 'ethos of mixing' being preferred. However, it is to be noted during COVID-19, perceptions around this could have changed due to the 'stay at home' messages (Crown Copyright, 2020), making this 'mixing' less visible, occupying a more virtual space.

Perceptions of integration are shaped by race, particularly whiteness, which serves as cultural capital. Whiteness influences constructs of femininity and respectability, dictating beauty norms, morality, body ideals, and gendered social interactions (Lundström, 2014, p.16). The capacity to blend into the urban landscape holds significant importance for women and individuals whose bodies are marked by perceived differences (Tonkiss, 2003, p.301). In Wessendorf's research, visible diversity allowed for the invisibility of people on the streets, with participants sharing they could 'dress down' and express themselves how they wanted which made them 'feel freer' and 'that they do not stick out' (2016, pp.454-455). Individuals may experience a sense of inclusion when they perceive an environment as diverse, leading to reduced pressure to conform (Wessendorf, 2017, p.139), as diversity is 'embedded and visible' (Huc-Hepher, 2021, p.46). Urban areas serve as

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spaces where marginalised communities, cultural dissenters, and newcomers can find acceptance in their otherness (Van Leeuwen, 2010, p.642), 'melting' into the range of different people within the social landscape around them (Wessendorf, 2014, p.60).

Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez's (2010, p.59) study demonstrated varying societal integration amongst Spanish and Portuguese people in Bournemouth, with them exhibiting a range of sociolinguistic and sociocultural markers. They found Spaniards in Bournemouth, Dorchester, Southampton, and Winchester do not create clearly defined communities with specific geographic or ethnic enclaves, resulting in minimal socioeconomic impact within the local linguistic landscape (ibid, p.50). Linked with this, Vertovec (2018, p.176) warns that attachment, loyalty, and belonging are not linked to a single nation-state or society, which means it is not a given that the more someone engages in transnational activities, the less integrated they are, or vice versa.

Blommaert advocates belonging to a place is more than integration – it is important for expression of identity, as 'people always speak *in* a place' (2004, pp.221-223). Space can encompass various social, cultural, knowledge-based, and emotional attributes; when imbued with such qualities, it transforms into 'place'—a distinct space where feelings of belonging, ownership rights, and authority can be projected or established. People also speak *from* a place in terms of their stance and the varieties they use, which index certain values. Speaking *from* a place is about how a person positions themselves in relation to other people (Bamburg, 1997, p.336) and in relation to wider discourses outside of the immediate interaction (Wortham, 2001, p.37). People also orient themselves with reference to other places, since 'we cannot consider the story of one city without comparing it, even implicitly, to other cities, either within or outside the same national boundaries' (Kenny and Madgin, 2016, p.4). This shows a place is always thought of in contrast to other places – it does not exist in isolation by itself.

Our senses profoundly impact how we experience cities, guiding our movements by attracting us to what we desire, offering comfort, and signalling potential threats, whether enticing, comforting, or warning, our senses play a pivotal role in numerous socially significant decisions (Rhys-Taylor, 2017, p.2). As Huc-Hepher (2021, p.73) discovered, food actively contributes to a sense of belonging, encompassing the processes of buying, creating, and cooking. Taste tends to be linked with

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sensations we intentionally pursue or have actively sought out, often fulfilling and strengthening pre-existing connections and bonds (Rhys-Taylor, 2017, p.11). As Miller (2001) asserts, food can help individuals to create a 'home from home,' especially as people increasingly adopt a more portable notion of their living space; Mintz and Du Bois point out, 'not only do peoples move across the globe, so also do foods' (2002, p.105).

Food is particularly associated with the cultural practice of 'sharing,' the most widespread type of human economic conduct, separate from and more foundational than 'reciprocity' (Price, 1975, p.3). The construction of a local identity through the sharing of international cuisine was highlighted by Tam (2001), focusing on people originating from Hong Kong living all around the world. Sharing food together helps 'to solidify group membership' (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002, p.109) and so is key in maintaining friendships. Another way of sharing is using 'home-based knowledge gathering...built on existing family and social relationships,' whereby recipes are not just information, but reveal the family's connections (Leong, 2018, p.11). Historically, recipes have played a significant function in hospitality-based economies and the exchange of gifts and are important socioculturally.

People may also connect to objects in a place, as they serve as 'visual metaphors,' and 'evoke something beyond themselves' (Naguib, 2022, p.139). Povrzanoviü Frykman and Humbracht (2013, pp.47-48) highlight that regardless of where a person lives, objects might be essential for reasons of personal attachment, practical usefulness, or their 'everydayness' in that person's life. Whatever their purpose, they provide a sense of continuity in transnationals' practices in specific locations; intertwined with memories and practicality, objects traverse borders because they resonate with people's acquired preferences, reaffirming social ties across space and time.

Overall, belonging to a place, or place-making, is actively created and upheld; locations are crafted through ongoing daily practices and interventions influencing both the community and the individual (Benson and Jackson, 2013, p.794). Place-making is 'a discursive practice in action' (ibid, p.797), since 'place is both performative and dynamic' (ibid, p.807).

### 3.3.2 The transnational journey and concepts of home

The transnational journey is an ongoing process, associating with particular points along the trajectory through time and space such as moving to a specific place at a certain time, so this links with temporal belonging (Vallentin, 2019, pp.35-36). According to Pedersen's (1995, p.3) culture shock theory, people relocating to another country progress through five different stages. At first, in 'the honeymoon' stage,' individuals are excited by the new culture and feel a sense of euphoria, though their identity is rooted in their country of origin. The initial enthusiasm then gives way to a phase of discomfort and disorientation known as 'disintegration,' due to differences in customs, language, and social norms becoming apparent (ibid, p.79). In the 'reintegration' stage, people start to adjust and cope with the cultural differences, developing strategies for managing challenges, and their emotional wellbeing improves (ibid, p.134). Next is 'autonomy,' as individuals become more familiar with the new culture, developing a sense of belonging and functioning effectively in the new environment, seeing themselves as an insider in some areas (ibid, p.201). Finally, the 'interdependence' stage comes, where there is both self-awareness and an understanding of the culture around them, leading to a multicultural identity (ibid, p.263).

Along with a multicultural identity, there may be a 'multi-layered citizenship,' as multiculturalism allows for a sense of belonging which can operate on different levels - 'local, ethnic, national, or state' - and each aspect can be constructed in different positions according to specific historical contexts (Sujoldžić, 2009, p.1340). This is particularly salient in the city, where both the urban landscape and people's identity are dynamically constructed, resulting in group boundaries being subject to change, as various narratives of belonging vie for prominence, giving rise to provisional formations of new identities (ibid, p.1335). Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p.1011) highlight that if individuals incorporate social interactions and behaviours extending across borders into their daily lives, they manifest a transnational lifestyle; when they consciously acknowledge and emphasise the transnational facets of their identity, they also affirm a transnational sense of belonging.

Transnationals' journeys are varied and do not follow a set pattern. For example, Baynham's (2006) study on Moroccan married men who moved to London in the 1960s and 1970s for economic reasons revealed their sense of stability was



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challenged, and their identities unsettled. In contrast, Armbruster's (2010) research focusing on two generations of Germans who relocated to Namibia in the 1950s and 1960s, and after the 1980s, showed their moving had not caused any 'major disorientations' (p.1239). For some, it is returning to their place of origin which unveils the type of person they have evolved into and can spark an awareness of a self-transformation that is irreversible, as Marschall (2017, p.221) found when focusing on people originally from central, west, and southern Africa, residing in South Africa.

According to Al-Ali and Koser (2002, p.9), the concept of home has started to shift for transnationals and may no longer be associated with a particular place. The concept of place and the idea of home as fixed and limited is questioned by the dynamic experience of living, working, and socialising in various locations at different moments; rather, home is constructed psychologically and put into action through daily routines and practices (Beswick, 2020, p.29). Prazeres (2018, pp.928-929) describes the notion of 'collecting places,' where cities and neighbourhoods become a home through residing, studying, or working there; 'collecting homes' entails feeling at home in various global cities, framing them as part of one's home rather than different from it (ibid, p.932). This concurs with Baldacchino's (2007, p.166) idea of a contrast between 'roots' and 'routes,' and as Beswick (2020, p.30) asserts, the distinction between home and away may no longer be sustainable.

Armbruster's study of Syrian Christian refugees in Germany and Turkey revealed how some transnationals conceptualise 'home' in terms of identity and belonging, where home is 'an actual place of lived experience and a metaphorical space of personal attachment and identification' (2002, p.20). Further, home 'is mediated in interpersonal relationships' (ibid, p.32), and as Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p.1009) state, someone's 'social field' can transcend national limits and is about 'simultaneity of connection' between different places (ibid, p.1011). Nowicka (2007, p.69) declares home is best understood as a network of connections, involving both humans and non-humans and including elements of proximity and distance, defined by the presence and absence of certain objects, rather than a fixed location.

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, p.1029) add that one nation-state does not define the limits of significant social connections, highlighting individuals can participate in multiple nation-states simultaneously. They argue assimilation and lasting transnational ties are not mutually exclusive, considering the transnational

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migration experience as a gauge oscillating between ties to the host land and connections extending beyond national borders (ibid, p.1003). Similarly, Armbruster (2002, p.32) contends, home can encompass both one's place of origin and the destination to which one travels, and that tension may exist between the two places. Likewise, Nowicka agrees the notion of home can be fluid, can be located geographically 'anywhere and everywhere,' and can 'move with an individual' (2007, p.83). Bammer (1992, p.ix) sums up - for those who have experienced displacement from an original place where they may have once felt a sense of belonging, home is not confined to a specific location; instead, it transcends geographical boundaries, existing as a hybrid entity encompassing both here and there, forming an amalgamation of experiences.

### 3.3.3 National identity in relation to Brexit

Schieffelin et al (1998, p.38) propose that language use is often a way to signify and express identity and loyalty. Similarly, CoPs<sup>26</sup> are based around the idea of a common set of negotiable resources, such as language, collective involvement, and a shared goal, such as maintaining a shared identity (Wenger, 1998, p.76). Anderson (2006, p.6) puts forward the imagined community, whereby the nation state invokes a community within the minds of the people within it. The community is imagined because even within the smallest nation, individuals may never personally encounter or be aware of their fellow members; nonetheless, in the thoughts of each individual, there exists an image of their shared connection.

Irrespective of any existing inequality or exploitation, the nation is consistently perceived as a profound, egalitarian camaraderie among its people (Anderson, 2006, p.7). In reality, EU nationals may attach themselves to their country of origin or may feel more aligned to the UK; others may not feel such an affiliation. For example, Portes et al (2009, p.122) found new arrivals tend to focus on establishing their presence and identity within the host country, prioritising individual efforts over organising themselves collectively. In contrast, the Polish participants in Ryan's (2010, p.369) study in London identified their Polish friends as primary sources of help and support, though simultaneously placed themselves in a stance of opposition to other Polish individuals to steer clear of negative stereotypes

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<sup>26</sup> See 3.2.2.

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associated with Polish identity (ibid, p.367), revealing national identity is complex. These positionings of self towards or in opposition to a group link with Vallentin's (2019, p.27) concept of social belonging, oriented around groupness and a collective identity.

Botterill et al (2019, p.2) emphasise that Brexit resulted in altered social interactions for some EU nationals, whilst for groups like Polish nationals, it represented a continual and ingrained questioning of their identity and standing. Similarly, Guma and Jones (2019, p.3) observed the scrutiny of European nationals' rights and sense of belonging is not a recent occurrence but rather an enduring process predating the referendum, highlighting the persistent othering experienced by EU nationals over time. Nonetheless, many EU nationals felt unsettled after the referendum, as Botterill and Hancock's (2019, p.1) research on Polish nationals living in Scotland showed, revealing that emotion plays a key role in attachment to place. Further, many EU nationals in the UK are rethinking their sense of belonging towards a concept that is more European and rights-based (Botterill et al, 2019, p.3; Ranta and Nancheva, 2019, p.1).

Degen et al's (2024, pp.24-25) research focused on what they are calling 'ordinary Brexit' or 'Brexit with a little "b"' to indicate the pervasiveness of Brexit in everyday lives, from discourses at Westminster to conversations in the pub or at the bus stop, and the profound emotional impact experienced, whether someone voted Leave or Remain. In addition, they draw attention to intersectionality and how senses of belonging are shaped by the differing relations between various aspects of identity, including migration status, ethnicity, race, and class (ibid, p.23).

In relation to national identity and Brexit, Ranta and Nancheva (2019, pp.4-5) conceptualised four types of belonging. The first, 'breakaway' characterises those who actively strive to cut off existing connections with their national community, attaching greater importance to integrating within the UK. The second, 'cosmopolitan' distance themselves from exclusive belonging, viewing themselves in a way that transcends national communities, and more likely to be highly mobile and in a mixed-nationality relationship. This group links with Appiah's (1997, p.618) concept of 'rooted cosmopolitanism,' where a person feels connected to their own home, with its unique cultural characteristics, whilst also finding joy in the presence of other diverse places serving as homes to different people.

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Ranta and Nancheva's (2019, pp.4-5) third group, 'in-between,' recognise robust connections with both host and national communities and this is especially common amongst those who have been in the UK for longer, have had children here or are in a long-term relationship with a British partner. This group are also more likely to have applied for permanent residency and British citizenship. The fourth group, 'patriotic,' exhibit a purposeful bond with their native community, striving to recreate elements of their national environment within their new host country, and have usually only been in the UK a short time. Ranta and Nancheva (2019, pp.5-6) found differences in belonging patterns in terms of education, with the 'cosmopolitan' group being the better educated and/or highly skilled and the 'patriotic' group having a lower level of English proficiency.

All the research points to EU nationals' perceptions of Brexit changing over time (Botterill et al, 2019, p.3; Ranta and Nancheva, 2019, p.1). Belonging is not a static condition; rather, it is a continuous, evolving process of establishing and revising connections, as well as nurturing and sustaining attachments (Guma and Jones, 2019, p.8). Just as our identities and group relations shift, our sense of connection or belonging to a place may change over time, since it is not fixed (Norton, 1997, pp.411-412). This links with Vallentin's (2019, pp.35-36) concept of temporal belonging. Further, in the same way that transnational identities blend and transform throughout their journeys, languages and linguistic practices undergo a similar process. These linguistic changes can serve as positive, creative assets facilitating social interaction and progress; conversely, they might manifest as negative challenges within hierarchical linguistic ideologies (Mar-Molinero and Paffey, 2018, p.15).

There are many factors in creating a sense of belonging to a place, and regardless of the political context, EU nationals may or may not feel a sense of belonging to their locality. For example, Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez (2010, p.58) note that belonging in Bournemouth for their Spanish and Portuguese participants depended upon their initial reasons for migrating, whether they viewed their stay in the UK as temporary or permanent, and their aspirations (realised or not) in terms of integrating into the local culture. Further, they raise the issue of 'pragmatism,' where the necessity to assimilate and thrive in an unfamiliar setting results in the imperative to adjust to new cultural values. Social class was more of a variable in their study too, rather than ethnic grouping, so multiple factors had an impact on sense of belonging.

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Wessendorf's (2017, p.131) study amongst recent overseas arrivals in East London and Birmingham finds three factors which can shape a sense of belonging: the immigration-related diversity in the area in which they settle, whether or not they had experienced previous migration-related diversity in a neighbourhood, and social factors such as gender, language, race and religion. Overall, the sense of belonging is not solely influenced by the overall ethnic composition of a city; instead, it is predominantly shaped by the neighbourhood, the immediate community where transnationals reside, and the quality of social interactions with other residents in those areas which crucially determine their feeling of being included or excluded (ibid). Like Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez (2010), Wessendorf (2017) discovers that multiple factors contributed to participants' sense of belonging. As Vertovec (2007, p.1026) sums up, there are a variety of factors affecting people's lives.

Meinhof and Galasiński (2005, p.80) suggest a sense of belonging is symbolic and personal, achieved through language in the narratives we tell: determining an individual's affiliation with a group through discursive identification is not solely influenced by time, place, and person; instead, all these elements interact extensively with the context of the narrative, shaping the overall positioning of the speaker in terms of belonging (ibid, p.17). Demossier (2017, pp.55-57) focuses specifically on European identity, commenting it is in a state of evolution, characterised by change, negotiation, and primarily rooted in political dynamics. The plural 'belongings' and 'constellation of belongings' represents how empirical descriptions of attachments unveil group formation in public, social, and political spheres, highlighting that belonging involves diverse expressions, from actions and emotions to narratives and boundary delineation.

Belonging now embodies a paradox, encompassing both the individual self and their interaction within the defined social environment; this includes broader expressions within political structures, where they are moulded or are creatively and subversively expressed (Demossier, 2017, p.59). Overall, 'belonging is about negotiating where you feel more at home and on which values your social and political being relies' (ibid, p.64).

### **3.3.4 Women and belonging**

The concept of woman has changed over time (Allen, 1997; 2002) and varies across cultures (Remennick, 2007). In the UK, there is currently much debate around the

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definition of a woman, and this has been politicised, such as in the run up to this year's General Election (Grunewald and Devlin, 2024). Likewise, gender is a related complex concept explored by feminism through theory, language, and politics, but without a single, clear definition, since there are a range of contested views on gender rather than a unified stance (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, pp.11-12). Gender is understood in various ways, with there being differences in views on how people embody their gender, the actions they take, the relationships and inequalities they establish, the meanings given to these actions and identities, and the social impacts of gender concepts (ibid).

I take the stance that there is not just one way of being a woman (Moi, 1999, p.9) and that gender identity is constructed and negotiated (Norton, 2006, p.24). This is influenced by gendered social norms; for example, the fact that women are positioned as care givers and providers means that globally they undertake three times more care and domestic work than men (Seedat and Rondon, 2021). Women tend to be more involved than men in the selection and preparation of food (Counihan, 1999; Cairns and Johnston, 2015), the building and maintaining of familial relationships (Seery and Crowley, 2000) and that of relationships between different households (Di Leonardo, 1987), parenting (Chodorow, 1999), and the passing on of cultural values, customs, and traditions within the family context (Ochs and Taylor, 1992). However, whilst my research includes attention to some everyday practices which are often performed by women,<sup>27</sup> I am not assuming any essentialised differences between men and women, or that any of my female participants necessarily carry out these practices, endeavouring to keep an ethnographic open mind (Fetterman, 2010, p.1).

Further, I acknowledge that gender is just one aspect of a person's identity, where identity involves self-narratives, labels, and stories of origin and destiny (Anthias, 2008, p.8). Being a woman is only one part of the whole, since 'the positionings of social individuals or groups is multifaceted, intersectional, shifting and contradictory' (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p.325). I take an intersectional approach, noting that other elements may interact with my participants' identities as women, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexual orientation, age, disability, and so on (Davis, 2008, p.68; Christensen, 2009, p.25; Yuval-Davis, 2011, p.13;

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<sup>27</sup> For example, for food, see 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.4.2; for religion, see 5.3.2 and 6.4; for parenting and children, see 5.3.2, 5.3.3 and 6.2.3.1 etc.

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Degnen et al, 2024, pp.24-25). Multiple positionings constitute everyday life and 'the power relations that are central to it' (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006, p.187). These positionings cannot be assumed and are not stable but are locations of 'constant struggle and negotiation' (Prins, 2006, p.284).

Moving now from identity to belonging, which is about sharing values, networks, and practices, beyond just identification (Anthias, 2008, p.8), various researchers have focused on women and belonging. Samson examines the narratives of 14 women in an East London street, putting forward the concept of subjective belonging, defined as 'emotional attachments to people and places which give security and meaning to people's lives' (2013, p.i). Whilst related to my work, Samson's participants also included some women who were British-born, so it did not cover migration journeys in the same way.

Studies focusing on migration, women, and belonging have often centred around legal status, for instance, Yuval-Davis (2011) focuses on women's citizenship, arguing that it should be examined not just in contrast to that of men, but also in relation to women's affiliation to various groups, their ethnicity, origin, and urban or rural residence. Whilst my work touches on citizenship,<sup>28</sup> it is not my main consideration. Further, Gedalof (2007) analyses how transnational women are represented in government policy documents and tabloid press representations, providing an interesting account of how women are perceived as objects of concern, lacking English, and having limited awareness of cultural differences (p.89). However, Gedalof's project is more focused on refugees and asylum seekers, who have different legal statuses from my participants. Additionally, their research investigates how others perceive these groups to belong or not, rather than on how they themselves feel.<sup>29</sup>

Other work in this field has tended to centre around a single aspect of belonging. For example, Mirza's (2020) ethnographic study explores how middle-class British-Pakistani women in Manchester cultivate a sense of belonging through their social status. Although most of my participants come from a middle-class background, class was not the primary focus of my research. Later work from Gedalof (2009) similarly focused on one area: mothering, belonging, and cultural transmission, highlighting the connection between repetition and change in mothering and how

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<sup>28</sup> See 6.3.1.2.

<sup>29</sup> See 1.1 on 'self-ascription' versus 'ascription by others' (Barth, 1969, p.13).

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transnational mothers recreate home and shape new identities. Whilst there are some overlaps with experiences of some of my participants who are mothers, not all my participants have children,<sup>30</sup> and thus my research adopts a broader perspective on women and the various ways they experience belonging.

### 3.3.5 Ordinary belonging

Antonsich argues that overall, belonging is ‘vaguely defined’ and ‘under-theorized’ (2010b, p.645). In the sections above, I have shown how many concepts of belonging focus on one aspect such as space and place (Relph, 2016), time (Pedersen, 1995), or concepts of home (Bammer, 1992); or one identity characteristic such as women (Samson, 2013) or national identity (Ranta and Nancheva, 2019). My thesis aims to contribute to this area by taking a broader, more intersectional (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p.325) and interdisciplinary approach (Nissani, 1997, p.213), bringing together linguistic and social contexts (Echeverría, 2017, p.17) to explore the dynamic place-making narratives of 10 European women in Southampton, who are constantly shaping their understanding of themselves and their social connections (Norton, 1997, p.410) throughout their ordinary daily lives.

Additionally, whilst some research has examined specific, extraordinary moments in time, such as Brexit (Botterill et al, 2019; Guma and Jones, 2019), I wanted to give a voice to the ordinary, everyday narratives of my European participants. Considering everydayness, Miller and Woodward’s (2016) ethnography observed an everyday item - blue jeans - to see what this single piece of clothing can reveal about individual and social lives within the context of ongoing global displacement, dislocation, and migration. Other concepts encapsulating everydayness relate to the word ‘commonplace’ regarding diversity (Wessendorf, 2013, p.407) and superdiversity (Creese et al, 2016, p.17), previously mentioned earlier in this chapter.<sup>31</sup> These notions link with other definitions around everyday multiculturalism, which investigate how cultural diversity is lived and navigated in daily, real-world interactions (Gilroy, 2004, p.131; Wise and Velayutham, 2009, p.2). Whilst these perspectives foreground participants’ own intimate experiences of the everyday, the focus is primarily around how they navigate the diversity around them;

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<sup>30</sup> See 4.2.2.

<sup>31</sup> Wessendorf (2013) – see 3.1.3; Creese et al (2016) – see 3.2.



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in my study, this was uncovered in some of the data<sup>32</sup> but was not my main aim, as I take a broader view of the everyday and belonging.

Now turning to the idea of the ordinary, some scholars have used the term in reference to 'day-to-day practices' (Samson, 2013, p.2) and life changes associated with growing up including transitioning to different schools, moving to new homes, entering adolescence, and so on (ibid, p.80). Similarly, Hall uses 'ordinary' to describe everyday practices but specifically in terms of how people participate in various spaces in Walworth Road, London - a 'multi-ethnic street' (2012, p.5) - concentrating on the mercantile, civic, and public aspects of their lives. Hall's street brings together space, time, and everyday interactions, since it is a place where people come into contact, and its diversity is seen as commonplace. Whilst Hall's focus - and that of other scholars such as Wessendorf (2013) - is on public spaces, my study also takes into account participants' private spaces, rather than solely their interactions with public ones.

Degen et al's (2024) study, mentioned above in 3.3.3, brings together Brexit as an extraordinary moment in time with the ordinariness of everyday life in their term 'ordinary Brexit,' highlighting how Brexit has woven itself into everyday life, from political discussions in Westminster to casual chats in pubs or at bus stops. Whilst their work focuses on ordinariness, the narratives of their participants focus solely on Brexit, whereas the narratives of my participants are more wide-ranging, with Brexit as just part of what they have to say.

In my thesis, I put forward the notion of ordinary belonging, which brings together a broader perspective on belonging with the ordinariness of everyday practices in the individual lives of my participants in both their public and private spheres. I define ordinary belonging as the pragmatic process of individuals integrating into their local area, emphasising their civic identity, and involving flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances as they engage in everyday practices. It encompasses the negotiation of their position over time, fostering relationships, and continually reflecting on various aspects of their identity, such as their nationality. This concept underscores the significance of everyday actions in fostering connection and integration within society, which is often overlooked, and will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

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<sup>32</sup> See 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2.

### 3.4 Summary

In this chapter, I introduce theories of language and migration within the UK, positioning myself within the interdisciplinary approach of linguistic ethnography, viewing language as a cultural practice, as more than just words, apprehending linguistic as beyond language itself, and considering communication more broadly. Regarding qualitative data, Winkworth et al (2007), Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012), Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021), McGhee et al (2015) and Hilmarsson-Dunn et al (2010) focused on Southampton, and I aim to add to this body of knowledge. Previous methods of research show an increasing focus on the interaction between language and the contexts in which it is used as well as the lived experiences of the people using the language and constructing their sense of belonging, and my research continues in this area, but has been adapted to the online sphere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also investigated theories of belonging, focusing especially on space and place, concepts of home, and national identity in relation to Brexit. I demonstrated how the concept of belonging is complex and that whilst some people may view it as integration into society through shared use of public space, EU nationals may experience this differently and from diverse perspectives concurrently. Further, I discuss how their feeling of belonging may shift over time, is emotion driven, and political. I also consider my participants' identities as women and how this may intersect with other aspects of who they are and how this impacts on belonging. Whilst my project includes a focus on linguistic practices, it takes a broader approach, looking at narratives and how my participants make meaning, either connecting or distancing themselves from Southampton as a city, viewing themselves as insiders or outsiders.

To conclude, my project sits within the field of linguistic ethnography to provide a broader perspective on language use and the construction of place in Southampton, taking the position that language is socially constructed - that it is a social practice rather than a system - and I therefore focus on how my participants make meaning rather than on how they use linguistic structures. With EU nationals now at a crossroads following Brexit and the introduction of the Settlement Scheme, I aim to uncover how multilingual speakers living in the UK experience English as a dominant hegemonic and standard language, as well as how these speakers are perceived by those around them who only speak English. Further, I seek to uncover

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how my participants position themselves with relation to the UK but specifically Southampton as an urban area, and how they connected to the city with the increasing use of technology during social distancing rules. My project endeavours to build on the knowledge that currently exists around place and multilingualism, putting forward the concept of ordinary belonging, which is the process of integrating into a local area through civic identity, adaptability, and ongoing reflection on identity aspects like nationality. It emphasises how everyday actions foster connection and integration, which is often overlooked.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

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## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I position myself within the field of linguistic ethnography and explain how I found my participants and carried out my data collection procedures remotely, adapting to the online sphere because of the constraints which were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this context, I provide details of the methods which were used: a participant activity which I have called 'Journey to Southampton,' a series of online ethnographic interviews, participant journaling including the submission of photographs, and a WhatsApp focus group. I then discuss transcription and data analysis, as well as the role of ethics and reflexivity in my project. Whilst I had some ideas of language and belonging in mind beforehand, I did not take these for granted, and with my ethnographic gaze, I listened intently to my participants in order to form my conclusions. Finally, I consider the limitations of the research.

### 4.1.1 Qualitative and ethnographic research

Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world and takes the view that knowledge is comparative and subjective (Nunan, 1992, p.3). Following this approach, and through engaging with the Debating Ethnography group and an intensive ethnographic training course at the University of Southampton, I decided to use ethnography in my research. Ethnography is an insider's examination of a group's social and cultural practices (Roberts et al, 2001, p.3) and since I was already part of the field site as a resident and as someone who was born elsewhere, there is some commonality with my participants.

Concerning linguistic ethnography, Rampton et al (2004, p.2) comment that because language and social life are interdependent, a detailed examination of situated language use can offer both basic and unique insights into the processes and dynamics of social and cultural production in daily life. Since the questions I am focusing on are concerned with language, the approach I have taken sits within linguistic ethnography, bringing together the theories and methods of linguistics and ethnography to investigate social issues that are intertwined with language in various ways (ibid). I use the term linguistic ethnography in an expansive and inclusive way, recognising linguistic as extending beyond language itself and embracing a more comprehensive understanding of communication, since human communication is fundamentally a social activity (Baird et al., 2014, p. 184), with

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language encompassing more than just verbal interactions, incorporating non-verbal, material, visual, and other sensory forms.

Ethnographic research provides a model to expand perspectives on the idea of culture as a system of meanings that shapes who we are, what we think, and what we do as something more complex, messy, and perhaps elusive (Demossier et al, 2019, p.294). Further, it is not just a technique (McGranahan, 2018, p.2) as it involves dedication to using interpersonal interactions as the foundation of knowledge (ibid, p.4).

An advantage of doing ethnography is that it produces more in-depth and subtle explanations of phenomena when compared with other research (European Association of Social Anthropologists - EASA, 2015, pp.4-5). Wells et al (2019, p.3) add that in this way, ethnography is 'counter-hegemonic' since it looks to break down generalisations and to create new insights that contradict long-held presumptions. Further, by confronting complexity, overcoming knowledge silos and disciplinary fragmentation, ethnography produces a distinctive kind of transdisciplinary and hybrid knowledge production (ibid, p.4). Ethnography is naturalistic (Stewart, 1998, p.10) and begins with the data in an unstructured way to explore different phenomena, rather than starting with hypotheses and then finding data to fall in line with these (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, p.248). Due to this data-driven approach, a disadvantage of ethnography is therefore that it is time-consuming (EASA, 2015, p.4).

In addition to its time-consuming nature, ethnography has been criticised for its subjectivity (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). However, ethnographers argue that this research approach emphasises the importance of contextualised experience and situated meaning in understanding social conduct (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.5). Ethnographers directly address the issue of subjectivity through reflexivity, considering their own cultural values and perspectives and how these influence their views of others (Roberts et al, 2001). Blommaert and Dong (2010, p.67) advocate for awareness of researchers' subjectivity and the importance of questioning assumptions. Fetterman emphasises that maintaining an open mind toward the group or culture being studied is a skill ethnographers are known for, suggesting that this does not imply a lack of objectivity, since 'the ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not an empty head' (2010, p.1). Ethnographic methods

primarily aim to find and contextualise meaning within a broader framework (Boswell et al, 2019, p.60).

### 4.1.2 Research in COVID-19 times

Initially, I had identified various research methods that sit within ethnography. I had planned to start with ethnographic interviews – viewed as ‘a conversation’ by Heyl (2007, p.374), drawing upon Busch’s (2017) ‘language portraits.’ I then had hoped to carry out observations at sites identified by my participants during the preliminary interviews. Participant observation is described by Roberts et al (2001, p.139) as ‘*the* essential method’ of ethnography, whereby the researcher interacts with individuals, engages in conversation, occasionally poses questions, and attempts to gain a full understanding of the regional customs (EASA, 2015, p.4). This approach is a commitment over a long period of time and involves getting to know participants to see the world from their perspective (Shah, 2017, p.51).

I also wished to shadow my participants, taking an ‘on the move’ approach, as advocated by Lamarre (2013) who shadowed multilinguals in Québec, and by Stevenson (2017), who conducted ‘walking interviews’ in Manchester, UK. Further, I wished to encourage audio-journaling, whereby I would ask participants to audio-record short memos of how they feel in the moment after something significant has happened relating to language and belonging, taking an active approach to engaging with the research process (Pink, 2013), and avoiding attrition rates experienced in research featuring written journaling (Hayman et al, 2012).

However, with the unexpected arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, it meant that I had to completely rethink my methodology, since I could not engage with my participants face-to-face within the constraints that were in place. Kuiper (2020, p.300) outlined that fieldwork was unviable and pointed out that the situation was of an unknown length of time. In particular, the participant observation and shadowing methods that I had planned had to be abolished, as the social distancing measures plus the fact that the rules about what people could and could not do kept changing at short notice, meaning that this type of research would have been impossible to plan and implement (Crown Copyright, 2020). COVID-19 forced many previously face-to-face interactions to take place virtually, including my research, and this increased emphasis on technology meant that we had to rethink what being

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human is all about, as well as how we interpret language with regard to objects, people and place (Pennycook, 2016, p.445).

Within the restrictions that I found myself, I wanted to maintain as much of the essence of ethnography as possible, given the length of my research journey, and the fact that this methodology provides unique perspectives into daily life (Rampton et al, 2004, p.2). Wells (2020, p.145) discusses how 'drinking coffee together' with her participants created 'mutual emplacement' in line with Pink's (2015, p.80) observation around trying to inhabit the world in a similar way to your participants. Whilst I could not physically be with my participants in the way that Wells (2020) and Pink (2015) advocate, the move to ethnography taking place virtually meant that I shared the online medium together with my participants, within the mutual positioning of the COVID-19 context. This provided me with unique insight into my participants' lives - the restrictions of the pandemic encouraged them to talk about what they were unable to do, thereby highlighting indirectly what they would normally do, providing me with an understanding of their usual routines, relationships, traditions, and so on. Additionally, the video calls and photographs displayed snapshots into their homes, so I was still able to observe, albeit remotely.

The video calls especially offered greater awareness of my participants' home lives. For example, on one call, a participant's husband came to assist her with the technology, and on several different calls, children appeared; this allowed me to observe the interaction between my participants and their loved ones. On one call, the participant took me with her virtually as she carried her laptop from the room that we had started doing the interview in to the kitchen, where she proceeded to make waffles for her son whilst continuing to talk to me (with various asides to her son) at the same time. Though participants took video calls from me from their homes in most cases, a couple of them spoke to me from their workplaces, so I was able to observe them in those settings too, often with colleagues and, in some cases, students popping up in the background. My 'rapid-response' adaptation of the methods to the COVID-19 context meant that my 'socially distanced' fieldwork was still able to be 'ethnographically rich' (Magnani and Magnani, 2020, pp.312-313). Considering this backdrop of the pandemic, I outline my research design below.



## 4.2 Research development and design

Charmaz and Mitchell (2001, p.161) advocate that methods are merely a means to an aim, as our participants' worlds and our interpretation of them take prominence. They put forward that rather than developing methodological tools, it is more important to cultivate skills such as the ability to listen well, to observe detail and be open-minded, as this brings us closer to what we are researching. Since participant observation was not possible in the usual sense with the COVID-19 restrictions, it questioned the extent to which my research was ethnographic. I therefore carefully chose methods which I believe lend themselves to the 'long-term intimate engagement' with participants as advocated by Shah (2017, p.51) to ensure that my research was ethnographic and not simply qualitative.

Whilst other researchers have employed interesting, creative methods with an ethnographic praxis, their research has been short-term. For example, Bradley et al (2018, p.60) carried out some interesting arts-based research in Leeds across two university locations but it only occurred over three days. Similarly, Wells (2020, p.134) carried out interviews and attended some community-related events, though her fieldwork was limited to just a month. In contrast, my data collection procedures were carried out in-depth over the course of 18 months to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings. Whilst Beswick (2020) and Huc-Hepher (2021) carried out much longer-term work, over years, their focus was not on Southampton. Winkworth et al (2007) and Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012) concentrated on Southampton, but over a much shorter period of time, and Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021), McGhee et al (2015), and Hilmarsson-Dunn et al (2010), whilst longer term, had different focuses.

### 4.2.1 Field site(s)

Originally, I considered physical places in Southampton such as institutions, as these have previously been studied within the context of multilingualism and urban spaces: for example, the police (Rock, 2017), hospitals (Shaw et al, 2018; Cox and Li, 2020), schools (Laihonen and Szabó, 2017), and the local council (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012). However, beginning research at an institutional level tends to focus more on language planning and policy rather than on the people themselves and what they think and feel. I therefore initially decided to identify field sites as

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directed by my participants, according to the locations that were expressed as important to them through the first round of ethnographic interviews.

Subsequently, with the advent of COVID-19, I had to move away from physical spaces completely, instead using the online sphere as my field site. The online space at first glance appears enormous and nebulous, but it is not separate from the physicality of Southampton; rather, online and physical spaces are mutually shaping, as Lane's study of Harlem revealed, since 'street life is characterized by its flow online and offline' (2016, p.43). In addition, spaces are not just confined by geography but are constructed psychologically; sites have links to other places, as the boundaries of a particular location are too small to be able to encapsulate the broader impacts of increased migration on how modern urban space is changing (Hall, 2015, p.24; Beswick, 2020). Further, Stevenson (2017, p.544) emphasises that places are not just topographical but are clothed with meaning which develops from experiences which are corporeal, fluid and invoking of the senses. Where a person has been before is important - their journey to the place (ibid, p.547) - and places are not fixed but are 'unfinished stories' (ibid, p.559). Although my field site was virtual, it retained the connection to Southampton as a city by involving people who were resident there.

### 4.2.2 Participants

I carried out a pilot study from September 2019 to August 2020 during which I recruited participants using purposive sampling. This type of sampling is where the researcher selects specific cases according to their applicability to the research question as well as how much information of good quality that they are potentially able to offer (Picardi and Masick, 2014, p.156). The term 'theoretical sampling' is sometimes used, when the intention behind the purposive sampling is theoretically defined (Silverman, 2013, p.150). The objective behind this is to create a sample that is theoretically meaningful by making use of specific characteristics which can assist in trialling and developing your argument (Mason, 2002, p.124). My pilot study had a more international focus rather than being EU-specific, so I only managed to retain one participant from this avenue who was an EU national.

Sourcing potential participants through the existence of a Southampton-focused EU nationals' group or via blogs proved difficult. Baran (2018) was able to find former fellow refugees from Poland on Facebook, but they now live in Canada, Australia,

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and the United States, rather than in one locale. Whilst Huc-Hepher (2016) was able to find enough blogs by French nationals living in London to study, I assume this is because London is bigger and more diverse than Southampton, with larger groups of transnationals. Since specific groups for EU nationals in Southampton were difficult to find, I decided to locate my participants via various other means.

First, I approached EU Welcome, which is a charitable organisation in Southampton providing help and support to EU nationals (City Life Church Southampton, 2024). I asked them to put out my invitation to participate in the research, in which I asked potential participants to produce a short video, audio or written piece about their journey to Southampton. As highlighted in 3.1.2, the term 'migrant' is contentious, so I did not include this in my invitation in order to avoid any predetermined labels or otherwise off-putting language, following Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez (2010, p.49), focusing on the participants' individual life experiences and how they found themselves to be in Southampton. Appendix A contains the email text I used to send to the manager of EU Welcome, Appendix B shows the invitation to potential participants from EU Welcome, and Appendix C shows the screenshots of EU Welcome's promotion of my study on Facebook. Unfortunately, nobody came forward via this route, perhaps because they did not know me.

Second, I used word of mouth to talk to others about my research, and most participants then came forward via contacts of mine or directly via places I have connections within the city, such as Solent University as a previous employer and Southampton Quakers, the faith community I belong to.

Third, I used 'snowball sampling,' where existing participants refer additional contacts to the researcher (Picardi and Masick, 2014, p.156). This is also known as a 'chain-referral' method and is particularly useful in cases where it is difficult to access participants or where the topic is sensitive (Cohen et al, 2011, p.158), which is applicable to my research focusing on EU nationals as a minority group within Southampton.

One man and ten women over the age of eighteen came forward, and whilst I began carrying out the research with all eleven people, I decided to focus just on the ten women, since I decided that there was not enough of a mix regarding sex to warrant the man continuing. Table 3 provides an overview of the participants, who range in age, occupation, and length of time in Southampton. Considering age, except for Angélique who relocated to Southampton in her 50s, all the other participants first

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arrived in the UK in their 20s-30s. The nationality breakdown is as follows: four French, three Polish, one Belgian, one Greek, and one Spanish; all are white. The women have varying levels of English alongside other languages.

Most participants are from a middle-class background and achieved an undergraduate-level degree prior to moving to the UK; some had also undertaken postgraduate-level study in their countries of origin. After arriving in the UK, over half of the participants completed or are in the process of completing postgraduate studies. Two thirds of my participants own property in the UK, with just over a third of them additionally owning property abroad. Although a couple of them appeared on the surface to be moving for economic reasons as the worsening financial climate in their countries of origin was mentioned during the ethnographic interviews (Beswick, 2020, pp.73-74), I would argue that all of my participants are lifestyle migrants since they have been able to make active choices in their journeys here, and have the education and skills as well as the financial means available to support them (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009a, p.621; Korpela, 2014, p.42).<sup>33</sup>

The sociogram in Figure 20 highlights the links between myself and participants and shows how some of them know each other. Pseudonyms are used.

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<sup>33</sup> See 3.1.3.

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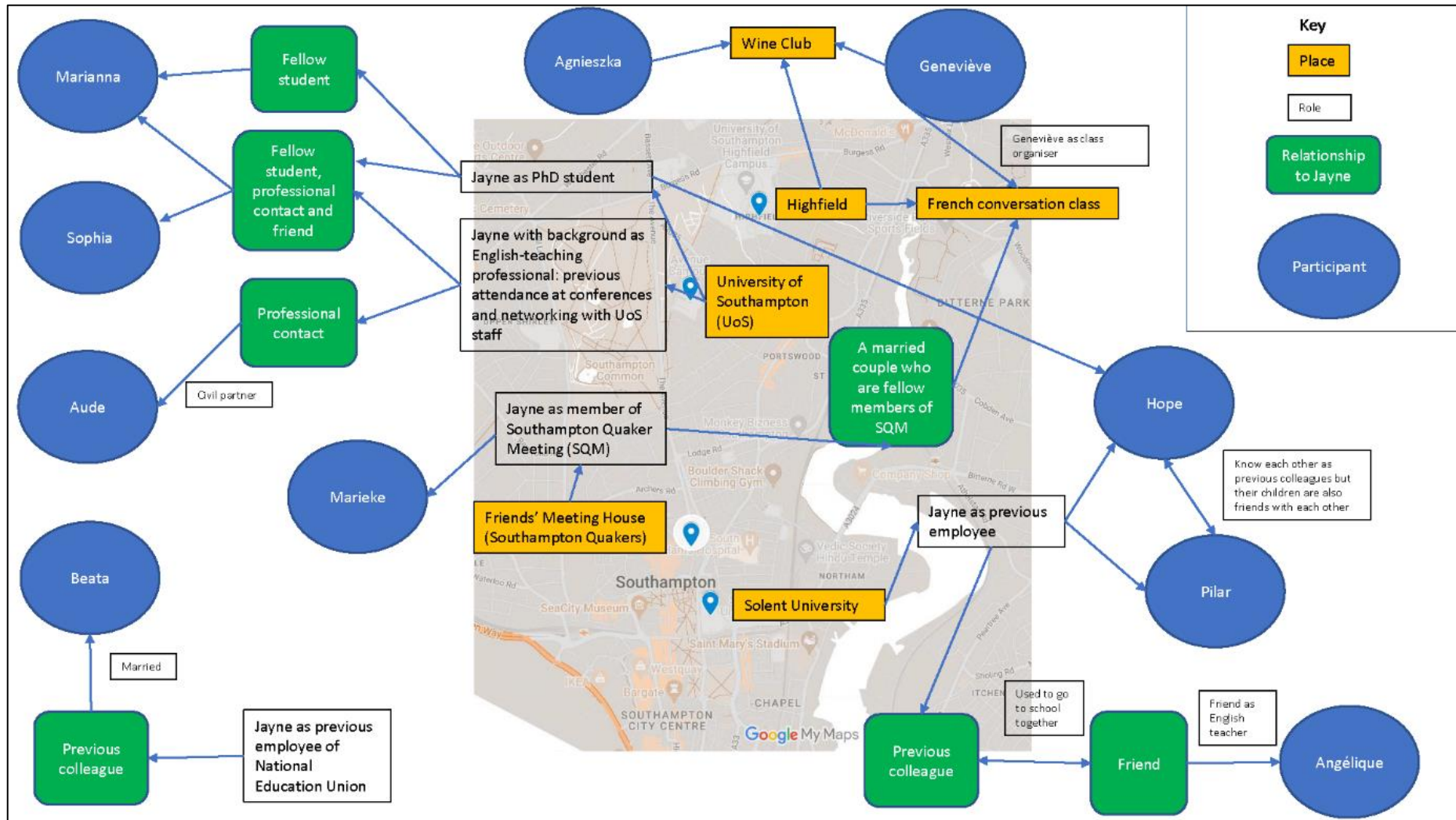
**Table 3**     *An overview of the participants*

<b>Participant pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Relationship status</b>	<b>Occupation status</b>	<b>Year of arrival in Southampton and reason for moving here</b>	<b>Length of time in Southampton</b>	<b>How we met</b>
Agnieszka	40s	Polish	Married to an English man	Homemaker	2008 as her mother-in-law needed care	16 years	Friends with Geneviève – they know each other from a mutual friend before they started seeing each other regularly at a wine club in Highfield
Angélique	50s	French	Married to a French man	Engaged in voluntary work – 2 daughters have left home	2018 because her husband’s work relocated	6 years	A previous colleague of mine from Solent University (SU) put me in touch with a professional contact who is now my friend. She teaches English and Angélique is her student
Aude	40s	French	In a civil partnership with an English woman	Employed	2004 as her partner was offered a job	20 years	Partner of a professional contact who I know from the University of Southampton (UoS) and took part in my pilot study
Beata	40s	Polish and British	Married to an English man	Employed	2005 to get some work experience and improve her English; a friend was already here	19 years	Wife of colleague from a previous employer, the National Education Union
Geneviève	70s	French	Married to an English man	Retired - 2 sons have left home and now have their own families	1986 because her husband was offered a job	38 years	Geneviève runs a French conversation class and a married couple who I know from Southampton Quakers attend her class so put us in touch with each other
Hope	50s	French	Married to an English man	Employed, student, and mother (1 daughter, 1 son)	1994 because her husband can’t speak French and	30 years	Old colleague from SU as we were teaching in the same department, but later reconnected as PhD students at UoS;

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					he is from this area originally		Also knows Pilar as previous colleagues at SU and their children know each other too through their college
Marianna	30s	Polish	Married to a Polish man	Student and mother (1 daughter, 1 son)	2009 to pursue her MA studies; her mother was already here	15 years	Friends with 2 people I know who were part of the UoS PhD student community (1 of them was originally a professional contact of mine and is now a friend) – both of my contacts suggested I contact Marianna
Marieke	30s	Belgian	Dating a British-Bangladeshi man	Employed and student	2021 following a difficult rental situation in Winchester	2 years	Southampton Quakers
Pilar	50s	Spanish and British	Divorced from an English man, currently single	Employed - daughter has left home	1999 for a job, as the south coast had been recommended to her by colleagues in Spain	25 years	Old colleague from SU - we were teaching in the same department and then reconnected at a mutual friend's 50 <sup>th</sup> birthday party more recently
Sophia	40s	Greek	Divorced from a Nigerian man, currently single	Employed, student, and mother (4 sons)	1999 to visit her mother who was living here, but then stayed longer as enrolled on a college course and got a job	25 years	Friend of someone I know who was part of the UoS PhD community and is also a professional contact and a friend

Figure 20 A sociogram of how I know the participants



The small number of participants means that my sample is not representative of a particular EU group and is also not generalisable to a wider community, though Huc-Hepher argues that ‘in keeping with social semiotics, it is through ethnographic *smallness* that larger sociocultural truths can be inferred’ (2016, p.9). Rather than focusing on specific groups, my work thus focuses on the individual experience, which is complex, using ‘theoretically telling cases’ (Rampton et al, 2015, p.16). Mitchell (1984, p.239) explains that this means focusing on the specific situation of a case to allow relationships that were previously incomprehensible to become clear. My work brings together ‘a holistic account’ of my participants’ different experiences (Khan, 2017), focusing on ‘storytelling as a meaning-making practice’ (Baynham and de Fina, 2017, p.32).

### 4.2.3 Data collection procedures

Gogolin et al (2013, p.7) highlight that the use of multiple methods when focusing on linguistic superdiversity is vital. For this reason, I chose several methods for data collection, and an overview can be seen in Figure 21.

First, I invited participants to produce a short video, audio, or written piece about how they came to be in Southampton, which I have called ‘Journeys to Southampton.’ I started collecting these from February 2021.

Second, I drew upon my participants’ initial stories to create a basis for conversation in the first online ethnographic video interviews. Feminist scholars such as Heyl (2007, p.374) view interviews as ‘a conversation’ and promote an unstructured format, as this fits more appropriately into the tradition of ethnography and recognises the nature of the interview as a co-construction (ibid, p.370). Whilst I used an unstructured approach to interviewing and did not have planned questions that I wished to ask, I read about Atkinson’s (1998) ‘life story interview’ and Brinkmann and Kvale’s (2015, pp.160-162) book on interviews beforehand for guidance. I endeavoured to use a mix of questions to keep conversation going and to explore themes in more detail, such as by using follow-up and probing questions, as well as making use of silence to allow participants time to reflect. I also tried to avoid the use of any potentially off-putting language such as ‘migrant,’ allowing participants room to tell their own stories and to self-identify how they wished.

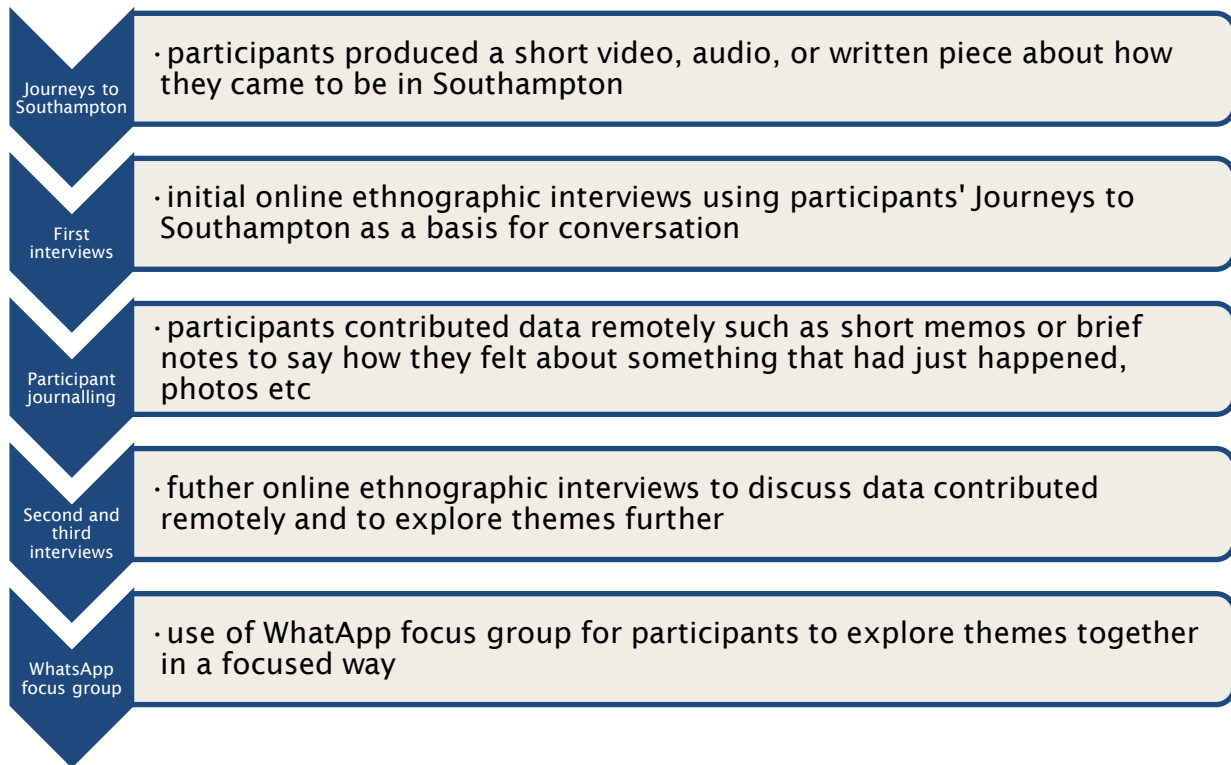
Heyl cautions that full understanding can never be achieved in interviews (2007, p.370); however, the same could be said of any research method, and these conversations were a useful starting point to come back to later in the data



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collection process. Due to COVID-19, the interviews took place online using Microsoft Teams, as this was recommended by the university rather than other comparable digital platforms due to the data security and privacy measures in place (University of Southampton, 2020). Microsoft Teams made it possible for the interviews to be recorded and for transcripts to be produced, with appropriate consent from my participants. As a backup, I made a few handwritten notes during the interviews in case the recording failed but also to assist me with formulating follow-up questions to ask during the interviews themselves.

The first interviews took place between April 2021 and July 2021. The length of the interviews varied as some participants were more talkative than others, and some were curious to find out about me as a person so asked me questions as well as talking about themselves. In one interview, I ended up talking about my relationship with my stepson, whether I wanted children of my own, attitudes towards motherhood in society, and expectations around the role of women. I had not expected this, but felt that it was important to share about myself when asked, in order to maintain the relationship with my participants, to build up trust, and to reciprocate, since participants were giving me a lot of personal information about their lives. In the first round of interviews, the shortest was 36 minutes and the longest was 1 hour 39 minutes, with the average interview lasting around 1 hour 3 minutes.

Figure 21 *Overview of methods for data collection*

Third, I used participant journalling to collect electronic data remotely. I explained to my participants that they could provide a variety of multimodal material according to their desires. I recommended that they could write, draw, or audio-record short memos of how they felt in the moment after something significant had happened relating to language and belonging in Southampton. I explained that they could make electronic notes or audio-record easily on their mobile phones, as I thought that this would encourage a higher rate of engagement, since written journals tend to suffer from a high rate of participant attrition due to its time-consuming nature (Hayman et al, 2012). Further, these vignettes avoided the necessity to obtain permission from others since it was just my participants on the recording, rather than a conversation with others from whom I had not gained consent. It also reduced the need to use interpreters, since I am unable to know every language that my participants might have used and it was likely that they would record in English, knowing that I would be their ‘audience.’<sup>34</sup>

I gave examples of other materials that they could contribute such as maps showing sites that are important to them in Southampton, following Stevenson’s (2017, pp.555-556) participants’ personalised walking maps of Manchester. Additionally, I

<sup>34</sup> Though I did not assume this – see 4.2.4.

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proposed that they might like to produce photographs, as advocated by Pink (2013) and Heng (2017), and as shown in Stevenson's (2017, p.557) work. I considered other creative data that my participants might make too such as collages (Bradley et al, 2018), commemorative postcards (Stevenson, 2017, pp.561-562), and soundscapes (ibid, pp.565-566). I suggested that participants could share relevant emails, meaningful social media messages, and so on, along the lines of 'netnography' (Kozinets, 2010) and 'digital ethnography' (Varis and Hou, 2019, p.230).

I wanted to offer plenty of scope for my participants to contribute data that was meaningful to them in terms of their connection to Southampton and hoped it would be enjoyable for them to produce. In this way, my participants were more active and involved, which Pink (2013) argues is the only way for ethnography to be ethically acceptable. In a similar way, de Koning et al (2019, p.171) highlight the co-production of knowledge with participants in anthropology. Further, Wells (2020, p.134) adds that information is negotiated in a process which is specific to a context and is shaped by all involved in the research. The collaborative nature of ethnographic research is currently a wider key issue, as shown by the publication of some draft guidelines for collaborative research by Tilche and Astuti (2020) in the January 2020 EASA newsletter. As Bakardjieva and Feenberg (2000, p.233) point out, participatory research is 'empowering' for participants.

I asked participants to share their chosen data with me securely using SafeSend as it is recommended by the University of Southampton since it is hosted by the institution and enables encryption before, during, and after transit. Further, it can be used by people outside of the organisation, so it meant that my participants were able to use it (University of Southampton, 2020). In reality, participants found this process cumbersome and not so easy to use from a mobile phone, so whilst I did receive some data via SafeSend, most chose to send data via email and WhatsApp.

Despite the variety of data that I had proposed, photographs were preferred by most participants. Some selected a small number to send to me such as three to six photographs, whilst others sent a lot more, with one participant sending me over thirty, as well as a video. Some participants included explanatory text with their photographs. One participant was away from her apartment for a long time during the pandemic and said that I could go and work there in her absence, so when I visited, I took a few photographs of my own. I noticed some musical instruments and religious objects which I photographed since she had not mentioned her faith or

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music previously, so this provided a useful conversation starter later in the research process.

Other data I received included screenshots of apps such as DuoLingo, Scrabble and a shopping list app, a couple of poems, and a work-related report. A few participants sent me written reflections about some of their experiences, ranging from attending a football match to completing the census. One participant lent me a DVD to watch about the Polish in Southampton which she had narrated, as well as a folder documenting projects she had been involved with, which included newspaper clippings. Only one participant found it difficult to send me anything for this phase of the data collection, but I did receive a photograph of her from her partner, and I sent her a screenshot from a book relating to English phrases such as 'willy-nilly,' as we had discussed that during interview, and it generated some conversation between us on WhatsApp.

Fourth, following the collection of electronic data via participant journalling, I carried out further ethnographic interviews online with my participants on Microsoft Teams to discuss the data they had provided. As de Fina (2019, p.163) comments, this is necessary for triangulation to compare information from different methods. Again, following Heyl (2007), I used unstructured interviews to follow on naturally from my observations. Since most participants provided photographs, I used photo-elicitation in the second and third interviews as conversation starters (Banks, 2001, p.87). Appendix G shows some questions I considered beforehand for the online interviews to assist with this.

By talking about the photographs, it gave participants opportunity to let me know the context within which they were taken and the meaning that they held for them, which I could not have inferred purely by looking at the photographs by myself (Banks, 2001, pp.10-12). Further, this method of data collection was an 'engagement' with participants, in line with my ethnographic approach (ibid, p.179). With the COVID-19 restrictions, the photographs allowed me to gain an insight into my participants' worlds which I could not have directly observed in person (Pink, 2013, p.99). The data produced by my participants acted as great prompts to provide more detail and to clarify perspectives. These additional interviews occurred between July 2021 and January 2022. The shortest lasted 31 minutes and the longest 1 hour 45 minutes, with the average interview lasting around 1 hour 12 minutes.

Finally, I carried out a WhatsApp focus group with all my participants to explore themes collectively. I had initially considered carrying out a focus group on Microsoft Teams, but I had already gathered enough data at this stage so decided to set up the WhatsApp group as a more informal focus group to create casual discussion amongst my participants around distinct topics (Beck et al, 1986, p.73). As with focus groups, the WhatsApp group allowed sense to be made collectively, with identities expressed and meanings negotiated via the social interaction amongst them (Wilkinson, 1999, pp.224-225). I collated data from the WhatsApp focus group between January 2022 and July 2022.

Throughout the data collection process, I kept a fieldwork diary in which I made memos. Whilst it acted as an observation tool, and was in keeping with ethnography, I did not use this as the main part of my data analysis but used it to reflect on later on in the process.

### **4.2.4 Visual data, women, and belonging**

The participant journalling phase of my research produced a rich variety of visual data, from photographs to app screenshots and a DVD, with photographs making up the majority. The use of photography in Southampton has a longstanding history. From 1977 to 2013, Judy Harrison led the Mount Pleasant Photography Workshop in the city, which promoted photographic self-representation among local Black and Asian communities (Harrison, 2013). Rooted in feminist principles, the Workshop included an all-girls' group in the 1980s, providing Black and Asian girls with access to photography technology as a means of self-expression. This project was significant as it challenged the traditional power structures within photography, creating a platform for young people to resist racism and the marginalisation of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities during the Thatcher era in which they were raised (Photoworks, 2024). This venture was part of a broader movement of collaborative feminist organisation, whereby photography was used as a powerful activist tool to challenge the media's portrayal of girls and women and to foster a collective sense of feminist identity (Klorman-Eraqi, 2019, p.12), concentrating particularly on the street as a site of protest (ibid, p.52).

Whilst the use of photography in my project is not new to Southampton, it serves a completely different purpose - as an ethnographic research method that offers intimate insights into my participants' ordinary lives, rather than as a political photography project focused on representation and activism. Additionally, for the first time, it foregrounds the narratives of female EU nationals, and covers private

spaces within participants' homes as well as the public spaces which they access. For example, whilst I received many photographs showing communal areas of the city: Guildhall Square, the central shopping precinct, the ferry terminal, and Southampton Common to name just a few,<sup>35</sup> participants also sent images depicting aspects of their private lives: preparing food for friends and family, children playing on a rug, bookshelves displaying their favourite books, and so on.<sup>36</sup> These photographs centre around the ordinariness of their everyday lives and objects, whether preparing food, looking after children, or placing fruit in a bowl and books on shelves, reinforcing the significance of everyday actions in fostering a sense of ordinary belonging and connection.<sup>37</sup>

In particular, I noticed that many photographs draw attention to everyday practices which are often performed by women, highlighting some of the gendered roles that my participants are carrying out, such as the selection and preparation of food (Cairns and Johnston, 2015), the building and maintaining of familial relationships (Seery and Crowley, 2000) and that of relationships between different households (Di Leonardo, 1987), as well as parenting (Chodorow, 1999) and the passing on of cultural values, customs, and traditions within the family context (Ochs and Taylor, 1992). Considering the evidence of gendered roles in my data - which will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6 - and my identity as a woman, I wondered whether my participants felt more comfortable sharing certain photographs with me, perhaps considering it a gendered safe space.<sup>38</sup> For instance, it raises the question of whether my participants would have shared photographs of their children with me if I were a man, given that societal expectations around traditional binary gender roles often categorise certain professions or tasks as 'men's work' or 'women's work' (Baskwill and Vanstone, 2018), and men involved in childcare can therefore unfortunately be perceived as a potential threat because they are not fitting in to the expected norm (Solomon, 2017, p.97).

Further, the visual data led to in-depth discussions during the follow-up ethnographic interviews which included attention to the expectations around the role of women and their feelings of belonging. For example, as mentioned above at

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<sup>35</sup> See Figure 2 for Guildhall Square, Figure 3 for the central shopping precinct, Figure 25 for the ferry terminal, and Figures 4 and 22 for Southampton Common.

<sup>36</sup> See Figures 38, 42 and 50 for preparing food, Figure 52 for children playing on a rug, and Figure 51 for bookshelves.

<sup>37</sup> See 3.3.5.

<sup>38</sup> Safety and safe spaces encompass more than just protection from crime and harassment. Originating from the women's movement, the concept of a safe space suggests the freedom to express oneself, take action, build collective strength, and develop resistance strategies. It was seen as a tool, not merely a physical location, but also as a space formed through the gathering of women seeking a sense of community (Kenney, 2001, p.24).

4.2.3, in one interview, Marianna and I talked about attitudes towards motherhood and childlessness in society as well as roles considered outside of the norm, such as being a stepmother, and caring for a disabled child, just from the stimulus of the photograph of a playground which she had provided. Additionally, everyday practices were explored, using the photographs as a starting point to focus on the ordinary and its significance in relation to belonging. The rich visual data also allowed my participants to take a more active role in the research process and provided me with insights into their worlds that I could not have directly observed due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time (Pink, 2013, p.99).

### **4.2.5 Translation issues**

Gibb and Iglesias (2017) highlight that ethnographic work has a multilingual nature but that researchers have not written much about language-related issues, specifically their own knowledge (or lack thereof) of various languages and their decisions about the use of interpreters or translators in their fieldwork. Being aware of this, I explained at 4.2.3 that asking my participants to audio-record vignettes would reduce the need to use interpreters, since they would be aware that I am the 'audience' and would therefore be likely to record in English, rather than them recording a conversation with others and switching between languages without the same regard to their linguistic output. However, it was not guaranteed that my participants would always use English, and I did not want to assume that, bearing in mind the already powerful status that English has as the dominant language within the UK, and knowing the variety of languages that my participants speak.

Although I have studied other languages and used them whilst working abroad, I was unable to know every language that my participants might use and would not have been able to offer all participants an interview in a language other than English. This meant that I chose to use English for all the interviews to provide consistency. However, I did consider beforehand the possibility that I might need to use interpreters. As it happened, my participants used English most of the time. In cases where other languages were used where I did not know the meaning of the words or phrases expressed, my participants usually offered translations themselves, and if not, I asked them to provide a translation, as this added to the co-production of knowledge and ensured that they were more actively involved rather than using a third party (de Koning et al, 2019; Pink, 2013; Tilche and Astuti,

2020; Wells, 2020).<sup>39</sup> Words in languages other than English mostly related to festivals or traditions, such as *Śmigus-dyngus*, a celebration held on Easter Monday in Poland. In some cases, participants made use of Google Translate. For example, one participant tried to think of various English words to translate *berto* from Polish, suggesting 'wand' but it was clear that she was not quite happy with this translation, so as we looked at a photograph together, we discussed alternatives such as 'magic wand' and 'staff,' before she checked Google Translate, which gave us the word 'sceptre.'

In most cases, there were no communication problems, as we were able to clarify meaning together using alternative words. There was only one participant who had not learnt English prior to her arrival in the UK and had not been here very long when we began the research together, so I arranged for the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to be translated into French for her, to ensure that she understood fully what she was participating in and that she was able to give appropriate consent. During my interviews with her, we both asked each other questions for clarification in cases where we did not understand what the other had said. Our interviews lasted quite a long time because of this clarification process, and it meant that we were not able to go into as much depth as I had with the others, particularly around political issues, but I felt that the interviews were good enough for my research purposes and did not require an interpreter.

### 4.2.6 Transcription and data analysis procedures

#### 4.2.6.1 Transcription

For the ethnographic interviews, I used the transcription facility in Microsoft Teams which creates a transcript alongside recording which can be downloaded afterwards (Microsoft, 2024). In a few cases, this did not work, and I ended up with the sound only, and some of the Journeys to Southampton were provided to me in audio form, so I was able to produce transcriptions from the sound files using the Microsoft Word online transcription feature (Microsoft, 2024). I listened back to all the recordings and checked the transcripts for accuracy. This process was quicker than producing the transcripts myself from scratch but was still time-consuming and allowed me to become immersed in the data from an early stage, ahead of the analysis process. Full recordings and transcriptions of all my interviews meant that

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<sup>39</sup> See 4.2.3.



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it was easy to check back later to see what participants said and the context within which they said it (Walliman, 2006, p.77).

The use of Microsoft's transcription facilities meant that the transcriptions were produced consistently following pre-set conventions. For example, I noticed that:

- timestamps were included
- standard written capitalisation patterns were followed
- standard orthography was used
- standard punctuation was used
- contractions were only transcribed when actually produced by the speaker
- numerals were written out as complete words
- hesitation sounds were transcribed as they sounded e.g. *ah*, *er*.

The transcription software struggled with acronyms, names of people and places, words or phrases in other languages, and sometimes it had not deciphered what was said at all and had transcribed something completely different, so the checking process was crucial.

The software was not able to note non-verbal cues such as laughing, coughing, or when a participant was impersonating someone by putting on another voice. It also could not indicate physical cues such as when a participant held something up to the screen to show me or when they were doing something else at the same time as talking to me, such as cooking, or when others entered the room. I wanted to capture this detail to provide more information about the context of the interviews, and so I adapted the transcripts to include these specifics. To help with this, I looked at some protocols for transcribing, such as FAVE, which was produced by Dr Rosenfelder for the University of Pennsylvania's Philadelphia Neighbourhood Corpus Data (2011) project to create files that could be read by the FAVE-Align dictionary (Rosenfelder et al, 2011). However, I found that the protocols were too detailed for my purposes as they were devised to focus on sociolinguistic change, and I did not want to overcomplicate the transcripts since I was interested in the themes discussed rather than specific linguistic aspects.

I therefore created my own protocol to demonstrate gross nonverbal aspects of communication only, such as laughter, and excluded micro elements of communication, such as supertokens, where speakers alternate between the non-standard and the standard form within the same utterance or within a couple of utterances. Microsoft automatically uses 'speaker 1' and 'speaker 2' so I amended these to indicate myself as the researcher and used pseudonyms for the participants

and additionally inserted page numbers and labelled the transcripts for ease of reference. In interviews where participants were talking about photographs or other data they had provided, I included these in the transcripts at the relevant points.

As Blommaert and Dong (2010, p.69) highlight, transcriptions contain bias and preferences, since the choices made along the way are already an initial interpretation of the data, but this cannot be avoided and would be the case whichever transcription protocol I settled on. The transcription conventions I used are presented in Appendix H, and I have included a sample transcript in Appendix I. I worked on the transcripts from the first interviews from May 2021 to September 2021, and those from the additional interviews from March 2022 to May 2022.

### 4.2.6.2 Data analysis

In terms of analysing the data, I considered various methods. For example, Conversation Analysis (CA) involves the researcher looking at interaction line-by-line (Moerman, 1988, p.5). However, this focus emphasises the linguistic structures and I was more interested in how my participants make meaning. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines discourse from a critical perspective to uncover power dynamics (Lê and Lê, 2009) and can be useful in analysing interview data by focusing on lexical choices, especially in relation to evaluative statements (Fairclough, 2003, p.172). It can also highlight how various identities are constructed through language, as Wodak et al (2009) show in their work on national identity. However, as Blommaert (2005, pp.34-35) highlights, it also places a strong focus on the analysis of linguistic text, as with CA, and this concentration on the linguistic creates an emphasis on discourse that is there and ignores discourses that are not present. Blommaert therefore recommends investigating outside of language in society as well as within the language itself but stresses that these two aspects are intertwined. Hymes's (1974) 'SPEAKING' model<sup>40</sup> focuses on interaction and the 'speech situation' at hand, rightly placing prominence on the context; however, the model cannot adequately account for silences or provide a suitable framework of analysis for what is communicated without language.

To counter these approaches to data, nexus analysis places more emphasis on social action alongside the linguistic, such as with Hult's (2017) work. However, this approach is quite new, not everyone interprets the method in the same way, and

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<sup>40</sup> SPEAKING: Setting/Scene, Participants, Ends, Acts, Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre (Hymes, 1974).

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there are no clear guidelines as to how to carry out such research (Haapanen et al, 2018, p.87). Likewise, narrative analysis provides a focus on practices rather than texts, using local interaction as a starting point for analysis and emplacing narratives within sociocultural and discursive contexts (de Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2015, p.3). Similarly bringing together the social and the linguistic, Li's (2011a, p.1224) work on translanguaging focuses on three Chinese youths in Britain, using a mixture of data consisting of their everyday interaction alongside their own commentaries on their language practices. Li used Moment Analysis to analyse his data, where specific significant points in time are examined which focus on each individual and their thought processes around the moment.

Other possibilities I considered for analysing my data include ethnopoetics, which is a form of 'verbal art' (Webster and Kroskrity, 2013, p.1) as per Hymes (2016), which tries to open up ways of speaking that are culturally embedded (Blommaert, 2018, p.29). In a similar vein, I-poems could have been used, as advocated by Nind and Vinha (2016). Regarding the visual aspects of my data, Domingo and Kress (2013) provide useful guidance for decoding online texts, and this was used successfully by Huc-Hepher (2016) in the analysis of the London-French blog due to the multimodality involved so I also thought about that, though the narratives of my participants were more important than the visual data in of itself and were linked to the visuals they provided.

Overall, I decided to follow the advice of Roberts et al (2001, p.131) for my analysis, who advocate searching for patterns that emerge according to context, trying to find a wider cultural understanding as opposed to 'one final truth.' Thinking along the lines of patterns and a broader approach focusing on the macro rather than the micro, I decided to use thematic analysis which is used for classifying, evaluating and recounting patterns, or themes, within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79). This method is not as technical as CA or CDA (ibid, p.94) and can provide a 'thick description' of the data set (ibid, p.97), which meant that it was compatible with the wide range of types of data that I collected in my study, so catered for non-linguistic data as well as the text in my interview transcripts. Thick description examines social motivations and cultural meanings, which was key for my project's focus on belonging (Holliday, 2007, pp.74-75).

To assist with the thematic analysis, I began by creating a data summary template, which I then used for each participant, producing individual summaries of their Journeys to Southampton and interview transcripts with key words and quotations, as well as details of their contributions of other types of data and their participation

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in the WhatsApp focus group. An example of a completed data summary is at Appendix J. After the time I spent reviewing and editing the transcripts, this process of summarising the data helped me to familiarise myself with the data further. During the summarising process, I wrote notes on key ideas emerging from the data and used these to generate initial potential themes, such as ‘Southampton,’ ‘othering,’ and so on. A theme encapsulates a key aspect of the data with regard to the research question and depicts a degree of patterning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). Additionally, I made a list of ‘candidate’ subthemes related to the overarching themes. In tandem with this, I refamiliarised myself with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) article and (2022) book on thematic analysis to guide me during this process.

After completing the data summaries, I looked back at my list of potential key themes and tried to organise them, looking for some overarching themes and subthemes within them. These can be seen in Appendix K. I then created several tables, each with the headings I had chosen for the overarching themes, and then I read through my data summaries again, referred back to the Journeys to Southampton, interview transcripts, and WhatsApp group data, and pulled out data extracts to go under each relevant theme in the appropriate table. I made sure to include a reference for each data extract to show which participant they had come from, and whether they had come from the Journeys to Southampton, interviews, or WhatsApp group, and the page numbers from the transcripts the extracts were from. I also added in the photographs and other data provided by my participants under the relevant themes and referenced them appropriately.

Where I found overlap of the themes, I copied the data extract into more than one of the themed tables. I created an extra column in all the tables to add in subthemes and any additional comments or key words I wanted to note. Throughout this process, I kept revising my subthemes and questioning whether they were under the right overarching theme. As I reviewed what my participants said, I found contradictions in the data. For example, in her first interview with me, Geneviève said that she does not like her accent and wants to change it to sound like a native English speaker, whereas later in the same interview, she said that she thinks that people should keep their accents and should not change them. Similarly, Aude said in her first interview about not wanting to prepare or eat French food in the UK, but then later described preparing some French food with a friend in Southampton. I made sure to include all the inconsistencies within my data analysis rather than to exclude them, to ensure that I had as full a picture as possible of my participants’

views. As Smith (2001, pp.139-140) highlights, contested voices are not a representation of disarray, but belong to an interplay within transnational cities which invites the researcher to suspend binary thinking and reflect on the boundaries and constructs which exist.

After going through all the data, I checked that the data extracts within each table matched the overarching theme I had allocated them to and reviewed the subthemes. I then looked back at my fieldwork diary to add in relevant comments in the final column of the table. Finally, I reviewed the themes and made notes on them, to help guide my writing up process. There was so much data that I was not able to mention all the subthemes in my writing-up, but the overarching themes have all been included in some way. In February 2022, I carried out data analysis around the Journeys to Southampton and the first ethnographic interviews, then between July and October 2022, I analysed the additional interviews, WhatsApp group data, and photographs and other material supplied. My data analysis is around 400 pages long so is too lengthy to include in an appendix, but Appendix L provides some examples from it to give an idea, and the full analysis is available on request.

### **4.3 Ethical considerations**

My overarching aim in the research when considering ethics was to carry it out openly and with informed consent, ensuring to respect the dignity and rights of my participants and avoiding any harm to them (Denscombe, 2007, p.141; de Koning et al, 2019, pp.171-172). In October 2016, I carried out the University of Southampton's compulsory online training around ethics - 'Epigeum: Ethics 1 - good research practice' and 'Epigeum: Ethics 2 - working with human subjects in health and social sciences.' I followed the Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO) procedure in line with the university's Ethics Policy (University of Southampton, 2020), and in agreement with my supervisory team I completed the ethics application form for studies involving human participants (Appendix D), Participant Information Sheet (Appendix E), and Consent Form (Appendix F).

I read the university's 'COVID-19 (Coronavirus) guidance for research involving human participants - Non Clinical' as well as the 'Guidance for applicants and reviewers of ethics applications and amendments on ERGO II regarding changes from face-to-face to remote data collection (in response to the COVID-19 pandemic)' and adhered to the guidelines provided (University of Southampton, 2020). Once

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receiving approval for my project, I reviewed my ethics form regularly as my data collection progressed, and updated it as and when required, along with the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.

In the Consent Form, I gave participants various options to consent to or opt out of certain types of data collection, and I made it clear that they may change their mind throughout the research process, to ensure that my data was collected fairly and lawfully (Denscombe, 2007, p.140). Additionally, the participatory nature of my data collection guaranteed informed consent and meant participants had control over what data they supplied. This avoided invasion of privacy which can happen in virtual research by taking a 'user-centred approach' (Beneito-Montagut, 2011, p.730).

I used pseudonyms in my notes and in the write-up of the research so that participants cannot be uniquely identified, to maintain their anonymity (Denscombe, 2007, p.141). I gave my participants choice in their pseudonyms by asking them if they had a preference for any particular name that they wished me to use, and a few responded in the affirmative. For those who did not choose a name, I researched common names in their countries of origin for their age group, to ensure that the pseudonym was in keeping with their identity.

Regarding photographs which feature people's faces, when considering which ones to include in my thesis, I only made use of those where their identity could be obscured using Microsoft Word's artistic effects. The option 'Watercolour Sponge' seemed to be the best at concealing facial features, so I chose this one. For example, Figure 22 shows the application of Watercolour Sponge to a photograph from a participant (Microsoft, 2024). Where people's faces were still recognisable even after the application of the artistic effects, I did not use them.

Figure 22 *Application of the artistic effect Watercolour Sponge to a photograph received from Angélique on 12.04.21 showing a barbecue with friends on Southampton Common*



#### **4.4 Reflexivity: my role as researcher**

Geertz (1988, p.78) suggests that the object (participant) can reduce if the subject (researcher) increases in importance, and similarly, Bourdieu (2003, p.281) questions how a researcher can both observe and observe themselves. Whilst I have a personal interest in my research and learnt a lot about myself during the process, I tried to position myself away from self-discovery to focus on my participants, since I am not important in comparison to them as the researcher. As Bourdieu (2003, p.282) highlights, the researcher ought to be objectivised as well as their social world and the field in which they operate, and I tried to ensure when writing up my results that I moved from ‘I-witnessing’ to ‘they-picturing’ as Geertz (1988, p.84) describes.

In terms of my own interest in the topic, Johnson (1975, p.23) advises to make personal values explicit, and Gibb and Iglesias (2017, p.145) advocate for researchers involved in the investigation of language to reflect on their own language learning journey. I did this initially by outlining my background and attraction to the topic in Chapter 1, and additionally I was able to use my fieldwork diary to note personal reflections during the research process.

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As Andrews (2007, p.27) argues, the questions that drive our research often stem from deep within us. In my case, I can see that the idea of belonging has been a preoccupation for me since I was a child. I have sometimes found it difficult to feel like I fit in to British society, and for a long time, experienced great pressure in trying to conform to become someone I thought others expected me to be. When I moved abroad to South Korea to teach English in 2005, I was driven by the need to escape, thinking that leaving the UK would help, only to discover that the problem was to be found within myself rather than externally. This strongly impacted on my mental health and wellbeing. As I have got older, I have been working on being more comfortable with not fitting in and have experienced more freedom in being myself rather than trying to conform to an unachievable ideal.

I have realised that a lot of this wrestling with myself has been related to expectations around gender and sexuality. As Nava highlights, our sense of belonging and our identity, including our gender, impacts on how we 'make sense of the world' (2007, p.134). It has often been the comments of others that have led me to believe that I do not fit in, particularly relating to the gendered roles it is imagined that I should carry out as a woman. For example, my femininity has been questioned when remarks have been made about my appearance or behaviour apparently being somehow masculine.

Further, there seems to be a discourse which is reinforced through the media that there is something wrong with a woman if she is childless, that somehow she is missing out, and perhaps that biological mothers have some special insight or greater depth of feeling (Lynch, 2023). In relation to this narrative, I have encountered numerous unsolicited questions and comments over the years regarding motherhood - not only inquiries about whether I have children, but more intimate questions around whether I desire them, if I am satisfied with being 'only' a stepmother and why I do not have children of my own, as well as comments expressing concern about my age and the passing of time or about my fertility, among others.

During my PhD candidature, I went through divorce, and later began a relationship with my current long-term partner and became a stepmother. This change in my relationship status made me reflect on how my identity as a woman and how I view and perform or challenge gender roles has been continuously evolving, as has others' perceptions of me and my choices, and this has impacted on my relationships with family and friends in various ways. Thinking about my research, it could have been my identity as a woman which encouraged women to participate,



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and whilst there is not just one way of being a woman (Moi, 1999, p.9), women share pressures related to being a woman, including the gendered expectations placed upon them, and my project could have been perceived as a gendered safe space, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.<sup>41</sup> Further, some of the themes identified in the data and explored in Chapters 5 and 6 focus around fitting in, building relationships, and homemaking, which all centre around women and belonging when considering gendered roles, and my identity as a woman is likely to have influenced my interpretation of the findings.<sup>42</sup>

Now considering sexuality, as a bisexual woman, I feel attraction to different genders and so am neither heterosexual nor homosexual, therefore sometimes having a feeling of being 'in between.' My sexuality has often been assumed according to the gender of partners I have been with at different times in my life. I have also experienced biphobia, based on others' opinions that I was going through a phase, as well as pervasive negative attitudes in society suggesting that bisexual people are promiscuous. In some ways, I can see a link between the inbetweenness I sometimes feel and that expressed by my participants in their narratives,<sup>43</sup> as they also face assumptions about who they are and experience discrimination because of their identities, though as an L1 speaker of English, my status here in the UK is different from theirs, and discrimination experienced due to sexuality is different from discrimination due to nationality or ethnic or national origins. I also see other similarities between myself and my participants, when thinking about whiteness, class, and educational background, but differences when considering age, nationality, and motherhood. I tried to bear my position in relation to my participants in mind when analysing my data and interpreting the results.

Above I have touched upon Britishness and cultural norms, mental health and wellbeing, gender including the expectations of women in relation to motherhood, and sexuality. All these areas are often positioned in a binary manner – viewing a person as British or not, mentally well or unwell, man or woman, mother or childless, straight or gay – but my personal experience of grappling with these aspects has highlighted the need to go beyond the binary and to instead embrace multiple and nuanced conceptions of identity, and to challenge the reductionist, essentialist constructs of personhood that others attempt to place us in.

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<sup>41</sup> See 4.2.4.

<sup>42</sup> See 3.3.4 and 4.2.4.

<sup>43</sup> See 6.2.3.4.

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I have experienced how one can belong, without necessarily belonging to one or the other, navigating what Bhabha calls the 'inbetween space' or 'Third Space' (1994, p.56). My own journey has drawn attention to the proliferation of structures that formalise identity and I think has put me in a suitable position to notice when these rigid constructs of identity impact others. I have therefore tried to maintain a sensitivity towards my participants in relation to these conceptions, bearing in mind that identity is not fixed but fluctuates and develops (Hall, 1996, p.4), and that their narratives as conveyed in my thesis provide a snapshot at this time and may change in future.

It is important to reflect, since the researcher's own background and particular way of interpreting culture are vital in understanding the complexity of 'situated everyday activity' amongst those being studied (Rampton et al, 2015, p.16). Further, Charmaz and Mitchell (2001, p.171) point out that reflexivity helps us to see the difference between what we say and what we do, and as our awareness grows, our struggles with language to explain this mirror the complexities of the area being studied. Additionally, it is key to bear in mind that shared experiences are not necessarily shared meanings, as Brockmann (2011, p.233) found, since everyone views circumstances from their own perspective. Reflexivity can also be collective, as Pink (2013) advocates, and I strove to achieve this together with my participants by reflecting with them during the ethnographic interviews and on the WhatsApp focus group, so that I was not reflecting alone. By being reflexive in this way, both individually as the researcher and collectively with my participants, it directly addressed the subjectivity inherent within ethnography.

With the increase in use of technology due to social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, given that I had to carry out my research wholly digitally, it was important that I also reflected on this process throughout my research. Davies (2008, p.170) advocates that ethnography online still requires reflexivity, as with in-person ethnography, whether we are considering our own interactions online or whether we think about the internet in a wider sense as a product of culture, and the assumptions that we have made about the technology. As shown in 4.1.2, relating to my participants online provided me with a different type of observation than is usual in ethnography, with the ability to observe my participants' homes and workspaces on the screen. It also offered unexpected interactions between my participants and their loved ones, as well as a video call on the move, where a participant took me via her laptop to the kitchen whilst cooking. Further, an

amusing moment occurred during one interview when a participant's Alexa piped up in the background, saying, "sorry, I don't know that one!"

It is vital to retain reflexivity throughout the research process, including during the writing-up stage. Astuti (2017, pp.10-11) promotes the importance of keeping in touch with our participants to avoid them becoming 'cartoonish' or 'more exotic than they actually are' in our write-ups of the research. Further, Astuti advises return visits to sites to continue engagement with people and place to retain a realistic perspective. This allows the researcher to keep being challenged over time through continued dialogue with participants. Although I could not return physically to a site, I was able to keep going back to my participants virtually to clarify understanding and to check that my representation of them in the write-up of my research was accurate. Further, after the COVID-19 restrictions had ended, I organised several coffee mornings for my participants after I had completed the interviews, in April 2022, June 2022, October 2022 and April 2023. This was a way to touch base with my participants and to give back to them, as they were able to develop friendships through meeting each other.

### **4.5 Limitations of the research**

One limitation of my project was that participants may conceal information or lie if they did not trust me and/or the reasons why the research is being conducted (Sanjek, 1990, pp.162-163). This could have been the case if they were concerned about their immigration status, for example. Although EU citizens living in the UK had until 30 June 2021 to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme (Crown Copyright, 2020), participants may have questioned whether I was affiliated to the government and if I would be impartial as a researcher, especially as some participants may not have applied by the deadline, and the first round of interviews occurred close to the scheme's deadline, between April 2021 and July 2021. To reassure my participants and build trust, I ensured that I explained the project in detail and answered any queries they had. One participant seemed more closed than the others initially, and I considered that this could be due to her growing up under communism in Poland prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, since she is older than the other Polish participants. However, she suggested that she might like to go for a coffee with me, and later attended a couple of the coffee mornings I organised, demonstrating how I had managed to build up trust with her over time.

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A second limitation highlighted by Sanjek (1990, p.162) was that ‘voluminous data’ could be collected, making it extremely time-consuming to analyse. In my case, there was a very large amount of data and the analysis process outlined in 4.2.5.2 took 5 months to complete. Whilst I was able to assign the overarching themes to all my data, I did not have time to ascribe subthemes to every single data extract I had pulled out, so I had to be selective.

A third limitation of the research was time. As a part-time student, carrying out my research alongside my job meant that I had restricted availability to focus on my PhD. Further, the university regulations around the length of PhD candidature added to the time constraints. Whilst I managed to carry out my data collection procedures over the course of 18 months to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings in line with ethnography, my work commitments and the candidature regulations meant that I was unable to study my participants for longer, which restricted the amount of data I was able to collect, thereby somewhat addressing the issue of ‘voluminous data’ mentioned above.

A fourth limitation was related to the virtual environment in which I carried out the research. For audio and videocalls, Seitz (2016) highlights that technical issues can occur such as dropped calls, delays, and poor sound or video quality. Further, body language and other nonverbal cues may be more difficult or impossible to read, and participants (and the researcher) may experience a reduction or loss of intimacy when compared with in-person research. I could not fully resolve these issues given the COVID-19 restrictions, but I implemented strategies recommended by Seitz (2016, p.229) such as having a stable internet connection, using a quiet room with few distractions, speaking more slowly than usual, and clarifying talk, repeating answers and questions where necessary, and studying my participants’ facial expressions.

In terms of technical issues, I had to be flexible to adapt to changing situations. For example, for one interview, I had to switch to Zoom at short notice as the participant could not access Microsoft Teams, and in another interview, we lost connection towards the end and could not reconnect, so I phoned the participant. To try to address the issue of loss of intimacy, I discussed the COVID-19 situation with my participants, the oddness of the lockdowns, and the strangeness of so many activities in our lives which would normally occur face-to-face taking place online. Talking directly about the situation we found ourselves in helped to build trust, to understand my participants better, and to create a deeper connection, which all helped with the research process. The only issue I could not resolve in the virtual

environment was that I necessarily had to exclude from my study people who did not have access to the internet (Kuiper, 2020, p.301); however, this was unfortunately unavoidable in the COVID-19 climate.

A fifth limitation is that it is not possible for the conclusions of my work to be generalised to the residents of Southampton as a whole (Sanjek, 1990, p.162), as my small-scale study provides detailed data relating to just 10 people. As Hannerz (1980, p.297) comments, to study a city in-depth, one would have to observe everyone in all spheres of life. Rather, this project is a snapshot into my participants' lives, focusing on 'ethnographic smallness' (Huc-Hepher, 2016, p.9), 'theoretically telling cases' (Rampton et al, 2015, p.16) and 'the particular circumstances surrounding a case...to make previously obscure theoretical relationships suddenly apparent' (Mitchell, 1984). Hopefully this will just be the start of more in-depth research into this area in future.

### **4.6 Summary**

In this chapter, I positioned myself within the field of linguistic ethnography and explained how I recruited my participants and carried out my data collection procedures remotely and online during the COVID-19 pandemic. I provided details of the methods which were used: Journeys to Southampton, a series of online ethnographic interviews, participant journalling including the submission of photographs, and a WhatsApp focus group. I then discussed transcription and data analysis, as well as the role of ethics and reflexivity in my project, before considering the limitations of the research.

Whilst Winkworth et al (2007), Cadier and Mar-Molinero (2012), Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen (2021), McGhee et al (2015), and Hilmarsson-Dunn et al (2010) have carried out research in Southampton, they had different focuses. My research was in-depth over the course of 18 months using linguistic ethnography to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings. Further, the adaptation of my research to the online sphere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has questioned the need for solely using traditional face-to-face participant observation and has opened up opportunities for more ethnographic research to take place remotely.

## Chapter 5 Experiencing Southampton as a City

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## 5.1 Introduction

Southampton, a large industrial city, was previously unknown to my participants, and its seemingly unattractive architecture and drab appearance was initially somewhat of a shock. In this chapter, I examine how they first reacted and interpreted the cityscape before moving on to explore how their experience with the urban environment and its people led to a reassessment of their early impressions. Their narratives reveal a deeper sense of what is at stake when making somewhere your home and how the experience of the cityscape relates to the social, cultural, and political capital they already had as cosmopolitans prior to their arrival. A Southampton guidebook purchased by one of my participants, Pilar, when she first arrived here in the 1990s described it as ‘a big city with no appeal whatsoever’ (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.8). The heavy bombing of the city during the Southampton Blitz in World War II destroyed many buildings,<sup>44</sup> meaning that today’s architecture influenced my participants’ first impressions of the city. Whilst Chapter 2 covered definitions around the city<sup>45</sup> within the context of globalisation and superdiversity,<sup>46</sup> in this chapter, we will explore how Southampton has been perceived by my participants over time before looking at how they connect to Southampton as a place through various place-making activities and the use of English as a Lingua Franca.

## 5.2 Southampton: from concrete lump to sense of space

### 5.2.1 First impressions

First impressions are often affected by previous experiences of place-making, since our response to a place is not just in relation to its physical aspects, but also has affective and imaginative characteristics (Castree, 2009, p.163). Most of my participants came to Southampton by choice for various pragmatic reasons,<sup>47</sup> yet it is easy to see that despite their appreciation of the city as lacking in terms of architecture and the arts, as lifestyle migrants they remain convinced that they will

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<sup>44</sup> See 2.1.2.1.

<sup>45</sup> See 2.1.2.

<sup>46</sup> See 2.1.2 and 3.1.3.

<sup>47</sup> See 4.2.2 and Table 3.

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be able to situate themselves here (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009a, p.621; Korpela, 2014, p.42). Aude grew up in a picturesque town by a lake in the Alps in south-eastern France, half the size of Southampton and popular with tourists for watersports in summer and skiing in winter. She moved to Southampton in 2004, 'quite excited to be in a bigger place.'<sup>48</sup> Here she recalls her initial reaction to the city:

'We arrived by train, and the first thing I saw...was the large Toys R Us warehouse on one side of the train station and a **big concrete lump** of a building on the other side of the train station, so my first impression was about...**how awful** I thought the place looked...[it] was **quite dreadful really**.' (Aude-J2S-11.04.21-p.1)

Aude's characterisation of the building near the train station as a 'lump' invokes a mass of concrete without a defined shape, lacking beauty, whilst the use of the adjectives 'awful' and 'dreadful' conjure up an unpleasant, ugly place. Her description focuses on the aesthetics of the architecture and visualises a grey, shapeless landscape. She adds:

'I kept reminding myself that...Southampton had been **bombed during the war** and **rebuilt quickly afterwards**, which is **why it looked so terrible**...all I could think about was about the war basically when I came here.' (Aude-J2S-11.04.21-p.1)

Similarly, Pilar explains:

'I've seen old pictures of the city centre, and it looked so pretty, it looked very similar to Winchester before the war... The city centre is **horrible**, it's **not nice**...' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.39-41)

Aude's and Pilar's depictions reveal negative connotations, making Southampton unattractive to them in relation to other places.

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<sup>48</sup> Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.5-6.



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Until the age of 12 Pilar lived in a small town with a population of less than 21,000 in north-western Spain at the centre of an agricultural area; she moved to Southampton in 1999, and recounts her first days here:

‘When I came, I have bought...an informal guide, and they said that the city was a big city with **no appeal whatsoever...anybody shouldn't stop there** because there was no appeal in the city.’ (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.8)

Whilst ‘appeal’ can centre around the sense of sight, it also has the wider meaning of attracting interest, and Pilar’s anecdote shows that even the guide to Southampton did not make it seem worth visiting. Later, she explained that her daughter had moved to London, since she ‘can’t stand Southampton’ as ‘it's very **boring**.’<sup>49</sup> Other participants echoed the sentiment of Southampton as a slow, dull place. Like Pilar, Sophia moved to Southampton in 1999. However, though she had come from a port city rather than an inland location, it was a much bigger place – Athens, the capital and largest city of Greece with a population of nearly 638,000. Sophia described:

‘In Athens everything is so vibrant wherever you go, whether you are in the port or whether you're in the mountain - everywhere you go, there's a different vibration, time flows by differently. Here [Southampton], everything is **very slow and calmer**.’ (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-pp.4-5)

Likewise, Agnieszka originated from Kraków, the second largest and one of the oldest cities in Poland, located in the south with a population of nearly 810,000, and named European Capital of Culture in 2000. She moved to the UK in 2008 and draws this comparison:

‘Southampton is **a bit sleepy town** comparing to Kraków which is very lively and cosmopolitan, it’s very popular tourist destination - there is always something to do.’ (Agnieszka-J2S-16.05.21-p.1)

Sophia and Agnieszka contrast Southampton with Athens and Kraków using the adjectives ‘vibrant,’ ‘lively,’ ‘cosmopolitan,’ and ‘popular’ to indicate via

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<sup>49</sup> Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.49.

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juxtaposition that Southampton is lethargic, unrefined, and not a popular place to visit.

Beata grew up in a metropolis in the south of Poland with almost 2 million inhabitants. Although her hometown is around 8 times the size of Southampton, when she moved to Southampton in 2005, she did not feel safe, as she outlines here:

**'I wouldn't be going out in the evening** [in] Southampton, walking on the streets...so the sense of...crime that happens definitely has always been - I was kind of **on guard** and always thought that **maybe there's more crime happening here** than where I used to grow up in.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.36)

She sums up:

**'As a city, Southampton...it's too industrial**, just like...where I used to grow up... But...**I don't have a really, really strong feeling towards the city**...there's some really nice spots and the location is good, but **I wouldn't say that this is kind of my hometown** in a way, I wouldn't describe it as that, **it's just somewhere to be.**' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.35-36)

Beata's use of the phrase 'on guard' suggests a sense of feeling vulnerable in the city, whilst 'it's just somewhere to be' again signifies a negative attachment to the place, despite its 'really nice spots.'

In 5.2.1, we have seen that my participants' first impressions of Southampton seem to centre around the city's grey post-war architecture, showing how the historic event of the Southampton Blitz has had a dramatic impact on how the city is viewed today.<sup>50</sup> Their initial negative perceptions of the city are not unlike the wider 'Crap Town' portrayal<sup>51</sup> and are revealed in comparison to their hometowns which vary dramatically from a rural location with less than 21,000 inhabitants to a metropolis with a population of 2 million; my participants also contrast Southampton with other places in the UK such as London and Winchester, reinforcing Kenny and

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<sup>50</sup> See 2.1.2.1.

<sup>51</sup> See 2.1.2.6.

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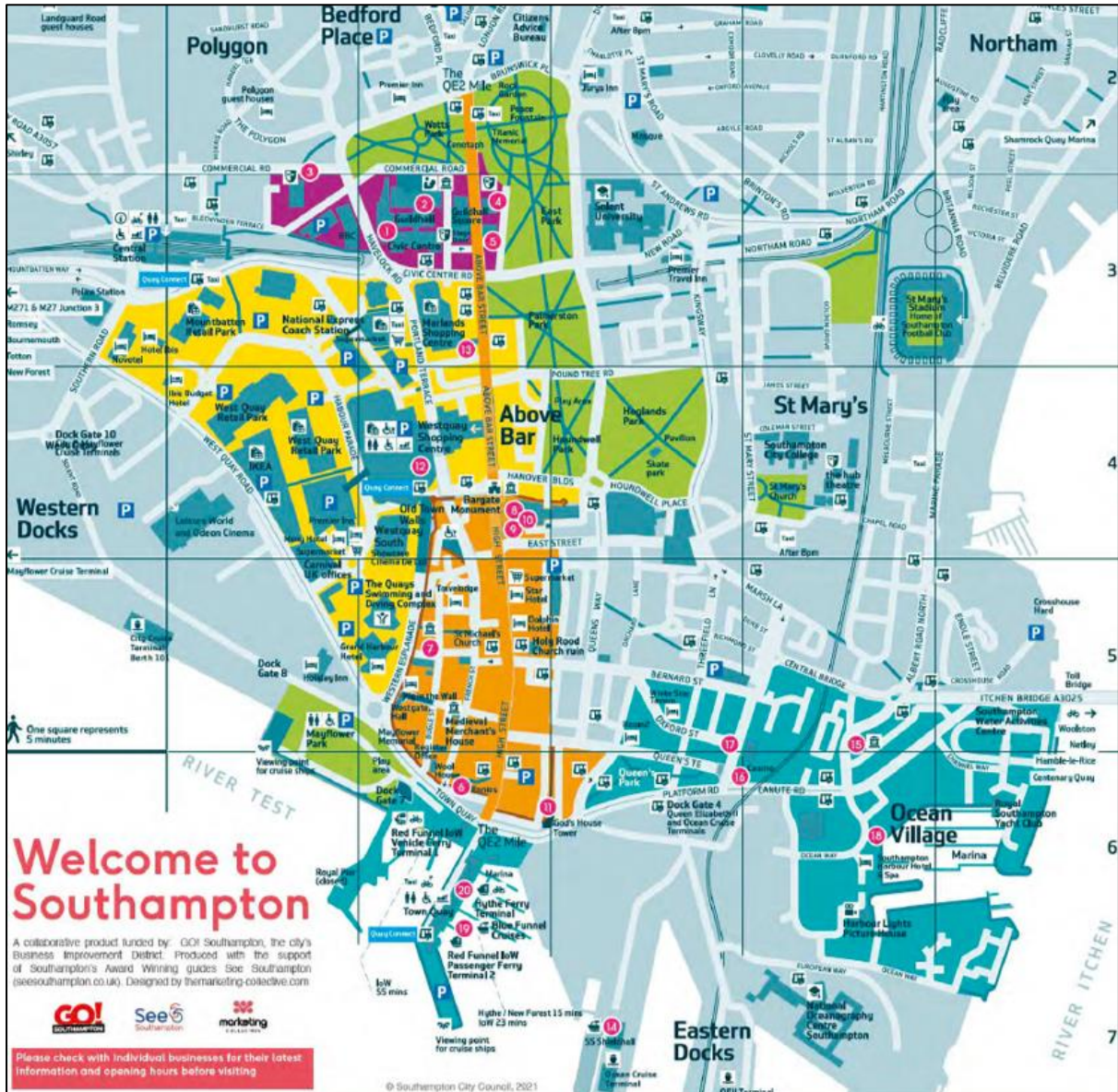
Madgin's (2016, p.4) theory that people orient themselves with reference to other places.<sup>52</sup> At this stage in their journey on arriving in the city, none of the participants describe it as their home, just 'somewhere to be,' some focusing on the aesthetics of the city, others on how sleepy or dangerous it is, showing that whilst there are some shared perceptions of Southampton, their experiences are all individual, shaped by where they have been before. With all my participants, there is a sense of having moved to the city for pragmatic reasons, whether due to their partners' jobs or lack of language ability, for caring responsibilities, to get out of a difficult housing situation, or for work or study. Making Southampton their home will be the next step in their place-making process, using the English language as a tool to help them.

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<sup>52</sup> See 3.3.1.

5.2.2 Change of the physical landscape and psychological perceptions over time

Figure 23 Visit Southampton map (Southampton City Council, 2021)



Maps, guides, and other visual mediums play an important role in experiencing the city and place-making (Duggan, 2017, p.3); through this progressive mapping of place, the city becomes a space to discern and build experiences upon.

Interestingly, all my participants relied extensively on this experience to delineate their sense of belonging, making use of guides and maps in English, as well as buses, landmarks, and shops, to constitute their sense of the city as a place to live.

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In the following extract, Pilar refers once again to the guidebook she purchased on her arrival in Southampton and reflects on the changes since the 1990s:

‘When West Quay<sup>53</sup> was opened...I think that **changed the shape of the city**, and also Ocean Village. I think when they have started open up the Marina,<sup>54</sup> **developing it** - because it was an arcade when I came here twenty-odd years’ ago and I remember going to that arcade on Sunday with the family I was living with because there was nothing to do - **the city also has open up...it’s trying to change the face...but if we stop and consider an industrial city with nothing to see...because that is how it was considered.**’ (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.12-13)

Moreover, as their city experience developed, their narratives underline the sense of place and change, often expressed in terms of a civic identity, encompassing the process of establishing and situating themselves within the city vis-à-vis their participation in the local social, political, and economic structures (Viola, 2020, p.103). Pilar speaks positively about the modifications relating to buildings and areas in Southampton, using verbs such as ‘change,’ ‘develop’ and ‘open up’ to indicate the scale of transformation, particularly in contrast with the image of ‘an industrial city with nothing to see.’ In a similar vein, Aude comments on the modernisation of buildings over time:

‘I definitely think **Southampton has changed massively**...probably in the last 15 years... Even just the uni...has changed a lot...they've got **some really nice new buildings**...it's **modernised**... Even...in town now...around Debenhams, they've **pulled down a lot of buildings that were really dreary**...and **now there's some...nicely places.**’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.16)

Pilar continues to talk about the positive changes in the city, which include improvements to housing as well as to shopping and hospitality venues:

‘They've **opened the Watermark**<sup>55</sup> next to West Quay...I think **that’s a very good thing and I like that**...and then **the other thing I like that is being**

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<sup>53</sup> See Figure 23 – yellow zone.

<sup>54</sup> See Figure 23 – turquoise zone.

<sup>55</sup> See Figure 23 – Westquay South, yellow zone.

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**regenerated** here and I thought I hope it continues is Woolston<sup>56</sup>... **Woolston is now really, really pretty, it's fully gentrified.** Don't know where I'm going to live when they finish gentrifying this area and they charge me *[laughs]*.' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.14-15)

In addition to housing and retail developments, Pilar talks about things to do in Southampton:

'When I [first] came here, the Museum of the Titanic<sup>57</sup> was a small thing, in a beautiful setting... Another time there was going an exhibition of the Titanic...through all Europe that was remarkably outstanding, so **it was a shock to see that in the city where the Titanic left, there was hardly anything.** And so **the SeaCity Museum...**that [now] holds the Titanic<sup>58</sup>...I think it's OK and **I like it** when I went there first time, but they **need to do more...** You have the Boat Show,<sup>59</sup> but obviously what the people on the Boat Show do, what do they do? They have to walk all the way [into town]. There is now three or four cafes there...but **there is nothing...for the cruise passengers...[they] don't even stay.**' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.13)

Pilar explains how the museum has developed but indicates that more change is needed in future to encourage cruise passengers and those attending the Boat Show to stay longer in Southampton. Her criticism seems to be around a lack of strategy from local government, which changes according to which party is in power at any given time:<sup>60</sup>

'I think **Southampton has a lot of potential if only time and money was applied to develop a proper strategy... There were many plans...**since I first came here to the city. At some point...there was a plan to actually demolish the walls of the city. Can you imagine, demolish the walls? Yes - demolish, to regenerate the city! Then there were people going to Barcelona to see how Las Ramblas was restructured to try to develop something similar.

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<sup>56</sup> See Figure 23 – visible from Ocean Village across the River Itchen.

<sup>57</sup> Figure 23 – number 6, orange zone.

<sup>58</sup> Figure 23 – number 1, pink zone.

<sup>59</sup> Figure 23 – Mayflower Park.

<sup>60</sup> See 2.1.2.4.

But of course, **every time...the local government changes, something changes within the city.**' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.9)

Whilst more could be done in Southampton to develop tourist attractions and encourage spending in the area, we can see that the participants overall have a positive view of how the city has developed over time. Though Southampton has physically changed over time, it has also altered in perception in the minds of my participants, which corresponds with the fluid concept of a city and underlines how their belonging is negotiated in a flexible way (Mar-Molinero, 2020, p.15; Relph, 2016, p.33). Their narratives of progressive appreciation of Southampton independently formed against the broader political background of Brexit provides a nuanced account of belonging which interrogates the relationship between place, politics, and language.

### 5.2.3 Southampton as a port city

The city of Southampton is marked by the cruise industry and the port, which though very active does not connect the people to the sea closely. However, the arrival of cruisers at the station and the overwhelming presence of taxis used at times of boarding is always a surprise, and accentuates the fluidity of the city. Tourism, the leisure industry, and its associated wealth add a lustre to the city that all my participants noticed very quickly.

'When I was going on a...field trip cruise with [my] students, I looked at the city from the cruise... **From the ship, you could see the city like a huge park** - and the barrier was the sea. And I thought that was **a beautiful, beautiful image of the city** because you don't see a city, **you see loads and loads and loads of trees with some houses, and then you do not have the barrier, the frontier is the sea.**' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.8)

Pilar's portrayal of the city as seen from the sea depicts it as 'a huge park,' suggesting it is very green, and with the sea not as a 'barrier' but as a 'frontier' – a border which can be crossed. Building on the notion of borders, Sophia describes the feeling of the port being connected to other places around the world:

**'It feels that the city is not disconnected even though we are in an island,** in a different language, different culture. **Somehow there's always a**

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**connection back...to Europe**, back to even to Greece...**there is a diversity...it feels like there's always a connection to the rest of the world in one way or another because of the people that come here and there is always a reference...to out of...Southampton.**' (Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.4-5)

Sophia draws attention to the diversity in Southampton, whereby the mix of people creates a link to other parts of the world. For her, there is 'always a connection' to other places and the possibility of travelling 'out.' The openness to the world is also encapsulated in this extract from Angélique:

**'There is a lot of ship and exchange with the outside...so...we can meet that mind of people.'** (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.9)

Engagement with 'the outside' suggests the city is not insular, and Pilar believes that the history of Southampton as a port has added to this openness:

'I think you can change the mentality of people that have travelled... Travelling, even if it's minimal, opens horizons, and perhaps the fact that the city...**there have always been foreigners through history in the city...that means that the people in the city have always been accustomed to trade with foreigners** - perhaps not with immigration, but with travellers.' (Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-pp.9-10)

In addition to the attitude of the people, Sophia shows how the city's port status is evident in the buildings:

'I feel Southampton as a port...**I feel the nautical history...in the architecture** a lot, so when I will walk around, especially closer...to the sea front, I can feel the connection to the sea and how perhaps it was used in the past. Now in terms of language...there are references like **you'll see in pubs lots of names that are linked to...[ship] captains.**' (Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.20-21)



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Sophia's description shows how some of Southampton's buildings seem to embody its nautical connection through language, and Southampton's cruise industry<sup>61</sup> was mentioned by several of my participants, with Angélique supplying a photo showing a cruise ship.

Figure 24 *Photograph received from Angélique on 12.04.21 showing the Itchen Bridge with a cruise ship*



She explains:

'In the background, you can see **that enormous boat, which is the size of a building**. We see six or seven floors. So **it's part of Southampton**... I don't really appreciate some boats like that exist...I can understand you go on holidays, but **it's a lot of pollution**...but I don't want to judge anything - **that's part of Southampton and I recognise that as it is** *[laughs]*.'  
(Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.66-67)

Marianna adds:

'I think the only downside of living here that close to the water is that sometimes I get a kind of smell...the **fumes from the ships**...sometimes...it's just constant. But...I think Covid might have made it

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<sup>61</sup> See 2.1.2.3.

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worse because...the ships they're kind of stationing here or there, like they kind of move in and out. So yeah, that's the only downside I can see.'

(Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.53)

Whilst pollution from the ships is mentioned, and cruise trips are not to everybody's liking, my participants see that the industry is part of Southampton, and it is also a constant reminder of the city's port status:

'I would hate going on cruise and [my husband] would hate going on cruises, but **it...reminds us that we are not far from the ferry** and far from going to France, crossing the channel... It's nice as well to know that Southampton is a port, is on the estuary and **connected to the sea and other parts of the world**. So that's...rather nice to be reminded... **It's a nice thing to know, that possibility of travelling...and escaping...**and remembering because when you are...by work, it was all very...limited.' (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.70-71)

Like Angélique, Geneviève also provided a photograph showing cruise ships, this time with the Ferry Terminal in the foreground.

Figure 25 *Photograph received from Geneviève on 21.06.21 showing Southampton Ferry Terminal*



Southampton's port status and its position on the tidal estuary, Southampton Water, seem to be valued by my participants:

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‘Very often, we walk along Woolston, with the estuary, up to Netley...especially during the lockdown, we walked quite often along the shore, so that's a nice reminder of the other aspect of Southampton, **the estuary, the ship coming in and out...all the business going on and then the...people, the anglers...and the birds...it's all lovely, we are lucky to have that on our doorstep.**’ (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.76-77)

Figure 26 *Photograph received from Geneviève on 21.06.21 showing the shipping activity and anglers from Weston Shore<sup>62</sup>*



The feelings accompanying the narratives around Southampton and making-home slowly develop against the grain of the city and its landmarks and specific features. Southampton, through its fluid structure and constant movement of people, things, and ideas, contributes to the atmosphere described by my participants. They perceive Southampton as ‘a global gateway’ (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012, p.152), recognising its long ‘nautical history’ with ‘a lot of ship and exchange with the outside,’ perceiving the local people as open to other cultures. The cruise industry is especially very visible to them, even if they choose not to go on cruises themselves, but the psychological connection to other places, that possibility of travel and ‘escaping’ is important to them as transnationals (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.199). The mobility it incarnates echoes their own sense of freedom, often described in terms of feelings of being at home in an open city.

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<sup>62</sup> Weston Shore (Southampton City Council, n.d.) cannot be seen in Figure 23 but is across the other side of the River Itchen, and this photo looks from Weston Shore towards the Eastern Docks.

#### 5.2.4 Southampton as a convenient location

My participants' reasons for their migration cover very different motivations, but they are all pragmatic ones (Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez, 2010, p. 58). With this in mind, it came as no surprise that my participants reported that Southampton is a convenient location for them, both in terms of its position within the UK and for accessing Europe. In line with Kenny and Madgin (2016, p.4), belonging is always articulated in their narratives in relation to previous experiences of their places of origin or where they have formerly been, expressing a sense of continuity, resilience, and self-reflection. Within the UK, Beata comments:

**'It's got a good location because it's got an airport, it's very close...to the New Forest, is very close to...London.'** (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.35-36)

Beata mentions transport links such as Southampton Airport<sup>63</sup> as well as the location being beneficial to visit other places, ranging from cities to rural areas, such as the New Forest, which Agnieszka supplied a photo of.

Figure 27 *Photograph received from Agnieszka on 17.10.21 showing the New Forest*



Aude adds:

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<sup>63</sup> See 2.1 2.3.

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**'Southampton is great in terms of location** because you're...**up to an hour and a bit away from London**. And...you get the **[New] Forest close by**. There's **good connections**...for me to go back home as well as it's...**quite convenient**, which to me...is important, and...an hour and a half away from [my partner's] family. So...**it's a really good place to be**... **You can be in Bath in not too long**, and if you want to visit nice places, you can do that as well, can't you?' (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.23)

Here, Aude draws attention to the convenience of being able to 'go back home' to France, and Geneviève echoes this:

**'For me and for my husband, the plus side was that we were so near the coast - that made the travelling easier** when we were travelling to **France...but also to get to London, to get to the New Forest**... I think **it's...really quite convenient living in Southampton**.' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.5)

Pilar compares the location of the UK with the US for accessing Europe:

**'My first intention had been to go to the US actually. You don't know how happy I am that I didn't... You want to be at hand, so if something happened...I can be in a few hours in Spain, and for a relatively modicum price**. Not always the same, because **when my Mum died...I had to pay a fortune to go...but it was possible...I was there**. If I had lived in America, it might not have been possible because...the planes take longer and it depends on where you live, you might have to take two or three planes, and by the time you get there, my Mum would have been buried.' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.24-25)

Here, Pilar highlights the practicalities of living in the UK as opposed to the USA, especially when difficult family circumstances arise. Whilst Southampton Airport is useful, the location of the city to London's airports offers more flexibility:

**'Location-wise...it's probably not the cheapest areas...because it is quite expensive. But at the same time...the necessity of, for example, flying to Poland, being not too far from the airport, so Heathrow and**

**Gatwick...Luton, an hour and a half, that just makes a big difference.'**

(Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.37)

As we see, the geographic location of Southampton as part of their migratory experience shapes my participants' wishes to belong. The city features primarily in their narratives as a way of fixing their identity as cosmopolitans. They contrast their experiences with that of leaving and what they have left behind positively, articulating where they seek to belong while keeping all the doors open to further migration. Despite its disadvantages as a congested, polluted, expensive place to live, Southampton's 'convenient' location and transport links are seen as positive by my participants, in line with their value of pragmatism. As well as the city's advantageous position within the UK and on the south coast, it is practical for accessing Europe and beyond, described as having 'exceptional connectivity' (Visit Southampton, 2021). Whilst my participants are physically rooted in Southampton, their connection here is always seen in relation to other places, which are not necessarily close geographically but are strongly linked in their minds (Sassen, 2005, p.38). Further, their sense of belonging extends beyond the immediate locality to other places which hold meaning to them (Jones and Jackson, 2014, p.5).

### 5.2.5 Access to open and green spaces

In making yourself at home in a densely urbanised city, green spaces - often associated with the UK experiences of cityscape even in London - feature as one of the most attractive landmarks for my participants. Despite the monumental architectural side of Southampton and its equally oppressive social housing, green spaces are always talked about in terms of a positive experience of the city. Several participants commented on the spaciousness experienced in Southampton:

'Something that strikes me here is **the sense of space.**' (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.11)

Angélique considers this in terms of less crowding:

'In London, there is too many people compared to Southampton... **There is not as many people as in London**, so that's really nice in Southampton.'  
(Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.10)

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Marieke adds more detail, with Belgium as a comparator:

‘Like UK for me in general, **sense of space is very important** here. For me it was like...a very big difference. Belgium is a very compact country and it's really hard to get away from people, while I find it a lot easier here. Also, **I find it a lot easier to access green space**...actual green space...not the kind of, you know, ten square meter park which you get in Belgium. In Belgium...if you really want...green space, you have to travel all the way to the south of the country, while here...**it's a bus ride away or sometimes even a walk away**, and that has been something that I've really appreciated and it was one of the reasons also why I wanted to come back<sup>64</sup>... - after being in the UK, Belgium feels very claustrophobic... While renting, it's often hard to kind of have a garden...and then **having green space at close range...just helped a lot.**’ (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-pp.14-15)

Whilst Belgium is Marieke's country of origin, Marianna's was Poland, but she visited Belgium and draws a similar comparison to Marieke:

‘**What attracts me to...Southampton is that it has so many green areas.** I remember I went to Brussels for three months in 2015 just to collect the data...for my project, and...in the weekends, I would go and try and kind of relax as much as I could...I really desperately looked for...green areas, which there were some, but not as many, and I remember that my husband came to pick me up and we came to Southampton, and I couldn't believe that **the air was so much fresher and it was so much greener than...Brussels.** So...I realised...how much I missed this place...I was back in Brussels...when I had this feeling... When I was here, before I had gone to Brussels, I had those feelings that I missed Poland, but as soon as I went to Brussels, I missed Southampton rather than Poland...I probably realised more...that **my life is...kind of evolving in a way in Southampton, it's more...rooted in Southampton now than it was in the past or...that I realised.**’ (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.23-24)

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<sup>64</sup> Marieke first moved to the UK in 2018 to Brighton for her partner's job; they returned to Belgium once his contract ended but she returned to the UK in 2020 during the first lockdown to look for work, first moving to Winchester, and then to Southampton in 2021.

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For both Marieke and Marianna, a sense of spaciousness and access to green space is important to them and has helped them to settle here - to feel 'rooted,' as Marianna says - since individuals cherish places that hold significance to them (Savage et al, 2004, p.103) and feel a sense of insideness when they identify to it (Relph, 2016, p.49). Other participants also value the numerous green spaces which can be found in and around Southampton:

'I like the fact [in Southampton] that we are **so close to the New Forest and nature which I really like.**' (Agnieszka-J2S-16.05.21-p.1)

Marianna explains the contradiction that can be found in Southampton between the fact that there are lots of people living here, yet you can find quiet green places:

'In Sholing...in the previous house...that we rented...we were...lucky because...we felt as if it was outside of Southampton, so we had that busy road...[but] **across the road...there were just playing fields...and I think that there were some horses as well...nature**, and...I just like the fact that...you can't see much life apart from...the trees, but like human life, like no cars, nothing...and yet you are in Southampton...**there's like contradiction, where Southampton is a lively place...there's a lot of...people...and yet, there are some places in Southampton where you can't...see many people around.**' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.17-18)

Angélique also draws upon Southampton as a city of contrasts:

'What is appreciating Southampton is also **all that green space...construction and integrating the green...I love that**, I appreciate that.' (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.79-80)

and she provided a photograph illustrating this. Even the smallest green corners of the city appear to attract participants' attention and appreciation of the place in which their lives are being constructed.



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Figure 28 *Photograph received from Angélique on 12.04.21 showing a green space in Woolston*



Another aspect of natural beauty to be found in Southampton is the sunsets:

‘You know the Kuti’s restaurant and that place near West Quay...in front of the pub Dancing Man?<sup>65</sup> **The seaside at that point, it's a place you can see the...sunset...** At the end of the weekend, it was a nice moment to walk there...you can just nourish yourself with what you see and the peacefulness of that moment.’ (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.35-36)

Pilar compares the sunsets in Spain with those in Southampton:

‘In Spain...the sunsets are outstanding...and this is exactly the same in Southampton. **The sunsets are so beautiful.** We miss on them because we don't look at them. But if you stand somewhere in the city where you can see the sunset...and you look at it, **it's a very long sunset, beautiful...**you can appreciate the gradual changes, **it's one of the things I really like about Southampton, the sunsets,** and that doesn't happen everywhere in the country...’ (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.36-37)

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<sup>65</sup> The location being described can be seen on Figure 23 on the edge of Mayflower Park by Town Quay.

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Pilar also supplied a photograph of a sunset in the city centre.

Figure 29 *Photograph received from Pilar on 15.10.21 showing a sunset over the city*



She explained:

‘This [photo] was trying to reflect the colours of one of those sunsets...this is near the city centre...I actually stopped and stayed there for 10 minutes watching at it with my daughter. And I recommend it...if you have never stopped to look at the sunset, you don't need to be in a garden - obviously that's more beautiful - or near the sea is more beautiful, but the sunset is going to be the same, everywhere you are...when you look up, and **this is one of the things that I associate the city with - beautiful sunsets.**’ (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.36-37)

It is interesting that several participants talked about Southampton's sunsets, highlighting this as a regular, colourful feature, perhaps providing a welcome

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contrast to the grey architecture, allowing them to find a sense of connection to place through beauty.<sup>66</sup>

My participants value the spaciousness that is to be found in Southampton, perceiving it as less crowded than elsewhere, and close to nature, with beautiful sunsets. This association with green spaces has allowed them to feel connected here - in some cases even 'rooted,' as Marianna voices - as they have developed an emotional attachment to these places (Savage et al, 2004, p.103) and a sense of insiderness, of feeling settled and relaxed in them (Seamon and Sowers, 2008, p.45). Further, they appreciate contrasts within the city: that it can be busy yet quiet, and industrial yet green - simultaneously. Again, in line with Kenny and Madgin (2016, p.4) my participants view Southampton in comparison to other places, such as London, Brussels, and Spain, but the role that the green spaces within the city play is not to be underestimated in terms of the strength of rootedness some of the participants feel, as the spaces are important for their wellbeing (Swanwick et al, 2003, p.104).

### 5.2.6 Southampton's culture

Compared to other British cities, Southampton does not rank highly for its cultural life. Yet for my participants, Southampton as a multicultural city offers a wide range of experiences with its theatres, festivals, cinemas, museums, and restaurants to name just a few, even if it cannot compete with London or Manchester. Culture in a multilingual city is often presented as a possible opportunity to engage diverse communities and Southampton has not escaped this trend. For example, Vaisakhi has been celebrated by thousands of people in Southampton in April every year, excepting during the COVID-19 pandemic (George, 2023). Residents line the streets as they take part in the traditional Nagar Kirtans procession. Furthermore, Southampton's first ever Black Businesses, Art, and Music (BBAM) Festival took place in October 2023 (Black History Month, 2024). In comparative terms, my interlocutors always assess Southampton against the rich and nationalistic European context they come from, as well as other places in the UK that they are familiar with.

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<sup>66</sup> I also have a lot of photographs of sunsets in Southampton!

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**'I know that Southampton [has] the reputation of being dull and being not very interesting and not very cultural and...so on and so forth...'**

(Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.5)

Geneviève's comment reinforces the negative image that is often portrayed of Southampton, using adjectives such as 'dull' to make her point.<sup>67</sup> Linked with this, my participants were not enthusiastic about the culture in terms of the arts in Southampton, describing it as 'dead':

**'That's the thing in Southampton, we always felt culturally, it was a bit dead...there's nothing much going on. And...I come from a place...where there's festivals right, left and centre...all the time. It's half the size [of Southampton], but there's...three theatres, one is...a national theatre, so all the big things in Paris...end up there as well...there's load of things going on all the time...and that's why Southampton I think was a bit dead... You've got The Mayflower with a bit of...West End shows...and the Nuffield...fortunately was really good for some stuff. But...to me, it wasn't at the level of what I was used to at all, it was...completely not in the same scale.'** (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.20-22)

Hope agrees with Aude, and uses Paris as an example to compare with Southampton:

**'I definitely miss being in Paris...because of...the access to French culture... I can access French culture here in this country of course with technology, but it's not the same...from...maybe going to physical theatres, meeting people, discussing thing, you've got less exposure being in...England...so that's why I miss the cultural life...and maybe...big lifestyle, being in an urban city, whereas it's still Southampton city here, but...it's suburban, it's like semi-green, it's also countryside as well.'** (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.16-17)

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<sup>67</sup> See 2.1.2.6.

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Hope's depiction of the city as 'suburban' and the contrast with Paris suggests a slower pace as already voiced by other participants.<sup>68</sup> Most of the cultural activity within Southampton seems to stem from the various groups of people living here:

**'There are so many things happening, there is a Latin radio station...there are lots of things happening...in communities, that Mela Festival and everything... I don't think you can now disentangle the city from the cultural...springs that has come out. I think the city has its own culture.'**  
(Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-pp.7-8)

Pilar considers that the diversity of the city is the driving force of its 'own culture,' and Geneviève comments similarly:

**'Not a beautiful city but it is good to see so many different people living here.'** (Geneviève-WhatsAppGroup-18.02.22-p.7)

In terms of different groups of people living in the city, Beata describes an art project which involved the Polish community:

**'Years back when I was walking in the city and I knew that there is this guy who does some kind of guerrilla mosaic around the city and when we went to the park, I...stumbled upon that and I was like...is this just a coincidence? ...maybe it's a symbol for something else? But I thought no, that just looks like Warsaw Mermaid. And so...I checked, I've contacted...that artist and he says, yes...it's because there was this...St Mary's...community event...where they were doing the mosaic...for...different communities and one of the communities was Polish community, that's why there is a...Polish mermaid there, really nice... It is a symbol of Warsaw...it's about her protecting the city...it's always pictured with shield and sword.'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.44-45)

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<sup>68</sup> See 5.2.1.

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Figure 30 *Photograph received from Beata on 18.03.21 showing the Warsaw mermaid in East Park*



Whilst Beata did not participate in this project herself, seeing the Warsaw Mermaid in Southampton gave her a positive sense of being part of the Polish community here, and it is a physical reminder of the two cities' transnational links. Likewise, Geneviève highlights historic links with the French community:

'Visiting on two or three occasions **the Vaults** in Southampton...that was a very pleasant discovery to see...the old, the **Middle Ages connection with France**...the import of wine... It's lovely to discover that **Southampton is not limited to the port and to these fairly nondescript buildings that you see, but there is...a very important past**, and it was rather lovely to discover the old Southampton - what is left of it - and it's...quite a lot that is connected with the past.' (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.72-73)

Geneviève shows the historical connections between Southampton and France and feels part of this. She highlights the Mediaeval import of wine in particular, which is a link to the wine club she attends in Highfield.

It is evident that my participants enjoy and take pride in the diversity within the city:

'When I think about Southampton, this was a totally different place, like culture-wise, **you can see different cultures, and it's even like there is a pride in it**, even like you know we're from this culture, especially from the

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Pakistani or Indian, which I really like because **they just celebrate things, and you know...they are welcoming you to that celebration as well.**'

(Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.31)

Marianna's description of the city as welcoming tallies with others from the Polish community (Winkworth et al, 2007, p.18). Further, the civic pride she elucidates is also reflected in my participants' connections with their culture in the city, through their interaction with objects, such as the mosaic, and experiences, like the tour of the Vaults, linking to history (Collins, 2016, p.175). The achievement of the city as a finalist as UK City of Culture 2025<sup>69</sup> is a far cry from my participants' initial impressions of Southampton as a slow, unappealing place, and the reminder of World War II's Blitz conveyed through the grey architecture. However, looking at the modernisation of the city over time, it is easier to see why Southampton gained recognition in this way. It is a port city with a long nautical history, a successful cruise industry, good transport links and a convenient location both in terms of its position within the UK and for accessing Europe, which my participants appreciate as it fits with their value of pragmatism. In addition, it is a city of contrasts, with 'concrete' and 'construction,' but also 'so many green areas,' a 'sense of space,' 'beautiful sunsets,' and a 'lively' mix of different groups of people.

My participants orient themselves to Southampton with reference to other places and whilst Southampton has physically changed over time, it has also altered in perception in their minds, corresponding with the fluid concept of a city. Their identity as transnationals is clearly asserted through their psychological connection to other places which are not geographically close and the ever-present recognition that Southampton is a gateway for travel, highlighting that their sense of belonging extends beyond the immediate locality to other places which hold meaning to them. The sense of space, and access to green areas, along with the diversity in the city has allowed participants to feel 'rooted' here, though each person's journey is individual, and their experiences varied. Yet sometimes they strongly express how their previous experience has shaped their sense of belonging, especially as hegemonic European cultural expectations are concerned.

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<sup>69</sup> See 2.1.2.6.

### 5.3 Place-making in Southampton

As already discussed,<sup>70</sup> Southampton is a multilingual cityscape, and it is situated by my participants as a place-making possibility. For most of them, individual experiences of where they come from shape their identification to the city, and they use narratives to contrast their own experiences of place and place-making. Interestingly, as educated cosmopolitans who have moved out of choice, they place an emphasis on adaptability and a kind of invisibility often instrumentalised through the use of English as a Lingua Franca (Wardle, 2010, p.386; Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7). Place-making, therefore, becomes central to their identification to Southampton (Blommaert, 2004, p.221) and the use of English mediates their ongoing feelings of settling and making home here.

‘A place is just a place, isn’t it? **It’s what you make of it.**’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.23)

As Aude conveys, a place is not merely a geographical location with particular features, but it can be interacted with, and a person has agency to ‘make’ a place. Whilst 5.2 showed how Southampton is perceived, it is how my participants connect with the city that is key, through place-making processes such as working in Southampton, accessing local services, and seeing themselves as part of the wider diversity of the city, adding to the multicultural. Section 5.3 explores place-making, where ‘what you make of’ a place indicates an active process in making sense of and engaging with it (Benson and Jackson, 2013, p.797)<sup>71</sup> as Aude has highlighted, and involves the use of English as a tool for facilitating this.

#### 5.3.1 Places that are important for my participants

‘I live quite close...to the Common, and **the Common is a very important place to me** here already because it's kind of **it's become my base... I often go**, I go every day in the weekend...I go for a run, but I often go for a walk as well, I go and pick flowers...I often go and sit there under a tree and read when I can.’ (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.12)

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<sup>70</sup> See 2.1.2.5.

<sup>71</sup> See 3.3.1.



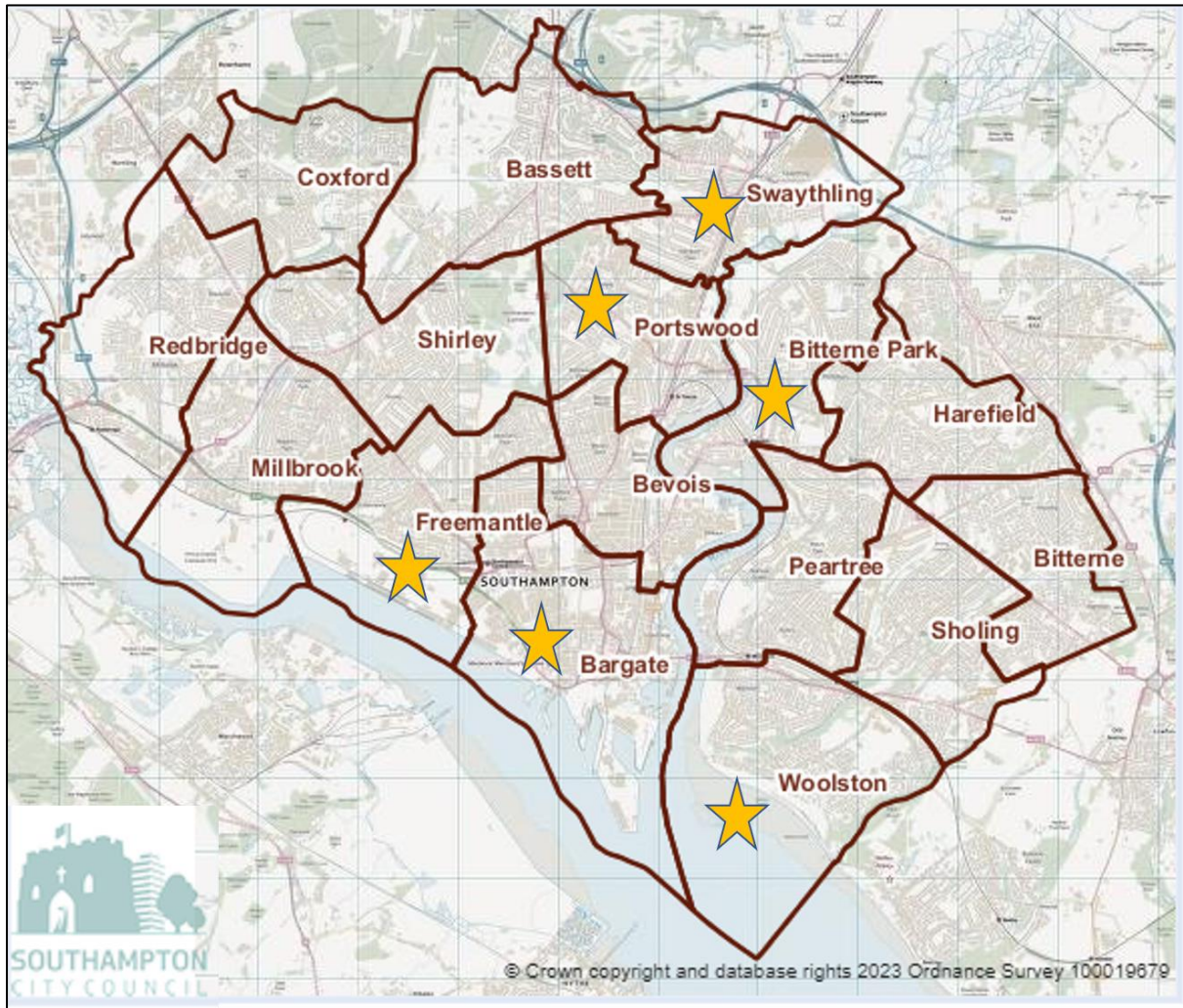
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Marieke shows how she has built a connection with Southampton Common and that it has become her 'base,' a fundamental part of her weekly activities. In the same way that she feels a bond with the Common, ascribing her own meaning to it (Tuan, 1977, p.6), other participants associate themselves with specific areas of the city, which can be seen in the following series of four maps, which I created using QGIS software. In the first map at Figure 31, the electoral ward boundaries have been overlaid onto the city of Southampton.<sup>72</sup> I have added yellow stars to indicate where my participants reside, with the majority living outside the city centre which is located within the Bargate ward.

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<sup>72</sup> The ward map shown in Figure 31 was correct for the time frame within which the research was carried out, though I note that the ward boundaries were changed afterwards in 2023 (Southampton City Council, 2022).

Figure 31 *Map of Southampton showing electoral ward boundaries in relation to where participants reside (Southampton City Council, 2023)*



The red lines on Figure 32 outline the electoral wards mentioned by participants. Comparing this with Figure 31, we can see that the wards cited are mostly wards where the participants live, or are neighbouring, which demonstrates association with their locality, and spatial belonging (Vallentin, 2019, p.26). The blue circles indicate points of interest to the participants, which are mainly focused within the bounds of Southampton City Council, with a few in the surrounding areas. Whilst there are some close to where participants live, the majority are focused around the city centre, and will be explored in more detail in Figures 33 and 35.

Figure 32 *Map of Southampton and surrounding area showing ward boundaries and points of interest mentioned by participants (QGIS, 2022)*

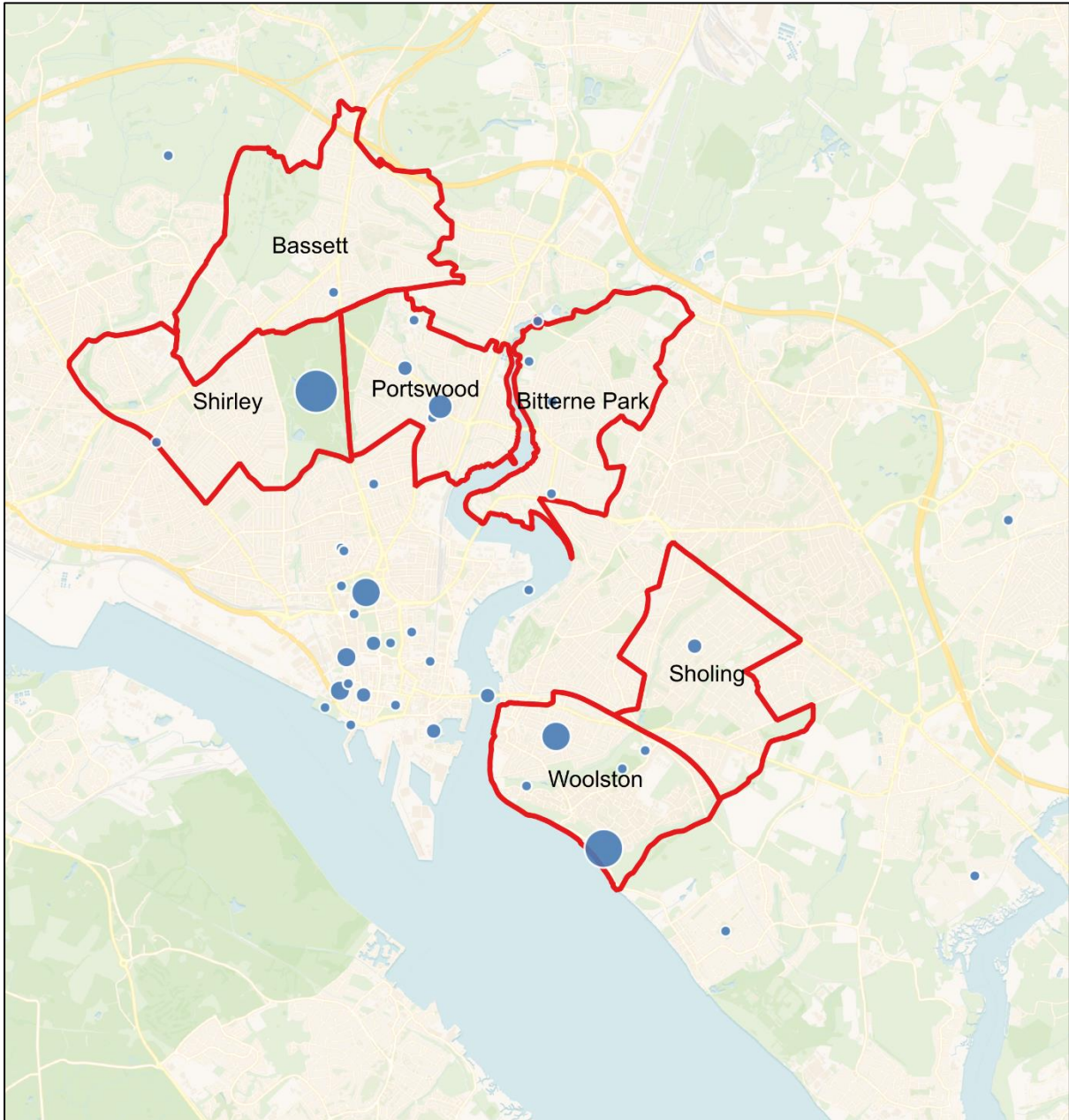


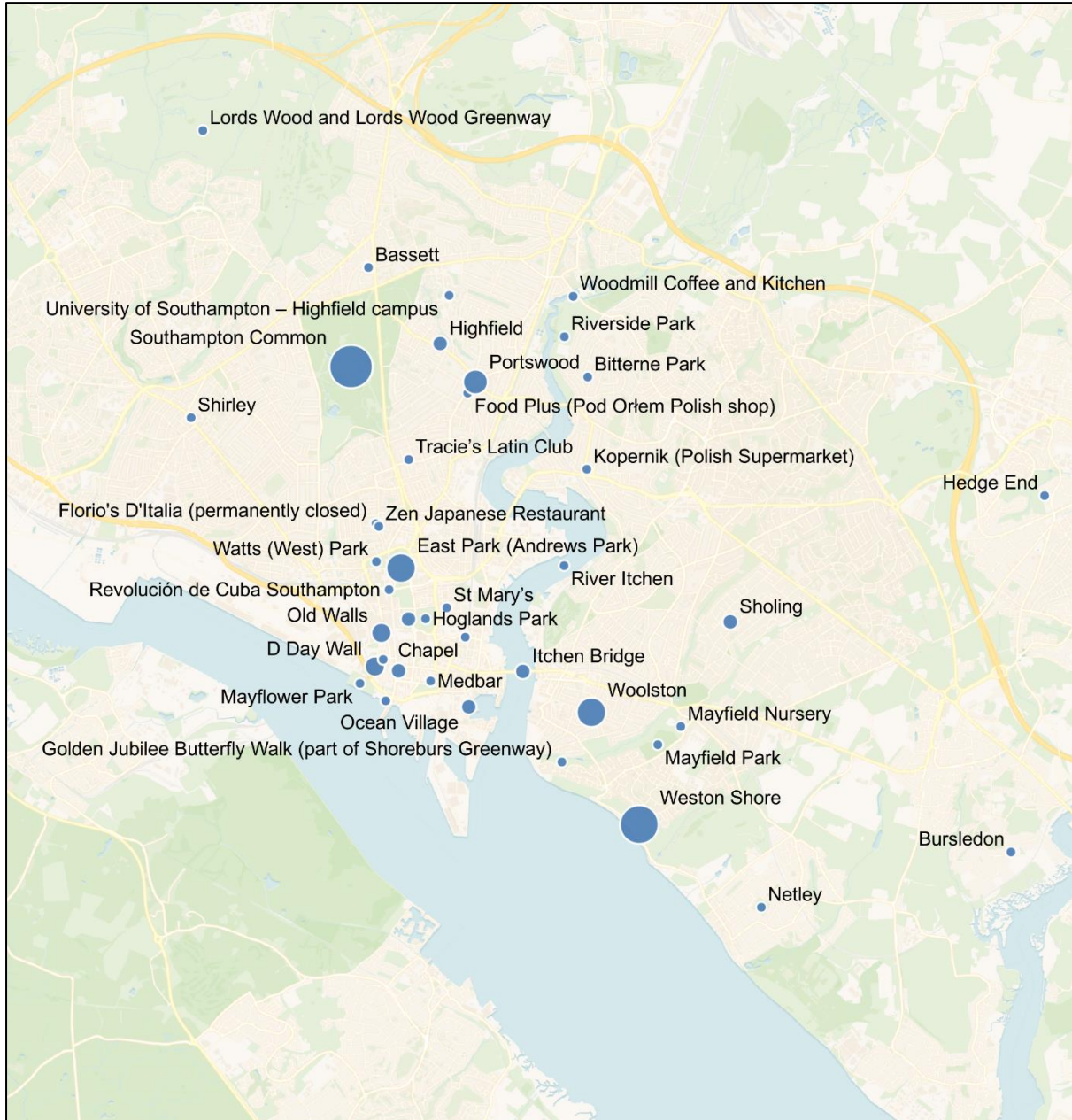
Figure 33 shows points of interest highlighted by my participants in Southampton and the surrounding area. The town of Hedge End with a population of around 21,000, and the villages of Bursledon and Netley, each with populations of less than 6500, fall under the jurisdiction of Eastleigh Borough Council, but are close to Southampton, around 20 minutes' drive away from the city centre (Eastleigh



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Borough Council, 2023). The rest of the points shown all fall under the area governed by Southampton City Council.

Figure 33 *Map of Southampton and surrounding area showing points of interest mentioned by participants (QGIS, 2022)*



The larger the blue circle, the more often the point of interest was mentioned by participants. The most cited place was Southampton Common, already described by Marieke above, and in line with its high tranquillity rating in the University of Southampton's recent (2024) research. However, Figure 33 shows other green

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spaces highlighted in the study, including the parks in the city centre as well as spaces outside of the centre areas, reinforcing the value placed on these areas.<sup>73</sup> The spaces outside of Southampton's central area range from parks such as Mayfield Park and wooded areas such as Lords Wood, to greenways,<sup>74</sup> such as the Golden Jubilee Butterfly Walk, part of Shoreburs Greenway; additionally, Weston Shore has direct access to the waterfront and is a popular place to visit (Southampton City Council, n.d.).

Southampton's green spaces allow nature to thrive and are places where participants can relax:

'I wanted the kids to...see what the woods looks like, what the park looks like, in different times of the year, and so in winter...**we pick out...ice sheets** in the morning or...in the summer...there's one really good place where there's so many ladybirds...**we go and look for the larvae and...the ladybirds**... I really want them to be noticing the things around them, especially the nature because I know **it can kind of cool me down...in our hectic lives**, and I think **Southampton is one of those places that is kind of relaxed but can be intense**, and especially now I can see with [my daughter], she's attending school and it's like full on day where I can...see that she's...really tired and I really want her to be...knowing that **there are places that she can go and relax...out of the house.**' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.12-14)

Here, we see how Marianna values the nature near her home and shares its benefit with her family. Of all of the types of places mentioned by participants, green spaces accounted for 38%, specific areas for 29%, landmarks for 18% and venues for 15%. Figure 34 provides a more detailed breakdown of types of places that were significant in this study.

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<sup>73</sup> See 5.2.5.

<sup>74</sup> Greenways are 'ribbons of open space that follow stream valleys' (Southampton City Council, n.d.).

Figure 34 *Types of places mentioned by participants*

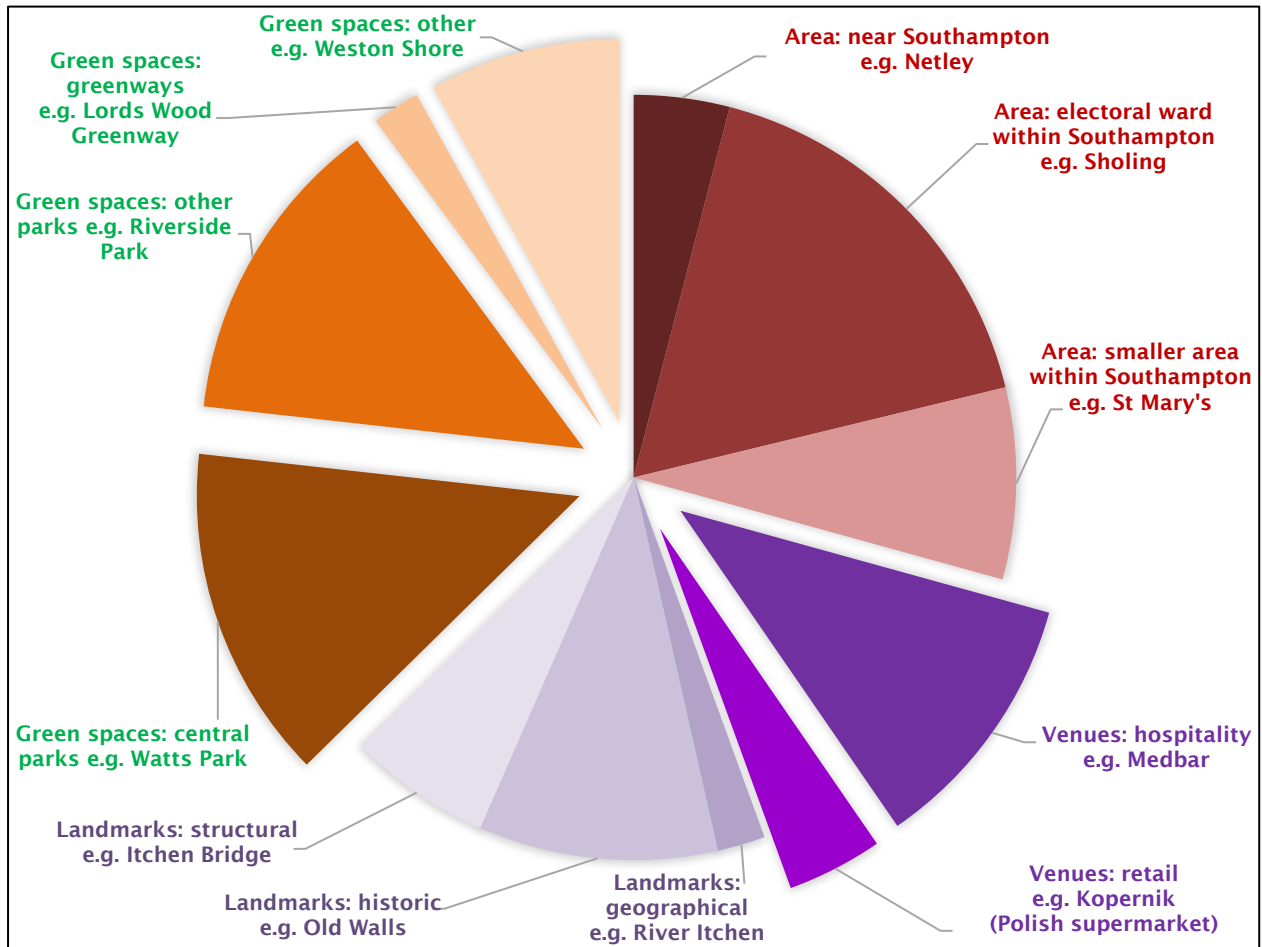


Figure 35 provides a closer view of the city centre showing places that are important for my participants. Again, green spaces such as East Park (also known as Andrews Park) and the other city centre parks as well as Mayflower Park, near Southampton Ferry Terminal, are highlighted as key places for my participants. Specific areas are such as St Mary's, Chapel and Ocean Village are named as they are used as navigational aids by my participants (Golledge, 1999b, pp.15-16), as well as landmarks such as the Itchen Bridge which is spatially prominent since it can be viewed from afar (Lynch, 1960, p.80). Additionally, historic landmarks such as the D-Day Wall (Maritime Archaeology Trust, 2020) are memorable (Lynch, 1960, p.78),<sup>75</sup> as Beata exemplifies in Figure 36.

<sup>75</sup> See 3.3.1.

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Figure 35 *Map of Southampton city centre showing points of interest mentioned by participants (QGIS, 2022)*

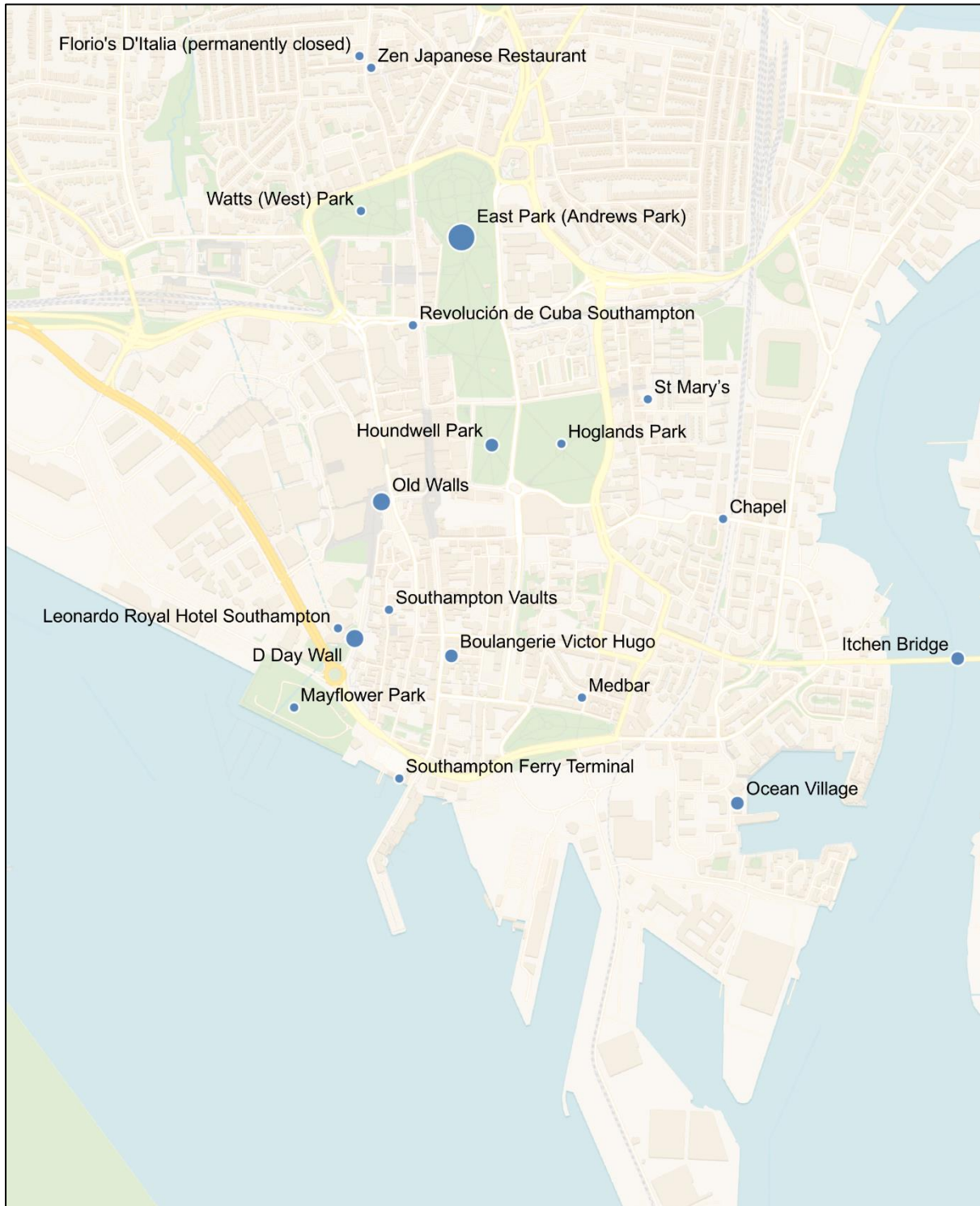




Figure 36 *Photographs received from Beata on 22.03.21 showing the D-Day wall*



Beata explains:

‘This is one of my favourite places near old walls, behind the Leonardo hotel. I learnt about it from...my manager when I worked for EU Welcome project. He is a licensed tour guide and I used to help him with interpreting at Old Walls walk for Polish community. **I like the wall as it's hidden and not many people know about it. It's a piece of history linking UK, USA, and Europe. Feels amazing seeing the soldiers' graffiti with their names. How many did not return?**’ (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.46-47)

In terms of venues, unfortunately the French Boulangerie Victor Hugo has closed (Cruise Southampton, n.d.) and so has the Italian store in Bedford Place, Florio’s D’Italia (Edgley, 2021).<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that Polish retail shops in Southampton are a visible marker of the presence of the Polish community within the city, such as the Food Plus Pod Orłem Polish shop in Portswood (Mastermedia, 2021) and the Kopernik Polish Supermarket in Bitterne Park (W00beit, 2018), shown on Figure 33, and there are many more across the city which demonstrates their success, as Hope describes:

‘**The city is being...influenced.** And there's been...different things, for example...I’ve notice that **there was a lovely Polish shop with lots of delicatessen that was open a few years ago** and that was new and obviously from the contribution of Polish nationals...or Polish cultured...maybe British Polish... **Southampton I would say...it’s very multicultural.**’ (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-p.34)

<sup>76</sup> Since completing my research, I noticed that a new Italian supermarket called Tan Market opened in January 2024 in Hanover Buildings in the city centre (Visit Southampton, 2021).



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Beata visits the Food Plus Pod Orłem Polish shop in Portswood to keep up to date with Polish culture as she often buys Pani magazine<sup>77</sup> as shown in Figure 37 and mentioned in one of our ethnographic interviews.

Figure 37 Photograph received from Beata on 02.04.21 showing Pani magazine



'I used to buy that magazine back in Poland. And...I always found it to...be really...high class in a way, so it had really interesting interviews or articles, sometimes some psychologists describing...how to deal with particular issues...and the fashion...was quite good... **I just really enjoy reading it because it kind of brings me back to...when I was in Poland when I used to read that... Nearly every time...I'm [in the Polish shop in Southampton] I would look if they've got...the latest edition.**' (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.6-7)

Beata also buys food for special occasions from the Polish shop.

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<sup>77</sup> 'Pani' means 'Ms / Mrs' in Polish.

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Figure 38 *Photographs received from Beata on 04.04.21 showing Easter food purchased from the Polish shop*



**'I would never...imagine not having something nice over Easter. So nice...tablecloth and nice food laid out because it's just something that we've always been doing, so...it's...very special occasion. So, Christmas and Easter, we would always...prepare...more fancy foods or bake some cakes, but also at least for Easter breakfast and Christmas Eve dinner, we would always...try to make it really...official and special.'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.13-14)

By purchasing items from the Polish shop, Beata is simultaneously connecting herself to Southampton through the physical entity of the shop, and the preparing of and eating food within her home, but also psychologically to the Polish community within Southampton, and to Poland (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.199; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1011). Beata also makes use of a Polish hairdresser and beautician. The Polishness that she experiences through accessing these services as well as the shop mirrors the findings of McGhee et al (2015, p.437). The Polish shops in Southampton are not just accessed by the Polish community, as Aude from France explains:

**'I'm not sure I've seen a French shop in Southampton 😞?! But I often shop at the Polish shop at the end of Bullar Road opposite the Station pub. I mainly go there because they have a great choice of bread. I'm a pasta fan and they have a good selection plus a choice of Milka chocolate. 🍷🍷'** (Aude-WhatsAppGroup-10.02.22-p.3)

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In contrast to the Polish community, other European groups such as French are less visible in terms of retail outlets. Aude laments the closure of Boulangerie Victor Hugo.<sup>78</sup>

‘There was a time where **there was a French bakery...Victor Hugo...and it was awesome... I would have...my little bread and also I was like, this is like being home...** And it was really a little cloud where I could be a little island, where I could be and **I could have this kind of Frenchness, which I really enjoyed...** I used to buy *baguettes* there and...*pain au chocolat*...and to me it was...**a bit of Frenchness**. There was like proper French, not the *baguettes* you buy in Sainsbury’s, nothing like that...it was...**proper what...I would buy in France...and that was lovely, I really enjoyed that.**’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.24-26)

Like Beata’s experience of the Polish shop, Aude found that she could experience ‘Frenchness’ at Victor Hugo’s but is sad that it has now closed.<sup>79</sup> Angélique has found retail outlets and hospitality venues that work for her:

‘**I miss the taste and food...I miss it from France, but I found it here...it takes me six months to find it, but...I found place, this fish shop. I found a butcher** on the north of the Common...another one in New Forest. And **we have found an association...with the food [where] we can have really good vegetables**, so we can make good food here because my husband is an amazing cooker.’ (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.37)

The search for familiar tastes from their countries of origin expressed by Beata, Aude and Angélique strengthens pre-existing attachments and plays an active role in belonging (Rhys-Taylor, 2017, p.11).<sup>80</sup> Whilst food preferences connect to places abroad, there is also a sense that my participants are adapting their tastes to what they can find in Southampton, as Aude highlights:

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<sup>78</sup> See Figure 35.

<sup>79</sup> I am also sad that Victor Hugo’s has closed. When I was teaching at Solent University, my French students used to rave about it, and that’s how I first heard about it, as they went there daily to buy their *baguettes* - I think one student might have brought a *baguette* into class, which initially sparked the conversation about Victor Hugo’s. One day, a French colleague invited me to go there for a long lunch and we ate *raclettes* and drank French cider together, and another time, we went there as part of a larger group to have drinks after work for someone’s leaving do. Later, when working at the National Education Union, I used to go there regularly to have business meetings with colleagues, and we enjoyed coffee and pastries. I think I had suggested it to them as a meeting place, but they already knew about it and had previously used it as a meeting venue as they are Francophiles.

<sup>80</sup> See 3.3.1.

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**'There's a place for everything, isn't it? ...I don't go to France when I have a curry...I don't go to France and go to the pub...why would I go to a British pub in France, you know? So, it's the same when I'm here [in Southampton]. Like why would I try to do French food? I don't even bother...I do it at home or I've got...another French friend here...so sometimes we do stuff but, that's it, I don't bother... The family sends me fruit as well, and parcels, but other than that, I do enjoy the diversity and it's fine... And it's like...I'm not in France and [so] ...why should I expect to have French stuff?'** (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.27)

Instead of being an obvious presence via retail outlets, signs of the Spanish community can be seen through the existence of dance get-togethers such as at the Medbar (Southampton Medbar, n.d.), the Revolución de Cuba (2023) and Tracie's Latin Club (2020) as well as the local radio station Fiesta 95 FM (2024), echoing Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez's (2010, p.50) findings of showing minimal socioeconomic presence.

Figure 39 *Photograph received from Angélique on 12.04.21 showing a poster advertising the salsa class at Tracie's Latin Club*



In 5.3.1, we have seen how ward names mentioned show participants' association with their immediate locality, whilst most points of interest are focused around the city centre, with green spaces being highlighted the most, reinforcing the value placed upon these to connect with Southampton. Participants also named landmarks due to their spatial prominence and memorability, whilst specific venues tended to be linked with food, such as the Polish shops. By identifying their own important places around the city, my participants signal their emotional attachment

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to the area (Savage et al, 2004, p.103). It is interesting to note how certain groups are more visible than others as a marker of a community, such as the Polish shops serving as a reminder of the Polish community present within Southampton, in contrast with the absence of material markers for other communities, but instead places where people can socialise and have fun together, such as with the Spanish community.

However, it is my participants' interaction with these places which is significant and how they ascribe meaning to them (Tuan, 1977, p.6), whether it is going to a green space such as Southampton Common to relax or whether it is purchasing special ingredients to prepare food for distinct occasions such as Easter. In particular, I note that the interaction with some places such as green spaces seems to be confined to the locality, whilst other relationships are inherently transnational; for example, purchasing food in a Polish shop is a physical act which anchors participants materially to Southampton, yet it also connects psychologically to the wider Polish community within the city, and to those living in Poland, reinforcing a transnational sense of belonging through the processes of buying, creating and cooking food (Huc-Hepher, 2021, p.73).

In addition, some of my participants' engagement with places in Southampton seems to link with their identities as women and related gendered roles;<sup>81</sup> for example, Marianna's use of green space includes passing on the value of it to her children in her role as mother (Ochs and Taylor, 1992). In line with Cairns and Johnston (2015), the selection and preparation of food is mentioned by Beata, Aude, and Angélique, though in Angélique's case, she purchases the food, and her husband cooks it. Although Hope does not specifically mention this responsibility, the fact that she knows what food is on offer inside a shop suggests that this falls within her remit too. Further, food is often tied up with the transmission of traditions, as shown by Beata's description of preparing special food at Easter and Christmas (Ochs and Taylor, 1992).

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<sup>81</sup> See 3.3.4.

In 5.3.2, we will explore in more detail the interactions with place: the place-making activities in which my participants are involved, which they access through the use of English.

### 5.3.2 Place-making activities in Southampton

Whilst my participants mentioned things to do in Southampton such as shopping and eating out, key activities for place-making were those in which they were more invested, in terms of their time, finances or identity, whether personal or professional. For all my participants, something to do in Southampton which had a purpose seemed to be important, be it a focus on studies, work, the home, relationships and family, or activities, including volunteering. It is through their experiences that they construct their sociality and indeed that their sense of belonging is negotiated. It is also important to mention their civic identity<sup>82</sup> in which they make use of the available resources and what is on offer for them as European citizens situated within Southampton City Council's structures (Viola, 2020, p.103). Their approach to the city remains utilitarian, and though they use other languages at home, their focus is predominantly on the use of English in the public sphere, rather than grounded into a multilingual experience of place. In terms of work, Beata explains:

‘My idea was to...go for a year to **earn some money**, get some **work experience, practise English**, and then come back to...Poland.’ (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.4)

Her focus is pragmatic, on developing her skills as well as being economic, and her goal was short-term, tallying with Winkworth et al's (2007, pp.12-13) research on the Polish in Southampton. Geneviève adds:

‘Almost immediately, I **got back into teaching** because I wasn't sure what I was going to do when we arrived in Southampton. So straight away...**I was integrated** because I taught...I met...colleagues and so on, so straight away you have some kind of **social interaction** with...other people... I've been **employed part-time or full-time all the time**, so that means that...it has

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<sup>82</sup> See 5.2.2 – Viola (2020, p.103).

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been **helpful for integration**...it does help, doesn't it? **When you actually...have a job...it does help.**' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.7-9)

Like Beata, Geneviève is practical, but accentuates the importance of relationships with others 'for integration.' In contrast, Marieke highlights the difficulty of lacking employment:

'The first lockdown was **a really tough period** because mentally **not having a job in such a time is extra stressful** because...**I do very much identify with the job that I do**, and you know, **give myself value because I have a job** and I know it's not right, but I do it anyway and...**I really felt useless**...I was very **close to having a depression.**' (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-pp.6-7)

Marieke shows how what we do is closely linked with our identity and draws attention to the value of a job through the impact on her mental health. In a similar way, Hope explains the importance of being 'able to contribute':

'**I think the feeling of belonging is very much conditioned to the ability...to be able to contribute.** It determines your feeling of belonging and...your confidence in belonging... **People are social beings, so they like to be in contact**... if they are not in contact and not able...to contribute...in some way... whether...a person is disabled, for example, or...**a foreigner like me**...I think **it's really valid for everyone**... **You've got to be able to do that thing that you want to do in life**... whatever you're doing or you're good at...**if suddenly you're unable to do that...it's very problematic.**' (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-p.65)

For Hope, having a purpose or contributing in some way is key to feeling a sense of belonging, especially as 'a foreigner,' and like Geneviève, she highlights the need for social interaction with others. Geneviève also links 'contribution' specifically with having a job:

'**I have been retired for almost 15 years, so my involvement in public life is limited**... **I am slightly concerned about the type of contribution you expect from me** [in your research] as I am not involved in the city's life beyond my own circle of friends and limited activities.' (Geneviève-J2S-17.03.21-p.1)

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As a retiree, Geneviève does not see that she is contributing in the same way as she was when she was working, indicating a withdrawal from 'public life,' though friendships and 'activities' remain valuable to her.

Pilar's first year in Southampton involved living with a family, teaching their children Spanish, and learning English at college. She ended up marrying an Englishman and staying in the city longer than she had anticipated. Later, she divorced, and continued her studies to degree level, juggling this alongside work and being a single mum:

**'[I] had [to] balance it out, studying full-time.** So, it was a big achievement... **Of the people that studied with me, I got on very well with them, but some of them...are now friends for life...**so that's something, plus of course **I am teaching now** in this university.' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.43-44)

Again, friendships are emphasised, alongside work and studies. Like Pilar, Sophia ended up staying in Southampton unexpectedly after her original reason for coming to Southampton was to visit her mother:

**'I decided to visit [my mother] and end up enrolling on a part-time IT and English course at City College,** whilst also working in a factory. After completing that course, I decided to do another course in Travel and Tourism, **with the scope that I will return to Greece soon after that is finished,** but **life had different plans for me - I started a relationship and had a child, and my life changed to that of a mother etc.'** (Sophia-J2S-12.04.21-p.1)

The narratives expressed by both Pilar and Sophia show how reasons for being somewhere can change over time and be complex and multifaceted, since belonging is constantly negotiated and reinterpreted (Eckersley and Vos, 2023, p.15; Peth, 2014, p.2).

As well as studying and working, relationships are prominent in my participants' lives, whether with a partner, family, friends, or colleagues. Marianna describes her surprise at meeting her husband at work:

**'[My husband and I] met at Tesco...because I worked part-time there during my studies and he worked there...**he's originally from



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Poland...but...our towns...are...about 300 miles away, so **there's no chance that we would have met back in Poland**, so we came to Southampton and I met him [*laughs*]. ...We bumped into each other to be honest... **I would never imagine to meet someone in such a place...someone that will be so important in my life**, never, but...there we go [*laughs*].' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.4-5)

Marianna had moved to Southampton on a temporary basis and had not imagined that she would stay longer, but relationships are part of us making place. Pilar shows how having a relationship can help to become part of a community:

'In one of my outings to a nightclub, **I met a guy that I was later on to marry and divorce** - thank goodness - but I have my baby [*laughs*]...so **that gave me a big insight onto what was life in the UK**, because of course a boyfriend is not like a friend. **A boyfriend tries to involve you in family and in this country.**' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.7)

It is this notion of 'involvement' with others that helps to engender a sense of social belonging to a place, whether through associations with colleagues or via personal relationships (Vallentin, 2019, p.27).<sup>83</sup> Angélique's focus is on family, friends, and homemaking as she explains here:

'**I have not tried to...be definitely and totally emerged in English life because I was also there to accept at home friends or family, when friends and family wanted to visit us...for that reason to be there when they come and to be free when they come. That also reason I have not tried to work...just volunteering to keep that freedom for family and friends when they come to visit.**' (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-pp.32-33)

With other participants, we have seen how they connect with people they have met locally, whilst Angélique's intention is to maintain relationships with those in France and so has deliberately not got a job or become totally immersed in the city, echoing Ranta and Nancheva's (2019, p.5)<sup>84</sup> 'patriotic' group, who have usually been in the UK for a short time and maintain close links with their native community.

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<sup>83</sup> See 3.3.3.

<sup>84</sup> See 3.3.3.

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Homemaking activities which my participants engage in include gardening and especially growing edible items, which is particularly popular with my Polish women.

Figure 40 *Photographs received from Agnieszka on 01.10.21 and 17.10.21 showing tomatoes and flowers in her garden*



Figure 41 *Photographs received from Beata on 18.03.21 showing herbs in her garden*



Cooking and baking are also activities based at home, which Agnieszka is fond of, again highlighting the importance of food for creating a sense of belonging.

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Figure 42 *Photograph received from Agnieszka on 24.02.22 showing home-made doughnuts*



Six of my participants have children, of whom three have children who are still living at home with them:

**'I have settled here, I have my small family here. I've got kids, my two kids, my husband and my Mum.'** (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.10)

Marianna uses the word 'settled' in conjunction with her family here, showing how this has helped her to build roots in Southampton, conveying an emotional aspect to her belonging (Gidley et al, 2018, p.3), and insideness (Relph, 2016, p.49; Seamon and Sowers, 2008, p.45). Pilar's daughter has now left home, but she reflects on her experience of getting to know others and make friends through her daughter and the engagement she had with the school:

**'I think...having a child, it's a very good way to meet people...differently. You go to the park and people talk to you, you talk to them. It's like having a dog...but I think this is even more integrating** because with your children in the school...during the first two years, you have to invite all the thirty kids to every birthday... So...**friendships have developed from that, and they're still there, strong**...some people were from Southampton, some people have moved from abroad, or from another parts of the city.'

 (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.18)

Pilar uses the word 'integrating' to show how her connection with the city through the relationships that she developed with other parents through her daughter going to school, emphasising the importance of being part of a community. This

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collective identity, oriented around groupness, links with Vallentin's (2019, p.27) concept of social belonging. Likewise, Marianna explains the network of Polish Mums that she became part of once her daughter started school:

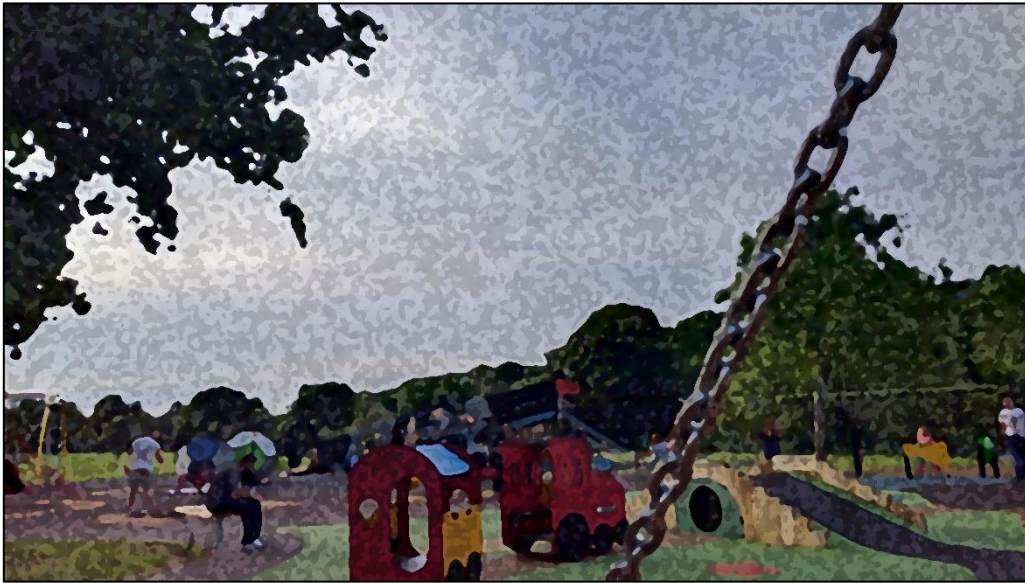
**'People at schools...immigrants...have this kind of relationship with schools... I wasn't really proactively seeking Polish people out, but at school...there is about five or six Polish Mums...of the children that started with [my daughter] and I have to say, they are...the nicest Polish people that I met here. It's so helpful and we...have the same kind of interests... We...want to be on the healthy side, and so we...exchange information about...different...meals...for kids. And...we have this...WhatsApp group where we...exchange things... When one gets an email...they shout, have you seen this about the school? ...we have this kind of...network...of Mums.'** (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.57)

Whilst Marianna had not sought out other Polish people when she moved to Southampton, she met other Polish Mums through the school who have created a 'network' of 'exchange.' She also highlights the playground as a way for her children to meet and connect with others:

**'It's...multicultural because many children come from different backgrounds and my kids have the opportunity to...interact with different kids... This is a delicate matter for us – but...[my daughter] comes home from school saying that she noticed that someone was crying and...she would never say the name first, but she was saying she was black or white in the face...she tends to...have this distinction between different people, like...how they look, and...[my husband and I] both don't know where she took that from because we never discussed this at home in the sense like, oh he's this or she's that...we're both kind of really, really open and we want the kids to be open and...it's...a hard thing for me...to...grasp - where she's taken this from and why she's doing this... So, I tried to...make the kids see different people...in the same...situations, like you know they play together...so that they...see it as normal part of everyday life rather than something different...'** (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.26-29)

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Figure 43 *Photograph received from Marianna on 08.09.21 showing a playground she visits regularly with her children at Mayfield Park*



Marianna expresses how the playground is a site for cultural learning and how she and her husband want their daughter to be open to difference, like they are, passing on their own values. Participants who currently have young children at home talked at length about parenting decisions related to culture, such as whether or not to send children to the Polish school, what languages to use at home with the children, and about their children's activities such as learning to play musical instruments. Various cultural practices were highlighted in the research, such as parents teaching their children about traditions, such as '*Śmigus-dyngus*, where you have a bucket of water and you just splash it on people [on Easter Monday].'<sup>85</sup> Similarly, my study revealed practices such as reading the Bible with children and explaining how the same religious occasion can be celebrated differently in various countries:

**'We don't go to Church that much, but me and my husband, we did teach [our children] about the festivals, but also the traditions in Poland, and how this is...maybe differently what it is here and how we celebrate.'**

(Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.25)

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<sup>85</sup> Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.22.

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Whilst talking about their children, participants also mentioned other family members who are here with them and able to lend a hand, often their mothers.

Not all participants have children or have family in the UK, and Pilar takes a wider view of family here:

**‘Marrying an English man helped me a lot understand English culture, cuisine, and then of course after that I had lots of very, very good English friends, and friends from other nationalities...that I consider my family. Obviously, this is the family I have in this country.’** (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.11)

Similarly, Agnieszka demonstrated the importance of connections with friends for her in the photographs she shared with me.

Figure 44 *Photograph received from Agnieszka on 17.10.21 showing an example of a coffee morning hosted at her home on Saturdays with friends*



Further, participants talked about how they spend their free time, being active and enjoying green spaces as well as accessing arts and culture, as already discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, they drew attention to hobbies and activities they are involved in, such as Agnieszka’s attendance at a wine club, which Geneviève also attends.

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<sup>86</sup> See 5.2.5 and 5.2.6.



Figure 45 *Photograph received from Agnieszka on 17.10.21 taken at the wine club*



Volunteering is another activity that several participants have been involved with in the city. Their experiences have been wide-ranging, from using their language skills at a French school for early learners and at a language line for British Gas customers as well as at Unity 101, a community radio station, to helping in a charity shop, a community art café, and at a social enterprise supporting people with mental health difficulties through gardening. Participants have also used their skills at advice services, including EU Welcome, and the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB). Geneviève describes her experience volunteering at the CAB:

‘I decided through a friend I knew who worked for the Citizens Advice Bureaux...I said **maybe I should...do something for English society...the community**, so I applied, and...I did some training and I work then just a general advisor... It was tough and I did learn a lot...about problems and things I never had to face before...people in debt...immigrants, lots of people applying for visas or tenant problems and so on, so **you really become aware of another side of...life in Southampton**, which is the same as in other cities really, but it made you aware because to a certain extent I've been privileged... [My husband and I] both had work...we were never in debt...and **suddenly, being faced with all the problems, that was an eye-opener and it was very interesting...and really made me aware of how**

**some people struggle in...Southampton.'** (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.12-13)

In 5.3.2, we have seen how my participants are engaged in a wide range of place-making activities in Southampton, from working or studying to homemaking and bringing up children to enjoying friendships and activities in the city. Again, gendered roles appeared as a theme in some of the activities,<sup>87</sup> considering the importance placed on building and maintaining relationships with family and friends, whether Geneviève's 'circle of friends' or Pilar's 'friends for life,' or the focus on family expressed by Angélique, Sophia, and Marianna (Seery and Crowley, 2000). Marianna's example of the WhatsApp network of Mums also shows the creation of connections between different households (Di Leonardo, 1987), and she further commented on her role in transmitting information about traditions and festivals to her children (Ochs and Taylor, 1992). Even Beata's and Agnieszka's fondness for growing herbs and baking links with the fact that women tend to be more involved in the preparation of food (Counihan, 1999).

Participants mentioned using languages other than English, such as Angélique using French with visitors from France, Marianna using Polish with other Mums at her daughter's school, and Beata and Hope using Polish and French in various voluntary roles; however, in most activities, English is used as a Lingua Franca, whether in a work or volunteering environment, through connections at children's schools or interactions in the playground, and at social events such as the wine club or having friends over for coffee. Sophia, Pilar, and Aude improved their English by attending courses at Southampton City College too. Overall, their approach to language is utilitarian, and fits with their pragmatic, ordinary approach to life. Some participants ended up staying here longer than initially planned and we have seen how reasons for being somewhere can be complex, multifaceted, and change over time, since creating a sense of place is a dynamic practice in motion (Benson and Jackson, 2013, p.807). Whilst difficulties such as unemployment and divorce are mentioned in their narratives, mine did not express experiencing any turmoil on arriving and settling in the UK, as with Armbruster's (2010) participants.

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<sup>87</sup> See 3.3.4.



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Overall, the theme of 'contribution' seems to be important, and Hope summarises it, bringing together the strands of work (whether paid or unpaid when considering childcare), pragmatism, and people:

'Maybe 'contribution'...is bigger than 'belonging' 'cause belonging is social, is your individual...enjoyment of it...whereas **contribution is a cultural contribution and economic contribution, a contribution to others**. But of course **in belonging there is...being part of the community...it's not just bricks and mortar...it's being with people and connected to people...** I think I see the contribution in terms of...your economic contribution... I'm not talking about...a wage you receive...**it's what you achieve...in the economy [and] in the community...**' (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.54-56)

### 5.3.3 Accessing local services

A wide variety of local services were mentioned by my participants, ranging from public transport, libraries and the Job Centre to Southampton City Council, health care services, local media, and charities and advice services. Whilst some services like the libraries and health care services are accessed regularly by my participants, others such as the Job Centre are not used by them, but they are aware of what is available. Schools and services aimed at specific communities are also important to them. My participants actively choose which services to access, mainly through the use of English as a Lingua Franca, and in line with established systems and structures, as is common with lifestyle migrants (Korpela, 2014, p.44). Some participants discussed local services in relation to their previous experiences elsewhere. Sophia expresses her delight at free library access:

'I started walking around [Southampton] and I realise there is a library... In Greece...if you're not a student...- [this] was in the 1990s -...you had to have...a certificate to get into the Public Library, and I did not have access, and I always liked books. So, **when I discovered there's a library [in Southampton] and I can have access to it, I was over the moon!**' (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-p.7)

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Angélique also considered differences in the UK compared with France, again reinforcing the relativity of places (Kenny and Madgin, 2016, p.4). She provided a photograph of The Samaritans 'talk to us' sign on the Itchen Bridge.

Figure 46 *Photograph received from Angélique on 12.04.21 showing the Samaritans advert on the Itchen Bridge*



She explained:

'I don't remember I saw that in France. But...for people...to see that things **with the...phone number on it...who feels the need to go to the suicide...when people really need...will use that...** It was really interesting [to see]. And here it seems...**in the town too, there is some place you can just...have a talk with someone**, I don't know who...**but it seems to be really helpful for people...without a house... I really appreciate that part in England that people are there if you need...** I never have the feeling that I have to call them, but it's really nice and I can also see people going and sit with the homeless...and have a chat...and asked if he needs anything... We don't have that in France like that, integrated in the life as it is here. **Also, the charity shop, we don't have that...in that quantity**, so...I appreciate that **we are...circulating the things, take care of people...[it's] part of the life of...people around here in the town.**' (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.76-79)

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Although the local libraries, charity shops, and assistance for the homeless and those experiencing mental health difficulties are UK-wide, not just specific to Southampton, they seem prominent in Angélique's mind. Likewise, participants with children consider services for them in terms of how they are different from what they imagined:

'When I took my daughter to nursery, one of my Spanish friends came to visit, and we went to pick her up and she said, "oh my goodness, **this place...looks like the United Nations - everybody is represented in this nursery!**"' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.9)

Marianna adds:

'What actually is really nice about this [Catholic] school is...**there are plenty of different religions, like children from different backgrounds, not only religion but like cultural backgrounds and ethnic backgrounds**, which is also **another good thing about this school which I didn't know prior to signing [my daughter] up** for that, so that was a nice surprise for me, because **I know that she's going to be learning about different cultures as well** because they bring up those topics.' (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.24)

Pilar shows how her daughter's experience at school was also a learning experience for her:

'The city has helped me and my daughter going to the school, a Catholic school, where they celebrated all faiths. So, **every time there was something going on, Eid, a Sikh celebration, they would also celebrate in the school, so that opened my horizons**. I had met people from different races, but this was really opening up even further.' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.10-11)

The self-reflection demonstrated here by Pilar is common for lifestyle migrants (Korpela, 2014, p.30). Further, participants mentioned schools aimed at specific communities, such as the French school highlighted by Hope (La Récré Southampton, n.d.). Marianna describes her involvement with the Polish school:

**'I want my children to be bilingual and I want them to be part of the...Polish, like learning about Polish and Polish language and Polish**

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**history**, so that's why I send...[my daughter] because [my son]'s still too young to a Polish school, so **[my daughter] attends Polish school.**'

(Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.60)

Whilst Marianna is aware of various services available to the Polish community and sends her daughter to the Polish school, she does not access everything available to her:

'You know **there is that...Polish association...**so they deal with all the issues that the Polish as a community has here...and **I think I could access this, but I really didn't want to for some reason**, I don't really know why not. This makes me think that...**I probably could help out...I could...go and try and work there, but I just...didn't want to**, I don't know why.'

(Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.14)

Marianna's selectiveness echoes McGhee et al's (2015, p.442) observations of Poles steering clear of formal community institutions, favouring impersonal interactions with more informal or commercial Polish amenities that do not necessitate formal membership. Other services aimed at specific communities include radio stations such as the Latin radio station (Fiesta 95 FM, n.d.) mentioned by Pilar, and community radio station Unity 101 (2019) where Beata volunteered.

In 5.3.3, we have seen how participants highlighted the importance of local services for them, often in relation to their experiences elsewhere, particularly emphasising the active choices they made in accessing them, and the use of English required. Whilst some services are accessed out of necessity, such as schools and health care services, participants also actively choose to access some services, such as libraries, radio stations, and the Polish school. Homemaking for them translates into a rather utilitarian use of what is on offer, and their narratives emphasised key activities and resources where the use of English needs to be performed to become a member of the locality, positioning themselves in relation to Sotonians (Bamburg, 1997, p.336). Whilst Pilar, Aude, and Sophia mentioned attending classes at Southampton City College to improve their English early on, others did not need to, as they arrived with a higher level of the language. Whilst my participants do use other languages at home and to help others through volunteering, their focus is on English as a Lingua Franca, with most local services being available to them through this

medium. Overall, they access services which are important for their everyday lives, connecting to their local area in an ordinary way. The feelings of newness and unfamiliarity they had when first arriving in the city have now changed into a commonplace normality, linking with the autonomy and interdependence stages of Pedersen's culture shock theory (1995, p.201; p.263).<sup>88</sup> This highlights the significance of daily actions in building connections and promoting integration within society, creating ordinary belonging.<sup>89</sup>

### 5.3.4 Diversity in Southampton

Diversity in cultural or linguistic terms is often described by my participants as characteristic of Southampton, and is something they appreciate, yet their definition of diversity refers to a cosmopolitan view of 'others' which often echoes European national narratives (Council of Europe, 2000). Themselves being white Europeans, their narratives are rooted in traditional conceptions of cultural diversity, which acknowledge and appreciate the differences among various cultural groups within society, and emphasise the coexistence of unique cultural identities, traditions, languages, and customs while promoting mutual respect and understanding among them (Council of Europe, 2000). Earlier in the chapter, we emphasised that Southampton's status as a port gives it a diverse quality<sup>90</sup> and that many activities in the city are built around the mix of people living here.<sup>91</sup> Aude reflects on the general diversity of the people in Southampton, and especially how it is greater towards the city centre:

'I work with a lot of people from different backgrounds...**I used to work in Shirley and there was mainly like white British people there, but now I work in the city centre and there's people from loads of different backgrounds and different nationalities** and therefore I end up talking to a lot of different people from all sorts of places in Asia, Africa or everywhere. And...we understand each other really well. It's lovely actually, it's really nice, we just get it. You know, they struggle with English sometimes a lot more

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<sup>88</sup> See 3.3.2.

<sup>89</sup> See 3.3.5.

<sup>90</sup> See 5.2.3.

<sup>91</sup> See 5.2.6.

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than I do, but we...kind of...get each other [*laughs*] which is good.’ (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.38)

Aude’s narrative makes clear that she enjoys working with a diverse mix of people, displaying a cosmopolitan view, with openness and readiness to interact with difference (Wardle, 2010, p.386; Hannerz, 1990, p.103), and there is also a shared understanding around using English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7).

Pilar makes a comparison between the diversity in Southampton and where she grew up in Spain:

‘When they first took [my daughter’s] school picture and I took back to Spain to show my family in Christmas...my Mum said, **every face, skin colour, religion, dress, is represented in this picture**. And it’s true. And I haven’t seen things like that because when I was growing up in Spain, people were like me, usually with dark hair. Some of them blonde and blue eyes, but a few with olive skin. The majority was white skin. Never seen anybody from any other race. Olive skin is normal in my country, we consider that white...because that’s how...it was [but] it’s changing now.’ (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.10)

Pilar also describes Southampton as more diverse than Winchester:

‘One of the things that I can see about the city [**Southampton**] is a very **diverse city**... My daughter went to a very good college...in Winchester...and it was only after a year at university, when she told me one day that she had been unhappy in that college... And I asked her why, and she said...I only saw a Muslim person, I hardly saw any black people, any Chinese. So, **my daughter was used to that diversity in the city of Southampton** to go to school, even the Catholic schools, and to see all that diversity, **and she moved to an area where the majority were middle-class or upper-class white... But she couldn’t fit there**...she said it was the unhappiest years of her life. And so I think...that’s given through the city of Southampton...this is where she grew up here, so that kind of diversity in the city.’ (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.11-12)

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Pilar's descriptions of her hometown and Winchester vis-à-vis Southampton reveal the city's diversity, and she values this, highlighting that it has been a positive learning experience for her, as demonstrated in section 5.3.3 in her reflection on her interaction with her daughter's school. The assortment of languages and food in Southampton are part of this diversity that my participants appreciate.

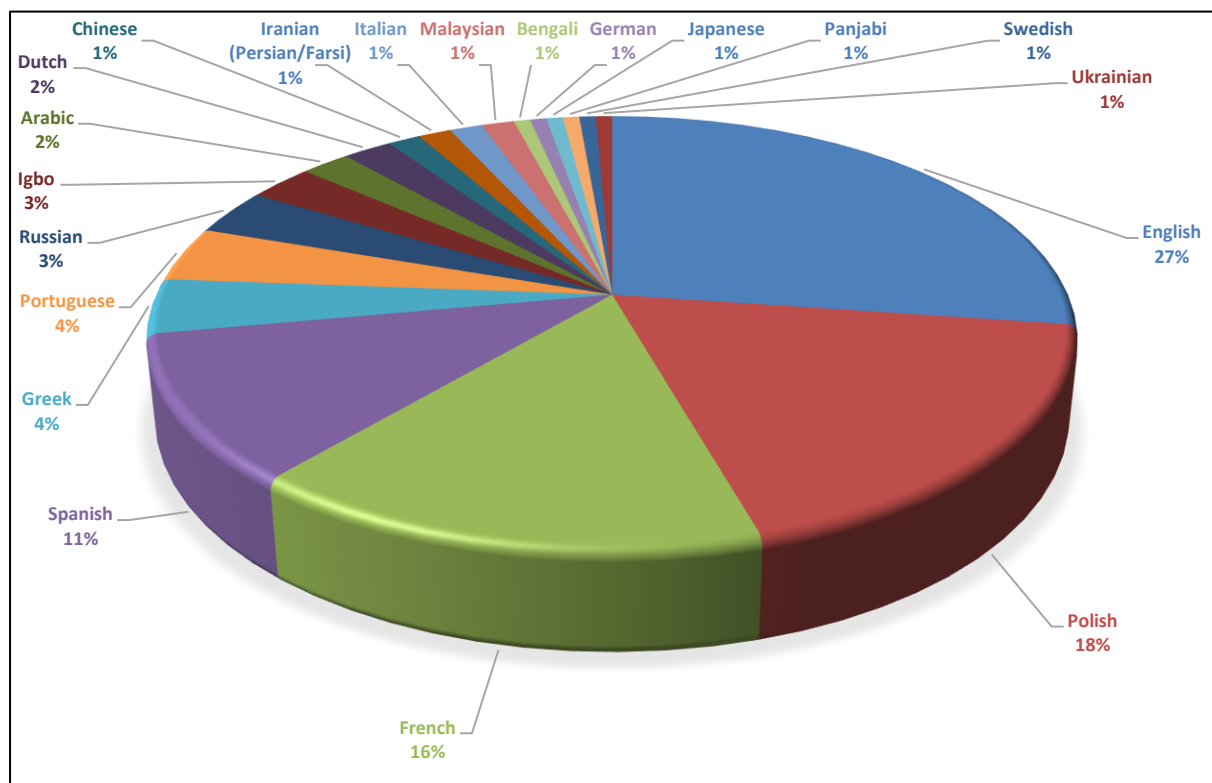
### 5.3.4.1 Languages in Southampton

Reflecting upon their experiences of cultural diversity, my participants mentioned a range of languages during their online ethnographic interviews, and I used this data to create the pie chart in Figure 47. Their perceptions of different languages remain linked to their experiences of Southampton as a multicultural city with an appreciation for linguistic diversity. English was mentioned the most by participants (27%), and although they did not discuss the hegemonic influence of the language, they perfectly understand the need for them to become fluent in English, as signalled by Pilar, Aude, and Sophia's attendance on courses at Southampton City College.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.

Figure 47 Pie chart of languages in Southampton as mentioned by participants



After English, Polish (18%), French (16%), and Spanish (11%) were mentioned the most. English and Polish as the top languages ties in with data presented in 2.1.2.5 (Office for National Statistics, 2022; Southampton Data Observatory, 2024). Marianna adds her own experience of Polish translation services, within the healthcare context:

‘I got a letter...inviting [my son] for his flu jab, and there was that piece - like **translation to different languages** - and I looked...“oh, I said to my husband, there’s no Polish,” and I got a bit like, [*disappointed tone*] “oh!” - and then I looked closer, and I saw [*upbeat tone*], “oh yeah, **there is Polish!**” And I felt like, oh **it's so nice that they provided this.**’ (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.59)

Other European languages referred to most after the four main ones were Greek (4%) and Portuguese (4%). A variety of languages were stated less than 3% of the time and included some European languages such as Italian, German and Dutch, as well as African languages like Igbo, and Asian languages like Chinese and Japanese. Cross-referencing this with Figure 18 which shows the top ten languages spoken in



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Southampton excluding English, my participants mentioned all of them except for Bulgarian and Romanian. However, these two languages saw a huge increase in the city more recently between 2011 and 2021, and nationally, as highlighted in 2.1.2.5 (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Additionally, it is interesting to note the increase in Portuguese, Spanish, and Greek, both locally and nationally.

Whilst Matras (2013) warns that census data is unreliable, it does appear that what my participants are reporting about the languages they are aware of in Southampton does match up with the census data. It could be that those relocating from Bulgaria and Romania may have only done so more recently and so that could account for my participants not having contact with these groups. French was also in the top four languages mentioned by participants, yet had seen a decline nationally; however, this could reflect the mix of my participants, given that 4 are French.

In total, 20 different languages were mentioned by my participants, and this indexes the variety of people living in Southampton. Marianna provides a personal example of the mix of languages present in her friendship group:

*[Looking at a photo]* 'That's the Common and me and my friend [who is] Brazilian and she told me to take part in that...muddy run in support of Cancer Research UK...that's organised every year... Everyone got involved, so we were...four girls and I think we called ourselves muddy **polyglots** [*laughs*] 'cause...**we all spoke different languages**... [This friend] is Brazilian so she speak **Portuguese, English and a bit of Spanish** as well, and the two other girls, one...is Malaysian...but she spent a lot of time in Singapore but she speaks **Chinese, Malaysian, English**...and the fourth girl, she's from Iran and she speaks **Iranian and some Spanish**... This...shows **how diverse** friends...four of us from different...parts of the world, but yet we met here at the university.' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.47-48)

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Figure 48 *Photograph received from Marianna on 08.09.21 showing running with friends on Southampton Common in aid of Cancer Research UK*



Overall, my participants demonstrate an excellent awareness of the languages around them in Southampton and are able to reflect on their own experiences of daily language interaction, perceiving the linguistic cityscape and the spatiality of language, since language in a city envelops us, guides us, and clamours for our attention (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015, p.148).

### 5.3.4.2 Food fusion in Southampton

Given the role women often play in selecting and preparing food (Cairns and Johnston, 2015), food was a key theme in the ethnographic interviews, WhatsApp focus group, and within the photographs and other data that my participants shared with me, as we have already seen earlier in the chapter as part of place-making activities:<sup>93</sup>

**‘I have always associated the city with all ‘multis’ - multicultural, multilingual and eat - it was the first time I went to an Indian restaurant,**

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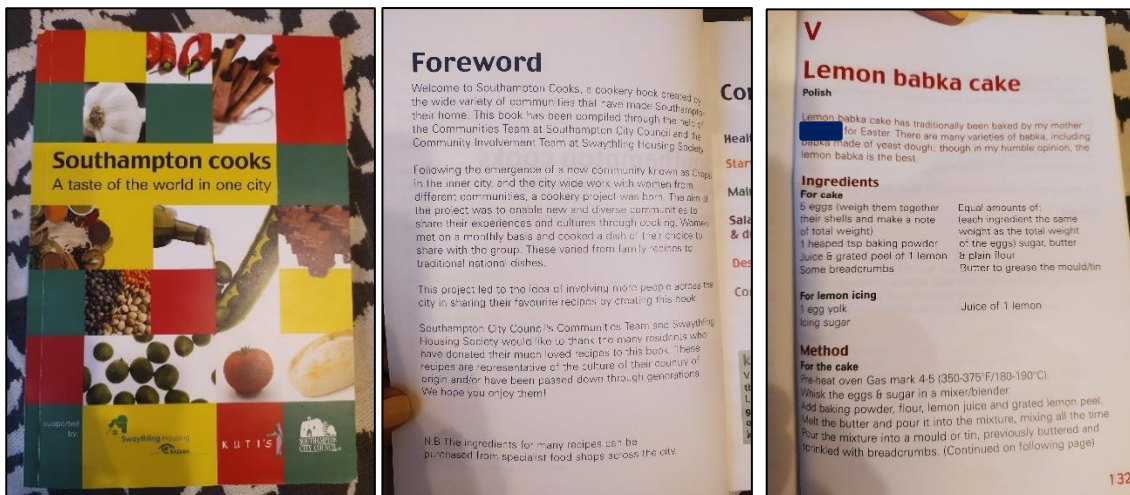
<sup>93</sup> See 5.3.2.

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[I'd] never eaten Indian food, so **the city has actually introduced me into international cuisine** as well...I think the city is adapting well to cultures, it's just there are the people in the city [*laughs*] are a little bit reluctant, but I don't think you can go against the tide...culture evolves, it does not stay the same, no matter how much...we want to keep it... **Always I have identified this city with internationalisation.**' (Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-pp.7-8)

Beata contributed to Southampton Cooks, a community project led by Southampton City Council (Stojkovic et al, 2007). She provided some photographs of the book and her Mum's recipe that she shared as part of the project.

Figure 49 *Photographs received from Beata on 25.04.21 showing a recipe book featuring her Mum's lemon babka cake recipe*



She explained:

**'I don't have my own recipes, but my Mum has got...hundreds and hundreds of recipes either that are her own, or basically are being passed from her Mum...her Mum's Mum and so on, so that one [lemon babka] is...a traditional cake that's baked for Easter and...is very good and...it's lasting for quite some time as well because when you bake it...it doesn't...go stale too much, so you can actually eat it...for quite...a long time without...worrying that it's going to go stale... That was the time I think 2007...a few years after I came in from Poland that...this New Communities**

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team<sup>94</sup>...was there, was still quite a lot of emphasis...different ways...of having some sort of community cohesion and events and...bringing together the...**Southampton community as a very multicultural, but as a...community that...still shares...things that are passionate for everyone, like cooking and so on, so...that was just something really nice and I was very happy...to help out with that.**' (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.52-53)

Beata's description of the cultural practice of creating and using recipes shows her connection with generations of her family through food (Leong, 2018, p.11), and the Southampton Cooks recipe book that she contributed to, along with other residents in the city, has 'social and cultural importance.' Figure 50 shows a meal that Hope shared with a friend.

Figure 50 *Photograph received from Hope on 14.06.21 showing a meal with a friend*



She said:

**'It dawned on me as I was looking at the photo that she's a German friend and then I had planned some sausages, which I think is quite...tradition**

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<sup>94</sup> A Southampton City Council project team.

**in Germany... and then she had bought a camembert, which I'm sure she'd done that knowing she was coming to me as a French woman, she thought I would enjoy some French cheese, baked, so she came over...[and] we did it in my oven, so...she added different things like rosemary and some garlic in it, which I've never thought of doing... And some *baguette* as well, some French *baguette* and salad and potatoes... And cheese crackers... Crackers with cheese is definitely English, so you see the influences there... [There is a] fusion of the cuisines.'** (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.29-30)

Hope describes not just sharing the food together but also cooking together, and how she learnt a different way of preparing baked camembert by observing her friend add rosemary and garlic to it. The focus on the traditional German sausages, French cheese and *baguette* highlights how food moves around the world as well as people (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002, p.105). Additionally, Hope served English crackers, creating a fusion of cuisines, and the practice of sharing European food in her home simultaneously creates a local identity. Geneviève describes the significance of sharing food with others:

**'I think maybe for French people, meeting up for food and so on is important, maybe more than for English people. Although I must say that we meet up with friends in Highfield and we do sit down and eat as well, and it's a pleasure.'** (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-p.81)

Geneviève and Hope both describe the sharing of food with others which is key in developing and maintaining friendships (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002, p.109). Cultural practices relating to food are key in making my participants feel at home, but they also reveal diversity in Southampton. Further, my participants' relationship with food shows a connection with the locality in terms of sharing with others in Southampton, but also a link with other countries by preparing and eating food from elsewhere.

In 5.3.4, we have seen how Southampton is viewed by my participants as diverse in comparison to other places, both within the UK and abroad. The mix of languages within the city demonstrates the various groups of people living here, but it is 'embodied habitual practices' and 'sensory experiences' (Wells, 2020, p.147) which

help to create a local identity and attachment to Southampton. This has been seen especially through food, in the use and sharing of recipes from families and through cooking and eating together with friends, which are important place-making activities that simultaneously express the variety of groups living in Southampton and my participants' multiple attachments, to the locality and abroad.

### **5.4 From newness to normality: developing ordinary belonging in Southampton**

In 3.3.5, I outlined the concept of ordinary belonging, which refers to the practical process by which individuals assimilate into their local area through repeated everyday actions focusing on their civic identity, while remaining adaptable to changing circumstances in their lives. It involves ongoing negotiation of their role within a place, navigating administrative structures in their case, building relationships, and consistently reflecting on different facets of their identity, such as their gender and nationality. Ordinary belonging is crucial for understanding how my female participants have come to feel at home in Southampton, despite its initially perceived shortcomings.

In an era where mobility and globalisation often challenge traditional notions of belonging, Southampton has become a meaningful home for my participants through everyday practices connecting them to their surroundings. This process is rooted not in extraordinary experiences but in the ordinary daily interactions that shape their sense of place and identity. As we have seen, some of these actions are intertwined with gendered social norms, highlighting how ordinary belonging is experienced through the lens of everyday responsibilities and cultural practices but also the expectations placed on them. Through a deeper understanding of these ordinary elements, we can better appreciate how belonging is cultivated in evolving urban spaces.

Initially, participants in this study viewed Southampton negatively, describing its post-war architecture as hideous and drab. However, over time, their perceptions shifted, reflecting a more positive view of the city's development. This evolution aligns with the idea of ordinary belonging, where attachment to a place grows through continuous interaction and familiarity, where the initial feelings of newness

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on arrival in a city change to become the normality of the everyday. The introduction of pleasing new buildings and the recognition of Southampton's character as a port city have contributed to this shift in perception, though ultimately the change is psychological rather than physical. The city's strategic location on the south coast facilitates convenient travel, and the close connection to Europe further enhances this sense of belonging, enabling my participants to maintain ties with multiple places, fostering a feeling of being simultaneously connected to Southampton and other places meaningful to them elsewhere in the world. They have made Southampton their home through their growing experience and attachment to the city.

Participants highly value the spaciousness and numerous green areas in Southampton, which play a significant role in their sense of belonging. However, it is the meaningful engagement with these places that matter most. As women, this often intersects with their gendered roles; for instance, Marianna's use of green space is not just for personal relaxation but also is a way to pass on the value of nature to her children, reinforcing her role as a mother. This reflects how ordinary belonging is often gendered, with women engaging in place-making activities that simultaneously nurture familial ties and personal connections to the city. Similarly, the selection and preparation of food, as described by participants like Beata, Aude, and Angélique, is another aspect where gendered roles shape their sense of belonging. Although Angélique's husband does the cooking, her responsibility for purchasing the food highlights the shared, yet gendered, nature of domestic tasks that contribute to the creation of a home. Food preparation, particularly during significant cultural events like Easter and Christmas, also serves as a means of transmitting traditions, further embedding these women's transnational identities, bringing together both the local and the cultural.

Participants' engagement in varied place-making activities, including work, study, homemaking, parenting, and socialising, underscores the importance of ordinary belonging in building a civic identity. They display a comprehensive understanding of various local services, often drawing comparisons with their experiences elsewhere, as it is natural to assess our experiences in one place against others. While some services like schools and healthcare were essential, others such as libraries, radio stations, and the Polish school were actively chosen by participants,

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and most were accessed through using English as a Lingua Franca. In Southampton, diversity is evident through the multitude of languages spoken, reflecting the various resident groups. However, my participants, despite their multilingualism, prioritise and use English as a Lingua Franca for navigating the city.

By participating in place-making activities, accessing local services, attending cultural institutions like the Polish school, or simply using English as a Lingua Franca, my participants actively shape their identities within Southampton. An emphasis on contribution and civic engagement highlights how ordinary belonging is not just about fitting into a place but is also about making a meaningful impact. The fact that some participants have extended their stay in Southampton longer than anticipated further illustrates the complexity and evolving nature of their connection to the city.

Some might argue that Southampton's lack of distinctive qualities makes it an unlikely place for fostering a strong sense of belonging. However, this overlooks the fact that ordinary belonging does not require a city to be extraordinary. Instead, it is the everyday interactions, the familiarity with local spaces, and the creation and maintenance of personal connections that matter most, in a place which my participants have chosen as their home. Southampton's status as a gateway to the world, coupled with its green spaces and diverse services, provides a foundation for ordinary belonging that transcends the city's physical attributes. For my participants as women, this sense of belonging is often intricately tied to the gendered roles they play within their households, where everyday tasks and responsibilities reinforce their connection to the city.

Each participant possesses a unique narrative, with their own individual experiences, identities, goals, and resources. This chapter emphasises the richness of their everyday lives and a sense of ordinary belonging that transcends the conventional idea of a speech community, encompassing both physical and psychological realms. This understanding extends far beyond Southampton geographically and evolves over time, illustrating its complexity. Further, they have situated themselves within the city, establishing a civic identity, focused on making a contribution, in line with the value of pragmatism - what I am calling ordinary belonging.



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**'It's nice to be part of that intercultural trend in Southampton, being part of it, creating it... Maybe that's not the way other people see it, but yes!'**

(Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.10)

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## 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore my participants' journeys to Southampton and their perceptions of mobility<sup>95</sup> and belonging<sup>96</sup> through their own narratives.<sup>97</sup> I begin by focusing on the stages of these journeys to Southampton, from their ideas and experiences prior to arrival, to their entry and settlement in the city. I then discuss how their connections to Southampton have been affected by external factors and events such as Brexit and Covid, before concentrating on how they now place themselves within city's diversity. I demonstrate how they have negotiated and reframed their positions over time (Eckersley and Vos, 2023, p.15), utilising English as a Lingua Franca, nurturing relationships, and adapting to life circumstances in a pragmatic way, adopting an everyday approach that embodies what I am calling ordinary belonging.

## 6.2 Journeying to Southampton

My earlier discussion<sup>98</sup> considered the oft contentious meaning of the term migrant (Anderson and Blinder, 2019, p.2) and how its status as a 'problematic category' may imply that participants do not identify with it (Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez, 2010, p.49). Since transnational identity is achieved discursively through narratives around the journey (Baran, 2018, p.265), my focus here is on 'journey' to emphasise the distinctiveness of the life experiences of my participants, rather than focusing solely on their arrival in the UK as part of a broader migration flow or system (Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez, 2010, p.49). In line with BenEzer (2002), I examine my participants' physical arrival in Southampton, but note that psychologically their journeys have not ended, since they may be continually re-evaluating and 'reinterpreting' their lives here (Baran, 2018, p.265), especially in response to external factors such as political changes like Brexit (Botterill et al, 2019) and world events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Guadagno, 2020).

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For definitions of terms, see:

<sup>95</sup> Mobility - 3.1.3.

<sup>96</sup> Belonging - 3.3.

<sup>97</sup> Narratives - 3.1.1.

<sup>98</sup> Migrants - 3.1.2.

## 6.2.1 Pre-arrival in Southampton

During the ethnographic interviews, participants reflected on their thoughts and feelings prior to their arrival in Southampton. Key themes explored in this section are the history of immigration in their families, their own experiences of travel or living abroad, and their motivations for moving to Southampton, which are all key in their evaluations of their experiences.

### 6.2.1.1 History of family immigration

Four participants referred to family history of immigration and described varying degrees of choice in their movement. Sophia and Marianna both recounted family members being subjected to 'forced migration' (Van Hear, 1998, p.10).<sup>99</sup> For example, Sophia recalls how her family came to be in Greece, following the murder of her grandparents in the Pontic genocide:<sup>100</sup>

'I come from a **different group** of Greek people. I'm a Pontian Greek...I speak ancient Greek, but then the modern Greeks can't really understand that...so that had an impact, my relationship of **being the other being Greek** but also **being the other in my own homeland**... I always considered myself a **citizen of the world** because when we were in Greece, we were **the other** because...my grandparents were part of the genocide, so when I was born in Kazakhstan, we were also the other, the Greeks. And then when we came to Greece - the borders open[ed] and we came home - **we were again the others** - you know the Pontian stuff...**came from somewhere else**, so...**I always felt that I belonged [in Greece], but not fully**, so when I came here [to Southampton]...**it felt home, felt I belonged here. I was welcomed**...' (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-pp.3-4)

Sophia's narrative highlights her experience as a Pontian Greek, which is at odds with the traditional essentialist idea of a nation being a group of homogeneous people, all speaking the same language, and living in the same place (Blommaert and Rampton, 2011, p.4; Holliday, 2011, p.5; Saraceni, 2015, p.27).<sup>101</sup> In particular, her story challenges the concept of a 'homeland' being somewhere you are born and

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<sup>99</sup> See 3.1.3 for more on Van Hear (1998).

<sup>100</sup> The Pontic genocide was the systematic killing of the Christian Ottoman Greek population of Anatolia, carried out mainly during World War I and its aftermath (Shirinian, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> See also 3.3.3 for Anderson (2006, p.6) on imagined communities.

connect to, as we see that although she was born in Kazakhstan, she was seen as 'the other' there due to her Greek background, and later, in Greece, she was still viewed as an outsider due to being a Pontic Greek and speaking a different language, meaning that she never belonged 'fully.' Wherever she lived, others perceived that she 'came from somewhere else,' and so she was constantly othered (Blommaert, 2004, p.205),<sup>102</sup> impacting on her sense of belonging and making her feel outsiders (Relph, 2016, p.49).<sup>103</sup> It is interesting to see from Sophia's narrative how her family background and her experiences of being a minority in both Kazakhstan and Greece shaped her journey to Southampton and seemed to increase her sense of belonging here so that she felt 'welcomed' and that she 'belonged.'

In another example, Marianna describes the impact of people being forcibly moved after World War II,<sup>104</sup> reflecting on her grandparents' journey:

**'My grandfather from my father's side...was Ukrainian. But my [grand]father...married a Polish woman...and why we had so many Ukrainians in the region I'm from is because of the war...the eastern border between Poland and Ukraine, they fought a lot... After the war when the Germans left...the then government of Poland decided to relocate those people that were fighting and igniting those fights, so they took Polish and Ukrainian people...to the place to the North East where I'm from, and that's how my grandparents met.'** (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-pp.29-31)

Whilst Marianna's family background includes forced migration, her recounting of this is notably different from Sophia's; since her grandparents met as a result, she portrays this in a romantic way, in contrast to Sophia's account of persecution and exclusion.

Aude and Beata both express the 'voluntary migration' of their family members (Van Hear, 1998, p.44), where they had more choice than Sophia's and Marianna's relatives. Aude discusses her late grandmother:

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<sup>102</sup> See 1.1 on 'othering' (Blommaert, 2004, p.205).

<sup>103</sup> See 3.3.1 on insiderness and outsiders (Relph, 2016, p.49).

<sup>104</sup> After World War II, the communist government of Poland forcibly relocated the country's Ukrainian minority by means of a Soviet-Polish population exchange (Reilly, 2013).

**'My grandmother...was Austrian and lived in France.** It was...a four-hour drive for her to go back between...the Alps...and Austria...so **she was...forever going one place or another...**and obviously...we have two cultures, and she always said to me, "**once you start living abroad...you...are in between all the time...**it is the way it is." And I often think of that and I'm like, yeah, you are totally in between...in a good way... I think **it...gives you more experiences, skills, and you see things in a different way,** which I think is awesome...and anyway, I feel really lucky to have that...opportunity, but...then...you are in two things.' (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.36)

Aude's narrative highlights the influence of her grandmother's experiences on her own journey, and she sees the benefits of being able to understand different languages and cultures. However, she also draws attention to the fact that 'you are in two things' or 'in between,' indicating a sense of connection to more than one place in line with Jones and Jackson's assertion (2014, p.5) that a person may feel a sense of belonging 'to different places at different times, or to several places at once.' Further, she indicates a transnational sense of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1011).

Beata explained that in the 1980s, her parents considered moving to Sweden due to the difficult economic situation in Poland. However, her mother, concerned about her small children, decided against it, but Beata's uncle and cousins emigrated. Whilst her account<sup>105</sup> was quite factual and she did not give an opinion about her relatives moving abroad, their influence on her is clear through items she has in her home, which I observed in the photographs she provided.<sup>106</sup> For example, she owns some Swedish language books and travel guides, as well as a Dalarna horse, which was given to her as a keepsake at her cousin's wedding.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Beata explained about her parents and wider family considering moving to Sweden in one of the ethnographic interviews (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.37-38).

<sup>106</sup> See Figure 51.

<sup>107</sup> Beata discussed the Dalarna horse in one of the ethnographic interviews (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-p.35).

Figure 51 *Photographs received from Beata on 15.06.21 showing her bookshelves at home*



Whilst Sophia, Marianna, Aude, and Beata all had different stories to tell about their family histories, it is clear that this has strongly influenced them in their life journeys (Thompson, 1993, p.8; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p.51).<sup>108</sup>

### 6.2.1.2 Experience of travel and living in other places

Most participants had lived abroad in another country or another part of the UK prior to moving to Southampton; several mentioned relatively short stays abroad during their undergraduate studies. Beata stayed in London for 2 months, whilst Aude spent a month in London, a month in Derby, and then a year in Warwick. Geneviève too came to England a few times as part of her studies as she was studying English in France, before spending 2 years working in Yeovil, Somerset. After returning to France and meeting her English husband, they lived in Norfolk and Lincolnshire for over 10 years before finally settling in Southampton. Marieke describes her first time living abroad as part of the Erasmus+ scheme (European Commission, n.d.):

**‘In 2007...I went for six months to Greece... It was weird because I came back from that amazing experience...having lived in a different culture**

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<sup>108</sup> See 3.1.3 on mobility.



**and making it my own and wanting to talk to people and share it with people where I came from and not being understood, like they would see it as something...that I was trying to show off... - it was not regarded as...something positive...it really made me feel separate from them.** And I noticed that in the years after that especially...I started more and more hanging out, like **my friends were all foreigners** [laughs]... I have a couple of Belgian friends, but...it's...the people that have the same kind of background that have lived in a different country or have studied in a different country that I tend to get along with a lot more still... Whenever I go back to Belgium, I feel OK, I know this place and I know it very well, and I know how it functions, but **it's not just who I am...there's more to me than that.**' (Marieke-Int-2-11.10.21-pp.22-24)

Marieke's first trip away from Belgium had a profound impact on her to the extent that it changed who she interacted with and made friends with during the years afterwards. Her narrative portrays a feeling of separateness from other Belgians, and whilst there is a sense of knowing of the Belgian culture, she describes her identity as 'not just' that, suggesting that it is wider than national identity alone, and revealing self-reflection. Later, she spent over 2 years living in Greece and spent some time living in Holland. She first moved to the UK in 2018 to Brighton for her partner's job; they returned to Belgium once his contract ended but she came back to the UK in 2020 during the first lockdown to look for work, moving to Winchester, and then to Southampton in 2021. In February 2023, Marieke relocated to London for work.

Other participants came to the UK to gain work experience and improve their English at the same time, as was the case with Marianna, who spent 15 months in London working as an *au pair* and studying English at a college, before going back to Poland to study. Several years after, she came to Southampton to pursue further studies at postgraduate level. Agnieszka had lived with her husband in the United States before coming to Southampton. Sophia also had international travel experience, having stayed in Russia for a year, and for some months in Italy, France, and Indonesia.

My participants' past experiences of travel and migration appear to have influenced their journeys to Southampton (Czaika and Vothknecht, 2014, p.17).<sup>109</sup> Whilst some participants' socioeconomic and educational backgrounds seem to have allowed them to move more freely, others primarily moved for economic reasons, highlighting the unique nature of each journey. Whatever their reasons for moving, they were all able to make an active and voluntary choice about it, with their mobility challenging concepts of borders (Saraceni, 2015, p.27), showing that their national identity does not confine them to one place; rather, it is just one aspect of a broader cosmopolitan identity in the making.

### 6.2.1.3 Motivation for moving to Southampton

In line with Czaika and Vothknecht (2014, p.1),<sup>110</sup> certain participants expressed reasons for moving here which could be considered ambitious, such as to improve their English, to gain a higher level of education, to earn money, or to gain work experience; decisions are therefore predominantly work or education related. However, over half moved for relationship reasons (ibid, p.6), as they mentioned that family members or friends were already living here, encouraging them to move, or their partner was offered a job in Southampton and they moved with them.

Angélique recounts:

**'I came here with my husband. His job arrived here.** His society, an American society in France, has been bought by an Italian company, and he has been sent here in England in Southampton... **It was just the day after I let my father in the grave, one week after his death, because I was taking care of him, and he is gone.** And I was...free to come in another land...with my husband for his work. At that time...**I had already stopped my job, around 9-10 years ago...for the balance of the family, so I was free to come with him and that was my choice to...come with him.**' (Angélique-J2S-29.03.21-p.1)

Angélique was not working at the time of their move and her caring responsibilities for her father had ended, which meant that she was able to relocate with her husband. Geneviève also moved because of her husband's work, though she was working and bringing up young children at the same time:

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<sup>109</sup> See 3.1.3.

<sup>110</sup> See 3.1.3.

'[I] came to the UK in 1974 and worked in England as a teacher... **My husband...was a lecturer in French...and was offered a post...in Southampton, so we moved to the city, with our two sons**, in Spring 1986. We welcomed the move from Lincolnshire as it brought us nearer to France. We knew nothing about the city at the time and for a while we looked for a house outside of Southampton, but we found that housing was much more affordable in the city than in the New Forest. We ended up buying a property in Highfield and have lived happily in this area since then. We never regretted not living in the countryside - although I come from a very rural area in France - because of the convenience of living and working in the city.'

(Geneviève-J2S-17.03.21-p.1)

A couple of participants with British husbands said that their spouses would be unable to work abroad due to language issues, so it was more practical to move to the UK. Hope explains:

'I moved...as a young 24-year-old 'mobile European' in 1994...[and]...had no idea at the time that I would still live here 25 years later... My reason for moving was personal as my English fiancé had asked me to come and live with him. **We had met whilst working together in France, but he could not speak any French... I moved because 'I could'...as an educated, bilingual 'European' graduate.**' (Hope-J2S-22.03.21-p.1)

Whilst Hope's education and language skills would have allowed her to move, her primary reason was relationship-focused since her fiancé could not speak French, indicating a pragmatic reason for relocating.

The women exemplified here were all at differing life stages with varying responsibilities but moved due to a focus on their fiancé's/husband's work, which I would argue is not 'ambitious' as Czaika and Vothknecht (2014, p.1) propose. Some participants were single when they first moved here, though the majority were already in stable relationships, so for my participants, their age on arrival, education status, and socioeconomic backgrounds could have been more prominent motivational factors in terms of 'aspiration-enhancing characteristics' (ibid, p.5).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> See also 4.2.2 for more details of my participants.

Section 6.2.1 highlighted that my participants' family backgrounds and experiences abroad have significantly influenced their journeys to Southampton. While not as ambitious as proposed by Czaika and Vothknecht (2014, p.1), factors like economic and relationship reasons have contributed to their moves, emphasising pragmatism. Although some appeared at first glance to be driven by economic motives (Beswick, 2020, pp.73-74), they all align with a lifestyle migration pattern (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009a, p.621), making active choices and reflecting on their journeys (Korpela, 2014, pp.29-30). Further, their national identity does not confine them (Saraceni, 2015, p.27) but is just one aspect of a broader identity.

### 6.2.2 Arrival in Southampton

Participants revealed how they felt on arrival to Southampton during the ethnographic interviews. Important concepts discussed in this section include invisibility, acceptance, and integration, which all tie in with their pragmatic approach and desire to live ordinary lives.

#### 6.2.2.1 Blending in – a desire for invisibility

'I've never ever had to face racism...xenophobia. It has never been an issue for me personally. I must say **I've always feel...if I walk in the street, nobody would know I'm French.** As soon as I open my mouth, obviously people say, "where do you come from?" which is very annoying for me, but...I've never...faced [xenophobia], and I don't know how I would react to that... **I'm privileged because I look white...nobody would know that I'm not British, really, and so it makes life easier.**' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.20, pp.41-42)

Geneviève recognises her white privilege and feels that others on the streets of Southampton cannot tell she is French just by looking at her, in contrast to when she speaks. This 'makes life easier,' as there is not an outward marker of difference, and so she is not questioned on where she is from whilst walking around. In contrast, Southampton residents who are not white cannot pass by unnoticed in the same way, as Aude exemplifies in relation to some of her colleagues:

'I can't complain here, honestly - **you do have bits and bobs, but I think it's because you're different,** isn't it? So you will get things thrown at you here

and there, but overall, I can't complain...it's just **I haven't experienced it in the way some of my colleagues have...and they are British...born and bred, and they struggle more than I do**, so...I kind of put it in perspective - what happens to me and what happens to them...**when you're black and living in Southampton and...what you have to put up with** - not put up with, they shouldn't put up with - but do you know what I mean, what they experience and what I experience?.' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.60)

Whilst Aude's colleagues are from Southampton and so have not had the experience of moving from one country to another, they face racism because they are perceived by others as being 'from elsewhere.' As Geneviève pointed out, no one can tell where she is from until she opens her mouth, and likewise, Aude draws attention to the difference in experiences of living in the city based on appearances. In both cases, there is a marker of difference - whether accent or skin colour - which positions them as outsiders and creates a 'separation between themselves and world' (Seamon and Sowers, 2008, p.45);<sup>112</sup> however, my participants' whiteness puts them in a position of race privilege (Frankenberg, 1993, p.1).<sup>113</sup>

Like Geneviève, Aude acknowledges her white privilege:

**'Many people want [jokes] to be friendly or come across as friendly...maybe I've done some stupid things like that as well myself...so I can't judge because I've probably done stuff like that...it's a few people where they would do it to me, and one of them is actually...British, but of Indian origin - her parents are Indian, and somehow, we can be very un-PC with each other [laughs]. And because she mocks me...sometimes I can also mock her... But bearing in mind that we do have some deep conversations about racism together and she has experienced racism herself. So, she kind of knows...what it is like and probably more than I have because...I'm white and she isn't. And I think there's different layers [of]...racism, and I think...being French...I probably don't experience racism...- I know I don't...in the way that...black or...Asian people would for sure.'** (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.55-56)

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<sup>112</sup> See Relph (2016) and Seamon and Sowers (2008) on insideness and outsideness - 3.3.1.

<sup>113</sup> See Lundström (2014) and Frankenberg (1993) on whiteness and race privilege - 3.1.2.

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It is interesting here that Aude mentions 'jokes' which are used in relation to her as well as others but would constitute microaggressions as they trivialise xenophobic attitudes (Huc-Hepher, 2019, p.17), but she also talks about 'different layers' of racism in relation to her white privilege, perhaps viewing other forms of discrimination as worse than the microaggressions she experiences.

Although my participants are all white and so blend in from that point of view, they did discuss other aspects in relation to appearance, commenting that they feel less pressure here in terms of their body size and how they dress. Aude recalls some of her initial feelings when she first arrived:

**'My perception was that...it didn't really matter what people looked like - you didn't need to fit a mould. You could just be the way you want,** whereas where I come from in France...you need to fit in that model - that this is how cool French people look like... It was more like a physical outside look than anything else...at the time, I think.... **You can be fat, and it's fine, and people are like, yes, it's OK... For me...when I'm here [in the UK], I don't feel fat at all; when I'm in France, I'm like this massive obese person.'** (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.10-12)

Aude provides a stark contrast between feeling like a 'massive obese person' in France and not feeling 'fat at all' in the UK. Whilst of course there are still ideals of femininity, beauty, and body shape here (Lundström, 2014, p.16), Aude's perception was that the expectations were different, and she felt more comfortable not having to 'fit a mould' and to 'just be the way you want.' Angélique also draws comparison between these two countries:

**'Here, it appears to me more...in comparison to France...on the...bodies and clothes.** We don't have that in France because people...are so obsessed by the image of...themselves...and...it's a focus in France...in all the publicity you can see a...wonderful body for a standard body...with a woman - class, style - it's everywhere - on the wall, on the people... Here, you don't have that publicity...so there is not a focus of how you have to appear, so maybe they are not concerned here... **You can see really big difference between...someone...really slim and someone really big.** And...you can see on the same road a woman with...Muslim dress [where] you can't see anything [of her body]...and just one metre near her, another woman with something [where] you can see everything...[including] the

**bottom...and that sort of difference appears for me.'** (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.97-99)

Angélique's description highlights diversity in both size and dress of the women on the streets of Southampton, even just a metre apart from each other. Although observations relating to appearance were mainly discussed by my French participants, Agnieszka added:

**'I think in Poland, people put more effort in their appearance than here which is my observation.'** (Agnieszka-J2S-16.05.21-p.1)

As women, it seems that my participants feel that they need to conform to idealised standards of femininity, which are driven by societal expectations (Bartky, 1990). The move to the UK has led to them feeling that there are different expectations for them as women in the UK compared with their countries of origin in terms of their appearance. In particular, the diversity of women's bodies and clothing in Southampton means that they can feel comfortable within that diversity, resonating with the findings of Tonkiss (2003, p.301) and Wessendorf (2016, pp.454-455).<sup>114</sup> They feel a sense of freedom and reflect on this, in line with other lifestyle migrants (Korpela, 2014, p.30, p.32). Overall, my participants feel that they can blend in and have some sense of invisibility within the city, due to both their whiteness and their perception of a lack of necessity to comply with an ideal image (Wessendorf, 2017, p.139).

#### **6.2.2.2 Fitting in – a desire for acceptance**

The previous chapter emphasised that participants value the diversity of Southampton.<sup>115</sup> Marieke comments on the variety of languages spoken:

**'I've sat down to have a coffee on the weekend in a place and I've heard people speak Spanish, I've heard people speak Greek and I'm like, yeah, I'm just one among the many and I feel at home here. So...that really, it makes a big difference. It's just feeling the presence and feeling that...you're not a minority.'** (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.20)

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<sup>114</sup> See 3.3.1.

<sup>115</sup> See 5.3.4 on the diversity in Southampton but also 5.2.3 on Southampton as a port, 5.2.6 on activities related to diversity in Southampton, and comments in 5.3.3 about the diversity in schools.

Knowing that she is part of a wider group of transnationals in Southampton helps Marieke to feel a sense of belonging and connection to the city, as she knows she is not alone. Likewise, Beata comments on the plethora of cultures in Southampton:

**'When I came, I just felt that I wasn't standing out as much because of everyone just accepted that there's just different cultures everywhere and my initial kind of perception was that we are quite welcome because of being a novelty in a way, because we're kind of this...new incoming migrants who are still more of a curiosity rather than...something that would be a nuisance.'** (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.8)

Like Marieke, Beata feels that the diversity around her is enabling her to fit in instead of 'standing out.' She describes herself as 'a novelty' and 'a curiosity,' suggesting that she and others like her are new and interesting for the local population, rather than 'a nuisance.' For both Marieke and Beata, the feeling of belonging to a wider community of transnationals links with Anderson's (2006, p.6)<sup>116</sup> concept of the imagined community, since they feel a shared connection with people they have never met. Further, my participants demonstrate insiderness by feeling comfortable, familiar with, and part of the multicultural of Southampton, portraying 'emotional participation in' and 'involvement with' the city (Relph, 2016, p.50)<sup>117</sup> through their narratives.

Additionally, some participants conveyed a wider sense of belonging through their perception of Britain as a tolerant society. Geneviève recalls her first visit to the UK:

**'I felt that overall, the English society...was tolerant...probably more tolerant in many areas than in France. I don't mean from a personal point of view, but it's sort of general point of view. So I mean, the first time I came to England...it was quite an amusing thing for me to see in London...on the bench a punk sitting next to an old lady in her little gloves and hat...I thought the contrast was so vivid...and just the fact that nobody batted an eyelid... I come from a rural area, so I suppose the contrast was even stronger because...of that... It was quite an eye opener.'** (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.4)

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<sup>116</sup> See 3.3.3.

<sup>117</sup> See 3.3.1.



Geneviève paints a powerful image with the contrast of the ‘punk’ and ‘old lady’ sitting next to each other, implying that the diversity was not just about their appearances, but also their assumed differing values and lifestyles, again hinting at a value of freedom (Korpela, 2014, p.32). This juxtaposition is reminiscent of Angélique’s earlier comment<sup>118</sup> about a Muslim woman and another woman only a metre apart wearing completely different outfits, again suggesting not just varying approaches to the body and dress but also distinct attitudes and beliefs. Aude comments more specifically on values:

‘Over the years...I can see that [British people] are definitely **more accepting**...and in deeper ways than just physical here, **in terms of LGBT**, in terms of...**race and ethnicity**, and things like that...**they talk about it a lot more, and consider it more, and think, are more open minded.**’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.11)

Whilst Aude had initially spoken about appearance in terms of her body shape,<sup>119</sup> here she is focused on people’s identities. This was obviously something important to her, as she mentioned it during both ethnographic interviews,<sup>120</sup> discussing racism, sexism, and attitudes towards LGBT+ people - or as she defined it: ‘all the ism.’<sup>121</sup> In particular, she described France as ‘backwards’ and ‘behind the times,’ and said ‘[they] have some catching up to do.’<sup>122</sup> To me, her remark about British people being ‘more accepting’ seems pertinent to her identity as a lesbian,<sup>123</sup> indicating that she feels more comfortable about her sexuality living in the UK than in France, where ‘heteronormative othering’ is more prominent (Huc-Hepher, 2021, p.57). This echoes Korpela’s (2014, p.32) findings around lifestyle migrants’ narratives being around societies of origin being more ‘restrictive and oppressive.’ Aude continues:

‘I’ve, **as a foreigner, I always felt really accepted.** I don’t think it stopped me from progressing in my career or I’ve never felt that there was a problem at all. But **you do have a lot of comments...you do hear a lot of things, lots of...jokes have been made about you being a foreigner,** and...I’ve always

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<sup>118</sup> See 6.2.2.1.

<sup>119</sup> See 6.2.2.1.

<sup>120</sup> Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.11-14; Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.56-59.

<sup>121</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.58.

<sup>122</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.57.

<sup>123</sup> See Table 3.

had that...[but] **I think...if I was...an English person in...France...it would be ten times worse.**' (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.29)

Whilst Aude recognises that there is discrimination in the UK, and she has experienced this herself through 'a lot' of microaggressions, she says she feels 'really accepted' overall, and perceives that the situation would be considerably worse in France. Whether my participants are considering their appearance, language, culture, class, age, sexuality, or another part of their identity, they feel that they are accepted as part of the diversity of the city, as they fit into the range of different people within the social landscape around them in an ordinary way (Wessendorf, 2014, p.60; Van Leeuwen, 2010, p.642; Huc-Hepher, 2021, p.46).

### 6.2.2.3 Joining in - a desire for integration

All participants demonstrated a desire to integrate into the culture, and language was shown to be a big part of this, in keeping with Winkworth et al's (2007, p.13) and Hilmarsson-Dunn et al's (2010, pp.225-226) findings regarding the importance of learning English to facilitate integration; many transnationals are highly pragmatic, recognising that without proficiency in English as the dominant language of the UK, they may be excluded from accessing wealth, knowledge, and power. Geneviève explains:

'I'd never been to England before, but I felt at home in England...I felt close to...the English character...so I never felt I was in a foreign country, I always felt adopted by England... **The fact that I had learned English at university did help tremendously because when you come to a foreign country and you don't speak the language and you're not familiar with it, it...makes it, I would imagine, more difficult.**' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.3-5)

Geneviève highlights the importance of knowing English and how that helped her to feel 'at home'; however, the French language skills of Geneviève's English husband and the fact that they were both teachers were also key since the school holidays afforded them opportunities to travel to France. In contrast, Angélique explains not being able to communicate when she arrived in Southampton:

'During...first three months, **I couldn't speak English.** I couldn't understand people in the street, and...I knew nobody, so...**I was alone, all lonely at home...trying to go out...but not able to do it.**' (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.19)

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Angélique's narrative shows how not knowing a language can limit your social world and impact on mental health and wellbeing. However, despite this barrier, she describes how she was able to express herself, connect, and communicate with others through dance:

**'This evening dance [class], I think that helped me to have a settle...to build roots** because it was a...body work, a body language - **dance is a body language**. And as you see, almost three years after, I'm...still not fluent with my words, but body language is really more comfortable for me, and **I think if I can speak English like I am doing now with you, it's thanks to that dance...** I arrive...on an understanding by that activity.' (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-pp.25-26)

Angélique's quote shows that language is more than just words (Duranti, 1997, p.1) and that her involvement with the dance class was instrumental in being able to learn English and feel rooted in Southampton. She acknowledges the importance of her relationships with others in the integration process:

**'[My English teacher] has been a gift for me...** She was the one [who] organised that we met together... I'm really grateful that she has been my teacher and...now a friend... **She understood that English language was not enough** to enter England... She was listening to...what I needed and... **she helped me to find the place where I found what was important for me, to socialise and settle** in that area.' (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.90-92)

Angélique's English teacher helped her to find activities to get involved in, ranging from the dance class to voluntary work to participating in my research, as English on its own 'was not enough.' Marianna also recognises that integrating is about a deeper understanding of cultural processes and systems:

**'I'm now at this stage that I...know how things work, more or less here, what I wouldn't necessarily know how these things work in Poland anymore** because things may have changed, so for example, we bought the house here, so we went through this whole process. I know it's a different process in Poland because you don't have the agents involved and...the notary public is someone different than the solicitor that you get in here. So...there are differences, but...I wouldn't know where to start if I went back

to Poland...**But...also knowing English allows me to do this as well.**'

(Marianna- Int-2-22.10.21-p.45)

Marianna references 'knowing English' as being important, but shows how there are other types of knowledge, citing the house-buying process as an example. Linked with the focus on English as the language and culture to learn, a common theme in the narratives of many participants was a desire to avoid people from their own nationality group:

'[My manager] said to me, "I know some Spanish people." I said, "**I don't want to meet anybody Spanish.**"' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.6)

Pilar later explained that she wanted to avoid other Spanish people because her level of English was low when she arrived in the UK, and she knew that she would not improve unless she interacted with English people, so it was a conscious decision not to mix with her own nationality. For others, the avoidance was more cultural:

'When I...first came here, **I was quite adamant that I didn't want to meet French people** and I didn't want to be around French people 'cause I was like, **I don't really want to be dragged into that kind of French stuff** and...I suppose **what annoys me with the French is how critical they are and how negative they can be...** I have met...French people who keep complaining...like nothing is good enough here...it's so much better in France, and this is so much better... I'm like, if you really feel it's better, just go back - why are you here? ...I've always felt that, and I think I met someone, a French person who was like that when I first came here...and therefore **I've...[been] trying not to meet too many French people** [*laughs*].' (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.38-40).

Aude uses strong adjectives and verbs – 'quite adamant'; 'how negative'; 'how critical'; 'dragged into; 'annoys' – to show the depth of feeling and extent to which she consciously avoids other French people. Likewise, Marianna 'didn't want to stick' to Polish people due to the 'cultural assumptions' she had.<sup>124</sup> Geneviève did not remark on any undesirable presumptions but conveyed being 'reluctant' to meet other French people and emphasised instead feeling 'at ease with English people' as

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<sup>124</sup> Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.14.

well as ‘confident’ and ‘integrated.’<sup>125</sup> My participants seem to value integration, in line with Wessendorf’s (2013, p.417) ‘ethos of mixing’, and as with Portes et al’s (2009, p.122) research, their primary focus is on defining their individual identity within the host country, rather than on forming national groups. In terms of friendships with others in Southampton, whilst English people were mentioned, friends originating from other countries were foregrounded, highlighting the use of English as a Lingua Franca:

**‘The other connection...is my friendships with...Spanish speakers... Since I was younger, I listened to tango music and I had not realised the influence it had and how familiar I am with the language, so I noticed it when I came here and started befriending Spanish speakers. I would understand what they're saying, and I think that came back to the music... I have English friends, I have some Italian friends, some Croatian friends...French friends...I have friends from all over the world... I think because of having relationships since I was a young child with...different nationalities, different cultures, I always felt that I'm part of all those things - I'm not just one national or ethnic identity...’** (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-pp.18-19, pp.20-21)

Sophia’s readiness to interact with others ‘from all over the world’ evidences a cosmopolitan attitude (Wardle, 2010, p.386; Hannerz, 1990, p.103).<sup>126</sup> Her global outlook and previous experience of living in other countries as well as her family history of moving abroad means that she does not feel bound to ‘just one national or ethnic identity,’ transcending a national community and distancing herself from exclusive belonging (Ranta and Nancheva, 2019, p.5). Likewise, Hope explained that she had ‘quite a few friends who are like me,’ establishing connections and settling away from their countries of origin,<sup>127</sup> and similarly, Marieke ‘very often connect[s] with foreigners wherever I go.’<sup>128</sup> Aude adds:

**‘Out of all my friends - close friends in Southampton - none of them are from Southampton, like zilch. No one is from Southampton... I've got...2 Spanish friend and one French friend, but all the rest are all English people, but none of them are from here.’** (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.28)

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<sup>125</sup> Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.44-46.

<sup>126</sup> See 3.1.3.

<sup>127</sup> Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.26-28.

<sup>128</sup> Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.16.

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Aude shows a diversity of friendships too but draws attention to the fact that her English friends are also not from Southampton originally but have moved internally within the UK, showing she is connecting with other mobile people. In line with Beswick (2020, p.28), my participants convey a sense of transnational interconnectedness, showing how their journeys from other places connect them with others who have experienced similar journeys to Southampton.

6.2.2 demonstrated that several factors contribute to my female EU nationals' sense of belonging in Southampton. They leverage their whiteness and the city's lenient attitude towards body and dress norms to blend in seamlessly and feel inconspicuous on the streets, with there being a perception of freedom from idealised standards of femininity (Bartky, 1990; Wessendorf, 2016, pp.454-455). British society's inclusive environment, particularly towards minority groups like LGBT+, fosters feelings of acceptance and welcome among participants, who appreciate being part of the city's diverse social fabric. As lifestyle migrants, they value the sense of freedom afforded to them both in Southampton and the UK as a whole. Additionally, participants highlight the importance of proficient English skills and cultural understanding in their integration process, often forging connections beyond their nationality groups and embracing a cosmopolitan identity. Utilising English as a Lingua Franca, they pragmatically navigate social interactions and bridge linguistic divides.

### **6.2.3 Homemaking in Southampton**

Following Armbruster (2002, p.32), home is often centred and shaped around social relationships, and this section focuses on my participants' relationships – with other people, with objects, and to more than one place – not just to Southampton. As Miller (2008, p.6) asserts, relationships 'flow constantly between persons and things' and include routines – both social and material – that bring comfort to them (ibid, p.296).

#### **6.2.3.1 Relationships with others**

In 5.3.2, I covered place-making activities, which are often emphasised as a key to belonging for my participants within Southampton; however, these activities also involve relationships with others. For example, Geneviève mentioned 'social interaction' with her work colleagues, and friendships were discussed by Pilar, Agnieszka, and Angélique. Sophia, Marianna, and Pilar all mentioned a relationship

with a partner, as well as their children, with the connection to schools and other parents being important. Members of their wider family were also highlighted by Marianna, Sophia, and Angélique. For all my participants, relationships with people were key to feeling settled in Southampton. For instance, Beata's story starts with getting a job but shows how she became 'more rooted' once she met her husband:

'For the...workers registration scheme to be able to have some sort of rights in case I lose job... I had to had worked for at least...one year, so I thought, OK, I have to reach that one year at least. And then by the time I reached one year, I'm thinking...things are not...going...so badly, maybe I'm going to stay a little bit more...and then **later on, I met [my husband] and then things obviously...shifted in a way and...I just felt...more rooted at that point...**than not. So, I think my initial idea of having experience...getting some money...was gone...because I started just living my life...where...before, I was just kind of having that plan without kind of specific after that year what I'm going to do and then...I've reached there [where] you just kind of started...flowing from one month to another.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.12)

Whilst 'pragmatism' (Beswick and Pozo-Gutiérrez, 2010, p. 58) was at play for Beata initially in terms of her needing to get and sustain a job as mentioned earlier, it was her relationship with her husband that led to her being more established in the city. Marianna adds:

'I think **home is...where your life is around...where you have...the people that you are the closest to...**' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.57-58)

Whilst Marianna refers to 'where' – a tangible location – the attachment is not just physical, but also 'a metaphorical space' (Armbruster, 2002, p.20); likewise, Hope's earlier quote<sup>129</sup> emphasised that 'it's not just bricks and mortar' but that 'it's being with people and connected to people.' Marieke summarises:

'In the end, **feeling home is about the people that you connect with - whether you have people that you can connect with and people that accept you.**' (Marieke-Int-2-11.10.21-p.34)

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<sup>129</sup> See 5.3.2.

Regardless of my participants' initial aspirations and ideas about their length of stay in Southampton,<sup>130</sup> they share a sense of belonging to the city through the relationships they decided to forge. Even though Marieke only stayed in Southampton for two years before relocating to London, and Angélique talked about her six-year stay as a temporary 'passage,'<sup>131</sup> both made connections here and articulated a sense of belonging in their narratives. Relationships are key to our experience as humans, as we 'strive' to create them (Miller, 2008, p.296), and my participants build, develop, and maintain relationships in a sensible way, according to the situations they find themselves in, taking a pragmatic, everyday approach that constitutes ordinary belonging. As mentioned earlier in 3.3.4, creating and sustaining relationships within the family and with those from outside the family are often roles expected of women (Di Leonardo, 1987; Seery and Crowley, 2000), so it is no surprise that my participants focus so heavily on relationships in their narratives.

### 6.2.3.2 Relationships to objects

The last section exposed that a sense of belonging and home is linked to relationships with other people. This section examines connections to objects, which are an important element for integration and can be viewed as a way of consolidating your roots. Several participants mentioned owning their own homes, both in Southampton and in other countries. After spending some time renting in Southampton, Marianna discusses the purchase of a house:

'We bought the house and then we moved into the house, expecting it to be in a slightly better state... In the end, **I realised that...we can remake the house to be ours...it's our house...that's the roots...here.** That means that we're going to stay here a bit longer, like in Southampton or in UK in general, but we decided to buy the house because we feel that this is the place for us.'  
(Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.14-15)

Marianna's use of the verb 'remake' suggests creativity around adapting the house and a sense of the place evolving to suit her and her family. Her comments demonstrate an investment in the property as a sign of successful integration and a

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<sup>130</sup> See 5.2.1.

<sup>131</sup> Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.25.



way of marking a local identity, with a desire to build 'roots' in Southampton. However, objects in the house also have connections elsewhere:

**'This specific rug [is] from my bedroom from Poland...it...brings really good memories** with me and my younger brother...jumping on ...those flowers...there's that kind of frame and you can see those big flowers and we jumped on them and we jumped on the ones in the middle. We had so much fun and now my kids do this without me telling them...they did the same thing.'

(Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.25)

Figure 52 *Photograph received from Marianna on 08.09.21 showing children playing on the rug*



The rug has two purposes in that it has practical use in Southampton, but it has memories associated with it too, which are attached to her family in Poland, and particularly her brother, offering a trope for continuity (Povrzanoviü Frykman and Humbracht, 2013, p.47). Her own children jumping on the rug now in Southampton in the same way that she and her brother did in Poland is simultaneously a physical activity that she associates with the rug as an object and a memory or psychological connection with people who are meaningful to her in two different countries, signalling a transnational identity (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1011). The rug as an object signifies a desire to build a local identity whilst recognising her roots.

Hope expresses a similar sentiment when talking about a number plaque she bought for her house in Southampton:

**'It is a reminder as part of my domestic landscape in the UK as a subtle aesthetic hint of the Paris street nameplates where I grew up...**

Traditionally [signs] may be a bit bigger, and you've got the street name - Rue...or Avenue - and it is a rectangular blue enamel plate, it tends to have a

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bit of a...traditional...white border... So...I found that to put on my house...I thought, I'm definitely gonna have that because...I guess **it's definitely a gesture of identity assertion**...it's not really property, but...it's aesthetic... **It's kind of little hint to my sources, where I come from.**' (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-p.28, pp.37-40)

Figure 53 *Photograph received from Hope on 14.06.21 showing the blue enamel numberplate outside her home*



Like Marianna's rug, Hope's numberplate has practical use but has a strong symbolic connection abroad. Further, she describes a ceramic bowl which was given to her and her husband by friends in France:

'This big yellow French ceramic **used as a fruit bowl** in my house **reminds me of sunny South of France** - 'fruit and olives country' - in all ways.' (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-p.28, p.37, pp.38-39)

Figure 54 *Photograph received from Hope on 14.06.21 showing a ceramic fruit bowl*



Again, the bowl is functional as a fruit bowl, but conjures up memories for Hope of the French landscape as well as her friends. The rug, numberplate, and bowl are all part of the 'everydayness' in my participants' lives yet simultaneously reaffirm social ties across space and time (Povzanoviü Frykman and Humbracht, 2013, pp.47-48);

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objects are markers, both establishing and signifying belonging. The objects are also symbolic of homemaking and parenting, linking with my participants' identities as women and therefore associated gendered social norms (Chodorow, 1999; Cairns and Johnston, 2015).<sup>132</sup>

The objects described so far appear in the participants' homes, but Sophia and Marieke explain their connection to objects outside of their homes, around Southampton. Sophia describes her affinity with a statue to which she feels a strong personal connection:

'When I first came...I did not know anyone else apart from my Mum... There is a statue in the centre of Southampton, and I remember I used to come from work, and I wanted to be with people and needed it but didn't know where to go, how to meet people, and **I end up going and talking to that statue. His name is Richard [Andrews].** And I used to go and sit down and have my coffee and cigarette and...why I liked Richard is because I read his plate and he invested in the city, he actually made factories and kind of help the city to build to the stage where it is now. And I thought...**this person is so important because perhaps if he did not make those factories, I would not be here, I would not be working here...so I was grateful for that. Then we became friends.**' (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-p.6)

Figure 55 *Photograph taken by Mr Derek Wilson 24.09.02 showing the Richard Andrews Memorial 1860 (Historic England Archive ref: 135700)*



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<sup>132</sup> See 3.3.4 on gendered social norms.

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Although the statue is not a personal effect, it connects Sophia emotionally to Richard Andrews<sup>133</sup> and the people who worked in his factory since her first job here was in a factory.<sup>134</sup> It is interesting to see how she personifies the statue, taking her break with him, 'talking' to him and becoming 'friends.' The statue reminds her particularly of her early days in Southampton, reinforcing that objects are 'intertwined with memories' (Povrzanoviü Frykman and Humbracht, 2013, p.48).

Likewise, Marieke describes a connection to people in the past through the Belgian graves she came across in a cemetery:

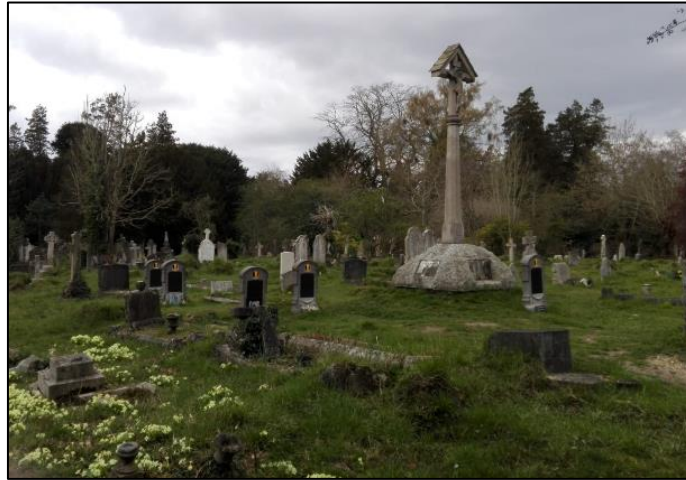
**'Cemeteries...is something that reminds me of home because...the house where I grew up in was just across the street from a cemetery, a very old one, just like this one, so...it's been weirdly always very homely to me... I found these Belgian guys and I thought, oh wow, what were they doing here? [laughs] And...I made a habit of it every time I come...through the cemetery to just stop briefly and just say "hi" to them as fellow Belgians [laughs] ...it sounds really strange when I tell you this, but...it's something I did do and...still do... They come from...Wevelgem which is like 20 minutes from where I grew up...it kind of gave me something like...if they managed to die here...maybe I can stay here as well [laughs].'** (Marieke-Int-2-11.10.21-pp.12-14)

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<sup>133</sup> Richard Andrews lived from 1798 to 1859 and was a coach builder of international renown. He had a factory in Southampton in Above Bar Street. He was also involved in local politics, being Mayor of Southampton five times (Historic England, 2024).

<sup>134</sup> See 5.3.2.

Figure 56 *Photograph received from Marieke on 14.09.21 showing the Belgian graves in Southampton Old Cemetery*



The cemetery, whilst physically placed in Southampton, has a mental link to Belgium and where Marieke grew up, creating a ‘very homely’ feeling. Like Sophia, Marieke uses personification, talking to the graves. The phrase ‘as fellow Belgians’ chimes with Anderson’s (2006, p.6) imagined community, as Marieke sees their shared journeys to Southampton, and the hope that she can stay here as well demonstrates a desire to build roots. Both Marieke and Sophia engage with imagined people through historical objects, with the statue and the graves acting as ‘visual metaphors’ (Naguib, 2022, p.139). Neither Sophia nor Marieke have met these people, yet they feel close to them, sharing a connection. Overall, the objects which my participants mention in their narratives link with people, whether they are real or imagined, alive or dead, from the present time or the past, connecting across time and space and transcending national boundaries. As Miller (2003, p.218) asserts, belonging is created by associations with pasts, people, and place.

### 6.2.3.3 Relationships to more than one place

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptive effects, Agnieszka usually moves between Kraków and Southampton every 6 weeks as she has homes in both places:

**‘Because I’ve spent much more time here [in Southampton] now, probably here [is my home]... It’s funny because when we go together to Kraków, it always takes me like two days to assimilate, like going back, and then...you**

**start doing your own routine and your own things and...then it's fine.'**

(Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-p.22)

Agnieszka highlights the physical movement between places and the different routines in each place, whilst Geneviève focuses on people in her narrative:

**'The thing is when we go to France...it's because we are going to see the family, we're going to see friends.** It's not so much for me the need to - you know some people say, "oh, I can't live without going back to France, I need France" - I think **it's mostly because [of] the attachment to the links, to the family and friends really.'** (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.49-50)

For both Agnieszka and Geneviève, home is fluid, with connections to more than one place, and includes the physicality of moving between places as well as emotional elements (Nowicka, 2007, p.83; Beswick, 2020, p.29).

Not all my participants have the desire or means to be able to travel frequently. Sophia explains:

**'I've been busy with children, studies and work, so I haven't been [back to Greece] since summer 2010,** it's quite a long time... **I do have my connections of course through video calls with family and friends,** and I have friends who actually go to places where we used to go and say, "oh I'm here," and then they will do video calling, they'll show me, and **I'll see home again** and so there is that connection in a way. **But...I can't say I miss it.'** (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-p.5)

Sophia no longer has a physical association with Greece, and it is interesting that she says she does not miss it, though still describes it as 'home,' in addition to Southampton. However, we can see that she is connected there virtually to friends and family, so the link is emotional rather than physical. Likewise, Marianna does not travel to Poland as frequently as she might like, so keeping in touch via technology is important:

**'I also have my cousins that I keep in contact - really close contact - like every week or so, we Skype.** And...I really want my kids to be part of that...to feel that they have the family there, because they're detached in a way... **The virtual contact with the family actually allows [the children]...to know that [they've] got that part of family... We do want**

**them to speak both languages and to have the connections with Poland...**we want this culture bit to be part of daily life as well...as much as we can.' (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-pp.11-12)

For Marianna, maintaining contact with family in Poland is not just for herself but also for her children so that they are familiar with a transnational way of life and can develop linguistic and cultural competence. Angélique mentioned virtual networks too, explaining that she uses WhatsApp, Zoom, and phone to maintain relationships in France with 'people you love.'<sup>135</sup> This virtual contact is not limited to specific nation states but transcends them, expanding the boundaries of social relations (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1029). Again, the emphasis on maintaining relationships links with my participants' identities as women and gendered social norms (Seery and Crowley, 2000).<sup>136</sup>

Contact with my participants' countries of origin is not just about maintaining relationships with people close to them but is additionally about keeping abreast of wider society and culture. For example, Beata purchases Polish magazines from one of the many Polish shops in Southampton:

**'I usually try to kind of catch up on...what is...socially happening in Poland as well...because I can read the news...online...but it's not the same as...having this kind of social context...I think just kind of gives me a little bit of additional kind of insights I guess into...what is happening now, what people are discussing now...what's just trending in a way and I guess...in the...news magazines...you wouldn't be able to...get maybe that flavour in a way.'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-p.8)

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<sup>135</sup> Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.60-61.

<sup>136</sup> See 3.3.4.



Figure 57 *Photograph received from Beata on 22.08.21 showing Zwierciadlo magazine and cheesecake from the Polish shop*



For Beata, the Polish magazines give her a broader perspective on society than if she only read Polish news. Similarly, Aude listens to the radio and uses Google to keep up with French culture:

**'I don't always know [what French people think] and I think that's why I kind of listen to the French radio quite a bit. And then...for example French culture...I kind of miss out on as well and that makes me a bit sad sometimes as well 'cause...maybe I don't know that singer...when I go back to France...people will talk about...some programme on TV or something and I'm like, "no, I don't have a clue"... And now I know I've been in England for such a long time...I'm really disconnected from it...I don't know it...so...I listen to the French radio and...they'll have...some guests coming...it could be an actor, or it could be...a politician, or whatever. And...often I Google them so I can say, "oh yeah, that's such and such," and it's just trying to keep up as well with that.'** (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.66)

Aude's use of the verb 'miss out' and the adjectives 'sad' and 'disconnected' emphasise her desire to keep connected with French culture. Aude and Beata both engage in practices and routines in Southampton which link with their own conceptions of home and belonging, both in the UK and in their countries of origin (Beswick, 2020, p.29). Whilst some connect with more than one physical space through travel, all participants retain a psychological connection with loved ones via



technology and through keeping up-to-date with cultural news, emphasising their identity as transnationals (Glick Schiller et al, 1995, p.48). Ultimately, it is their relationships which are key and engender a sense of belonging to more than one place (Savage et al, 2004, p.106; Jones and Jackson, 2014, p.5).

### 6.2.3.4 Living 'in between'

Home can encompass both one's place of origin and the destination to which one travels (Armbruster, 2002, p.32). Several participants talked about this in-betweenness positively:

'The strange thing is, when I go to Spain...there are things that when I speak...my brother say...you don't know what you're talking about, but **then I am at home, but when I come here, I am at home as well, instantly...** My brain switches languages, I don't have to think, tonight I'm going to dream in English - I will dream in English, I will think in English, and vice versa.' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.15)

Pilar's use of the phrase 'at home' demonstrates a sense of belonging to both Spain and England, and we can see that for her, languages are a key part of this. It seems that for Pilar, the physical act of moving between the two countries immediately situates herself within that environment. In contrast, Sophia no longer travels to Greece<sup>137</sup> yet the concept of 'both' is still a reality for her:

**'I belong to both of them [Athens and Southampton], and they both belong to me...'** (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-p.19)

The way she uses the verb 'belong' suggests an active and reciprocal relationship in that it is not just her who is part of Athens and Southampton, but the cities are also part of her. Whilst she is physically located in Southampton, she has constructed a psychological connection to both where she is living now, and where she was living in the past (Beswick, 2020, p.29). Likewise, Aude used metaphors to represent France and England as 'two universe' and 'two silos',<sup>138</sup> showing a mental association as well as a material one.

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<sup>137</sup> See 6.2.3.3.

<sup>138</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.24.

However, having attachments to two or more places can cause tension (Armbruster, 2002, p.32) and there can be various types and depths of belonging to the different places, creating a sense of ambivalence, as Beata outlines:

**'I'm kind of still Polish but having very different overview of things because of how I was living here.** It would be very different I think for me to go back. It's kind of **being in between - so not 100% in UK, not 100%...in Poland...** I don't know whether the sense of belonging...would be stronger in Poland, it might be, or is it...more to do with your nationality? Is...the sense of belonging to a nationality rather than...the country or a place? And I guess there's a difference there, so maybe I feel...I belong more to the actual nationality rather than physical place where I am, so I could belong still to...being Polish living, I don't know...in Spain...or France, or somewhere else.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.16)

Here, Beata self-reflects on her journey and her Polish identity, noting that now she has the experience of living in the UK, it would be a different experience than before if she moved back to Poland, echoing Marschall's (2017, p.221) idea of an irreversible self-transformation. She questions what it means to belong and particularly the concept of nationality, even considering whether she could live elsewhere such as France or Spain, suggesting that she is viewing her social field as expanding across national limits, whilst still retaining Polishness (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1009). Geneviève similarly ponders nationality in this ambiguous fashion:

**'I'm sort of sitting between two stools...**am I French, am I British? ...I think if I said - "no, I'm French first," I think I would feel that I'm betraying the country which...has accepted me, providing me work and stability and...acceptance really. So, I really don't want to do that. **I still feel at ease in both countries,** until maybe somebody comes up to me - "well, go back to your country!" And then I don't know how I would feel about that - I would be shocked.' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.40)

Both Beata and Geneviève use the word 'between' to describe their experiences, though whilst Beata seems more focused on her Polish identity in different places, Geneviève queries her attachment to being either French or British, sitting more on the fence.

Likewise, Marianna feels 'in between':

'I still feel that **I don't fit exactly**. I have that kind of funny thing that when I go back to Poland, I don't fit there anymore, but when I'm here, I don't fit here yet, so **I'm sort of in between**' (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-pp.9-10)

Whilst Geneviève characterises herself as 'at ease,' for Marianna there is more of a sense of being an outsider, though both see themselves as 'between' cultures, highlighting that there are different experiences of in betweenness. Aude adds:

'I think of that a lot...**the kind of beauty of having two cultures**. But also...then **how you fit** in both of those cultures...where are you in both cultures? And basically...my idea is that **you are across those two cultures**, and **you can have like a bridge in between** where it's kind of like...what happens? And **some people choose to...just fully embrace one...or maybe fully stay in the other one**...in the culture where they come from.' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.68)

Aude uses the metaphor of a bridge to exemplify being in between but also shows that people may prefer to be on one side or the other of that bridge, emphasising the uniqueness of each person's experience, as they navigate that 'inbetween space' or 'Third Space' (Bhabha, 1994, p.56).

Someone's belonging to a particular place, nation, or culture is constructed by themselves but can also be created by others, as Aude demonstrates:

'When I go back to France, I do **struggle** for the first few days and I've had a few times - and that was **a little bit upsetting** - I've had people telling me, "ah, **so you're English?**" I'm like - "no, no! I am not!" [*laughs*] And that has really **freaked me out** because **I go back to France and people think I'm from English when I speak French now**, and I'm like, "oh my God, what do I do?" [*laughs*]... I went to a christening and I was the godmother, and I did a little text...that I read at the christening... And after the ceremony, the baby's grandmother...came to me, and she's like, "oh **so you're English then?** Where [are you from]?" [*laughs*] Because I wrote the speech - that broke me... [*laughs*]. So now I'm like, well, **where do I belong?** ...I'm kind of **in between now all the time**. I suppose that's the beauty of being an immigrant - is that you're then **in between two places all the time with everything, including my flipping language.**' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.40-41)

In this case, the baby's grandmother had constructed an English identity for Aude, and her narrative implies that it was not the first time that this had happened, leaving her in emotional turmoil and leading her to constantly query where she belongs. Aude laughed several times while she was telling me this, which indicated to me feelings of awkwardness, uncomfortableness, maybe embarrassment and shame too. Again, the phrase 'in between' is used, and specifically in relation to language use here. However, Aude recognises that living 'in between' also has its advantages:

**'I do then feel I'm split in between two things...and...I have...the best of both, I suppose...it is lucky that you have two cultures and that you can...take from one or the other and also see things differently...and understand things differently as well because...you've got two cultures and things are different where you come from and...the way...you celebrate things or you do things, or...the way you even eat, or what [you] eat.'**  
(Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.38)

Aude's idea of taking 'the best of both' cultures illustrates a hybrid identity, an 'amalgam' (Bammer, 1992, p.ix), showing 'simultaneity of connection,' a transnational way of being and belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1011). Her awareness of the different cultures means that she can also take a step back and laugh at some aspects; for example, she mentioned inefficiency in shops in France around Christmas time, compared with the culture of queuing and apologising for people having to wait in England.<sup>139</sup> The extracts from all my participants around being 'in between' link with the notion of 'rooted cosmopolitanism,' where they connect to their culture of origin but also to other diverse places (Appiah, 1997, p.618). Their experiences are often described in a pragmatic and unproblematic way, positioning them as an ordinary part of their everyday lives, linking with ordinary belonging.<sup>140</sup>

Living 'in between' brings with it self-reflection on the journey of moving across cultures. Pilar explains:

**'You go through different processes. First year, everything is new. Then the next years, I was so dismissive of any Spanish customs that my brother said**

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<sup>139</sup> Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.36-38.

<sup>140</sup> See 3.3.5.

that I was a traitor to the country, because everything is terrible - everything for me in Spain looked rubbish, waste of time. **Then I went to the opposite pole, so everything in England was rubbish** and...my Spanish friends here say you...had better move back to Spain, and I think **now I am in that area of equilibrium...the balance... Southampton for me...it is my city.**' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.12-14).

Her account of adapting to the UK is reminiscent of Pedersen's (1995, p.26) culture shock stages theory, moving from 'the honeymoon' stage, where 'everything is new' to 'disintegration' (ibid, p.79) where 'everything in England was rubbish' to 'interdependence' (ibid, p.245) where the 'equilibrium' is reached. Pilar talked at length in our ethnographic interviews about 'the timetable for the eating' because she found the amount and type of food as well as the various times for eating very different.<sup>141</sup> She also mentioned being able to understand jokes in English as part of her adaptation process to UK culture, citing knowledge of cultural references such as 'the Council Estate' allowing her to find the film 'The Full Monty' funny, in contrast with her brother (still living in Spain) who could not understand why it was a comedy.<sup>142</sup>

Marianna reflects on her journey too:

'I feel I fit better here [in the UK] because...I feel that...everyone has...the right to live their own life the way they want to... And I think **that's what I like about here, that Southampton is quite open and because of probably the cultures that came et cetera so...I think that made me change as well. Like...the way I think about different cultures because I was brought up in that culture and...I knew I had those things in myself...when I came here, I in a way freed myself from that...I can say thanks to Southampton for that.**' (Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-p.13)

Her narrative shows how her understanding of different cultures has evolved over time and has changed her mindset since moving to Southampton. It is interesting that she refers to ideas she had before in Poland, saying that she has 'freed' herself from those, and now sees her outlook as more open, linking with lifestyle migrants' attitude of freedom (Korpela, 2014, p.32).

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<sup>141</sup> Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.17; Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.9-10; Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.12-14.

<sup>142</sup> Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.19-20; Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.12-14.

My participants' narratives of adapting to the UK culture contrast heavily with those of asylum seekers and refugees, who are subject to 'forced migration' (Van Hear, 1998, p.10). For example, Papadopoulos et al's (2004, p.61) study on Ethiopian refugees in the UK showed that 'losing status' was one of their first major transitions, and that difficulty adapting to British culture has led to poor health, stress, and depression. In addition, they faced barriers to employment, financial difficulties, poor housing, discrimination, and racism, as well as social isolation (ibid, pp.63-65). Whilst my participants have experienced significant change in status due to Brexit, their original motivations for moving here were out of choice, and this factor, along with their privileged socioeconomic backgrounds situates them in the UK in a very different position, which has made it easier for them to integrate and to belong in a more ordinary way.

In sum, my participants have reflected on their journeys with an awareness of the changes they have gone through and a sense of self-transformation. A sense of ordinary belonging is constructed by the participants themselves in relation to others and their national identity, but others also construct an identity for them, which may not necessarily match how they feel. Their 'social fields' transcend national limits, and their sense of belonging is complex and fluid, showing 'simultaneity of connection.' Whilst they do indicate signs of 'rooted cosmopolitanism,' there is also tension between homes, with home being '*both here and there*' (Bammer, 1992, p.ix). Overall, my participants navigate living 'in between' languages and cultures, each having their own unique, individual experiences of in betweenness.

### 6.2.3.5 Future aspirations

Angélique describes her stay in Southampton as temporary, even though she and her husband had been here for five years at the time she participated in my study:

'We knew from the beginning that **it was just for a few years**. So, when you are not in a place definitely, **you don't have the feeling you will be settled** there, like **just the passage...**' (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.25)

Her description of it as a 'passage' suggests a journey whereby somewhere else is the destination and Southampton is just a stop on the way. Interestingly, Angélique was initially hesitant to participate in my research as she did not know how long she would be in Southampton, but once her husband's contract was extended, she

agreed to proceed, seeing her stay as less temporary than she had previously thought, though still ‘a passage,’ and has since moved to Italy due to her husband’s work. In contrast, others conveyed feeling settled in the city but indicated that they could move in future:

**‘I feel I belong here, but not so much** that I probably would want to be here forever.’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.45-46)

As part of our discussion, Aude considered whether she felt she belonged enough in Southampton for it to be her final resting place or whether she would prefer to be buried or cremated in France.<sup>143</sup> She was undecided, but her narrative revealed the possibility that she could move again at some point in her life. Likewise, Hope considered returning to her roots:

**‘I’ve come to a point also...where...I may have the opportunity to move again** and spend more time back in France...**I’m very happy here, but also I long to spend a bit of time...back in France.**’ (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-p.16)

Like Aude, Hope conveys that she is ‘happy’ in Southampton, but she considers ‘opportunity’ to move at this stage in her life following redundancy and the fact that her daughter has left home to study abroad, and her son will soon be leaving home too.<sup>144</sup> Whilst Aude and Hope suggest the possibility of returning to France, their country of origin, Beata considers other options:

**‘I don’t know much about how it is like living in Spain** day to day and going to work... I only know...from being on holiday, so it might be very different... But at the same time, **I just thought...if I could have done it by moving to UK, maybe I can do it moving to another country, maybe...it’s not going to be such a big deal.**’ (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.17)

Beata regularly goes on holiday to Spain, where she and her husband own a property, which is maybe why she thinks of this country first, but it is clear from her use of language – ‘another country’ - that she considers herself open to moving in general. For Aude, Hope, and Beata, there is no definite plan to move again, but there is the possibility that they could, reinforcing that transnational migration is a process rather than a one-off event, especially as they may also change their minds

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<sup>143</sup> Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.31-35.

<sup>144</sup> Hope-J2S-22.03.21-p.1; Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-p.17.

in future (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1012). Further, 'home' can move with a person, rather than being located in one place (Nowicka, 2007, p.83).

In 6.2.3, relationships emerge as pivotal to homemaking in Southampton, shaping perceptions of home and belonging. Participants skilfully cultivate connections, adapting to circumstances and embodying a pragmatic approach that reflects ordinary belonging. Their sense of connection transcends physical objects, extending across time and space, and despite engaging with multiple physical spaces through travel, they maintain ties with loved ones via technology. This underscores their identity as transnationals. Their belonging extends beyond one place, living amidst linguistic and cultural intersections, shaping their identities amidst complex emotions and tensions. While they have no immediate relocation plans, the possibility underscores the fluidity of the concept of home, not necessarily tied to a specific location (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, p.9; Beswick, 2020, p.30).

### **6.3 The Brexit episode**

I now examine my participants' positions following Brexit,<sup>145</sup> as evoked through their narratives, first looking at external pressures due to their legal situation and perception in wider society, before looking at their attitudes towards the UK and Europe.

#### **6.3.1 Changing status**

6.2.2 indicated how participants want to blend into the city, walk around Southampton unnoticed, to fit in, feel accepted, and well-integrated, yet also feel part of the diversity of the city and have a cosmopolitan attitude, with a focus around tolerance, individual expression, and freedom (Hannerz, 1990, p.103; Wardle, 2010, p.386). In contrast, Brexit has challenged cosmopolitanism (Knight, 2017, p.238) and the freedom that they imagined they would enjoy (Korpela, 2014, p.40). Further, the status of EU nationals is somewhat unclear in UK governmental legislation and this confusion has been reinforced by the media. We now turn to

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<sup>145</sup> See 2.1.1.



these issues before examining how my participants feel about their change in status, especially regarding their sense of belonging to both the UK and Europe.

### 6.3.1.1 Legal position: Pre-Settled and Settled Status

Under Brexit legislation, EU nationals had to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021 in order to continue living in the UK (Crown Copyright, 2023), undergoing a 'transition of status' (Reed-Danahay, 2020, p.16). Settled Status is a possibility for those who have lived in the UK for a continuous 5-year period (known as 'continuous residence') and Pre-Settled Status is available to those who do not meet this criteria, both allowing certain rights such as to work or enrol in education or study in the UK, use the NHS for free, and access public funds such as benefits and pensions if eligible, as well as to travel in and out of the UK (ibid). Agnieszka, who is highly mobile, moving between Kraków and Southampton every 6 weeks, describes her experience of applying to this scheme:

'So, I have this problem...with all this...settlement permit...because **there...are these certain rules that...you can't be away for more than sixty days, and I always exceeded this number**, so that was always a problem for me to apply for British passports, which...was a bit annoying for me because...**I just wanted to...have clear situation with my settlement here... So it's a ongoing process...because...all this...entering, 'cause...if you travel so often, it's like you have hundreds of flights and you have to enter all the details for the last five years and I just thought, oh my word, it's just impossible!**' (Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-pp.6-8)

Agnieszka had previously investigated applying for British citizenship but did not meet the criteria due to travelling so frequently and found that the EU Settlement Scheme had similar principles, highlighting a discrepancy between the legal system and her lifestyle, making the process just too difficult. Most other participants also travel frequently, making this aspect of the application difficult. The COVID-19 pandemic added to the challenges experienced, as Sophia outlines:

'I was having issues with my second son's...Greek passport because [my first and second sons are] Greek nationals, where [my third and fourth sons] are British nationals. I applied for [my first son] and for myself...but then **because [my second son's] passport was expired, I had to renew that, I thought I had to do it [first]...in order to do for the whole family.** And we

had an appointment to renew his passport, but because of the lockdown...they did not accept anyone, and then they open again for appointments...but **it was impossible to get an appointment...so...I was really worried about what's happening because the [Settlement Scheme] deadline is coming through**, so I contacted the...Citizens Advice Bureaux, and this wonderful lady, she helped me find a solution.' (Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-pp.23-24)

Sophia's account draws attention to the complexity of her family's situation, and the fact that she needed assistance from the CAB emphasises that the process was not straightforward, particularly due to the additional obstacles in place with COVID-19. For Agnieszka and Sophia, Brexit just seemed to be an administrative annoyance to them, with their narratives communicating a sense of matter-of-factness around their legal status, whilst for most participants, it had a huge emotional impact, in line with Degnen et al's (2024) observations. Following the application process, many participants were concerned about what would happen next and the impact of Brexit on their lives, as Marianna explains:

'In terms of Brexit, I haven't felt it yet...much... I haven't experienced anything connected to Brexit apart from the fact that I had to apply for the settlement... **Before that...my father and...my brothers and my other cousins could come and join us freely. I don't know how this will happen, whether my life will be affected by the fact that they will not be able to maybe travel as freely as they would. I don't know whether the UK will introduce visas** et cetera for those people...wanting to come and visit the family, so in that respect I potentially see that this might affect me.'

(Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-pp.33-34)

In line with Knight (2017, p.241), Marianna's anxieties are based around the possible consequences of Brexit; however, these '*potentialities*' are real concerns for my participants, and there is the feeling of insecurity that lies underneath:

'As time progressed, I did feel like psychologically, **it started to weigh more and more, the insecurity of what's going to happen to us**, how is this going to affect us?' (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.22)

Marieke's use of the verb 'to weigh' really gives a sense of the pressure and heaviness she was feeling, accentuating the uncertainty ahead, and the negative impact on her wellbeing. Likewise, Hope expresses her fears:

'You could say on the one hand it has not changed...I've got still my commitment and...I still got my...inner confidence. I am trying to...manage my integrity, you know? And I've done...all the things that were required...the settled status and I was...quite early doing that. But on the other hand, it's change because **I cannot really trust this process because I just think it may change. It says...on the letter I received, it said you are entitled to stay, but...then it does say that this letter...is...not a proof. So, you could come back to country and they say you have no right. I mean, I'm very settled to be married to a British national!**' (Hope- Int-1-09.04.21-p.21)

Hope's narrative reveals a contrast between her own situation as someone who has followed the rules and is 'very settled' as someone who is married to a British man and has been living here for thirty years, and the government's position which 'may change' and cannot give her clarity about her status, only sending her a letter which states it is 'not a proof.' Her initial comments about having her 'commitment' and 'inner confidence' and trying to 'manage' her 'integrity' against the backdrop of fear and suspicion provide a juxtaposition that signifies the turmoil she is experiencing.

Hope's feelings echo those of others who are not happy about the absence of tangible documentation and feel insecure (Buelmann, 2020, p.3; Sigona et al, 2022, p.16). My participants' feelings around Brexit have eroded their sense of trust in the government and have questioned their sense of belonging in the UK, in line with Buelmann's (2020, p.3) argument that 'unsettling status' would be a more fitting name for the EU Settlement Scheme.

### 6.3.1.2 Citizenship

Obtaining British citizenship allows a person to 'live and work in the UK free of any immigration controls' (Crown Copyright, 2023). Pilar gained British citizenship to secure improved rights following Brexit:

'When Brexit started, obviously my daughter she has the two passports, she has a Spanish and British passport, but **I thought if just for my daughter...I want to have freedom to come here... So now I have both nationalities....** I would have never taken dual nationality, I didn't consider it necessary, but

**when the Brexit happened, and I couldn't vote, I thought that is something very wrong here - I'm paying high taxes and I cannot give my opinion and that was another decisive factor for me, to have a voice.** I told my daughter, the only voice we have is the vote and at the moment, I can't vote.' (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.30-31)

Pilar explains how citizenship has provided her with 'freedom' and 'a voice' and allows her to be able to continue to live and work in the UK and see her daughter, stressing that it was Brexit that was the trigger for her to apply, like many others who had not previously considered it (Reed-Danahay, 2020, p.20). Whilst not all my participants have applied for citizenship, several are considering it, as Geneviève outlines:

'I have the right to vote in local elections [and]...I do vote for the local elections but...**I'm not allowed to vote for the national action because I still haven't taken on British nationality** - I didn't see the point, but maybe as time goes on and **frictions are getting worse** between Europe and the UK...**maybe I will have to take on British nationality to make...things easier**, I don't know yet, never thought really strongly about it because we're part of Europe, so it didn't really matter, but maybe it will in the future, so I've got my...residency permit, I can stay in England. I've lived now...most of my life here.' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.14-15)

Like Pilar, Geneviève highlights the right to vote in national elections as well as the possibility of citizenship making 'things easier.' For Hope, she is thinking about citizenship to make her status more secure:

'My sense of belonging hasn't altered because I thought this settled status in between is not any [status]. **I probably need to request and make the British citizenship application...not really to belong more spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, because that I already do, but really legally because just to guarantee my rights...**because I've worked here all my life. You know...**my pension rights?** ... [The reason isn't] really within me, it's external, so that's why I think it's...quite a political reason, quite legal reason...I also think the other reason is the rights aspects...**it's paradoxical because I just think I want the British citizenship, maybe not to stay because I can stay, I'm already here, but to be able to leave and come back...** It's challenging the traditional vision of getting a citizenship in order

to stay in the country - it's like basically getting citizenship to be able to leave the country!' (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-p.22)

Hope highlights her rights, pension, and the ability to travel freely as reasons for applying.<sup>146</sup> These different forms of capital separate my participants from others, whether those with British status, or transnationals with other types of rights, positioning them as outsiders (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010, p.62). Whilst a surge of political activity did not happen in the case of my participants when compared with MacClancy's (2019, p.368) British residents in Spain, there was an increase in them applying for or considering applying for British citizenship to gain specific rights, showing their ability to 'act back upon' powers and structures (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1013) and highlighting their agency.

### 6.3.1.3 Perception as 'immigrants'

The change in status of EU nationals has not just been legal but also a change in the perception of others, whether influenced indirectly by the media or experienced directly by my participants due to a loss in social standing (Sigona et al, 2022, p.10), which will be explored next.

#### 6.3.1.3.1 The immigration narrative in the media and wider public discourse

In line with Botterill and Burrell's (2019, p.24) observation of European groups now being viewed as 'not quite white,' Geneviève outlines:

**'I'm one of the...privileged ones** who came at a time where foreigners were more or less accepted...**you didn't think of being - and well, when you were, let's say white face and European - you didn't think in the terms now that people are thinking about immigration, and so things have changed a lot about that.** So, I must confess that that has been really a privilege really for me to have come at the time when I came.' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.59-60)

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<sup>146</sup> Since completing my research, Hope and Agnieszka decided to apply for citizenship. Hope called me on 23.02.24 and let me know that since meeting each other at one of the coffee mornings I had organised, they had bumped into each other at the gym and struck up a friendship. Since then, they met regularly to support each other through the citizenship process, and Agnieszka informed me on 30.09.24 that she had received approval of her citizenship status. Hope informed me on 03.11.24 that she had also received her citizenship status.

Whilst Geneviève has been living in Southampton since 1986, she has been in the UK since 1974,<sup>147</sup> so has seen a lot of change in a 50-year period in terms of attitudes towards those moving to the UK and particularly highlights a shift in levels of acceptance of ‘foreigners,’ considering herself to be in a better social position than those who have arrived more recently. However, she notes that the media has always been ‘very biased’ and ‘anti-European’:

‘I feel that...the media very often are **very biased**...and **that has always been the case**. I always felt that the media in England for as long as I lived here have been...**anti-European** so that's...a part of me which **feels a bit of grieved** about the situation... **It saddens me** that...we are not as two countries trying to discuss in a reasoned way the pros and cons of the situation.’ (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.16-17)

Her feelings of sadness and being aggrieved are sentiments which have been there previously but have been stoked by Brexit. Marianna concurs:

‘I just **don't trust the media**...I feel like...**they're not really showing the full picture** and I think this is **mainly related to Brexit** and...how people...reacted to, yeah, we want Brexit because **we don't want all those people around and...really putting everyone into one category**, whereas you know... it's not the case, it's not the reality, like **you have so many different people around you**... people that do participate in a society in the sense that you know **they're bringing something**... I just felt like...this was a **huge misrepresentation...the Brexit and the media coverage around the immigration and...the immigrants themselves**, and I felt that **this wasn't...fair** on that side. And I think that your project is really important to show that **we're actually part of, we want to be part of the community, we...see ourselves here, we...are...part of the city whether someone else wants it or not.**’ (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-p.54)

Marianna is conscious of the persistent media tropes judging newcomers’ integration into society (Horner and Dailey-O’Cain, 2019, pp.10-11) and criticises the generalisations made, highlighting the diversity of transnationals, the contribution that they bring and that they are ‘part of’ the community and city. Her

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<sup>147</sup> After marrying her husband, Geneviève relocated to Wymondham in Norfolk in 1974 and started teaching French there prior to moving to Southampton (Geneviève-J2S-17.03.21-p.1; Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.2-4).

## Chapter 6

language shows an eagerness to be accepted here, in contrast with the othering of EU nationals portrayed in the media, implying detachment, which she demonstrates using ‘all those people’ and ‘category.’ Pilar adds:

‘Brexit is another thing that was...a political wave...and of course **all the fault was of the foreigners, particularly the Polish**. Everyone thought I was Polish, so there you go [*laughs*].’ (Pilar- Int-1-09.07.21-p.30)

The use of the noun ‘fault’ reveals scapegoating, and especially towards Polish people. Whilst Geneviève, Marianna and Pilar discuss the immigration narrative more broadly in the media and public discourse, Beata outlines personal experience of this around the political changes caused by Brexit:

‘**The first few years, I was approached many times to translate things for either MPs or for local authorities to kind of reach out the Polish community**, whereas afterwards there's more and more cases of...“**there's just too many of them**”...**it started getting very different over the years**, and...especially leading towards the referendum vote with Brexit...**definitely the atmosphere has changed a lot and the worst was this way all these MPs and local kind of Councillors were reaching out...to kind of welcome Polish community... They were then...after referendum, talking about...“that was a big mistake, so many people came, and...it's...clearly having a massive strain on all the facilities”** and it just...**made me feel...betrayed...because...first...you are welcoming us and...you're trying to...reach out and then you say, “oh, actually, there's just too many”** and...“**you are...a problem for the city,**” so it's definitely a change there I felt.’ (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.8-9)

Beata’s personal interaction with local Councillors and MPs emphasises the betrayal she felt as their actions changed from first welcoming and valuing her and her skills to later around the referendum and following it referring to EU nationals - and especially the Polish community - as ‘too many,’ ‘a big mistake,’ ‘a massive strain,’ and ‘a problem for the city.’ Further, participants were directly faced with the negative immigration narrative through personal contacts, such as colleagues at work:

‘People being more accepting here - I think that's still the case. I think **Brexit...was a...really weird time...and some sense of belonging was...even**

now it's kind of making me...emotional...I found it really difficult. And...I was in an office with people talking about it and voting for Brexit and being really open about it and saying...“before I vote for Brexit, how is it gonna affect you? Can I just check that you're not going to be kicked out? ... - I like you, but I don't want anyone else...so I just wanted...to check you're going to be OK. But I will vote for Brexit”... And...I have found that really, really hard and...then...when Brexit went through, being at work after that. I'm getting quite emotional just thinking about it now. It was hard, and it was...people saying, “I'm glad I voted for Brexit, but I didn't think it was going to happen”... So, I had a lot of that and then...through work a lot of incidents reported to us where basically non-UK people were being targeted...and...having issues.’ (Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.30)

Aude's narrative shows a real conflict between people here 'being more accepting' whilst voting for Brexit, and people originating from outside the UK 'being targeted.' Beata had a similar experience:

‘Just before we started that meeting [a colleague] approached me, saying...“how are you feeling...after the referendum?” ...And then she says, “so are you planning to go back home?” I remember it just shook me... - at first, I didn't know how to respond - but then I said, “well...I'm settled here, I've got mortgage...it's not like going home,” and I think she realised how she said it and what she said was...not really...very appropriate at all because it made me really upset and I remember the whole meeting I just couldn't stop thinking about it... [Later] even though she apologised it kind of...stayed with me. So that was one of the...first...wake-up calls...where...I just felt...people don't really think that I am supposed to be belonging here.’ (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.10)

Beata and Aude demonstrate how Brexit made them feel 'upset' and 'emotional,' and it was 'really hard.' The othering process is summed up in Beata's comment that 'people don't really think that I am supposed to be belonging here' and is further highlighted through the discriminatory incidents that were reported to Aude's work organisation. My participants' narratives reinforce that the immigration discourse is not just a trope but is something that they have to personally deal with, navigating Brexit and negotiating their belonging in different spaces (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, pp.10-11). Overall, they voice an eagerness to be accepted



into British society and to be seen as part of it in a positive way, rather than in the negative light that newspapers position them in.

### 6.3.1.3.2 The immigration narrative and discrimination

I address discrimination more generally in this section, before moving onto a more specific focus on discrimination around accents in the next section. Geneviève highlights racism as being linked to a rise in nationalism across Europe:

‘Lots of racism goes under the radar...no doubt. Very often...it's an insult in the street...and then how do you report it? How do you check that it's true or not? ...but if you get a lot of reports, surely there's something happening...and I'm...**very concerned actually...that we are moving towards less tolerance overall in our countries.** You know, populism, and terrible...state of affairs really, I never thought even 20 years ago that it would come to that, **I really am fearful...of the future. [The rise in nationalism across Europe has been in] all countries...in France as well...and in Italy and...even in northern countries like...Holland...it's very, very, very, very worrying.**’ (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.43)

Geneviève’s awareness of European relations concurs with research on the rise in nationalism across Europe as a whole and the fact that there has been an increase in nationalism within the UK, particularly amongst the working class, which has led to a surge in hate crimes.<sup>148</sup>

As explored in 3.1.2, whiteness exerts influence on the global platform by serving as a position of racial privilege and structural advantage (Lundström, 2014, p.9; Frankenberg, 1993, p.1). However, it may provide only partial safeguarding against anti-immigrant sentiments (Botterill and Burrell, 2019, p.23), as Marieke shows in her account of harassment which took place on a bus around the time of Brexit:

‘I did have a **particularly upsetting experience** on a bus...where I basically was **harassed on a bus by two 60-year-old men who thought they could have a go at me just because I had a slight accent, and it was clear I wasn't born [here] and that was a really traumatic experience...** It was the first time ever that I felt what discrimination is myself because...**I'm a white**

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<sup>148</sup> See discussion at 2.1.1.1.

**woman, and I am still privileged in that sense.** And I have never really felt that...explicitly, but it was...such a bad experience for me, **it haunted me for a long time and it still does**, and it still colours how I see Brexiteers... **If I see a British flag or one of those white and red cross flags, I flinch.** And...**it really...set the fear in the heart of me...** The thing is...it's only one incident, but...I was amazed myself at how much of an impact it has on...behaviour and how you think in a later stage still.' (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-pp.23-27)

Marieke's combination of adverbs with adjectives - 'particularly upsetting' and 'really traumatic' - demonstrate the depth of feeling from that incident, and as a result, she reported it to the police at the time, though no action was taken. Her narrative outlines how the incident still impacts on her now, using language such as 'haunted' and 'flinch' to convey the ongoing effect. Marianna recalls an incident of verbal abuse prior to the EU referendum, which left her feeling 'scared':

**'Back in 2015...I saw...a gang of boys...I was a bit scared then... [They were] shouting things like, "go back to your country"..."go back to where you belong."**' (Marianna- Int-1-16.04.21-pp.34-35)

The abusive comments aimed at her label her as an outsider, as someone who does not 'belong.' Marianna was also a witness to the physical abuse of her uncle during a fight which had been started by a group of men after they overheard Marianna's family and friends speaking in Polish in the city centre. She described it as 'a stressful situation' which 'resolved quite quickly,' and it is interesting that she rationalises the men's behaviour by stating that they were from a social group that she would not normally associate herself with.<sup>149</sup> Pilar similarly recounted an incident of abuse, this time based on discrimination by association as she is often mistaken for being Polish because of her appearance.<sup>150</sup> She recalled how she was sworn at and told, "Go back to your country!" Following this event, Pilar was 'scared to say anything so my accent would come out'.<sup>151</sup> For all these participants, their narratives make it clear that the impact of the abuse is still with them today.

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<sup>149</sup> Marianna- Int-1-16.04.21-pp.35-36.

<sup>150</sup> Pilar has blonde hair and blue eyes and said that when she first came to Southampton, people assumed she was Russian because of her appearance, but then following the influx of more Polish people into the city after Poland became part of the EU, she says that Sotonians now assume she is Polish (Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-p.27).

<sup>151</sup> Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.28-29.

Whilst all participants mentioned accent discrimination, which will be examined in the next section, incidents relating to physical and verbal abuse around racial discrimination seemed to affect my Polish participants the most, in line with Benedí Lahuerta and Iusmen's (2021) study of Southampton-based Poles, as well as statistics from across the UK (McDevitt, 2014). My non-Polish participants observed different attitudes towards Eastern Europeans compared with other European groups, as Aude shows:

'There's probably also levels of difference depending on the country you come from...even though it's still Europe, if you come...from Romania or you come from France... I think **there's a hierarchy there**... There's a bit of a ranking of the different countries, and I think **if you come from...maybe Germany, Italy, France, Spain...maybe I'm wrong, but...I feel that that's kind of more accepted than if you came from Romania or...I don't know about Poland...but...the Eastern European countries...they're probably experiencing things in a different way than I am**, and then maybe there is a bit of a difference there as well. I don't know, that's kind of my feeling.' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.60-61)

Aude draws attention to a 'ranking' of Europeans and intimates that she is privileged coming from France rather than an Eastern European country, putting forward that people from those countries are experiencing less acceptance than she is. Aude further comments that British people are familiar with countries like France and Spain because they go on holiday there:

'People are like [*puts on voice*], "**oh yeah, I go on holiday to France, oh yeah, it's lovely!** Oh, I like having...a coffee and *croissant* and...**it's kind of all romantic isn't it, France?**", or they go on holiday to Spain, don't they, it's like, [*puts on voice*] "oh yeah, I go to Spain, and I drink sangria, and...I drink...my French rosé, with a bit of this, bit of that" [*laughs*]. "I have my *croissant*, my *pain au chocolat*" [*laughs*] and **they tell you that and that they love France, and France is amazing...so therefore, you're French and they're kind of like, "yeah, it's fine"... I feel like I get a bit of that...it's like, you're French, it's fine because I quite like France - I go on holiday there** [*laughs*].' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.61-62)

This then links with more of an acceptance of French and Spanish people, as opposed to Polish people, as Poland is not a popular holiday destination for British

people - Eastern European countries did not feature in the 10 most popular holiday destinations for 2022, whilst Spain came in at number 1 and France at number 3 (Thackray, 2022). Beata also highlights a negative image of Eastern European countries:

**‘European Union - amazing idea of having people...being equal and being able to move between different countries...not feeling that you're...kind of...worse...than other country, even though...Poland and Czech and Slovak and so on, we always have been thought of being kind of Eastern Europe rather than central Europe or Western Europe so...we're still kind of equal, there's always going to be a sense that maybe some are...less equal than others I guess, and that sense of...feeling that...kind of inferiority complex of being...in a country that has been under the Communist and Soviet Union for so long.’** (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.18-19)

Beata shows that there are disparities in equality between various EU countries, with the prolonged influence of Soviet rule contributing to the development of an ‘inferiority complex.’ Overall, my participants’ experiences of discrimination have led to them feeling fearful, in line with Buelmann (2020, p.42), and reinforce that the immigration discourse is not just a narrative but a daily reality to contend with.

### **6.3.1.4 “Do I detect an accent?” – language and political space**

A person’s accent is a social marker (Kristiansen, 2001, p.129), and in the case of my participants, their accents mark them out as different, as outsiders. As evidenced in the previous section, the immigration narrative in the media and wider public discourse around Brexit has led to an increase in discrimination towards EU nationals, as it has ‘ignited explicit anti-EU rhetoric’ and ‘xenophobic microaggressions’ (Huc-Hepher, 2019, p.15). Much has already been written on accents in terms of power, bias, stereotypes, accommodation, and identity (De Klerk and Bosch, 1995; Montgomery and Zhang, 2018; Beswick, 2020); here I focus on accents in terms of belonging – how others receive my participants in an environment which prefers monolingualism, and how they perceive and position themselves within this context. A person’s accent is a form of cosmopolitanism, as it is a social action which is part of a linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991, pp.37-38), linked to people’s social aspirations and how they form identity and link to place in different ways. This section will focus on how my participants are navigating perceptions and constraints in relation to their accents in Southampton.

#### 6.3.1.4.1 Accent as marker: 'not from here'

'We had customers calling and saying, "oh **you've got a funny accent...am I calling UK?**"' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.30)

'All the time [people say] "oh, **where's your accent from?** ...it doesn't sound like you're from Southampton?"' (Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-p.24)

'He said, "oh where are you from?" And **we said, "oh we're from Southampton," and he said, "oh really?"**' (Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-p.23)

The interlocutors in the extracts above use my participants' accents to draw attention to the fact that they are 'not from here,' whether on a broader scale in terms of the UK, as in Beata's example, or more locally, as in Sophia's and Agnieszka's. This focus on accent marks my participants as belonging to an out-group, and they are measured and compared against the larger in-group of those who were born in Southampton (Sumner, 1906, p.13). Agnieszka comments:

'It's like you don't [want to] be always feeling like **outsider**. The people will always say, "oh **do I detect an accent?**" and...that's how their conversations start.' (Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-p.23)

Whilst the topic of my participants' accents is phrased on the surface as a seemingly polite conversation starter, the undertone is that their origins and identities are being questioned, as we can see with this question 'do I detect an accent?' which came up several times in my data from different participants. This is in line with Huc-Hepher's (2019, p.17) study of the French in London with xenophobic sentiments being concealed beneath a façade of light-heartedness. This process of systematic othering challenges my participants' sense of belonging to the city, by constantly reinforcing a message that they are outsiders, that they do not belong and are not wanted:

'Often if I'm being asked that, even if it's asked for...innocently, it's just again makes me feel that **I'm kind of flagged** and **there's like a label**...that the accent must mean that [I am] **the outsider**, and that again feeds into like **sense of unbelonging** in a way...**the other**, rather than a person that speaks with a Southampton accent, whatever that is.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.30-31)

Comments about my participants' accents were often irrelevant, for instance asking about their identity in a situation that did not require it, such as at a healthcare

appointment or during a sales transaction in a shop. In the example below, the remark was inappropriate and detracted from the professional focus of the conversation:

**'I've been talking to the police in...a work environment and you're having a discussion about like a serious crime that's happened somewhere, and then the first thing they tell you is, "oh where are you from?"'** (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.31)

In some cases, participants were mistaken for other nationalities, for example, Beata, a Polish participant, was asked if she was French, and Aude, a French national, was asked if she was South African. Here, though the comments were less direct, they still come to the same point around where my participants are from:

**'You...start to see things...in a different light and thinking...is this really just something funny, or is this actually...making me feel uncomfortable? Is that actually something inappropriate?'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.26-28)

Aude mentioned people imitating her, copying her accent, and making jokes, particularly deliberately using the expression 'excuse my French' in her presence and saying it with a French accent. Using humour, othering becomes normalised, and microaggressions like this conceal deep-seated bigotry, and exclude EU nationals from fully belonging in the UK (Huc-Hepher, 2019, p.16). As Looney (2017, p.6) comments, othering has become mainstream and has become absorbed into everyday small talk. 5.2.3 illustrated how participants value the status of Southampton as a port, and they perceived that local residents would be open to other cultures because of this history of trade; however, this perception has not always matched up with the reality they have experienced and has challenged their expectations.

#### **6.3.1.4.2 Accent and positionality within the linguistic landscape**

Baker and Wright (2017, p.395) put forward that we do not create identities on our own; rather, we do so via social comparison, labelling by others, discourse with others, and through self-talk, as well as through engagement in constantly changing situations and contexts. In the previous section, we highlighted how discourse with Sotonians led to my participants being othered. It was notable that the word 'outsider' occurred numerous times within my data and was used by different participants, reinforcing the wider narrative in society around EU nationals. When

questioned about their accents by locals, my participants felt a range of emotions from 'annoyed' and 'irritated' to 'uncomfortable' and 'really awkward,' also expressing that it was 'irrelevant' and 'inappropriate.'<sup>152</sup>

My participants have responded to comments from others by feeling unsettled and internally questioning Southampton as their home, but have a desire to fit in and do not want to stick out by challenging others' remarks, so therefore do not speak up:

**'I wasn't really very comfortable** with that and I just couldn't understand why it came about and why **I didn't have...courage to say, "why did you ask?"** And I think whenever someone asked me that, I just feel it would be rude to ask them back, like, "why do you ask?" So...it's really hard because I feel uncomfortable, at the same time I **feel obliged to kind of go with it** rather than...stop it in a way and start questioning...why it came up...  
**Because...I just feel it would be rude then...or obstructive...to...question it back towards the other person.'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.21-23)

Lilienfeld (2017, pp.141-142) argues that microaggressions can be difficult to spot and respond to effectively because they are so subtle. If victims remain silent, they run the risk of growing resentful and may unintentionally encourage more microaggressions from the same individual. However, if they speak up, the interlocutor can deny having shown bias and blame them for being overly sensitive or neurotic. In this case, Beata had spotted the microaggression but was unable to respond to it due to fear of appearing rude.

As a result of being repeatedly challenged, my participants voiced lack of confidence in using English. Aude told me about a situation with a friend which had upset her, as he kept interrupting her all the time to correct her when she was in the middle of saying something.<sup>153</sup> She reported having to constantly think about which syllable of a word to put the stress on due to the differences in languages, giving 'tomato' in English versus '*tomate*' in French as an example.<sup>154</sup> Additionally, she acknowledged that she avoids saying certain words and phrases like 'willy-nilly' in case she gets them wrong to prevent herself 'looking like a fool.'<sup>155</sup> Both Geneviève and Agnieszka

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<sup>152</sup> Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.30-31; Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.34-35; Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.46-48; Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-pp.25-27; Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.21-23; Agnieszka -Int-2-01.10.21-pp.39-40; Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.62-63; Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.26-28.

<sup>153</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.25-26.

<sup>154</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.35-37.

<sup>155</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.33-34.

said that they make an effort to speak ‘quite clearly,’<sup>156</sup> and Pilar reported that she tries to reduce her accent as it is ‘really strong’<sup>157</sup> and has received complaints about it at work. Further, Agnieszka said that she had considered having elocution lessons due to comments about her accent.<sup>158</sup>

‘We all have different levels of confidence...in talking generally, don't we? But...**when English is not your first language, it's kind of this worry sometimes that you are making mistakes** and then it's how other people kind of relate to that and how they...interact with you... And when it's good to...tell someone that they've made a mistake, so obviously they need to learn, otherwise you never learn, and you never improve your English either. But also, how it...sometime makes conversations going difficult...**I've been here for a long time, but still...sometimes in English...it's difficult.**’ (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.26)

Aude's extract here portrays ‘imposter syndrome’ – feelings of inadequacy and that the self is deficient in some way (Breeze et al, 2022, p.5). This is echoed in Geneviève's comment that she feels that she is ‘not good enough.’<sup>159</sup> With the exception of Angélique, all participants have a high level of English and are currently or have previously been working in professional environments or are studying in the UK at postgraduate level, so this at odds with their perception of themselves. This tallies with Hewertson and Tissa's (2022, p.32) findings that impostor syndrome is not just an individual's personal emotion but is influenced by ‘systemic societal forces’ and is particularly experienced by minority groups (ibid, p.20).

Looking at the wider linguistic landscape and how they fit in to that, my participants recognise the status of English as a world language:

‘[I] have been...thinking...quite a bit...about the use of English...and then comparing it to the use of French and how the French are very set in their ways - that the French is spoken in that way, and that is it! And you also have a bunch of people who...decide what words and how French is going to be done and spoken, and that is French, and anything else is not French, and that's it. Whereas I think **English...is...spoken more widely**, isn't it? **By all**

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<sup>156</sup> Geneviève -Int-1-09.04.21-pp.51-52; Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-pp.25-28.

<sup>157</sup> Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.16

<sup>158</sup> Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-pp.25-28.

<sup>159</sup> Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.46-48.



**sorts of different people, and therefore people are maybe more tolerant about the use of English** and how it's spoken here, there, and everywhere, and I feel that that...is...helping me here...because maybe **it's giving me a little bit more freedom of how I use English.**' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.28-29)

At the same time, they demonstrate an understanding of English accent variety, both on a worldwide scale and within the UK. For example, thinking globally, American, South African, and Australian English accents were mentioned during interviews, whilst in the UK, accents ranging from regional accents such as Northern Irish and Scottish to the more local accents found in Liverpool, Winchester, and Southampton were mentioned.

Further, my participants drew attention to accent prestige, showing that you need to have 'the right accent,' as Geneviève pointed out.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, Hope commented:

'I just came across a BBC News story...about a controversy with...a presenter at the Olympics, and **there was this Lord...and he's made really annoying comments, saying that he could not stand her speaking on television...saying like...climbin' and dryin', runnin' - not saying the 'g'...** And then...there was lots of comments, saying, "oh we have no time for this, like this is completely a stupid debate"... It's not a stupid debate because this keeps happening, so...you keep having situation like that, completely unbelievable, where you have **a young successful woman of colour, who is very professional - and then she gets picked by this Lord on her accent and we...make it worse, even commenting on the background...**and I think this keeps happening... But...you wouldn't have this Lord commenting on the...accent of Alan Shearer for example.' (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.70-71)

The presenter at the Olympics referred to here is Alexandra Scott MBE, English sports presenter, and former professional footballer, who was born in East London. Digby Jones, Baron Jones of Birmingham, British businessman and politician, sat in the House of Lords as a non-aligned active crossbencher until 2020 and is the one who criticised her accent (Bryant, 2021). Alan Shearer, English television football pundit and former professional player, has a Newcastle accent, which is not

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<sup>160</sup> Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.46-48.

considered very prestigious, but is clearly favoured by Digby Jones when compared with the East London accent. The fact that Alex Scott is also ‘a young successful woman of colour’ suggests that intersectional discrimination could be at play here, when considering sex, race, and class, as Hope intimates. Considering my participants are all women, it is possible that there could be discrimination at the intersection of nationality and gender, rather than the race-gender intersection, as Huc-Hepher found with the French in London (2019, p.14).

With monolingualism being preferred in the UK, my participants are aware of this and try to position themselves accordingly. For some like Pilar, they try to soften their accent, but focus mainly on using ‘grammatically correct English,’<sup>161</sup> whilst for others like Aude and Geneviève, they expressed a desire to sound English.<sup>162</sup> However, given the variety of English accents available, no one was able to choose which accent they would like to have, though nobody favoured the ‘really strong’<sup>163</sup> Southampton accent! Interestingly, whilst yearning to sound English, Geneviève also voiced that it was ‘lovely to have different accents’ and that ‘people should resist and keep their accent.’<sup>164</sup> Beata mentioned a Polish client she had been working with who had a ‘spotless’ English accent, and it was only due to her surname that Beata realised she was Polish, conveying admiration for her client.<sup>165</sup> However, she also expressed how being Polish should not ‘be anything to be ashamed of’ and that perhaps she ‘should be more proud than...before’ of her origins.<sup>166</sup> This indicates unease between wanting to sound English and to fit in, and wishing to embrace an identity which acknowledges and celebrates her roots.

We can see that the linguistic landscape in Southampton is full of tensions. As explained in Chapter 5, my participants appreciate the diversity in Southampton and feel that they are part of it and contributing to it, and that it helps them to fit in. Yet, on the other hand, they voiced wanting to sound English and talked about lack of confidence in using English, revealing imposter syndrome and a sense of unbelonging. This indicates that they perceive language to have a strong identification with place-making.

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<sup>161</sup> Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-p.3.

<sup>162</sup> Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.35-37; Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.46-48.

<sup>163</sup> Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-p.2.

<sup>164</sup> Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.50.

<sup>165</sup> Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.33-34.

<sup>166</sup> Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.34-35.

Another contrast was shown between the use of English as a world language with others who also speak English as an additional language, with English being relaxed, versus more specific local Englishes, being aware of accent variety and prestige, and wanting to sound a certain way. Whilst my participants expressed wanting to sound more English, none of them wanted to sound like they were from Southampton specifically, and all take a pragmatic approach, foregrounding English as a *Lingua Franca*.

Overall, the data reveals contrasting complexities between my participants being proud of their heritage and wanting to blend in, nurturing a degree of ambivalence. The wider societal narrative is currently around accentuating difference rather than celebrating diversity, and this is at odds with my participants' cosmopolitan attitude. In particular, the focus on accents draws attention to my participants' origins and makes them feel less welcome, especially around and following Brexit, highlighting the scale of commonplace linguistic racism within Southampton.

### 6.3.2 Attitudes towards the UK and Europe

#### 6.3.2.1 Attitudes towards the UK

Most respondents in Sigona et al's (2022, pp.8-9) survey showed a strong connection to both their countries of origin and residence, as well as to the EU, though 68% said their feelings towards the UK had changed 'a great deal' or 'a lot' since Brexit. Mixed feelings were cited, ranging from 'disappointment, frustration and betrayal' to 'love, family, home, and opportunities,' indicating 'an ambivalent and complex set of feelings' towards the UK. Similar varied sentiments were expressed by my participants, though more negative overall, demonstrated through their narratives:

'[In] 2016 in June **something...just broke** and then that was the point **where I felt...completely...uprooted** even though I wasn't settled completely because...I wasn't growing up here...but I just felt that...I was OK. And then in 2016 when the referendum...in Brexit came, **I just felt...whatever little roots I've started...to have, it was just completely kind of gone and progressively was just getting worse and worse**. So yeah, I think that was...the point where I felt...this is...just the focal point of when things started going not as well as they were at the beginning.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.9)

'It became clear when Brexit started happening...**it kind of prevented me from feeling like I could possibly integrate properly here.** It was a very, **very emotional reaction** that I had, **but also I still carry within me.'**

(Marieke-Int-2-11.10.21-p.33)

'I suppose the sense of belonging, yes, I have to Southampton, but I think **since Brexit, something has definitely shifted...I do feel like I'm accepted in Southampton and I do feel like I belong, but Brexit has changed things big time for me.** Deep down, I don't know.... I was able to be here and go back and forth whenever I wanted...and all of a sudden, I had to register myself and do this, and do that, and...**that was a big kick in the teeth.'**

(Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.31)

'I don't know if I'm like too tired or my confidence or...**my heart is broken...** I'm not sure I can contribute very well in a post-Brexit era so...**this has become very kind of deeply political and difficult for me, and I am extremely disappointed with everything that's happened...and also very pessimistic.'** (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.51-53)

Whereas the overall emotions shown are negative, Beata and Aude show more mixed feelings. For example, whilst Beata did not feel completely at home here prior to Brexit, she had some sense of belonging, which meant that afterwards she felt 'completely uprooted.' Likewise, Aude feels a level of acceptance in Southampton, but Brexit had a massive impact, and the use of 'all of a sudden' highlights her rapid change in feeling. Beata describes Brexit as a 'focal point' 'when things started going not as well as they were at the beginning.' This tallies with Buelmann (2020, p.47), who argues that individuals who had chosen to establish their lives in the UK, believing they were well-integrated, experienced a sudden sense of alienation almost overnight. Pilar also identifies Brexit as a turning point:

**'Until Brexit happened, I had never been scared of opening my mouth, even if nobody could understand what I say. When Brexit came, I didn't realise that the perception of people - not everybody, obviously - but the perception of many people could be that of a foreigner, and in my specific case, I'm never going to lose this accent, and this is something I have to accept.'** (Pilar- Int-2a-15.10.21-p.16)

Pilar's comment about being 'scared of opening my mouth' tallies with Degnen et al's (2024, p.30) observation that routine behaviours came to feel risky after Brexit, and Sigona et al's (2022, p.10) findings that post-Brexit Britain is seen as less welcoming towards EU citizens.

For Beata, Brexit has led to a change in her behaviour. For example, during our interviews, she mentioned avoiding Wetherspoons pubs and not purchasing anything from Dyson because these brands were known to support the Vote Leave campaign.<sup>167</sup> Further, she decided not to meet with a particular friend anymore since they had voted Leave.<sup>168</sup> This shows that it has had an impact on her relationships, and this has even been the case not just through her own choice, but where restrictions have been imposed externally too:

**'I guess the biggest obstacle recently is my Mom not being able to send me parcels which she used to send me and with lots of different things from seeds to chocolate, everything that she could find, so she can't do it now because of whatever declarations you have to put in and some of the restrictions that the Polish...transport companies are putting now too...so she's distraught that she can't send me things.'** (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-p.23)

The restrictions around sending parcels have meant that Beata and her mother have had to alter some of their transnational practices, and this has led to her mother feeling 'distraught' as a result, demonstrating that this change was not just political and legal but had a direct emotional impact too, and highlights the pervasiveness of Brexit in everyday lives (Degnen et al, 2024, pp.24-25).

Despite the negative feelings towards the UK, Sigona et al's (2022, pp.3-4) survey showed that most EU citizens are not planning to leave the UK at present, particularly as relationships and family are the key motivation behind decisions to move, but that EU citizens living in the UK display a higher chance of moving again than British citizens living in the EU. Geneviève encapsulates this:

**'At the moment with the Brexit...it feels a bit sour...what's happening between our countries and that is sad. And the friends I have here are pro-European, so it comforts me in a way... I think I would have found it quite**

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<sup>167</sup> Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.19-20.

<sup>168</sup> Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.21-22.

difficult...to have these friends who would be very anti-Europe...I don't think I could have carried on...keeping close ties with people, so I've been lucky in the sense that the people I know are pro-European, so it makes life easier... I do understand to a certain extent...the reasons why some people would have voted for Brexit and so on, I'm not unrealistic...but in my heart, **my heart bleeds...that...it has come to that...it's so very emotional... But as far as living in Southampton is concerned, I'm quite happy and I can't see us moving really.**' (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.16-17)

Like Beata and Aude, Geneviève is ambivalent in her feelings, ranging from being 'sad' and 'emotional' to 'quite happy' to the point where she 'can't see us moving really.' Similarly, whilst my participants see the possibility of moving again,<sup>169</sup> nobody is making any specific plans to do so, and even Marieke, who has left Southampton since my data collection ended has stayed in the UK, in London. Overall, the materials highlight emotion as important in attachment to place (Botterill and Hancock, 2019, p.1).

### 6.3.2.2 Attitudes towards Europe and the EU

Sigona et al (2022, p.16) assert that Brexit constituted a transformative event in terms of EU citizens' sentiments toward the UK, engendering ambivalent feelings towards their country of origin and notably reinforcing their attachment to European identities. This is clearly expressed by my participants in relation to their sense of being European:

**'I feel like a European rather than belonging to just one country.'**

(Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.39)

'The whole idea of when Poland became part of the EU that we had a complete door open...and...**the sense of freedom that you can actually choose and be treated equally and choose to go to any country in the European Union that you wanted and knew that...your rights as a citizen's are protected.** That does make you feel more European - that **obviously your national identity you still have, but at the same time...you are still able to feel that you're part of Europe, like a bigger and bigger identity,** a bigger project, so...you'll be treated the same and you feel

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<sup>169</sup> See 6.2.3.5.

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you...got equal rights...to where you are. It doesn't really matter whether it's...Holland or France or Spain. So...I think the sense of being more European definitely appeals to me...and...that's why I was voting to stay in EU in the referendum because I just felt it's...amazing idea of a project.' (Beata-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.18-19)

Beata describes the EU as an 'amazing idea of a project,' specifically focusing on the rights enjoyed within the EU, whilst Marieke expresses a sense of belonging that transcends nationalism. Their outlook matches Ranta and Nancheva's (2019, p.5) 'cosmopolitan' group, viewing themselves in a way that transcends national communities. Geneviève and Hope also share similar feelings, but highlight an 'international' focus too:

**'I think the most important thing more than a hotch potch or mix...is more European international, because where I've spent so much time away from France...I don't feel so French in many ways...when I go back and I see different things I am not that close to...like...there's no typical French, but I can...feel I'm quite different now. I've got a different look on things... Actually of course I'm French. So now I've got French nationality and that...maybe I'm...French in colour or in...legal...label I'm French... But my life's taken me to be more British, but I think above all...this is only possible because I feel very European... I think definitely the European international is...more prevalent for my identity.'** (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.23-24)

**'I still feel...half French and half British really. And also, the problem is that I have children - one has married a New Zealander, they live in Scotland, and the other one has married Japanese and lives in Japan now. So...it's sort of international, it goes beyond Europe, you know? More international now for me... [On the recent census, I put] French because that's my nationality, but I really feel half and half.'** (Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.16)

Whilst both Geneviève and Hope suggest a more global identity, in line with Woolard's (2016, p.150) 'citizen of the world' view, it seems that being European has been key for them to feel this wider sense of belonging. Overall, my participants show a much more positive view of Europe and the EU than the UK, which aligns with Bueltmann's (2020, p.3) study in which 70.29% of her respondents agree or strongly agree that their European identity was strengthened by Brexit.

Whilst my participants expressed living ‘in between,’<sup>170</sup> they also show a sense of belonging that transcends national groupings, so they fit with Ranta and Nancheva’s (2019, p.5) ‘cosmopolitan’ group, especially in relation to their level of education, but also the ‘in-between’ group.

Section 6.3 discussed how Brexit has disrupted the cosmopolitan outlook, leaving EU citizens in a new position as international immigrants (Reed-Danahay, 2020, pp.19-20). This shift has prompted contemplation among my participants about obtaining British citizenship to secure their rights, including pensions, travel privileges, and political participation. Brexit has diminished their social standing, leading to feelings of not entirely fitting into society and being seen as outsiders, as indicated by the term ‘not quite white’ (Botterill and Burrell, 2019, p.24). Emotionally, participants are grappling with their sense of belonging in a post-Brexit landscape, where they suddenly feel disconnected.

Unfortunately, most have experienced discrimination, despite their white privilege. This has led to a diminished sense of safety, particularly evident in incidents targeting the Polish community in Southampton. Despite these challenges and mixed feelings about the UK, participants express reluctance to leave, although their attachment to European identities has grown stronger. While they align with Ranta and Nancheva's (2019, p.1) ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘in-between’ groups, Brexit has pushed them into a new phase, focusing more on their European identity and rights. However, it is crucial to note that these insights capture a specific moment in time, and attitudes may change over time.

### **6.4 The Covid period**

Following Brexit, participants raised varied concerns relating to COVID-19. In terms of the disease itself, several participants had apprehensions about other people not being vaccinated, whilst Marieke experienced issues with her housing and had to move at short notice due to her landlord’s fear of COVID-19. Transnationals were perceived as possible threats to public health (Della Rosa and Goldstein, 2020, p.258) with ‘the body of the other’ contributing to this fear (Roy, 2020, p.343). Considering health more generally, Hope felt that a more sedentary lifestyle during

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<sup>170</sup> See 6.2.3.4.



Covid impacted negatively on her health, and Agnieszka experienced delays in accessing health treatment because of the pandemic. Other situations which were worsened because of the restrictions were delays for Sophia and Agnieszka in obtaining Settled Status and in applying for British citizenship, and a period of unemployment for Marieke.

However, the main area of anxiety for all my participants was around travel – firstly the inability to do so, and later the difficulties in completing the relevant paperwork in line with the restrictions at different times. The transnational practices of ‘connecting, moving, and acting across national borders’ (Armbruster, 2002, p.19), were greatly reduced during Covid due to the limitations around travel:

‘Over the years, I haven't visited [France] so much, and then obviously now with Covid, it's even worse because international mobility is at the other extreme. So...**I've started my journey, my physical journey, with mobility, and now it's...no mobility for now.**’ (Hope-Int-1-09.04.21-p.8)

‘**Before COVID-19 situation, I used to spent half of my time in Kraków and half in Southampton**, as we have our second home there which is really convenient. I still have family in Poland which I was visiting regularly. **I really miss that and not being able to travel freely.**’ (Agnieszka-J2S-16.05.21-p.1)

‘**It has been hard this particular last year.** You see, when we were locked down, it was spring and then the summer, and we went to France in the summer later on, but at least you could meet people in the garden and so on, **while this winter...it was sad because we were on our own for weeks on end...nobody [else] in the house...** And it's so strange, and so I can understand people stuck in very small...flats and have no way...not to be in each other's way and no gardens and...**it can be awful really...it went on for so long**, so I hope it doesn't happen again.’ (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-p.82)

Whilst mobility is a movement or ‘transition from *immobility* to *mobility*’ (Van Hear, 1998, p.38), Hope describes the opposite situation from mobility to ‘no mobility for now.’ The lack of ability to travel meant that my participants could not visit their relatives, as Agnieszka points out. Her use of the words ‘really miss’ and Geneviève’s use of the adjectives ‘hard,’ ‘sad,’ ‘strange’ and ‘awful’ bring the psychological impact to the fore. Marianna, Angélique and Beata all talked about not being able to visit their families or for their families to come to the UK. Beata

explained how she and her family increased their use of WhatsApp during the lockdowns, and she set her Mum and sister tasks to do each week such as making soup or planting seeds, which they then reported on via WhatsApp. COVID-19 forced many previously face-to-face interactions to take place virtually, and this increased emphasis on technology challenged our relationship to people and place (Pennycook, 2016, p.445).

As travel started to be allowed, the restrictions in place meant that my participants had to have Covid vaccinations, carry out NHS Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, fill in the appropriate paperwork and self-isolate if necessary, sometimes at a cost if required to go to an isolation hotel rather than isolate at home:

**'We have our double vaccination and...we received the paperwork from the NHS so we can show the authorities... When we are [in France], we'll have to see what happens...if it's going to be stricter or not, if we will have to isolate when we get back or not... [We're travelling] because of the family and friends, otherwise, it would not really bother me at this stage...it seems...so difficult. But being retired means that we can pick and choose when...we want to go - so many people are not lucky like that. And...the prospect of having to isolate themselves on their return might be...not possible for them.'** (Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.1-3)

**'[I] had a good time [in Spain]. It was a little weird because...the situation is not completely normal, but...the trip back was an absolute nightmare...it beggars belief and you just can't lose the will to live, I thought it was so horrible...I thought until I was on the plane, I didn't even know if I was going to come to the country because this was at last minute things we had to go to the airport. We had to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning to go to the airport, do all the PCRs, and everything they wanted...'cause the government guidelines and the airline guidelines did not coincide.'** (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.6)

**'You understand English really well and you can deal with the [Covid] paperwork [but] it's really tricky for people to come to the UK and do [it] ...'cause you need to do the test on day two and or within two days and you need to do...the passenger locator form, but you need to have the code... [It's]...totally fine if you can speak English and know what's going on, otherwise, if you just want to come to London for the weekend,**

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**forget it!** Do you know what I mean, if you're like French or Italian or Spanish and you just want to do a weekend in London and...your English is...basic, there's no way...you can work it out!' (Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.7)

All the extracts above reveal complications according to the different rules in place in each country and on the airlines as well as difficulty completing paperwork, coupled with the possibility of changes happening at short notice whilst travelling, plus the added expense of the PCR tests and isolating. For this group of cosmopolitans open to mobility, the whole process of travelling within the Covid climate became 'so difficult,' 'so horrible' and 'an absolute nightmare.' Following increasingly pessimistic feelings towards the UK after Brexit, the Covid pandemic did not help. Most respondents in Benson et al's (2022, p.14) study experienced an increase in negative feelings towards the UK following COVID-19, and in particular, due to the UK government's – and especially Prime Minister Boris Johnson's – response to the pandemic, which was echoed in the narratives.

Covid led to mixed feelings towards Southampton as a city too. For some, it meant disconnection from other people and their locality. For example, Angélique highlighted how the situation made it more difficult to attend Church and this intensified the cultural differences she had already been experiencing in that environment:

**'When we were in France, we were part of a Church...every Wednesday...we were meeting a group of teenagers and worship with them, help to pray, discussions, things like that. We were part of a group...it was an active part in the Church...also we were playing music during the Mass... So when we arrived here, we...tried...to meet people in the choral and propose to be active if they wanted to. But I think our way to express, way to seeing or style of music we could use was really different...from what they were used to seeing or play...it was really difficult to match... So from now, we didn't really felt comfortable to be active and participate in the Church. We have tried, but...also with the Covid, everything has been stopped, so that's also reason...we didn't stay in that intention of participating...to the life of the Church.'** (Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.17-19)

Whilst not describing herself as religious, Beata is traditional and so would normally go to Church on Easter Sunday for her breakfast food to be blessed, but as she could not do this during Covid, she instead had the basket on her dining table as a

reminder of what she would usually do.<sup>171</sup> Although this symbolic action helped, the lack of ability to travel made her feel 'locked' and impacted her sense of connection to the city as well as to Europe:

**'The biggest challenge is the fact that...I wasn't able to see my family for so long and the kind of travel issues... I've always been OK with wearing masks, so that's not...really a big...deal, but...the lack of being able to travel...makes it really difficult and...the sense of belonging to the city [is] ...diminishing even further because you just feel really...locked... Before pandemic...I used to travel around, so this was obviously my base, but...I just felt very...international...and now...it's just all kind of cut off and...it's just not me in a way... And...that's quite hard.'** (Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-pp.64-65)

Beata explained how the lack of mobility reduced her sense of belonging to the city and changed how she felt about herself as she felt 'cut off,' which was at odds with her identity. As time progressed, a hybrid working policy was implemented by her employer so she could then spend a few days at home and some in the office rather than being at home all the time. Hope showed how her changing work situation has meant that even after the pandemic, she no longer goes into the city centre much:

**'My life has completely changed...in the last two years because I was in a physical office and then suddenly, I was sent into at home and then I didn't come back until I finished...my contract, so I just kept working from home.'** (Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-p.43)

The change in the way that my participants worked, spent their free time, and connected with family and friends differently due to lack of ability to travel created a sense of disconnection from others and the city. It also gave a change in perspective:

**'The whole pandemic has really made me even more live in the moment and live things very short term rather than long term. I mean I worry long term, but right now my first goal is just to get through the pandemic in one piece.'** (Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.39)

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<sup>171</sup> See Figure 38.

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In contrast, however, the pandemic meant that some felt an increasing sense of connection to people and Southampton. For example, whilst Angélique felt disconnected from the Church, she felt more connected to her family as she was able to spend more time with her husband as he was working from home, and one of her daughters and a niece also ended up staying with them during the lockdowns as they had come to the UK around those times for various reasons. In the first lockdown, she was unable to continue with her voluntary work, but when the rules changed for the second lockdown, this meant that she was able to sort out donations in the charity shop and connect with her colleagues more. Pilar too experienced the lockdowns differently; in the first lockdown, her daughter was staying with her, but she was living alone during the second lockdown and found a greater sense of connection to the city centre parks:

'[This photo] reflects...the beauty of the [Houndwell] park. I think it's really pretty for me... **There was nobody else in the park...it was mesmerising to see the park like that...** I usually walk around 15 minutes [to work] so I tried to replicate that... It doesn't make me sad, **this picture...it reflects something beautiful...it reflects the pandemic...[and] one of the positive things that I did was those morning walks...**because I don't like walk for the sake of walk... But **during the pandemic...I really...couldn't stand being at home all the time. I needed that break before I started work at 8:00.'**  
(Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.48)

Figure 58 *Photograph received from Pilar on 15.10.21 showing Houndwell Park in the fog*



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Pilar found her walks in the park 'beautiful' and 'positive.' Similarly, Marianna felt a closer connection to Weston Shore to the point where 'we feel like we are part of it':

'I think that I just realised...how much from those pictures actually comes to the...regional or even...just one area...**almost like patriotism...we...explore...this area and...we feel like we are part of it.** We like it very much.' (Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.50-51)

Figure 59 *Photograph received from Marianna on 08.09.21 showing Weston Shore*



Pilar's and Marianna's connections to local places are significant for them (Tuan, 1977, p.6; Seamon and Sowers, 2008, p.44; Relph, 2016, p.147), and demonstrate emotional attachment to Southampton, feeling at home, even when there was little or no contact with other residents during the Covid period (Savage et al, 2004, p.103).

Whilst my participants had mixed experiences of whether Covid helped them to connect or feel disconnected from Southampton, all of them had a shared focus around being able to travel as a transnational practice. As Aude sums up:

**'It's a relief that we can travel again,** I think for me anyway.'

(Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.7)

Overall, following increasingly pessimistic feelings towards the UK after Brexit, the Covid pandemic did not help and led to mixed feelings towards Southampton as a city too, with some feeling disconnected from people and their locality, and others feeling more connected to geographical place. The key focus for all my participants was first the inability to travel and then the complex restrictions around travelling,

which impacted on their usual transnational practices and affected how they felt about themselves, since mobility – or at least the concept or possibility of it - is an integral part of their identification to place.

## 6.5 Southampton, City of Culture finalist

Looking back at Abrams and Vasiljevic's (2013) four types of city (Table 1), my participants' cosmopolitan attitude is focused on the ideal of 'the intercultural city' with cohesion between groups of people, and residents being open and tolerant. However, in practice, the prejudice observed through discriminatory comments and incidents experienced by my participants suggests that Southampton sits somewhere between 'the sectarian city' and 'the revanchist city.' My participants' narratives highlighted some good relations but with some hostility towards outsiders characterised by a sectarian urban area, but also ambivalence and hostility towards the government and other residents in relation to Brexit, showing the disengagement and fragmentation realised in a revanchist city.

Whilst Brexit and Covid have brought negative feelings towards the UK and to Southampton, my participants do connect to the city and see themselves staying here, with the exception of Marieke who has already moved to London for economic reasons, and Angélique who has since relocated to Italy due to her husband's work. The research has highlighted that participants value the city as a port as well as its history, parks, and multicultural diversity, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Southampton as a port city means that there is always a connection 'to Europe' and to 'other parts of the world' and my participants are aware of the nautical history of the city as well as the present reality of the cruise industry. Its geographical location means that it is 'convenient' for travel and this allows my participants to maintain links with friends and family in Europe, making it possible to feel connected to multiple places simultaneously (Jones and Jackson, 2014, p.5):

**'At the same time...on the same street...side to side, you have someone...Polish or French or Spanish or Italian... And also, English people who have travelled...that we can meet here in Southampton...they are able to open their mind to something else.'** (Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-pp.9-10)

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The 'sense of space' in Southampton and having 'so many green areas' 'at close range' is valued highly by my participants and plays an important role in their lives (Swanwick et al, 2003, p.104):

'This is another thing that I will always associate with Southampton is the parks within the city. **You don't need to go anywhere else, you have the parks**, and I'm not even talking about the Common. This is just the parks within the city, **beautiful.**' (Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.37-38)

Southampton is viewed as diverse and the mix of languages within the city demonstrates the various groups of people living here, but it is 'embodied habitual practices' (Wells, 2020, p.147) which helps to shape a strong local attachment to the city. This is especially clear through food, in the use and sharing of recipes from families and through cooking and eating together with friends, which are important place-making activities that simultaneously express the variety of groups living in Southampton:

**'It's multilingual city, and you can see it as you step out onto any streets** - I'm not talking just about St Mary's where you will hear Punjabi and Indian and other languages and Arabic obviously. But when you step anywhere - as **the city has progressed with the influx of immigration, it has become even more multilingual...** So when I am in my flat now...there are lots of families with little children, I can hear the Mums, typical like Spanish Mums - [*puts on a whining voice:*] "come here!" - from one end to the other...and you can hear it in Polish and...in the language they speak in Pakistan and they have some Arabs there... **So of course [Southampton is] mainly English, but...there is this kind of multilingualism.**' (Pilar-Int-2b-22.10.21-p.5)

My participants are part of the multicultural of the city. As Kushner (2021, p.92) aptly puts it, 'Southampton is...a city made and re-made by those who have passed through and sometimes settled permanently - people from every part of the globe.' This key trope of mobility is an integral part of the narratives of my participants.



## 6.6 Navigating the everyday: the complex journey towards ordinary belonging

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Southampton has become a significant home for my participants, focusing particularly on place-making activities which are often intricately tied to the gendered roles they play within their households. These everyday practices connecting them to their surroundings embody ordinary belonging, with an emphasis on pragmatism and constructing a civic identity, which involves making a meaningful contribution to society. In this chapter, I develop the idea of ordinary belonging and have concentrated on this concept as an ongoing journey, as the dynamic ability to adapt to life's changing circumstances, especially considering the challenges posed by Brexit and Covid. These episodes required my participants to reflect more specifically on their identity and necessitated a continuous negotiation of their role, not just within Southampton but within the UK as a whole.

Through my participants' narratives, I see both a desire for, and embodiment of, ordinary belonging in their lives. Considering desire, their thoughts and feelings express a yearning for being an ordinary, everyday citizen – to fit in: to feel comfortable, accepted, and included in society, rather than to stick out, to appear different, or to be regarded as 'other' (Utlu, 2011, pp.94-95). Section 6.2.2 concentrates predominantly on this desire, considering three different aspects: invisibility, acceptance, and integration. Firstly, there is the desire for invisibility, or the ability to be anonymous, by being able to navigate public spaces in Southampton without drawing attention to themselves. Whether it's riding a bus, walking down a street, or shopping, my participants want to be able to go about their daily activities without being questioned about their origins, which is aided by their white privilege and their perception of not having to conform to dress or body ideals, as they slot into the diversity that surrounds them in the city.

Secondly, they have a desire for acceptance, or freedom to be themselves, by being 'one among the many' as Marieke said, or feeling more comfortable being a lesbian here than in France, as Aude highlighted, which is helped by their impression of Britain as a generally tolerant society. Thirdly, there is a desire for integration, or participating in civic life, with English viewed as essential for this, meaning that my participants foreground English as a Lingua Franca, rather than their multilingual

## Chapter 6

identities, and avoid other people from their national groups in order not to be marked out as different. This desire for ordinariness is reflected in the way they construct narratives of ordinary belonging, emphasising a longing to be seen as part of the city, in contrast to external narratives - especially in the media - that position them as 'the other.' They adopt behaviours that allow them to appear ordinary, even trying to soften their accents, aiming to avoid standing out and being viewed as outsiders. However, this desire to blend in also makes it difficult to challenge the discrimination they face, as they prioritise fitting in over confrontation, perhaps wishing to fulfil gendered expectations that emphasise modesty, unobtrusiveness, and harmony.

Beyond their narratives, it is clear that my participants actively embody ordinary belonging through their daily activities and interactions, as seen in 6.2.3 and Chapter 5. Relationships are central to their experience of belonging, with their narratives reflecting that homemaking involves not just physical spaces but also the social bonds they foster. Even their connections to objects, expressed by some participants, are also tied to people, whether real or imagined, past or present. Their relationships, often grounded in their roles as mothers, caregivers, and homemakers, are fundamental to their sense of home and belonging. In these roles, often gendered and aligning with feminine ideals of adaptability and sociability, they participate in the city's social and civic life, cultivating a civic identity that helps anchor their sense of ordinary belonging in Southampton. This embodiment of belonging is practical and rooted in their everyday experiences in both public and private spheres, whether it is cooking for their families, creating meaningful social connections, working, or participating in local events. By contributing to Southampton's multicultural tapestry and embracing their roles as mothers, partners, workers, friends, and neighbours, they have become part of the city's fabric.

My participants expressed the tensions they feel of having more than one home, with home being 'both here and there' (Bammer, 1992, p.ix), reflecting their 'in between' status. They manage these pressures of maintaining connections across multiple homes, navigating their 'in-between' status with pragmatism, positioning their experiences as ordinary in their narratives despite the complexity of living between different cultures and places, and embodying the flexibility and resilience often associated with women's roles in managing familial and social networks. Additionally, they acknowledge the potential for further relocation, recognising

## Chapter 6

transnational migration as an evolving process influenced by changing circumstances and feelings over time.

Compared to asylum seekers or refugees, their privileged backgrounds have enabled them to integrate more easily, but Brexit has disrupted their cosmopolitan ideals, leading to uncertainty about their rights and status in the UK. Previously as mobile EU citizens, now reclassified as international immigrants, my participants face the challenge of renegotiating their sense of ordinary belonging in a post-Brexit environment. For some, this has meant considering British citizenship as a way to secure their rights concerning pensions, travel, and political participation, in order to maintain a sense of agency in the face of shifting power structures.

Unfortunately, this reclassification has also resulted in a loss of social status and increased experiences of discrimination. While being white affords some privilege, it offers only limited protection.

Participants have encountered microaggressions, particularly directed toward the Polish and French communities, aligning with national data as well as Huc-Hepher's (2019, p.17) findings. These experiences have impacted on their sense of safety and belonging in the UK, and their attachment to their European identities has been strengthened. Whilst my participants seem to fit Ranta and Nancheva's (2019, p.1) 'cosmopolitan' and 'in-between' groups, Brexit has propelled them into a new era based around their European identity and rights. However, these insights offer only a snapshot of their current experiences, and their perspectives may evolve over time.

The Covid pandemic further complicated their sense of belonging. For some, it deepened feelings of disconnection from their surroundings, while others found renewed attachment to Southampton. Their inability to travel freely - a key aspect of their transnational identity whether realised or not - affected how they saw themselves and their place in the world. Yet despite the challenges posed by both Brexit and Covid, my participants expressed being committed to staying in Southampton during the time I carried out my research, valuing its history, parks, and multicultural diversity, and seeing themselves as part of the city. As Kushner (2021, p.92) states, Southampton is created by people from all over the world who have both moved through and settled in the city.

In sum, my participants' sense of ordinary belonging in Southampton reflects both their roles as women and their broader transnational identities. Their attachment to

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the city is shaped by their relationships, their roles in the city, and their pragmatic ability to adapt to changing circumstances. They embody ordinary belonging as a process that is deeply intertwined with gendered responsibilities, social relationships, and their navigation of local and global identities. As women, their contributions to their families, their social networks, and their engagement with the city reflect this form of belonging, which is practical, relational, and constantly evolving. While Brexit and Covid have raised questions about their status and future in the UK, they continue to assert their presence and enrich Southampton's multicultural landscape. Their ability to adapt, form connections, and nurture relationships as transnational women speaks to the resilience of their ordinary belonging, allowing them to navigate the complexities of identity, migration, and homemaking in an ever-changing world.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

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## 7.1 Overview of findings

My research concentrated on how EU nationals experience and construct a sense of belonging in Southampton. My approach used linguistic ethnography, since my research questions<sup>172</sup> focused on language to investigate belonging (Rampton et al, 2004, p.2). In terms of how they identify to Southampton as a city, their perceptions have changed over time. Initially as newcomers to the area, the grey post-war architecture had negative connotations for them, but over time, the physical development and improvement to the urban space contributed to a change in how they view Southampton. Whilst the city has seen dramatic transformation over the years, it has been my participants' everyday engagement through mundane practices which has connected them to their surroundings and has cemented a psychological shift for them, as Southampton has become familiar to them as their home.

Their daily interaction with the city has led to an appreciation of what it has to offer. In particular, its parks and other green spaces contribute to their wellbeing. Holding cosmopolitan values, my participants value the diversity of the place and feel that they are part of it. Southampton's location on the south coast and its status as a port mean that it is well connected to other places and therefore convenient to travel. Even if some participants have limited ability to travel, the possibility of doing so is something that is forefront in their minds, as part of their transnational identity. Their previous experiences of living in other places mean that Southampton is always seen in comparison to other homes (Kenny and Madgin, 2016, p.4), and through the purchase, preparation, and eating of food, they bring together the local and the global, transcending national boundaries.

As women, much of their experiences of the city are enacted through gendered roles. For example, they engage in place-making activities which simultaneously nurture familial ties and personal connection to the city, such as through going to the park with their children. Likewise, the selection and preparation of food is an activity often carried out by women (Cairns and Johnston, 2015), and my participants are no exception, cooking and baking for their households, and even in some cases growing herbs and tomatoes. Food is also linked with traditions such as

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<sup>172</sup> See 1.5.

## Chapter 7

Christmas and Easter, with women often being responsible for passing on cultural values and customs within the family context (Ochs and Taylor, 1992).

Language has proven itself to be key in constructing and expressing identity, and the English language is central to my participants' identification to Southampton. Although they are multilingual, they access local services mainly through English, and foreground English as a *Lingua Franca*, rather than their multilingual identities. Their focus has been to integrate into the local area, using English to navigate the city in their daily lives and constructing a civic identity, encompassing the process of establishing and situating themselves within the city *vis-à-vis* their participation in the local social, administrative, political, and economic structures (Viola, 2020, p.103). Avoiding their own nationality groups and building relationships with others through English - whether others speak it as a first or additional language - has been important to them in developing a sense of ordinary belonging, and the use of English for them is both a tool and a social practice in a dynamic and changing sociopolitical landscape.

The reasons driving their sense of belonging are related to their civic identity, as they have a desire to contribute and to make a meaningful impact, whether they are working, studying, bringing up children, volunteering, or fostering social connections. Relationships are key to my participants feeling a sense of belonging, and the research highlights that there is more of a connection to self and others rather than to one place only, as individuals prioritise personal and social connections over a strong attachment to just one home. Homemaking for them is not just about the physical space within which they live but is about the social bonds that they foster. Even everyday objects in their homes have symbolic connections to people, often received as gifts from friends or family members, and connect to homes elsewhere.

My participants build and maintain a range of relationships in the city, with their partners, children, colleagues, neighbours, and friends. As transnationals, they sustain relationships abroad as well as locally, especially as women often have the responsibility for building and maintaining familial relationships and that of relationships between different households (Seery and Crowley, 2000; Di Leonardo, 1987). Their intricate relational networks show that belonging goes beyond the notion of a speech community (Hymes, 2005), incorporating both physical and

virtual spaces and places, extending geographically much further than Southampton.

My participants' connection to the city is complex and evolving, as reasons for belonging can change over time (Eckersley and Vos, 2023, p.15). For some, their initial reasons for moving to Southampton are not now their reasons for staying here, as life has developed in a different way than how they had planned, often due to meeting a partner and/or starting a family. Brexit and Covid were two significant episodes which meant that my participants had to re-evaluate their reasons for belonging. They had mixed experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for all, the inability to travel challenged their position as transnationals, since mobility - whether realised or not - is important to them.

For many, Brexit severely disrupted their sense of belonging and led to them questioning their status, not just in Southampton as a city but within the UK as a whole, in line with EU citizens' sentiments nationally (Sigona et al, 2022). Whilst most of my participants are settled here and do not see themselves moving in the near future, the possibility of doing so again is now a clearly articulated possibility. Indeed, two participants have moved away since my study ended, one to London to pursue a job opportunity, and the other to Italy due to her husband's work, although they did not have any plans to move during the time my research was carried out, having expressed commitment to staying in Southampton. Whilst still retaining a local sense of belonging, Brexit led to my participants' European identities being strengthened.

A sense of belonging is shown through the ordinariness of my participants' everyday actions; whether they are working, studying, bringing up family, volunteering, or engaging in social activities, they have developed and maintain a connection to the local area. They emphasise their civic identity through voicing wanting to make a contribution, and they make use of the local services available to them, making active choices and selecting those most relevant to them and their households. Even though Covid and Brexit disrupted their sense of the everyday, they adapted to change, and with their value of pragmatism, talked about how they negotiated these episodes with resilience.

Compared with refugees or asylum seekers, my participants' privileged backgrounds have allowed them to integrate into life in the UK more easily, as the differing rights available to them have meant that they have been able to live more ordinary lives.



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Whilst Brexit challenged their legal status, some participants considered applying for citizenship in order to be able to secure their rights and to navigate their daily lives better. Their narratives show a huge degree of self-reflection, and the way in which they have been able to adapt and to utilise the resources available to them at different stages in their journeys displays their pragmatism and strength of character. The concept of ordinary belonging which I have coined in my thesis is shown through the lives of my participants as practical, relational, and constantly evolving.

A vast amount of data was gathered as part of this project, and my participants have articulated their sense of ordinary belonging discursively through their narratives, whether expressed via the video interviews, their journalling, on the WhatsApp focus group, or shown visually through the photographs they supplied. Their narratives reveal unique, individual journeys, each engaging in different transnational practices and with a range of trajectories and cultural capital available to them, yet they also collectively share a sense of ordinary belonging.

Their narratives also reveal tensions, with home being both here and there (Bammer, 1992, p.ix) with a sense of feeling in between as they navigate a third space (Bhabha, 1994, p.56). Their experiences of discrimination, particularly in relation to their accents and especially around Brexit, have sometimes led to feelings of unbelonging. However, their narratives articulate creative thinking, problem-solving skills, and a sense of tenacity as they navigate these challenges, reflecting on their lives continually, and negotiating the everyday, whatever it brings, as it comes.

My participants narrate a desire for ordinary belonging, a yearning to blend in, to have the right to anonymity as they navigate the streets of Southampton, to be accepted into UK society, and some even try to soften their accents as part of this. Their narratives further reveal an embodiment of ordinary belonging, as through daily activities, routines, and interactions, they enact ordinariness. The sense of belonging that my participants feel and construct in their lives is in stark contrast to that of media narratives, which position them instead as other (Utlu, 2011, pp.94-95) and 'not quite white' (Botterill and Burrell, 2019, p.24), constantly judging their integration into society (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, pp.10-11). My participants defy the stories being told about them by telling their own stories and asserting their presence here simply through living their lives in an ordinary way, enriching

Southampton's multicultural landscape and making a valuable contribution to society.

## 7.2 Significance and contribution

Until I conducted my study, there had been limited research in Southampton, as most studies in urban areas of the UK had focused on cities such as London, Leeds, and Manchester. While previous work explored institutions and languages at the policy and planning level in Southampton, my research shifted focus to the people themselves - specifically EU nationals as locals - by examining their everyday meaning-making practices. Other studies looked at East Europeans in Southampton before Brexit, or explored feelings related to the referendum, but focused solely on specific nationalities, such as the Polish.

Additionally, research on social identity practices in the city concentrated only on post-accession Polish people, without addressing other nationality groups. Studies of the Portuguese and Polish in Southampton have focused mainly on language use and employment opportunities, thus examining only one aspect of their lives. This means that my work is particularly timely, focusing on EU nationals' experiences of negotiating their everyday lives within the wider context of hostility towards those originating from outside the UK as well as the Leave vote in Southampton, which was higher than the national result.

My project makes both a conceptual and methodological contribution to knowledge. In terms of the conceptual contribution, I coined the term ordinary belonging, bringing together a broader perspective on belonging with the ordinariness of everyday practices in the individual lives of my participants in both their public and private spheres. I define ordinary belonging as a practical process through which individuals integrate into their local area, emphasising their civic identity and adaptability to changing circumstances as they engage in everyday practices. This process involves ongoing negotiation of their position over time, building relationships, and reflecting on different aspects of their identity, such as nationality. The concept highlights the importance of everyday actions in fostering connection and integration within society, which is often overlooked in broader discussions.

While some research focuses on specific aspects of belonging, such as space and place, time, or concepts of home, or examines identity characteristics like gender or national identity, my conceptualisation of ordinary belonging takes a broader, more intersectional and interdisciplinary approach. It integrates both linguistic and social contexts to explore the evolving place-making narratives of 10 European women in Southampton.

In contrast to much research that centres on public spaces, my project also includes the private sphere. While other studies have explored extraordinary moments, such as Brexit, my 18-month study offers a wider perspective on these women's everyday lives, emphasising how they continuously shape their identities and social connections through intimate, daily experiences. A key finding in my research is the significant impact of accent discrimination on their sense of belonging, particularly as most studies on accent bias have focused on professional contexts like recruitment, rather than everyday experiences.

Regarding the methodological contribution, I have shown how linguistic ethnography can be adapted to the online sphere, since traditional methods of face-to-face participant observation and shadowing were not possible due to the restrictions in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst I could not physically be with my participants, we were emplaced together online, which provided a unique insight into their lives. In particular, the video interviews provided a visual window into their homes, creating an exclusive opportunity for remote observation into their private lives. Further, the restrictions of the pandemic encouraged my participants to talk about what they were unable to do on a daily basis, thereby highlighting indirectly what they would normally do, providing me with an understanding of their usual routines, relationships, and traditions.

The participant journalling phase of my research produced a rich variety of visual data, from photographs to app screenshots and a DVD, with photographs making up the majority, as my participants played an active role as co-producers of knowledge. This type of data provided a useful stimulus for participants to talk about how they construct a sense of belonging in Southampton, along with their experiences of discrimination, motherhood, and so on, foregrounding for the first time the narratives of female EU nationals in Southampton, covering private spaces within participants' homes as well as the public spaces which they access. The volume and quality of the photographs I received is especially noteworthy, and

provides an important insight into ordinary belonging, since they depict everyday aspects of their lives and surroundings, whether preparing meals, caring for children, or arranging fruit in a bowl or books on shelves. These simple actions revealed through the photographs highlight the importance of daily routines in cultivating a sense of ordinary belonging and connection.

I observed that many of the photographs emphasise everyday tasks typically carried out by women, shedding light on some of the gendered roles my participants fulfil. These include activities such as choosing and preparing food, building and maintaining familial relationships, fostering connections between different households, parenting, and passing down cultural values, customs, and traditions within the family, suggesting a link between my participants' identities as women and ordinary belonging.

### 7.3 Implications

The online ethnographic video interviews alongside participant journalling and the use of a WhatsApp focus group provided rich ethnographic data. The adaptation of my research to the online sphere due to COVID-19 challenges the need for traditional face-to-face participant observation and opens up opportunities for more ethnographic research to take place remotely. Whilst conventional methods remain valuable, alternative approaches should not be overlooked, particularly when working with participants who are hard to reach physically for various reasons.

The individual experiences of everyday accent discrimination highlight the participants' own views of themselves fitting in or not fitting in (Horner and Dailey-O'Cain, 2019, pp.10-11) and being 'not quite white' (Botterill and Burrell, 2019, p.24) from their own perspectives. Participants criticised the anti-European sentiments of the media, putting forward that they bring a positive contribution to the city, and are part of society 'whether someone else wants it or not.'<sup>173</sup> More studies like this are needed, and research outputs need to be more generally accessible in order to try to change the pervasive anti-immigration discourse in the media and wider society.

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<sup>173</sup> Marianna- Int-2-22.10.21-p.54.

## 7.4 Limitations

My research was based on my participants self-reporting, so it is possible that some information could have been concealed or presented in an inaccurate manner. Additionally, I used my own observations from the data they supplied along with my interpretations of the data I had gathered overall. Whilst ethnography has been criticised due to its subjectivity, no research is able to be completely objective, whichever methodology it uses. I used reflexivity throughout the research process to mitigate this.

The virtual environment in which I carried out the research meant that there were some technical issues. Given the COVID-19 restrictions, I could not fully resolve these, but I implemented strategies such as having a stable internet connection and was flexible to adapt to another video call platform or to speak over the phone when necessary. The only problem I could not avoid in my research environment was that I necessarily had to exclude from my study people who did not have access to the internet.

## 7.5 Suggestions for further research and other work

As lifestyle migrants, my participants are well educated and mostly have the means to be able to travel when they wish. Other socioeconomic groups could be studied in Southampton, particularly those who are not able to travel regularly, to evaluate the impact on feelings of being in between.

It would also be interesting to evaluate the impact of Brexit by carrying out a comparative study looking at accent discrimination in other cities. For example, could accent discrimination be more prevalent in cities like Southampton where there was a high Leave vote, and less so in cities like Bristol which had a larger Remain vote?

Given the fact that my participants were all women, and gendered roles were revealed in my data, a study focused more directly on this and the impact on sense of belonging might be pertinent. This type of research could possibly be widened to include women originating from outside of the EU. It might also be of interest to investigate ordinary belonging and to see if this is easier for women to achieve than other genders.

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Considering methodology, additional research could be carried out in person, making use of ethnographic observations and/or participant shadowing. This would ensure to include those who do not have internet access and perhaps help to target other socioeconomic groups.

I am particularly keen for my research to be accessible to all local residents. There is scope for using some of my participants' experiences of discrimination as an educational tool, perhaps by working with local actors, artists, and other local creatives, to produce plays and interactive displays and experiences within Southampton's schools, the city's art galleries, or the SeaCity museum.

'I certainly don't want people to think that we're all the same, and we're all here to steal your jobs because we not - **we're here...to make the life.**'  
(Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.54-55)

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## Appendix A Email text to go to EU Welcome

[Version number 1, Ethics number 62268, 05/02/21]



**Study Title:** Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton

**Researcher:** Ms Jayne Love

**ERGO number:** 62268

Dear Mr Brown,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Jayne Love and I am a part-time PhD student at the University of Southampton, Modern Languages and Linguistics. My project title is 'Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton' (ERGO number: 62268).

I am fascinated to see how people build connections in a city such as Southampton and am currently seeking participants over the age of 18 who are resident in Southampton but have originated from an EU country prior to living here. Since EU Welcome exists to provide help and support to EU citizens in the Southampton area, I wondered if you might be able to assist me in my research by sharing the attached information about my study with anyone you think might like to participate.

Participation is voluntary and participants are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to state their reason for doing so. I am in receipt of the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship and my supervisors are Professor Marion Demossier and Dr Jaine Beswick. I attach further information about the study to be circulated to any potential participants, if this is something that you might be able to assist with.

If you have any questions about my study or would like to discuss my project further, please let me know - I am happy to schedule a phone or video call if you would prefer this to email correspondence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Jayne Love



## Appendix B Invitation to potential participants from EU Welcome

[Version number 1, Ethics number 62268, 05/02/21]



**Study Title:** Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton

**Researcher:** Ms Jayne Love

**ERGO number:** 62268

My name is Jayne Love and I am a part-time PhD student at the University of Southampton.

I am currently seeking participants over the age of 18 who are normally resident in Southampton but have originated from an EU country prior to living here.

Participation in my research is voluntary and participants are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to state their reason for doing so.

Participating in this project will give you personally the opportunity to reflect on and to share your experience about your journey to Southampton and how you feel about living here.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research will take place fully online over a period of 12 months.

First, participants will create a short written/typed piece or audio/video-recording of how they came to live in Southampton. This will form the basis for an online interview.

Next, participants will take part in at least one other online interview, with the possibility of a maximum of four online interviews in total, each lasting one hour to one hour and a half, over the course of the year.

You will also have the opportunity to contribute more creatively to my project by providing short audio or video recordings, notes, photographs, drawings, diagrams, maps, social media screenshots, emails, and so on over time, which we will discuss in the interviews.

Towards the end of the 12 months, there will be a group discussion online with other participants to discuss my findings, lasting up to two hours.

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. When I write up the results, you will be given a pseudonym in order to protect your identity.

If you are interested in participating, please get in touch using the contact information below and I will send you more details about the project so that you can make a considered decision.

I am very happy to arrange a phone or video call to answer any questions you might have and to discuss further.

Thank you for your time,

## Appendix B

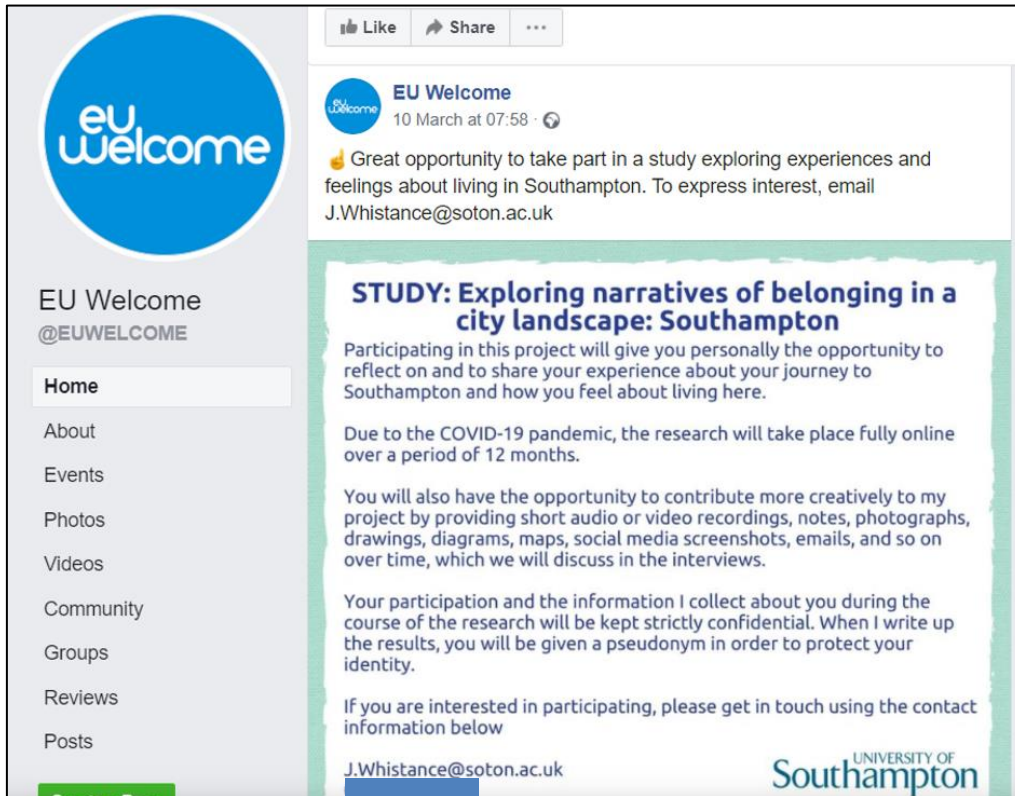
Jayne

**Contact:**

[J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk)

# Appendix C Screenshots of EU Welcome's promotion of my study on Facebook

March 2021



## Appendix C

**STUDY: Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton**

Participating in this project will give you personally the opportunity to reflect on and to share your experience about your journey to Southampton and how you feel about living here.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research will take place fully online over a period of 12 months.

You will also have the opportunity to contribute more creatively to my project by providing short audio or video recordings, notes, photographs, drawings, diagrams, maps, social media screenshots, emails, and so on over time, which we will discuss in the interviews.

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. When I write up the results, you will be given a pseudonym in order to protect your identity.

If you are interested in participating, please get in touch using the contact information below

J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk

 UNIVERSITY OF  
Southampton

 EU Welcome  
Like This Page · 10 March

👉 Great opportunity to take part in a study exploring experiences and feelings about living in Southampton. To express interest, email J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk

Sandra Madej and Adriana Conroy like this.

# Appendix D Ethics application form for studies involving Human Participants

[Version number 3, Ethics number 62268, 24/10/22]



## Ethics application form for studies involving Human Participants Faculty of Arts and Humanities

This form must be completed for any research project that involves human participants or work with human remains less than 100 years old

If your research project involves both human participants or work with human remains less than 100 years old and research involving cultural heritage that requires ethical review, you must complete both this form and the Cultural Heritage Ethics Application form. However, we will not ask you to repeat information that has already been given on another form (except your name, supervisor's name (if relevant), the title of the study and the ERGO number).

All fields marked (M\*) are mandatory and must be completed. Fields marked (M\*\*) must be completed unless you have already given these details in the Cultural Heritage Application Form or Secondary Data Analysis Application Form. Applications without mandatory fields completed are likely to be rejected by reviewers. Other fields are marked "if applicable". Help text is provided, where appropriate, in italics after each question.

### 1. APPLICANT DETAILS

<b>1.1 (M*) Applicant name:</b>	Ms Jayne Love
<b>1.2 Supervisor (if applicable):</b>	Professor Marion Demossier and Dr Jaine Beswick
<b>1.3 Other researchers/collaborators (if applicable):</b> <i>Name, address, email, telephone</i>	N/A

### 2. LIST OF CHANGES

<b>2.1 (M**) Are you resubmitting this ethics application in response to a request for revisions?</b>  <i>Do not complete this section if you have already provided this information in the Ethics Application Forms for Studies Involving Cultural Heritage or Secondary Data Analysis.</i>
Yes/ <del>No</del>

### 3. RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS

<b>3.1 (M*) Title of Research Project:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How EU migrants in Southampton use language to construct narratives of (un)belonging (<i>official title for internal use within the University of Southampton</i>)</li> <li>2. Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton (<i>informal title for use with participants and gatekeepers in order to avoid a politicised use of the term 'migrant'</i>)</li> </ol>
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<b>3.2 (M**) What are the aims of this research project?</b> <i>Do not complete this section if you have already provided this information in the Ethics Application Forms for Studies Involving Cultural Heritage or Secondary Data Analysis.</i>
<p>Whilst different definitions of language and multilingualism put forward by academics are useful, they have not been driven by everyday language users, and so I hope that this study will uncover how my participants relate to these concepts in terms of their day-to-day experiences of being multilinguals within Southampton and how these impact on their sense of (un)belonging.</p> <p>I view language as socially constructed and so although I will be looking at EU migrants' linguistic practices, my main focus will be on the narratives they tell - how they make meaning through language. This includes how my participants position themselves with relation to Brexit and the broader UK context with English as the dominant language and the need to apply for the Settlement Scheme, as well as the more local focus on Southampton as an urban area and their sense of (un)belonging to the city.</p> <p>My indicative thesis title and working research questions can be seen below.</p> <p>How EU migrants in Southampton use language to construct narratives of (un)belonging / Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton</p> <p>To what extent do EU migrants experience a sense of belonging in Southampton?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vi) How do they identify to a place such as Southampton?</li> <li>vii) To what extent is language central to their identification to Southampton?</li> <li>viii) What are the reasons driving their sense of belonging or unbelonging?</li> <li>ix) How is this articulated discursively?</li> </ol>

<b>3.3 (M**) Background to research project (a <i>brief rationale for conducting the research project</i>):</b> <i>Do not complete this section if you have already provided this information in the Ethics Application Forms for Studies Involving Cultural Heritage or Secondary Data Analysis.</i>
<p>Research in UK urban areas has focused mainly on other cities such as London, Leeds and Manchester - little has been done in Southampton. Whilst Cadier and Mar-Molinero's (2012) study in Southampton focused on institutions and languages at a policy and planning level, my research will focus on the people themselves: EU migrants as local residents, focusing on their meaning-making practices. In</p>

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addition, it will be in-depth - over the course of a year - and will take an interdisciplinary approach, bringing together ethnography and sociolinguistics so as to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings. Further, it is the first study of this kind to take place in Southampton in COVID-19 times. The PhD will build on the knowledge that currently exists around place and multilingualism but it is envisaged that it will also contribute on a practical level, potentially impacting on local language policy or through improving community cohesion in Southampton through public engagement initiatives.

### **3.4 (M\*\*)** Key research question (*Specify hypothesis if applicable*):

*Do not complete this section if you have already provided this information in the Ethics Application Forms for Studies Involving Cultural Heritage or Secondary Data Analysis.*

To what extent do EU migrants experience a sense of belonging in Southampton?

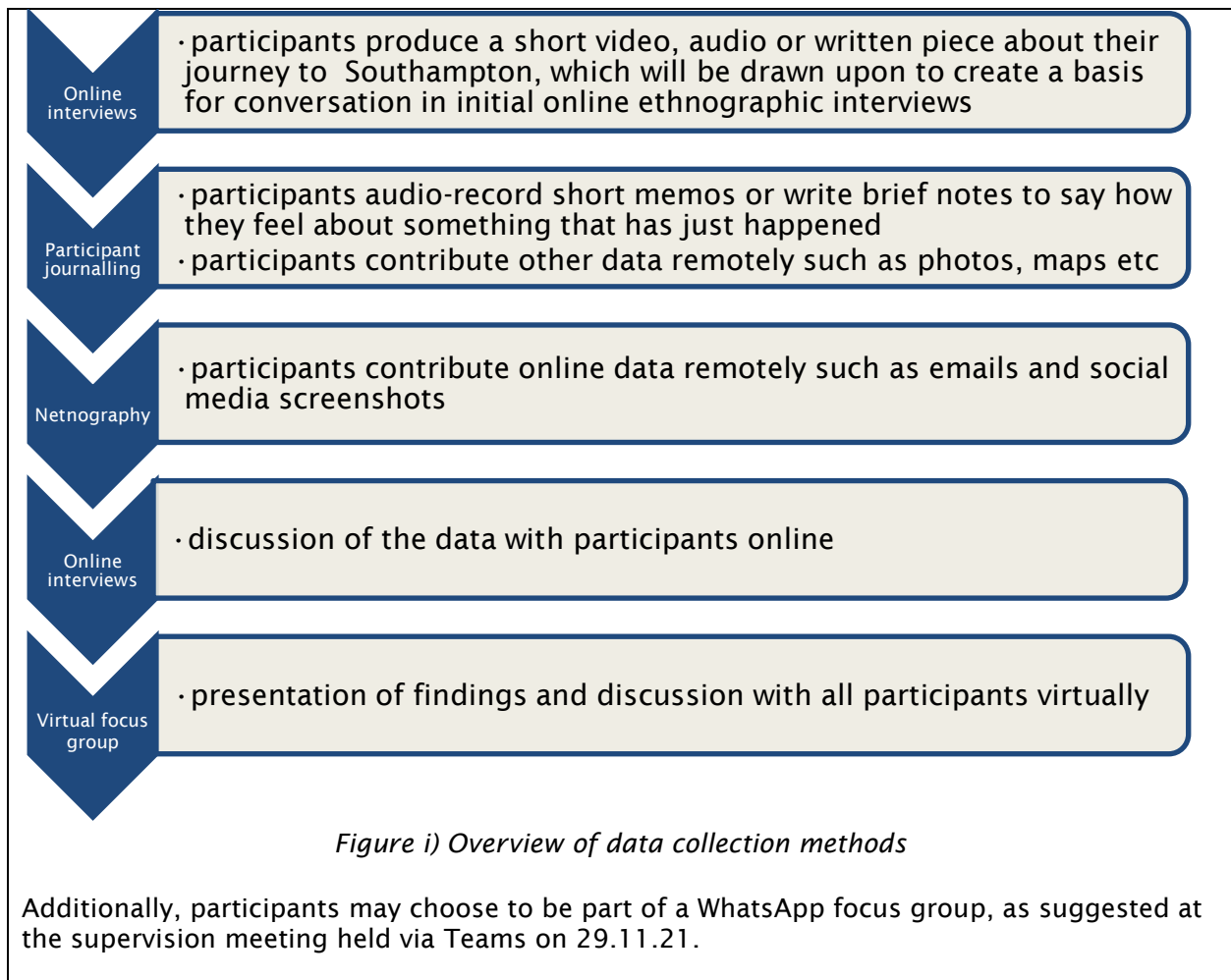
### **3.5 (M\*\*)** Study design (*Give a brief outline of basic study design*)

*Outline what approach is being used, why certain methods have been chosen. Do not complete this section if you have already provided this information in the Ethics Application Forms for Studies Involving Cultural Heritage or Secondary Data Analysis.*

My project relies on a qualitative, inductive ethnographic approach which produces 'more detailed and nuanced descriptions of...phenomena' when compared with other research (European Association of Social Anthropologists - EASA, 2015, pp.4-5). Since my study focuses on Southampton in terms of how EU migrants use language in their daily lives to narrate their sense of belonging, and I am already part of the field site as a resident, ethnography seemed a logical choice.

Due to COVID-19, my data collection will all take place virtually. Gogolin et al (2013) highlight that 'for research on linguistic super-diversity, the inclusion of multi-method approaches is crucial' (p.7). For this reason, I have chosen several methods for data collection which are shown in Figure i).

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## 4. PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

### 4.1 (M\*) How are participants to be recruited?

In some cases, you may need gatekeeper approval. Gatekeepers are individuals or institutions whose permission is needed to access participants, often because they have a duty of care to participants or because you need to go on to their property to access the participants.

Gatekeeper approval needs to come from someone appropriately senior in the relevant organisation. (Headteachers not class teachers in the case of schools.)

If you have already obtained gatekeeper approval, you should upload it with your application. If not, you should upload the intended letter/ email asking for permission.

If you are asking a third party to send out emails/letters on your behalf, the text you plan to ask them to send out should also be uploaded.

Please confirm:



The University of Southampton logo, version number, date, ethics number (ERGO ID for most studies) appears on every participant-facing document (including, posters, flyers, emails etc). If it is not possible to include the logo, then the name of the university is included.



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Is permission from a 'gatekeeper' needed to access your participants (e.g. child accessed through a school)? Yes/ ~~No~~

If yes, please give details:

Some participants will be found via EU Welcome, which is a charitable organisation in Southampton providing help and support to migrants from the EU and other European countries (EU Welcome, 2019). I will ask EU Welcome to put out the invitation to participate in my research, in which I will ask potential participants to produce a short video, audio or written piece about their 'Journey to Southampton.'

Please confirm:

I have permission from\_\_\_\_\_ and I have **uploaded the letter/email of permission with my submission in ERGOII**

or:

I will acquire permission from\_EU Welcome\_ before starting the study and I have **uploaded the letter/ email that I will send asking for permission with my submission in ERGOII. (I have already had initial email contact with EU Welcome.)**

Please also confirm

I have uploaded with my submission in ERGO, **the proposed text of the email/letter which I will provide to the third party to distribute on my behalf to invite potential participants to take part in the research.** This email/ letter includes the ERGO number and project title, states that the project is taking part at the University of Southampton, clearly states that participation is voluntary and gives clear instructions of what to do in order to take part in the study.

Social Media: Yes/ ~~No~~

If yes, please complete the following.

Platform (s) used:

Form of recruitment:

Direct message (or equivalent)

General post/ announcement (Tick all that apply)

Details:

I already located a few potential participants using purposive sampling through my pilot study which I carried out from September 2019 to August 2020 (ERGO number 52323). I will contact these potential participants via WhatsApp.

Text that will be used in any posts/ messages: (These can also be uploaded as a separate file. If you have uploaded these as a separate file please indicate this here.)

As I have already built a relationship with these potential participants through my previous contact with them, I will adapt my messaging according to the individual, but the general message will be similar to that shown below.

Dear XXXX,

Thank you for your previous interest in my research. I am now moving on to the next stage of my research and am contacting you to see if would be interested to participate further.

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My research will be continuing at the University of Southampton but all of my engagement with you will be online due to the COVID-19 context. This time, the research will take place over a longer period, up to a year, and will include several one-to-one online interviews as well as a group discussion online with other participants. You will also be able to contribute more creatively to my project by providing short audio or video recordings, notes, photographs, social media screenshots, emails etc over time, which we will discuss in the interviews.

Participation is voluntary and the first stage would be for you to provide me with a short written/typed piece or audio/video-recording of how you came to live in Southampton. This will then form the basis for the first online interview we have together.

My project title is 'Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton' (ERGO number: 62268). If you are interested in participating, please let me know, and I will send you further information about the project for you to make a considered decision. I can also provide more guidance about how to create the short written/typed piece or audio/video-recording of how you came to live in Southampton at this point.

Thank you for your time, with best wishes,

Jayne

Other relevant information: In addition, or alternatively, I may contact these participants via text message or email using similar wording to the above.

Email: Yes/ ~~No~~

If yes, please complete the following:

How you will acquire the email addresses? I will only be using email addresses in the case where I have already obtained them from the participants in my pilot study, as outlined above.

If you are using mailing lists, please state any mailing list(s) used and then complete the declaration:

I have permission from the list owner and, if using University of Southampton Mailing lists, I have permission from a senior member of the Faculty. **I have uploaded confirmation of this with my application.**

Text of any emails that will be sent: (These can also be uploaded as a separate file. If you have uploaded these as a separate file please indicate this here.)

As above.

*NB The University does not support the use of 'blanket emails' for contacting potential participants within the University (i.e. fellow staff and/or students) because there is a potential to take advantage of the access to 'group emails' and the relationship with colleagues and subordinates.*

*Before using any University of Southampton mailing list to contact participants, you should usually*

- *ensure groups of students/staff have given prior permission to be contacted in this way, or*
- *use a third party (with appropriate permissions) to pass on these requests.*

*If a blanket email from a researcher to a University of Southampton mailing list is the only way to access a chosen cohort, you must*

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<p>- <i>obtain explicit approval from the holder of the list and (if using University Mailing Lists) from a senior member of the Faculty.</i></p>
<p>Posters: <del>Yes</del>/ No</p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Where will the posters be displayed?</p> <p>Please confirm you have the appropriate permissions to display posters (tick one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No permission is needed to display these posters OR</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have permission to display the posters from _____</p> <p>Please confirm</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have uploaded the poster.</p>
<p>In person: <del>Yes</del>/No</p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Place: (If times and date will not be confirmed until ethics approval is obtained, then state maximum number of recruitment events, expected length, and approximate time of day.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment is not taking place at an open place.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment is taking place at an open place, and posters/flyers will be used to warn potential participants that recruitment is taking place, including details of whom people should contact if they don't want to be approached.</p> <p><b>These flyers have been uploaded with my ethics application.</b></p> <p><i>(An open place is somewhere which can be freely accessed by either by all members of the general public or by a considerable group. Recruiting at the beginning of a class would not normally count as recruitment in an open space. Recruiting in a campus café would count as recruiting in an open space.)</i></p>
<p>Other: <del>Yes</del> / No</p> <p>If Yes, please give details.</p> <p><i>Please ensure that you <b>include the text</b> of any message that you will send to participants. (This can be uploaded here or as a separate file.)</i></p>

### 4.2 (M\*) Who are the proposed participants and where are they from (e.g. fellow students, club members)? List inclusion/exclusion criteria if applicable.

Due to the intensive nature of ethnography, I am carrying out a small-scale study over 12 months, and will be focusing on around 10 participants.

All participants will be over 18 and will normally be resident in Southampton, UK, but will have originated from an EU country prior to living here.

The participants will be from different backgrounds in terms of their gender, age, occupation, social status, accent, place of origin, length of time resident in Southampton, location of residence within the city, and so on.

I will avoid any direct contact or interaction with any vulnerable individuals and will not include anyone who falls into this category within my study.

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### 4.3 (M\*) Describe the relationship between researcher and participants (*Describe any relationship e.g. teacher, friend, boss, clinician, etc.*)

My relationship with my participants will be as a fellow Southampton resident. Participants may begin as complete strangers or acquaintances, depending upon whether or not they are already known to me through the pilot study. As the study will take place over the course of a year, it is possible that participants may see me as a friend in some instances as the relationship develops, rather than just as a researcher.

### 4.4 (M\*) Describe how you will ensure that fully informed consent is being given:

*If your study has different activities or groups of participants, you may need to produce more than one version of the participant information sheet and consent form.*

*If your study involves research with minors then an appropriate person must provide informed consent. If you are doing research on children in schools, then parents or guardian normally need to be informed of the research and given an opportunity to decide whether their children should take part. It is good practice to get consent from parents and guardians as well as permission from the school. However, in some cases, it may be more appropriate for the Headteacher to give permission together with an opportunity for parents to 'opt-out'. If you do not intend to get active consent from parents and guardians, this must be justified.*

*It is also best practice to acquire 'assent' from any participants who are not able to give fully informed consent. Assent is the term for agreement to proceed from someone who is not able to give consent i.e. a child may agree to take part in a study by saying 'Yes, I would like to do it.' but because they are underage this counts as assent and not consent. Again, if assent is not going to be obtained, this requires justification.*

In what format will participants be given information about the study?

Please tick those that apply.

participant information sheets;

online combined participant information sheet and consent form

other, please give details.

Please note that the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form will be sent to participants electronically and the Consent Form will be completed virtually rather than in person because this study will take place fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ERGO process dictates that I produce a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for each method of data collection; however, given that the participants will be the same throughout my study and will participate in all of the data collection methods, this will be rather cumbersome for them to read and agree to, especially as the data collection methods are interlinked. I have therefore produced a combined Participant Information Sheet and a combined Consent Form for the purposes of my fieldwork which I intend to use with my participants, rather than them being faced with 4 Participant Information Sheets and 4 Consent Forms. The combined Participant Information Sheet and combined Consent Form make the

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data collection process easier to understand from the participants' viewpoint and will hopefully encourage people to take part in my study rather than putting them off at the first hurdle.

The participants will complete the combined Consent Form at the beginning of the study, but as the research takes place over a year, I will obtain additional verbal consent each time a new data collection method begins, making a record of this on each occasion.

With the addition of the WhatsApp focus group, I will email all participants to inform them of this new method of data collection, drawing their attention to the WhatsApp Privacy Policy: <https://www.whatsapp.com/legal/privacy-policy-eea?eea=1> I will include the invitation link to join the WhatsApp group within the email so that by clicking on it, they are actively choosing to join the group themselves (and are therefore consenting), rather than by me adding them.

During the process of writing up my data, I realised that my original combined Consent Form was inadequate when considering how I wanted my thesis to materialise. I noticed that I had asked for agreement from participants around gathering and recording data in different ways, but I had not asked anything about whether the data could actually be used in my thesis or published in future publications. I therefore created an updated combined Consent Form to capture permission from my participants around this to ensure that fully informed consent is being given. The updated Consent Form makes clear that with the use of quotes, a pseudonym will be used so that participants are not directly identifiable. In the case of photos, it is explained that faces will be obscured so that any people involved will not be recognisable, and that with the use of any other type of data, the participants will not be identifiable from the data provided. (N.B. 'Other data' includes data such as some notes one participant wrote about her experience of completing the Census in 2021, and a screenshot another participant sent me of a shopping list app in which she has used English and Dutch to list items she needs to buy).

I decided to ask specifically about the inclusion of photos in my thesis since I found from my data analysis that these were an important way in which my participants engaged with Southampton during the Covid-19 lockdowns. They also indicated the extent to which people and places are important to them, which is a key aspect of my research question 'To what extent do EU migrants experience a sense of belonging in Southampton?' I do not plan to use every photo in my write-up as I will be selective, but by asking for blanket permission at this stage, it means that I can have more choice over what to include as I put together my thesis and it will save time closer to my submission deadline.

When and how will participants be given this information? Please give details.

After having initial contact with potential participants about my project via email, WhatsApp or text message, I will provide the Participant Information Form electronically. If they find it difficult to understand written English, I can arrange a time with them for a phone or video call in which I can read it out to them and paraphrase if necessary, to aid understanding and to answer any questions they might have. Most of the fieldwork will be carried out in English but any future communications in a language other than English will be carefully checked and I will employ a translator if needed, especially if a translation of the Participant Information Form and Consent Form is required.

The participants will be sent an updated version of the combined Consent Form in order to update their consent.

How long will they have to decide whether to take part? Please give details.

I will not pressurise participants to take part, but they will have up to 6 weeks to get in touch if they wish to be included in my study. Otherwise, it will be too late during the time frame of my candidature for me to be able to include them, given the long length of the data collection period.

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<p>Please confirm</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have included all relevant participant information sheets, consent forms, and debriefing form</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have used up to date templates for all forms</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The University name (and logo where possible), the version number, date, ethics number (ERGO ID for most studies) appears on every participant facing document</p>
<p>Is there is any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? <del>Yes</del>/ No</p> <p>If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests?</p>
<p>Are any participants under 18? <del>Yes</del>/ No</p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Is the consent of participants' parents or guardians required? Yes/No</p> <p>If no, please justify this and explain who will be consenting on behalf of the participants and how this consent will be acquired.</p> <p>If yes, how will this be acquired?</p> <p>Will you also be acquiring assent from the participants? Yes/No</p> <p>If no, please justify this.</p> <p>If yes, explain how.</p>
<p><b>4.5 (M*) Will you provide the findings of the study to participants?</b> <i>It is good practice to give participants the opportunity to see any dissertations or publications resulting from the study, but this might not be necessary e.g. if it is a small study for an undergraduate or MA dissertation. Note: if you intend to keep participants' contact details in order to feed back findings, you must describe how this data will be managed in section 5.6.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> No. Please explain why.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is stated in the Participant Information Sheet that participants can contact me by email to ask for a copy of my dissertation or publications associated with the research project.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I will email results to participants. I understand that participants' email addresses count as personal data and have described in section 6 how this data will be managed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What will be emailed to participants?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Please give details.</p> <p>In the virtual focus group as part of my data collection process, preliminary findings will be shared with my participants as this will form the basis for discussion of the focus group.</p>

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### 4.6 Will any of the documents that you give to participants be in a language other than English?

*Public facing documents that are badly written with poor spelling and grammar can lead to complaints. University policy is that reviewers should request revisions for badly written public facing documents.*

*However, we will not request revisions for mistakes in English when the documents will not be given to participants in English.*

Yes/ No / Other (delete as appropriate) Most of the fieldwork will be carried out in English. I do not know how many different nationalities I may encounter as part of my research so will not prepare any translations of documents in advance. However, any future communications in a language other than English will be carefully checked and I will employ a translator if needed, especially if a translation of the Participant Information Form and Consent Form is required.

If yes, please list any documents that will be given to participants in a language other than English. For each document say whether the English translation will also be given to any participants. Then complete the declarations below.

I confirm that I have provided an accurate English translation of any non-English language documents

I confirm that any documents in a language other than English have been carefully checked for grammar and spelling errors by someone fluent in the relevant language. (This may be the researcher or a third party.)

## 5. RESEARCH PROCEDURES, INTERVENTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS

### 5.1 (M\*) Give a brief account of what will happen in the study as experienced by the participant

*Make clear who does what, how many times and in what order. Make clear the role of all assistants and collaborators. Make clear total demands made on participants, including time and travel. You must also describe the content of your questionnaire/interview questions and EXPLICITLY state if you are using existing measures. If you are using existing measures, please provide the full academic reference as to where the measures can be found.*

- Participants will receive an invitation from myself or EU Welcome to participate in the study via email, text or direct social media message;
- Participants will respond directly to me to request further information;
- Participants will read the Participant Information Sheet and complete the Consent Form;
- Participants will receive further guidance about the first step in the research, in which they will create either a short written/typed piece or an audio/video-recording about their 'Journey to Southampton';
- Participants will be contacted by myself to arrange the first online interview which will take place on Microsoft Teams to discuss their 'Journey to Southampton';
- Participants will receive more guidance about the participant journalling and the netnography phases of data collection;
- Participants will provide me with information digitally via SafeSend about how they feel in the moment after something significant has happened relating to language and belonging in Southampton on an ad hoc basis;

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- Participants will select what they wish to share with me, which could include: audio/video recordings, scanned images of handwritten notes, photographs, scanned images of maps, diagrams, drawings or art work, emails, screenshots of social media/text messages etc;
- Participants will be contacted by myself for additional online interviews to discuss the data they have provided, why they chose to share it with me, what it means to them, and how it signifies their sense of belonging or unbelonging to Southampton;
- Participants will be emailed and invited to join a WhatsApp focus group should they choose to do so;
- Towards the end of the data collection period, participants will receive an invitation to participate in a virtual focus group with other participants in the study during which participants will hear about my initial findings about language and belonging in Southampton, then be able to ask questions and discuss.

Due to the COVID-19 context, participants will not be required to travel anywhere as all of the data collection will take place online/remotely. If participants wish to travel to parts of Southampton in order to submit a photograph or other type of data as part of the participant journalling, for example, that would be on their own volition and not a requirement of the project.

In terms of time, the initial 'Journey to Southampton' piece will take participants anything from half an hour to a few hours, depending upon the person. Each online interview will take an hour to an hour and a half and there will be a minimum of two and a maximum of four interviews per participant. The length of time spent doing the participant journalling, netnography and WhatsApp focus group will vary according to the motivation and time constraints of the participants; the time involved in this phase of the research will therefore be determined by the participants. The virtual focus group will take around two hours. In sum, over the course of a year, the time involvement for participants would be a maximum of 12 hours for the 'Journey to Southampton' activity, online interviews and virtual focus group combined, plus whatever time they wish to commit to the participant journalling and netnography. If participants spend an hour a month submitting data to me remotely in this way, combined with the other methods, participants are looking at volunteering around 2 hours per month of their time over 12 months.

Please tick all that apply.

- I am using a paper questionnaire and have uploaded a copy of the questionnaire in its final form, showing the University logo and project name and ERGO number.
- I am using an online questionnaire and have uploaded a copy of the text of the questionnaire, including the project name, ERGO number and the University name.
- I am using focus groups or interviews, and have uploaded a copy of the questions.
- I am not using questionnaires, interviews or focus groups.

## 6. STUDY MANAGEMENT

**6.1 (M\*) Detail any psychological or physical discomfort or distress and/or any other adverse effects that the participants may experience arising from the**



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**study. If there is not likely to be any discomfort, distress or adverse effects, please state: 'None.'**

None.

**6.2 (M\*) Explain how you intend to alleviate any such discomfort, distress or adverse effects that may arise. If there is not likely to be any discomfort, distress or adverse effects, please state: 'Not applicable.'**

Not applicable.

**6.3 Explain how you will care for any participants in 'special groups' (i.e. those in a dependent relationship, vulnerable or lacking in mental capacity) (if applicable)**

Not applicable - I will not be including such participants in my study.

**6.4 Please give details of any payments or incentives being used to recruit participants (if applicable)**

Not applicable.

**6.5 (M\*) Will there be participant anonymity and/or data anonymity and if so, how will it be maintained?**

*Note that unlinked anonymity can only be promised if questionnaires or other requests for information are not targeted to, or received from, individuals using their name or address or any other identifiable characteristics. For example if questionnaires are sent out with no possible identifiers when returned, or if they are picked up by respondents in a public place, then anonymity can be claimed. Research methods using interviews cannot usually claim anonymity - unless using telephone interviews when participants dial in.*

*Unless there is unlinked anonymity, the information provided to participants should indicate that they could be linked to their data.*

- Unlinked anonymity: nobody involved in the research project will be able to identify the research participants. (Please give details.)
- The researcher or someone else may be able to identify participants. However, the research data contain no way of identifying participants and consent forms will be kept separately. (Please give details.)
- The researcher or someone else may be able to identify participants. However, the research data is coded so that participants are not identifiable from the research data. Consent forms and participant codes will be kept separately. Pseudonyms will be used for the participants so that they will not be identifiable from the research data.
- The participant can be identified in the research data, but no identifying information will be included in publication. (Please give details.)
- It is not possible for participants to be anonymous in this research. (Please give details.)

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### 6.6 (M\*) Will you keep research information confidential and, if so, how?

*Confidentiality is defined as the non-disclosure of research information except to another authorised person. Confidential information can be shared with those who are already party to it, and may also be disclosed where the person providing the information provides explicit consent.*

I will keep research information confidential by storing it securely with password protection.

I will pseudonymise the data as soon as possible after collection, and preferably at time of collection, in order to minimise the risk of accidental disclosure.

I will store the participant details and pseudonymisation key separately from the data, most likely by holding the information in separate systems, for example by keeping the data on the filestore/networked 'my documents' and the key etc on the University's OneDrive.

For the purposes of my thesis, I will check with participants if they are happy with the data to be included in the write-up of the project and pseudonyms will be used so that they will not be identifiable.

In the case of the use of any photographs, I will check with my participants if they are happy for these to be used in my thesis with faces obscured. To obscure the faces in the photographs, I will use an artistic effect in Microsoft Word called 'Watercolour Sponge' (see the photo example I have included). I will also check if they are happy for any other data to be used in my thesis, so long as they are not identifiable from it.

In the case of publication of any results, I will check again with the participants if they are happy for their data to appear under their pseudonym in the public domain where they are quoted. In the case of the use of any photographs, I will check with my participants if they are happy for these to be used with faces obscured as described above. I will also check if they are happy for any other data to be used, so long as they are not identifiable from it.

In the case of the WhatsApp focus group, participants' mobile phone numbers will be visible to each other. I will highlight this in my email inviting them to join the group and will ask that those joining the group do not share this information or other content shared within the WhatsApp group anywhere outside of the group.

### 6.7 (M\*) What personal data, research data and study results will be collected/ produced during the study? Please state if any of your data is sensitive/ special category data. Note this should include all data collected during the study including e.g. names and contact details to arrange participation or to allow you to feed back results of the study.

*Personal data means any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified in particular by reference to an identifier. This could include personal data, including name, identification number, location data or online identifier. Personal data that has been pseudonymised – e.g. key-coded – can fall within the scope of the GDPR depending on how difficult it is to attribute the pseudonym to a particular individual.*

*Sensitive /special category personal data: data that consists of information about racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs or beliefs of a similar nature, physical or mental health or condition, sexual life, the commission/alleged commission of an offence alleged/committed by the data subject and any related*

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*court proceedings, trade union membership. It also includes genetic (i.e. inherited or acquired genetic characteristics e.g. blood type) and biometric data (e.g. fingerprints) where processed to uniquely identify an individual.*

- Personal data collected will include: names, contact details, how the researcher and participant came to know each other, occupation, language background, information about social networks (i.e. interaction with friends, family, social media etc). Some sensitive/special category personal data such as nationality will be gathered since the study focuses on EU nationals. This could lead to other sensitive/special category data being revealed such as ethnicity, political opinions, religious beliefs or beliefs of a similar nature, as well as potentially any other sensitive/special category data that may relate to participants' sense of belonging or unbelonging in Southampton.
- Research data collected will include: audio recordings, video recordings, scanned images of handwritten notes, photographs, scanned images of maps, diagrams, drawings or art work, emails, screenshots of social media/text messages/WhatsApp group discussion etc, transcripts of online interviews and the virtual focus group.

**6.8 (M\*) Where will you store your data?** *(Please indicate where data will be stored for all data identified in 6.7. If any of your data is sensitive/ special category data, please confirm that your data storage plan has been agreed with [researchdata@soton.ac.uk](mailto:researchdata@soton.ac.uk) )*

*Personal data should be stored on a password protected, University of Southampton network or computer. If this is not possible, data may be encrypted and stored on a password protected hard drive or data stick. For guidance on how to encrypt data, see <https://library.soton.ac.uk/researchdata/sensitive#s-lib-ctab-14657966-2>*

*Emails should be kept in a password protected University of Southampton email account and all emails should be deleted after the study is finished.*

*If you are using sensitive / special category personal data, you should agree a data storage plan with [researchdata@soton.ac.uk](mailto:researchdata@soton.ac.uk)*

*If you have questions about the storage of research data please contact [researchdata@soton.ac.uk](mailto:researchdata@soton.ac.uk)*

Data	Where it will be stored.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audio and video recordings, plus associated transcripts</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On University of Southampton servers, within the University network (to be uploaded weekly) <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a university build laptop <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a data stick or external hard drive <input type="checkbox"/> In a locked filing cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> Other -please give details

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographs, diagrams and other visual data</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On University of Southampton servers, within the University network (to be uploaded weekly) <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a university build laptop <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a data stick or external hard drive <input type="checkbox"/> In a locked filing cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> Other -please give details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handwritten notes made by the participant</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On University of Southampton servers, within the University network (to be uploaded weekly) <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a university build laptop <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a data stick or external hard drive (whilst in the field) <input type="checkbox"/> In a locked filing cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> Other -please give details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emails</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emails will be kept in a password protected University of Southampton email account and all emails will be deleted after the study is finished
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text/social media messages, including WhatsApp focus group discussion</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On University of Southampton servers, within the University network (to be uploaded weekly) <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a university build laptop <input type="checkbox"/> Encrypted on a data stick or external hard drive (whilst in the field) <input type="checkbox"/> In a locked filing cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> Other -please give details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive / special category personal data</li> </ul>	<p>Prior to conducting my pilot study (ERGO number 52323), I emailed <a href="mailto:researchdata@soton.ac.uk">researchdata@soton.ac.uk</a> with regard to the sensitive / special category personal data outlined in 6.7 and clarified the</p>

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	<p>following, which still applies to this current ERGO application 62268:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as long as the data is held on the University servers, there should be no need for additional back-ups on USB stick or hard drive. I will minimise the number of copies to reduce the risk of data disclosure.</li> <li>• I will pseudonymise the data as soon as possible after collection, or preferably at time of collection, again to minimise the risk of accidental disclosure.</li> <li>• I will store the participant details and pseudonymisation key separately from the data. I plan to do this by holding the information in separate systems, for example by keeping the data on the filestore/networked 'my documents' and the key etc on the University's OneDrive.</li> </ul>
--	---

### 6.9 (M\*) Please confirm

I am aware of, and compliant with, the Data Protection policy of the University, the Data Protection Act and the GDPR.

I understand that if I lose personal data, I must contact [databreach@soton.ac.uk](mailto:databreach@soton.ac.uk) immediately.

### 6.10 (M\*) Who will have access to these data and how will they be shared/moved?

Tick the appropriate box

Only I will have access to the data

Only I and my supervisor will have access to the data

Only the research team based at the University of Southampton will have access to the data

Collaborators from [*insert external organisation*] will have access to the data. They will/ will not be given access to raw data. There *is/ is not [delete as appropriate]* a data sharing agreement under negotiation. I understand that if raw data is to be shared with collaborators, a data sharing agreement must be in place before data collection begins and that if any documents or processes are changed as a result of negotiation, I must submit an amendment to my ERGOII application and wait for approval of the amendment before beginning to collect data.

Please give details.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Other. Please give details.
Tick the appropriate box	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No personal data will be moved or shared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	When sharing or moving personal data, University of Southampton Dropoff will be used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	When sharing or moving personal data, a Sharepoint site will be created for the use of the researcher and supervisor/ collaborators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other. Please give details.
Please confirm:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I understand that personal data must not be sent by email

### 6.11 (M\*) Have you taken appropriate action to minimise potential risks to researchers?

#### Risks to researchers

If you are a student, please check to confirm you have discussed potential risks to researchers arising from the research with your supervisor.

**Are there any potential risks to researchers and any other people impacted by this study as a consequence of undertaking this research that are greater than those encountered in normal day to day life that have not already been described in the application?**

Yes/ No (please delete as appropriate)

If yes, please describe these potential risks and what you will do about them. This might include, for instance, arrangements to ensure that a supervisor or co-researcher has details of your whereabouts and a means of contacting you when you conduct interviews away from your base; or ensuring that a 'chaperone' is available if necessary for one-to-one interviews.

Please check to confirm you have carried out any relevant health and safety risk assessments for your research

**6.12 Please complete if your research includes an online questionnaire. Any online questionnaire platform must be GDPR compliant. We recommend that researchers use the University's ISurvey platform ([isurvey.soton.ac.uk](http://isurvey.soton.ac.uk)) or Survey Monkey. If you wish to use another platform, please explain why and confirm that it is GDPR compliant.**

**Which platform will you be using for your survey?**

Tick the appropriate box

I will be using ISurvey

I will be using Survey Monkey

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I will be using \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ Please include a link to the GDPR statement of the company here:

### 7. ANY OTHER DETAILS

7.1 If there is anything else that you think the reviewers should know about the study, please give details here.

Not applicable.

### 8. CULTURAL HERITAGE

8. Will your study involve any of the following?

1. **Intrusive or destructive intervention in cultural heritage.**  
*This might include archaeological excavation, surface collection of cultural artefacts, destructive analysis of cultural artefacts or materials, or activities leading to a loss of artefact provenance information.*
2. **Work with historic artefacts or materials that may be ethically or legally sensitive.**  
*This might include artefacts of uncertain provenance where there is the possibility that they have been illegally excavated and/or exported from their country of origin, artefacts of uncertain ownership, artefacts or materials of particular significance to indigenous people.*
3. **Gathering of information leading to the commercial exploitation of cultural heritage, specifically activities that facilitate treasure hunting, pillaging or commercial salvage operations, usually with the aim of financial gain by putting artefacts from a heritage site up for sale.**
4. **Work with human remains dating from more than 100 years ago.**

No

Yes – and I have already provided details of relevant recognised guidelines, legislation or policy which my study will comply with and which cover all ethical concerns surrounding all work with cultural heritage involved in my study.

Yes – and I have completed the Cultural Heritage Ethics Application Form.

**N.B. – Before you upload this document to your ERGO submission remember to:**

1. Complete ALL mandatory sections in this form
2. Complete the Cultural Heritage Ethics Application Form if relevant.
3. Upload any participant information forms, consent forms, letters of agreement to your ERGO submission. Please ensure that you are using the up to date templates, which can be found on ERGO II.

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4. Upload any interview schedules and copies of questionnaires
5. Checked that the University of Southampton logo appears on all documents and the version number, date, ethics number (ERGO ID for most studies) appears on every participant facing document (including emails, posters, flyers etc)



## Appendix E Participant Information Sheet



### **Combined Participant Information Sheet [Version number 1, Ethics number 62268, 05/02/21]**

**Study Title:** Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton

**Researcher:** Ms Jayne Love  
**ERGO number:** 62268

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

#### **What is the research about?**

My name is Jayne Love and I am a part-time PhD student in Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Southampton, UK. My indicative PhD project title is 'Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton.' I am interested to know to what extent Southampton residents who originated from EU countries feel a sense of belonging or unbelonging to Southampton as a city, and I will be investigating this by looking at the language my participants use in the stories they tell about their lives here.

Research on languages, migration and belonging in UK urban areas has focused mainly on other cities such as London, Leeds, and Manchester - little has been done in Southampton. Work that has been done previously in Southampton focused on institutions and languages at a policy and planning level (Cadier and Mar-Molinero, 2012). In contrast, my research will focus on the people themselves as local residents, focusing on what is meaningful to them. In addition, it will be in-depth over the course of a year, so as to better understand my participants and uncover deeper meanings. Further, it is the first study of this kind to take place virtually in Southampton in COVID-19 times.

The PhD will build on the knowledge that currently exists around language, place and belonging but it is envisaged that it will also contribute on a practical level, potentially impacting on local language policy or through improving community cohesion in Southampton through public engagement initiatives.

I am in receipt of the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship, which pays for my PhD fees, and my supervisors are Professor Marion Demossier and Dr Jaine Beswick.

#### **Why have I been asked to participate?**

You are over the age of 18 and are normally resident in Southampton but originated from a country within the European Union prior to living in the UK.

#### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

1. You will create either a short written/typed piece or an audio/video-recording about how you came to live in Southampton, UK.

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2. You will take part in an online interview with Jayne, during which you will talk about your journey to Southampton in more detail. This first interview is estimated to last one hour to one hour and a half. Interviews will take place over Microsoft Teams and be audio and video recorded using the built-in recording software on Microsoft Teams. If you do not wish to appear on the video, you may leave your camera off. Microsoft Teams is a third party software. You can find the Microsoft Privacy Statement here: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-GB/privacystatement#mainnoticetoendusersmodule>
3. You will be able to contribute to the project more creatively through 'participant journaling,' which is a virtual multimodal language diary through which Jayne will collect data from her participants remotely. You will be able to choose what data you select in order to create this journal, and data will be shared with Jayne securely via SafeSend which is recommended by the university as it is hosted by the institution and 'supports both in-transit and at-rest encryption' (University of Southampton, 2020). Participants will write, draw or audio-record short memos/reflections of how they feel in the moment after something significant has happened relating to language and belonging in Southampton. Handwritten notes and drawings can be scanned or photographed in order to share with Jayne digitally, along with any audio-recordings and typed notes. Other more creative types of data could also be shared e.g. photographs, video recordings, art work etc. Some participants might share data of this nature frequently with Jayne, for example on a weekly basis, whilst others might contribute once a month or less often. This will depend upon your interest in this part of the project and your time constraints. As the research project will take place over a year, you will have a long period of time to be able to participate in this stage of the research, creating your journal over a number of months.
4. You will be able to contribute to the project through 'netnography,' which is a way of collecting electronic data from participants such as emails and social media messages. You will be able to choose which electronic data you share with Jayne. The data you choose will be relevant to this study in terms of how you feel about language and belonging in Southampton. Emails can be forwarded to Jayne's university email account, or if you prefer, screenshots of the emails can be taken. Screenshots of social media messages can also be taken. Screenshots of emails and social media messages can be shared with Jayne securely via SafeSend which is recommended by the university as it is hosted by the institution and 'supports both in-transit and at-rest encryption' (University of Southampton, 2020). As with the journal, you will have a long period of time to be able to participate in this stage of the research, contributing electronic data over a number of months. This process can run concurrently alongside the participant journaling.
5. You will take part in additional online interviews, where discussion will focus around the data you have provided as part of the journal and netnography: why you chose to share it with Jayne, what it means to you, and how it signifies your sense of belonging or unbelonging to Southampton. Each interview will last one hour to one hour and a half and there will be a minimum of two and a maximum of four online interviews in total, spread out over a 12-month period.
6. You will take part in a virtual focus group, which is the final stage of the project, and will be an informal discussion with Jayne and the other participants in the project. During the focus group, Jayne will present her initial findings about language and belonging in Southampton. Participants will then be able to provide their opinions on this, discuss it between themselves and ask Jayne questions. The focus group is estimated to take around 2 hours of your time and will take place over Microsoft Teams and be audio and video recorded using the built-in recording software on Microsoft Teams. If you do not wish to appear on the video, you may leave your camera off. Microsoft Teams is a third party software. You can find the Microsoft Privacy Statement here: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-GB/privacystatement#mainnoticetoendusersmodule>

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

Participating in this project will give you personally the opportunity to reflect on and to share your experience about your journey to Southampton and how you feel about living here. As

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a whole, the project will build on the knowledge that currently exists around language, place and belonging and aims to improve community cohesion locally through public engagement initiatives.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

It is possible that you might feel anxious about some aspects of the research. The anxiety you may feel about this is not expected to be beyond the normal level of social anxiety that the average person experiences on a daily basis when interacting with others online within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you feel unduly anxious, you will be able to talk to Jayne about this and she will try to find ways in which she can help you to feel more comfortable, which could include, for example: providing technological support, changing how she collects your data (creating an audio recording rather than a video recording), interviewing you for shorter periods of time, offering you the option of typing in the chat function on interviews and in the focus group to comment and ask questions rather than speaking, discussing what types of data you feel more comfortable sharing, limiting the amount of data you provide etc. If you feel too uncomfortable, you are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to state your reason for doing so.

Even though the data will be anonymous, you could possibly be identified from some specific comments made during the online interviews or in the focus group, or you could possibly be identified from the data you provide during the journal and netnography phase, particularly through visual data such as photographs. In order to reduce this probability, you will be given a pseudonym when the results are written up. When selecting participants' quotations to include in her work, Jayne will check with you whether or not you agree to your specific quotes being included and you may wish to change them slightly if you feel that a particular word or phrase might identify you. When selecting any visual media such as photographs to include in her work, Jayne will check with you whether or not you agree to it being included.

### **What data will be collected?**

Initial data collection will include the short written/typed piece or audio/video-recording which you provide about how you came to live in Southampton. Data to be collected from the online interviews and the focus group will include audio or video recordings of the interviews, as well as any handwritten notes made by Jayne during the interviews.

The data collected in the participant journaling phase of the study could include any of the following: typed notes, audio-recordings, video-recordings, photographs, scanned images or photographs of handwritten notes, diagrams, maps, drawings or other art work and so on. The data collected during the netnography phase will include electronic data including emails and screenshots of social media messages.

Personal data collected will include your name and contact details, how you and Jayne came to know each other, your occupation, language background and information about your social networks (i.e. interaction with friends, family, social media etc). Some sensitive/special category personal data according to Data Protection will be deliberately gathered such as nationality because Jayne is interested in the views of her participants towards language(s) and nationality. This may therefore reveal other sensitive/special category data inadvertently such as political opinions, religious beliefs or beliefs of a similar nature.

Jayne will collect the interview and focus group data online by audio or video recording on Microsoft Teams as well as by making handwritten notes at the time of the interviews and focus group taking place. Jayne will collect the data from the participant journals virtually and securely using SafeSend.

For the netnography phase, Jayne will collect screenshots of emails and social media messages from participants virtually and securely using SafeSend. Emails may also be forwarded to her university email account.

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Only Jayne will have access to your data, though some may be shared with her supervisors in order to guide the research process. She will keep research information confidential by storing electronic data securely with password protection and will use lockable cabinets for any hard data. She will pseudonymise your data as soon as possible after collection, or preferably at time of collection, in order to minimise the risk of accidental disclosure. Jayne will store your details and the pseudonymisation key separately from the data, most likely by holding the information in separate systems, for example by keeping the data on the filestore/networked 'my documents' and the key etc on the University's OneDrive.

For the purposes of her thesis, Jayne will check if you are happy with the data to be included in the write-up of the project and pseudonyms will be used so that you will not be identifiable. In the case of publication of any results, Jayne will check again with you if you are happy for your data to appear under your pseudonym in the public domain.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only Jayne as the researcher and responsible members of the University of Southampton (such as her supervisory team) may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Research information will be kept confidential by storing electronic data securely with encryption and password protection and hard data will be stored in lockable cabinets. Any audio or visual recordings made as part of the research will be transcribed and the recordings will then be destroyed. Data will be pseudonymised as soon as possible after collection, or preferably at time of collection, in order to minimise the risk of accidental disclosure. Participant details and the pseudonymisation key will be kept separately from the data, most likely by holding the information in separate systems, for example by keeping the data on the filestore/networked 'my documents' and the key etc on the University's OneDrive.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

### **What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. To do so, you only need to let the researcher know – Jayne Love: J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk. If you choose to withdraw from the study at any point, the information collected about you will be destroyed.

### **What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in Jayne's thesis or any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants and Jayne will check with you if you are happy for direct quotations from your data to be used. In this case, Jayne will check with you if you wish to change the wording slightly if you feel that a particular word or phrase might identify you.

If you wish to receive a copy of Jayne's PhD thesis or any reports or publications associated with the research project, you may contact her via email to request this.

### **Where can I get more information?**

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You can either contact Jayne directly at [J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk) or contact one of her supervisors, Professor Marion Demossier ([M.Demossier@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.Demossier@soton.ac.uk)) or Dr Jaine Beswick ([J.Beswick@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Beswick@soton.ac.uk)).

### **What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to Jayne ([J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Whistance@soton.ac.uk)) or her supervisory team who will do their best to answer your questions (Jayne's supervisory team are Professor Marion Demossier: [M.Demossier@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.Demossier@soton.ac.uk) and Dr Jaine Beswick: [J.Beswick@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Beswick@soton.ac.uk)).

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

### **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/Is/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information – may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

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If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research. This study could not be undertaken without your help.**

# Appendix F Consent Form



## COMBINED CONSENT FORM [Version Number 2, Ethics reference 62268, 24/10/22]

**Study title:** Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton

**Researcher name:** Ms Jayne Love

**ERGO number:** 62268

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet dated 24/10/22 Version Number 2 and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher .....

Date.....

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**Optional - please only initial the box(es) you wish to agree to:**  
*(Agreement to those marked \* are key to this research project as a minimum.)*

I agree to the researcher making handwritten and/or typed notes whilst interviewing me online and during the virtual focus group.	
*I agree to the researcher audio-recording the online interviews and virtual focus group.*	
I agree to the researcher video-recording the online interviews and virtual focus group i.e. I agree to have my webcam switched on during the online interviews and virtual focus group so that I can be seen by others.	
I agree to the researcher saving the content of the chat from the online interviews and virtual focus group.	
I agree to sharing typed notes that I have made myself with the researcher.	
*I agree to sharing audio-recordings that I have made myself with the researcher.*	
I agree to sharing video-recordings that I have made myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing photographs that I have taken with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing scanned images or photographs of handwritten notes that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing scanned images or photographs of diagrams that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing scanned images or photographs of maps that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing scanned images or photographs of drawings and other art work that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing emails that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing screenshots of emails that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to sharing screenshots of social media messages that I have selected myself with the researcher.	
I agree to being quoted directly in the researcher's thesis with the use of a pseudonym so that I am not directly identifiable.	
I agree to being quoted directly in the researcher's future publications with the use of a pseudonym so that I am not directly identifiable.	



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I agree to the photos I have provided being used in the researcher's thesis (faces will be obscured so that any people involved will not be recognisable).	
I agree to the photos I have provided being used in the researcher's future publications (faces will be obscured so that any people involved will not be recognisable).	
I agree to other data I have provided being used in the researcher's thesis so long as I am not identifiable from the data provided.	
I agree to other data I have provided being used in the researcher's future publications so long as I am not identifiable from the data provided.	

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**I understand that should I withdraw from the study at any point, then the information collected about me will be deleted.**

**I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (i.e. my name will not be used – a pseudonym will be given instead).**

**I understand that special category information will be collected about me to achieve the objectives of the study. In particular, I understand that some sensitive/special category personal data will be explicitly gathered such as my nationality. This is because the researcher is interested in my views about language(s) and nationality.**

**I understand that the research process may reveal other sensitive/special category data inadvertently, such as my political opinions, religious beliefs or beliefs of a similar nature.**

**I understand that where I have agreed to audio or video recording, the recordings will be transcribed and then destroyed for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet.**

**I understand that personal information collected about me such as my name or where I live will not be shared beyond the study team.**

## Appendix G Questions for Online Interviews



### Questions for Online Interviews

**Study Title:** How EU migrants in Southampton use language to construct narratives of (un)belonging / Exploring narratives of belonging in a city landscape: Southampton

**Researcher:** Ms Jayne Love

**ERGO number:** 62268

#### First online interview

Prior to this initial interview, participants will have provided a short written/typed piece or an audio/video-recording about their 'Journey to Southampton.' This will therefore be the starting point for discussion.

As I have not yet received these accounts, I cannot plan these questions now, but will create some nearer the time based upon the information provided by the participants. In line with established ethnographic techniques, interview questions will be open-ended and will aim to uncover more detail regarding participants' journeys to the UK, their backgrounds, as well as how they feel about living in Southampton, and will serve as prompts to open up discussion.

This first interview is estimated to last one hour to one hour and a half.

#### Subsequent online interviews (second, third and fourth)

After the initial online interview, each participant will take part in a second online interview as a minimum. Additional online interviews may also take place, with a number of four interviews in total occurring as a maximum.

The number of online interviews required will depend upon the amount of and quality of data provided from the participant journalling and netnography phases of the research project. The online interviews will be spread across a 12-month period. Each online interview is estimated to last one hour to one hour and a half.

These subsequent online interviews will focus around the data the participants will have provided in their journals and through the netnography phase. As this data has not yet been provided, I cannot fully plan questions at this stage, but the questions below are intended to be indicative of what may be asked and are centred around participants' sense of belonging or unbelonging:

- Can you please explain why you chose to share this [name the piece of data being referred to] with me?
- What does this [name the piece of data being referred to] mean to you?
- How does this [name the piece of data being referred to] indicate your sense of belonging or unbelonging in Southampton?
- Within this [name the piece of data being referred to], you used the word/phrase [insert word/phrase of interest]. Can you please tell me what [insert word/phrase of interest] means to you?
- Within this [name the piece of data being referred to], you mentioned [name incident of interest]. Can you please tell me more about [name incident of interest]?

## Appendix H Transcription conventions

Code	Meaning
J2S	Journey to Southampton
Int-1	First interview transcript
Int-2	Second interview transcript
Int-3	Third interview transcript
WhatsAppGroup	WhatsApp focus group
BEATA	Participant pseudonym
JL	Interviewer - Jayne Love
<i>word in italics</i>	A sound or word in a language other than English has been used e.g. <i>Laïcité</i> .
[ <i>words inserted in italics</i> ]	Non-verbal information e.g. [ <i>laughs</i> ].
[description of person]	In order to maintain the anonymity of people mentioned by my participants, I have replaced their names with their relationship to the participants e.g. [My husband].
[place added]	Sometimes it isn't clear in an extract where a participant is talking about, so I have added this information to clarify e.g. [In Poland].
[grammatical component added]	In cases where it is not exactly clear what the participant is saying or it could be misunderstood what/who they are referring to, I have added a grammatical component to make the meaning more obvious to the reader e.g. [I].
<b>text in red</b>	The meaning of the word is unclear to me e.g. <b>Terrilyn</b> .
Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-pp.5-6	In-text citation within thesis: Participant pseudonym-Data source-Date-Page reference

## Appendix I      Sample transcript

**SOPHIA Int-1 19.04.21 10:00 – 10:46**

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:02.430

JL

I think you can close it if you don't want to see it.

00:00:04.250 --> 00:00:05.720

JL

Is it can be a bit distracting?

00:00:04.700 --> 00:00:08.250

SOPHIA

How do you do that? Is it through the three dots?

00:00:08.120 --> 00:00:13.460

JL

Yeah, so it has the start recording option and then underneath it has the.

00:00:10.990 --> 00:00:12.020

SOPHIA

Oh yes.

00:00:12.770 --> 00:00:14.810

SOPHIA

So just yeah, that's clear.

00:00:14.380 --> 00:00:21.300

JL

Yeah, so it's it's not 100% accurate, but it it saves me a lot of time so.

00:00:20.010 --> 00:00:22.390

SOPHIA

Helps yeah, yeah.

00:00:23.030 --> 00:00:27.420

JL

Yeah, so did you have any questions to begin with?

## Appendix I

00:00:27.890 --> 00:00:38.430

SOPHIA

Not at the moment, I'm sure I'm gonna have questions later on. What it wasn't very clear for me is why are you doing this research?

00:00:39.060 --> 00:01:09.140

JL

Yeah, so it's so erm so as part of the PhD study er my background is in languages and I'm interested in the connection between languages, nationality, and Southampton as a city. So I'm I'm I'm focusing in depth on probably around 10 people who have all come from other EU countries to look maybe also the perhaps the link with Brexit or think or trying to understand.

00:00:54.410 --> 00:00:54.770

SOPHIA

OK.

00:01:09.200 --> 00:01:12.530

JL

Language and belonging and those kinds of issues.

00:01:12.780 --> 00:01:17.170

SOPHIA

So it has to be with language and national identity, is it?

00:01:16.830 --> 00:01:47.470

JL

Erm, kind of, I mean, it's a bit to be honest it's a bit I didn't put the national identity in my in the the title or the description because it's a bit political and I think for some people maybe the the nationality isn't doesn't shape their belonging here, so I wanted to try and keep it quite vague, but so far, I mean to give an example, I've I've done a few, several interviews now so far and for some participants

00:01:38.730 --> 00:01:39.140

SOPHIA

OK.

00:01:47.940 --> 00:01:57.190

JL

## Appendix I

Brexit was a big thing, and it really changed the way that they they felt they belonged here and for some people it wasn't an issue at all and

00:01:58.110 --> 00:02:15.860

JL

You know, the their sense of belonging here was to do with other things to do with their their jobs or their families here or or friends. So, it's so I wanted to try and keep it vague, but in the background I was thinking maybe maybe Brexit could be an issue. Er, does that make sense?

00:02:15.910 --> 00:02:33.340

SOPHIA

Yes it does. I mean it's not an issue for me. It wasn't before the accident. It's not after. The only difference for me has to do with paperwork, so that's the only thing that changed, otherwise no effect whatsoever.

00:02:26.930 --> 00:02:27.410

JL

Yes.

00:02:33.930 --> 00:02:55.290

JL

Uh, and I think maybe it depends on people's experience here. If, you know, if they've experienced any discrimination or if you know if they had some negative experience, I think for participants who have had had that kind of experience, they have a more, you know, the Brexit has been a big thing for them whereas for other people, like yourself, it's not

00:02:55.710 --> 00:02:56.300

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:02:55.880 --> 00:03:23.910

JL

It's not an issue, so yeah, so I think really kind of looking at language looking at the city as a as a diverse place to live. And my background is in languages myself and in teaching English, which is why have I guess an interest in in languages and cultures in general. Also, I myself I'm originally from Sheffield in the north, so although I'm I'm English

## Appendix I

00:03:25.310 --> 00:03:37.800

JL

I have noticed there is kind of like a north-south divide in the UK and the, you know, sometimes people comment about my accent or so just thinking about my own journey to Southampton as well.

00:03:28.730 --> 00:03:29.380

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:03:38.890 --> 00:03:44.740

SOPHIA

I think it's every every country has that where you where you're from and your locality.

00:03:43.700 --> 00:03:44.110

JL

Yeah.

00:03:46.060 --> 00:03:47.100

JL

Yeah, definitely.

00:03:46.790 --> 00:03:57.060

SOPHIA

Same thing in Greece. On I I come from a different group of Greek people. I'm a Pontian Greek, so they are the Greeks who were in the Black Sea

00:03:57.960 --> 00:04:26.970

SOPHIA

Before the Ottoman Empire takes over. So I actually speak Greek language, which is nearly 3000 years old because it belongs today. I union dialects, so I speak ancient Greek. But then the modern Greeks can't really understand that. Can pick up words so that had an impact. My relationship of being the other being Greek but also being the other in my own homeland.

00:04:28.170 --> 00:04:37.110

SOPHIA

## Appendix I

But when I come here and and I say I'm Greek, but I'm also specific Greek, people here don't really understand it - for us, you're just Greek.

00:04:37.820 --> 00:04:54.110

JL

Yeah, yeah, oh, that's interesting because from your story, yeah, you said you came with no purpose as you were trying to find a place to belong to and I thought that was quite interesting, so I guess you were already a minority group in Greece?

00:04:53.260 --> 00:05:23.360

SOPHIA

Yes, yes, I always considered myself a citizen of the world because when we were in Greece we were the other because we were children of the genocide. You know, my grandparents were part of the genocide, so when I was born in Kazakhstan, we were also the other, the Greeks. And then when we came to Greece, the borders open and we came home, we were again the others - you know, the Pontian stuff.

00:04:54.950 --> 00:04:55.410

JL

Um.

00:05:23.410 --> 00:05:53.050

SOPHIA

Came from somewhere else, so it it's it I always felt that I belonged but not fully, so when I came here it felt home. I tried to go away but somehow the city itself, it worked fine for me. It felt home, felt I belonged here. I was welcomed. Either I have friends who have not experienced the same thing but to me it felt home, and everyone was really nice and

00:05:31.630 --> 00:05:31.980

JL

Uh.

00:05:53.480 --> 00:05:54.540

SOPHIA

So I stayed.

00:05:56.090 --> 00:06:01.170

JL



## Appendix I

Could you tell me a bit more? Maybe a bit of a comparison perhaps between Athens and Southampton as cities?

00:06:01.890 --> 00:06:02.980

JL

Just as a place to live.

00:06:03.430 --> 00:06:18.950

SOPHIA

Well, I would not say Athens. I would say Piraeus. That is a port in Athens, so I can see similarities in terms of the structure of the city because they're both ports, but.

00:06:22.450 --> 00:06:43.400

SOPHIA

I come Athens is quite big so I would say there are areas of Athens that I could say there are similar similar things, like if you go to the centre you always have that diversity of people. Yes, it's a touristic place and you have this touristic feeling here because of the ships coming in and out.

00:06:44.710 --> 00:06:46.980

SOPHIA

But in terms of

00:06:47.610 --> 00:07:03.060

SOPHIA

The life of the city that it's different - here is more subtle. Where Greece in Athens everything is so vibrant wherever you go, whether you are in the port or whether you're in the mountain everywhere you go, there's a different vibration.

00:07:04.600 --> 00:07:08.450

SOPHIA

Time flows by differently. Here everything is very slow and

00:07:10.840 --> 00:07:14.280

SOPHIA

Calmer I would say, yeah.

00:07:16.120 --> 00:07:17.540

SOPHIA

Did that answers your question?

## Appendix I

00:07:17.750 --> 00:07:25.980

JL

Yeah, that's interesting. Yeah yeah, definitely. I mean, there's there's no kind of right answer, so I'm just interested in your your opinion so.

00:07:26.070 --> 00:07:26.370

SOPHIA

OK.

00:07:26.900 --> 00:07:36.560

JL

Please, you know, please don't worry about that. I'm yeah I'm interested to know yet, do you visit Greece often at all or do you have?

00:07:36.840 --> 00:07:43.290

SOPHIA

No, I've been busy with children, studies and work, so I haven't been since summer 2010.

00:07:43.490 --> 00:07:43.900

JL

Uh-huh.

00:07:44.420 --> 00:08:08.600

SOPHIA

It's quite a long time. So, I do have my connections of course through video calls with family and friends and I have friends who actually go to places where we used to go and say, "oh I'm here" and then they will do video calling, they'll show me and I'll see home again and so there is that connection in a way. But I don't I can't say I miss it.

00:08:10.410 --> 00:08:19.310

SOPHIA

But I don't know how I feel if I will visit again, but at this stage I can't say I miss it 'cause I'm too busy to to be something.

00:08:20.790 --> 00:08:25.600

JL

## Appendix I

And you moved here originally 'cause your your mother was here, and is she still here?

00:08:24.060 --> 00:08:24.730

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:08:25.600 --> 00:08:27.100

SOPHIA

She's still here, yes.

00:08:27.500 --> 00:08:30.630

JL

So why did she come here originally?

00:08:31.720 --> 00:08:41.270

SOPHIA

Her ex-husband came here to work so she followed him. [son enters the room calling "Mama," then inaudible]. Oh oh, I will make you in a minute give me 5 to 10 minutes baby, I'm busy now [says something in Greek to her son].

00:08:44.660 --> 00:08:56.630

SOPHIA

And yes, she then later on, she separated, but we decided to stay here. I mean, I already had my own family when she separated, so it was.

00:08:58.620 --> 00:09:29.100

SOPHIA

It's what I felt when I first came, I was I did not know anyone else apart from my Mum and because I was I self-taught myself English, that's another journey perhaps I can take you through. When I first came I I used to go there is a statue in the centre of Southampton and I remember I used to come from work and I wanted to be with people and needed it but didn't know where to go, how to meet people.

00:09:14.090 --> 00:09:14.560

JL

Yes.

## Appendix I

00:09:29.490 --> 00:09:34.630

SOPHIA

And I end up going and talking to that statue. His name is Richard.

00:09:36.600 --> 00:10:06.560

SOPHIA

And I used to go and sit down and have my coffee and cigarette and I why I liked Richard is because I read his plate and he invested in the city. He actually made factories and kind of help the city to build to the stage where it is now. And I thought, you know, this person is so important because perhaps if he did not make those factories, I would not be here. I would not be working here. Yeah, so I was grateful for that. Then we became friends.

00:10:08.970 --> 00:10:11.170

JL

What was the Richard's surname?

00:10:11.400 --> 00:10:16.110

SOPHIA

I can't remember his surname, next time I pass by. I'll have a look.

00:10:17.560 --> 00:10:36.630

SOPHIA

He's just at the back of the Titanic memorial. I don't know if you ever passed there like yeah, so if you pass by next time, perhaps you notice him. He used to be down and you could actually see it and touch his hand and say "hello" properly. But the past few days because of vandalism they kind of uplifted him high.

00:10:22.280 --> 00:10:23.000

JL

Oh yeah.

00:10:31.160 --> 00:10:31.750

JL

Oh wow.

00:10:37.490 --> 00:11:05.660

SOPHIA

And then then I realise I started walking around and I realise there is a library and in

## Appendix I

Greece, if you, if you're not a student at the time, when I was in the 90s you did not and you had to have a kind of a certificate to get into the Public Library and I did not have access and I always liked books. So, when I discovered there's a library and I can have access to it, I was over the moon!

00:11:07.020 --> 00:11:18.110

SOPHIA

So that was my everyday thing, going to the library I started. I ask how I can use books to learn English and there was this lady who said, "why don't you use audiobooks?"

00:11:19.490 --> 00:11:36.510

SOPHIA

Because she said to me, "oh your English is quite good," and I said, "well, I learned through music" and she said, "oh there is audio books you could use," and I started using Stephen Fry audio books and I will just read the book, listen to it, and start to practise like that.

00:11:36.530 --> 00:11:37.130

JL

Uh-huh.

00:11:38.450 --> 00:11:50.360

SOPHIA

And she also suggested, "when you're sleeping, put the radio on and it will get into you" and she was right. You know, that's how, little by little I decided to do a course.

00:11:51.700 --> 00:12:08.010

SOPHIA

And then I did a travel and tourism course afterwards, initially I did an IT and customer service and English and that kind of developed into getting into travel and tourism 'cause I was thinking I might go back home?

00:12:08.790 --> 00:12:09.140

JL

Uh.

00:12:09.390 --> 00:12:19.300

SOPHIA

## Appendix I

But then after I finish that course, my first son came along. I started the relationship. So, every all the plans that I had initially changed.

00:12:21.690 --> 00:12:24.770

SOPHIA

So yeah, the journey of learning English.

00:12:26.100 --> 00:12:56.560

SOPHIA

It started when I was in secondary school. I grew up in a convent, so when we were in primary, we will do our classes inside the convent. When we went to secondary school, we would do the classes outside in the public school, so I befriended this girl who we used to work walk from school home together and there were two days a week where she will stop in her house for her to get her English books to go for her private lessons.

00:12:57.050 --> 00:13:27.220

SOPHIA

And one day, I was quite upset because I wanted to learn as well. But because of my life circumstances was impossible and she her Mum saw me crying in the steps and she was like, "well, what happened?" and I said, "I want to learn English as well. I'm jealous of [my friend]" and she was, I don't know how she took it. Like sometimes after sometime after that, "oh," she asked me, "actually who is your favourite singer?" And I said, "George Michael" and

00:13:27.510 --> 00:13:57.200

SOPHIA

She's you know she took it in and sometime after that, she came to me with a present and it was an LP of George Michael's 'Listen without Prejudice' and with a dictionary. And she said to me, "sit down, listen to the music, translate all the words, sing it, and you will learn." I mean, it was a life changing experience. I'm forever grateful to her because if she had not

00:13:57.740 --> 00:14:03.530

SOPHIA

Put that base for me, I might not have been at the stage of using the language as I am now.

## Appendix I

00:14:04.820 --> 00:14:10.890

SOPHIA

And so, yes, I did that, took me about six months, but I knew I know their album by heart.

00:14:12.200 --> 00:14:44.070

SOPHIA

And the then when I grew up and I started, uh, when I finished high school, I used to go I did I did lessons in photography and I decided I need to practise my English 'cause I started going into the centre of Athens from the suburbs into the centre to do 'cause the school was there. And I realised that English was used a lot around me. There were lots of tourists around and I thought, OK, why don't I do something about it?

00:14:44.120 --> 00:14:48.160

SOPHIA

I decided to be going every Sunday morning. I will go to the centre.

00:14:49.610 --> 00:14:55.890

SOPHIA

And ask tourists if they want me to give them a tour for an exchange of speaking in English.

00:14:56.680 --> 00:15:26.540

SOPHIA

And then I got the chance to practise like that and then that's it. When I came here, and they did a test to see if my level of English before I enrolled to the course and they said straight away to proficiency and I was in shock because in Greece you will need to have at least 10 years of private lessons to get proficiency and they were happy for me to go to that level. So I was like wow, this is amazing.

00:15:28.730 --> 00:15:30.840

SOPHIA

And so yeah, that's the journey.

00:15:31.110 --> 00:15:43.980

JL

Wow, so it's it sounds like music has been a really important part of that journey. I

## Appendix I

wonder, do you play any musical instruments, or you just enjoy listening to music?  
Or could you tell me a bit more about your interest in music?

00:15:36.990 --> 00:15:37.550

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:15:43.500 --> 00:16:00.650

SOPHIA

Yes, I I love music. I think it has been there for me in so many ways, especially when it comes to psychology. I find that when I get into very difficult times in my life, music has been there for me and and healed me and

00:16:02.400 --> 00:16:04.990

SOPHIA

And I think also because of

00:16:07.090 --> 00:16:24.900

SOPHIA

Specific types of music will address specific times in my life, but George Michael's music has been throughout of my childhood, and as an adult now still, there's so many things I would listen to his songs that that I didn't hear before and I would see it in a different light.

00:16:26.220 --> 00:16:30.920

SOPHIA

It will address different people in me so

00:16:33.220 --> 00:16:48.850

SOPHIA

Now, in terms of my children, I because I don't learn, I haven't learned music, I don't even know how to read the theory, I make sure that my children are musically, you know, involved. So, my eldest son is now doing music production at college.

00:16:48.940 --> 00:16:49.640

JL

Oh wow.

00:16:50.220 --> 00:17:08.810

SOPHIA



## Appendix I

And he plays the accordion, the guitar and the piano, and my second son is doing the guitar and is also interested in drums because I am now learning how to play the tongue drum, so he's he's learning as well with me.

00:17:05.960 --> 00:17:06.420

JL

Wow.

00:17:10.380 --> 00:17:16.200

SOPHIA

So yeah, there are lots of musical instruments in the house, we have we have.

00:17:16.700 --> 00:17:29.220

SOPHIA

How do they call it? A kalimba. We have a lyra, so er guitars, drums, keyboards, so we have lots of music around. You know, even though it's not professional, it's there.

00:17:29.630 --> 00:17:30.300

JL

Uh-huh.

00:17:31.490 --> 00:17:31.980

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:17:31.510 --> 00:17:35.330

JL

And how about, you said you have an interest in photography as well, do you?

00:17:35.530 --> 00:18:05.980

SOPHIA

I did, not not anymore, I I I used I did my course for two years and I try to work as a photographer in Greece. I worked a little bit for a magazine called 'Super Katarina' for four months. Didn't really go anywhere. I started doing baptisms and weddings at some point and then when I came and I did my IT and customer service course, it was linked into finding a job.

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00:17:36.480 --> 00:17:36.920

JL

Yeah.

00:18:06.160 --> 00:18:24.690

SOPHIA

There was a kind of project with the with the [Southampton City] Council at the time and I got a job with Daily Echo and I worked with them for three months. But after that period, they did not give me the job. I had an interview and I thought I was not right for the job. I don't know.

00:18:26.190 --> 00:18:29.660

SOPHIA

But yeah, my interest has just kind of died out.

00:18:31.660 --> 00:18:32.060

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:18:31.980 --> 00:18:46.580

JL

OK, no problem. Erm well yeah so you, I'm sorry this is kind of jumping about a bit er but it sounds like you've done quite a lot of things since you've been here. So, when you first arrived you were working in a factory. What what sort of work was that?

00:18:43.910 --> 00:18:44.600

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:18:46.410 --> 00:19:00.720

SOPHIA

I I started working in a flowers factory in Hook. I worked with them for six months, normally doing 12 to 16 hours a day. So, it was quite intense.

00:19:02.050 --> 00:19:24.910

SOPHIA

After that I worked with a pizza factory. I stayed with them for nine months and then

## Appendix I

after that I worked in contact lenses factory. So, the pizza factory was in New Milton and the contact lens factory was in is in Hamble.

00:19:18.540 --> 00:19:18.960

JL

Uh-huh.

00:19:25.480 --> 00:19:44.570

SOPHIA

And I worked with them for nine months as well, and when I finished 'cause I was doing also my travel and tourism course at the time. So, when I finished my course I applied and I got the job with P&O, the travel agency.

00:19:46.810 --> 00:19:53.710

SOPHIA

Travel air agent. So, I would book flights for people to go and get their ships from different locations and

00:19:56.570 --> 00:20:07.680

SOPHIA

And then after that, I had the baby, I I stopped working for P&O. It was too tense, they would not give me part-time for some reason, I don't know.

00:20:09.100 --> 00:20:25.120

SOPHIA

It was a very kind of strange time in terms of work for me 'cause I was also working at night two nights a week. I would work in the restaurant at the Olive Tree in Oxford Street. I worked with them for two years during the weekends.

00:20:25.710 --> 00:20:27.170

SOPHIA

And then

00:20:29.180 --> 00:20:50.180

SOPHIA

What else? And then I had the baby, so I stopped working for during that time and I go after I decided, OK what do I want to do? I want to change my career again. This is not speaking to you, so I decided to enrol into an anthropology course, and I started that but

## Appendix I

00:20:50.840 --> 00:21:23.030

SOPHIA

The thing is, when I was accepted to do the anthropology course I did because I had changed house and the letters came to the old house. I wasn't I did not know I did not change my details on UCAS and, and I was passing by through the old neighbourhood, and my neighbour said, "oh, you have some letters that the landlord left with me," because he knows we are friends. So, I opened the letter and says, I've been accepted, but my belly was already up here [gestures size of belly with hands], I was already seven months pregnant.

00:21:23.080 --> 00:21:34.560

SOPHIA

Something like that, and I thought, oh my God, what am I going to do? I called up the university and they said, "oh you can still continue if you want." I had the baby in February, but I started the course

00:21:35.170 --> 00:21:50.240

SOPHIA

In September. I was due to go back to work, but I didn't 'cause I could not cope, at the end I felt it was too much for me with the baby and the studies at the time because the the dynamic in the household was not right with the

00:21:51.110 --> 00:21:52.560

SOPHIA

With my ex-partner.

00:21:54.020 --> 00:22:13.500

SOPHIA

And so I stopped the course and I had to go back to work, and I started working at the Fountains Cafe as an assistant manager at the library, Civic Centre. I worked with with the Fountains for nearly two years.

00:22:03.680 --> 00:22:04.130

JL

So yeah.

00:22:14.750 --> 00:22:15.820

SOPHIA

And then.

## Appendix I

00:22:17.360 --> 00:22:22.530

SOPHIA

And then I apply, I said OK, I need to change and it's something else. This is not for me.

00:22:23.750 --> 00:22:33.200

SOPHIA

So I applied at the university to work for Social Sciences because that was my calling. I always wanted to do something with Social Sciences

00:22:34.810 --> 00:22:42.520

SOPHIA

Relating to older people, but I did not know at the time what exactly and then

00:22:43.650 --> 00:22:49.340

SOPHIA

Uh, I started, yeah, I applied for Social Sciences and

00:22:51.450 --> 00:23:10.650

SOPHIA

At the time I was waiting for the I did the interview, I was waiting for them to contact me and somebody I know at the School of Humanities said to me, "oh there is a job going on for the Language Resources Centre, why don't you apply there as well?" I did that. I had the interview. Meanwhile I received [son enters the room and appears on camera].

00:23:12.190 --> 00:23:12.750

JL

[to the boy] Hi.

00:23:13.780 --> 00:23:15.600

SOPHIA

I received a reply. [background noise of son mentioning waffles]

00:23:18.770 --> 00:23:21.010

SOPHIA

Shall we continue in the kitchen while I do?

## Appendix I

00:23:21.350 --> 00:23:22.310

JL

Yes, of course.

00:23:23.110 --> 00:23:27.090

SOPHIA

Hungry people! [Turns to son] I'll I'll call you when it's ready.

00:23:28.440 --> 00:23:31.310

SOPHIA

And the school, Social Sciences

00:23:32.600 --> 00:23:35.200

SOPHIA

Came back to me saying that I did not get the job. [starts walking into the kitchen with the laptop and talking simultaneously]

00:23:36.630 --> 00:23:46.400

SOPHIA

But the School of Humanities came back to me saying, oh yes, you you can get the position. So, I was very happy I started working with them and. [starts cooking, cooking noises in background]

00:23:47.970 --> 00:23:49.550

SOPHIA

Yeah, I've been with them for.

00:23:52.670 --> 00:23:53.990

SOPHIA

Sorry about the noise.

00:23:54.530 --> 00:23:55.220

JL

It's OK.

00:23:55.280 --> 00:24:03.600

SOPHIA

I've been with them since and then we had the merging between the library and then the Resources Centre. And I've been with the library for the past six years.

## Appendix I

00:24:05.130 --> 00:24:06.730

SOPHIA

They were happy to take me on.

00:24:08.730 --> 00:24:12.820

JL

And you're studying as well, you're studying also at the moment?

00:24:12.920 --> 00:24:41.310

SOPHIA

Yes, I started my Master's. Ah I did, meanwhile when I had when I was pregnant with my second son, I decided, you know I really need to get along with what I really want to do and I I started a course with Open University, and I did apply no - combined Social Sciences and I did that while I was working and having children.

00:24:41.820 --> 00:24:47.010

SOPHIA

Uhm, I finished two years ago. I got my degree.

00:24:50.350 --> 00:24:53.010

SOPHIA

Then I thought, OK, I need to continue with this.

00:24:53.730 --> 00:25:02.240

SOPHIA

I'm gonna do my Master's, so I started Master's in October. Full-time initially, but then lockdown came and just

00:25:02.790 --> 00:25:12.700

SOPHIA

Crushed everything. It was too hard for me with with the boys and and work and now it was too much. So, from January I'm doing it part-time now

00:25:13.320 --> 00:25:13.650

JL

Uh.

00:25:13.680 --> 00:25:18.870

SOPHIA

Which is much easier and it's on global health.

## Appendix I

00:25:19.110 --> 00:25:19.690

JL

OK.

00:25:20.020 --> 00:25:29.990

SOPHIA

And hopefully it will lead me to where I need to go, working with older people. Still don't know what exactly it's going to be, but let's see.

00:25:33.200 --> 00:25:33.700

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:25:33.790 --> 00:25:38.410

JL

And how about your children? So how old is – so you've got four of them, what are their ages?

00:25:37.420 --> 00:25:43.810

SOPHIA

Yes. 4 boys, so [my eldest] is is 17.

00:25:45.460 --> 00:25:54.850

SOPHIA

[My second son] is 10, [my third son] the one that you just saw, he's 5, and [my youngest son] is now 3.

00:25:55.250 --> 00:25:55.640

JL

Uh-huh.

00:25:55.750 --> 00:25:56.930

SOPHIA

So yeah.

00:25:57.450 --> 00:25:58.190

JL

Quite a mix.



## Appendix I

00:25:58.910 --> 00:26:00.220

SOPHIA

Yes, yes.

00:26:00.720 --> 00:26:11.870

JL

And then they're exposed to different languages as well. So, I think you said Greek Portuguese, Igbo and Russian but mainly English. So, my understanding is that your.

00:26:08.710 --> 00:26:09.270

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:26:14.290 --> 00:26:17.470

JL

Do you have a partner at the moment or the it's just?

00:26:16.530 --> 00:26:42.460

SOPHIA

No, I'm single at the moment. My my first son's father is Portuguese, well Spanish-Portuguese, but born and grew up in Portugal in Madeira, so [my eldest son] was grew up with and his father was mainly using Portuguese in the household when we were together.

00:26:18.400 --> 00:26:18.770

JL

Uh-huh.

00:26:42.910 --> 00:27:06.300

SOPHIA

So [my eldest son] grew up knowing Greek and Portuguese, and later on actually when he actually started reception, even though he was born here, English was kind of not his main language. He will use Greek and Portuguese mainly, but then as he started school, that kind of changed and now we use Greek and Portuguese just too. [son in background calls "Mama" and Sophia turns to face him]

00:27:08.480 --> 00:27:10.610

SOPHIA

[to son] Be patient, I'm on the phone. [kitchen noises continue]

## Appendix I

00:27:13.670 --> 00:27:19.510

SOPHIA

We use it as a code, so if we want to say something that we don't want others to understand or.

00:27:21.530 --> 00:27:24.830

SOPHIA

Yeah, but English now is the main one between us.

00:27:27.290 --> 00:27:35.000

SOPHIA

And then my Mum, who lives here, her first language is Russian because we were born in Kazakhstan. [music begins in background]

00:27:36.870 --> 00:27:37.750

SOPHIA

[talks to self, it looks like she is looking at plates in the kitchen] They are dirty.

00:27:41.360 --> 00:27:42.240

SOPHIA

So.

00:27:43.350 --> 00:27:59.250

SOPHIA

When the kids are with my Mum because she has the Russian language or because she will speak with family on the phone and they will speak in Russian, they have that influence and they I noticed sometimes they will come and say like [my second son] my 10 years old, he will come and say

00:28:01.560 --> 00:28:14.160

SOPHIA

For example, what was the other word he he asked me about? Ah *pravda*, he will come and say, "oh Mum, what does *pravda* mean?" And I'm like, "where did you hear it?" "Oh [my Grandma] says it when she's on the phone."

00:28:07.600 --> 00:28:08.000

JL

So yeah.

## Appendix I

00:28:16.180 --> 00:28:19.870

SOPHIA

You know different things. She he will come and say.

00:28:20.830 --> 00:28:37.170

SOPHIA

He doesn't know what what it means, but because my Mum will say it to him, he will come and do hugs with me and he'll say "*lubov maya*," which is 'my love,' and he will select what is it. You know, you will come and use that the words, but he doesn't really know what the, it's just there.

00:28:39.090 --> 00:28:52.410

SOPHIA

[My eldest two sons] use more Greek. The youngest ones, not so. I mean [my youngest] is just starting to talk now properly and then Igbo because.

00:28:53.180 --> 00:28:58.730

SOPHIA

The three boys they're from my ex-husband with my ex-husband and they.

00:28:59.920 --> 00:29:30.490

SOPHIA

[My ex-husband] tends to listen to Igbo music a lot, and what I found throughout the years is that they sing to the music, even though they don't use it, and [my ex-husband] uses the language only when he wants to direct them to do something, so he doesn't use it as expressing yourself or let's have a conversation, but actually do this or do that, or don't do this, don't do that, it's more of a directive rather than use of language, but music has

00:29:30.540 --> 00:29:45.140

SOPHIA

Influenced them because they started singing along, so we would be in the car and they will sing in Igbo. And sometimes I would notice even in the in the house here, they will go on YouTube and they will play Igbo music.

00:29:47.830 --> 00:29:50.800

SOPHIA

What else, what other languages?

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00:29:50.570 --> 00:29:56.710

JL

Do they have contact with the their fathers, and they are then, you know regularly using languages there?

00:30:12.750 --> 00:30:14.220

SOPHIA

Yeah, we are in contact every day, face to face if they want to. The children come and go to their fathers' house anytime they want, we are not restricting them. Yeah, they can be at home. And they will say, "oh I want to go to Daddy." "Daddy, are you available?" Then they just go.

00:30:14.420 --> 00:30:15.130

JL

Yeah.

00:30:16.530 --> 00:30:17.360

SOPHIA

Uhm?

00:30:18.010 --> 00:30:18.800

SOPHIA

That's it.

00:30:20.050 --> 00:30:32.050

SOPHIA

Now, in terms of the city, the connection of the language in the city I was trying to find, but nothing really comes in mind apart from that story with Richard.

00:30:32.720 --> 00:30:35.020

SOPHIA

And.

00:30:37.290 --> 00:31:07.020

SOPHIA

I can't really think of anything. Ah, also the other connection that are my half between European languages and the city is my friendships with Spanish people, Spanish speakers, whether they are from Spain or from Latin America. What I found

## Appendix I

is that because of since I was younger, I listened to tango music and I had not realised the influence it had and how familiar I am with the language so.

00:31:07.300 --> 00:31:17.500

SOPHIA

I noticed it when I came here and started befriending Spanish speakers. I would understand what they're saying, and I think that came back to the music.

00:31:19.650 --> 00:31:29.110

SOPHIA

So yeah, now my Spanish friends, if they would talk to each other, I will pick up words and they don't have to tell me what it is, it's just the knowledge is there.

00:31:31.250 --> 00:31:31.890

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:31:31.950 --> 00:31:35.020

JL

Fantastic, but with the, would you say?

00:31:35.630 --> 00:31:46.420

JL

Yeah, in terms of feeling a sense of belonging to Southampton, you said you feel that this is more home than than Athens was. Is it what what do you think makes you feel belong here?

00:31:46.820 --> 00:32:15.810

SOPHIA

And no, I would not say what Athens will no - they're they're both, I belong to both of them, and they both belong to me, because we have, you know, I feel I actually have written a poem. I write poems sometimes. I've written a poem about Athens, but my connection with Athens is more, I feel dark because of the experiences I had at the time. Where my experience with Southampton is more

00:32:16.100 --> 00:32:36.110

SOPHIA

Bright, so I found because I had difficult childhood in Athens, my connection with the city is more kind of, not disturbed, but more challenging. Where when I came

## Appendix I

here my 'cause of the relationship I had with the city and the people which is more, you know

00:32:37.320 --> 00:32:45.650

SOPHIA

Calm and more friendly and more accepting, it's less challenging, so I'm a bit happier here than when I am there.

00:32:45.980 --> 00:32:46.340

JL

Uh-huh.

00:32:48.750 --> 00:32:56.260

JL

And you have a lot of Spanish speaking friends. Do you have friends from other countries or some English friends as well?

00:32:51.780 --> 00:32:52.480

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:32:54.480 --> 00:32:55.910

SOPHIA

Yes, I have.

00:32:56.470 --> 00:33:02.240

SOPHIA

Yes, I have English friends. I have some Italian friends, some Croatian friends.

00:33:04.310 --> 00:33:04.680

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:33:06.290 --> 00:33:10.300

SOPHIA

French France yeah French friends, yeah, I have friends from all over the world but

00:33:12.330 --> 00:33:14.790

SOPHIA

When it comes to European, yeah.

## Appendix I

00:33:15.120 --> 00:33:23.550

JL

Yeah, yeah, I think you said earlier that you see yourself as international, like an international person. Could you say a bit more about that?

00:33:24.890 --> 00:33:54.290

SOPHIA

I think because of having relationships since I was a young child with with different nationalities, different cultures, I always felt that I'm part of all those things. I'm not just one national or ethnic identity, you know, 'cause I, even though I'm a Pontian Greek, I was born in Kazakhstan. You know, I was part of the Russian culture at some point, 'cause we lived in Moscow for a year.

00:33:54.500 --> 00:34:25.040

SOPHIA

Before we go to Greece, so there was an influence from that. It shapes you to who you are, you know. And then when I went to Greece and I travelled a little bit, I stayed in Italy for a while. I stayed in in France for a little bit. Not long enough, just about six months. And then I stayed before I come to UK was for four months in Indonesia and that kind of shaped me in a different way. You know, it was the first time I actually lived

00:34:25.090 --> 00:34:30.020

SOPHIA

For a long time in an Islamic country and I got to experience that.

00:34:31.360 --> 00:34:40.290

SOPHIA

And of course the the variation of food and behaviours, all different to what I had in Europe.

00:34:42.090 --> 00:34:51.430

SOPHIA

Because when I was in Kazakhstan, I guess it's an Islamic Country, but I did not know I was. It was my babyhood. I did not really understand things in the same way.

00:34:52.600 --> 00:35:06.560

SOPHIA

And also because my biological father is is Muslim, so for me it was, uh, it had a

## Appendix I

different influence to kind of understand. OK, that's the it's it's a different way of being.

00:35:08.330 --> 00:35:10.370

SOPHIA

So that shaped me again.

00:35:13.200 --> 00:35:13.730

SOPHIA

Yeah.

00:35:15.870 --> 00:35:18.200

JL

Do you still have a bit more time, is it?

00:35:19.230 --> 00:35:20.030

SOPHIA

Yes, I do.

00:35:20.280 --> 00:35:27.110

JL

So if the questions are too personal, please feel free to.

00:35:27.130 --> 00:35:29.490

SOPHIA

I'm very open, very open, yeah.

00:35:30.430 --> 00:35:35.090

JL

Do you have a uh, would you describe yourself as religious or having a

00:35:36.490 --> 00:35:37.060

JL

Faith?

00:35:38.570 --> 00:35:43.530

SOPHIA

I don't know if it's a faith, as I feel that I have a certain belief but

00:35:46.440 --> 00:36:12.390

SOPHIA



## Appendix I

I grew up in a convent and as an Orthodox Christian and I was trained by the age of five until I was eight for three years, they were trying to train me to become a nun, and then I, my Mum, took me away at the age of eight and then I returned again at 13 and stayed there until I was 16.

00:36:15.900 --> 00:36:30.600

SOPHIA

I saw things in a different way. I re-lived it. So 'cause I was inside, then went out. I had a bit of a cultural shock, then went back in so it was constant changes with my relationship with a religion.

00:36:32.200 --> 00:36:32.910

SOPHIA

And then.

00:36:33.540 --> 00:37:03.940

SOPHIA

And then knowing that my biological father is a Muslim that also as a child, had a kind of I was questioning it, you know, what is on that other side and we were forbidden in a way to know that other side because because of the environment I was. But also because the relationship between Greece and Turkey. You know, being having all these problems with religion throughout the years and being slaves to them for for over 400 years and

00:37:05.530 --> 00:37:18.080

SOPHIA

Yeah, I wouldn't say I'm religious at all, but I feel that I'm spiritual in a way and analyst, I don't know if that's the right word and

00:37:18.890 --> 00:37:25.770

SOPHIA

It changes, agnostic sometimes, and like you know, but no religion, no

00:37:25.920 --> 00:37:26.650

JL

Uh-huh.

## Appendix I

00:37:26.720 --> 00:37:29.340

SOPHIA

I just believe in something, I don't know what it is yet.

00:37:30.370 --> 00:37:34.630

SOPHIA

All I all I feel is that it has to be

00:37:35.200 --> 00:37:36.270

SOPHIA

To me, I feel that

00:37:37.430 --> 00:37:41.500

SOPHIA

I need to embrace my dark sides and my light sides and

00:37:42.350 --> 00:37:43.620

SOPHIA

Yeah also.

00:37:44.370 --> 00:38:02.310

SOPHIA

Feel the love. That to me, that's the drive of believing, is being kind, being loving, giving and being willing to accept also what you're given. So, if you call that a religion, yeah, that's my religion but now I don't know.

00:38:04.340 --> 00:38:24.050

JL

OK thanks. I'm and then sorry if the questions seem a bit random but just going so I know earlier we you said that Brexit didn't really have it didn't really have an effect on you, could you maybe say a bit more about the your legal status in terms of have you applied for the settled status?

00:38:24.220 --> 00:38:42.890

SOPHIA

Yes, I did. I left everything last minute because I was hoping, I was having issues with my second son's Greek passport because [my eldest two sons] they're Greek Nationals, where [my youngest two sons] are British Nationals.

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00:38:42.870 --> 00:38:43.250

JL

Yeah.

00:38:43.810 --> 00:38:44.700

SOPHIA

So.

00:38:46.280 --> 00:39:01.610

SOPHIA

I applied for [my eldest son] and for myself, but because of no I wanted to apply for us. But then because [my second son's] passport was expired, I had to renew that, I thought I had to do it to in order to do for the whole family.

00:39:02.330 --> 00:39:21.920

SOPHIA

And we had an appointment to renew his passport, but because of the lockdown last May, they did not accept anyone and then they open again for appointments in September. But it was impossible to get an appointment um actually since September. I got an appointment for June so he's not yeah.

00:39:20.580 --> 00:39:21.080

JL

Wow.

00:39:22.710 --> 00:39:28.410

SOPHIA

So I was really worried about what's happening because the deadline is coming through, so I contacted the

00:39:29.090 --> 00:39:59.560

SOPHIA

[burps] Excuse me, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and this wonderful lady, she helped me find a solution and we did what it's called like a papal form for him where he we can give because I now have the EU settlement, so I applied. I got accepted same as [my eldest son] and my Mum but because [my second son] is my son, we could apply through me. So, he finally got it

## Appendix I

00:39:59.610 --> 00:40:00.710

SOPHIA

Two weeks ago.

00:40:02.220 --> 00:40:05.450

SOPHIA

So we are all settled yeah, we all have our settlement now.

00:40:05.690 --> 00:40:09.870

JL

Yes, it must have been a relief after that time with uncertainty?

00:40:07.850 --> 00:40:09.340

SOPHIA

Yes yeah yeah.

00:40:11.070 --> 00:40:11.670

JL

Yeah. So, I guess the Brexit thing was more of a question of the legal status rather than anything else?

00:40:18.460 --> 00:40:33.500

SOPHIA

Yes, yeah, uh, politically I'm I'm not a political person. I don't understand, don't even understand borders, for me borders has to do with language and culture, not with politics so

00:40:34.880 --> 00:40:35.790

SOPHIA

I don't know if that's.

00:40:37.190 --> 00:40:38.870

JL

Yeah, that's helpful. Thank you, yeah.

00:40:40.240 --> 00:40:48.010

JL

I think that I've asked most of the questions that I was thinking of, was there anything that you wanted to ask me, or?

## Appendix I

00:40:48.730 --> 00:40:53.430

SOPHIA

Yes. What is the next stage? What would you like me, how would you like me to follow things?

00:40:53.800 --> 00:41:10.000

JL

OK, so yeah, I appreciate the documentation was is a bit confusing, isn't it? So basically, the idea now is if you would like to maybe take some photos on your phone or if you want to send me one of your poems or.

00:40:58.360 --> 00:40:58.940

SOPHIA

I don't know.

00:41:10.970 --> 00:41:11.570

SOPHIA

OK.

00:41:12.130 --> 00:41:27.930

JL

I mean, it it it depends what you want to share, but for example, I was thinking this the statue of Richard seems to be quite an important feature in your journey to Southampton. So maybe next time you're walking by it.

00:41:23.400 --> 00:41:23.890

SOPHIA

OK.

00:41:28.090 --> 00:41:29.180

SOPHIA

OK, yeah.

00:41:28.840 --> 00:41:42.660

JL

So the idea is I'm looking for things that feel you feel connected to Southampton or to the area or maybe in contrast it could be like the poem you wrote about Athens if you if you felt comfortable sharing that.

## Appendix I

00:41:43.410 --> 00:41:46.750

SOPHIA

It's in Greek. I'm happy to share it, but it's in Greek.

00:41:47.290 --> 00:41:49.410

JL

Yeah, that's fine. Don't worry about it, I can

00:41:50.960 --> 00:42:06.300

JL

I can work with that, um so yeah it is fine. It could be in any language, so any basically any materials I think about you can think about it creatively. It sounds like you're quite a creative person, so anything

00:42:07.890 --> 00:42:38.320

JL

Thinking yeah, anything that's connecting you to to Southampton or anything related to language as well or as I say anything connecting with that connection to Athens or thinking about this international person theme - it could be something more broad, not linked to a specific place, so I think the idea now is if you can share some kind of materials like that with me and then after some time we will arrange a second interview where

00:42:38.370 --> 00:42:53.820

JL

I will ask some follow up questions from today's interview so I will review the the recording and the transcript. I'll think of some questions and then I'll also say, "well, you've sent me this picture of Richard the statue, can you tell me more about this," or "you've sent me this?"

00:42:55.030 --> 00:43:22.740

JL

So I mean I can give some examples of what other participants have done, so one participant has sent me mainly photographs of people who are important to her in the area. So, she's sent photographs of her spending time with friends or being with family. Another participant has taken pictures of parts of the city that are important to her, so there's the D-day Wall.

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00:43:23.510 --> 00:43:24.260

SOPHIA

Yes.

00:43:24.320 --> 00:43:40.680

JL

And so for her, that's an important landmark, and she took a photo of a mosaic, which is of the Warsaw mermaid, and as she's from Poland that was a connection for her, so it could be it could be objects, it could be people, it could be

00:43:42.050 --> 00:44:06.530

JL

Anything. Another participant just sent me a few sentences about her experience of filling in the census. Because the census asks you, you know which nationality, how do you, you know? And it made her think, and so she just so it could just be a, you know, you could on WhatsApp, just send a few sentences, oh I thought about this today. Or you could do a quick audio recording so it could be any type of

00:44:07.230 --> 00:44:38.850

JL

Material like that that's thinking about language, connection, belonging, place, and I think yeah, because this is taking place over a longer period of time for the second interview, I'm thinking maybe in two or three months' time, so you have plenty of time to send me things and again, some participants are very keen about this and they're sending me lots of things, other people are not very keen and haven't sent me anything yet, so there is no, I won't be pressurising you

00:44:10.290 --> 00:44:10.720

SOPHIA

OK.

00:44:22.230 --> 00:44:22.630

SOPHIA

OK.

00:44:39.230 --> 00:44:45.590

JL

To send things it's up to you, so just, and I appreciate that you are you are busy, and you have a busy life, so just

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00:44:46.380 --> 00:44:48.900

JL

You just send something as and when.

00:44:50.030 --> 00:45:13.920

JL

And what you feel comfortable sharing and then I'll be in touch with you again in a couple of months to arrange another interview. If you haven't sent me any material, then we can still have some follow up questions from this interview. So, it's I'm sure I will think of some of the things to ask you, so it's not a problem, so you know. So please, if you are very busy and you're anxious about that

00:45:15.420 --> 00:45:28.390

JL

Don't worry too much if you haven't sent me many things. I will send you a follow up email confirming what we've just discussed. Does that make sense? Did you, yeah?

00:45:19.120 --> 00:45:19.610

SOPHIA

OK?

00:45:24.700 --> 00:45:25.240

SOPHIA

OK.

00:45:27.320 --> 00:45:28.990

SOPHIA

Yes yeah yeah.

00:45:29.350 --> 00:46:00.490

JL

I I know it's a bit weird. It's a bit of a strange project. And then maybe yeah, after the second interview again, I think it depends on the participants. Some might like to continue sending me materials, other people maybe not. So, depending on how it goes, we may have other interviews, we may not, and then maybe in February or March next year we will have a focus group with the other participants. So, I will say, "oh well, here are my initial findings"



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00:46:01.600 --> 00:46:04.940

JL

“What do you think about it?” And we can have a discussion.

00:46:06.660 --> 00:46:10.210

JL

So you can hear from the other people as well, so I think I think that would be quite interesting.

00:46:11.870 --> 00:46:12.460

SOPHIA

OK.

00:46:14.820 --> 00:46:16.540

SOPHIA

Well, nice to see you Jayne.

00:46:16.640 --> 00:46:18.690

JL

You too Sophia, it's been lovely to meet you.

00:46:18.790 --> 00:46:20.100

SOPHIA

We'll be in touch soon.

00:46:20.290 --> 00:46:23.190

JL

Yes, thank you so much for your time. Take care.

00:46:23.340 --> 00:46:24.480

SOPHIA

Bye, bye, bye!

00:46:24.590 --> 00:46:25.080

JL

Bye!

## Appendix J Sample Data Summary

### Data summary: Marieke

Type of data	Summary
Journey to Southampton Date: 30.05.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived 2021 following a difficult rental situation in Winchester (p.1)</li> <li>• Came to UK again during 2020 in 1<sup>st</sup> national lockdown to look for work and found a job in Winchester (p.1)</li> <li>• Had previously been living in Brighton (p.1)</li> <li>• <i>'I was quite scared of doing a new city again from scratch'</i> (p.1)</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> interview transcript Date: 28.06.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First moved to the UK in the summer of 2018 due to partner being offered job in Brighton (p.1)</li> <li>• Wanted a new start with career as had been teaching for a number of years but it had a negative impact on her health so had started working more flexibly in coffee shops and doing creative stuff etc (p.2)</li> <li>• Started applying for library jobs as that was what she wanted to do (p.2)</li> <li>• Partner's contract ended so Marieke returned to Belgium shortly after, then the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown happened (p.3)</li> <li>• Brighton as <i>'cultural and very open minded'; 'a really good bubble to be in...I felt very welcome as a foreigner, I really felt embraced.'</i> (p.4)</li> <li>• Discussion around Brexit <i>'They were very much making clear that they wanted the Europeans there and it was really nice feeling.'</i> (p.4)</li> <li>• Also made some friends in Brighton (p.4)</li> </ul>

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- And creative connections (p.5)
- Mentions a poem she wrote about leaving Brighton which she also performed on the radio (p.5) [28.06.21 Marieke This is not a love poem.pdf]
- Was focused on music in Belgium but started focusing on poetry in Brighton (p.5)
- Went to a poetry night in Brighton and met people there (p.6)
- Career: *'I do very much identify with the job that I do, and you know, give myself value because I have a job and I know it's not right, but I do it anyway.'* (p.6)
- Came back to UK during 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown as didn't have a job and felt *'useless'* (pp.6-7)
- Partner had been offered a job in Germany, then in the US, so she was alone in Belgium (p.7)
- Had already started doing librarianship qualification distance learning in the UK and had moved around a lot already so didn't want to go to the US (p.8)
- *'I felt I had moved too many times and it was really affecting my sense of where do I belong and it was really making me feel very anxious.'* (p.8)
- Several *'cores'* of family and friends based around Europe (p.8)
- Had to move back to the UK then in order to keep her pre-settled status before 6 months had passed (p.8)
- Stayed at a friend's house in Brighton whilst applying for jobs then moved to Winchester as a lodger after being offered a job (p.9)
- Winchester: *'I really felt like a stranger there, like an immigrant. I felt like an immigrant in Winchester which I have never felt like before and I have lived in Holland, I've lived in Greece, but nobody has ever made me feel like an immigrant and I have felt like that over there.'* (p.11)
- The landlord had voted to Leave which didn't help their relationship, but the main breakdown was due to his fears around Covid-19 which meant that Marieke had to leave Winchester (p.11)

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- Southampton as '*a much less dense version*' of Brighton with '*cores of artistic activity*' and '*a sense of space*' (p.11)
- The Common is an important place for her – walking, running, picking flowers, reading under a tree (pp.12-13)
- Received a lot of support from Quakers in Winchester – Brighton Meeting had written to them to let them know Marieke was coming – '*they really received me with open arms,*' several people contacted her weekly to see how she was doing (p.13)
- The UK has more and easier access to green space and is less compact than Belgium where it is difficult to get away from people, it can feel '*claustrophobic*' (p.14)
- '*I thought the place that I came from was progressive until I moved to the UK*' (p.15)
- Has found it easier to make friends here than in Belgium (p.16)
- '*Once you've lived somewhere else, it changes you to such an extent that you're not just from that place anymore, you're more than that. You don't really belong anywhere anymore.*' (p.16)
- '*I very often connect with foreigners wherever I go.*' (p.16)
- From a town called Wervik on the border (pp.16-17)
- A tiny city with 20,000 people, quite rural, with half the city in Belgium and half in France (p.17)
- Flemish (Dutch) is her mother tongue but also got taught Walloon (French) and German at school (p.17)
- Also speaks Greek as lived there for 2.5 years (p.18)
- Has MA in Modern Languages and Culture (p.18)
- Speaks English and some German and Dutch with her German partner (p.18)
- Also spoke some Spanish with Spanish friends but lost touch with them (p.19)

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- *'For me, learning languages has always been based on some kind of relationship, friendship or something more.'* (p.19)
- E.g. she learnt some Polish when she had some Polish friends (p.19)
- Comes across Polish at work in Winchester and there are lots of Polish in Soton (p.19)
- *'Languages really are something I really like because I'm quite good at it. I like being able to communicate with people in their own language because it really gives you a different level of understanding of the culture and it gives you a way straight into their heart.'* (p.19)
- Soton: *'I've sat down to have a coffee on the weekend in a place and I've heard people speak Spanish. I've heard people speak Greek and I'm like, yeah, I'm just one among the many and I feel at home here. So that's that really, it makes a big difference. It's just feeling the presence and feeling that...you're not a minority.'* (p.20)
- Everyone was talking about Brexit when she arrived in Brighton in 2018 (p.21)
- Went to an anti-Brexit poetry night in Brighton and ended up performing (pp.21-22)
- Brexit: *'As time progressed, I did feel like psychologically, it started to weigh more and more, the insecurity of what's going to happen to us. How is this going to affect us?'* (p.22)
- Incident on a bus in Brighton due to her accent (p.23)
- Understands her white privilege so was shocked at this (p.23)
- Nationalism: *'If I see a British flag or one of those white and red cross flags, I flinch.'* (p.23)
- Men on the bus asked her where she was from in a threatening manner and lent over into her space to close the window (p.24)
- Told the bus driver who said to report it so she did but the police did nothing, felt *'powerless.'* (p.25)

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- *'If you don't tell someone explicitly what your ideas are about these things, it's really hard to pinpoint. And when you retell the story, it never sounds as bad as it feels in that moment. Because a lot of it stays very implicit.'* (pp.25-26)
- *'It's only one incident, but I was amazed myself at how much of an impact it has on, you know behaviour and how you think in a later stage still.'* (p.27)
- Brexit: *'You put bananas over the rights of other people, and I'm like how? How can you function like that as a human? I really don't understand.'* (p.28)
- Covid-19: her colleague tested positive so Marieke had to self-isolate and even though she tested negative, the landlord was very fearful (p.29)
- Now living with a mix of housemates from UK and abroad in Soton (p.31)
- Home: *'It's your one safe place, supposedly, and if that's affected, that is really...how it has a big impact. I really need to have a safe space somewhere where I can retreat to.'* (pp.32-33)
- Home: *'I don't know anymore where I belong. I honestly don't know, and I don't know where home is because I still haven't made up my mind on whether I want to stay in this country.'* (p.35)
- *'I think for me the goal right now is to find a place where I feel I can settle down, to have a place with a garden and a cat.'* (p.36)
- Enjoyed living in Greece previously but it was in the middle of the financial crisis from 2010-2012 (p.37)
- Has pre-settled status here until 2024 (pp.37-38)
- Not sure if will keep it as the jobs she does don't earn enough (p.38)
- Covid: *'The whole pandemic has really made me even more live in the moment and live things very short term rather than long term. I mean I worry long term, but right now my first goal is just to get through the pandemic in one piece.'* (p.39)
- Belonging: *'I feel like a European rather than belonging to just one country.'* (p.39)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude towards participating in my research: <i>'I found this really entertaining to be the centre of attention...I'm enjoying this quite a lot. You know, it's nice to be able to just relate the story of your life.'</i> (p.41)</li> <li>• Happy to be put in touch with Sophia re: poetry as is looking for friends (p.45)</li> </ul>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> interview transcript Date: 11.10.21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marieke has a new partner (p.1)</li> <li>• Her and her previous partner mutually agreed to split up (p.2)</li> <li>• She was trying to make new friends and had been attending a bouldering meetup group (p.3)</li> <li>• Then she attended another meetup group and started talking about climbing with a guy who she then invited along to the other group and he became her new partner (p.4)</li> <li>• They've been together for a couple of months and are spending a lot of time together, staying at each other's places (p.5)</li> <li>• He is a Muslim and they are exploring each other's faiths; on a Friday evening, they spend time looking at Quaker texts and the Koran together (p.6)</li> <li>• Discussion about an upcoming inter-faith event (pp.7-9)</li> <li>• Discussion about the Southampton Council of Faiths (pp.9-10)</li> <li>• Talked about [14.09.21 Marieke photo of Belgian graves in cemetery.png] (p.11)</li> <li>• The Common has always been her base since she moved to Soton (p.11)</li> <li>• Marieke goes to the Common several times a week (p.12)</li> <li>• Cemeteries remind Marieke of home as she grew up living opposite one (p.13)</li> <li>• Chrysanthemums are associated with graves in Belgium and so she finds it odd here that they are used as decorative flowers (p.13)</li> </ul>

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- She spotted the Belgian graves in the Soton cemetery and she likes to say hello to them (p.14)
- *'If they managed to die here...maybe I can stay here as well'* (p.14)
- [28.06.21 Marieke This is not a love poem.pdf] (p.16)
- She wrote this poem, associated with place, on Valentine's Day, when she was about to leave Brighton and return to Belgium and she didn't feel ready to leave (p.17)
- She had just started a job at Chichester Uni and wanted to gain more experience (p.18)
- The poem references features of Brighton (i360; starlings; the sea) as well as America as that was where her partner was planning to move to (Redwood trees) (p.18)
- It was a poem of sadness for her but she was glad she could have the opportunity to share it on the radio (p.19)
- Marieke talks about the first poem she wrote which was in Dutch where she talks about wanting to leave Belgium. She now feels guilty about that as she sees the value in sticking to a place and investing in it (p.20)
- She hasn't had much chance to write yet in Soton and isn't sure if she'd class herself as a poet (p.21)
- In 2007 she went on an Erasmus trip to Greece for 6 months (p.22)
- It was an amazing experience for her (p.22)
- But it was not viewed positively in Belgium and so she felt separate from others and started having foreign friends (p.23)
- Her best friend in Belgium is Polish; her foreign friends complained that it's hard to get close to Belgians and she feels the same way (p.23)
- She remembered another poem she wrote during the first lockdown (p.24)



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- She was hating everything about Belgium (p.25)
- [11.10.21 Marieke Lockdown in Belgium poem.odt] (p.28)
- Marieke recited her poem about lockdown in Belgium (p.29)
- She was determined to hate the city but surprised herself by realising there were some aspects of it that she liked (p.30)
- Marieke's Mum has grown up with it being a value to stay at home and not travel but now her parents are starting to accept that side of her and now they're planning to visit her in Soton (p.32)
- Brexit prevented her from feeling that she could properly integrate in the UK (p.33)
- *'I've lived in Holland and...I've lived in Greece, and they're very much part of me...they were not just touristic endeavours...it really was my goal to become part of that culture and...to live there as a person rather than as an outsider. It's always been my aim when I go to a new place...when you've done that in a couple of places, I feel like...I belong in all those places. I'm still an outsider, but...if you add them all up, then you've got me.'* (pp.33-34)
- Marieke still knows people in places she's lived (p.34)
- *'...in the end, feeling home is about the people that you connect with - whether you have people that you can connect with and people that accept you.'* (p.34)
- Marieke's work is in Winchester and her studies are online so they are not connected to Soton but she is trying to build up a circle of people around her, and starting a new relationship with someone who lives here has helped (p.35)
- She has been going more regularly to Quakers and to climbing and she has a ginger cat (p.36)
- Marieke feels a lot happier now (p.37)
- Marieke has been discovering new places like Lords Wood and has been visiting the New Forest (p.38)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Quakers in Winchester contacted her regularly and that was helpful (p.39)</li> <li>• She attended some meetings in Belgium as well (p.40)</li> <li>• She's forgetting her mother tongue; there's a mix of languages used in the Brussels meeting (p.40)</li> <li>• Marieke feels that she's really embraced English and tends to read in English now whereas it seems an effort to read in Dutch; sometimes she watches TV series in Dutch to refamiliarise herself with the language (p.42)</li> <li>• One of her friends says she sounds British now which she denies (p.42)</li> <li>• She listens to music in her own language but tends to read and write in English now (p.43)</li> <li>• Her partner grew up in London but his parents are from Bangladesh so there is a mix of languages and she's learning some Arabic (p.43)</li> <li>• Her colleagues can't pronounce her surname and so she has anglicised it so they can understand it, which she finds annoying (p.44)</li> <li>• She noticed that she has a passion for mayonnaise as she has it with everything, which she thinks is a Belgian thing (p.45)</li> </ul>
Photographs/other material	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 28.06.21 Marieke This is not a love poem.pdf - Marieke -Int-1-28.06.21-p.5 and Marieke -Int-2-11.10.21-p.16</li> <li>2. 14.09.21 Marieke photo of Belgian graves in cemetery.png - Marieke-Int-2-11.10.21-p.11</li> <li>3. 11.10.21 Marieke Lockdown in Belgium poem.odt - Marieke -Int-2-11.10.21-p.28</li> <li>4. 29.12.21 Marieke DuoLingo.jpg</li> <li>5. 29.12.21 Marieke Online Scrabble app.jpg</li> <li>6. 29.12.21 Marieke shopping list.jpg</li> </ol>

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	7. 29.12.21 Marieke WhatsApp messages.docx
WhatsApp focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 21.01.22 - joined the WhatsApp group (p.1)</li><li>• 02.04.22 – after attending the coffee meetup, Marieke posted ‘It was so lovely to chat to you! As promised: here's the link to the 3million. They can support you if you have any troubles with proving your status, and regularly organise campaigns for getting us physical proof of our status as EU citizens. <a href="https://www.the3million.org.uk/">https://www.the3million.org.uk/</a>’ (p.18)</li><li>• 02.04.22 – ‘And this movie is the comedy about the customs between Belgium and France, good for brushing up your french! <a href="https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_to_Declare_(film)">https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_to_Declare_(film)</a>’ (p.19)</li><li>• 23.06.22 – in response to this article I had posted <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/23/brexit-remains-open-wound-eu-citizens-living-uk">https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/23/brexit-remains-open-wound-eu-citizens-living-uk</a>, Marieke said, ‘Very much on tune with how I feel about Brexit’ (p.33)</li></ul>

## Appendix K Themes and subthemes in the data

Overarching themes	Subthemes
Southampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions prior to coming here</li> <li>• Reason(s) for choosing Southampton</li> <li>• First impressions</li> <li>• Early days - navigating around/getting lost</li> <li>• Southampton as a place</li> <li>• Southampton as a port</li> <li>• Important places around Southampton</li> <li>• Southampton over time</li> <li>• Diversity in Southampton/other communities</li> <li>• Southampton in relation/connection to other UK cities e.g. London</li> <li>• Southampton in relation to hometowns/countries</li> <li>• Southampton in relation to other places they've lived</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude towards language learning</li> <li>• Language use</li> <li>• Attitude towards own accent</li> <li>• Attitude towards others' accents</li> <li>• Language with regard to bringing up children</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work/career/study (or does this go under 'belonging/connection?')</li> <li>• Aesthetics</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Faith/religion</li> <li>• Traditions/celebrations</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Living in between cultures</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting to cultures (or should this go under 'belonging/connection?')</li> <li>• Navigating systems e.g. political/health/transport etc</li> <li>• Change over time (self/in a country)</li> <li>• Stereotypes</li> </ul>
Belonging/connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of home</li> <li>• The choice/not to settle/stay in Southampton</li> <li>• Their own sense of belonging to Southampton</li> <li>• Connection to other places</li> <li>• Their perception of others' belonging to Southampton (but maybe this ought to go under the 'otherness' section?)</li> <li>• Their perception of others' perceptions of their sense of belonging (but maybe this ought to go under the 'otherness' section?)</li> <li>• Choosing who to connect with – foreigners or locals?</li> <li>• Partner/significant other</li> <li>• Friendships</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• The impact of Covid-19</li> </ul>
Brexit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional response</li> <li>• Financial impact</li> <li>• Administrative / legal immigration aspect</li> </ul>
Otherness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes towards nationalism</li> <li>• Being a foreigner/an immigrant in the UK</li> <li>• Microaggressions / harassment / racism / accentism etc and responses to that</li> <li>• Positive views on otherness</li> </ul>

## Appendix L Examples from data analysis

### Theme 1: Southampton

Data extract	Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)	Subtheme and Comments
‘I was quite scared of doing a new city again from scratch.’	Marieke-J2S-30.05.21-p.1	Perceptions prior to coming here
‘There is a lot of ship and exchange with the outside...so...we can meet that mind of people.’	Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.9	Soton as a port; Diversity in Soton/other communities
‘When I was in Italy, I would see things and I never really got the chance to go to museum and visit...but I would see things around. So coming to Southampton actually, going to the [Da Vinci] exhibition was really exciting... I...go very often with my children [to the city art gallery]...not every month, every other month definitely - every time I will see that there's something new, I'll maybe take them, and sometimes they like there something, and we go back again following weekend.’	Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.15-16	Links to other places through art - Da Vinci, Italy Soton city art gallery Activities to do with children
‘Sorry it is not just France that is 'full of French' as you hear sometimes in England! 🤔 So, you have to put up with one more French here in the group ah ah! I have lived in Southampton for 28 years... France and Britain...long history of entente and not so cordiale at times. There have been three waves of Polish immigration in Southampton, last in 2004 with EU rules (I know this because I studied EU and topics). Also, in Southampton, a long history of Italian immigration going back to Titanic days or turn of last century, and a port gateway to the US... Sometimes, people stayed...in Southampton! It is about economics too.’	Hope-WhatsAppGroup-18.02.22-pp.6-7	French, Polish and Italians in Soton, links to the US Migration history Soton as a port

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	<p>22.03.21 D-Day wall.jpg Beata-Int-2-21.08.21-p.46</p>	<p>History – D-Day, WW2 Old Soton</p>
<p>‘So we came from the Cotswolds to Southampton for the day for that interview, knowing absolutely nothing about Southampton at all...I think it was just the shock of coming out of the train...and from the train station, and what I could see. And I was like, well blimey, I hope she doesn’t get the job! <i>[laughs]</i>... It's crazy, isn't it? Your...first views of the place. And when you've got...no attachment to it...there's nothing, don't know anything about it, it's all visual, isn't it?’</p>	<p>Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.5</p>	<p>Soton as a place; Soton in relation to other UK cities – Cotswolds; first impressions Transport; train ‘Shock’; ‘visual’ ‘no attachment to it’</p>
<p>‘We are very close to Portswood and so on with a very mixed population...poor, richer, immigrants, lots of people...I can hear...lots of people from Eastern Europe and...so I feel comfortable with that, I feel comfortable. I don't feel so comfortable about the homeless people...lying on the pavement in the street, but that seemed to be not exclusive to Southampton unfortunately...but I like this sort of mixed...population.’</p>	<p>Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.22-23</p>	<p>Diversity in Soton/other communities Portswood Poor/rich; homeless Immigrants; Eastern Europe Mixed population</p>

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Theme 2: Language


Data extract	Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)	Subtheme and Comments
<p>'I also have my cousins that I keep in contact - really close contact - like every week or so, we Skype. And...I really want my kids to be part of that...to feel that they have the family there, because they're detached in a way... The virtual contact with the family actually allows [the children]...to know that [they've] got that part of family. And also, we speak Polish at home only...so the idea is for them to also have their Polish background, although they are British by passport... We do want them to speak both languages and to have the connections with Poland. Obviously, this will change for them and we are aware of this, but...we want this culture bit to be part of daily life as well and as much as we can.'</p>	<p>Marianna-Int-1-16.04.21-pp.11-12</p>	<p>Digital communication - Skype Bilingualism Polish at home English at school</p>
<p>'I spoke to [my daughter] in English every now and then, not very often, but we were going to nursery. She was crying every day. I was having the English lessons, preparing my proficiency in English... And the nursery staff asked me for some comforting words in Spanish, and I said no, you don't talk to my daughter in Spanish because then what was the point? She was two years old only but she needs to learn...to respond in our language and...so we never spoke in English, the two of us, until she was ten years' old, so we were speaking in Spanish no matter who was there, because that's the only way to make itself fully bilingual...in the language... Because once they got...to school, they want to use that language, the language which they socialise with. So I said to her, if you don't speak to me in Spanish, I just won't answer... It's been hard, very, very, hard work. Also, one summer we went to Spain and...my brother said this child is not pronouncing the word that they said in Spanish properly, so all Summer we were practising '<i>thumb</i>' and '<i>theretta</i>' so she could distinguish. It was really hard, really hard,</p>	<p>Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.32-33</p>	<p>Bilingualism Spanish at home English at nursery and school Pronunciation difficulties Accent</p>



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<p>because you know my accent is not exactly...and I didn't want my daughter to speak with my accent.'</p>		
<p>'[In Poland] we weren't allowed to learn other languages, but in Russia...they could learn English, they could learn French, Italian, German, so that was really strange situation. Why...we weren't allowed...to learn other languages apart from Russian? I mean, I don't mind because I do like learning languages, I just thought, oh it's another skill.'</p>	<p>Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-p.33</p>	<p>Russia/political situation and language learning</p>
<p>'At work, but also in my personal life...writing English and spoken English...and how you are reminded...every so often that you are a foreigner, but then at the same time, other colleagues will come to me, asking me about how do you write this or how do you..? I'm like <i>[laughs]</i>... You're the English person! <i>[laughs]</i> How do you spell this? I'm like <i>[laughs]</i> You're English - I'm not. <i>[laughs]</i> You work it out! <i>[laughs]</i>.'</p>	<p>Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.28</p>	<p>Using English in different environments English as a speaker of other languages Written and spoken language</p>
<p>'Meeting this girl [from Southampton City Council]...I thought, oh hold on, it's not just...in my reality where words we adopt in our household or we use words, but even this girl who has no connection with British apart from...her situation with her friends and stuff that she adopted the language in her everyday use as well. So that was an interesting thing...it's a way of becoming more familiar with the other... I think...it has helped...sometimes - we have this xenophobia towards the other and I think this has helped me having the fact that I have all these languages since I was younger around me, I'm always open to the other, I don't have a restricted mind, I accept it - where I feel that there's some people who are not exposed, they're kind of more conditioned in accepting it yet.'</p>	<p>Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.6-7</p>	<p>Using languages with others on the street - the woman from SCC could speak a bit of Greek and is from Portugal but her parents are from Angola; some of Sophia's best friends are Angolan or Portuguese; Greek, Portuguese, English; adopting words for everyday</p>

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		use; language has helped her to be more open to the 'other'
<p>'This is a food shopping list for us, which I made in dutch. Partly for me to stay in touch with my mother tongue, which I feel is fading, and partly for [my partner] to practice. Some things were added by him in English.'</p> 	<p>29.12.21-Marieke-WhatsApp messages.docx 29.12.21Shopping list.jpg</p>	<p>Shopping list featuring a mixture of Dutch (Flemish) and English</p> <p>Language loss of mother tongue</p>
<p>Beata: Hello fellow JL's researcher subjects 😊 Quick question, do you have in your mother tongue anglicised personal names? I mean in Polish I sometimes heard Dżesika =Jessica, Brajan = Brian, and I'm just watching Netflix "Hold Tight" and they have a character called Jaśmina = Jasmine, which I have not heard before, so just wandered whether this is just a Polish thing, or do others do it as well?</p> <p>Marianna: Beata, Russian and Ukrainian have this thing too - I don't speak these languages but I can read them and I have seem a lot of these names in Russian and Ukrainian (mostly on tweeter, but that's how I know they exist in these languages)</p> <p>Beata: Interesting 😊😊</p>	<p>Beata/Marianna/Geneviève/Hope/Aude-WhatsAppGroup-10.05.22-13.05.22-pp.27-28</p>	<p>Anglicised first names – Polish, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Brazilian</p> <p>Language change over time – 'old-fashioned' and influenced by culture</p> <p>Social media influence</p>


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<p>Geneviève: What happened in France in the last 40 years is that people watched American series and started giving their children English names such as Kevin, which did not exist in French.</p> <p>Hope: After Kevin Costner maybe? 😊</p> <p>Geneviève: Probably but many parents were influenced by all the series they watched. Once people were given the right to name their children as they wished (within reason) foreign names became popular....</p> <p>Beata: In Poland in the 80s there was a fashion for Izaura, after Brazilian soap opera "Slave Girl"</p> <p>😊 <a href="https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escrava_Isaura_(1976_TV_series)">https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escrava_Isaura_(1976_TV_series)</a></p> <p>Izaura-Slave Girl.. was the title 😊</p> <p>Aude: 😊 incredible! In France Kevin was the most popular name for babies in the 90s for a few years running - when I moved to England I was told that in the UK it's quite old fashioned 😊</p>	
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### Theme 3: Culture

Data extract	Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)	Subtheme and Comments
<p>'And also English people who have travelled...that we can meet here in Southampton...it's easy also...to meet people like that who have travelled and...they have that English culture and also that mind. They are able to open their mind to something else, and even if they will not...quit the queue to go on the side, but they can accept you want to do a little bit outside.'</p>	<p>Angélique-Int-1-12.04.21-p.10</p>	<p>Travel</p>
<p>'I went for a consultation to General Hospital a month ago and I was asked by the nurse...where you're from... What I find really awkward like everywhere I go...is it like a typical English thing or is it normal that...if you go in for a medical appointment, they always ask you what's your profession? That's something that you would be never ask in Poland...</p>	<p>Agnieszka-Int-2-01.10.21-pp.39-40</p>	<p>Small talk English v Polish culture</p>

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<p>You come there...to ask about your...health issues...and what I know that this is maybe the way of like having the conversation, but this is not something you would expect to do... I wasn't sure...if that's the place to be talk about...so that was quite interesting or like surprising for me.'</p>		<p>Healthcare settings</p>
<p>'I had only one friend who actually said, go there [to the UK], but in general, I think the view has changed now basically because we are more mixed, but the view was that the British were really arrogant...I think the perspective was from holiday makers in Spain...the [British] people that have bought houses and live there [in Spain] and don't mix with anybody, and they are annoyed to hear noise...it's like they've taken a piece of the UK into Spain and they're arrogant, but this is generally to tourists, because they're not tourists...so this is the arrogance...to think...they [the Spanish] should be grateful we [the British] are here, we are leaving money here, which is true, but it was the arrogance, and on the other hand you have the hooligans, the people that went and destroy everything, and the perception is that people that went to Spain to destroy everything, they didn't do it in their countries. Now when you live here [in the UK], you realise that hooligans are hooligans at home and abroad - there's not much difference <i>[laughs]</i>. But the perspective...was...they are not allowed to do anything in their country, so they come here.'</p>	<p>Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-pp.23-24</p>	<p>Holiday makers People who buy property abroad British arrogance Hooligans Attitudes towards immigrants</p>
	<p>21.06.21 JL Religious objects.jpg Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-p.16</p>	<p>Religion / faith</p>

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<p>Beata: Are you watching Eurovision this weekend? 😊</p> <p>Marianna: No, I forgot about it!</p> <p>Beata: Norway has a great entry 😊</p> <p>Marianna: What time do they air it? If it's late (read after 9pm) I'm in bed already 😊👉</p> <p>Beata: BBC1 @ 8pm Saturday</p> <p>Marianna: OK, great I will be up at that time 😊😊</p> <p>Beata: 😊👉 Poland's entry is not bad. But I think Ukraine will win</p> <p>Marianna: Fingers crossed for PL :- ) yes, I too think Ukraine will win</p> <p>Hope: Productions of variable quality 😊 the results, neighbourly votes, and other sociocultural aspects or breakthrough always fascinate me!</p> <p>JL: My friend is hosting his legendary Eurovision party again at his house - he prints out score sheets in advance so you have to rate each song and have a serious discussion about each one 🤔 All accompanied by 'Eurosnaacks' of course!</p> <p>Beata: Well, we know who is likely to win this year, still I love the whole experience and crazy performances 😊😊</p> <p>Aude: Sounds great! Please share what Eurovision snacks are! - we had before at Eurovision parties in the UK cheese and pineapple on cocktail sticks making a little hedgehog 🤔😊 Also, I hope you have a Eurovision fancy dress outfit for your party?! Photos needed if you do 😊👉👉</p> <p>AM: Pineapple and cheese hedgehogs sound great 😊😊😊</p> <p>JL: 😊 this was ubiquitous at parties here during the 1980s but seems to be making a come back 👍</p> <p><a href="https://www.missionurovision.co.uk/recipe/cheese-and-pineapple-hedgehog/">https://www.missionurovision.co.uk/recipe/cheese-and-pineapple-hedgehog/</a></p> <p>Aude: Haha see 😊👍</p> <p>JL: When I was younger and we had guests round, my Mum always got me to make the hedgehogs 🤔 it took aaaaages to prepare! 🤔 In other news, apparently I missed the memo and we should dress up for the Eurovision</p>	<p>Beata/Marianna/Hope/Aude/Agnieszka-WhatsAppGroup-12.05.22-15.05.22-pp.27-31</p>	<p>Eurovision Music Food Parties / celebrations Fancy dress Popular culture – famous musicians TV, BBC</p>
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party tonight! 🤯 what should we wear at short notice? 🤔  
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/tvandshowbiz/celebrities/6265779/eurovision-song-contest-party-costume-ideas/>  
Aude: That sounds more like a Eurovision party if you have to dress up  
JL!! 👯👯  
JL: I'll get photos of 'Eurosnaacks' and outfits Aude 🤔  
Aude: Yes please 😂😁  
JL: Apparently [my friend]'s lounge is all decorated, ready  
Hope: Enjoy!  
Beata: Wow, looks great 😂🍷🎈  
Hope: After seeing the French number... , I might be ready to 'give the wolf a banana!' What the? 🤔😂  
JL: We wondered if that was a political reference. Put the subtitles on for extra amusement! 🤔  
JL: [photos of costumes and food]  
Hope: 👍 Political! Yes, and err the Italian number... I think I vote for the sign language that came before, but some will love this number. And all, you look in great form, have a lovely night! xxx  
JL: Thanks, you too. X  
Hope: I stop posting but Ukraine... Really interesting... Rap hip hop moves plus traditional music instruments... Amazing!  
Agnieszka: And Jamiroquai in pink hat 🤔  
Beata: Give that 🐱 a 🍌  
Beata: BTW, just realised I heard the Spanish song on Spanish radio when in Spain over Easter, they played it all the time  
Hope: I enjoyed Germinen! And I swear I saw Mireille Matthieu Lithuanian style!  
JL: 👍 😁  
Agnieszka: Hosier combined with Lady Gaga -2 in 1

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<p>Beata: Pandemic style Serbia with hand washing 😓</p> <p>Hope: Yeah, and with subtitles... Thank you... one can really get how political this was... The Arts against neoliberalist policies that is!</p> <p>Beata: I think I will not be able to stay for the vote counting. I'll wake up to a surprise 🙏 😊</p> <p>Hope: Same for me 😊 and our multi talented Mika who is very good at French on the voice talent show in France still needs to work a bit because he cannot master conditional or subjunctive tenses and uses present instead very confidently! It entertains me every time! What a showman!</p> <p>Beata: I'm embarrassed to say I use present tense in French all the time, as well as say "I'm 15", "I need a shirt for my husband" and "Tutu the dog is thirsty." 😂😂😂😂 That's about all my knowledge in French, courtesy of secondary school 1 hour a week lessons. Bon nuit 😊😓😓</p> <p>Hope: We use our resources! 😊 Good night all 📺</p> <p>JL: Who's Tutu? I thought your dog was called [NAME REMOVED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY REASONS] 🙏</p> <p>Beata: Tutu was a dog that belonged to the French coursebook people, I think it got stuck in a lift once? 😊😊</p> <p>JL: 👍🙏😓</p>		
<p>'My friend...comes from a family of melon growers. In fact, they were the most important producers in Europe in the 70s and 80s. They've sold the business, the grandson sold the business, just maybe four years ago, but since the late 60s, they have been producing <i>le charentais</i>, the famous sweet melon, and it's still going on - somebody has taken over and they are still producing melons and other things so in the summer in my area, you eat melons.'</p>	<p>Geneviève-Int-2-26.07.21-pp.45-46</p>	<p>Food Family business History</p>
<p>'When I was in Italy, I would see things and I never really got the chance to go to museum and visit...but I would see things around. So coming to Southampton actually, going to the [Da Vinci] exhibition was really exciting... I...go very often with my children [to the city art gallery]...not every month, every other month definitely - every time I will see that</p>	<p>Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.15-16</p>	<p>Art Museums</p>

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there's something new, I'll maybe take them, and sometimes they like there something, and we go back again following weekend.'		Passing on values to children
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**Theme 4: Belonging/connection/mobility**

<b>Data extract</b>	<b>Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)</b>	<b>Subtheme and Comments</b>
<p>'I really didn't feel like moving again, I felt I had moved too many times and it was really affecting my sense of...where do I belong and it was really making me feel very anxious...I felt the need to stay close to my centre and to where my family and my friends are. My family is one place, but my friends are a bit all over the place because I've moved around a lot. But you know, I have several cores and they're all based around Europe and the UK. So yeah, it was important for me to stay close to that.'</p>	<p>Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.8</p>	<p>Mobility Wanting to feel connected to one place Connection to more than one place</p>
<p>'So when I got married...I didn't ask for a nationality or anything because I chose this country because I could move freely...stupidly, because...it would have been free, no exams, no money, nothing, but anyway, but when Brexit started, obviously my daughter she has the two passports, she has a Spanish and British passport, but I thought if just for my daughter, also my job, everything, but it's just for my daughter, if anything happened, I want to have freedom to come here, she's here. So now I have both nationalities. And in fact, I asked at work to change my nationality and they said we put both, in the primary one it's the Spanish, I said no...put the primary one the English because I think it's this should be for my work, so that's my status now, but only since last year.'</p>	<p>Pilar-Int-1-09.07.21-pp.30-31</p>	<p>Passports and nationality</p>



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<p>'I have some friends in Romsey as well and they were really big...against the Brexit, so they were like always like almost crying and, oh what we're gonna do? ...I have to say I start noticing things which are changing now in terms of like bringing goods...like sending parcel that it's more complicated and...it's more costly, which wasn't the case previously, so that's...one of the bad effects which I can tell [which] probably affects me right now... It's like...every time [the government say]...that's because of Brexit. So we can put the prices up yeah, so it's...everything in one basket and...they can say, oh it's...just easy or it takes so long because...of Brexit.'</p>	<p>Agnieszka-Int-1-04.06.21-pp.34-35</p>	<p>Parcels - connection to other places Friendships</p>
<p>'People are like [<i>puts on voice</i>] Oh yeah, I go on holiday to France, oh yeah it's lovely, oh I like having...a coffee and croissant and...it's kind of all romantic isn't it, France, or they go on holiday to Spain don't they, it's like, [<i>puts on voice</i>] oh yeah, I go to Spain, and I drink sangria, and...I drink my rose, my French rose, with a bit of this, bit of that. [<i>laughs</i>] I have my croissant, my <i>pain au chocolat</i> [<i>laughs</i>] and they tell you that and that they love France, and France is amazing...so therefore, you're French and they're kind of like, yeah, it's fine... I feel like I get a bit of that...it's like, you're French, it's fine because I quite like France - I go on holiday there [<i>laughs</i>].'</p>	<p>Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-pp.61-62</p>	<p>British mobility and connections to other cultures</p>
<p>'My grandparents on my Dad's side, they didn't like my Mum so much because she was Polish and a funny thing because my grandfather on my Dad's side, he was Ukrainian but...my Grandma, his wife, she was Polish and my great grandparents were both Ukrainian on my grandfather's side and they didn't want my grandmother because she was Polish and so...they secretly got married, just before...the Second World War...and then my grandfather went to army...the day that they got married...he then returned and they had two children...my</p>	<p>Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.40-41</p>	<p>Family background of connection with other nationalities History of mobility in the family</p>

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<p>Dad and his older brother, and so the same thing happened to my parents, so my grandmother and her husband...didn't want my Mum and so they...got married...not secretly, but...my Mum told me [she] had to...conceive before, so that [she] could get married.'</p>		
<p>'Statues has always been there for me in Greece because I would visit museums since I was a child, and later on...there was a shop that opened close to my neighbourhood and the man who owned this shop was a sculpturer. And...when he will not be busy with the customers, you will find him knocking the wood, working...on the marble, so it was always very close to me, around me, so when I see them, I appreciate them. But maybe again, perhaps this has to do with stability for me. [The statue of] Richard [Andrews in East Park]...represents Southampton...he is a figure that...tried to do so much to the city, to the workers. Even though he came from an elite background, he and I came to this country to work and find a better life. And when I read his story, I'm thinking this is someone who was a privilege, but...he understands me. I kind of identified...with the work that he's done, I am one of these people...that he could have helped if I was here at the time...so I relate to that. Now coming to this sculpture [of Atlas at the University of Southampton] again, there is a stability, stability of knowledge in the city... And...working...represents [and] gives me stability - I have an employment or I feel that there's a connection with all that... When I first came and I saw [the statues at the University] I was like, why are they here? What's going on? ...but now I've just appreciate it, even now as I was walking by and I was looking at them, hello guys! <i>[laughs]</i>.'</p>	<p>Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.10-11</p>	<p>Connection with employment, history, statues/artefacts, historical figures</p> <p>'I came to this country to work and find a better life'</p>
<p>'Watched (2006) DVD on the Polish community in Southampton which Beata lent me. It was very short but explained the 2 main waves of Polish migration to</p>	<p>24.10.21 JL Fieldwork entry about Beata's Polish</p>	<p>Different generations of Polish migrants - different reasons for coming here;</p>

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<p>Southampton - the first post-war, where people had been displaced, and the second after Poland joined the EU in 2004, where people were actively choosing to come to the UK for economic reasons. The 2 groups of migrants do not generally mix, other than through the Catholic Church; in particular there is a lack of understanding from the older generation as to why the younger generation would choose to come here, with feelings of nostalgia for Poland. Beata is the narrator of the film and also appears in it. It is interesting to hear how her accent has changed over the years. The Job Centre, EU Welcome, and the Polish Club all feature in the film, which Beata has mentioned in the course of my research with her. The Polish priest also features, who was mentioned by Marianna. WhatsApped Beata to let her know I had watched the DVD. She responded and apologised about her accent. In particular, she said she noticed how she said 'meeigrants' instead of 'migrants.'</p>	<p>community in Soton history project DVD.docx</p>	<p>'actively choosing'; 'feelings of nostalgia for Poland'</p>
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**Theme 5: Brexit/political space**

Data extract	Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)	Subtheme and Comments
<p>'I'm not too sure whether I can't contribute to Southampton because...I stopped working or you can't go there because it's Covid. Or, I don't know if I'm like too tired or my confidence or...my heart is broken and I feel like I can't... I'm going to do something, but maybe not in the UK economy because...I'm not quite retirement age...for a few years and I've got to figure out how I'm going to contribute and I'm not sure I can contribute very well in a post-Brexit era so...this has become very kind of deeply political and difficult for me, and I am extremely disappointed with everything that's happened... I'm disappointed and also very pessimistic...it's just like I cannot see it work... Having done European business...in my studies</p>	<p>Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.51-53</p>	<p>What does it mean to contribute? Covid Brexit Age Politics Economics Employment</p>

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<p>and knowing so much about it and and knowing that from all corners economically, strategically, historically, foreign policy-wise, to me it is completely the wrong decision that it's just not gonna lead to growth so...I'm just like, how do I pick from here? ...Where do we work? What's gonna happen? ...I just feel I'm...a stunned observer...this is exactly what I think was gonna happen...problems with import, exports and...staff shortages everywhere and I just don't think it's because of Covid - it is because of Brexit... The economy slowed down...growth is not going to come from outside the EU...half of the growth of the UK economy comes from the EU.'</p>		
<p>'My daughter was selected... - you know we have a festival in every town in Spain - so...the year before the Covid...to be the representatives of town, the Queens or Kings, or different word, we don't call it like that... So, my daughter, another two girls and her friend got asked, and...they are asked to write a statement describing themselves. So...my daughter...started with something like 'as the daughter of an immigrant, so obviously from Spain, blah blah blah,' and one of my friends saw the words and said...you are not an immigrant! I said, no...from your perspective I am an emigrant because I have left. [The friend said] no...but you are not! And I said, but I am! And it's because the very negative connotation when you talk in Spain about immigrants and all Europe. So, it's not just here [in the UK], this really negative connotation...the word is now moving from there. I am an emigrant [in Spain], and an immigrant in that country [UK]. And nobody's going to call me anything else, because this is the word to describe a person that has moved to another country that has gone through that journey. I couldn't be prouder of that. This is my stance.'</p>	<p>Pilar-Int-2a-15.10.21-p.22</p>	<p>Discourses around immigration, emigration, migration</p>
<p>JL: Hello everyone, I hope you are well. I think my PhD is taking over my life because last night, you were all in my dreams! 🤔 I dreamt I was at the University Highfield campus</p>	<p>Angélique / Agnieszka / Pilar/Beata/Hope/Marianna-</p>	<p>Protest Trade unions, consultation Brexit</p>

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<p>and there was some kind of protest between the French and the English, and the road had been blocked by the protesters. I went to talk to the protesters and I was speaking in French (I was on the French side!). And then all of you appeared to join the protest, and then Geneviève said, 'Aren't you going to introduce us JL?' 🙄</p> <p>Angélique: 😊😄🙏😌❤️</p> <p>Agnieszka: 😊😊</p> <p>Pilar: Oh dear, you need a vacation, JL!!</p> <p>Beata: 😊 Hope it was a peaceful protest? No croissants were harmed?</p> <p>JL: 🙄 Pilar, we have booked a holiday for the end of June - we will go to Spain, but not near your home town - we will go to Villajoyosa, which literally means the town of joy 😊 near Alicante. Beata, It seemed peaceful to me and I didn't see any croissants so I'm guessing I had eaten them prior to the protest 🙄</p> <p>Hope: Hi everyone, sorry I was on my travels and now caught a nasty cold (I tested not Covid...). PhD too is taking over my life as due in May... I am afraid I would avoid a protest myself as I feel I would throw more than a . When you see what happened with P&amp;O and govt doing strictly nothing to police. They do not know the meaning of 'social dialogue' by law to technically consult trade unions and at least give notice. This is proof of what was predicted would happen post Brexit. Not a bad dream, reality! It follows in my dreams too. For a cheeky language note, Dumas the writer of the musketeers made one of them say English is like French, but pronounced otherwise or badly... something like that! 😞🙄 I like the idea though JL, 'all for one, one for all,' dreaming to protest towards sustainability and conscious capitalism. It is</p>	<p>WhatsAppGroup-11.04.22-pp.20-21</p>	<p>Capitalism French elections Far-right</p>
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<p>important to dream... Sorry again I missed Café rdv and hope to meet later on. 👍</p> <p>Geneviève: Sorry JL to hear you had a bad dream and that we all had a role to play brave in it. Either you are working too hard on your PHD or the French elections are stressing you. Not surprising as there is cause to worry. Is France turning into a far right country?? Hope reason will prevail</p> <p>Hope: Well said Geneviève. May reason prevail, and truth... And 'Viva' PhDs or all forms of protest, arts, action and else arguing against extremisms!</p> <p>JL: Lol, actually the dream didn't seem like a nightmare. It seemed like a solidarity with everyone, and I enjoyed speaking French! I spoke French much better in the dream than in real life 🤔</p> <p>Hope: 👍😊 All for universal patriotism in French or other, for human rights I mean. Voilà!</p> <p>Pilar: You are getting very serious here, must be all these doctors!!</p> <p>Hope: Aha! Pilar, the opposite! A philosopher knows not much or 'nothing' precisely (unlike others of course), and keeping my feet on the ground...c u 😊</p>		
<p>'I can't say that I'm involved in anything substantial in the life of Southampton...I suppose...you might think that it is a selfish point of view that I feel...part of Southampton...I don't dislike the town, the city at all. Maybe somebody else would see it as very selfish and not wanting to be involved. I've never really been very politically involved, although I have got...some opinions and so on, but obviously not strongly enough to want to be involved in changing thing, although I have taken part in...petitions and so on, you know, but it...hasn't gone any further than that...I don't know if it does help...[or] made any difference? ...and I do vote. I have the</p>	<p>Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-pp.14-15</p>	<p>Political involvement Petitions Voting Local elections v national and British nationality Residency permit</p>

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<p>right to vote in local elections, so...I'm participating in that way. I do vote for the local elections but...I'm not allowed to vote for the national action because I still haven't taken on British nationality - I didn't see the point, but maybe as time goes on and frictions are getting worse between Europe and the UK that maybe I will have to take on British nationality to make...things easier, I don't know yet, never thought really strongly about it because we're part of Europe, so it didn't really matter that maybe it will in the future, so I've got my...residency permit, I can stay in England. I've lived now...most of my life here.'</p>		
<p>'I mean, it's not an issue for me. It wasn't before the accident, it's not after. The only difference for me has to do with paperwork, so that's the only thing that changed, otherwise no effect whatsoever.'</p>	<p>Sophia-Int-1-19.04.21-p.2</p>	<p>Brexit described as 'the accident'</p>
<p>'People being more accepting here - I think that's still the case. I think Brexit...was a bit of a weird...really weird time...and some sense of belonging was...even now it's kind of making me...emotional...I found it really difficult. And...I was in an office with people talking about it and voting for Brexit and being really open about it and saying...before I vote for Brexit, how is it gonna affect you? Can I just check that you're not going to be kicked out...I like you, but I don't want anyone else...so I just wanted...to check you're going to be OK. But I will vote for Brexit...And...I have found that really, really hard and...then...when Brexit went through, being at work after that. I'm getting quite emotional just thinking about it now. It was hard, and it was...like people saying, I'm glad I voted for Brexit, but I didn't think it was going to happen... So I had a lot of that and then...through work a lot of incidents reported to us where basically non-UK people were being targeted a bit and...having issues.'</p>	<p>Aude-Int-1-10.05.21-p.30</p>	<p>Brexit Impact of colleagues at work voting to Leave</p>

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<p>'Lots of racism goes under the radar...no doubt. Very often...it's an insult in the street...and then how do you report it? How do you check that it's true or not? True, but if you get a lot of reports, surely there's something happening...and I'm...very concerned actually and our friends are very concerned that we are moving towards less tolerance overall in our countries. You know, populism, and terrible...state of affairs really, I never thought even 20 years ago that it would come to that, I really am fearful of the of the future. [The rise in nationalism across Europe has been in] all countries...in France as well. Marine Le Pen might be the next President...I hope it doesn't happen, but it might, but she has a strong support in France... And in Italy and...even in northern countries like...Holland and so on, the Netherlands...it's very, very, very, very worrying... I would imagine...because of the Brexit as well...and of course the fact that you're an immigrant, you come and take the job...of somebody who is British. The irony is that they are just where people can't find workers... So, it doesn't necessarily solve the problem, not having migrants. I think things before Brexit hadn't been explained properly...to the people, the pros and cons and what is good and what is bad about Europe.'</p>	<p>Geneviève-Int-1-09.04.21-p.43</p>	<p>Racism Populism Brexit Nationalism Europe</p>
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**Theme 6: Otherness**

<b>Data extract</b>	<b>Reference (Pseudonym-Data set-Date-Page)</b>	<b>Subtheme and Comments</b>
<p>'[The landlord and landlady] never really told me explicitly how scared they were, but afterwards, after leaving...the puzzle fell together...The landlady I remember kept telling me, oh, how nice it is to walk to work, and how much better it is for your health, rather than taking the bus, 'cause I was taking the bus to work. I didn't give it much thought then, but...even though we didn't celebrate Christmas</p>	<p>Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-p.29</p>	<p>Covid-19 Fear of the other</p>



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<p>together...they had already commented about my backpack and said that it wasn't waterproof and I said well it's fine, I'm happy with it, but then suddenly for Christmas Day [they] had gotten me this waterproof backpack, again as a kind of, you know, when you walk outside rather than taking public transport...It's only afterwards that I realised these things...The landlord had been looking up whether me, with the condition that I have, would be entitled to a vaccine earlier than other people, and in the beginning I thought like honestly...I do...tend to give people the benefit of the doubt, and I do tend to think positively of people, literally, which is not always...to my benefit, but...I thought oh that's kind that you looked that up, but then afterwards all these things together and how they started reacting and acting once I had to start self-isolating, which happened because a colleague of mine got the virus. I had tested negatively twice but still...the whole relationship...went sour from that moment on.'</p>		
<p>'Here, it appears to me more...in comparison to France, for example, it's on the bodies, bodies and clothes[s]. We don't have that in France because people...are so obsessed by the image of...themselves...and also it's a focus in France...in all the publicity you can see a body, wonderful body for a standard body. Yeah, with a woman - class, style, it's everywhere on the wall, on the people... Here you don't have that publicity, or more with food, snacks and things like that, and you don't see bodies, so there is not a focus of how you have to appear, so maybe they are not concerned here... You can see really big difference between...someone...really slim and someone really big. And...you can see on the same road a woman with...Muslim dress with you can't see anything on, nothing from her except that, and just one metre near her another woman with something you can see everything here -</p>	<p>Angélique-Int-2-13.09.21-pp.97-99</p>	<p>Body image Cultural differences in body size, shape, dress, attitude</p>

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<p>short, you can see...the bottom...and that sort of difference appears for me.'</p>		
<p>'Our Spanish friend was telling me they've got the same in Spain. They do have an Academy and they decide what is Spanish and what is not. And obviously Spanish is spoken a lot more in the world than French is, you know whether it's in South America and all the rest of it, but they decide what is Spanish and what is not. And you know, Spanish is that way, saying it's French, well, that's why, I don't know about Spanish. But talking to my friend, it seems very similar. Whereas English is like belongs to people who want to speak English, it doesn't matter, which I found fascinating, but also I kind of struggle with as well <i>[laughs]</i>.'</p>	<p>Aude-Int-2-15.11.21-p.54</p>	<p>Linguistic items are othered.</p>
<p>'I think...I'm a very privileged situation...I can pick a work online now, I don't have the travelling...I have skills that can be deployed online...I realised...not everybody is able to do that because it's a limit, even if company provides some material, I think there's also how you're able to connect it. Not everyone from IT is going to come and connect your things for you, you've got to be able to do these things and then have a broadband connection...and also in the domestic environment, you have disruptions, and people say, well, we just tell...children to be quiet... this is again a socio economic disadvantage, because if you're...in a house where you have spare rooms...you can, but if you're in a flat where you only got your bedroom...and a lounge...then you're going to be working <i>[in]</i> your lounge and be in touch with family.'</p>	<p>Hope-Int-2-16.08.21-pp.45-46</p>	<p>Socioeconomic differences Digital skills Education Class Recognition of privilege</p>
<p>'I did have a particularly upsetting experience on a bus between Brighton and Lewes, which is a neighbouring village there, where I basically was harassed on a bus by two 60-year-old men who thought they could have a go at me just because I had a slight accent, and it was clear I wasn't born there and</p>	<p>Marieke-Int-1-28.06.21-pp.23-27</p>	<p>Brexiters Harassment incident</p>

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that was a really traumatic experience...It was the first time ever that I felt what discrimination is myself because...I'm a white woman, and I am still privileged in that sense. And I have never really felt that...explicitly, but it was...such a bad experience for me, it haunted me for a long time and it still does, and it still colours how I see Brexiteers...if I see a British flag or one of those white and red cross flags, I flinch. And...it really...set the fear in the heart of me. It was very implicit and very...devious, in that sense, so...it started with a discussion about having my bag on the seat next to me, which I had removed so that they could sit there and then they were talking about me negatively and I said I'm sorry Sir but I did remove...my bag right away, and then they heard that I had an accent and they started asking me oh yeah, well where are you from and I said, well I live and I work here, it doesn't matter where I'm from, and he's like, no, no, that's not why I asked - where are you from? Like in a really threatening way. Then...I froze in that moment and I kind of stuttered a few things, but then it just went on, like...I was...quite upset and the woman behind me...I think she might have been Polish...was trying to kind of calm me down a bit because...I was really upset...I had the window next to me open, and the guy just came hanging over me and shut the window very loudly...I found it a very physically aggressive thing to do to come into my personal space...and do that behind my back. Also...before, he was actually sitting next to me...that was the whole start of the thing - sitting next to me - and really taking up quite visibly a lot of space...I was squished into a corner of the bus and that really already...felt quite threatening...I was so upset that I told the bus driver about what happened and he said...that's really not OK that you have to feel like that on a bus, you should report this to the police, and we will support you. We can...get CCTV and everything. And then I went to the police and they listened to me and then nothing

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<p>happened...I just felt like I was completely being dismissed...And...that made me feel really powerless....But the thing is...I found...if you don't tell someone explicitly...what your ideas are about these things, it's really hard to pinpoint. And when you retell the story, it never sounds as bad as it feels in that moment, because a lot of it stays very implicit...the greatest evil <i>[laughs]</i>...The thing is...it's only one incident, but...I was amazed myself at how much of an impact it has on...behaviour and how you think in a later stage still.'</p>		
<p>'Oh, you're an outsider, and...I feel this all the time, I don't feel I fit in here any better yet... We've got really nice neighbours and they're British and...they are quite open and they are really friendly and they've always been that, but at the same time, I do meet people, you know British people, and other people...somehow they know I'm not from here...my husband had really difficult - for me, I think it would be a difficult situation where someone throws a bottle at you and says something, like he's not even English because his accent is not English, like those kind of attitudes that people hold, or being shouted at by a 13 year old maybe, go back to your country! ...I certainly don't want people to think that we're all the same, and we're all here to steal your jobs because we not, we're here...to make the life.'</p>	<p>Marianna-Int-2-22.10.21-pp.54-55</p>	<p>(Not) fitting in - 'somehow they know I'm not from here' Discrimination - her husband had a bottle thrown at him and was shouted at Suggests there are different types of people who come to the UK and doesn't want to be put in the same category - not here to 'steal jobs'</p>
<p>'All the time [people say] oh, where's your accent from? ...I don't mind it, [but] some people mind it. But some tend to do it, even native speaker English speakers. I would say, oh where's your accent from, it doesn't sound like you're from Southampton? I mean, why should they feel offended? Some of them, some English people, are gonna see that they're like, how do you know...why would you know? - you're foreign, you should understand the difference between accents...but there's some of them take it nicely, like I'm one of the people</p>	<p>Sophia-Int-2-21.01.22-pp.24-25</p>	<p>Otherness - 'foreign,' brought up as 'the other' as was a minority group in Greece Accents - feeling of otherness when asked about accents v curiosity about accents</p>

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<p>that takes it nicely, so...I think it depends on the person's acceptance of the other... I was always brought up as being the other, so because of my background I would never have this kind of issues with the whole, you're from another country. I've been here nearly...24 years in this country, and I've been here longer than anywhere else. So, for me this is home, and no one can deny it. Even my accent cannot deny that Southampton is home to me, and no one can deny that because this is where I have most of my memories. This is where I have my family, so I am connected to the city and the city is connected to me, so no one can take that from us... I don't have an issue with accents, I actually accept them, and I find it interesting if I hear other people having an accent, I will ask them, and if they feel offended, I will ask them, why are they? Do you have any issues? So, do you have any childhood traumas? I have asked before like that, do you have any childhood traumas that we want to talk about, is it wrong to ask you where you from?'</p>		
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## Appendix M Reflection on political leafletting: getting to know a geographical area

### Ethnographic notes made on 29.10.18

If you want to get to know a particular geographical area well, I highly recommend leafletting. I do this voluntarily for the Labour Party locally on an ad hoc basis but I return to the same area each time on different days and at varying times, which has allowed me to gain an insight into the area I cover. I started doing this because I am interested in politics and I live in a marginal constituency, so leafletting makes a huge difference in influencing people's voting decisions. However, I realised over time that I have now learnt a lot about this area, which has been particularly useful in my current search for a new place to live. Although this activity is nothing to do with my PhD research, I have realised that doing leafletting on a regular basis in the same geographical area could be useful in ethnographic studies. If you don't want to get involved in politics, I am sure you could do other types of leafletting such as delivering takeaway leaflets, which you might get paid to do.

Based on my experience over the last year, highlights not to be missed on your leafletting round could include:

- **Physical attributes of the area which could give an insight into the residents' values / circumstances etc.** For example: the gate or letterbox that you can't open easily or the letterbox that your hand gets stuck in, so it looks like you're trying to break in; the well-kept garden that looks like it's trying to win an award for 'Britain in Bloom'; the garden that is unkempt and full of rubbish; the yard that is covered in dog dirt; the property that is surrounded by extraneous items and you suspect it might feature on a TV programme such as 'Britain's Biggest Hoarders' sometime in the near future; the broken window that has been boarded up; the Christmas decoration that is still on the front door in August; signs indicating that a dog / cat lives there; signs telling you that there is CCTV on the premises when you can't see any evidence of CCTV at all; properties where there actually is evidence of CCTV or at least a camera that is pretending to be CCTV; the smell of tobacco, cannabis, something stronger, or other smells emanating from the letterbox; aromas of food being cooked; the sign that tells you not to put leaflets through the door 'or else!'; the house where the resident loves animals so much that they have built a little house for them in the garden and you can

see at least ten cats; the house where you see a cat flap and therefore assume they have a cat, but a tiny dog leaps out of the cat flap and starts jumping up your leg!

- **Observations and interactions with the residents themselves.** For example: the same few learner drivers keep circling round the streets as you deliver your leaflets; you keep passing the postie who smiles at you; a resident winks at you; a neighbour says 'hello,' 'good morning/afternoon' etc; someone else swears at you for no apparent reason; the kids on the street corner who give you a hard stare as you walk past; the anxious resident who comes out to talk to you to see what you're doing and to check you're not a burglar; someone who watches as you walk up the driveway and continues staring at you in a creepy manner until you leave the premises, making you feel like you're about to star in a horror movie; the resident who politely accepts your leaflet and asks you questions about it; the neighbour who says they want a leaflet when you ask them and you have explained what it is about, but as you leave, they say in a loud voice 'well, that's one less leaflet spreading her message'; the resident who watches through the window as you deliver the leaflet, then opens the door and rushes outside quickly, then tears up the leaflet in a dramatic fashion with a look of glee on their face as you are walking away.

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