



SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Was Brexit Really all that Bad for EU Students?

A deep-dive in understanding the effect of Brexit on EU students in the UK

By

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Abstract:

This research paper uses an explanatory sequential mixed method design to examine the factors influencing students' decision-making regarding their future and the impact of Brexit on these choices. The study aims to understand the interplay between various factors and Brexit's role in shaping students' decisions. Initially, quantitative analysis of the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS survey data is conducted to identify general trends and factors influencing decision-making. In-depth interviews with a group of EU students currently studying in the UK follow, exploring their experiences and perceptions. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the interviews, incorporating theoretical frameworks on identity formation, socio-cultural influences, and policy contexts. The research concludes with a comparative analysis that integrates findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases to identify commonalities, discrepancies, and interactions between factors and Brexit's influence. The study contributes to existing literature by comprehensively understanding the complex factors affecting students' decision-making and emphasizes the specific impact of Brexit. The findings have implications for educational policies and support systems.

Keywords: Brexit, International Students, EU, Brain Drain, Push-Pull Factors

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1. Introduction

In light of the “Leave” vote receiving a majority in the 2016 Brexit popular vote, resulting in the UK leaving the European Union, the question of what effect it would have on the amount of international students from the countries in the European Union taken in and being sent out is one that is often overlooked. One of the cornerstones and main functions of the European Union is to allow for free movements of not only capital but also people (European Council, 2023). In terms of international students within the EU this is taking form through lower tuition fees or no tuition fees at all depending on which EU country the student decides to study in. By leaving the EU, the UK also left the agreement of students from EU countries being allowed to study at universities in the UK for home fees and in the case of Scotland studying for free, something that is argued to have affected the amount of students wanting to study in the UK and going somewhere else instead or simply choosing to study in their home country instead (Nuffic, 2021). These claims are backed up by data released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) which shows a steady increase in the enrolment of first year international students from the EU up until the effects of Brexit came in to play on the first of January 2021, where the UK experienced a drop of around 21.5 percent or in actual numbers around 32000 students, from 152905 students to 120140 students (HESA, 2023).

The decision on Brexit was also highly related to the European migration crisis of 2015 as the EU had taken in over one million migrants and refugees which took a large economic toll on the EU (IOM, 2016). This was something that members of the Conservative Party did not take lightly and used as a big argument for leaving the EU and the narrative of the EU holding back the UK was only pushed further despite the Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, was against leaving the EU (O’Rourke, 2019).

As the phenomenon is relatively new in terms of studies being done on the subject, the literature on how Brexit has affected international students from the EU is lacking, especially in qualitative studies which is the reason for this study as it furthers the existing literature not only by adding the qualitative part in the form of interviews but

with that also adds recent data. With the use of both qualitative and quantitative data the study aims to answer what role Brexit has played in students' decision on their respective thoughts regarding staying or leaving the UK after finishing their studies.

1.1 Problematization

As Brexit came into full effect, the EU-settlement scheme was introduced as a way for individuals from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Lichtenstein who were situated in the UK previous to Brexit, to apply for either a settled or a pre-settled status (UK Government, 2021). The status you would get would be depending on the amount of time spent in the UK. Had you been there for a longer period of time than five years you would be eligible for the settled status right away whereas if you had been there for shorter than five years you could apply for the settled status once you had lived there for the five years.

There were some stipulations however in that you had to stay in the UK for more than six months per year and you could not leave for more than 90 days consecutively (UK Government, 2021). These stipulations are argued to have restricted the possibility to move outside the limits of the UK for a prolonged period of time which also limited students in terms of not being able to go on a semester abroad or taking their masters degree someplace other than the UK.

1.2 Clarification of Terminology

Brexit - Brexit is a widely used term describing the event in which the United Kingdom left the European Union after a referendum in 2016 (O'Rourke, 2019). See section 2.2 for more information and exact details on what is meant and what effect it has had.

EU Settlement Scheme/ Pre-Settled Status/Settled Status - The EU Settlement Scheme was introduced by the British government as a way for European citizens who had moved to the UK previous to the referendum to give them the benefits of being a UK citizen. The pre-settled status is the status you would get after first applying and is the one you

would have until you had stayed in the UK for a minimum of five years. After the five years had passed you could apply for the settled status with which you would gain most benefits a UK citizen would have (UK Government, 2021).

CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS 2017 - CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS 2017 is an abbreviation for Centre for Population Change-Office for National Statistics-Universities UK Survey of Graduating International Students 2017. If the name does not give it away it is a survey done on international students who are graduating higher education in the UK in which they answer questions regarding their future plans. The survey has been used as the quantitative data for this study and posed as inspiration for the questions asked during the interviews done.

Migration - There is a debate on what term should be used when discussing migration in terms of students, this is due to migration on a general level referring to a long-term mobility such as when studying a full program in a foreign country whereas mobility is argued to be better suited to the shorter form of mobility such as a semester or year abroad (King & Raghuram, 2013). This study uses the term migration as I feel it is better suited as the umbrella term for the movement of students.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to bring to light aspects of the decision made by the UK government to leave the EU that are often forgotten in the public discourse surrounding Brexit and to give personal insights as to how the decision to leave the EU has affected university students particularly from the EU. Through the combination of interviews and a survey as a background, the role of Brexit in students' future plans is examined and questioned to see to what extent it plays a deciding factor. The study is guided by one main research question:

- What factors affect students' decision making about their future and what part has Brexit played in it?

Further the study aims to expand the already existing literature on the large question regarding migration and noticeable patterns and more specifically the literature on international students and their reasons for moving to a different country.

2. Background

2.1 History of the European Union & What it Stands For

In the postwar era of 1945-1959 European countries started to cooperate with each other as a way to reduce the likelihood of something like World War II to ever happen again. It all started with the European Coal and Steel Community, which later became the European Economic Community (EEC) with six founding members in Italy, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg (European Union, n.d.). During the 1960s' the EEC achieved great economic growth mainly due to trade barriers such as custom duties being removed as well as agreeing upon having joint control over food production which led to increased wages for farmers along with greater food production (European Union, n.d.). During the 1970s' the community expanded with three countries; Denmark, Ireland and the UK. The 1980s' welcomed a further three countries to join; Spain, Portugal and Greece thus increasing the total member nations to twelve. Along with this the Erasmus Programme was introduced which allowed university students to go to other countries on an exchange programme to work, study or gain other types of experiences (European Union, n.d.).

The 1990s' is quite possibly the most defining decade for the European Union as we see it today, as it is then when the Maastricht Treaty is signed, officially creating the European Union. The rules and regulations regarding a common currency are set out and in the final year of the decade the Euro is introduced. Once again another three countries joined the Union during this time, the countries being Sweden, Austria and Finland. The Schengen agreement also comes into effect in seven countries, allowing EU citizens to travel within the region without a passport (European Union, n.d.). The 2000s' and 2010's are two turbulent decades with a lot happening on different fronts. There are 13

new member countries in total, amounting to 28 member nations in the whole union. In 2016 the biggest change to the European Union since its creation came to realization as the UK voted to leave the EU (European Union, n.d.).

On a whole the European Union strives to promote peace amongst the member countries in part by creating an internal market where countries can trade with each other without barriers to trade such as tariffs. Along with the free movement of goods, free movement of people is another of the driving values in the European Union as it allows for cohesion between the countries. By having the member countries in the European Union engage in constant trade with one another along with having people move between the countries, the risk of intracontinental war is greatly reduced (European Union, n.d.).

2.2 The European Migration Crisis

The European migration crisis of 2015 was a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that had significant political, social, and economic implications for the EU and its member countries. The crisis was prompted by a combination of factors, including political instability, conflict, and economic hardship in countries of origin, as well as the Syrian Civil War. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe by sea in 2015 was over 1 million, a significant increase from previous years (IOM, 2016).

The crisis had profound implications for the EU's policies and institutions, as well as for the political landscape of many member states. One of the key challenges was the strain on the EU's asylum system, which was not designed to handle such a large influx of people. Many European countries struggled to cope with the influx of refugees and migrants, and there were significant challenges in providing adequate shelter, healthcare, and other essential services. The crisis also prompted a heated political debate about immigration and border control in many countries, with some advocating for stricter border controls and others calling for greater support for refugees and migrants.

One of the major drivers of the migration crisis was the Syrian Civil War, which had displaced millions of people since its outbreak in 2011. According to UNHCR (2015), the majority of the refugees who arrived in Europe in 2015 were from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, with many others coming from countries such as Eritrea, Somalia, and Nigeria. The migration crisis highlighted the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to managing migration in Europe, including efforts to address the root causes of migration and to strengthen the EU's asylum system.

In addition to the political and social implications of the migration crisis, there were also significant economic consequences. Many European countries faced significant costs in providing services and support to refugees and migrants, and there were concerns about the impact of the crisis on the labor market and public finances. At the same time, there were also potential economic benefits associated with the arrival of refugees and migrants, such as increased demand for goods and services and the potential for a boost to the labor force in some sectors (Scipioni, 2017).

Overall, the European migration crisis of 2015 was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that had significant implications for the EU and its member states. It highlighted the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to managing migration in Europe, as well as the importance of addressing the root causes of migration and promoting stability and development in countries of origin.

2.3 How did Brexit come into fruition?

Ever since joining the EEC in the 1970s' there had always been strong criticism against being a part of such a union from the Labour Party of Britain as they believed that they pulled an extra weight being a major power compared to the smaller nations in the union and were being drained of their resources and losing jobs (O'Rourke, 2019). At this point the Conservative Party led by Margaret Thatcher is at the forefront in support of European cooperation. As the 1980s' progressed the parties would come to switch their thoughts regarding being a part of the EEC, the Labour Party would come to be increasingly more pro-EEC which is speculated to be the result of a visit from Jacques

Delors in 1988 during which he explained that the union is not necessarily a capitalist movement made to increase GDP for member countries but rather provided workers with job security through collective agreements (O'Rourke, 2019). On the other side of the political spectrum the Conservative Party and more specifically Margaret Thatcher herself became more distant to the idea of being a part of the EEC as she and other sceptics drove a Germanophobic agenda as they believed the union to be a way for Germany to regain power over Europe. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 only added more fuel to the Eurosceptic fire as it created the European Union which in contrast to the EEC was not only monetary but included joint policy decision making along with other freedoms experienced today such as the free movement of people with the introduction of the EU Citizenship (O'Rourke, 2019).

When David Cameron got elected as leader of the Conservative Party in 2005 he did so with the intentions of taking the party in a more liberal pathway by for example loosening beliefs on gay marriage. He did however not believe or feel that the position on the European Union the party held was something to be tampered with. Cameron did however intend to increase the opposition but aimed to focus on internal problems within the UK, something that proved to be easier said than done (O'Rourke, 2019). When Cameron became head of the government in 2010 the opposition against the EU had grown strong and by 2011 81 MPs for the Conservatives had voted for a referendum on staying or leaving the EU. Despite his unwillingness to focus international politics in the form of questions regarding the EU the situation came to the point where in 2013 Cameron promised that he would hold a referendum regarding the UKs being or not being a part of the EU if he was to be re-elected in a desperate attempt to cling on to his position of power (O'Rourke, 2019).

When Cameron and the Conservative Party unexpectedly won the 2015 election and it stood clear that the referendum would indeed be held, the two sides quickly developed, those campaigning to stay and those campaigning to leave with David Cameron in the lead for remaining a part of the EU. Out of the four member nations of the UK only two were in favor of leaving the EU, however because of their respective pull, the vote ended

with the exit of the UK from the EU with 51.9 percent voting to leave compared to 48.1 percent voting to stay (O'Rourke, 2019).

After losing the referendum, David Cameron got removed from his role as leader of the Conservative Party and was replaced by Theresa May, who as a Home Secretary took a strong position against immigration and the large flows of immigrants and refugees to the EU which she argued to be enhanced and promoted by the free movement of people that was allowed for EU citizens (O'Rourke, 2019).

3. Theory

The study focuses mainly on two different theories to understand the dynamics of international students in a country like the UK especially in a time of great uncertainty such as the one the interview subjects have experienced in the form of the UK leaving the EU during their time of study. To gain a better understanding through a theoretical background, push-pull theory will be used to understand what creates the desire to move to another country and how it has shown in the interviews made for the study. The second theory that will be used to understand consequences of student migration will be the theory of Brain Drain as it explains in great detail how countries gain and lose human capital as a result of migration, mainly in the form of people in higher education.

The push-pull theory of migration and the concept of Brain Drain are heavily interlinked through the factors the two theories use to explain migration patterns, and more specifically the pull-factors that cause individuals to move, such as better job opportunities, higher wages or a general increase in standards of living. The two are however separated in the fact that Brain Drain focuses solely on highly-skilled individuals and the pull-factors that cause them to migrate to developed countries whereas the push-pull theory focuses on the factors that cause migration regardless of academic background or if the movement is from a underdeveloped country to a developed country.

3.1 Push-Pull Theory of Migration

The push-pull theory of migration is one of the most widely used frameworks for understanding the complex forces that drive migration. This theory suggests that people migrate due to a combination of "push" factors that force them to leave their home countries and "pull" factors that attract them to new destinations (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2017). For international students, specifically students from the EU, the pull-factors could be argued to play a bigger part in deciding where to study than the push-factors as will be seen in section 6 when discussing the results of the interviews made for this study.

Push factors are those that compel individuals to leave their homes. These include political instability, war and conflict, persecution, natural disasters, poverty, lack of opportunities, and environmental degradation. For example, the Syrian refugee crisis is a clear example of a situation in which push factors have played a major role in driving large numbers of people from their homes. In 2011, protests against the Syrian government led to a civil war that has since displaced millions of people due to violence, persecution, and the destruction of their homes (UNHCR, 2023).

Pull factors, on the other hand, are those that attract individuals to new destinations. These include economic opportunities, the prospect of a better life, political stability, freedom, education, and family reunification. For example, the United States has long been a popular destination for migrants due to its strong economy, political stability, and reputation as a land of opportunity (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2017).

The push-pull theory suggests that migrants weigh the relative importance of these push and pull factors when making decisions about whether to migrate. This decision-making process is complex and often influenced by a range of individual, social, and structural factors, along with the costs of migration, both financial and social. These can include the transportation costs that it takes for someone to move, higher cost of living in the area that is migrated to. Psychological costs such as living and getting used to a new cultural

environment amongst other things are also accounted for in the costs of migration (Sjaastad, 1962).

Individual factors include personal characteristics such as age, education, and skills, as well as motivations for migration such as a desire for adventure or a need to escape persecution. Social factors include family and community ties, which can play a major role in encouraging or discouraging migration. Structural factors include broader economic and political conditions such as labor shortages, immigration policies, and global economic trends (Lee, 1966).

The push-pull theory has been used to explain a wide range of migration patterns, from rural-urban migration within countries to international migration between different regions of the world. In many cases, push and pull factors are interrelated and reinforce each other, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of migration. For example, poverty and lack of opportunities in rural areas of developing countries may drive people to urban areas in search of better economic prospects. Once in the city, they may find that migration to other countries offers even greater economic opportunities, leading to further migration (Lee, 1966).

One of the key strengths of the push-pull theory is its ability to account for the complex and often contradictory factors that drive migration. For example, the theory can explain situations in which migrants leave their homes due to a combination of both push and pull factors. In other cases, push and pull factors may be in tension with each other, such as when migrants leave their homes due to war or conflict but are also attracted to the prospect of a better life elsewhere.

Overall, the push-pull theory of migration offers a good framework for understanding the forces that drive migration. By taking into account both push and pull factors, as well as the many individual, social, and structural factors that influence migration decisions, this theory provides a useful understanding of the basic motivations behind migration patterns. While there is much more to be learned about the complexity of student

migration, the push-pull theory remains a useful and widely used framework for understanding this important global phenomenon.

3.2 Brain Drain & Brain Gain

3.2.1 Brain Drain

Literature handling brain drain is not difficult to come by, it was first written about in 1963 when the British Royal Society wrote about technologists and scientists moving away from the UK to the US and Canada (Cervantes & Guellec, 2002). The general consensus is that Brain Drain is damaging for the country that is subdued to having their greatest academic talent move away and beneficial for the receiving country/countries. However this is not always the case as study done by Beine, Docquier and Rapoport (2001) shows, as they find that there are scenarios where Brain Drain is not necessarily harmful for the country, however the scenarios rely on specific migration probabilities which are not necessarily applicable in a general context.

In a modern context the term “Brain Drain” is more commonly used to describe the relation between highly educated people in an developing country and the likelihood of them migrating to a developed country as there is greater opportunity for them to make the most of their education by moving compared to staying in their country of origin, this in turn hinders developing countries in their growth as they lose human capital. The term is also used on a more regional level to describe urbanization where rural areas lose educated people to larger cities once again as there is greater opportunity when moving out, however once again hinders the rural area in their growth (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011).

3.2.2 Brain Gain

The concept of Brain Gain is, as can be understood by its name, the thought that countries can gain from the migration of highly educated individuals. The most likely way for this to take place is through what is often referred to as “Brain Circulation” which is a phenomenon in where highly educated individuals in developing countries migrate to

developed countries to gain more knowledge and then returns to the origin country with newly acquired information which then helps development in the home country (Saxenian, 2005; Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz, 1997). Stark, Helmenstein and Prskawetz (1997) argue that this can happen due to an initial high wage for all highly-skilled migrant workers but when proper assessment can be done for the workers the decrease in pay experienced by some might be enough for them to return to their home country, now with greater experience.

4. Literature Review

Student migration and the concept of brain drain have been topics of significant scholarly interest and policy concern in the realm of international education and migration. As globalization continues to shape the landscape of higher education, an increasing number of students are pursuing educational opportunities beyond their home countries, leading to a growing body of research exploring the dynamics and implications of student migration. Simultaneously, the phenomenon of brain drain, the emigration of highly skilled individuals, has garnered attention due to its potential impacts on countries of origin and destination.

This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarship on student migration and the concept of brain drain, shedding light on key themes, theories, and empirical findings in these interconnected fields. By synthesizing and analyzing a range of academic works, this literature review seeks to identify patterns and trends in the literature, in hopes of contributing to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding student migration and brain drain.

The review will begin by examining the motivations and factors influencing students' decisions to pursue education abroad. This section will explore theories and studies that shed light on the push and pull factors driving student migration, such as economic considerations, access to quality education, cultural experiences, and career opportunities.

The subsequent section will delve into the concept of brain drain, focusing on the causes, consequences, and policy implications of highly skilled individuals leaving their home countries. It will explore the economic, social, and political dimensions of brain drain, including its impact on human capital formation, innovation, and social development in both source and destination countries.

Through this literature review, I hope to provide a comprehensive understanding of student migration and brain drain will be established, enabling policymakers, educators, and researchers to make informed decisions and develop strategies to address the challenges and use the opportunities presented by these phenomena.

4.1 Migration of Students

Literature on student migration is quite spread out in terms of what is being studied as scholars try to identify the underlying reasons for students migrating both nationally and internationally. There are several studies on student migration that highlight the importance of different factors when students decide where to study and find that quality of education is not amongst the most important factors but rather things that link the student to other countries like possibly colonial linkages or sharing a common language plays a much bigger role in deciding where to study (Perkins & Neumayer, 2014). The role that country of origin plays is also an important factor in the decision making as it is unsurprisingly noted that people from lower income countries tend to migrate to countries with a higher income level whereas people originating from countries with a higher income level will instead have a greater focus on the quality of education. Studies also find that geographical barriers such as distance play a much greater role for students from developing countries compared to developed countries (Perkins & Neumayer, 2014; Abbott & Silles, 2015).

One theory that is often used in earlier literature but also very common to find in more recent studies is the one that is used for this study, the push-pull theory of migration (see section 3.1) which focuses on the different factors that may cause an individual to decide to migrate, these factors may include but are not limited to improved quality of life in

terms of higher paying jobs, better education etc. (Lee, 1966; Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2017).

The push-pull theory of migration is however not the only theory that has been used in studies on student migration, Raghuram (2012) uses comparativism to understand the reasoning behind choosing one place over another and does this by comparing different elements of cities, as stated by her “Comparisons are never neutral; they hierarchise places along particular axes – job availability, wages, corruption, and so on – and it is through comparison between these places that the imperative for migration is secured” (Raghuram, 2012, n.p.). She goes on to put a great emphasis on the spatiality of knowledge and viewing student migration as more than simply migration in search of attaining knowledge, much like the push-pull theory of migration, however in this spatiality of knowledge the will for migration of the student is less central to migration but rather a by-product. As globalization becomes a main driving factor for institutions of knowledge, these institutions have to find a way to enhance employability for the students as a way to attract students (Raghuram, 2012). This way of thinking puts the focus on the institutions of knowledge rather than the students themselves.

4.2 Literature on Brain Drain & Brain Gain

Brain Drain is a widely written about subject that originally handled a loss of human capital in the form of highly educated people moving from the UK to the United States and Canada (Cervantes & Guellec, 2002). It is more commonly used to describe the relationship between migration of highly educated people in developing countries and the loss of human capital that is accompanied by it (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011). The context in which the term is used can differ as scholars try to understand the loss or potential loss in human capital from different situations, one of which being Brain Drain from the migration of students. Carrington and Detragiache (1999) puts great emphasis on economic factors and is in many ways similar to push-pull theory of migration in that limited options in terms of careers and such are driving factors for Brain Drain in developing countries. These thoughts are backed up by other scholars such as Docquier, Lowell and Marfouk in their paper on emigration through a gendered approach (2009).

The literature on Brain Gain and how the loss of highly educated residents can in fact lead to a general gain in human capital is not as definitive in its conclusion as the literature on its counterpart of Brain Drain, it is however discussed thoroughly in literature. The angle that is taken on Brain Gain can be very different depending on the study you are looking at. As mentioned in section 3.3.2 the general theory of Brain Gain is used when talking about benefits of circulation migration where highly educated people leave an developing country in order to gain knowledge and increase their human capital in a developed country only to then return to the country of origin with newly acquired information (Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz, 1997). It can however be used in other situations with similar but slightly changed meaning such as when used to describe Brain Drain in a European context and how the loss of human capital in less developed countries in Europe might lead to an overall gain in human capital and thus lead to a “Brain Gain” (Gérard & Sanna, 2017). In order to achieve this believed Brain Gain it is necessary to introduce policies in a way that encourages people who have migrated to return to their country of origin as it will otherwise result in a Brain Drain as discussed above.

5. Method

5.1 Research Design

The research takes form in an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to help investigate the underlying reasons for the results found in the survey referenced in section 3 (Creswell, 2013). The rationale behind utilizing a mixed method approach, rather than exclusively relying on a quantitative approach, is to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors contributing to the observed results. The secondary data collected from the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS (2017) is limited as it gives no reasoning for the answers given as well as it being conducted in 2017 when the effects of Brexit were not yet seen. The qualitative sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.3 where the primary data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews both in person and

online through Zoom.us, allows for opinions and nuance in answers to shine through in a way that is unachievable in a short-answer survey format.

When writing the questions that were going to be used in the interviews, the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS (2018) survey was used as a background. This was done in order to be able to compare the answers that were given in the interviews with the answers given in the survey. This is necessary in order for the explanatory sequential mixed method to work as intended as the questions need to be similar in order to explain underlying reasons for the short-format survey answers (Creswell, 2013). The base questions used in the interviews were:

1. What is your country of origin?
2. Why did you choose to study in the UK?
3. Did you move here specifically to study or did you live here prior to your studies?
4. Did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study at the university and if so, what was the process like?
5. How long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?
6. Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?
7. When will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?
8. If you are not planning on staying in the UK, why is that? Or What makes you want to stay in the UK?
9. How long are you planning on staying in the UK after finishing your studies?
10. What part has Brexit played in your decision?
11. Would you have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU, in terms of not having to apply for a worker visa etc?
12. Is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying/leaving the UK?
13. How has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

If felt like there was a need for a follow up question due to a lack of information in the response or the possibility to dig deeper into the answer that would be done, however this was not planned before the interview and varied throughout the interviews which is why

the follow up questions are not listed above. Semi-structured interviews are especially well suited to studies using a mixed method approach such as this one as it allows for expansion on questions asked in surveys that otherwise would have been left without context. Using the semi-structured interview format one can get a reasonable comparability between the answers to the questions asked as they are structured around the same format and topic (Williams, 2015). Despite this there are some drawbacks to using semi-structured interviews such as them being more time-consuming to analyze as no interview is the same as another one, and despite this also being true for structured interviews, the semi-structured interview allows for further analysis in the form of follow up questions being asked (Williams, 2015).

5.1.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology was originally used as a philosophical way to look at phenomena, more specifically by putting its focus on the experience of certain phenomena from the point of view of the person experiencing it instead of the perception of the phenomenon itself (Connelly, 2010). In short, phenomenology puts its main emphasis on lived experiences rather than objective observations of certain phenomena and is often used in medical research to describe personal experiences of living with certain medical conditions.

In research phenomenology is mainly used in two types of ways; descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. In this specific study interpretive phenomenology will be used as I as the researcher am well aware of certain biases that might occur in interviews as a result of my pre-determined understanding and thoughts of Brexit as a phenomenon, there has been an attempt to avoid the biases to a great extent when writing the questions for the interviews, however follow-up questions asked will not be controlled in the same way which might cause biases to take place (Connelly, 2010).

Interpretive phenomenology is often used to understand the personal experience of a rarely occurring event or something experienced by a limited group of the population, and by interviewing this limited group of people hopefully bringing a greater understanding of the phenomenon to the general public (Ivey, 2013). In terms of this

specific study, that is the experience of the international students who studied in the UK during a time of administrative turmoil as a result of the UK leaving the EU. By using the personal experiences of these students, prospective students might get an insight into the situation to make a more well-informed decision on their future.

Descriptive phenomenology, in contrast to interpretive phenomenology, tries to get rid of all biases that might affect the result of the study instead of embracing them and accepting them for what they are (Connelly, 2010). The goal of descriptive phenomenology is to take the individual experiences of a phenomenon and turn them into a more generalizable understanding of the phenomenon as a way to make the experience relatable for people who have not experienced the same thing (Holloway, 2005). Another contrast to interpretive phenomenology is that descriptive phenomenology considers what can be read in between the lines in peoples answers in interviews compared to taking the answers given at face value as is done in interpretive phenomenology (Holloway, 2005).

5.2 Data Collection

This study uses a mixed methods approach where the primary qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interviews with international students from EU countries that study in the UK. The reason for using interviews was the general lack of primary data on the specific subject especially in a recent enough time frame so that the effects of Brexit were visible to the interviewees. By conducting semi-structured interviews there was an opportunity to not only somewhat update the already existing data from the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS (2017) survey, but also add the reasoning behind why the answers might look the way they do.

In regards to the secondary quantitative data employed in this study, obtaining a satisfactory number of respondents within the project's constrained timeline was not feasible, necessitating reliance on previously collected data. Nevertheless, the retrieved data exhibited a high level of comprehensiveness and coherence with the qualitative data as it contained 995 respondents from EU countries, the countries included being Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg,

Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Malta and Croatia, it is however not specified how many of the respondents originate from the specified countries (Falkingham, J., Giulietti, C., Wahba, J. & Wang, C., 2017). The questions used in the survey also gave a background to base the questions used in the interviews on in order to be able to compare the results obtained from the interviews with the answers given in the survey.

5.2.1 Collection of Qualitative Data

The process of selecting interviewees was carried out through purposive sampling (Dudovskiy, 2022), wherein contacts were made with individuals affiliated with different universities. The requirements given to the affiliated people were quite open for the study as it was not restricted to any specific year of study or other restrictions. The only requirements for the study was that the students had to study at a university in the UK and be of European nationality. When the university affiliated people came back with possible respondents, emails were sent out with information about the study that was being conducted and their role in the study as possible interviewees along with questions regarding the time and location for the interviews to take place.

The reason for the open sample size was to get as broad of a sample group as possible, however, the sample size was imbalanced, with six out of the seven participants being affiliated with the University of Edinburgh, while the remaining participant hailed from the University of Leeds. This was due to a lack of responses from affiliates at the universities. As most respondents were studying at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland at the time of the interviews, their answers to some questions might differ to people who study in England as a result of tuition fees being non-existent for EU students prior to the effects of Brexit coming into fruition.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner in order for the interviewer to ask follow up questions at times where felt necessary, however all interviews contained the same base-line for the questions. The reason for using a semi-structured style

compared to a fully structured interview is as mentioned to be able to ask follow up questions if answers were unclear or lacked explanation. When comparing the semi-structured interview approach to an unstructured or a structured interview there are benefits and losses made, when comparing to an unstructured interview you have some form of control in getting the answers to what you are looking for when using a semi-structured design. However if you were to use a structured design you lose out on digging deeper into questions or topics that you feel like need more explaining or skipping questions you might not feel necessary in one interview that might be of use in another (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

5.2.2 Collection of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data used to complement the qualitative data from the interviews was collected from the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS (2018) as it was the most recent edition of a UK wide survey on international students and their plans after finishing their studies. The survey focuses on four main areas; intentions after graduation, travel patterns during holidays, work and lastly study. This study chose to focus on two of the four main areas as not all were relevant to the study, the two being intentions after graduation and study.

By including quantitative data in the form of a survey one can obtain a greater amount of observations compared to doing it in an interview setting, which allows for an easier generalization of the results. On the other hand the survey lacks reasoning behind answers which is why the mixed method is applied.

5.2.3 Limitations on Qualitative Data

There are some limitations to the qualitative data used in the study as there is with all data, one example being the inability to generalize the results due to the lack of observations. Another one to note is the lack of disparity between the respondents as six out of the seven interviewees studied at the University of Edinburgh with the other one studying at the University of Leeds. This is quite significant as the two have differences in what regulations were in place before Brexit, especially in the form of the University of Edinburgh working under the Scottish government and their rules where all EU

students got to study without paying tuition fees previous to Brexit whereas the University of Leeds operate under English law where EU students still had to pay their own tuition fees (Interviews 1-7).

Further limitations in the use of interviews is the bias that inevitably comes with the respondents in that there might be a certain type of person with a specific agenda who wants to be included in a study regardless of subject but specifically in one on such a divisive topic as Brexit. Questions should be asked regarding who decides to engage in these types of studies and who is more inclined to stay away.

The third limitation to the use of interviews is the bias held by the interviewer themselves which might lead to framing questions in leading ways in order to get an answer that fits the narrative they want to portray. In this study I decided to use open ended questions in an attempt to get rid of most interviewer bias and allow the interview subjects to freely answer the questions the way they see most fit (Creswell, 2013).

5.2.4 Limitations of Quantitative Data

Similar to the qualitative data there is a limitation to be stated in the subjects who choose to participate in studies or answer surveys on topics where opinions differ greatly, as there is a risk of people driving a certain agenda being more inclined to answer surveys which might lead to a skewed result.

Another factor that has already been brought up earlier in the text is the lack of context to the answers given making it easier to interpret data in a way that is different to the way that it would be if put in context where the subjects got to explain their reasoning behind answering questions in a certain type of way.

6. Analysis & Discussion

The analysis section of this study aims to provide insights into the research question presented in section 1.3; “What factors affect students' decision making about their future

and what part has Brexit played in it?” This investigation entails a two-fold approach. Firstly, an initial analysis of the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS survey will be conducted, examining the dataset's relevant variables and exploring the relationship between the theoretical background and students' decision-making processes. This quantitative analysis will provide a broad overview of the overall trends and patterns observed.

Subsequently, in-depth interviews specifically conducted for this study will be analyzed, drawing upon the theoretical frameworks mentioned in sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. These theories, encompassing areas such as what drives students decision making, will guide the interpretation and understanding of the interview data. Through a qualitative analysis, rich and nuanced perspectives of individual students' experiences and decision-making processes within the context of Brexit will be explored.

Once both the quantitative analysis of the survey data and the qualitative analysis of the interview data have been completed, a comparative analysis will be undertaken. This comparative approach will aim to identify commonalities and discrepancies between the findings of the two analyses. By putting the quantitative and qualitative data side by side, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Brexit in shaping students' decisions regarding their future.

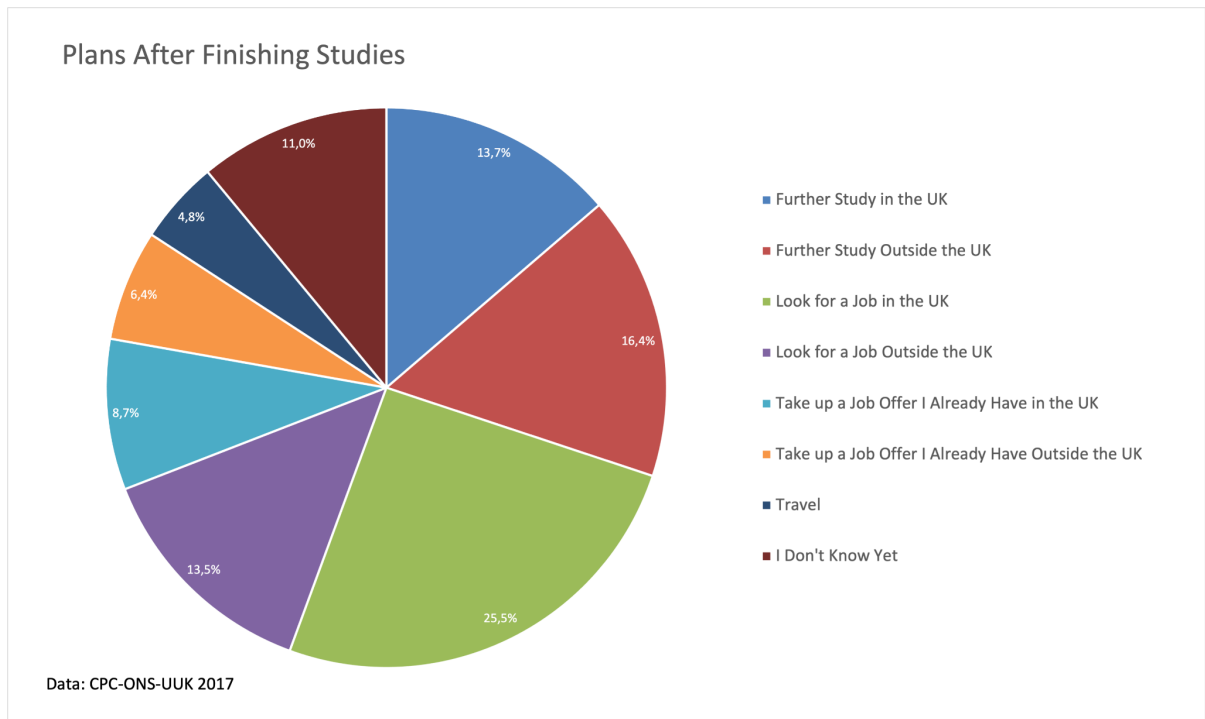
Overall, this combined analytical approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, along with theoretical frameworks, will provide a multi-dimensional exploration of the research question, shedding light on the extent to which Brexit has influenced students' decision-making processes.

6.1 The CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS

When looking at the data from the 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK survey, the divide between EU students who decide to stay in the UK after finishing their studies is quite similar to the amount of students who are more prone to leave. When the survey asked students “After finishing your current course of study, what are you planning to do?” 47,9% of all respondents from the EU answered that they were planning to stay in the UK for various

reasons. 13,7% of those planned further studies, 25,5% were planning on looking for a job in the UK and 8,7% planned on taking up a job offer they had received from a UK based company (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Of the EU respondents 41,1% answered that they were most likely going to leave the UK after finishing their studies with 16,4% of those planning to study further, 13,5% were going to start looking for a job outside of the UK and 6,4% were going to accept a job offer they had received from a company based outside of the UK. The remaining 11% of respondents answered that they were not sure on what they wanted to do after finishing their studies.

Because the survey does not specify the nationality of respondents it is difficult to make connections to the push-pull theory of migration as it relies on background information such as nationality when deciding on what is considered a push factor and what is considered to be a pull factor. Had it shown what nationalities the respondents were from it would have been easier to draw conclusions based on the push and pull factors if the

results showed for example that respondents from countries with a generally lower standard of living than the UK chose to stay after finishing their studies to a greater extent than respondents from countries with similar or better standards of living.

On the questions asking respondents on the length of their planned stay after finishing their studies, the answers varied but the most common answer was to leave immediately, followed by staying for less than three months. The third most common answer given was planning on staying to qualify for permanent residence, however it is difficult to give a proper analysis on this specific question as it has not been divided into nationalities or regions such as EU and non-EU like previous questions which makes it impossible to know how the EU students answered specifically.

In terms of the concept of Brain Drain or Brain Gain the answers given in the survey are once again difficult to decipher on a EU level as the survey data is limited in the information on what nationality the respondents had on the questions regarding the length of their stay. What can be said about the phenomenon on a more global level is that only 16.1% of respondents in the survey answered that they intended on staying in the UK indefinitely and even if you increase the span to students who were planning on staying for longer than a year it would only constitute just over 30% of the respondents meaning that almost 70% of international students intend on either returning to their home country or moving somewhere else. If the theory of Brain Gain is then as persistent as some scholars argue, it would be beneficial for the origin countries as students who studied in the UK would return with a greater knowledge thus increasing the human capital in the origin country (Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz, 1997; Saxenian, 2005).

However despite not knowing the exact length of their stay the answers from the survey gives some information on plans after finishing their studies as 47,9% of all EU students were planning on staying in the UK for some amount of time either due to further studies or searching for/ taking up job opportunities. Depending on the length of the students stay one could argue that both Brain Drain and Brain Gain could be theories in effect as it could be considered a Brain Drain if the students decide to stay in the UK indefinitely or

move somewhere else. As mentioned above however, if the students intend on returning to their countries of origin it could be considered a Brain Gain as they have increased their knowledge (Stark, Helmenstein & Prskawetz, 1997; Saxenian, 2005).

6.2 Interviews on the Effect of Brexit on International Students

The interviews that were conducted for this study had their base in 13 questions (see section 5.1) surrounding international students from the EU and how they felt Brexit had affected them and their studies. The questions used for the interviews were themselves based on the above mentioned 2017 CPC-ONS-UUK SoGIS in order to be able to compare the answers given in the interviews to the survey answers. The interview subjects were mostly from Northern European countries such as Sweden and Finland with two people originating from other European countries, the two countries being Poland and Hungary. Out of the seven interviewees, six were in their final year of study and were therefore in the decision making part of what they were planning to do after finishing their studies. The respondent who was not in their final year of study was still able to answer the questions regarding their future plans in a sufficient way.

Throughout the interviews there were several examples of both push and pull factors being mentioned. One example of a push factor given as a reason to move away from their previous location was the lack of inclusivity they felt as a member of the LGBTQ+ community which played a big role in them moving to a place in which they felt more comfortable expressing themselves; “I feel like that [being a queer woman] definitely is easier here, and especially, in a city like Edinburgh or London, it's a lot easier to kind of be apart of like, a community, and not really...feel like you have to hide it.” (Interview 4, Appendix 4). Another example given of a push factor was the fact that there was a large lack of job opportunities in the respondents home country even with a university degree which made them more prone to moving to a country where they felt they had a greater chance of increasing their income and general quality of life (see Appendix 7).

The pull factors for moving to the UK to study were several for the interview subjects with most having to do with a general thought of better standard in education or getting

an experience by studying in another country, and the most common pull factor being the use of English language in education. For the students who studied in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh there was a common theme of not having to pay tuition fees as a major pull factor to studying specifically in Scotland with answers such as “I chose to study in Scotland because, and I applied only to Scottish universities because the tuition fee was free for EU students” (Interview 1, Appendix 1) whereas the interview subject who studied at the University of Leeds planned to create a career for themselves in the UK and that was the reason for choosing the university that they did. The University of Leeds student were also studying for a job in a line of work that is country specific which made it difficult for them to study somewhere else other than the UK as they planned on staying to work in the UK after finishing their education (see Appendix 6).

In terms of the theoretical background in phenomenology and the questions related to how Brexit had affected the students in their decision making for future plans and their lives as students in the UK in general, there was a common consensus that the biggest impact Brexit had had on the respondents was the implementation of the EU Settlement Scheme (UK Government, 2021) where they had to apply for the pre-settled status in order to be eligible for the settled status eventually. Many respondents also attributed their inability to leave the UK to study abroad to the EU Settlement as they felt forced to stay in order to be eligible for the settled status, one example was when talking to Interview subject 7 who stated that they would like to go abroad for some time after finishing their studies but “after having invested four years into my status to begin with, it feels stupid to throw that sort of time away” (see Appendix 7).

When looking at the interviews through the lens of student migration it is interesting to note that in some places, we can observe different patterns emerge compared to what theory would tell us we should expect to see. As mentioned in section 4.1, the literature on student migration suggests that students from developed countries are more likely to choose the destination for where they want to study based on the quality of education, compared to students from less developed countries where they were more likely to pick a country with a higher standard level of income (Perkins & Neumayer, 2014; Abbott &

Silles, 2015). Through analyzing the answers given on the question regarding reasons as to why the respondents chose to study in the UK as compiled in Figure 1 (see Appendix), one common theme is found in that all students who studied at the University of Edinburgh did so largely as a result of them not having to pay tuition fees with a majority of them not applying to universities outside of Scotland, suggesting that the financial aspect of studying abroad played the greatest role in deciding whether or not to study abroad despite the respondents country of origin being from a more developed country (see Figure 1 in Appendix). As is mentioned in the literature on the subject of student migration, one of the most important factors in choosing where to study, the English language was the most common answer as all respondents accredited a large chunk of the reason as to why they specifically chose the UK as their preferred place to study.

On the subject of Brain Drain in a European context similar to what is done by Gérard and Sanna (2017), it is interesting to note the answers given by the respondents with a background from relatively lower income countries in terms of GDP per capita such as Poland and Hungary (World Bank, n.d.) seem to be more inclined to stay in the UK in the long run compared to the respondents from countries with relatively higher GDP per capita such as Sweden and Finland (World Bank, n.d.). This would give more leverage to the theory that developing countries do in fact experience Brain Drain and thus lead to a decrease in the total human capital in these countries. As Brain Drain is seldom connected to developed countries such as Sweden and Finland, the few cases seen in this study in which students from developed countries decide to stay indefinitely in the UK it is difficult to think of it as Brain Drain as it is quite a rare occurrence, at least when looking at the results from this study. If one decides to look at the interviews from the angle taken by Gérard and Sanna (2017), the willingness of the respondents to stay in the UK after finishing their studies could and should be seen as a Brain Gain for the UK instead of a Brain Drain of Poland and Hungary respectively.

One recurring theme that I as the interviewer found interesting was the answers given on question 13 (see section 5.1) as the respondents in general did not put a great emphasis on the effect of Brexit on their lives as international students in the UK despite having noted

the impact it played in them needing to stay longer than they possibly would have intended had it not been for Brexit. Responses such as “I don't know, but just little things, not anything huge.” (see Appendix 2) were not uncommon from the respondents but rather the norm and the general tone towards the effects of Brexit was less hostile than I would have thought at the start of my research. This however is not to say that everyone was unbothered by it as some respondents noted that it had increased the amount of administrative work that had to be done in order to be able to stay and function in the UK with one example of having to change bank details as an EU citizen (see Appendix 3).

6.3 Comparison in Results

When comparing the results from the study with the results received from the interviews it is important to consider what is comparable and what is not. In this specific study I have done my best to ensure that the question used in the interviews were of similar fashion to those used in the survey in order to be able to compare the answers, however on the topic of Brexit and its effect on students there will be no comparison as the survey did not include questions related to that specifically. It will also be difficult to make any comparisons between the answers given on the questions in which the survey respondents are not categorized by nationality. The comparison between the survey and the interviews will therefore focus on two main areas and their connection to relevant theory and literature; student migration and linkages to the theories mentioned throughout the study.

6.3.1 Comparing Results in terms of Student Migration

When looking at the results from the CPC-ONS-UUK 2017 in terms of student migration and what the literature suggests about the patterns of student migration it goes somewhat in line with what theory suggests in that students who study for a longer period of time such as doing full programs abroad are more likely to stay in the country for longer after finishing their studies compared to those who do a semester or year abroad (King & Raghuram, 2012). As 47,9% of the EU students are planning on staying in the UK compared to 41,1% that are leaving to go back to their home countries it could be argued that the literature on student migration holds true in the case of the survey at least when it comes to the willingness of students to stay for students who have studied multiple year

programs. As for students studying shorter periods of time it is unclear as the survey does not take them into account.

Much like the survey, the interviews made for this study did not include short term international students such as those studying a semester or year abroad making the comparison between short term and long term students impossible. What can be said about the students who had done their full programs in the UK is that five out of the seven respondents were going to stay in the UK after finishing their studies due to either furthering their studies or for work (see Figure 2 in Appendix). Much like with the survey, the interviews seem to be in line with what previous literature on student migration tells us.

One important note to make is that out of the seven respondents, the two that did not plan on staying in the UK had either gotten a job and were not intending on living in the UK in the long term thus not caring about applying for and getting the settled status or had already been outside of the UK for a long enough amount of time for them to not be able to apply for the settled status for another five years. The reason as to why this is important is that out of the respondents in the interviews who answered that they planned on staying in the UK, all of them mentioned getting the settled status as a main reason for them staying and had it not been for that then they would have been a lot more likely to move around and either study somewhere else or travel (see Appendix 3-7). This could possibly open up for debate that had it not been for Brexit, the results from the interviews would not be in line with the survey answers.

6.3.2 Comparing Results from a Theoretical Point of View

EU students who have spent their full higher education in the UK are more likely to stay in the UK after finishing their studies than they are to go home according to the CPC-ONS-UUK 2017, this would suggest that if the students come from developing countries or in the case of this study, countries with a relatively lower GDP per capita than other European countries, they are more likely to stay in the UK than students from countries with a relatively higher GDP per capita (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011). However,

because the data in the survey is limited in terms of knowing the nationality of the people answering it is difficult to draw any conclusions. If the results from the interviews are to follow the answers in the survey one would expect to see most interviewees leaning towards staying in the UK which is what we observe (see Figure 2 in Appendix). In regards to theory this would suggest a Brain Drain for the countries with lower GDP per capita but would constitute a Brain Gain for the UK (Gérard & Sanna, 2017).

If looking at the results from push and pull factors one has to begin by looking at the answers given in the conducted interviews to try to give some context to the answers in the survey. As discussed in section 6.2 the push factors of countries are plenty and can range from lower standard of living to not feeling welcome due to being a part of certain communities and there is no common denominator amongst the respondents. When looking at the pull factors there are a few that are brought up frequently throughout the interviews such as the desire or preference to study in English along with the fact that the UK as a location itself drew their interest (see Figure 1 in Appendix). It could be argued that these pull factors would be applicable to the answers given in the survey by EU students as the respondents in both the survey along with the respondents of the interviews share background in that they are students from EU countries studying in the UK.

7. Conclusion

The concluding segment of this study will be based on trying to answer the research question the study set out to answer in section 1.3 which was “What factors affect students' decision making about their future and what part has Brexit played in it?”. In the analysis and discussion section of this study and more specifically the comparison between the results from the CPC-ONS-UUK 2017 and the interviews made, there are some similarities between the two formats that also go in line with some of the theoretical frameworks used throughout the study. As a result of the lacking data available in the survey it is difficult to come to any clear and proven conclusions to the role of Brexit in students decision making, the answers provided in the survey gave some vague linkages

to the answers given from the interviews that can then be connected to the theory if certain assumptions are made.

To try to give the most accurate answer for the research question I will use the answers given in the interviews as they provide the most accurate information. The factors that played the biggest role in students decision making was threefold for the students that were interviewed for this specific study. The English language played an important role as many of the students had studied international programs during high school and felt that it would only be natural to carry out their higher education in English as well. The second factor that played a large part in deciding where to study was the geographical location or rather the attraction of studying in the UK specifically. The final factor that played a big part in deciding where to study was the tuition fees or rather the lack thereof as EU students who started their studies in Scotland previous to Brexit got their tuition fees paid for which was a great attraction for the respondents. The specific role of Brexit was mostly notable when the students were asked about their future plans and the feeling that I as the interviewer got was that most of the respondents almost felt forced to stay in the UK in order to attain the settled status for which they had to stay another one or two years as a result of the EU Settlement Scheme.

For future studies it would be interesting to look at how newly arrived international students from the EU would answer similar questions as the EU Settlement scheme would no longer be a factor in answering the questions regarding why and how long they would choose to stay in the UK after finishing their studies. This would most likely give a more realistic depiction of what actually plays a part in the international EU students' decision on whether or not they are going to leave or stay in the UK. As seen in the results from the interviews the majority of interview subjects based their decision regarding their staying or not staying in the UK on the fact that they had to stay in order to receive the settled status.

Another interesting way to look at the same subject but from a different perspective would be to interview potential students who were thinking about studying in the UK just

as the shift happened and as a result decided not to. By taking this perspective one could gain additional information on the impact of Brexit on not only existing international students but also lost potential students.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Transcript of Interview 1:

F- What is your country of origin?

V- Finland

F- Why did you choose to study in the UK?

V- I chose to study in Scotland because, and I applied only to Scottish universities because the tuition fee was free for EU students. I also wanted to study abroad but the fact that I wanted, didn't want to pay any tuition was the reason I chose to apply for Scotland.

F- Right, so basically just the tuition fees, you weren't really interested in studying in England or Wales?

V- Yeah, and I thought of course, of course I applied cause it's a good university, highly ranked, they had programs that I wanted to study. Because back home we didn't have as many options for the field that I wanted to study in. But a big player was the fact that the tuition fees were free. That there were no tuition fees.

F- And so you moved specifically to study?

V- Yes.

F- Did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study? Or was it like, what was the process like?

V- No, no visa after Brexit or like before, was it 2021 or when they told the EU students that were here before the Brexit happened basically, they told us to apply for the EU settlement scheme. But I didn't have to do that. I did that during my first year here studying. But I could move here without the visa. I could accept my program, whatever the application, not the application, but what do you call it?

F- Like the offer to study at the university?

V- Yeah exactly, so I didn't need any visa or anything before coming here basically.

F- Okay, great. How long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

V- I've studied for four years and I'm studying finance and business.

F- Very nice. Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

V- No, not from the UK.

F- Do you have anything from Finland?

V- Well, I have the usual what you get. It's like a student loan and then you get the support from the state.

F- Like a grant?

V- Yeah, yeah, yeah.

F- Okay, so do you know if it's similar to the one we have here in Sweden or is it where you get like...? Because in Sweden we get like, I think it's somewhere around like 900 euros or something in student loans that we can take out each month and then it's like 300 euros a grant per month.

V- Yeah, exactly like that. Exactly like that. We get 800 euros in student loans and then 460 in a grant.

F- Okay, great. When will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

V- I'm finishing in May 2023, and my plan is to work for a couple of years, I'm moving home to work, to Finland, to work within the fields that I've studied, and maybe do a masters later, but right now, just work for the next couple of years.

F- Okay, and so since you're not planning on staying in the UK, do you have a specific reason for that?

V- The reason is that I got a job. And I mean, my plan, maybe within the year or so, depends on how my grad scheme goes and not there. Depending on that, I might want to come back, but unless I don't get a good offer from a job that I would actually like to do, I'm not going to come back. So we'll have to see.

F- Yeah, because I've heard a lot of people talk about the importance of them just staying to get the settled status. And so they're doing their masters or working or whatever for a year just to get their settled status. That's not something that you're interested in?

V- No, I've been thinking about it, but because I'm at least going to work in five months back home. And if they offer me a full time, I think I might want to work there for a little bit. Because it's exactly what I wanted to do. The offer that I got from home is so good that I kind of like, if I would have gotten like something maybe not as good there, I would have maybe focused more on applying to the UK, but because I, you know, because I secured such a good grad scheme at home I don't want to like blow that, like just not go. So that's why at least for the next half a year, I'm going to be back home. If I get a good, I'm going to apply now during summer, or for London as well, but it's not sure, it's very difficult to get one. And if I really like my job at Nordea I'm going to stay there. So it's not like I'm not particularly thinking about the settlement status. Like, you know, I can come back and like figure it out somehow later.

F- So it's not really played a part in your decision.

V- No, not really no.

F- And then, yeah, the next question is sort of you've already answered in how long you're planning on staying in the UK after finishing.

V- Well, right now I'm moving right away.

F- And what part has Brexit played in your decision?

V- Oh, good question. Well, I don't think it has played a decision. No, no, no, I don't think it has played a role in my decision to be fair. It's not as I said, like I'm only moving because I got a good job offer from home. But yeah, that's to be fair.

F- Yeah, yeah, no, yeah, just from your answering that previous question, I get that it hasn't really played a big part. So do you think you would have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU in terms of like not having to apply for worker visas and like being able to leave and come back whenever without having to sort out, sort out all the settlement status things?

V- Like what was the question? What would it be?

F- Would you, would have been more likely to stay in the UK?

V- Um, no, I don't think so. Again, because it's not just not really played a role right now, but I have to say that in case if I want to come back, it will play a role, because I'm consciously thinking about the fact that, you know, I like I got this panic like a month ago when Anna told me like, you know, I'm actually like, you won't you will lose the settled status. Unless you like stay now and that work by like, that was a little bit like I didn't realize that until she told me that. So I was like, like actually consider that when I, you know, in case I actually want to come back and then think about it. So if I'm coming back, it will definitely play a role and it would have been much easier without Brexit happening.

F- Yeah, yeah. Um, and is there any other factor that would have affected your decision on staying or leaving?

V- No, not really. No.

F- Okay, and then the last question is how, how has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

V- Well, it has caused some like extra work or like, you know, I've had to like. Do the, all the, like the settlement status like applications and all that. When I came back to the last time and I had renewed my passport, I had some troubles with like, or like, I had heard that you, I should probably bring my, it would be good if I brought my old passport as well. So it took some longer time for me to get in. And I actually now that I remember this, I have to go and like go and whatever, like you said, I want people like, like, I can know that I have a new passport.

F- Oh, okay.

V- So I had to do all this extra stuff

F- Yeah, yeah, yeah.

V- It's not like so much, but it's still something that.
F- Yeah, just small things on like, an administrative level.
V- Exactly, exactly, and also, um, well, I have, uh, what I think. Well, it's just like, I don't know. That's a good question. I think it has to like, it has definitely affected, but now I just can't think of like.
F- Yeah, there are not really like concrete, like things that you can think of.
V- Yeah, when it comes to like, healthcare for example, like of course we can't use because you have, you probably had the same card, like the EU.
F- Yeah.
V- You know, that always like, you can't use that anymore. So that's why it's more important here to like, make sure that you have a GP and, you know, if something happens, you can't just go to a hospital.
F- Yeah, no, exactly, yeah.
V- So, maybe things like that. Um, and yeah, I guess that's it.
F- Not really any like day to day stuff?
V- No, no, no, no, it's just, yeah. I can't think of any right now.
F- Yeah, great.

Appendix 2

Transcript of Interview 2:

F- What is your country of origin?
E- Sweden.
F- Why did you choose to study in the UK?
E- Okay, well I was, I was a bit quick when I said that I was from Sweden, because I am from Sweden and I like classify myself as Swedish, but I grew up in Australia as well and my dad is Australian, but we moved to Sweden when I was like 13. So I have both nationalities, but that ties into why I wanted to study in the UK, because I grew up studying in English and I had an international background, I went to international high school. In high school I lived in a very small town, so I was very excited to get out into the world. And I wanted to study in the UK because that's where a lot of the best universities were, it was relatively close to home, at that point it was still in the EU, it was quite an easy transition. So I applied to just the best universities in the UK and I ended up in Edinburgh.
F- Great.
E- Yeah.
F- Did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study? And if so what was the process like?

E- I did not have to apply for a visa, but I think I'm in a situation where even if it had been post -Brexit, I think because I'm also a commonwealth citizen, I would not have had to apply for a visa.

F- Right, and how long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

E- I study law and I began my studies in 2019 after I graduated high school, but this is my third year studying in Edinburgh because last year I was on exchange in Lund in my home country.

F- Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

E- I receive CSN, which is the Swedish government grant, and I also, because I started in 2019, before Brexit, received the Scottish government grant to cover my tuition fees as though I was a home student from the UK. So I received the Swedish grant to cover my expenses, but then my tuition is covered by S -A -A -S. It's called.

F- Right. And when will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

E- I graduate in two months with my law degree, so that's very exciting.

F- Very nice.

E- And a few weeks ago I was accepted to do a master's in Lund.

F- Oh, wow.

E- Yeah.

F- In what subject?

E- Human rights law.

F- Very nice.

E- So, yeah, I'm very excited about that.

F- Very nice, and so you're leaving.

E- Yeah.

F- That sort of messed up one of my questions.

E- Ask it anyway, and I...

F- Yeah, if you're not planning on staying in the UK, why is that?

E- Because I'm, yeah, further education in a different country, yeah.

F- And are you planning on going back to the UK after finishing your studies?

E- Potentially. I know I'm going back in during the summer for my graduation ceremony. But after that, I'm not quite sure when I'll be back. One of the reasons why people specifically in my situation that started studying in 2019, a lot of my friends, they are choosing, you'll probably hear this from someone else, but the reason that they're planning on choosing to stay in the UK for at least another year or two is because they will, after five years in the UK after Brexit, get pre -settled, get settled in status, which means they can stay in the UK indefinitely.

F- Right.

E- I already blew my chance because I was away for over 12 months when I was on my exchange. So I won't be getting pre -settled, like I won't be getting settled status anyway.

So for me, that's not one of the pulls to come back to the UK or stay in the UK. So potentially I'll be back, but I'll be gone at least for the next two years while I'm doing my masters. Yeah, but who knows? Who knows?

F- Yeah, okay, great, and what part has Brexit played in your decision to stay or be?

E- Zero part. It has not played a big role for me. Like, when I started studying, I was very excited about moving to the UK, but soon afterwards I started becoming quite homesick and realizing that it's like "Borta bra men hemma bäst" [Swedish saying about being homesick]. I was so excited to leave, but then I couldn't wait to come home. So I am excited to be coming up to Sweden, and that was basically always my plan. So I wasn't considering applying for something further in the UK. I wasn't planning on staying, especially with my degree, like a law degree. It's quite country-specific, so as soon as possible, I'm planning on like, getting back to Sweden and making that work for me in Sweden.

F- So your plan is to like get your, or like settle, settle down, in Sweden?

E- Yeah, maybe not immediately, but eventually I plan on settling down in Sweden. So nothing really to do with Brexit.

F- Yeah, okay, great, again, not really relevant, but would you have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU in terms of having to apply for a worker visa and things like that?

E- Potentially, if it was a lot simpler to be in the UK, it would have been easier to jump back and forth between Sweden and the UK. I would have at least been more inclined to look at most of the opportunities in the UK, because there are obviously great ones. It also wouldn't have been as expensive as it is. It's like such a huge undertaking now to pursue any sort of higher academics in the UK because of how expensive it is, whereas in Sweden it's completely free for me. Yeah, but saying all of this, I am also Australian, so even with Brexit, I would have, like, now... It doesn't really apply to me as much, and that I am Australian, I have many more rights now, in the UK, than European students.

F- Yeah, it's a bit weird.

E- Yeah, it's a bit weird.

F- So, is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying or leaving the UK?

E- It would have been if I got a fantastic work opportunity or a fantastic, like, further education opportunity in the UK. Maybe if my boyfriend wasn't studying Maskin [Maskinteknik, is an engineering program] in Lund, and he was here, maybe I would stay here, if we broke up, I maybe I would stay here, but... Yeah, there were just a lot of factors pulling me home.

F- Great! And the last question... How has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

E- I mean, it has affected me a little bit, I have to admit, obviously. It was quite an uncertain period, 2020, when Brexit happened, and you had to apply for this pre-settled

status, and it was a bit nerve -wracking. I was studying here, so I had a reason to be here, but that year my Swedish boyfriend joined me and lived here with me. It was meant to be a fun gap year for him, but instead it was just lockdown for the whole year, so it was kind of depressing. Which meant that he couldn't find a job here, he couldn't take any courses here, anything that he wanted to do. He worked from home, and he studied from home, so he had stuff to do, but it wasn't this big experience. But it also made us kind of unsure when Brexit happened, like, does he have sufficient reason to be here? Is it going to affect that aspect?

That was a little bit nerve -wracking, and now just little things like... Yeah, flights are so much more expensive, it's quite annoying to get here. I don't know, but just little things, not anything huge. Not in the way that it's affected other people.

F- Thank you very much.

Appendix 3

Transcript of Interview 3:

F- What is your country of origin?

C- Sweden.

F- Why did you choose to study in the UK?

C- Well I kind of always wanted to come to the UK because I knew I wanted to go abroad to study because that's always been something I wanted to do and then the reason I came to Edinburgh is because it was at the time it was free for EU students to study in Scotland and so it seemed like a great opportunity to do my undergrad abroad without having to pay the fees because it's free and sweet.

F- Yeah so is it like mostly financial or like is it more of the financial part or is it more of the wanting to study somewhere else? Like would you still have studied in the UK or like Scotland specifically if it wasn't for the free tuition?

C- I wouldn't have done my undergraduate here because the reason I, the reason I came, I even saw the opportunity to come is because it was free.

F- Yeah. Did you move here specifically to study or did you live here prior to your studies?

C- I moved here to study.

F- Right and did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study at the university and if so what was the process like?

C- I did not have to apply for a visa to come here.

F- How long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

C- I am in my final year of my undergraduate degree so this is my fourth year so I have been here a bit more than three and a half years now and I am studying BSc geography.

F- Great. Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

C- No but I get CSN, Student finance from Sweden.

F- Right, yeah and do you get like an enhanced version of it?

C- Yeah, I get the extra money for studying abroad.

F- And do you like roughly know how much? Like from what I've understood from people studying in the US you get like either a lump sum like for the whole year or you get like the regular monthly.

C- I get the monthly kind the same you'd get at home. But I get a bit more so I get 14 and a half thousand a month.

F- Right.

C- Crowns obviously.

F- Right and it's how much of it is like the student loan.

C- Maybe like 9 ,000 is the student loan and then actually I think I'll get the same grant as people back home and then I get an extra loan so I get a few thousand more in a loan back.

F- Right. When will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

C- I'm finishing the summer and then after that I'm staying on in Edinburgh to do a PhD.

F- Very nice. And yeah it sort of makes sense but like it's in the same category. What makes you want to stay in the UK?

C- Well I wanted to stay because I wanted to continue studying here and then I got the PhD. So then now I have a reason to stay.

F- So you would have stayed like either way if you would even if you didn't get the PhD you still would have stayed.

C- Yes.

F- Right. Do you think you would have stayed like to work as well or like strictly studying?

C- I was applying to both masters and PhDs because I wanted to keep studying here but if I wouldn't have gotten accepted to any of them I would have worked for a year or two and then reapplied.

F- Right, right. And is it, because I know like from the previous interviews I know a lot of them talked about like staying the extra year just because getting the settlement status. So is that has that played any part of it or is it like strictly just because you want to like live in the UK?

C- Um. Yes. Yes and no. I only applied for masters and PhDs in the UK because I wanted to stay and because I wanted to get the settled status because I had a few of my lecturers tell me oh you could go back home to Sweden and do a masters or you could go to like Germany, Switzerland, France because it'd be a lot cheaper to do a masters there but I decided against even applying because if I went I would have lost my pre -settled status.

F- Right.

C- And then it would have been really difficult for me to come back. Yeah. So like kind of.

F- Yeah. So the next question is sort of similar or like it ties into it with what parthas Brexit played in your decision.

C- Well, yeah, it's made it a very on or off decision. Yeah.

F- Yeah. Cause that from what I've heard as well it's been, it's been very much that the people are feeling like they're sort of forced to stay. Just to get the settled status. Like if they're not very like set on not staying in the UK they're then they would be like, oh well maybe then I like I wouldn't study or like stay here. But just because you get it, so you're sort of forced to staying if you want to like or like you are if you want to get the status but.

C- Yeah, it definitely feels like a more like an on or off thing. Like either you stay for the foreseeable future or you leave forever basically.

F- Yeah, um and would you have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU in terms of having like apply for visas now and stuff like that for like working and stuff like that.

C- I would have probably been just as likely to stay um because I knew I wanted to stay. I've known for a while that I wanted to stay for at least a few more years. Yeah. Um. But it would have made many things significantly easier. So. Yeah.

F- So like it would have played some part but not really.

C- Yeah, exactly.

F- Right, um and is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying or leaving the UK?

C- Um no. In what kind of ways?

F- Well I mean like there are a billion different reasons for like could be I don't know. Uh a love interest. Uh a job offer. Yeah. Um. Really anything. It's been like. Um. There's been a lot of like different, different answers.

C- I've been very like I knew like emotionally that I really wanted to stay. So it's been more of a like fighting to get my like get my way. Um. Rather than finding a reason to stay. You know. It's been more like no. I don't want any reason to leave.

F- Right. Uh and then the final question is, how has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

C- In so many ways. It's made so many things so much more complicated. Applying for both masters and PhDs was more challenging because I had to go through this process of like they had to figure out my funding status and um.

F- Right, and what what's that like with the with the PhD? Do you because would you still get like the CSN grant and loan or is it?

C- I don't know to be honest. I know that because I've done my undergraduate here for both the masters and the PhDs I applied for. I was eligible for home fees. So like for my master, that meant like 10,000 pounds instead of like 30,000 pounds. But for my PhD it just meant that I was part of a different because it's fully funded so it's free and I get a salary for it. Um but they only take in like I think like three or four international students

a year but they take in like 20 home students. So it put me in the category where I'm like a more beneficial category forme.

F- Right.

C- So yeah.

F- And If, if the UK would have stayed like if basically if Brexit wouldn't have happened would use this from what I've understood from doing my research like Europeans are or like people from the from the EU were considered like home students previous to Brexit. So would that would that have been the same like in the PhD context um had they been a part of the EU?

C- Yeah, had they been a part of the EU it would have been easier for me to like. If I, if I hadn't gotten onto my PhD now I would have been able to like go back home and do a masters or go somewhere else because I would have still been a part of the home.

F- Right.

C- Whereas if I'd left now to do a masters elsewhere I would have had like minimal chance of ever getting onto a PhD program in the UK because it's just they don't really want to take on international.

F- Yeah, so would you say like it's it's been more limiting?

C- In my options yeah. Also it's made like outside of kind of studies. It's been really difficult to like manage my bank stuff. Like I found, you know like I'm with Revolut right now and I'm technically not allowed to be with them because I have my EU Revolut account like signed up from when I was still living in Sweden because I moved abroad I'm like a Swede living abroad now "utomlandssvensk", I'm not like, you know, "folkbokförd" [registered] in Sweden, so I'm technically not allowed to be in the EU Revolut scheme which means that like when I start my PhD I'm going to have to reapply for another card. And it's been really difficult, like I was, I had an internship here last summer and I had to like apply for a national insurance number and I had to like, you know, it's been like a lot more challenging with like taxes back home and I still like, no one in the Swedish tax agency knows how to like help me declare my taxes I, you know, so like the kind of admin side of it of like being kind of from Sweden but still living here and kind of not fully living here because I still have my family back home and stuff, that's been like really difficult because of Brexit and because so many people like both in Sweden and here don't really know how to navigate Brexit because it's not like so fresh.

F- Yeah, okay, great. Thank you very much.

Appendix 4

Transcript of Interview 4:

F- The first question is what is your country of origin?

A- So I'm from Poland.

F- Yeah, and why did you choose to study in the UK?

A- Oh that's a good question. I feel like that would be a very wobbly answer because I'm not sure, because I did IB in high school. And that was played on a whim decision really. And then obviously, sort of like being surrounded by people that had plans on living abroad even for IB and that inclusion definitely helped. And then sort of, not really peer pressure but a feeling of peer pressure so it was like, looking at my options. So I think it was a lot easier to go abroad with IB because it was more easily recognised abroad. So obviously that was before Brexit so it was way easier to get to the UK as a European student. And so it was sort of an option. And it looked fine, sort of. It's not necessary that it was primarily better to say like a better quality than the one we would get at home. But it was just kind of like, I already have the IB, so I might as well just kind of use it better. It's a bit of a weird explanation, like I have put myself through a lot of effort for the past few years, so I might as well just like, use it further and see how it goes and see if that's something that I feel like is my thing or not going up and sort of like worrying about it later on if it's for me or not. So that was my primary thought of going abroad. And then I don't know just sort of halfway through it, I just sort of like also thought of studying economics, and that's in itself, why it's a broad degree doesn't have to be a kind of specific one. So that also made it easier so I could go and study abroad, and I think that's sort of like how I started searching UK in the universities, and then primarily Scotland was mostly because of the finances. Because obviously it's nice not to be in debt, after four years at the university, and also because it was before Brexit. I couldn't...

F- So you also got the like, UK payment grant?

A- Yeah. So I don't think they have a study here, which is really nice. And it's a great thing. It's a great thing. That definitely influenced me to study in Edinburgh a lot because I had some offers from London and had some offers from Manchester. And I think, yeah, Edinburgh was put as the first option. Honestly and so like that it definitely took a huge chunk of problems out of my mind when I was applying. And yeah, and when I got in, it was like my first choice and so I was like, yeah.

F- And so you moved here specifically to study?

A- Yeah, so I moved after highschool just for studying.

F- Great. And did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study or like?

A- No, so it was... I think it was... So that EU passport it was all fine, because I was considered on the basis that I am an EU student. But then obviously, so I came here September of like 2019, and then January 2020 was the official sort of like Brexit days. And they actually exited the EU. And then after that, it was sort of like... So I was the last one just before Brexit that received that scheme. Still sort of like a lot on the same sort of basis. So that I still don't have to pay tuition fees due to studying in Scotland and it was all because of the EU citizenship. But then the year that I get two years after, it was all sort of like as a connection to the students. So I was not the last, but second to last with sort of the EU.

F- Yeah, I was going to say like I got into St. Andrews University in 2019. Then I was right out of highschool and I was like, I'm not really sure what I want to do. And I didn't really consider the Brexit part of it. And so I said no, and then I applied again next year, got in and then I was like, oh shit. So that...

A- Yeah, I get it.

F- And how long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

A- So it's been almost four years. So it's the last year of four year degree, and I do economics.

F- Very nice. Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

A- So I have the SaaS tuition scholarship. So I don't pay the tuition fees here. It's all paid by the Scottish government and yeah, that's it. So I think that qualifies as a scholarship I guess, or a scholarship.

F- Do you have any jobs on the side?

A- I do have a job. I do have a part-time job, I tutor in maths so that's mostly where my income comes from.

F- Right. And do you feel like that's necessary for being able to keep up with living, or the standard of living?

A- Yeah, currently yes. Obviously depends on like how much support you get from your family and how much you want to be in debt versus how much you want to have your own source of income. For me, I would say it was necessary. And also it like gave me some peace of mind that I do have my own source of income while studying as well. And that sort of made me feel better. So yeah, obviously you can also apply for like loans or grants to have a standard of living. And that's another option. I didn't necessarily do that, as I managed to find a job my first semester at uni so like that was quite easy and that sort of like obviously took a lot of pressure off me. But yeah, and I think especially now it's kind of necessary to have a part-time job to kind of like, live your life.

F- So it's like if you're from Sweden we get like a CSN It's called, student funding. So basically like if you study in Sweden you get paid like 300 euros to go study. And then you can take out a student loan which is a further like 700 euros. And so if you study abroad you can get like, you can take... I'm not quite sure how much it is every month. But I think you get like a yearly grant, so like you get financial help from the government basically.

A- So do you pay for any of your universities?

F- No, or we don't have any tuition fees. So we pay like 300 euro grant or whatever every month. Just to study, and then we can take out a loan, like student loan. That's I think it... Well now it's probably like with the inflation is has probably gone up to about like eight or nine hundred euros. But and like the loan has like zero percent interest rate. You can pay it back like anytime.

A- Okay fair.

F- And when will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

A- So I finish at the end of May, graduation in July. So essentially like in a few months, and I think the plan after is to do my master's in the UK as well.

F- Very nice. And so what makes you want to stay in the UK?

A- I think it's mostly for more than I think I've had all my last work experience for the past four years, based in the UK. And I think that would be way more easily recognized in the UK as well compared to back home. And I think it's not really because like that would still be quite important thing in my CV. But I think it's still easier to translate in the same country. And also just I think especially because I want to do my master's and having studied for four years in English and sort of like having started Econ just in English it would be really weird to switch back to Polish in terms of better studies. So I think that's why I certainly want to continue it in English, and yeah and then probably job prospects here. But yeah I think it's like I already know what's my first bigger biggest motivation of staying in UK after it's really. I think it's just kind of I have used to being here and it's quite nice. And I think I kind of still don't want to close the chapter and go back home. So I think that's, yeah.

F- So do you prefer it here over being in Poland?

A- I think I do. Just in terms of like everyday life I think it's like I feel better being here than I do at home.

F- Right. Yeah. And how long are you planning on staying in the UK after finishing your studies?

A- So well a year after that for sure. And then I don't really have a specific day of how long I want to stay. I think for now it's quite, it's not indefinite because I'm not saying that I will always stay here. But from now it doesn't really have the endstate so I think that's sort of indefinite.

F- Okay. And is that, does the pre -settled status play into that? Like you wanting to stay like for like even after finishing your masters to get the pre -settled status.

A- Yeah. So I already have the pre -settled status.

F- Oh but the settled status I mean.

A- Yeah, I know what you mean. So the one I have now, expires in 2024.

F- Right, and you have to stay for five years right?

A- I think you have to stay for five years until you have to apply...you can apply for the settled status. So I think for me that will be 2024 and then the one I currently have expires in 2025. So anyway there's like an overlap but yeah. I mean I think that definitely plays a role in that because I think if I leave for a year, or like if I were to do my masters anywhere else, not even at all, but like that mostly two years, not one year, so that would be a big break of that. So I don't know how that would play into my pre -settled status versus settled status. And then yeah, that job wise, I'm not sure exactly where I want to work. So I think that's a big part of it. So I've like I once moved out for a very long time so then I can do the best.

F- So do you think you'd want to do your masters some other place if you were like... If it weren't for the settled status?

A- Yeah, to be fair if it was still the case that it was still a part of the EU and I can always come back anytime and just like find a job, yeah, like that would be an option. Like I would just go some place like the Netherlands or Denmark. Like somewhere else, not necessarily back home in Poland, but just somewhere else. I think that two years also, two years versus one year of a masters, like also plays the difference. So I feel like after four years, two or three years, I feel like a lot as well. So that's another sort of factor but I think yeah definitely, if it hadn't been for the fact that I... It could be quite of a difficult situation to come back here and sort of like wherever all my belongings are. So that's definitely a factor towards sort of like staying. That's not the only factor obviously. I think that's kind of for now or plays a part and that sort of like makes me not think that hard about staying here for masters versus going somewhere else in Europe. Because I think that the option of finding a job after is still... I still want to find a job straight after a university here, so I think that would mean that I want to keep my pre-settled status as I just don't go through the first thing. So yeah, I guess no. I guess it does play a role yeah.

F- And so the next question sort of ties into that, what part has Brexit played in your decision on staying?

A- It has played a part in that I don't want to lose the pre-settled status as, well as I don't want to apply for it again. And again, this is very like hazy in the future. I'm going to stay here for a longtime. But I think for now I feel like I do. So I don't want to start off like there's a chance of leaving and then having to apply for it again. So I think quite a substantial part. I think it was like way easier to not consider the options of studying somewhere else for the masters than it would have been without the pre-settled status. Hope that answers that?

F- Yeah, definitely. And would you have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU in terms of having to apply for a worker visa or stuff like that?

A- Yeah, I feel like that was, I didn't think it was like... I don't know if it's more or less willing to stay versus willing to leave. It was more about how easy it is to leave and then come back after a while, not necessarily for like, for two months and it's fine. But if I went to the university for like nine months or two years.

F- Is it six months?

A- Yeah Yeah. So yeah, that gets me you know, that gets a bit complicated. So I think it was just like... It kind of... I think I've been restricted in my choices in the way that if I want to stay, I just sort of like have to commit to staying versus, you know, I want to leave for a while and then maybe come back and sort of like see how it plays out. I think I have to be more definitive with my decisions. Because obviously the other side of it is quite... Not difficult, but you know, it takes a bit of your time and sort of like you don't want to go through the whole process again once you sort of gone through it once. So yeah, I think it just makes my decisions a one way street straight away, and it definitely, it

always is a factor of like, oh I have this until 2024 and are like, I sort of like, you know, set and I don't have to do anything about it. So I think, yeah, that definitely plays a role. And I think if it weren't for that, I think I would be more sort of like flexible with my decisions. So I'm like, oh no, I might go somewhere else to kind of like experience something else rather than just staying here. Because yeah, I guess, you know, studying somewhere else was a stronger option before I realized that I would have to leave for two years. And I would sort of like have to apply for... I guess I actually have no idea if I would have to apply for either after that. Just probably my pre-settled status.

F- I haven't looked into it too much. I just like, looked through the settlement schemes and things like that. And from what I gathered, I thought that you would have to apply for a worker visa... But I'm not sure.

A- Yeah, that's what I understand as well. Again, I haven't really looked much into it mostly because...

F- But it's also way easier with the settlement status.

A- Yeah, and then, yeah, once you have a settled status, that's pretty much indefinite so you can leave the country whenever you want and for how long you want sort of. Yeah, I feel like that definitely kind of makes it easier. While in the pre-settled status, you still are sort of like very on the fence, yeah.

F- And are there any other factors that would affect your decision on leaving or staying in the UK?

A- I mean, I said it's sort of something I touched upon a little bit before, just kind of in general I like it here better. Just sort of like the pre-settled status. I think even like, before it actually properly hit me that, you know, I have the pre-settled status and I would have to figure out all the stuff around it if I were to leave.

F- So like living standards or...?

A- Yeah, living standards is just kind of like how easier it is to be kind of in the...open about your opinion, sort of like how you approach people, and stuff like that. I feel like a big part to that is like, that will be probably too much information, but that's important for that I feel like, I mean, as a queer woman it's really hard to be in eastern Europe, and I feel like that definitely is easier here, and especially, in a city like Edinburgh or London, it's a lot easier to kind of be apart of like, a community, and not really...feel like you have to hide it. And I feel like, back in Poland, it's still very much like, yeah, depends on the sort of like, what group of people you are around... And it's very much a conservative environment, and that is really not something that I want to be around. Yeah, that's not something that I want to be like a part of for like a long time, and I feel like even when visiting for a very short period of time, it kind of hits you a lot, especially after being away for a while. And yeah, I feel like that's a huge factor of like, why I want to stay. So yeah, that's not only reason, but I feel like yeah, that sort of like, might be a lot easier.

F- Yeah, for sure, for sure. And the final question, how has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

A- I had to apply for a pre-settled status, which wasn't a lot of work. It was just, you know, a bit of a stressful thing, and we're like, oh, am I going to have to leave or not. Yeah, obviously it was quite an easy process, so definitely that, but you know, a bit of an admin step. And I guess, you know, every single time you apply for a job or like, you know, applying for universities, you have to prove that you have the pre-settled status, so you know, it's like an additional sort of a part of the admin stuff. I think before you would just put that you are an EU citizen and you have a copy of your passport, that was kind of like settled, you didn't have to be anything else, now you have to sort of like send them the code and sort of like prove that you do have that status, so you know, that makes it a bit, not really difficult, but you know, that's another thing that you have to think about. University-wise, because I have pre-settled status when applying for a master's program, I'm treated as a home student, not an international student. In my case, in all the cases that I apply to, so I think that's pretty much the standard. So, I mean tuition fees are still expensive, but it's pretty important for an international student, so like that's right. I mean because of pre-settled status, I still have the same rights that I used to have before, so you know, NHS access, right to work. I can still apply for all student loans as before on the same basis that I used to, and yeah, just as a home student. So I feel like in my situation now, it's fine, like I think it's helping a lot, I think it's just an additional side of admin work that I have to remember when applying for jobs or like looking for class, or master programs, whatever. So, yeah, it's like, well, it's fine because I still sort of can do everything that I used to do before Brexit kind of, but then, you know, not leaving for along time if I want to stay, and just sort of like, always remembering that I have to prove it, and I have to have a very certain set of documents.

F- Would you say that you have like a disadvantage, like compared to UK people, when applying for jobs, would say like you feel like you're at a disadvantage because of you having to like prove it?

A- See, I don't think it is, because it's pretty much, I still don't have to apply for a visa, so I feel like for me, it's not really a disadvantage, because like places don't have to worry to sponsor me, or they don't have to sort of like go through, I think can, go through all the hard admin work, because I can quite easily prove that status, so it doesn't really add them much work, but I don't think. I don't think how it actually influences the decision, but that's a different question, but like far, like just the superficial level I think is not too much difficult. I think that, yeah, I think the hardest part is that like if you want to stay, you just have to stay and sort of like sort that out versus if you'll leave, you sort of like have to start over from scratch, or you know, like where a visa, and I'm just like in trade as an international student versus just a professional worker, so that's hard, so like actually kind of job/uni.

F- Great, well I think that's it.

Appendix 5

Transcript of Interview 5:

F- What is your country of origin?

A- My country of origin is Finland. I'm half Finnish, half Polish, but I grew up in Finland.

F- Very nice. And why did you choose to study in the UK?

A- So I did my highschool in an international school. I did the IB in Finland, I wanted to move abroad from Finland and I thought that going to uni would be the appropriate time to move out. I chose the UK because the universities here are very good, especially in biomedical sciences, which is what I'm studying. I don't know if your questions are going to ask about this, but I chose Scotland specifically because it was free. I wasn't really considering the whole UK. I was considering Scotland.

F- I probably know the answer to this one, but did you have to apply for a visa to be able to study?

A- So no, because I started studying in 2019, so it was just moving here.

F- As an EU citizen?

A- Exactly.

F- Did you get the pre -settled status in 2020?

A- Yes, I think I had to apply for it in 2020.

F- How long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

A- I'm studying biomedical sciences and this is my fourth year.

F- Great. Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

A- I do not have a scholarship. I have a student loan from the Finnish government and they also have sort of a student like help...

F- I think it's the same thing. It's the same as CSN where you get a certain amount of money, and then you get the student loan on top of that.

A- Yeah.

F- And do you have like a... because in Sweden I know it's different if you study in Sweden or you go abroad, so you get like, if you go abroad, you get like, I think you get like a lump sum. Sort of like, this is your yearly allowance. And then you have like a budget for the year. In the case where if you study in Sweden, you get like a monthly allowance. Or like allowance, but student loan.

A- The student loan, I think you can choose to get either as like a big chunk once a year or then monthly. But the allowance is just monthly.

F- Oh, right.

A- Yeah, yeah.

F- And when will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

A- So I'm graduating this summer. I'm finishing now in May, and my plan is to stay here for at least one more year because I would like to apply for the settled status. And I am really enjoying this city so I would like to stay anyway.

F- And so the next question sort of ties into that. What is it that makes you want to stay in the UK?

A- Well, right now, honestly, it is the university or like the subject that I'm getting into because I study biomedical sciences. But I want to specialize in neuroscience and specifically go into research and the research here is very good, and I found a lab that I really like. So, yeah, that's the like primary reason. And then I mean, I feel like I've started to build a life for myself here in some way so I would be very happy to stay here for a while.

F- Yeah, so is a lot of it because of the settlement status that you get? Or is it... Is that just like a byproduct of it? Do you think if you wouldn't get the settlement status, would you still stay?

A- Yes, I would definitely stay. But I think that if let's say Brexit wasn't a thing and I wouldn't have to have a pre-settled status to work and study here, I think I would be more open to considering other countries now because I would be like, okay, I can always come back here.

But it's sort of like it is a factor that plays a role.

F- So it's more of a byproduct of you wanting to stay here.

A- Yes.

F- But then it's also played into like your decision making?

A- Yes.

F- How long are you planning to stay in the UK after finishing your studies?

A- It depends on what I decide to do after next year. So ideally, I will now work for a year in a lab and then I would apply to PhDs, most likely here again. Or then if I find other labs elsewhere, I would apply for PhDs there.

F- Other labs in the UK or...?

A- In the UK, maybe Finland, but most likely not. So I think there's a possibility that I would stay here for at least five more years.

F- So that's the timeplan, like around five years -ish? Or is it like indefinitely, but realistically you're looking at five years?

A- I think I, like in the grand scheme of things, I am open to work, like live and work here permanently. But I do think that I would also, like if I go into research, it's very common to like do your PhD somewhere and do like a postdoc position somewhere else. And like it's in like two year chunks often. So I would be open to live somewhere else for a couple of years and then come back to the UK. But I do now see Finland and UK as like equally possible for a permanent.

F- Great. And what part has Brexit played in your decision making?

A- Well, honestly, I think that the whole like pre-settled status and right to work, study, live here, that's the like biggest part that has played a role. Like any other aspects of Brexit, I haven't really thought about that much because this is such an international university, a lot of my friends here are EU citizens. So I guess I have like, the bubble I'm in is not very like Brexit is not that visible in everyday life.

F- Right, so would you have been more likely to stay in the UK? Like even though like you're still very willing to stay in the UK, do you think you would have been more likely to stay here had they been a part of the EU? So like you don't have to apply for like a worker visa and stuff like that?

A- I don't know if I would put it as more likely because I'm still like very much planning to and willing to do it but I think I wouldn't consider it a stressful factor in my decision.

F- Do you think it has played a part in... because as I mentioned earlier like you might have gone somewhere else, like for your masters or like doing something else in another country for a short period of time, but because of the settlement status?

A- Yeah. I guess it does play a big role in the sense that like time wise I now want to stay in the UK for a while. To get a settlement status and then possibly move abroad and also I think if I would have started my studies here. Well first of all I wouldn't have come here to study if I had that fees that there are now. And so I guess I consider myself very lucky to have started right at the end.

F- And is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying or leaving the UK?

A- Yes. I would say definitely primarily like postgraduate studies or work. Currently I see the best possibilities with that here which is why I want to stay. But if I were to like find a program somewhere else that I really wanted to do for a job somewhere in Europe then I would probably consider moving away.

F- Yeah. And lastly how has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

A- As an international student in the UK? Well. I guess it has made me more aware of the benefits of being an EU country. And it has made me realize that it's very easy for us to travel around Europe as EU citizens. And not so much anymore here...well, traveling is fine. But I wouldn't say it has really affected my studies in the morning that I can think of. So I'm not really sure how to answer that.

F- That's fine, great. Thank you!

Appendix 6

Transcript of Interview 6:

F- What is your country of origin?

H- Sweden

F- Why did you choose to study in the UK?

H- I chose to study in England because I went to an American highschool and did an English speaking programme, and then I wanted to continue my studies in English and England felt like the natural choice for that.

F- Did you move to the UK specifically to study or did you live there prior to your studies?

H- Yeah, no I moved here to study.

F- How long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

H- I've been studying here for three years and I am studying the psychology programme.

F- And is that your final year or what's the situation like? Because most of the people I've interviewed are studying four year programmes.

H- Yeah it's a three year programme.

F- Do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

H- No, well not except for CSN, but nothing other than that.

F- And so do you get the increased CSN for studying abroad?

H- Yeah so I get the regular CSN and then I've taken out extra in order to pay for my tuition fees, and I've taken that every semester.

F- Is that in the way of a loan then?

H- Yeah it's a loan, but then the CSN I get is the exact same as the one you would get in Sweden.

F- Oh okay, so it's not the increased version for students studying abroad?

H- No, so it's not increased and I don't have any add-ons either which I know some people get for things like travel expenses, the only add-on I get is the one for my tuition.

F- Okay great. When will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

H- I will be done in like a month and a half. Right now it's kind of up in the air but I will take a gap year and stay here in Leeds to work, but I don't know where. I currently have a part-time job, but yeah that's like the near future.

F- What makes you want to stay in the UK?

H- Well currently it's mostly because a lot of my friends have been on a gap year and so they're coming back which makes me want to stay and have like another year in the student lifestyle. But I also feel like I enjoy staying here so...yeah I would really like to stay here but I don't know.

F- Is there anything to do with getting the settled status? Because a lot of people that I've spoken to talk about how they probably would have liked to study their masters somewhere else but don't because they will lose their settled status.

H- Yeah so that's sort of the choice I am standing in front of right now because I would like to do my masters but because tuition fees are like thirty to thirty five thousand pounds and it doesn't really feel like it's worth it to only study for a year. But it is that thing with me having pre-settled status as of right now and will have to re-apply in 2025

but I want to do my masters in Holland but I think I might delay that until I have the settled status.

F- So how long are you planning on staying in the UK after finishing your studies?

H- So at least for one year but it really depends on how things goes if I can do my masters outside of the UK and return without having any problems, so maybe between one to two years.

F- So what part has Brexit played in your decision?

H- A great deal, because my bachelors wasn't really affected because I was here prior to Brexit and so I paid the same tuition fees as home students, but now that I want to study further it becomes a problem. I also thought about doing a PhD but that would now cost me thirty thousand pounds times how many years it would take me. So yeah of course it has played a big part.

F- And so do you pay the home as a result of you coming to the UK before the effects of Brexit were put in place?

H- Yeah so i started studying in the fall of 2020 and the effects didn't kick in until January first of 2021. So I was really a part of the last quota of pre-Brexit students.

F- Would you have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the UK?

H- Yeah I mean it would have been a completely different situation.

F- Do you think you would have left to do your masters somewhere else and then been more inclined to return to the UK?

H- No I don't think so as my plan has always been to return to England as psychology is a very special as if you want to become a licensed psychologist you have stay within the NHS, so I couldn't return to Sweden and start practicing there or do it the other way around, so you get quite bound to one country. I currently don't anything right now and so I have to finish my masters in order to get a job so that I can finish my practice. So if I could decide without thinking about the cost of studying I would have stayed here to do my masters, but now I feel like I have to go somewhere else in order to be able to stay here in the long run.

F- Right, and so have does that work out, because you're not allowed to be outside of the UK for more than six months per year right?

H- Yeah so that's the problem right, so the alternative is that I can do my masters in Holland without being away for more than six months so that my pre-settled status doesn't perish then I will do that but if it doesn't work out I will work until I can apply for the settled status and then do my masters.

F- Is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying or leaving the UK?

H- Not as of right now, but I guess if like, something would happen to my family that forced me to go home. And I mean I would love to work somewhere like in Spain for example but those plans have sort of gone out the window now with Brexit.

F- Yeah and I guess it's a bit different when your line of work is that country specific?

H- Yeah definitely, I should have thought about that before when I was deciding.

F- How has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

H- Oh, well I don't feel like that's affected me that much honestly, maybe in the form that I have barely met any other EU students, but I am not sure how much that has to do with Brexit compared to just the people that I gear towards. Another thing is that this is the first year where we've had on campus tutoring, everything up until October last year was done online or through hybrid teaching. But so from all the people that I've met are barely any EU students that do their full studies in the UK, but I'm not sure if that's an effect of Brexit or if that's just the way it is. So yeah I don't really feel like I have been affected by it all that much.

F- Yeah okay great, thank you very much!

Appendix 7

Transcript of Interview 7:

F- So what is your country of origin?

Z- I'm originally from Hungary

F- And why did you choose to study in the UK?

Z- I wanted to study English, well, linguistics in general and kind of with a focus on English linguistics, and I studied it very briefly in Hungary and there is, there are some courses available that are, that are good but it felt like it would make sense to study it in an English speaking country mainly because of the amount of native speaker lecturers and tutors that I would sort of be able to learn from and then among all the options of English speaking countries, I very briefly considered somewhere like the US or Australia, New Zealand, those places are really hard to afford for the kind of background that I come from and then in between sort of UK and Ireland, I was also looking at, I suppose there was a level of prestige involved with my choice, and then also the question of where would be affordable to go. And I was in the last year of EU students who still got funding through the Scottish government. So I don't actually have to pay for tuition fee here, which is a massive difference when you're studying in the UK, obviously, it's quite expensive if you have to pay full tuition, so kind of ultimately that was one of the deciding choices, and also because I knew that I really love Scotland. So once I found out that I was accepted in to Edinburgh uni and Glasgow uni, choosing where I thought I would have a better time living, environment wise and then I chose Edinburgh. I just thought that sort of general quality of education would be better than what I would have been able to receive in Hungary, so that was the main motivation for going abroad.

F- OK, great, and so you moved to the UK basically just to study?

Z- Yeah, that was the idea, yes.

F- And so did you have to apply for a visa or anything or what was that situation like?

Z- When I moved that was just a couple of months before covid kind of came into motion or being, so I had to apply for pre-settled status at the time, but not a visa, just pre-settled

status, which I have to sort of make sure that I don't break the rules of so I can, I can hold that status until I need to move onto the next step with it.

F- And so how long have you been studying in the UK and what subject are you currently studying?

Z- So I'm just finishing my third academic year here, so I guess it's not entirely three years, but like two and a half, and I study linguistics. It's an undergraduate but an honors course, so it takes four years and I'm just finishing my third.

F- And do you have a scholarship or any other financial help for your studies?

Z- No, I don't receive any scholarships. I don't think my grades are good enough to get one. And so basically I work part time next to uni to be able to afford kind of the cost of living over here and I also receive some financial help from my family back home. So that's kind of the only way that I'm able to, be able to stay, but I don't have a student loan or anything like that, so it's just from these sources.

F- Okay, and when will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

Z- I finish in May 2024, so a year from now, and the plans have changed a lot, but at the moment, I'm hoping to stay in Edinburgh and do a master's at a different university. I'm looking to do a speech and language therapy masters. It's offered by quite a few universities around the UK, but in Scotland, I believe it's only Queen Margaret University that has it... So, I really enjoy living in Edinburgh, so I would be keen to stay here. So hopefully if I get accepted into that program, then I will stay, and that means that I would be here for at least another two years after I finish my undergrad.

F- And so what is it that makes you want to stay in the UK specifically?

Z- That's a big question. I think coming from Hungary, there is this sort of perspective for me about, you know, kind of like levels of bad in terms of like political turmoil and financial difficulty and all of that. And I'm lucky enough to come from a family that is reasonably well-situated on Hungarian standards, but still the prospects for me as a young person to kind of make a good living for myself in Hungary, it's not looking great so I wasn't very, I didn't ever really want to stay there in the long run. And after I moved to Edinburgh and especially after COVID kind of settled down, I realized that this is a really nice place to live. Obviously it has its challenges, it's very expensive. Like it's incredibly expensive to live here. And every place has its own issues, but comparatively to me, it's still a much more livable environment than where I come from. And then I feel that what I want to study is also tying me here just for a little bit longer. I could imagine staying here in the long run, or I could imagine moving away after my masters. I think that is yet to be seen.

F- Yeah. And so, how long are you planning on staying in the UK after finishing your studies approximately?

Z- I think after finishing my studies, I will probably leave for a little bit and maybe comeback after, but I could imagine, I could imagine living here in the long run later on, after having gone away for a little bit and seen some other places as well.

F- And I was just thinking with the, with the master's program, do you want to do it in the UK? Like specifically because of the quality of education, or is it, is it more of a... Because I know from talking to, to other people, they talked about sort of feeling forced to stay in the UK just to get the settled status, and then wanting to like possibly go, I don't know, to the Netherlands or something to do their masters, but it's not really worth it since they'll lose the pre-settled status.

Z- Yes, that's definitely something that has come into the, this train of thought for me as well, because I had previously intended to leave for a year after my undergrad to go and spend some time abroad, but then once I started looking into it, I realized that if I leave for, I mean, I'm sure you've heard people then already, but if you leave for more than 90 days and won't go in if you leave for more than six months in a given calendar year, then you lose that status. So I think for me, I'm not entirely sure if I do want to live here, you know, kind of in the, in the longer term, but if I do then having settled status and possibly applying for citizenship is definitely something that I would be interested in doing. So after having invested four years into my status to begin with, it feels stupid to throw that sort of time away. So I'd rather stay a little bit longer, try and get those administrative things in motion, and then consider leaving once I have a more secure status over here, because obviously the visa processes of pain. And I would like to avoid it if I can.

F- And so the next question sort of ties into the previous one and what part has Brexit played in your decision on what you want to do after studying?

Z- Well, yeah, definitely in terms of like how complicated the admin is. It has made me want to not jump around too much... trying to think in terms of my study choices I guess in a negative way, how it's impacting it is that at the moment I'm quite confused about what kind of tuition fee rules will be applying to me and that kind of thing. So it, it could turn into a negative choice if I realize that despite the settled status, I count into the international fee bracket, then I simply might not be able to afford staying here. Whereas if I count into the local bracket because of having the set of the pre-settled status, then I might be able to find a funding option that makes it possible for me to stay here, and I guess before Brexit that might have been a little bit different, but I don't have very accurate information on this at the moment.

F- Yeah, no don't worry about it

Z- Like I don't want to say anything stupid or incorrect.

F- So do you think it would have been more likely to stay in the UK had they stayed a part of the EU, in terms of having to apply for visas and stuff like that?

Z- It's a hard one because obviously in Scotland there's very... There's a lot of disdain at the whole Brexit process like there's a lot of talk about Scottish independence and rejoining the EU and all of those things. It's really hard to know because I did already know that Brexit was happening when I decided to come here. Yeah, I'm not sure how to answer that question because I'm not entirely sure how well the circumstances would be affected if Brexit was just suddenly you know non-existent. It would definitely make it

easier to commute back and forth between countries and stuff. So maybe, maybe I would be kind of like moving around a little bit more, but I think I would still, I would have similar plans in terms of wanting to stay.

F- And is there any other factor that would affect your decision on staying or leaving the UK?

Z- I suppose more personal things. My partner at the moment is living in Canada. He's from the UK, but he, he's staying in Canada just presently, and if he decides to stay there in the long run, then maybe after a master's degree, I would also go and join him there instead of staying in the UK. But equally if he decides to come back then, then we might stay here. So those sorts of personal things. I think cost of living, which has been like quite a big issue here lately, that will influence, basically, not just my decision to stay, but whether I'm just able to, because it has been quite challenging. So those kinds of factors that aren't directly related to Brexit, but maybe they are on some level. I think those, depending on how those circumstances change, that could influence my choice.

F- And then the final question is, how has Brexit affected you as an international student in the UK?

Z- I would say that it seems to me that there are... There are still a lot of international students, but I feel like the UK seems much less accessible to a lot of people now so in incoming students, at least Hungarian's I don't really know many. I'm not sure if it's the case is like European students applying less or just coming here less, but there's definitely a sense in people that I've talked to who are kind of in the process of applying for universities at the moment, that it, it seems like it might be quite complicated to come here, which is a shame because I think you still can and obviously the, the tuition fees are a big problem. I think directly for me it, it influenced opportunities of doing an Erasmus. A lot of universities during the Brexit process stopped offering Erasmus options for other UK universities. Even when that was kind of still just in the progress of happening, it was already looking too complicated admin wise so I never really even properly considered going on an Erasmus or some similar program abroad because I just thought it would be too complicated as well. So I just never bothered, and I felt like I was abroad enough already. So I didn't try. That's maybe something I would have gone for if, if it seemed, if it had seemed simpler.

F- Yeah okay, great. Thank you so much for participating!

Figure 2

Figure 2 compiles answers given in the interviews on question 2: Why did you choose to study in the UK? (Students were able to give several reasons as to why they chose to study in the UK which is why the amount of respondents does not correspond to the number of interviews made).

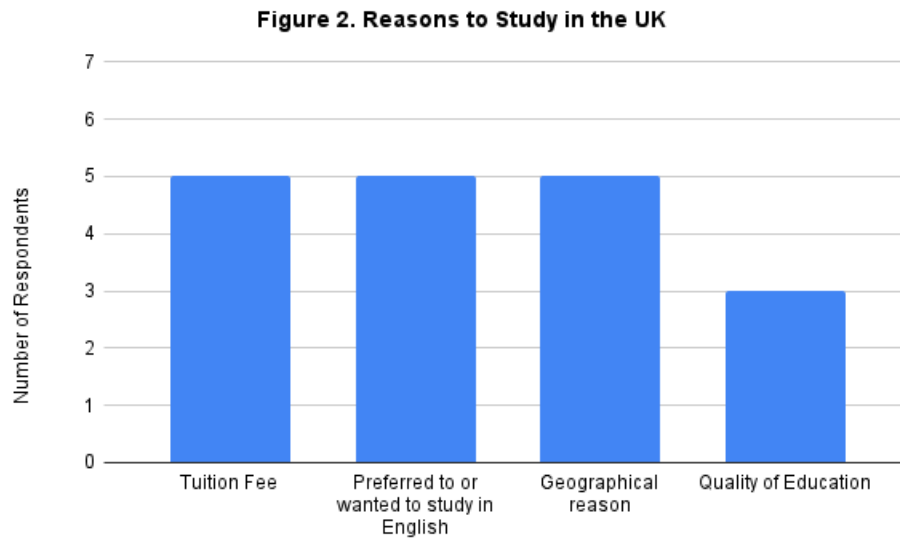


Figure 3

Figure 3 compiles answers given in the interviews on question 7: When will you finish your studies and what is your plan after finishing?

