

The Will of the People? The
Responsiveness of UK MPs During the
EU Withdrawal Process (2016-2019)

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Abstract

The impact of the 2016 EU referendum result on UK politics was as dramatic as it was unexpected. Instead of endorsing the status quo, it forced a significant change in policy direction that most of the political class disagreed with. However, this rare example of direct delegation to UK voters did little to alter the strong and persistent perceptions among them that their MPs do not care what they think. On the contrary, it appeared to exacerbate such sentiments and reinforce the beliefs of voters that their representatives are primarily motivated by other factors.

The academic literature suggests that when deciding on what policies to support MPs face a trade-off between three main influences: the demands of their constituents, their party leadership and their own consciences. Within the UK studies regularly suggest that the party line is the most reliable predictor of how an MP will vote. However, the referendum presents a unique opportunity to comprehensively test the extent of these influences that has yet to be sufficiently realised. While there have been numerous academic studies focusing on either explaining why people voted as they did at the referendum or how Parliament handled the withdrawal process in the years that followed, the extent to which the former may have influenced the latter remains understudied.

This is an important area of study given the aforementioned declining public faith in their representatives and the rarity of direct delegation to voters within the UK. This research therefore addresses this gap in the literature while also contributing to broader debates about democracy and representation within the UK. Using a mixed methods approach, the study develops and tests a tripartite model of the potential influences on MPs to determine the effect they can have on how they vote in Parliament.

The findings suggest that voter perceptions of their elected representatives are not all that far off the mark: most MPs were not directly responsive to constituency opinion and their voting behaviour was instead primarily motivated by their own beliefs and evaluations of what needed to happen. These in turn could be heavily influenced by the evaluations of MPs as to what was best for their party and their position within it. However, despite having little observable impact on how they voted in Parliament, most MPs were still responsive to constituency opinion in other ways, notably in how they framed their policy positions and actions.

In contributing these findings to the academic literature, this study therefore proposes a broader framework within which to conceptualise and test the responsiveness of MPs to constituent desires. While the findings of this research do reinforce some of the negative views voters hold about their representatives, it does offer them a broader understanding of how their opinions play into the legislative process and what influence they can actually have. This situation still raises important questions about UK democracy and the ability of political elites to effectively engage with voters and govern the country, but the findings of this study can go some way towards helping academics and practitioners better address and engage with these problems and public perceptions of them.

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Chapter One: Introduction

'The first duty of a member of Parliament is to do what he thinks in his faithful and disinterested judgement is right and necessary for the honour and safety of Great Britain. His second duty is to his constituents, of whom he is the representative but not the delegate. Burke's famous declaration on this subject is well known. It is only in the third place that his duty to party organisation or programme takes rank. All these three loyalties should be observed, but there is no doubt of the order in which they stand under any healthy manifestation of democracy.'

Sir Winston Churchill¹

The UK's style of representative democracy is not one that traditionally privileges the opinions of voters over those they elect to represent them. Elected representatives are often split into two broad categories: trustees, who use their own judgment to decide how to vote on legislation, and delegates, who follow the will of voters regardless of their own opinions. As the above quote from Churchill exemplifies, in the UK Members of Parliament (MPs) are conventionally elected to act as trustees, not delegates, and use their own experiences and judgment to autonomously determine what is in everyone's best interests. However, it has become increasingly evident in recent years that this form of representation is no longer satisfactory for many voters, if indeed it ever was. Voters frequently demand MPs who are more accountable and responsive to their desires, yet opinion polls regularly suggest that the majority have little faith in their elected representatives to

¹ Cited in King-Hall (1954)

know or care what they think, let alone represent those views in Parliament. Instead, many voters believe their representatives to be more concerned with the issue that Churchill gave the lowest priority: party loyalty. As the role of MP has become increasingly professionalised and developed into a viable career in its own right, maintaining a good standing with their party leadership has become more important for MPs and public perceptions that their representatives prefer to play party politics and advance their own careers have risen accordingly.

This disconnect between constituent desires and MP actions was highlighted by the 2016 European Union (EU) membership referendum. Given the UK's trustee style of representation referendums are not a common feature of the political system, only being proposed and occasionally used to get the public to endorse the status quo rather than set a new direction for the nation. However, this was not the case with the 2016 referendum which delivered a result that was both unexpected and unwanted by much of the political class. Historically, the issue of the UK's place in Europe was one over which Westminster was notably unresponsive to public opinion but the referendum made a continuation of that behaviour untenable. Voters had been given a rare direct say on policy direction and they expected their desires to be listened to and implemented.

Following the referendum, many MPs presented themselves as the true representatives of voters and what they wanted, while others were regularly accused of trying to block EU withdrawal and frustrate the 'will of the people'. However, to date there has been little research that tests such assertions to establish how influential constituent opinions were on MPs during the withdrawal period. Numerous studies have sought to explain why a majority of voters opted to leave the EU, while many others have examined and evaluated how the government negotiated withdrawal and how MPs debated

and argued amongst themselves over the issue. Yet there has been little research that has sought to bring these two areas together in order to determine whether giving the public a say through a referendum actually resulted in their desires being recognised and implemented. This is an important area of study in light of the declining levels of public faith in MPs and UK democracy, especially given the referendum's ostensible purpose of letting the people have their say. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this study does not seek to prescribe the extent to which constituent opinions should influence the policy positions MPs adopt, but instead provide a better understanding of what factors do influence them and why.

Using the 2016 EU referendum and subsequent withdrawal period as an illustrative example, this study addresses three fundamental issues that lie at the heart of the debates surrounding MP policy positions and their responsiveness to constituent opinions. Firstly, this thesis considers how influential constituency opinions were on MPs during the referendum and withdrawal period, and thus, whether they acted as trustees or delegates. Secondly, it tests the effects of other potentially significant influences highlighted by the academic literature and also by Churchill at the start of this chapter: these being the demands of their party leadership and their own judgements and evaluations. Thirdly, this thesis considers how the behaviours witnessed during the period studied play into broader debates about responsiveness and representation within the UK and the implications for these going forward.

This chapter introduces the study and proceeds by first discussing the background and context before explaining the gap in the literature this thesis seeks to address. It then outlines the research questions, aims and significance of the study before finally explaining the key findings of the

thesis and their broader relevance in the study and practice of representation and democracy within the UK.

1.1: Background to the Study: Responsiveness, Referendums and the 'Will of the People'

The UK's style of political representation does not encourage direct delegation by voters, traditionally privileging the opinions of elected representatives over those of the people who elect them. However, most observers of UK politics over the past couple of decades will have likely noticed a growing discontent among voters regarding the functioning of the political system. Opinion polls and surveys regularly suggest that voters want their MPs to be more directly responsive to their desires, but at the same time, studies also show that voters are more likely to believe their MP only cares about career progression and playing party politics (e.g. CSPL, 2018; Fieldhouse et al., 2020; Graham et al., 2003; Ipsos MORI, 2017). On the other hand, MPs still regularly present themselves as more balanced trustees and maintain that their actions are based on evaluations of what is best for everyone, in line with Edmund Burke's oft quoted beliefs on the matter (Burke, 1906, 1971; Mansbridge, 2011; Norton and Wood, 1993). The significant disconnect between what MPs offer, what voters want and what they perceive they get raises major concerns about democracy within the UK and the ability of political elites to effectively engage with voters and govern the country (Fiorina and Abrams, 2009; Harrison, 2019; Menon, 2019; Rosenbluth and Shapiro, 2018; Trumm, 2018; Trumm and Barclay 2021; Trumm, Milazzo and Townsley, 2020).

The issue of EU membership is one over which MPs have often been regarded as unresponsive to voter desires. The UK public have never looked upon the EU particularly favourably, but even as they began to shift from indifference

to animosity, the UK political class were not especially concerned. Hostility towards the EU was not taken all that seriously, with much of it being dismissed as a proxy for domestic political discontent (Anderson, 1998; Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Vasilopoulou, 2013; Ziller and Schübel, 2015). Even when politicians pandered to such hostility or scapegoated the EU for unpopular policies and decisions, most never seriously advocated the UK should leave the organisation altogether (Daddow 2015; Fontana and Parsons, 2015; Hertner and Keith, 2016; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013). Although growing, hostile sentiments towards the EU generally remained on the periphery of UK politics for many years until the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) managed to successfully link them to issues of more salience, such as immigration and public service provisions (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015; Tournier-Sol, 2015). Eventually the issue of EU membership became one of the most prominent in the country, leading David Cameron's promise of a referendum to settle the issue.

However, given the trustee notions heavily embedded within UK politics, referendums are not a common feature. When they have been proposed and occasionally used, the primary motivation was to get the public to endorse the status quo rather than usher in a new policy direction. The 2016 EU membership referendum was no exception, with the all the talk of it being 'time for the British people to have their say' (Cameron, 2013) providing a thin veil for what was primarily an attempt to nullify the electoral threat posed by UKIP and settle disputes within the Conservative Party (Bale, 2018; Smith 2018; Qvortrup, 2018). However, instead of endorsing the status quo this referendum obligated the political class to implement a dramatically different policy direction, one which the majority of MPs did not support. The subsequent two and a half years were a tumultuous period in UK politics and saw further declines in public faith in their elected representatives. Despite

having been given a rare, direct say on policy direction, many voters did not feel listened to or represented in the post-referendum debates. While some MPs presented themselves as fighting for the 'will of the people', others were accused of trying to overrule the referendum result or attempting to leave the EU in name only.

Although the UK political system does not traditionally encourage MPs to act as delegates, winning votes and getting elected requires politicians to offer policies that voters want (Downs, 1957; Froio, 2016; Schmidt and Thomasson, 1997). The desire to achieve political office should therefore encourage MPs to act as delegates to some extent, especially when constituent opinions are unambiguous (Broockman and Skovron, 2013; Schneider, 2020; Wratil, 2018). However, whether it is EU membership or other issues, MPs are routinely observed to support policy directions their constituents do not (e.g. Bafumi and Heron, 2010; Fiorina and Abrams, 2009). While some studies have suggested this is because politicians are primarily influenced by their own opinions (Canes-Wrone, Herron and Shotts, 2001; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1997; Page and Shapiro, 1983), studies of the UK instead show that the party line is the most reliable indicator of which lobby an MP will go through, even when it is a free vote, where MPs have the ability to determine their own position (e.g. Cowley and Stuart, 1997, 2010; Plumb and Marsh, 2011, 2013; Plumb, 2013, 2015; Raymond and Overby, 2016). However, while one of these three influences will often be stronger than the others, they can all play a role, and thus, MPs often face a trade-off between them, having to find the right balance between the demands of their constituents their party and their own conscience (Müller and Strøm, 1999).

The 2016 EU membership referendum and subsequent withdrawal period, therefore, present a unique opportunity to analyse how MPs attempt to find

this balance and which of these influences carries more weight. Constituent preferences were relatively unambiguous following the referendum and several pieces of withdrawal legislation presented MPs with the opportunity to be responsive to them. Moreover, given the salience of the issue MPs could expect to be under closer scrutiny than most policy issues and may not have been able to default to acting as a trustee. Thus, if MPs do have any predispositions towards acting as a delegate, this would be the issue over which they could demonstrate it and do so in a manner that can be captured by empirical analysis.

1.2: The Research Problem: Assessing the Influence of Constituency Opinions

Despite the 2016 referendum providing a rare opportunity to test the extent to which constituency opinions influence the policies MPs support, this area of the literature is, at present, understudied. Unsurprisingly, the referendum has drawn significant attention from academics and numerous studies have tried to explain various aspects of the process, but very few have assessed the extent to which MPs were truly interested in representing 'the will of the people'.

Studies on constituent policy preferences have largely focussed on why people voted as they did at the 2016 referendum, either looking at the effectiveness of the different campaigns (e.g. Agnew, 2020; Zappettini, 2021) or the demographic factors that affected how someone might vote (e.g. Curtice, 2020; Cutts et al., 2020; Flinders, 2020). Those studies that have examined how MPs acted have focussed on Westminster, analysing parliamentary debates, intra-party disputes and bargaining over EU withdrawal (e.g. Alexandre-Collier, 2020 and 2021; Martill and Staiger, 2021; Russell, 2021).

The current academic literature therefore provides robust explanations for why constituents voted as they did in 2016 and for how the withdrawal process played out in Parliament. However, these two areas of study have remained largely separate, with little focus on how the positions of MPs related to what their constituents voted for in 2016. Thus, the objective of this thesis is to address this gap in knowledge and provide a robust understanding of the extent to which constituency opinion influenced MPs vis-à-vis their own judgements and party loyalty. This is an important area of study given the declining public faith in UK politicians and the rarity of referendums and direct delegation by voters in the UK political system.

1.3: Research Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to provide an empirical examination of the trustee-delegate dynamic within UK politics using the 2016 EU membership referendum, both as a case study within its own right and as an illustrative example of the dynamic within the UK more generally. This study does not seek to place value judgements upon the potential influences on MPs, nor does it try to prescribe which should be of more importance to how they vote in Parliament. Instead, against a backdrop of declining public faith in their MPs and how they are represented, this thesis analyses which factors do affect MPs' positions and why this is so.

The referendum provides a good case study with which to test the responsiveness of MPs to constituent demands for two main reasons. Firstly, unlike most policy issues within the UK, the referendum provided significant and comprehensive data points to facilitate such analysis. The initial policy preferences of constituents and MPs were relatively unambiguous, as were MP policy stances following the referendum. Moreover, such data is not limited to particular constituencies, areas or time periods. The referendum

provided an extensive reading of constituent and MP preferences across the whole of the UK at the same point in time, allowing for a broader and more robust analysis than has previously been possible for most policy issues. Secondly, the referendum was highly salient and divisive. Unlike many votes within Parliament, MPs had a clear idea of what their constituents wanted and knew that voters were likely to know and care how their representatives voted. Thus, if MPs have any predispositions towards acting as a delegate and moving into alignment with the opinions of their constituents, the issue of EU withdrawal would be a likely time for them to do so.

While the referendum itself was a unique event deserving of significant analysis, it also serves as an illustrative example of the trustee and delegate dynamic within UK politics more broadly. Polls and surveys regularly show that voters feel their MPs do not really know what they think on policy issues or even care to find out, and such sentiments were highly prominent throughout the referendum and withdrawal periods. This point in UK political history is, therefore, a good opportunity to test such sentiments and ascertain whether they are accurate.

To this effect, the research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the extent to which constituency opinion, as expressed in the 2016 referendum, subsequently affected MPs' policy positions on EU membership and withdrawal.
2. To explore whether MPs' own opinions and the demands of their party leadership were also important, if not more so, in influencing their stances on EU membership and withdrawal.
3. To examine how these potential influences play into broader themes of MP responsiveness within UK politics and public perceptions of these.

The primary focus of this thesis is MPs who were out of alignment with their constituents over the referendum result. These MPs subsequently had the ability to be responsive to constituent desires and bring themselves into alignment at several key votes in Parliament, either supporting or opposing EU withdrawal². Using the existing literature on MP responsiveness, five hypotheses are developed to test the different potential influences on their policy positions. The hypotheses are then tested using a mixed methods approach. Initially, the whole population of out of alignment MPs are examined quantitatively before these findings and hypotheses are examined in more depth in subsequent chapters with the use of qualitative case study analysis. To facilitate this, MPs are split up into four groups based on how they and their constituents voted at the referendum. Group 1 consists of remain-supporting MPs who subsequently supported EU withdrawal legislation in Parliament, while Group 2 contains remain-supporting MPs that did not. Group 3 is comprised of leave-supporting MPs who voted against withdrawal legislation, while Group 4 features leave-supporting MPs who voted in favour of it. Two representative MPs from each of the four groups are then examined through an objective and systematic thematic analysis of their communications during the time period studied, revealing how they explained and justified their actions and votes in relation to their constituents, their parties and their own beliefs.

1.4: Key Findings

The analysis presented in the subsequent chapters leads to five key findings regarding the influence of constituency opinions on MP policy positions relative to other potential factors. The first key finding of this study is that the desires of constituents are not a strong influence on how MPs vote in

² For more detail on MP case selection, See Chapter Three, Section 3

Parliament. Even after giving voters a rare direct say on policy direction via the referendum, MPs did not reliably base their positions on what constituents wanted and still viewed themselves as trustees, regardless of how strong local sentiments were. The referendum result did force a change in national policy direction, legitimising the stances of those MPs who had long supported leaving and forcing many of those who wanted to remain to support a policy they disagreed with. However, whether they had initially backed leaving or remaining, the policies MPs subsequently supported closely reflected their own beliefs for what should happen next, deciding for themselves what leaving the EU entailed. While the referendum did leave the specific requirements of withdrawal open to interpretation, the MPs studied did not defer to their constituents when it came to resolving this dilemma.

Following on from this, the second key finding of this study is that MPs do still take constituent opinions into account, even if these do not ultimately influence the way they vote in Parliament. Instead, constituent desires can affect how comfortable MPs are in discussing their actions and how they frame their policy positions when they do. During the withdrawal process, most MPs were not overtly dismissive of constituent opinions and often took the time to engage with them and show they valued their input, even if in practice they had little intention of changing their stance in response to local beliefs. Depending on their perceptions of local attitudes, an MP may have tried to avoid the withdrawal issue altogether if they felt little would be achieved by broadcasting their stance too fervently. Conversely, if they felt there might be scope to bring constituency opinion into alignment with their own many would try to do just that, convincing people of the merits of their stance or demonstrating that it was conducive to what voters wanted. While this finding does little to counter popular sentiments among voters that their

representatives are not directly responsive to their desires, it does show that constituent opinions do not always fall on deaf ears and many MPs take more interest in local attitudes than they are given credit for.

Thirdly, the safety of an MP's seat is found to have little influence on how willing they are to act as delegates for what their constituents want. The results of the analysis show that MPs who face the very real prospect of losing their seat at the next election are no more likely to move into alignment with the demands of their constituents than MPs who can effectively take re-election for granted. In some instances, the majority enjoyed by an MP did influence the way they framed their actions, with those in more precarious positions putting in more effort to engage with local opinions and present their actions in the best light. Nonetheless, some MPs in safe seats were observed to be just as diligent in this respect, while other MPs in marginal seats could be quite dismissive of local opinions. Seat majorities, therefore, had no consistent effect on how MPs voted or how they tried to present their actions.

Fourthly, the influence of an MP's political party on their policy positions is found to be significant. Few MPs openly attributed their stances to such loyalty, but the influence was evident from their actions. Several of the case study subjects closely adhered to the party position, even if it contradicted their own stated policy preferences. However, the case studies also demonstrate that MPs are not necessarily passive in this process and often follow the party line because they want to, seeing it as the best way to achieve their own policy goals rather than just an opportunity to improve their career prospects. While the case study MPs sometimes faced trade-offs between what they wanted and what their party expected, they ultimately voted as they did because it was conducive to what they felt was the best course of action. Moreover, many of the case study subjects were

willing to rebel against the party line if such compromise was not agreeable to them. While the influence of party is therefore, strong, it is not always decisive, and thus, personal preferences of MPs should not be discounted entirely.

The fifth key finding is that an MP's length of service does not necessarily make them more or less likely to support the party line. The majority of MPs studied voted as their whips instructed them to irrespective of how long they had been in office. However, similar to the effect of constituency opinions, the way in which MPs present their stances can be influenced by how long they have been in office. Newer and more ambitious MPs are observed to be more likely to quietly follow the party line, while longer tenured colleagues might be more vocal if they disagree with their leadership. Although these longer-tenured MPs ultimately fell into line at the relevant votes, they often felt comfortable enough in their positions to make it clear they were not particularly happy about doing so. Although several of the case study MPs did become more independent and rebellious as they entered the twilight of their careers, such behaviour cannot solely be attributed to this because it was their determination to follow alternative policy directions that brought about their impending retirements.

These key findings contribute to both the academic debates and public discourse surrounding the trustee and delegate dynamic within UK politics. With regards to the academic literature, this study provides support for the regular assertion that the party line is often the most reliable predictor as to how an MP will vote. However, the case studies also demonstrate that the agency of individual MPs should not be underestimated, with the issue of EU withdrawal being one over which many were willing to rebel and act independently. While MPs may not be willing to defy the party line at more 'routine' votes, it demonstrates that MPs have the capacity to do so when

they believe the stakes are high enough. Moreover, those that do adhere to the party line may not necessarily do so out of blind loyalty. Instead, they may see it as the best way to achieve their own policy ambitions, as opposed to being primarily concerned with party loyalty and career advancement. These findings highlight a complex interplay between the personal opinions of MPs and the demands of their leadership that is deserving of further study and consideration. They also demonstrate the benefits of using a mixed methods approach, combining more detailed, qualitative analysis with large-n quantitative studies to provide a more nuanced understanding of how MPs behave.

Regarding public perceptions, the findings of this study suggest that the public's concerns are not entirely unfounded. When it comes to how they vote in Parliament, MPs are not particularly responsive to what their constituents want and do appear more focussed on their own careers and party politics. However, the findings also suggest that the situation is not quite as bleak as many voters perceive it to be. Many MPs do care what their constituents think and will respond to it, albeit not in the manner that many constituents would like or that the academic literature generally looks for. Instead, responsiveness is more likely to be seen in the way MPs frame their behaviour, using knowledge of constituency opinions to present their actions in a more favourable light or to avoid doing so entirely. Public and academic understandings of responsiveness could therefore benefit by moving beyond a focus on voting behaviour. Nonetheless, this style over substance and lack of voting congruence is still problematic, with the disconnect between voters and representatives raising serious questions about the functioning of democracy within the UK and the ability of political elites to effectively engage with voters and govern the country.

However, the findings of this study could still prove useful to voters in two respects. Firstly, this thesis can help voters to better understand just what influence their opinions have on policy direction and aid people to navigate their relationship with their MPs and the political system accordingly. Secondly, the findings of this study could go some way towards countering the negative public perceptions of MPs. While opinion polls regularly suggest that voters believe their MPs to be self-serving and unprincipled, this study shows that this is not always the case. Many MPs were prepared to put their careers on the line in order to support the withdrawal policies they believed were best for the UK, not just for themselves or their career prospects. While voters may not agree with the stances such MPs took, the fact that many MPs were prepared to put principle before career should be acknowledged and hopefully provide some comfort to voters about the intentions and motivations of their elected representatives.

1.5: Thesis Structure

The next chapter of this thesis begins by highlighting the UK public's growing discontent with their elected representatives and shows that the issue of EU membership has long been one over which MPs were unresponsive to constituent opinions. The existing literature on how MPs form their policy positions is reviewed, highlighting what the key influences on this are believed to be. It then discusses how referendums are a rare occurrence in UK politics, usually only being proposed and used to endorse the status quo, and thus, showing why the 2016 referendum result created a problematic situation for many MPs, but a unique opportunity for academic research into MP-Constituent responsiveness.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework of this study. The use of a mixed-methods approach is justified and the research design explained.

Hypotheses are developed to facilitate the investigation and the choice of parliamentary votes and MPs for analysis are also explained and justified.

Chapter Four presents the quantitative analysis. This chapter examines how the out of alignment MPs voted at the referendum and at the key pieces of legislation chosen in the preceding chapter. Statistical analysis is used to assess the effects of an MP's constituency opinion, party leadership and own evaluations on their policy positions at these votes. This chapter, therefore, serves as the first test of the theories and hypotheses outlined in the thesis.

Chapters Five through Eight present the qualitative analysis of this study. MPs are split into four groups based on how they and their constituents voted at the referendum and how they subsequently voted in relation to EU withdrawal. Each chapter studies two representative MPs from each group, using an objective and systematic thematic analysis to reveal how they explained and justified their behaviour and votes in relation to their constituents, their parties and their own beliefs. Chapter Five analyses remain-supporting MPs who subsequently supported EU withdrawal legislation in Parliament, while Chapter Six looks at remain-supporting MPs that did not. In both chapters, the MPs represented constituencies where the majority of voters opted to leave the EU. Shifting the focus to constituencies that voted to remain, Chapter Seven looks at leave-supporting MPs who voted against withdrawal legislation in Parliament, while Chapter Eight analyses leave-supporting MPs who consistently voted in favour of it.

Finally, Chapter Nine presents the key findings and conclusions of the thesis, bringing together the discussion of the previous chapters and presenting the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and their broader impact and significance.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

'There is no job description for an MP. Each represents a constituency and how they do so is shaped by their own interpretation as well as by the expectations of constituents.'

Lord Norton³

Parliamentary democracy within the UK relies on an implicit trust between voters and their chosen representatives. Traditionally MPs are elected to act as trustees, using their own experiences and judgements to decide what is in the best interests of their constituents. However, as will be shown in this chapter, the modern UK electorate has little faith in their MPs to act in such a way and are increasingly vocal in their demands for more directly representative politicians. These attitudes have been particularly evident during debates regarding the UK's membership of the EU. While most MPs were generally in favour of remaining a member state prior to 2016, the public had become increasingly hostile towards UK participation in the EU. Referendums are scarcely used in UK politics, not being compatible with the trustee notion of representation that underpins it. However, it was hoped that the 2016 referendum would provide the political class with the justification to maintain their preferred policy of continued cooperation with the continent. This backfired, and instead the referendum put many MPs in an uncomfortable position, pressuring them to act as delegates for a policy direction they had openly opposed.

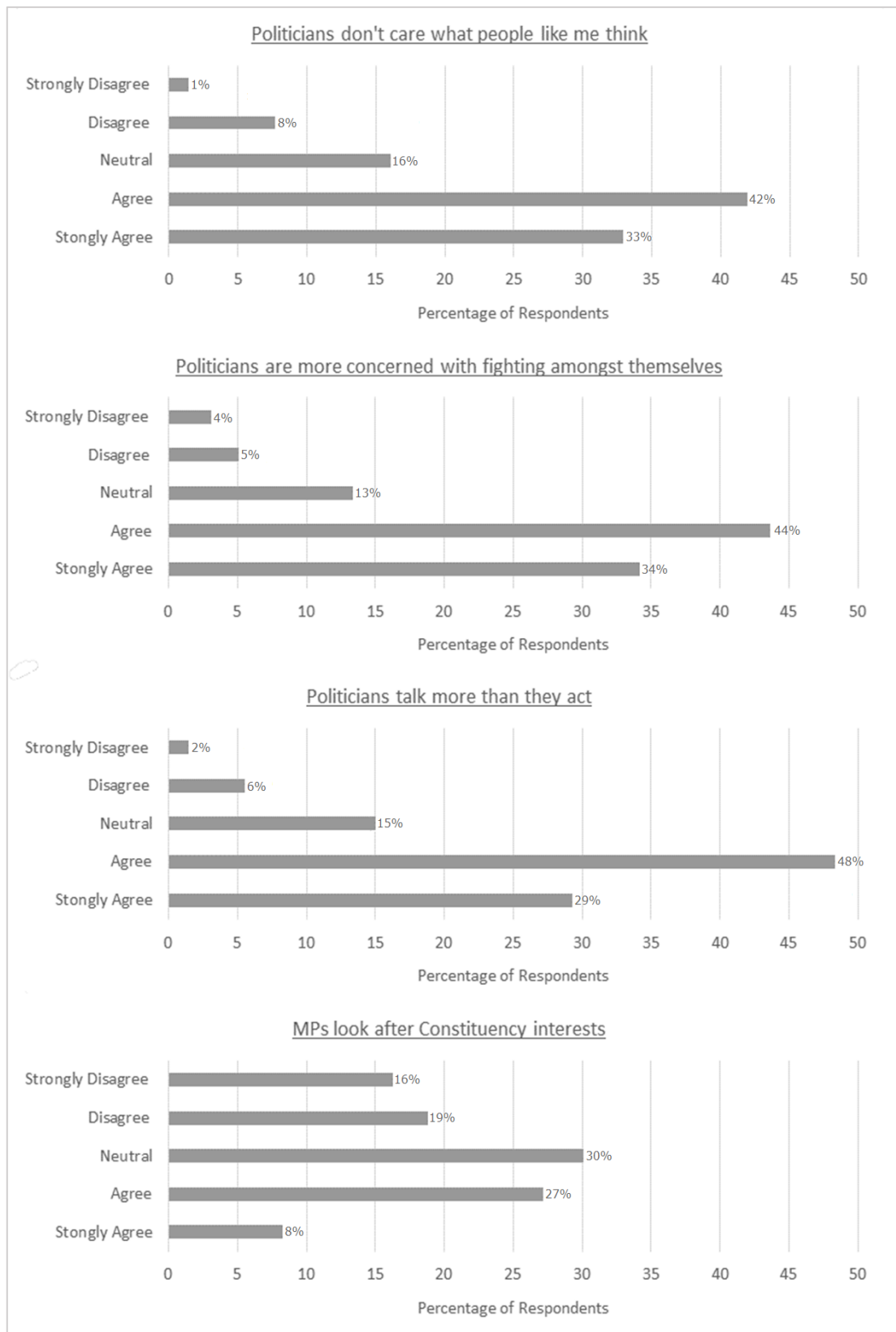
³ Norton (2021)

2.1: 'The Will of the People': The UK Public's Declining Trust in MPs

Parliamentary democracy within the UK depends on an implicit trust between voters and their elected representatives, but in recent years it has become clear that the relationship between the two has broken down. Contemporary events such as EU withdrawal and the 2009 expenses scandal have dealt a severe blow to public trust in MPs (Allen and Birch, 2012; Flinders and Anderson, 2019; Pattie and Johnston, 2012; Vivyan, Wagner and Tarlov, 2012; YouGov, 2019), but overall this lack of faith is not a new development. Data from the British Social Attitudes survey (Lee and Young, 2013) and polling by Ipsos MORI both show that public faith in MPs has been consistently low, with only 17% of people in 1983 trusting politicians to tell the truth compared to just 19% in 2021 (Ipsos MORI, 2021). In comparison, 43% of respondents said they would trust bankers, while 52% would trust TV news readers and 60% would trust the average person in the street (Ipsos MORI, 2021). The 2019 British Election Study survey saw nearly 59% of respondents claim they had little to no trust in MPs while only just over 15% said they trusted the government to do what is right most or all of the time (Fieldhouse et al., 2020).

Figure 2.1 uses data from the 2019 British Election Study to provide a more detailed breakdown of public perceptions of UK politicians, showing how strongly those surveyed agreed or disagreed with statements relating to MP motivations. The data shows that for most respondents, there is a distinct lack of trust in politicians to represent the desires of the general public and their constituents. According to the survey, 75% of those questioned believed their MPs did not care what they thought on issues compared to only 9% who believed that they did, with 78% of those surveyed believing that their elected representatives would rather play party politics than represent the public's best interests (Fieldhouse et al., 2020).

Figure 2.1: BES Data on UK Public Attitudes About Politicians in 2019



Source: British Election Study (Fieldhouse et al., 2020)

These low-levels of public faith in their MPs combined with the increased levels of anti-establishment rhetoric and rising support for populist parties suggests a growing problem within UK politics (Clarke et al., 2016; Dommett and Temple, 2020; Pedersen and Pedersen, 2020; Watts and Bale, 2019). While such sentiments are by no means unique to the UK (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; World Economic Forum, 2020), they still raise concerns about democracy within the UK and the ability of political elites to effectively engage with voters and govern the country (Fiorina and Abrams, 2009; Harrison, 2019; Hart, 2010; Menon, 2019; Trumm, 2018).

Research suggests that constituents are increasingly demanding MPs that are responsive to their wishes (e.g. Campbell et al., 2019; Johnson and Rosenblatt, 2007; McKay, 2020; Vivyan and Wagner, 2012), with one study finding that parliamentary candidates who forego their own policy preferences and adopt those of their constituents are 20% more likely to be chosen at the ballot box (Vivyan and Wagner, 2015). The same research also finds that constituents want their MPs to dedicate a significant amount of time to constituency work. MPs who spend three days a week on constituency work and two days on national policy are preferred most, while MPs who spend at least two days on constituency work are strongly preferred to those who just spend one day a week on local issues (Vivyan and Wagner, 2015).

However, studies and opinion polls also regularly suggest that most voters have little faith in their representatives to actually be receptive to their desires and put in regular effort at the constituency level. In early 2019 as the UK should have been making its final preparations to leave the EU, one study suggested that 82% of the public felt that British politics was 'broken' compared to only 9% who thought it was working fine (YouGov, 2019). In conjunction with this, it is perhaps not surprising that 79% of respondents

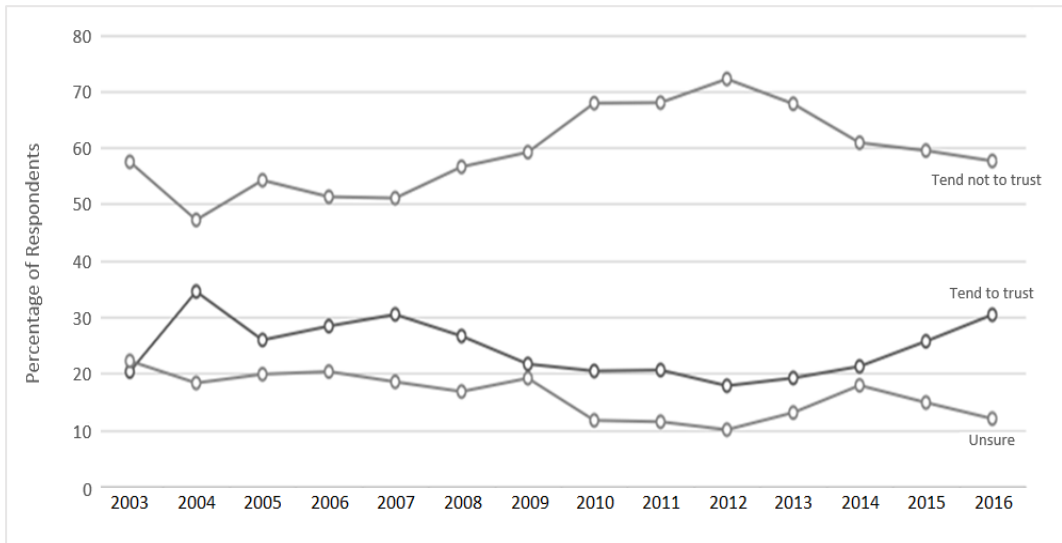
to the 2019 British Social Attitudes Survey felt that the UK political system and style of representation needed to change (BSA, 2022). This situation has not improved significantly since the conclusion of the withdrawal negotiations, with subsequent surveys suggesting that less than a third of UK voters believe their MPs are willing to be responsive to their views on national policies, with just over half thinking it was unlikely MPs would respond to them at all (ONS, 2022).

2.2: The Reluctant European: Euroscepticism and an Unresponsive Legislature

If there is one issue that best reflects the disconnect between the desires of voters and the actions of MPs, it is the question of the UK's membership of the EU. Indeed, the fact that the overall result of the 2016 referendum came as a shock to many within the UK political establishment is seen to show just how out of touch many MPs were with voters (Davis, 2018). For many years the nature of the UK's role in Europe did not appear to be of great importance to many voters or MPs, with only the left-wing of the Labour Party and more recently the right-wing of the Conservative Party challenging the legitimacy of the status quo (Bale, 2006; Dorey, 2017; Fontana and Parsons, 2015).

Although it was not necessarily at the top of their list of concerns, the EU was certainly in voters' consciousness, and overall their perceptions were not positive (Vasilopoulou, 2016). The UK public has consistently been the most Eurosceptic electorate in the EU since the UK joined the group in 1973 (Hobolt, 2016) and Figure 2.2 displays Eurobarometer data highlighting how the UK public's trust in the EU had been consistently low for many years prior to the 2016 referendum.

Figure 2.2: UK Public Trust in the European Union



Source: Eurobarometer (2016)

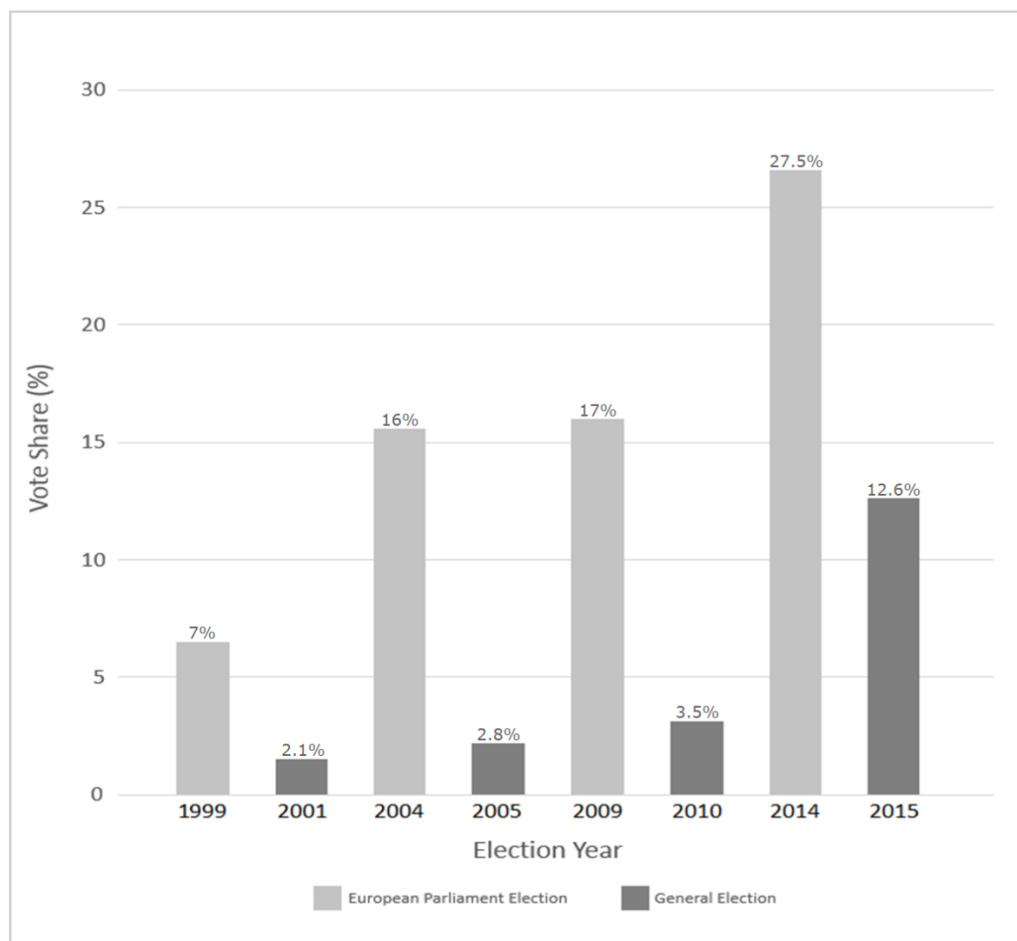
Despite these public sentiments, most of the UK political class remained supportive of the UK's membership of the EU, leading many observers to remark that this was an issue over which MPs were particularly unresponsive towards public opinion (e.g. Carl, Dennison and Evans, 2019; Hellström, 2008; Sanders and Toka, 2013; Steenbergen, Edwards and de Vries, 2007). Even after the referendum, many MPs were still unwilling to yield to public opinion, seeing it as less well informed than their own views (HC Deb 12th October 2016, Col.371).

Although highest in the UK, public disdain for the EU was common across the continent. As such, it was often not treated seriously, being seen as little more than a passing phenomenon and the inevitable 'grit in the system' that occurs when political institutions are developing (Usherwood and Startin, 2013, p.2). Many argued that the 'Euroscepticism' exhibited by the public could not be considered as genuine opposition to the EU because public knowledge of its processes was low, so it was simply an expression of domestic political discontent (Leconte, 2010). The increasing public support for parties like UKIP was dismissed as 'proxy' protest votes against the

political establishment (Anderson, 1998; Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Ziller and Schübel, 2015), with electoral success only being witnessed in 'second order' elections to local government or the European Parliament rather than Westminster (de Vreese et al., 2006; Vasilopoulou, 2013).

Figure 2.3 shows that for many years these presumptions seemed to hold true within the UK context, with parties such as UKIP being far more successful in 'second order' elections than in general elections. Even when UKIP decisively won the 2014 European Parliament elections, the view that the outcome was voters using domestic politics as a 'proxy' to show dissatisfaction with domestic issues persisted. Notably, David Cameron blamed the result on a 'disillusioned' public and claimed that their message was 'received and understood' (BBC News, 2014).

Figure 2.3: UKIP Vote Share at European and General Elections



Sources: LSE (2014) and BBC News (2015)

In reality, UKIP had managed to tap into something that voters cared about but felt other political parties were ignoring. The leadership of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties were all largely pro-European and were not particularly responsive to growing public hostility towards the EU (Carl, Dennison, and Evans, 2019; Hellström, 2008; Sanders and Toka, 2013; Steenbergen, Edwards and de Vries, 2007). Both the Conservative and Labour parties had their Eurosceptic contingents on the right and left of the parties, respectively (e.g. Bale, 2006; Daniels, 1998; Dorey, 2017; Prosser, 2014), but these MPs were on usually the periphery and not given much credence (Evans, 1998; Fontana and Parsons, 2015; McAllister and Studlar, 2000).

Prior to Theresa May in 2016, no British Prime Minister had ever proposed that the UK should leave the EU. However, the majority of the political class had never seriously attempted to challenge the strong notion of 'outsiderness' that underpinned the UK's status as a reluctant partner in Europe either (Daddow, 2015, p.85). The mainstream political parties recognised the growing public hostility towards the EU but did not act on it in any meaningful way, changing their language more than their policies. For example, the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats maintained their pro-EU stance, but were hesitant to praise it too fervently in case it cost them at the ballot box and thus often talked about the need for reforms (Daddow 2015; Hertner and Keith, 2016; Schnapper 2015; Vail 2015). Moreover, successive governments would try to capitalise on public hostility towards Europe to win support or to use it as a scapegoat for unpopular or failed policies (Daddow 2015; Fontana and Parsons, 2015; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013; Toshkov and Kortenska, 2015). Substantive forms of representation require there to be genuine congruence between the policy preferences of voters and the policy positions that parties adopt (Miller and Stokes, 1963).

Therefore, this 'rhetorical' responsiveness came at the expense of 'effective' responsiveness (Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008), which helps to explain why many voters felt unrepresented by their MPs.

2.3: Trustee or Delegate?: The UK System of Parliamentary

Representation

'Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays you instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion'

Edmund Burke - 1774 Speech to the Bristol electorate⁴

The preceding quote from eighteenth century politician and philosopher Edmund Burke alludes to the best explanation for why many voters feel their opinions carry little weight with their elected representatives. Burke, like many of his peers, was sceptical about the capabilities of voters, famously referring to certain sections of society as 'a swinish multitude' (1971, pp.109-110). Elected representatives can be divided into two broad categories: trustees, who use their own judgment to decide how to vote on legislation, and delegates, who follow the will of voters regardless of their own opinions.

It is the trustee notion of representation that best reflects the UK political system, with MPs traditionally being elected by their constituents to 'represent their interests and concerns in the House of Commons' (Parliament.uk, 2017). Parliament is regarded as sovereign, with direct democracy being eschewed in favour of the decisions it takes (Fox and Shotts, 2009; Rhodes, Wanna and Weller, 2009; Smith, 2016). The opinions

⁴ Burke, 1906, p.164

of elected representatives on policy issues are therefore privileged over those of the voters who elect them (Grube and Howard, 2016; Hillebrand and Irwin, 1999; Marsh and Mitchell, 1999; Matthews, 2017; Norton and Wood, 1993; Pitkin, 1967 Smith, 2016), implying a hierarchy in which MPs are more rational beings than voters, possessing more knowledge and wisdom that allows them to make the best decisions on behalf of the people (Mansbridge, 2011). This itself is often referred to as the 'Burkean' trustee notion of representation (Norton and Wood, 1993) and Burke's quote to the Bristol electors is often used in Parliament by MPs to justify their position. This included after the 2016 referendum (HC Deb 12th October 2016, Col.371), notably by Conservative MP Kenneth Clarke to justify his continuing opposition to attempts to bring the UK out of the EU (HC Deb 31st January 2017, Cols.828-831).

The trustee category can subsequently be divided into three subcategories reflecting the main potential influences on the positions MPs adopt. Should MPs act as delegates, the factors that influence their policy positions are relatively straightforward to determine: it is the views of their constituents.⁵ However, if they do indeed act as trustees as most observers and researchers suggest, then their motivations are more complex. In the academic literature, there is a consensus around Müller and Strøm's (1999) assertion that politicians acting as trustees are driven by trade-offs between three main desires: policy, office and votes.⁶ This study uses a modified version of Müller and Strøm's framework to analyse how and why MPs voted as they did at the referendum and during the subsequent withdrawal period. The seeking of policy, office and votes is seen as responding to the influences of

⁵ How this might work in practice is an area of contention amongst theorists, see Chapter Three, Section 3.2.1 for more detail on this.

⁶ See: Afonso, (2015); Aidt, Grey and Savu, (2021); Bale and Dunphy, (2011); Kam, (2009); Martin, (2016) and Moore, (2017) for just a few examples.

an MP's own beliefs, their party leadership and their constituents respectively. Each of the three goals are explored in this section. There is no consensus amongst practitioners and observers as to which of these factors should be most important to MPs, nor does this study seek to contribute to such debates and prescribe the extent to which these influences should affect the positions MPs adopt.⁷ However, the aforementioned discontent amongst voters regarding how they are represented by their MPs raises serious questions about the functioning of UK democracy. It is therefore important to understand which factors do influence the policy positions of MPs and why.

2.3.1: Vote Seeking – Winning the Support of Constituents

Winning votes is key to winning a parliamentary seat, so it is not unreasonable to suggest that many MPs would be motivated to adopt policy positions that reflect what voters want. Prior to 1911, MPs did not get paid and it was, therefore, primarily a role for the independently wealthy (Lough, 2015; Parliamentary Archives, c.2020). However, in more recent times, politics has become a viable and desirable career for a broader range of people (Barber, 2014; Cowley, 2012; Kelly, 2009). Research shows that in countries such as the UK, between 70-80% of incumbent MPs seek and secure re-election (Matland and Studlar, 2004). Thus, politicians could be expected to be particularly responsive to voter desires, especially around election times, in order to win votes and stay in office (e.g. Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan, 2017; Elling, 1982; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1997; Spoon and Klüver, 2014; Wratil, 2018).

⁷ See Chapter Three, Section 3.2.1 for more detail on this.

One of the most referenced studies on this topic is Downs (1957), who argues that voters will give their support to the political party that offers the policy position closest to their 'ideal point' for a particular issue.⁸ Politicians will therefore compete by shifting their ideological positions to bring them into closer proximity with voter desires and win the support of the 'median voter'. Within this framework, Downs essentially argues that politicians only desire to be in power and therefore policies are tools they use in order to win votes and achieve this. They have limited ideological attachment to their positions and change them as and when necessary to secure votes (Downs, 1957). A prominent example of such behaviour in recent years would be New Labour under Tony Blair, whose 'third way' (Giddens, 1998) and overall election strategy were heavily based on securing the support of the 'median voter' (Curtice, 2001; Heath, Jowell and Richards, 2019; Wickham-Jones, 2005). Similar to what Downs envisioned, Blair viewed political parties as flexible organisms that could use focus groups to find out what voters want and adapt their policies accordingly (Gould, 2011).

The shifting of policies in response to changes in public opinion has been termed 'dynamic representation' (Stimson, Mackuen and Erikson, 1995), and studies have shown that it occurs more often than voters believe (e.g. Baughman, 2004; Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan, 2016; McMenamin, 2020; Raymond, 2017; Schmitt and Thomassen, 2000). Indeed, Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan (2017) suggest that while personal and party pressures do exert a strong influence on MPs' positions, the effect of constituency opinions is far from negligible and MPs are indeed responsive to them. However, it may sometimes appear that MPs are not listening to voters because responsiveness of this nature involves a time-lag. Changes

⁸ See Miller and Stokes (1963); Page and Shapiro (1983); Canes-Wrone, Herron and Shotts, (2001); Jacobs and Shapiro (2000); Hobolt and Klemmensen (2008) for just a few examples.

in public opinion can occur at any time and be communicated within a short time frame, but changes in policy may only be possible around election time (Werner, 2019). MPs are elected on a particular policy platform and then feel obliged to enact these policies once elected, having been given a 'mandate' by the voters to do so (Schmidt and Thomasson, 1997). In such mandate-based models of representation, the views and interests of voters are seen to determine the political behaviour of their representatives, with elections being the principal mechanism for this translation of citizen preferences into public policy (Belchior, 2010; Froio, 2016; Hofferbert and Budge, 1992). Between elections politicians are, therefore, focussed on implementing the policies they promised to, while still anticipating what voters will desire of them at the next election (Mansbridge, 2011).

Moreover, other research suggests that MPs may be unresponsive to voter desires simply because they may be unaware of what people want and normally do not place much value on actually ascertaining what constituency opinion is on most issues (Hibbing and Marsh, 1987; Mughan and Scully, 1997; Pattie, Fieldhouse, and Johnston, 1994). Therefore, only when public opinion is relatively unambiguous do representatives appear to reliably take notice (Broockman and Skovron, 2013; Schneider, 2020; Wratil, 2018). On issues of lower salience, MPs can get away with instinctively deferring to their party leadership or using claims of expertise and privileged information to act more like a trustee. However, when voters are invested in an issue such behaviour becomes much less acceptable (Page and Shapiro, 1983; Wahlke et al., 1962). Political responsiveness to constituent desires may, therefore, be greatest when an issue is particularly salient (Lax and Philips, 2011; Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021), and in cases of large and sustained opinion change, rather than slight or temporary ones (Page and Shapiro, 1983).

2.3.2: Policy Seeking – Personal Ideology of MPs

Perhaps the most significant criticism of median-voter models, such as the one proposed by Downs, is that it underestimates the importance of policies to politicians, reducing them to little more than 'vote-buying-currency' and suggesting that it is only voters who care about them (Huber, 1999; Roemer, 1997, 2001). On the contrary, politicians have shown throughout history that they do care about policies and will push for them even if there is limited public support. For example, many nations have green parties founded on concerns for the environment (Adams et al., 2006), while UKIP was founded and continued to operate on a platform of staunch opposition to the EU, even when the issue was not all that salient with the public (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015; Whitaker and Lynch, 2011). Whilst such politicians naturally want to win as many votes as possible at elections, they also have an ideological attachment to certain policy goals and will be unwilling to significantly compromise their beliefs in order to do this. Moreover, recent research by Aidt, Grey and Savu (2021) shows that the personal opinions of MPs can be around twice as important to the positions they take compared to party and constituency concerns.

Additionally, regularly shifting policy positions could risk losing votes because it would make politicians look inconsistent and untrustworthy (Adams et al., 2004; Roemer, 2001; Tavits, 2007). Therefore, rather than shifting position on policy issues to align with voters, politicians may instead compete with each other by adapting policies within certain dimensions and selectively emphasising those aspects of their policies that are popular with voters or that they are seen to have 'ownership' of (Ezrow, De Vries and Steenbergen, 2011; Klüver and Sagarzazu; 2016; Lefevere, Tresch and Walgrave, 2015; Wagner and Meyer, 2014). Research shows that right-wing and centre leaning political parties are more likely to shift policy positions

than left-wing parties, the latter of which will normally outright refuse to (e.g. Adams, Haupt and Stoll, 2009; Ezrow and Hellwig, 2011). Historically, this has been evident within the UK Labour Party, in which the left-wing of the party have prioritised ideological purity over being in government (Bew, 2016; Morgan, 2001). Moreover, although Tony Blair believed in changing policy direction based upon the findings of focus groups (Gould, 2011), he still operated within a particular ideological dimension, adapting Labour's socialist base for contemporary issues and problems of importance to voters rather than completely abandoning it (Bevir, 2000). As such, it has been suggested that a better model of representation should see political competition as occurring between politicians, who have policy preferences that would serve to bring about their preferred society, and who thus play the game of politics in order to achieve their goals (Wittman, 1973).

There is also evidence to suggest that if politicians are either unable or indeed unwilling to shift their policy positions, they can instead try to shift the positions of voters, thus allowing them to simultaneously pursue their preferred policies and win votes (e.g. Dunleavy and Ward, 1981; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1997, 2000; Matsubayashi, 2013; Ward, 2006). Steenbergen, Edwards and de Vries (2007) describe this as a 'dual-process model', whereby politicians seek to both influence and respond to the opinions of the public simultaneously. There are numerous instances where politicians will respond to public opinion, either because they want to or because they have little choice, but at the same time political parties are in a privileged position, where they can actively attempt to influence voters' perceptions (Hobolt, 2006; Dunleavy and Ward, 1981; Flinders, 2020). On issues where the public is 'uninformed', they are likely to have weakly held preferences and by taking a stand on an issue politicians can potentially persuade their constituents to adopt the same beliefs (Carrubba, 2001). Failing this,

politicians can try to emphasise the aspects of their policies that are most appealing to voters (Budge, 2015). Perhaps the most pertinent recent example of this behaviour would be the rise of UKIP, who greatly increased their electoral support by successfully connecting their core messages about Europe to issues of much more concern to the UK public, notably immigration, and therefore, convincing voters their policies were of benefit to them (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015; Tournier-Sol, 2015).

2.3.3: Office Seeking – Party Leadership Preferences

When standing for election as an MP in the UK, most candidates do so under a particular party's banner and there are expectations of party loyalty that come with this. Thus, they are strongly motivated to adopt their policy positions based on what their party leadership decrees (Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan, 2017; Hanretty, Melon and English, 2021; Pattie, Fieldhouse and Johnson, 1994; Watts and Bale, 2019). Ambitious MPs will aim to climb the political ladder and attain ministerial positions and influence, with their chances of doing this being heavily linked with loyalty to the party leadership (Longley and Hazan, 2000). When looking to fill a ministerial position, the party leadership will consult with other key party members and carefully assess a backbencher's record and reputation (Crowe, 1986; Punnett, 1973; Rose, 1974). MPs who aspire to hold a ministerial office know this and vote accordingly, which prompted Samuel Beer to remark that 'when one makes a statistical study of party voting, the figures are so monotonously 100 per cent or nearly 100 per cent it is hardly worth making the count' (1966, p.88). Thus, it is often observed that politicians will routinely support positions that conflict with those held by many of their constituents in favour of their party leadership (Bafumi and Heron, 2010; Fiorina and Abrams, 2009).

If the potential rewards of being a loyal party member do not encourage MPs to follow the party line, there are numerous punishments for not doing so that may prove persuasive. Disloyal MPs can be cut off from party communications, meetings and support or even expelled altogether, making re-election almost impossible if standing as an independent (Crowe, 1986). At the constituency level, they could be punished by not being re-nominated for their seat by the local party association, who have ultimate control over this. These highly partisan groups often contain activist opinions more extreme than those of the party leadership itself (Butt, 1967) and party whips are not above informing an association of their candidate's disloyalty, although many members would likely be aware of it anyway (Searing, 1977). The power that local party associations hold over MPs can often influence how the latter vote in Parliament (Koop and Bitner, 2011). While some MPs may defy the party line if they do not fear repercussions, in important and whipped votes they will quickly fall back into line (Hibbing and Marsh, 1987; Overby, Tatalovich and Studlar, 1998).

However, research suggests that such punitive measures are often not necessary because most MPs are instinctively loyal to their party leadership, irrespective of their desire for reward or fear of punishment. Numerous studies find that even on 'free votes' in Parliament, where MPs are not directed by their leadership, they still largely vote in line with the rest of their party (e.g. Cowley and Stuart, 1997, 2010; Plumb, 2013, 2015; Plumb and Marsh, 2011, 2013; Raymond and Overby, 2016; Raymond and Worth, 2017). While career considerations are undoubtedly important in many votes, the fact that an MP associates with a particular party suggests that they are naturally predisposed towards its positions on policies (Hibbing and Marsh, 1987). Additionally, through a process of socialisation, many MPs become more loyal over time because they primarily associate with others

who share their ideology and that of the party leadership, thus reinforcing their beliefs and conditioning them to support the party line (Cowley and Stuart, 1997, 2010; Raymond and Overby, 2016). Additionally, many MPs may simply defer to their party leadership's directions because they have incredibly busy schedules (CSPL, 2018, pp.23-27), and they do not have the time to grapple with the details of every policy Parliament debates, or to consult with their constituents on them (Davis, 2018).

2.3.4: Finding the Right Balance

Much as Wittman (1973) suggests, MPs therefore have to 'play the game' of politics and balance their own interests with those of their party leader and their constituents. The rules of this game are largely determined by the political operating system that the parties work within (Pitkin, 1967), but the trustee underpinnings of the UK political system were put under strain by the 2016 referendum. Having been given a rare direct say on policy direction, the public expected their opinions to be listened to (Axe-Browne and Hansen, 2020; Curtice, 2019; YouGov, 2017). However, the referendum as a political tool has an uneasy place within UK politics, and as such, many MPs felt no obligation to offer a vote in the first place or to accept the result and act as delegates.

2.4: The Uneasy History of Referendums in the UK – 'A Device So Alien to All Our Traditions'⁹

Referendums are a rare and for many observers an unconstitutional aspect of UK politics, not fitting with the traditional 'trustee' notion of representation. To date, there have only been three nation-wide

⁹ Clement Attlee (cited in Churchill, 1953), see also Margaret Thatcher (HC Deb 11th March 1975)

referendums in the UK, as well as some at the local level, notably the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence (Qvortrup, 2018). The first nationwide referendum occurred in 1975 over the UK's continued membership of the EU's precursor, the European Economic Community (EEC). The second took place in 2011 and asked voters if they wanted to replace the UK's First-Past-The-Post electoral system with the 'Alternative Vote' system. The third and final referendum held so far by the UK is the now infamous 2016 referendum on EU membership. There is no constitutional requirement for referendums in the UK and none of those that have been held were intended to set a precedent. The 1975 referendum was an ad hoc response to what was believed to be a unique issue (Bogdanor, 1994), and both subsequent referendums also required their own legislation to enact (Johnson, 2016).

As discussed earlier, Parliament is sovereign in the UK and direct democracy is traditionally avoided (Grube and Howard, 2016; Matthews, 2017; Norton and Wood, 1993; Smith, 2016). Referendums have, therefore, been scarcely used and strongly opposed by many for fear of undermining parliamentary sovereignty (House of Commons, 2017; House of Lords, 2018) and forcing MPs to support policy directions they do not agree with (Bogdanor, 1994). These fears were subsequently realised for many MPs on the morning of 24th June 2016. However, prior to 2016, the fleeting discussions about referendums, and their occasional use, had been to the benefit of the political establishment.

Despite the engrained hostility towards referendums within UK politics, their use has often been theorised and promised to voters at various times by the UK political elite (Qvortrup, 2018). However, often those advocating the use of referendums did not do so out of a desire to move UK politics towards a more direct form of representation. Instead, the referendum was largely seen as a defensive weapon, with the predominant motivations of their

supporters being a desire to maintain the status quo (Bogdanor, 1994; Butler, 1978). What is seen as one of the first major endorsements of referendums in Britain came from nineteenth century constitutional lawyer A. V. Dicey, who suggested that referendums could be used as an alternative 'second chamber', a mechanism through which the 'prerogatives of the crown' could be turned into 'the privileges of the people' (1890, p.503). However, Dicey's support for the referendum did not stem from a strong belief in direct democracy, but from concerns over the incumbent Liberal Government's intention to grant Home Rule in Ireland, seeing a national referendum as a potential way to prevent this (Gay and Winetrobe, 1995). Later writers such as J.A. Hobson (1909) and L.T. Hobhouse (1911)¹⁰ would also propose the UK hold referendums. but again this was for practical rather than democratic reasons, seeing them as a way to resolve deadlocks in parliament as opposed to any desire to see MPs act more like delegates (Manton, 2011).

Despite having opposed the idea while Home Secretary, in May 1945 Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed a referendum as a way to legitimise the continuation of the wartime coalition government until the war with Japan was over (Bogdanor, 1981). He wrote to the Labour Party leader Clement Attlee that he hoped the two could continue to work together 'with all the energy and comradeship which has marked our long and honourable association' (Churchill, 1945). Attlee refused, writing in his reply that 'I could not consent to the introduction into our national life of a device so alien to all our traditions as the referendum' (cited in Churchill, 1953). In his letter, Attlee stated that the inter-war experiences of Hitler's rigged plebiscites had discredited the idea of referendums within Britain. However, the rejection of the proposal by the Labour NEC (Bew, 2016; McKinstry,

¹⁰ Republished in 1998, p.104

2019) and the fact that Labour went on to win a landslide victory in the subsequent election suggest party-political considerations were also important.

When it did eventually happen, the UK's first national referendum was no exception to the trend of political expediency winning out over democratic concerns. In 1966, when asked if he would introduce legislation to provide for a referendum should the UK be granted entry into the European Common Market (EEC), Prime Minister Harold Wilson rejected such a notion, saying that 'decisions of great moment of this kind have to be taken by the elected government of the day, responsible to this House. The constitutional position is that whatever this House decides on this matter, or any other, is the right decision' (HC Deb 14th July 1966). However, by 1975 Wilson had become a convert and actively campaigned for a referendum on EEC membership. This was not primarily due to any real desire to know how the UK public felt about it, but because he saw it as a way to see off a potential split on the issue within the Labour Party (Tierney, 2015). Cabinet member and future Prime Minister James Callaghan famously stated that the referendum would be 'a rubber life raft into which the party may one day have to climb' (cited in Butler and Kitzinger, 1976, p.12).

At the time, the Leader of the Opposition, Margaret Thatcher, was hostile to the idea of a referendum, paraphrasing Clement Attlee's statement some years earlier that 'the referendum was a device of dictators and demagogues' (HC Deb 11th March 1975). Nonetheless, like Wilson before her, Thatcher would later support the holding of a referendum when it was convenient to her aims. She initially supported a referendum to help implement her desired trade union reforms, before rejecting them as a political tool once it became clear this was not necessary (Qvortrup, 2006). Towards the end of 1990 Thatcher would once again embrace the

referendum, seeing it as a way to block the ratification of Maastricht Treaty (Wright et al., 2000). When the UK eventually held its second national referendum in 2011, the impetus was to cement the coalition government formed between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in 2010 (Tierney, 2015) and David Cameron's subsequent decision in 2013 to promise a national referendum on the UK's membership of the EU followed the same party-political precedent.

2.5: The 2016 Referendum: 'Time for the British people to have their say'¹¹

2.5.1: Cameron's Gamble

When the 2016 referendum was first proposed the primary concern, as with other UK examples, was not to discover what the public truly felt about the issue at hand or to make MPs act more like delegates. Instead, the leadership of the Conservative Party wanted to silence the very vocal anti-European faction within the Conservative party that had plagued them since the days of John Major (Bale, 2006; Dorey, 2017; Fontana and Parsons, 2015). These MPs were historically on the periphery of the party (Evans, 1998; Fontana and Parsons, 2015; McAllister and Studlar, 2000) but they were vocal enough that they helped to bring the Eurosceptic message to the mainstream after years of relatively low salience with the public (Hobolt, 2016; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013; Senninger and Wagner, 2015; Smith, 2016; Wagner and Meyer, 2014).

The prominence of EU membership debates within the public was exacerbated by UKIP who managed to win support for their anti-EU policies by connecting them to issues of far greater salience with the public, namely

¹¹ Cameron, 2013

immigration and the effects of this on issues such as social welfare (Tounier-Sol, 2015). It was noted how the public were increasingly concerned about immigration, so their chosen strategy was to 'get into people's heads that immigration and Europe are the same thing and that we [UKIP] are important' (Cited in Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015, p.40). In turn, their media presence and name-value with the public rose significantly, thus increasing their support and vote shares further (Clarke et al., 2016). UKIP became an electoral threat to the Conservative Party, and many MPs, not just those who wanted to leave the EU, feared that UKIP may split the vote enough to lose them their seats (Bale, 2018; Smith 2018). To counter this threat, David Cameron promised a referendum in 2013, with it being a central part of their foreign policy pledges in their 2015 election manifesto (Conservative Party, 2015, pp.69-73).

Figure 2.4: A Conservative Party Election Banner in 2015¹²



The promise of a referendum initially helped to keep the Conservative party together and played a role in containing the UKIP threat at the election, although the latter's inexperienced campaigning and the First-Past-The-Post electoral system also played a part (Cutts, Goodwin and Milazzo, 2017; Goodwin, 2015; Green and Prosser, 2016). However, it only solved these

¹² Source: West Midlands Conservatives (2015)

problems in the short-term. The conflict within the Conservative Party meant that collective cabinet responsibility had to be put on hold, which came as a relief to MPs such as Priti Patel, Dominic Raab, Penny Mordaunt, Andrea Leadsom and Theresa Villiers, who were pleased that they no longer had to choose between their beliefs and their careers (Shipman, 2017). However, this just served to freeze the disputes and tensions for the campaign period rather than ending them altogether (Smith, 2016).

The hope was that the public would endorse the status quo, much like they had done in the Alternative Vote and Scottish independence referendums, settling the issue and allowing the UK to remain a member of the EU. However, a victory for remaining was never a guarantee, especially after years of negative rhetoric regarding Europe from the media and aspects of the political class, combined with the lack of engagement with the issue by the latter (Startin, 2017). Nonetheless, as the polls closed on the evening of 23rd June 2016 David Cameron and his allies were confident that their gamble was going to pay off, albeit only just, holding a celebratory dinner in Downing Street (Shipman, 2017) at the same time as UKIP leader Nigel Farage seemed to be admitting defeat (Woodcock, 2016). However, only a few hours later the prematurity of these celebrations became all too apparent.

2.5.2: Explaining the Referendum Result and its Repercussions

The referendum result came as a shock to many, and there are numerous studies that seek to explain the vote to leave and its implications. Some studies examine the nature of the referendum campaigning itself (e.g. Greene, Nash and Murphy, 2021; Hönnige et al., 2020; Lee, Morris and Kemeny, 2018; Agnew, 2020), while others assess the economic, social and political implications and practicalities that leaving the EU presented to the

UK (e.g. Fahy et al., 2017; Figueira and Martill, 2020; Gamble, 2018; McConalogue, 2020; McEwen, 2021).

However, very few studies have thus far attempted to examine whether the referendum result encouraged MPs to act as delegates on the issue of EU membership. This is an important area of research, as having been given a rare direct say on policy direction, UK voters expected their demands to be enacted. Yet studies of how MPs behaved and voted during the withdrawal period have remained largely separate from studies of what voters wanted and why. The referendum presented voters with a simple binary choice, leave or remain, and the majority supported an option that 'government and parliament did not support, which was ill-specified, and which left parliamentarians to navigate the unexpected result' (Russell, 2021, p.459). Given that the nature and details of EU withdrawal were up to Parliament to decide, many studies have focused on EU withdrawal from a Parliamentary perspective, examining and evaluating how the government tried to negotiate EU withdrawal and how MPs were included in the process (e.g. Allen, 2018; Figueira and Martill, 2020; McEwen, 2021; Richardson and Rittberger, 2020). Moreover, other studies focus on the parliamentary debates, intra-party disputes and bargaining over EU withdrawal that became more visceral and divisive as the withdrawal process developed in 2018 and 2019 (e.g. Alexandre-Collier, 2020, 2021; Allen, 2018; Gamble, 2018; Xu and Lu, 2021). Therefore, research into the behaviour and voting of MPs has thus far been primarily focussed on how the government and parliament debated and disputed the withdrawal process amongst themselves. There has been little attention paid to how this related to what constituents voted for in 2016.

This is not to say that constituency opinion has been ignored, quite the contrary. There are numerous studies that try to explain why people voted

as they did in 2016 and why these views persisted throughout the withdrawal process. However, the influence of public sentiments on MP policy positions has yet to be fully explored. Some studies look at how the different referendum campaigns won peoples' votes (e.g. Lee, Morris and Kemeny, 2018; Agnew, 2020), while others have looked at potential media bias towards leaving (e.g. Greene, Nash and Murphy, 2021; Hönnige et al., 2020; Zappettini, 2021). Other scholars analyse deeper issues within UK society that made a vote to leave more likely. Such studies highlight that someone was more likely to support leaving the EU if they were older, white, working class voters without formal academic qualifications (e.g. Alabrese et al., 2019; Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018; Curtice, 2020; Flinders, 2020; Fetzer, 2019; Fox, 2021), especially if they felt left behind economically and had lost out due to austerity (e.g. Carreras, Irepoglu Carreras and Bowler, 2019; Cutts et al., 2020; Dunlop, James and Radaelli, 2020). There is also research into the effects that issues such as gender (Green and Shorrocks, 2021), religion (Kolpinskaya and Fox, 2021), geographic factors (Brooks, 2020) and the lack of a 'European identity' within UK society (Carl, Dennison and Evans, 2019) had on how people voted in 2016.

The current academic literature, therefore, provides robust explanations for why constituents voted to leave the EU and for how the process played out in Parliament. However, thus far there has been little analysis of the extent to which public desires actually influenced the withdrawal policies that MPs sought. This should be an important area of study given the rarity of referendums and direct delegation by voters in a political system that traditionally privileges the views of representatives over those of whom they represent. As the withdrawal process developed many MPs, notably those within the Conservative Party who had long supported EU withdrawal, branded 'themselves first and foremost as representatives of 'the people''

(Alexandre-Collier, 2020, p.1), yet there have been few studies that have tested such claims or the prominent sentiments among voters that certain MPs were trying to block EU withdrawal and deny them what they had voted for in 2016 (Anderson et al., 2020; Curtice, 2020; Cutts et al., 2020; Ward and McLoughlin, 2020).

This research, therefore, expands upon the limited literature that has tried to assess the impact of voter preferences at the referendum on MP actions following it. One such study by Moore (2018) examines the influences on how Conservative MPs voted in the 2016 referendum and suggests that although constituency opinion was influential on MPs, it was not as influential as party-political and ideological concerns when it came to deciding how to vote. Similar conclusions are also reached by Aidt, Grey and Savu (2021), who examine what factors influenced how Conservative MPs voted during the meaningful votes in 2019, suggesting that constituency opinions did indeed have some influence on how MPs voted, but career considerations and personal ideology appeared more important. Studies by Auel and Umit (2021), who look at the Withdrawal Bill vote of 2017, and Giuliani (2021), who analyses the Indicative Votes of 2019, broadly echo these sentiments. Although their findings place a higher importance on the effects of constituency opinion than the previous two studies, they note that their overall importance can be dampened by other influences such as the party line.

2.6: Conclusions

Traditionally, representation within the UK political system has been based on the trustee notion, whereby MPs are elected to act in the best interests of voters rather than follow their directions. However, it seems that for many voters this style of representation is not satisfactory, highlighted by a

persistent lack of faith in politics and a desire for their voices to be represented more directly. The 2016 EU referendum and subsequent withdrawal efforts have exemplified these public sentiments all too well. While on the face of it, the use of referendums in the UK have been presented as a way to enhance direct democracy, historically, their use has not been part of any precedent or desire to do so.

While the 2016 referendum was presented as a way for the people to have a direct say in the future of their country, historically, referendums have been proposed in the UK for reasons of political expediency, and this one was no different. The primary goal of the 2016 referendum was to nullify the UKIP threat to the Conservative Party and heal its long-running internal divide over Europe. Although the prospect of a referendum appeared to succeed in these goals in the short term, when the result became clear and was not the one anticipated by those who called it, many MPs were forced into a difficult position. Numerous academic studies have sought to explain why a majority of voters opted to leave the EU while many others have analysed the development of the withdrawal process within Parliament. However, few studies have tried to merge the two and explore whether the policies MPs supported were representative of what their constituents voted for. This study contributes to such understandings, with the next chapter setting out the framework with which it does this. Using the academic literature outlined in this chapter, a tripartite model is developed to assess the influence of constituency opinion, party leadership and their own evaluations on how MPs voted during the withdrawal process. Hypotheses relating to these are then developed to test this model in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three: Theory and Methods

Traditionally it is argued that social scientists 'attempt to understand the world from the subjects' point of view and unfold the meaning of their lived world' (Kvale, 2006, p.481). However, it has also been argued that many social science disciplines have skewed strongly towards quantitative research and thereby overlook the personal experiences of elite groups such as MPs (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Harvey, 2010; Lareau, 2012; LaRossa, 2012; Small, 2009; Urquhart, 2013). Studies such as those by Bevir and Rhodes (2003) and Crewe (2010, 2014, 2015, 2017) have attempted to address such criticisms and provide more personal insights into the motivations and actions of politicians by undertaking more detailed examinations of their individual experiences. However, unlike quantitative studies, these deeper analyses of political actors face practical limitations on how many cases they can realistically explore at a deeper level (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994; Lijphart, 1971; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002).

Quantitative and qualitative studies can, therefore, be perceived as different ways of examining the same research problem and by combining the two, the validity of any conclusions are enhanced if they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation (Bryman, 1988; Lijphart, 1971). Using a mixed methods approach this study tries to strike a balance between observing the overall trends in the data, while also analysing MPs as individuals. Utilising a deductive approach, this study uses the academic literature to develop five hypotheses that explain how MPs might be expected to respond to the desires of their constituents. These hypotheses are initially tested on the broader population of UK MPs using quantitative methods before being applied to representative individual MPs through qualitative case-study

analysis. Combining these two methods, therefore, provides breadth and depth to the study and allows for mutual testing and confirmation, fostering greater confidence in the validity of the findings (Webb et al., 1966).

This chapter proceeds by demonstrating why the 2016 Referendum and subsequent withdrawal process provide a suitable case with which to test the influences on MP policy positions. It then explains the rationale behind the selection of five parliamentary votes that serve as the data points for analysis and also details the reasoning behind the MPs chosen for further examination. The chapter then develops a tripartite model based on the literature highlighted previously to act as a framework for analysing the potential influences before devising five hypotheses to test the validity of this model. Following this, the creation and coding of variables for the quantitative analysis is discussed. Finally, the chapter discusses the case studies, explaining the case selection, data collection and the thematic analysis used to test the hypotheses.

3.1: The Data: Case Selection

This study uses the 2016 EU referendum and subsequent withdrawal period as an overall framework within which to test the potential influences on MP policy positions. This section explains why the referendum provides a unique and useful opportunity to test theories of MP motivations and justifies the MPs and parliamentary votes selected to facilitate the analysis.

3.1.1: Case Selection: Why EU Withdrawal?

The 2016 EU referendum and subsequent withdrawal process provide a unique opportunity to examine the trustee-delegate dynamic at the UK constituency level. Although congruence between constituent desires and the policy positions of MPs is a simple concept in theory, measuring it has

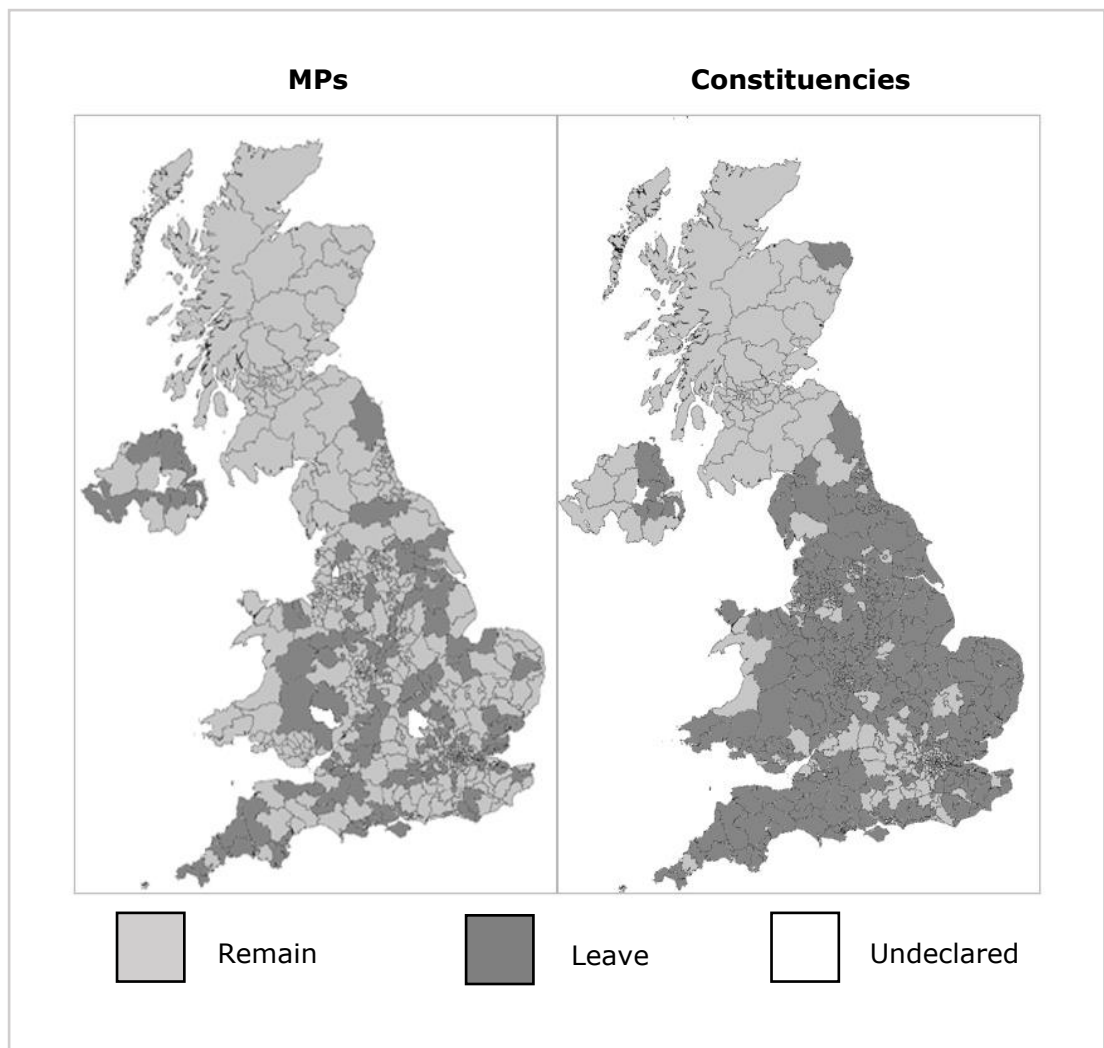
proven to be quite difficult (Broockman and Skovron, 2013; Jennings and Wlezien, 2015; Lax and Philips, 2011) and it can often be difficult to connect constituent desires to MP actions (Huber and Powell, 1994; Powell, 2009). Moreover, reliable opinion polls seldom break the data down by constituency and even if they do it is very rare to have a reading of opinions from all 650 constituencies on the same policy and conducted at the same time. However, this is not the case when it comes to the 2016 EU referendum, which can effectively be treated as a nation-wide opinion poll on a single, highly salient issue, and thus, provides a rare base point for assessing constituency opinions across the whole of the UK. Additionally, the base points for MP opinions are also known, with all but five MPs on record as stating a preference for either leaving or remaining in the EU.¹³ These ideal points can, therefore, be compared to highlight any disparities between MPs and their constituents and, where these are found, examine if those who were out of alignment with their constituents subsequently made efforts to rectify this during the withdrawal process.

Figure 3.1 breaks the UK down into constituencies and shows how MPs stated they were going to vote in the referendum compared to how the majority of their constituents are estimated to have voted.¹⁴ It clearly shows that a majority of MPs supported the UK's continued membership of the EU while the majority of their constituents favoured quite the opposite, highlighting just how out of alignment many MPs were on this issue.

¹³ Those undeclared MPs were primarily the Speaker of the Commons and his deputies

¹⁴ Results were not released at the constituency level and thus had to be estimated, see Section 3.1.3 for more details.

Figure 3.1: How MPs and Constituencies Voted at the 2016 EU Membership Referendum



Blank constituency map taken from History & Maps (2015). Data added by author using Hanretty (2016a, 2016b); BBC News (2016b); The Guardian, (2016) and MP personal websites.

Figure 3.1 demonstrates that MPs were notably more supportive of remaining in the EU than the majority of their constituents, with 75% of MPs voting to remain at the referendum compared to only 37% of constituencies. Although it was often argued that many voters who opted to leave only did so as a protest vote, or that they subsequently changed their minds (Beattie, 2017; Dearden, 2016; Lynskey, 2017), national opinion polls regularly suggested that public attitudes towards withdrawal remained fairly

consistent throughout the withdrawal period compared to how they were represented by the 2016 referendum (Curtice, 2018b, 2019; Wells, 2018). Although such polls occasionally indicated a slight increase in support for remaining, this could be due to those who did not or could not vote in 2016 now expressing an opinion, rather than those who did vote changing their minds (Curtice, 2018b). While the debates about whether public opinion shifted following the referendum are likely to be the focus of media and academic debate for many years to come, this study is built on the assumption that the referendum result was a valid reading of constituency opinion based on the evidence previously presented.

Figure 3.2: MPs who were out of alignment at the 2016 Referendum with their Constituents

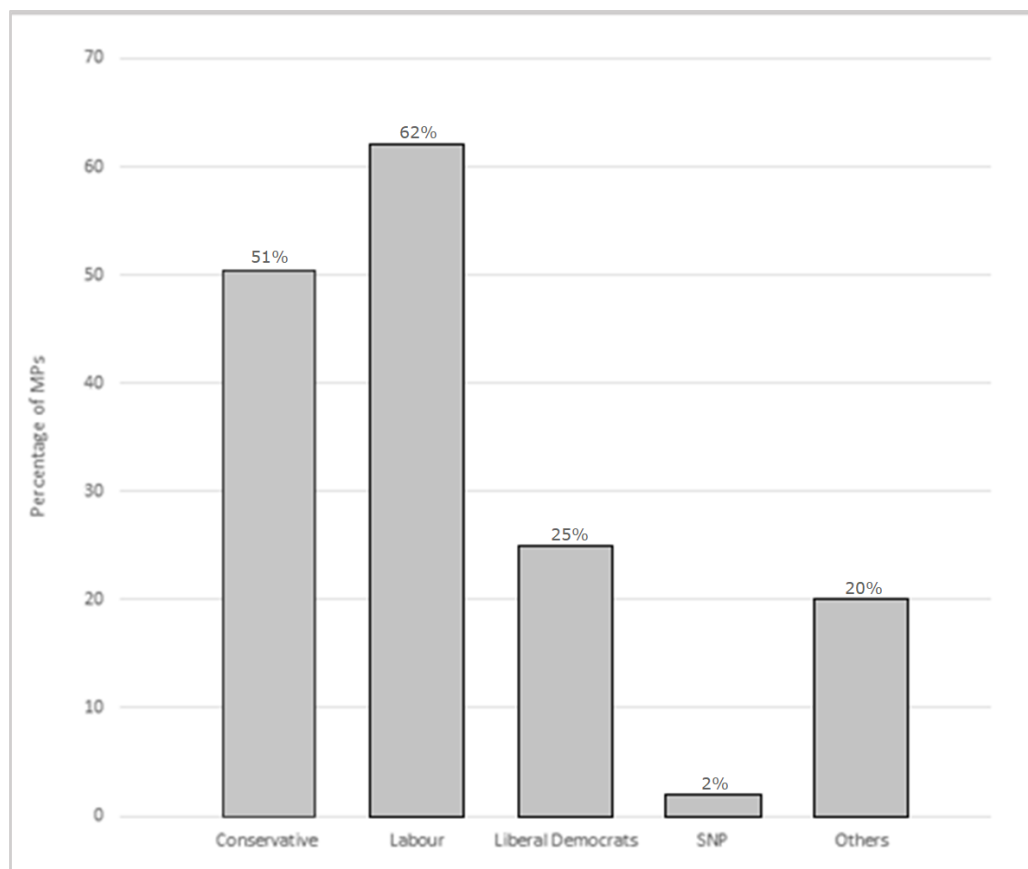


Figure 3.3: Percentage of out of alignment MPs at the Referendum

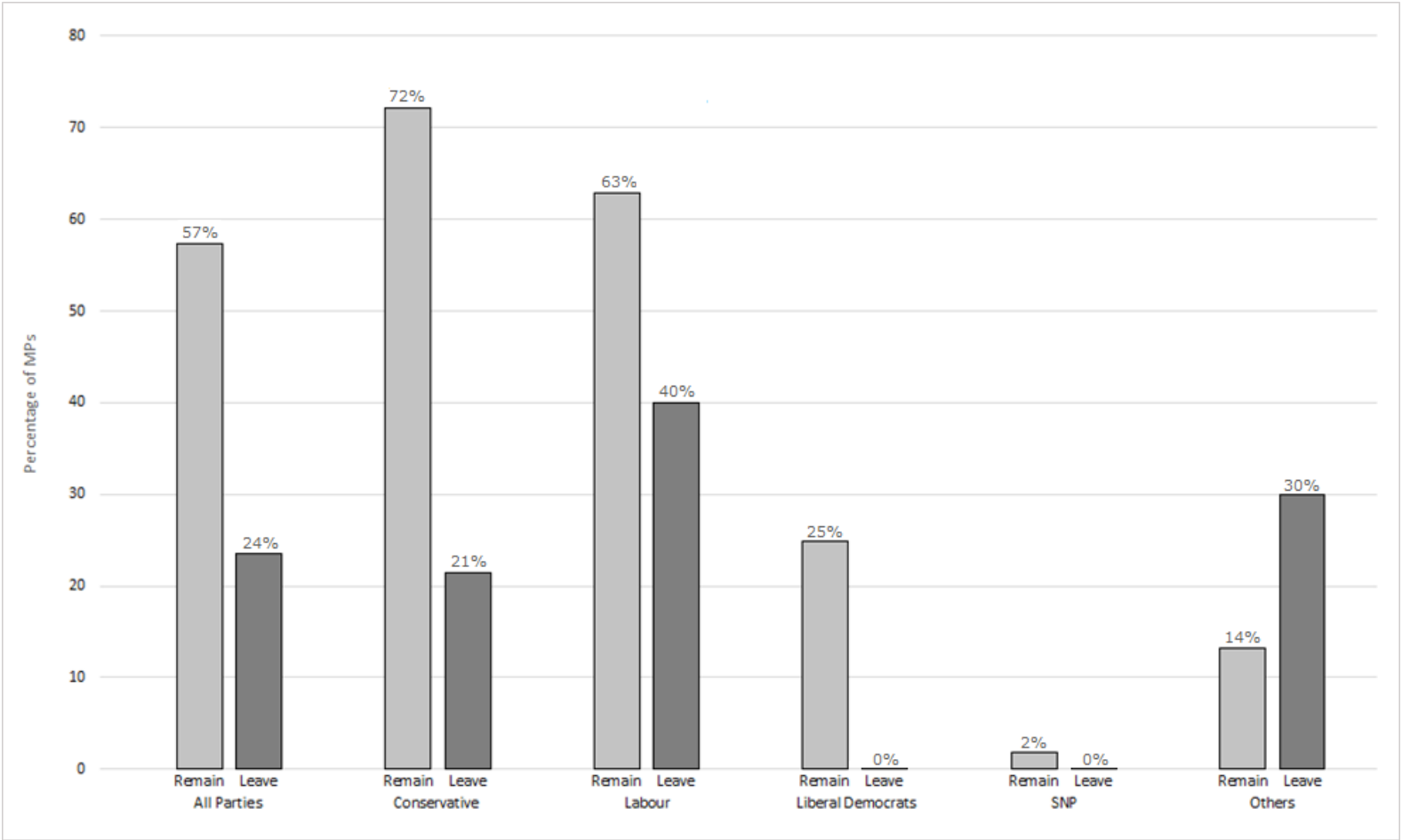


Figure 3.2 breaks the referendum result down by political party, showing that the disconnect between MPs and constituents was much more prominent for the Conservative and Labour parties than it was for others. Just over half of Conservative MPs and close to two-thirds of Labour MPs backed the opposite referendum result to the one chosen by the majority of their constituents. As shown in Figure 3.1, being out of alignment was largely due to MPs supporting continued EU membership, while the majority of their constituents voted to leave. However, this was more pronounced for the two main parties and is shown in more detail in Figure 3.3, which breaks down the data by political party to show the percentage of MPs that were out of alignment with their constituents depending on how they voted in the referendum.

Figure 3.3 shows that MPs from the Conservative and Labour parties were more likely to be out of alignment if they sided with remain at the referendum, while MPs from the smaller parties that did so were more likely to be in alignment with their constituents. This is particularly notable for the SNP, where only one out of their fifty-four MPs backed the opposite result to the majority of their constituents. The referendum positions of individual MPs were reported on the BBC website and in the national and local press. Although this does not guarantee that constituents were aware of how their MP voted and whether they were in alignment, it does show that this information was widely available (Hanretty, Melon and English, 2021). Therefore, the significant disparity between the preferences of MPs and constituents displayed at the referendum provides a valuable opportunity to analyse the extent to which constituency opinion drives MP policy positions. The 2016 referendum was a rare example of the public being given a direct say over government policy and although the result was only 'advisory' (HC Deb, 16th June 2015, Col. 231), there was an implicit expectation that it

would be honoured. The fact that the result did not endorse the status quo and settle the issue (Daddow, 2015; Smith, 2016) created problems for many MPs who were, traditionally speaking, not accustomed to being mandated by voters so directly (Norton and Wood, 1993; Mansbridge, 2011 Rhodes, Wanna and Weller, 2009; Smith, 2016). Those MPs that found themselves out of alignment with their constituents, therefore, had potentially difficult decisions to make. Should they come into alignment like a delegate or, should they continue to act as trustees?

Although the issue of EU withdrawal was more salient and divisive than many of the matters MPs vote on in Parliament, it is still reasonable to regard it as representative of their regular experiences when deciding on policy positions. Studies show that being out of alignment with constituents on highly salient policy issues generally has limited electoral consequences for MPs (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997, Pattie, Fieldhouse and Johnston, 1994; Vivyan and Wagner, 2012), and recent research on the 2017 General Election has suggested the same was true with regards to EU withdrawal, with MPs neither expecting nor experiencing significant repercussions based on their withdrawal stance (Hanretty, Mellon and English, 2021). Thus, although the public may be paying more attention to a salient issue, for most MPs the available evidence suggests that they will still treat it in the same manner that they do other votes in Parliament. However, from a research perspective the increase in salience results in a greater availability of data for analysis and measurement.

3.1.2: Case Selection – The Subset of MPs for Analysis

This study works under the assumption that the preferences of MPs, as stated prior to the referendum, can be regarded as their genuine opinions on EU membership. However, it is entirely possible that the pre-referendum

stances of MPs could already have been a reflection of career concerns and constituency preferences. Although the notions of personal, party and constituent preferences appear as distinct entities, in practice there is often overlap between them and it can be difficult to measure them independently with regards to their influence on MPs. In order to account for this, several research decisions were made that precluded some MPs from inclusion in the analysis. As a result this study primarily focusses on English Conservative and Labour MPs who were out of alignment with their constituents over the referendum result in 2016. While this unfortunately limits the geographical and partisan representativeness of the subjects, it facilitates a more robust analysis by ensuring that the views expressed by MPs at the referendum can be regarded as a genuine reflection of their desires for EU membership.

The decision to focus primarily on Labour and Conservative MPs allows for this study to control for the potential influence of party considerations for two main reasons. Firstly, the splits within the Labour and Conservative Parties makes it easier to distinguish between the personal opinions of MPs and potential party pressures. This is not as straightforward with MPs from other political parties, all of which were internally unified around either leaving or remaining. This lack of internal party division therefore makes it difficult to distinguish the effects of an MP's individual position from the effects of their party affiliation (Hanretty, Mellon and English, 2021). Secondly, the evidence suggests that the influence of the Conservative and Labour party leaderships on the positions of their MPs was likely to have been minimal. Neither party mandated how their MPs should vote and there was little reason for MPs to see their choice as affecting their career prospects, especially as the option to remain was widely expected to win (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Hanretty, Mellon and English, 2021). In 2016 the issue was not significantly divisive within the Labour Party, and the

Corbyn administration's lukewarm support for remaining meant that whatever side they chose, MPs were unlikely to incur any ill-will from their leadership. For the Conservatives, it was their leadership who had called the referendum, in part, to settle the long running disputes on the issue within the party and were therefore unlikely to want to maintain these divisions post-referendum.

With regards to the potential influence of constituent opinions on MPs' pre-referendum stances, the decision to focus on MPs who were out of alignment with their constituents following the referendum is a way to control for this. For MPs who found themselves in alignment with their constituents following the referendum, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility that, lacking strong views on the desirability of EU membership themselves, they based their positions on what they thought their constituents might prefer. However, this is less feasible for those MPs who found themselves out of alignment, notwithstanding the possibility that some misjudged what it was their constituents wanted. Nonetheless, other research has shown that for most MPs, the correlation between how they voted at the referendum and what their constituents wanted was very low (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021). Thus, by excluding 'in alignment' MPs it is possible to draw a credible distinction between the preferences of MPs and their constituents and treat MPs' pre-referendum stances as a genuine expression of their own beliefs.

3.1.3: Case Selection: The Five Key Votes in Parliament

One way in which it would be evident to constituents whether their MP had moved into alignment with them or not is how they voted on withdrawal legislation. From a constituent perspective, how an MP votes in Parliament often serves as a heuristic shortcut for congruence with their own

positions.¹⁵ The key details for the votes chosen to test this are listed in Table 3.1.

The referendum is the logical starting point from which to compare constituent preferences with the opinions and actions of their MPs. It provides the base point for the stances of both groups, clearly showing which MPs were out of alignment, and therefore, who had to decide whether to rectify this. Constituency results are not known for certain as the votes were counted and announced at the local authority level rather than the Westminster constituency level. Thus, the levels of support for 'leave' and 'remain' in each constituency used in this study are based on estimates provided by Hanretty (2016a, 2016b, 2017). These estimates have been widely accepted as valid and used by numerous other studies (e.g. Curtice, 2017; Heath and Goodwin, 2017; House of Commons Library, 2017; Johnston et al., 2018; Norris, 2017) and correlate well with the few known results and other attempts at estimation (Clark, Morris and Lomax, 2018). As noted earlier, the available evidence suggests that public opinion on EU membership remained consistent with their referendum choice throughout the withdrawal period (e.g. Beattie, 2017; Curtice, 2018b; Dearden, 2016; Lynskey, 2017), and thus, the results of the 2016 referendum can be considered as a legitimate reading of constituency opinion on the issue throughout the period studied.

¹⁵ The BBC News website, for example, regularly invites readers to look up their MP and see how they voted on newsworthy legislation.

Table 3.1: The Votes Covered by this Study

Vote	Date	Purpose	Result
European Union Membership Referendum	23 rd June 2016	In/Out Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union	483 MPs (75%) vote to 'Remain' compared to 161 (25%) who voted to 'Leave'
European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017	8th February 2017	Bill giving the Government the authorisation to trigger Article 50 and officially begin the withdrawal process.	493 in favour to 110 against. Government majority of 383
1 st Meaningful Vote	15 th January 2019	Gave MPs the option to endorse the Government's proposed Withdrawal Agreement.	202 in favour to 432 against. Majority against the Government of 230 votes
2 nd Meaningful Vote	12 th March 2019	Gave MPs another opportunity to endorse the Government's proposed Withdrawal Agreement.	242 in favour to 391 against. Majority against the Government of 149
3 rd Meaningful Vote	29 th March 2019	Gave MPs another opportunity to endorse the Government's proposed Withdrawal Agreement. This was also the original date on which the UK was scheduled to leave the EU.	286 in favour to 344 against. Majority against the Government of 58
4 th Meaningful Vote	22 nd October 2019	Gave MPs the option to endorse the new Government's amended Withdrawal Agreement. Treated by this study as the fourth meaningful vote.	329 in favour to 299 against. Government Majority of 30.

The first parliamentary vote analysed by this study is 'The EU (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017', henceforth known as the Withdrawal Bill, which, when passed, gave the government the authority to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty (UK Parliament, 2017). EU withdrawal would not have been possible otherwise and this vote was the first major opportunity in Parliament for MPs to show they had moved into alignment with their constituents' referendum positions, either by opposing or supporting EU withdrawal. Following the Withdrawal Bill, there were numerous other votes in Parliament that concerned withdrawal, but these are not included in this study. Most of these were procedural and not salient enough with the public to provide a good measure. They also did not have strong ramifications on whether the UK would leave the EU and thus, an MP's support or opposition for them was not necessarily a clear indicator of their withdrawal position.

Therefore, the next votes analysed by this study are the meaningful votes held in 2019. Unlike the aforementioned procedural votes in the preceding years, the meaningful votes had much clearer ramifications on whether or not the UK would leave the EU and they were highly salient within the public consciousness. As with the Withdrawal Bill in 2017, it is therefore possible to observe how MPs voted on the legislation and compare this to what their party leadership expected of them and what their constituents had previously signalled they wanted via the referendum. The first three meaningful votes were held under Prime Minister Theresa May in early 2019, who's Withdrawal Agreement was finalised in the summer of 2018, but failed to be ratified by Parliament on all three occasions. The fourth meaningful vote cited by this study occurred in October 2019 after Boris Johnson became Prime Minister and renegotiated aspects of May's deal, subsequently

presenting the amended agreement to Parliament.¹⁶ At this vote, a majority of MPs voted in favour of accepting it, but a majority opposed the attached timetable for its implementation, and thus, it ultimately failed to get through Parliament (HC Deb, 22nd October 2019, Cols.917-920, 923-926).

This fourth meaningful vote is the final vote analysed by this study. Following the December 2019 General Election, there was another meaningful vote in Parliament where the amended Withdrawal Agreement was once again accepted. However, this vote is not included in this study because many of the MPs of interest to the research either did not stand at the 2019 general election or lost their seat. As such, the number of MPs who voted in the 2016 referendum, found themselves out of alignment with their constituents and remained in office to vote at this fifth meaningful vote was too small for study. Moreover, finding MPs from this small group who could be seen to have consistently moved into alignment with their constituents and had useable data for deeper analysis was not possible.

3.2: What Factors Might Affect MP Policy Positions?: Formulation of Hypotheses

3.2.1: Responsive Vs. Responsible Government: Normative Considerations

There is no consensus amongst practitioners, academics or observers as to what factors should be most influential on the policy positions MPs adopt. Indeed, there are many debates about the merits of responsive versus responsible government and which should be observed in political systems such as that of the UK (Andeweg, 2019; Karremans and Lefkofridi, 2020; Mair, 2009, 2011). Moreover, the two notions are often seen as

¹⁶ Officially, this was a second reading of the Bill, but as will be explained, it is treated as the de facto fourth meaningful vote by this study.

incompatible, with the 2016 referendum and its repercussions being regarded by some as evidence of this (Karremans and Lefkofridi, 2020).

Those who advocate 'representative government' argue that policy should be responsive to public opinion, although how this should work in practice can be a contentious issue. Some argue it should be a majoritarian system in which MPs support policies based on what the majority of voters desire. However, constituency opinions are not always clear and adopting the position of the majority may not prove to be a straightforward matter. Moreover, others highlight that the needs and preferences of minority groups should not be overlooked and thus MPs should consider the opinions of these groups too (e.g. Hänni, 2017; Norris, 1997; Pitkin, 1967). Conversely, those who advocate 'responsible government' argue that policy directions would be more practical and consistent if they were determined independently of public opinions. For some, this means MPs should use their own experience and independent judgement to decide upon the best policy direction for everyone (e.g. Mansbridge, 2011; Norton and Wood, 1993). For others, 'responsible government' is best implemented by political parties who compete to devise and implement policies that are to the benefit of society as a whole in the long run. Following the party line is therefore the responsible choice for MPs in such a party government system (e.g. Pulzer, 1987; Rosenbluth and Shapiro, 2018).

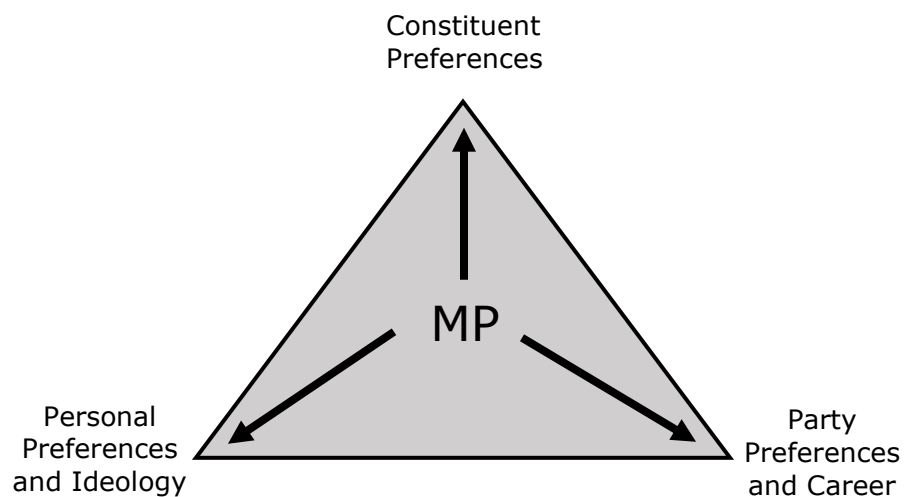
While it is important to acknowledge these discussions and the normative underpinnings surrounding them, it is also important to note that this thesis does not seek to contribute to the debates surrounding how MPs should act. Instead, rather than placing value judgements on the potential influences and prescribing which should be of more importance to the positions MPs adopt, this study seeks to provide an empirical understanding of what factors do influence MP policy positions and why this may be the case. Against the

aforementioned backdrop of declining public faith in MPs and UK democracy, this is an important area of study.

3.2.2: The Tripartite Model

This study uses a modified version of Müller and Strøm's (1999) tripartite model to examine the three major influences on MP decision making outlined by the literature in Chapter Two. This is shown in Figure 3.4, which identifies these three influences as the desires of an MP's constituents, their own ideological beliefs and the desires of their political leadership, which for many MPs is inexorably linked to their career aspirations and prospects.

Figure 3.4: Tripartite Model of the Influences on MPs¹⁷



Although Figure 3.4 shows an equilateral triangle, the pull of the three factors is not necessarily equal. There may be occasions when these three influences conflict and MPs must prioritise one over another, with the referendum and withdrawal period being a good example of this. Some MPs may be more drawn to the desires of their constituents, while others may be more concerned with what their party leadership wants. The hypotheses

¹⁷ Figure created by the author based on Müller and Strøm (1999) and also more recent work such as Moore (2018) and Aidt, Grey and Savu (2021)

presented in this section test the extent to which of these factors influenced the out of alignment MPs following the 2016 referendum. The first and primary hypothesis tests the effect of the vote within a constituency at the 2016 referendum. The subsequent four hypotheses act as controls, with the first two testing the influence of the other two aspects of the tripartite model, these being an MP's personal ideology and the demands of their party leadership. The final two control hypotheses examine the influence of an MP's length of time in office and how marginal their parliamentary seat is, which as will be discussed could affect the potency of one or more of the aspects of the tripartite model on an MP and the decisions they make.

3.2.3: The First Hypothesis - The Strength of the Constituency Vote

While the direct influence of constituent opinions is often thought to be low, studies such as that by Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan (2017) show that it is far from negligible and should produce an observable effect. Numerous other studies suggest that politicians will adopt policies that are popular with voters, either to improve their chances of re-election (e.g. Downs, 1957; Moore, 2018; Müller and Strøm, 1999), or because they want to accurately represent their views in Parliament (Hibbing and Marsh, 1987; Mughan and Scully, 1997; Overby, Raymond and Taydas, 2011; Overby, Tatalovich and Studlar, 1998). Given that constituent preferences were relatively unambiguous following the referendum, MPs could, therefore, have been more likely to support policies that would reflect these (Brockman and Skovron, 2013; Lax and Philips, 2011). While there is debate surrounding whether constituent opinions can be best represented by an MP adopting the majority position, given the binary nature of the referendum question this thesis does use a majority for either leaving or remaining in 2016 as a representation of overall constituency opinions at that time.

However, for some constituencies, the majority for either leaving or remaining was quite evenly split. In such instances, MPs may have faced less pressure to move into alignment given that their own position still had a decent amount of support. Similarly, they may have been able to argue that they were already in alignment given the margins of error for the estimates (Hanretty, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). Moreover, a closer result could later allow an MP to claim that enough constituents had changed their minds over time either by seeing things in a different light or due to generational effects.¹⁸ However, in a constituency where the support for leaving or remaining was significantly above 50%, such assertions would be harder to make, especially given that opinions polls regularly suggested that voter preferences on withdrawal remained largely consistent during the period studied (Curtice, 2017, 2018b, 2019, 2020; Cutts et al., 2020; Menon and Fowler, 2016; Wells, 2018; WhatUKThinks.org, 2019).

Therefore, if a clear majority of voters within a constituency backed either remaining or leaving, the MP in question would have less room to manoeuvre and would be more obviously out of alignment with their constituents if they maintained their pre-referendum stance.

This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: The more decisive the referendum result in a constituency, the more likely an MP will be to vote in a manner that puts them back into alignment with constituency opinion.

The tripartite model proposes two other major influences on MPs and their decision making. Regardless of whether MPs brought themselves into

¹⁸ See Fox and Pearce (2018). Opinion polls suggest that there was a slight increase in support for remaining due to younger votes becoming enfranchised (Curtice, 2018b).

alignment with their constituents these actions may have been influenced by factors other than the desires of those who elected them. Although voters are increasingly demanding MPs that are responsive to their wishes (Curtice, 2019; Fieldhouse et al., 2020; YouGov, 2017), and it is argued that it is now easier for interested constituents to keep track of their MP's actions and hold them to account (Bengtsson and Wass, 2010; Mulgan, 2003; Vivyan and Wagner, 2012), the UK's style of representation traditionally encourages MPs to act as trustees and therefore neither requires nor encourages such a form of representation (Rhodes, Wanna and Weller, 2009; Smith, 2016). Indeed, a study by Hanretty, Mellon and English (2021) shows that while voters may want to sanction out of alignment MPs, most do not have the ability to select a 'better' alternative who does represent their views on an issue. Most MPs can therefore get away with being out of alignment and are well aware of this. Therefore, MPs may not see congruence as necessary or desirable and may have other concerns, such as pursuing their own preferred outcome or that which their party leadership desires.

3.2.4: Control Hypothesis - Party Position

Pressure from the leadership of the political party they belong to is likely to be very important when MPs come to decide on their policy positions. When candidates run for office, they do so under a party's banner and there are expectations of loyalty that come with this affiliation (Pattie, Fieldhouse and Johnson, 1994; Watts and Bale, 2019). MPs may also be naturally loyal to their party position. As noted earlier, this could be because they see following the party line as the responsible choice in a party government system (Pulzer, 1987; Rosenbluth and Shapiro, 2018). That possibility notwithstanding, being a member of a particular party also suggests that an MP is already predisposed to its point of view on policy issues. Additionally,

through a process of socialisation, MPs may become more loyal over time, being conditioned to support the party line because they primarily associate with others who share their ideology and that of their leadership (Cowley and Stuart, 2010; Raymond and Overby, 2016). Moreover, as the role of 'MP' has become increasingly professionalised, career minded individuals are likely to vote in accordance with the preferences of their leadership in order to gain their favour and be rewarded with career advancement (Cowley, 2009; Koop and Bittner, 2011). Such behaviour is often seen to perpetuate the view that party focussed systems encourage MPs to support policies and act in ways that satisfy the requirements of their party and its leaders, rather than their constituents (Low, 2014).

This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: MPs will be more likely to vote in a manner that puts them into alignment with their constituents if this reflects their party leadership's position on the legislation.

3.2.5: Control Hypothesis - An MP's Own Opinions

It is also important to control for an MP's personal desires, represented in this study by their pre-referendum stance. Studies have shown that politicians can be strongly guided by their own opinions on certain issues (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Jacobs and Shapiro, 1997, 2000; Plumb and Marsh, 2011; Read, Marsh and Richards, 1994). With the national result being narrowly in favour of leaving the EU, there is a good chance that MPs who were in alignment with this were under less pressure to change their stance in subsequent votes. Their position was validated by the overall national result, even if it was contrary to how their constituency voted. Conversely, those MPs who were out of alignment with both their

constituents and the national result may have been under much more pressure to align themselves with their leave-supporting constituents.

This leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: MPs who voted to leave the EU in 2016 will be less likely to vote in a manner that brings them back into alignment with their constituents than those who voted to remain.

3.2.6: Control Hypothesis - Seat Majority

There are also factors that may accentuate the effect of one or more aspects of the tripartite model. With regards to constituency preferences, one potentially important factor that may make MPs more attuned to these is the level of support they enjoy from constituents during election periods. MPs in 'safe seats' are unlikely to face any serious risk of losing their position at the next election and as a result may be less concerned with being congruent with their constituents (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Moore, 2018). They may therefore be less focussed on their local reputation and perhaps more focussed on pleasing those within their party who have the power to re-nominate them for their seat in the future (Koop and Bittner, 2011). Conversely, MPs who represent more marginal seats cannot take their constituents' support at the next election for granted. In order to improve their chances of re-election, such MPs may be keen to show themselves as being in touch with voters and try to build up a strong local following (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984; Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan, 2017; Norton and Wood, 1993; Roy and Alcantara, 2015). While there is no official definition for what constitutes a marginal seat, this research follows the standard set by numerous other studies and considers a majority of less than 10 percent to qualify a seat as marginal (e.g. Finer, Berrington and

Bartholomew, 1961; Jackson and Lilleker, 2011; Rallings and Thrasher, 2012).

This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H4: MPs in marginal seats will be more likely to vote in a manner that puts them in alignment with constituency opinion than MPs in safe seats.

3.2.7: Control Hypothesis - Length of Service

One factor that may negate the pull of the party leadership is the length of time an MP has been in office. Newer MPs may be very career focussed and thus be more likely to follow the party line in order to achieve promotion (Auel and Umit, 2021; Cowley, 2009; Koop and Bittner, 2011). However, this may not be the case with longer-tenured MPs who are more stable in their careers or nearing the end of it. Instead, such MPs may be more willing to defy the party line, being less concerned with promotion and advancement or the repercussions for acting more independently. Long-serving MPs may also be less concerned about constituency-level repercussions too, having built up a strong local following that can negate any hostility caused by being out of alignment, even if they only enjoy a small majority in their seat (Norton and Wood, 1993). Longer-serving MPs may therefore be more willing to act independently of their party and also their constituents, thus staying out of alignment regardless of other factors.

This leads to the fifth hypothesis:

H5: Longer serving MPs will be less likely to vote in a manner that puts them into alignment with their constituents compared to newer members of Parliament.

3.3 Quantitative Analysis: Modelling Strategy, Data Collection and Coding

3.3.1: Modelling Strategy

For the empirical analysis, the five hypotheses are tested on the broader population of out of alignment MPs using a dataset of six variables: one dependent and five independent variables. These are compiled from various sources and their creation and coding is detailed in this section. Given that the dependent variable is dichotomous, a logistic regression model is used to analyse the data. The same statistical model is used for each of the five key votes, but each is analysed using a separate logistic regression.

To be included in the model, MPs were required to meet two criteria, without which it is not possible to determine whether they were initially out of alignment with their constituents and thus how they subsequently responded. Firstly, they needed to have openly stated a preferred referendum outcome prior to the result. Secondly, they needed to have been an MP from the time of the referendum in 2016 until the final key vote in October 2019. MPs elected in 2017 did not know in 2016 that they would soon be fighting a general election, so even if it is possible to find their referendum preferences, the incentive to have matched their position with that of potential future constituents was arguably much lower than that of sitting MPs (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021). The MPs included in the model did not need to have voted at all five key votes, although the overwhelming majority did. However, if an MP did abstain from a particular division in Parliament they were not included in the model for the vote in question. The number of MPs analysed at each vote is made clear in the relevant section of analysis.

3.3.2: Dependent Variable – MP Moving into Alignment?

The dependent variable for the quantitative analysis shows whether an MP can be seen to have moved into alignment with their constituency referendum result, coded 1 if they did and 0 if they did not. Each of the five key votes has their own dependent variable, but all five are coded in the same manner. An MP is considered to have moved into alignment if they effectively voted to support the opinions of their constituents as measured by the 2016 referendum. Therefore, an MP that voted to remain in 2016, but subsequently voted in favour of the withdrawal legislation at the relevant vote, is seen to have moved into alignment with their constituents. Conversely, if they voted against the legislation, they are seen to have stayed out of alignment. Similarly, an MP that supported leaving in 2016 and then voted against a piece of withdrawal legislation is seen to have come into alignment with their constituents, while voting in favour of the legislation meant they did not.

3.3.3: Independent Variable: Constituency Opinion

The variable for constituency opinion is continuous, coded according to the percentage of voters above 50% that voted to leave or remain in each constituency. For example, in a constituency where 60% of voters opted to leave the EU the code assigned is 10, with the same being the case for a constituency where 60% of voters wanted to remain. A constituency that was split down the middle and saw 50% of people vote to leave and remain is therefore coded 0. This data was taken from the estimates provided by Hanretty (2016a, 2016b, 2017) which have been widely accepted as valid and used by numerous other studies (e.g. Clark et al., 2018; Curtice, 2017; Heath and Goodwin, 2017; House of Commons Library, 2017; Johnston et al., 2018; Norris, 2017). Constituent preferences are therefore treated as consistent, remaining unchanged from the referendum and throughout the

withdrawal process. This assertion is backed up by numerous opinions polls and research conducted during this period (e.g. Curtice, 2017, 2018b, 2019, 2020; Cutts et al., 2020; Menon and Fowler, 2016; Wells, 2018; WhatUKThinks.org, 2019).

3.3.4: Independent Variable: Seat Majority

The variable for the marginality of a seat is dichotomous, coded 1 if the seat is considered marginal and 0 if it is not. While there is no official definition of marginality, this research follows the standard set by numerous other studies and considers a majority of less than 10 percent to qualify a seat as marginal (e.g. Finer, Berrington and Bartholomew, 1961; Jackson and Lilleker, 2011; Rallings and Thrasher, 2012).¹⁹ Data regarding the level of support an MP received at general elections is taken from the official published results (UK Parliament, c.2021a). There are two variables reflecting seat majority. The first records the marginality of a seat based on the 2015 general election and is used when analysing the Withdrawal Bill in 2017. For the meaningful votes in 2019, a different variable is used based on the 2017 General Election. Both variables are coded in the same manner according to the same criteria.

3.3.5: Independent Variable: Party Leadership Position

The variables regarding the party line at the key votes studied are also dichotomous, coded 1 if an MP's party leadership supported the legislation, and 0 if they did not. These positions were ascertained from various sources, with priority given to any official party statement, but where this was not available sources such as The Public Whip and reputable media articles were

¹⁹ To further validate this choice, different thresholds for marginal seats were tested, with variables using 1%, 5%, 10% and 15% majorities used in logistic regressions. The different percentages produced negligible differences for the results and thus the standard of 10% was maintained.

used and cross-compared with how the leader of each party voted on the relevant legislation. To further account for the effects of political parties and the similarities members of one might share, the standard errors from the logistic regressions are clustered around party groupings. The variable for this contains three categories, one for the Conservatives coded 1, one for Labour coded 2 and another for the smaller parties coded 3.

3.3.6: Independent Variable: Length of Service

The length of service variable is continuous, recording the number of years an MP had been in office at the time of the vote being studied, determined by subtracting the year of their election from the year of the vote. This data was collected from official figures on each MP (UK Parliament, c.2021b). There are two different variables for this data, depending on the year in which the relevant vote occurred, with one variable for the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017 and a second for the meaningful votes in 2019.

3.3.7: Independent Variable: An MP's Own Opinion

The variable for an MP's own opinion on EU membership is based on how they claimed to have voted in 2016 at the referendum, therefore treating MP preferences as consistent throughout the time period studied much as constituency preferences are.²⁰ It is a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the MP supported leaving the EU and 0 if they supported remaining. Data relating to how an MP voted at the referendum was collected from various sources that clearly showed their support for a side of the campaign. These included personal websites, news articles and referendum campaign materials.

²⁰ For other studies that have taken a similar approach on the potential consistency of politician policy positions in relation to their own opinions, see Alexandre-Collier (2021); Heppell, Crines and Jeffery (2017); Jacobs and Shapiro (1997); Lynch and Whitaker (2018); Xu and Lu (2021).

3.4: Case Study Selection, Measurement and Analysis

The qualitative aspect of this research analyses eight representative MPs in order to test the hypotheses and the findings of the quantitative analysis. This is achieved using a deductive thematic analysis of written and verbal outputs from the MPs during the referendum campaign and subsequent withdrawal process, complimented by contemporary interviews with them where available.

3.4.1: Case Study Selection

Although the population of study is relatively small, with 320 of the 650 MPs being out of alignment with their constituents, this is still too many MPs for this thesis to analyse at a deeper level. This study, therefore, uses a non-random sample selected using the 'most different' design method (Burnham et al., 2004; Clark et al., 2013; Landman, 2008). All share the same dependent variable, reflecting how they voted on withdrawal legislation in relation to what the majority of their constituents voted for at the referendum. Cases were therefore selected based on variation in the independent variables, notably the referendum positions of the MP, the political parties they represented, their seat majority and length of time in office. To avoid issues of selection bias inherent with non-random sampling (Geddes, 1990; Neuendorf, 2002; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002) the selection process was made as objective as possible in relation to the variables, splitting the MPs into smaller groups and selecting examples that were representative of each. This can therefore be seen as a form of 'relevance sampling' or 'stratified sampling', where the sampling frame is segmented according to categories of one or more variables of interest to the research (Neuendorf, 2002, p.85).

To facilitate analysis and aid an objective sampling process, MPs were initially split into four broad groups based on their own referendum position, that of the majority of their constituents and how the MPs subsequently voted on withdrawal legislation (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: The Four Categories of MP

	Referendum Position		Voting Behaviour During Withdrawal Process
	MP	Constituency	
Group 1	Remain	Leave	Supported Legislation
Group 2	Remain	Leave	Opposed Legislation
Group 3	Leave	Remain	Opposed Legislation
Group 4	Leave	Remain	Supported Legislation

MPs were then selected from these groups based on quantitative values such as the majority for leave or remain amongst their constituents, their political party and their seat majority, with the aim being to create a sample that maximised the variance between these variables. Although these criteria helped to narrow down the focus and keep the selection process as objective as possible, ultimately some of the selections were based on qualitative judgement. Sometimes an MP met the criteria for selection, but upon further inspection did not make sufficient comment during the withdrawal process to facilitate a meaningful analysis and unfortunately had to be dropped as a potential case study.

When it came to Group 1, remain-supporting MPs who consistently supported withdrawal legislation, there were many MPs to choose from and Ian Austin and Nick Boles were selected as case studies. Both of these MPs represented different parties and both had significantly different majorities in their seat, creating variation in the key variables. Equally important was

the data available on them, with both having made enough comment during the withdrawal process to facilitate a meaningful analysis. Similarly, those leave-supporting MPs who continued to support withdrawal following the referendum, Group 4, also proved relatively straightforward to select. There was certainly less choice and no variation with regards to their political party, all of them being Conservatives, but there was variation for other variables such as seat marginality and length of time in office. Within this group there were two MPs, Cheryl Gillan and Stuart Andrew, who had made enough comment during the time period studied to facilitate meaningful analysis.

However, when it came to selecting MPs from Groups 2 and 3, some discretion was necessary. With regards to Group 2, remain MPs who consistently voted against withdrawal legislation, there were only six MPs who opposed the legislation at all five votes studied. All six represented Labour but only one, Paul Farrelly, proved to be a viable case study with enough comment to analyse. Given that the vast majority of MPs supported the Withdrawal Bill, the selection criteria was expanded slightly to allow for MPs who supported it, but then subsequently refused to support the Withdrawal Agreement at the meaningful votes. From this pool, Anna Soubry was selected as the other case study. Soubry had made more than enough comment during the withdrawal process to allow for analysis and her selection also brought variation to the party category, representing the Conservatives rather than Labour for most of the withdrawal period.

Some discretion was also used regarding those leave-supporting MPs that ended up opposing withdrawal legislation, Group 3. There were no MPs that supported leaving the EU at the referendum who went on to vote against the Withdrawal Bill. Therefore, it was not possible to find MPs in this group that consistently voted against the withdrawal legislation and thus the selection had to be based on their refusal to support the Withdrawal Agreement in

2019. However, selecting MPs on this criteria also proved difficult as there were only four that consistently voted against the legislation at all four meaningful votes. Moreover, three of these were unsuitable case studies because they had made little to no comment during the EU withdrawal process and it was easy to see why one had been branded as 'Britain's Laziest MP' (Curtis, 2011; Rodger, 2019a). However, one of the four MPs in this group, John Cryer, had made sufficient comment to facilitate deeper analysis and was thus selected as a case study. In order to find a second MP with enough discussions of withdrawal to allow for analysis, the vote criteria was expanded a little to find MPs who had opposed the Withdrawal Agreement at the majority of the meaningful votes. Theresa Villiers was found to have done so at all but the fourth meaningful vote and had made sufficient comment during the time period studied to make her a suitable case study for Group 3.

Focussing on this small number of objectively and well-chosen MPs facilitates a deeper analysis and more detailed and nuanced understandings of the behaviour being studied, thus enhancing the validity of the research and conclusions (Landman, 2008). Although in some studies such non-random sampling can affect the legitimacy of any inferences to the larger population (Landman, 2008; Neuendorf, 2002; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002), the objective sampling of this study aimed to counteract this. The careful selection of the case study MPs makes them broadly representative of their respective groupings and thus allows for meaningful inferences towards the larger population of MPs (Neuendorf, 2002; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002).

3.4.2: Case Study Data: Collection and Analysis

The primary method of qualitative analysis conducted by this study is a deductive thematic analysis of MP writings and speeches, complimented with contemporary interviews with the case study subjects where available. Thematic analysis is a rigorous approach that can be used to identify and analyse themes within data in a manner that is transparent and credible, presenting the stories and experiences of the subjects as accurately and as comprehensively as possible using their own outputs (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2016, 2020; Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012; Joffe and Yardley, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017, Terry et al., 2017; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013).

Thematic analysis suits this particular research as it is compatible with a deductive approach based in prior academic theory, as opposed to approaches such as content analysis which often try to be more atheoretical (Braun and Clarke, 2020; Joffe and Yardley, 2004). Moreover, it can be used to analyse texts of any length, from something as short as a tweet to a long formal statement in Parliament (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012; Terry et al., 2017). However, care should be taken by the researcher as thematic analysis requires more involvement and interpretation than other methods such as discourse and content analysis, moving beyond counting words and phrases and instead describing implicit and explicit ideas and themes within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2016, 2020; Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012; Joffe and Yardley, 2004). This means that much of the analysis is based on the judgment of the researcher and thus caution is required, but 'ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are converted into numbers' (Krippendorf, 2004, p.160). Therefore, the data is used to assess the validity of the theories, rather than making the data conform to those theories. The themes

discovered by the analysis are therefore flexible and developed as it did, as opposed to allowing rigid interpretations of these themes to inform the analysis (Terry et al., 2017).

Although time consuming, the advantages of this method outweigh the costs. The analysis is not dependent on the consent and availability of the chosen subjects and is also unobtrusive, with the subject being unaware of the analysis taking place. Therefore, the act of measurement does not influence or confound the data (Halperin and Heath, 2012; Weber, 2004), unlike with interviews, for example, where respondents may alter their answers depending on how they want to be seen or because of what they think the interviewer might be looking for (Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002). Another advantage is that rather than relying on what respondents recall or what they choose to mention, this form of analysis allows the researcher to systematically analyse an official's statements from the period in question to find evidence of their perceptions or attitudes without the need for direct contact (Halperin and Heath, 2012). Of course, any publicly available statements or interviews are likely to have been planned and tailored with a certain purpose in mind, but these can be taken into consideration and unlike the interviews, there is no direct influence of the research on the texts (Charmaz, 2006).

When deciding on what communications to analyse the two key criteria that needed to be met were accessibility and authenticity. Some MPs are prolific communicators while others barely discuss their actions at all. The authenticity requirement is necessary to make sure the content being analysed is indeed made by the subject in question (Burnham et al., 2004). The primary sources used in this study are speeches made in Parliament,

social media and personal websites, media interviews and opinion columns.²¹ Such sources meet the authenticity requirement and are arguably the channels most likely to be used by an MP to state policy positions and the reasoning for them, especially towards their constituents. They are also readily available to collect for analysis and thus meet the accessibility criteria as well.

Reflecting the protracted nature of the withdrawal process, the time period in which data was collected was also quite broad. The starting point was 1st January 2016, allowing data to be captured from the period in which the referendum loomed and campaigning began in earnest. The end point was 6th November 2019 when Parliament was dissolved in preparation for the 2019 General Election, thus allowing for any supplementary comments on the fourth meaningful vote and withdrawal process to be collected. Although a highly prominent issue, withdrawal was just one of many policies discussed in the time period and thus not all communications made by an MP were relevant to the study. Key word searches were used to highlight those documents that contained discussion of key themes such as 'EU', 'Referendum', 'Brexit', 'Article 50' and 'Withdrawal'. Table 3.3 shows the data sources used for each MP, with the numbers representing how many of each type were coded as relevant to the study.

Data analysis and coding occurred during multiple readings of the documents, adapting a method advocated by McDowell (1998). The first reading was a general one to establish the overall narrative, looking for how the MP situated themselves in the debates and if there were any shifts, inconsistencies or revisions to their positions. Three subsequent readings then highlighted the influences on these, looking at each aspect of the

²¹ Internet archives were also used to locate any deleted articles.

tripartite model individually and in turn to allow them a fair chance to show through and be found.²² The coding scheme itself was flexible and developed as the analysis did, allowing the key themes to be more accurately reflected (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2016, 2020; Deterding and Waters, 2021; Joffe and Yardley, 2004; Krippendorff, 2004).

²² See Appendix One, pp.352-356 for a sample of the coding scheme

Table 3.3: Relevant Data Sources for each Case Study

Data Types	Ian Austin	Nick Boles	Anna Soubry	Paul Farrelly	John Cryer	Theresa Villiers	Cheryl Gillan	Stuart Andrew
Website Articles	28	32	10	20	12	65	143	43
Hansard Contributions	8	19	117	29	6	24	46	15
Twitter Posts	136	488	218	0	81	0	109	51
Facebook Posts	0	41	0	58	0	90	0	22
Media Articles	10	54	5	21	24	5	12	10
Newsletters	8	0	13	0	37	0	0	0
Election Leaflets	2	4	6	4	7	4	4	1
Interviewed	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

3.4.3: Case Study Data: Interviewing MPs

This study makes use of interview data, where available, to compliment the textual analysis. All eight of the case study MPs were contacted on multiple occasions through different mediums to request an interview but only three responded. Given that the data was not as accessible as the other sources nor were they as unobtrusive (Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002), it was given no priority over the textual analysis and simply regarded as additional material for evaluation. Moreover, while the interviews did provide some useful quotes and clarifications, overall, they did not reveal anything that had not already been said in public and therefore highlighted by the textual analysis.

The interviews were conducted using the semi-structured technique, which is by far the most recommended in the literature (e.g. Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Berry, 2002; Burnham et al., 2008; Charmaz, 2006; Cowley, 2021). This format allows a balance between asking significant questions while avoiding the potential to force desired responses from the subject (Charmaz, 2006), creating instead an unconstrained conversation where the interviewee can talk freely, potentially opening up new avenues of enquiry and allowing them to cover what they think is important (Burnham et al., 2008; Cochrane, 1998; Cowley, 2021; McDowell, 1998). The use of broad but open questions allows the interview to investigate the different aspects of the tripartite model while letting the MP discuss their constituents, party leadership and own evaluations in the manner they see fit.²³ Having completed the bulk of the textual analysis before conducting the interviews, some questions could be tailored to be more specific to the MP and their experiences and thus make the conversation feel less formulaic and more personal, increasing the potential for revealing answers. Overall, the aim

²³ Examples of these questions can be found in Appendix One, pp.357-358

was to make the process feel more like a conversation rather than an interview and create a space for intellectual dialogue and free exchange of ideas, allowing both parties to learn and benefit (McDowell, 1998; Rice, 2010). If this can be achieved and the interview is conducted as a casual, comfortable conversation then the follow-up questions, the branching, the movement away from unproductive avenues to new areas, and the circling back should have come across as a natural part of that conversation (Berry, 2002).

Nonetheless, selecting a few choice quotes from hours of discussion has inherent possibilities of bias (Harvey, 2010; McDowell, 1998) and 'the published account is not an objective rendering of 'reality', but it is the researcher's interpretation of the facts that is published for public view' (Morris, 2009, p.214). Consequently, recognising the power dynamics from the social construction of knowledge in interviews is necessary to ascertain objectivity and ethicality of interview research (Kvale, 2006) and 'the importance of the researcher's positionality throughout the research process must not be underestimated' (Mikecz, 2012, p.490). To increase the validity of any conclusions drawn from the interviews, the transcripts were therefore sent to the subjects for their approval prior to analysis to ensure it was an accurate record of their statements (Harvey, 2010). The transcripts were then subject to the same coding process as the other sources, with multiple readings helping to ensure that each potential influence was fairly and accurately highlighted where relevant, with any conclusions cross-compared with those of the other sources.

3.5: Conclusions

The 2016 EU membership referendum and subsequent withdrawal process, therefore, provide a rare but representative opportunity to test the influence

of constituency opinions on MP policy positions relative to other potentially important factors. Unlike many policy issues that are put before Parliament, the positions of both MPs and constituents are known on a national scale, facilitating a robust and substantial test of the factors that determine MP policy positions in the UK. In addition to the demands of constituents, the literature also suggests that an MP's policy stances may be strongly influenced by the demands of their party leadership and also by their own evaluations of what is best. Together, these three factors form a tripartite model of influences, with MPs needing to find a balance between the three factors.

In order to test the potential significance of these factors, this study uses the academic literature to develop five hypotheses which are then applied to the voting behaviour of MPs at five key parliamentary votes during the withdrawal process. The analysis is conducted using a mixed methods approach. Initially, the quantitative analysis applies the five hypotheses to the whole population of MPs relevant to the study. These are MPs that were out of alignment with their constituents regarding the 2016 referendum result and therefore had the ability to rectify this and move into alignment. This serves as the first test of the hypotheses and theories and provides a general overview of the influences that appeared more significant to how MPs decide to vote. Following this, eight representative MPs are used as detailed qualitative case studies to further examine what factors influence their policy positions. This is achieved through a deductive thematic analysis, examining their written and spoken outputs from the time of the parliamentary votes to highlight which aspects of the tripartite model appear to hold more significance.

In using a mixed methods approach, this study is therefore able to provide an overview of all the out of alignment MPs while also being able to

investigate their actions in more detail at an individual level. The next chapter proceeds with the quantitative analysis and presents its findings, before the subsequent four chapters present the qualitative thematic analysis and examine further what factors may have influenced how these MPs and their colleagues voted during the EU withdrawal process.

Chapter Four: Four Meaningful Votes (a Third Reading) and a Referendum

This chapter uses quantitative methods to apply the study's five hypotheses to the whole population of out of alignment MPs to test their explanatory power during the five key votes in Parliament. The findings of this chapter suggest only the influence of an MP's party leadership had a consistent and meaningful impact on how they voted and thus whether they appeared to move into alignment with their constituency referendum result, proving both statistically and substantively significant at all five key votes.

This chapter proceeds by first providing a brief overview of the withdrawal process and the background to the five key votes analysed by this study. Following this, some initial analysis is conducted to better understand how MPs voted in relation to the key variables at all five votes and provide an initial test of the hypotheses. After this preliminary analysis, logistic regressions are used to determine the significance of the effects and thus provide a more robust analysis of what factors influence how MPs vote.

4.1: A Brief History of the Withdrawal Process

4.1.1: The Withdrawal Bill – 8th February 2017

The first major opportunity in Parliament for MPs to change their position and effectively bring themselves into line with their constituents was 'The European Union [Notification of Withdrawal] Bill', henceforth referred to as the Withdrawal Bill. This legislation proposed to give the UK Government the authority to trigger Article 50 of the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon and begin the formal process of leaving the European Union (Parliament, 2017b). Initially, the government signalled it would do this unilaterally without legislation, but after a legal challenge the Supreme Court ruled that Parliament needed to

give the government authority to do this (Supreme Court, 2017). The Bill was subsequently presented to Parliament and the final vote was held after the third reading on 8th February 2017. It passed by 494 votes in favour to just 112 against (Parliament, 2017a), suggesting a significant number of remain-supporting MPs had in effect converted to the leave camp.

Table 4.1 shows the basic breakdown of how MPs voted in relation to their constituents and their own pre-referendum stance, with the MPs of interest to this study highlighted in bold. It shows that a significant number of MPs voted in a manner that effectively brought themselves into alignment with their constituents, but only if they voted to remain in 2016. Regardless of whether they were in or out of alignment with their constituents, all MPs who supported leaving at the referendum held onto this position at the Withdrawal Bill vote and facilitated the start of UK withdrawal from the EU.

Table 4.1: The Withdrawal Bill Vote²⁴

Out of Alignment With Constituents?	Change Position	Pre-Referendum Stance	
		Remain	Leave
Yes	No	3% (9)	100% (35)
	Yes	97% (255)	0% (0)
	Total	100% (264)	100% (35)
No	No	58% (114)	100% (120)
	Yes	42% (79)	0% (0)
	Total	100% (193)	100% (120)

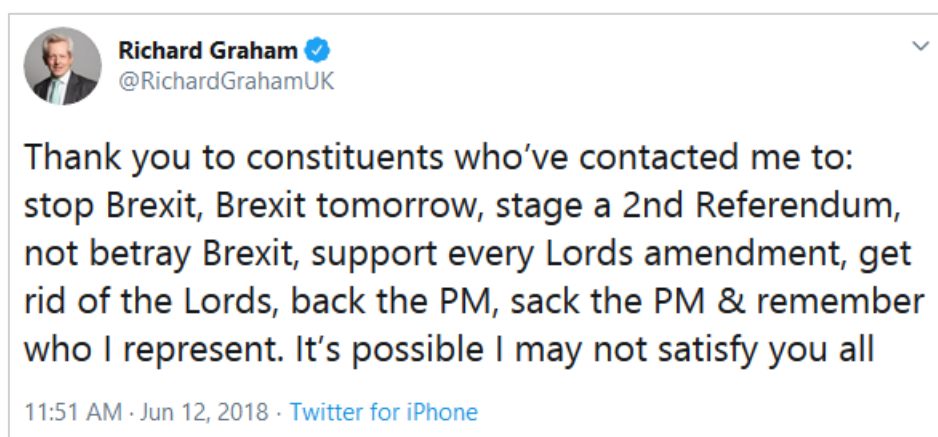
²⁴ Table 1 includes all MPs for which there is data. MPs who did not state a position for the referendum or who abstained from the vote in question are not present. The numbers in brackets represent the total number of MPs the percentage refers to. These conditions apply to all other tables in this chapter as well.

4.1.2: The First Meaningful Vote – 15th January 2019

The triggering of Article 50 in 2017 marked the official start of a two-year period in which the UK and the EU could negotiate a Withdrawal Agreement, setting out the terms on which the UK would leave and set the basis for their future relationship. If the two sides failed to reach an agreement by the end of this timeframe, the UK could either choose to leave the EU without a deal in place or ask for an extension to the negotiating period (European Parliament, 2016).

The nature of the UK's withdrawal from the EU remained a highly salient and divisive issue during the intervening period. Although the majority of MPs appeared to accept that the UK had to leave the EU and voted to trigger Article 50, there was no such consensus on what leaving should look like. Many of those who most fervently advocated leaving in 2016 became advocates of the UK having little to no future cooperation with the EU, a 'hard' exit, while many of those who opted to remain in 2016 pushed for a close future relationship that almost resembled continued membership in what was referred to as a 'soft' exit (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Menon and Fowler, 2016; Xu and Lu, 2021). Prime Minister Theresa May eventually succeeded in finalising an agreement with the EU, henceforth known as the Withdrawal Agreement, in November 2018 (HM Government, 2018). Although this agreement focussed on the more immediate terms of the UK's withdrawal, it and the accompanying Political Declaration that set out the aims of future cooperation were largely seen as a compromise between the hard and soft exit positions (Curtice, 2018a, 2018c; Institute For Government, 2018).

The Withdrawal Agreement needed to be ratified by Parliament in order to become law, this being forced upon the government in an earlier setback on 13th December 2017 when MPs secured a 'meaningful vote' on whatever terms the UK was to leave the EU.²⁵ Initially the government allowed five full days in Parliament for debate of the Bill, with the vote set for 11th December 2018. However, it soon became clear that the Withdrawal Agreement was not particularly popular among MPs, regardless of how they voted in 2016 (Barnes, 2018; BBC News, 2018a). Voters were also split on the issue and not just along their pre-referendum lines. Polls suggested that only around a third of people surveyed supported the agreement and it was equally as unpopular with those who voted to remain in 2016 as it was with those who voted to leave (Curtice, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d; Curtis and Smith, 2018). For many MPs this situation meant that party loyalties, constituent desires and personal preferences would have been at odds with each other, presenting them with a potentially difficult choice (Hobolt and Leeper, 2017; Renwick, 2018; Richards, Heath and Carl, 2018). This was well captured by a tweet from MP Richard Graham in in the summer of 2018:²⁶



²⁵ European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018: Section 13

²⁶ Graham (2018)

Despite a concerted effort from the Prime Minister, very few MPs or voters were convinced of the merits of the deal (BBC News, 2018a). After it became clear that the government was not going to win the meaningful vote in December the Prime Minister delayed it until 15th January 2019 in an attempt to buy more time to convince MPs and the public to support it (BBC News, 2018b; New York Times, 2018).

The attempt to gather more support for the Withdrawal Agreement in Parliament ultimately failed, with the government losing the vote by a majority of 230 votes, with 432 votes against them to just 202 in favour (Parliament, 2019a). This represented the largest defeat for a UK government in Parliament's history (Clark, 2019). Table 4.2 shows how MPs voted on the Withdrawal Agreement in relation to how they and their constituents voted in the 2016 referendum and demonstrates a much greater variation in voting behaviour than there was at the Withdrawal Bill in 2017.²⁷ Much as the scale of the parliamentary defeat suggests, the majority of MPs now voted against the withdrawal legislation regardless of how they voted at the referendum, with just 43% of remain-supporting MPs voting in favour of it compared to only 23% of leave-supporting MPs.

Such a situation would clearly require many of the MPs in this study to have effectively changed their minds from when they voted to trigger Article 50 two years earlier. However, the meaningful votes proved to be a complex situation and the position of an MP on the legislation did not necessarily reflect whether they supported or opposed EU withdrawal. For example, despite voting against the Withdrawal Agreement, many leave-supporting MPs had not truly moved into alignment with their remain-supporting

²⁷ MPs of interest to the analysis are highlighted in bold.

constituents. Instead, they still very much supported leaving the EU, they just wanted to do so under very different terms to those on offer.

Table 4.2: The First Meaningful Vote

Out of Alignment With Constituents?	Change Position	Pre-Referendum Stance	
		Remain	Leave
Yes	No	57% (138)	24% (7)
	Yes	43% (104)	76% (22)
	Total	100% (242)	100% (29)
No	No	77% (119)	32% (35)
	Yes	23% (35)	68% (75)
	Total	100% (154)	100% (110)

4.1.3: The Second Meaningful Vote – 12th March 2019

Parliament’s rejection of the Withdrawal Agreement in January 2019 was a major setback for the government. The EU asserted that it was not willing to renegotiate (Juncker, 2018) and with just over two months until the negotiating period ended, the UK’s options were limited. The government wanted to avoid the politically costly move of asking for an extension to the Article 50 period, but at the same time, it did not want to risk the economic costs of leaving the EU without a deal (HC Deb, 12th March 2019, Cols. 208-224; UK Parliament, 2019a, 2019b). The Prime Minister, therefore, scheduled a second meaningful vote on the Withdrawal Agreement for 12th March 2019, albeit with a few assurances and changes to the interpretations of certain unpopular aspects to try and sway support in the government’s favour (Cox, 2019).

Table 4.3 shows how MPs voted on the Withdrawal Agreement at the second meaningful vote in relation to how they and their constituents voted in the 2016 referendum.²⁸ Although Theresa May’s efforts convinced a few more MPs to support the legislation, it was not enough and the government lost by 149 votes, with 391 against to 242 in favour (Parliament, 2019b), this being the fourth largest defeat of a UK government in history (Clark, 2019). Much like the first meaningful vote there is more variation in how MPs voted compared to the 2017 Withdrawal Bill, but overall the majority of MPs, regardless of how they voted at the referendum, voted against the Withdrawal Agreement, with 60% of leave-supporting MPs and 54% of remain-supporting MPs doing so.

Table 4.3: The Second Meaningful Vote

Out of Alignment With Constituents?	Change Position	Pre-Referendum Stance	
		Remain	Leave
Yes	No	54% (130)	40% (12)
	Yes	46% (111)	60% (17)
	Total	100% (241)	100% (29)
No	No	76.47% (117)	50.46% (55)
	Yes	23.53% (36)	49.54 (54)
	Total	100% (153)	100% (109)

4.1.4: The Third Meaningful Vote – 31st March 2019

After the second meaningful vote Prime Minister Theresa May was forced to ask for an extension to the negotiating period, being unwilling to leave the EU without a deal at that point in time. In response, the leaders of the

²⁸ The MPs of interest to the study are highlighted in bold.

remaining twenty-seven EU members offered an extension comprising of two dates, one being 22nd May 2019 if the Prime Minister could convince MPs to back the Withdrawal Agreement in a third vote, but failing that, the 12th April 2019 would become the new end of the negotiating period (Walker, 2020). Hoping that these dates would put pressure on MPs and threatening that the UK might not leave at all unless they supported the Withdrawal Agreement (May, 2019), the third meaningful vote was held on 29th March 2019, the date the UK was originally set to leave the EU.

Once again, the Prime Minister and her whips tried to encourage support for the Withdrawal Agreement, with May even promising two days before the vote that she would resign as Prime Minister if Parliament accepted it (Heffer, 2019). Although the prospect of a party leadership contest convinced some of the more vocal opponents to support it (Mikhailova, 2019), this was not enough to see it pass Parliament. Despite the threats, the ultimatums and the promises, MPs rejected the Withdrawal Agreement a third time by a majority of 58 votes, with 344 against to 286 in favour.

Table 4.4 shows how MPs voted in relation to how they and their constituents voted in the 2016 referendum, with the MPs of interest to this research once again highlighted in bold. While the voting positions of out of alignment remain-supporting MPs were once again split fairly evenly as to whether they supported or opposed the Withdrawal Agreement, there is quite a significant reversal in the behaviour of leave-supporting MPs compared to the previous two meaningful votes. These MPs were now more likely to vote in a favour of the Withdrawal Agreement, with 66% doing so. For whatever reasons, such MPs were now prepared to compromise and support the withdrawal legislation, giving effect to their pre-referendum preference to leave the EU. Therefore, as discussed previously, it is doubtful whether any prior votes

against the Withdrawal Agreement can be seen to have represented a true move to alignment with an MP's constituency referendum result.

Table 4.4: The Third Meaningful Vote

Out of Alignment With Constituents?	Change Position	Referendum Stance	
		Remain	Leave
Yes	No	51% (122)	66% (19)
	Yes	49% (118)	34% (10)
	Total	100% (240)	100% (29)
No	No	75.82% (116)	73.58% (78)
	Yes	24.18% (37)	26.42% (28)
	Total	100% (153)	100% (106)

4.1.5: The Fourth Meaningful Vote – 22nd October 2019

Following the third defeat of the Withdrawal Agreement in Parliament the Prime Minister had to ask the EU for another extension to the Article 50 period, being unwilling to leave the EU without a deal on the already extended deadline of 12th April 2019. The request was made on 2nd April and just over a week later on 10th April the EU agreed to extend it until 31st October 2019 (Walker, 2020).

Theresa May, once again, tried to find a way to get the Withdrawal Agreement accepted by Parliament, offering concessions to MPs regarding the possibility of a second referendum and their ability to have a say on different options for the future customs arrangements between the UK and the EU (Wheeler and Stamp, 2019). However, her previous defeats in Parliament and the disastrous 2019 European Parliament elections meant that Theresa May's position as Prime Minister had become untenable.

Having run out of room to manoeuvre, May announced she would stand down as Conservative leader on 24th May 2019, staying in post until a replacement had been selected (BBC News, 2019d). After a well-publicised and one-sided leadership campaign, Boris Johnson officially became the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 24th July 2019.

However, the new Prime Minister still faced the same problems as his predecessor. The majority of MPs still refused to support the Withdrawal Agreement even after it had been renegotiated, with some analysts suggesting that only 5% of the text had changed (Holder, 2019; Usherwood, 2020). Much like Theresa May before him, Johnson struggled to make progress in Parliament, suffering numerous defeats within it (Armstrong, 2019; BBC News, 2019e). One of the most damaging defeats came on 19th October 2019 when Parliament forced the government to ask the EU for another extension, which itself stemmed from a prior defeat colloquially known as the 'Benn Act'.²⁹ The EU subsequently extended the deadline once again, with the UK now scheduled to leave the EU on 31st January 2020 (Walker, 2020).

On 22nd October 2019, the amended Withdrawal Agreement was once again put to Parliament. Officially, this was a second reading of the Bill, but it was also the last vote on it prior to the 2019 General Election. Therefore, for the purposes of this study this vote is treated as a de facto fourth meaningful vote. In stark contrast to the previous three meaningful votes, this time the majority of MPs voted in support of the Withdrawal Agreement, with 329 in favour to 299 against (Hansard, 2019a). However, this seemed to count for very little as MPs then subsequently voted against the attached timetable for this, which would have fast-tracked the progression of the Bill through

²⁹ European Union (Withdrawal) (No.2) Act 2019

Parliament (Hansard, 2019b). The withdrawal process was now seen to be 'on pause' and the Prime Minister signalled his intent to push for a general election rather than continue with the withdrawal legislation (BBC News, 2019g; Stewart and Boffey, 2019).

Table 4.5 shows how MPs voted on the Withdrawal Agreement at this fourth meaningful vote in relation to how they and their constituents voted in the 2016 referendum.³⁰ Once again, out of alignment MPs who supported remaining at the referendum were split fairly evenly, with 54% supporting the legislation compared to 46% opposing it. The actions of leave-supporting MPs is similar to the third meaningful vote, although now almost all of them supported the Withdrawal Agreement, with just 14% voting against it. Once again this highlights how personal opinions were perhaps more important to MPs than was initially apparent at earlier votes. While many leave-supporting MPs originally opposed the Withdrawal Agreement, it seems unlikely this was an intentional reflection of their constituency referendum result, with the vast majority eventually voting to give effect to their own preferences once the legislation became acceptable to them.

Table 4.5: The Fourth Meaningful Vote

Out of Alignment With Constituents?	Change Position	Referendum Stance	
		Remain	Leave
Yes	No	46% (109)	86% (25)
	Yes	54% (130)	14% (4)
	Total	100% (239)	100% (29)
No	No	77% (118)	93% (99)
	Yes	23% (35)	7% (8)
	Total	100% (153)	100% (107)

³⁰ MPs of interest to the analysis are highlighted in bold.

4.2: Initial Analysis – The Votes and The Hypotheses

4.2.1: The First Hypothesis – Constituent Opinions

The first hypothesis states that the more decisive the referendum result within a constituency, the more likely an MP would be to vote in a manner that put them into alignment with their constituents. The data relating to this is shown in Figure 4.1 and suggests that this may only be accurate for the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017.

For the Withdrawal Bill, the majority of MPs moved into alignment with their constituents regardless of the local referendum result, but the more decisive the result, the greater the percentage of MPs that moved into alignment. Where the constituency result was close to 50%, around 77% of MPs moved into alignment, but this increased substantially to 93% if the local result saw more than 70% of voters back either leaving or remaining. However, the data also shows that all those who did switch their position had supported remaining, with no leave-supporting MPs moving themselves into alignment with their constituency referendum result.

For the meaningful votes, the data shows very little support for the first hypothesis. At the first three votes, in areas where constituency results were evenly split, between 56-57% of MPs effectively switched their position, while in more decisive areas MPs became less likely to appear in alignment with their constituency referendum result. In constituencies where 70% of voters backed either leaving or remaining, just 42% of MPs voted in a manner that aligned with their constituency referendum result at the first meaningful vote, while only 33% did so at the second and third. With regards to the fourth meaningful vote, 53% of MPs appeared to move into alignment in evenly split constituencies, rising to just 56% in areas where the referendum result was more decisive. The voting behaviour of MPs during the meaningful votes does not therefore appear to have been

strongly related to how the majority of their constituents voted at the referendum.

4.2.2: The Second Hypothesis – The Party Line

The second hypothesis suggests that MPs will be more likely to bring themselves back into alignment with their constituents if this reflects their party leadership's position on the vote. The data presented in Figure 4.2 suggests that this may indeed have been the case at all five of the votes studied.

Both Conservative and Labour MPs were instructed by their party leadership to vote in favour of the Withdrawal Bill, with official party positions therefore moving into alignment with the national referendum result (BBC News, 2016c, 2017b). This saw 82% of Conservative and 92% of Labour MPs support the legislation and effectively move into alignment with their constituents, with all of these MPs having previously supported remaining at the referendum. With regards to the other political parties included in this analysis, their leadership opposed the Withdrawal Bill and as such 83% of these MPs voted in a way that effectively kept them out of alignment with their constituents.

For the meaningful votes, the Conservative Party line supported the Withdrawal Agreement, while Labour and the smaller parties included in this analysis opposed it. The majority of Conservative MPs did support the Withdrawal Agreement, with 63%, 75%, 85% and 97% of those studied voting in favour of it at the first, second, third and fourth votes respectively. The data presented in Figure 4.2 shows that at all four votes between 81-83% of Conservative MPs voted in a manner that gave effect to their constituency referendum position. While this therefore included some leave-

supporting MPs who rebelled and voted against the withdrawal legislation, the majority did actually follow the party line, appearing in alignment with their constituency referendum result as a consequence. Conversely, at the first three meaningful votes 93-94% of MPs who effectively stayed out of alignment with their constituency referendum result represented parties that opposed the deal, with this dropping slightly to 87% at the fourth meaningful vote. This saw just 4-6% of Labour MP vote in manner that appeared to place them in alignment at the first three meaningful votes, rising to 13% at the fourth vote. Given that most Labour MPs supported remaining at the referendum, this suggests that the majority therefore adhered to the party line, but as a result they appeared to be out of alignment with constituency opinions as measured by the referendum.

4.2.3: The Third Hypothesis – Personal Preferences

The third hypothesis suggests that MPs who voted to leave at the referendum will be less likely to move into alignment with their constituents, seeing the national result as vindicating their own pre-referendum stance. The data shown in Figure 4.3 suggests that this may be accurate for the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017, but overall the effect is less certain for the meaningful votes.

The data appears quite decisive for the Withdrawal Bill vote, with 100% of leave-supporting MPs voting to trigger Article 50 and effectively staying out of alignment with their constituents. On the other hand, 97% of remain-supporting MPs backed the legislation and thus appeared to bring themselves into alignment with their constituents. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the pre-referendum stance of an MP did affect their position at this vote. However, the situation is less certain for the meaningful votes. On the surface, the third hypothesis does not appear to hold true as many

leave-supporting MPs voted against the Withdrawal Agreement and therefore appeared to move into alignment with their constituency referendum result. However, it is debatable if this represents a genuine alignment with constituents because many of these MPs still wanted to leave the EU, just in a different manner to that which was on offer at this vote (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Menon and Fowler, 2016; Xu and Lu, 2021). The behaviour of leave-supporting MPs may therefore provide more support for the third hypothesis than is initially apparent.

This is highlighted by the growing numbers of leave-supporting MPs who voted for the Withdrawal Agreement as the meaningful votes process developed. At the first meaningful vote, 76% of leave-supporting MPs voted against the Withdrawal Agreement, dropping to 59% at the second, 34% at the third and 14% at the fourth. As the meaningful votes progressed and after the Withdrawal Agreement was amended, most leave-supporting MPs therefore became more willing to vote in favour of the legislation, giving effect to their pre-referendum desires to leave the EU. It therefore seems unlikely that such MPs truly moved into alignment with their constituency referendum result when they voted against the legislation at prior meaningful votes. This is something that is explored further in the subsequent case study chapters.

4.2.4: The Fourth Hypothesis – Seat Majority

The fourth hypothesis suggests that MPs in marginal seats will be more likely to switch position and bring themselves into line with their constituents, fearing potential electoral reprisals if they do not. However, the data presented in Figure 4.4 provides little support for this, with MPs in safer seats actually appearing more likely to be in alignment at all five key votes. For the Withdrawal Bill, 80% of MPs in marginal seats voted in a manner

that put them back into alignment with their constituents, but 87% of MPs from safe seats also did the same. At the first meaningful vote, only 36% of MPs in marginal seats voted in a manner that put them in alignment with their constituency referendum position, compared to 48% of MPs in safe seats. For the subsequent three meaningful votes 50-51% of MPs in safe seats appeared to move into alignment compared to just 31% of MPs from marginal seats at the second and third meaningful votes and 48% at the fourth. The safety of an MP's seat therefore appeared to have little influence on how they voted and thus whether they appeared in or out of alignment with their constituency referendum result.

4.2.5: The Fifth Hypothesis – Time in Office

The fifth hypothesis states that longer serving MPs may be less likely to move into alignment given that they may feel more secure in their positions. The data in Figure 4.5 suggests some support for this in relation to the Withdrawal Bill, but overall the effect does not appear to be strong.

The data for the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017 does show some support for the hypothesis, although the majority of MPs switched position regardless of when they were first elected. Nonetheless, there is a slight upward trend, with 76% of MPs elected before 2005 switching position, gradually increasing to 82% and then 88% for the 2005 and 2010 intakes respectively. Of those MPs elected in 2015, 93% switched position. Given that this represented remain supporters backing the legislation, which both the Conservative and Labour leaderships supported, this suggests that newer MPs may have been more likely to adhere to the party line rather than risk repercussions for not doing so.

The meaningful votes are less clear. At the first meaningful vote, just 35% of MPs elected before 2005 appeared to move into alignment with their constituents compared to 50% of those MPs elected more recently in 2015. Similar can be observed for the second, third and fourth meaningful votes. At the second, 69% of MPs elected before 2005 voted in a manner that kept them out of alignment with their constituency referendum result, dropping to 64% for the third and fourth meaningful votes. However, at all four meaningful votes there is no clear trend for MPs elected in subsequent general elections, being quite evenly split as to how they voted. Overall, the data therefore shows little support for the fifth hypothesis, with the majority of MPs voting in a manner that effectively kept them out of alignment with their constituency referendum result regardless of when they were elected.

Figure 4.1: The First Hypothesis: MPs moving into alignment in relation to the strength of their constituency referendum result

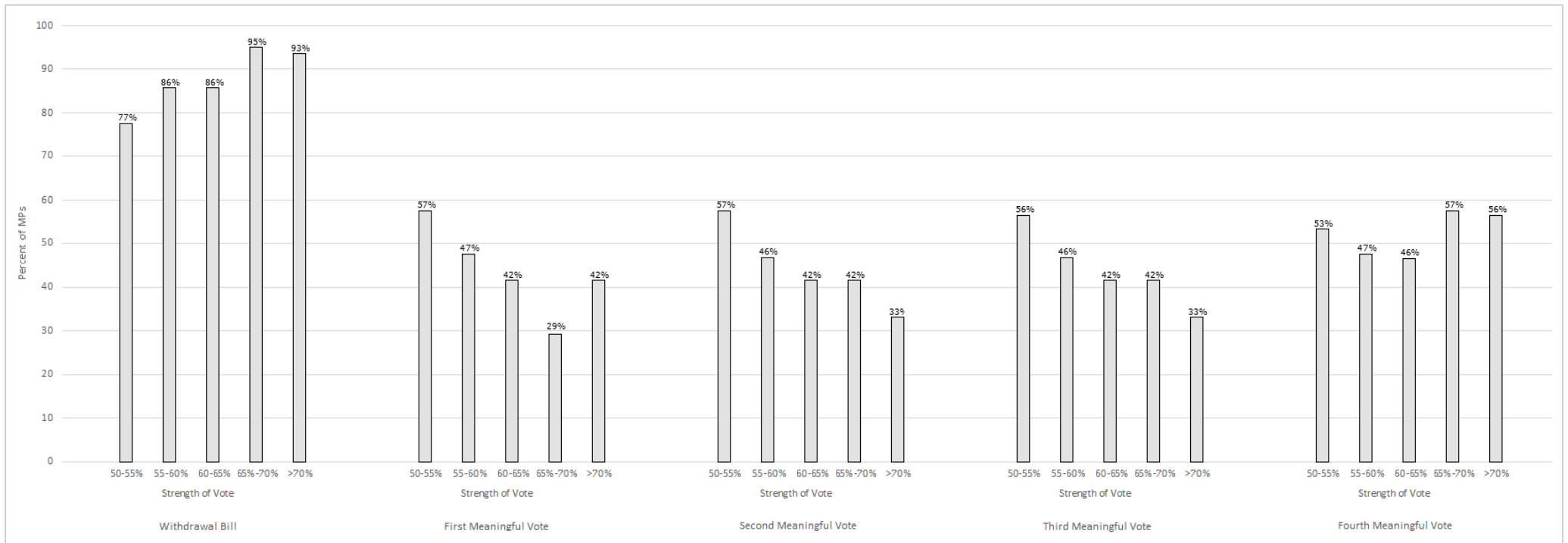


Figure 4.2: The Second Hypothesis: MPs moving into alignment in relation to their party leadership's position

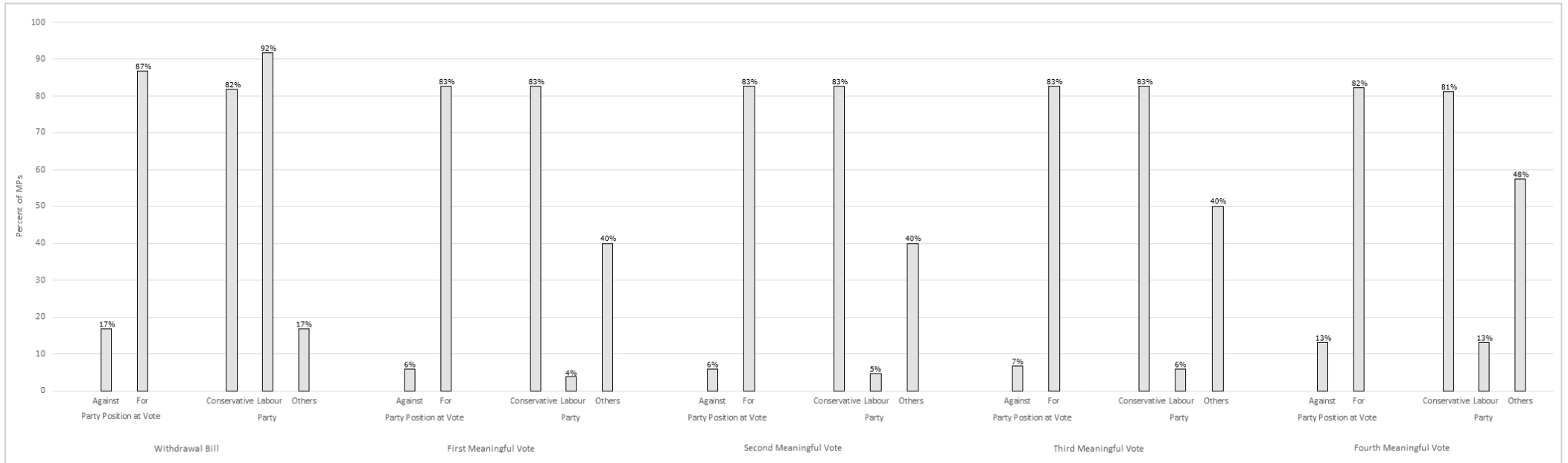


Figure 4.3: The Third Hypothesis: MPs moving into alignment in relation to their own pre-referendum stance

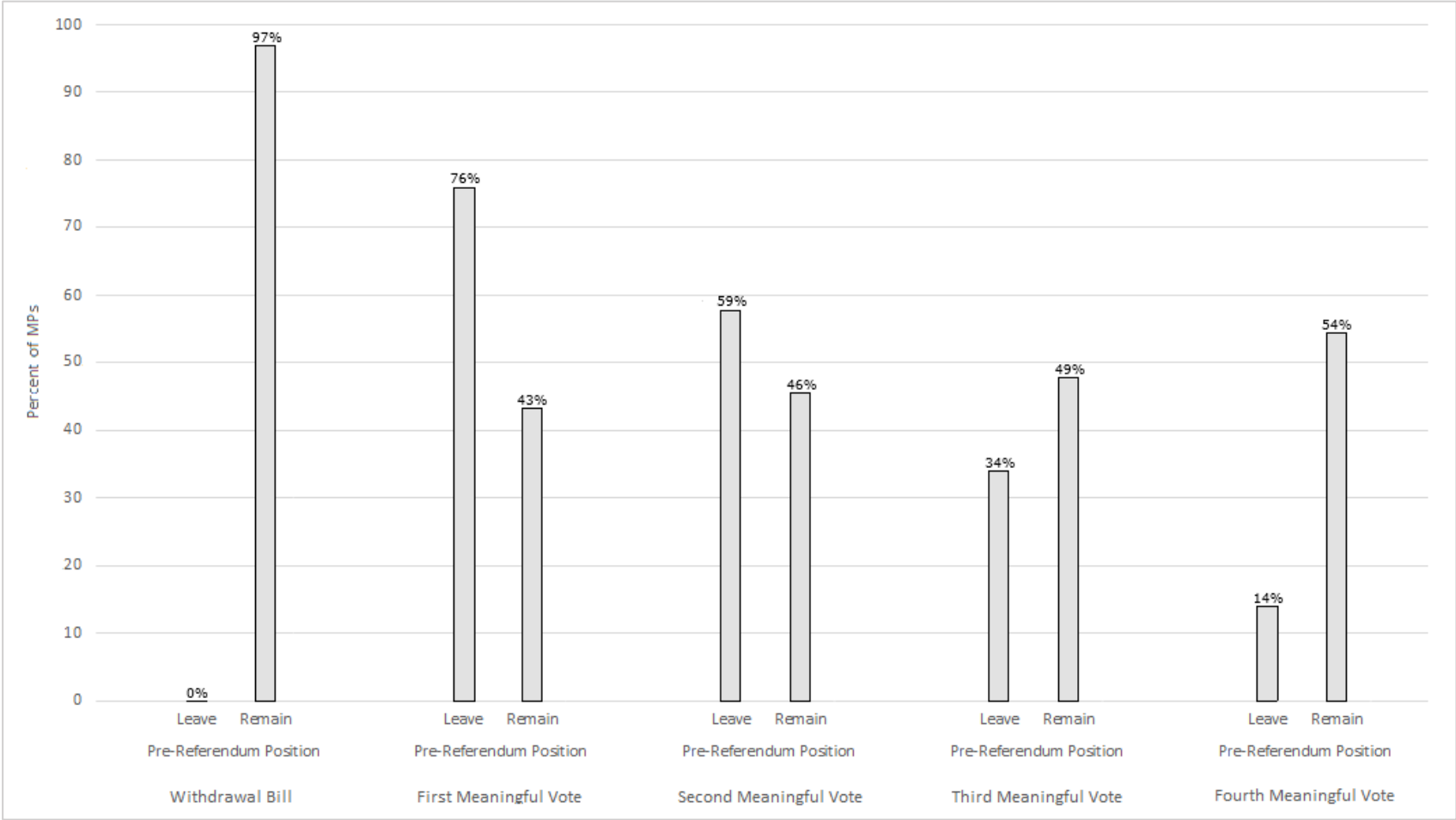


Figure 4.4: The Fourth Hypothesis: MPs moving into alignment in relation to the safety of their parliamentary seat

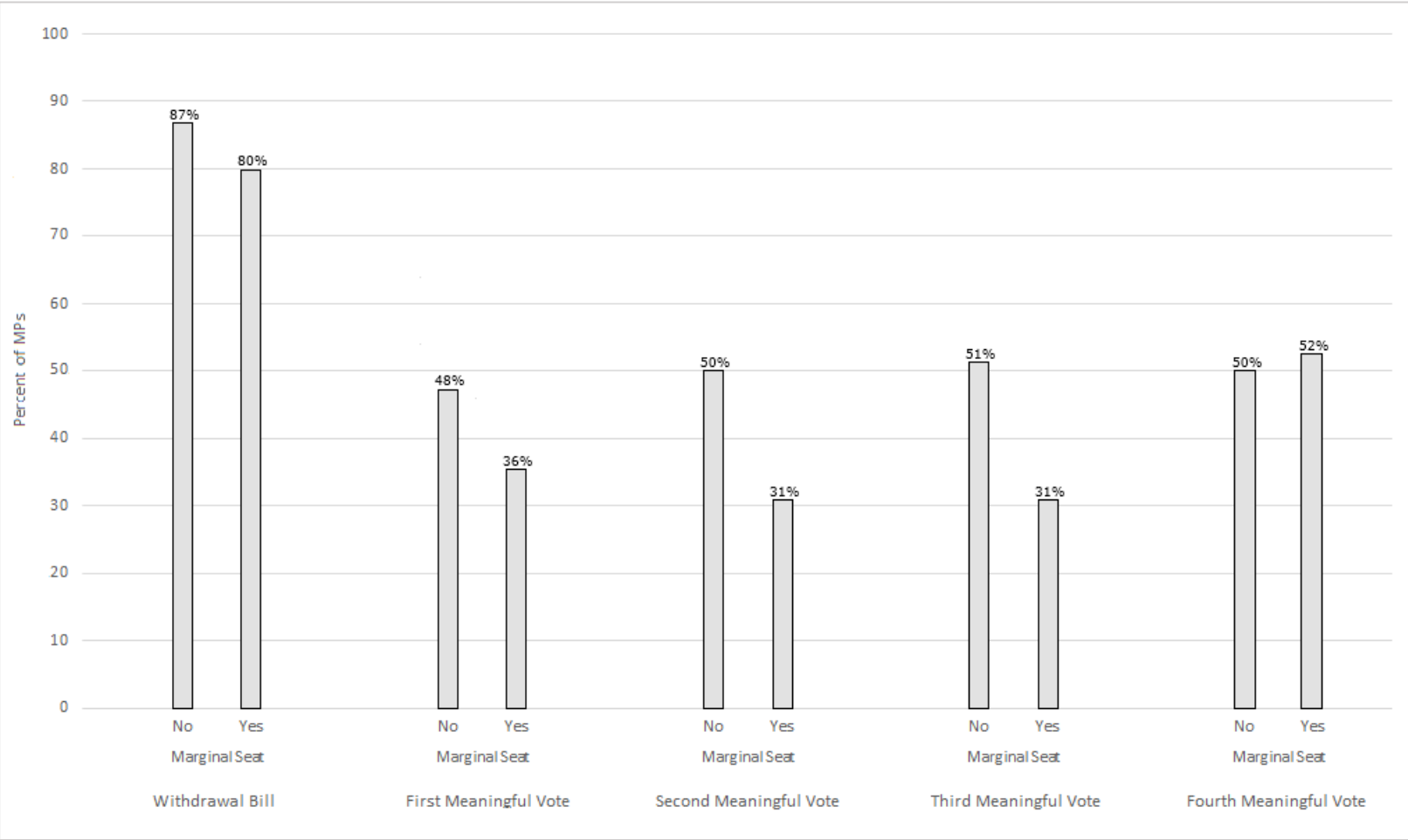
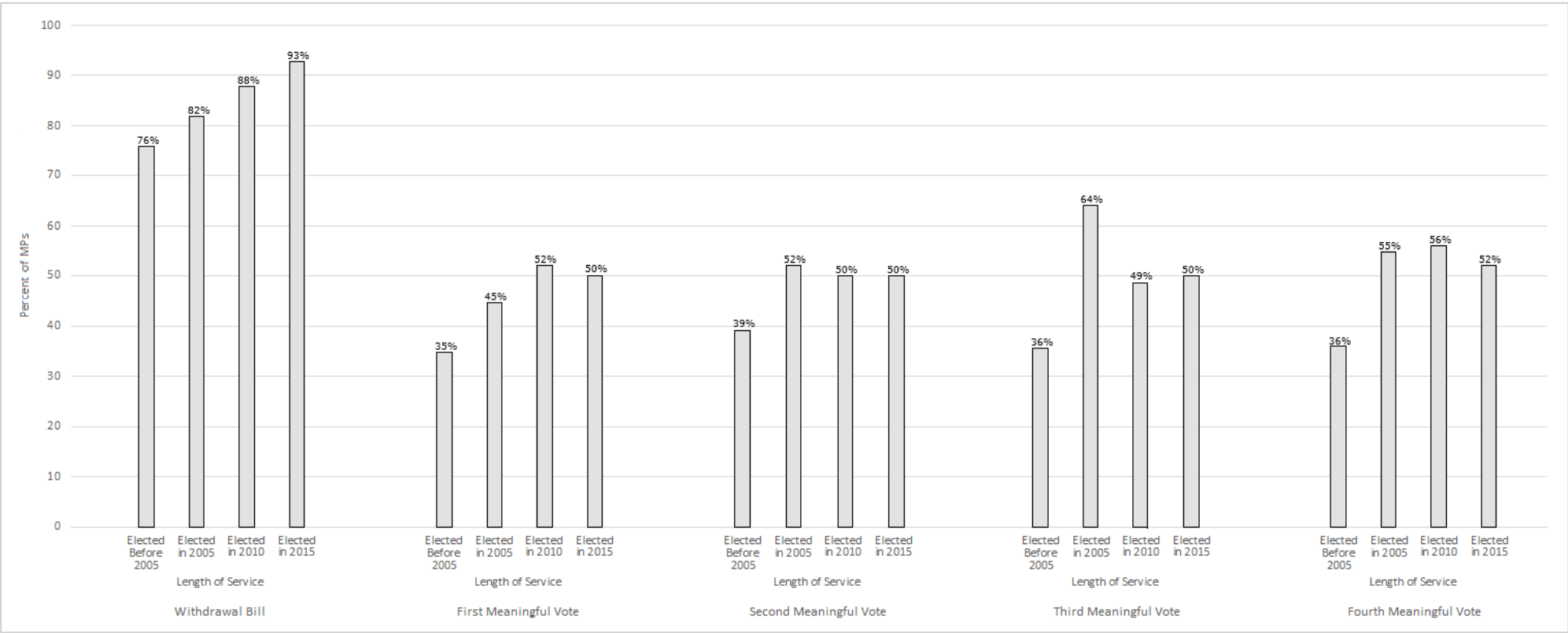


Figure 4.5: The Fifth Hypothesis: MPs moving into alignment in relation to their length of time in office



4.6: Logistic Regression and Postestimation

To provide a more robust analysis of the factors which may influence MP policy positions, logistic regressions are conducted for each of the five key votes. This allows the statistical significance of each variable to be determined while also controlling for the effects of the other variables. The dependent variables represent whether or not an out of alignment MP's position at each vote appeared to bring them into line with their constituency referendum result, coded 1 if they did, and 0 if they did not.

The outcomes of the multivariate models are presented in Table 3.³¹ The results of the logistic regressions provide broad support for the findings of the preliminary analysis and highlight the potential importance of the party line to how MPs voted relative to other factors.

³¹ For a full discussion of the coding of variables, see Chapter Three, Section 3.

Table 4.6: Results of Logistic Regressions

Variables	Withdrawal Bill		1st Meaningful Vote		2nd Meaningful Vote		3rd Meaningful Vote		4th Meaningful Vote	
Strength of Constituency Vote	-0.10	(0.06)	0.07	(0.05)	0.10	(0.07)	0.10	(0.07)	0.11*	(0.05)
Marginality of Seat	-0.71	(0.81)	0.65	(0.40)	-0.08	(0.40)	-0.18	(0.41)	0.31	(0.61)
Party Position	4.79**	(1.53)	4.75**	(0.82)	5.13**	(1.00)	5.47**	(1.11)	4.78**	(0.98)
Length of Service	-0.09**	(0.03)	-0.00	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.03)	0.05**	(0.02)	0.00	(0.01)
Pre-Referendum Stance	-22.70	(5362.60)	0.74	(2.57)	-0.92	(1.74)	-2.68	(2.03)	-4.15	(2.62)
Constant	0.38	(1.41)	-3.93**	(1.52)	-4.36**	(1.69)	-4.24**	(1.48)	-3.11**	(0.84)
<i>N</i>	299		271		270		269		267	
Pseudo R ²	0.706		0.518		0.524		0.564		0.515	

Notes: Standard errors are given in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The preliminary analysis suggests that the influence of the party line was important to how MPs voted on the withdrawal legislation and the logistic regressions confirm this, with the effect being significant and substantive at all five votes. The predictive probabilities are shown in Figure 4.6 along with the 95% confidence intervals. The coefficients are all positive and statistically significant, suggesting that MPs were more likely to appear in alignment with their constituency referendum result if their party leadership supported the legislation, and more likely to appear out of alignment if the party opposed it. The effects at all five votes are also substantive, having meaningful effects on how MPs voted on all five occasions. With regards to the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017, an MP had an 86% probability of appearing in alignment with their constituency referendum result if their party leadership supported the legislation. Conversely, the probability of appearing in alignment drops to just 30% if the party line opposed the legislation, although the wide confidence intervals make this figure less certain. This is most likely due to the small sample size, with these being the minority of MPs representing the smaller parties. Nonetheless, there is still a meaningful difference between the two.

The meaningful votes prove similar overall, albeit with narrower and more convincing confidence intervals. If an MP's party leadership supported the Withdrawal Agreement, they had between a 83% and 87% probability of voting in a manner that appeared in alignment with their constituency referendum result. As noted in the initial analysis, these figures represent Conservative MPs. While this includes leave-supporting MPs who opposed the legislation, the majority of Conservative MPs did support it at the four votes as per the party line, and thus appeared to be in alignment with their constituency referendum result to leave the EU. Conversely, if a party leadership opposed the Withdrawal Agreement there was only a 5-6%

probability an MP would move into alignment at the first three meaningful votes, increasing to 13% at the fourth. In line with the findings of the initial analysis, this suggests that many Labour MPs aligned with their leadership but not their leave-supporting constituents at the four meaningful votes. This therefore provides strong support for the second hypothesis.

With regards to constituency opinions, the logistic regressions broadly support the preliminary analysis and only finds it to have been significant to how MPs voted at the fourth meaningful vote. The preliminary analysis suggests that constituency pressures may also have been important at the Withdrawal Bill vote, but this is not supported by the results of the logistic regression. The predictive probabilities and 95% confidence intervals are presented in Figure 4.8 and show that in evenly split constituencies MPs had just a 41% probability of voting in a manner that moved them into alignment at the fourth meaningful vote, but this increased significantly to 71% if a constituency had a 25% or more majority for either leaving or remaining. The confidence intervals do not overlap at either end of the scale, suggesting there may be a meaningful difference between evenly split constituencies and ones with more decisive referendum results when it came to how MPs voted. However, in general there is considerable overlap of the confidence intervals and thus there may not be substantive differences between, for example, a constituency where 60% voted to remain compared to one where 55% or 65% did. Overall, the first hypothesis is, therefore, not strongly supported by the data.

The results of the logistic regressions also broadly align with the preliminary analysis in showing that the length of time an MP had been in office was not particularly important to how they voted. The logistic regressions show an MP's length of service to have been statistically significant to how they voted at the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017 and the third meaningful vote in 2019.

For the Withdrawal Bill, the coefficient is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that the more time an MP had been in office the less likely they were to move into alignment with their constituents. For the third meaningful vote the opposite is observed, with the positive coefficient suggesting that the more time an MP had been in office the more likely they were to move into alignment with their constituents. However, the coefficients are quite small and the predictive probabilities shown in Figure 4.7 suggest that the effect was not substantively meaningful. For both votes the 95% confidence intervals are wide and overlap significantly, suggesting there are no meaningful differences between the values. Thus, an MP's length of time in office cannot be seen to have a substantive effect on how they vote and thus the fifth hypothesis is not supported by the data.

Finally, the results of the logistic regressions provide no support for the third and fourth hypotheses. Regarding the fourth hypothesis, the preliminary analysis suggests that the safety of an MP's seat was not an important influence on how they voted and the results of the logistic regression support this, with it proving statistically insignificant at all five key votes. The third hypothesis suggests that leave-supporting MPs will be less likely to move into alignment with their remain-supporting constituents, but the logistic regressions provide little support for this either. While the preliminary analysis suggests that an MP's own pre-referendum stance may have been significant to how they voted in some instances, the results of the logistic regressions indicate that their impact was not significant relative to the other variables. At all five key votes, MPs' pre-referendum stances are found to be statistically insignificant to which lobby they walked through. However, this does not necessarily mean that the policy positions of MPs were not influenced by their own preferences, but rather that MPs' referendum positions were not a reliable indicator of how they would vote on the

legislation. The Withdrawal Agreement in 2019 was opposed by many MPs who had backed leaving in 2016, but this did not mean that they no longer wanted to leave the EU. This is something that will be explored further in the qualitative analysis of subsequent chapters.

Figure 4.6: Predictive Probabilities for the Effect of Party Leadership

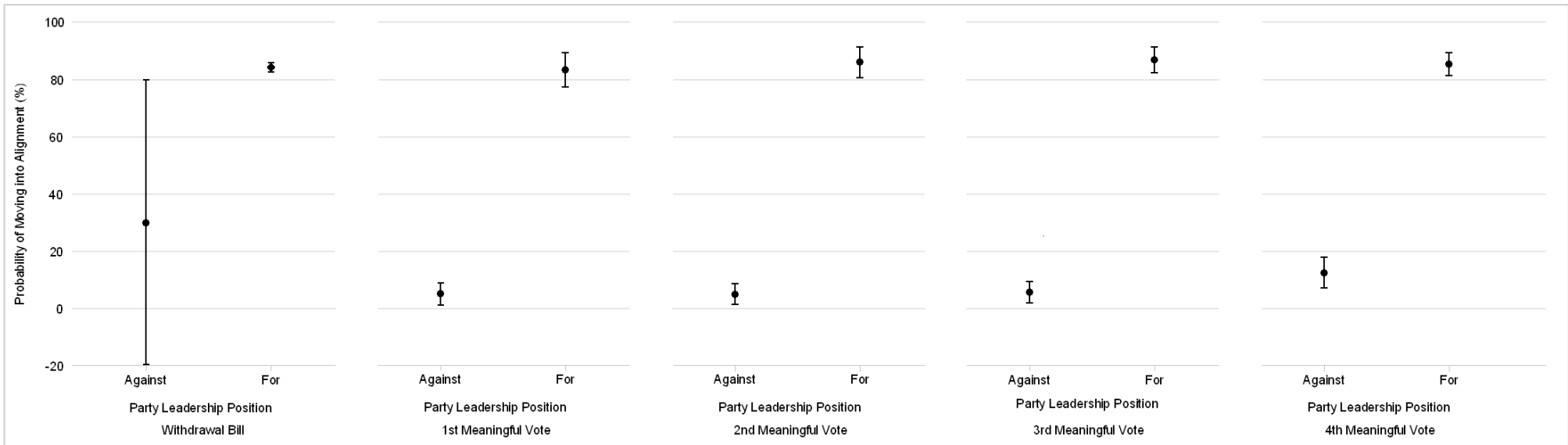


Figure 4.7: Predictive Probabilities for the Effect of an MP's Length of Service

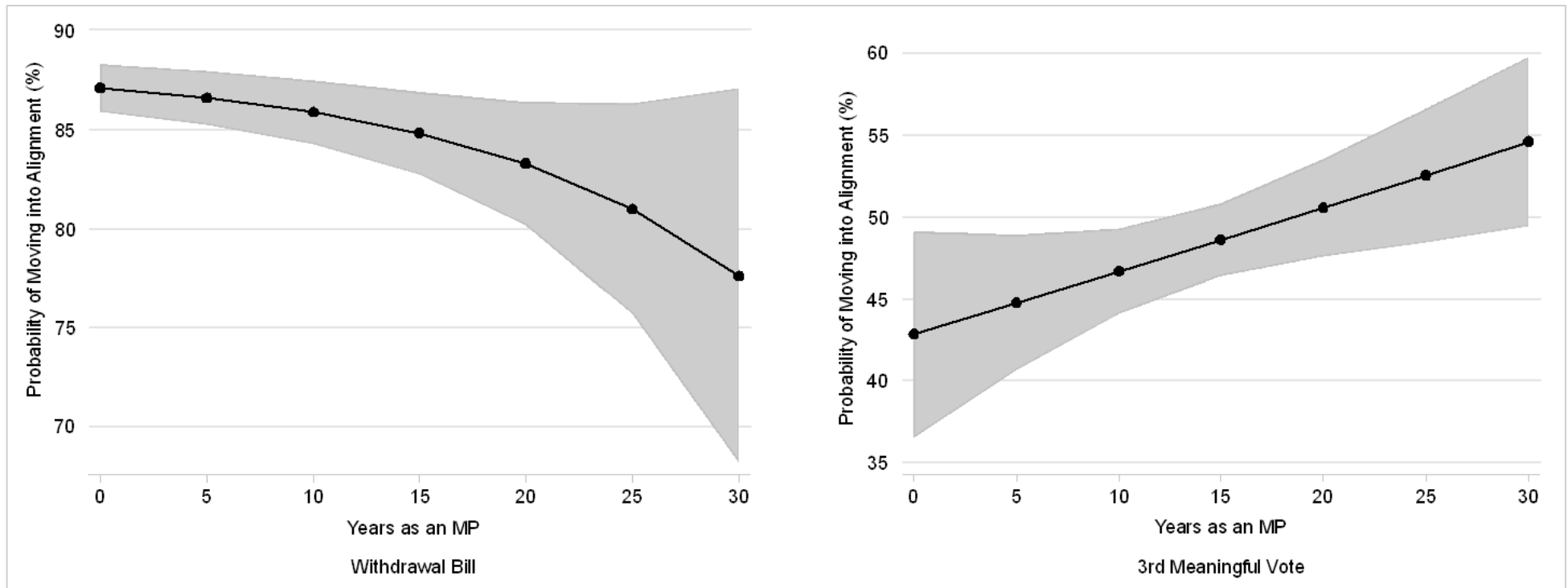
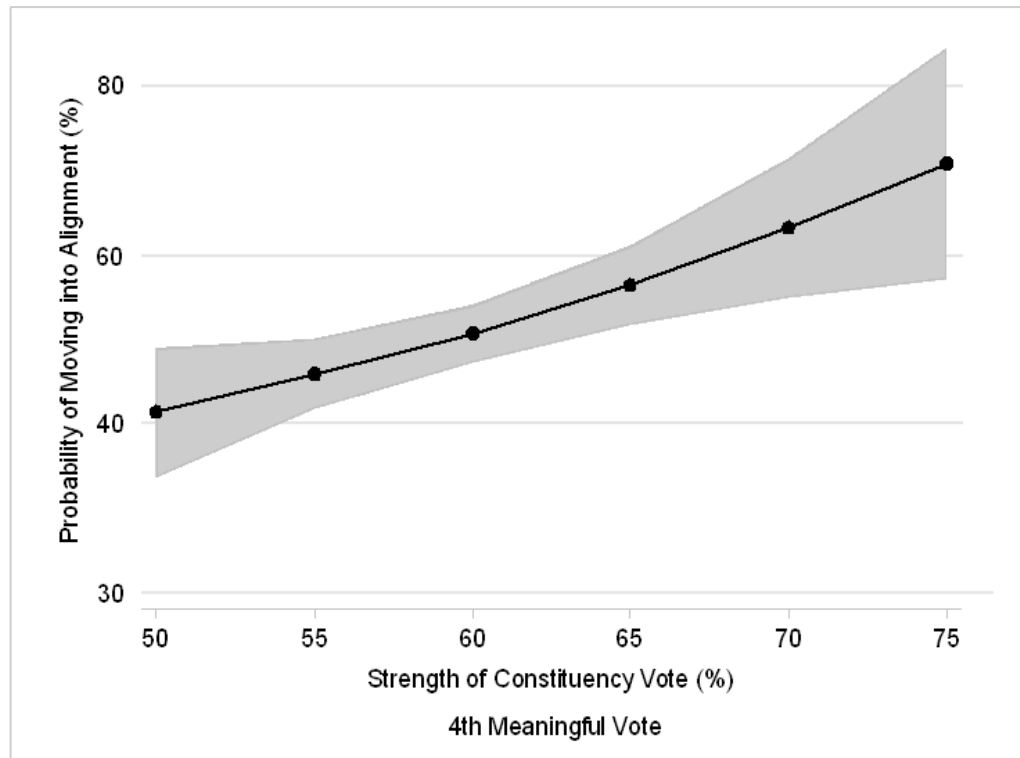


Figure 4.8: Predictive Probabilities for the Effect of Constituency Opinions



4.7: Conclusions

In conclusion, the analysis presented in this chapter suggests strong support for the second hypothesis but little for any of the others. The influence of an MP's party leadership proved consistently significant and substantively meaningful at all five of the key votes. Their support or opposition to the legislation in question provided a strong indication of whether an MP would vote in a manner that effectively saw them move into alignment with their constituency referendum result. Constituency opinions only proved statistically significant at the fourth meaningful vote, but the substantive significance was limited. The length of time an MP had been in office was statistically significant at the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017 and the third meaningful vote, but there was no substantive significance and thus it likely had no meaningful effect on how MPs voted. None of the other variables were found to have been statistically significant to how MPs voted. However,

it seems likely that the personal opinions of MPs were more important to their positions than the data initially suggests. Although many leave-supporting MPs opposed the withdrawal legislation in 2019, most still wanted to leave the EU and thus had not truly changed their stance on withdrawal in response to other pressures. This is something that the subsequent case study chapters investigate in more detail. A summary of the coefficients and statistical significances can be found in Table 4.7.³²

Table 4.7: Summary of Coefficients and Variable Significances

Variable	Model				
	WB	MV1	MV2	MV3	MV4
Constituency Opinion	NS	NS	NS	NS	+
Party Position	+	+	+	+	+
Own Opinion	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Seat Majority	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Time in Office	-	NS	NS	+	NS

The subsequent four chapters further test the hypotheses and the findings of the quantitative analysis, using qualitative case study analysis to ascertain what factors influence how MPs vote in Parliament. In doing so, they shed further light on the motivations of MPs and provide support for the findings of this chapter, demonstrating that the party line can be significant to how MPs vote, while constituent opinions have little influence on their policy positions. However, the qualitative analysis also highlights that constituency opinions and MPs' own preferences are still important to MPs, even if this is not necessarily reflected in the way they vote in Parliament.

³² In the table, '+' represents a positive effect, '-' represents a negative effect and 'NS' shows there was no significance. 'WB' refers to the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017, while 'MV' and the number following it refers to the relevant meaningful vote.

Chapter Five: Reformed Remainers?

The Cases of Ian Austin and Nick Boles

Following the referendum, many MPs who had supported remaining found themselves out of alignment with the result at both the national and constituency level. These MPs had to decide whether to now support EU withdrawal or continue to oppose it. Ian Austin and Nick Boles are representative of the former category, with both supporting the withdrawal legislation at all five votes studied. Although similar in this respect, they were very different when it came to other key variables such as the political party they represented and how marginal their seat was (see Table 5.1). Their similar actions but differing characteristics allow for cross-comparison to determine if any of these can be seen to have affected the extent to which they were influenced by the views of their constituents, their party leadership or their own opinions.

The evidence presented in this chapter broadly aligns with the quantitative analysis of Chapter Four, but places more importance on personal opinions and offers deeper explanations for the behaviour observed. The findings suggest that both MPs were primarily influenced by their own evaluations of what was best, with constituent preferences having a greater effect on how they framed their actions rather than on the positions they supported. The demands of their party leaderships were only significant for Boles, who for much of the period of study was an ambitious and career-minded MP. His own evaluations were therefore heavily influenced by considerations of what was best for his party and his standing within it. On the other hand, Austin started the period of study alienated from his leadership and their relationship deteriorated further as the withdrawal process developed. The party line therefore had little influence on him, with any similarity in their positions being coincidental.

To demonstrate these behaviours, this chapter analyses the speeches and writings of the MPs around the five key votes in conjunction with contemporary interviews to highlight which influences appeared most prominent in their decisions. Each factor is examined in turn, starting with constituency opinions and seat majority before moving on to the demands of their party leadership and the length of time they had been in office, before finally examining the MPs' own preferences and the prominence they gave them. The subsequent three case study chapters will also follow this structure.

Table 5.1: The Key Variables of the MPs

Name	Party	Constituency	Majority	Time in Office	Constituency Referendum Position	Vote Positions					
						Referendum	Withdrawal Bill	MV1	MV2	MV3	MV4
Ian Austin	Labour	Dudley North	11% (2015) 0.1% (2017)	2005 - 2019	Leave (69%)	Remain	For	For	For	For	For
Nick Boles	Conservative	Grantham and Stamford	35% (2015) 36% (2017)	2010 - 2019	Leave (61%)	Remain	For	For	For	For	For

5.1: The Effect of Constituent Opinions and Seat Marginality

Following the referendum both Austin and Boles effectively acted as delegates, supporting withdrawal in order to give effect to the result and maintaining this position throughout the period studied. However, overall the withdrawal policies they supported were not determined by what their constituents wanted. Instead, they used knowledge of local opinions to frame their actions appropriately, highlighting their commitment to withdrawal and convincing voters to agree with their stances. Nonetheless, Boles was still quite dismissive of local opinions, whereas Austin made significant efforts to engage with them, even if he too ultimately acted as a trustee. This behaviour possibly reflected their different majorities, with Boles' safe seat helping him to act more independently of his constituents than Austin could afford to do in his marginal seat.

5.1.1: Ian Austin – 'I'm from Dudley and I'm on your side'

Austin was born and raised in Dudley and had a deep, personal connection with the area and genuinely wanted to voice his constituents' views in Parliament.³³ Throughout the period studied he regularly consulted with his constituents via emails, leaflets and in person to find out what they thought.³⁴ However, this was also part of a long-running effort to win their trust and make them more willing to listen to his own policy preferences:

'I just thought if I want people in Dudley to listen to what I've got to say about education, or how we bring new industries and new jobs to Dudley, how we've got to make skills the number one priority, how we need a university campus in the area ...

³³ Austin (n.d.; c.2017, 01/01/2017, 12/01/2017) and Appendix Three, pp.365-366, 368, 377-394

³⁴ For examples, see Appendix Three, pp.382-393; Austin (04/02/2016, 05/09/2019)

which is what I wanted to campaign about ... I've got to listen to them first'.³⁵

The fact he held a marginal seat was also a significant influence on his desire to show he was listening, noting that when he first stood for election 'I knew it was a marginal seat and I knew I was going to have to work really, really hard to hold on to it'.³⁶ Through his regular consultations he knew that the majority of his constituents wanted to leave the EU,³⁷ but he disagreed with them on this and quietly supported remaining.³⁸



Therefore, although his constituents' opinions may not have affected his overall policy position, they did affect how comfortable he was in discussing it and how he framed it when he did. Knowing how strong support for leaving was in his constituency, Austin did not put much effort into broadcasting his own position and believed little would be achieved by trying to convince his constituents to agree with him.³⁹ He made no official statement on his website and did not campaign,⁴⁰ noting that he would be open about his

³⁵ Appendix Three, p.364

³⁶ Appendix Three, pp.380

³⁷ Appendix Three, pp.364-365; see also The Guardian (2016); Express & Star (2011); Parveen (2019) for evidence of Dudley's demographics that made voting to leave much more likely, which were acknowledged by Austin when interviewed.

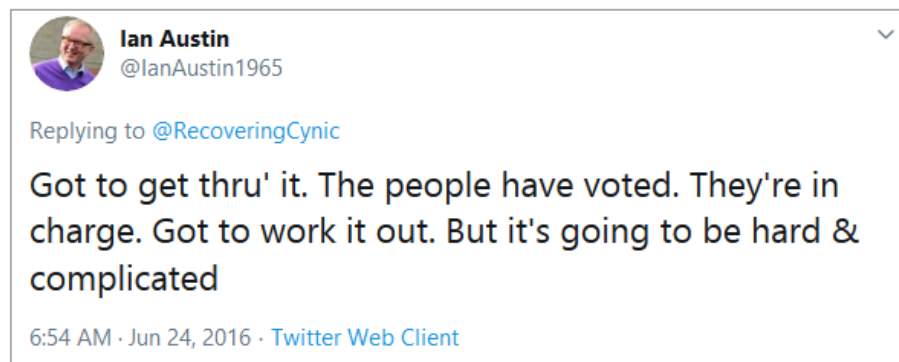
³⁸ Austin (17/06/2017); Birmingham Mail (2016); Express and Star (2016a)

³⁹ Appendix Three, p.368

⁴⁰ Out of the sixty-one post he published there between 1st January and 23rd June, only two mentioned the EU and neither of these saw Austin state his position on EU membership, see: Austin (04/02/2016, 10/06/2016)). There is no evidence to suggest he deleted any posts from this period either, see Web Archive (c.2021)

opinion when asked, but otherwise, he left the debates alone.⁴¹ When Austin did discuss his stance, he only offered cautious and pragmatic support for remaining,⁴² claiming he had made the 'difficult decision' to vote remain because of the risks to the economy, trade and jobs 'particularly in an area like ours [Dudley] where manufacturing and exports are so important'.⁴³

Despite presenting himself as a reluctant remain supporter, when the referendum result became clear Austin's initial reactions suggested that remaining was perhaps more important to him than he had previously felt comfortable acknowledging.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Austin evidently felt he had no choice but to accept the decision of his constituents and the nation, despite fearing the ramifications of seeing Brexit implemented:⁴⁵



That he was acting in accordance with his constituents' wishes was something that he was keen to broadcast, but at the same time he did not want to commit to any specific policy direction he might later regret, even if he knew it might be popular locally. Instead, he kept his stance ambiguous and linked the referendum result to issues on which he had a strong record

⁴¹ Appendix Three, p.368

⁴² Austin's only available comment to the local newspapers simply stated that he 'said he was 'supporting the campaign to "stay" in the European Union.' (Birmingham Mail, 2016)

⁴³ Express and Star (2016a)

⁴⁴ Austin (24/06/2016, 26/06/2016)

⁴⁵ Austin (24/06/2016, 26/06/2016), Appendix Three, pp.366, 370, 373

of fighting for his constituents over, ones which they could get behind regardless of what they wanted to happen next:⁴⁶

'I thought there were strong arguments on both sides, but it's my job to represent people in Dudley whether they voted to leave or remain, and I'll be working hard to listen to them and come up with fair and reasonable answers on the concerns we've heard during the campaign on issues like immigration and how we bring new investment, new industries and more jobs to areas like the Black Country.'⁴⁷

Austin committed himself to triggering Article 50 and attributed this to his constituents, saying he respected the 70% of people in Dudley that voted to leave the EU.⁴⁸ He also promised to 'get the best deal for Dudley' and see that the government replaced its EU funding and provided the 'extra money for our local NHS as we were promised'.⁴⁹ However, following these assertions Austin avoided the issue of withdrawal as much as possible until the meaningful votes, where he once again directly attributed his stance to his constituents. In supporting the Withdrawal Agreement, he claimed to be delivering on what they voted for in 2016, and again in 2017, when they re-elected him on a manifesto that 'promised unequivocally and categorically to uphold the result of the referendum'.⁵⁰ Although he did not want to leave the EU, Austin still felt bound by his constituents' choice at the referendum, adding that 'many people saw the referendum as a chance to have their voice heard and they would be furious if it was now overturned'.⁵¹

⁴⁶ See Austin (2014, 04/02/2016); Walker (2016)

⁴⁷ Express and Star (2016b)

⁴⁸ Austin (12/01/2017)

⁴⁹ Austin (01/01/2017)

⁵⁰ Austin (16/01/2019)

⁵¹ Austin (16/01/2019); see also Appendix Three, p.370

However, it was also clear that Austin's support for the agreement was an attempt to avoid leaving without one at all.⁵² Available opinion polls suggest the Withdrawal Agreement was unpopular in Dudley,⁵³ much as it was in the rest of the UK.⁵⁴ Regardless, Austin claimed that his position was an accurate reflection of his constituents' desires after having 'worked hard to listen to local people at dozens of meetings in Dudley, by sending out thousands of surveys and talking to people face-to-face' to determine what it was they wanted.⁵⁵ He also encouraged other Labour MPs to support the Withdrawal Agreement, arguing that although it may have been unpopular, they should vote in favour because it was the only way of 'keeping our commitments to our constituents' regarding the referendum result.⁵⁶

He maintained this position at the fourth meaningful vote in October 2019, once again attributing his stance to what his constituents had twice voted for,⁵⁷ rhetorically questioning 'what are MPs for if not for keeping commitments to constituents?'.⁵⁸ He also argued that implementing the desires of constituents was more important than any negative economic consequences of leaving the EU, even 'when schools, hospitals and housing in their constituencies badly need investment' because giving his constituents what they wanted and maintaining trust in their MP, and democracy was more important.⁵⁹ For Austin, the damage to the economy could be fixed, but 'once you allow trust and confidence in your democratic process to be massively undermined, it would be difficult to rebuild that'.⁶⁰

⁵² Appendix Three, p.370

⁵³ Lauderdale (2018)

⁵⁴ See: WhatUKThinks (2018); YouGov (2018)

⁵⁵ Austin (16/01/2019); see also Appendix Three, pp.382-393

⁵⁶ Austin (30/11/2018)

⁵⁷ Austin (30/11/2018), also cited in Austin (22/02/2019); HC Deb, 04 September 2019, Col.276

⁵⁸ Austin (15/10/2019)

⁵⁹ Austin (30/11/2018), also cited in Austin (22/02/2019)

⁶⁰ Appendix Three, p.371

Nonetheless, despite such rhetoric he was not prepared to leave the EU at any cost, regardless of what his constituents might have wanted. While he genuinely believed in the need to leave the EU and acted as a delegate in that sense, overall he behaved as a trustee and used his own judgement to decide how withdrawal could be best achieved.

5.1.2: Nick Boles – 'I will not pretend to be representing anyone but myself'

Constituency opinion had little influence on Boles' policy positions and while he never explicitly stated it, this behaviour was likely made easier by the very safe nature of his seat. Unlike Austin he had no real concerns about losing support at the next election nor did he have strong attachment to his constituency, only being associated with the area for the purposes of becoming an MP. Even after his election in 2010, he maintained his primary residence in London and gained the moniker of the 'absentee MP', with local newspapers,⁶¹ and even local party activists⁶² and Conservative councillors⁶³ criticising him for his extended absences, for rarely meeting with constituents,⁶⁴ for seldom being available for comment to local newspapers⁶⁵ and for being 'really London-centric'.⁶⁶ This was evident in his publications, the majority of which discussed national issues for a national audience.⁶⁷

⁶¹ The Grantham Journal, 2019

⁶² Wallace (2019)

⁶³ McNeill (2019)

⁶⁴ Greenwood (25/01/2019b; 08/02/2019)

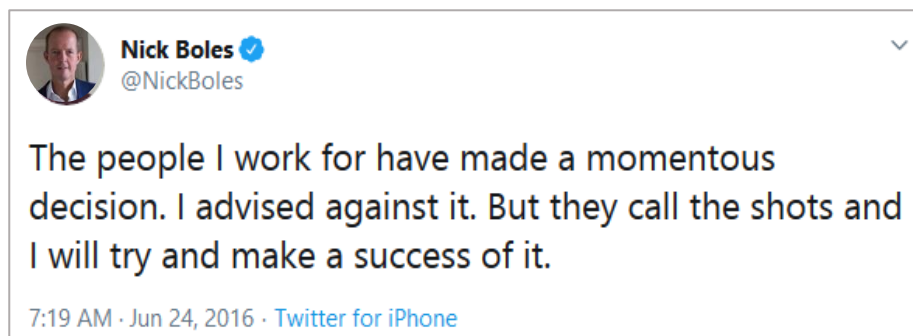
⁶⁵ Greenwood (11/01/2019; 25/01/2019a; 25/01/2019b; 08/02/2019)

⁶⁶ Wallace (2019), see also Quinn (2019)

⁶⁷ Although such content was posted on his website and in local newspaper columns, these were usually re-posts, with the articles initially posted for more broader audiences for national newspapers, (Boles, 18/10/2016, 05/12/2016), or websites such as 'Conservative Home' (Boles, 27/06/2016, 10/10/2016, 17/01/2017, 12/03/2017) and 'Brexit Central' (Boles 13/09/2016), being the first external contributor to the latter (Isaby, 2019) and suggesting he was highly motivated to reach out to an audience broader than his constituents.

Prior to the referendum, Boles thought 'it was clear that there was a good deal of support for Brexit in many parts of the constituency',⁶⁸ but came out in favour of remaining nonetheless. Unlike Austin he was very vocal about this discrepancy and made efforts to bring contrary opinion into alignment with his own, with constituency opinion therefore affecting how he framed his actions rather than the actions themselves. For the most part he did not directly tell people how they should vote,⁶⁹ but instead presented his own pragmatic opinion in the hope of appealing to similar pragmatism in his audience.⁷⁰ He would hold his nose and vote to remain, and he hoped that his fellow sceptics would weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of membership and do the same.⁷¹

The morning after the referendum, Boles felt he had little choice but to yield to the result, accepting it⁷² and promptly deleting pro-remain images from his social media⁷³ and an article⁷⁴ on his website that had been solely devoted to encouraging his constituents to vote to remain.⁷⁵



⁶⁸ Appendix Two, p.361

⁶⁹ This changed somewhat as the day of the referendum grew closer. See Boles (07/04/2016); The Grantham Journal (2016)

⁷⁰ Boles (15/04/2016; 17/04/2016)

⁷¹ Boles (06/02/2016), for other examples of economic arguments, see Boles (15/04/2016, 17/04/2016, 07/06/2016a, 14/06/2016)

⁷² Boles (24/06/2016b, 24/06/2016c)

⁷³ Boles (07/06/2016b, 24/06/2016a)

⁷⁴ Boles (15/04/2016)

⁷⁵ WebArchive (2016a, 2016b) - The article is still available via the local newspaper, see Boles (17/04/2016)

Boles, therefore, wanted to present himself as being in alignment with his constituents and noted in Parliament that 'I need to change my views' on certain aspects of cooperation with the EU⁷⁶ and argued that withdrawal would only be successful if all MPs did the same and asked themselves how they could 'achieve the fundamental things our constituents want'.⁷⁷ However, unlike Austin there is no evidence to suggest that Boles ever consulted his constituents to ascertain exactly what it was they wanted, nor did he acknowledge questions and comments on social media despite promising constituents that they could 'let me know what they think' through such media.⁷⁸

The referendum had forced a change of policy direction, but outside of this, constituency opinion had little effect on the policies he supported, with Boles feeling a stronger obligation to simply keep people informed of his actions instead. Despite being seriously ill during this period, and in his words 'unable to fulfil constituency duties',⁷⁹ Boles made regular efforts to keep his constituents and wider followers updated on his positions through his website⁸⁰ and social media.⁸¹ Boles wanted people to know that he was busy representing them, even if he was not necessarily supporting the policies they favoured. When the time came to vote for the Withdrawal Bill in 2017, Boles' illness kept him away from Parliament, but he wanted people to know he would vote in favour if he could, being understandably aggrieved when criticised for not doing so.⁸²

⁷⁶ HC Deb, 12 October 2016

⁷⁷ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Cols.378-380; Boles (15/10/2016, 19/10/2016)

⁷⁸ Boles (10/09/2016)

⁷⁹ Appendix Two, p.361

⁸⁰ Boles (19/10/2016, 24/01/2017, 07/02/2017a, 07/02/2017b, 13/03/2017)

⁸¹ Boles (01/02/2017, 03/02/2017)

⁸² Boles (03/02/2017)

Boles subsequently voted in favour at the final reading of the Bill in Parliament, prominently advertising this on his social media,⁸³ personal website⁸⁴ and in the local newspapers,⁸⁵ complete with picture of him leaving hospital in a wheelchair and facemask to do so. Although the Bill would have comfortably passed without his support,⁸⁶ being seen to vote for it clearly had an important symbolic value that he wanted his constituents and broader audiences to see:

‘Today, on my own initiative, I am coming out of hospital to support the government on the Article 50 bill ... I want to come to Parliament to represent my constituents on this important bill and do my bit to ensure that it is passed without amendment.’

Boles also attributed his support for the Withdrawal Agreement in 2019 to his constituents’ referendum choice,⁸⁷ but like Austin this was not his main motivation for endorsing it. Although he voted for the agreement, Boles’ preferred option was his own alternative known as ‘Common Market 2.0’,⁸⁸ an option he heavily promoted,⁸⁹ but would have brought about a withdrawal very different to that which he originally claimed his constituents had voted for in 2016.⁹⁰ Boles also supported the Withdrawal Agreement because, like Austin, he was heavily opposed to leaving without a deal at all. Although available opinion poll evidence suggests that Boles may have broadly been

⁸³ Boles (07/02/2017a)

⁸⁴ Boles (07/02/2017b)

⁸⁵ Rutland and Stamford Mercury (2017)

⁸⁶ The majority of Conservative MPs were on side and the Labour leadership had also urged their MPs to support the Bill as well, see Lords Library (2017) . In the end the Bill comfortably passed by 494 votes in favour to just 122 against, a majority of 372 (HC Deb, 8th February 2017, Vol.621).

⁸⁷ HC Deb, 29 January 2019, Cols.743-744; Boles (17/03/2019, 12/01/2019, 25/01/2019); Greenwood (2019d)

⁸⁸ BBC News (2019c)

⁸⁹ Twitter (c.2020a)

⁹⁰ Boles (17/01/2017, 24/01/2017, 13/11/2017, 08/06/2018)

in alignment with his constituents on this, it was coincidental.⁹¹ When challenged by Andrew Marr as to the fact that his constituents may want a 'no deal' situation, he stated that 'I'm afraid I'm going to claim the right to interpret what is in the best interests of the 100,000 people I represent'.⁹²

By the time of the fourth meaningful vote, Boles still attributed his decision to support the Withdrawal Agreement to his constituents, stating like Austin that 'I still believe we need to deliver what a majority of my constituents and of the British people voted for in the referendum in 2016'.⁹³ However, his interpretation of what it was that needed delivering was still not based on what his constituents wanted, but on what was in their best interests.⁹⁴ As before, he did not ask for their opinions, but simply kept them informed as to what he was doing 'to make sure that the constituents I represent in Parliament, have an accurate picture of my views'.⁹⁵ Although he made efforts to convince his constituents of the validity of his position, he conceded that 'I doubt many readers will agree with me on all of these points. But I have thought very hard about them and drawn what I think are the right conclusions for those I was elected to serve'.⁹⁶

5.2: The Effect of Party Leadership and Length of Service

The effect of party leadership on the two MPs was far more significant for Boles than it was for Austin. Boles was an ambitious and loyal political animal for much of the period studied, openly prioritising the needs of his party over other considerations until 2019 when he came to the conclusion that the direction it was heading in was not one he could follow. Conversely,

⁹¹ Greenwood (2018)

⁹² Boles (17/03/2019)

⁹³ HC Deb, 03 September 2019, Cols.112-113; Boles (05/09/2019)

⁹⁴ Appendix Two, p.361; Boles (09/11/2019, 10/11/2019)

⁹⁵ Boles (25/01/2019); see also Appendix Two, p.361

⁹⁶ Boles (25/01/2019)

Austin displayed no such loyalty or ambition, being alienated from his party leadership well before the referendum due to his misgivings about their stewardship and handling of accusations of Antisemitism. Their lengths of service are not found to have significantly affected their adherence to the party line. Both were relatively new MPs, but ultimately, neither were prepared to support policies they disagreed with just to keep their positions.

5.2.1: Ian Austin – 'Jeremy Corbyn isn't my boss'

Austin was a proud Labour MP,⁹⁷ loyal to what he saw as the party's values⁹⁸ and regularly played party politics against the Conservatives.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, he was openly hostile towards his leadership and had no expectations of career advancement under them. Thus, he often defied their directions,¹⁰⁰ openly stating that Jeremy Corbyn 'was a disaster from day one'¹⁰¹ and telling a constituent in 2016 that Jeremy Corbyn 'isn't my boss. The people of Dudley North are'.¹⁰² Austin was very open about the fact that this stance helped him to get re-elected in 2017, as Corbyn was not a popular figure in the area,¹⁰³ and this was enough to dissuade many from voting Labour who otherwise wanted to.¹⁰⁴ However, although beneficial in this sense it was also quite genuine, eventually leaving the party in February 2019¹⁰⁵ and encouraging people to vote Conservative in that year's general election.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ Austin (n.d.; c.2017, 01/01/2017, 12/01/2017)

⁹⁸ Austin (15/11/2016, 18/11/2016, 22/11/2016, 09/11/2017, 18/10/2019)

⁹⁹ Austin (05/02/2016, 01/03/2016a, 01/03/2016b, 08/06/2016, 06/09/2016, 13/03/2018, 13/04/2018)

¹⁰⁰ Austin (11/07/2016); Appendix Three, pp.372, 378-379

¹⁰¹ Appendix Three, p.373

¹⁰² Austin (11/07/2016)

¹⁰³ Madeley (2019)

¹⁰⁴ Appendix Three, p.379

¹⁰⁵ Austin (22/02/2019), Appendix Three, p.374

¹⁰⁶ Rodger (2019b); Sylvester and Thomson (2019); Madeley (2019)

Austin's support for remaining in 2016 and for the Withdrawal Bill in 2017 were in alignment with his leadership,¹⁰⁷ but he did not attribute his positions to them and their fractured relationship suggests this congruence was coincidental. Their lack of influence became more evident when he later moved out of alignment with his leadership at the meaningful votes and eventually left the party altogether. Writing for the Guardian newspaper in November 2018, Austin encouraged Labour MPs to support Theresa May's deal, fearing the worst if rejecting it led to a 'no deal' scenario.¹⁰⁸ However, this was contrary to the party line¹⁰⁹ and according to Austin many MPs and party officials were 'furious' and 'really angry about it'.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, Austin maintained this position¹¹¹ and accused the Labour leadership of trying to 'frustrate the entire exercise',¹¹² arguing that the choice facing Labour MPs 'should have nothing to do with party politics'.¹¹³

However, despite the animosity towards the Corbyn administration, Austin stated that his relationship with his local party association remained good up until the point he left the Labour Party altogether.¹¹⁴ Austin claimed that, with the exception of a few ideologues on either side of the debate, most accepted what he was trying to do and acknowledged that 'it was a massively difficult issue, but I'd thought about it a lot, I'd listened to local people and I was trying to find a way through'.¹¹⁵ Much

¹⁰⁷ Jeremy Corbyn was of course not a particularly fervent remain supporter, see Corbyn (2016)

¹⁰⁸ Austin (30/11/2018)

¹⁰⁹ Stewart (20/12/2019)

¹¹⁰ Appendix Three, p.372

¹¹¹ Austin (15/10/2019); HC Deb, 04 September 2019, Col.276; HC Deb, 09 September 2019, Cols.562-576; HC Deb, 30 September 2019, Cols.983-984; see also Madeley (2019); Rodger, (2019b); Sylvester and Thomson (2019)

¹¹² HC Deb, 04 September 2019, Col.276

¹¹³ Austin (15/10/2019)

¹¹⁴ Appendix Three, pp.372-375

¹¹⁵ Appendix Three, pp.371

as with his constituents, Austin would listen to his local party members and take on board their opinions, but ultimately, he would not base his positions solely on what they wanted.¹¹⁶

5.2.2: Nick Boles – 'An instinctive loyalist ... ambitious for high office'

Boles was an ambitious, career-minded MP who had close personal ties to his pre-referendum leadership,¹¹⁷ claiming after first being elected that he saw 'no contradiction' in following his party line and serving his constituents.¹¹⁸ His leadership's support for continued EU membership likely influenced his own stance, with his own unenthusiastic campaigning¹¹⁹ supplemented by promoting and endorsing their statements.¹²⁰ Following the referendum, Boles made several statements about the need to respect the result and listen to what constituents wanted,¹²¹ but his primary concern appeared to be redeeming himself in the eyes of his party, both locally and nationally. He wrote several articles for 'Conservative Home'¹²² and 'Brexit Central',¹²³ being the first external contributor to the latter,¹²⁴ trying to influence the debate within his party and prove that he was now 'on side' with leaving. His first local newspaper column following the referendum was also written to improve his standing with his local party association.¹²⁵ After Cameron resigned as party leader, Boles was initially a vocal supporter of Boris Johnson¹²⁶ before jumping ship with his 'political soulmate' Michael

¹¹⁶ Appendix Three, pp.372-375

¹¹⁷ Hinsliff and Temko (2005); Chartwell (c.2016) and Gov.uk (2019)

¹¹⁸ Appendix Two, p.359. Similar comments were also made later, see Boles (17/03/2019)

¹¹⁹ See Boles (15/04/2016, 17/04/2016, 06/02/2016) for just a few examples

¹²⁰ Boles (06/02/2016, 07/04/2016, 15/04/2016)

¹²¹ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Cols.378-380; Boles (15/10/2016, 19/10/2016)

¹²² Boles (27/06/2016, 10/10/2016, 17/01/2017, 12/03/2017)

¹²³ Boles (13/09/2016)

¹²⁴ Isaby (2019)

¹²⁵ Boles (14/07/2016)

¹²⁶ Boles (27/06/2016)

Gove to manage the latter's failed leadership campaign.¹²⁷ This upset and embarrassed his local party association, who publicly labelled his perceived careerism as a 'debacle'.¹²⁸ This article, therefore, functioned as a public apology and justification for his actions, as well as an assurance that going forward he would do his best 'to represent the constituents I was elected to serve'.¹²⁹

However, the discussion of constituency desires simply appeared to be a way to reinforce the policy direction he wanted to take. Boles' interpretation of what people voted for and the policies required to achieve this bore a striking resemblance to what would become the Conservative Party's official position: that the UK had to leave Single Market and Customs Union.¹³⁰ Boles evidently still held out hope that he could salvage his career which, in his own words, was in 'ruins' following Theresa May's election as party leader.¹³¹ He pledged his allegiance¹³² to his new party leadership and maintained his aforementioned support for leaving the Single Market and Customs Union, making it clear he was fully behind¹³³ the Prime Minister's intentions as set out in the Lancaster House Speech.¹³⁴

Boles also had a deeper level of loyalty to his party as an institution, irrespective of the incumbent leadership. As a self-proclaimed 'moderniser', Boles wanted to make sure that the party continued to move in his preferred direction, and therefore, still had a place for people like himself.¹³⁵ In a somewhat 'Downsian' fashion, Boles was very open about

¹²⁷ Boles (14/07/2016)

¹²⁸ Sagar (2019a)

¹²⁹ Boles (14/07/2016)

¹³⁰ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Cols.378-380; Boles (15/10/2016, 19/10/2016)

¹³¹ Boles (05/12/2016)

¹³² Boles (17/01/2017)

¹³³ Boles (17/01/2017, 24/01/2017)

¹³⁴ UK in a Changing Europe (24/09/2020)

¹³⁵ Boles (27/06/2016, 10/07/2016)

his desire for the party to adopt policies based on whether they would keep the party moderate, electable and in power:

'As someone who has devoted over 15 years to the task of broadening the party's electoral appeal by reaching out to people who are moderate in instinct and liberal in attitude, I do feel strongly that there is a wrong way and a right way for Conservatives who share this outlook to respond to the prospect of Brexit and the triggering of Article 50'.¹³⁶

He argued that the party needed to be 'utterly unsentimental' in assessing their political strengths and weaknesses, compared to those who would later become known as 'Hard Brexiteers', and choose political ground from which they could easily attack and defend against such 'extreme positions' and stop them taking control of the party.¹³⁷ Boles claimed that the best way to achieve this was to follow Theresa May's withdrawal plans¹³⁸ and put a lot of effort into convincing his fellow Conservative MPs to do the same.¹³⁹

However, by the time of the meaningful votes, Boles had changed his mind. In defiance of his leadership, he now wished to retain access to the Single Market and refused to support leaving without a deal at all.¹⁴⁰ Boles no longer saw party loyalty as the best way to serve voters and stated that 'all Members of Parliament owe a duty to the country that is greater than their duty to their party'.¹⁴¹ Initially, this appeared to cause him more issues with his local party association,¹⁴² who believed that he was beholden to their

¹³⁶ Boles (24/01/2017)

¹³⁷ Boles (17/01/2017)

¹³⁸ Boles (24/01/2017)

¹³⁹ Boles (17/01/2017, 24/01/2017, 07/02/2017b, 13/03/2017)

¹⁴⁰ Boles (18/12/2018a, 18/12/2018b)

¹⁴¹ Boles (19/12/2018); Wallace (2018)

¹⁴² Greenwood (11/01/2019, 18/01/2019, 08/02/2019, 10/02/2019, 02/04/2019a, 02/04/2019b)

views and branded him 'disloyal'¹⁴³ even though many members also demanded he vote against their national leadership's Withdrawal Agreement.¹⁴⁴ Boles consulted with them and discussed the issues numerous times¹⁴⁵ but like Austin, he would not be mandated as to how to act, stating in an interview with the BBC that his local association were entitled to their views 'but I'm not going to change what I believe is in the interests of the 80,000 people that I represent in parliament because of 100 people in my constituency'.¹⁴⁶

Boles eventually parted ways with his local association, but was allowed to remain a member of the national party.¹⁴⁷ However, he continued to act independently of it and worked with opposition MPs to legislate against a 'no deal' scenario and held talks with Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.¹⁴⁸ This upset many Conservatives and leave supporters,¹⁴⁹ but he claimed to be proud to have done the right thing.¹⁵⁰ Now that he was entering the twilight of his Parliamentary career,¹⁵¹ Boles appeared more willing to act according to his own evaluations of what was best.¹⁵² Eventually, his diverging desires from those of his leadership saw him resign from the Conservative Party altogether,¹⁵³ and now that he was completely independent of his party's demands, he vocally encouraged his former party colleagues to break ranks with their leadership and vote to block the possibility of the UK leaving the EU:

¹⁴³ Greenwood (15/01/2019, 28/01/2019)

¹⁴⁴ Appendix Two, pp.361

¹⁴⁵ Boles (19/12/2019); Appendix Two, pp.361

¹⁴⁶ Greenwood (25/01/2019a)

¹⁴⁷ Boles (17/03/2019); Greenwood (10/02/2019)

¹⁴⁸ Boles (17/03/2019)

¹⁴⁹ Greenwood (18/01/2019, 22/01/2019, 25/01/2019a)

¹⁵⁰ Boles (21/09/2019)

¹⁵¹ Boles claimed he had no desire to move to the House of Lords or remain in politics, see Whale (2019)

¹⁵² HC Deb, 12 June 2019, Cols.715-716; Appendix Two, p.361; Whale (2019)

¹⁵³ HC Deb, 01 April 2019, Col.880, see also Whale (2019)

'Many friends on the Conservative Benches will feel torn between their loyalty to their party and their clear understanding of the national interest ... I, too, was an instinctive loyalist—someone who towed the party line, ambitious for high office. For each of us, however, there comes a moment and an issue that demands that we put such concerns to one side and do the uncomfortable thing, because we know that our constituents' best interests demand it.'¹⁵⁴

5.3: The MPs' Own Judgements

Throughout the period studied, Austin and Boles were strongly influenced by their own evaluations of what was best. Both MPs moved into alignment with their constituents following the referendum, but their stances on withdrawal were primarily based on their own opinions. This was more evident with Boles, who openly acted in accordance with his own judgements and made little effort to present them as anything else. Initially, these were primarily based on what was best for the Conservative Party and his position within it, but after their relationship broke down, he was more focussed on what he thought was best for the nation as a whole. Austin too acted as a trustee, but was less open about this and made more effort to present his stances as being in alignment with what his constituents wanted. Nonetheless, there were certain policy directions he was not prepared to support even if his constituents or party leadership directed him to.

¹⁵⁴ HC Deb, 12 June 2019, Cols.715-716

5.3.1: Ian Austin – 'I wasn't a delegate'

Throughout the withdrawal period Austin's positions were primarily based upon his own evaluations of what should happen. Although he took the views of his constituents seriously and regularly engaged with them, ultimately, he was not going to support policies he disagreed with just because it would bring him into alignment with them:

'I wasn't a delegate. I knew what I thought. But in the end, I personally felt I was pretty representative.'¹⁵⁵

Prior to the referendum, Austin knew that the majority of his constituents supported withdrawal, but he maintained his own belief that the UK should remain. However, he did use this knowledge to frame his position in an appropriate manner, downplaying his attachment to the EU and avoiding discussion of the issue wherever possible.¹⁵⁶ Austin claimed it was not really an issue he felt strongly about, that he did not think leaving the would be 'the end of the world' or 'a huge disaster'¹⁵⁷ and given that it was a referendum, not an election, he would let people make up their own minds.¹⁵⁸ However, Austin also felt that local support for leaving was too strong and there was nothing he could do to make a difference, so rather than risk alienating supporters, he stayed out of the debates as much as possible.¹⁵⁹

Following the referendum Austin yielded to the result and promised to support withdrawal. However, the referendum question did not specify what leaving required, so like many MPs, Austin reserved the right to determine the specifics for himself. Concerned about potential damage to the

¹⁵⁵ Appendix Three, p.380

¹⁵⁶ Appendix Three, p.368

¹⁵⁷ Appendix Three, p.367

¹⁵⁸ Appendix Three, pp.367-369

¹⁵⁹ Appendix Three, pp.368-371

economy, Austin decided he 'wanted the softest possible Brexit' in order to minimise any potential problems.¹⁶⁰ Although this was his own view, he believed that public opinion could be brought into alignment with it if MPs moved quickly, before the debate was 'poisoned' and things became 'intransigent', 'polarised and difficult'.¹⁶¹ Austin claimed that it was clear to him from conversations with people in Dudley that the majority were not fixed on a particular sort of withdrawal, and that they certainly did not want a 'no deal' scenario because that is not what they were promised during the referendum campaign.¹⁶²

Even after the debates became polarised and difficult like he feared, Austin maintained his position and refused to accept a 'no deal' scenario, regardless of what others thought should happen. Even though the Withdrawal Agreement was unpopular in his constituency¹⁶³, and his party instructed him to vote against it, Austin held his ground and supported it, hoping to avoid leaving without a deal at all.

'I thought leaving without a deal would be a real problem for industries like automotives and aerospace, which provide lots of jobs in the West Midlands. I thought it would be difficult, cause all sorts of problems and was unnecessary'.¹⁶⁴

Although this position was based on his own evaluations,¹⁶⁵ Austin maintained that it was representative of what his constituents wanted after having 'worked hard to listen to local people at dozens of meetings in Dudley,

¹⁶⁰ Appendix Three, p.371

¹⁶¹ Appendix Three, pp.369-370

¹⁶² Appendix Three, p.370; Austin (30/11/2018, 16/01/2019, 31/08/2019)

¹⁶³ Lauderdale (2018)

¹⁶⁴ Appendix Three, p.369, see also Austin (22/02/2019) and Poole (2019a). He had also made similar claims much earlier, see HC Deb, 29 November 2017, Col.336

¹⁶⁵ Austin (16/01/2019)

by sending out thousands of surveys and talking to people face-to-face'.¹⁶⁶ However, Austin was not passive in this process and actively tried to bring opinions into alignment with his own, noting that he did not ask them to 'tell me what you think and I'll vote the way you say'.¹⁶⁷ Instead, he would present a case and make an argument in an effort to bring them round to his point of view,¹⁶⁸ claiming that when he set out the facts as he saw them,¹⁶⁹ most people were 'in the middle, pragmatic, reasonable, prepared to listen'.¹⁷⁰

'What is politics about in the end? It's about listening to people's concerns and coming up with reasonable answers based on your values. That doesn't mean pandering to people and it doesn't mean just agreeing with people whatever they say. But it does mean listening to what people are saying and coming up with reasonable answers. That's really what I think politics is about'.¹⁷¹

5.3.2: Nick Boles – 'I have done what I believe to be right'

Prior to the referendum Boles backed the remain campaign despite knowing his constituency was more supportive of leaving. Like Austin, he portrayed himself as a reluctant, but pragmatic remain supporter,¹⁷² claiming he was 'not starry eyed about the EU' and proceeded to list and legitimise many of its perceived flaws such as the impact on sovereignty and wasting money.¹⁷³ However, given his safe seat, it is likely this ambivalence was not purely

¹⁶⁶ Austin (16/01/2019)

¹⁶⁷ Appendix Three, p.380

¹⁶⁸ Appendix Three, p.380

¹⁶⁹ Appendix Three, p.379

¹⁷⁰ Appendix Three, p.372, see also p.379

¹⁷¹ Appendix Three, p.377

¹⁷² Boles (2016d), see also Boles (2016a; 2016c)

¹⁷³ Boles (2016d), see also Boles (2016a; 2016c)

about retaining local support and instead appeared genuine. Even when appearing at 'Stronger In' events around the UK in his capacity as a junior minister, he did not adopt a more positive tone and maintained the same ambivalent and pragmatic approach.¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, having made the decision to support remain, Boles made a concerted effort to bring constituency and national opinion into alignment with his own, presenting his own pragmatic opinion in the hope of appealing to similar pragmatism in his audience.¹⁷⁵

Following the referendum, Boles did move into alignment with his constituents and his party, but like Austin, he reserved the right to decide for himself what leaving actually entailed, despite being critical of MPs with opposing viewpoints for interpreting the result in ways that suited their own desires.¹⁷⁶ Boles' interpretation of what his constituents wanted was remarkably similar to his own ambivalent stance, namely that 'membership of the European Union was a means to an end: we joined, and we stayed in, because we wanted to have free trade with our European neighbours, easy access to their markets in exchange for easy access to ours, and a common approach to some big global issues like terrorism, and the environment.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the policies he claimed could best achieve withdrawal bore a striking resemblance to those that would keep him in good standing with his party leadership, those being that the UK had to leave Single Market and Customs Union.¹⁷⁸ As with before the referendum, having made his decision Boles then did his best to bring opinions into alignment with his own.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ FE News (c.2016); O'Donoghue (2016); West London College (2016); Your Harlow (2016)

¹⁷⁵ Boles (06/02/2016, 15/04/2016, 17/04/2016, 07/06/2016a, 14/06/2016)

¹⁷⁶ Boles (15/10/2016, 18/10/2016)

¹⁷⁷ Boles (15/10/2016, 19/10/2016)

¹⁷⁸ HC Deb, 12th October 2016, Cols.378-380; Boles (15/10/2016, 19/10/2016)

¹⁷⁹ Boles (10/09/2016, 13/09/2016, 17/01/2017, 24/01/2017)

However, by the time of the meaningful votes, Boles no longer saw the best interests of his party and the nation as one and the same. He began to act more independently, with party and career considerations becoming less important to his evaluations.¹⁸⁰ When the Withdrawal Agreement was first announced he labelled it a 'humiliation' that had been 'dictated by Brussels',¹⁸¹ but by the end of 2018, he had changed his mind and claimed it was 'not as bad as people are making out' and that he had 'no qualms' with voting in favour of it,¹⁸² once again trying to bring opinion into alignment with his own.¹⁸³

'I have received dozens of communications from my constituents urging me to take a whole series of mutually contradictory positions. Every MP will have had the same experience. What I have done is what MPs have to do when asked to vote on contentious issues: I have weighed up the views of my constituents, the commitments that I made in the manifesto on which I was elected and the promptings of my conscience, and then made a decision. On the matters we have been debating this week, I have concluded that I should support the Prime Minister.'¹⁸⁴

This change of heart was not due to any sense of loyalty to his party leadership, or because it was what his constituents wanted, but because like Austin, he did not want to risk leaving without a deal at all, something which would have posed 'unacceptable risks' to the economy.¹⁸⁵ This was despite having previously defended such a policy direction and criticising other MPs

¹⁸⁰ Boles (05/09/2018, 18/12/2018a, 18/12/2018b); Appendix Two, pp.361

¹⁸¹ Boles (01/09/2018, 05/09/2018)

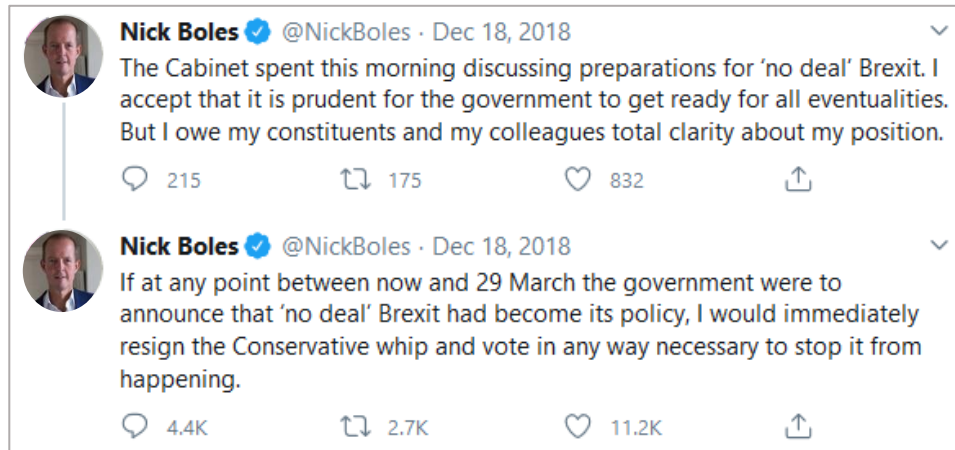
¹⁸² Boles (30/11/2018), see also HC Deb, 29th January 2019, Cols.743-744

¹⁸³ Boles (08/06/2018, 16/06/2018, 17/06/2018, 30/11/2018, 12/01/2019, 25/01/2019)

¹⁸⁴ Boles (16/06/2018, 17/06/2018)

¹⁸⁵ Boles (05/09/2018)

as 'disingenuous' just a year before when they expressed concerns about leaving without a deal, with Boles arguing that they knew this was a possibility when they voted to trigger Article 50.¹⁸⁶



Although he supported the Withdrawal Agreement in Parliament, it was not his preferred policy, and he promoted his own 'Common Market 2.0' plans as a better alternative.¹⁸⁷ These were a stark departure from his leadership's preferred policy direction which he had supported and promoted in the years prior.¹⁸⁸ When brought to task on this, Boles brushed it off by claiming he was 'older, wiser (and balder) now'.¹⁸⁹ The implication was that now, whatever his past motivations, he was being driven by his own evaluations of what was best for his constituents and the nation as a whole.¹⁹⁰ This was further highlighted when he eventually suggested he would reluctantly support a second referendum if it was the only way to avoid leaving the EU without a deal.¹⁹¹ Polls suggest that the idea of a second referendum was unpopular in his constituency,¹⁹² much like the rest of the country.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ Boles (13/11/2017), see Boles (18/12/2018a, 18/12/2018b) for source of image.

¹⁸⁷ Boles (25/01/2019, 05/09/2019)

¹⁸⁸ Boles (10/09/2016, 13/09/2016, 17/01/2017, 24/01/2017)

¹⁸⁹ Boles (2019a)

¹⁹⁰ Boles (17/03/2019)

¹⁹¹ Boles (19/10/2019)

¹⁹² Greenwood (2018)

¹⁹³ ComRes (c.March 2019); YouGov (c.October 2019)

However, by opposing a 'no deal' scenario and fighting for his own preferred alternative, Boles claimed 'I can look people in the eye, knowing that I have done what I believe to be right and put the interests of the country before my own comfort or career'.¹⁹⁴

'Ultimately I took the view that MPs are representatives not delegates and that I owed my constituents and members of the local association my honest judgment and not slavish obedience. Maintaining my integrity mattered more to me than preserving my political career or achieving my personal ambitions'.¹⁹⁵

5.4: Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter, therefore, demonstrates that both MPs were primarily influenced by their own evaluations of what was best, with constituent preferences having a greater effect on how they framed their actions rather than on the policies they supported. Both Austin and Boles viewed themselves as trustees and prioritised their own judgements, although only Boles was comfortable openly acting in this manner and this was perhaps a reflection of his safe seat. Their support for withdrawal following the referendum was partially a response to local sentiments, but overall, they decided for themselves how best to achieve it and would use their knowledge of constituency opinions to frame their actions in an appropriate manner. The demands of their party leaderships had little influence on Austin, but were significant for Boles, closely adhering to the party line until his career ambitions faded. These results therefore provide mixed support for the hypotheses and the findings of Chapter Four.

¹⁹⁴Boles (25/01/2019, 07/09/2019)

¹⁹⁵ Appendix Two, p.361

With regards to constituency opinions, the findings of this chapter support those of Chapter Four's quantitative analysis in asserting that they were not a significant influence on how the MPs voted. Nonetheless, in line with the first hypothesis neither would try to dispute the decisive local referendum results and their decision to support withdrawal throughout the period studied was partially based on a desire to deliver what a sizeable majority of their constituents had voted for. However, ultimately the policies they advocated to achieve withdrawal were not directly based on what their constituents might have wanted. Instead, their knowledge of local sentiments helped to determine how comfortable they were in discussing their stances and how they framed them when they did. Austin was more receptive to local opinions than Boles and went to great efforts to engage with them and present himself as responsive, but he would not support policies just because his constituents told him to. By the time of the meaningful votes, he had decided to back the government's Withdrawal Agreement and claimed that this was representative of what his constituents wanted, despite polling evidence to the contrary. Boles would also attribute his support for withdrawal legislation to his constituents and claimed it would deliver what they wanted, but like Austin the evidence suggests they may not have agreed with him on this. Although he presented himself as being interested in local opinions there is no evidence that he ever engaged with them and he openly acted as a trustee, basing his positions on what he thought were their best interests rather than on what they wanted. Both MPs therefore demonstrated some level of responsiveness towards constituency opinions, but this primarily manifested itself in their rhetoric rather than their voting behaviour.

There is little direct evidence that the majorities held by each MP in their seat affected their positions. However, the findings of this chapter do

suggest some potential support for the fourth hypothesis, contrary to the quantitative analysis of the previous chapter. While Boles was quite dismissive of his constituents' views, Austin was much more willing to engage with them, which could reflect their different seat majorities. Representing a safe seat, Boles may have felt more comfortable dismissing local opinions and supporting unpopular policies, having few fears of electoral reprisals. On the other hand, Austin could not take re-election for granted owing to his marginal seat and openly stated as much when interviewed. This combined with his close personal connection to the area may have resulted in him putting a lot of energy into engaging with local opinions, even if like Boles he ultimately acted as a trustee.

The findings of this chapter with regards to the effect of their party leaderships provide mixed support for the second hypothesis and results of Chapter Four. The party line was certainly significant to the positions Boles took for much of the period studied. He was an ambitious and career-minded MP whose stances were strongly motivated by considerations of what was best for his party and his position within it. The change in party leadership following the referendum was a setback, but he tried to rebuild and thus closely adhered to the party line on withdrawal and encouraged others to do the same. However, his leadership's influence over him had declined by the time of the meaningful votes, and he could no longer reconcile what he wanted with what they were offering. He devised and promoted his own alternative withdrawal plans, but these proved unsuccessful and he left the Conservative Party as a result. Conversely, the party line is observed to have had little influence on Austin, who began the period of study alienated from his leadership and became more estranged over time. Although he was in alignment with his party over the triggering of Article 50 this was coincidental. Like Boles he was unwilling to risk leaving the EU without a

deal and supported the government's Withdrawal Agreement, defying his party line and prominently encouraging other Labour MPs to also put country before party.

Overall, their lengths of service are not found to have had a significant influence on the importance of the party line, contrary to the fifth hypothesis but in line with the findings of the quantitative analysis. Despite being relatively new MPs, both would ultimately defy their leadership and cut short their careers rather than support policies they disagreed with. Although Boles' initial loyalty was indicative of an ambitious early-career MP, he eventually became unable to reconcile the demands of his party with his perceptions of the national interest. Like Austin, supporting the policies he felt were best was ultimately more important than remaining an MP.

In summary, throughout the period of study it was the personal evaluations of Austin and Boles that primarily guided the policy positions they adopted. Having both supported remaining prior to the referendum, their subsequent support for EU withdrawal suggests some support for the third hypothesis. Nonetheless, both MPs primarily followed their own preferences for what withdrawal should look like. Even Boles' initial adherence to the party line was still based on his own evaluations of what was best for his own policy and career goals. This therefore suggests that personal preferences were more important to the policy positions the MPs adopted than the analysis of Chapter Four was able to discern. Regardless of what others demanded they do, ultimately neither MP was prepared to unquestioningly support policies they did not personally agree with.

Chapter Six: Recalcitrant Remainers? The Cases of Paul Farrelly and Anna Soubry

While most remain-supporting MPs began to back EU withdrawal efforts following the referendum, some appeared reluctant to do so regardless of what their constituents or party might have expected of them. Anna Soubry and Paul Farrelly are two such MPs. Both opposed withdrawal legislation at the five key votes in Parliament,¹⁹⁶ but differed when it came to other key variables such as the political party they represented and the level of support for leaving within their constituencies (see Table 6.1).

Much like the previous chapter, the evidence presented here suggests that both MPs were primarily influenced by their own evaluations and judgements. Constituent preferences once again had a greater effect on how Soubry and Farrelly framed their actions rather than on the policies they supported. Although they both assured their constituents they were listening to what they wanted and would see withdrawal implemented, neither truly supported the policy and actively tried to prevent it in 2019. The influence of their party leaderships also appeared minimal, with both MPs acting quite independently of them when it came to EU withdrawal.

¹⁹⁶ Soubry did vote in favour of the Withdrawal Bill however, see Chapter Three for an explanation of case selection.

Table 6.1: The Key Variables of the MPs

Name	Party	Constituency	Majority	Time in Office	Constituency Referendum Position	Vote Positions					
						Referendum	Withdrawal Bill	MV1	MV2	MV3	MV4
Anna Soubry	Conservative	Broxtowe	8% (2015) 1.6% (2017)	2010 - 2019	Leave (52%)	Remain	For	Against	Against	Against	Against
Paul Farrelly	Labour	Newcastle-Under-Lyme	1.5% (2015) 0.1% (2017)	2001 - 2019	Leave (62%)	Remain	Against	Against	Against	Against	Against

6.1: The Effect of Constituent Opinions and Seat Marginality

The evidence presented in this section suggests that neither MP was significantly influenced by the opinions of their constituents. Although Soubry did vote to trigger Article 50 in response to their demands, her preferences for how withdrawal should be achieved were not directly based upon what her constituents wanted. On the other hand, Farrelly remained out of alignment with his constituents throughout the withdrawal period and made it clear that he was under no obligation to do as they instructed. The fact both MPs represented highly marginal seats did not make them more inclined to act as delegates, but they did try to mitigate the electoral impact by framing their actions accordingly. Both assured constituents the UK would leave the EU, but they opposed the withdrawal legislation because it was inadequate and not worthy of support. However, despite such claims both would subsequently back options for continued EU membership when the opportunity arose in 2019.

6.1.1: Anna Soubry – 'If you vote leave you will get leave'

Soubry's decision to support remaining in the EU prior to the referendum was very clearly made independently of her constituents. Soubry would later claim that her inability to use the Conservative electoral database meant she had no idea how her constituency might vote, but she nonetheless suspected it would be a very close result.¹⁹⁷ Following the referendum, Soubry quickly claimed to accept the decision and promised to see it implemented.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Appendix Four, pp.395-398

¹⁹⁸ Soubry (24/06/2016b); BBC Question Time (2016); HC Debs, 13 July 2016, Cols.125WH-130WH; HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1330; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Col.280

Having promised her constituents 'if you vote leave you will get leave', she clearly felt compelled to honour this.¹⁹⁹



Thus, in February 2017 Soubry reluctantly supported the legislation to trigger Article 50, despite her grave reservations about it:

'I voted against my conscience in accordance with the promise I made to the people of Broxtowe that I would honour the referendum result, and I voted for us to leave the EU'.²⁰⁰

However, for Soubry, this was the extent of her obligation to act as a delegate.²⁰¹ There were numerous interpretations of what leaving the EU actually looked like, but Soubry clearly intended to decide which was best independently of her constituents. For Soubry, although many people voted as they did for reasons that were 'completely honourable',²⁰² ultimately these votes were either protests against the political class or the result of voters not understanding the issues and being misled by unaccountable leave campaigners.²⁰³ Because of this, it was, therefore, the responsibility

¹⁹⁹ HC Deb, 10 October 2016, Col. 46; HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1330; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Col.280, see also Soubry (26/01/2017, 27/01/2017a, 27/01/2017b, 27/01/2017c, 27/01/2017h, 27/01/2017i, 27/01/2017j, 30/03/2017a, 30/03/2017b)

²⁰⁰ HC Deb, 13 March 2017, Col.54

²⁰¹ HC Deb, 10 October 2016, Col.46; HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1330; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Col.280

²⁰² BBC Question Time (2016)

²⁰³ Soubry (09/07/2017); HC Deb, 15 November 2016, Col.211

of Parliament to determine the specifics of withdrawal in everyone's best interests, without further public consultation.²⁰⁴

Nonetheless, Soubry still tried to present her actions as being consistent with what people voted for in 2016, even if it was clear she knew they were perhaps not exactly what many voters had envisioned.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, following the 2017 General Election, Soubry began to claim she had a personal mandate from the people of Broxtowe, and her approach to withdrawal was consistent with what they wanted,²⁰⁶ having been re-elected on a platform that deviated from the official Conservative Party position in favour of her own:

'I accept and will continue to honour the EU Referendum result. We are leaving the EU and must now get a good deal. I will continue to make the case for the positive benefits of immigration and the Single Market'.²⁰⁷

However, these claims are a little contentious given that such statements were not particularly prominent in her campaigning,²⁰⁸ and over half of those who voted in Broxtowe did so for a different candidate.²⁰⁹ Soubry even acknowledged when interviewed that 'it would be silly to assume that people read all of my leaflets' and also suggested that many people probably voted for her because of her Party and its manifesto, not hers.²¹⁰ Regardless, for Soubry the important point was that 'it was there' and she could therefore

²⁰⁴ HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1331

²⁰⁵ Soubry (27/10/2016, 20/11/2016b, 10/12/2018a, 11/12/2018, 12/12/2018a, 14/12/2018b, 29/12/2018a, 29/01/2019c, 08/02/2019, 17/02/2019, 03/09/2019)

²⁰⁶ HC Deb, 15 November 2017, Col.453; HC Deb, 20 November 2017, Col.760, 799; HC Deb, 20 December 2017, Cols.1192-1194; Soubry (11/02/2018, 24/02/2019)

²⁰⁷ Soubry (05/06/2017)

²⁰⁸ Soubry (c.May 2017, 22/05/2017, 05/06/2017)

²⁰⁹ UK Parliament (c.2017a)

²¹⁰ Appendix Four, p.399; see also Soubry, (23/07/2017)

justify her actions vis-à-vis her constituents irrespective of what other demands they might try to make.²¹¹

Soubry's actions at the meaningful votes were also presented as being consistent with what her constituents wanted, even if it was evident this was not the motivation behind them. Her opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement was presented as congruent with their desires, even though her stated reasoning for opposing it was that the legislation was not in their best interests.²¹² Soubry's outspoken support for a 'people's vote' was also presented as being in accordance with what her constituents wanted. However, she only offered anecdotal evidence to support this, claiming that they could now see through the lies and were entitled to change their minds.²¹³ Soubry clearly wanted to overturn the referendum result irrespective of what her constituents thought,²¹⁴ but did not think doing so would be successful if it was not legitimised by enough of them in a second referendum.²¹⁵

'This is not what leave voters in Broxtowe voted for. They have seen through the lies on buses and they now know of the broken promises. They see that whichever way we cut it, Brexit will make them poorer and reduce the life chances of their children and grandchildren. Now that they see the reality of Brexit, they are entitled to change their minds and have a final say by way of a people's vote.'²¹⁶

²¹¹ Appendix Four, p.399

²¹² Soubry (01/03/2018, 13/12/2018, 14/12/2018b, 04/02/2019a, 04/02/2019b, 04/02/2019c, 08/02/2019, 27/03/2019a, 27/03/2019c)

²¹³ Soubry (06/12/2018a, 06/12/2018b, 10/12/2018a, 14/12/2018b, 21/01/2019b, 17/02/2019, 24/01/2019, 27/01/2019, 26/03/2019a, 26/03/2019b)

²¹⁴ Soubry (08/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 12/12/2018a, 14/01/2019, 14/12/2018c, 29/12/2018a, 29/12/2018b, 07/01/2019, 24/01/2019)

²¹⁵ Soubry (21/01/2019, 21/09/2019)

²¹⁶ HC Deb, 04 December 2018, Cols.799

The fact she represented a marginal seat did not appear to be a significant influence on her policy positions, but it possibly affected how she presented them. Unlike Nick Boles, Soubry could not afford to appear dismissive of constituency opinions, and thus, regularly claimed to be listening to what people wanted and delivering on these desires.²¹⁷ However, ultimately Soubry was not so concerned about constituent support that she would act as a delegate and was prepared to risk her losing her seat,²¹⁸ unapologetically maintaining her outspoken positions at the 2017 and 2019 General Elections.²¹⁹

6.1.2: Paul Farrelly – ‘I am not disrespecting the opinion of the majority; I just think, on this occasion, that it is wrong’

Following the referendum result, Farrelly’s immediate reaction was one of disappointment,²²⁰ and unlike many of his fellow MPs he did not claim to accept the result or promise to see it implemented. On the contrary, by the time of the Withdrawal Bill vote in February 2017, he made it clear that he was not a delegate for his constituents and would not be supporting the legislation:

‘In opposing the Bill, I am not disrespecting the opinion of the majority; I just think, on this occasion, that it is wrong. I am not failing to trust the people; I just disagree with some of them and agree with the 48% who voted to remain’.²²¹

²¹⁷ Soubry (06/12/2018a, 06/12/2018b, 10/12/2018a, 14/12/2018b, 21/01/2019b, 17/02/2019, 24/01/2019, 27/01/2019, 26/03/2019a, 26/03/2019b)

²¹⁸ Soubry (26/01/2017, 24/09/2019, 11/09/2019, 27/10/2019), HC Deb, 03 September 2019, Cols.115-116; Appendix Four, pp.402-406

²¹⁹ Soubry (c.May 2017, 09/06/2017), Chaplain (2019); Dennison (2020)

²²⁰ Farrelly (24/06/2016)

²²¹ Farrelly (02/02/2017)

Although the previous statement was quite bold, Farrelly was careful to not be completely dismissive of constituency opinions. He conditioned his opposition to triggering Article 50 as procedural, claiming he did not want to 'hand the government a blank cheque' before he even knew what they wanted to negotiate.²²² Even when he had a better idea of what this would be he still opposed it and claimed that, despite wanting to 'respect the referendum result',²²³ the government's legislation to achieve this was 'profoundly undemocratic' and flew 'in the face of the message sent by the British people' at the referendum.²²⁴

Representing a highly marginal seat, this framing of his actions was likely an attempt to keep constituents on side, but ultimately, Farrelly was prepared to run the electoral risk of remaining out of alignment with them. Nonetheless, he did show concern for how precarious his seat was at the 2017 General Election, urging his constituents not to view it as a 'second EU referendum'.²²⁵ He gave assurances that 'the UK will be leaving' the EU just as they wanted, but argued that 'we need proper scrutiny by a strong, not poodle Parliament to make sure we get the best deal'.²²⁶ However, where possible he tried to avoid the withdrawal issue,²²⁷ preferring to shift the focus to local issues that his constituents could directly relate to and on which he had a strong record of fighting for them:

'When the subject of Brexit came up on the doorstep last year, I politely—I hope—disagreed with people of a leave persuasion, and then we moved on to discussing the state of our local hospital

²²² Farrelly (24/01/2017a, 26/01/2017, 27/01/2017)

²²³ HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Col.539

²²⁴ HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Col.540

²²⁵ Farrelly (19/04/2017)

²²⁶ Farrelly (19/04/2017)

²²⁷ His website makes minimal mentions of the process, see Farrelly (09/01/2019) for the only notable example. Additionally, his social media was deleted sometime following the vote on Article 50.

and the potholes in the road. For all the heat that we feel at Westminster, most people were simply not obsessed about Europe. The great, reasonable majority want us to get this right in the national interest — and, for all the reasons that most Members have outlined today, the Prime Minister’s deal does not serve that national interest.²²⁸

Farrelly managed to retain his seat, albeit by just 30 votes,²²⁹ but his subsequent actions suggested that his purported support for withdrawal may have been somewhat disingenuous. Farrelly continued to oppose withdrawal legislation, albeit still on ‘procedural’ grounds,²³⁰ and refused to vote in favour of the Withdrawal Agreement in 2019.²³¹ However, at the indicative votes of March 2019 he perhaps showed his true intentions, proving a strong supporter of ‘Motion (L)’ which called for the option to revoke Article 50 altogether.²³² This behaviour was something he made no effort to broadcast to his leave-supporting constituency.²³³

6.2: The Effect of Party Leadership and Length of Service

The demands of their party leaderships had very little influence on Soubry and Farrelly’s policy positions. This could partially be attributed to the fact that, like Ian Austin, neither MP had expectations of career advancement

²²⁸ HC Deb, 05 December 2018, Col.966

²²⁹ UK Parliament (c.2017b); see also HC Deb, 5 July 2017, Col.1152; Ault (2017); Corrigan (2017a; 2017b)

²³⁰ HC Deb, 29 June 2017, Col.716; HC Deb, 05 July 2017, Col.1152; HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Cols.503; 539-541; HC Deb, 14 September 2017, Col.961; HC Deb, 01 November 2017, Col.882; HC Deb, 14 November 2017, Cols.192-198, 210, 234; HC Deb, 05 December 2017, Col.912; HC Deb, 13 December 2017, Cols.422, 441, 449-450; HC Deb, 20 December 2017, Cols.1136, 1143, 1154, 1165, 1170 and 1175-1176; HC Deb, 20 June 2018, Col.363; HC Deb, 15 November 2018, Col.456; HC Deb, 26 November 2018, Col.53

²³¹ Farrelly (29/03/2019); HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Cols.414-415

²³² HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Col.415

²³³ Farrelly (29/03/2019) and HC Debs, 27 March 2019, Cols.414-415

under their respective leaderships, and thus, had less incentive to be loyal. However, withdrawal also appeared to be an issue over which both felt so strongly that their party whips may have been ineffective even if this were not the case. Soubry did maintain a pretence of loyalty to the Conservative Party on most policy issues, but withdrawal was one over which she was prepared to break ranks and be highly critical. On the other hand, Farrelly was much like Austin in that he was openly hostile towards the Corbyn administration and acted quite independently of it. The length of time each MP had been in office also appeared unimportant, with both MPs acting consistently, irrespective of how long they had been in office or how much time they suspected they might have left. Ultimately, both MPs were prepared to defy their parties and end their careers in order to pursue the withdrawal policies they did.

6.2.1: Anna Soubry – ‘MPs are not party delegates’

Soubry’s support for the remain campaign in 2016 was in alignment with her leadership, but the evidence suggests that this was not the reasoning behind it. Unlike fellow government minister Nick Boles, Soubry’s support for continued EU membership appeared more genuine and passionate.²³⁴ She enthusiastically repeated many of her leadership’s key arguments,²³⁵ but also went much further on some issues, being notably more in favour of freedom of movement.²³⁶ Nonetheless, her loyalty to her party was clearly demonstrated at various points in the campaign. She dismissed comments that the party was tearing itself apart over the issue as ‘seriously boring’²³⁷ and retorted that the whole country was split.²³⁸ Soubry also refused to

²³⁴ Soubry was Minister of State for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise, see UK Parliament (c.2021c)

²³⁵ People’s Vote HQ (2016); Soubry (28/03/2016c, 22/06/2016)

²³⁶ Soubry (22/06/2016d)

²³⁷ Sky News (2016)

²³⁸ Snow (2016)

argue against fellow Conservative MPs on the issue, being unwilling to engage in 'blue on blue' debates²³⁹ as was the Conservative leadership position at the time,²⁴⁰ abruptly pulling out of one debate when she discovered this would be the case.²⁴¹

Although Soubry supported her leadership at the Withdrawal Bill vote in February 2017, she claimed that this was not an easy decision²⁴² and had openly defied them to support the legislation that made this vote necessary in the first place.²⁴³ Even then, the fact that she supported their legislation did not appear to stem from any sense of loyalty to them but out of obligation to the promises she made to voters before the referendum.²⁴⁴ Moreover, her desire to stay in the Single Market and retain freedom of movement²⁴⁵ was in stark contrast to Conservative Party policy,²⁴⁶ as was her support for a second referendum from 2018 onwards.²⁴⁷ Soubry became highly critical of her leadership's approach to withdrawal,²⁴⁸ accusing them of failing to build a consensus²⁴⁹ and for pandering to negative rhetoric about

²³⁹ McCann (2016); Soubry (26/02/2016)

²⁴⁰ Shipman (2016)

²⁴¹ Chris Grayling was scheduled to be her opponent, see McCann (2016); Soubry (26/02/2016)

²⁴² Aitkenhead (2016)

²⁴³ HC Deb, 03 November 2016, Col.1040

²⁴⁴ See Section 6.1.1

²⁴⁵ Soubry (20/11/2016d, 08/10/2019); HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1331; HC Deb, 13 July 2016, Cols.125WH-130WH; HC Deb, 10 October 2016, Col.46; HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328; HC Deb, 18 October 2016, Cols.671-672; HC Deb, 24 October 2016, Col.34; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Cols.237-238; Soubry (28/11/2016b); Appendix Four, p.396

²⁴⁶ BBC News (2017a)

²⁴⁷ Appendix Four, pp.403-404; Soubry (06/12/2018a, 06/12/2018b, 06/12/2018d, 06/12/2018e, 07/12/2018a, 07/12/2018b, 08/12/2018c, 08/12/2018d, 08/12/2018, 08/12/2018, 10/12/2018a, 10/12/2018b, 12/12/2018a); For the Conservative Party position, see Elgot (13/05/2019)

²⁴⁸ Soubry (29/03/2019c, 29/03/2019d)

²⁴⁹ HC Deb, 04 December 2018, Cols.797-799; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.35; HC Deb, 11 December 2018, Col. 210; HC Deb, 18 December 2018, Col.697; Soubry (06/12/2018b, 06/12/2018c, 10/12/20, 13/12/2018, 14/12/2018b, 14/12/2018d, 19/12/2018a, 19/12/2018b, 20/12/2018, 21/12/2018, 22/12/2018a, 07/01/2019, 20/01/2019, 29/01/2019a, 29/01/2019b, 29/01/2019c, 29/01/2019d, 30/01/2019a, 30/01/2019b, 05/02/2019, 07/02/2019, 08/02/2019, 15/02/2019)

immigration rather than challenging it.²⁵⁰ Soubry was also highly critical of other MPs kowtowing to the party line, arguing that 'MPs are not party delegates, we're elected to represent all our constituents',²⁵¹ and that 'putting our country and the interests of all our constituents first transcends everything and that includes the normal party political divide'.²⁵² Thus, Soubry began to work cross-party to find an alternative withdrawal policy,²⁵³ although she still refused to openly argue with other Conservative MPs.²⁵⁴

Although Soubry dismissed the suggestion that this was disloyal and claimed that it caused no significant animosity with her party leadership,²⁵⁵ eventually their relationship became untenable, and she felt the need to leave the Conservative Party and join the Independent Group. However, even when free of any considerations of party loyalty, Soubry still followed the same policy positions as she had before, suggesting once again that her party leadership had exercised very little influence on her. Additionally, this suggests that Soubry's length of service was also uninfluential on her policy positions. Having left the Conservative Party, Soubry knew she was unlikely to be re-elected at the next election,²⁵⁶ but she was prepared to take this risk because of the policy positions she supported, as opposed to being more willing to support those positions because she knew her career was coming to an end.

With regards to her local party association, Soubry suggested that they too did not influence her stances. Soubry claimed her positions did not cause

²⁵⁰ Soubry (15/01/2017)

²⁵¹ Soubry (07/01/2019)

²⁵² HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328; see also HC Deb, 15 January 2019, Cols.1071-1072; HC Deb, 20 March 2019, Cols.1131-1133; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.88; Soubry (07/01/2019, 20/01/2019, 04/02/2019a, 04/02/2019b, 04/02/2019c, 20/09/2019)

²⁵³ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Col.280

²⁵⁴ Soubry (28/11/2016a)

²⁵⁵ Appendix Four, pp.400-402

²⁵⁶ Appendix Four, pp.403-406

any problems, apart from with some of the 'old fashioned Conservatives' for whom it was deeply ingrained that you should be loyal to the party leadership, even if you thought they were a 'prize one plonker'.²⁵⁷ However, unlike Boles' local association, the Broxtowe Conservatives remained broadly supportive of their outspoken, but constituency-orientated MP, unanimously reselecting her as their candidate for the 2017 election²⁵⁸ and defending her in 2019 when her opposition to the withdrawal legislation saw her receive abuse in the media and in the streets.²⁵⁹ Even after she left the party on 20th February 2019,²⁶⁰ they wished her well and praised her for being a good constituency MP,²⁶¹ with Soubry even offering to help them campaign in the 2019 local elections.²⁶² Although Soubry was clearly happy to have her local activists on side and had worked hard in the constituency to earn their trust and support, this was again of little consequence to her positions. Soubry was prepared to listen to their views and justify her own, but ultimately, they would not direct her as to how to act.²⁶³

6.2.2: Paul Farrelly – 'I certainly didn't vote for Jeremy Corbyn'

Farrelly's support for remaining prior to the referendum put him, officially at least, into alignment with his party leadership on the issue and he was an active member of the party's 'In for Britain' campaign group.²⁶⁴ However, this was not primarily due to party loyalty and he was evidently frustrated by his leadership's actions, accusing them of not taking the referendum seriously enough.²⁶⁵ Although the Labour Party accepted the referendum

²⁵⁷ Appendix Four, p.400

²⁵⁸ Soubry (21/04/2017, 22/04/2017)

²⁵⁹ Broxtowe Conservatives (07/01/2019)

²⁶⁰ Soubry (20/02/2019a, 20/02/2019b)

²⁶¹ Broxtowe Conservatives (20/02/2019)

²⁶² Soubry (22/02/2019)

²⁶³ Appendix Four, p.407

²⁶⁴ Farrelly (22/02/2016a, 28/02/2016)

²⁶⁵ Farrelly (22/02/2016b, 24/01/2017); HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Col.539

result, Farrelly did not and would rebel to vote against the Withdrawal Bill in February 2017.²⁶⁶ Following this, Farrelly seldom promoted party policy on withdrawal, but when he did it was usually in relation to the Shadow Brexit Secretary Kier Starmer and his efforts, rather than those of the Corbyn administration.²⁶⁷

Farrelly ran under the Labour banner at the 2017 General Election, but distanced himself from its leaders, telling his constituents that 'we need a strong, independent voice – an MP who's local and effective'.²⁶⁸ Like Ian Austin, Farrelly's vocal criticism of Corbyn was genuine but may have also helped his re-election campaign given how unpopular the leader was in the constituency. His party leadership were conspicuous by their absence in his campaigning,²⁶⁹ and he was very open about the fact that 'Jeremy does not go down well with our core Labour support',²⁷⁰ noting that 'if I told anyone Jeremy Corbyn was going to be Prime Minister they would laugh me off the streets'.²⁷¹ In return, his leadership seemed happy for him to lose his position, withholding the extra funding that would be expected in such a marginal seat and forcing Farrelly and his local party association to rely heavily on outside donations to fight a successful campaign.²⁷²

The 2017 General Election was just one example of the good working relationship between Farrelly and his local party association. Given how marginal his seat was, Farrelly worked hard locally and they clearly valued him as a good constituency MP, much like Soubry's association.²⁷³ They

²⁶⁶ Farrelly (24/01/2017a, 26/01/2017, 27/01/2017)

²⁶⁷ Farrelly (24/01/2017a); HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Col.539

²⁶⁸ Election Leaflet, cited in Ferguson (10/05/2017), see also Farrelly (c.2017)

²⁶⁹ Farrelly (07/05/2017, 30/05/2017); see also Ferguson (10/05/2017)

²⁷⁰ Watson (10/05/2017)

²⁷¹ Watson (10/05/2017); Ferguson (10/05/2017)

²⁷² Farrelly (11/06/2017); Newcastle under Lyme Labour Party (10/05/2017, 11/06/2017); Watson (10/05/2017)

²⁷³ Newcastle under Lyme Labour Party (06/09/2019); see also Farrelly (c.2019b, c.2019c) for his regular examples to broadcast this.

expressed disappointment at his decision to stand down²⁷⁴ and allowed him to be involved with the selection of their next candidate.²⁷⁵ They also appeared to be on the same page with regards to most aspects of withdrawal, even if it defied the national party line, vocally supporting his positions at all five of the key votes and his desire for a second referendum.²⁷⁶ There is no evidence that they had any influence on Farrelly taking these positions, but given his generally headstrong views, it seems more likely that he was fortunate enough to have a trusting and supportive local association. Much like Soubry, they appeared willing to go along with their outspoken, but constituency-orientated, MP even if it risked upsetting their national leadership.

By the time of the meaningful votes in 2019, Farrelly was in alignment with his party. However, given his consistent hostility towards withdrawal legislation over the preceding years, this was unlikely to have been a result of party loyalty. Moreover, Farrelly still rebelled on other issues such as the possibility of joining the EEA²⁷⁷ and his leadership's desire to force an early general election following the fourth meaningful vote.²⁷⁸ He was also a proponent of a second referendum²⁷⁹ long before his leadership warmed up to the idea.²⁸⁰ Farrelly acknowledged that he regularly defied the party line but brushed this off by noting his record of rebellion was 'quite modest compared with our leader's'.²⁸¹

²⁷⁴ Newcastle under Lyme Labour Party (06/09/2019)

²⁷⁵ Newcastle under Lyme Labour Party (01/11/2019)

²⁷⁶ Farrelly (13/05/2019); Newcastle under Lyme Labour Party (25/04/2017, 02/05/2017, 15/01/2019, 30/08/2019, 25/10/2019)

²⁷⁷ European Economic Area, see Rodgers (14/06/2018)

²⁷⁸ BBC Politics (29/10/2019); HC Deb, 29th October 2019, Col.237

²⁷⁹ Labour List (22/05/2019)

²⁸⁰ Mason and Elgot (28/05/2019)

²⁸¹ Farrelly (24/01/2017a, 26/01/2017, 27/01/2017)

There is also little evidence to suggest that Farrelly's time in office significantly influenced his actions. Farrelly was prepared to defy the party line regardless of how long he had been in office or how much time he suspected he might have left. This behaviour was likely made easier by the fact that he had no expectations of career advancement under his leadership,²⁸² and thus, had less incentive to be loyal. Nonetheless, Farrelly had no apparent intention to retire prior to late 2019 and acted the same in the twilight of his career as he did when actively seeking re-election in 2017. Like Soubry, he therefore seemed prepared to risk ending his parliamentary career because of the policy positions he supported, rather than being more likely to follow those positions because he knew his career was drawing to a close.

6.3: The MPs' Own Judgements

Throughout the period studied, the primary influence on both Soubry and Farrelly was undoubtedly their own individual evaluations of what was best. Although at times they would claim to accept the need to leave the EU, neither got fully behind the project. Farrelly steadfastly refused to support any withdrawal legislation and his eventual support for revoking Article 50 came as no surprise. On the other hand, Soubry would go against her better judgement and vote to trigger Article 50, but she subsequently pushed for a withdrawal that many saw as leaving in name only. Thus, while they may have amended their tactics and rhetoric, ultimately both MPs pursued their own preferred policies, irrespective of what their constituents and parties may have wanted, ultimately being willing to sacrifice their parliamentary careers in order to do so.

²⁸² Farrelly (06/01/2016, 22/02/2016a, 22/02/2016b, 24/06/2016, 14/08/2016)

6.3.1: Anna Soubry – ‘I’m just going to be true to what I believe in’

Throughout the referendum campaign Soubry was a passionate and prolific campaigner,²⁸³ and this was undoubtedly because she truly believed in continued EU membership regardless of what others thought.²⁸⁴ Soubry made regular efforts to bring constituency opinion into alignment with her own, regularly challenging contrary views and signposting undecided voters to the Stronger In website.²⁸⁵ However, Soubry would also be selective about where she campaigned in person, avoiding areas she believed would not be receptive to her remain messages, or promptly leaving them if she had not realised this beforehand.²⁸⁶

Following the referendum, Soubry quickly accepted the result and promised to see it implemented.²⁸⁷ However, she also made it clear that she was not a ‘leaver’ yet,²⁸⁸ and that accepting her side had lost the referendum did not mean she would stop campaigning for what she believed in. She justified this by pointing to leave supporters following the 1975 referendum²⁸⁹ and noting how slim the majority to leave was,²⁹⁰ vowing she would ‘not give up on the 48%’ who voted to remain and needed to be allowed into the withdrawal debates.²⁹¹

²⁸³ Twitter (c.2020b); Snow (22/02/2016); HC Debs, 15 March 2016, Vol.607; HC Debs, 15 March 2016, Col.793; Soubry (18/05/2016, 12/06/2016, 15/06/2016, 20/06/2016a, 20/06/2016b, 20/06/2016c, 21/06/2016, 22/06/2016a, 22/06/2016b, 22/06/2016c, 22/06/2016d, 23/05/2016)

²⁸⁴ Appendix Four, pp.395-397, see also Soubry (12/06/2016, 20/06/2016a, 20/06/2016b, 20/06/2016c, 22/06/2016a)

²⁸⁵ Soubry (28/02/2016a, 28/02/2016b, 16/04/2016, 14/05/2016, 26/05/2016, 01/06/2016, 18/06/2016, 22/06/2016d), see also Appendix Four, pp.395-397

²⁸⁶ Appendix Four, pp.396-398

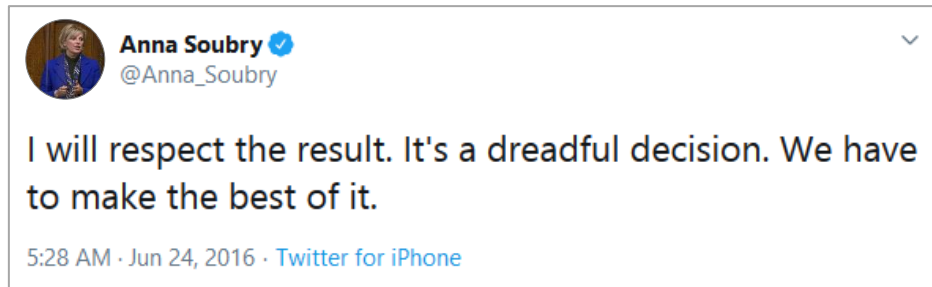
²⁸⁷ Soubry (24/06/2016b)

²⁸⁸ Soubry (21/12/2016)

²⁸⁹ Soubry (23/07/2016c)

²⁹⁰ HC Debs, 05 September 2016, Col.54 and HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1327

²⁹¹ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328, see also Soubry (26/10/2016a, 26/10/2016b, 25/11/2016a, 25/11/2016b)



Nonetheless, Soubry pledged to support the triggering of Article 50, and this is the only example of Soubry's actions being clearly and directly influenced by the demands of others.²⁹²

'I will be quite honest: I have struggled with this ever since June. It has been my long-held belief that our country – our nation – is considerably better off as a member of the European Union ... I am a firm Remainer.'²⁹³

Much like constitutional scholars have historically suggested,²⁹⁴ the referendum therefore forced Soubry to act contrary to her better judgement and she clearly regretted her vote. The following week Soubry stated in Parliament that she became an MP to do the 'very best' for her constituents, but having supported the Withdrawal Bill, 'I genuinely do not know whether I did that'.²⁹⁵ Soubry therefore held out hope that Article 50 was revocable²⁹⁶ and that after seeing the 'reality' of what leaving entailed people would change their minds, claiming that 'the 48% may in due course actually become the majority'.²⁹⁷

²⁹² HC Deb, 10 October 2016, Col.46; HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1330; HC Deb, 07 December 2016, Col.280, see also Soubry (26/01/2017, 27/01/2017a, 27/01/2017b, 27/01/2017c, 27/01/2017h, 27/01/2017i, 27/01/2017j, 30/03/2017a, 30/03/2017b)

²⁹³ HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1330, see also Soubry (26/01/2017b, 26/01/2017c, 26/01/2017d)

²⁹⁴ See Chapter Two, Section 4

²⁹⁵ HC Deb, 07 February 2017, Vol.621

²⁹⁶ Soubry (23/11/2016)

²⁹⁷ HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328

However, while waiting for this to happen, Soubry set about her contingency plan of maintaining the closest possible relationship between the UK and the EU. Although she had promised to uphold the referendum result, this did not mean that she would not 'fight tooth and nail to make sure that the government go into the negotiations seeking to make sure that we stay a member of the Single Market'.²⁹⁸ While there was a lot of ambiguity as to what leaving the EU meant, this was Soubry's evaluation of what was best, regardless of whether it was what people had intended when they voted to leave.²⁹⁹ For Soubry, leaving the EU simply meant no longer being an official member and it was, therefore, possible to retain freedom of movement³⁰⁰ and access to the Single Market³⁰¹ while still respecting the referendum result:

'There is this other way of getting a Brexit. We would be out of the European Union, so we would have satisfied the 52% of voters on that, but we would deliver what everybody wants, which is the best possible Brexit that is in the interests of everybody in this country, with the economy, jobs and prosperity right at its heart.'³⁰²

During this period Soubry would again do her best to bring opinions into alignment with her own. Although her position was based on her own

²⁹⁸ HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1331

²⁹⁹ HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1331; Soubry (22/12/2016a, 22/12/2016b, 26/01/2017e, 26/01/2017g)

³⁰⁰ HC Deb, 05 September 2016, Col.54; HC Deb, 12 October 2016, Col.328; HC Deb, 07 November 2016, Col.1327; Soubry (28/03/2017b, 20/06/2017a)

³⁰¹ HC Deb, 08 January 2018, Col.83; HC Deb, 09 January 2018, Col.226; HC Deb, 16 January 2018, Cols.744-745; HC Deb, 17 January 2018, Cols.920, 945; HC Deb, 31 January 2018, Cols.830-861; HC Deb, 28 February 2018, Col.839; HC Deb, 07 March 2018, Cols. 359 and 369; HC Deb, 14th March 2018, Col. 916; HC Deb, 15th March 2018, Cols.1073-1079, 1105; HC Deb, 19 March 2018, Cols.42; HC Deb, 26 April 2018, Cols.1056, 1082-1084, 1099; HC Deb, 16 May 2018, Cols.367-368; HC Deb, 09 July 2018, Cols.86-87; Soubry (26/01/2017d, 26/01/2017e, 30/12/2018, 24/02/2019, 27/02/2017a, 27/02/2017b, 27/02/2017c, 26/03/2017a, 26/03/2017b, 28/03/2017a, 20/06/2017b)

³⁰² HC Deb, 20 November 2017, Col.801

evaluations of what was best,³⁰³ Soubry clearly recognised that it would need popular legitimacy in order to succeed. Soubry did not want to force her position on the UK, she wanted the public to agree with her and push for it themselves.³⁰⁴ To this end, Soubry often used apophasis to subtly convince people of her view. Soubry would plant seeds in people's minds, bringing to their attention issues such as many young people not having had a say,³⁰⁵ that Scotland voted to remain³⁰⁶ or that maybe there should be another referendum.³⁰⁷ Each time Soubry would take no ownership of the idea, claiming that she did not necessarily agree with it but that many people did and so it needed to be considered.

Like a trustee, Soubry opposed the Withdrawal Agreement at the meaningful votes stating that 'I did not come into this place to vote for something in the full knowledge that it would make people less well off.'³⁰⁸ However, at the same time Soubry had dropped any pretence of support for EU withdrawal and now pushed for a second referendum, believing that enough of the public were now ready to revoke Article 50 and remain a member of the EU.³⁰⁹ Soubry believed in this position so strongly that she was prepared to abandon the Conservative Party, and effectively end her parliamentary career, in order to fight for it.³¹⁰

³⁰³ Soubry (26/01/2017d)

³⁰⁴ Soubry (06/12/2018b, 06/12/2018e, 08/12/2018, 10/12/2018a, 14/01/2019, 21/01/2019a, 21/01/2019b, 24/01/2019, 17/02/2019, 24/03/2019, 27/03/2019b, 27/03/2019d, 29/03/2019a, 29/03/2019b)

³⁰⁵ BBC Question Time (26/06/2016); HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.35; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.542; HC Deb, 18 December 2018, Col.697; HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.833-834; HC Deb, 27 February 2019, Col.431; HC Deb, 12 March 2019, Col.254; Soubry (08/12/20176)

³⁰⁶ Cited in Aitkenhead (2016)

³⁰⁷ HC Deb, 17 July 2018, Col.233; Soubry (21/01/2019b, 24/03/2019, 27/03/2019b, 28/03/2019a, 28/03/2019b, 30/03/2019a, 30/03/2019b)

³⁰⁸ HC Deb, 12 March 2019, Col.254

³⁰⁹ Appendix Four, p.403; HC Deb, 04 December 2018, Col.799; Soubry (06/12/2018e, 10/12/2018c, 17/02/2019)

³¹⁰ Appendix Four, p.406

'I made that decision. I'm just going to be true to what I believe in. What I believe is best for my country and my constituents. It wasn't what was best for me. Where am I right now? I'm in my garden. Where are they? In the House of Lords? Back in Parliament or a bloody minister?! I can look myself in the mirror in the morning, I can justify it'.³¹¹

6.3.2: Paul Farrelly – 'I would simply not be doing the right thing by my conscience'

During the referendum campaign, Farrelly seemed aware of hostility towards the EU within his constituency³¹² but this did not deter him from regularly campaigning and trying to bring such opinions into alignment with his own.³¹³ However, like Soubry, it appeared that he was somewhat selective in where he campaigned in person, sticking to more pro-remain audiences and using his interactions with them to promote and reinforce the opinions he already held.³¹⁴ Following the referendum Farrelly questioned the legitimacy of the result like Soubry did, suggesting voters had been misled and had not properly understood the issues,³¹⁵ making it clear he would continue to campaign and convince people that leaving the EU was a bad idea:

'In Newcastle-under-Lyme, after a very hard campaign, it was 60% and 40%. As this fraught, long process goes on, I have not

³¹¹ Appendix Four, pp.405-406

³¹² Farrelly (15/01/2016)

³¹³ Farrelly (06/01/2016, 15/01/2016, 01/02/2016, 22/02/2016a, 22/02/2016c, 28/02/2016a, 28/02/2016b, 16/03/2016b, 02/04/2016, 08/04/2016b, 11/04/2016, 17/04/2016a, 17/04/2016b, 23/04/2016, 29/05/2016, 06/06/2016, 23/06/2016)

³¹⁴ HC Deb, 15 June 2016, Col.1827; Farrelly (28/01/2016, 27/05/2016, 15/06/2016); Ashcroft (24/06/2016) and Ipsos MORI (05/09/2016)

³¹⁵ Farrelly (24/06/2016, 28/08/2016, 24/01/2017a, 24/01/2017b, 24/01/2017c)

given up on persuading another 10%, at least, in my constituency.³¹⁶

Farrelly, therefore, refused to come into alignment with his constituents or his party and voted against the Withdrawal Bill, stating that 'I would simply not be doing the right thing by my conscience, nor would it be in the interests of the country or what I believe to be the interests of the people I represent'.³¹⁷ Although he refused to support leaving the EU out of principle, Farrelly eventually, and reluctantly, accepted that the UK was, in all likelihood, going to leave. Therefore, much like Soubry, he decided to try to make the best of what he saw as a bad situation and push for the UK to retain the closest possible trading links with the EU.³¹⁸

'It is sadly clear that we will end our formal membership of the European Union ... [but] common sense says that such an agreement should include our remaining in the Single Market and Customs Union'.³¹⁹

Nonetheless, Farrelly still held out hope that the referendum result could be overturned, and in 2017, he became an early proponent of a second referendum, ostensibly because it would force the government to get the best possible deal if they knew it would need public approval.³²⁰ Over the next few years, he was heavily involved in the Parliamentary debates,³²¹ and

³¹⁶ Farrelly (02/02/2017)

³¹⁷ HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Col.934; See also: HC Deb, 07 February 2017, Vol.621 and Farrelly (01/02/2017a, 01/02/2017b)

³¹⁸ HC Deb, 05 December 2017, Col.912 and HC Deb, 15 November 2018, Col.456

³¹⁹ HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Col.539

³²⁰ HC Deb, 13 March 2017, Col.56

³²¹ HC Deb, 29 June 2017, Col.716; HC Deb, 05 July 2017, Col.1152; HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Cols.503, 539-541; HC Deb, 14 September 2017, Col.961; HC Deb, 01 November 2017, Col.882; HC Deb, 14 November 2017, Cols.192-198, 210, 234; HC Deb, 05 December 2017, Col.912; HC Deb, 13 December 2017, Cols.422, 441, 449-450; HC Deb, 20 December 2017, Cols.1136, 1143, 1154, 1165, 1170, 1175-1176; HC Deb, 20 June 2018, Col.363; HC Deb, 15 November 2018, Col.456; HC Deb, 26 November 2018, Col.53

by the time of the meaningful votes, it was clear that he still had no intention of supporting the UK's withdrawal from the EU, being especially opposed to a 'no deal' scenario.³²²

Although he was still supportive of a second referendum,³²³ by 2019, he was less confident than Soubry that it would successfully endorse remaining in the EU,³²⁴ saying that he viewed one with 'trepidation' because he doubted it was possible to have a 'reasoned debate'.³²⁵ Nonetheless, if it was 'the only road ahead' he argued that 'we should not shirk from holding that vote' and that 'come an election or a referendum, I will be making the same arguments again',³²⁶ campaigning 'to remain and reform'.³²⁷ However, fearing that voters would fail to endorse his preferred option for a second time, it seemed Farrelly preferred to avoid the risk altogether and during the 'indicative votes' he strongly supported Motion (L), the option for Parliament to revoke Article 50.³²⁸ Failing that, he hoped MPs would 'vote for something pragmatic and for a future that keeps us close to our partners in Europe'.³²⁹

Throughout the period of study, Farrelly therefore closely adhered to his own beliefs regardless of what his constituents or party might have wanted. This was something he was particularly open about after deciding to end his parliamentary career and not stand for re-election in 2019:

'Throughout my 18 years I've done my best to be honest with my constituents, even when we disagree. I have tried always, too, to act on principle, so people know where they stand ... I

³²² HC Deb, 03 October 2019, Cols.1412-1413; Ault (2019)

³²³ HC Deb, 05 December 2018, Col.966

³²⁴ HC Deb, 05 December 2018, Col 966, see also Farrelly (30/07/2018); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.934-935

³²⁵ HC Deb, 05 December 2018, Cols.966-967; see also HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Cols.414-415

³²⁶ HC Deb, 05 December 2018, Cols.966-967

³²⁷ HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Cols.414-415

³²⁸ HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Col.415

³²⁹ HC Deb, 27 March 2019, Col.415

have been consistent in standing up for the benefits of our membership of the European Union, opposing the referendum and the triggering of our exit as terrible ideas'.³³⁰

6.4: Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter once again supports the notion that MPs are primarily guided by their own opinions and evaluations. Both Anna Soubry and Paul Farrelly clearly viewed themselves as trustees and openly acted as such, prioritising their own evaluations of what was best over the desires of their constituents and party leaderships. While both would use knowledge of local opinions to frame their actions accordingly, neither really amended their positions to reflect what constituents wanted. Both MPs made it clear they prioritised what they felt were their constituents' best interests over what they might have desired, with Soubry in particular using the ambiguity surrounding what 'leaving' meant to, somewhat disingenuously, present these as one and the same. The influence of their party leaderships also appeared negligible, contrary to the findings of Chapter Four. This could be partially attributed to the fact that neither MP was in favour with their leaderships. However, they both believed so strongly in their convictions that it is not clear whether under different circumstances the party line would have significantly influenced their positions anyway.

With regards to constituency opinions, the findings of this chapter once again provide support for Chapter Four's conclusions that they are not a strong influence on how MPs vote. The first hypothesis is therefore not supported. Apart from Soubry's support for the triggering of Article 50, neither MP was

³³⁰ Farrelly (06/09/2019)

strongly influenced by the opinions of their constituents and pursued their preferred policy directions regardless of whether they were popular locally. In line with the previous chapter, constituency opinions are again found to have been more influential on how they framed their actions. While the more decisive result in Farrelly's constituency did not make him move into alignment, it did affect the way he could present his continued opposition to withdrawal, often citing procedural reasons rather than his continued desire to remain. Conversely, the evenly split result in Broxtowe gave Soubry more opportunity to shift opinions into alignment with her own and claim people had changed their minds, presenting her actions as being in alignment with what they now wanted. While the first hypothesis is not supported, this behaviour suggests some validity to the theory behind it and again demonstrates the effect of local opinions on rhetoric, rather than votes.

In line with the findings of Chapter Four, the majorities held by each MP in their seat did not appear to affect their policy positions, contrary to what was observed with Boles and Austin in the previous chapter. Both Soubry and Farrelly represented marginal seats but were unwilling to move into closer alignment with their constituents. However, like Austin, their unsafe seats may have encouraged them to put more effort into positively framing their actions than a safer colleague like Boles. Soubry was certainly very proactive in convincing constituents that her actions were in their best interests and congruent with what they wanted. Although Farrelly was also observed to do this, he made significantly less effort despite having a smaller majority. Representing a marginal seat is, therefore, not found to have been a strong or consistent influence on their policy positions in this instance and the fourth hypothesis is not supported.

With regards to the demands of their party leaderships, no significant influence was observed on either MP, and thus, this chapter finds no

evidence to support the second hypothesis or the findings of the quantitative analysis. Like Austin and later Boles, neither Soubry nor Farrelly were in favour with their leaderships and this may partially explain why they were willing to defy them as often as they did. However, the evidence also suggests that withdrawal was an issue over which they felt too strongly to just quietly follow the party line. Farrelly defied his party leadership and opposed the Withdrawal Bill in 2017 but was in alignment with them when he opposed the Withdrawal Agreement in 2019. However, given his statements at the time and his consistent hostility towards withdrawal, this alignment cannot credibly be attributed to party loyalty. On the other hand, Soubry did maintain her loyalty to her party, if not its leadership, for the majority of the withdrawal period. She regularly praised its other policies and often played party politics, but when it came to withdrawal their approaches were just too different to reconcile. Soubry wanted to retain a far closer relationship with the EU than her leadership and hoped they would eventually see things her way, but when it became clear this was not going to happen, she left the Conservative Party for the Independent Group. Whether under different leaderships either MP would have been more willing to compromise and follow the party line is debateable, but as it stood, neither was strongly influenced by their party leadership during the withdrawal period.

This willingness to defy the party line also appeared unrelated to their time in office, much as Chapter Four suggested. Throughout the withdrawal period both MPs acted consistently irrespective of how long they had been in office or how much time they suspected they had left. Both stood at the 2017 General Election with the intention of being re-elected, even though neither was fully behind withdrawal and both distanced themselves from their leadership and some of their policies during the campaign. Farrelly

decided not to stand in 2019 and Soubry ran for the Independent Group out of duty rather than expectation of winning.³³¹ However, like Boles and Austin it was their rebellious actions that helped to bring about the end of their careers, rather than their looming retirements encouraging them to be more rebellious. This consistency, therefore, demonstrates that their length of service was likely unimportant in their determination of policy positions and thus, the fifth hypothesis is not supported.

In summary, throughout the period of study Soubry and Farrelly's policy positions were strongly influenced by their own evaluations of what should happen. Having both supported remaining prior to the referendum, the MPs' refusal to subsequently support withdrawal does not directly support the third hypothesis. However, much like the previous chapter this, therefore, does suggest that personal opinions were more important to MPs than the analysis of Chapter Four was able to determine. Both MPs very clearly acted as trustees, with neither being prepared to abandon their beliefs that the UK was better off as an EU member regardless of the pressure others put on them and the potential ramifications for their careers.

³³¹ See Appendix Four, p.403

Chapter Seven: Lapsed Leavers?

The Cases of John Cryer and Theresa Villiers

Following the referendum, MPs that had supported leaving the EU saw their positions validated by the overall result, but many found themselves out of alignment with their constituents. While many of these MPs were supportive of withdrawal legislation in the years that followed, others such as John Cryer and Theresa Villiers voted against it.³³² Although similar in this respect, they exhibited differences in other key variables such as the political party they represented and how marginal their seat was (see Table 7.1).

The evidence presented in this chapter provides similar findings to those of the previous two and suggests that both MPs were primarily influenced by their own evaluations of the best policies. Once again constituent preferences had a greater effect on how Cryer and Villiers framed their actions as opposed to how they voted in Parliament. Although both effectively voted against EU withdrawal at the meaningful votes, this had little to do with what their constituents might have wanted. The demands of their party leaderships affected each MP differently. While Cryer closely adhered to the party line even when he disagreed with it, Villiers regularly defied her leadership when it was conducive to her aims.

³³² Villiers did eventually move back out of alignment at the fourth meaningful vote. See Chapter Three for an explanation of case selection.

Table 7.1: The Key Variables of the MPs

Name	Party	Constituency	Majority	Time in Office	Constituency Referendum Position	Vote Positions					
						Referendum	Withdrawal Bill	MV1	MV2	MV3	MV4
John Cryer	Labour	Leyton and Wanstead	37% (2015) 49% (2017)	1997 - 2005 and 2010 - Present	Remain (65%)	Leave	For	Against	Against	Against	Against
Theresa Villiers	Conservative	Chipping Barnet	14% (2015) 0.6% (2017)	2005 - Present	Remain (60%)	Leave	For	Against	Against	Against	For

7.1: The Effect of Constituent Opinions and Seat Marginality

Constituency opinions had a greater effect on how Cryer and Villiers framed their actions than it did on how they voted in Parliament. Neither was dismissive of local opinions and both used their knowledge of them to tailor their messages appropriately, either highlighting the potential benefits of withdrawal or ignoring and distancing themselves from less popular aspects. However, much like the MPs studied in previous chapters, the final decision on how they voted in Parliament was not primarily based on what constituents wanted. This was observed regardless of their majorities, with both behaving in this manner regardless of how safe or marginal their seat was.

7.1.1: John Cryer – ‘My vote is worth exactly the same as yours in this referendum’

Although Cryer was a firm believer in the merits of leaving the EU, he did not actively campaign during the referendum period.³³³ He avoided discussing the referendum as much as possible, with there being very few examples³³⁴ of him engaging with the issue on his website, social media or in Parliament.³³⁵ Indeed, Cryer only discussed his stance when asked about it,³³⁶ acknowledging that ‘while I stated my views plainly to anybody who asked, I did not campaign in the referendum but exercised my right to vote.’³³⁷

³³³ Cryer (26/06/2016d, c.July 2016, 28/08/2019b)

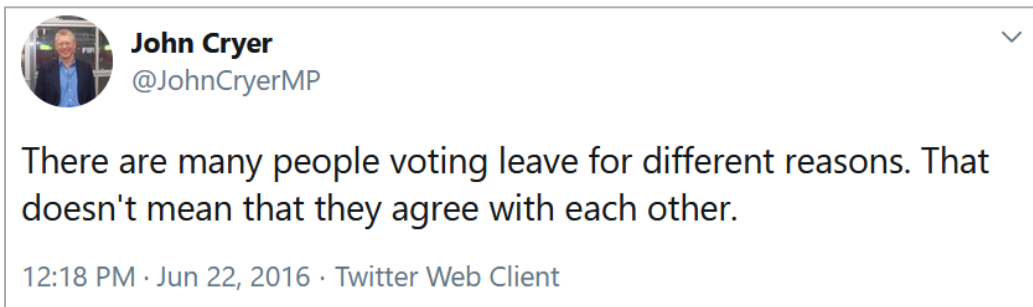
³³⁴ See Cryer (c.February 2016); HC Deb, 05 January 2016, Col.36 and HC Deb, 29 February 2016, Col.698 for the only available examples.

³³⁵ Searches for deleted articles also brought up nothing, see Web Archive (2020)

³³⁶ Cryer (20/06/2016a-e, 21/06/2016, 22/06/2016a-g, 26/06/2016a-m)

³³⁷ Cryer (c.June 2016, c.December2018), see also Cryer (26/06/2016a,f,g,l; c.July 2016)

Even though he represented a very safe seat, Cryer did not feel comfortable driving a wedge between himself and his constituents over such a divisive issue. He was open about his choice and would defend it when criticised,³³⁸ but ultimately, he made it clear that his support for leaving the EU was not related to his role as their representative,³³⁹ noting that 'it is not a vote in Parliament, my vote is worth the same as yours, at the ballot box.'³⁴⁰ While the safe nature of his seat perhaps made it easier for him to engage in such debates, and even tell people that it was their right to vote against him at the next general election if they disliked his position,³⁴¹ he nonetheless wanted to keep as many constituents on side as possible.



Representing a diverse and multinational area,³⁴² Cryer was keen to distance himself from the national leave campaign,³⁴³ telling constituents that he supported leaving the EU due to concerns about democracy and workers' rights, not because he opposed immigration and freedom of movement:

'I represent a multi-cultural and diverse community with residents from all backgrounds and nationalities. My views on the EU have nothing to do with my work as a local MP which is to

³³⁸ Cryer (20/06/2016a-e; 21/06/2016, 22/06/2016a-g; 26/06/2016a-m)

³³⁹ Cryer (20/06/2016d, 21/06/2016b, 22/06/2016a, 22/06/2016c, 22/06/2016d, 22/06/2016e)

³⁴⁰ Cryer (22/06/2016c)

³⁴¹ Cryer (20/06/2016d, 22/06/2016d)

³⁴² UK Census Data (2011a, 2011b); for explanations of how this linked to the vote to leave, see Arnorsson and Zoega (2018); Fox and Pearce (2018); Alabrese et al. (2019)

³⁴³ Cryer (22/06/2016f, c.June 2016, c.February 2017)

serve all my constituents, to fight for every constituent – regardless of their voting history or record and what is their place birth, nationality or mother tongue.’³⁴⁴

Following the referendum, Cryer continued to avoid the issue as much as he could.³⁴⁵ However, he could not do this indefinitely and his November 2016 newsletter made it clear that, despite constituent anger at the result and demands that he act as a delegate and work to overturn it, he would not do so because Parliament had promised before the referendum that the overall result would be implemented, whatever it was.³⁴⁶

‘Whatever one’s personal views on that the UK’s departure from the European Union will now happen and it is in everyone’s interest that the best possible deal for our country is negotiated.’³⁴⁷

Thus, Cryer supported the triggering of Article 50 despite the protestations of his constituents,³⁴⁸ once again arguing that he was obliged to do so out of respect for the national result and promises made before the referendum.³⁴⁹ Moreover, he argued that, even if he did act as a delegate and oppose the legislation, it would make no difference, as even ‘if every MP voted with the wishes of the majority of voters in their constituency, triggering Article 50 would still enjoy a majority.’³⁵⁰ Cryer, therefore, continued to use knowledge of constituency opinions to frame his actions in a manner he hoped would be more palatable. He still distanced himself from

³⁴⁴ Cryer (c.June 2016); see also Cryer (26/06/2016h)

³⁴⁵ His social media and regular newsletters made no mention of it, see Cryer (c.August 2016, c.September 2016) and Twitter (2021)

³⁴⁶ Cryer (c.November 2016)

³⁴⁷ Cryer (c.December 2016)

³⁴⁸ Cryer (c.November 2016, c.January 2017)

³⁴⁹ Cryer (c.February 2017)

³⁵⁰ Cryer (c.January 2017)

the official leave campaign and noted that, 'as a Labour MP representing a constituency that voted to remain', he felt 'a particular responsibility' to explain to his constituents why he would be supporting the triggering of Article 50. Although he held a substantial majority in his seat, at the 2017 General Election Cryer was still uncomfortable dwelling on an issue over which he and his constituents profoundly disagreed. Thus, his campaigning seldom discussed EU withdrawal and focussed on other issues on which he hoped they could find common ground.³⁵¹ He did acknowledge that withdrawal was one of the biggest issues, but like many fellow Labour MPs dismissed the notion that 2017 was the 'the Brexit election' and asked voters 'not lose sight of the vast array of other policy issues that affect ordinary people day in, day out.'³⁵²

Cryer's opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement in 2019 was also not a direct result of constituency opinions, with his stated reasoning being that it was 'a bad deal for Britain'.³⁵³ However, he also asserted that leaving without a deal at all would be even worse.³⁵⁴ Although he claimed his constituents were broadly in agreement with him on this, he made no pretensions that he had arrived at this position because of their desires.³⁵⁵ Moreover, his eventual support for a second referendum did not stem from any desire to stop withdrawal or to let his constituents have another say. Instead, he simply felt the withdrawal process had 'run out of viable alternatives.'³⁵⁶ Therefore, much like the other withdrawal policies he supported, Cryer's position was once again not significantly influenced by what it was his constituents wanted.

³⁵¹ Cryer (c.May 2017, c.June 2017a, c.June 2017b, c.June 2017c)

³⁵² Cryer (c.April 2017)

³⁵³ Cryer (c.November 2018); see also Cryer (c.December 2018)

³⁵⁴ Cryer (c.January 2019); see also Cryer (26/07/2019)

³⁵⁵ Cryer (19/10/2019a, 21/10/2019a)

³⁵⁶ Cryer (c.May 2019); see also Cryer (c.March 2019)

7.1.2: Theresa Villiers – ‘I would like to reassure all of my constituents who voted remain that their voices will be heard’

Prior to the referendum Villiers was an early and vocal supporter of leaving the EU.³⁵⁷ Chipping Barnett’s demographics and large immigrant population made a remain vote likely and Villiers appeared to know this despite never explicitly stating as much.³⁵⁸ Like Cryer, Villiers did not hide her voting intention but avoided discussing it in her constituency if she could.³⁵⁹ The Conservative promise of a referendum was not mentioned in her 2015 election literature³⁶⁰ and during the referendum campaign she appeared to do little work in her own constituency,³⁶¹ instead focussing her efforts elsewhere.³⁶²

Following the referendum result Villiers’ position did not change, with her constituency’s support for remaining having no effect. However, much like before the referendum it clearly had an influence on how she discussed and framed her stance. Villiers was gracious in victory and took a conciliatory tone, promising she would listen to all opinions going forward and stating that ‘I would like to reassure all of my constituents who voted remain that their voices will be heard.’³⁶³

³⁵⁷ Villiers (21/02/2016, 22/02/2016, 14/04/2016a, 14/04/2016b, 16/04/2016, 29/05/2016, 20/06/2016, 22/06/2016)

³⁵⁸ Barnet JSNA (c.2021); for explanations of how this linked to the vote to leave, see Arnorsson and Zoega, (2018); Fox and Pearce, (2018); Alabrese et al., (2019)

³⁵⁹ Villiers (22/02/2016, 14/04/2016, 24/05/2016, 29/05/2016b, 20/06/2016, 22/06/2016)

³⁶⁰ Villiers (c. 2015a, 2015b)

³⁶¹ See Villiers (14/05/2016, 11/06/2016b), although only the latter appears to have been a deliberate attempt at campaigning.

³⁶² Villiers (16/04/2016, 23/04/2016, 13/05/2016, 20/05/2016a, 20/05/2016b, 28/05/2016a, 28/05/2016b, 28/05/2016c, 29/05/2016b, 31/05/2016, 11/06/2016a, 11/06/2016b, 15/06/2016)

³⁶³ Villiers (27/06/2016); see also Villiers (25/06/2016a, 25/06/2016b)



Theresa Villiers

25 June 2016 ·



It has been a momentous time since the polls closed on Thursday. The country has taken a very big decision. I welcome the fact that we voted to leave because this will restore democratic control over making our laws. I want to thank everyone who helped out with the leave campaign and everyone who voted leave. I believe we can look forward to a bright future outside the EU.

However, I fully understand the disappointment felt by the millions of people who voted to remain. It is important that we try to bridge the divisions that have emerged in this referendum by listening to the concerns of both leave and remain voters as we prepare for negotiations for our exit from the EU.

I want to reassure remain supporters that leave voters don't want to 'pull up the drawbridge' and isolate this country. Brexit does not mean that we stop cooperating with our neighbours on matters of mutual concern, far from it. We on the leave side have a forward looking vision of the UK engaging with the wider world as well as with Europe. Friendly cooperation with neighbouring countries will always be the right thing to do and this will continue.

However, there is little evidence that constituency opinion affected anything more than her words. Villiers supported the Withdrawal Bill in 2017 without hesitation,³⁶⁴ despite concerns from constituents who feared for their status if freedom of movement was revoked and were upset with the way they were being treated.³⁶⁵ Villiers promised to fight for their rights and distanced herself from the anti-immigration aspects of the leave campaign,³⁶⁶ but nonetheless, she continued to support plans to abolish freedom of movement.³⁶⁷

Much like the MPs studied thus far, constituency opinion was more influential on how Villiers framed her actions than on how she voted. Villiers avoided discussion of the issue wherever possible or directed the narrative so it focussed on issues her constituents supported, such as improving animal

³⁶⁴ Villiers (17/01/2017a, 17/01/2017b, 26/01/2017, 08/02/2017b)

³⁶⁵ Villiers (06/07/2016)

³⁶⁶ Villiers (25/06/2016a, 25/06/2016b, 27/06/2016, 19/09/2016a, 19/09/2016b); see also Villiers (08/02/2017a, 14/03/2017, 23/06/2017, 27/06/2016, 11/09/2017, 03/10/2020); HC Deb, 02 February 2017, Col.1223; HC Deb, 26 June 2017, Col.309 and HC Deb, 07 September 2017, Cols.290-291

³⁶⁷ They Work For You (13/03/2017, 21/11/2017, 23/10/2019, 08/01/2020, 18/05/2020, 30/06/2020)

welfare legislation.³⁶⁸ At the 2017 General Election, her campaigning barely mentioned EU withdrawal,³⁶⁹ instead focussing on local and less divisive issues where she likely perceived she had the rhetorical advantage.³⁷⁰ When she did discuss it, Villiers was once again keen to show constituents she respected their views and took them into consideration, even if in practice she appeared unresponsive to them:

'Whilst I voted leave in the referendum, I am listening to the views of all residents, whether they voted leave or remain, as the country seeks a new relationship with the EU, a deep and special partnership based on trade and cooperation between friendly neighbours. I will be striving to achieve a successful outcome to the Brexit negotiations with which the majority of both leave and remain voters in the constituency can be comfortable.'³⁷¹

Villiers retained her position at the election, but her majority was drastically reduced and she now represented a very marginal seat. However, this had no observable impact on how important local opinions became to her vote choices. Villiers' opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement at the first three meaningful votes had little to do with constituency opinions,³⁷² but she would nonetheless highlight the congruence, claiming that when speaking to constituents 'almost all of them' told her 'they oppose the draft withdrawal

³⁶⁸ HC Deb, 24 January 2017, Cols.80WH-85WH; HC Deb, 08 February 2017, Vol.621; HC Deb, 26 February 2018, Cols.223WH-241WH; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.30; Villiers (24/01/2017, 09/02/2017, 13/09/2017, 15/09/2017, 31/10/2017, 23/11/2017, 02/02/2018, 10/04/2018, 16/04/2018)

³⁶⁹ For examples, see Villiers (02/05/2017a, 02/05/2017b, 17/05/2017b, 15/06/2017)

³⁷⁰ Villiers (c.June 2017, 02/05/2017a, 02/05/2017b, 17/05/2017a, 17/05/2017b)

³⁷¹ Villiers (02/05/2017a, 02/05/2017b), see also Villiers (19/04/2017, 10/05/2017, 17/05/2017a, 07/06/2017)

³⁷² HC Deb, 12 July 2018, Col.1170; HC Deb, 22 November 2018, Col.1110; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.39; Villiers (13/09/2018, 19/11/2018a, 19/11/2018b, 10/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 16/01/2019, 20/01/2019, 29/03/2019a, 29/03/2019b, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019)

agreement'.³⁷³ However, at no point did Villiers attribute her position to her constituents and there was no doubt that she was still a passionate supporter of leaving the EU,³⁷⁴ as evidenced by her eventual support for the amended Withdrawal Agreement at the fourth meaningful vote. Once again, the framing of her actions was affected more than the actions themselves, with Villiers making numerous statements about the divisive nature of the issue³⁷⁵ and regularly promising she would be listening to her constituents' views regardless of how they voted in the referendum.³⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Villiers' policy positions ultimately remained unaffected by the desires of her constituents, much as they had throughout the withdrawal period.

7.2: The Effect of Party Leadership and Length of Service

The demands of their party leaderships affected each MP differently. Cryer was consistently loyal to the party line throughout the withdrawal period, even if he expressed concerns about particular policies. Conversely, Villiers adherence to the party line wavered depending on the direction of the withdrawal debates. Their lengths of service also affected them differently. Neither had expectations of career advancement under their leaderships, but both also wished to remain MPs. While this saw Cryer keep his head down and follow the party line, Villiers did the opposite. However, given the instability of Theresa May's leadership in 2019, Villiers may have been thinking ahead to the next leader of her party, one she hoped might be more agreeable to her positions and career prospects.

³⁷³ Villiers (02/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 15/01/2019)

³⁷⁴ Villiers (19/11/2018b, 11/04/2019a, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019); HC Deb, 20 March 2019, Col.1066; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.30

³⁷⁵ Villiers (19/11/2018b, 10/12/2018, 11/12/2018); HC Deb, 09 January 2019, Col.445

³⁷⁶ Villiers (02/12/2018, 10/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 29/03/2019b, 08/06/2019, 10/10/2019, 12/10/2019); HC Deb, 09 January 2019, Col.445

7.2.1: John Cryer – 'As is Labour Party policy'

During the referendum, Cryer's support for leaving the EU put him at odds with his leadership's official position. However, he did not regard himself as disloyal because this was not a vote in Parliament and he was therefore not accountable to anyone but himself on the issue.³⁷⁷ Moreover, his stated reasons for voting to leave were very much in alignment with left-leaning Labour arguments against the EU that had previously been advocated by prominent figures, including Jeremy Corbyn.³⁷⁸ Cryer regarded the EU as 'a wealthy and exclusive club set up largely to defend the interests of big banks and business'³⁷⁹ and suggested that continued membership would make it harder for future Labour governments to 'protect workers' rights, renationalise the railways or maintain a universal Royal Mail service.'³⁸⁰ Nonetheless, he was, officially, out of alignment with his party leadership on the issue, even if his reasoning was still based in elements of Labour ideology.

This changed following the referendum when his party's position on withdrawal moved into alignment with his own. Although he was initially in alignment by default, Cryer maintained this throughout the withdrawal period and encouraged others to support the same policies. Prior to the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017 he used his newsletters and website to promote the Labour Party's withdrawal policies and suggested amendments to the Bill,³⁸¹ all of which Cryer supported and promised to vote in favour of at the first opportunity.³⁸² The same was observed during the meaningful votes process, with Cryer promoting the party line and stating that 'alongside

³⁷⁷ Cryer (20/06/2016b, 20/06/2016c, 22/06/2016b, 22/06/2016c)

³⁷⁸ Benn (2013); King (2015); Stone (2015); Wilson (2016)

³⁷⁹ Cryer (c.February 2016)

³⁸⁰ Cryer (c.June 2016)

³⁸¹ Cryer (c.January 2017, c.February 2017)

³⁸² Cryer (c.January 2017, c.February 2017)

Labour colleagues I will be voting against the deal when it comes before the House because it is a bad deal for Britain'.³⁸³ This was despite the fact that voting in this manner risked leaving without a deal at all, something he stated would be much worse.³⁸⁴ He was also heavily involved in playing party politics and criticising the Conservative Party's handling of EU withdrawal,³⁸⁵ referring to Theresa May's attempts to drum up support as a 'marathon turd-polishing tour'.³⁸⁶ This behaviour continued throughout 2019 as the situation became more divisive, with Cryer defending the actions of his own leadership and directing the blame at Theresa May's poor handling of EU withdrawal and the failure of cross-party talks.³⁸⁷

Given that Cryer had supported EU withdrawal long before his party officially did, adherence to the party line may not necessarily have been the only influence on his positions. However, it did have a notable effect on his decision to reluctantly support a second referendum. Cryer was uncomfortable with this³⁸⁸ but still supported it because it was Labour Party Policy³⁸⁹ and because they had 'run out of viable alternatives'.³⁹⁰



³⁸³ Cryer (c.November 2018), see also Cryer (c.December 2018)

³⁸⁴ Cryer (c.January 2019); see also Cryer (26/07/2019)

³⁸⁵ Cryer (c.November 2018, c.December 2018, c.January 2019)

³⁸⁶ Cryer (c.November 2018)

³⁸⁷ Cryer (c.May 2019)

³⁸⁸ Cryer (01/11/2019, c.February 2019, c.June 2019)

³⁸⁹ Cryer (01/11/2019); see also Cryer (02/11/2019, 11/11/2019)

³⁹⁰ Cryer (c.May 2019)

With regards to Cryer's length of time in office, there is some evidence to suggest that his desire to remain in post was influential. He had no real expectation of advancement under Corbyn, not being a close ally of his leader and occasionally clashing on issues with him.³⁹¹ However, unlike Austin and Farrelly, Cryer was less willing to openly criticise and defy his leadership. He had no intention of winding down his career or leaving his role as Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party,³⁹² and this may have encouraged him to avoid confrontation and follow the party line. However, at the same time, Cryer had long supported the idea of EU withdrawal and he came across as instinctively loyal to the party he represented, proudly displaying his long history of devotion to it and workers' rights movements.³⁹³

7.2.2: Theresa Villiers – 'I am hugely grateful to the Prime Minister for allowing his Cabinet to follow their consciences'

Prior to the referendum, Villiers was one of the 'group of six' Cabinet members who went against the position of the government and campaigned to leave the EU. Villiers claimed that going against her leadership made her uncomfortable and that it had been a difficult decision to make.³⁹⁴ Thus, she was visibly relieved to not be held under collective-cabinet-responsibility and lose her ministerial role.³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ Cryer (04/06/2021); Heffer (08/07/2019); Mortimer (08/10/2016); Payne et al. (03/09/2019); Waugh (15/07/2019)

³⁹² Cryer (c.2019); see also Ellington (2011)

³⁹³ Ellington (2011); Cryer (c.2019)

³⁹⁴ Villiers, T. (25/06/2016b)

³⁹⁵ BBC News (2016a); Villiers (22/02/2016, 14/04/2016, 25/06/2016b)



Theresa Villiers ✓

20 February 2016 · 🌐

I have today joined the campaign to leave the EU and take back control. We can flourish outside the EU. If the UK votes to leave, we would regain the power to make our own laws and control our own borders. I welcome the important changes achieved by the Prime Minister in Brussels this week, but I sincerely believe the only way we can secure the relationship with the EU which is right for the UK is to leave and negotiate a new arrangement based on free trade and cooperation.

I am hugely grateful to the Prime Minister for allowing his Cabinet to follow their consciences on this issue and for giving every person in this country to chance to vote on whether we stay in the EU or leave.

Despite their differences on EU membership, Villiers was still loyal to her leadership, following their desires to avoid confrontations with fellow Conservative MPs³⁹⁶ and regularly playing party politics, suggesting that the UK would be able to prosper outside of the EU thanks to the success of the Conservative Party's economic policies and reforms over the preceding six years.³⁹⁷

Much like Cryer, Villiers found herself in alignment with her party by default following the referendum after it changed its position and began to support withdrawal. Unsurprisingly, Villiers stated the government would have 'her full support' in trying to 'seize the many positive opportunities presented by the Brexit vote.'³⁹⁸ Villiers remained loyal and supportive to her outgoing leader David Cameron,³⁹⁹ but did not support Theresa May's leadership bid, subsequently resigning from her ministerial role rather than accepting a demotion in the new government.⁴⁰⁰ Nonetheless, Villiers remained outwardly loyal and unreservedly supported and promoted her leadership's

³⁹⁶ Institute For Government (15/11/2016)

³⁹⁷ Villiers (21/02/2016)

³⁹⁸ Villiers (14/07/2016a, 14/07/2016b)

³⁹⁹ Villiers (12/07/2016)

⁴⁰⁰ BBC News (2016d); McCann (14/07/2016); Villiers (07/07/2016)

EU withdrawal plans⁴⁰¹ while regularly playing party politics against Labour.⁴⁰²

By the time of the meaningful votes Villiers' withdrawal position diverged significantly from that of her leadership. As early as July 2018, Villiers began to register objections to the government's withdrawal negotiations,⁴⁰³ and by November, she made it clear there was little that could be done to make her support the Withdrawal Agreement.⁴⁰⁴ Although she expressed 'regret' that she would 'diverge from the government'⁴⁰⁵ regarding the deal, unlike the referendum campaign there was no indication that this was a difficult decision for her.⁴⁰⁶ Villiers was also a strong proponent of leaving without a deal and claimed she was 'pressing the government' to prepare for such a scenario.⁴⁰⁷ Although her party leadership wanted to keep this as an option, it was certainly not their preference at that time.⁴⁰⁸

While Villiers did move back into alignment with her party leadership at the fourth meaningful vote, both the leader of her party and the Withdrawal Agreement had changed by this point. Villiers' position throughout the meaningful votes reflected that of the ERG faction of which she was a member.⁴⁰⁹ This group demanded a particular type of withdrawal and would eventually push to replace Theresa May with a leader more amenable to

⁴⁰¹ Villiers (17/01/2017a)

⁴⁰² Villiers (13/03/2018, 27/03/2018, 19/04/2018, 15/07/2018, 02/10/2018, 04/10/2018)

⁴⁰³ HC Deb, 12 July 2018, Col.1170

⁴⁰⁴ HC Deb, 22 November 2018, Col.1110; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.39; Villiers (13/09/2018, 10/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 16/01/2019, 20/01/2019, 29/03/2019a, 29/03/2019b, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019)

⁴⁰⁵ HC Deb, 09 January 2019, Col.444; see also Villiers (10/12/2018, 11/12/2018)

⁴⁰⁶ HC Deb, 22 November 2018, Col.1110; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.39; Villiers (13/09/2018, 10/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 16/01/2019, 20/01/2019, 29/03/2019a, 29/03/2019b, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019)

⁴⁰⁷ Villiers (13/09/2018, 19/11/2018a, 19/11/2018b, 11/04/2019a); HC Deb, 20 March 2019, Col.1066; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.30

⁴⁰⁸ BBC News (2019a, 2019b)

⁴⁰⁹ Villiers (13/09/2018); Walker (18/03/2019); Watts and Kentish (21/02/2018)

it.⁴¹⁰ When this eventually happened and the Withdrawal Agreement was amended, Villiers swiftly came back into alignment with her party on the issue. However, as before the party line was likely uninfluential on this. Although Villiers was now in alignment with her leadership, it was they who had changed position, not her.

There is no direct evidence to suggest that Villiers' time in office influenced her positions. She had no desire to end her career as an MP, yet this did not foster any loyalty towards her party leadership. However, given the instability of Theresa May's administration in 2019, Villiers' disloyalty towards her incumbent leader may be evidence of her playing a long game and allying herself with a potential successor instead. Villiers was an early supporter of Boris Johnson and his leadership bid⁴¹¹ and soon saw herself re-elevated into government upon his appointment as leader.⁴¹² Although it was debateable as to whether Johnson's deal improved on May's, whatever had changed ostensibly satisfied the 'major rewrite'⁴¹³ she had demanded of the previous deal,⁴¹⁴ and thus, Villiers was now willing support it and her new leadership without hesitation.⁴¹⁵

7.3: The MPs' Own Judgements

Throughout the period of study both Cryer and Villiers were primarily influenced by their own judgments when it came to EU withdrawal. Both had longstanding beliefs that the UK would be better off outside of the EU and neither felt any need to change these following the referendum,

⁴¹⁰ Charity (12/09/2018); Wells (29/12/2020); Wheeler and Stamp (24/05/2019)

⁴¹¹ Villiers (10/06/2019, 12/06/2019, 15/07/2019, 23/07/2019)

⁴¹² Villiers (19/10/2019)

⁴¹³ Villiers (10/12/2018, 11/12/2018)

⁴¹⁴ Villiers (17/10/2019, 20/10/2019, 22/10/2019, 02/11/2019)

⁴¹⁵ Villiers (29/12/2020)

regardless of what their constituents or party leaderships may have wanted. At some key votes, their positions appeared to reflect the desires of those groups, but such occurrences were largely coincidental. Much like the other MPs studied in previous chapters, the primary motivations for their actions were ultimately their own evaluations of what was best.

7.3.1: John Cryer – 'As unfashionable as it may be, MPs are still representatives, not delegates'

During the referendum campaign Cryer's position was clearly influenced by his own preferences, being a strong yet muted supporter of withdrawal. He was open about the fact he had 'never been a great admirer of the EU',⁴¹⁶ but like Ian Austin, he appeared to know the strength of opinions within his constituency. Thus, he saw little point in trying to bring them into alignment with his own, stating that he and his constituents would have to 'agree to disagree' on the matter.⁴¹⁷ Unlike votes in Parliament, the referendum was a personal choice. His vote carried the same weight as his constituents, and thus, he was only accountable to himself.⁴¹⁸

'Although I have long-held, strong views on this, I do not feel that the people of this country should take their cues from a politician like me on an issue as important as this and should instead look at the facts and make their own minds up. This was a massive moment for Britain. For that reason, while I stated

⁴¹⁶ Cryer (c. February 2016)

⁴¹⁷ Cryer (22/06/2016d)

⁴¹⁸ Cryer (26/06/2016a, 26/06/2016c, 26/06/2016e, 26/06/2016f, 26/06/2016g, 26/06/2016h, 26/06/2016i, c. June 2016, c. July 2016, c. December 2016)

my views plainly to anybody who asked, I did not campaign in the referendum but exercised my right to vote.⁴¹⁹

Following the referendum result, Cryer continued to follow his own preferences and maintained his support for withdrawal. He came under pressure from constituents to act as a delegate and oppose leaving the EU, but he was not prepared to do this.⁴²⁰ Notwithstanding his own support for leaving, Cryer argued that the national result had to be upheld because that was the promise made to the electorate. He argued that 'whatever one's personal views on that the UK's departure from the European Union will now happen and it is in everyone's interest that the best possible deal for our country is negotiated.'⁴²¹ By the time of the Withdrawal Bill vote in 2017, Cryer was still under pressure from his constituents to side with them and fight to keep the UK in the EU, but once again, Cryer made it clear that he was not a delegate and would support the policy he believed was best:

'I can understand that a growing number of constituents expect their views not only to be respected and listened to but also acted upon. I acknowledge that. I have received several emails which are pretty robust along the lines of 'you will do as you are told'. And yet, as unfashionable as it may be, MPs are still representatives, not delegates. It is our duty to exercise our judgement on behalf of our constituents and the wider electorate, on that basis, to vote for what we believe to be the right decision in any given situation - even when that decision risks

⁴¹⁹ Cryer (c.June 2016), see also Cryer (26/06/2016a, 26/06/2016f, 26/06/2016g, 26/06/2016l, c.July 2016, c.December2018)

⁴²⁰ Cryer (26/06/2016a, 26/06/2016b, 26/06/2016c, 26/06/2016d, 26/06/2016e, 26/06/2016f, 26/06/2016g, 26/06/2016h, 26/06/2016i, 26/06/2016l, c.July 2016)

⁴²¹ Cryer (c.December 2016)

condemnation or being at odds with significant numbers of those we represent'.⁴²²

Cryer opposed the Withdrawal Agreement in 2019, but it was apparent he had not come to this position as a result of pressures from his constituents or party, but because he genuinely did not believe it was in the best interests of the UK.⁴²³ However, this was clearly not the case when it came to the prospect of a second referendum, but given that it was Labour Party policy and he felt there were no viable alternatives, he reluctantly supported it anyway:

'It saddens me deeply, as someone who has long believed in the potential of our country to prosper outside of the EU, to have reached this conclusion. I still believe that the EU is insufficiently accountable and transparent and have little faith in its ability to be reformed. However, balancing my own views of the EU's flaws as I must against the national interest and the views of my constituents, I will be voting for this particular amendment'.⁴²⁴

Nonetheless, for the most part Cryer acted in accordance with what he thought was the best course of action, even if like Nick Boles, this was sometimes influenced by consideration of the party line and required him to compromise. Therefore, throughout the withdrawal period Cryer viewed his role as that of a trustee, not a delegate, and was not afraid to make this clear to his constituents:

'The principles that underlie the role of MPs were set out 250 years ago by Edmund Burke: not only to be accountable to and

⁴²² Cryer (c.February 2017)

⁴²³ Cryer (c.January 2019, c.February 2019, 22/02/2019)

⁴²⁴ Cryer (c.February 2019)

listen to our constituents, but to observe our own conscience and judgment.⁴²⁵

7.3.2: Theresa Villiers – ‘After much reflection...’

Prior to the referendum Villiers’ preference for leaving the EU was primarily based on her own long-held beliefs.⁴²⁶ Her official website biography proudly stated that she had been a ‘Eurosceptic MEP’ before transitioning to Westminster⁴²⁷ and it was, therefore, little surprise that she chose to support the leave campaign in 2016. The suspension of collective cabinet responsibility certainly made this decision easier, but her beliefs on the issue were strong enough that she almost certainly would have supported leaving regardless:

‘When the question at stake is as fundamental as who governs this country, I felt that I had no choice. I had to campaign for the UK to become an independent self-governing democracy again, whatever the impact on my career prospects.’⁴²⁸

Villiers did very little in her remain-supporting constituency,⁴²⁹ but was a vocal campaigner on the national stage where she evidently felt there was more opportunity to bring opinion into alignment with her own.⁴³⁰ Following the referendum result, she continued to support leaving and had no intention of compromising her long held beliefs on the matter. Villiers acknowledged

⁴²⁵ HC Deb, 21 March 2019, Col.1247

⁴²⁶ Villiers (21/02/2016, 22/02/2016, 14/04/2016a, 14/04/2016b, 16/04/2016, 29/05/2016, 20/06/2016, 22/06/2016)

⁴²⁷ Villiers (c.2019a). By 2020, the word ‘Eurosceptic’ has been removed from the sentence, now just reading ‘Representing the capital for six years as an MEP’.

⁴²⁸ Villiers (25/06/2016b)

⁴²⁹ See Villiers (14/05/2016, 11/06/2016b), although only the latter appears to have been a deliberate attempt at campaigning.

⁴³⁰ Villiers (16/04/2016, 23/04/2016, 13/05/2016, 20/05/2016a, 20/05/2016b, 28/05/2016a, 28/05/2016b, 28/05/2016c, 29/05/2016b, 31/05/2016, 11/06/2016a, 11/06/2016b, 15/06/2016)

how divisive the issue was and that she was out of alignment with her constituents,⁴³¹ but ultimately made it clear she was going to follow her own preferences regardless.⁴³² Therefore, rather than changing her own position Villiers tried to bring opinions into alignment with her own,⁴³³ assuring remain supporters that although their concerns were ultimately unfounded, they were nonetheless valid and would not be ignored during the withdrawal process.⁴³⁴

Thus, Villiers readily supported the Withdrawal Bill in 2017, allowing her to give effect to her longstanding beliefs that the UK was better off out of the EU.⁴³⁵ The opposition of her constituents and the demands of her party were irrelevant, Villiers personally believed in what she was doing:

‘Ever since the result of the referendum started to become clear in the early hours of June 24th, there have been times when I’ve found it hard to believe that we would actually leave. Today, as the Prime Minister invokes Article 50, we can now say with confidence that it will happen and we are leaving.’⁴³⁶

Throughout 2017 and 2018, Villiers continued her efforts to bring contrary opinion into alignment with her own, presenting herself as willing to compromise with remain supporters so that the UK could leave on terms that the ‘majority of both leave and remain voters can be comfortable.’⁴³⁷

⁴³¹ Villiers (17/01/2017a, 17/01/2017b, 26/01/2017, 08/02/2017b)

⁴³² Villiers (21/02/2016, 22/02/2016, 14/04/2016a, 14/04/2016b, 16/04/2016, 29/05/2016, 20/06/2016, 22/06/2016)

⁴³³ Villiers (14/04/2016a, 14/05/2016, 24/05/2016, 11/06/2016b, 22/06/2016)

⁴³⁴ Villiers (25/06/2016a, 25/06/2016b, 27/06/2016)

⁴³⁵ Villiers (25/06/2016a, 27/06/2016, 14/09/2016b, 19/09/2016a, 19/09/2016b, 03/10/2016, 13/10/2016a, 13/10/2016b, 02/10/2016, 03/10/2016, 20/10/2016, 04/11/2016, 23/12/2016, 17/01/2017a, 17/01/2017b, 01/02/2017, 17/01/2017a, 17/01/2017b, 26/01/2017, 08/02/2017a, 08/02/2017b, 14/03/2017, 29/03/2017)

⁴³⁶ Villiers (29/03/2017)

⁴³⁷ Villiers (01/02/2017), see also HC Deb, 09 January 2019, Col.445; Villiers (10/12/2018, 11/12/2018)

However, despite such assertions her interpretation of what leaving entailed was highly rigid and she was very dismissive of any alternative options.⁴³⁸

This became more evident during the first three meaningful votes in 2019, where Villiers opposed the Withdrawal Agreement, even though it would have achieved her goal of EU withdrawal. Villiers still strongly supported leaving but had decided that the deal on offer did not meet her expectations of how it should be achieved.⁴³⁹ Villiers claimed that ‘having reflected carefully on the draft Withdrawal Agreement, I cannot support it and I will vote against it if it is put to the House of Commons’, arguing that in her opinion the deal did ‘not respect the vote to leave and would not be in the best interests of the country.’⁴⁴⁰ However, she was still quite happy for the UK to leave the EU without a deal at all, despite tacitly admitting that this would also be bad for the UK.⁴⁴¹ Regardless of how she tried to frame it, Villiers had strongly held beliefs about what she would and would not accept regarding EU withdrawal and was not prepared to compromise.⁴⁴²

By the time of the fourth meaningful vote, Villiers had reevaluated and decided that the amended Withdrawal Agreement was now acceptable and in the best interests of the UK.⁴⁴³ There was much debate as to whether the ‘new’ deal was a substantially different agreement to the previous iteration.⁴⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Villiers claimed that it met most of her requirements and was now willing to compromise, further demonstrating the

⁴³⁸ Villiers (13/10/2016a, 13/10/2016b, 14/09/2016a, 14/09/2016b, 19/09/2016a, 19/09/2016b, 04/11/2016, 17/05/2017a, 19/11/2018)

⁴³⁹ Villiers (16/01/2019)

⁴⁴⁰ Villiers (19/11/2018a, 19/11/2018b, 16/01/2019)

⁴⁴¹ Villiers (19/11/2018a, 19/11/2018b, 11/04/2019a, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019); HC Deb, 20 March 2019, Col.1066; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.30

⁴⁴² Villiers (13/10/2016a, 13/10/2016b, 14/09/2016a, 14/09/2016b, 19/09/2016a, 19/09/2016b, 04/11/2016, 17/05/2017a, 19/11/2018a, 19/11/2018b, 11/04/2019a, 21/05/2019, 22/05/2019); HC Deb, 20 March 2019, Col.1066; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Col.30

⁴⁴³ Villiers (10/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 17/10/2019, 19/10/2019, 20/10/2019, 02/11/2019)

⁴⁴⁴ Usherwood (2019)

importance of her own evaluations to the positions she supported throughout the withdrawal period:

'There have been compromises ... but as a package, this FTA does stand up to scrutiny. It delivers zero tariffs and zero quotas, but does not bind us into the EU's laws or its court. It is a trade agreement between sovereign equals. It will "Get Brexit Done", as promised at the general election.'⁴⁴⁵

7.4: Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter once again demonstrates that both MPs were primarily driven by their own evaluations. While not dismissive of constituency opinions, like the other MPs these had more influence on how Cryer and Villiers framed their actions than they did on how they voted. Their party leaderships affected them differently, with Cryer more beholden to them than Villiers. However, both had longstanding and strongly held beliefs that the UK was better off outside of the EU and they sought to achieve this regardless of what others demanded of them. These findings therefore provide mixed support for the results of Chapter Four, but align well with those of the previous two case study chapters.

The findings of this chapter complement the analysis of the previous three and show that constituency opinions were not a strong influence on how the MPs voted, contrary to the first hypothesis. Much like the MPs studied in the previous two chapters, constituency opinions were instead more influential on how they framed their positions when they discussed them. Both represented areas that voted quite strongly to remain and thus neither could dispute the result or claim opinions had swung in their favour. However,

⁴⁴⁵ Villiers (29/12/2020)

neither amended their positions in response to local sentiments or tried to hide their positions, but they did avoid highlighting them at the constituency level as much as possible. Representing diverse and multinational areas, both were keen to show their constituents that they did not subscribe to the leave campaign's arguments relating to immigration and freedom of movement, with both instead focussing on the impact of the EU on democracy and sovereignty. However, both still supported EU withdrawal and Villiers, in particular, supported policies that many of her constituents feared would adversely affect them.

The majority each MP held in their seats also appeared to have little effect on their actions. Cryer represented a highly safe seat, but was still unwilling to risk driving a wedge between himself and his constituents over such a divisive issue. On the other hand, Villiers started the period of study with a large majority but lost it at the 2017 general election. However, the demands of her constituents appeared to have just as little effect on her actions when her seat was marginal as they did when it was safe. Additionally, the way she framed her actions remained consistent throughout. The fourth hypothesis is therefore not supported by these findings.

The demands of their party leaderships affected each MP differently, but overall, the findings of this chapter do provide some support for the second hypothesis and the results of the quantitative analysis. The influence of their leaders was more evident with Cryer, who consistently adhered to the party line and supported aspects of it even though he disagreed with them. By contrast, Villiers did not appear as constrained by party loyalty and often rebelled against the party line if it was not conducive to her preferences. However, given the instability of the May administration, it was evident that Villiers was likely thinking ahead to her next leader and the benefits of loyalty

to them. The fifth hypothesis is therefore partially supported by these findings, as the positions of both MPs were in part driven by a desire to maintain or advance their careers. However, whether they aligned with their current or future leaderships, the positions of both MPs also enabled them to achieve a policy goal they had supported long before the referendum and as such party loyalty does not necessarily provide a complete explanation for the positions they adopted.

In summary, Cryer and Villiers' policy positions were therefore strongly influenced by their own evaluations of what should happen, much as has been observed with the MPs of previous chapters. While their continued support for withdrawal following the referendum supports the notions behind the third hypothesis, their willingness to vote against the legislation does not provide complete support for it. Once again, this suggests that personal opinions were more important to MPs than the analysis of Chapter Four was able to capture. Although the stances of both MPs sometimes aligned with what their constituents or parties wanted, ultimately they acted as trustees and supported the policies they saw necessary to give effect to their long held beliefs that the UK was better off outside of the EU.

Chapter Eight: Longstanding Leavers? The Cases of Cheryl Gillan and Stuart Andrew

While the out of alignment MPs studied in the previous chapter were not consistently supportive of the withdrawal legislation during the five key votes, Cheryl Gillan and Stuart Andrew are representative of leave-supporting MPs who were. While both represented the Conservative Party, they exhibited variation along other key variables such as their time in office and how marginal their seat was (see Table 8.1).

Much like the previous three chapters, the evidence presented here shows that the MPs were primarily motivated by their own evaluations of what was best. Once again, the analysis suggests that constituent opinions had little observable impact on the stances they took and instead had more influence on how these were framed. Much like other case studies such as Boles and Cryer, considerations of party loyalty are also found to have been important. The policy positions of both MPs were therefore based on a combination of what they wanted from EU withdrawal and what they thought would benefit the Conservative Party and their position within it.

Table 8.1: The Key Variables of the MPs

Name	Party	Constituency	Majority	Time in Office	Constituency Referendum Position	Vote Positions					
						Referendum	Withdrawal Bill	MV1	MV2	MV3	MV4
Cheryl Gillan	Conservative	Chesham and Amersham	45.4% (2015) 40.1% (2017)	1992 – 2021	Remain (55%)	Leave	For	For	For	For	For
Stuart Andrew	Conservative	Pudsey	8.8% (2015) 0.7% (2017)	2010 – Present	Remain (52%)	Leave	For	For	For	For	For (Teller)

8.1: The Effect of Constituent Opinions and Seat Marginality

Throughout the period of study constituency opinions had little noticeable impact on the policy positions of the MPs, with both clearly viewing their role as that of a trustee. This held true regardless of how safe their seat was. Gillan represented a safe seat throughout the period of study, while Andrew almost lost his seat at the 2017 General Election, yet local attitudes became no more influential to his positions. Nonetheless, both still tried to show constituents they valued their opinions and were receptive to them, with Andrew often raising constituency concerns with the relevant government ministers. However, much like the MPs studied in previous chapters, they primarily used their knowledge of constituency opinions to amend the framing of their actions rather than the nature of the policies they supported.

8.1.1: Cheryl Gillan – ‘Thank you for letting me know your views and requests – they are always appreciated’

The effect of constituency opinions on Gillan’s framing rather than her policy positions was evident throughout the referendum campaign. Although Gillan would subsequently claim that ‘there was no way an MP could predict how people were going to vote’ in their constituency, and thus, could only ‘set out their own position’,⁴⁴⁶ the notably different framing of her actions towards constituents compared to broader audiences was very similar to Theresa Villiers and thus suggests otherwise. Gillan barely discussed the referendum at the constituency level, briefly mentioning it in January 2016 for the local newspaper,⁴⁴⁷ and then once more in February on her website, where she set out her position and made it clear that it was a personal vote and not related to her role as MP or based on what her constituents might

⁴⁴⁶ Gillan (15/07/2016)

⁴⁴⁷ Gillan (02/01/2016)

think on the matter.⁴⁴⁸ This was in stark contrast to her social media, which featured dozens of appeals to support leaving the EU.⁴⁴⁹ Of course, Gillan's social media was accessible to interested constituents, but like Theresa Villiers, there was a notable difference in the manner and frequency in which she discussed EU withdrawal to a broader audience than she did with her constituents, the majority of whom supported remaining.

Following the referendum, the opinions of her constituents and the fact that she was out of alignment with the majority of them still had little effect on her policy positions. Gillan welcomed the result with 'enthusiasm'⁴⁵⁰ and promised to make sure that it was implemented,⁴⁵¹ promptly dismissing the notion that there should be a second referendum.⁴⁵²



Even after the constituency-level results became clearer Gillan did not change her position. Although she would later acknowledge that the majority of her constituency voted to remain, Gillan was dismissive of

⁴⁴⁸ Gillan (26/02/2016); there is no evidence of further articles, even when searching for deleted ones, see Web Archive (20/08/2021)

⁴⁴⁹ Gillan (25/02/2016a, 25/02/2016b, 01/03/2016, 02/03/2016, 03/03/2016a, 03/03/2016b, 03/03/2016c, 04/03/2016, 06/03/2016, 07/03/2016, 17/03/2016a, 18/03/2016, 06/04/2016a, 06/04/2016b, 06/04/2016c, 07/04/2016a, 07/04/2016b, 12/04/2016, 21/04/2016, 27/04/2016, 03/05/2016a, 03/05/2016b, 07/05/2016, 02/06/2016a, 02/06/2016b, 02/06/2016c, 02/06/2016d, 03/06/2016a, 03/06/2016b, 03/06/2016c, 03/06/2016d, 03/06/2016f, 03/06/2016g, 03/06/2016h, 03/06/2016i, 09/06/2016, 10/06/2016a, 10/06/2016b, 11/06/2016a, 11/06/2016b, 12/06/2016, 15/06/2016a, 15/06/2016b, 16/06/2016, 21/06/2016a, 21/06/2016b, 22/06/2016a, 22/06/2016b, 22/06/2016c)

⁴⁵⁰ HC Deb, 15 September 2016, Col.1022

⁴⁵¹ Gillan (24/06/2016a, 27/06/2016)

⁴⁵² HC Deb, 27th June 2016, Col.39

suggestions that this meant she should change her stance.⁴⁵³ Instead, she argued that the national result overruled that of her constituency and for the sake of democracy it needed to be implemented.⁴⁵⁴ Gillan maintained this line of argument when she voted in favour of the Withdrawal Bill in 2017.⁴⁵⁵

Such a position was undoubtedly Gillan's attempt to frame her actions in a manner that would minimise the consequences of pursuing a policy direction her constituents were not supportive of. Gillan regularly claimed that she wanted to hear what they thought,⁴⁵⁶ noting that 'representing a constituency that voted mostly remain, but having voted leave myself, I have been particularly careful to listen to the hundreds of representations that have come in to [sic] my office.'⁴⁵⁷ However, despite such assertions, there is no evidence to suggest that local opinions affected her policy positions in any meaningful way. Instead, much like the other MPs previously studied, constituency opinion was more influential on how she framed her actions. Such framing often utilised the aforementioned arguments that the national result overruled the constituency one,⁴⁵⁸ but often Gillan just tried to avoid the issue altogether.⁴⁵⁹ For example, her 2017 new year priorities made no mention of withdrawal⁴⁶⁰ and general

⁴⁵³ Gillan (11/12/2018, 15/01/2019); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864

⁴⁵⁴ Gillan (27/06/2016, 15/07/2016, 26/12/2016, 01/02/2017c); HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Cols.461-463

⁴⁵⁵ Gillan (01/02/2017c); see also (c.2018a, c.2018b, c.2018, c.December 2018, 15/01/2019, 08/03/2019, 08/04/2019, 30/08/2019b); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.34; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533 and HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920

⁴⁵⁶ Gillan (11/12/2018); see also Gillan (21/11/2018, 27/11/2018a, 06/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 08/01/2019, 10/01/2019a, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 13/03/2019, 14/03/2019, 20/03/2019, 21/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 30/08/2019b, 30/08/2019b, 27/11/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920

⁴⁵⁷ HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864

⁴⁵⁸ Gillan (c.2018a, c.2018b, c.2018, c.December 2018, 15/01/2019, 08/03/2019, 08/04/2019, 30/08/2019b); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.34; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533; HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864, 919-920

⁴⁵⁹ Gillan (16/01/2017, c.May 2017a, c.May 2017b, 21/05/2017, 06/06/2017)

⁴⁶⁰ Gillan (16/01/2017)

election materials from the same year either did not feature it particularly prominently⁴⁶¹ or neglected to mention it at all.⁴⁶²

Regardless, like Anna Soubry, her re-election in 2017 allowed Gillan to claim her position had the support of constituents⁴⁶³ and as such, she was now 'honour-bound' to support EU withdrawal.⁴⁶⁴ Gillan also attributed her support for the Withdrawal Agreement as being in alignment with what her constituents had told her they wanted.⁴⁶⁵ However, such claims were somewhat disingenuous, as her justifications in this respect were all based on a binary choice between leaving with the Withdrawal Agreement or with no deal at all.⁴⁶⁶ In reality, the debate was far more complex and despite protestations from her constituents Gillan continued to support withdrawal, opposing a second referendum⁴⁶⁷ and the possibility of revoking Article 50, questioning the authenticity⁴⁶⁸ of signatures on a locally popular petition to do so.⁴⁶⁹

There is no direct evidence to suggest that her seat majority had any significant effect on her policy positions, although it is possible that her safe seat made it easier for her to maintain separate policy positions from those of her constituents. Nonetheless, Gillan wanted to be seen to listen and respond to constituent opinions, regularly updating them on her actions⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶¹ Gillan (c.May 2017a, c.May 2017b)

⁴⁶² Gillan (21/05/2017, 06/06/2017)

⁴⁶³ Gillan (c.2018a, 08/03/2019, 22/03/2019a, 28/03/2019a, 02/04/2019, 08/04/2019, 28/05/2019a, 30/08/2019b, 02/10/2019)

⁴⁶⁴ Gillan (28/03/2019a)

⁴⁶⁵ Gillan (27/11/2018b, 28/03/2019b, 15/01/2019, 13/03/2019, 08/04/2019)

⁴⁶⁶ Gillan (27/11/2018b, 28/03/2019b, 15/01/2019, 13/03/2019, 08/04/2019); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864

⁴⁶⁷ Gillan (c.2018b, 21/11/2018, c.December, 11/12/2018, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 27 June 2016, Col.39 and HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533

⁴⁶⁸ Gillan (15/07/2016, 22/03/2019a, 22/03/2019b)

⁴⁶⁹ Trivedi (24/03/2019)

⁴⁷⁰ Gillan (21/11/2018, 27/11/2018a, c.January 2019, 08/01/2019, 10/01/2019a, 15/01/2019, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, c.February 2019, 01/02/2019, 12/02/2019, 29/02/2019, 08/03/2019, 13/03/2019, 14/03/2019, 20/03/2019, 21/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 11/04/2019,

and encouraging their feedback.⁴⁷¹ Gillan prided herself on being a constituency-orientated MP⁴⁷² and for fighting for her constituents on issues that affected them,⁴⁷³ notably the HS2 railway developments, which she also opposed and regularly highlighted this congruence.⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, while she was prepared to listen to local opinions, ultimately Gillan very clearly viewed her role as that of a trustee:

'Can I through this thank all those constituents who have been providing opinions and advice. It is very much appreciated even though on occasions we differ on the way forward. I continue to try to deliver Brexit which is what the referendum instructed Parliament and the government to do and always in the best interests of both the constituency and country.'⁴⁷⁵

8.1.2: Stuart Andrew – 'I know my constituents...'

The influence of constituency opinions on Andrew's framing, rather than his positions, was evident during the referendum campaign, as despite being a long-time Eurosceptic and proponent of a referendum, he chose not to get actively involved with the campaigning.⁴⁷⁶ Although at times he appeared to think his desire to leave the EU was in alignment with the majority of his constituents,⁴⁷⁷ Andrew seemed uncomfortable with the thought of

25/04/2019, 28/05/2019a, 27/06/2019, 28/08/2019, 30/08/2019a, 30/08/2019b, 03/09/2019a, 03/09/2019b, 30/08/2019b, 27/11/2019, 02/10/2019, 17/10/2019c, 24/10/2019)

⁴⁷¹ Gillan (15/07/2016, 21/11/2018, 27/11/2018a, 06/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 08/01/2019, 10/01/2019a, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 13/03/2019, 14/03/2019, 20/03/2019, 21/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 30/08/2019b, 30/08/2019b, 27/11/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864, 919-920

⁴⁷² Gillan (14/06/2017, 11/01/2018); Trivedi (03/01/2018)

⁴⁷³ Gillan (17/03/2016b, 05/04/2016, c.May 2017a, c.May 2017b, 14/11/2018)

⁴⁷⁴ See Gillan (c.2020); HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Cols.461-463

⁴⁷⁵ Gillan (20/03/2019)

⁴⁷⁶ Andrew (25/10/2011, 12/06/2013, 09/07/2013, 28/11/2014)

⁴⁷⁷ Andrew (25/06/2016a, 25/06/2016b, 25/06/2016d, 25/06/2016e)

campaigning and attributed his silence to a desire to let his constituents make their own decision:

'I have already been contacted by many constituents expressing their views on our membership, and I look forward to hearing more from them at the public meetings I plan to hold on this. However, I will not be actively campaigning for either side after I have made my decision on how to vote because it is now the turn of my constituents to have their say.'⁴⁷⁸

Following the referendum, it was evident that despite wanting his constituents to 'have their say', Andrew would not be acting as a delegate in response to what they wanted. He made it clear he would not move into alignment with his constituency, and like John Cryer, he dismissed the disparity between them because his referendum vote was a personal choice and carried no more weight than those of his constituents.⁴⁷⁹ However, even in Parliament, where his vote did carry more weight, Andrew was content to maintain the disparity, arguing like Gillan that the national result overruled that of his constituency, while adding that it was now up to MPs to decide how best to see it implemented:

'I am sorry that you feel the result was the wrong one, however, I do feel it is a result that should be respected. This was a referendum that many people had called for. It is the ultimate form of democracy and this should be observed. It is now up to the government to do what the electorate have asked and work out a way forward that is beneficial for all UK citizens ... I can

⁴⁷⁸ Andrew (24/02/2016); see also Andrew (01/06/2016, 24/02/2016, 07/04/2016, 15/06/2016, 27/05/2016, 29/05/2016, 20/06/2016); HC Deb, 09 February 2016, Cols.1474-1476

⁴⁷⁹ Andrew (25/06/2016b, 25/06/2016d); see also Andrew (24/02/2016, 24/02/2016)

appreciate that you may disagree with this, but I think it would be wholly wrong to reject the will of the people.⁴⁸⁰

However, like Gillan, he did not want to appear completely dismissive of local opinions and promised to work hard for all his constituents, no matter how they voted, to get the best result for everyone.⁴⁸¹ To this end, Andrew also promised to represent their concerns and questions about the withdrawal process in Parliament and with relevant government ministers, noting that 'while I appreciate that some of my constituents held a different view to me in the referendum, I will always represent their views moving forward.'⁴⁸²

Although Andrew would indeed make such representations on behalf of his constituents, ultimately their concerns and opinions did not have any observable effect on his support for withdrawal.⁴⁸³ Instead, like the other case study MPs, local opinions continued to be more influential on how he framed his actions. In a similar manner to Gillan and Soubry, following the 2017 General Election, Andrew framed his policy positions as being in accordance with his constituents' desires because he ran on a platform that supported EU withdrawal.⁴⁸⁴ Such claims were made even though after running on that platform, Andrew very nearly lost his seat.⁴⁸⁵ By the time of the meaningful votes, Andrew would also frame his support for the Withdrawal Agreement as being in alignment with constituency opinion, claiming that the government's plan had 'gone down incredibly well with

⁴⁸⁰ Andrew (05/07/2016); see also HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Col.920-922

⁴⁸¹ Andrew (05/07/2016), see also Andrew (05/07/2016); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Col.920-922

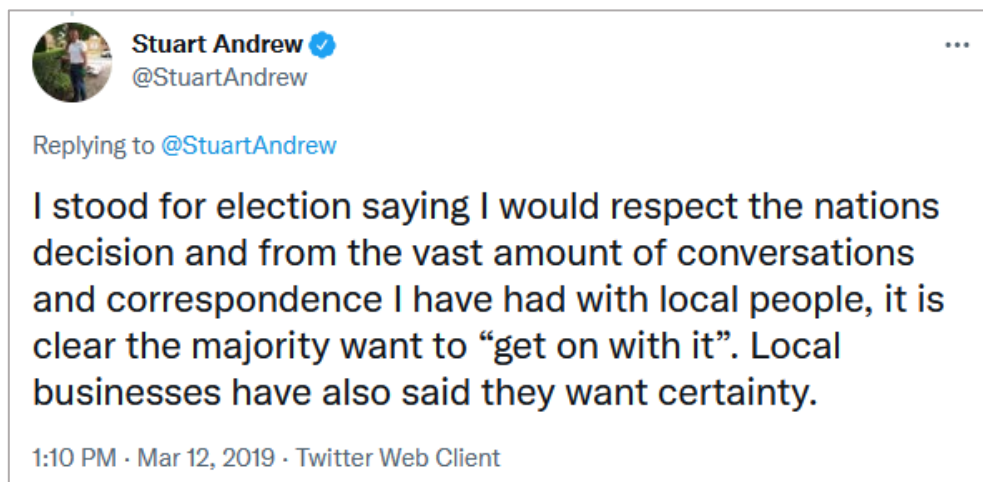
⁴⁸² Andrew (16/08/2016); see also Andrew (06/07/2016, 11/10/2018)

⁴⁸³ Andrew (26/01/2016, 07/03/2016, 21/03/2016, 16/08/2016, 09/10/2016, 11/10/2016, 11/10/2018, 12/03/2019a)

⁴⁸⁴ Andrew (12/03/2019b)

⁴⁸⁵ Yorkshire Evening Post (10/06/2017, 24/07/2019b)

many of my constituents⁴⁸⁶ and suggested that in voting for it, he was carrying out their wishes to 'get on with it' and avoid a no deal scenario.⁴⁸⁷



Although this apparent congruence was convenient to the policies Andrew wanted to pursue, such claims were somewhat disingenuous because like Gillan, he too only presented this as a binary choice between deal and no deal. Other options, such as a second referendum or revoking Article 50, were not part of the equation.⁴⁸⁸ Additionally, Andrew was clearly aware that many of his constituents were unsupportive of the Withdrawal Agreement and eventually promised to raise their concerns about it with the relevant government ministers.⁴⁸⁹

Much like the other MPs studied, the safety of Andrew’s seat did not appear significant. Representing a marginal seat, he did make efforts to appear receptive to constituent opinions and concerns,⁴⁹⁰ but was nonetheless content to act as a trustee even after he nearly lost his seat in 2017. Although this may explain his concerted efforts to show he was listening to

⁴⁸⁶ HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Col.921

⁴⁸⁷ Andrew (29/09/2018, 12/12/2018, 12/03/2019b, 01/11/2019); Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

⁴⁸⁸ Andrew (29/09/2018, 12/12/2018, 12/03/2019b, 01/11/2019); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Col.921; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

⁴⁸⁹ Andrew (11/10/2018)

⁴⁹⁰ See Andrew (08/01/2016, 26/01/2016, 10/02/2016b, 07/03/2016, 21/03/2016, 07/04/2016, 11/10/2016, 16/11/2016, 15/02/2017) for examples.

constituency opinions and delivering on certain expectations relating to EU withdrawal,⁴⁹¹ overall this behaviour was not out of character for him. While there was some adjustment to the framing of his actions after he almost lost his seat, ultimately constituency opinion still had no observable impact on his policy positions.

8.2: The Effect of Party Leadership and Length of Service

The demands of their party leadership had a notable effect on both MPs, especially Andrew. Their decisions to support leaving at the referendum went against their leadership's position, yet for the remainder of the period of study, they closely adhered to the party line. While this proved convenient to achieving their pre-referendum stances, both experienced a trade-off between their ideal policies and those their party offered. They expressed doubts over Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement and about leaving without a deal at all, yet both supported these policy positions as instructed. However, as a long-tenured and seasoned MP, Cheryl Gillan appeared much more willing to criticise her party leadership in these instances, whereas the newer and more ambitious Andrew quietly fell into line.

8.2.1: Cheryl Gillan – 'I continue to support the government...'

During the referendum campaign Gillan's party leadership had little influence on her position. Not only was her support for the leave campaign contrary to their stance, she was also a strong and vocal critic of their campaign.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹¹ Andrew (13/12/2017, 02/02/2018, 11/04/2018, 19/10/2018a, 19/10/2018b, 23/10/2018, 29/10/2018, 30/10/2018, 21/03/2019, 02/04/2019, 17/06/2019, 10/07/2019, 04/09/2019, c.2021a, c.2021b)

⁴⁹² Gillan (01/02/2016, 26/02/2016, 07/04/2016a, 02/06/2016d)



Despite their profound disagreements regarding the referendum debates, Gillan was still loyal in most other respects and praised her leadership for being 'honest enough to respond to our electorate's wishes' and holding a referendum to let them have a say.⁴⁹³ Moreover, Gillan regularly played party politics and saved her strongest criticisms for MPs from rival parties,⁴⁹⁴ expressing dismay at Conservative MPs turning on each other during the campaign.⁴⁹⁵ Gillan's underlying loyalty was evident following the referendum, praising David Cameron's record after he resigned,⁴⁹⁶ and quickly pledging her support to Theresa May when she took office,⁴⁹⁷ exalting her as 'extremely competent',⁴⁹⁸ providing clear and positive leadership⁴⁹⁹ and for conducting 'grown up' politics.⁵⁰⁰

Given that Gillan had campaigned to leave, it was not surprising that she supported the Withdrawal Bill in 2017. However, Gillan was also clearly following the party line on many other aspects of EU withdrawal, notably the need to leave the Single Market and Customs Union⁵⁰¹ and she also repeated

⁴⁹³ Gillan (26/02/2016)

⁴⁹⁴ Gillan (05/04/2016, 23/05/2016, 24/06/2016c)

⁴⁹⁵ Gillan (26/02/2016)

⁴⁹⁶ Gillan (24/06/2016c)

⁴⁹⁷ Gillan (13/07/2016, 15/03/2017, 20/03/2017, 29/03/2017)

⁴⁹⁸ DailyBUCKS (15/07/2016)

⁴⁹⁹ Gillan (08/01/2017a); see also Gillan (29/01/2017)

⁵⁰⁰ Gillan (08/01/2017b, c.2018a). This was maintained after May resigned, see Gillan (23/07/2019, 28/03/2019a, 28/05/2019a)

⁵⁰¹ Gillan (17/01/2017); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847

the 'Brexit Means Brexit'⁵⁰² and 'Global Britain'⁵⁰³ narratives while regularly playing party politics over withdrawal.⁵⁰⁴ Nonetheless, by the summer of 2018, it was obvious that her leadership's demands were not the only influence on Gillan's positions when she began to openly criticise aspects of their withdrawal policy, notably the 'Irish Backstop' which she claimed provided 'a great barrier for me in making my decision.'⁵⁰⁵ Nonetheless, Gillan would vote in favour of the Withdrawal Agreement at the first three meaningful votes, but presented it as a pragmatic compromise rather than party loyalty:

'I cannot gamble with our future or our countries' [sic] future in a reckless fashion but I recognise that this deal is a big compromise ... I therefore reluctantly will support the Prime Minister in the lobbies tomorrow. But again I repeat, I firmly believe that the backstop should be removed.'⁵⁰⁶

Despite this disconnect between Gillan and her leadership she remained loyal,⁵⁰⁷ praising Theresa May for getting a deal when no one thought she could and for her resolve in the face of significant opposition.⁵⁰⁸ Gillan also maintained the party line on opposing a second referendum⁵⁰⁹ and keeping 'no deal' on the table as a negotiating strategy,⁵¹⁰ despite making it very

⁵⁰² HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847

⁵⁰³ Gillan (17/01/2017)

⁵⁰⁴ Gillan (23/11/2016, 03/01/2017, 17/01/2017, 23/11/2016, 20/02/2017, 07/03/2017, 16/03/2017, 18/04/2017, 28/11/2017, 14/12/2017)

⁵⁰⁵ HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.919-920; see also Gillan (11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 28/03/2019b, 02/04/2019a)

⁵⁰⁶ Gillan (15/01/2019); see also HD Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920

⁵⁰⁷ Trivedi (14/12/2018); Wareham (16/01/2019)

⁵⁰⁸ Gillan (27/11/2018b, 15/01/2019, 17/01/2019, 28/03/2019a, 28/05/2019a); HC Deb, 29 March 2017, Cols.265-266; HC Deb, 11 September 2017, Cols.461-463; HC Deb, 26 November 2018, Col.44; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.34; HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920; Trivedi (14/12/2018)

⁵⁰⁹ HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533; see also Gillan (c.2018b, 21/11/2018, c.December 2018, 11/12/2018, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 27 June 2016, Col.39

⁵¹⁰ Gillan (13/03/2019)

clear that she would never vote in a manner that would allow that scenario to materialise.⁵¹¹ Indeed, Gillan decided to work with her leadership to resolve the deadlock, voting in favour⁵¹² of the 'Brady Amendment' they supported⁵¹³ to give them the power to seek 'alternative arrangements' to the backstop.



By October 2019, Gillan no longer appeared to face a trade-off between her ideal policy position and the Withdrawal Agreement her party was offering.⁵¹⁴ Gillan claimed that the amended agreement had solved the issue over the 'Irish Backstop,' and unlike May's deal, she now fully supported it not just in Parliament, but also in her rhetoric.⁵¹⁵ She also strongly promoted the party line on prorogation being 'normal'⁵¹⁶ and was highly critical of the Supreme Court when it ruled contrary to this.⁵¹⁷ However, just as with May, under Johnson Gillan supported the party line with regards to keeping 'no deal' an option even though she clearly did not believe in it.⁵¹⁸ Once again, Gillan was open about how she would not vote in a manner that would allow such a situation⁵¹⁹ and was proactive in drafting legislation that would

⁵¹¹ Gillan (15/01/2019); HD Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920

⁵¹² Gillan (27/01/2019a, 27/01/2019b)

⁵¹³ UK in a Changing Europe (c.2020)

⁵¹⁴ Gillan (02/10/2019, 27/11/2019)

⁵¹⁵ Gillan (17/10/2019a, 17/10/2019b, 19/10/2019)

⁵¹⁶ Gillan (28/08/2019, 30/08/2019b, 30/08/2019b, 02/10/2019, 24/09/2019)

⁵¹⁷ Gillan (24/09/2019)

⁵¹⁸ Gillan (02/10/2019)

⁵¹⁹ Gillan (27/06/2019, 30/08/2019a, 11/09/2019a)

'minimise any disruption' if her efforts failed and no new agreement was reached.⁵²⁰

Gillan's loyalty to the party line suggests that her lengthy tenure as an MP did not make her more likely to rebel in Parliament, even when she disagreed with a particular policy. However, the fact she was willing to speak out and criticise her leadership⁵²¹ was in stark contrast to newer and more career-driven MPs such as Boles and Andrew. Additionally, there is no evidence that Gillan's policy positions came under any pressure from her local party association, with them both supporting withdrawal and maintaining a strong, positive relationship throughout the period studied.⁵²²

8.2.2: Stuart Andrew – 'I can't sign as a minister...'

Being a long-time opponent of EU membership Andrew's decision to support leaving the EU during the referendum was clearly not influenced by his party leadership. Indeed, Andrew had rebelled against the party whips in 2011 to vote in favour of an earlier referendum, claiming it was a 'difficult decision' but he was 'not an MP to solely follow the party line'.⁵²³ Nonetheless, in 2016 he was not comfortable campaigning against his leadership⁵²⁴ or criticising their campaign.⁵²⁵ Instead, he simply attributed his position to a pragmatic personal choice and stated that 'whilst I pay tribute to the Prime

⁵²⁰ Gillan (30/08/2019b), see also Gillan (27/06/2019, 30/08/2019a, 11/09/2019a)

⁵²¹ Gillan (01/02/2016, 26/02/2016, 07/04/2016a, 02/06/2016d, 01/02/2018, 18/09/2018, 11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 28/03/2019b, 02/04/2019a, 30/04/2019, c.2020); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.919-920

⁵²² Gillan (06/04/2017, 14/06/2017, 03/04/2018, 14/05/2018, 28/05/2019b)

⁵²³ Andrew (25/10/2011); see also Andrew (12/06/2013, 09/07/2013, 28/11/2014); HC Deb, 09 February 2016, Cols.1474-1476

⁵²⁴ Andrew (24/02/2016); see also Andrew (01/06/2016, 24/02/2016, 07/04/2016, 15/06/2016, 27/05/2016, 29/05/2016, 20/06/2016); HC Deb, 09 February 2016, Cols.1474-1476

⁵²⁵ His criticisms were never aimed directly at any Conservative, see Andrew (10/02/2016a, 28/10/2017); Yorkshire Evening Post (29/10/2017)

Minister's hard work and determination to bring about reform within the EU, I have concluded, that on balance, I will vote to leave.'⁵²⁶

Andrew's underlying loyalty to his party was more evident following the referendum, with his initial thoughts after the polls closed on 23rd June being related to party unity and loyalty,⁵²⁷ although he would later rectify this to talk about the country as a whole,⁵²⁸ noting that 'of course I want that too' when challenged on his statement.⁵²⁹



Despite that clarification, Andrew did appear more concerned about the Conservative Party and his position within it than he was with the opinions of voters. Andrew remained loyal to David Cameron and signed a petition urging him not to resign,⁵³⁰ but when this ultimately failed, he quickly pledged his allegiance to Theresa May⁵³¹ and praised her plans for withdrawal as 'innovative' and the best available.⁵³² Andrew subsequently became a Minister in May's government and was later promoted further,⁵³³ while in September 2016 he was also appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party.⁵³⁴ Over the next couple of years, he consistently

⁵²⁶ Andrew (07/04/2016)

⁵²⁷ Andrew (23/06/2016a)

⁵²⁸ Andrew (24/06/2016)

⁵²⁹ Andrew (23/06/2016b)

⁵³⁰ Andrew (25/06/2016c)

⁵³¹ Andrew (30/06/2016a, 30/06/2016b, 01/07/2016, 06/07/2016, 11/07/2016)

⁵³² Andrew (06/07/2016, 06/07/2016b)

⁵³³ Andrew (19/07/2018, c.2020)

⁵³⁴ Andrew (23/09/2016a)

followed and promoted the party line on EU withdrawal,⁵³⁵ regularly praised his leadership's efforts,⁵³⁶ played party politics⁵³⁷ and tried to sell the benefits of policies and budget announcements to voters.⁵³⁸ It was, therefore, little surprise that he commended Theresa May's negotiating efforts with the EU and subsequently supported the Withdrawal Agreement.⁵³⁹

Given Andrew's prior support for leaving, his adherence to the party line was also conducive to his own longstanding goals. However, by the time of the meaningful votes, it was more obvious that, like Gillan, he faced a trade-off between his ideal policy and that which his party was offering. Andrew would also ultimately fall into line and vote for the legislation, but he was much more reserved about his misgivings and was not prepared to openly criticise his leadership and risk his status within the party. Shortly after it was announced, Andrew expressed concerns with aspects of the Withdrawal Agreement and acknowledged that for many it did 'not go far enough and does not deliver the Brexit that many felt they were promised.'⁵⁴⁰ However, despite such reservations, he still pledged to support it,⁵⁴¹ and justified this by claiming that leaving the EU would 'be a process, not an event' and that

⁵³⁵ HC Deb, 25 April 2018, Col.867; HC Deb, 23 May 2018, Cols.419-422; HC Deb, 13 June 2018, Cols.875-876; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH

⁵³⁶ HC Deb, 31 January 2018, Cols.809-810; HC Deb, 04 July 2018, Cols.453-456; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Cols.6-7; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018, 02/11/2019)

⁵³⁷ HC Deb, 09 February 2016, Cols.1474-1476; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH; HC Deb, 04 July 2018, Cols.453-456; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; see also Andrew (11/06/2017, 12/06/2017a, 12/06/2017b)

⁵³⁸ Andrew (08/12/2017, 13/12/2017, 02/02/2018, 11/04/2018, 19/10/2018b, 23/10/2018, 29/10/2018, 30/10/2018, 21/03/2019, 02/04/2019, 17/06/2019, 10/07/2019, 04/09/2019, 07/08/2021)

⁵³⁹ Andrew (08/12/2017)

⁵⁴⁰ Andrew (11/10/2018)

⁵⁴¹ Andrew (02/12/2018, 12/12/2018)

despite its flaws, the Withdrawal Agreement was sufficient to set the scene for something better to be negotiated later.⁵⁴²

Andrew also supported and promoted the party line in a similar manner to Gillan, keeping a 'no deal' scenario a possibility even though he strongly opposed leaving the EU in such a manner.⁵⁴³ This included voting to keep it an option during the indicative votes, with his other choices during these divisions also matching his party leadership's stances on the issues.⁵⁴⁴ This loyalty continued after the party leadership changed in 2019. Just as he did with Cameron, Andrew expressed regret at May's resignation and heavily praised her record,⁵⁴⁵ before promptly supporting her eventual successor Boris Johnson.⁵⁴⁶ Andrew gave his full support to Johnson, defending the controversial prorogation of Parliament⁵⁴⁷ and continuing to support leaving without a deal even though he was clearly still uncomfortable with this.⁵⁴⁸ Like Gillan, Johnson's amended Withdrawal Agreement appeared far more agreeable to Andrew and he was highly supportive of it both inside and outside of Parliament.⁵⁴⁹ He was subsequently promoted after it was eventually ratified.⁵⁵⁰

There is no evidence to suggest that Andrew's local party had any influence on his policy positions. They too did not campaign during the referendum,⁵⁵¹ and the policies they supported were in alignment with Andrew and their

⁵⁴² Andrew (11/10/2018)

⁵⁴³ Cooper (28/03/2019); HC Deb, 25 April 2018, Col.867; HC Deb, 23 May 2018, Cols.419-422; HC Deb, 13 June 2018, Cols.875-876; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Cols.6-7; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

⁵⁴⁴ Cooper (28/03/2019)

⁵⁴⁵ Andrew (24/05/2019)

⁵⁴⁶ Andrew (27/05/2019)

⁵⁴⁷ West Leeds Dispatch (31/08/2019)

⁵⁴⁸ Hansard (2019a; 2019b); Yorkshire Post (25/09/2019)

⁵⁴⁹ Andrew (17/10/2019, 01/11/2019, 20/12/2019)

⁵⁵⁰ Andrew (c.2020)

⁵⁵¹ Pudsey Conservatives (08/08/2021a, 08/08/2021b, 08/08/2021c, 08/08/2021d, 08/08/2021e)

national leadership.⁵⁵² From the evidence available, it appears they had a good relationship and were happy with Andrew's actions,⁵⁵³ referring to him as their 'great MP'⁵⁵⁴ and being quite happy that he was rising through the party ranks.⁵⁵⁵ Their only apparent dispute was in 2019, over Andrew's support for Boris Johnson as the next party leader, which saw the chairman of his local association resign. However, there is no evidence that any other members had such a problem.⁵⁵⁶

What did appear to have a more observable impact on Andrew's policy positions was his time in office. In the early years of his career and ambitious for advancement, Andrew's policy positions closely followed the party line, even when he had reservations about the legislation in question.⁵⁵⁷ This was more pronounced after he became a minister and was compelled to abide by collective cabinet responsibility, something he alluded to when asked to support certain petitions and policies.⁵⁵⁸ Andrew's largely unconditional adherence to the party line, even when it went against other stated positions, therefore suggests that career ambitions may have played a key role in how Andrew decided to vote in Parliament.

⁵⁵² See Pudsey Conservatives (21/03/2017, 01/05/2017, 03/06/2017, 02/03/2018) for just a few examples

⁵⁵³ Andrew (20/04/2017a, 20/04/2017b, 19/10/2018b, 02/05/2019); Pudsey Conservatives (11/02/2017, 20/04/2017, 16/05/2017, 08/06/2017, 09/06/2017, 02/02/2018, 06/04/2018, 08/08/2021a)

⁵⁵⁴ Pudsey Conservatives (20/07/2018)

⁵⁵⁵ Pudsey Conservatives (23/09/2016, 20/07/2018)

⁵⁵⁶ Yorkshire Evening Post (24/07/2019a)

⁵⁵⁷ Andrew (11/10/2018); Cooper (28/03/2019); HC Deb, 25 April 2018, Col.867; HC Deb, 23 May 2018, Cols.419-422; HC Deb, 13 June 2018, Cols.875-876; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Cols.6-7; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

⁵⁵⁸ Andrew (03/03/2019); Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

8.3: The MPs' Own Judgements

During the withdrawal period the most significant influence on the policy positions of both MPs was their own evaluations and judgements, although only Gillan openly described herself as a trustee. While both presented themselves as prepared to listen to all viewpoints before making a decision, ultimately, their stances remained consistent with their own desires for withdrawal. Although both adhered to the party line even when they disagreed with it, such behaviour cannot be fully attributed to party loyalty. Instead, both faced a trade-off between the policies they wanted and those on offer from their leadership. While in such instances they ultimately sided with their party, this was primarily based on a pragmatic compromise to allow them to achieve some semblance of what they wanted personally, with neither wanting to remain in the EU but being unprepared to risk leaving without a deal either.

8.3.1: Cheryl Gillan – 'This is a great privilege, to represent, with the responsibility of seasoning that representation with careful thought and experience.'

During the referendum campaign, Gillan was a passionate supporter of leaving the EU⁵⁵⁹ and attributed this to a personal choice unrelated to what her constituents or party leadership may have thought.⁵⁶⁰ While Gillan did make efforts to bring public opinion into alignment with her own, these were

⁵⁵⁹ Gillan (25/02/2016a, 25/02/2016b, 01/03/2016, 02/03/2016, 03/03/2016a, 03/03/2016b, 03/03/2016c, 04/03/2016, 06/03/2016, 07/03/2016, 17/03/2016a, 18/03/2016, 06/04/2016a, 06/04/2016b, 06/04/2016c, 07/04/2016a, 07/04/2016b, 12/04/2016, 21/04/2016, 27/04/2016, 03/05/2016a, 03/05/2016b, 07/05/2016, 02/06/2016a, 02/06/2016b, 02/06/2016c, 02/06/2016d, 03/06/2016a, 03/06/2016b, 03/06/2016c, 03/06/2016d, 03/06/2016f, 03/06/2016g, 03/06/2016h, 03/06/2016i, 09/06/2016, 10/06/2016a, 10/06/2016b, 11/06/2016a, 11/06/2016b, 12/06/2016, 15/06/2016a, 15/06/2016b, 16/06/2016, 21/06/2016a, 21/06/2016b, 22/06/2016a, 22/06/2016b, 22/06/2016c)

⁵⁶⁰ Gillan (26/02/2016, 15/07/2016)

primarily aimed towards audiences she felt would be receptive to them⁵⁶¹ and thus largely ignored her pro-remain constituency.⁵⁶² Following the referendum, Gillan's stance was validated by the national result and she had no intention of changing it, noting that 'I have been consistent in my views about Europe ... I have not changed my position in 25 years of serving this country and my constituents.'⁵⁶³ To this end, Gillan invoked Burke's notion of MPs as trustees,⁵⁶⁴ much like fellow safe-seat MP John Cryer did, and made it clear her policy positions would be based on her own evaluations:

'There was no way an MP could predict how people were going to vote in their constituencies and all they can do is set out their own position. However in a representative democracy an MP owes their constituency their judgement which in my case accorded with the result in the country.'⁵⁶⁵

Gillan evidently knew that this position was unpopular and tried to mitigate the potential consequences by bringing constituency opinion into closer alignment with her own. She tried to persuade voters that, regardless of the local result, the national one needed to be implemented to preserve faith in democracy.⁵⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Gillan still tried to engage with constituent

⁵⁶¹ Gillan (25/02/2016a, 25/02/2016b, 01/03/2016, 02/03/2016, 03/03/2016a, 03/03/2016b, 03/03/2016c, 04/03/2016, 06/03/2016, 07/03/2016, 17/03/2016a, 18/03/2016, 06/04/2016a, 06/04/2016b, 06/04/2016c, 07/04/2016a, 07/04/2016b, 12/04/2016, 21/04/2016, 27/04/2016, 03/05/2016a, 03/05/2016b, 07/05/2016, 02/06/2016a, 02/06/2016b, 02/06/2016c, 02/06/2016d, 03/06/2016a, 03/06/2016b, 03/06/2016c, 03/06/2016d, 03/06/2016f, 03/06/2016g, 03/06/2016h, 03/06/2016i, 09/06/2016, 10/06/2016a, 10/06/2016b, 11/06/2016a, 11/06/2016b, 12/06/2016, 15/06/2016a, 15/06/2016b, 16/06/2016, 21/06/2016a, 21/06/2016b, 22/06/2016a, 22/06/2016b, 22/06/2016c)

⁵⁶² Gillan (02/01/2016, 26/02/2016)

⁵⁶³ HC Deb, 31st January 2017, Cols.845-847

⁵⁶⁴ Gillan (15/07/2016, 27/06/2017)

⁵⁶⁵ Gillan (15/07/2016)

⁵⁶⁶ Gillan (24/06/2016c, 15/07/2016, 22/12/2016, 03/01/2017, 01/02/2017); see also (c.2018a, c.2018b, c.2018, c.December 2018, 15/01/2019, 08/03/2019, 08/04/2019, 30/08/2019b); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847; HC Deb, 10 December 2018, Col.34; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533; HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864, 919-920

concerns about leaving the EU and framed withdrawal in a manner that would prove beneficial to the issues they cared about.⁵⁶⁷ Gillan would regularly assure them that the UK would still be involved with Europe through a variety of institutions,⁵⁶⁸ that the economy would continue to prosper⁵⁶⁹ and that groups such as local businesses⁵⁷⁰ and non-UK citizens⁵⁷¹ would not be adversely affected.⁵⁷² Gillan's attempts at persuasion often took the form of rhetorical arguments, asking how 'sensible people could otherwise believe' an argument she was trying to dismiss⁵⁷³ or stating her preferred option and presenting those who thought differently as content to 'create chaos.'⁵⁷⁴

Throughout the withdrawal period, Gillan regularly claimed to be prepared to listen to alternative viewpoints⁵⁷⁵ and take them into account when making her decisions.⁵⁷⁶ However, at the same time she continued to quote Burke's trustee notion of representation and made it clear that the final decision lay with her,⁵⁷⁷ noting after the 2017 General Election that while she had been re-elected to represent the views of all her constituents⁵⁷⁸ she

⁵⁶⁷ Gillan (24/06/2016b, 25/06/2016, 20/07/2016, 02/02/2017); see also Gillan (19/03/2019, 10/09/2019a, 10/09/2019b)

⁵⁶⁸ Gillan (01/12/2016, 17/01/2017, 15/07/2016, 19/01/2017, 01/02/2017a, 01/02/2017c, 18/04/2017, 18/07/2017, 18/09/2017, 19/10/2017a, 20/11/2017, 14/12/2017, 31/12/2017, 17/08/2018, 21/08/2019, 02/09/2019); HC Deb, 18 April 2018, Cols.117WH, 126WH-128WH; HC Deb, 18 July 2018, Cols.102WH-103WH, 108WH-111WH; Wareham (12/09/2017)

⁵⁶⁹ HC Deb, 27 June 2016, Col.39

⁵⁷⁰ Gillan (19/10/2017a, 21/08/2019, 02/09/2019); Wareham (12/09/2017)

⁵⁷¹ Gillan (15/07/2016, 19/01/2017, 02/04/2019b)

⁵⁷² Gillan (23/11/2016, 10/07/2017)

⁵⁷³ Gillan (03/03/2016a, 04/03/2016, 07/03/2016, 25/11/2018)

⁵⁷⁴ Gillan (18/09/2017)

⁵⁷⁵ Gillan (21/11/2018, 27/11/2018a, 06/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 08/01/2019, 10/01/2019a, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 13/03/2019, 14/03/2019, 20/03/2019, 21/03/2019, 09/04/2019, 30/08/2019b, 30/08/2019b, 27/11/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Col.864, 919-920

⁵⁷⁶ Gillan (27/11/2018a, 11/12/2018, 06/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/04/2019)

⁵⁷⁷ Gillan (07/07/2017, 27/06/2017, c.2018a, c.2018b, c.2018c, 25/11/2018, 04/12/2018, 06/12/2018, c.January 2019, 06/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, c.February 2019, 01/02/2019, 12/02/2019, 29/02/2019, 08/03/2019, 11/04/2019, 25/04/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.845-847; HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920

⁵⁷⁸ Gillan (07/07/2017); see also Gillan (27/06/2017)

would do this by 'seasoning that representation with careful thought and experience.'⁵⁷⁹

I respect people's views but in the end I have to make the decision as to what I think is best for my constituency and country and I will continue to review the options at every stage and vote accordingly. I hope that my position would also be respected.'⁵⁸⁰

While Gillan therefore tried to appear receptive to the opinions of others, ultimately, her policy positions remained consistent with her own personal evaluations of what should happen. By the time of the meaningful votes Gillan still maintained her belief that leaving the EU was the best option for everyone⁵⁸¹ and pledged to support the Withdrawal Agreement despite its unpopularity on all sides of the debate.⁵⁸² This was not purely out of loyalty to her party leadership, Gillan was a vocal critic of their actions and the agreement,⁵⁸³ but because she saw this as the best way to achieve her long-standing ambition of EU withdrawal.

Despite pressure from her constituents and elsewhere, Gillan was not prepared to leave the EU without a deal⁵⁸⁴ nor was she willing to consider a second referendum or anything tantamount to remaining.⁵⁸⁵ Thus, the

⁵⁷⁹ Gillan (27/06/2017)

⁵⁸⁰ Gillan (02/04/2019a)

⁵⁸¹ Gillan (15/07/2016, c.2018b, 21/11/2018, c.December, 11/12/2018, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 22/03/2019a, 22/03/2019b, 09/04/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 27 June 2016, Col.39; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533; Trivedi (24/03/2019)

⁵⁸² Gillan (25/11/2018); see also Gillan (06/12/2018, 04/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 13/03/2019, 02/04/2019a)

⁵⁸³ Gillan (11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 28/03/2019b, 02/04/2019a); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.919-920

⁵⁸⁴ Gillan (14/03/2019, 20/03/2019, 28/03/2019a, 02/04/2019a)

⁵⁸⁵ Gillan (15/07/2016, c.2018b, 21/11/2018, c.December, 11/12/2018, 17/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 08/03/2019, 22/03/2019a, 22/03/2019b, 09/04/2019, 02/10/2019); HC Deb, 27 June 2016, Col.39; HC Deb, 17 December 2018, Col.533; Trivedi (24/03/2019)

Withdrawal Agreement, however imperfect she perceived it to be,⁵⁸⁶ was her only viable option,⁵⁸⁷ noting that 'at this point in time I have to make a decision based on a risk assessment of the options on offer – not on some idealistic view of what Brexit means to me.'⁵⁸⁸ However, although she reluctantly supported the Withdrawal Agreement at the first three meaningful votes, Gillan became genuinely supportive of it in late 2019 after it was amended. As before, this position was primarily influenced by her own preferences, with Gillan no longer viewing the agreement as a compromise, but as offering the kind of withdrawal she could genuinely support.⁵⁸⁹

Throughout the withdrawal process Gillan's positions were therefore primarily influenced by her own beliefs as to what should happen. Although she would encourage the input of others, ultimately she could be quite dismissive of contrary opinions, declaring at the start of the meaningful vote process that 'as I want the best for our country, I will decide which lobby to go through',⁵⁹⁰ with such a decision being 'based upon my own objective assessment rather than upon prejudice, press speculation and other commentators' views.'⁵⁹¹ There certainly was some merit in her claims that there was no consensus of opinion as to what withdrawal looked like,⁵⁹² thus necessitating the use of her own judgment and experience to make the best decision on behalf of everyone.⁵⁹³ However, her insistence that she was a

⁵⁸⁶ Gillan (11/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/01/2019a, 02/04/2019a); HC Deb, 14 January 2019, Cols.864, 919-920)

⁵⁸⁷ Gillan (25/11/2018); see also Gillan (06/12/2018, 04/12/2018, 11/12/2018, 13/03/2019, 02/04/2019a)

⁵⁸⁸ Gillan (15/01/2019)

⁵⁸⁹ Gillan (17/10/2019a, 17/10/2019b, 19/10/2019)

⁵⁹⁰ Gillan (06/12/2018)

⁵⁹¹ Gillan (21/11/2018)

⁵⁹² Gillan (27/11/2018a, 11/12/2018, 06/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/04/2019)

⁵⁹³ Gillan (27/11/2018a, 11/12/2018, 06/12/2018, 15/01/2019, 25/04/2019)

trustee and dismissal of direct democracy was a stark contrast to her earlier support for the referendum and its result:

'A Member of Parliament exercises his or her judgment on behalf of his or her constituents and to give consideration to their views. Parliament cannot function by plebiscite and there are always issues on which MPs vote according to their conscience ... keyboard warriors can sometimes present simplistic choices and the important thing for MPs to do is to weigh the arguments put before us.'⁵⁹⁴

8.3.2: Stuart Andrew – 'We now have to make a decision'

Andrew's pre-referendum stance was clearly a matter of personal choice, contradicting that of his constituency and party leadership. Consistent with his longstanding claims that he supported a referendum to let the people have their say,⁵⁹⁵ Andrew did not campaign and made no effort to sway opinion one way or the other.⁵⁹⁶ However, his actions also suggest he was playing it safe, unwilling to risk alienating any potential supporters in his constituency or party. He waited until April 2016 to officially declare his position and even then he stressed that it was a difficult and personal choice,⁵⁹⁷ but it had to be about balance, 'and, on balance, I have made my choice to vote to leave.'⁵⁹⁸ Nonetheless, despite claiming he wanted the people to have their say, he evidently had no desire to act as a delegate

⁵⁹⁴ Gillan (10/01/2019b)

⁵⁹⁵ Andrew (25/10/2011, 12/06/2013, 09/07/2013, 28/11/2014); HC Deb, 09 February 2016, Cols.1474-1476

⁵⁹⁶ Andrew (07/04/2016), see also Andrew (10/02/2016, 05/07/2016)

⁵⁹⁷ Andrew (07/04/2016); see also HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.920-922

⁵⁹⁸ Andrew (07/04/2016)

outside of using the overall result to justify his own stance and asserted that the specifics of withdrawal were up to Parliament to decide.⁵⁹⁹

'When I voted for the referendum I knew full well that the result would be what the majority of the people of the whole United Kingdom decided, so I will be representing the views of the British people. I will also represent those in my constituency who did not want us to leave by ensuring that I regularly write to the Department, and I am grateful to the Department for its answers.'⁶⁰⁰

While Andrew was, therefore, happy to listen to the views of others, take on board their suggestions and try to tackle any concerns they had, ultimately, he would be the one to decide the best course of action.⁶⁰¹ Moreover, unlike before the referendum Andrew did make efforts to convince his constituents and wider audiences that his preferred direction was the right one, and thus, try to minimise the consequences of supporting positions they did not. Andrew was firmly behind Theresa May's leadership bid and plans for withdrawal and passionately tried to convince his constituents to support her as well,⁶⁰² while making numerous attempts to persuade them leaving the EU would be a beneficial move⁶⁰³ and facilitate improvements on issues they cared about, such as the environment and animal rights.⁶⁰⁴

Regardless of whether these efforts succeeded, Andrew continued to act according to his own opinions and as the withdrawal debate became more divisive, he dismissed alternatives to withdrawal and stated 'I am absolutely

⁵⁹⁹ Andrew (05/07/2016); see also Andrew (07/04/2016, 25/06/2016b, 25/06/2016d)

⁶⁰⁰ HC Deb, 31 January 2017, Cols.920-922

⁶⁰¹ Andrew (05/07/2016, 06/07/2016, 12/12/2018, 12/03/2019a, 12/03/2019b, 12/03/2019c)

⁶⁰² Andrew (06/07/2016)

⁶⁰³ Andrew (08/12/2017, 13/12/2017)

⁶⁰⁴ Andrew (13/12/2017, 21/11/2017)

committed to ensuring we leave the EU.⁶⁰⁵ By the time of the meaningful votes, Andrew clearly had reservations about the Withdrawal Agreement,⁶⁰⁶ but saw this as his best option to achieve his goals, especially given that he was strongly opposed to leaving without a deal at all.⁶⁰⁷ He was therefore prepared to compromise and tried to encourage others to see things the same way:

'I do personally feel I am able to support this White Paper as it is my view that it will take some time for us to disentangle ourselves from a system we have been a part of for the best part of 50 years and that this will be a process, not an event - just as joining the EU was an event that took place over many, many years and I do feel like the core tenets required for us to leave the EU are provided for by this White Paper.'⁶⁰⁸

However, it would be remiss to ignore the fact that Andrew's choice to support the legislation was heavily influenced by loyalty to his party and the effects on his career ambitions. Although he presented his support for the Withdrawal Agreement as a compromise, he also could not oppose it and remain a minister nor could he go against his leadership and vote to block a 'no deal' scenario despite his strong opposition to it.⁶⁰⁹ Thus, Andrew's support for the original Withdrawal Agreement appeared to be based on a pragmatic evaluation of what was best for both the country and his career.

⁶⁰⁵ Andrew (11/10/2018)

⁶⁰⁶ Andrew (11/10/2018, 02/12/2018, 12/12/2018)

⁶⁰⁷ Cooper (28/03/2019); HC Deb, 25 April 2018, Col.867; HC Deb, 23 May 2018, Cols.419-422; HC Deb, 13 June 2018, Cols.875-876; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Cols.6-7; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

⁶⁰⁸ Andrew (11/10/2018); see also Andrew (08/12/2017)

⁶⁰⁹ Cooper (28/03/2019); HC Deb, 25 April 2018, Col.867; HC Deb, 23 May 2018, Cols.419-422; HC Deb, 13 June 2018, Cols.875-876; HC Deb, 27 June 2018, Col.408WH-410WH; HC Deb, 23 July 2018, Cols.830-833; HC Deb, 11 February 2019, Cols.1-12; HC Deb, 25 March 2019, Cols.6-7; Yorkshire Evening Post (29/09/2018)

This was evident in his half-hearted efforts to justify his position and bring opinions into alignment with his own, trying to convince others, and perhaps himself, to support the deal in order to 'get on with it' rather than because it was going to bring about positive change⁶¹⁰.



However, by the time of the fourth meaningful vote, the trade-off between policy and party appeared to have alleviated, with Andrew's support for the amended Withdrawal Agreement becoming much more genuine and far less hesitant. Andrew felt more comfortable supporting the amended deal, claiming that it had resolved his prior concerns and he fervently supported and promoted it in a manner that suggested it was a policy he wanted to support, rather than being due to pragmatism or party loyalty.⁶¹¹

8.4: Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter therefore provides very similar findings to those of the previous three chapters, with both MPs being primarily influenced by their own evaluations of what was best. Although considerations of party loyalty were important when making their decisions, ultimately, they viewed the party line as the best way to achieve a policy

⁶¹⁰ Andrew (02/12/2018, 12/12/2018, 12/03/2019a, 12/03/2019b)

⁶¹¹ Andrew (17/10/2019, 01/11/2019, 20/12/2019)

they had supported long before 2016. Overall, Gillan and Andrew viewed themselves as trustees and prioritised their own evaluations of what was best over those of others.

In line with the findings of this thesis, neither MP was strongly influenced by constituent opinions when deciding how to vote in Parliament, contrary to the first hypothesis. Although they claimed to take local viewpoints seriously and wanted to be seen to engage with these, neither changed their positions in response to them. Instead, like the other MPs studied, they used their knowledge of local opinions to change the framing of their stances. Both tried to avoid the issues if they could, but otherwise attempted to show how their actions would benefit constituents. As observed in the previous chapters, the safety of their seats appeared to have little effect on how responsive the MPs were to constituency opinions. Gillan represented a safe seat, but still wanted to engage with local sentiments and be seen as responsive, even if in practice she was not. Representing a marginal seat, Andrew also wanted to be seen to engage with local sentiments, but he too did not base his stances on them even after he nearly lost his seat at the 2017 General Election. The fourth hypothesis is, therefore, not supported.

In line with the second hypothesis the demands of their party leadership were influential, supporting the findings of the quantitative analysis and aligning with other case study MPs. There were times when both faced a trade-off between their ideal policy and that on offer from their leadership, with both ultimately following the party line. Andrew was an ambitious, career-minded MP whose policy positions closely matched those of his leadership. He expressed reservations about the government's Withdrawal Agreement and over leaving the EU without one at all, but nonetheless put these concerns aside at the relevant votes. Gillan too had reservations but like Andrew she compromised when party loyalty demanded it. However,

unlike Andrew, Gillan was a veteran MP and while she had no intention of winding down her long career, she was not afraid to openly criticise her leadership and seek alternative policies. While her longer tenure may have emboldened her rhetoric, ultimately it did not affect how she voted and this supports the findings of Chapter Four and the previous case studies. While Andrew's case may therefore provide some support for the fifth hypothesis, Gillan's does not.

However, while party loyalty was important to both Gillan and Andrew, ultimately their positions were still primarily based on their own evaluations of what should happen much as the previous three chapters suggested would be the case. While both did adhere to the party line and compromise some of their positions in order to do so, they were also longstanding supporters of EU withdrawal and doing this allowed them to achieve a policy goal they personally wanted. However, only Gillan openly acted like a trustee and justified her actions in such terms, although at the same time she was happy to follow public opinion when it was conducive to her withdrawal aims. Nonetheless, while happy to entertain different opinions and suggestions, ultimately, she made it clear that the final decision as to how she would vote in Parliament lay with her. Stuart Andrew also presented his actions as being an evaluation of the best course of action for his constituents and the nation, but while he acted as a trustee, he never openly presented his behaviour as such. This may reflect his small seat majority, given that safer MPs such as Gillan and John Cryer were much less hesitant in this respect.⁶¹²

In summary, the findings of this chapter align well with those of the previous three, demonstrating that Gillan and Andrew's personal evaluations of what was best were what primarily guided the policy positions they supported.

⁶¹² For Cryer, see HC Deb, 21 March 2019, Col.1247

Both knew what they wanted and were quite consistent in their efforts to achieve it. Having both supported leaving the EU prior to the referendum, their continued support for withdrawal throughout the period studied suggests some validity to the third hypothesis. However, like Boles and Cryer, the party line was also important to their decisions and saw them support policies that were contrary to some of their personal preferences. Nonetheless, adhering to the party line was, ultimately, the best way for both Andrew and Gillan to achieve their own long-held policy goal of EU withdrawal, even if this required some compromise along the way.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This study has sought to understand the relationship between constituent opinions and MP policy positions. The 2016 referendum on EU membership is used as an illustrative example to test the influence of constituent desires on the policy positions their MPs adopt, in relation to other key pressures on MPs such as the demands of their party leadership and their own opinions. Many MPs found themselves out of alignment with their constituents after the referendum, and this research investigates how they determined which policy directions to support in period that followed. In a political system that traditionally privileges the opinions of elected representatives over those of voters, the referendum was presented as a unique opportunity for the public to have their say, yet it did little to alter the strong and persistent perceptions among voters that their MPs do not care what they think. Table 9.1 reiterates the five hypotheses of this study and details the extent to which each of the eight case-study MPs can be seen to support them. These brief explanations are then elaborated upon further in the subsequent sections and compared with the findings of the quantitative analysis.

This chapter, therefore, concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings in relation to the research objectives while also discussing the value of these to the academic discipline and public discourse. It also proposes opportunities for future research based on the overall findings of the study, the new and unanswered questions that stem from these and limitations identified within the analysis.

Table 9.1: How the MPs fit with the hypotheses

MP		Hypothesis				
		1: Constituency Opinion Stronger local referendum results will encourage MPs to move into alignment	2: Party Position MPs will move into alignment if this reflects the party line	3: Pre-Referendum Stance MPs who supported leaving in 2016 will be less likely to move into alignment	4: Seat Majority MPs in marginal seats will be more likely to move into alignment	5: Time in Office Longer-serving MPs will be more likely to stay out of alignment
Chapter 5	Ian Austin	Partial Support Switched position to support withdrawal partially in response to referendum result	No Support Regularly rebelled against party line	Partial Support Remain supporter – national result made this hard to maintain	No Support Marginal seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Cut career short over withdrawal preferences
	Nick Boles	Partial Support Switched position to support withdrawal partially in response to referendum result	Partial Support Highly loyal to party line prior to 2019	Partial Support Remain supporter – national result made this hard to maintain	No Support Safe seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Cut career short over withdrawal preferences
Chapter 6	Anna Soubry	Partial Support Voted to trigger Article 50 in response to referendum result	No Support Regularly rebelled against party line	No Support Remain supporter – but stayed out of alignment	No Support Marginal seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Cut career short over withdrawal preferences

	Paul Farrelly	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric	No Support Regularly rebelled against party line	No Support Remain supporter – but stayed out of alignment	No Support Marginal seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Cut career short over withdrawal preferences
Chapter 7	John Cryer	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric	Support Party line encouraged him to support for policies he otherwise would not have	Partial Support Opposed Withdrawal Agreement but maintained support for leaving the EU	No Support Safe seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	Partial Support Not a new MP, but desire to remain in post encouraged party loyalty
	Theresa Villiers	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric	No Support Regularly rebelled against party line	Partial Support Opposed Withdrawal Agreement but maintained support for leaving the EU	No Support Marginal seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Opposed incumbent leadership despite career ambitions
Chapter 8	Stuart Andrew	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric	Support Party-line encouraged him to support some policies he otherwise would not have	Support Leave supporter – national referendum result allowed him to maintain this stance	No Support Marginal seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	Support Career ambitions influenced his support for policies
	Cheryl Gillan	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric	Support Party-line encouraged her to support some policies she otherwise would not have	Support Leave supporter – national referendum result allowed her to maintain this stance	No Support Safe seat affected rhetoric more than policy positions	No Support Primarily affected rhetoric, but still supported all legislation

9.1: Main Findings

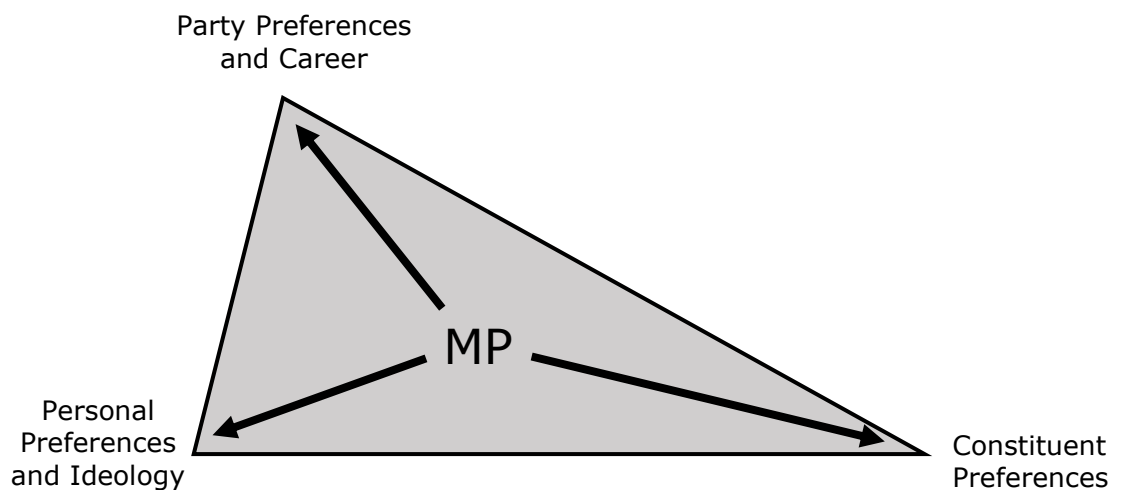
The key finding of this research is that MPs primarily view themselves as trustees, even after a policy decision is directly delegated to voters. While constituent preferences do carry some weight on how MPs vote, their effect is consistently found to be the weakest of the three main influences. Of far more significance are an MP's own opinions and the demands of their leadership, with there being a notable interplay observed between the two. The quantitative analysis demonstrated that the influence of party leaderships could be a significant influence on MP policy positions and several of the case study subjects were observed to fall into line and support party policies even though they did not fully agree with them.

However, the case study analysis also highlights that party loyalty is not necessarily an automatic reaction and does not provide a complete explanation for how MPs vote. The majority of the case study MPs were prepared to follow the policies they thought best regardless of whether their constituents or party agreed with them and what the repercussions of this behaviour might be. When they did follow the party line, they often genuinely agreed with the policy direction. Others may have had some reservations about party policy and needed to compromise, but ultimately they saw this as the best way to achieve something they wanted personally, either in terms of their policy or career goals. Against a backdrop of declining public faith in politicians and the referendum's ostensible purpose of letting the people have their say, these findings are therefore important to both academic and public understandings of the referendum and of UK democracy more generally.

The model of MP influences outlined by the literature, represented by an equilateral triangle in Chapter Three, is therefore redrawn here as a scalene

triangle to better represent the significance of each influence as determined by this study. The largest angles are given to personal and party preferences to reflect their greater impact, while the smallest is used to represent constituent preferences to demonstrate their lesser significance relative to the other factors.

Figure 9.1: Updated Tripartite Model of the Influences on MPs



9.1.1: The Effect of Constituency Opinions

The primary aim of this study is to understand the extent to which constituency opinions influence MP policy positions, using EU withdrawal as an illustrative case study. The results of the analysis show that public perceptions on the issue are not without merit, with constituency opinions found to have little effect on how MPs vote in Parliament. However, they are found to influence MPs in other ways, having a notable impact on how comfortable they are discussing their policy positions in public and how they frame their stances when they do.

Two of the five hypotheses seek to test the influence of constituency opinions. The first states that the stronger the support for either leaving or remaining within a constituency at the referendum the more likely an MP will

be to move into alignment with their constituents. This thesis finds little evidence of this, with constituency opinions having minimal influence on how MPs voted regardless of how the local referendum result was split. This is initially highlighted in Chapter Four, which uses quantitative methods to test the hypothesis and shows that local referendum results had no statistical significance on how MPs voted, with the exception of the fourth meaningful vote. However, even in the instance where it was statistically significant, the analysis suggests that the substantive significance of constituency opinion was low. The analysis presented in the four subsequent case study chapters supports these initial findings and shows that while constituent opinions can have some impact on how MPs vote, their effect is neither strong nor consistent, especially compared to other factors. The national referendum result certainly pressured many remain-supporting MPs to support withdrawal while allowing leave-supporting MPs to maintain their original positions. Moreover, local opinions did have some influence on MPs such as Nick Boles and Ian Austin, whose consistent support for withdrawal efforts was partially a response to their decisive local majorities for leaving. Although the result was much closer in her constituency, Anna Soubry also initially supported the triggering of Article 50 because of the referendum result.

However, while some MPs may have changed their overall stance towards EU membership in response to the referendum, ultimately an MP's vision for withdrawal and the policies they pursued in order to achieve it were not significantly based on what their constituents might have wanted. Nonetheless, while the strength of constituency opinions did not significantly affect how MPs voted, it did affect how willing they were to engage with the disparity between them and their constituents and how they framed their positions when they did. MPs such as Anna Soubry, Stuart Andrew and

Cheryl Gillan, represented constituencies that were evenly split at the referendum and were more comfortable staying out of alignment with the referendum result, with Soubry eventually using the closeness of the local result to suggest people had changed their minds and that her positions now reflected those of the majority. Such claims would have been harder to make for MPs like Nick Boles, Ian Austin and John Cryer, where the constituency referendum results were more decisive.

This behaviour therefore shows that constituency opinions, while not a major influence on how MPs vote, can be an important factor in how comfortable they are discussing a policy issue and how they frame their behaviour when they do. Even if they had no intention of acting like a delegate, all the case study MPs presented themselves as willing to listen to and consider local opinions. For Nick Boles, this was little more than perfunctory, with no evidence to suggest he ever did so, while Soubry, Villiers, Andrew and Gillan regularly made efforts to show they were listening to what constituents wanted. However, engaging with constituent opinions did not significantly impact the policies the MPs supported, but instead allowed them to tailor their communications and craft arguments they hoped would bring local sentiments into alignment with their own. By contrast, while Austin and Cryer also engaged with local sentiments, they ultimately saw little value in dwelling on an issue over which they and a large majority of their constituents profoundly disagreed, and thus, tried to avoid it wherever possible.

Linked to the first hypothesis, the fourth suggests that MPs in marginal seats will be more likely to move into alignment with constituents, fearing potential electoral repercussions if they do not. However, this study finds no evidence for this, with MPs in marginal seats being no more likely to move into alignment than those in safe seats. For example, Paul Farrelly remained a

vocal critic of the withdrawal process despite representing a highly marginal seat that voted strongly to leave. Conversely, John Cryer represented a very safe seat but was not comfortable acting in the same manner and tried not to drive a wedge between himself and his constituents over withdrawal. Much like constituency opinion in general, the safety of an MP's seat often appeared more influential on how much effort they put into engaging with local sentiments and framing their actions. This was highlighted well by Chapter Five, with there being a stark contrast between the diligent efforts of Ian Austin to engage with constituency opinion in his marginal seat, compared to the very safe Nick Boles' general disregard for it.

Therefore, the findings of this study demonstrate that constituency opinions have little influence on how MPs vote in Parliament. However, the case study analysis highlights that they can still have a notable effect on how comfortable MPs are discussing their actions and how they frame them when they do. MPs are therefore found to be somewhat responsive to constituent opinions, just not necessarily in the manner voters would like or that academic studies generally look for.

9.1.2: The Effect of Party Leadership

In addition to constituency opinions, this study also sought to ascertain the importance of other potential influences on MP positions. Studies of UK politics regularly suggest that the demands placed upon MPs by their party leadership are key to understanding the policies they support, and the analysis presented in this thesis provides strong support for these assertions. The party line is shown to have a significant effect on how the majority of MPs vote, but at the same time, they are observed to exercise more agency in this decision than many give them credit for.

In order to test this effect, the second hypothesis states that MPs will be more likely to move into alignment with their constituents if this reflects their party leadership's position on the legislation. The quantitative analysis presented in Chapter Four provides early support for this assertion and such behaviour is observed to be substantively meaningful and consistent across all five key votes. The case study chapters provide similar support, with the strength of party loyalty being particularly evident with Nick Boles who very openly prioritised actions that would benefit the Conservative Party's national standing and his place within its ranks. Other MPs such as John Cryer, Stuart Andrew and Cheryl Gillan were less open about it in this respect, but the importance of the party line was evident in their actions, with all three supporting withdrawal policies that went against personal red lines they had set out previously. In the case of Cryer, this included his lukewarm support for a second referendum, while both Andrew and Gillan supported the government in keeping the possibility of leaving the EU without a deal an option, despite making it clear they strongly opposed that course of action.

However, not all the case studies strongly support the quantitative analysis of Chapter Four, suggesting that for many MPs there are other significant influences to consider. Ian Austin, Anna Soubry, Paul Farrelly and Theresa Villiers all acted quite independently of their party lines. Both Austin and Farrelly were alienated from the Labour Party leadership long before the referendum, and this persisted throughout the withdrawal period. Soubry remained broadly loyal to her party, but was unwilling to support their plans for withdrawal, while Villiers only supported her party line when it was convenient to her aims. Additionally, even those MPs that adhered to the party line were not observed to do so out of blind loyalty, with many doing so willingly in order to achieve their own policy or career goals. While

important, party loyalty does not, therefore, provide a full explanation for how MPs vote and their personal opinions also hold significance, as will be discussed in the next section.

The fifth hypothesis links party allegiance to an MP's length of service, suggesting that longer tenured MPs may feel comfortable enough in their positions to act more independently. However, the findings of this study show little support for this. Long serving MPs appear no more likely to stay out of alignment with constituents, or to defy the party line, than their more recently elected colleagues. Newer and ambitious MPs such as Boles and Andrew are shown to have been highly loyal to the party line, but longer tenured colleagues such as Cryer and Gillan were also observed to be very loyal even if in theory they could afford not to be. Those MPs that defied the party line did not have particularly long tenures, although most of them were entering the twilight of their Parliamentary careers. However, this situation was brought about by their determination to follow alternate paths, rather than such decisions being encouraged by the knowledge that they would soon be leaving politics.

Therefore, this study provides strong evidence to suggest that the demands of an MP's party leadership can have a significant effect on how they vote in Parliament, much as the academic literature suggests. However, not all the MPs studied were unquestioningly loyal, and even those that fell into line exercised some discretion in this, suggesting that their own opinions also hold importance to their decisions.

9.1.3: The Effect of an MP's Own Opinions

Given that MPs are traditionally encouraged to use their own judgement when deciding what policies to support, this study also aimed to test the

effect of MPs' own opinions in relation to the two influences already discussed. The results show that personal evaluations are indeed a strong influence on MPs and accounts for the dissent from the party line observed in the case study chapters. However, personal evaluations are also found to be at least partially responsible for MPs' support of the party line and the findings of this study therefore demonstrate a clear interplay between the two factors.

The third hypothesis was created to test this influence and suggests that MPs will be less likely to move into alignment with their constituents if they voted to leave in 2016, seeing their own positions validated by the national result. The findings of this study suggest some validity to this, but overall, MPs appeared strongly predisposed towards following their own preferences, regardless of how they voted in 2016. The qualitative analysis supports this finding, with the case studies demonstrating that throughout the withdrawal period both leave and remain-supporting MPs followed their own evaluations regardless of how they voted in 2016 and whether it put them into or out of alignment with their constituents and parties. In looking beyond voting behaviour and considering how MPs discussed and promoted their actions, the case study analysis demonstrates that personal evaluations are important to MP's positions, even when they appear to be simply following the party line or constituent desires.

Paul Farrelly and Theresa Villiers clearly prioritised their own desires for what should happen regardless of constituency or party pressures, with any congruence between these being coincidental. Nick Boles, Ian Austin and Anna Soubry did make claims to be doing as their constituents instructed, but ultimately, their visions for withdrawal and the policies they supported were primarily based on their own evaluations of what should happen. The simple referendum question did leave the specifics of leaving the EU open to

interpretation and there were many competing visions for what withdrawal should look like. Nonetheless, while many of the MPs claimed to be listening to what their constituents wanted and representing the 'will of the people', ultimately none of them directly based the policies they supported on what constituents might have wanted. Again, any congruence between the two positions was mostly coincidental.

Additionally, while the influence of party leaderships is found to be significant this study also shows that this itself is closely linked to an MP's own evaluations. Even those who followed the party line are not found to have done so out of blind loyalty, with most doing so willingly because they saw it as the best option, either for their policy goals or career ambitions. This was highlighted well in Chapter Eight with both Gillan and Andrew following the party line, even aspects they disagreed with, because they felt this was the best way to achieve the closest approximation of a policy they had supported long before the referendum. Nick Boles was initially very loyal to his party, but again this was based on his own evaluations of what was best for it and his position within it. As time progressed, he ultimately became unable to reconcile what he thought was best with the policies his leadership were offering and showed little reluctance in following his instincts, estranging himself from his party in the process.

Thus, the results of the analysis show that an MP's own evaluations are an important influence on their policy positions, even if they simply appear to be following the directions of their party leadership. This study, therefore, finds there to be an important interplay between an MP's own opinions and their party line. Some of the MPs studied were determined to follow their own preferred path irrespective of their party or constituents. However, others did follow the party line but ultimately saw this a suitable compromise

in order to achieve their own policy ambitions, rather than being purely focussed on considerations of career advancement.

9.2: Contributions

The third stated objective of this study is to examine how the influences observed regarding EU withdrawal relate to broader themes of MP responsiveness within UK politics. The 2016 EU membership referendum and subsequent withdrawal period were certainly a unique time in UK politics and this must be acknowledged. Nonetheless, this study asserts that its findings are relevant and generalisable to broader studies of UK politics, in addition to their relevance to more specific studies of the referendum and withdrawal period. Although most policy issues are unlikely to garner as much public attention as EU withdrawal, nor would they have as comprehensive readings of public opinion available, the fact that most MPs appeared no more willing to act as delegates after the referendum suggests they are unlikely to do so for more 'routine' policy issues either. This aligns well with other studies that have shown the electoral consequences of MPs being out of alignment with constituents on salient issues, including EU withdrawal, to be minimal.⁶¹³ It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the behaviour of MPs witnessed during the withdrawal period can be seen as representative of their actions for other policy issues as well. This section therefore details how the findings of this study relate to broader studies of UK politics and the contributions they make to both the academic literature and public discourse regarding perceptions of the referendum and MP behaviour and responsiveness more generally.

⁶¹³ See Chapter Three, Section 3.1.1

9.2.1: Academic Implications – The 2016 Referendum

Firstly, the findings of this study contribute to the rapidly expanding discourse on the 2016 referendum while also bringing together two strands of study that have thus far remained largely separate. The 2016 referendum and its largely unexpected result has generated much research and debate, but thus far, there has been little focus on the links to representation and responsiveness. Significant effort has been put into understanding why people voted to leave and as such the academic literature provides a robust understanding of the factors that made this so. Other studies have looked at withdrawal negotiations and legislation and analysed the actions of the government and Parliament in these debates and votes. However, there have been few studies that attempt to combine the two and understand how voter preferences may have influenced the legislation that was sought and promoted by MPs. Given the high levels of public discontent with politics and the referendum's ostensible purpose of letting the people have their say, this gap in the literature is one that needs addressing.

This study, therefore, helps to close this gap by bringing together the two aforementioned areas of academic study, while also expanding on the limited literature that has previously made efforts to do this (Aidt, Grey and Savu, 2021; Auel and Umit, 2021; Giuliani, 2021; Moore, 2018). These studies present several opportunities for further research that this thesis has utilised. Firstly, all four of these studies focus on one parliamentary vote or time period. They also primarily use quantitative methods to test the influences on MP positions. This study goes further by using qualitative methods and analysing multiple votes over the course of the withdrawal period. In doing so, this research presents findings that are broadly in alignment with those of the prior studies, but also goes further in explaining the dynamics of the relationships observed quantitatively. This study agrees

with the prior studies that constituency opinion is often a weak influence compared to personal and party concerns, but is also able to show the importance of constituents on non-voting behaviour. These findings, therefore, broaden our understanding of the withdrawal period and the level to which the referendum choices of voters factored in to the policies that were eventually enacted.

9.2.2: Academic Implications – MP Influences and Responsiveness

In addition to the findings regarding the withdrawal process, the 2016 referendum also serves as an illustrative example of the trustee-delegate dynamic within UK politics more generally. The findings of this study, therefore, contribute to the overall debates surrounding this and provide support for the general consensus that the demands of political parties are highly important to the positions MPs adopt. However, this study also highlights how adherence to the party line is not always an automatic reaction and often depends on an MP's own opinions and circumstances.

The academic literature suggests that there are three main potential influences on MP policy positions, these being the demands of voters, party leaderships and their own consciences. Müller and Strøm's tripartite model proposes that politicians face a trade-off between the three, with the strength of each depending on the individual and the political system in which they operate (1999). Studies focussing on the UK regularly find that the party line is the most influential factor on how an MP will vote on legislation (e.g. Cowley and Stuart, 1997 and 2010; Plumb, 2013, 2015; Plumb and Marsh, 2011, 2013; Raymond and Overby, 2016). In adapting Müller and Strøm's tripartite model, this study provides further support for such assertions, with the demands of party leaderships found to be a consistently significant influence on how MPs voted in Parliament, both in

the quantitative analysis of Chapter Four and within the qualitative analysis, notably in Chapters Five, Seven and Eight. MPs were significantly more likely to move into alignment with their constituency referendum result if this reflected their leadership's position on the legislation in question, and several were observed to follow the party line even though they had previously expressed reservations about such policies.

However, as noted earlier, the findings of this study also demonstrate that party loyalty does not provide a full explanation for how MPs vote. Studies such as that by Aidt, Grey and Savu (2021) suggest that personal opinions can be twice as important to MP policy positions than constituency and party demands. This thesis broadly supports this notion. There is ample evidence to show that MPs may rebel against the party line if they feel strongly enough on an issue (e.g. Cowley and Stuart, 2012a, 2012b; Mughan and Scully, 1997; Overby, Tatalovich and Studlar, 1998; Plumb and Marsh, 2011) and this study observes such behaviour during the withdrawal process, with five of the eight case study subjects defying their party line at some point (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven). While the high stakes inherent in the withdrawal debates may have made such behaviour more prominent than for 'routine' policy issues, it nonetheless demonstrates that MPs do have the capacity to act independently when they believe it is necessary.

Moreover, even when MPs adhered to the party line the evidence suggests this was not necessarily a result of blind loyalty. Sometimes they agreed with the policy, which might be expected given that they share the same ideology as their party and over time this will be reinforced through a process of socialisation (Cowley and Stuart, 1997, 2010; Raymond and Overby, 2016). However, even when MPs had to compromise and support policies they were not fully in agreement with, ultimately, they still saw the party line as the best way to achieve their own policy ambitions, rather than

following the party line solely for reasons of career advancement (see Chapters Five and Eight for prominent examples). While party is therefore found to be a key influence much as the extant literature suggests, this study also finds that MPs' own opinions are more influential in this than they are often given credit for.

With regards to the influence of constituency opinions, this study broadly agrees with that of Hanretty, Lauderdale and Vivyan (2017), who argue that while constituent desires are a weak influence on MP positions, their effect is not negligible. However, this thesis does not support the claims of other studies that their influence on MP policy positions can be more significant if they are unambiguous and the issue is salient (e.g. Broockman and Skovron, 2013; Lax and Philips, 2011; Mughan and Scully, 1997; Page and Shapiro, 1983; Schneider, 2020). The referendum made constituent opinions relatively clear, yet the policy positions of MPs were still not particularly responsive to the desires of voters. The influence of constituency opinions are therefore found to be a rather weak influence on how MPs vote in Parliament. Nonetheless, they are found to have an important influence on how MPs frame their behaviour and vote choices, which contributes to strands of the literature that investigate how politicians try to influence public opinion, rather than allowing it to influence them (e.g. Jacobs and Shapiro, 1997, 2000; Ward, 2006; Dunleavy and Ward, 1981; Matsubayashi, 2013).

Chapter Two highlighted how, prior to the referendum, MPs were often more responsive to growing Euroscepticism in words rather than deeds and this thesis observes similar behaviour following it too. Even after the referendum, the issue of EU membership remained one over which UK MPs were particularly unresponsive to voter preferences and they experienced limited electoral repercussions from this behaviour. The findings of this

study therefore provide some support for those of Hanretty, Melon and English (2021), who argue that MPs are often able to survive being out of alignment with constituents and are well aware of this potential, especially if their electoral rivals do not offer a more agreeable policy alternative to voters. Given that the Conservative and Labour party lines switched to supporting withdrawal following the referendum, it is possible that many voters therefore had no significantly different alternative on offer in constituencies where these two parties dominated. Thus, many MPs could potentially stay out of alignment and follow their own preferences, or those of their party, without fearing significant electoral repercussions.

Moreover, most MPs either tried to avoid the issue altogether or made efforts to bring the preferences of voters into alignment with their own positions, rather than changing their own stances to better reflect the desires of voters. The nature of such behaviour depended on the MP and their circumstances. Anna Soubry represented a very evenly split area and held out hope that she could convince enough voters to side with her preferred option and thus pursue it with popular legitimacy. On the other hand, Ian Austin and John Cryer represented areas with decisive results and did not feel able to do this, often trying to convince people to accept their stances rather than agree with them. All the case study subjects, therefore, tried to mitigate any damage their positions might cause, but by trying to change public opinions rather than their own stances, much as the aforementioned literature suggests.

9.2.3: Other Implications - Public Perceptions

The findings of this study also have relevance for political practice and discourse, especially within the public sphere, where they may prove useful

to interested groups and individuals who want to better understand and navigate their relationship with their MPs and the legislative processes.

The largely negative public perceptions of MPs highlighted in Chapter Two are both supported and challenged by the results of this study. The overall finding that constituent opinions are a weak influence on how MPs vote suggests that public perceptions are not unfounded. However, the findings also suggest that the situation is not quite as bleak as many voters perceive it to be and their opinions do carry weight with their representatives, albeit not to the extent they might like. Although not a strong influence on how the majority of MPs voted, the fact that constituency opinions can influence how they discuss their policy stances highlights that in most instances constituent desires do not fall on deaf ears. While Nick Boles had little regard for the opinions of his constituents, others such as Ian Austin, Anna Soubry, John Cryer, Theresa Villiers, Cheryl Gillan and Stuart Andrew regularly engaged with them, defending and promoting their own stances based on what they were hearing.

However, this style over substance and lack of voting congruence is still problematic and highlights further the disconnect between voters and representatives discussed in Chapter Two. The findings of this study, therefore, continue to raise serious questions about the functioning of UK democracy and the ability of political elites to effectively engage with voters and govern the country. Even so, the findings of this study can go some way towards helping voters better understand what influence their opinions have and aid them to navigate their relationship with their MPs and the political system accordingly. MPs do care what their constituents think, but ultimately still view their role as that of a trustee and the complex nature of EU withdrawal and wide spectrum of desires regarding it perhaps demonstrates some validity in this approach. While many voters may not

be satisfied with this, understanding that their voices are heard could provide some solace and help them to better express and direct their opinions in the future.

Moreover, the fact that many MPs were prepared to support the policies they believed to be right should also be highlighted and may help voters feel somewhat more positively towards how they are represented. While opinion polls regularly suggest that voters believe their MPs to be self-serving and unprincipled, the case study analysis provides evidence that this is not always the case. Austin, Boles, Soubry and Farrelly were all prepared to put their careers on the line in order to support the policies they believed were best for the UK, not just for themselves or their career prospects. Other MPs not studied in detail by this thesis, such as the twenty-one Conservative MPs who had the whip withdrawn in September 2019 after defying the party line, also support this assertion. While voters may not feel that their own policy preferences are reflected in such behaviour, the fact that many MPs were prepared to put principle before career should be acknowledged and hopefully provide some comfort to voters about the intentions and motivations of their elected representatives.

9.3: Areas for Further Study

In addition to the contributions made to the existing research on responsiveness and the 2016 referendum, this study also presents implications for the future research of these fields and raises several questions deserving of further study.

The first relates to the assumption that the behaviour of MPs observed by this study is generalisable to their behaviour on other policy issues. Chapter Three outlines the grounds upon which this assumption is based and

provides ample evidence to support it, including recent research demonstrating that despite the divisiveness and salience of the issue, votes on withdrawal would have been 'business as usual' for MPs. However, while there is plenty of evidence within the existing literature to support this assumption, the exceptional nature of the referendum and subsequent withdrawal period cannot be ignored. Unlike many policy decisions that Parliament deals with, the issue was highly salient within the public and political consciousnesses. Voters and MPs had strong opinions on the matter and many of the latter were prepared to cut short their careers to pursue a particular outcome (see Chapters Five and Six). Thus, the influence of personal evaluations could feasibly be much lower for less prominent policy issues. Further research on the referendum and other policy issues with sufficient data points would, therefore, help to test the assertions of this study and ideally provide mutual confirmation of the findings. The probability of another referendum in the near future is low, but there is scope to analyse a past referendum, such as that on Scottish Independence in 2014, using its salience and the ongoing debates to observe the extent to which MPs or MSPs have responded to the opinions expressed by it.

The unique characteristics and circumstances of each MP demonstrated by the case studies also highlights the desirability of expanding the sample size to gain a fuller appreciation of these. The stratified random sampling employed by this study helped to draw a representative pair of MPs from each of the four different groups highlighted. The fact that the individual analyses of these MPs broadly aligns with each other and with the initial quantitative analysis inspires confidence in the findings. Nonetheless, additional qualitative case studies would undoubtedly help to provide further data and analysis that can test the findings of this study. Although random, some of the individuals selected for closer analysis inadvertently

demonstrated traits that were not necessarily common among MPs more broadly. For example, Chapters Five and Six both feature Labour MPs who had strained relations with their leadership. Had different subjects been selected, ones who turned out to be more amenable to the Corbyn administration, then perhaps the influence of the party line would not have been so easy to dismiss and may have provided stronger support for the quantitative analysis of Chapter Four.

Additionally, future studies in this area could also benefit from looking at a broader range of MPs, given that this study primarily analyses English MPs from the Conservative and Labour Parties who were out of alignment with their constituents over the referendum result. As discussed in Chapter Three, this research decision was necessary to ensure as far as possible that an MP's referendum stance was a true reflection of their own preferences, rather than possibly reflecting pressures from their constituents or party. Future research may therefore benefit by studying MPs from smaller and regional UK parties and also those MPs who were in alignment with their constituents over the referendum result. Their behaviour is not analysed by this thesis, but future studies could build upon this one and test its findings on such MPs, helping to foster a greater understanding of the influences on MP policy positions. While confidence in the findings of this study is high, further detailed analysis of individual MPs could only help to make new discoveries and, ideally, reinforce those presented in this thesis.

This study also highlights limitations with how responsiveness is conventionally measured and suggests the need to reconsider it going forward. Most voters and academic studies do not have the time or resources to determine precisely what an MP stands for and thus their voting behaviour is a useful proxy for both public perceptions and academic

study.⁶¹⁴ While the simplicity of this measure is acknowledged by the literature, this also makes it a convenient gauge of responsiveness for research and is, therefore, one of the most commonly used.⁶¹⁵ While this study maintains that it is a useful measure going forward, the findings highlight that when using it in such a manner the potential pitfalls should be considered and accounted for as much as possible.

For example, this study found that the way an MP votes in Parliament may only provide limited insights into their policy preferences and the influences behind them. This was particularly evident during the meaningful vote process, where the lobby an MP went through did not always reflect their overall stance on withdrawal, nor was it necessarily a reliable indicator of whether they were genuinely and purposely in alignment with their party or constituents. While this complexity is acknowledged within this thesis, the fact that the Withdrawal Agreement was unpopular with voters and MPs regardless of how they voted at the referendum meant that it proved difficult to credibly assert whether an MP's position at the meaningful votes reflected their true position or that of their constituents. Ian Austin, John Cryer and Theresa Villiers appeared to move into alignment with their constituents based on how they voted, but deeper analysis revealed there to be other considerations at play, and Villiers in particular was not in alignment on purpose.

The same caveats apply to an MP's apparent congruence with the party line. While most MPs are observed to have been loyal, Nick Boles, Stuart Andrew and Cheryl Gillan demonstrated that this also reflected a personal choice based on their own policy ambitions, in addition to the usual career

⁶¹⁴ The BBC News website, for example, regularly invites readers to look up their MP and see how they voted on newsworthy legislation.

⁶¹⁵ See Chapter Two, Section 3

considerations. The interaction between different influences fits within the bounds Müller and Strøm's (1999) tripartite model and with the work of academics, such as Cowley and Stuart (1997, 2010) and Raymond and Overby (2016), who have shown that MPs often agree with the party line in ways that cannot be explained solely by the influence of party whips. However, it sheds new light on such behaviour and provides further evidence that for many MPs choosing between personal and party preferences is not always a stark and binary choice. This is something that should be taken into consideration when conducting or consulting studies that investigate these factors and often find the party line to be the most significant influence on MPs.

The second major limitation demonstrated by this study is that voting behaviour is just one potential way in which MPs can be responsive to their constituents. Although many cannot be seen to have responded to constituent desires based on how they voted, all the case study MPs nonetheless demonstrated rhetorical responsiveness towards their constituents. While many scholars and voters may not consider this genuine responsiveness (e.g. Fieldhouse et al., 2020; Miller and Stokes, 1963), this thesis shows that how an MP discusses their vote can be just as important to understanding their position as the vote itself. It is, therefore, an important part of the MP-constituent dynamic and should be considered in addition to voting behaviour in future studies. This would not be practical for most quantitative studies and is thus more suited to qualitative analysis, but this research shows the benefits of going beyond voting behaviour to provide a more detailed explanation of how MPs respond to constituent desires.

Overall, this study therefore highlights the benefits of a mixed methods research design and provides a template for future studies in this area. The

quantitative analysis (Chapter Four) highlights the overall trends, which broadly align with the prevailing wisdom within the academic literature. However, the qualitative case studies (Chapters Five to Eight) have been able to analyse these at a deeper level and provide explanations for the behaviour observed, highlighting interaction between the key influences that the quantitative analysis was not as well suited to determining. By combining the two approaches a richer and more detailed understanding of the influences on MP policy positions has been possible and demonstrates the viability of such studies in this and other areas of research, following in the footsteps of other studies such as those of Bevir and Rhodes (2003) and Crewe (2010, 2014, 2015, 2017).

9.4: Concluding Remarks

This thesis has, therefore, addressed fundamental questions and concerns regarding UK democracy in the wake of the 2016 referendum on EU membership. The UK public's faith in their elected representatives has been consistently low for many years and this became particularly evident during the withdrawal process. The academic literature suggests that MP policy positions are determined by a balancing act between constituent opinions, party loyalty and personal beliefs, with studies of the UK regularly asserting that it is the party line which has the most influence. However, the 2016 referendum was different to most policy issues. The public had been given a rare direct say on policy direction and expected their voices to be heard, yet most continued to feel that their opinions were not valued. While the referendum has generated a significant amount of research, these public perceptions have thus far not received the attention they deserve. This thesis therefore helps to address this gap within the literature while also contributing to more general debates regarding the trustee-delegate

dynamic within the UK political system, highlighting which factors influence the positions MPs adopt and their responsiveness to public opinions.

This study has demonstrated that public perceptions on the matter are not unfounded, and their opinions are a consistently weak influence on how MPs vote compared to that of their party line and own evaluations. However, they are found to have a more substantial influence on how comfortable MPs are discussing their actions and how they frame them when they do. Additionally, while this study agrees with the existing literature that party influences are significant it also finds that they do not offer a full explanation for how MPs vote. Withdrawal was one issue over which many MPs were willing to defy their leadership and demonstrates that they do have the capacity to act according to their own beliefs when they consider the stakes high enough. Moreover, even those MPs that demonstrated loyalty, often did so willingly, either believing in the policy or seeing it as the best way to achieve what they wanted personally. These findings, therefore, raise important questions about public and academic perceptions of responsiveness, congruence and representation and suggest the need to consider broader conceptions of them in order to gain a fuller understanding. This would assist both future academic studies and voters when attempting to navigate their political system and relationship with their representatives.

These findings not only demonstrate the need to reconsider perceptions of responsiveness and congruence in both public and academic discourse, but they also show the benefits that a mixed-methods research design can bring to studies of this subject. While the current operationalisation of these concepts for academic study serve as useful proxies and produce valid findings, qualitative case study analysis can delve deeper into the mechanics of these and provide more detailed and nuanced understandings of them for both academic and practical consideration.

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Appendix One

This appendix provides explanations and examples of the coding scheme relating to the thematic analysis and also examples of the questions used in the case study interviews.

A1.1: Coding Directions

This section shows the basic coding guidance that was used to code the various documents used in the research. There were five broad categories of codes, but the coding itself was 'open', so there was no rigid criteria for what could be coded in a particular manner. This therefore allowed flexibility as more data was read and coded so that as many examples of the key themes could be uncovered as possible.

Table A.1.1: Text Coding Criteria

Theme	Code	Guiding Criteria
Constituency Opinion	C	Does the MP discuss their actions in relation to the opinions of their constituents? - Discussing the need to listen to constituents? - Respect for constituents' views? - Claims to be acting according to their wishes?
Marginality	M	Does the MP discuss their actions in relation to the marginality of their seat?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does an MP openly discuss the marginality of their seat? - Does an MP in a safe seat appear unconcerned with constituent opinion? - Conversely, does an MP in a marginal seat appear very concerned with constituent opinion?
Party Leadership	P	<p>Does the MP discuss their actions in relation to the party line?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does an MP openly discuss the party line or loyalty? - Does an MP hint or suggest the party line is why they support a particular policy? - Do an MP's policy positions closely match the party line?
Length of Service	LS	<p>Does the MP discuss their career ambitions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the MP open about their desires for advancement within their party? - Is a relatively new MP strongly in alignment with the party line? - Conversely, is a longer tenured MP more independent of the party line?
Own Opinions	O	<p>Does the MP discuss their actions in relation to what they think is best?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acting in everyone's best interests

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MP having to make a decision or weight up options and opinions - Open discussion of Burke or 'trustee/delegate' issues
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A1.2 Coding Examples

Table A.1.2: Text Coding Examples

Sample Text	Coded As
<p>'It's my job to represent people in Dudley whether they voted to leave or remain' Austin - Express and Star (2016b)</p> <p>'We would do events in West Bridgeford because we knew that there was a higher turnout and that there would be more support for remain in a place like West Bridgeford. We were selective as to where we went'</p> <p>Soubry – Appendix Four</p> <p>'I am not disrespecting the opinion of the majority; I just think, on this occasion, that it is wrong'</p> <p>Farrelly (02/02/2017)</p>	C (Constituency Opinion)
<p>'I knew it was a marginal seat and I knew I was going to have to work really, really hard to hold on to it.'</p> <p>Austin – Appendix Three</p>	M (Marginality)

<p>'When you are in a marginal seat like Broxtowe you are campaigning all the time' Soubry – Appendix Four</p>	
<p>'As is Labour Party policy' Cryer (01/11/2019)</p> <p>'All Members of Parliament owe a duty to the country that is greater than their duty to their party' Boles (19/12/2018)</p>	<p>P (Party Line)</p>
<p>'I, too, was an instinctive loyalist—someone who towed the party line, ambitious for high office' Boles - HC Debs, 12th June 2019, Cols. 715-716</p>	<p>LS (Length of Service)</p>
<p>'I wasn't a delegate' Austin – Appendix Three</p> <p>'This is a great privilege, to represent, with the responsibility of seasoning that representation with careful thought and experience.' Gillan (27/06/2017)</p>	<p>O (Own Opinions)</p>

A1.3: In-Document Coding Example

The following is an actual example used during this study. Hard copies of an MP's outputs were printed and then coded. The coding scheme was written in the right-hand margin, with other notes occasionally being made in the left-hand margin to aid with the analysis. To make it easier to find examples of the key themes when writing up each case study, the written codes were complimented by a colour coding scheme as well. Green

highlighting represented constituent opinions and marginality, pink highlighted party and length of service and finally yellow highlighting signified the MP's own opinions.

EU Referendum: Timing
09 February 2016
Volume 605 Col. 1474-1476

Stuart Andrew (Pudsey) (Con)

Party Politics I congratulate the Democratic Unionist party on this debate, which is obviously of interest to many of us, but clearly **not to the Labour party**, given that its Benches are all empty. P

Stephen Pound (Ealing North) (Lab)

I'm here!

Stuart Andrew

I am sorry—there are two of them, including the right hon. Member for Gordon (Alex Salmond), who has defected by the looks of it.

Simon Hoare

I have heard a rumour that the Labour Members are all in a Trident submarine somewhere, sailing around and looking for things.

Stuart Andrew

That was a wise intervention.

I come at the issue having always supported a referendum. Dare I say it with the Government Whip on the Front Bench, but **I was one of the rebels who voted for a referendum back in the day**. I was four when the people of this country last had an opportunity to have a say on our relationship with Europe. That relationship has clearly changed over the past 40-odd years, and **many of my constituents want the opportunity to discuss the matter and have their say** again. That is backed up by evidence; in 2008, an organisation called Open Europe organised an all-postal ballot in my constituency, asking people whether they wanted a referendum and whether they supported the Lisbon treaty. Even though it was a voluntary postal ballot, more than 13,000 people took part in it, and more than 11,400—some 88% of those who took part—voted to say that they wanted to have the opportunity for a referendum on Europe. Is it representative though? → **There is a clear appetite for such a referendum.** P C O/C?

Many people have expressed to me their frustration about the fact that the referendum could be as late as 2017. **They want to get on with it, regardless of which side of the argument they are on.** I suspect that if there was a further delay because of the issues that have been raised in the motion, **many of my constituents would view that with some scepticism.** C

When the European Union Referendum Bill was going through the House, I had sympathy with the views about the referendum being held on the same day as the 6 May elections. I am glad that the Government responded to the pressure that was applied, because those two

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A1.4: Interview Question Examples

The following are examples of the interview questions used when contacting and interviewing MPs. The first section shows the general, open-ended questions that formed the basis of each interview. The second shows variations of these questions tailored towards the specific experiences of the MP in question. (See also Appendix Two section A2.2 for another example).

A1.4.1: General Interview Questions

1. During the referendum campaign, did you get a sense of how the majority of your constituents were going to vote?
2. Before and after the referendum (including the meaningful votes in 2019):
3. Did you receive any significant input from constituents on how they felt you should vote?
4. Did you receive any significant input from local party association on how they felt you should vote?

A1.4.2: Questions for Anna Soubry

Research Questions

Christopher Stafford <[REDACTED]@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>

Wed 02/12/2020 18:29

To: asoubry [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Dear Ms. Soubry,

I have listed some questions at the end of this email for you to consider whenever you should have the time to do so. Please do not hesitate to respond in as much (or as little) detail as you would like. Likewise, if you do not want to answer a question that is also fine. Additionally, if there is anything else that you would like to share or that you think I should consider, please feel free to mention it.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you,
Chris Stafford

1. Estimates suggest that the result in Broxtowe was very close, with about 52% voting to leave. During the referendum campaign, did you get a sense of how the majority of your constituents were going to vote? Did you feel there was clear support for either leaving or remaining or did it always feel too close to call?
2. Following the referendum result, were your constituents particularly vocal (in person, via email, letters and such) about how you should act and vote going forward? How about your party leadership (both locally and nationally)?
3. Although you voted to trigger Article 50, your statements at the time suggest that this was a difficult decision, but that you felt duty bound to do it. Do you feel that voting this way won or lost you support with any of your constituents, depending on how they voted in the referendum? If a clear majority of your constituents had voted to remain, do you think you might have been willing to vote against triggering Article 50?
4. As the Brexit process developed over the next few years, were your constituents particularly vocal about what types of withdrawal you should support and what Brexit should look like? When it came to the 'meaningful votes', were they vocal about whether you should support or oppose the withdrawal deal? How about your party leadership (both locally and nationally)?
5. How difficult was it to follow your beliefs and vote against your party and Theresa May's deal? Did your local party association have anything to say about this?
6. Any other comments you might have on your experiences during the Brexit process and how you balanced competing ideas and demands?

Appendix Two

This appendix provides additional data for Nick Boles

A2.1: Constituent Communication with Nick Boles

Fwd: RE: meet a constituent

ANDREWS JOHN <[REDACTED]>

Fri 01/02/2019 16:09

To: Christopher Stafford <[REDACTED]@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>

> ----- Original Message -----

> From: "BOLES, Nick" <nick.boles.mp@parliament.uk>

> To: john andrews <[REDACTED]>

> Date: 09 June 2010 at 15:17

> Subject: RE: meet a constituent

>

> Dear Mr Andrews

>

> Thanks for taking the trouble to get in touch. I lived and worked at a school called Moleli Secondary School: the nearest town was Selous.

>

> Since you wrote, you have probably seen reports of the Government's firm response to the deaths on the boat seeking to deliver aid to Gaza. Although I detest the Hamas regime that rules Gaza, and am sceptical about the intentions of so-called 'peace activists' brandishing knives, I deplore Israel's action and support the Government's condemnation of the loss of innocent lives.

>

> I am very happy serving people in my constituency as a backbench MP and find the work very rewarding. I do not altogether accept your suggestion that an MP can either serve his or her constituents or the government. I suspect that, of the people who voted for me, more were motivated by the desire for a Conservative government and David Cameron as Prime Minister than for me as their local representative. It surely follows that they want me to support the new Government and Prime Minister and see no contradiction between that and serving my constituents.

>

> With best wishes,

>

> Nick Boles

>

> From: john andrews <[REDACTED]>

> Sent: 31 May 2010 10:07

> To: nick@nickboles.com

> Subject: meet a constituent

>

> Dear Mr Boles,

>

> Congratulations on being elected to parliament. Although I didn't vote for you (or anyone else) I live in Great Gonerby, and therefore am one of your constituents. I competed in the previous general election and would have competed in this one too, but couldn't afford it.

>

> I was interested to notice from your website that you spent some time in Zimbabwe. What part? I lived in Rhodesia for 23 years, so know the country quite well.

>

> There are two reasons I'm writing.

>

> Firstly, I was appalled at a report on this mornings 'news' that a boat trying to take humanitarian relief supplies to Gaza was attacked by an Israeli warship, and about ten people have been reported killed as a result. Obviously I have no idea what your personal feelings are about that, but I wonder if you're prepared to write to the foreign secretary expressing the revulsion of at least some of your constituents (I am not alone in my views on this subject), with a view to the foreign secretary demanding explanations from the Israeli Ambassador?

>

> The second reason I'm writing is to offer a little advice - please don't take offence - I don't intend it that way; but you seem a pleasant enough chap and my words might be helpful to you.

>

> As you embark on your political career you have a simple choice to make: to serve the people or to serve your party. You cannot do both - the system won't allow it. The right thing to do is to serve the people; but you could only do so by sacrificing any aspirations for a glittering political career. I suggest you resolve to remain on the back benches throughout your time in parliament, or until the system changes; for your only chance of serving the people reasonably honestly in the existing system, and thus retain your own integrity, is to refuse absolutely any government 'promotion'. If you think I'm mistaken, I would be happy to see your reasons why; but I would suggest that if you do think I'm mistaken then it is you who doesn't fully understand how our government works rather than me. Under our existing system you can serve the people or your party. You cannot do both.

>

> Best wishes

>

> john andrews

>

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A2.2: Email Correspondence with Nick Boles⁶¹⁶

Re: Research Questions

Nick Boles <nickbolesoffice@gmail.com>

Wed 13/01/2021 12:45

To: Christopher Stafford <[REDACTED]@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>

Sorry for the delay, Chris. Hope this is useful.

During the referendum campaign, did you get a sense of how the majority of your constituents were going to vote?

Yes, it was clear that there was a good deal of support for Brexit in many parts of the constituency.

In the initial period following the referendum result, did you receive any significant input from your constituents or your local party association on how they felt you should act going forward and what kind of Brexit you should support?

I was seriously ill with cancer for about a year from November 2016 and unable to fulfil constituency duties. But from roughly October 2017 onwards, I organised special meetings to update members of the local Conservative association on the Brexit negotiations and solicit their views. From the morning after the referendum, I made clear my view that Brexit must be delivered and promised to do everything in my power to make the best of it. From the end of 2017, I also made clear that, while I would support any Brexit deal negotiated by the government, I could not support a No Deal Brexit.

How vocal were your constituents and your local party association as the Brexit process developed over the next few years? Did you receive any significant input as to what kind of Brexit they wanted you to support or how they wanted you to vote (such as during the meaningful votes)?

Some members of the association were very vocal but not a huge number. During the course of 2018, tensions rose between me and those who supported a 'no deal' Brexit who wanted me to vote down Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement.

By the time of the meaningful votes in 2019, your relationship with your local party association had become strained due to your differing views on Brexit. Did you have similar tensions over other issues (perhaps more local, such as Grantham Hospital's A&E) or was Brexit a special case in which they became involved?

I resigned from the local Conservative Association well in advance of the meaningful votes. While I continued to receive the Conservative whip until the day of the meaningful votes, it was already clear that I would not be standing again as the Conservative candidate in Grantham and Stamford.

Brexit was the only issue which caused significant tension between me and the local Conservative association. Several years before, many members of the association had been unhappy about my support for same sex marriage but the tension had never reached the same level.

How did you manage the various pressures on you during this time period and ultimately decide how to act?

I tried to manage the tensions between my views and the views of my local association by communicating regularly and explaining the reasons for my support for Theresa May's deal and my opposition to a No Deal Brexit. I also used my column in the local newspaper to explain my actions to my constituents.

By the end of 2018 it became clear to me that it would not be possible for me to continue as the Conservative representative in Grantham and Stamford, and by April 2019 it became clear that I could no longer remain a member of the Conservative Party. Ultimately I took the view that MPs are representatives not delegates and that I owed my constituents and members of the local association my honest judgment and not slavish obedience. Maintaining my integrity mattered more to me than preserving my political career or achieving my personal ambitions.

⁶¹⁶ Boles' recollection of dates differs from the record. He received the Conservative Whip for the first three meaningful votes and initially claimed to have resigned from his local association on 16/03/2019. See HC Deb, 01 April 2019, Col.880 and Boles (28/03/2019) respectively.

Appendix Three

This appendix provides additional data for Ian Austin.

A3.1: Interview with Ian Austin - 8th April 2021

Transcribed: 8th -10th April 2021

Key:

CS = Chris Stafford

IA = Ian Austin

CS: So, as I said in my email I'm interested in how MPs balance the various different demands when it comes to policy direction and what they support. Whether it is from their constituents, their parties or just from themselves. I imagine most of the issues you dealt with in your time in Parliament were not followed very closely by most people, but of course Brexit was different. Pretty much everyone knew about it and had an opinion on it.

So, getting to my first question, before the referendum did it seem fairly obvious to you that most people in your constituency wanted to leave the EU?

IA: Yes. I thought for a long time that we had to address people's concerns about the EU and unfortunately it had become a symbol for wider disenchantment and unhappiness. In a place like Dudley, like lots of former traditional industrial areas, they've lost the industry and jobs on which the area's wealth and local people's pride and sense of identity were based. And just as individuals derive their sense of identity, or a big part of it, from the jobs they do, I think that goes to for local communities and areas as well. I think that the EU had become a symbol of this, rightly or wrongly. And I thought we had to address this.

I thought that Labour should have agreed to have a referendum and done it on the same day as the General Election in 2010. Which had been an idea

that the Labour Government considered, but they decided not to. But I thought it was a good idea. I was in favour of the referendum, having the debate and dealing with the issue.

CS: How do you think it would have gone if we had held it earlier?

IA: I think the issue became more heated in the subsequent years. I think Farage and UKIP were able to exploit it, along with other issues like immigration and poison the debate. I think if there'd been a referendum then, in which Gordon Brown or an effective Labour leader, before they'd gone mad about Brexit, could have been leading the debate. It would have been settled. We would have been in a better place to get reforms from the EU. Cameron went to the EU and said "don't worry, they're going to vote to remain, but give me these changes anyway". Which wasn't a great strategy.

It's also quite difficult to make the economy the argument in places like the Black Country when they've lost traditional industries and jobs. So you can't go to them and say "think about the damage to the economy" because for lots of people in the Black Country that had happened already. And it was also difficult for the Tories to make the argument about the economy after six years of austerity. But even then, if 2% of people that voted in a different way and that would have been a possibility [back in 2010].

But after 6 years of austerity, it was quite difficult for David Cameron to make an economic argument to Labour voters, or traditional Labour voters, who were concerned about the EU. And of course, Labour's leadership was completely incapable of putting the argument. They didn't really want to. I was quite amused by the way, when you said my relationship, the Labour leader was 'frosty', I thought 'deep freeze'!

Anyway, so I thought for a long time that we should have had a referendum. And it was obvious what was going to happen in places like Dudley.

CS: In addition to the economy I read that one of the Labour Councillors said immigration had been blamed, that a lot of the problems had been blamed on immigration. So the two factors...

IA: Immigration is a really interesting issue. Between 2010 and 2015 it was obvious to me that immigration was a massive issue, whether people like it or not, Labour voters in places like the Black Country, were really concerned about this.

I just thought if I want people in Dudley to listen to what I've got to say about education, or how we bring new industries and new jobs to Dudley, how we've got to make skills the number one priority, how we need a university campus in the area. All these sorts of things, which is what I wanted to campaign about, my plans for the area.

If I want people in Dudley to listen to that, I've got to listen to them first. So we had a long, twelve month piece of work about immigration. I used to send out surveys to people in Dudley all the time. These were A4, 20 questions, proper serious questions on difficult issues. And we sent out probably three or four of these a year, every year. So people were used to getting them and we used to get 1000s and 1000s of responses. And we would have Voter ID questions and "How good a job do you think I'm doing as your MP?" and "Is there anything you want to tell me?" and we got loads of case work off them.

But I basically thought, if I want people in Dudley to listen to me, I've got to listen to them. If I want them to think I take their views seriously, actually, I've got to take that view seriously! There's no shortcut. So we wrote to every elector with this survey on immigration, we invited them all to local meetings. Every year I used to do these community meetings in addition to weekly surgeries. But every summer we would invite people to come to these local community meetings, some in the evenings, some were weekends. Over the summer, we'd do ten or so of these and invite everybody to come. Some you get 100 people, some you get 6.

We did a series of things on immigration. You've got to invite people in and say, "we're going to talk about this". You can say anything you want, but we will have a proper discussion, and we're going to be respectful to each other and we're going to listen to what each other have got to say. But you can say what you like, nothing's off limits. To do that, on immigration, you've got to have... I remember the first meeting, I thought to myself if you're a really horrifying racist, and there are some people like that, you're not going to come and talk to me about it anyway. And if you don't want to engage with

me politically, you're probably not going to come. Most people wouldn't come to cause trouble or just be difficult. I'd thought through issues and so on. But what was really interesting, I remember a guy came, wouldn't give his name, with a bit of paper. I could see on it written things like 'burqa', 'grooming', 'terrorism'. Just a list of the most awful issues that people might associate, wrongly, with immigration. So the way we did them, we used to get groups of people in tables, give them three questions to think about and I'd then go around the tables chatting. At the end we would share feedback and then I'd answer people's questions. It had gone really well, you know, really positive, really engaged. People weren't saying anything at all offensive. Anyway, this guy, just as I was finishing and thanking everybody for coming and thinking, "that's gone really well", he put his hand up and I thought "oh no", he's going to cause trouble and destroy it all, and he just said, this had been really good and if every MP was doing this we wouldn't have these problems in the country. And I just thought, "isn't this incredible?" This guy came in with all these perceptions, preconceived, hostile ideas. All that's happened is that somebody has listened to him. All that's happened here is that a politician has listened to what local people think, and it has totally diffused his hostility. I was pretty struck by it.

So we had this long consultation process, invited everybody to these meetings to be surveyed, then out of that I came up with these ideas, most of which were actually Labour policy at the time. Things like implementing the minimum wage properly, cracking down on exploitative employers, if people couldn't find someone with the skills they needed, if a big business or government department, couldn't find someone with the skills and had bring somebody from abroad to do a job, then they had to take on an apprentice or local apprentice as well. Immigration affects different communities in different areas. And so we were proposing that workers from abroad, highly paid workers from abroad, would pay taxes to improve public services in poorer communities. There are schools in Dudley in poor areas, which have to deal with lots and lots of different languages, and whether people like it or not, that affects the education those schools can provide. You've got to deal with it. We can't run away from that, or pressure on housing or the NHS. Citizens from abroad would pay for NHS services, just like we have to do if you go to Spain, you've got your with card or whatever. Fingerprinting people who claim asylum. But that's just so that if someone

claims asylum that isn't eligible for it and is deported. If they come back and claim it again, you will know.

That's not a bad thing, to sort out the chaotic asylum system. Nothing that's actually controversial and difficult. I remember Yvette Cooper, Shadow Home Secretary at the time, came to Dudley everyone who'd come previously [to the meetings] was invited to meet her. We ran through these ideas. She thought it was an amazing engagement, the whole process was incredible. But it has been over a year of hard work and serious engagement. I remember a Labour MP said to me at the time, "Ian, how can we persuade people that we are listening to them on immigration?" And I said, "so here's an idea, book a room, invite them in and listen to them!"

CS: Simple enough!

IA: Yes! But it requires hard work and serious engagement. And most people shy away from it. Politics would be easy for the Labour Party if all you had to do was say "the Tories are terrible, isn't the NHS great?" If that's all you had to do, you'd have Labour governments forever. But the truth is that the voters decide the conversation, not the politicians. And the voters won't listen to the politicians until the politicians listen to them. I remember during this process, I stood up in Prime Minister's Questions and said, "people in Dudley think you shouldn't be able to come here..., oh, this was another part of it, people said you should work and pay in before they can claim benefits. Actually, I believe that too, obviously not in a time of recession, Covid, people out of work and all that. But in this period when the economy was growing, people could work really, there were jobs available and if people can work they should work. If they're able to work, they should work and pay in before they can claim benefits. And I don't just think about people coming in from abroad. I think that's a reasonable expectation for everybody really. Wherever you're born. So, not a controversial thing to say, I don't think anyway. When I stood up in Prime Minister's Questions and said "people think that you shouldn't be able to come here and claim benefits until you've worked and paid into the system, you shouldn't be able to come here and be unemployed. And, you certainly shouldn't be able to come here and claim benefits for children who aren't in the country". What was really interesting was the only person I think on the Labour benches

who understood that this was Labour policy was Ed Balls, who was nodding his head enthusiastically. Other Labour MPs are thinking, "what are you talking about this for?" Cameron, sneered and said, "how can a Labour MP raise these questions?" The Guardian sketch writer said that I put my jackboots on! Called me a Nazi! Unbelievable!

What I said to people in Dudley, I listen to people in Dudley and it's my job to go down to London and speak up for you whether the people in London want to hear it or not. What could be better proof of that? I'm a "Nazi" just for raising the question! The Prime Minister sneers at you. What's interesting is that basically we could really work hard to listen to people. We communicated Labour's policies in an authentic and compelling way and we won local people's confidence and trust as a result. If you recall the national Labour party was doing at the time, we lost a local election, got hammered by UKIP, Ed Miliband went to Dover, made one speech and then went back to talking about, you know, the 99% or whatever it was, in his comfort zone. The truth about these things is that you've got to work really hard to win people's confidence and trust on issues and interests, on issues where they're not automatically listening to you and agreeing with you.

Anyway, we did a similar thing on Brexit. We invited lots of people in, did a big process, surveys, meetings, all that on the EU. It was really clear to me that the majority of people in Dudley were going to vote to leave - a big majority. So, I think one of your questions is about what did I do during the referendum? Well, I didn't campaign hard to stay in. I voted to remain, to stay in, but I wasn't some sort of an evangelist. I didn't think that voting to leave was the end of the world, I didn't think it was going to be a good thing, but I didn't think it was going to be a huge disaster. I think Brexit has driven people mad on both sides really. So I didn't really campaign, if people asked me what I thought I told them and I did some stuff in the press. I organised a hustings which actually didn't go ahead in the end because it was a day that Joe Cox was murdered so we called it off for obvious reasons.

CS: Of course.

IA: But I thought, it's a big national debate, I'll promote a local debate so people can make up their mind and let's see what happens. Dudley North voted 71% to leave, so one of the highest in the country.

CS: Do you think if you'd have got the sense that it was a bit closer in Dudley, say 52-48%, do you think you might have tried a little harder?

IA: It was off the charts. In the Black Country, the age profile is higher than the national average, the proportion of people with degrees is lower than the national average. That's not a reflection on them. It's just a reflection of the legacy of the traditional industrial economy, where people didn't have degrees to go and work in foundries and big steel works. They are highly skilled, intelligent people. But the economy was just different in those days. It's the biggest place in the country with no University campus, although that's changing as a result of the campaigning we did. So young people need to go to university and often don't go back to get the jobs they want. So the old outweigh the young, lots of young people don't vote and it's 90% white British. So it was pretty obvious to me, just look at demographics and look at who voted for Brexit. It was very clear what was going to happen.

CS: I suppose what I was trying to say was if, hypothetically speaking, you had gotten the sense that the result was going to be closer than it was, would you still have taken the same tactic? Or do you think you might have you might have tried to convince people and try to shift the result towards remain?

IA: I thought, look, it's a referendum let people make up their own minds, I'm not a candidate. I didn't vacate the pitch. I was engaged in the debates. But I wasn't particularly telling people what to do. If people asked me, I would explain what I thought and I did stuff in the local media, saying why I thought we should stay in. But I wasn't churning out leaflets and all that. Just stuff in the local press.

CS: So if we go forward to when the result came out, as I said, in the questions I sent, you were quick to say you'll do your best to make a success of it and try to get the people what they voted for. At that time, of course later you, you were quite opposed to leaving without a deal, had you thought about that kind of thing in 2016 or was a bit too early?

IA: I thought leaving without a deal would be a real problem for industries like automotives and aerospace, which provide lots of jobs in the West Midlands. I thought it would be difficult, cause all sorts of problems and was unnecessary. And it was clear to me from the conversations I had that most people in Dudley weren't fixed on a particular sort of Brexit. They weren't voting for 'no deal Brexit' and they'd been assured in the referendum campaign by the Brexit campaigners, people like David Davis, "oh getting an agreement will be really easy, we can agree it in an afternoon", all this sort of rubbish. Farage was talking about Norway, I think. But during the referendum campaign, the Brexit campaigners were saying it will be easy to get a deal and nobody was talking about leaving with no deal.

And I thought if we move quickly, I'm not sure whether we could have stayed in the Single Market but we could definitely have stayed in the Customs Union. If we had moved quickly, before the debate was poisoned and things became intransigent and polarised and difficult. The public mood, the public get fed up with it, impatient. The debate in the UK became polarised and poisonous. I thought if we move quickly, you could have agreed a 'Soft Brexit' that the country would have accepted. So that's what I wanted to happen. I thought we had to respect the result, I didn't think there's any possibility of it being overturned.

Then when we have the election in 2017, everybody stood the platform of honouring the referendum result and getting a deal. I repeated that promise to people in Dudley. I meant it and I thought you had to honour that. There's never any prizes in politics for being vindicated by events. But I always thought Theresa May's deal was a perfect 'no', but it was the best deal we had, I thought if you don't vote for this anything else is going to be worse.

CS: So, going to those documents you sent me regarding your local party. You were saying very similar things to them, so were they pushing you to vote against it?

IA: Well this is really interesting. There were some new members who joined to support Jeremy Corbyn and didn't agree with my views in general. But on this issue we were saying "hold on a minute, 70% of people voted for Brexit, we've got to find a way through this". There were lots of Labour members in Dudley, like in other parts of the country who just did not want to leave and were in anguish about Brexit. Which was fair enough. Pro-European and they wanted us to stay in. I understand that. And then there was some older members, who I'm pretty sure probably voted to leave, some older guys who've worked in industry and so it was pretty mixed.

I remember, somebody sent a stroppy email saying, I'd got to vote against the government's proposals. And I said look, I'll always listen to what members say, I'm very happy to. I offered to meet the executive, all members before the votes, and listen to what people have got to say. You've got to do that. Of course you should. But I said I'm not going to be mandated and instructed, I'll listen to what people are going to say. I haven't made up my mind, I'm thinking about what to do. I think there's a strong case for voting for Theresa May's deal. But of course I will listen to what people have to say, of course. Anyway, they didn't want to meet.

CS: Right.

IA: Anyway, we have the GC meeting, and if you look at the GC report, I basically went through all these arguments. And even people who thought we should stay in the EU and were upset about it all thought actually, Ian's got a point here, he's thought all this through. Labour's position is incoherent, it's not possible to force an early election through a vote of no confidence. Even if we did, what would be Labour's position at a general election? When we say we want another referendum, what would the questions be? I just couldn't see a way of stopping this. I thought, if there's another referendum, the debate would be, to have a reasonable debate about benefits or not of leaving the EU would be impossible.

All Nigel Farage would have to do, or Boris Johnson, in the second referendum is just say, "They think you're stupid. They don't trust you. Politics doesn't work. Westminster's not listening". What would be the impact of that on trust in our democracy? Absolutely catastrophic. And by the way, we couldn't go to the EU and say, "give us a deal which we will then put the public in a second referendum". Because obviously, the EU would have said, "right, let's give them a really terrible deal", in the hope that British people won't vote for it. And who would have campaigned for it? The Government would have gone and negotiated an agreement and then come back and said, "right, we've got this deal, we don't want you to vote for it". And Farage and co. would have said "it's not Brexit" and the public would have felt betrayed. So I could not for the life of me see how a second referendum would work. Of course, I was worried about the economic impact of Brexit. But I was more worried about the impact on trust and confidence in our democracy. And I think once that's undermined, looking at the economic impact, but I'm not blasé about, I understand it. That's why I wanted the softest possible Brexit. But you can do things to improve the economy, once you allow trust and confidence in your democratic process to be massively undermined, it would be difficult to rebuild that.

CS: That is an interesting point.

IA: So when I explained this to people in the Labour Party they accepted, by and large, what I was trying to do. It was a massively difficult issue but I'd thought about it a lot, I'd listened to local people and I was trying to find a way through. And politics in the end is about compromise.

CS: Moving away from your local party membership. How did your constituents react? Did they see things that way too?

IA: Yes, by and large. I used to get angry emails from a few people accusing me of not supporting Brexit. But that was very much in the minority. These people, they were just sort of ideological about leaving the EU. Walk away. Just leave. What does that mean? And then there were some people who were very angry, very upset, in distress about leaving. And they wanted me

to vote against Brexit at every opportunity. And I had to explain to people and take them through these arguments, explain why. I talked about trust in our democracy. And some people weren't satisfied with that. But I think people in the middle did understand that. Like on every issue. You've got people at either of the argument with passionately held views. Most people on every issue are in the middle, pragmatic, reasonable, prepared to listen.

CS: So most people were pretty reasonable about it?

IA: Yes most people were reasonable and they were prepared to listen and I think, without being big-headed about it, we had the reputation of listening to people and engaging with them. People could see that I had been prepared to speak out on these issues. When I said that my job was to listen to people in Dudley and go down to Westminster and tell them what they think, whether they like it or not. That had an authenticity to it. It was difficult. When I wrote that Guardian article in 2018, November 2018, that I sent you the link for. The Labour Party, nationally, in Parliament, people were furious. People were really angry about it.

CS: About you writing that article? Supporting May's deal?

IA: Yes, or that we should think about it. I remember saying to Labour MPs at the time "it will only get worse".

CS: So what was their alternative to this? Were they still trying to push for the election?

IA: Some wanted to stay in the EU, some wanted to have an election. They were really angry about Brexit. Even the pragmatic ones, I remember one guy saying to me "it's not my job to get Theresa May off the hook". I just thought, if we don't vote for this it's going to get worse and worse! The debate will get worse, it will get more poisonous and if Theresa May is forced

out, the Tories are going to go for a Brexiteer and a hard Brexit. It was obvious. It was so predictable. That's a catastrophe. We ended up where we are with a harder Brexit, the problems in Northern Ireland, the difficulties the EU and it could have been avoided.

CS: So, by this point in time had you more or less decided you were probably leaving the Labour Party anyway at some point? Or was this issue one of the final straws?

IA: No, Brexit wasn't really the issue. I left the Labour Party because of Antisemitism. Not directed at me, well, some of it was directed at me, but I'm not Jewish. I'm not complaining about what people said to me, personally or directly. But arguments were put to me about Jewish people by people in the Labour Party that were Antisemitic, certainly. I was appalled about Corbyn's leadership, completely unfit to lead the Labour Party. I thought he was a disaster from day one. I was writing articles in the election in 2015 warning about what would happen, that he would put the Labour Party out of business. Things he said about Hamas and Hezbollah, support for the IRA. Some of the stuff, the mural, stuff he said personally, the wreath that we later learned about. But there was certainly enough evidence to know what was going to happen. He was just completely unelectable in a place like Dudley.

CS: Yes, I got that impression from my research.

IA: It could not be worse. So I was implacably opposed to him from day one.

CS: Did you try to have a good relationship with the leadership? Or was it just not possible for you?

IA: I wasn't personally unpleasant to him. Despite some of the things have been written I wasn't personally aggressive. Claims I was shouting at people were not true. But I did think he would be a disaster. I thought he was unfit to lead the Labour Party. I thought he was not a mainstream Labour politician. I thought the electoral impact would be catastrophic. I thought the people around him, were not Labour. I mean, lifelong communists. People like Andrew Murray. These weren't Labour people. So no, I didn't really try to. I spoke to him a couple of times about different things.

We had a motion of confidence. Didn't change anything. He became more intransigent. In 2018 there was a long debate, went on for months and months and months about Labour adopting the IHRA definition of Antisemitism, the general internationally accepted definition. It has public confidence, and is used by the police, governments, universities, all sorts of people. And there's no evidence whatsoever that it curtails freedom of expression without concern for Palestinians. I mean, I'm concerned about the plight of Palestinians, I want a Palestinian State. That doesn't stop anybody talking about the actions of the Israeli government or the Israeli Prime Minister or Israeli government policies or the actions of the Israeli military. I mean, it does say that you can't compare Israel to the Nazis, but it doesn't stop freedom of expression about these things.

Anyway, long debate about this, went on and on and on for months. I remember I was in with the chair of the Labour Party at the time and I said it was a disgrace that it hadn't been accepted. And they subjected me to this complaints process. An investigation on exaggerated or untrue claims about what I'd said or done. I took out one of the best lawyers in the country to defend me against my own party. I had to get statements from other MPs that had witness conversations to prove that what they were saying was not true.

The worst thing though, it went on for months, right at the last minute Corbyn tries to change the definition. Add more examples so that he wouldn't personally fall foul of it. You wouldn't have heard all that summer 2018, go look at the press cuttings, all the stuff about the wreath, things Jeremy said, this terrible summer long publicity about Jeremy Corbyn and Antisemitism could all have been avoided if they had accepted at the outset, the definition they eventually accepted after the summer. After the summer, Jeremy came

along and said he had been very upset by some of the coverage. Because it's about him, he was the victim in all this!

CS: So, moving back to the Brexit issue, did you have much input from, maybe not Jeremy personally, but from the national leadership? They of course wanted to vote against Theresa May's deal and as you said, they didn't like your article.

IA: No, not really. I wrote it in November 2018, I left in February 2019. There wasn't a long...., it's not like we were meeting. Subsequently there was a more organised effort, but I'd left the Labour Party by then. Other MPs thought Labour should vote for a deal. People like Caroline Flint and so on, John Mann, were working together. But I wasn't really involved in that because I'd left by then.

CS: Yes, of course. Were there any other MPs, Labour MPs, that held the same position as you or do you feel you were fairly on your own, at least initially?

IA: Lots of Labour MPs representing industrial, representing Midlands or Northern seats knew exactly what was happening. Knew the issue and knew it had to be dealt with. They could see what was happening in their communities or what people were saying. And the Labour Party knew, the reason Yvette came to Dudley was because the Labour Party were trying to suggest to people that they should run programmes like the one I'd been running. It's quite a difficult thing to do, to invite constituents in to have a detailed discussion about a controversial subject on which you're not trusted.

CS: Indeed, as you said it takes a lot of effort and bit of courage on your part to do that.

IA: For me, because we had for 10 years been sending out regular surveys and been doing these summer meetings. I'd been around a lot, I'd built up a lot of credit in the bank.

CS: Yes.

IA: We were building on foundations of work that had gone on for ages. I think if you've never done that, and you just tried to do it on this one issue it would not have had the same sort of results or the same impact. I remember Andy Burnham and Kier came to, when Andy Burnham was the shadow Home Secretary. So this was under Corbyn, Kier was the Shadow Minister of Immigration. And they came to Dudley. They wanted to do a meeting where they listened to people in immigration and because we'd been doing all this work, they came to Dudley and did it. This was early on in that Parliament, 2015-2017. Anyway, they wanted to do a meeting on immigration, listen to people on immigration and so they came to Dudley and we invited all the people in who had contributed to previous events, about a 100 or so people.

So I think on immigration, people in the Labour Party knew they had to deal with it, they had to listen to people and win people's trust and confidence. They weren't hostile to the way that I tried to do it. They weren't hostile to the strategy, and they weren't hostile to what I said, if you look at social media, there are some people on the left who, there are people on Twitter who accuse me of being racist. And the reason they do that is because I listened to people on immigration and I set out some ideas. And what they do is they produce some headlines in the Daily Mail about how "MP says you've got to cut immigration" or "MP says we need to have a tougher approach to immigration". They're not actually words I used. If people look at things I said, personally, and the ideas I promoted. There's nothing you could say was remotely xenophobic or racist. But are there newspaper headlines which are dramatic? Well yes, but they're not things I said.

CS: Rightly or wrongly those were concerns people had, whether you agree with them or not.

IA: What is politics about in the end? It's about listening to people's concerns and coming up with reasonable answers based on your values. That doesn't mean pandering to people and it doesn't mean just agreeing with people whatever they say. But it does mean listening to what people are saying and coming up with reasonable answers. That's really what I think politics is about. You need to listen to what the people you represent say and come up with answers to the things that they are concerned about speak up on their behalf in Parliament. Really, that's what I think our political system is about.

CS: I think a lot of voters would agree with you there.

IA: If people in Dudley said things which were racist, I wouldn't agree with them. My first campaign when I became an MP was to drive the BNP out of Dudley. We knocked on every door in the ward where they had a councillor and we destroyed them. And when the EDL came to Dudley I stood with the Muslim community, I went to the Mosque. When Aidan Burley, the Tory MP for Cannock organised a Nazi-themed stag-do in France, I led the campaign that drove him out of Parliament. There's no way I said or did anything which reasonable people would regard as racist or xenophobic. And when people on the doorstep said things to me, which I thought weren't acceptable I would tell them "well if that's what you think, don't vote for me". I remember my agent telling me, "you can't tell people that, we want them to vote for you!"

CS: In a marginal seat though, it must have taken quite a bit of courage to be so principled.

IA: They probably weren't going to vote for me anyway, but regardless, I wasn't going to stand on people's doorsteps and to listen to them say things that I thought were actually racist. I certainly didn't pander to racism. The really interesting thing about immigration and Brexit, when it comes down to it is, if you listen to people, if you engage with the public, all they want to know is, is he listening to me? In the end, they know it's a complicated and difficult issue. They know there's no easy answer to whatever it is they

are concerned about. All they want to know is does this politician listen to me? Do they take me seriously? (On issues in general). On immigration, all they want to know is does this guy think I'm a racist for being concerned, because they think that they're being smeared or they've been treated with contempt by the political establishment, the political elite. And it's that sense I think that fuelled a lot of the Brexit stuff. You've got to listen to us now. This is our moment to speak up. We're not having it. Whatever we're angry about we can vote for Brexit. Now the way you deal with that is to deal with people's anger and frustrations.

CS: I see.

IA: It's really interesting, you know the Syria vote? On the Syria vote I sent out, in addition to the paper surveys I used to send out emails all the time. Seven or eight thousand email addresses of people in Dudley North. And I used to email them all the time about stuff. So, you know, if I had a question in PMQs, I would send them an email saying next Wednesday, I've been drawn out the hat to ask the Prime Minister a question, what do you think I should ask? And obviously, loads of people came back with lots of different suggestions. But I would always ask and after, I would always send an email saying "thanks for your replies, X number of people said this, X number of people said that, I decided to ask this. You can watch the clip of what I said here". I used to send out this stuff all the time. On Syria I sent a really detailed survey out and a long explanation of what I thought about that issue, saying I'd read all the evidence, I've met the MoD, I've listened to the government. I've listened to Syrian refugees, I've listened to those are opposed to any form of military action. But before I made up my mind, I wanted to know what people in Dudley thought. Loads of detail, serious questions. I think I had a thousand responses, I mean, a lot of responses. 70%, when you set it all out, supported limited targeted strikes to deal with ISIS. Even in the Labour Party, and this is under Corbyn, Labour Party members in Dudley, because we disaggregated through surveys, the surveys were basically the same, there may have been an additional question on the members one about, do you want to come campaigning or something? I don't know. But you know, basically the same survey. There might have been additional questions for the Labour members, but the actual questions about Syria were the same,

CS: Right, ok.

IA: It was over 60% of the Labour Party members supported limited targeted strikes. Some people were furious about it, really angry. But again, when you set out the facts, when you listen to people properly, and when people know you take their views seriously, they respond and they're prepared to listen. Some people were really, really angry, but most people were quite prepared to listen and understood why I was thinking about voting for this. An overwhelming majority of constituents supported the military action. I think lots of people thought we were just going engage in indiscriminate bombing of Syria, and go to war in Syria like we'd gone to war in Iraq. But that wasn't the case at all. This was limited precise action against ISIS terrorists who presented a threat to us in Europe as well as doing terrible things in Syria. And once you explained that, people understood that and they supported it.

CS: As you said earlier.

IA: So when I went into the lobbies with the government to vote in favour of that I knew I'd got the vast majority of people on my side. If you've asked 1000s and 1000s of people in your constituency, that's a pretty..., is it scientific survey where you sample the electorate and have broken it down by category and all that, no? But it's a pretty big number. I sent emails out to about 15% of people in Dudley. I got more responses from my constituents than the number of people MORI use when they're doing a national opinion poll. They predict elections on the basis of 1000 conversations. Well, I had more responses than them, detailed answers, and I wrote to everybody after the vote saying thank you for your responses, this is what people said and this is how I voted.

I remember going to the Labour Party GC meetings subsequently and even people who were furious about it, really angry, when you say, "well, look, this is my position, this is why I voted the way I did, I consulted local people, this is what they thought", they accepted it.

CS: As you've said, that's how you see your role, isn't it?

IA: Yes, but I wasn't a delegate. I knew what I thought. But in the end, I personally felt I was pretty representative. I think my views, they might not have been mainstream Labour MP. Well, I think they were actually mainstream Labour MP before Corbyn. But I think I was pretty in-tune personally with what people in Dudley thought on lots of issues. I think I understood what people in Dudley thought. People in Dudley, if you explain why the government is considering taking military action against people in Syria, terrorists, ISIS terrorists, I thought people in Dudley would listen to that, and they did. When you set out the facts, ask them what they thought, they agreed with what I was saying. My email was saying, basically, "I'm thinking about voting for this, what do you think?" And they agreed with me.

CS: Right.

IA: I wasn't saying, "tell me what you think and I'll vote the way you say". My emails on an issue like that, they were presenting a case, they were making an argument,

CS: Right.

IA: And some people did reply and say, "well it's pretty clear what you think". Well, I was an MP, I did have views on issues. It's hard work, you know? A marginal seat. I'm from Dudley, I love the place, I've got a deep personal connection with it. I never wanted to be the MP anywhere else. It was a massive privilege. But I knew it was a marginal seat and I knew I was going to have to work really, really hard to hold on to it. In 2010 I held on by 600 votes, the meetings and everything we'd done between 2005 and 2010 contributed to hanging on. We worked really, really, really hard between 2010 and 2015, did all that stuff on immigration. Got a really good result in 2015. But then in 2017, think about this, all that hard work 2017, years of handing out surveys, organising meetings, consistency events, being pretty much in tune with local peoples' views, working really hard to

represent them. There was one of these surveys about how responsive MPs were and I came 7th, I was the 7th highest responding MP, which actually, I was annoyed about, I thought, "who are these other 6 people?!" I was local, authentic, clearly from Dudley, clearly in tune with people in Dudley. Not everybody, but a lot of people. Clearly prepared to listen to people in Dudley and go down to London and vote against the party or the government or whatever, to stand up for local people. I'd shown all that, I had a really good track record, did a really good campaign, a really good local office, worked really hard. And with all that, I can only win by 22 votes.

That shows how hard you have to work in a marginal seat. I won by only 22 because I didn't like Jeremy Corbyn. If I had liked him I would probably have dropped more. Actually, the number one conversation in the election in 2017 was, "Ian, you've done a great job, but I'm not voting Labour because I don't want Jeremy Corbyn to be the Prime Minister.

CS: From my research I did get the sense that was likely the case in Dudley.

IA: I promised them on the doorstep, there is no way I'm going to make Jeremy Corbyn Prime Minister. It's not going to happen, I don't believe he will get the chance, but if he does get close I won't be supporting him. I promised people, I looked them in the eyes and shook their hands and said "I am telling you I will not make Jeremy Corbyn Prime Minister", and they said, "well look Ian, on that basis I'll vote for you". Everyone in Dudley knew what I thought of Jeremy Corbyn.


[End of Interview]

A3.2: Examples of Austin's Constituent Surveys and Consultations

A3.2.1: 'What do you think about Brexit, cost of living and Education in Dudley?'

Below is an email Austin sent to constituents to court their opinions, the subsequent six pages feature the questionnaire he asked them to complete.

From: "Ian Austin MP" <austini@parliament.uk>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 4 October, 2019 15:29:11
Subject: What do you think about Brexit, cost of living and education in Dudley?

 [Ian Austin MP](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

I know lots of people think politicians are all the same and out of touch, but as an independent MP, I don't have to follow a party line.

I know who I work for - you and other people in Dudley, not anyone in London. I work hard to listen to local people, stand up for the area and improve things in Dudley.

Listening to local people really helps me speak up for Dudley, so will you take a few minutes to tell me what you think about Brexit, the cost of living and education?

Can you take a moment to fill in my survey?

Many thanks and best wishes,

Ian Austin

Ian Austin MP
<http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/>

This email was sent to [REDACTED] To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).
You can also keep in touch with me on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Reproduced from an email sent and promoted by and on behalf of Ian Austin at St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley DY1 1JB.

Ian Austin MP: Tell me what you think about Brexit, crime, school funding and the cost of living

* Required

Q1. What do you think should happen next on Brexit?

- Try for a new deal
- Leave with no deal
- Hold another referendum
- Oppose Brexit altogether
- Just not sure

Q2. Regardless of how you answered Q1 above, are you concerned about the availability of medicines, food etc in the SHORT TERM if we leave with no deal?

1 2 3 4 5

Not concerned Very concerned

Q3. Do you think things are going in the right direction for you and your family?

- Yes, things are looking up
- No, I feel we are going backwards
- Going to stay the same
- Not really sure

Q4. Which of the following is of greatest concern to you?

- Income not keeping up with prices
- Job does not feel secure
- Not enough well-paid jobs locally
- Little opportunity to save
- Other: _____

Q5. Are cuts to school budgets impacting on the education of your children or grandchildren?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q6. Do you support my campaign for a university-level technical campus here in Dudley to train high-skilled apprentices?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q7. Thinking about the cost of living what makes you worry most?

- Cost of weekly shop going up
- Increasing gas and electricity bills
- More expensive household bills such as water and insurance
- Rent and housing costs costing more
- Childcare
- Travel costs (petrol, bus fares) increasing

Q8. Christmas is fast approaching and it is an expensive time of year, are you planning to ...

- Spend less
- Spend more
- Spend about the same
- Not sure yet

Q9. Can you back my plan to demolish Cavendish House to improve Dudley Town Centre

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q10. Thinking about crime locally, do you feel that ...

- Crime is increasing
- Crime is decreasing
- No change
- Not sure

Q11. Please use this space if there is anything else you want to tell me

Your answer _____

Q12. How good a job am I doing as your independent MP?

- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Poor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent |

Q13 Would you consider voting for me as an Independent MP for Dudley North?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q14 Which Party did you support last time?

- Labour
- Tory
- Lib Dem
- Brexit
- Green
- UKIP
- Not sure

Q15. Can you like and share my Facebook posts?

- Yes
- No
- Already do

Q18. If you are happy to hear from me or my team by phone please let me have your phone number

Your answer

First name: *

Your answer

Last name: *

Your answer

House number: *

Your answer

Postcode: *

Your answer

Submit

A3.2.2: Letter that accompanied paper version of the 'Brexit Survey'



I'm from Dudley and I'm on your side

Ian Austin

Independent MP for Dudley North

St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley DY1 1JB
07591 640 750 | getintouch@ianaustin.co.uk
ianaustin.co.uk | [facebook.com/IanAustinMP](https://www.facebook.com/IanAustinMP)
twitter @IanAustinMP

As I write this it looks like the next few weeks in Parliament will be dominated by Brexit so I wanted to report on what I've been doing and ask for your views on what should happen next.

First, I respect the people I represent and I keep my promises. The election manifesto I stood on in 2017 promised to implement the referendum result so I consistently voted for a Brexit plan to give us control of our money, laws and borders and promote trade, help local businesses and protect jobs.

I've spent the summer in Dudley listening to local people, and now **I want to know what you think about Brexit, crime and the cost of living so please fill in and send back my freepost survey.**

As well as Brexit, I've been working hard on other issues. With schools going back and Christmas around the corner, I want to know what you think about the economy and the cost of living.

Hundreds of people came to my community meetings this summer. They are worried about antisocial behaviour, car theft, burglary, drugs and violent crime. I want more police on the streets and more criminals locked up. I led the successful campaign for a new police station open to the public in Dudley.

I fought for the new £30 million industrial skills centre at Castle Hill and I'm campaigning for a university-level technical campus with high-level apprentices to attract new industries and good well-paid jobs.

I'm fighting for patients and staff at Russells Hall and I want to see quicker appointments for GPs. I want the council to get on with knocking Cavendish House down and bringing more trade to the town.

Remember, I left the Labour Party because Jeremy Corbyn can't be trusted to stand up for our country and because extremism and antisemitism have poisoned the party under his leadership. I have always answered to local people and stood up for Dudley but now I don't have to follow a party line. Local people are my boss, not anyone in London, so please fill in my survey and help me fight for our area.

It also means I haven't got the backing of a big party, so please let me know if you would like to get involved in the work I do locally by using the enclosed freepost survey or have a look at my website: http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/join_my_team.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Austin

I use an electronic version of the electoral register to enable me to contact my constituents to ask their views, invite them to events and provide updates on my work in parliament and the constituency. If you do not want to receive any letters from me please telephone my office 01384 342504, email me on ian.austin.mp@parliament.uk, or write to me at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. My data protection policy is available at http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/privacy_policy

A3.2.3: Invitation to Constituents to a Public Forum



NAME
TITLE – if appropriate
ADDRESS
Dudley
POSTCODE

Dear NAME OF RECIPIENT

**Can you join me to discuss crime, cost of living and how we can improve things in Dudley?
Friday 21st June 2019 at 6:30 - 8pm
St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley, DY1 1JB**

People say all politicians are the same or that voting doesn't make a difference, but I work hard to listen to local people and stand up for Dudley.

Join me for an informal discussion on crime, antisocial behaviour and the cost of living in Dudley. I will report back on my work to improve things in Dudley and the promises I made to you at the election.

It will be an opportunity to ask me questions over tea and coffee on these issues and any other issues you want and agree action that I can take. I will share the results of my recent survey on crime and antisocial behaviour in Dudley which has received a remarkable 3,000 responses and still growing. There will also be an opportunity to ask individual questions at the end.

Let me know if you can attend by please calling my office on 01384 342 504 or emailing me at ian.austin.mp@parliament.uk. Even if you can't come, you can have your say by completing my survey and returning it by freepost and I'll make sure your feedback is included in my response.

I hope you can come and tell me how you think we can help improve things in Dudley but please let me know if there is anything I can do to help.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'I. Austin'.

Ian Austin
Member of Parliament for Dudley North

PS. I'd like to keep you up to date with my work in Parliament. However, if you don't want to hear from me again, please let me know by writing to me at St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1JB

Working hard for you in Dudley North all year round

Dudley Office: 01384 342503/523 London Office: 020 7219 8012

Email: ian.austin.mp@parliament.uk

Web: ianaustin.co.uk Twitter: [@IanAustinMP](https://twitter.com/IanAustinMP)

A3.2.4: Calls to constituents for PMQs suggestions

Sent: 07 June 2019 19:09

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: What would you ask Theresa May on Wednesday

Dear [REDACTED]

I've been drawn out of the ballot to ask Theresa May a question at Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

It's my job to go to London and stand up for Dudley, so I want to know what you would ask if you had the chance.

[Submit your question here](#)

When I last had this opportunity I asked thousands of people what they thought and got a huge response.

I read all of the ideas I was sent and called on the government to bring more apprenticeships to Dudley. On another occasion I raised the increase of crime.

I know from all the emails and letters I receive that people have a range of concerns - local, national and international. In the last week alone people have been in touch about a number of issues like crime, our town centre, the NHS, border controls and how we bring good new jobs to Dudley.

I work hard to speak up for the local people of Dudley and now I want to take your questions to the Prime Minister.

Thanks for your help – and let me know if there is anything I can do to help you.

[What would you ask Theresa May?](#)

Many thanks and best wishes,

Ian Austin MP

<http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/>

This email was sent to [REDACTED] To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).

You can also keep in touch with me on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Reproduced from an email sent and promoted by and on behalf of Ian Austin at St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley DY1 1JB.

Dear [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your reply to my email about my question to the Prime Minister. I had lots of responses from local people raising all sorts of issues.

You won't be surprised to hear anti-social behaviour, crime and policing were some of the top issues. I have raised this on lots of occasions with the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, organised meetings for local MPs to lobby the government and campaign all the time for more police and tougher sentences and promise I will continue to do so.

Residents also raised the NHS and the free TV licenses decision the BBC made last week and I have raised that with the government too, demanding they think again so pensioners continue to receive their licenses free of charge.

The issue raised by most people was around jobs, skills and education so I asked Theresa May to back our plans for a new technical skills centre to provide technical apprenticeships and university level qualifications.

[Watch my question to Theresa May here](#)

There will be lots of good jobs created in new hi-tech industries like advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, low carbon industries and autonomous, electric vehicles and I want to make sure we get our fair share of them because that would enable us to bring new investment, new industries and good new well-paid jobs to the Black Country.

Thanks again for letting me have your views and please keep in touch.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Ian Austin MP

<http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/>

This email was sent to [REDACTED] To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).

You can also keep in touch with me on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Reproduced from an email sent and promoted by and on behalf of Ian Austin at St James House, Trinity Road, Dudley DY1 1JB.

A3.2.5: Examples of Austin's Consultations with Constituents - 2015 Syria

Vote

From: Ian Austin MP (<mailto:austini@parliament.uk>)
Sent: 27 November 2015 17:16
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ian, what are your views on Syria?

 [Ian Austin MP](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

The House of Commons will soon vote on extending military action in Syria, and I want to know what you think about this.

Voting on whether to send servicemen or women into action is one of the most important decisions that an MP can take, and I would never take that decision lightly.

It's my job as an MP to listen to the case the Prime Minister makes, weigh up all the evidence and then make a decision. There are strong views on both sides of this argument, so I know I have to explain how I vote and be accountable for it.

Any kind of military action can have serious consequences. That's why I stood up in Parliament earlier this week to question the Government about the difference Britain can make in the fight against ISIL-Daesh, how we can ensure that civilians are protected and what long-term plans the Government has to help bring stability to Syria. You can hear what I said [here](#).

But there can be consequences when we fail to take action too, both here and abroad.

Lots of people have asked me where they can find out more about this issue. You can read my personal views in more detail [here](#), and you can watch the Prime Minister set out his proposals and take questions from other MPs [here](#). You can also read a report on this issue by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee [here](#), read the Prime Minister's full response to the report [here](#) and read the resolution on Syria recently passed by the UN [here](#).

This will be the most important decision that Parliament makes this year. I want to make sure that I hear directly from you as I study the evidence and come to my decision. There are bound to be strong views on both sides so it will be impossible to please everyone, but I hope you will agree that I will take my responsibilities to listen to you and consider all the points people make very seriously.

[Please click here to take part in my consultation and let me know what you think.](#) I want to hear from as many local people as possible, so please forward this email on to friends and family who live in Dudley North so they can have their say too.

Thanks for your help,

Ian

This email was sent to [REDACTED] To stop receiving emails, [click here](#)

You can also keep in touch with me on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

Reproduced from an email sent and promoted by Dudley North Labour Party on behalf of Ian Austin at Turner House, Wrens Nest Road, Dudley DY1 3RU.

Appendix Four

This appendix provides additional data for Anna Soubry.

A4.1: Interview with Anna Soubry - 13th May 2021

Transcribed: 13th-14th May 2021

Key:

CS = Chris Stafford

AS = Anna Soubry

CS: So what I'm looking at with my research is how MPs such as yourself balanced the different pressures on them. You have your own opinions, and then there are those of your constituents and of course the desires of your party leadership. I'm using Brexit as case study because everybody knew about it. Everyone had an opinion on it. So I'm really just trying to see how MPs such as yourself balanced all those competing demands. Of course, you were in favour of remain before the referendum and your constituency was split down the middle, with most estimates suggesting it was slightly in favour of leaving.

AS: I think it was a very similar to the national result. My agent said it was just as you would expect, we reckon it was around 49% remain to 51% leave. We could be really, really picky about this and say, 'actually, the majority of constituents did not vote to leave the European Union'. But the point is, of those that did vote, the majority voted to leave.

CS: So when you were out campaigning, did you get the sense that lots of people were planning to vote to leave? Were they quite vocal about it? Could you try to convince them otherwise?

AS: The trouble was we didn't have access to any campaign databases. When you are in a marginal seat like Broxtowe you are campaigning all the time, and what do you do when you are campaigning is you build up the large database. If you've got a majority of 15 or 20,000, no disrespect to

anyone, I'm not saying they take it for granted, but it is very different to where you have a majority like I did in 2010 of 389.

CS: Yes, of course.

AS: You're always campaigning, you're always out and about and you use every opportunity to find out where your support is and what peoples' voting intentions are. Now that of course is very useful, not just in general elections but also in other elections, including a referendum. I couldn't access my database. Because the Conservative Party policy was that we had no permissions, we were not allowed to use the Conservative Party database, because even data on my supporters, the data belongs to the party. If I looked at a particular area, I could say I know this area and I think it might be 50/50, but you couldn't really go 'blind campaigning' and you didn't have the people, that was the other thing. The Conservative Party membership supported leaving, so it limited how we could campaign. We had to try to join with the Labour Party and they did have the data, they did have the ability to campaign as I would have done if I had access to the data. In the absence of that data, I was hugely limited, so what I did, I went around the country, I went to various things as a Minister, and worked with the media and so on and so forth. But in my own constituency, I was very limited in what I could do. So, the Liberal Democrats asked Labour if we could do an all-party campaign, but Labour wanted to do their own thing, so that was an immediate disadvantage. I'm not blaming Labour, by the way, I'm just using an example to show how these things worked. So, I know that in Broxtowe the Labour Party were delivered 40,000 Labour Party, pro-remain newspapers and they had no plan to deliver them.

CS: Is that so?

AS: There was one day when myself and this lovely young man I'd met, who was a Lib Dem, a Remainer, and we would do events in West Bridgeford because we knew that there was a higher turnout and that there would be more support for remain in a place like West Bridgeford. We were selective as to where we went. So we went there once, and then we decided we would go to Stapleford, which is a town in my constituency, which is a town that returns 50/50, I'd say a proper swingtown, but it

tends to be a bit more Labour. And, we saw on the on the main road a large group of people, 10 or 15, with Leave banners right on the main street in Stapleford, waving them around and everything else. And that was it. We left. We went because with just two people turning up, we just felt silly!

CS: I'm sure!

AS: We went into Nottingham and spent one morning in Nottingham. There was me, a Labour MP, some Lib Dems and some green people and a couple of Tories. I think there were three people from the Labour Party. It was pathetic, absolutely pathetic. We were up against a well-coordinated, vehement Leave campaign. I look back and I sometimes think it is amazing we managed to get 48%.

CS: So you noted that the Conservative Party membership was pro-leave. How was your local party? Where they as well?

AS: Broxtowe Conservatives could not campaign either which way. That was Conservative Party policy. The Conservative Party was neutral. The Government wasn't. So if you wanted to support and campaign for leave, you would join the Leave Campaign. My councillors and my members, you see, Broxtowe Conservatives always used to be a more Ken Clarke type, moderate, sensible, One Nation Conservatives. Most didn't do anything. I'm sure there were a few of them that campaigned for leave, but the majority of them didn't do anything at all. It was not a problem, nobody fell out. There was just nothing. You know, it wasn't an issue or concern or anything at all in the association. The previous Conservative MP, Jim Lester, was just like Ken and me. You know, proper One Nation, moderates Conservative. And that says a lot about the way the association was at that point in time. That's how it was.

CS: Did that change over the course of the withdrawal period?

AS: Definitely. Completely. They had been infiltrated. Many of them are not Conservatives, in my opinion. Totally for Brexit, they think it is the best thing that has happened to this country, 'we've taken back control' and all that.

CS: So when you were quite vocal about wanting to stay in the Single Market and Customs Union, were your local party undergoing this change at that point in time?

AS: No. No. In June 2016 we voted to leave the European Union. By September of 2016, I think, without being big headed, I was the first person to say that we should be a member of the single market.

CS: I think so, you were certainly one of the earliest I can find.

AS: I think at that time I was the only one arguing for the single market. So when we went back into Parliament in the autumn of 2016, a group of Conservatives got together, now at that time, we weren't arguing for the Single Market or the Customs Union, we just wanted the least harmful Brexit. That was our position. We were appalled that the Government did not want to give Parliament a say on Brexit. They were saying, 'no, no, no, Parliament is not going to negotiate Brexit, we are. We've got the mandate from the people. We will do the negotiating and Parliament will not be involved'. In the Autumn of 2016 towards the end of the year, you'll see a number of opposition days and Parliamentary events and we were saying, hang on a moment, at the very least the government's got to produce a white paper, it's got to involve Parliament. So, nobody was really saying, 'we don't want a no deal Brexit' but we were trying to establish if we could even have a deal in the first place! But I personally believed in the Single Market and the Customs Union. When I stood for re-election in 2017 I made it very clear in my literature. I voted for us to leave the European Union. I didn't like it but I accepted that we were leaving. I voted for the legislation which put the date of departure as 29th March 2019. And obviously I voted to trigger Article 50. Ken [Clarke] didn't, because Ken had never believed in the referendum in the first place. I've had these conversations with him subsequently. So it was all about how Parliament should have a say and it must be a soft Brexit, but we hadn't got into the minutia of what that meant, but for me it was the Single Market and Customs Union. So when I stood in Broxtowe in 2017, I got a reduced majority, but I made it clear that I accepted the result and I would make clear the case for the Single Market, Freedom of Movement and the Customs Union. So that was 2017.

CS: I see. So how was that received?

AS: My association were not really bothered by this at all. There were some who were a bit annoyed, who said I was not being loyal and that I should be loyal to Theresa May. Then in 2017, I think it was that Queen's speech where Chuka Umunna laid down an amendment to the Queen's speech calling for our continued membership of the Single Market. I was of the view we needed to stay in the Single Market and the Customs Union and there were a number of people who took the same view and we made the case for it. We had all sorts of meetings about it and out of that came the people's vote. Because by that time, Dominic Grieve actually was the first person who suggested a second referendum. The more you looked at the Single Market and Customs Union, we would have been a rule taker. I know economically, it's better than leaving with the bad deal we'd got or no deal at all, but we would have been a rule taker and we looked at all these different relationships such as Norway, and the relationship between Norway and Sweden. The financial service sector in the City of London, they were terrified because you would not have control and they were really worried that they would get turned over by countries like Germany and France. We had conversations with people, Conservatives and Labour, who said they'd back it and we would have gotten the majority. But none of them had the courage to stand up and be counted and I didn't know why I was bothering. When you looked at Northern Ireland, you've got to stay in the Single Market and the Customs Union because you can't put up a hard border, so you'd have to have customs arrangements for Northern Ireland. All of these things put together, we needed to put this back to the British people after getting what we can from the deal. We'd been over there and seen Barnier, we knew what the options were. And it just made sense to put it back to the people. The arguments about the Single Market and Customs Union didn't exist, it just wasn't an issue anymore. And we settled on the people's vote. So that was in 2018. And then in the summer of 2018, we had a majority for a Customs Union. Conservatives were willing to vote for a customs union. And I'm sorry to say that some of my former colleagues, rather dishonourably, changed their minds and decided that now's not the time to push that to a vote. So we lost it. Then when they realised they should support it, it was too late, because the Chief Whip had picked off enough, and we lost it, by I think three votes. So that was 2018. For me, out of that came the people's vote.

CS: So, I've read your campaign leaflets from 2017 and you do make it clear that you supported remaining in the Single Market and Customs Union. Did you still get a lot of criticism in the constituency in the following period?

AS: No. Well, not in 2017. Of course, it would be silly to assume that people read all of my leaflets, but it was there. That was the case in 2017 and I had no problems regarding that at all. But later what did happen was that people just claimed I wanted to stop Brexit. Staying in the Single Market and Customs Union would be Brexit in name only. 'What about freedom of movement?' 'We want to stop all these immigrants'. That's what we were open to. That's what we got to really bad abuse and that's when the big infiltration of the party started.

CS: I see.

AS: I've got all the evidence of a very, very strong concerted campaign to get people to join associations like mine and get rid of people like me. To the extent where the vice chairman of Nottinghamshire Conservatives contracted a member of my association who was in charge of social media, and actually provided this person who was fairly young, very new and naive, with the words that had been used by another association to attack their MP. So of course, all of these people are now County Councillors and such. It was an extraordinary campaign and of course there was nothing that could match it.

CS: And sorry, when did when did you say this was happening?

AS: This was 2018. So I was having was problems with my association Chair, but not because of Brexit. It was because he wanted to do my job! He wanted to be the MP. So he was quite happy to use everything against me and rake up some really nasty, really awful things. So you asked me about them and voting for May's deal. Interestingly, when her Chequers deal, which was also 2018 wasn't it?

CS: Yes, if I remember correctly!

AS: So when the Chequers Deal came out, I had a meeting and somebody, who's not a very nice man, very, very right-wing. This is a mark of the association. He said to me, 'I don't have a problem with May's deal' and I said, 'I don't have a problem with May's Deal, it's not that bad.' But nobody, nobody was suggesting..., well, if there were, there might have been one or two, but they were the plonkers, not like this chap who was right wing and not very nice, but even he was saying 'I don't know what the problem is with May's deal and I think it should be supported.'

CS: I see.

AS: I told him why I didn't approve of it. There was nobody saying 'you must vote against it, because it's not really Brexit', and it's a betrayal the rest of it. And I think that shows you the nature of the association at that time.

CS: So they were more or less quite happy for you to use your own judgement on May's deal then?

AS: To some extent. Most were old fashioned Conservatives, they didn't like their MP not being in the fold and believed the MP should support of the party leadership, that is an old school Conservative, you know, even if you think that the leader is complete idiot, you've got to be loyal. And you'll see that if you look at people like Nick Soammes, you know, of course he was a One Nation Conservative, but it ran through his DNA that you had to be loyal to the leader, even if you thought they were a 'prize one plonker'.

CS: So we've talked about your local party. If we look at your relationship with the National Party, you worked quite closely with Chuka Ummuna and did various cross-party initiatives. Did that cause a lot of tension?

AS: No. If you think about it, we'd just come out of a Coalition with the Lib Dems!

CS: Of course, that's true.

AS: What was interesting was that in all of this the Lib Dems were nowhere! They really weren't. They didn't even come to most of the meetings we were having! If Vince [Cable] did come along, he made no contribution. It was most peculiar. They just hadn't got their stuff together. They paid a terrible price for being in Government, I think they were still reeling from that.

CS: Having looked at your speeches and such from the time, would it be would it be right to say that you were quite loyal to the Conservative Party, but that you just had quite big disagreements on how Brexit should be done? Is that a fair assessment?

AS: Yes, I think that is true. I enjoyed the coalition. I thought the coalition was great. And I still believe that, two parties working together in the common interest. Although I think there were things that on reflection, such as the cuts that were made in the MoJ for example. Back in the day departments could without too much difficulty make cuts, but it had already been cut back so badly that 25 percent was devastating. But apart from those sorts of things, it was a good government and the direction of travel. I felt very happy in the coalition. It moderated the more extreme views. I did have a conversation very, very early on with a high ranking member of Cameron's team that he should jettison the right wing of the party and embrace Clegg and all the other Tories to build something new. And if he'd had the courage to do that we'd never have had a referendum. But we are where we are.

CS: Interesting.

AS: When Corbyn was elected that was an opportunity to completely reframe British politics. But we hadn't reckoned on losing the referendum. If we had actually won the referendum, David could have begun to, having gained the majority, do amazing things. He could have turned us into the one nation, Conservative party and brought in lots and lots of other people. But it didn't turn out like that.

CS: If the referendum had been won by remain, do you think do you think it would have settled the issue? Or do you think it would still roll on in some form?

AS: Oh no, they would still have rabbitied on. They would have called for another referendum. Of course they would. Of course, we would have been able to do what they did, which was say 'oh shut up, the people have spoken'. But you have to deliver. But it is undeliverable.

CS: Yes, this has been shown to some extent hasn't it?

AS: Yes it has. If you stay in the Single Market and the Customs Union, you might as well stay in the European Union and have a seat at the table. I think that was the problem, that the more you argued for the Single Market and the Customs Union, the more you did become aware of the failings of that position. So the only way through was to take it to the British people and I do think that in 2018, if May's deal had gone to the people they may have chosen to remain. In 2018 I think people were getting the argument that it was too difficult, it wasn't possible. But by 2019 it was different and people were just fed up.

CS: Did you get the sense that people in Broxtowe might lean more towards remain if there was a 2nd referendum?

AS: In 2018? Yes, I think nationally and everywhere. I met people in 2017 that were very remain, and they were, properly remain not reluctant remain. And it was interesting that there was some number who said we agree with you, but we've fought the battle and lost so we need to get on and deliver it. But my argument always was 'you can't!' You can't deliver it. It was undeliverable. But I was hugely conscious of that. Because obviously you knock on lots and lots of doors. I was aware certainly, by 2019, we were amazed by the number of emails of support that I got when I left the Conservative Party. We were really amazed. Really, really surprised. We got far more people saying 'well done' than people saying 'this is disgraceful'. But that just shows how inboxes are not representative. I had no doubt that if I stood in Broxtowe before Brexit was resolved in one way or another, then I would lose.

CS: I see.

AS: And so is it fair, sensible people like Chris Leslie, so knowledgeable and brave. Chris was exactly the same. There's no way he could win in

Nottingham East having left the Labour Party without Brexit being resolved because the only way that a General Election could solve Brexit was because Boris Johnson would get a majority. We all agreed on that, Labour and the Lib Dems agreed and then the Lib Dems lost the plot and believed they were going to win 200 seats, and that is a fact, they believed they were going to 200 seats. Went mad and drank the cool aid and decided one weekend in 2019 that because the SNP kept banging on about a general election, they would add to the drum beat and they came out and said, 'yes, let's have a general election.' They went against what we had agreed and signed their own suicide note.

CS: It didn't go too well for them did it?

AS: I've done a lot of thinking on that. There is a very serious point and it's a difficult one. One of the choices that you face when you have a referendum on a single issue and you're the MP, you've not been elected on any particular side of that. If anyone had asked me I would have told them I believed in our continuing membership of the European Union. But what happens when that referendum goes against what you believe in and you're the MP and your constituents have also voted for something you don't believe in? You're in a really, really difficult position. If you're honourable and not thinking of your own self-interest. I'm sorry if that sounds pompous, but I'll use the example of a very good friend of mine who I respect enormously. She found herself in a similar position to me, but her constituency voted about 60% to leave. So it couldn't even be said that it was close. She went into Government and she voted for Theresa's deal. She didn't pay strong attention to it all, she kept it in the corner of her eye and got on with her ministerial work, concentrated on that. And then Johnson gets elected. Not her choice for Prime Minister and she is appalled at this choice. Has views on him and of course, then on what he gets up to, proroguing Parliament illegally, or unlawfully, crashing out of the EU and there is no doubt at that time in the Summer into the autumn of 2019 Johnson and his crew did not know what Brexit looked like. They were quite prepared to leave without a deal. And I know that from people who were very high, senior minister level, so we knew that was a fact. So my friend, at this point decided we've got to stop no deal, which was in 2019 and we successfully did that. She resigned from government, she'd had enough of the whole thing. And in due course, she decided not to

stand again as a Member of Parliament. And, she was not a career politician. There's two or three of them exactly the same actually now that I think about it. This was just somebody who got elected at the same time as me and she was not a career politician, she'd had a very nice life, went into Parliament because she wanted to serve and all those honourable reasons. And I saw her last summer after we said we should get together a bit more. I'm very fond of her. And I said, 'what happened?'. She just said she couldn't bear it any longer. I couldn't bear any longer supporting something that I disagreed with, because I genuinely fundamentally believed it was not in the interests of my constituents. And she said that will all that agitation, almost heartbreak. And if I was a career politician, if I was, if I had a mortgage to pay, which I don't, I'm very lucky, I don't have a mortgage. My friend doesn't have a mortgage to pay because she's made her money before she came into politics. And I do understand that there are some people who do have mortgages to pay, whose whole life is politics and the political party. The more I looked at it, I used to be the Business Minister, I thought 'this is madness', this is bad for my constituents. They are going to be up to 8% poorer in the long term. Here's all the evidence. How can I support something, vote for something in the knowledge, in knowledge, not just the belief, but the knowledge, on the evidence that it was going to make my constituents poorer? But, I would get really vile, angry emails from people pointing the finger, 'that's what you're constituents voted for', 'you're a traitor', 'you despise your constituents'. And I thought, I've been sent to this stage to effectively put my constituents interests first. And that flew in the face of this bloody referendum! And there are people now in Parliament, who in the privacy of the smoking room, nobody smokes in there, it's just a lovely old term for a room where they used to smoke. I sat with two people, vehement Brexiteers, one of them sits on the board of some investment bank, and he said 'my board is very cross with me because we all know what's going to happen'. I just thought, you [expletive]!. Thousands of people are going to lose their jobs and then you stand up in the Commons saying how brilliant Brexit is, and here in private..., at least I didn't say anything in private that I didn't also say in public. And I did actually say that in Parliament, I didn't name the person but I did say there are people in this place who in private say that Brexit will not be good for the economy of our country. And they'll now stand up and tell you how brilliant it is. The dishonesty of all of it was just... and then you have senior, really

senior government ministers, cabinet ministers, the most senior level, when you've just voted for something obviously against the party whip, you'd get more abuse and upsetting behaviour, all the emails and press commentary and all the rest of it. And these people would come up to you and, they'd literally just slide up and say 'keep going, you're doing a great job'. And you'd think, 'oh thank you, I'm the one getting my arse ripped off here!' I have thought about this and I don't know what the answer is because people will say to you, 'but you agreed to this referendum and you thought it was a good idea'. And I did. You've got then to be true to the referendum. I was. I voted to trigger Article 50. I put the date in the Withdrawal Act of our departure. I did all that. But the more I dug into it, the more and more convinced I was that it was not in my constituents' interests. But I didn't try to stop it! This is another huge misconception. With that, that was the narrative that was spat out. And that's the narrative that was bought. I never said 'Bollocks to Brexit' and all this nonsense. All I said was, now we know what it looks like, I think we are entitled to see if people have changed their minds about that opportunity and we should put it back to them. So that's hopefully a lesson that if we ever have another referendum on Scottish independence, yes, you can vote on the principle, but then when you know what it looks like, you have the opportunity to say 'yay' or 'nay' to that deal.

With regards to the Brexit referendum, I did wrestle with it terribly. I had this wonderful constituent who became a friend, and we persuaded him, he was a Tory and we persuaded him to stand for the council. Such good fun, lovely bloke. He had the biggest leave poster in his garden of anybody I've ever seen. But apart from that he was a lovely man! I sat there one day and I went through with him, again, this was 2018-2019. I explained about the Customs Union, I explained how 'Just In Time' supply chains work, things which normal people haven't got a clue what you are talking about! Unfortunately, neither has our current Prime Minister, but that's another story! I always used him as my check, and I would ask, 'what would he think?'. How would you explain the way you just voted to him? How can you keep his respect? He was my marker, but then he went and died unexpectedly. I don't know, but when he died, something in me just, I felt, 'I'm just going to be true to what I believe in now'. And I, I made that decision. I'm just going to be true to what I believe in. What I believe is best for my country and my constituents. It wasn't what was best for me. Where am I right now? I'm in my garden. Where are they?

In the House of Lords? Back in Parliament or a bloody minister?! I can look myself in the mirror in the morning, I can justify it.

CS: Hypothetically speaking, do you think that like your friend, if your constituency had been more clearly for leaving, do you think you might have might have tried to get behind it a bit more? Or do you think you just always knew it was a bad idea?

AS: I think that's a really good question. I always remember Ken [Clarke], saying it was much easier for him because the majority of his constituents had voted to remain. I think if it had been 60% in Broxtowe, I would have found that..., I think it would have been a bit like, if you look at Ed Miliband, there were a number of Labour people who said, 'this is the percentage of my constituents who voted this way', but then did what they thought was right. You've got people like Anna Turley, Phil Wilson, who was the MP for Sedgefield up in the North-East. Look at the two women in Sunderland. Really big and brave. First time we had the people's March in Sunderland, they weren't available to come on the march. The next time they did and they were brilliant. They were really brave. So too were people like Caroline Flint. They could have just shut up. So you do wonder sometimes how many people were actually thinking more about their seat, or about winning their seats and staying in in Parliament rather than doing what was right. Many MPs in the latter category all lost their seat. It's very difficult, very difficult. People were being lied to. It was easier for Labour people because they could say this is a Tory plot, controlling capitalism, they could make different arguments to resonate with supporters. I decided I was just going to do what I believed was in the best interests of my constituents. Don't have a referendum unless you know what all the options are. Each option, what the consequences are, the options or consequences?

CS: Indeed. Well, I think that covers most of my questions...

AS: Sorry, can I just add something?

CS: Yes, of course. Please, go ahead.

AS: I didn't have public meetings about Brexit.

CS: Why was that?

AS: Not because I'm frightened of public meetings. Far from it, I had a public meeting on equal marriage which was just horrible, very unpleasant things were said. So I'm not afraid of public meetings. I did have an association members meeting. I said 'I know a lot of people are very unhappy about my stance on Brexit, so we're having a meeting. Please come and let's have a chat about it'. I had two meetings and I think about seven people spoke up.

CS: Right.

AS: Actually, in the streets, I mostly got support. I'd get some abuse, people were cross and they were entitled to be cross. There was one chap who was really very offensive to me, tore me off a strip in the shop when I was buying some flowers just before Christmas. I was in a shop and the last thing I expected was for this man to launch this tirade at me. But if you put your head above the parapet don't complain if people take shots at you.

CS: When that kind of thing happened would you would you try to convince them of what you were doing or was it just not possible?

AS: You can't convince them. I wouldn't try what some did and claim that 'I understand' or that 'I feel your pain'. I don't feel it at all. I'd stand there and look all wrong. Where are all these immigrants in Broxtowe? There's hardly any immigrants. And they'd say, 'well you know' and I'd say 'I don't, no I really don't know'. I would tell people about the Polish people who fought with us during the war, and after it was finished they couldn't go home, once the Nazis were gone the Soviets took over. So they settled here and married and contributed to society. When people are prepared to do that, I would say 'I don't have a problem with that, do you?' That's how I would speak to them. Nobody could say anything other than '[makes flustered sounds] well, no..., I didn't know that', and that makes me really angry. 'I didn't know that', shocking, isn't it? But there you go.

[End of Interview]

Appendix Five

This appendix provides links to the online sources used for each MP in Chapters Five through Eight.

Table A.5: MP Online Sources

Stuart Andrew	
Date	Link
25/10/2011	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/mps-vote-eu-referendum
12/06/2013	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/node/160
09/07/2013	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/node/168
28/11/2014	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-andrew-mp-welcomes-prime-ministers-action-eu-immigration
08/01/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/new-station-entrance-provides-opportunity-development
26/01/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-rawdon-councillors-take-rail-link-campaign-government-minister
10/02/2016a	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-blasts-patronising-referendum-campaign
10/02/2016b	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-backs-government-plans-housing
24/02/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/electoral-commission-agree-stuart-readiness-eu-referendum
07/03/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-meet-justice-minister-constituents
21/03/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-meets-minister-discuss-joint-enterprise
07/04/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/statement-voting-leave-eu
27/05/2016	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10156867331560123
29/05/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/736953349816365056

01/06/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/eu-referendum-public-meetings-announced
15/06/2016	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10156942557015123
20/06/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/744825716517314560
23/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746085425933090816
23/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746098384205979648
24/06/2016	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10156983077690123
25/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746627836883111936
25/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746628011840126976
25/06/2016c	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746628116546789377
25/06/2016d	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746628545951207425
25/06/2016e	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/746628604717637632
28/06/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/747815446506840066
29/06/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/748066209065799680
30/06/2016a	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10157010411720123
30/06/2016b	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10157011594440123
05/07/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/response-eu-referendum-result
01/07/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/748912072835080192
06/07/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-backs-theresa-may-pm

11/07/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/752472261924425728
16/08/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-raises-constituents-concerns-brexit-minister
23/09/2016a	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-announced-vice-chairman-conservative-party
23/09/2016b	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/779278365039681536
09/10/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/785170012382322688
11/10/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-makes-speech-backing-greenbelt-questions-minister
16/11/2016	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-record-levels-employment
11/12/2016	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/808020072245641216
15/02/2017	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-record-levels-employment-0
20/04/2017a	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/855161481410871296
20/04/2017b	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10158527134545123
27/04/2017	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/857687655697588224
11/06/2017	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/873928356496105473
12/06/2017a	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/874362850998980609
12/06/2017b	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/874375928746577920
28/10/2017	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10159509715535123
21/11/2017	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10159618654145123
08/12/2017	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-andrew-mp-welcomes-publication-joint-report-today-negotiators-european-union-and

13/12/2017	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-andrew-mp-praises-bill-strengthen-animal-welfare
02/02/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-andrew-mp-welcomes-news-973-cent-homes-pudsey-horsforth-aireborough-now-benefit
11/04/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-andrew-mp-welcomes-support-families-pudsey-horsforth-aireborough
19/07/2018	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1020063706095456256
11/10/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-raises-constituents-concerns-department-exiting-european-union
19/10/2018a	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-special-adviser-housing-communities-and-local-government-constituency-discuss
19/10/2018b	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-secretary-state-health-and-social-care-pudsey
23/10/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-winter-social-care-funding
29/10/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-cash-injection-2018-autumn-budget
30/10/2018	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-new-funding-road-repairs-and-congestion
02/12/2018	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1069276307182288896
12/12/2018	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1072813646747713537
03/03/2019	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1102201301436370944
12/03/2019a	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1105456141050564608
12/03/2019b	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1105456142757580800
12/03/2019c	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1105456144045301761

21/03/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-extra-funding-veteran-homelessness-west-yorkshire
02/04/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-over-ps500000-investment-tackle-leeds-roads
02/05/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-celebrates-results-local-election
24/05/2019	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1131886282232205313
27/05/2019	https://twitter.com/StuartAndrew/status/1133046268803145730
17/06/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-changes-blue-badge-criteria-and-enforcement
10/07/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-continues-stand-greenbelt-pudsey
04/09/2019	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/news/stuart-welcomes-funding-boost-spending-round
17/10/2019	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10162449862490123
01/11/2019	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10162526521715123
20/12/2019	https://www.facebook.com/stuart.andrew1/posts/10162767063310123
c.2020	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/about-stuart
c.2021a	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/campaigns
c.2021b	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/parliament
07/08/2021	https://www.stuartandrew.org.uk/search?keys=stuart+welcomes&type=All
Ian Austin	
Date	Link
30/10/2014	https://www.expressandstar.com/news/2014/10/30/dudley-mp-ian-austin-urges-cameron-to-stop-immigrants-cheating-child-benefit-system/
n.d.	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/profile
04/02/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_hosts_launch_of_labour_immigration_listening_campaign

05/02/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_cuts_put_4_250_black_country_homes_for_elderly_at_risk
01/03/2016a	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/mp_demands_action_over_west_midlands_school_places_crisis
01/03/2016b	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/mp_demands_fairer_funding_for_west_midlands_authorities_in_the_budget
08/06/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_urges_rethink_on_land_registry_sell_off
10/06/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/mp_organises_dudley_eu_referendum_debate
17/06/2016	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/743667212666318848
24/06/2016	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/746219822749356034
26/06/2016	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/747084854542614528
11/07/2016	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/752489218136535041
06/09/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_slams_funding_cuts_for_local_apprentices
15/11/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_calls_for_government_to_maintain_black_country_skills_funding
18/11/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/people_are_concerned_about_immigration_labour_must_come_up_with_fair_answers_rather_than_hiding_from_it
22/11/2016	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_goes_back_to_his_old_school_for_awards_evening
c.2017	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/my_pledges 01/01/2017
01/01/2017	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/new_year_message_2017
12/01/2017	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/dudley_mp_makes_education_and_brexit_his_priorities_for_new_year
09/11/2017	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/back-local-brewers-says-mp
13/03/2018	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_calls_for_extra_help_to_tackle_rough_sleeping
13/04/2018	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/austin_backs_fight_for_44_million_fair_funding_for_west_midlands_police

30/11/2018	https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/30/labour-mps-reject-may-brexit-deal-voted-leave
16/01/2019	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/the_vote_on_the_governments_brexit_deal
22/02/2019	http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/i_have_taken_the_difficult_decision_to_leave_the_labour_party
31/08/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1167872763257708550
03/09/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1168878772168343552
03/09/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1168891011210338305
05/09/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1169587400235999232
15/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1184163214558453768
18/10/2019	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-7589767/Party-loved-not-betray-Brexit-says-IAN-AUSTIN-quit-Labour-independent-MP.html
19/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1185593114087641090
19/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1185593562672619520
19/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1185594037002276864
19/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1185598497023807490
22/10/2019	https://twitter.com/IanAustin1965/status/1186721904113209352
Nick Boles	
Date	Link
06/02/2016	http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/grantham-mp-nick-boles-column-it-s-a-compromise-but-if-pm-backs-it-eu-deal-will-get-my-vote-1-7200808
07/04/2016	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/875763259216415

15/04/2016	https://web.archive.org/web/20170702024548/https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/remain-eu
17/04/2016	http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/grantham-journal-column-i-will-be-voting-for-the-uk-to-remain-a-member-of-the-eu-1-7331782
07/06/2016a	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/photos/ive-registered-to-vote-you-have-until-1159pm-tonight-tuesday-7th-june-to-registe/912099235582817/
07/06/2016b	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/photos/a.521988251260586/912096392249768/?type=1&theater
14/06/2016	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/916277125165028
24/06/2016a	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/photos/a.521988251260586/922446504548090/?type=1&theater
24/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/746226300327604225
24/06/2016c	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/922384484554292
27/06/2016	https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/06/nick-boles-im-a-moderniser-i-backed-remain-and-heres-why-i-believe-johnson-should-be-the-next-conservative-leader.html
10/07/2016	https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/07/nick-boles-we-modernisers-arent-repeat-arent-quitting-the-party-were-staying-put-and-weve-so-much-more-to-do-within-it.html
14/07/2016	http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/opinion/grantham-and-stamford-mp-nick-boles-tells-why-he-backed-boris-switched-to-political-soulmate-gove-and-resigned-as-minister-1-7478013
01/09/2016	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/970239539768786
02/09/2016	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/771655742449262592
06/09/2016	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/974370599355680

10/09/2016	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/grantham-journal-column-post-brex-it-we-will-need-to-have-control-over-uk-immigration-1-7570382/
13/09/2016	https://brexitcentral.com/nick-boles-mp-why-i-after-voting-remain-am-now-cautiously-optimistic-about-brex-it/
10/10/2016	https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/10/nick-boles-immigration-control-and-openness-arent-opposites-they-go-together.html
15/10/2016	http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/opinion/grantham-journal-column-mps-must-ask-what-it-is-their-constituents-really-want-1-7629719
18/10/2016	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3845940/NICK-BOLES-Remain-voters-like-Miliband-s-attempt-block-Brexit-utterly-nauseating.html
19/10/2016	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/brexit
05/12/2016	https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cancer-is-not-a-battle-its-a-forced-march-8pllq5t66
c.2017	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/about-nick
17/01/2017	http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2017/01/nick-boles-liberal-conservatives-must-abandon-fantasies-about-staying-in-the-single-market.html?fbclid=IwAR0g2Mm1hzGLZYcZIWpvp2M1fq-D_EU5wliAw1gzMa-FmMGifp3ZPsE-mnU
24/01/2017	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/my-conhome-article-brexit
01/02/2017	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/photos/a.912097612249646/1112739622185443/?type=3
03/02/2017	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1114599941999411
07/02/2017a	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/photos/a.912097612249646/1118721188253953/?type=3&theater
07/02/2017b	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/article_50_bill
12/03/2017	https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2017/03/nick-boles-i-backed-remain-but-i-hope-other-mps-who-did-so-too-reject-these-lords-amendments-to-the-article-50-bill.html

13/03/2017	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/amendments_to_article_50_bill
29/03/2017a	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/triggering_of_article_50
29/03/2017b	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1167931129999625
13/11/2017	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1370607429731993
08/06/2018	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1565111000281634
16/06/2018	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/column-i-supported-pm-on-brexit-vote-9002214/
17/06/2018	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/eu_withdrawal_bill
01/09/2018	https://twitter.com/nickboles/status/1036014783609360390
05/09/2018	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1694378224021577
30/11/2018	https://twitter.com/nickboles/status/1068506134091313152
18/12/2018a	https://twitter.com/nickboles/status/1075069706103676928?lang=en
18/12/2018b	https://twitter.com/nickboles/status/1075069709840801793?lang=en
19/12/2018	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/since-august-i-have-held-three-meetings-with-members-of-the-grantham-stamford-co/1842983745827690/
10/01/2019	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/1083428060639232000
12/01/2019	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/i-wont-be-bullied-by-extreme-brexiters-9058978/
21/01/2019	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/1087353854700781574
25/01/2019	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/eu_elections
17/03/2019	http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/17031901.pdf

28/03/2019	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1979080498884680
10/04/2019	https://www.facebook.com/nickbolesofficial/posts/1988170544642342
18/05/2019	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/never-mind-buffoons-i-will-vote-for-deal-9070616/
20/05/2019	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/news/eu_elections
05/09/2019	https://www.nickboles.co.uk/supporting_a_deal
07/09/2019	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/i-can-look-people-in-the-eye-knowing-i-have-put-the-countrys-interests-before-my-career-9082082/
19/10/2019	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/1185638553042276355
19/10/2019	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/i-may-be-a-critic-of-the-pm-but-he-is-working-hard-to-get-a-deal-through-9086637/
21/10/2019	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/1186226164152582144
09/11/2019	https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/farewell-to-all-my-constituents-and-thank-you-9088900/
10/11/2019	https://twitter.com/NickBoles/status/1193561988133199873
John Cryer	
Date	Link
c. February 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/185.pdf
c. May 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/187.pdf
c. June 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/eu-referendum-result
20/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/744837451051565056
20/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/744844944603549696

20/06/2016c	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/744845381549293568
20/06/2016d	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/744847529230098433
20/06/2016e	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/744837776164687872
21/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745196305119645696
21/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745222867881725952
22/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745571927742373888
22/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745572479461122048
22/06/2016c	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745573928333082625
22/06/2016d	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745574315639345152
22/06/2016e	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745575802931130368
22/06/2016f	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745576794842087424
22/06/2016g	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/745579255220797440
26/06/2016a	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747020206732623872
26/06/2016b	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747130839394299904

26/06/2016c	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746976710525059073
26/06/2016d	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746988146068434944
26/06/2016e	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746988440194023424
26/06/2016f	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746990050655731713
26/06/2016g	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746991650740801536
26/06/2016h	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746993196346056704
26/06/2016i	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/746992525181919232
26/06/2016j	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747191136494755840
26/06/2016k	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747198038100279296
26/06/2016l	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747023750311321600
27/06/2016m	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/747370898999644160
c.July 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/188.pdf
c.August 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/193.pdf
c.September 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/194.pdf
c.November 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/200.pdf

c.December 2016	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/203.pdf
c.January 2017	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/205.pdf
c.February 2017	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/eu-referendum-result
c.March 2017	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/208.pdf
c.April 2017	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/217.pdf
c.May 2017	https://web.archive.org/web/20191224104100/https://electionleaflets.org/leaflets/14299/
c.June 2017a	https://web.archive.org/web/20191224104049/https://electionleaflets.org/leaflets/14897/
c.June 2017b	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/222.pdf
c.June 2017c	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/220.pdf
c.September 2018	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/263.pdf
c.November 2018	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/269.pdf
c.December 2018	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/docs/news/271.pdf
19/12/2018	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/1075330169857105921
20/12/2018	https://twitter.com/JohnCryerMP/status/1075756400742023169
c.2019	https://www.johncryermp.co.uk/biography
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