

# A LOST TRIBE: BRITAIN'S YOUNG EUROSCEPTICS

BY DR RAKIB EHSAN



**CENTRE ON  
SOCIAL &  
POLITICAL RISK**

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## About the Author

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Dr Rakib Ehsan is a Research Fellow at the Henry Jackson Society.

Rakib specialises in the socio-political behaviour and attitudes of British ethnic minorities, with a particular focus on the UK's Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups.

He holds a BA Politics & International Relations (First-Class Honours), MSc Democracy, Politics & Governance (Pass with Distinction), and a PhD in Political Science, all from Royal Holloway, University of London.

His PhD investigated the effects of social integration for British ethnic minorities. Rakib has had research published by a number of UK-based think-tanks, including Runnymede Trust, Policy Exchange and Intergenerational Foundation, as well as the Mackenzie Institute, an independent security think-tank based in Toronto, Canada.

## Acknowledgments

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This includes Dr James Sloam, Professor Oliver Heath (both Royal Holloway, University of London) and Professor Eric Kaufmann (Birkbeck, University of London), who were all involved in the external peer review process. I would also like to thank HJS colleague James Rogers (Director of Global Britain) for his part in the internal peer review process, and Dr Andrew Foxall (HJS Director of Research), who was heavily involved in the report's development.

And finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my mother, Nasrin. She always takes an interest in my work, and her love, support, and encouragement, is always appreciated.

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I welcome Dr Rakib Ehsan's excellent report for the Henry Jackson Society. 'A Lost Tribe' offers much-needed insight in order to understand the strongest predictors of pro-Leave sentiments among young people. The report breaks through ideologically-charged attempts to homogenise social groups and divide the country into 'young vs old' and 'educated vs uneducated'. Instead, Dr Ehsan offers a nuanced look at young people's valid concerns regarding EU membership and how they would vote. The referendum result, as proven by 'A Lost Tribe', may not be explained by a reductionist economic argument; the role of identity, place and belonging, and values are all crucial. All involved in politics should look to the report if they want to understand and gain the trust of those young Brexiteers. I believe this is our mission to rebuild trust in British politics.

**Andrea Jenkyns MP**

## Executive Summary

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This paper is based on a nationally representative survey of 1,351 young British adults and was conducted in May 2016 by YouGov. Although now three years old, this survey remains one of the largest systematic surveys into British young people's socio-political attitudes and their views on the UK's membership of the EU. According to this survey:

- Just under one in four young people intended to vote Leave in the UK's June 2016 referendum on EU membership (rising to more than three in ten when "don't knows" and those who stated they would not vote are excluded).
- 64% of young pro-Leave people in the survey were male; 49.9% of young pro-Remain people were male.
- 46.7% of young pro-Leave people held a negative view of cultural diversity, compared with 6.4% of their pro-Remain counterparts.
- Lack of trust in teachers and academics was an important dividing line between young Leavers and their pro-Remain counterparts, with young Leavers far less likely to be trusting of those working in the education sector.
- Pro-Leave youngsters were more trusting of politicians than their pro-Remain peers in the lead-up to the June 2016 referendum.
- Not prioritising education and the environment as important issues facing the country is strongly related to pro-Leave sentiments among younger British people.
- The profile of an "archetypal" young British person reporting pro-Leave sentiments is male, of lower socio-economic status, holding a negative perception of cultural diversity, and prioritising immigration as a major policy issue facing the country.

These results allow a number of observations to be made, including:

- This socio-demographic and attitudinal profile for young people reporting pro-Leave sentiments – male, socio-economically disadvantaged and holding negative perceptions of immigration-induced cultural diversity – has striking parallels with target groups for pro-Brexit far-right organisations and their recruitment/mobilisation efforts.
- Young British people who primarily self-identified as Scottish were less likely to report pro-Leave sentiments than peers who primarily identified as British, English or Welsh. This highlights the risk of heightened intra-Union tensions with a possible no-deal Brexit on the horizon.
- Young pro-Leave people were more trusting of politicians, when compared with their pro-Remain peers. This defies the broader social trend of political disaffection driving support for leaving the EU.
- Brexit-related disaffection and disillusionment among certain elements of the UK's young pro-Leave electorate poses a social and political risk which is underestimated by both large sections of the democratic political system and sections of the mainstream media.



## 1. Introduction

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The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU) in June 2016 sparked a wave of Brexit-related research. This research has examined the role of policy preferences on issues such as immigration,<sup>1</sup> socio-economic status,<sup>2</sup> socio-demographic characteristics such as ethnicity,<sup>3</sup> and value systems in vote choice in the referendum and wider perceptions of the EU.<sup>4</sup>

Some of these strands of research have been tied together in an attempt to explain the sharp generational divides over the UK's membership of the EU.<sup>5</sup> At a macro-level, these intergenerational differences see the UK's pro-Leave older generation being at odds with its pro-Remain younger generation.<sup>6</sup> Notable generational differences did emerge from the results of the UK vote on EU membership. A survey of 12,369 voters shortly after the referendum found that 73% – nearly three in four – of those aged between 18 and 24 voted for the UK to remain in the EU. The corresponding figure for those aged 65 and over was only 40%.<sup>7</sup> While Britain's older voters are more inclined to view the UK's withdrawal of EU membership as a positive move towards greater national sovereignty, many of the country's younger population express a strong desire for the continuation of a close relationship with the EU – one where freedoms associated with the Single Market are maintained for UK citizens.

The broader intergenerational patterns for the June 2016 EU vote have understandably led to much Brexit-related research focusing on what drives pro-Remain sentiments among younger people in the UK (as well as what contributes towards the high levels of Euroscepticism among older voters). Indeed, a prominent feature of media coverage on the UK's referendum on EU membership was the stark difference between the “pro-EU young and their Eurosceptic elders”,<sup>8</sup> with this social dividing line on the UK's membership of the EU also being presented as a “generational conflict” by a number of prominent politicians.<sup>9</sup> Narratives of “pro-EU youthfulness” have been firmly established within academic and political circles, as well as large sections of the British mainstream media.<sup>10</sup> This has resulted in both a lack of research and media coverage on the smaller, but by no means unimportant, section of younger voters

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<sup>1</sup> Curtice, J., 'Brexit: Behind the Referendum', *Political Insight*, 7, 1 September 2016, pp. 4-7. See also Goodwin, M. and Milazzo, C., 'Taking back control? Investigating the role of immigration in the 2016 vote for Brexit', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19(3), 8 June 2017, pp. 450-464.

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin, M. and Heath, O., 'The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-Level Analysis of the Result', *The Political Quarterly*, 87, pp. 323-332.

<sup>3</sup> Begum, N., 'Minority ethnic attitudes and the 2016 EU referendum', *The UK in a Changing Europe*, 6 February 2018, available at: <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/minority-ethnic-attitudes-and-the-2016-eu-referendum/>, last visited: 15 August 2019. See also Leidig, E., 'Immigrant, Nationalist and Proud: A Twitter Analysis of Indian Diaspora Supporters for Brexit and Trump', *Media and Communication*, 7(1), 5 February 2019, pp. 77-89.

<sup>4</sup> Norris, P. and Inglehart, R., *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and the Rise of Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019). See also Kaufmann, E., 'It's NOT the economy, stupid: Brexit as a story of personal values', LSE British Politics and Policy, 7 July 2016, available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/69138/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Its%20NOT%20the%20economy%20stupid%20Brexit%20as%20a%20story%20of%20personal%20values.pdf>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Norris, P., 'Generation wars over Brexit and beyond: How young and old are divided over social values', LSE European Politics and Policy, 18 August 2018, available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/91383/1/Norris\\_Generation-wars\\_Author.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/91383/1/Norris_Generation-wars_Author.pdf), last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Ehsan, R., 'The Great Political Divide: Britain's Young and Old', Intergenerational Foundation, 29 June 2018, available at: <http://www.if.org.uk/2018/06/29/the-great-political-divide-britains-young-and-old/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Ashcroft, M., 'How the United Kingdom Voted on Thursday... and Why', Lord Ashcroft Polls, 24 June 2016, available at: <https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Golby, J., 'Oh My God, Grandma, What The Fuck Have You Done?', *VICE*, 24 June 2016, available at: [https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/8ge9yg/oh-my-god-grandma-what-the-fuck](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/8ge9yg/oh-my-god-grandma-what-the-fuck), last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Fox, S. and Pearce, S., 'The generational decay of Euroscepticism in the UK and the EU referendum', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 1, 4 September 2017, pp. 19-37.

<sup>10</sup> Graham-Harrison, E., 'Young people on the EU referendum: "It is the end of one world, of the world as we know it"', *The Guardian*, 26 June 2016, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/26/young-people-vote-anger>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

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who hold pro-Leave sentiments. This report seeks to address this imbalance by critically examining the socio-demographic characteristics and attitudinal drivers associated with pro-Leave sentiments among younger sections of British society.

The most comprehensive study into young Eurosceptics to date is a report produced by Intergenerational Foundation in 2017. The report splits the UK's millennials into four distinct "tribes" using British Election Study data, three of which are pro-EU (affluent pro-Europeans, Celtic pro-Europeans, and left-wing pro-Europeans) and one which is an anti-EU tribe simply labelled as "Eurosceptics".<sup>11</sup> This tribe of "young Leavers" is broadly characterised by its relatively low level of formal qualifications, its deep-seated anxieties over immigration, and its strong sense of national identity. Building on this existing research, this study focuses on young British people who report pro-Leave/anti-EU sentiments. As well as exploring important Leave-Remain "chasms", such as socioeconomic resources and attitudes towards immigration,<sup>12</sup> authoritarian vs libertarian attitudes and national identity, this study examines the extent to which negative perceptions of cultural diversity, individual economic pessimism and political distrust drive pro-Leave sentiments within younger sections of British society.

Using a nationally representative pre-referendum survey of 1,351 respondents aged between 18 and 30, this report provides an analytical account of pro-Leave sentiments reported by young British people in the build-up to the referendum held on 23 June 2016. The survey, conducted by polling organisation YouGov between 6 and 13 May 2016, remains one of the largest surveys into the social attitudes and political behaviour of the UK's young people. Crucially, the survey provides a wealth of data on what drove the reporting of pro-Leave sentiments among a non-negligible section of the UK's younger population. Through quantitative analysis, this survey data is utilised to provide a comprehensive account of the socio-demographic characteristics and socio-political attitudes that are most strongly associated with pro-Leave sentiments among Britain's younger Eurosceptics – a "lost tribe" in regard to both existing academic research and prevailing media narratives.

The report first presents an overview of existing Brexit-related research and political commentary. As well as demonstrating how little attention has been paid to Britain's young Eurosceptics by the academic, policy and media communities, the report explores the potential relevance of the 'left behind' thesis when examining attitudes towards EU membership among young British people. The report moves on to the analysis section, which is split into two parts. The first part includes descriptive statistics which explore the socio-demographic characteristics and socio-political attitudes of two subgroups – pro-Leave young people and pro-Remain young people. The second part of the analysis robustly tests key relationships of interest through multivariate analysis in the form of logistic regression. Following a discussion of the analysis, the report concludes by outlining the policy and political implications of the main findings.

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<sup>11</sup> Kingman, D., 'Generation Remain: Understanding the Millennial Vote', Intergenerational Foundation, October 2017, available at: [http://www.if.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Generation-Remain\\_final\\_October\\_2017.compressed.pdf](http://www.if.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Generation-Remain_final_October_2017.compressed.pdf), last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Ehsan, E. and Sloam, J., 'Resources, Values, Identity: Young Cosmopolitans and the Referendum on British Membership of the European Union', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 0, 10 October 2018, pp. 1-20.

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## 2. Brexit and the 'Left Behind' Thesis

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Much Brexit-related academic research (and media commentary) has referred to the 'left behind' thesis when explaining the Leave result delivered back in June 2016.<sup>13</sup> This concept refers to how economic stagnation and cultural alienation drive forms of political disaffection which in turn feed into populist backlashes – such as Brexit and the ascendancy of Donald Trump to the Presidency of the United States.

The socio-economic element of the 'left behind' thesis refers to the industrial decline experienced by regions that have struggled to cope with the impacts of globalisation. In the British context, this includes former coal-mining and manufacturing communities which have both been hollowed out by the forces of market globalism and have suffered as a result of chronic public underinvestment. Inspection of the Leave vote by local authority reveals that places that have endured this socioeconomic decline tended to vote for Brexit in high proportions. This includes the Derbyshire town of Bolsover in the East Midlands (70.8% Leave), Stoke-on-Trent in the West Midlands (69.4% Leave) and the coastal town of Hartlepool in the North East of England (69.6% Leave).

But solely relying on the economic dimension of the 'left behind' thesis to explain Brexit is reductionist. While a wave of working-class, traditionally Labour-voting Northern constituencies voted to leave the EU, this was also the case for a swathe of predominantly middle-class, Conservative-voting constituencies in Southern England. This interesting Leave-voting alliance – in which places as varied as the relatively deprived Stockton-on-Tees in County Durham (61.7% Leave) and the relatively affluent Brentwood in Essex (59.2% Leave) voted to leave the EU – demonstrates the limitations of purely economic explanations for Brexit. This is where the more socio-cultural elements of the 'left behind' thesis come to the fore. This aspect of the thesis speaks of the disconnect between the largely socially liberal attitudes of the political elite and the more socially conservative intuitions of large parts of the electorate.<sup>14</sup> These are sections of the British public that are unable to relate to relaxed, at times celebratory, attitudes towards issues such as immigration and cultural diversity, and hold more conservative positions when it comes to issues such as migrant integration and national security.<sup>15</sup>

Economic explanations are partly useful for electoral shocks such as the UK voting to leave the EU and Donald Trump being elected as US President, but there are also cultural factors at play. While a number of Brexit-related studies have emphasised the relationship between lower socio-economic status and voting to leave the EU, there is a comprehensive body of literature that has also discussed how social values and cultural worldviews were also influential factors.<sup>16</sup> While the economic "winners and losers of globalisation" thesis holds some relevance in the Brexit context, other sociocultural factors are important. Framing of national identity, sense of place and belonging, the "cosmopolitan vs provincial" divide on issues such as immigration and multiculturalism, and prioritisation of post-materialist concerns such as environmental protection also fed into voting patterns for the UK's referendum on EU membership.

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Goodwin, M. and Heath, O., 'The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left behind: An Aggregate-Level Analysis of the Result', *The Political Quarterly*, 26 August 2019; Hobolt, S., 'The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23, 7 September 2016, pp. 1259-1277; Sensier, M. and Devine, F., 'Social Mobility and Brexit: A Closer Look at England's "Left Behind" Communities', *University of Manchester Economics Discussion Paper Series*, June 2017, available at: <http://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/schools/soas/economics/discussionpapers/EDP-1709.pdf>, last visited: 15 August 2019; Harris, J., 'They voted for Brexit in a cry of pain – what happened to the left-behind?', *The Guardian*, 5 November 2017, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/05/brexittheresa-may-economic-austerity-leave-voting>, last visited: 15 August 2019; Kilcoyne, C. and Ledwith, S., 'In Brexit-on-Sea, the left-behind still want Out', *Reuters*, 4 April 2019, available at: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-coast-insight/in-brexit-on-sea-the-left-behind-still-want-outidUSKCNIRGOGZ>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Goodhart, D., *The Road to Somewhere* (London: Penguin Books, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Goodwin, M. and Eatwell, R., *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy* (London: Penguin Books, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Goodhart, D., *The Road to Somewhere*.

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### 3. Survey Analysis Findings

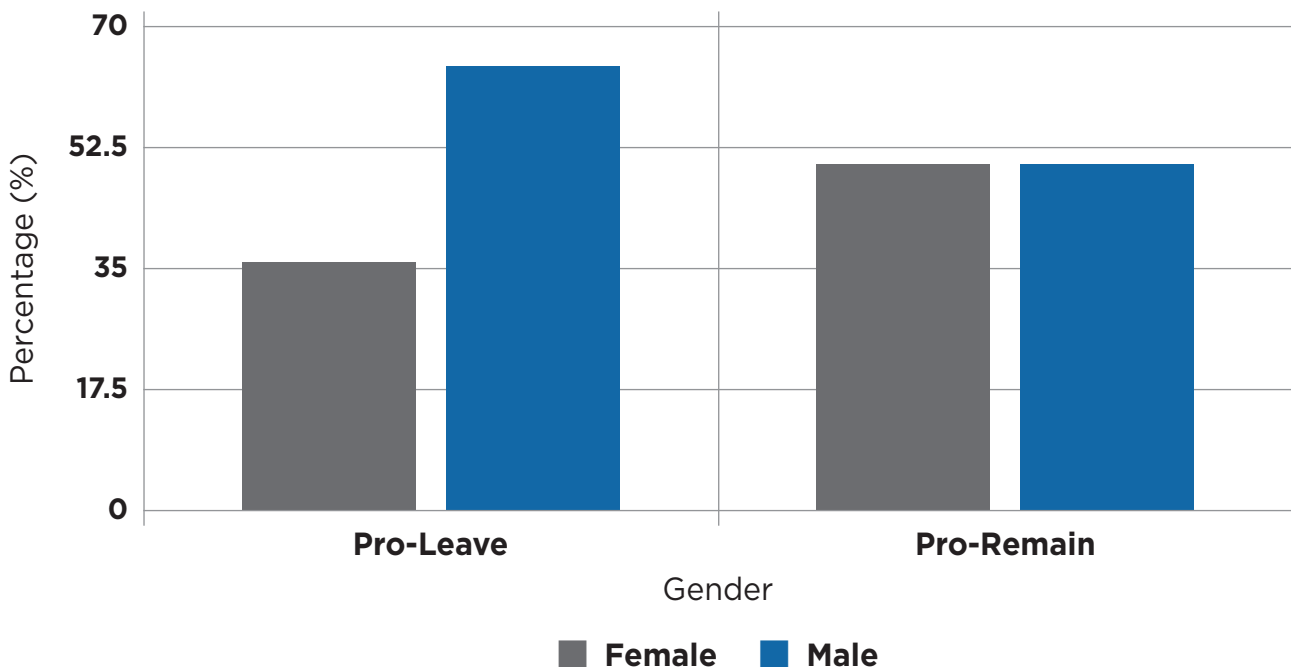
This section presents the first part of the analysis. It includes bivariate analysis of how socio-demographic factors, post-materialist values and attitudes, policy priorities, trust in social and political actors, and primary (trans)national identity relate to pro-Leave and pro-Remain sentiments among young British people.

#### 3.1 Socio-demographic Factors

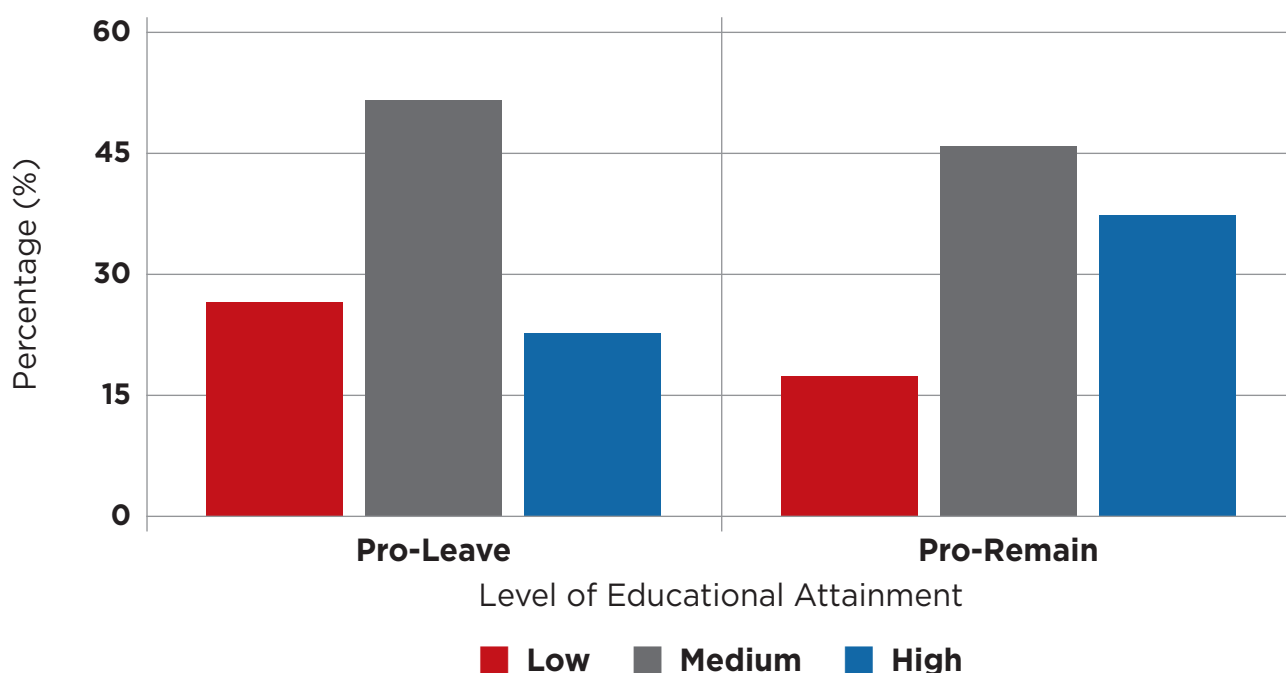
Figures 1 to 4 show the socio-demographic character of two subgroups: young pro-Remainers and young pro-Leavers. One of the clearest differences between the two subgroups is gender composition.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the pro-Remain subgroup is divided almost evenly (male 49.9%; female 50.1%). However, there is a clear gender imbalance within the pro-Leave subgroup, which is 64% male. In regard to educational attainment (Figure 2),<sup>17</sup> following the pattern demonstrated by a number of Brexit-related studies, the pro-Leave subgroup is overall less-formally educated. While 22.5% of the pro-Leave subgroup is classified as highly educated, the corresponding figure for the pro-Remain subgroup is 37.2%. A figure of 17.3% of the pro-Remain subgroup was classified as lowly educated – this figure rises to 26.4% for the pro-Leave subgroup. There are similar levels of medium-educated people within the two subgroups. More than half (51.1%) of young pro-Leave people were categorised as having medium educational attainment; the corresponding figure for the pro-Remain subgroup was 45.6%.

**Figure 1: Gender**

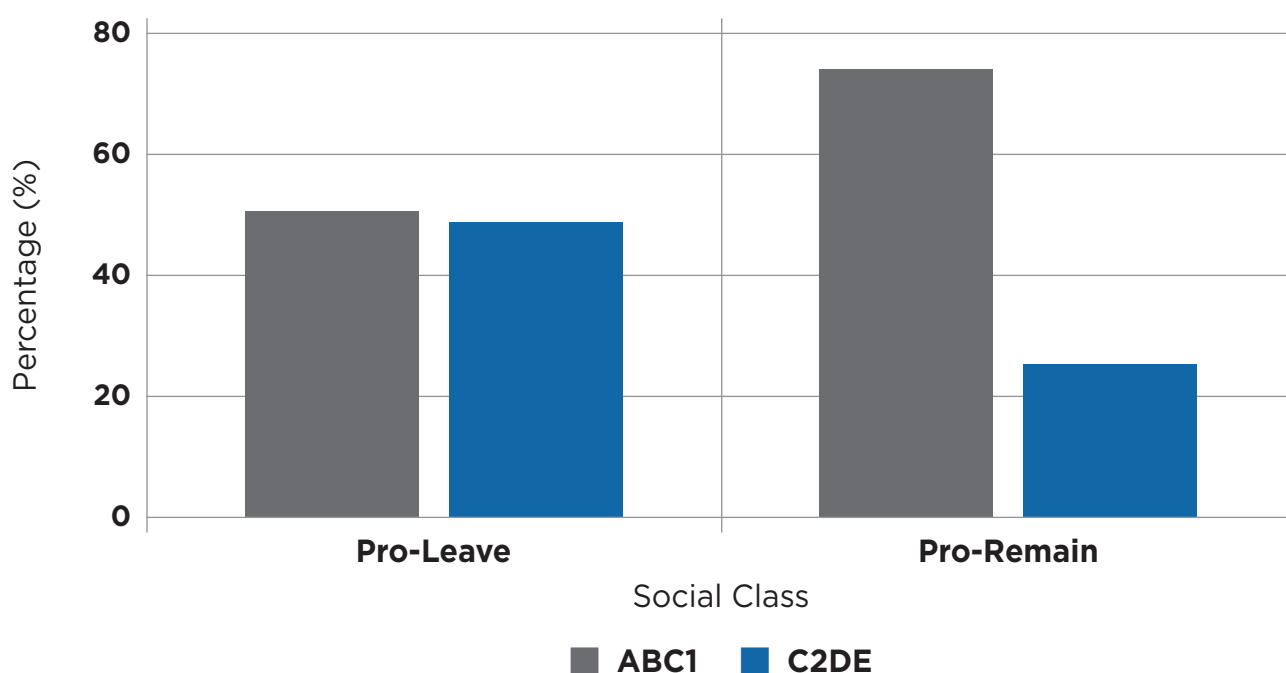


<sup>17</sup> Low level of education includes the following levels of highest qualification attained: no formal qualifications; Youth training certificate/skillseekers; Clerical and commercial qualification; City & Guilds certificate; CSE Grades 2-5; CSE Grade 1, GCE O-Level, GCSE, School Certificate; and Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate. Medium level of education includes: Recognised trade apprenticeship (completed); City & Guilds Certificate (advanced); Ordinary National Certificate (ONS); GCE A Level or Higher Certificate; Scottish Higher Certificate; Nursing Qualification (e.g. SEN, SRN, SCM, RGN); Teaching Qualification (not degree); University Diploma; and other technical, professional or higher qualification. High level of education includes: University or CNA first degree (e.g. BA, BSc, B. Ed); and University or CNA higher degree (e.g. MSc, PhD). Mean age for pro-Leave subgroup: 24.69 years. Mean age for pro-Remain subgroup: 23.87 years.

**Figure 2: Educational Attainment**

In line with existing research, there are noticeable differences between the young pro-Remain and pro-Leave subgroups based on social class. Figure 3 shows a fairly even split among young pro-Leavers along the lines of class, with 50.7% falling into the higher ABC1 social classes and just under half being placed in the lower C2DE social classes (49.3%). The young pro-Remain subgroup is of a more economically privileged character, with nearly three in four (74.5%) falling into the higher ABC1 social classes.

There are also noteworthy differences based on education/employment status, as shown in Figure 4. A higher concentration of young people within the pro-Remain subgroup were in full-time education in the build-up to the June 2016 referendum (36.8%). The corresponding

**Figure 3: Social Class**

**Figure 4: Work and Education Status**

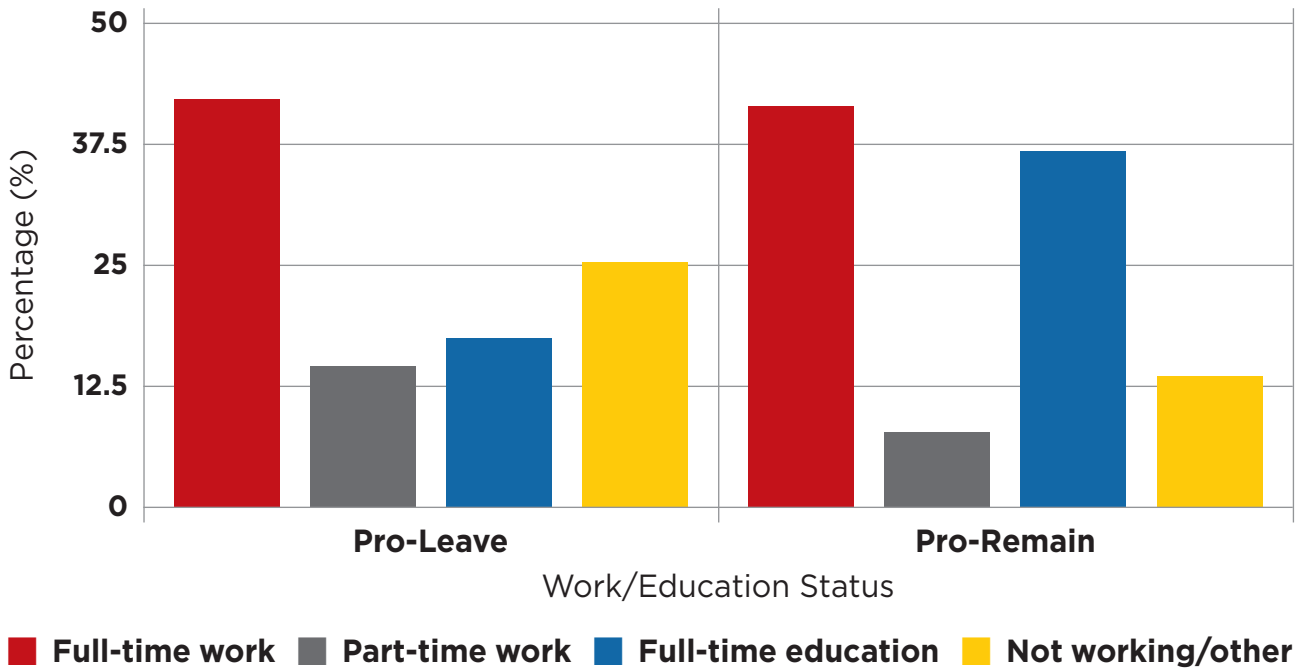


figure for those within the pro-Leave subgroup was only 17.7%. While the proportion of full-time workers within the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups are similar (42.3% and 41.5% respectively), the former includes a higher concentration of young people who are classified as not working/other (25.5% compared to 13.7%).

### 3.2 Policy Priorities

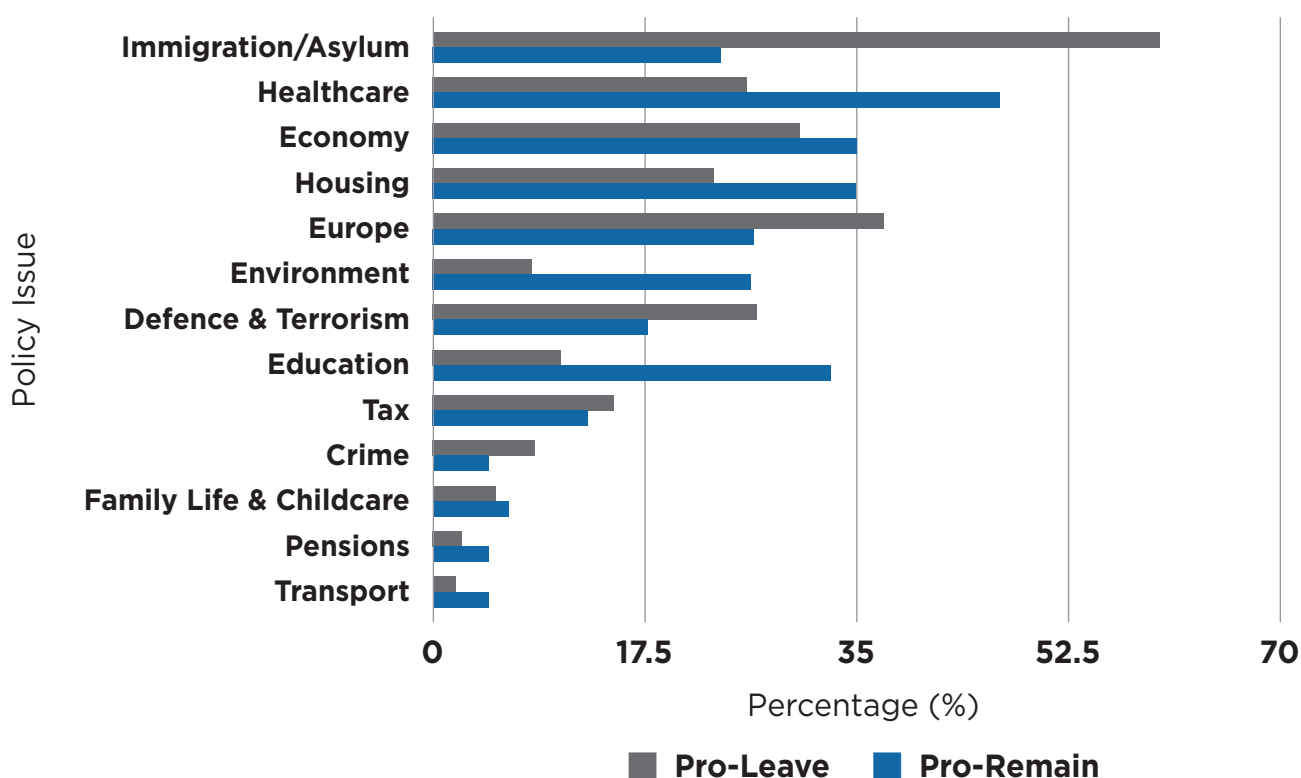
With existing Brexit-related studies emphasising the importance of policy matters such as immigration and post-materialist concerns over the environment when discussing vote choice for the June 2016 referendum, Figure 5 presents an overview of policy priorities within the young pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups.

Young British people who participated in the survey were asked, “Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three.”

Respondents were able to choose from the following policy areas: immigration and asylum; healthcare; economy; housing; Europe; environment; defence and terrorism; education; tax; crime; family life and childcare; pensions; and transport. They were also offered “none of these” and “don’t know” options.

Out of the policy issues selected, the largest Leave-Remain gap is on the issue of immigration. While 60.1% of young Leavers selected immigration as an important issue facing the country, only 23.8% of their pro-Remain peers followed suit. Young pro-Leave people were also more likely to select “Europe” (37.3% compared to 26.6%).

Another public policy area where a clear divide exists is on the issue of education. Only 10.6% of young Leavers chose education as an important issue facing the country – the corresponding figure for the young pro-Remain subgroup was 32.9%. A similar pattern emerges on the matter of the environment, which was selected by just 8% of young pro-Leave people but 26.1% of young Remainers. Another noticeable gap exists in the case of healthcare, which was selected by 26.0% of young Leavers but chosen by 46.7% of respondents within the pro-Remain subgroup.

**Figure 5: Policy Priorities**

Young Leavers were also less likely to select the economy (30.2% compared with 35.1%) and housing (23.2% compared with 35%) as important issues facing the country. Demonstrating their more “security-oriented” nature, young pro-Leave people were more likely to select defence/terrorism as an important issue facing the country in comparison to their pro-Remain peers (26.7% compared with 17.7%), as well as being more likely to select crime (8.4% compared with 4.5%).

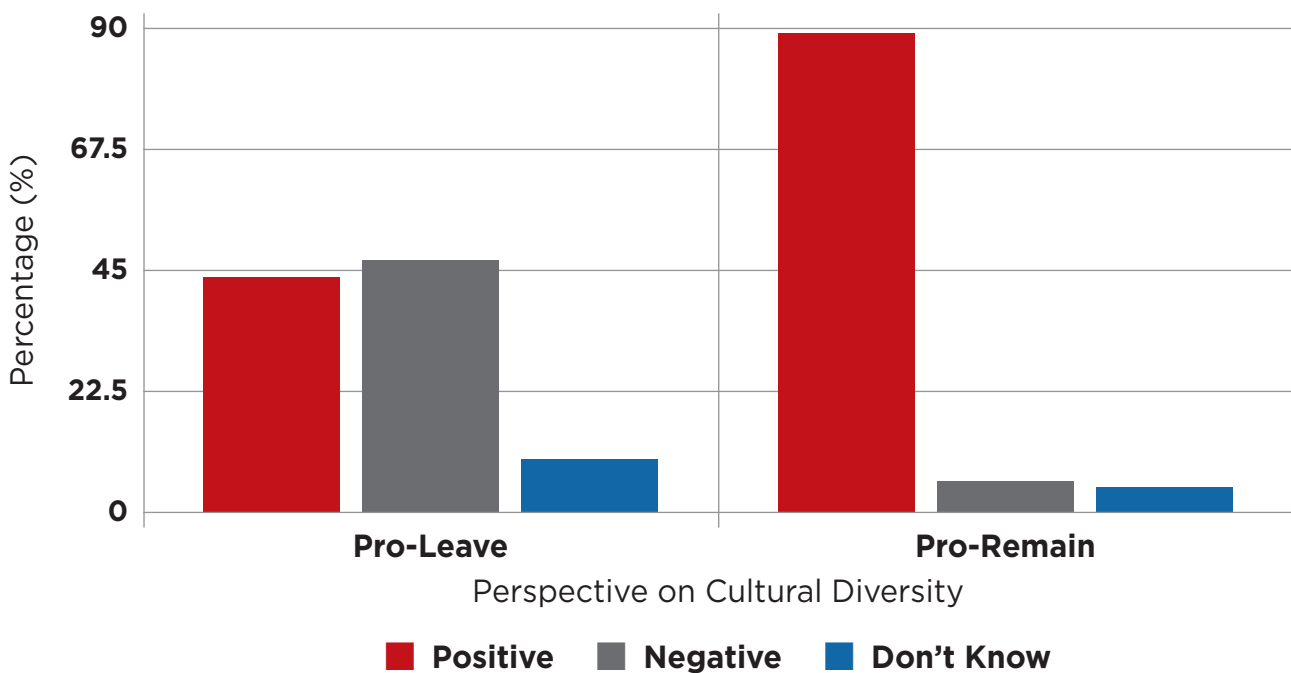
### 3.3 Perspectives on Cultural Diversity

Exploring the relevance of the socio-cultural element of the 'left behind' thesis in the context of young people and Brexit, Figure 6 breaks down perspectives on cultural diversity.

The young people in the survey were asked, *“Do you think that having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is a positive or negative part of modern Britain?”*<sup>18</sup>

A total of 43.7% of those within the young pro-Leave subgroup held a positive view of cultural diversity in the UK, with the corresponding figure for their pro-EU peers reaching as high as 88.7% – a gap of 45 percentage points. While 46.7% of young pro-Leave people held a negative view of cultural diversity, only 6.4% of their pro-Remain counterparts followed suit – a difference of more than 40 percentage points.

**Figure 6: Perspective on Cultural Diversity**



<sup>18</sup> Five responses were offered to the survey respondents: “very positive”, “fairly positive”, “fairly negative”, “very negative” and “don’t know”. For the analysis, the two positive and the two negative categories have been merged respectively.



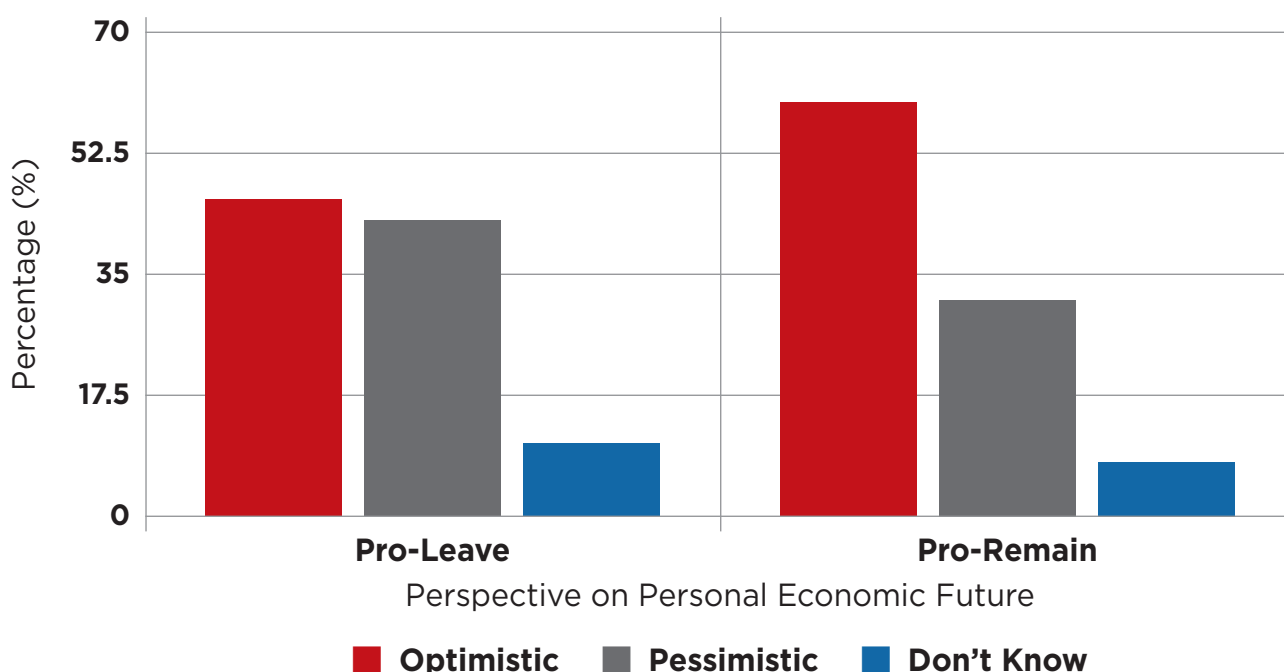
### 3.4: Personal Economic Optimism

To further explore the more economic aspects of the 'left behind' thesis among young British people in the context of the EU vote in June 2016, levels of personal economic optimism within the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups are worthy of consideration.

The young British people surveyed were asked, "How optimistic and pessimistic are you about the future personally?"<sup>19</sup>

Figure 7 shows that within both the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups, there were more people who felt optimistic as opposed to pessimistic over their personal economic prospects. However, while 46% of young Leavers stated that they were optimistic over their economic future, this figure rises to 60.1% for their pro-Remain peers. A figure of 31.6% of young Remainers reported that they were pessimistic over their economic future; the corresponding figure for their pro-Leave counterparts was 43.1%.

**Figure 7: Perspective on Personal Economic Future**



### 3.5 Social and Political Trust

Figures 8 and 9 show levels of social and political trust within the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups. In this case, social trust was measured by looking at trust in other young people, while political trust was measured by looking at levels of trust in British politicians in general.<sup>20</sup>

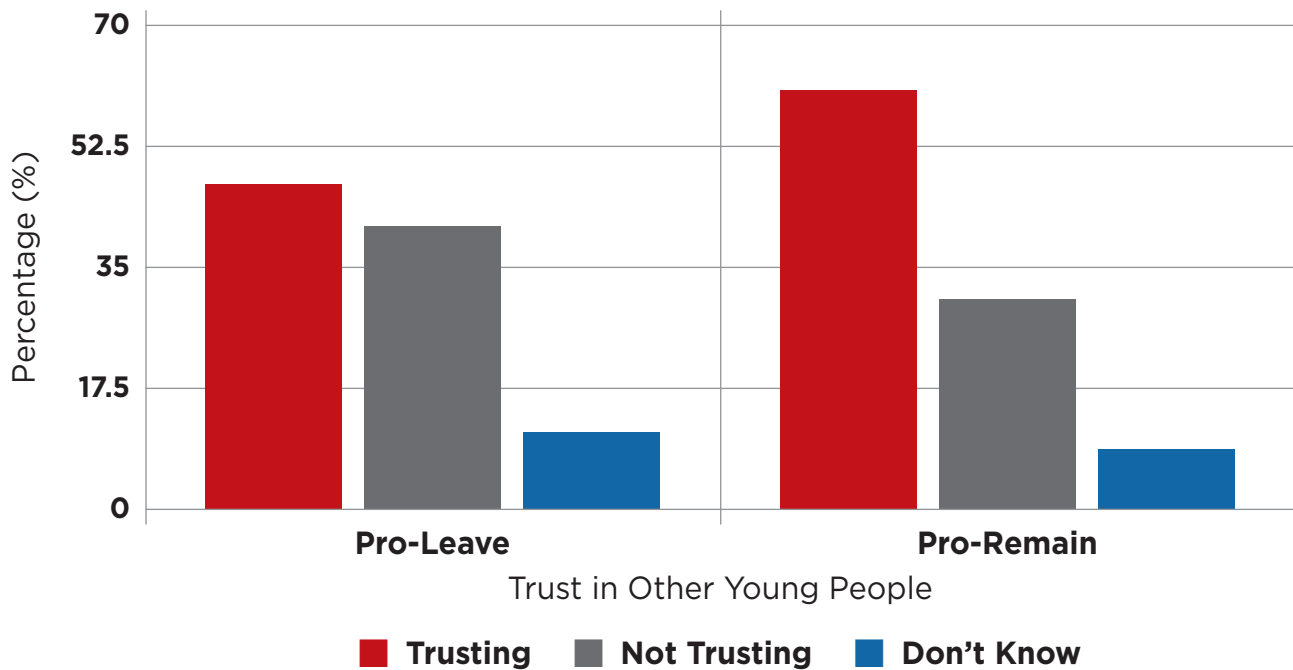
In regard to trust in their peers (Figure 8), the proportion of young Leavers who were not trusting of other young people was larger (41.2% compared with 30.6%). Young pro-Remain people were more likely to be trusting of their peers (60.6% compared with 47.3%). Figure 9 shows that levels of political distrust within both the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups were exceptionally high. A total of 78.8% of young Leavers reported that they do not trust

<sup>19</sup> Five responses were offered: "very optimistic", "fairly optimistic", "fairly pessimistic", "very pessimistic" and "don't know". For the analysis, the two optimistic and the two pessimistic categories have been merged respectively.

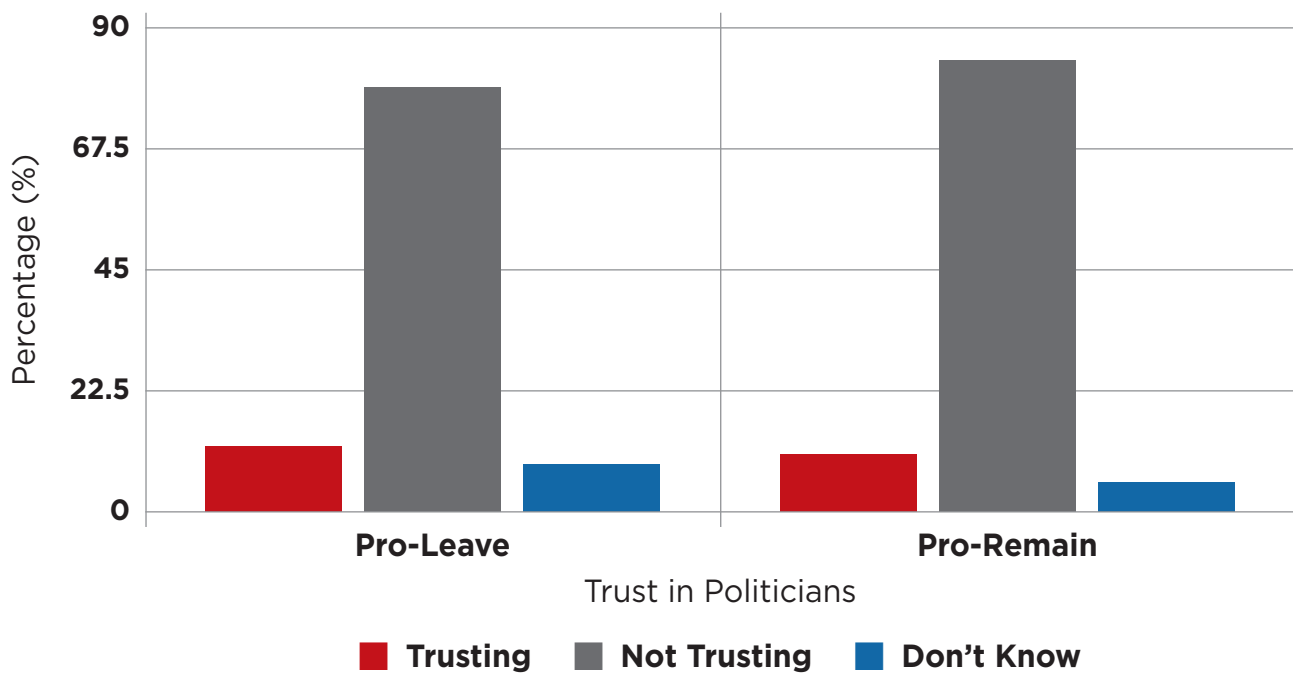
<sup>20</sup> Five responses were offered to the survey respondents when asked about their level of trust: "a great deal", "a fair amount", "not very much", "not at all" and "don't know". For the analysis, the first two responses have been merged to create a new category: "trusting". The third and fourth responses have been merged to create a new category: "not trusting". This recoding has also been done for the analysis presented later in Section 3.6.

British politicians. Interestingly, this figure rose to 83.8% among young Remainers, defying the broader social trend of political disaffection being more strongly felt among Leave voters before the June 2016 referendum.

**Figure 8: Trust in Other Young People**



**Figure 9: Trust in Politicians**

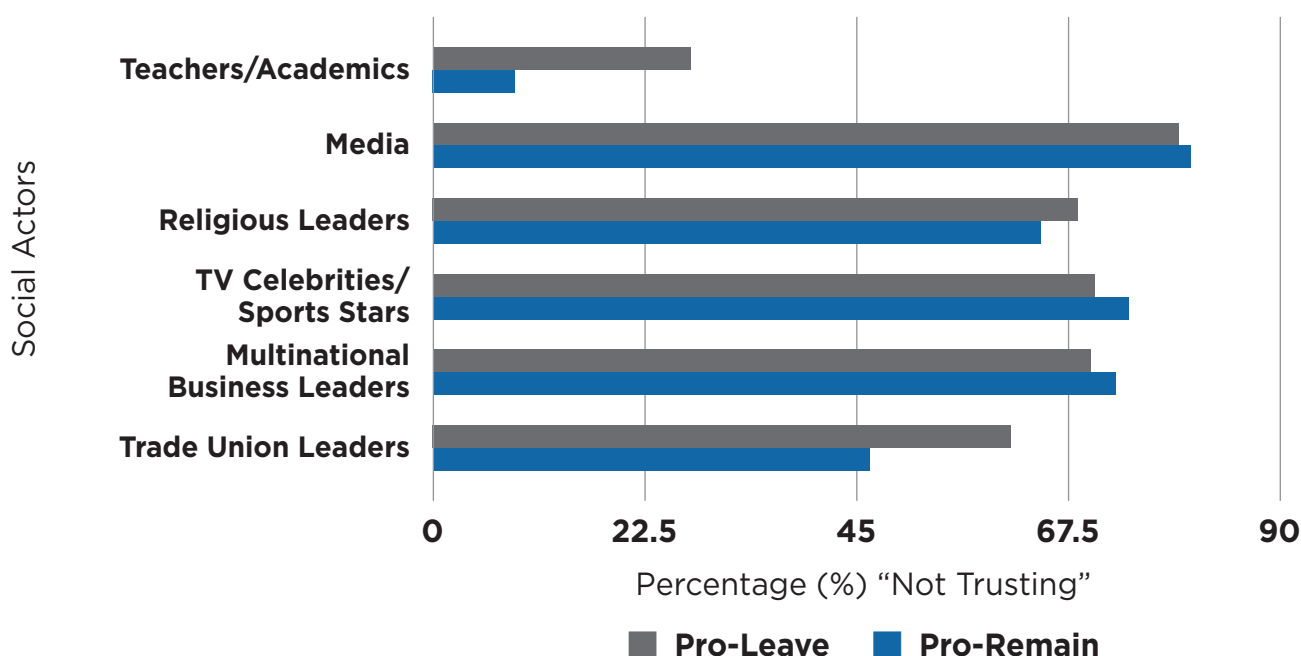


### 3.6 Trust in Other Social Actors

Figure 10 shows the levels of distrust when it comes to a number of social actors: teachers/academics; the media; religious leaders; television celebrities/sports stars; multinational business leaders; and trade union leaders.

While levels of distrust were the lowest for teachers/academics, there is a clear gap between the pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups. Only 8.8% of young Remainers reported that they did not trust teachers/academics compared with 27.3% of their pro-Leave peers. Levels of distrust were particularly high on both sides when it came to the media, with 79.1% of young Leavers not trusting the media, and the figure for young Remainers being even higher at 80.4%. While young Remainers were more likely not to trust business leaders (72.5% compared with 69.5%), young Leavers were more likely not to trust trade union leaders – by some distance (61.4% compared with 40.5%). Finally, 70.1% of young Leavers reported that they did not trust TV celebrities/sports stars; the corresponding figure for their pro-Remain counterparts was 73.7%.

**Figure 10: Distrust of Social Actors**



### 3.7 Primary Identities

There has been much speculation over how national identity fed into vote choice in the 2016 referendum. This includes a noteworthy body of research which suggests that a “protective” and “exclusionary” form of English nationalism was a driving factor in delivering the Leave result, while the more “open” and “inclusive” British and Scottish national identities were associated with voting to remain in the EU.<sup>21</sup> However, this strand of literature is by no means uncontested, with some advancing the view that “Englishness” is not widely framed in such exclusivist terms,<sup>22</sup> and that an overarching English nationalist identity is not strongly associated with Eurosceptic, anti-EU attitudes.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Virdee, S. and McGeever, B., ‘Racism, Crisis, Brexit’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41(10), 21 August 2017, pp. 1802-1819.

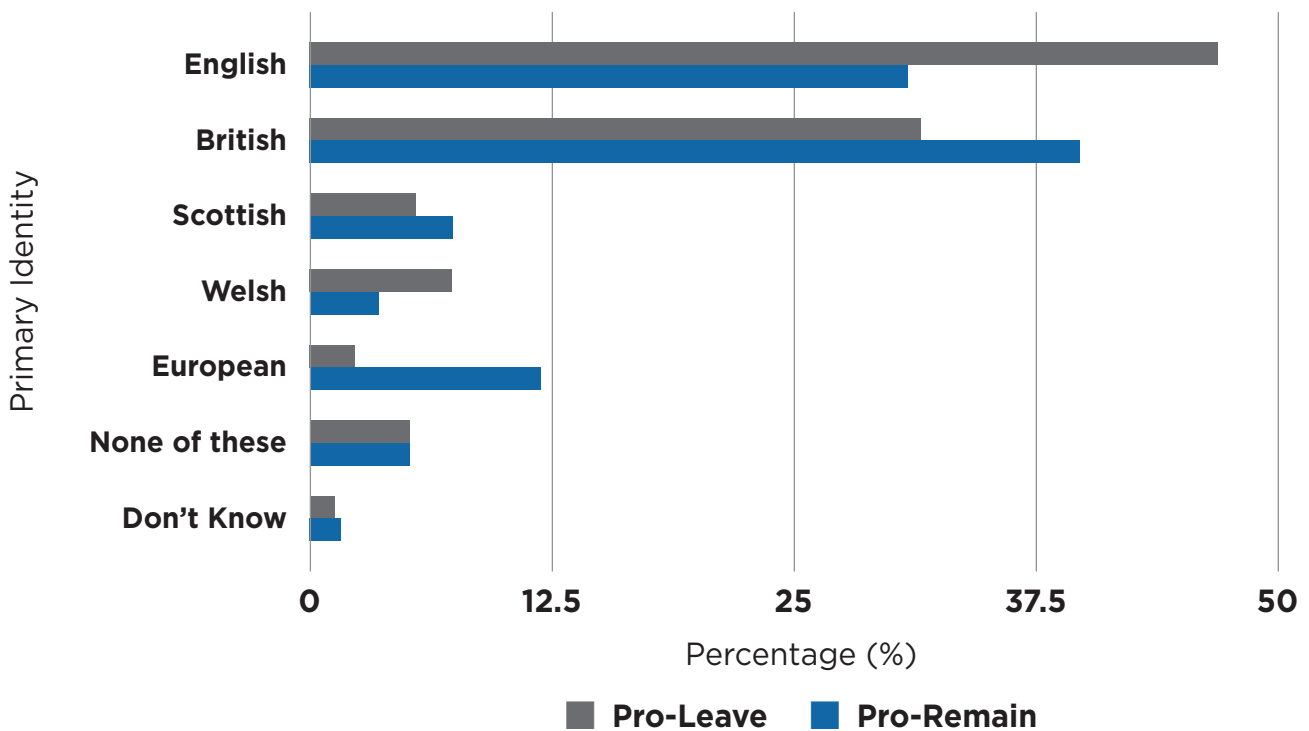
<sup>22</sup> Denham, J., ‘Nationalism in England is not just a rightwing nostalgia trip’, *The Guardian*, 13 August 2019, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/13/english-nationalism-brexit-remain-and-reform>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Kenny, M., ‘The idea that English nationalism has powered support for Brexit is unduly simplistic and requires re-examination’, LSE British Politics and Policy, 23 June 2016, available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-idea-that-english-nationalism-has-powered-support-for-brexit-is-unduly-simplistic-and-requires-re-examination/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

For this part of the analysis, five primary identities are considered: English, British, Scottish, Welsh, and European. The young British people surveyed were asked, “Which of the following best describes your identity?”

Figure 11 presents the reporting of primary identities within the young pro-Remain and young pro-Leave subgroups. The most popular primary identity reported within the pro-Leave subgroup was English (46.9%), while the most commonly reported primary identity within the pro-Remain subgroup was British (36.9%). It is important to note that more than three in ten young respondents within the pro-Remain sample reported English as their primary identity (30.9%). In line with expectations, the pro-Remain subgroup contained a higher concentration of young people who reported a primary Scottish identity, when compared to the pro-Leave subgroup (7.4% compared with 5.5%). However, the pattern is reversed for those who self-identified as Welsh, where the pro-Leave subgroup contained a larger proportion of young people who did this – in fact, more than double in terms of within-group percentage (7.4% compared with 3.5%). Unsurprisingly, the pro-Leave subgroup included a far smaller proportion of young people who primarily identified as European when compared to the proportion within the pro-Remain subgroup (2.3% compared with 11.9%).

**Figure 11: Primary Identities**



## 4. Survey Findings: Advanced Analysis

This section presents the second part of the analysis. It examines the strongest predictors of pro-Leave sentiments among young British people through multivariate analysis in the form of binary logistic regression. The model includes the following variables: party identification; gender; ethnicity; age; education level; social class; work/education status; whether or not immigration/asylum, defence/terrorism, education, healthcare and the environment were considered to be important issues facing the country; perspective on cultural diversity; level of optimism over one's own economic future; trust in other young people, politicians, teachers/academics and trade union leaders; and primary (trans)national identification. The binary dependent variable is coded as: intention to vote Remain = 0; intention to vote Leave = 1.

**Table 1: Binary logistic regression model predicting for intention to vote Leave among young people (against intention to vote Remain)**

	Log Odds Ratio (B)	Standard Error (SE)
<b>Party Identification: Conservative Party (REF)</b> <sup>24</sup>		
Labour Party	-.987**	.264
Liberal Democrats	-1.918**	.484
UK Independence Party	1.876**	.601
Other Party	-1.273**	.407
None	-.613*	.275
Don't Know	-.770*	.377
<b>Gender: Female (REF)</b>		
Male	.591**	.195
<b>Ethnicity: White (REF)</b>		
Non-white	-.196	.306
Prefer Not to Say	.023	.960
<b>Age</b>	.055	.031
<b>Education Level: Low (REF)</b>		
Medium	-.126	.291
High	-.425	.301
<b>Social Class: ABC1 (REF)</b>		
C2DE	.522*	.212

*continued...*

<sup>24</sup> (REF) denotes what has been set as the reference category for the categorical independent variables (age is included as a covariate independent variable in the model). Reference categories: identifying with the Conservative Party; female; white; low education level; social classes ABC1; in full-time work; not selecting environment, healthcare, education, defence/terrorism and immigration as an important issue facing the country; holding a positive view of cultural diversity; being optimistic over personal economic future; being trusting of peers; being trusting of politicians; being trusting of teachers/academics; being trusting of trade union leaders; and reporting English as a primary identity.

**Table 1 (continued)**

	<b>Log Odds Ratio (B)</b>	<b>Standard Error (SE)</b>
<b>Work Status: Full-Time Work (REF)</b>		
Part-Time Work	.539	.311
Full-Time Student	.333	.275
Not Working/Other	.223	.289
Environment important issue facing country	-.831**	.274
Healthcare important issue facing the country	-.322	.196
Education important issue facing country	-.892**	.239
Defence/Terrorism important issue facing country	.202	.225
Immigration important issue facing country	.776**	.196
<b>Perspective on Cultural Diversity: Positive (REF)</b>		
Negative	1.328**	.262
Don't Know	1.040**	.385
<b>Personal Economic Optimism: Optimistic (REF)</b>		
Pessimistic	.161	.208
Don't Know	.273	.378
<b>Trust in Other Young People: Trusting (REF)</b>		
Not Trusting	.040	.208
Don't Know	-.512	.506
<b>Trust in Politicians: Trusting (REF)</b>		
Not Trusting	-.079	.282
Don't Know	-.140	.599
<b>Trust in Teachers/Academics: Trusting (REF)</b>		
Not Trusting	.723*	.286
Don't Know	.801	.673
<b>Trust in Trade Union Leaders: Trusting (REF)</b>		
Not Trusting	-.191	.226
Don't Know	-.422	.386

*continued...*

**Table 1 (continued)**

	<b>Log Odds Ratio (B)</b>	<b>Standard Error (SE)</b>
<b>Primary Identity: English (REF)</b>		
<b>British</b>	-.246	.209
<b>Scottish</b>	-.890*	.453
<b>Welsh</b>	.072	.497
<b>European</b>	-1.720**	.501
<b>None of These</b>	.431	.398
<b>Don't Know</b>	-1.770	.938
<b>Constant</b>	-1.992	.914

**Notes for Logistic Regression Model: N = 1,044. Chi-square: 442.90. P-value <0.05 (.000). -2LL (final): 401.962. Pseudo R Square: .355. Source: YouGov (May 2016). \*p<0.05. \*\*p<0.01.**

Table 1 presents the results of the binary logistic regression model (intention to vote Remain = 0; intention to vote Leave = 1).

Controlling for all other variables, young people who identified with the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and other parties (such as the Scottish Nationalist Party and the Green Party) were less likely to report an intention to vote Leave than Conservative Party identifiers in the model ( $b = -.987$ ;  $b = -1.918$ ;  $b = -1.273$ ). Meanwhile, those who identified with the UK Independence Party (UKIP) were more likely to report an intention to vote Leave than Conservative Party identifiers ( $b = 1.876$ ). All of these findings are statistically significant at the 1% confidence level.

There are significant gender effects to report from the model. Controlling for all other variables, being male is significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave ( $b = .591$ ). This finding is statistically significant at the 1% confidence level. Interestingly, there are no significant effects to report for ethnicity, educational attainment and work/education status. However, there are significant class effects. Belonging to the lower C2DE social classes (as opposed to the higher ABC1 social classes) is significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave in the model ( $b = .522$ ). This finding is statistically significant at the 5% confidence level.

In regard to the policy matters deemed to be important issues facing the country, selecting immigration is significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave ( $b = .776$ ). Selecting the environment or education as an important issue facing the country is significantly associated with a lower likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave ( $b = -.831$ ;  $b = -.892$ ). All three of these findings are statistically significant at the 1% confidence level. There are no significant results delivered for personal economic optimism. Being unsure or holding a negative view of cultural diversity are both significantly associated with a higher likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave in the model ( $b = 1.040$ ;  $b = 1.328$ ). Both of these findings are statistically significant at the 1% confidence level (with the results shown in Figure 12).<sup>25</sup>

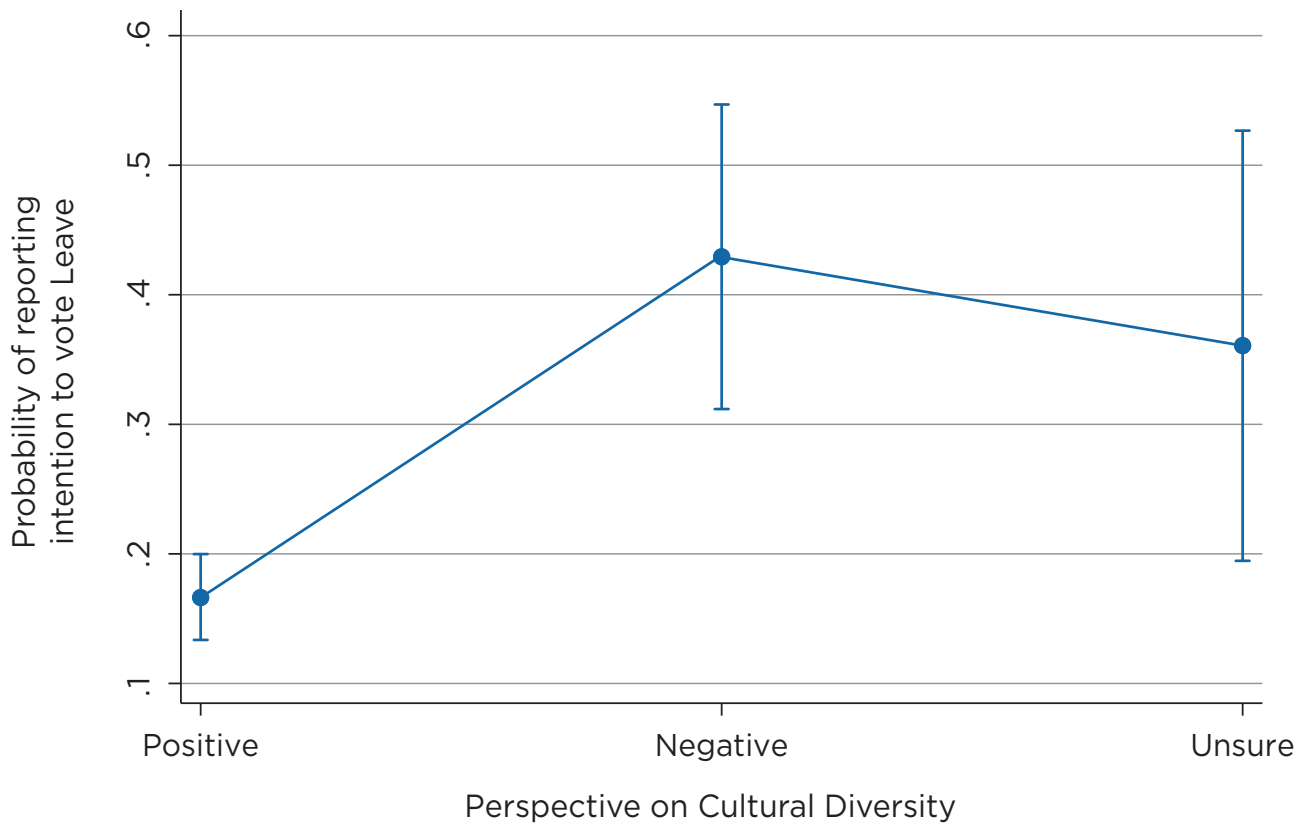
While there are no significant effects to report with regard to trust in other young people and trust in politicians, not being trusting of teachers/academics is significantly associated with a

<sup>25</sup> "Don't Know" responses displayed as "unsure" in Figure 12 (as well as Figure 13).

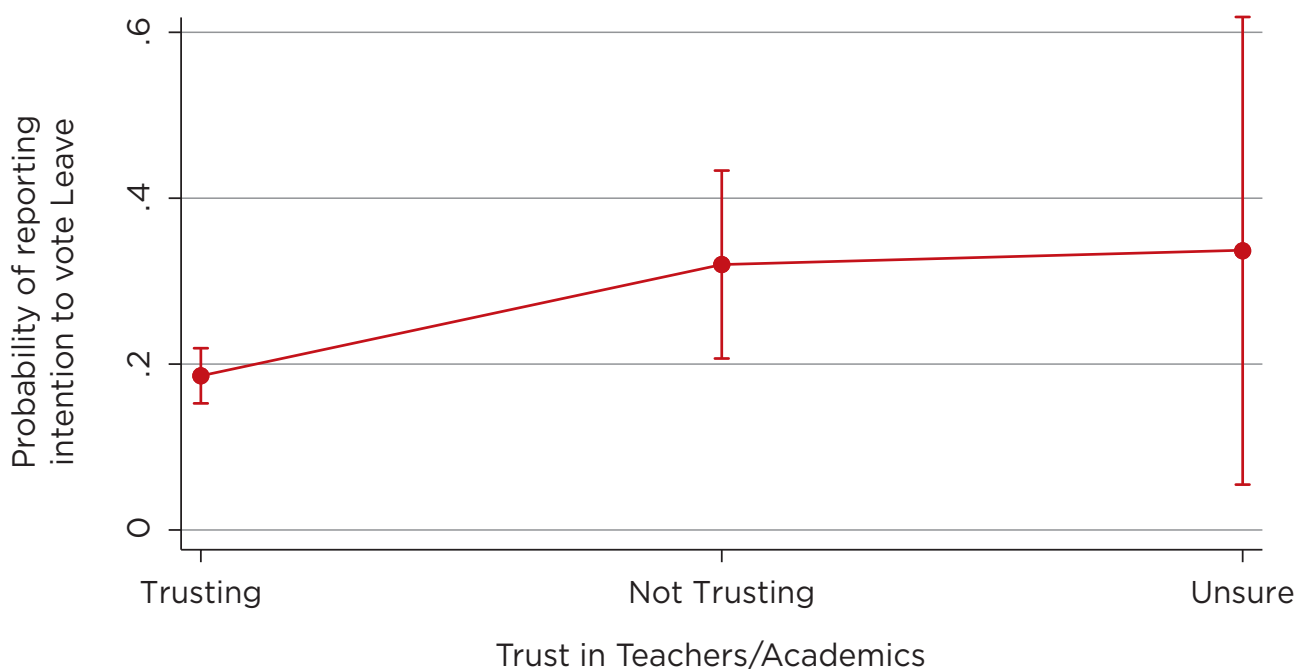


higher likelihood of reporting an intention to vote Leave ( $b = .723$ ). This finding is statistically significant at the 5% confidence level (with the results shown in Figure 13). In regard to identity, those primarily identifying as European ( $b = -1.720$ ) and Scottish ( $b = -.890$ ) are significantly less likely to report an intention to vote Leave than those who primarily identify as English (at the 1% and 5% confidence level respectively).

**Figure 12: Predicted Pro-Leave by Diversity Attitudes**



**Figure 13: Predicted Pro-Leave by Trust in Teachers/Academics**



**Table 2: Predicted probabilities for reporting intention to vote Leave (against intention to vote Remain)**

	<b>Predicted Probabilities</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>95% Confidence Intervals (Lower and Upper)</b>	
<b>UKIP Identifier</b>	.770	.103	.569	.971
<b>Male</b>	.263	.028	.209	.318
<b>C2DE</b>	.276	.036	.205	.346
<b>Immigration Important Issue</b>	.306	.035	.238	.375
<b>Negative View of Cultural Diversity</b>	.431	.060	.313	.550
<b>Not Trusting of Teachers/Academics</b>	.321	.058	.207	.434
<b>Primary English Identity</b>	.258	.030	.199	.316

Table 2 presents predicted probabilities for reporting pro-Leave sentiments among young people. Seven categories are considered: identifying with UKIP, being male, belonging to the lower C2DE social classes, selecting immigration as an important issue facing the country, holding a negative view of cultural diversity, not being trusting of teachers/academics, and primarily identifying as English.

The table shows that identifying with UKIP is the strongest predictor of reporting pro-Leave sentiments in the model (.770). Holding a negative view of cultural diversity is the second strongest predictor of reporting pro-Leave sentiments in the model (.431). The third strongest predictor out of those presented is not trusting academics/teachers (.321), further demonstrating the importance of trust in educationalists when examining young people's attitudes towards the EU. Selecting immigration as an important policy issue facing the country is the fourth strongest predictor out of those presented (.306). The next most important predicted probability is belonging to the C2DE social classes (.276), followed by being male (.263) and primarily identifying as English (.258).

## 5. Discussion

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There is a tendency for politicians<sup>26</sup> and media commentators<sup>27</sup> to homogenise social groups that are both socio-politically diverse and internally stratified. Much of this homogenisation is politically motivated and is often influenced by personal ideology. This is particularly the case with Brexit. There has, for example, been little attention paid to the one in four university graduates, the one in three ethnic minority voters, or indeed the four in ten Londoners who voted for Brexit. Another section of British society that has been neglected by the academic, policy and media communities – as well as by mainstream politicians at large – are young people who hold Eurosceptic attitudes. While comfortably outnumbered by their pro-Remain peers, this is by no means an unimportant part of Britain's democratic community. Much Brexit-related research has understandably emphasised the higher levels of Euroscepticism within “greyer” sections of the British electorate as part of a broader generational divide narrative – but this means our understanding of pro-Leave attitudes among young people is far from developed.

This report, which is based on the findings of a nationally representative pre-referendum survey of those aged between 18 and 30, has provided a comprehensive account of the socio-demographic and socio-political underpinnings of pro-Leave sentiments among younger parts of British society. There are clear points of separation between young Eurosceptics and their pro-EU peers – intragenerational “value divides” and differences in worldview which tend to dominate the intergenerational “young versus old” narratives which have developed following the June 2016 referendum and the “youthquake” witnessed at the 2017 UK General Election.<sup>28</sup>

The differences in the socio-demographic character between the young pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups are largely reflective of broader voting patterns for the UK vote on EU membership. Young people reporting pro-Leave sentiments were less likely to be highly educated. But another difference between the two subgroups is work and education status, with young Eurosceptics being far less likely to be in full-time education than their pro-Remain peers. This supports the finding of previous studies which emphasise the importance of educational *status* as well as educational *attainment* in shaping the socio-political attitudes of young people living in liberal democracies.<sup>29</sup> But the real dividing line is based on socio-economic status. Following the general trend of existing Brexit-related research, there are significant class effects when examining pre-referendum attitudes towards the EU among Britain's young people. Belonging to the lower social classes (C2DE) is strongly associated with reporting pro-Leave attitudes, as demonstrated by the multivariate analysis. June 2016 was a unique test of British public opinion – and one which showed that class still matters in the UK's electoral politics.

The report's central gender-related finding – that pro-Leave people are more likely to be male when compared to the pro-Remain subgroup – means it is part of a burgeoning strand of research that emphasises the role of gender in contemporary voting behaviour. In the British context, there were clear gender differences among young people for the 2017 UK General Election. While 52% of men aged 18–24 voted for the Labour Party, this figure rose to 73%

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<sup>26</sup> Paterson, K., ‘Mhairi Black issues warning over Brexit's impact on young people’, *The National*, 12 August 2019, available at: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/17830230.young-people-will-pay-price-brexit-mhairiblack-warns/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Shand-Baptiste, K., ‘Young people are at the end of their tether – which is why we'll march for a Final Say on Brexit’, *The Independent*, 16 February 2019, available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/final-saybrexit-young-people-march-put-it-to-the-people-second-referendum-a8780666.html>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Sloam, J., Ehsan, R. and Henn, M., ‘Youthquake: How and Why Young People Reshaped the Political Landscape in 2017’, *Political Insight*, 9(1), 28 February 2018, pp. 4–8.

<sup>29</sup> Henn, M. and Foard, N., ‘Social differentiation in young people's political participation: the impact of social and educational factors on youth political engagement in Britain’, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17, 25 September 2013, pp. 360–380.

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among their female counterparts in the same age bracket. A total of 36% of men aged 18–24 voted for the Conservatives; the corresponding figure for women aged 18–24 was only 18%.<sup>30</sup> The UK is not unique in this respect. In the 2016 US Presidential Election won by Donald Trump, 63% of women under the age of 30 voted for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton; the corresponding figure for men under the age of 30 was 47%.<sup>31</sup> This gender gap in Democratic Party support among younger voters was larger than the gap for the 2008 and 2012 US Presidential Elections. These gender differences in voting have the potential to impact on the democratic politics and policy debates in Western liberal democracies, including the UK, for some time to come.

In a purely attitudinal sense, one of the sharpest points of difference between young Leavers and young Remainers was their perspective on cultural diversity in the UK. Young British people with pro-Leave sentiments were far more likely to have a negative perception of the cultural diversity that characterises modern British society, compared to their more cosmopolitan-minded pro-Remain peers. Indeed, the logistic regression analysis reveals that holding a negative view of cultural diversity is the strongest predictor for reporting pro-Leave sentiments among young British people (putting aside party identification effects). This finding, along with the class effects aforementioned, help to paint a picture very much in line with the ‘left behind’ thesis. Socio-economic disadvantage – being economically ‘left behind’ – was strongly associated with pro-Leave sentiments. But socio-cultural disaffection – feeling negatively towards cultural diversity and holding a sceptical view of multiculturalism – was also a powerful driver of Eurosceptic attitudes among young British people.

If there is an area where the differences between Britain’s young pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups are at their starkest, it is their priorities when asked which policy matters facing the country are the most important. These differences on specific policy priorities are most influential when seeking to understand the shaping of pro-Remain and pro-Leave sentiments. Unsurprisingly, selecting immigration (and asylum) as an important issue facing the UK was strongly associated with pro-Leave sentiments among young British people. This also demonstrates the cosmopolitan outlook that exists among young pro-Remain people, who were more likely to hold relaxed attitudes towards immigration and view the cultural diversity it brings as a positive feature of modern British society.

Post-materialist attitudes were more prevalent within the pro-Remain subgroup, and this is nowhere better demonstrated than the issue of the environment. Not choosing the environment as an important issue facing the country was a relatively strong predictor of reporting pro-Leave sentiments among Britain’s young people. The findings do suggest that young pro-Remain people were far more likely to hold the view that the UK’s membership of the EU is an integral part of a broader collective effort to address environmental challenges such as climate change and waste reduction.

Another policy-based difference between young Leavers and young Remainers is the extent to which education was prioritised as a key issue for the country at large. Not prioritising education as a major issue for the UK was significantly associated with pro-Leave sentiments among younger sections of the British population. While Brexit-related narratives have tended to focus on levels of educational attainment, attitudes *towards* education as a public policy issue appear to be heavily implicated in the Leave–Remain divide among young British people.

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<sup>30</sup> Sloam, J., Ehsan, R. and Henn, M., ‘Youthquake: How and Why Young People Reshaped the Political Landscape in 2017’, *Political Insight*, 9(1), 28 February 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Kawashima-Ginsburg, K., ‘How Gender Mattered to Millennials in the 2016 Election and Beyond’, Council on Contemporary Families, 30 March 2017, available at: <https://contemporaryfamilies.org/kawashima-ginsberggender-millennials-2016-election-and-beyond/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

This flows into the findings over trust. One of the statistically significant predictors of pro-Leave sentiments among young people was not trusting people who work in the education sector – namely teachers and academics. This further demonstrates the importance of education-related factors when examining points of separation between the young pro-Leave and pro-Remain subgroups. However, it is important to recognise that this does not mean that teachers and academics were widely mistrusted among young Leavers, but rather reflects the particularly high levels of trust in educationalists among young Remainers. Indeed, of the social actors considered under the analysis, teachers and academics commanded far higher levels of trust within the young pro-Leave subgroup when compared to other social actors, such as business and trade union leaders. Despite much speculation over young people being obsessed with Britain's “celebrity culture”,<sup>32</sup> television celebrities and sport stars commanded relatively low levels of trust among younger sections of the British population.

In regard to trust in other young people, at the bivariate level, social trust was lower within the pro-Leave subgroup. But the most notable finding regarding trust was the overwhelming lack of trust young people have in British politicians. The proportion of those within both the pro-Leave and the pro-Remain subgroups who did not trust politicians may well be reflective of how prevailing concerns among younger generations have not been prioritised by the political classes<sup>33</sup> – especially during the age of austerity where cuts to public expenditure have disproportionately affected younger sections of British society.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, politicians are less trusted than all of the other social actors considered in the analysis.

Much has been made of the role of national (and transnational identity) in shaping attitudes towards the EU and voting patterns for the June 2016 referendum itself. In line with other Brexit-related studies, deeper expressions of English identity appeared to be strongly related to pro-Leave sentiments among younger sections of British society. However, it is important to note that more than three in ten young people who intended to vote Remain prior to the referendum also reported English as their primary identity. Indeed, this provides evidence of there being fertile ground for the fostering of an inclusive, values-based “Englishness” which can help to bond together both pro-Leave and pro-Remain young people living in England.

Despite existing media and political narratives offering the view that Brexit is a “provincial English enterprise”<sup>35</sup> – even worse, the product of English xenophobia – a higher proportion within the pro-Leave subgroup reported Welsh as their primary identity when compared with the pro-Remain subgroup. However, what is clear is how English and Scottish identity operate in very different ways when examining young people's attitudes towards the UK's membership of the EU. When compared to primary English identities, overriding expressions of Scottishness are significantly associated with a lower likelihood of holding Eurosceptic attitudes. While English political identity appears to be somewhat related to British Euroscepticism and anti-EU attitudes, Scottish political identity – especially among young people – is very much tied to more favourable views of EU membership.

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<sup>32</sup> Mason, R., ‘Education minister Nick Gibb claims celebrity culture and obsession with wealth is harming children’, *The Telegraph*, 15 December 2011, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/8959344/Education-minister-Nick-Gibb-claims-celebrity-culture-and-obsession-with-wealth-is-harming-children.html>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Pickard, S., *Politics, Protest and Young People: Political Participation and Dissent in 21st Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019).

<sup>34</sup> Sloam, J. and Ehsan, R., ‘Youth Quake: Young People and the 2017 General Election’, Intergenerational Foundation, November 2017, available at: [http://www.if.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Youth-Quake\\_Final.pdf](http://www.if.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Youth-Quake_Final.pdf), last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Stephens, P., ‘Goodbye UK, and goodbye the United Kingdom’, *Financial Times*, 4 April 2019, available (behind paywall) at: <https://www.ft.com/content/e4b113f0-5552-11e9-91f9-b6515a54c5b1>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

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## 6. Conclusion

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Using a nationally representative pre-referendum survey, this report finds that Britain's young people are far from being a homogenous bloc when it comes to the UK's membership of the EU. Roughly one in four of the young people surveyed expressed pro-Leave sentiments. This often-overlooked section of the British electorate, as well being far more likely to view immigration as an important issue facing the country, were also less likely to view cultural diversity in a positive light when compared to their pro-EU peers. As well as being less formally educated than their pro-EU counterparts, Britain's young Eurosceptics were both less inclined to prioritise education as an important policy matter for the country, and more distrusting of educationalists.

What the analysis shows is that there is no easy answer to questions over the possible political and social drawbacks associated with Brexit. Characteristics associated with pro-Leave sentiments among young people – male, lower socio-economic status, anxious over immigration, sceptical of cultural diversity, prevailing expressions of “Englishness” – also overlap with the profile of “target groups” for the recruitment and mobilisation processes of far-right organisations in the UK.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, there is growing evidence of “Brexit Betrayal” rhetoric being increasingly co-opted by far-right nationalist movements.<sup>37</sup> Perceived failure when it comes to the delivery of Brexit carries the risk of fuelling political disaffection among “at risk” groups traditionally associated with membership of far-right groups.

On the flip side, the majority of Britain's young people did vote to Remain, with positive views of immigration-induced cultural diversity appearing to be strongly related to pro-EU sentiments. A disruptive Conservative-led Brexit under new Prime Minister Boris Johnson could also serve to intensify calls for Scottish independence among young Remainers living north of the border – adding considerable energy to renewed demands for a second referendum on Scotland's possible separation from the UK. Indeed, a recent poll has shown that more Scottish people would prefer independence to remaining in the Union,<sup>38</sup> with another survey showing that 60% of Scots believe support for Scottish independence would increase if the UK was to exit the EU on a no-deal basis.<sup>39</sup> This is the dilemma that faces unionist politicians who are both pro-Leave (to the extent of supporting a no-deal Brexit) but also wish for Remain-voting Scotland to maintain its place in the UK.

While this report has focused on socio-demographic and attitudinal differences between young pro-Leave people and their pro-Remain peers, it is important to highlight the similarities between the two subgroups as we move forwards. The incredibly low levels of trust in politicians among young people – both pro-Leave and pro-Remain – should be a serious concern for those who care for the health of Britain's democracy. The role of austerity, which has disproportionately affected younger sections of British society, should not be underestimated in this context. This perhaps explains why levels of political distrust were even higher among young pro-Remain people, who were more likely to identify with the Labour Party and have lived much, if not all, of their adult life under Conservative-led rule.

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<sup>36</sup> Winlow, S., Hall, S. and Treadwell, J., *The Rise of the Right: English Nationalism and the transformation of working-class politics* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017).

<sup>37</sup> Poulter, J., ‘The Left Behind: What makes young people join the far right?’, *BBC News*, 11 July 2019, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/73eb2bab-ca72-42eb-a712-26f0680010bb>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>38</sup> McCafferty, R., ‘Poll: Majority of Scots now in favour of independence’, *The Scotsman*, 5 August 2019, available at: <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/poll-majority-of-scots-now-in-favour-of-independence-1-4976640>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Learmonth, A., ‘Majority of Scots believe No Deal will increase support for independence’, *The National*, 11 August 2019, available at: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/17829985.majority-scots-believe-no-deal-will-increase-support-independence/>, last visited: 15 August 2019.

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Healthy percentages within both groups selected the economy as an important issue facing the country, and while almost half (46.1%) of young pro-Leave people were pessimistic over their economic prospects, almost one-third (31.6%) of their pro-Remain peers followed suit. Therefore, irrespective of the country's EU membership status, politicians would do well to adopt a more consultative, youth-oriented policy agenda which could look to boost investment in vocational colleges, the funding of apprenticeships and the provision of specialist research bursaries. Whether pro-Leave or pro-Remain, Britain's young people are the country's future, and more opportunities ought to be created to order for them to fulfil their potential in the UK.







Title: "A LOST TRIBE: BRITAIN'S  
YOUNG EUROSCEPTICS"  
By Dr Rakib Ehsan

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