Experience of Therapist Immigrant from Poland in Times of Brexit: An Interpretative phenomenological analysis

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on this programme of study, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work and in the list of references.

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Abstract

Leaving the European Union (EU) has involved extensive changes in British economic and social reality. Brexit referendum is a unique event, since no other member state has ever decided to exit the European Union. Brexit has not only implied a political change but, more than anything, a major social change in immigrants' life.

This qualitative research project uses Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the experience of therapist immigrants from Poland in times of Brexit. The study will attend to capture subjective experience of Brexit, how it affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland, including shifts, changes, and the impact on personal and professional life. Eight participants took part in the research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the transcribed data were analysed.

Themes emerged from the data revealed how participants made sense of complexity, uncertainty, and possible changes in their professional and private life. Themes that appeared to be significant included feelings of otherness and betrayal by the British society. Participants experience remained invisible and their voices were silenced during the Brexit debate. Participants also identified lack of adequate professional support. This research contributes towards a deeper understanding of social changes and their impact on mental health. The findings of this study contribute to the body of literature regarding the mental health of immigrants, in particular immigrant therapists from a counselling psychology perspective. It is hoped that the study will encourage therapists to reflect deeper on the tentative interplay between, broadly speaking, mental health and politics. It is considered that by opening up the space for understanding the difficulties of the political situation and admitting the challenges of the material, therapists expand the range of emotional availability. Possible future research has also been explored based on the findings. This study and its findings contribute to the expanding Brexit research literature with an IPA methodology and in the context of Counselling Psychology.

Keywords: Brexit, immigrant, therapist, European Union, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

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Contents

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Appendix 3: Research Ethics Committee Approval

Appendix 4: Full Transcript of Interview

Appendix 5: Example of development emergent themes

List of Tables

Table 1: Participants

Table 2: Superordinate Themes

       and related Superordinate Themes

Chapter 1

Introduction

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself.

Cohen, 1972, p.28

1.1 Introduction

In chapter 1 the research will be introduced by providing background information and introducing the researcher. The chapter will conclude with a short summary of the following work.

1.2 Background

Brexit is recognized by many as one of the most challenging and complex changes in modern politics and social life. There is no single experience of Brexit. There is

much to be gained from understanding changes happening now at different levels, including professional, institutional and personal. To capture lived experiences, to better understand the changes and impacts of Brexit that are taking place now, from the pre-referendum period to Brexit and beyond, this, I hope, proves useful in contextualizing the process alongside the wider problems of immigration, particularly for therapist-immigrants in the UK.

1.3 Integrative psychotherapy model

I believe that my values are foundational to the reality I live in, and therefore an inseparable part of the therapy process. At the very heart of relational therapy, it is my commitment to be present in the here and now. I am continually aiming to work relationally, mindful of an intersubjective engagement. As Stolorow and his colleagues highlighted, "A fundamental assumption that had guided our work is that the only reality relevant and accessible to psychoanalytic inquiry (that is, to empathy and introspection) is subjective reality - that of the patient, that of the analyst, and the psychological field created by the interplay between the two." (Stolorow, et al. 1995, p.4). In my work with a client, I am aware that the two subjectivities work together to make sense of the client's experiences and meanings. "The intersubjective field of the analysis, made possible by the emotional availability of both analyst and patient, becomes a developmental second chance for the patient." (Orange, 1995, p.56).

Sustained empathic enquiry contributes to the formation of an intersubjective situation in which the client increasingly comes to believe that his most profound emotional states and needs can be understood. It gradually establishes the therapist as an understanding presence with whom early unmet needs can be revived and

aborted developmental thrusts reinstated (Stolorow, et aI., 1995). The human being rises above psychosomatic construction and, by doing that, enters into the realm of genuinely human, together with his/her ontological variations of the somatic, psychic, noetic and the anthropological unity (Frankl, 2010, p.82). In Frankl's view, the ability to contemplate and be aware of life's ending makes life valuable. The motivation concept in the will to seek meaning means that every human being is inspired by a yearning for meaning. "It is seen as our main motivation for living and for acting, and it goes deeper than the will to pleasure and power. When we see meaning in life, we are willing to endure any suffering." (Barnes, 1995, p.9).

Frankl (2016), characterises three factors of human existence: spirituality, freedom and responsibility. Further, he divides freedom into three things: the instincts, inherited disposition and the environment. I am particularly drawn to his statement regarding instincts: "Certainly man has instincts, but these instincts do not have him." (Frankl, 2016, p.16). That is something I have been reflecting on at length while working with child sexual abusers, or perpetrators of domestic violence. "Man is not free from conditions, be they biological or psychological or sociological in nature; but he is, and always remains, free to take a stand toward these conditions; he always retains the freedom to choose his attitude toward them." (Frankl, 2010, p.108).

I believe that change happens in a relationship with a reliable, understanding, and caring person, where the client begins at least to feel his own true feelings, and think his own spontaneous thoughts, and find himself to be real (Guntrip, 1971, p. 182). A therapist's first task will be establishing the secure base, where the client feels some level of security, which in Winnicott's terms would be described as "holding" (Bowlby, 2005, p.159).

I trust in the experience of a real engagement and connection, which Mearns and Cooper (2005), call relational depth: "A state of profound contact and engagement between two people in which each person is fully real with the Other, and able to understand and value the Other's experiences at a high level." (Mearns and Cooper, 2005, p.xii).

As a therapist who integrates a relational approach into my therapeutic work, I offer the client a unique opportunity to face the relational forces that have shaped him. "You will hope for new meanings to emerge, a new narrative that makes better sense of his experiences, and a new way of being in a relationship together." (DeYoung, 2003, p.42). A client will have the opportunity to find their own lost self in our here-and-now experience, because this time around, we will both pay attention to it. Further, the relational context gives the opportunity for interactive affect regulation. "It is the patient's experience of empowering action in the context of safety provided by a background of the emphatic clinician's psychobiologically attuned interactive affect regulation that helps effect … change." (Ogden, 2005, p.22).

The therapeutic relationship is a two-person co-created journey that makes use of moments of intersubjective contact. The need for moments of contact facilitate the movement in a process of psychotherapy. "A therapy session (or any intimate dialogue) is made up of a series of present moments that are driven forward by the desire for intersubjective contact and an enlargement of the shared intersubjective field." (Stern, 2004, p.219). As the therapy progresses, a new way of being in a

relationship will be created, connecting together present moments. This position represents a shift away from viewing the therapeutic relationship in terms of discrete enactments involving transference and countertransference, and moving towards the relationship as an ongoing interplay of separate subjectivities (Safran and Muran, 2003, p. 52).

Within the context of Winnicott's (1967) potential space, the main therapeutic task of the clinician is to play a part in an illusion that the client can stay the same while changing. "The heart of the process depends on the ability of the analyst to avoid imposing meaning, so that the patient can feel free to enact new ways of being without fear of traumatically losing the continuity 'who he is'." (Bromberg, 2001, p.171). Therapist's interactive regulation of the client's communicated affect is a central mechanism of the treatment, "One of our goals as analysts is to enable our patients to experience a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings as safe rather than fearsome and shameful. If therapy is to provide a tranquil context for the review of relived emotion … what is needed? My answer: a safe enough interpersonal environment. One that has room for both the analyst's affective authenticity and an enacted replaying and symbolization of early traumatic experience that does not blindly reproduce the original outcome." (Bromberg, 2006, p.173).

The growth-facilitating environment of the therapeutic relationship encourages the experience-dependent development of the right brain implicit self (Schore, 2011). Stern highlighted that, "Without the nonverbal it would be hard to achieve the emphatic, participatory, and resonating aspects of intersubjectivity. One would only be left with a kind of pared down, neutral 'understanding' of the other's subjective experience." (Stern, 2005, p.80).

Deleuze (1977) beautifully put into words what I believe theoretical schools are about. All the theory should come from practise and should influence the practise. "It is strange that it was Proust, an author thought to be a pure intellectual, who said it so clearly: treat my book as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair." (Deleuze, 1977, p.208). As I am finding grounds and work to define what might be going on in a therapy room, I am open to hear my own voice within the structure and boundaries of my approach. Odgen (1977) wrote: "Different psychoanalytic perspectives are much like different languages. Despite the extensive overlap in semantic content of the written text of different languages, each language creates meaning that cannot be generated by the other languages now spoken or preserved in written form. The interpreter is not merely a passive carrier of information from one person to the other; he is the active preserver and creator of meaning as well as the retriever of the alienated." (Ogden, 1977, p.1).

1.4. Defining the main term

Brexit is the name given to the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Brexit was created by combining words Britain and exit. On 23 June 2016, the UK held a referendum on its membership of the EU. The question facing voters was, should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? Fifty-two per cent of voters voted to leave the EU (BBC 2016, EU Referendum Results). The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020.

Up to 31 December 2020 a transition period was in place. During that time nothing changed and the UK continued to comply with all EU laws and rules. On 24 December 2020 negotiators for the EU and the UK reached a deal on the two

parties' new relationship. The EU and the UK have set out the terms of this deal in three agreements:

- the Trade and Cooperation Agreement
- the Information Security Agreement
- the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement

On 1 January 2021 the rules set out in these agreements came into force (What is Brexit? https://www.government.nl).

1.4 Research Aim

The main purpose of this research is to explore the experience of therapist immigrants in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes, and the impact on personal and professional relationships, and how Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland.

1.5 Summary of the chapters

This chapter introduced the background of the research, the researcher's personal model of integrative psychotherapy, and the aim of this research. Chapter Two introduces literature review. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used in this research. In Chapter Four, I will present findings of the research. Chapter Five will attempt to discuss the findings from the previous chapter. Chapter Six will consider implications and major outcomes. Chapter Seven will conclude the paper.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review of the literature attempted to consider the relationship between psychotherapy and politics and political events such as Brexit. Although the political dimension has received attention more recently (Samuels, 1992, 1993; Gordon, 1995), an issue of concern is the limited literature that is based on research focused on the person of the therapist, with the emphasis on therapist-immigrant, working with political material. How do therapists respond to political material? The awareness of political experience is not particularly developed in any of the psychotherapy models, nor the experience of the therapist-immigrant to the political changes the professional is facing. What happens when politics is present in the material? It is a part of emotional reality for both the client and the therapist.

2.2 Personal context

This proposal has been written in the context of a distinctive political and historical moment, Brexit. The British people have spoken - leave the European Union, the vote concluded. My own household has been shaken and disrupted enormously by those events. My English-born husband and his Irish parents all favoured Brexit. Despite the fact that I have been living in England for the last sixteen years, I was not allowed to vote on a matter crucial to my existence here. I am Polish, I am a Polish immigrant in the UK. I have three young children who are half Polish and half

English. I felt betrayed and voiceless in my own house as well as in a country I regarded as a home.

The writing of this research proposal has felt an enormous and impossible task, partly due to fast, unpredictable changes in the Brexit negotiations and political vagueness, but also the painful journey I had to endure in order to look further into the shadowy spaces unexpectedly unlocked by Brexit, which I have resisted going to for some time now. These events have caused me to reflect upon my personal process further and reflect on how this has impacted and presented challenges within my personal life, client work and supervision.

Samuels (2016) writes, "An individual person leads not only his or her own life but also the life of the times." (Samuels, 2016, p. 53). Reflecting on this, "my times" have always had a huge influence on my choices and my journey. I was born in a communistic Poland. Even though my parents did not talk politics at home, my three siblings and I were breathing politics, our existence was political. Everything you did or did not do, could be seen as political. If I look further in the past of my family, I see Auschwitz and war. Wanda, my grandmother, lost her mother during the war, she was only six years old. Her cousins were killed in Auschwitz. Politics with a monster face. Wanda was born just before World War Two in the Polish town, Grodno, but after the war Grodno was assigned to another country. Politics held the power to change her and our world forever.

I always felt, if not a citizen of the world, a citizen of Europe while still remaining deeply patriotic to my own home country. Suddenly, on the morning of June the 23rd

2016, I became a reason for economic instability, an immigrant, a foreigner etc. Shocking, sudden stabbing in the heart of the stability of my soul. That was a painful awakening which burst the bubble I had been occupying for a long time. I vividly remember a phone call I received that morning. It was my good friend crying on the phone, after someone spat in her face while she was speaking Polish. I felt nauseated and I have remained in this state until now. I met my shame, not for the first time, but definitely for the first time so brutally.

Those new feelings without a doubt, have added or perhaps taken away something from me. Reflecting on those changes, I wonder if I became different as a therapist as well. Possibly, I may not have been entirely mindful of how much my own personal life and my state of mental health could influence my vulnerability as a therapist. "Why is there so much shame attached to those personal difficulties that are inevitable in life, regardless of the work we do? We are not above those we counsel." (Adams, 2013, p.9). Considering that Brexit is not only a private affair, but also a public and a national event, I am pondering how that might be a disruption to the therapeutic relationship.

The therapists' self-history is always present and formative alongside with the clients' in the making of the mutual intersubjective field in therapy (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992). The mutual creation of a genuinely emotionally open environment means to be met without pretence or defence for both client and therapist, where we could be judged for who we really are without a hiding place. I am becoming aware of my ability to open up to being impacted by my clients, hold sustained empathic enquiry and affective exchange (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992), which could be compromised when my defensive manoeuvres kick in. For over five years now I

have been noticing feelings of anxiety and frustration surfacing both professionally and personally, often without knowing why. Generally speaking, these states manifest through distraction, resentment and tension. Orange, Stolorow and Atwood (2009) talk about "the intersubjective conditions, or emotional context in which particular subjective configurations arise and are maintained," (Orange, Stolorow and Atwood, 2009, p.7). Through the painful process of discovery in therapy and supervision I have been getting to know the emotional context in which my feelings arise and developing an awareness of the impact of my states on the intersubjective field in the therapeutic relationship.

For instance, on meeting my clients who were also immigrants, I instantly and without conscious intent judged myself "to be better than" them. Although I am a foreigner as well, I am not claiming benefits, I am not a "burden to the society", and I "contribute" to the community, I am not breaking the law … etc. From this position of superiority, I felt personally and professionally competent. I have thought about my feelings of superiority in relation to my shame of being perceived as unwanted or undesired. Stolorow and Atwood (1992) have described a dynamic unconscious where emotional information, once known, is hidden or forgotten as it creates conflict related to potential damage to the emotional connection with the caregiver. In my personal development, emotional connection to my caregivers was mediated through my need to be wanted, desired and special. Being "better than" provides an understanding and reasoning to my world that is tolerable. My feelings of superiority are my defence against my own vulnerabilities that place me in a precarious position. I judge people in order to outlet feelings that I cannot own. Underneath the surface are bulging feelings of isolation, sorrow and, ultimately, pain.

I am equally ashamed with the idea of this condescending position and therefore meet the world with an incongruent pleasant exterior, what Mearns and Cooper (2005) refer to as "lace curtains" to protect against the reality of my unpleasant judgements and genuine subjective experience. I withdraw from emotional contact to hide and protect myself from being seen in this position. My feelings resonate with what Pines (1995) elaborates about shame:

> Shame is the affect of un-desire, one that comes through the painful realisation that I, and you, feel rejected, unwanted, repulsive, ugly, deformed, shrivelled, - the vocabulary is extensive. In shame we are no longer the object of desire, either of our own or that of others. (Pines, 1995, p. 7)

I considered my profession as more proper than others, with a far grander moral and ethical standard, I expected nothing but professionalism. This naive view has been reshaped many times and there is no question now, that psychotherapists are also human, acting as humans. My placement supervisor, a psychotherapist with many years of experience, who is also a white, middle-class Southerner, has been freely expressing their political view in my supervision group. For many months I was hearing that "there is not enough space for all of them", or "when I go for a walk on an English coast, I don't feel like it's my own country anymore".

There was a growing feeling in me I could not name but I could clearly place in my body, exactly in my chest, sometimes reaching my stomach. With time, this feeling became painful and then was forcefully pushing out tears, which made me really annoyed whenever I was driving back home from supervision. I started to dread

those Tuesday evenings, the time where I had to travel 40 miles to see my

supervisor in her countryside mansion, where I had to open my soul and to talk

about myself and my clients.

I have always heard stories like this and now I am at a place where I am ready to

listen to my own voice and act on it, and I wonder if perhaps there are other

psychotherapists who, like myself, are trying to find their voice. In my research I

would like to focus on how this political change and political climate has been felt

personally, and how this reality makes its way into the psychotherapeutic room. I

have no intention to deliberate on how "right or wrong" the Brexit decision has been,

or to convince my reader to agree or disagree with Brexit. What I am intending to

concentrate on is the felt sense of Brexit, and the struggles and processes which

might have surfaced since the vote.

2.3 Literature review

This paper explores the impact of the current social and political situation on the

individual experience of a psychotherapist – an EU immigrant. Because after all,

"We are political animals. Everything we are and do take place within a political

framework. It is impossible to divorce this from the inner world of either our patients

or ourselves." (Samuels, 2016, p. 209). And yet, the results of an international

survey done on psychotherapists concluded that 44 per cent of therapists did not

discuss political issues with patients (Samuels, 2016). Samuels writes:

> If we do want to treat the whole person, as some of us do, then we have to
>
> find detailed ways of making sure that the social and political dimensions of

experience are included in the therapy process regularly, reliably, and as a matter of course." (Samuels, 2016 p. 15)

Recent history shows that political situations can change drastically overnight, leaving individuals in shock, disbelief, and perhaps even feeling helpless. "It is hardly surprising that the rage, insecurity, frustration and general tedium of having to live in a sometimes brutal and inept commercial managerial environment should elicit the kind of conduct from which mental health professionals (therapists) make their living." (Willoughby, 2016). Historian Frank Furedi (2004), argues that the therapy industry is particularly serviceable to current economic and political interests both by "distracting people from engaging with the wider social issues in favour of an inward turn to the self" and "cultivating a sense of vulnerability, powerlessness and dependence" (Furedi, 2004, p.203).

The ongoing traumatic political and social assaults on mankind has exposed rapidly growing alienation between "us" versus "other". The rise of populists like Donald Trump in the USA, Nigel Farage, Marine Le Pen and many others across Europe "who some would see as encouraging racism" brings back questions like, "How do we tell right from wrong? And what, if any, is the responsibility of the psychotherapists in helping the client with this?" (Loewenthal, 2016, p.203). Brexit has highlighted the pivotal issue of "otherness" yet again. Not even a lifetime ago, part of the German population decided to split society for those who are worthy to be alive and those who should be eliminated. Similarly, I remember our close family friend who had to escape Yugoslavia, because of the rising splits which led to hostile conflict. My Irish friends tell me about deep-rooted hatred between Catholics and Protestants and how that continuously divides the nation to this day.

Zick, Pettigrew, Wagner (2008) argue that right-wing activities relate to increasing anti-Semitism in Europe. Since September 11, 2001, growing hostility toward Muslims is also apparent (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). Some surveys have exposed widespread prejudice against non-ethnic minorities, such as the homeless, people with disabilities, homosexuals, people with AIDS, Gypsies, and other groups.

> The many changing processes - migration, political transformations, the European unification process, and wide spread negative opinions toward ethnic and social minorities - underline the importance of social context for prejudice and discrimination. These sweeping changes call for increased attention to the links between the macro and micro-determinants of prejudice and discrimination. (Zick, Pettigrew, Wagner, 2008, p. 243)

Conclusions, such as those above, frequently direct me to reflect on the broad issues of human existence. There is something profoundly worrying for me, when I read Victor Frankl and consider his thoughts to be painfully contemporary at this point in history. His remarkable and heroic personal life story somehow brings to my mind my own family history. The ever-problematic question of value of the human being, the question of otherness, yet again has been raised as a subject of a debate. Frankl wrote, "A human being is one who always decides who and what one is. Humans are the Beings who invented the gas chambers, but they are at the same time also the Beings who went into the gas chambers, upright and with prayers on the lips." (Frankl, 2017, p.29). This unsettling answer has never been very far from my everyday awareness and, perhaps unsurprisingly, gets activated every time otherness comes into the equation.

As for psychotherapy, Frankl (2017) says, "Every age had its own collective neurosis, and every age needs its own psychotherapy to cope with it." (Frankl, 2017, p.65). Later he adds:

> A moral conflict of conscience, can lead to an existential neurosis. And as long as a man is capable of conflict of conscience he will be immune to fanaticism and to collective neurosis in general; conversely, a man who suffers from collective neurosis will overcome it if he is enabled once more to hear the voice of conscience and to suffer from it. (Frankl, 2016, p.15)

Coming back to Brexit, I wonder about ethics of actions like those during the Brexit campaign, for example Michael Gove's comparisons of economic experts warning against Brexit to Nazis, or the right to raise anti-immigrant feelings, as occurred when Nigel Farage produced a poster of non-white immigrants crossing the Croatia/Slovenia border in 2015 (Cowburn, 2016). I also hear the voice of Willoughby (2002, p.18), who says:

> Counselling and psychotherapy are particularly well placed to act as a platform to facilitate social solidarity given that they are faced daily with managing the consequences of social injustice and inequality. Using their position of expertise and authority to create a critical mass of opinion as to the social determinants of mental health problems would be a major civilising factor. Whether they have the necessary sense of moral responsibility is, however, something that remains to be seen.

However, some authors warn that the therapist's authority inescapably leads to abuse of power. Rowe (1989) argues, "Many people who wish to impose their definition of reality would deny they are involved in gaining power. They would say that because of their greater knowledge, wisdom, training and experience they know what is best. The most dangerous people in the world are those who believe they know what is best for others." (Rowe, 1989, p.16). Further, there is evidence that "therapists are more likely to be white and middle class, whereas clients are generally poorer, more disabled mentally and physically, older, younger, more dependant and less socially supported" (Proctor, 2010, p.19). Perhaps one might suggest encouraging people from oppressed structural positions in society to undertake the professional training, which in turn might have helped to change the imbalance. However, the other side of this would be the argument that people from oppressed groups who become therapists may take on characteristics of the mainstream group in order "to survive and 'pass'" (Proctor, 2010). Smail (1995) says:

> Power is in fact the medium of our social existence, the dynamic which moves the apparatus of our relations with each other … It is the power of others which either hurts or supports us, our own power which enables us to establish an at least precarious perch from which to survey and deal with the world. (Smail, 1995, p.348)

After many reflections it became natural to highlight feminist therapy strongly in my research, as a "theory that derives its inspiration and wisdom from an in-depth interrogation of standpoints that are unavailable to the dominant culture simply because they have been relegated to the margins (Brown, 2018, p.3). "It is a movement which not only listens to, but privileges the voices and experiences of the

other, as defined by a dominant culture. It is also a politically informed model that observes human experience within the framework of societal and cultural realities and through the dynamics of power informing those realities." (Brown, 2018, p.4). What has also drawn me to feminist psychotherapy is its construct that therapy does not only happen in a therapy room but is influenced by everyday life, politics, culture, and pays attention to the larger social context as well; it invites both clients and therapist to notice how the changing external world affects the internal and relational worlds.

Freyd (1996), proposed a theory where some of the distressful interpersonal and psychosocial dynamics could be understood as an experience of betrayal by someone on whom an individual depends, and those might be felt as disempowering and potentially traumatic. This concept of betrayal trauma, originally developed to conceptualize childhood abuse, could be used to portray the power of betrayal in adult relationships where there is an imbalance of power between two unequal parties. I wonder if this phenomenon might help me to reflect on why I found my husband's Brexit vote so emotionally traumatic. A white privileged Englishman (my husband) in a position of trust and power, was given a powerful vote, which was unattainable for me (as an immigrant). That is a powerful role that oppressive cultures and norms can play in the path toward distress and dysfunction for many people (Brown, 2018).

2.3.1 Immigrant and psychotherapist

Immigrant identity is an important concept in my research. Deaux (2006) writes about the immigration experience, "Different individuals, as members of different

groups, arrive in different cultural and historical contexts, and the ways in which their experience plays out depends on the mixture of elements." (Deaux, 2006, p.6). Immigration is a process which never ends, which engraves its meaning into generations to come.

I scarcely remember being labelled as an immigrant in the UK before June 2016. I also did not feel oppressed or marginalized. On the contrary, I felt I had been treated like any other British citizen. However, during and after the Brexit "madness", my feelings, thoughts and reactions have changed quite dramatically. I became an outsider, an immigrant from the European Union, a voiceless Polish woman. I have become preoccupied with my own internal debate. Although my voice was silenced, inside I was screaming.

A study (Sherman & Thelen, 1998) of 522 practicing psychologists indicated that half reported relationship problems and that work with traumatized clients was related to their own experiences of distress or impairment. The study said, "Psychotherapists who are engrossed in personal problems (e.g., marital difficulties or depression) are typically not able to use their skills effectively, and their therapeutic effectiveness can suffer." (p. 79). In a similar study (Pope, Tabachnick & Keith-Spiegel, 1987), 60% of practicing psychologists surveyed indicated that they were often seeing clients despite the fact they were too distressed to be effective. Considering that Brexit is not only a private affair but also a public and a national event, I am pondering how that might have been a disruption to the therapeutic relationship.

Ongoing Brexit negotiations and unknown possible outcomes might shake the political and social scene for quite a long time. Bearing in mind the tentative nature of a therapeutic relationship, anything could potentially injure the process. Particularly at this current time, my position as an EU immigrant in the UK feels particularly fragile. I wonder how that might tremble the sense of stability and predictability of a therapist in a therapeutic relationship. Concepts from attachment theory could provide a useful perspective on psychotherapy process. In therapy, the client re-experiences a primary attachment, repeating with the therapist parts of an old and usually unsatisfactory relationship (Jones, 1983). As the therapist and client explore their relationship and the client's relationships outside of therapy, the client's working models become conscious and subject to challenge and perhaps change (Sperling & Lyons, 1994). The therapist acts as an empathic and emotionally available attachment figure, encouraging an exploration of dysfunctional patterns in relating to others. I wonder how the fact that the therapist might have to leave the country and consequently end the therapy impacts the stability of that relationship. Gerhardt (2016) stresses that:

> As a psychotherapist, I argue that we must bring a deeper understanding of the role of emotional development into our political awareness, and recognise, that political behavior in general is not something separate from other forms of human relationships and is influenced by the same emotional dynamics. (Gerhardt, 2016, p.82)

Pearce's (1994) article, presents two studies which were run to explore the assumption that trainee counsellors who are members of the indigenous population will exhibit biased attitudes when they are confronted with the case history of clients from other ethnic groups. The outcome suggested that respondents showed more

favourable patterns of attribution for white clients than for clients from three other ethnic groups (Asian, Jewish and West Indian). There appeared to be discrimination in the biased attributions for particular out-group clients. I wondered about the opposite situation. What if the psychotherapist is an immigrant and the client comes from the native population? Especially now, in a post-Brexit reality, I would like to better understand how being an immigrant affects therapists' clinical encounters with clients.

The influence of being an immigrant on a psychotherapist during counselling sessions has received very little empirical attention, despite the fact that many of the greatest practitioners in the early history of psychotherapy were practicing in foreign countries. In this paper I will not focus on the obvious themes around immigration and the profession of counselling psychology, such as diversity or inequality. However, it is worth mentioning factors like the use of language by foreign therapists. For instance, the results of a study with international students in the USA has demonstrated that international trainees tend to experience more prejudice, particularly associated with their language abilities (Sodowsky and Plake 1992). Other studies showed that international trainees struggled with English, especially with the use of colloquial speech (Fukuyama 1994; Nilsson and Anderson 2004). Mittal and Wieling (2006) reported that students of counselling at doctoral-level described mixed experiences with clients. Some of the participants had clients who refused being treated by counsellors from different countries. Other clients were calling the office to ask for an American therapist, not a foreigner. I could definitely relate to those findings, especially now in the present reality.

Research indicates that the therapist's level of proficiency in the client's native language can considerably influence the process of psychotherapy (Lijtmaer, 1999; Akhtar, 2006). The conclusion from these results might support the research stating that the therapist and the client should ideally be linguistically matched (de Zulueta 1990). Nevertheless, research also suggests that therapy can be effective, despite a lack of linguistic proficiency between the therapist and the client, if the therapist is able to manage his or her own feelings about not understanding the client and find a way to communicate successfully with the client (Akhtar, 2006; Ali, 2004).

The language difference between the therapist and client can also accentuate differences in cultural identity, and that in turn could have important implications to the power dynamics in the therapeutic process. Both the client and therapist can hold unconscious cultural stereotypes. Further, the unspoken presence of the therapist's other language could be held as a sign of cultural otherness. Therefore, it would be crucially important for bilingual therapists to undergo continuing self-reflection around phenomena related to language, cultural identity and immigration (Antinucci, 2004).

Therapist conducting therapy in their second language, rely on the non-verbal aspects of communication far more than the therapist from the native culture (Jimenez, 2004), as the non-verbal process of the sharing of emotional states, like affective attunement, become the binding process of the therapeutic relationship. Affective attunement is a primary form of communication, developed in the communicative matrix of the mother-infant dyad (Stern, 1985). For that reason, the bilingual therapist's attunement to the deeper pre-verbal and affective processes of

the client provide a way of holding, where the client can experience the therapist as present and available. Also, Sella (2006) suggested that the presence of the bilingual therapist as the medium of empathy, could be enough to effectively establish an emphatic holding environment.

Pérez Foster (1998) fascinatingly wrote about her own experience as a bilingual Spanish and English-speaking woman. She described the different contexts and expressions of self that she had experienced in different languages, "Spanish was for loving my father, English was for anger with my mother, Spanish was for political discourse with everyone and English was for witty sarcasm with my aunts." (Pérez Foster, 1998, p.53). I sometimes reflect about Ariel, from the children's story of a little mermaid, who lost her voice when receiving a gift of legs. While living here in England, I have not been able to swim freely in a stream of language I was born into but I gained my freedom to live independently. And, yet, at the same time I still feel quite unable to run in a language which I have chosen as an adult.

Lastly, on a broader level, language could be seen as one of many vehicles in a way of connecting or disconnecting people. While this study addresses some of the themes of the therapist's work in the second language, the main aspect of this research can't be positioned only within language and bilingualism, as space constraints have only allowed for a certain depth of discussion.

2.3.2 Polish Immigrants

Following the EU enlargement in 2004, Polish migrants were initially recognised as

a "desirable" migrant group and were labelled as "invisible" because of their whiteness. A Spectator article stated, "The New Europeans are hard-working, presentable, well educated, and integrate so perfectly that they will disappear within a generation." (Browne, 2006). Existing research reveals that Polish migrants arriving in multicultural Britain have become aware of their whiteness and recognised it as an asset, according to a belief that white minorities are treated better than non-whites (Drinkwater, Eade, Garapich, 2009). Nevertheless, the presumed whiteness of these migrants in the UK has not exempted them from racism, violent attacks and discrimination, partly fuelled by negative discourse in the British media and politics. The theme of immigration and, in particular, Polish immigration in the UK has been extensively covered in the media and political discourse, affecting not only the way Polish immigrants have been viewed by the British public but also influencing everyday interactions. EU migration into the UK was a key issue in the EU referendum debates in 2016. The Leave campaign used the anti-immigration discourse, claiming that the main cause of all the UK's issues, including housing shortages or the strained NHS, has been uncontrolled mass immigration caused by the right to freedom of movement within EU member states. After months of anti-immigrant rhetoric in the run up to the EU referendum in the UK in June 2016, the annual number of racially aggravated offences recorded by the police was 41% higher than in 2015 (Home Office, 2016). A series of incidents which affected the Polish community were reported. For example, leaflets were left outside primary schools and posted through letterboxes of Polish people in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, with the message, "Leave the EU/No more Polish vermin." (*Cambridge News*, June 25, 2016). Another tragic event was the killing of Arkadiusz Jóźwik, a 40-year-old Polish factory worker in Harlow, who died after being punched to the ground for speaking Polish in the street. Also, Bartosz Milewski, a 21-year-old student was stabbed in the neck with a broken bottle

because his perpetrators heard him speaking Polish with his friend in Donnington, near Telford (*Independent*, September 20, 2016).

The research project which explored the lives of young people who arrived in the UK as migrant children from Central and Eastern Europe revealed that many young Eastern Europeans seem to experience racism on a daily basis in places where they should feel safe, such as schools, public transport, parks and shops (Sime, Kakela, Corson, Tyrell, McMellon, Kelly, Moskal, 2017). It was felt that the post-Brexit referendum atmosphere had made them more likely to experience or witness racism and xenophobia in their everyday lives. The study also exposes the pervasive nature of racism, whereby it is seen as normalised behaviour. Victims tended not to report it as they thought authorities would not be interested.

Immigrants from Eastern Europe were initially seen as unproblematic as they posed "few questions of cultural and racial difference from their host societies" (Favell and Nebe, 2009, p. 206). Gilroy (2006) suggested that European immigrants in the UK become racialised and imagined through the category of race because they are immigrants. Race is not an essential characteristic of migrants "but rather the socially constructed contingent outcome of processes and practices of exclusion. Racialisation does not require putative phenotypical or biological difference." (Fox, Moroşanu, and Szilassy, 2012, p. 681). Furthermore, differences can be invented to suit the cause or purpose of the argument. Polish immigrants coming from a predominantly white society become people with other shades of whiteness, perhaps as happened with Irish immigrants a few decades ago. "Past generations of Irish, Jewish, and indeed earlier East European migrants would suggest that putatively shared whiteness does not exempt them from the effects of racism." (Fox, Moroşanu, and Szilassy, 2012, p. 681). As a result of recent large-scale migration of

Polish people to the UK, their presence has become increasingly visible and audible. The privilege of Polish whiteness fades away once they open their mouth and start speaking. While whiteness allows a certain level of invisibility, foreign accents mark Polish immigrants as the Other. This confirms the argument that whiteness is always situational and temporary (Frankenberg, 1993), and that visibility and invisibility are very dynamic and changing (Goldberg, 1993). Polish food shops have become highly noticeable markers of a Polish presence in public spaces (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009). Polish names, different letters and pronunciation constitute symbols of difference.

Lumsden, Goode and Black's (2019) research found that, as a consequence of the experience of hate crimes, Eastern Europeans withdrew physically from the community and from public spaces. This included being hyper-vigilant in certain neighbourhoods, on public transport, and when participating in the night-time economy, and not drawing attention to their language or accent. Some immigrants retreated into the private space of their own homes, as the only place they could speak freely without fear of experiencing abuse. Rzepnikowska (2019) in her research on racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants in the UK before and after the Brexit vote, highlighted how not "looking Polish" could actually be considered as a way to be less stigmatised. The paper also illustrated how the interviewees saw themselves at risk of racist harassment in the white working-class, underprivileged neighbourhoods, and how they felt safe from racism in more ethnically diverse and more affluent areas. This raises the issue of becoming visible and invisible in different spaces and highlights the unstable racialised positioning of Polish immigrants (Rzepnikowka 2019).

2.3.3 Research Aims

The process of grappling with internal struggles on becoming an immigrant, might be common amongst those who decided to settle outside their countries of origin. Brexit, possibly only highlighted the complexity of this situation, and the importance of psychological equilibrium, essential for maintaining a good enough mental health. Brexit unavoidably awoke questions of belonging and otherness for many. As a Trainee Counselling Psychologist and an immigrant from Poland, I was interested to know how Brexit was experienced by Polish therapists practising in the UK. Hence my research question: How does being a Polish immigrant during the events of Brexit affect clinical encounters, psychotherapy process with clients, and personal experience. What is the experience of Polish therapist practising in the UK during the events of Brexit? This research is an enquiry into the subjective experience of a counsellor or psychotherapist who is also an immigrant to the United Kingdom from Poland in times of Brexit.

Considering the speed of such dramatic change in the current climate, e.g. social, political or economic change, I wonder if or how these themes might manifest in a therapy room. The research will consider how the changes in status, civil rights of an immigrant and socio-economic situation of the therapist might elicit feelings and a preoccupation with their own personal journey, as well as how those changes might potentially disrupt the therapy process.

To date, the literature on the consequences of Brexit for counselling and psychotherapy is limited. The research into the experience of therapists who are immigrants from the EU in Brexit times is also partial. As a trainee of Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy and an immigrant from Poland, I recognise the need

to discuss and explore potential implications of Brexit on training and the profession of Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy. There also may be long-term professional consequences of choices made during Brexit negotiations, such as the validity of qualifications here and abroad. Overall, it is vital that institutions like universities, colleges and other training programmes look into the costs and gains of Brexit. Furthermore, it is important to take into account the likely divisions and confusion resulting from Brexit, and reflect on the idea how to support professionals affected by the current reality.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology, explains the rationale for the chosen method, describes participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, and outlines how I have aimed to meet research quality guidelines.

3.2 Research Design. Philosophical and epistemological underpinnings

Based on its aims and phenomenological focus on idiographic lived experiences, this study's paradigmatic stance is constructivist, that is aim is to understand the meanings of Brexit from those who experienced it and constructed equally valid realities of it. The research paradigm is further supported by researcher's ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Social constructionism argues that knowledge is constructed and not discovered in the world, consequently our interpretation of the world does not correspond to real, objective entities (Coyle, 2007). Our understanding of the world is through social processes and is embedded within cultural and historical contexts, therefore research adopting this epistemological position focuses on how social reality is constructed in a particular cultural and historical context, how the ways of constructing are used and what the implications for human experience are (Willig, 2008). Social constructionism regards individuals as integral with cultural, political and historical evolution, in specific times and places, and so resituates psychological processes cross-culturally, in social and

temporal contexts (Brexit). For counselling psychology and psychotherapy, this view underlines the importance of the acquisition, creation and change of emotional behaviour, therapeutic ability and ways of interpreting things and people (Galbin, 2014). This study is interested in capturing phenomenological knowledge, which is "knowledge of the quality and texture of the participant's experience" (Willig, 2012, p. 7).

Qualitative research and the practice of counselling psychology are closely connected (Bryman, 2003). Therapists often use specific forms of qualitative inquiry in their practice, for instance when hoping to reflect on the understanding of what might be happening in the therapeutic relationship (Coyle, 1988). Qualitative research aims toward the understanding of how the world is constructed (McLeod, 2001) by focusing on the meanings through which people understand and make sense of their realities. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to explore, analyse and interpret the data to achieve a thorough understanding of the phenomena as experienced by each individual (Smith, 2008).

As indicated in the research question, this study is an enquiry into the subjective experience of a counsellor or psychotherapist who is also an immigrant to the United Kingdom from Poland in times of Brexit. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) sampling inclines to be purposive and generally homogenous as a small sample size can provide a sufficient perspective given suitable contextualisation (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In this respect, IPA differs from other methodologies, such as grounded theory, as in IPA the aim is to select participants in order to illuminate a particular research question, and to develop a full and interesting interpretation of the data. According to Smith and Osborn (2003), IPA is

not opposed to making general claims for larger populations, but is committed to analysis of small numbers of cases which may subsequently lead on to generalisations. With that in mind, this research aims to explore the impact on the personal change and a clinical practise of a Polish therapist practising in the UK during the events of Brexit.

The aim of this study is to explore the participant's experience of Brexit, a political and societal change. With this in mind, a qualitative approach has been adopted. "Qualitative research represents a form of narrative knowing, grounded in everyday experience, that has the potential to make a significant and necessary contribution to the evidence base for counselling and psychotherapy." (McLeod, 2011, p. 15). Qualitative analysis is essentially effective with subjects for which there is little previous research done and where there may be variables that are difficult to recognize or are not yet recognized (Morrow, 2007).

Moreover, this study aims to explore lived experiences, considering all unique processes, which further supports the use of a qualitative design. With its focus on exploring the lived experience of individuals, IPA is strongly influenced by phenomenology. Finlay and Ballinger (2006) highlighted how phenomenology is both a philosophy and an approach to research, which allows in-depth exploration of how phenomena appear to us in our awareness and the nature and meaning of such phenomena. IPA is an inductive approach concerned with understanding an individual's personal account of a particular experience or phenomenon, rather than trying to find causal explanations for events or produce objective "facts" (Smith and Osborn 2008).

My initial research idea was to use a qualitative methodology that enabled me to facilitate the presentation of the participant's stories and experiences. The underlying principle of IPA related to that of counselling psychology, which values the importance of the individual's subjective experiences, and the interpretation of meaning within the relationship between therapist and client. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2012, p.11). IPA consequently became an intuitively engaging method of research, providing insight into a topic held central to the work of the Counselling Psychologist. According to Smith and Osborn (2003), IPA puts particular emphasis on understanding and exploring the meanings that underlie specific experiences, actions or states, achieved through a detailed examination of the participants' subjective experiences. According to Conrad (1987), the researcher must enter the life-world of the participant, and attempt to gain an "insider's perspective" (Conrad, 1987, p. 9). A vital assumption of IPA is that human beings self-reflect. "Human beings are not passive perceivers of an objective reality, but rather they come to interpret and understand their world by formulating their own biographical stories into a form that makes sense to them." (Brocki and Weaden, 2006, p.87).

In the very early stages, I considered several options as a research method for the present study. First of all, grounded theory, which employs a process of testing emerging theoretical formulations against incoming data, with the focus on gaining insights into, and contextualising, social processes.

This movement between developing and testing theory means that grounded theory contains a deductive element, working towards discovering knowledge. This is opposed to the inductive approach of IPA, which is focused on making sense of, and gaining insight into, the individual's psychological world. Whilst IPA and grounded theory do share common techniques toward data analysis, it seemed that a more idiographic focus on the participants' subjective experiences was more

appropriate to the current study, rather than deducing larger social phenomena. IPA was chosen over grounded theory as the latter might be considered more of a sociological approach (Willig, 2003), which draws on convergences within a larger sample to support wider conceptual explanations. IPA, on the other hand, is more psychological, concerned with giving a more detailed and nuanced account of the personal experiences of a smaller sample (Smith et al. 2009), which was felt to be more in keeping with the researcher's aim.

Discourse analysis (DA) was also considered as a possible research method because it explores the psychological aspects of discourse, and the role of discourse in the construction of meaning (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002). According to Willig (2008), discursive psychology sees language actively shaping and building our social reality. Psychological experiences are constructed through the use of available discourses, and grounded within local social interactions. A prime distinction between IPA and DA is that DA examines the role of language in describing the person's experience, while IPA explores how people attribute meaning to their experiences in their interactions with the environment (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). Subsequently, IPA acknowledges that the researcher's engagement with the participant's narrative has an interpretative element. IPA, according to Willig (2008), aims to identify the subjective and contextual meanings that participants give to their experiences, rather than just conceptualising experiences as a manifestation of situated discursive resources. In contrast to discursive psychology, IPA argues that the things people say about their experiences form an integral part of the reality of those experiences, and that it is possible to say something meaningful about an individual's experiences through studying their narratives. IPA also takes into account the influence of wider social, historical and cultural contexts in which the individual is situated. Since the present study is focused on uncovering participants' subjective experiences of Brexit, rather

than the action of discourse, IPA is considered the most appropriate method of investigation.

I also firmly considered autoethnography as a research method, as I - the researcher - could use my experiences, together with those of other participants. "Autoethnography also provides insight into social experiences that we cannot observe directly, because the experiences occur in their own time, uninterrupted by a researcher's presence." (Adams, Jones, and Ellis, 2015, p.32). I was contemplating autoethnography as a methodological starting point for researching an experience of political changes from a personal perspective and within relationships because it encourages in-depth description of personal understanding with a prominent integration of reflexivity throughout the process and content of writing (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2010). Denzin (2014) is emphasising the notion that autoethnography always needs to be understood in the critical context of the politics and socio-political climate, therefore autoethnographic research might create a platform to reclaim my lost voice and perhaps empower other participants to join me. Moreover, this may generate a state of 'in-between-ness' (Siddique, 2011) where I would be able to experience being in-between two states or roles (participant – researcher), which can cause some tension but also a valuable source for learning, reflection and making meaning of the whole. I believe that autoethnography gives a voice to those whose experiences have been silenced or hidden in society (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Many feminist writers advocate for research that starts with one's own experience, with all the richness of the social, cultural and political world (Ellis, 2004).

As with any research model, autoethnography has attracted many criticisms. For example, it has been voiced that autoethnography is self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective and individualised (Atkinson, 1997; Sparkes, 2000). It also focuses on

the self and personal experiences, which are separated from other discourses in their contexts (Wall, 2006). Nevertheless, those in support of the method argue that autoethnography is more authentic than traditional research methods, precisely because of the researcher's use of self (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Critics also argue against it as being insufficiently rigorous, too artistic, emotional or not scientific, which cannot be easily remedied in this case (Holt, 2003).

Nevertheless, autoethnography felt like a likely methodology to employ, as I began feeling quite invested in the subject, with difficulties to separate my "grief" from the research. Upon further reflection, as the Brexit negotiations have been taking place, I have noticed experiencing feelings and emotions that are often difficult to contain. For example, the evening in January 2019, when Theresa May had been battling with a Plan B, I was battling with my husband about Brexit again. Our eight-year-old daughter, overhearing our conversation, said to both of us, "Surely when you are married, you should make important decisions together." We both stopped our row, astounded by this mature insight from a young child. The next day registration for settled status of EU citizens was introduced. Also, a memorial service for six Jewish victims of the Holocaust took place in London an unknown six people who were killed over 70 years ago in Auschwitz for belonging to the "outcast" of the society. It became apparent that separating my own process from the participants' experience would be very difficult. Wall (2006) suggests the researcher's self-research could be truer than any outsider's. Yes, I would agree with the above statement, however I am also mindful that autoethnography is a very powerful method. It can open our awareness to the complexities of lived experience (Ellis & Bocher 2000). Autoethnography is closer to the action or "inside emotional experience" (Ellis and Bocnher, 2000, p. 230). And precisely the emotional "closeness" to the research

subject, felt challenging. I became preoccupied with Brexit, and needed to regain perspective.

After many reflections on the pros and cons of those two methodologies, autoethnography and IPA, I decided to use IPA. Although I am continuously trying to reflect on the reality of Brexit, there are unexpected moments where I found myself stunned by new, resurfacing emotions, evoked suddenly by imminent Brexit news. I cannot control those feelings, sometimes they have a greater effect on me, at other times they have a lesser effect and I wonder if I might unintentionally influence my research participants through my own emotional processing. Therefore, I believe that IPA would give me the freedom of bracketing my own views from those of the participants. At the same time, I will continue writing my own reflective journal, where I contemplate my reflections on the research topics. "IPA is concerned with the micro analysis of individual experience, with the texture and nuance arising from the detailed exploration and presentation of actual slices of human life" (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2012, p.202).

3.3 Participants

IPA typically advises to interview a small group of participants, allowing for a highly detailed case-by-case analysis (Langdridge, 2007). Smith et al. (2012) argues that a smaller and homogenous sample size provides an opportunity to examine similarities and differences between individuals in-depth, without being overwhelmed by too much data.

Research is specifically focused on the experience of Polish therapists living in the UK. Participants have to be Polish EU nationals who have lived in United Kingdom

for more than five years and have practised counselling or psychotherapy for a minimum of two years. Eight participants were recruited for the research project, six women and two men, aged between 30 and 45. Table 1 contains the combined demographic information for the eight participants of this research project including: identifier, gender, place of practice, geographical region, and professional affiliation.

Table 1: Participants

Participant	Gender identity	Place of practice	Geographical region	Professional affiliation
Participant One	Female	Private practice / NHS	South West	Counsellor / Psychotherapist
Participant Two	Female	Private practice	South East	Counsellor
Participant Three	Male	Private practice	South East	Counsellor / Psychotherapist
Participant Four	Female	Private practice	South West	Counsellor
Participant Five	Female	Private practice	South East	Counsellor
Participant Six	Female	Private practice	South East	Counsellor
Participant Seven	Female	Private practice / NHS	North West	Counsellor / Psychotherapist
Participant Eight	Male	Private practice	South West	Counsellor

Participants were recruited through the Metanoia Institute advertisements boards and by requesting permission from Metanoia to circulate information about the research to graduates of the counselling and psychotherapy courses. I also chose to use the Psychology Today website to recruit participants, by sending a leaflet to Polish-speaking therapists practising in the UK. When potential participants made contact with me, either via telephone or email, I then provided information about the research project and the written Participant Information Sheet to further explain the

project. Once the potential participants had read the information provided and decided to continue with this project, I then made further contact to arrange a time and place to meet and proceed with the interview.

3.4 Data Collection

Interviews were conducted over seven months and took place in a location suggested by the participants. I travelled by car to see participants. Most of the interviews took place in participants' private therapy offices, two interviews we carried out in my private practise in Christchurch.

One-to-one semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant. This formula of interviewing allowed the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue, trying to enter the psychological and social world of the respondent as far as possible (Smith, 2008). The exact wording of the questions was not considered critical and the order in which the questions were asked was not fixed. This allowed the interview to flow more like a conversation (Clark-Carter, 2010). Adams, Jones and Ellis (2015) stress that the researcher should make herself available to the participant, setting aside personal preoccupations, experiences and agendas, so that she may listen mindfully to what the participant says.

After the initial warm-up conversation with participants, we read the consent form and signed it. I reminded participants that they had a right to withdraw from the research at any time. I began the interview with a wide-ranging question, to encourage participants to talk without me interrupting, to talk freely. I intended to remind the participant that I was interested in exploring their experience. This initial question varied to some degree depending on the interpersonal dynamic but,

fundamentally, the opening question reminded the participant that I was exploring their experience of Brexit, and allowing them to feel that I was interested in listening to their narrative. All the interviews were recorded using two digital recorders, just in case one of those devices failed to work.

3.5 Transcribing interviews

Eight semi-structured interviews were transcribed manually. That process allowed me to immerse myself in the material, and minimise external interference. Transcribing the eight interviews took around six months to complete. The entire process felt overwhelming in its scale. Nevertheless, that significant time commitment felt important as I actually began reflecting on the interviews while transcribing.

Participants' names were replaced with numbers. Although, initially the idea of attaching numbers to participants felt inappropriate, after many deliberations I decided it was the unpolluted way of thinking about each of them. For hours I had been struggling with choice of names or pseudonyms, Polish or English, or any other. Therefore, giving the participants the symbol of a number felt a relief. "It is well documented that names have social and cultural significance. Both personal (first) names and surnames imply particular ethnic, religious, class and age-based connotations, which will inevitably be transferred to any pseudonyms. Thus, through our anonymising process, we are in turn conforming to stereotyping practices and, potentially, inferring all sorts of connotative baggage onto research participants that may or may not be appropriate" (Clark, 2006, p.6).

3.6 Data analysis

The existing literature on analysis in IPA has not specified a single method for working with data (Smith et al., 2009); instead, there is a lot of flexibility in matters of analytic development, while the analytic task always remains in attempting to make sense of the participants' experiences. The process initially involved transcribing the interviews, with making notes of significant non-verbal utterances, pauses and hesitations (Smith et al., 2009), which were then followed by several readings of the transcripts with a view to getting an overall feel for the interview (Storey, 2007). That process allowed the researcher deeper familiarisation with the text (Willig, 2008). Bucholtz (2000, p.1440) viewed the transcription process as a reflective act in itself. He stated, "The responsible practice of transcription…requires the transcriber's cognizance of her or his own role in the creation of the text and the ideological implications of the resultant product." The analysis of the data followed the steps outlined by Smith and Osborn (2003). The first step involved within-case analysis. Initially, a transcript was read numerous times and comments were made in the left-hand margin about the meaning of particular sections of the transcript. These initial notes were formed into emergent themes that were noted and then listed separately into clusters to reflect any shared meaning or references. In line with the iterative nature of IPA, once the initial themes had been identified from each transcript, the transcripts were then reviewed in the light of any new themes that had emerged from the analysis of later transcripts. The second stage involved cross-case analysis, integrating the themes across the transcripts. The researcher attempted to identify common links between themes and to cluster them together in order to form broader themes. The process was repeated, as it involved moving back and forth within the data to check meanings and confirm interpretations (Langdridge, 2007). Smith (2008) suggested that the transcript should be read several times in order to become as familiar as possible with the text. Every reading has the possibility to

bring up some new perceptions, a deeper sense of the person's story. Additionally, it is recommended to make notes about the participant's body language, postures, gestures, laughter or tears. Interviewing cannot be separated from observing, interacting and attending to more than just words (Ely et al., 1991). Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006, p. 108) wrote that "the analytic process cannot ever achieve a first-person account – the account is always constructed by participant and researcher – so the objective during this initial stage is simply to produce a coherent, third-person, and psychologically informed description, which tries to get as close to the participant's view as is possible".

3.7 Validity and trustworthiness

"The question of qualitative validity always comes back to a matter of whether the researcher is plausible and trustworthy", says McLeod (2011, p. 279). He continues by emphasising that personal qualities of the researcher, integrity, honesty and commitment to the project, essentially make a difference. In order to establish integrity and trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry, the process of research should correspond with a process of self-awareness on the part of the researcher. This requires a constant examination of personal and professional influences on the research process, both in terms of data collection and analysis (Finlay, 2002).

Smith (2008) highlights that most qualitative researchers believe that there is no single true perspective on reality, therefore it is problematic to establish which perspective should be used to evaluate the validity of a study. He adds that the researcher unsurprisingly influences the production of data, for example by the way in which they frame the research question or interpret the findings, and attempting to

eliminate that influence would make it difficult to retain the benefits of qualitative research.

Despite the difficulty of developing criteria for validity, it is possible to list core principles for evaluating the validity of qualitative research, such as sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, coherence and transparency, and impact and importance (Smith, 2008; Yardley, 2000). Bush (2002) however advocates that assessing validity is not appropriate for all research methods and suggests consideration of trustworthiness instead.

3.8 Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to context may be established through demonstrating sensitivity to the existing literature and theory, and the socio-cultural setting of the study Yardley (2000). In effort to address sensitivity to context, I provided rationale for using the chosen methodology and demonstrated sensitivity to the existing literature, and later I returned to the literature after conducting data analysis. I have aimed to demonstrate sensitivity to the data through conducting and describing an in-depth analysis and supporting my arguments with verbatim extracts.

3.9 Commitment to rigour

Yardley (2000) highlights that commitment involves in-depth engagement with the topic and through developing competence and skill in the method used. Rigour refers to the thoroughness and completeness of the data collection and analysis. In IPA, commitment is demonstrated throughout the research process, which includes

selecting the sample which require determination in accessing potential participants, and through commitment to engaging with participants with sensitivity and respect and commitment to attending to detailed and scrupulous analysis. Rigour in IPA "refers to the thoroughness of the study, for example in terms of the appropriateness of the sample to the question in hand, the quality of the interview and the completeness of the analysis" (Smith et al., 2009, p.181).

3.10   Transparency and coherence

Yardley (2000) suggests that transparency and coherence could be achieved through transparent presentation of the data collection measures, transcripts, theme creation, and analytical processes. I aimed to design the presentation of the research in a clear methodical fashion. In the research chapters I intended to provide clarity and cogency, enabling the reader to get close to the research methods and findings. In the findings chapter I included extensive verbatim quotations from participants in order to ensure a high level of transparency, and I include one full anonymised transcript at the end of the paper.

3.11   Impact and Importance

Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) and Yardley (2000) state that the test of validity lies not in the fact that the study can be replicated, but in its methods having been clearly articulated and if it truly presents information and knowledge that is useful, engaging, and important. As I stated earlier, the research brings more understanding into the experience of therapist immigrants from Poland in times of Brexit. This IPA research not only intended to help to enhance the knowledge about the immigrant therapeutic community, but also to offer a unique opportunity to express participants' understanding of their experiences and give them back their

voices in a Brexit debate. That in turn may highlight the struggles they are facing and point out how better support for Polish immigrant therapists is needed.

3.12 Reflexivity

The requirement of reflexive practice in IPA is vital for the creation of strong and original research. The researcher needs to recognise and use their own likely prejudices to inform new interpretations. Reflexivity involves reflecting on the impact of the researcher on the research process (Spencer et al. 2003; Yardley, 2000). Engaging in reflexive research actions definitely challenges a personal and professional stance. Finlay (2006) suggests that a qualitative researcher needs to clearly articulate her intellectual position so that the research audience can apprise issues of rigour. However, self-disclosure in itself is not enough to resolve influencing preconceptions, and Finlay (2002) cautions against "endless narcissistic personal emoting" (Finaly, 2002, p.226). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) argue that too much reflection can turn the research interest away from "the object of inquiry – the thing itself" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.149) and so reflexivity must be purposeful to the research. In the thesis itself, I felt it was important to expose my knowledge of my world, as phenomenological understandings combine with interpretations of that knowledge to make sense of things. I followed the idea that the researcher can "be with", yet separate from the data, as Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p. 89) identify, "At times it may be helpful to draw upon your own perceptions and understandings, in order to sound out the meaning of key events and processes for your participants." (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 89).

3.13 Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines of the Metanoia Institute and BPS were followed. All participants were given relevant information concerning the study in order to acquire informed consent from them. People who contacted me and expressed an interest in participating in the research were provided with a participant's information sheet and a consent form, either personally in paper copy or electronically. Participants were required to complete a consent form before the interview, which was carried out at a suitable time and place for them. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained at all times. Participants were also informed that they have a right to withdraw from the study prior to publication of the results and interrupt the interview at any point, without providing any reason. Ely et al. (1991) highlights that the researcher must be constantly aware and reflective, in order to minimise any harm.

McLeod (2011, p.65) reminds us "that most types of qualitative research are ethically sensitive because they involve some form of relationship being developed between the researcher and the research participants". Participation in this research obliged both the participants and the researcher to discuss intimate and very personal issues. Therefore, the researcher did take all reasonable steps to ensure that participants would not be subjected to any stress or anxiety beyond what they might experience in their everyday life (Smith, 2008). Bond (2004, p.6) suggests that "in research that requires an extended relationship between researcher and participants and/or the disclosure of personally sensitive issues, it is best practice to ensure that the researcher is supported by regular and on-going supervision that is comparable to the ethical requirements for supervision in counselling and psychotherapy". He continues by emphasising that receiving suitable personal and professional support, in which ethical issues can be addressed, lowers the exposure to adverse risk for both the research participants and the researcher.

3.14 Summary

This chapter intended to outline the qualitative research design and introduce the selected methodology. I related the methodology Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), to the topic of the research.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the findings of the research in relation to the main aim of the research: to explore the experience of therapist immigrants in times of Brexit, including subjective experience, shifts, changes, and the impact on personal and professional life, and how Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland. The intention of this chapter is to provide participants'' insight into the experience of Brexit.

4.2 Superordinate themes

Six superordinate themes emerged from the data analysis, following interrelated subordinate themes. The superordinate themes that were determined in the analysis are:

1. Otherness
2. Pain of Brexit
3. Betrayal: did they pretend?
4. In the therapy room during Brexit
5. The other side of the coin
6. Final question. An opportunity to reflect on the interview experience

Table 2: Superordinate Themes and related Subordinate Themes

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Otherness	I am different: language, accents, culture
	I am an immigrant
Pain of Brexit	Hurtful process
	Brutal awakening
	Do I have to justify myself?
	Wound of uncertainty: anchorless
Betrayal. Did they pretend?	
In a therapy room with Brexit	
The other side of the coin	
Final question. An opportunity to reflect on the interview experience	

Considerable thought was given to the choice of superordinate themes labels. I chose labels that most faithfully reflected the content of data as it was presented to me. The themes are illustrated with extensive verbatim extracts from the interviews throughout this chapter. The themes are presented in such a way as to provide a logical narrative of the findings rather than the order being indicative of their importance. The themes are interdependent and not mutually exclusive.

During the process of reading through each transcript, coding, and analysing data, I

found that there were several layers of meaning to what the participants said that could require multiple codes. The task of selecting which themes felt significant, could be confusing and time-consuming. Ultimately, data was gradually transformed into findings as the study was shaped and reshaped throughout the entire research process (Watt, 2007).

All small hesitations, stutters, stammers, minor word repetitions, and utterances such as "um" have been removed. In most instances, quotations have been grammar checked and corrected to improve readability, without changing the meaning of a sentence. Names of participants have always been replaced with numbers and where possible all identifying information relating to third parties or places has been removed or changed.

4.3 Otherness

All eight participants spoke about what could be described as awakening into a reality altered by Brexit. The data suggested that Brexit emphasised feelings of otherness and highlighted a sense of being an immigrant, or different.
This section concentrates on otherness experienced by participants within the context of Brexit. The two subordinate themes identified were:

- I am different: language, accents, culture
- I am an immigrant

4.3.1   I am different: language, accents, culture

All participants described having internal conversations about the challenges of performing therapy in their second language. All the participants found there was a degree of nervousness about their command of English, despite the fact that all of

them passed relevant language tests to be able to study in the UK. Moreover, they undertook several professional training courses and degrees in the UK and have practiced counselling and psychotherapy for more than five years. Nonetheless, a certain awareness was attached to their identity as professionals who operated in English as a second language.

All eight participants undertook and completed their therapy trainings in the UK. Nevertheless, they all had reservations about their quality of spoken language. Participant Eight describes his fear of picking up his work phone because of the possibility of being judged as a person with a foreign accent. He prefers to email the client back, feeling that his accent might discourage the future client:

> *I'm almost paranoid that they are going to pick up the phone. But you know, a strong part of me thinks at times I've got more chances if I can email somebody back, or if I can make a face-to-face meeting happen. Maybe that fear of judgement that someone might think that, 'Oh, he's got a different accent, he's from a different culture, why would I not go for a native speaker or somebody who…' or, 'did this person get his qualifications here or did they get their qualifications in another country?'*

<div align="right">Participant Eight</div>

The question of intelligence in relation to being an immigrant appeared to be a significant one. Participant Eight has experienced fear of judgment of being not good enough to do his job properly. Those questions became attached to Participant Eight's initial process of reflecting on clients:

Pragmatically thinking, I am from a different country, from a different culture, different background. Maybe people think that I will not understand them as well as a native would, or it's about the trust, about language as well. I read a few books about it, that people assume sometimes when they hear accents, they associate that with trust and intelligence.

Participant Eight

Although none of the participants experienced explicit criticisms of their language, sometimes well-intentioned remarks had been experienced as damaging and hurtful, or traumatic and have had long-term effects on their self-esteem and perceived competence. The data shows that thoughts about language were present in all the participants' reflections to varying degrees. The following extract from Participant Two provides an example of the feeling of being not as good as British counterparts and, as a result, she had questioned her confidence in herself and did not believe that she was good enough:

I had a phone call from a British customer, she was looking for therapy. I found myself being more vigilant in that conversation. I was aware, more aware, of the fact that she knew straight away that I'm obviously not British, and I was thinking how she feels about that, which normally wouldn't really cross my mind, if that wasn't a British client. So, I was thinking, is she thinking that I'm good enough for what she's coming with?

Participant Two

Participant Seven shared similar experiences when contacted by a potential British client. Interestingly, Participant Seven has never been criticised for her language skills, not her abilities as a professional. What was bought up in a conversation was

the xenophobic abuse she suffered while walking on a street of her hometown:

> *There was this really strange thought of, but I'm Polish, you know, so why do*
> *they want to see me* [British clients]? *I'm Polish. Sometimes I still get that*
> *thought when I'm being contacted by someone, and I still work with a lot of*
> *British people, but still I get this, I'm Polish, you know, I wonder… I don't know!*
> *It's really strange. I don't know, I think it's just this element of the lack of*
> *confidence. On a bad day the lack of confidence comes out and I feel… and*
> *we feel low. On a good day, you feel great, you feel confident. All the people*
> *at work, all of my clients, they're all British, and you know, that's all fine, that's*
> *all good, and no one ever complained, no one ever said anything. I think this*
> *goes back to… years and years ago, when I had a couple of these situations*
> *where I was in* [name of town redacted], *where I was called different names.*
> *Calling me c**t I think… and b**ch.*

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

I felt deeply moved by Participant Seven's narrative on name-calling. I felt engaged in trying to make sense of what I was being told. I did not want to appear surprised or shocked by Participant Seven's account. Inside, however, I felt overwhelmed by her narrative. I was struck, not only by the extent of the buried pain she was telling me about, but also the deep emotional wound which affected Participant Seven's confidence. I wondered about traumatic memories being activated every time "Englishness" comes into question. Also, I wondered about the notion of shaming Participant Seven for being the Other. Generally, I would consider people who name-call to be bullies, abusive, or, at the very least, unkind. However, in the context of Brexit, name-calling of immigrants might not be considered just a regular verbal assault, but perhaps an intentional xenophobic attack.

The data showed that as a result of the felt shame imposed on the participants by their environment, some of the participants considered changing their Polish names to sound more English. There were numerous descriptions of participants grappling with internal conflicts and frequent intense debating on possibilities of name-changing. For example, Participant Six shared her reflections on struggles with her Polish name on the British "market":

> *I'm an immigrant…. They see my name – it's not a very Polish name, but it's still a foreign-sounding name. I've got the bit about, you know, in Polish on my profile, so I had a few months where I was really anxious about that, and had a mixture of feelings. So, I thought, do I change it? And my friend suggested that I change my name, and I said, well, to change to what? Just to get clients? I'm still Polish, that's not going to change, the fact that I speak with an accent, I am from Poland. I said, oh, no, I'm not going to do that! But then I said, oh, maybe I should if I want to get a business, if I want to make money, maybe I should compromise.*

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

Questioning professional capabilities or competencies, based solely on the fact of being Polish, evoked strong feelings of unfairness. Participant Seven grappled with feelings of rage, as she felt unfairly judged because of the fact she was labelled as an immigrant:

> *I think there is almost like an element of judgement in why they are asking me* [where I come from] *because it's almost like they want to put me in this box, so I belong to this box – migrant, Polish. […] I think that they really want to put*

me in this one box, so she belongs there, and it's like a label. So that's my

label, I'm Polish, that's my category.

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

That was a strong statement describing her lack of control over the process of

marginalisation as an immigrant. She feels pushed into the place, she does not wish

to occupy. As if she was punished for being an immigrant.

And then, what annoys me even more, is that people say, 'You speak very

good English!' and I'm just like, 'You know what? I've got a master's degree in

this country. I've got a bachelor's degree and I did it in this country. I'm a

counsellor, that's another degree I have.' So, you know, it's granted that I

need to speak English. So, it's really annoying because I see myself as a

professional. I've got my private practice as a counsellor, but I also work as a

mental-health consultant three days a week, and I support people with mental-

health problems. I don't have anything against other jobs, but I've got a lot of

qualifications and training. It's really frustrating. I see myself as a professional,

so how dare you just give me those comments?

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

She felt deeply hurt by people commenting on her language ability, as if all her

efforts and hard work were dismissed, as if the only thing that was heard was her

accent, as if she lost the importance of her voice, because of the wrong accent.

4.3.2   I am an immigrant

All the participants emigrated to the UK as young adults in their twenties. They

presented many reasons for leaving Poland but, overall, they desired to improve their lives in some way. Most of the participants wanted to continue further education in the UK to ensure a better future for themselves. Some of the participants desired to find out what was missing in their lives so far. For most participants, the change was bearable, filled with optimistic curiosity. Although all the participants came to the UK alone, without many savings, they all were able to cope well with stressors and demonstrated high levels of resilience. For all of them, adapting to the new reality took a considerably short time, without excessive hardship. Nevertheless, uncertainty about the future and change in routines caused a lot of stress, and took up a lot of strength and energy.

Because of their young age and natural flexibility, they integrated into their communities, making friends, and creating families here. I wondered if perhaps in that process, full of changes and ambiguity, they partially lost themselves, their national identity becoming uncertain, sometimes fluid, and, after many years of grappling with questions of national identity, they finally arrived at some sort of stability. Then Brexit happened. Participant Five powerfully described his stance:

> *It's a kind of feeling like your roots have been taken out of you, of the ground, of where you are. And all of a sudden you knew all the time where you are, what's your goals, what's your plans, and what your aim is and what kind of identity you've created for yourself. And then all of a sudden you lose part of this identity because, I suppose, if you kind of spent 15 or 16 years in this country, then you do adapt a lot and you do put this as a part of your identity. All of a sudden you're being separated from that. So, in a sense, it's like your identity is being disrupted or ruptured and you're kind of left in kind of a limbo, not knowing…. what now then?*

It felt like a very fresh wound reopened, and yet again the battle of identity came back even more powerfully. The data showed that two participants called themselves British because they owned British passports. Other participants referred to themselves as Polish and European. What was common in all cases was they preferred not to think about themselves as immigrants, and it appeared that the word 'immigrant' to them was a negative one:

> *I suppose it's been a few good years that I haven't felt like I have been an immigrant. It creates a certain distance thinking about myself in those words, certainly, a huge distance… But like I said, whether I didn't want to think about myself in those ways or I've stopped thinking about myself like that, because I genuinely just settled and just adapted into the culture, changed the culture around to suit me. I have not for a long time thought about myself, if ever, in those words. But if I was told, 'You're an immigrant, how do you feel?'… Powerless I suppose? A bit powerless.*

<div align="right">Participant Five</div>

Participant Six brought the idea of powerlessness, but also a shame of immigration into the conversation. I pondered about Participant Six's pain of being not good enough as an immigrant, "lowest of the low". It felt as if Participant Six's confidence had been shattered by the fact that she became an immigrant in this country and was "feeling like a guest":

> *You know, I had this internal dialogue. […] I always thought of myself as, so, okay, I'm an immigrant, so I'm the lowest of the low, although, you know, I'm*

from an educated family, an educated background, and I've got good self-worth, and always have, so that didn't really impact me that much, but maybe that could explain why I feel like a guest. I try and tread carefully and respect the ways of this society and would never impose my Polish way of living.

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

The above quotation, "*I try and tread carefully",* suggest that Participant Six positioned herself in a quite threatening place. Being an immigrant is the label she had to deal with. That involves constant negotiation between herself ("*good self-worth"*) and opposing derogatory representation ("*I'm the lowest of the low"*). Participant Five described feelings Participant Six brought the idea of powerlessness, but also a shame of immigration into the conversation. I pondered about Participant Six's pain of being not good enough as an immigrant, "lowest of the low". It felt as if Participant Six's confidence had been shattered by the fact that she became an immigrant in this country and was "feeling like a guest". What is also interesting is the feeling of being different, and I wonder about countertransference in the room with a client? British clients repetitively asked her how she was feeling after the Brexit vote. Although she appreciated the concern, nevertheless in her mind this highlighted the fact that she was seen as the "other":

I am not different, so you know, I'm a nice person, so I thought, they just want to be nice. But on the other side, there was this feeling of thinking, well, why are you coming to me? I am like you. So, it highlighted the possibility that perhaps they do see me as different so they have to enquire, like I don't belong.

<div align="right">Participant Five</div>

Participant Six also shared a description of a similar experience. She talked about hurtful conversations with her English colleagues at work. The particularly difficult conversation for her was when an article about Polish people eating swans appeared in newspapers. Allegedly, there were cases of Polish people persecuted for killing and eating swans. That "news" was openly discussed in an office where Participant Six worked. She reported feeling shamed by her co-workers for being Polish:

> *Sympathy towards Polish people, it is not quite at the highest level. I've had a lot of very positive opinions about Polish people, but…* […] *some people I work with, when they start talking about Brexit, or when I witnessed a conversation about swans – Polish people eating swans – I sat there. They had a conversation with me sitting there. I think sometimes they forget that I'm Polish… I'm a Polish person. Because what they've got in mind is, those immigrants, that come here and take their jobs and their benefits, and take everything for free. I don't fit that picture, so I think they sometimes forget that I'm actually Polish, and when they talk about, immigration, they talk about me.*

> Participant Six

Given that Brexit highlighted the "problem" of immigration, participants were left to rediscover their stance on belonging and identity. Two participants spoke about their struggle with identity, and the feeling of not belonging:

> *For a few years now, I've been feeling like a visitor in Poland as well as here. So, when I go to Poland, I say I'm going home. And when I return, I say I'm going back home. I definitely felt more Polish than English, I mean I don't feel*

English, but definitely Poland was my home, and it's a huge part of my

identity, and still is, but I feel both… a sort of split, so I don't know if I'm

homeless.

Participant Six

When considering participants' accounts, the issue of their sense of self in relation

to where home is, and their belonging, becomes central. They wondered what

"home" means for them, and that felt unsettling at times. Perhaps it was not

necessarily about a geographical territory, but the self needed some sense of

"containment", as stated by Papadopoulos (2003, p.19), "Home is the locus where

the physical and metaphorical meanings of containment are closely interlinked to a

degree that they become inseparable dimensions of the same entity."

I don't know if it's possible to completely shift your identity but I've been really

focusing more on my British identity now because I want to assimilate more,

because I might not be accepted as I used to be.

Participant One

Participant Four has made her decision to move back to Poland in the next few

months. Her decision has been prompted by a growing feeling of not belonging here

in England. Those feelings strongly appeared at the time of the Brexit vote:

It's just having the full right to be there, and I don't feel that here. I mean on

paper I do, but it just doesn't feel like that. And in Poland if someone said,

"What are you doing here? Why are you here?" – not that anyone asked me –

I can say, 'I bloody well belong here. I am Polish, this is Poland.'

Participant Four

I could hear anger and irritation in her voice, which was accentuated by a raised tone when saying, "I bloody well belong here." It felt as if her home in the UK was the fragile one built "on paper", the one in Poland was strong, and could endure her anger, she was "allowed" to be angry.

The findings of this research project support the view that participants experienced intensification of the othering of immigrants since the Brexit debate began, and it has been socially acceptable in the mainstream and UK politics as well as in everyday life. For example, Participant Six reported feeling "furious" listening to the lies talked about Polish immigrants in the mainstream media.

Participant Six: *I was really furious with [David] Cameron, from reading the news, and newspapers. Obviously, I do realise that I'm in my own bubble, information bubble, because I read certain papers, I try to read sort of more right-wing papers, but don't do it as much as probably I should to get the balance. So, I do understand that I'm also biased, very biased, in my views, but nonetheless, I felt angry with Cameron, that, for his particular reasons, short-sighted political gains, he whipped at, maybe not hatred, but some sort of… feelings against Polish people. He was saying about immigration from European Union, but because we were the biggest of that group, I felt that he was really saying those things about us.*

Researcher: *So, you just felt this very personally?*

Participant Six: *Very, very personally, and that was then what had a knock-on effect in Brexit results, so that was my feeling. There was a lot of false information about immigration from the European Union. This ridiculous information about Polish people eating swans, for example.*

Participant Six

Participant Seven felt very disappointed with the media for falsely representing Polish immigrants as taking away jobs from British people, using the NHS for free and, as a result, destroying the healthcare system.

So obviously this is touching me closely because I'm the migrant in this country, and it's wholly unfair because I know loads and loads and loads and loads of people that came to this country, we came just to work, we, don't just want to use the system.

Participant Seven

4.4 Pain of Brexit

The second theme intended to capture the pain and hurt participants experienced since the Brexit process began. Until the Brexit vote, being publicly hostile to immigration felt like it was socially frowned upon. It felt like holding a negative prejudice against EU immigrants belonged to a minority… until the Brexit result. Most of the participants voiced the belief that the 52% who voted in favour of the UK leaving the EU shared those negative views about immigrants, and Brexit legitimised this antagonism. People holding such political positions felt safer to express them in public. All the participants experienced Brexit as a negative change.

4.4.1 Hurtful process

All the participants described Brexit as a challenging experience. They all shared memories of situations where British people spoke about Polish immigrants in a negative light. For example, Participant Six spoke about feelings of hurt. Her pain was magnified by the sense of helplessness, as she believed she couldn't stand up for herself because she was "just a guest here". I was struck by the strength of emotions expressed by Participant Six: "Do they think that we are barbarians […]

savages?":

> *It is an unpleasant thing, because I'm a guest here, and then having these strong feelings and sort of standing up for myself. I don't like being upset over anything, but I was really – it was really, really upsetting, and I knew they were talking about me. I don't think it was aimed personally at me. My sense was that they forgot that I'm sitting there, and that I'm Polish, and actually it was sort of a mistake. But I didn't think they were aiming it at me, I don't think they were deliberately saying it to bully me or upset me. Is this how they see us? Is this how they see Polish people? Do they really think that we're barbarians? Do they really think that we're savages?*

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

Participants used several poignant metaphors to describe their experience of Brexit. I wonder if there were no words yet available for them to explain their hurt. For example, Participant Six powerfully compared the Brexit process to the Second World War. That felt to be an extreme comparison, which just emphasised the strength of her feelings about Brexit:

> *The history of the Second World War had a massive impact on my development, on my belief system and values, and the prospect of having a war again has always terrified me since I was a child. So, things like… knocking – the police or army knocking on the door, and give people two hours to pack, and shipping them off to God-knows-where.*

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

By using the metaphor "the police or army knocking on the door", Participant Six

conveyed her fears and uncertainty around her future in the UK. Worries of her life disrupted in such a drastic way were deeply rooted in her past and were felt to have re-awakened with Brexit.

Similarly, Participant Eight used a powerful metaphor of a fight and prolonged pain – "they keep punching" – to describe how he experienced what was happening. The fact that he used this term to describe his living experience, emphasised how traumatic it was, and how powerless he felt:

> *It's something like being in a fight, and they keep punching your face so many times, and you just think, this is the end of the world. But two or three days after, you know, you're getting back to reality.*
>
> Participant Eight

The sense of physical pain as well as the emotional pain was captured in the above quote. The pain felt extreme (*this is the end of the world),* but almost unreal at the same time *(you're getting back to reality).* His voice became quieter, as if he felt he was losing this fight.

All the participants felt alone in their pain, not heard by their British friends or family, their anxieties dismissed. Participant Seven said:

> *You discuss it with your friends, so with my English friends, they don't really get it, do they? For them, it's Brexit but they have no idea how this actually affects me as a non-British person. I can only tell them that, and they just laugh. 'Oh you'll be fine, you'll be okay, you've got a job, you've got…' But you*

don't know that! And then when I speak to my Polish friends, they feel, I

guess, similar to me, just unsafe and insecure and not knowing what the future

holds for us, and the anger at the whole situation.

Participant Seven

As well as hurt and anger, participants frequently referred to feelings of disappointment in British society. Perhaps because they felt fairly well integrated into British society, they expected to be seen as a part of it as well. They experienced reality however appeared different:

I felt that maybe they didn't really appreciate us as much as they're supposed

to. I feel disappointment, a little bit of sadness.

Participant Eight

As well feeling disappointment with the British, participant Eight voiced his discontent with Polish immigrants and himself. He highlighted the fact, that Polish immigration had been passive, ignoring the opportunity for gaining the British passport, and that in turn would allow immigrants to participate the Brexit referendum:

If all of us had British passport, then we would be still in the EU. I feel a little

bit angry with myself and other Polish people who had the same opportunity

but we haven't really done it ourselves.

Participant Eight

This anger felt very personal. His parents-in-law voted for Brexit:

That made me angry, but it's just a… once again they are lovely, they are

loving, caring, amazing people

<div align="right">Participant Eight</div>

Participant Eight was left in an impossible position, between anger and love towards his parent-in-law. He felt rejected by his family. That brought tension to the relationship with his wife. The findings support the view that Brexit deeply impacted the family dynamics, and was the cause of many interpersonal ruptures that occurred during Brexit.

4.4.2 Brutal awakening

Since the Brexit campaign began and the vote took place, there were numerous incidents of aggression and abuse towards Polish immigrants. Hateful comments on social media were accompanied by direct abuse from the British public. Participant Three described that as, "*Some dark forces have been awakened.*"

> *I was heartbroken. I think we woke up on that day and I thought, that's not my country anymore. I've been here for 16 years now, so I came when I was really young, and I've done everything here. So, it became, in a sense, my home, my country, my homeland. I started university here, I started studying, I started my first jobs in here, and I built a family and I bought a house and everything. So, in a sense, it was, in common language, a slap on the cheek. I thought that I am kind of safe and I belong and it's kind of taken that away from me.*

<div align="right">Participant Three</div>

Other participants also talked about feeling unsafe on British streets. Incidents of aggression towards foreigners were widely reported in the media. For example, shortly after the vote, Arek Jozwik, a Polish man, was violently killed in Harlow by a group of six men (Lusher and Wylie, 2016). Participants were acutely aware of the tensions, and the facts, that in the days following the UK's decision to leave the EU, there was a 57% increase across the nation in hate crimes, as reported by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). However, the increase in some of the most euro-sceptic parts of the country was even more acute. Derbyshire, for example, noted a 121% rise in hate crimes in the first week following the EU referendum, while Nottinghamshire experienced a 140% increase. Both counties were among several in central UK with a majority vote to leave (Stone, 2016).

> *So, a couple of my clients told me that they were attacked on the bus. They were told not to speak Polish. There were incidents all over the country, I think, and I read some stories where, you know, people were shouted at in the shops for speaking Polish, and people were being told to 'go back to your country now that we've voted you out'. So that was pretty harsh to hear and read, because it felt really personal and it felt as if people were against Europeans. So that was quite tough in the beginning*

Participant One

Data showed that some of the participants began to consider going back to Poland. Even though most of the participants had settled in Britain as a permanent home, the instability of the situation and fear for their safety caused them to re-evaluate their future:

I never thought I would be even thinking about going back to Poland. If it wasn't for Brexit, I wouldn't be thinking about this. Shortly after the referendum, people started to talk about not feeling wanted here. It just made me think. I didn't have those feelings at first. The referendum happened and I was like, yeah okay, whatever. But then many people said, "Oh, I'm going back to Poland; I don't feel wanted here." And that happened so many times that I started to question, do I feel wanted here?

Participant Four

Participant Four struggled with a heightened feeling of being unwelcome. Due to the migration-centred media and public discourse that dominated the referendum campaign, Participant Four, as well as other participants, had the perception that the general atmosphere had changed and that society had become more hostile towards them. Participant Four stressed that those feelings appeared mainly because of Brexit:

Before Brexit I would just say things like "citizen of the world" and that sort of thing. Being able to settle a home wherever in the world. Now, the word "parasite" comes to mind, even though I know it's far from true because, you know, I'm self-employed, I pay tax, my husband's self-employed and he pays huge tax. But it just feels like you're here to benefit in some way from the wealth of this country. It's crazy, no one said that to me in person, it's just a feeling.

Participant Four

4.4.3 Do I have to justify myself?

Participants described the hurt they felt hearing negative comments about immigration. In such a hostile environment they felt the need to justify their presence in this country, as that would improve their image among society and perhaps, above all, for themselves. Participant Eight explained:

> *We contributed to the economy and how much money we put into the taxes, and hard work. And all the research is actually showing that we are really productive, and we don't really claim much of benefits. So, we don't really take advantage of the country, we actually really strongly contribute to the economy. I felt disappointed as well with the government, who kind of portrayed us as we are taking advantage of England, advantage of the economy, and we are taking all the benefits of the country but without really contributing.*
>
> Participant Eight

Participant One didn't feel accepted as an immigrant, it was almost a sense of hiding her "true identity" in order to be seen as a "valuable person":

> *They might not like me when they find out where I am from, or that they might not accept me for who I am, if that makes sense. That they might change their opinion about me because of where I'm from. So, there is that worry there. But in general, I'm kind of trying to put it aside and kind of focus on who I am instead of where I'm from… just to kind of differentiate that actually I'm here as a person and I'm here, I do something meaningful, I still contribute to the society, and um… I'm a valuable person…*
>
> Participant One

Participant One spoke about the change she had been experiencing. The way Participant One felt before Brexit dramatically changed during the Brexit transformation:

> *It was easier back then to be Polish. So potentially it's that kind of idea that I need to prove myself even more to be worthy to be in this country, where before it was like, 'Oh, you're from a different country, that's cool! Tell me about you, and tell me about different things!' and people were more excited about the kind of diversity, about people from different countries. Now it's like, 'Oh, there's too many Polish people, too many people from there, and there, and there, and we don't want you now. Get out.'*

<div align="right">Participant One</div>

Participants expressed beliefs that society blamed immigrants for draining British social services, that EU migrants were coming to the UK to take advantage of its generous public benefits, despite the fact that there was little evidence found that EU immigrants were coming over to take advantage of British benefits. For example, Participant Seven described it as an "unfair" picture:

> *The media portrayed that we need to leave the EU because there are too many migrants, and that migrants are taking our jobs, they're using the NHS, and the NHS is on its knees, and there is not enough money for the welfare system and the social system and all of that. I've been seeing the media mainly saying, this is about migrants, so obviously this is touching me closely because I'm the migrant in this country. And it's wholly unfair because I know loads and loads and loads and loads of people that came to this country. We*

came just to work, we don't just want to use the system.

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

Although Participant Seven came to the UK with no professional qualifications, she managed to earn degrees and qualifications she felt proud of. Despite her stable and secure position, she feels scared, not knowing what might happen to her:

And now the government wants, or one of the parties suggested that they don't want any people – unskilled people – coming to this country. So my husband says to me, 'That's you!' because back then, 15 years ago, when I came to this country, I was one of those people who didn't have these qualifications as I have right now, who just came for a kind of adventure, looking for a job. I was young and free, and I could do whatever I wanted. I've always worked, I've always had jobs, I've always contributed to national insurance, to everything, I've always paid taxes. It's just a whole insecurity, it doesn't feel safe anymore. It's scary and I don't really know what's going to happen.

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

4.4.4 Wound of uncertainty: anchorless

Data shows that Brexit has created a huge amount of anxiety and uncertainty for participants. Lack of clarity around their rights to reside, work, run a private practice or access welfare, all were placed under question. EU migrants spoke of their personal anxiety about Brexit, which was often connected to a loss of control and changing sense of identity:

I'm just terrified now that this balanced world is falling apart, because the EU was just such a beautiful balance in power for the States and China and Asia and now this balance is coming to an end and I fear, to be quite honest, I fear […] the feelings of being not where I belong. Like every time somebody like at the bank or, I don't know, a mortgage broker has just failed us slightly. There's always going to be the question – is that because we are from Poland? Or is it not? I mean you can't not ask yourself that question. It will come up at some point. I didn't use to ask myself that question. I actually felt quite proud and happy to be a Polish person in the UK. No more of that.

<div align="right">Participant Four</div>

Participants Four's narrative illustrates how vulnerable and out of control she has been feeling. Brexit disturbed the fragile balance she managed to establish here as an immigrant into the UK. Similarly, Participant Seven spoke about her insecurity caused by Brexit, she did not feel safe here:

It is scary hearing all the different stories about people in similar position to mine, receiving letters from the Home Office saying, you need to leave the country. Very often I've been laughing, saying to my husband, because my husband is British and my child is white British in his passport, but I'm Polish. So, I've been saying lots of times, "One day I will get a letter saying maybe I need to leave the country." It's just this whole instability, insecurity, just not knowing what really is going to happen.

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

Participant Five also shared a "catastrophic vision" of the future after Brexit. She created her life here, confidently settling into the reality of her home town and workplace, and now that all might be taken away or altered "*because of someone else's decision*":

> *It does evoke the sense of uncertainty and those thoughts around, oh maybe they will kick me out? That – that's the reason why I kind of went with the decision to have a passport, because I felt like, I don't want to go, but what if they force me to go? Obviously, I don't know if they could, but then you hear stories from all over the world where people, where families are broken apart, because someone doesn't have a passport, or someone doesn't have a visa or something, and they're being removed from the country. That's very kind of catastrophic vision, but it did go through my mind. […] It is quite scary to think that the life that you've established for yourself could change because of someone else's decision.*

> Participant Five

Although Participant Six received Settled Status, she still worries about *"politicians changing their minds"* and deporting her to Poland. Participant Six referred to a part of herself which was changed by Brexit, as "*the unreasonable part*":

> *I think, don't be silly, it's a mature democracy, things like that don't happen in a democracy. But then there is the voice, 'Yeah, how do you know that? Those things did happen.' I get that the context was different, and all of that, but Germany, they were a democracy before Hitler got into power […] I try not to give in to this anxiety, but it's definitely there, that politics may change, just like that, they may change… What stops them from scrapping and going back*

on their word? Nothing, really. I feel very powerless. Can I go to my MP?

Would they fight for me? Could I go to the papers? Would they be outraged on

my behalf? Would I get that sense that there would be anyone on my side? If

the government decided to scrap all the laws and say, okay, you've got two

hours to pack, get off?

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

Brexit created a great deal of doubt and painful questioning of relationships and trust. The findings show that participants experienced increased feelings of alienation, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future in the UK. The majority of participants intended to remain where they were living. However, two participants have already decided to move back to Poland, and one participant considered moving to another EU country. Both participants put their houses on the market and arranged all the details of the move to Poland:

I came here as an EU citizen and I believe that Europe is one whole integrated

body, and now that it's not, I don't really want to choose this country because

I'm choosing Europe. So, it's not only feeling unwanted, but it's also me not

really wanting Britain because it's not European anymore. It's seeking home,

seeking to be amongst my own people, going back to where I belong. It

sounds horrible actually…

<div align="right">Participant Four</div>

4.5 Betrayal. Did they pretend?

Participants spoke about their feeling of betrayal by the British government and the people. All the participants came to the UK as young people, well-educated,and with great plans for the future. However, Brexit and the increasing hostility towards

immigration awoke their mistrust towards British people and their "hidden" motives. All of them spoke about their amplified inability to trust their British friends or work colleagues. Participant Three said:

I felt like, who are those people? Because, either I haven't noticed something, or they are very good at pretending. That didn't feel very nice, because it's as if I was being cheated. […] They were not being honest with me. So, they were pretending. I don't really know what to think because, before the referendum, I was still working part time in [name of a major supermarket] and those relationships felt genuine and real, there was no pretending. We had some jokes around me being a migrant, and taking their jobs, but I wouldn't expect those people to vote for Brexit, or they have seemed to have that kind of a mindset… yet some of them must have. I would appreciate them to be honest with me and say, 'Look, I voted for Brexit because of this and that and let's have a conversation," rather than pretending.

Participant Three

Participant Three continued with passion:

Because of this feeling that people may not necessarily be honest with me about how they feel about me and how they feel… I think that's the strongest feeling that is felt after Brexit. If you have something against me, say it to my face. Don't pretend you're nice for God knows what reason. […] Don't pretend you like me when you don't. If you think I'm stealing your job, to simplify things, well, say it to my face. Don't pretend you're my friend or something.

Participant Three

Participant Five spoke about her felt hurt after the Brexit vote. Initially she experienced a huge wave of anger which, with time, changed into disappointment and later, sadness. Participant Five's immigration story was about searching for opportunities and growth. She felt as she had found positive, personal and professional development here in Britain:

> *So, I came here and I absolutely loved it, and I loved the culture, and I loved the government for doing things like that, for people allowing other people to come and take benefits. I'm not talking about financial benefits, but the benefit of just believing that you can start university at the age of 29, I think I was. That was something that Britain gave me, this country. Then to realise that it's not really your choice now, or your voice, it's quite devastating. Again, kind of showing you that, we've welcomed you and you're such a valuable person.. but you're not actually. So, it's like, taking that mask off and saying, 'Haha, you're actually not.'*

> Participant Five

Similarly, Participant Eight felt a shift, from enthusiasm and sense of belonging to disappointment and alienation:

> *I think 2005 or 2006 I felt really welcomed in England, and I never really had any bad experiences. So, it was always a positive experience here and I always kept saying to everyone in my family, how amazing the UK is. I was in London at the time, and you know how tolerant the country is, and how many opportunities we've got, how well I adapted to the culture and I feel like I'm part of the society. I feel like I belong to the society. And then when you're finding out that people… voted against you, for Brexit – they don't really want*

you here, then you kind of open your eyes a bit more about it. You know,

about what actually… not everyone, but a huge proportion of people actually

think.

Participant Eight

Similar to others, Participant One described her experience of Brexit as a sudden change:

I never thought about my future until Brexit. I thought, well, I'm here, I'm going

to stay here for as long as I can – I'm happy here. And then all of a sudden it

was this kind of upheaval, and I had to make a decision – what am I going to

do with my future? And most likely I'm going to stay here, so to be safe it's

probably best for me to blend in and become British to be able to work here

and live here.

Participant One

Continuing, Participant One poignantly described the changes caused by Brexit as very unsettling, like losing the home she created in Britain:

It's difficult to describe, but I definitely felt like I'm losing my new home, you

know? Because when I came here, I remember there was this sort of

encouragement from the British government – come here, we're going to give

you jobs, we welcome you here, we want you to be part of our country. It felt

very welcoming. But after that it felt like, we don't want you here anymore, just

get out, you're not needed, and if anything, you're just, you're someone or you

are – the Polish people, the Europeans, you are the people that make our

country worse. It felt very unsettling, and I felt very anxious to be hearing those stories and it definitely changed my perspective on where my place is here.

<div align="right">Participant One</div>

Participant One voiced her struggle as feeling like she was being personally attacked by the Brexit process:

I thought it was kind of an attack on me as being European, being Polish, and people not wanting me to be here and live here and work here, so I did feel very upset, because I thought there was something wrong with me – they didn't want me, I don't know… to be a part of this society.

<div align="right">Participant One</div>

Participant Six spoke about his internal voice he never met before. He began to question people around him, their motives and political views:

I sort of started looking around the people that I work with (I work mostly with English), and I kind of got suspicious. What if they voted Brexit? What if they voted to leave? And there were a few unpleasant surprises, when I thought that people who shared my values, have similar mindsets, that somewhere in the conversation it sort of came out, that they were voting leave. It was like…[sigh] I don't know, if I can still like that person.

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

The harms caused by the volatility of the immigration system, for example sudden changing of rules, policies and processes, was strongly felt by the Windrush generation, in recent years. The data showed that risks and lack of trust in the government was felt by participants, and the Windrush scandal only deepened that view. Watching the pain and harm which was inflicted by the "hostile environment", participants became worried if a similar story might be repeated with Polish immigrants:

> *Windrush was real. Windrush did happen. Whether it was a mistake, or whether it was a deliberate action, I don't know, I don't have enough information to say it, but it did happen, and it did affect […] And whether they were born here, they have never been in the countries of the origin of where their ancestors came from, and they came here, invited by the British government, to help rebuild the country after the war, and it's really scary.*
>
> Participant One

The Windrush scandal magnified anxiety and gave brooding space for creating "catastrophic scenarios", where Participant One found herself mentally preparing for the possibility of deportation:

> *Hearing stories from people, it does evoke the sense of uncertainty and those thoughts around, oh maybe they will kick me out? That's the reason why I kind of went with the decision to have a passport, because I felt like, I don't want to go, but what if they force me to go? Obviously, I don't know if they could, but then you hear stories from all over the world where people, where families, broken apart, because someone doesn't have a passport, or someone doesn't have a visa and they're being removed from the country. […] And it is quite scary to think that the life that you've established for yourself could change because of someone else's decision.*
>
> Participant One

The above statement is a vivid example of the immigrant therapist's sense of uncertainty, and mistrust towards the changeable rules and laws. Polish history has many examples of these rules being changed, and that in turn had a dramatic impact on the people. There was acknowledgment of helplessness, while facing significant social change.

4.6 In the therapy room with Brexit

This master theme addresses participants' accounts of experiencing therapy with their clients during Brexit. Findings suggest that all therapists felt deeply affected by the current political climate. Therefore, inevitably questions about navigating the complexities of the political situation and self-disclosure in the therapeutic space became even more relevant than usual.

The following example illustrates the experience of participant One, when asked if she felt that Brexit might affect the therapy process:

> *The therapy process in itself, not really, but what it might affect, is how my clients* [Polish clients] *feel about themselves, and their place here, and their role in this society, and their life in general – their future. Over the years I've had a lot of people feeling anxious about – do they go back home because they are no longer wanted here? Or will they be able to keep their jobs? Do they need to move to a different country now? Or what's going to happen with their children? So, there's a lot of anxiety and uncertainty that I see in my clients, and some people come specifically because they worry about that. Because it affects their life decisions.*

Participants reported that their clients experienced anxiety on a personal level, and perhaps that was challenging to hold in a therapeutic space. Further, participants themselves struggled with similar questions, therefore it became difficult to separate what belonged to whom.

Data showed that all the participants would vote against Brexit if they were given the chance to vote. Therapists who believed their clients mostly shared their views were more likely to speak to them about Brexit. I found that participants reported a difference between Polish and British clients in self-disclosure on the subject of Brexit. For example, Participant Four talked about her British clients, describing the shift in power and her own powerlessness. She sensed that British clients desired to talk about Brexit to explain themselves, to state clearly to their Polish therapist that it was not their fault:

> *They would tell me what they voted, even though I don't ask. They obviously know I'm Polish so perhaps it's like defending themselves that they are not to blame. It's a funny dynamic, you know, when you're in the room with someone. So, I'm in a helping role and here is the client in the client role and they had the right to vote and I didn't. That's when it affects the process. It's a funny shift because normally in therapy you work on neutralising the power imbalance that you hold because you are the one with the knowledge and the client is the one who seeks your help and you'll be seeking balance, seeking to bring equilibrium to this relationship.*
>
> Participant Four

On the other hand, participants wondered why Polish clients felt hesitant to speak

about Brexit with their Polish therapist:

I see a mixture of English and Polish clients, I don't exclusively see Polish clients, but none of my Polish clients mentioned Brexit, really. If it's mentioned, it's usually by my English clients. […] I had the sense that it was kind of to reassure me that they are on my side, if you see what I mean. Because obviously they know that I'm Polish, because that's how I advertise, and they still choose to see me.

Participant Six

Similarly, this was also the case for Participant Five:

I know that the British clients that I worked with, they really were affected by that, whether, because it was a family member who voted leave and they really couldn't understand that, whether it was something about their connection to the country and how are they going to find themselves. I'm not sure about Polish clients, why it's never been mentioned.

Participant Five

Participants spoke about struggling with the uncertainty and unpredictability of the current political climate. There were some concerns about how to help clients with the impact of the rapid changes taking place. Regardless of where, both participants and their clients fall on the political spectrum, the vagueness and social disharmony felt challenging. Participants felt forced to reconsider many choices they thought were already dealt with and decided. For example, Participant Four made the decision to move back to Poland, mainly because of Brexit. As a result of that decision, she described her feelings of guilt and fear:

Well, it's just scary to leave someone [client] when they're more vulnerable and where the relationship is really, really strong and you took time to build it. It just brings up feelings of guilt and fear. The guilt, you know. I know I can do whatever I want with my life, I know I get to choose that. But still, it just feels like abandoning. It's just one person in particular who, there's always this one client who you worry about more than the rest. And that one person is, I think, quite worried. I have a plan, I already spoke to my supervisor, if it happens, I know how to handle it. It's a young client, so there's going to be this maternal side that's reacting, and it's horrible.

Participant Four

Most of the participants work predominantly with Polish clients in their private practices. Participant Four reported noticing significantly less enquiries from British clients since the Brexit debate began:

I've been really busy with my Polish clients, so it's not a general down period. And sometimes there's times like Christmas, not many people start therapy just before Christmas, but that's not been the case. I've just not had many enquiries from British clients, while still receiving lots from Polish clients.

Participant Four

Participant Four wondered why that might be the case:

Counselling Directory, it used to attract English clients, but now it doesn't. I did think, oh is it correctly written? Does it sound like Polish? I don't know. Honestly, I mean I don't want to think that my client base, in general, is choosing based on nationality.

Participant Four

Participant One reported that when she first started seeing clients in her private practice, she only worked with Polish clients. However, with time, she noticed a shift:

> *So initially I only worked with Polish people in my private practice, now it's more of a fifty-fifty Polish speaking and English speaking. I think there's been less Polish clients coming to see me. I'm thinking that's probably to do with Brexit, because a lot of people are leaving or have left, so they have probably different priorities than coming to therapy, and also my prediction for the future is that there will be less Polish clients because they will be somewhere else, not here.*
>
> Participant One

Participants have given considerable conscious thought to the idea of how Polish or British clients might see Polish therapists working in the UK, and how they would feel sitting in the room with that difference. Participant Seven, for example, shared her reflections about seeing both British and Polish clients, and concluded:

> *For Polish clients, that's amazing having someone who speaks Polish. Just being able to tell someone, in Polish, even though loads of my clients speak English, they just want to speak to someone in Polish, because they say, 'because you understand, you know, we come from the same country, same culture and background'. I know we're Polish, but we're all very different, I don't necessarily understand. But because I'm Polish, they feel like we have this real closeness, and I have this real understanding. When it comes to someone who is British, or maybe another nationality, what I've always wondered, I struggle with confidence at first, … how can I actually help you? will I be able to… what can I do for you? will I be able to understand exactly, what are your needs?*
>
> Participant Seven

Participants struggled with self-esteem, and it felt as if their skills were put in question. Some of the participants could not understand their emotional responses. Brexit made participants insecure in the therapy room with clients, and it became difficult to regain clarity of what was going on.

4.7 The other side of the coin

There was no lukewarm reaction to Brexit, all the participants strongly disliked the idea of it. However, there were three participants who despite experiencing the disadvantages of Brexit, were able to see themselves prospering beyond it. Nevertheless, the optimistic voices were filled with uncertainty. For example, Participant Two compared her vision of the UK, to travelling with a map, as if she would be lost in geography of Europe after Brexit:

> *It's a bit like me getting here today with a map – like I couldn't figure out how to get here. If you imagine now where Britain is, where is it? There was an image of Europe without the Island, it was just Ireland, nothingness, then Europe, and it would be a bit weird really. So, I think this is something under the skin, a feeling, 'where are we?', 'what does it mean not to be a part of Europe?'.*

> Participant Two

Brexit was not a transformation participants desired for themselves. Two participants left the UK mainly because of Brexit, but the remaining six decided to face the reality. The following extract illustrated the hopeful energy Participant Two was voicing:

> *'What can this situation offer you now?' I truly believe in that there's always opportunity to grow from that. From the shitty situation, because you have to face who you are, what you are and how you're going to come out stronger,*

without feeling shame, without doubting yourself. This person calls in and, how do you really find your inner strength, regardless of where you're from, and thrive in that environment? So, I think that's a good question, that's a creative question, 'okay so this is it, how are you going to turn it around for you as a practitioner?' (…) There is always another side, I mean, so you've got a war, some people make millions from war, it's that sort of thing.

<div align="right">Participant Two</div>

Although overwhelming experience of Brexit was negative, Participant Three optimistically spoke about his professional advantage of owning both passports, Polish and British:

Technically I am no longer an immigrant because I have a British passport. And actually now, I think having two passports in a way makes me more valuable on the job market because I could move across the continent easier than someone who is just British. So, I think it works in my favour… as a professional I guess, but maybe for someone who… I don't know has some basic job; it may not be that easy. But I don't see it being a problem. More of an advantage.

<div align="right">Participant Three</div>

Participants had to rebuild their safety promptly, as they could only rely on themselves. Most of their families and close friends were living in Poland, and that exposed the isolated side of the immigration. The need of re-establishing their reasonable equilibrium, became essential to their survival.

4.8 Final question. An opportunity to reflect on the interview experience

Towards the end of each conversation with the participants, I spent some time to reflect on their experience of taking part in the research. I intended to offer the opportunity to add anything they felt was missed. It was notable that nearly all of

them drew attention to the fact that they had never had a chance to reflect on Brexit with another therapist, and precisely a Polish therapist. All the participants expressed feelings of appreciation for giving them a forum to voice their thoughts on the subject. Participant Seven, for example, said:

> *I think this is the first time I've really spoken to someone at that level. You discuss it with your friends, so with my English friends, they don't really get it, do they? For them, it's Brexit but they have no idea how this actually affects me as a non-British person. So, I can only tell them that, and they just laugh, 'oh you'll be fine, you'll be okay, you've got a job, you've got-'but you don't know that! And then when I speak to my Polish friends, they feel, I guess similar to me, just unsafe and insecure and not knowing what the future holds for us, and the anger at the whole situation.*

<div align="right">Participant Seven</div>

Similarly, participant Three spoke about his unfulfilled need for discussion about "actual feelings". Participants did not have a space where they could share their feelings about Brexit on a deeper level and, further, be listened to and understood:

> *I think it's not as widely discussed as it should be – how people actually feel and what's behind those decision, whether to vote remain or to vote leave, but not in terms of economics and all this, but actual feelings that are behind those decisions; what kind of needs, what kind of fears and anxieties, fuelled what happened*

<div align="right">Participant Three</div>

The above statements reflect the view of the participants that wider conversation about the consequences of Brexit is needed, that there was the need for a space

where Polish therapists would be able to discuss, share their experiences, look for understanding, and also be asked how they feel about Brexit.

4.9 Summary

This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis explored the experience of therapist-immigrant in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes, and the impact on personal and professional life; and how Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland. A total of eight participants took part in the research including six women and two men, and their recounting of their experiences produced a rich data corpus. Themes and related sub-themes were determined through detailed data analysis. Six superordinate themes emerged from the data analysis, following interrelated subordinate themes. The superordinate themes that were determined in the analysis are:

1. Otherness

2. Pain of Brexit

3. Betrayal: did they pretend?

4. In the therapy room during Brexit

5. The other side of the coin

6. Final question. An opportunity to reflect on the interview experience

The next chapter will discuss these findings in more depth and relate them to the extant literature.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the main findings followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature. It will then move on to discuss the originality of the research.

The Brexit process and the journey of the current research have been intertwined with each other from the very beginning. The emotional turmoil of the participants and the researcher, professional and personal changes, added anxiety to already challenging times. The experience of a Polish national in the UK and the UK becoming separate from the EU, paralleled the enormously challenging Brexit process.

The initial proposal was submitted just after the Brexit referendum, and these closing thoughts were written in July 2021, when the UK had left the EU. The time has been divided into before Brexit and after Brexit. Like Pandora's box, Brexit opened a box of darkness and wounds, which had been hurting for a long time, well before Brexit. How could anyone have expected the trouble arising from a single, simple question?

The main aim of the research was to explore the experience of therapist immigrants in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes and the impact on personal and professional, and how Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland. The following superordinate themes were determined in analysing the data: otherness, pain of Brexit, betrayal: did they pretend?, in the therapy room during Brexit, the other side of the coin, and final question.

The findings are positioned within a growing body of literature that explores experiences of immigrants around Brexit. However, there has been much focus in the field of mental health on the needs of immigrants as clients, but little is known about immigrants as service providers. Akthar (1995) wrote, "In the light of the fact that a large number of early British and American analysts were immigrants (and there are still many), the lack of literature in this area is surprising." (Akthar, 1994, p.1075).

It is recognised practice within IPA research to return to the literature after data analysis has been completed in order to add a new take to the discussion. "It is in the nature of IPA that the interview and analysis will have taken you into new and unanticipated territory." (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 113).

5.2 Background and contextualising main findings in the literature

Inequality, racism and xenophobia had been bubbling underneath the surface of Britain's make-up for years. The political arguments about leaving the EU have also been present since the moment the UK joined. But the question of why Brexit became a pivotal point in all that journey is about the toxic campaign, which was

capitalised on by critics of multiculturalism and has normalised hatred towards immigrants. It is frequently said that people voted in a democratic manner and decided, but what exactly was decided? Overall, 17.4 million people voted for Leave, in comparison to 16.1 million who voted for Remain (https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) in the Brexit referendum in June 2016. I wonder, if a more truthful way of describing this endeavour is – people were divided. The Brexit debate generated public discourses in which people could transform their anger, fear, and sadness into political views: for or against immigration, for or against international laws, for or against Brexit. The idea of Brexit anxiety and connection between emotions and politics became the subject of the inquiries (e.g., Dagerman, 2019). Political reality became too loud to be ignored, feelings became too overwhelming to be repressed. "Brexit is the very definition of what psychologists refer to as a 'stressor'. It can therefore be presumed to be inflicting a grievous mental load on the population." (Hughes, 2019, p.3). The discharge of emotions has increased the political agency of individuals whose attempts to join in political discourse have long been dismissed or undermined on the basis that they are overly emotional and irrational.

Orbach (2016), reporting in the Guardian in the piece, "In therapy, everyone wants to talk about Brexit", described the volatile emotions that her clients had expressed about the outcome of the referendum, such as anger, fear, and anxiety:

> There is fright and consternation about a racism now given oxygen. The barely visible, the shadow, is being seen and it is unwelcome. It has released a shockwave as people recognise that the political really is the personal, and that what is personal – what counts as a response to alienation in some of the Brexiters – is the ugliness of othering the foreign, the newly arrived, the people who are displaced from home. The starkness

of this recognition, in the taunts and daubings and attacks that show a fear

of the other, are sobering and scary. It hurts to know how powerful and how

close to the surface such feelings are, and it is crucial that we contest the

underlying terms of a political debate in which racism is an acceptable

expression of powerlessness.(Orbach, 2016, p.VIII)

Hughes (2019), writes that Brexit is far more than just political. "It reflects how

British citizens psychologically experience their lives, how they identify themselves

culturally, and what values they hold." (Hughes, 2019, p. 67). Although it is apparent

that the Brexit process has affected people psychologically, establishing the extent

of the problem has proven challenging, as mental health research is a slow process.

Joel Vos, Digby Tantam and Emmy van Deurzen (2020) conducted a study where

they examined 19 surveys and research studies, which were done since the

referendum in 2016. They reported a range of Brexit-related emotional challenges,

for example anxiety, sleep problems, social concerns and a sense of

powerlessness, regardless of their voting behaviour or their citizenship status in the

UK (Vos, Tantam, Deurzen, 2020).

Political factors have to be incorporated into therapeutic space. This research yet

again highlights that human experience is embedded in contexts (van Deurzen-

Smith, 1996), and that the person and their experience cannot be separated out

from their environment. This view of human experience is also extended to

understanding the process of psychotherapy. In this regard the concept of reflexivity

is important in order to take into account our own impact on the therapy, our life

history, values and professional training.

5.3 Therapist immigrants in times of Brexit

5.3.1 Otherness

Othering, racism, xenophobia, nativism and discrimination are fundamentally related concepts that cross and overlap. The basis of othering is built on the imbalance of power, and could be understood as a social method of identifying individuals thought to be different from the majority or culture, that emphasises dominance and subordination (Johnson, Bottorff, Browne, Grewal, et. al, 2004). Extensive research has been conducted on the other throughout the decades, and much was reported on the subject. For example, Ajzenstadt and Shapira's (2012) understanding is that those who emigrated from an outside nation, deviant of the mainstream norm, are labelled as the "alien other" by those in the dominant culture. Ajzenstadt and Shapira (2012) elaborate:

> They are classified as subjects for regulation and control, aiming to protect society from the economic, demographic and social dangers they pose. Their definition as "dangerous" locates them in an isolated place with its own social meaning for them and for society. (Ajzenstadt and Shapira, 2012, p. 688)

The findings of this research project indicated that participants were always aware of the dynamics cited above. What changed during Brexit was the intensity and openness of the negative reactions towards immigrants. Overall, the participants involved in this project held the view that politicians used immigrants to manipulate the Brexit debate. Participant Three said:

Politicians do whatever they need to do to stay in power, and this blaming migrants and the poor has always been a strategy.

The expression of views that was once distinctive of the far right has now come into the general political discourse, for example, through the use of images of protecting and maintaining borders and British jobs. This, I believe, has dangerous consequences for society and vulnerable groups of citizens. The adoption of "us and them" narratives led Brexit to be mixed with special attention to race and racism. Jonathan Sklar (2019) writes that in times of uncertainty and anxiety we may abandon complexities and opt for a simplistic version of reality which offers a safer or pleasurable alternative which indulges in an oversimplified view of the world. This complexity was met with a simple solution – leave the European Union. Immigrants from the EU have become a perfect projective object where the main culture has disposed of its unwanted anxieties. The result is that immigrants become the enemy. Participants involved in this research, voiced their frustrations that they continuously had to experience undeserved judgments. They did not feel as if they are taking away anything from the British, on the contrary, they were confident that they enriched the country they had chosen to settle in. So, the assumption that they might be a burden to society was experienced as extremely hurtful. Participants were constantly exposed to the cruel narrative: place of work, streets, media, and their own homes. They found it challenging to deal with the hateful narrative.

I'm trying to think about it as a coping… in psychoanalytical terms… projection – what you don't want to acknowledge in yourself you project to someone, and obviously it's always easy to blame the poor and the migrants, and that's what happened. And projection is a powerful defence mechanism, […] it has always been about projection and projection has always been a political tool.

Participant Three

According to Bollas (2018), immigrants can come to serve as a translation of any unwanted person. Throughout the Brexit campaign, interpretation of the social world was reduced to black and white. This kind of paranoid thinking bound people together, simplifying complexities into digestible ideas that appeared to be cohesive and were assumed to be accurate. Through projection, people could rid themselves of unwanted persecutory anxiety and aim this to an Other who could then be eradicated (Baker, 2020).

Participants described having been exposed to verbal abuse, specifically name calling. It was apparent that this began with Brexit. Komaromi (2016) found that more than 6,000 racist hate crimes were reported to the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in the four weeks after the Brexit referendum:

> Incidents ranged from physical assault and property damage to verbal abuse. In 51 per cent of the incidents, perpetrators referred specifically to the referendum in their abuse, with the most commonly involved phrases including "Go Home" (seventy-four stories), "Leave" (eighty stories), "fuck off" (forty-five stories). These were followed up by statements such as "we voted you out", "we're out of the EU now, we can get rid of your lot", "when are you going home?", "shouldn't you be packing your bags? (Virdee and McGeever, 2018, p.1808)

5.3.2 Vulnerable language

Christodoulidi (2010), in her inquiry into the therapist's experience in a foreign country, highlighted that counselling and psychotherapy introduce complex and subtle concepts to practitioners and a wide range of highly nuanced vocabulary and idioms, which some participants mentioned as being a barrier. Others found it difficult to express themselves in a second language, when entering into deeper

emotional experiences or subtle feelings in a language different from their own. In my personal experience, similarly to Christodoulidi (2010), the use of English as a second language was not a complication in terms of performance, as my thinking and training as a counselling psychologist was shaped by English language. The challenge for me has been related to my native Polish language, as therapy terminology in Polish has not been familiar to me, so conducting therapy in Polish has always been a challenge and a huge learning task.

Participants did not report challenges while conducting therapy in their second language, what challenged them where their own anxieties. As immigrants, they already have been placed at risk of prejudice or stereotyping. As immigrants, they positioned themselves in structural terms in relation to the UK as foreigners. That already heightened sense of being different, only grew during Brexit. Foreign accents pointed at and exposed their vulnerability further. Perhaps, that is why some of the participants preferred to conduct the initial assessment session via email. The written English masked their difference.

Awareness of their accent was strongly noticed among the participants. What was interesting while talking to the participants was their regional English accents. Perhaps the most noticeable for me (as a person from Dorset), was the northern English accent. I remember feeling really startled by my own reaction. I felt surprised hearing a fellow Polish therapist speaking to me in English with a strong northern accent. Perhaps, the participant felt similar confusion hearing me talking with a Dorset accent. That initial exchange of language, awkward at the beginning, later in the interview became rich in data. Participant Seven, who lived in the UK for over 16 years, reported that the initially polite and curious question, "Where is your accent from?" gradually became more loaded with meaning. Participant Seven,

recognising her growing frustration, and reflecting on the subject, admitted angrily:

I think that they really want to put me in this one box - so she belongs there, and it's like a label. So that's my label, I'm Polish. What annoys me even more is that people say, 'You speak very good English!' And I'm just like…, 'You know what? I've got a masters' degree in this country. I've got a bachelors' degree and I did it in this country. I'm a counsellor, that's another degree I have.' So, you know, it's granted that I need to speak English. It's really annoying because I see myself as a professional, […] so how dare you just give me those comments? I don't know!

Participant Seven

The accent became like a scar, which should be hidden away from the outside world. That echoes what Benedi Lahuerta, & Iusmen (2021) investigated in their study, focusing on changes in the vulnerability of EU nationals in the UK as a consequence of the Brexit referendum. They were focusing on the experiences and feelings of the Polish community in Southampton. In the study it was found that the Brexit referendum led EU nationals to a heightened awareness of being perceived as different and to increasingly feeling unwelcome. They also reported feeling much more self-conscious about signs that would identify them as a migrant post-referendum. This self-consciousness has been intensified by British people's frequent questions about Polish immigrants' country of origin, which constantly reminded them that they do not belong in the UK.

5.4 Between. Voice

Even though participants voiced feelings of national pride in being Polish, they all

reflected on Polishness as a curse in everyday life. This contradiction left them in a peculiar position; on one hand feeling obliged to be proud of their heritage and, on the other hand, ashamed to be a Polish immigrant in this country. If we agree with the hypothesis that race constitutes a primary means to identify minority/majority status, and identification as a member of a particular racial group implies a long list of preconceived ideas about attitudes and actions (Kibria 1996; Bashi and McDaniel 1997), we perhaps might understand the feelings of shame in being a Polish immigrant. If Polish immigrants are portrayed negatively, particularly in the media, such portrayals present another level of otherness beyond the socio-political climate, providing an added layer of complexity to understanding the adaptation processes for Polish immigrants.

This issue also relates to the professional self of the foreign therapist, as there is also a questioning of belonging in a certain peer group or modality that may represent or operate from within values that are reinforcing the possible conflict between the original and host culture (Christodoulidi, 2010).

> People, who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; they have learned to negotiate and translate between cultures and, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, they have learned to live with and indeed to speak from, difference. They speak from the 'inbetween' of different cultures, always unsettling assumptions of one culture from the perspective of another and thus finding ways of being the same and, at the same time different from, the others amongst whom they live." (Christodoulidi, 2010, p. 206, original emphasis).

Findings of this research suggested that this duality of positioning, between Poland

and England, caused participants ongoing internal negotiation. The questions, shall I stay in the UK or go back to Poland, were alive in their reflections. Two participants decided to move back to Poland. That perhaps advocates the strength of that reflective process.

The emerged data suggests that participants identify themselves as a guest, which emphasised the strong sense of distinctiveness in relation to the majority of the UK population. The exclusion from the Brexit vote, only deepened the perception of marginalisation. The "label" powerfully heightened the sense of marginalisation and exclusion from society. Participants were continuously reflecting upon their identity, and perhaps that is why they were challenged to experience the world as stable and predictable. That sense of ever-changing circumstances, has weakened their sense of control over their life. Participant's voice was not taken into account, it did not feel as important as the British ones. The result of this research clearly highlighted, that there was no space for participants to share their Brexit anxieties, worries, or simply speak and being listened to. In those cases where participants were listened to, their concerns were taken lightly and the desired responses were not received. For example, when participant Six shared her worries about deportation with her English friends, she felt dismissed as they laughed at. This resulted in deepening fear of speaking out. Participants reported, that after several failed attempts to talk about their situation with others, both Polish and British friends or family members, they gave up because they did not feel listened to. Some participants reported that their supervisors were very quick to open the conversation about Brexit. However, that felt as imposed agenda, rather than "problem" brought to the supervision by participants. Participants felt confused with the idea of inviting the "political" into the room. As most of things related to Brexit, talking about Brexit has been difficult and baffling.

Participants found the Brexit changes difficult to cope with. As time passed by, the psychological stress increased, and their questions about the future had no clear answers. Participants struggled alone with "Brexistential crisis" (Vos, Tantam, van Deurzen, 2020, p.10). Emmy van Deurzen, who worked with clients who voiced the Brexit anxieties, said:

> As a psychotherapist I have worked with many people in this position and some of them are truly devastated because they have nowhere to turn. Not everyone can obtain settled status and many people have no home or family in their country of origin. They are British to all intents and purposes and should have been offered the sanctuary of dual nationality straight away. They feel as if they have lost their identity and their human rights. (Deurzen, E. van, 2018)

Their reality was decided by someone else. This brings again the historical background into the picture, as too many times Polish destiny was decided by "alien forces". Moodley (2009) discusses the idea that the marginalised clients of ethnic minority groups are often positioned "outside" the mainstream of the talking therapies and become "voiceless". This research considers that participants felt as voiceless during Brexit; they felt left outside of the conversation about their future in this country.

5.5 Betrayal: did they pretend?

All the participants have lived in the UK for more than 15 years now. Despite the fact that they are Polish, their sense of belonging is placed mostly in this country. In their experience, they worked hard to deserve the respect and acknowledgment as equals. They felt that they contributed to the society in many ways, from paying their taxes to being involved in charity work. Perhaps that is why the accusations, for example of being a burden to the society, or that they are claiming benefits, hurt so deeply. the label of an immigrant has been considered as a negative and loaded in meanings for the participants. Although participants immigrated willingly to the UK, and therefore became the Other as a matter of choice, the data showed that the label "immigrant" was certainly an unwelcome one:

I always thought of myself as, so, okay, I'm an immigrant, so I'm the lowest of the low, although I'm from an educated family, an educated background, and I've got good self-worth, and always have, so that didn't really impact me that much, but maybe that could explain why I feel like a guest.

<div align="right">Participant Six</div>

In conversation with Participant Five, the label "immigrant", caused quite an emotional response.

Participant Five: *That's the first time somebody's said 'immigrant' in connection with me, so I suppose it's been a few good years that I haven't felt like I have been an immigrant. But if you're asking me how I did feel about that? It creates a certain distance thinking about myself in those words creates, certainly, a huge distance… But like I said whether I didn't want to think about myself in those ways or I've stopped thinking about myself, because I genuinely just settled and adapted into the culture, and changed the culture around to suit me, I have not for a long time thought about myself, if ever, in those words. But if I was told, 'You're an immigrant, how do you feel?' Um… powerless I suppose? A bit powerless.*

Researcher: *In what sense?*

Participant Five: *In what sense? In a very emotional sense, because I know in reality I do have a power, there are laws round it to start with. But emotionally for me it creates a bit of a powerlessness in the sense.*

Participant Five

Not surprisingly then, the current political change has been emotionally charged for the participants. In the Brexit debate, they were left voiceless, and that in turn contributed to the feeling of powerlessness.

At this point in the discussion, I consider it important to reflect on the Polish perceptions of Others, which have been largely determined by the political and cultural past. Geo-politically Poland is positioned between the East and the West, with a strong push towards the East of Europe (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007). The label "Eastern-European" became the synonym for the poorer Europeans, economic immigrants, the Polish "plumbers". This places the Polish immigrant community into a space of vulnerability. The findings of this research showed that participants feel the need to fight back against that categorisation. For example, participants feel the need to highlight the fact that they are educated, worthy, and professionals contributing to British society.

The history of the twentieth century and the generational trauma of the Polish nation has been felt by some as a dark whispering shadow on the emotional wellbeing of its citizens. Perhaps it would be helpful to remind the reader of the historical background relevant to this discussion. After suppressing a Polish revolt in 1794, Poland vanished from the map of Europe until 3rd of November 1918, when the Polish Republic was proclaimed again (Davies, N. 2005). Poland re-emerged as a country of many ethnic minorities: 14.3 % of the population were Ukrainian, 3.9 %

Belorussian, 10.5 % Jewish, and 3.9 % German (Millard, 1998). Although that

diversity caused tensions in society, it was also enriching and beneficial. Naturally,

different cultures and belief systems introduced themselves to each other, creating

new, more familiar Others. As an example, my own family history combines

Catholic, Jewish and Russian Orthodox cultures, mixed with Polish, Austrian and

Belarussian roots. There is a part of me which has always celebrated that history,

and at the same I can sense the part which feels ashamed of it, and keeps it as a

secret.

World War Two and the turmoil initiated by Nazi Germany, combined with the Soviet

invasion, catastrophically transformed the multiculturalism and diversity of Poland.

Otherness was to be painfully punished. Poland became the place where German

fascists intended to exterminate this otherness. That trauma imprinted its painful

mark not only on Polish history and the Polish nation, but on humanity overall.

After 1945, Poland, under the Soviet Union's influence, was projected to be largely

homogenous, in regard to both ethnicity and religion. The official communist vision

promoted the idea of a nation state with limited sovereignty and loyalty to Moscow.

The other had to go into hiding as every glimpse of diversity or rebellion might be

harshly punished by the regime. It happened that neighbour reported neighbour to

communist authorities for breaking the guidance, for example attending church

masses. The Catholic Church unequivocally condemned communist ideology

(Szporer, 2010).

In 1989, after a long journey and many sacrifices, the freedom fighters of

Solidarnosc were on the road to win independence. Poland "returned" to Western

Europe in 1989. Perhaps because of that lengthy and painful process, the Eastern European label feels like an insult.

> Eastern Europe is a region more internally divided than any other part of the continent. It is only homogeneous in racial terms – its population is almost entirely white, which makes it rather exceptional and ill-suited to the realities of a globalized world, a factor that generates additional problems. Nevertheless, the countries of Eastern Europe are constantly thrown together by outside observers. (Sierakowski, 2019, p. 27)

That very brief historical sketch was intended to introduce the emotive past of Polish people and possible reactions towards otherness. Coming from a society where otherness has been culturally rooted as dangerous and suspicious, being labelled as other feels at least unsettling. In conversation with Participant Four, the breaking up of the European Union brought feelings of othering Britain as a country, combined with her own otherness as an immigrant. The unsettling disconnection of Britain from the peace and cooperation of the EU was described as "a huge disappointment" and "heart-breaking".

Participant Four: *The main thing that I love about the EU is that after years of war, horrific war and war crimes, Europe has finally come up with a plan that would bind the world, that would connect the different nations in peace, in cooperation. I mean nobody really lost on EU. Some countries were perhaps paying in more than they were getting out of it, but everybody thrived. All the economies were much more - but mainly peace. And I'm just terrified now that this balanced world is falling apart. Because the EU was just such a beautiful balance in power for the States and uh China and Asia and now this balance is coming to an end and I fear to be quite honest, I fear.*

Researcher: *What do you fear?*

Participant Four: *I fear war! I just basically fear a huge war because it feels like the balance that granted peace after years of war and war crime…that this is now falling apart.*

Participant Four

Participant Four sold her house and moved back to Poland a few months ago. After living in the UK for 15 years, Participant Four, her husband and two children who were born here in the UK, felt that they had no choice but to leave. The main reason was:

The feelings of being not where I belong. […] I never thought I would be even thinking about going back to Poland. If it wasn't for Brexit, I wouldn't be thinking about this. […] It's just having the full right to be there, and I don't feel that here. I mean on paper I do, but it just doesn't feel like that. And in Poland if someone said, "What are you doing here? Why are you here?" – not that anyone asked me – I can say, "I bloody well belong here. I am Polish, this is Poland, I get to be here."

Participant Four

The fear of war also vividly resonated for Participant Six. She compared Brexit to the turmoil of war. Although the participant couldn't remember the experience of war, I wonder if Brexit awoke a generational trauma of the war, and it arose to the surface just enough to be noticed.

Maybe there's a Polish history, and what happened, because the history of the Second World War had a massive impact on my development, on my belief system and values. And the prospect of having a war again, has always terrified me since I was a child. And there were, you know, things like… knocking – the police or army knocking on the door, and give people two hours to pack, and shipping them off to

God-knows-where, so the mistrust is always there to a political establishment, it's just really engrained in me, through history, not necessarily from my parents, from my personal upbringing, but from cultural background, the Polish history.

Participant Six

Children in Poland are taught about the atrocities of World War Two from a very early age. One of the powerful lessons from that period of history has been Bruno Schulz. Schulz, a Polish Jewish writer, was born in 1892 in the town of Drohobycz (Ficowski, 2002). Drohobycz, over the course of Schulz's life, belonged to or was fought over by successive states: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, West Ukrainian People's Republic, the Second Polish Republic, the Soviet Ukraine, Nazi Germany, and Ukraine at present. Without moving from his town of birth, he was moved from one country to another. Similarly, my grandmother Wanda, was born in Polish Grodno but, after the war, the town belonged to Belarus. The story of misplacement or not belonging, changing identity or being forced to change it, has been written into the history of many Polish families.

I remember reading Schulz's (1977) *The Street of Crocodiles,* at the age of fifteen. As I read his biography, I became deeply saddened, not only because of the tragic facts from his life, but also the terrifying familiarity of the account. I thought about grandmother Wanda and the story of her mother, who was killed by Nazis when she was walking back home with a bag of sugar. Schultz was shot and killed by a German Nazi, a Gestapo officer, in 1942 while walking back home toward Drohobycz Ghetto with a loaf of bread.

I waited for the Germans to go away, and then I walked past the dead people. There were dead bodies everywhere. Dead people in the street was an everyday thing. If you saw the dead body of a cat in the street it would have made a bigger impression. I didn't notice that anything special had happened, and I also didn't know who they were. I almost walked right past that one dead man, but when I saw the bread I drew closer. I saw, from one of the bodies lying on the sidewalk, something like a piece of bread. It was sticking out there, from the pocket of his trenchcoat. I went over to this dead man, and I guess I wanted to take his bread. And the dead man turned over. I turned him over, and the way I turned him he was facing me, and I look and see that it's Schulz. It was Schulz's face."

Fleischer stopped, folded his hands on his head, took a few deep breaths.

"And then what did you do?" I asked.

"I can't tell you . . . it was something shocking, so much that I'm not sure that . . . what did I do?

Grossman, 2009

The stamp of a generational trauma has been printed into the Polish mind. At home or at school, Polish children were taught about the painful side of the political turmoil, and the devastation left behind. As a little girl, at the age of eight, we went on a school trip to Tykocin – a beautiful little town in the north-east of Poland. As part of a history lesson, we were visiting the museum of Jewish history. The town of Tykocin was conquered by Nazi Germany during the German invasion of Poland. I clearly remember the curator taking us on a tour of the museum. On the morning of 24 August 1941, the Germans announced that all Jews should report the next day to the town square. At the time there were approximately 1,400 Jews in Tykocin. On 25 August the Jews were rounded up in the square by the Germans with help from Polish police. In order to placate the crowd, the Germans told the Jews that they were going to be transported to Białystok Ghetto. The men were marched to a

nearby village and from there taken trucks to the pits in Łopuchowo forest, and murdered. The women and children were driven by truck to the pits and murdered (Spector & Wigoder, 2001). I was eight years old but that history lesson, and many similar, have been carried with me forever.

The general feeling of mistrust towards politicians was strongly noticed in the findings. Participants questioned the trustworthiness of the present rule makers. In the British context of Brexit, the negative discourse fuelled by some politicians and the media about Polish immigrants, left participants in turmoil, doubting the established order, as illustrated by Participant Six:

I think, don't be silly, it's a mature democracy, things like that don't happen in democracy. But then there is the voice, yeah, how do you know that? How do you know? Those things did happen. Okay, I get that the context was different, and all of that, but… Germany, they were a democracy before the Hitler got into power, and things started changing. […] politics may change, what stops them from scrapping and going back on their word? Nothing, really. Can I go to my MP? Would they fight for me? Could I go to the papers? Would they be outraged on my behalf? Would I get – I don't have that sense that there would be anyone on my side, if the government decided to scrap all the laws and say, okay, you've got two hours to pack, get off.

Participant Six

I believe that Brexit, a complex and multi-faceted social and political phenomenon, will have more long-term effects on people than any other single event in recent history. It would be helpful to build a deep and rich understanding of how Brexit and reactions to it have and will influence the post-Brexit world. Data presented by participants led the researcher to believe that participants felt deeply affected by Brexit and failed by politicians. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, some of the participants referred to the Windrush scandal as an analogy. The Windrush generation were let

down by government failure and systematic discrimination. That brought more anxiety to an already difficult situation for Polish immigrants, where trust in politics and politicians was already low. Three of the participants mentioned the Windrush scandal as an example of neglect on the part of the British government. They voiced the worries that a similar experience might happen to them or their children in the future.

The most poignant lesson that ought to be learned from the Windrush scandal must be that no immigration status is ever a substitute for British citizenship. There is some justification for the analogy of Brexit and the settled status scheme set up for the European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals to secure their rights to live and work in the UK after the ending of European free movement rights in the UK. The risk that this scheme will prove inadequate is often described as analogous with the Windrush scandal. The consequences to the EEA and Swiss nationals, and their family members, of not registering under the scheme could be very similar to the experiences of members of the Windrush generation in losing their jobs, livelihoods and homes, being excluded from vital social and public services and being detained and expelled from their country of origin (www.openaccessgovernment.org/windrush-scandal). On 16 June 2021, the Guardian published a story about a British cellist, who was the first black winner of the BBC Young Musician award in 2016 and played at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan. He has had his passport cancelled by the Home Office. Sheku Kanneh-Mason, who was born and raised in Nottingham, whose father is Antiguan and mother is from Sierra Leone, said his original passport, which had an expiry date of 2029, had been returned cancelled (www.theguardian, 2021, Jun,16). This story was deeply moving on a personal level, once again highlighting the fact that the political situation might change at any time. I felt shaken by the possibility that

my three children, born and raised in this country, might have to undergo similar treatment in the future, and that possibility is very unsettling. Participants' narratives highlighted their acute awareness of the socio-political inequalities faced by other immigrant groups at different levels, and that further increased their anxieties.

Participant Six, although having settled status, still experienced anxiety and worry – "what if". And in spite of the fact that she has received all the documents permitting her to stay in the UK, she still has doubts that it might not be enough:

Participant Six: We've got settled status now, but we've started to think, maybe it's worth having that British passport in case, in a few years' time, the settled status turns out not to be enough. What if they change their mind, they change their politics – because there's a lot of mistrust on my part, to politicians in this country, and that is a huge change in me, how I perceive the UK. Because I always thought of British politics, because I studied political science in Poland. So when I studied our history, and politics, the UK always seemed to me, like really level-headed country. Reasonable, evidence-based, and then Brexit changed it. Really, big time, and now I'm not sure if having settled status is enough. They say it's enough, but, um…

Researcher: But the settled status doesn't settle you?

Participant Six: Doesn't settle me, exactly. But bear in mind, the letter is not a proof of your settled status. So, to get a proof, you have to log onto the Home Office website, and I don't trust the Home Office after the Windrush scandal, I'm not sure how to go about that. I'm thinking of printing this out myself, and laminating it and keeping a copy, because it's that level of distrust.

Participant Six

Participants actively struggled with the political change Brexit brought into their reality. Moreover, they struggled with re-establishing themselves in the new situation, and that felt threatening. For example, Participant One movingly explained how she changed after Brexit; from a person who openly spoke about being Polish, to one who would rather hide this fact away:

I've been really focusing more on my British identity now because I want to assimilate more, because I might not be accepted as I used to be. It was easier back then to be Polish. And now, potentially it's that kind of idea that I need to prove myself even more to be worthy to be in this country.

Participant One

Findings of this research indicate that belonging is an open-ended and ongoing process of making and remaking connections, and building and maintaining attachments. May (2016) stated that belonging is fundamentally a temporal phenomenon, rather than a fixed fact, with an endpoint reached when a person feels at home. That echoes the conclusion of Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000), that rethinking of identity is an on-going process, and the threats to their identities cannot be eliminated. "Quite the contrary, the threats are still there, still attacking viability of their identities. These threats trigger various coping strategies but these are only partially, if at all, stressful." (Timotijevic and Breakwell, 2000, p.370).

5.6 Therapists, therapy and Brexit

The process of grappling with internal struggles on becoming an immigrant has

been paralleled with questions about being a Polish therapist in a room with a client. Brexit perhaps only highlighted the complexity of this situation, and the importance of psychological equilibrium, essential in this profession: "A therapist, unlike an accountant or engineer, does not have the choice to do this work disconnected from personal experience and deep emotions." (Cozolino, 2004: xvii). The dialogue I had with Participant Two is just an example of the struggle that most of the participants voiced.

Participant Two: *I had a phone call from a British customer, she was looking for therapy. And what I found in myself, I found myself being more vigilant in that conversation.*

Researcher: *In what way?*

Participant Two: *I was more aware of the fact that she knew straight away that I'm obviously not British, and I was thinking how she feels about that, which normally wouldn't really cross my mind, if that wasn't a British client. So, I was thinking, is she thinking that I'm good enough for what she's coming with?*

<div align="right">Participant Two</div>

This example of a phone call with a client, brings attention to the disrupted communication in the therapeutic relationship. Stigmatised social status of Polish minority contributed to the already heightened sense of anxiety, adding to the psychological distress (Frost, 2020).

Interestingly, questioning of motives for being in therapy with a Polish therapist has been noted by participants. Participants became wary. In a sense participants othered themselves in a therapeutic relationship as an immigrant, and interactions became charged with suspicion. Research data showed that most of the Polish clients weren't keen on talking about Brexit with the participants in a therapy, as

opposed to English clients. The majority of English-speaking clients discussed Brexit in sessions, particularly after the Brexit vote.

They would tell me what they voted, even though I don't ask. They obviously know I'm Polish so perhaps it's like defending themselves that they are not to blame.

Participant Four

That feels as an important insight into the therapeutic process, and adds more complexities to the already complex endeavour. Participant Four highlighted the notion that these disclosures shifted the power dynamic in the relationship and disrupted the process:

Feeling powerless, well it puts you in a child mode, just weaker, less able. And I guess that could affect the process. It feels like they want explain themselves. Like they maybe seek a closeness, like maybe a fear of damaged relationship. Mainly like defending themselves. I suppose shame as well. Sometimes shame, yes definitely. I sensed quite strongly feeling ashamed for Britain's choices. And that would be present in the room because those choices affect people like me.

Participant Four

A theme that emerged from the participants' accounts was that of surprise when their clients engaged in disclosure of their political views. Participants were confused how to respond to those exchanges. As they themselves battled with various feelings caused by Brexit, those disclosures only added anxiety into the room. Although, overall data showed that participants were sensitive to their clients' needs and adjusted their communication accordingly. The accounts also reflected the participants' discomfort and feeling unsafe in a room with British clients talking

about Brexit. None of the participants self-disclosed their political stance about Brexit. Nevertheless, I assume that it might have become obvious to the clients that their therapists weren't able to vote in the Brexit referendum, as they were immigrants to this country. Participant One spoke about being voiceless because she could not vote in the referendum, and at the same time she was aware how much power her British client had: *their vote would affect millions of lives*.

I wondered about those clients who appeared very concerned about their therapist and tried to engage in the Brexit debate with participants. Interestingly enough, data also revealed that a few participants grappled with their own anxieties around self-disclosure and seemed to be concerned about feeling uncomfortable or challenged when the subject of Brexit was brought up by the client. For an immigrant therapist, a client's question in relation to their opinions, views or political stance, might be traditionally considered as breaking the rules of therapy. There is also the debate that the disclosure of something significant for the client, in relation to the therapist, at a particular time, may convey a willingness to enter into something emotionally meaningful in that relationship (Miletic, 1998).

As a therapist who mainly works within the psychodynamic approach, transference and countertransference are concepts that describe phenomena that are relevant to many relationally-based psychotherapies and are often adopted as useful ways of understanding those processes, regardless of the theoretical background (Gelso and Hayes, 2007). I wonder if the participant therapists-immigrants were invited by their clients to hold their Brexit tensions. Similarly, the therapist's emotional response towards their perception of their client's cultural background, and position on Brexit, is what I refer to as counter-transference, a cultural countertransference

(Foster, 1998). Seeing those dynamics from a relational viewpoint is crucial given that the cultural background of each member in the counselling dyad has mutual influence.

I considered research (Peterson, 2002) which has shown that self-disclosure might violate the ethical principle of non-maleficence with some specific clients, like those who have poor boundaries and tend to focus more on the needs of others rather than their own; therefore, these clients might have a tendency to take care of the therapist. In their own practice, participants stated that they always reflect upon their own motives before they engage in any kind of self-disclosure. They were also concerned that their self-disclosure could move the focus away from the client, burden the client or even blur the boundaries (Audet & Everall, 2003). On the other hand, the role of the therapist is bringing to consciousness the layer of material which might be unconscious, and woven into the dynamic of the relationship, ever mindful that the therapist contributes to, and is part of, the reality that is being formed (Green & Stiers, 2002).

The challenge for any therapist is to be attuned to the emotional "hot moment" to which the client most needs to speak. When multicultural or political dimensions are kept in consciousness, the salient issue at such a moment is variously determined (Green & Stiers, 2002). Creating the atmosphere for exploration of the varied perspectives in the therapy room is essential. Clearly, for participants of this research project, Brexit was an emotive event, sharply cutting into the reality of their personal and professional lives. The emerging picture frames the idea that perhaps participants weren't ready to talk about Brexit with their British clients. The experience and feelings brought up by Brexit felt raw and undigested. Each

individual's experiences were influenced by the complex interplay of their cultural past, support systems and political views. The profound impact of Brexit and the change in identity was experienced by all participants but highlighted most prominently in the experiences of Participant Four. Her anger with the outcome of the referendum, and her experience of living in the UK as an immigrant in times of Brexit couldn't be soothed or helped by anything or anyone. She had to leave the country she felt had betrayed her. She felt as if she was selling herself, and her true feelings did not have space to come out because her voice didn't have the right to be heard. Practising counselling in a country where she felt "like a parasite" became impossible. Participant Four felt as if she was selling herself by practising counselling in a place where she felt like an "exotic prostitute".

Counselling in many ways is like prostitution, isn't it? It's just emotional. So, some people will choose an experience with a foreign prostitute.

Participant Four

I wondered about the idea of a wounded healer (Jung, 1985). The image of Brexit as a wounding process recurs throughout the research. Therapists need to be able to acknowledge the client in themselves (Barnett, 2007). The therapist's own past or present wounds can facilitate empathic connection with clients and the positive use of counter-transference in therapy (Gelso & Hayes, 2007). The crucial question is the difference between the wounded healer and the therapist impaired by pain and anxiety. Consequently, it is critical that a therapist's wounds are mostly healed, or at least understood and processed sufficiently, to prevent them from interfering with therapy and the therapeutic relationship (Gelso & Hayes, 2007). All the participants experienced Brexit as a negative and painfully unwelcome event. However, none of them had a chance to take their struggles into their own therapy, as all of them had

completed their training, and personal therapy. Participants reported that supervision did not provide suitable space to discuss the subject at length either. Perhaps no other career is so closely connected to the delights and troubles, heights and depths of human existence on a daily basis. Due to the intimacy of this work, therapists can be awakened to their own parallel pain and grief experiences. Without working on areas that are activated from past wounds and without freeing their levels of awareness to experience life in the present, impairment and burnout can occur. This can have a profound effect on how a therapist is able to balance self and others' needs (Rudick, 2012).

Surprisingly, the findings support a view that most of the Polish clients weren't inclined to talk about Brexit with their therapists. Participants suggested that many Polish clients came to the therapy in states of absolute crisis. Vulnerable Polish immigrants who suffer from mental health problems face many challenges, and perhaps would consider Brexit to be quite low on their list of priorities. Participant Four said:

My experience is…a lot of my Polish clients, maybe 80% of them, are really low-functioning clients, really struggling with living life. I experience a big difference between working with British clients and Polish clients. My only experience of British clients is people who function well and want to improve their lives. But a lot of the Polish clients who come in, they are really low functioning, struggling with the function of living, working, holding family, getting out of bed kind of stuff.

Participant Four

That echoes the outcome of a study conducted by Weymouth Rethink Community Engagement Project (2008) on immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe. The

research concluded that the initial period of adjustment to living in the UK was difficult, that people experienced a high level of mental-health stigma, and that participants would not seek help unless issues were severe, such as a mental illness that needed hospital treatment.

The question of why Polish clients were not talking about Brexit with their Polish therapists is a curious one. Limited research has been done on the experience of distressed and help-seeking Polish immigrants in the UK. Some studies exploring help-seeking patterns of Polish immigrants found that a commitment to Polish values prevented individuals from seeking support for psychological difficulties (Bassaly & Macallan, 2006; Toby et al, 2010). Knab (1986), Titkow and Duch (2004) suggested that values such as family solidarity, a high level of conformity, and avoidance of shameful behaviour were reinforced within Polish families. Seeking psychological help was considered as bringing shame to the family (Czabala et al., 2000).

Selkirk et al. (2012), in a systematic literature review on immigrants' attitudes towards seeking psychological help, highlighted that the expression and understanding of distress might be different across cultures. Family closeness, traditional gender roles and a discomfort with difference, negatively influenced help-seeking. According to Robila (2007), immigrants from Eastern Europe were less likely to express their needs, are less socially assertive. Shafiro et al. (2003) noted that such differences may be attributed to the values of collectivism and communist ideology. This political framework left a painful legacy common to Eastern European immigrants, which sets these immigrants apart from those of other countries.

Chtereva (2016) highlighted that Central and Eastern European immigrants approach the topic of mental health as a taboo, and individuals with mental health conditions are likely to suffer in silence.

> It appeared that this secrecy about mental health was linked to cultural norms and obligations, which significantly influenced participants' behaviour, thus highlighting a high level of conformity to cultural expectations. Cultural scripts of resourcefulness, resilience and determination to overcome distress on one's own were reported by most participants. An inability to deal with emotional difficulties oneself was viewed as a weakness or a personal fault. (Chtereva, 2016, p.136)

These research findings did not bring the clear answer to the question of why Polish clients did not talk about Brexit with their Polish therapists. However, it is clear that Brexit has influenced people's emotional lives, regardless of their voting behaviour or their citizenship status in the UK. We have not yet properly thought through what has been happening. Perhaps it is too early to articulate, or even to begin making sense of it.

> The human condition makes us all insecure to some extent so we spend much of our lives securing ourselves in order to feel safe enough to build our lives and relationships, to work and to make it all go round. But, when that is pulled away, you go into what we call an existential crisis which is that the meaning of life is suddenly ripped apart because the meaning of life is very much determined by the way in which we secure ourselves and how we connect up to the world. Brexit is a severing of all those safe connections for people like EU citizens. (Van Deurzen, 2019)

Research done by Powdthavee et al. (2019) supports the idea that Brexit has been a sufficiently emotive event to impact people's mental health. They argued that poor mental health was both a likely driver of the Brexit vote and a consequence of it. That finding will be supported by Participant One's experience. She considered Brexit as a factor affecting the mental health of both clients and therapists.

I'm talking with some of my colleagues – they had sort of similar experiences with their clients, were they from Germany or France, that they are very worried about their place and what's going to happen with them and their life after Brexit. So, a lot of worry, a lot of sorts of concern around the future, and a lot of uncertainty that I've heard from my colleagues about their clients. So that definitely has been a theme over the last couple of years.

Participant One

However, the picture is unclear, and echoes what Hughes (2019) wrote in *The Psychology of Brexit*. "And even if it is true that 'everyone in therapy wants to talk about Brexit,' that is not the same as saying that everyone has sought out a therapist for this reason. Perhaps these clients would have been in therapy anyway." (Hughes, 2019, p. 99). Clearly, for participants of this research project, it is reasonable to conclude that Brexit anxiety has been real, and the stress caused by it significant. Moreover, as the political context changes very quickly, this makes the research slower and more complicated. To conclude, the present study demonstrates clear evidence that more research and data are needed to explain the emerging aftermath of Brexit and its effects on mental health.

5.7 Through and beyond Brexit

Clearly, for participants of this research Brexit was an undesired political event. Yet, not all participants felt equally affected by Brexit. Each individual's socio-cultural experiences were context-dependent and influenced by the complex interplay of many factors. In particular two participants, remained fairly positive about Brexit outcomes and benefits of the political change. One of the participants referred to the idea, that aftermath of a crisis, is the economic growth and opportunity for some. Participant Two, for example would be able to hold two passports, British and Polish, and that could benefit him on the job market, as he would be able to travel freely in and out of the EU. Study conducted by Trąbka and Pustulka (2020), aimed at analysing post-Brexit strategies of Polish migrants in Britain. The main objective was to offer a data-driven and temporally agile typology of the orientations immigrants adopt in the face of uncertainty. Their research has certainly added to my understanding of how participants reacted to the uncertainty caused by Brexit. "People, who arrived shortly after 2004, often in their early-to-mid 20s have by now had ample time to anchor. They have been gradually embedding in the UK, in terms of both professional and personal life. This group is best imagined as robust bumblebees: strong, social and with 'plump' social anchors. Although they are irritated or saddened by the result of the referendum, they do not personally feel at risk" (Trąbka and Pustulka, 2020, p.2668). That echoes what participant Three acknowledged in his experience. His attachment to the UK and appreciation of his existing situation, provided the security and stability, which even Brexit was not able to shake. That perhaps also resulted from the fact that he was able to engage in British society systems and emerged victorious after overcoming the initial challenges of settlement and social anchoring abroad.

Participants experienced Brexit changes differently, and as it was argued by Béland (2005), actors can be proactive or reactive in the face of risks by including or

excluding certain items or concerns from their agendas. Participants were concerned about the overall negative atmosphere in Britain, inflamed by Brexit and by British media coverage of immigration, and perhaps less by the actual referendum result. It is in this context that the referendum prompted Participants to rethink their commitment to Britain. Despite having a secured legal position in the UK, participants felt like they no longer belonged here.

5.8 Summary

The results of this research pointed to the impression that the referendum has deteriorated personal perception of political situation, the sudden overwhelming rise of a hostile environment and, in Participants' experience, that lead many to feel more entitled to express xenophobic views against immigrants. That heightened sense of vulnerability and the deeply entrenched wound has opened up a space that participants have not yet been able to familiarise themselves with. Participants felt challenged by the new situation, and from that position they were expected to carry on as "normal".

Participants experienced many feelings: anger, anxiety, and disappointment to name a few. Self-awareness in times of a crisis is vital, especially when the therapist is vulnerable to countertransference reactions. Therapists in crisis need access to supervision and often therapy. They need to feel that their colleagues understand and support them. This is especially helpful if the therapist is not receiving supervision or therapy. That in turn demands that supervisors should try and understand and be aware of the challenges Polish immigrant-therapists experience. Rather than assuming that immigrants from the European Union have homogenous experiences, it should be acknowledged that different nationalities experience

immigration to the UK in different ways. Unpredictable, hostile political situations and feelings of alienation, balancing one's own needs with the needs of clients can be experienced as overwhelming. As therapists, we need to be mindful that we are not immune to self-deception or to silencing voices crying out for recognition. For the wounded therapist to be able to not only function in the crisis, but also to move beyond it and to grow, means working through our own process. That in turn could begin a painful and lonely journey.

Chapter 6

Implications and major outcomes

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to explore the experience of therapist-immigrant in times of Brexit, how Brexit affected counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland, and the personal and professional impact on a Polish therapist in the UK during Brexit. Also, to consider the implications of those experiences for counselling psychology and psychotherapy.

6.2 Broad implications

As an integrative therapist who adopted IPA for this research project, it would not be consistent with either the phenomenological research methodology (IPA), nor my commitment to theoretical integration, to attempt to present guidelines for professional practice based only on the data from eight interviews, regardless of the depth of analysis. Larkin and Thompson (2012) highlighted that:

> The outcome of a successful IPA study is likely to include an element of 'giving voice' (capturing and reflecting upon the principal claims and concerns of the research participants) and 'making sense' (offering an interpretation of this material, which is grounded in the accounts, but may use psychological concepts to extend beyond them. (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 99)

These findings clearly pointed to the conclusion that participants felt silenced and voiceless in the Brexit debate. In this paper, I intended to create a space where participants could share and voice their experiences. Qualitative psychotherapy

research allows for the client's voice to be heard. Their experiences and interpretations of reality may guide research conclusions, theory developments and policies. Hence psychotherapy is adjusted to clients and service users, and not the other way around.

> Qualitative methodologies, and especially IPA, places the client in–context considering psychological, physical and social aspects of their experience of psychotherapy. Like clinicians who tailor their use of techniques to the specific client in the specific therapeutic relationship, researchers should consider individual needs, culture and social context, tailoring research methods to specific aspects of psychotherapy process and change. (Fragkiadaki, 2020, www.blogs.uwe.ac.uk).

In making sense of these results, I would like to come back to the article by Larkin, Watts, and Clifton, (2006), and once again reflect upon the method of this research. "If we take 'love' as an example subject matter, it should by now be apparent that an IPA researcher is not primarily concerned with the nature of love per se, but with this particular person, and with their experiences and understandings of love. This acknowledgment is potentially quite radical inasmuch as it involves a shift in subject matter: love is replaced by the person experiencing love." (Larkin, Watts, and Clifton, 2006, p.108). If the word "Brexit" were to be replaced by "a Polish immigrant therapist's experience and understanding of Brexit", the whole picture would change dramatically. The singular, simple question, "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" had a power to alter the lives of many. This simple question had only two simple answers, "Remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union". But the results of this research show that there is nothing simple about this process, and the result of that vote has had endless consequences. What was missing in the Brexit debate was acknowledgment of the "person in context" (Larkin, Watts, and Clifton, 2006, p.110).

Participants' right to their voice was denied. The tentative equilibrium the participants managed to carefully compose for themselves was demolished as a side-effect of the bitter pill of Brexit.

A researcher's responsibility is not only to conduct research that is relevant and meaningful to the field but, further, to society per se. It is also to speak out from a position that recognises that personal experience is part of this research, and that neither the academic field nor the identities of researchers are insulated from broader social phenomena, shocks and crises. Brexit, as no other recent event in history, proves this point. The referendum result has caused a shock and crisis within society. Brexit exploded into the air, and its poisonous particles were inhaled. It has given rise to complex and often intense emotions that, as psychologists, we have to bear the impact of.

This research contributes towards a deeper understanding of social changes and their impact on mental health. The findings of this study contribute to the body of literature regarding the mental health of immigrants, in particular immigrant therapists from a counselling psychology perspective. It is hoped that the study will encourage therapists to reflect deeper on the tentative interplay between, broadly speaking, mental health and politics. I believe that by opening up the space for understanding the difficulties of the political situation and admitting the challenges of the material, we expand our range of emotional availability. As Atwood pointed out, "Psychotherapy is not a procedure performed upon one person by another; it is a dialogue between personal universes, and it transforms both." (Atwood, 2015 p.152). Also, by attending to the subtleties of the material, we might recognise our own biases, which sometimes block the opportunity for exploration and affective

expression for the client, thus highlighting the moment-to-moment experience of self and other within the relational matrix of bumping subjectivities (Stolorow, 2013). "Health is the ability to stand in the spaces between realities without losing any of them. This is what I believe self-acceptance means and what creativity is really all about – the capacity to feel like oneself while being many." (Bromberg, 2001, p.186). What Brexit has done to the Polish therapist could be compared to an earthquake of magnitude six on the Richter scale, strong enough to shake the ground, but not powerful enough to destroy the city. Brexit has been shaking the ground underneath the immigrant therapists, and I can only imagine that it would be quite challenging to concentrate on the job in hand while the earthquake is taking place. Brexit has been felt to put a significant emotional impact on people whether they are leave or remain voters. In this sense, Brexit can be seen as a crisis and a source of emotional shock for individuals. Further, in the context of Brexit, references to crisis and shock are also appropriate in relation to aspects other than emotions.

Confronting the stigma of immigration and drawing attention to injustice, while providing education about mental health conditions, creating opportunities for immigrants to voice their concerns, and learning how to facilitate change can be a step towards developing a socially responsible and just society. We must ask questions and search for answers as a matter of fact. Kolakowski, a Polish philosopher who radically changed his views several times during his life in ways that reflected the post-war political developments in Europe, masterfully exercised fluidity of thinking, highlighting that, as individuals, we are obliged to think for ourselves and look for answers, define what is true, what is right, and what is moral autonomously from doctrines or political systems.

>   There is a mental compulsion to ask metaphysical, epistemological and
>   ethical questions. It is not that one is happy in thinking about it, but these

questions are difficult to get rid of. There are no definitive answers, but there are ways of approaching questions which give you the feeling that you are on the right track, even though you won't reach the expected goal. Nevertheless, this position is not dramatic. It is not terrible. One can live with it. (Lyall, 2004, p.8)

The unique contribution of my research in guiding good practice in the light of these findings (and based on my own clinical experience) lies in developing a broader knowledge and awareness of how the political situation might influence the process of psychotherapy, especially if we intend to work relationally.

6.3 Client work and organisational impact

An important aspect of the professional doctorate is the wider communication of findings and the influence they can have on the field of psychotherapy. It is my intention to disseminate the research in my own client work and organisationally through presentations, papers, and public impact.

As well as continuing to work with the immigrant community in private practice, I intend to present the research at various seminars, peer presentations and conferences, and I will be pursuing this additional opportunity once I am confident the exam board is satisfied with my work. These events would be a great opportunity for me to discuss my research with the wider community of counsellors and psychotherapists.

I believe in the great importance of networking and creating peer-mentoring groups that can provide support, and also opportunities for collaborating for research. We need to hear more diverse voices, more accounts need to be written by immigrant-therapists themselves, so that the circle of silence or isolation is weakened.

Accessibility of the shared experiences must be promoted and encouraged by professional organisations to ensure helpful insights and input on training, supervision and peer relationships. Personal therapy and robust supervision need to support therapists, where the transferential and countertransferential dynamics resulting from personal history or political situation continue to challenge. Supervision plays a crucial role in promoting awareness and ongoing reflective practice. Unfortunately, findings support the view that supervision was insufficient when dealing with complexities of cross-cultural practice and issues of political psychology. Thomas & Schwarzbaum (2006) highlight that:

> During a multicultural counselling course, it is not unusual for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant students to be the last to acknowledge that racism, bigotry, and discrimination still exists, in part because these are experiences they tend not to have. The ethnic identity of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants might remain weak or not relevant for most of the person's life […]. Clinicians need to be aware of their ambivalent discomfort, if or when it surfaces, as they work with their ethnic minority clients and are encouraged to explore the influence of their ethnicity and ethnic socialisation on their own identity development and functioning. (p.75)

Despite the increasing interest in issues around psychology, politics and culture in training programmes, there is little attention paid to the issues involved for trainees who have emmigrated from different countries and cultures. This, combined with "middle class whiteness" present in counselling and psychotherapy training programmes and, more broadly, within job settings, limits opportunities for exploring issues that concern those therapists, as well as discourses and approaches that are outside the dominant schools of thought. Participants emphasised that supervisors are not aware of the needs of immigrants and complexities of immigration, as well

as valuable contributions they can bring to the field, if they have had parallel experiences themselves.

As mental health professionals, we have an opportunity to create a safe space to process and reflect present collective experiences, and how they impact mental health. Also, we can help clients in therapy to navigate the discrimination and marginalisation that impacts their well-being. When we hold the individual and shared impact of division and oppression with as much importance as we do other aspects of therapy, we are more able to attune, empower and collaborate with clients in the most difficult times.

6.4 Summary

This chapter summarised the implications of the findings of the research for psychotherapy practice and outlined the major outcomes. The main areas in which the research has an impact include clinical work, organisational contexts, presentations, papers, and the wider public impact.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research with a summary and concluding remarks. The aim of the research was to explore the experiences of therapist immigrants in times of Brexit, how Brexit affected counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland, and the personal and professional impact on a Polish therapist in the UK during Brexit.

7.2 Limitations of the research

There were several limitations to this study. The small sample size of the study restricted the potential for making generalisations beyond the specific group of participants, therefore generalisability cannot be assumed (Yardley, 2000). Qualitative methodologies acknowledge that the researcher may bring biases to the research, therefore limiting the validity of the findings that can be made. However, this study aimed to give voice to the participants, and provide depth rather than breadth of analysis, and attempts to bracket were made throughout the course of the analysis (Yardley, 2000).

Taking into account that English was the second language for both participants and the researcher, I wondered how that affected the outcome of the study and the process. Considering the impact of the use of English as a second language by participants, it would be interesting to research how conducting the interviews in the native language (Polish) would affect the study.

Finally, throughout this research, I have struggled with negotiating how to include my voice, how to negotiate the space within IPA methodology to communicate my

experience. Further, how to be mindful of the balance between sharing and withdrawing. I was extremely mindful of the idea of neutrality as the researcher. Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000) struggled with similar questions in their research, and they concluded that there was no reason to suspect that bias would have been removed if the interviewer was neutral to the situation, "We would argue that the assumption of 'neutrality' or 'objectivity' of the researcher is unsustainable: when highly sensitive issues are probed by a researcher, an element of mutual trust and understanding is crucial to the validity of research." (Timotijevic and Breakwell, 2000, p.369).

7.3 Recommendation and further research

Further research needs to build a deeper understanding of how the political climate affects immigrants, and in particular how Brexit affects immigrants. For example, there is a need to study the changing identity of the immigrant community as the UK withdraws from the EU. Also required is an inquiry into how broader geopolitical events affect people, with special focus on the experience of the immigrant population. More research is also required to understand different experiences across the UK, highlighting specific areas of different demographic and socio-economic contexts.

Additionally, more research into the biases concerning different others in psychotherapy, supervision and training places is needed. That in turn would enrich direct experiences of mental-health professionals who are immigrants to this country. Open and broad discussions about the experience of foreign therapists in training, practice and supervision could be avoided, perhaps due to those not being acknowledged or due to fear of triggering attitudes of discrimination or inequality. Without safe and open spaces to discuss such experiences, immigrant therapists

may internalise unhelpful attitudes (Tinsley-Jones, 2001) and their confidence as therapists, students or supervisors may be damaged. We must build a deep and rich understanding of how inequality and discrimination influence individuals and organisations, and how that might manifest in the therapy room, especially among overlooked ethnic-minority groups such as white eastern European migrants. Cooper (2015) suggests that:

> If we genuinely want to help our clients feel better, then directly engaging in social and political change processes may sometimes be as important as one-to-one therapeutic work … even if we choose not to… it may be important to remember that such political processes are fundamentally aligned with what we are trying to do with our clients and not of an entirely different order. (Cooper, 2015, p.11)

7.4 Personal reflections. Snippets from shallow and deeper places

I was raised with an ethos of freedom fighters and old-fashioned virtues, where the moral standards were set up just about too high to be reached. "Start doing the things you think society should be doing, and start being what you think society should become. Do you believe in free speech? Then speak freely. Do you love the truth? Then tell it. Do you believe in open society? Then act in the open. Do you believe in a decent and humane society? Then behave decently and humanely." (Michnik, 1986, p.XXX). Early childhood was surrounded by dual messaging, communistic slogans outside, and hatred towards communism in the safety of a home. Very early I became aware that nonconformism fosters critical thinking and teaches civic disobedience when it becomes necessary. Kuroń, Polish opposition leader of the 1960s and '70s, without whom Lech Wałęsa's Solidarity would never have come into being, said that perhaps the most important life choice we make is

deciding which is the lesser evil: cynicism or naiveté. Kuroń preferred being naïve to being cynical. That is the first lesson we can take from Kuroń. The second is that the recognition of certain "political realities" does not mean abandoning ambitions to change the world (Sierakowski, 2014).

Journeying into this research felt important on many levels. First of all, the personal aspect, which became an almost cathartic experience. As many of the participants highlighted, becoming voiceless in the Brexit debate felt painful. There was so little importance attached to my voice, which in a sense placed me in a position of a helpless child again. To counter that, I understood I desperately needed to find a platform where I could step up onto an adult position, into the space where my arguments are valid and equal among all others.

Of course, Brexit was not the moment when my discomfort began. I have always felt uncomfortable with the non-wipeable label of immigrant. Brexit simply cumulated the nibbling feelings and exploded, sharply wounding my identity. With a heavy moral baggage and personal history, I arrived in the UK over sixteen years ago, and shortly after I began my journey at Metanoia. I vividly remember my first year at DCPsych, and how I was clinging to anyone who embodied otherness for me. I sat between Croatian and Estonian ladies, feeling just enough courage to introduce myself. I recalled asking the tutor if I could include in my essay some references from Polish literature. Before my tutor had a chance to answer, one of the students laughed, saying that there is just enough of a great English literature and that should be sufficient to write excellent essays. I didn't hear the lecturer's answer, perhaps because I froze, I felt confused not being able to recognise what was happening to me. I definitely felt hurt, shame and betrayal at the same time. I felt what it is to make oneself an immigrant, a foreigner who became a therapist. I am reminded of

Van Deurzen's (1998) words, "In some ways all forms of counselling and psychotherapy are about this: those who come to us are always alienated and although not always foreign by culture, they often feel foreign by nature." (p. 61).

There were many moments that I experienced the birth of this doctoral thesis as a painful process. Brexit broke me, broke my heart and soul. My values have been shaken and trust in humanity dented. My own home became a battlefield, where Brexiters and Remainers were having daily fights over the moral principles, and with passing time over …. anything really.

I realised that I must find a constructive means to channel my frustration and pain. Once I decided on researching the Brexit experience, life became more bearable. The pivotal point on my journey was meeting my participants, listening to their narrative felt reassuring, as if my experience became tangible, real. I was pleasantly surprised by their warmth and openness, also the eagerness they all had to tell their story.

As I was reflecting on my research, one quote - from Participant Three - has startled me throughout the whole process:

Technically I am no longer an immigrant because I have a British passport.

Participant Three

I took this further and wondered, if he meant, "I am no longer Polish"? I struggled with this statement. Does it feel like a betrayal, disloyalty towards "Motherland"? As I allowed myself to be immersed in this question, I have noticed reflecting on my grandad, Ignacy, who passed away shortly after I married my husband, James. Ignacy was a war soldier, a devoted patriot. After the war, he inherited the family farm, and settled there until he handed over the farm to his son. Although he had never had a chance to study in further education, he definitely was, as I would describe, a homegrown philosopher. I felt his love deeply, and he was very generous in expressing his affection towards me. He called me his Pine Tree, the most beautiful, the strongest and resilient tree in the whole forest. Very often, I found him in a fiery discussion with my granduncle, Leonard, who was an academic, teaching physics and chemistry. It became apparent that, Leonard despite being highly educated, was also a bigot and chauvinist. Once I participated in one of those conversations, explaining my academic aspirations, when Leonard interrupted and concluded that "ladies shouldn't focus too much on the academia, because in the end they tend to neglect their wife duties". My grandad, Ignacy, waited until Leonard left, and turned to me saying, "Never listen to him! You are able to achieve whatever you desire … and still be an excellent wife." I also remember when he was asked by my mother-in-law, how does he feel about his granddaughter marrying an Englishman. He, as straightforwardly as ever, answered:

If Iwona would marry a German, I would be disappointed. If she would marry Russian, I would be angry. If she would marry a Communist, I would take my axe and chase both of them away! So, in answer to your question, Englishman is fine.

Alack and woe, oh song: you're mocking me;
Try as I may, I'll never be your red, red rose.
A rose is a rose is a rose. And you know it.

I worked to sprout leaves. I tried to take root.

I held my breath to speed things up, and waited

For the petals to enclose me.

Merciless song, you leave me with my lone,

Nonconvertible, metamorphotic body:

I'm one-time-only to the marrow of my bones.

Szymborska, 2015

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Appendix 3: Research Ethics Committee Approval

Appendix 4: Full Transcript of Interview

Appendix 5: Example of development emergent themes

Metanoia Institute

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PIS)

Participant ID Code:…………………………………………

SECTION 1

1.   Study title

Therapist - Immigrant in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes and the impact on personal and professional. How Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland.

1.   Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

2.   What is the purpose of the study?

This research is an enquiry into the subjective experience of a counsellor or psychotherapist who is also an immigrant to the United Kingdom from Poland. I would hope to explore how does being an immigrant during the events of Brexit affect clinical encounters and psychotherapy process with clients? Considering the change in the current climate, e.g. social, political or economic change, I wonder if or how these themes might manifest in a therapy room.

3.   Why have I been chosen?

It is important that we assess as many participants as possible, and you have indicated that you are interested in taking part in this study.

We anticipate minimum of 8 participants, who have to be Polish EU nationals, and who have lived in United Kingdom for over five years and have practised counselling or psychotherapy for a minimum of two years

5.   Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you do decide to withdraw from the study then please inform the researcher as soon as possible, and they will facilitate your withdrawal. If, for any reason, you wish to withdraw your data please contact the researcher within a month of your participation. After this date it may not be possible to withdraw your individual data as the results may have already been published. However, as all data are anonymised, your individual data will not be identifiable in any way.

4.   What will I have to do?

In order to attain the necessary information to complete this study I intent to interview approximately 8 therapists and apply qualitative analysis to explore the accounts they give. You will be invited to attend a one-to-one interview with the researcher. Each interview will be audio recorded and the audio tapes will then be transcribed word for word and analysed using a research technique called Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).
All participants will be invited to take part in an interview with me at a time and date of your convenience. This may be at the location where we share therapy rooms or at an alternative suitable venue to suit the participant. It is envisaged that the interview will last for approximately one hour; however, the time may vary according to the individual.

Please note that in order to ensure quality assurance and equity this project may be selected for audit by a designated member of the committee. This means that the designated member can request to see signed consent forms. However, if this is the case your signed consent form will only be accessed by the designated auditor or member of the audit team.

7.   What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We hope that participating in the study will help you. However, this cannot be guaranteed. The information we get from this study may help us to understand better the impacts of Brexit on immigrant therapist. As the researcher I am unable to offer any financial payment to participants for taking part in this study.

8 .   Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The research team has put a number of procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of participants. You will be allocated a participant code that will always be used to identify any data you provide. Your name or other personal details will not be associated with your data, for example, the consent form that you sign will be kept separate from your data. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the research team, and all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. All information you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act.

9.   What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be presented at conferences or in journal articles. However, the data will only be used by members of the research team and at no point will your personal information or data be revealed.

10.   Who has reviewed the study?

The study has received full ethical clearance from the Metanoia Institute Research Ethics committee (MREC) who reviewed the study.

11.   Contact for further information
If you require further information, have any questions or would like to withdraw your data then please contact:

Iwona Scollard
Metanoia Institute
iwona.scollard@metanoia.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study. You should keep this participant information sheet as it contains your participant code, important information and the research teams contact details

SECTION 2

Metanoia Institute Guide to Research Privacy Notices

Privacy notices need to be presented whenever data is collected and should be understandable and accessible. Privacy notices must explain the type and source of data that will be processed. They will also set out the processing purpose, data retention schedules and data sharing. Privacy notices must include details of the subject's rights and who the subject can complain to.

The following example may be used and completed for your research purposes.

Metanoia Institute Privacy Notice for Research Participants

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) protects the rights of individuals by setting out certain rules as to what organisation can and cannot do with information about people. A key element to this is the principle to process individuals' data lawfully and fairly. This means we need to provide information on how we process personal data.

The Institute takes its obligation under the GDPR very seriously and will always ensure personal data is collected, handled, stored and shared in a secure manner. http://metanoia.ac.uk/media/2363/privacy-policy-metanoia-institute.pdf

The following statements will outline what personal data we collect, how we use it and who we share it with. It will also provide guidance on your individual rights and how to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO), the regulator for data protection in the UK.

Why are we collecting your personal data?

We undertake research as part of our function and in our capacity as a teaching and research institution to advance education and learning. The specific purpose for data collection on this occasion is to explore how does being an immigrant during the events of Brexit affect clinical encounters and psychotherapy process with clients.

The legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR on this occasion is Article 6(1a) consent of the data subject.

Transferring data outside Europe

In the majority of instances your data will be processed by Metanoia Institute researchers only or in collaboration with researchers at other UK or European institutions so will stay inside the EU and be protected by the requirements of the GDPR.

In any instances in which your data might be used as part of a collaboration with researchers based outside the EU all the necessary safeguards that are required under the GDPR for transferring data outside of the EU will be put in place. You will be informed if this is relevant for the specific study you are a participant of.

Your rights under data protection

Under the GDPR and the DPA you have the following rights:

- to obtain access to, and copies of, the personal data that we hold about you;
- to require that we cease processing your personal data if the processing is causing you damage or distress;
- to require us to correct the personal data we hold about you if it is incorrect;
- to require us to erase your personal data;
- to require us to restrict our data processing activities;
- to receive from us the personal data we hold about you which you have provided to us, in a reasonable format specified by you, including for the purpose of you transmitting that personal data to another data controller;
- to object, on grounds relating to your particular situation, to any of our particular processing activities where you feel this has a disproportionate impact on your rights.

Where Personal Information is processed as part of a research project, the extent to which these rights apply varies under the GDPR and the DPA. In particular, your rights to access, change, or move your information may be limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we may not be able to remove the information that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible. The Participant Information Sheet will detail up to what point in the study data can be withdrawn.

If you submit a data protection rights request to the Institute, you will be informed of the decision within one month. If it is considered necessary to refuse to comply with any of your data protection rights, you also have the right to complain about our decision to the UK supervisory authority for data protection, the Information Commissioner's Office.

None of the above precludes your right to withdraw consent from participating in the research study at any time.

Collecting and using personal data

All interviews will be audio taped by me and the tape recordings will then be transcribed word for word to produce a written transcript of each interview carried out. Participants' names will be substituted with a pseudonym and any other personally identifiable details within the transcripts will also be coded to protect confidentiality. All data will be kept secure.

When I begin analysing the research data this process will be closely monitored by my research supervisor.

Data sharing

Your information will usually be shared within the research team conducting the project you are participating in, mainly so that they can identify you as a participant and contact you about the research project.

Responsible members of the Institute may also be given access to personal data used in a research project for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your records. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

If we are working with other organisations and information is shared about you, we will inform you in the Participant Information Sheet. Information shared will be on a 'need to know' basis relative to achieving the research project's objectives, and with all appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the security of your information.

Storage and security

The Institute takes a robust approach to protecting the information it holds with its encrypted server and controlled access.

Retention

Under the GDPR and DPA personal data collected for research purposes can be kept indefinitely, providing there is no impact to you outside the parameters of the study you have consented to take part in.

Having stated the above, the length of time for which we keep your data will depend on a number of factors including the importance of the data, the funding requirements, the nature of the study, and the requirements of the publisher. Details will be given in the information sheet for each project.

Contact us

The Principal Investigator leading this research is Iwona Scollard

Iwona.scollard@metanoia.ac.uk

In case you have concerns about this project you can contact:

The Institute's official contact details are:

Data Protection Officer
Metanoia Institute
W5 2QB
Tel: +44 (0)20 8579 2505
Email: dataprotection@metanoia.ac.uk

Participant Identification Number:

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Therapist - Immigrant in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes and the impact on personal and professional. How Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland.

Name of Researcher: Iwona Scollard

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated ....……………..…for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

    | 1 |

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without penalty.

    | 2 |

3. I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor.

    | 3 |

4. I understand that my interview may be recorded and subsequently transcribed.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

    | 7 |

_____   _____   _____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of person taking consent Date   Signature
(if different from researcher)

_____   _____   _____
Researcher   Date   Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher;

Appendix 3: Research Ethics Committee Approval

METANOIA INSTITUTE

13 North Common Road
Ealing, London W5 2QB
Telephone: 020 8579 2505
Facsimile: 020 8832 3070
www.metanoia.ac.uk

Dr Julianna Challenor
DC Psych
Director of Studies (Research)

December 10th 2019

Dear Julianna,   **Iwona Scollard – DC Psych (Ethics Application)**

I can confirm that the ethical application forms and associated documents submitted by the candidate (e.g. Research Ethics Form, Consent Form, Participant Information Sheet, Risk Assessment) meet the required standard. The research proposal is titled -

Therapist - Immigrant in times of Brexit: subjective experience, shifts, changes and the impact on personal and professional. How Brexit affects counsellors and psychotherapists from Poland.

So, I recommend the research proposal for acceptance by the Metanoia Research Ethics Committee.

Kind regards

Dr Alistair McBeath
Academic Adviser, Module Lead D.Psych
Ethics Reader DC Psych
Faculty of Post-Qualification and Professional Doctorates
Metanoia Institute

Email : Alistair.McBeath@metanoia.ac.uk

Appendix 4: <mark>**Extract from the Transcript of Interview**</mark>

Transcription 8

I: Iwona/Researcher

P: Participant

I: What has changed?

P: I think it was quite emotional initially, 'cause, it was sort of, I really disbelieved that… that it's happening, um… you know I was convinced that people were gunna vote against it, so um… but it felt quite personal. That felt like maybe they didn't appreciate immigration as much as they should, or, didn't really give immigrants as much as I thought they did, so yeah.

I: hrm…

P: But I don't really… I don't really feel the same way now, obviously it's still really disappointing, uh, I actually thought- for the last few months I actually thought that it's not going to happen, that Brexit is gunna be stopped, but it's not… It's not as emotional anymore, I don't feel, you know, as upset about it anymore.

I: Hrm…

P: But definitely, it was- I had- it was a really strong feeling when I found out bout it, you know, I was kind of devastated.

I: And you said, um… they haven't appreciated as much as they should – what do you think they should appreciate us for?

P: I think it's that, um… you know, that positive impact of, you know, other Europeans, and people from other countries as well, but, uh, that was EU so particularly Europeans and how we contributed to the economy and how much, you know, money we put into the taxes, and you know, hard work, and all the research just actually showing that we are really productive, and all the research that says we don't really claim much of benefits, so we don't really take advantage of the country, we actually really strongly contribute to the economy, um… Yeah, yeah so, yeah, I felt disappointed as well with the government, who kind of portrayed us as we are taking advantage of, of… you know, England, advantage of the economy, and we are taking all the benefits of the country but without really contributing.

I: And um… how did you feel when they were portraying us this way?

P: Uh… it's interesting 'cause, I came, similar to you, I came here in 2000 and- I think 2005 or 2006, end of 2005, um, and I felt really welcomed in England, and I never really had any bad experiences, so it was always a positive experience here and I always keep saying to everyone in my family, you know, how amazing the UK is, 'cause I, I was… in London at the time, and you know how tolerant the country is, and how many opportunities we've got, um… and, you know, how well we- you know, we- sort of- adapt- how well I adapted to the culture and I feel like I'm part of the society, um, I feel like I belong to the society, um… and then when you're finding out that people… voted against [for] brexit – they don't really want you here, then you just kind of- you kind of open your eyes a bit more about, you know, about what actually… not everyone, but, you know, a huge proportion of people actually think.

I: Yeah… And I wonder how have you experienced Brexit – have you experienced any… any changes? Anything since the- all the Brexit started? All the talks?

P: Uh… no, no I haven't, things was… Actually the good thing- 'cause at the time I was in London, so, uh… Majority of Londoners voted against Brexit, so maybe I would feel differently if I were living in C [name of the city replaced by letter "C"], uh… at the time when it happened, but in London, majority of people were, um, you know, they were against it and, all- all my clients and uh…. friends… they felt devastated and ashamed themselves – you know they would call me and they would be apologetic, um… So… so I di- actually I didn't feel kind of any negative, you know, things from anyone, or I didn't experience any negativity from anyone or… no one had any bad comments or I never really experienced anyone behaving differently towards me.

I: Hrm… And um, and-and you mentioned that you- you have changed, obviously you've moved from London to south, and um, are you noticing any… anything different? Or how people react to you knowing that you are a foreigner?

P: Hrm… It's really interesting because in London, we talk about Brexit all the time with everyone, you know, different backgrounds, and on the street, in bars and caffs, you know, gyms, you know, everyone spoke about the Brexit, but the past 8 months, I didn't even have one conversation about Brexit with anyone in C, not even one. Which is really surprising, you know, I went to the East Dorset outdoor swimming club, and there were like hundreds of people there and we had this long conversation of the swimming, um, I met so many people, um… we never really discuss Brexit… not too sure what is the reason for that, not too sure if people think that, okay, I'm a foreigner so maybe it's not, you know, [an] appropriate thing to say or to discuss, um… or if it is another reason… and I did notice the difference- the added difference of this is that people never ask me where I'm from in Dorset… so I don't know if it's kind of, like, political correctness or… 'cause it's always the case in

London, people ask, 'oh, where are you from?', um… and, yeah, since I moved to C, over the last 8 months, hardly anyone has asked me where I'm from, which is really bizarre because in London, sort of, it was happening on a daily basis, you know, people asked me where I'm from all the time, which is annoying at times, you know, after you say where you're from like thousands of times and telling your life stories to everyone, so I'm- I'm not too sure, I don't think I'm here long enough to… figure out how people's minds work and what their intentions are.

I: And yeah, you say that London, uh, overwhelmingly voted against Brexit, whereas here you say they voted – well majority voted – for Brexit, and how do you feel about that?

P: Um… WE knew that before we moved in, um… I always, I came to C before, like, a few times in the holidays, and… I… it's a little bit [of a] different vibe to, let's say, Kent, when I was, I was- I was also considering to move to- to- uh- I always wanted to live close to the sea, so we were considering to move out to, uh, Kent, on the coast, and it's… I felt it's like a different vibe between these two locations, because maybe it's… obviously Kent is closer- especially Dover is closer to France, so there are immigrants coming from over the channel, and come from north Africa, and maybe… where we are in Dorset is further away from all that issues, um… so… I think people in Dorset maybe… it's-it's-it's a difficult question, but… I don't know, maybe they are not happy with the immigration but they wouldn't discuss that as openly as maybe in different parts of the country. That's the feeling which I am getting at the moment.

I: SO in a sense, um… *long pause* um… it's more difficult to sense what they really think about you… because they don't want to talk, or they are not open with you? Am I right?

P: Uh… yeah, yeah. I would say, maybe not as open… you know, regarding that sort of subject of Brexit, or maybe that type of talking about it as this point, I don't know.

I: Hrm, yeah… Um… and I wonder about- you mentioned about clients – have you noticed any changes or shifts in client work?

P: Um… I wo- I'm not as lucky… regarding work. I haven't really done much work in the last 8 months, so I was commuting to London still – I haven't commuted for the last 3 months because of- because of the coronavirus, um… I was strongly relying on income from London, so I was travelling Wednesday to Friday… So I didn't get any clients, but to be honest… um… it wouldn't be because of where I am from, or, um… my background, because I haven't really met anyone,

P; Um… See, I don't really like talking about myself – that might be the issue in this interview, I prefer talking about others to be honest.

(…)

UM… I think Pragmatically thinking that the fact that I am from- from- form a different country, from different culture, different background, uh… I think maybe people think that maybe I will not understand them as well as a native would, um… oh it's about the trust as well, about language as well, I read a few books about it, that people assume sometimes when they hear accents, they associate that with trust and intelligence, um… so-

I: SO there is loads of judgement for you in that? That you would be judged and you would be judged in a negative way?

P: Yeah, as I said, I don't- I haven't really experienced that in my work yet, so over the years I have never experienced or sensed that that would be the case… um…

I: But then it's- I 'm hearing that it's quite a strong feeling about that, that I- if- you know, you have never experienced, but at the same time you do believe that that might be the case, so I wonder where is that coming from?

P: Uh… that's an interesting question. *long pause* As I said with the- with the inquiries. I always… prefer to email someone, and then make sure I can arrange the first meeting, and then, for my work experience as well, you know, if I've got the chance to meet someone face to face, usually it's always that I continue working with them, so if I've got that chance to meet someone, uh, so I al- I always think, you know, that will give myself more chances, um… I don't know, it's, it's a tricky question.

I: Hrm… I think that there's something about difference, isn't it? And It's maybe about our own culture, you know, Polish people, we're… in my experience, our cul- it's um, we are a bit weary of difference, um… I- I think it- it's, for me, perhaps my own background, that you know, the, uh… that- that- I think that comes from our history as well, in that whatever was different was pretty dangerous, maybe, um… Yeah, but that's uh… that's really interesting.

P: But it- it's the, you nailed me with that, I have to say, *laughs* pushed me against the wall with this one, so it- it is true, the fact that, um, I sometimes would shy away from picking up the phone… partly 'cause with counselling I can be quite paranoid that I have to be in a quiet place, and if my daughter is running around and I don't have much privacy, it's quite- I'm almost paranoid that they are going to pick up the phone so I run to the room or… uh… but you know, a strong part of me, thinks at times I've got more chances that if I can email somebody back, or if I can make a face-to-face meeting happen, and yeah, maybe that fear of judgement that someone might think that, 'oh he's got a different accent, he's from a different culture, why would I not go for a native speaker or somebody who-', yeah… or if maybe they question, 'did this person get his qualifications here or did they get their qualifications in another country?'-

I: SO in a sense another thought would be- um- I'm just like, trying to follow your thoughts, and it's- the sense- it's almost- yeah, I feel as that we would be worse, that we would be the second best because we are foreigners.

P: Yeah, up to some extent yes, sometimes, yeah, sometimes if feel different – not always, but yeah sometimes I do feel this way, yeah.

I: hrm… Yeah…

P: It's not like I was- it's not like I'm feeling that someone would be- could provide a better service than me, it's more that somebody might think that other people are better than me.

I: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

P: I've definitely got that self-belief in my work, that I can be as good as anyone else, but maybe this fear of what other people think of me, if that makes sense.

I: Yeah, and you- you know, it's um… I sometimes feel that- that- this fear or this whole issues, it's just so magnified by brexit… what do you think about that?

P: Uh… Not in my case, I would say. I think I always felt this way… I feel this way less and less, so I felt this way when I came over to England, and then that changed, you know, when I improved, learned English and improved my skills, train myself, educate myself, and I had that high level of confidence… um… so that's, um, that's this fear slightly- maybe not disappear completely but there was less of that, and maybe- and maybe I feel I feel a bit more under pressure now that I've moved to C because I'm not dealing with that high volume of diversity that I was dealing with in London.

I: What do you mean, can you tell me more about that?

P: Um… so I think… as I was saying to many people before that I felt like a fish in the water in London, because it's such a great diverse society, um… when, as much as I love Dorset, and I wouldn't move back to London again, um, but obviously it's predominantly white English.

I: And how does it feel to be surrounded by white, uh, English? I would even say in the UK; C is middle class white English?

P: Yeah, to be honest, in terms of day-to-day living, you know, with neighbours and making friends, I- I feel 100% confident, in all honesty, I, you know, talk to people in the shops, in the street, in the beach, no problem at all, but in terms of work, it is slightly more stressful- work environment – because it's something new for me, so I'm more concerned about that. In terms of quality of living and social interactions I feel comfortable, sometimes even more comfortable than in Poland, uh... but, in terms of a working environment I'm not as confident.

I: And do you know why- where is that coming from? This- uh, you said you were more stressed here, why is that?

P: I think maybe because I haven't really done… much wok in C, it's, like, a different part of England, and as I said I felt more confident in London because I had more clients and consistent work and, uh, some security, uh… and because I do less now in C –

I: Those questions… they start coming and you start wondering why- why there is no phone calls…

P: Yeah…

I: Yeah… So, I wonder are there any professional changes in connection or during Brexit time – you said you move and that's a massive change but I wonder was it in connection with Brexit? Or that's absolutely not connected?

P: No, no that's not connected with Brexit. We've been planning to move for a really long time.

I: SO It's just coincidence that Brexit happened in between?

P: Yeah… Yeah.

I: Um… And I- um… and…. And I wonder about any personal changes? Any- any, um… 'cause I think we spoke in the beginning that you said, um, you perhaps started feeling differently about the whole issue of differences in immigration, but any other personal changes in that?

P: Um…. No. No

I: Um… well from talking with- with- um… With people, I'm… with Polish people, I'm aware that quite few families moved back to Poland, and I wonder, was it ever on your mind because of brexit?

(…)

P: I have to say I felt angry with myself and lots of other Polish people, um… it's not only in England, but also in America, that- I don't know what's the reason that we're not applying for British and American passports – I don't know why I mentioned America, but it's the same, like so many Polish people, uh, um, in the UK or in the states of other places, um… and, including myself, I should have a British passport considering how long I have been in this country, and I have a chance to make my vote count…

How do you know I didn't vote?

I: Um… I'm guessing. I'm guessing, because, um, I didn't have a chance to vote, um, because I don't have a British passport, still, yes, like you said, I'm this, like you said, I could, but I never really bothered, there is something, you know, I didn't *need* to, I think, in the past.

P: That's the same- same- same- same with me, but I feel I'm a little bit of a… ignorant… in that way, because… you know it could contribute to something good, you know, if all of us have British passport, then we would be still in the EU, so as I said, I feel a little bit angry with myself and, uh, other Polish people who had the same opportunity but we haven't really…. Done it ourselves… which is… I would probably trace that back to our history as well, because we are sort of… like, passive.

I: But that- it's really- it's really interesting that you said about anger, and you said you feel angry at Polish people…

P: And Myself.

I: and yourself.

P: First with myself, then with other Polish people.

I: Um, do you… do you feel angry at anyone else? Like, you know, British people for voting actually for Brexit? Because that was the first time you mentioned anger.

P: Hrm… Um… Initially I felt angry… Initially I felt angry, uh… I maybe now [have been] thinking longer about it, um… And then maybe, kind of looking back on our culture, how we behave towards other nations in Poland, how we are like in our acceptance, um… and I understand, you know, maybe why some of, you know, British people would… vote the way how they vote. If I would come from really loving and welcoming nation, that welcomes everyone to our country then maybe I would feel slightly differently… but yeah, I felt maybe more angry initially, uh… against English people, and how could they vote this way, uh… I no longer think about it, I've got maybe… more empathy towards the voters… especially, especially my parents in law, they voted for Brexit.

I: Hrm… Okay… So how do you feel about that?

P: Which does make me really angry…

I: Okay…

P: That made me angry, but it's just a… once again they are lovely, they are loving, caring, amazing people, um…

I: What do you think what was their reason for voting brexit, being mindful that you **are** foreign, that you are an immigrant from the European Union?

P: Hrm… I think the logic behind it was that they are originally Sri Lankan, so they felt that people from the common wealth countries cannot come to the UK, and they sacrificed so much in the war, and contributed to the economy, and then the Europeans are free to come… so that was sort of their logic behind it, but yeah, looking at individual cases, and sometimes talking to good people, and, you know, and… figuring out that they vote against [for] Brexit- as I said, my kind of understanding changed with time, but initially it was a little bit of anger and disappointment as I was mentioning before.

I: And how- how do you feel… now? How is your family life? DO you think it has been affected because your parents in-law voted brexit?

P: Um… No, I think if they would do it out of… if they had something against me, or… something about European… then I would feel differently, but no, nothing- nothing- initially I was obviously annoyed, but not anymore, I don't feel the same, I don't feel this way anymore. I don' think… our relationships haven't changed.

I; um… Well… And um… what do you think you- you- your wife felt… um… knowing that her parents voted against, well, the European union.

P: Oh she was really- she was really angry. I think she was much more angry than I was.

I: Why do you think?

P: Um… I know she was really hard on them, she told them they were stupid and didn't really know anything and… um… which I know she doesn't think of them but it was out of disappointment… um… I think because, yeah, these are her parents, and it's not the way how they brought her up, and I think also she mentioned that their decisions especially might affect me and my family, if they would want to come over, or um… so a bit about betrayal initially, but I think it's… the sae as me, with time, with time… especially…. She developed an understanding one day why they voted against it.

I: SO you know, in a sense, Brexit *did* affect your personally life – it's caused some tensions in your very close family – well, between you and your wife as well?

P: uh… I think as I was saying that when it happened, um… that was, you know, lots of emotions and lots of different feelings, angry, and disappointment and all those feelings, but it didn't last long, I would say, you know, it's not something that we carry on till now, it's something which is in the past now… *long pause* so It's something like being in a fight, and they keep punching your face so many times and you just think, 'this is the end of the world' but two or three days after, you know, you're getting back to reality, and a few weeks after you don't even think about it…

I: But that's um...

P: that's how I think about it

I: Yeah, it's interesting hat you said, you know, it's like being punched in your face and then, you know, you have to shake this off and stand up and fight again…

(…)

Appendix 5: Example of development emergent themes

Developing Emergent Themes

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	Iwona: So um… This is the first general question; what do you generally think about Brexit? Person being interviewed: Um… it's a tricky question I: I know it's far far far... a long time ago when you think it's over four years ago, so- P: I think… I have to say I feel slightly disappointed… um… and initially, I don't feel… as- the same way now, but initially when I found out about Brexit, obviously I disbelieved that actually it happened. Um… And I felt… I felt that, um… it was quite personal. It was quite personal, I felt that we, maybe… um… didn't really appreciate us as much as they supposed to as a… yeah, so yeah, disappointment, a little bit of sadness, I don't feel the same way now.	I intended to open the conversation with a broad question, to break the ice
Disappointment with British people Not appreciate/ not valued Sadness Detachment Being other		
	I: What has changed? P: I think it was quite emotional initially, 'cause, it was sort of, I really disbelieved that… that it's happening, um… you know I was convinced that people were gunna vote against it, so um… but it felt quite personal. That felt like maybe they didn't appreciate immigration as much as they should, or, didn't really give immigrants as much as I thought they did, so yeah. I: hrm…	I was curious about his experience now
Disbelieve Not valued		
Denial (it's not going to happen)	P: But I don't really… I don't really feel the same way now, obviously it's still really disappointing, uh, I actually thought- for the last few months I actually thought that it's not going to happen, that Brexit is gunna be stopped, but it's not… It's not as emotional	I am interested in 8 "anymore, I don't feel". I feels like 8 tries really hard to "not feel it anymore", so it might just

	anymore, I don't feel, you know, as upset about it anymore.	go away, this unpleasant feeling might disappear?
	I: Hrm…	
Devastated	P: But definitely, it was- I had- it was a really strong feeling when I found out about it, you know, I was kind of devastated.	I notice incongruence in his narrative, from one site he feels "devastated", and at this same time he doesn't "feel anymore".
	I: And you said, um… they haven't appreciated as much as they should – what do you think they should appreciate us for?	
Not valued Shame to be an immigrant	P: I think it's that, um… you know, that positive impact of, you know, other Europeans, and people from other countries as well, but, uh, that was EU so particularly Europeans and how we contributed to the economy and how much, you know, money we put into the taxes, and you know, hard work, and all the research just actually showing that we are really productive, and all the research that says we don't really claim much of benefits, so we don't really take advantage of the country, we actually really strongly contribute to the economy, um… Yeah, yeah so, yeah, I felt disappointed as well with the government, who kind of portrayed us as we are taking advantage of, of… you know, England, advantage of the economy, and we are taking all the benefits of the country but without really contributing. I: And um… how did you feel when they were portraying us this way?	8 tries to justify, why he is worthy to be in this country. Also, in my countertransference I sensed shame to be an immigrant, to belong to immigrant population, to be seen as the one who take an advantage of benefits etc.
	P: Uh… it's interesting 'cause, I came, similar to you, I came here in 2000 and- I think 2005 or 2006, end of 2005, um, and I felt really welcomed in England, and I never really had any bad experiences, so it was always a positive experience here and I always keep saying to everyone in my family, you know, how amazing the UK is, 'cause I, I was… in London at the time, and you know how tolerant the country is, and how many	I felt strong pull towards exploring his feeling about it. I noticed it was led by my own agenda I shared his experience and at this moment it became difficult to recognise "what is my and what is his". I felt strong pull into sharing my similar story with 8.

	opportunities we've got, um… and, you know, how well we- you know, we- sort of- adapt- how well I adapted to the culture and I feel like I'm part of the society, um, I feel like I belong to the society, um… and then ==when you're finding out that people… voted against [for] Brexit – they don't really want you here, then you just kind of- you kind of open your eyes a bit more== about, you know, about what actually… not everyone, but, you know, a huge proportion of people actually think.	By asking him that question, I confirmed my own thought.
Feeling rejected Betrayal Bursting of his safe bubble		
	I: Yeah… And I wonder how have you experienced Brexit – have you experienced any… any changes? Anything since the- all the Brexit started? All the talks?	I strongly wanted to explore further, but I was mindful I had to continue the interview and move on into another question. In hindsight, I would like to continue deeper. And at the same time, it was challenging moment for me, and perhaps it was "easier" to avoid the pain.
	P: Uh… no, no I haven't, things was… Actually the good thing- 'cause at the time I was in London, so, uh… Majority of Londoners voted against Brexit, so maybe I would feel differently if I were living in C, uh… at the time when it happened, but in London, majority of people were, um, you know, they were against it and, all- all my clients and uh…. friends… they felt devastated and ashamed themselves – you know they would call me and they would be apologetic, um… So… so I di- ==actually I didn't feel kind of any negative, you know, things from anyone, or I didn't experience any negativity from anyone or… no one had any bad comments or I never really experienced anyone behaving differently towards me==.	8 is normalising his experience, ==detaching himself from it==
	I: Hrm… And um, and-and you mentioned that you- you have changed, obviously you've moved from London to south, and um, are you noticing any… anything different? Or how people react to you knowing that you are a foreigner?	
	P: Hrm… It's really interesting because in London, we talk about Brexit all the time with everyone, you know, different backgrounds,	

<mark>Distrust toward British people Questioning their motives</mark>	and on the street, in bars and caffs, you know, gyms, you know, everyone spoke about the Brexit, but the past 8 months, I didn't even have one conversation about Brexit with anyone in C, not even one. Which is really surprising, you know, I went to the East Dorset outdoor swimming club, and there were like hundreds of people there and we had this long conversation of the swimming, um, I met so many people, um… we never really discuss Brexit… not too sure what is the reason for that, not too sure if people think that, okay, I'm a foreigner so maybe it's not, you know, [an] appropriate thing to say or to discuss, um… or if it is another reason… and I did notice the difference- the added difference of this is that people never ask me where I'm from in Dorset… so I don't know if it's kind of, like, political correctness or… 'cause it's always the case in London, people ask, 'oh, where are you from?', um… and, yeah, since I moved to C, over the last 8 months, hardly anyone has asked me where I'm from, which is really bizarre because in London, sort of, it was happening on a daily basis, you know, people asked me where I'm from all the time, which is annoying at times, you know, after you say where you're from like thousands of times and telling your life stories to everyone, so I'm<mark>- I'm not too sure, I don't think I'm here long enough to… figure out how people's minds work and what their intentions are.</mark> I: And yeah, you say that London, uh, overwhelmingly voted against Brexit, whereas here you say they voted – well majority voted – for Brexit, and how do you feel about that? P: Um… WE knew that before we moved in, um… I always, I came to C before, like, a few times in the holidays, and… I… it's a little bit [of a] different vibe to, let's say, Kent, when I was, I was- I was also considering to move to- to- uh- I always wanted to live close to the sea, so we were considering to move out to, uh, Kent, on the coast, and it's… I felt it's like a different vibe between these two locations, because maybe it's… obviously Kent is closer- especially Dover is closer to France, so there are immigrants coming from over the channel, and come from north Africa, and maybe… where we are in Dorset is further away from all that issues, um… so… I think people in Dorset maybe… it's-it's- it's a	Whom can I trust? What is really on people minds?
Uncertainty Questioning people's intentions		Unsure of people's intentions, feeling about immigration, towards immigrants.

	difficult question, but… I don't know, maybe they are not happy with the immigration but they wouldn't discuss that as openly as maybe in different parts of the country. That's the feeling which I am getting at the moment.	
	I: SO in a sense, um… *long pause* um… it's more difficult to sense what they really think about you… because they don't want to talk, or they are not open with you? Am I right?	
	P: Uh… yeah, yeah. I would say, maybe not as open… you know, regarding that sort of subject of Brexit, or maybe that type of talking about it as this point, I don't know.	
Distrust, Questions of authenticity, who is real	I: Hrm, yeah… Um… and I wonder about- you mentioned about clients – have you noticed any changes or shifts in client work?	
	P: Um… I wo- I'm not as lucky… regarding work. I haven't really done much work in the last 8 months, so I was commuting to London still – I haven't commuted for the last 3 months because of- because of the coronavirus, um… I was strongly relying on income from London, so I was travelling Wednesday to Friday… So I didn't get any clients, but to be honest… um… it wouldn't be because of where I am from, or, um… my background, because I haven't really met anyone,	
	I: Mhmm?	
	P: so, if that's what-	
	I: But- for uh- when you- when you think about the last 4 years, or… um…	
Denial Detachment	P: ==No, noth-nothing- nothing- nothing changed==, nothing- I ne- I never really felt that I might be discriminated in a way, any shape or form, I never really felt this way ever.	Incongruent in his responses. 8, just a moment ago explained that he has been feeling uncertain about peoples intention or thought about his as an immigrant; now he says "==nothing=="."
	I: And um, I wonder if you… majority of your clients are English or Polish?	

	P: Um… Majority of them are English, British, yeah. I: Um- P: I don't have many Polish clients, no. I: Ok… And I wonder if, have they ever mentioned the Brexit, um, in therapy sessions? P: Uh, no. No…. Actually…. *long pause* No, I don't think so<mark>, I was actually surprised but no, we haven't ever discussed Brexit, no</mark>. I: Hrm, and you said you are surprised, I wonder, why- why- why is that? Why were you surprised? P: I think it's just uh… in a way it is such a big thing, Brexit, that… you would think that somebody might mention that within the counselling setting… Uh, especially, people… every single client, like, every single personal training client discussed Brexit… uh… so I've got that comparison, uh, having all the clients for the personal training, and all of them discuss Brexit, and having counselling clients – not as many as personal training clients – and none of them have ever mentioned it. I: Do you have any thoughts about that? Why is that? P: Um… *sigh* Maybe one of the reasons is that- the fact <mark>that I am foreign myself, so I might be affected somehow, but- also… the way how I work with my clients, is that I never really talk about myself, or… relate myself or relate where I'm from, so in counselling I don't really… I don't really say where I'm from.</mark> I: And I wonder if they were mentioned, were mentioning Brexit, how would you react, what would you think? P: Mmm… No, if that would be something which worries them or if it's something they want to discuss, then <mark>I would be happy to talk about it. Um… if they would ask me how I feel about the Brexit, then, um… I would explain</mark>	I felt curious about his statement

	that the process is about them, not about me, and what I think, it's about what they think. I: Hrm… But that- that's really interesting what you said that you can notice such a big difference between counselling clients and your other clients – personal training clients, um… Hrm… it's almost this- this, um… it's in parallel, what you said about London and- and- and Dorset, um, the one they are openly talking about Brexit and other political issues, and south, in Dorset they don't really… yeah, it's really- really interesting… Um, and do you think that Brexit might affect the therapy process anyhow? P: Um… *long pause* That's a good question… I- I don't- I don't think so, no, ==I don't think Brexit would affect… like me personally in my… my work… uh… I'm not too sure about the other kinds of counsellors==. I: Um… So obviously you were saying that you're an immigrant, and do you think that this fact might affect the process? That you're an immigrant, a counsellor who is- who is working in a foreign country? P: Hrm… Um… In London, I didn't feel this way so I didn't really feel that, that is- where I'm from really matters, um, as much, I'm not too sure about C because I didn't have any experience with any counselling clients here in C, so I didn't have to pick up the phone, I didn't have to talk to anyone, um… they didn't have any enquiries, so I can't- can't really tell about how that would look like in C, um… in London, ==maybe slightly my own insecurities at times, I always prefer to… respond to the email rather than talk on the phone.== I: Why is that? P; Um… See, I don't really like talking about myself – that might be the issue in this interview, I prefer talking about others to be honest. UM… I think Pragmatically thinking that the fact that ==I am from- from- form a different country, from different culture, different background, uh… I think maybe people think that maybe I will not understand them as well as a native would==, um… oh it's about the trust as well, about language as well, I read a few	I feel I touched something raw, his insecurities about language perhaps? Questions about the difference, about haw he might be seen by the other, how he might be

Old schemas are activated, <mark>not good enough,</mark> Insecurities highlighted	books about it, that <mark>people assume sometimes when they hear accents, they associate that with trust and intelligence,</mark> um… so- I: SO there is loads of judgement for you in that? That you would be judged and you would be judged in a negative way? P: Yeah, as I said, I don't- I haven't really experienced that in my work yet, so over the years I have never experienced or sensed that that would be the case… um… I: But then it's- I 'm hearing that it's quite a strong feeling about that, that I- if- you know, you have never experienced, but at the same time you do believe that that might be the case, so I wonder where is that coming from? P: Uh… that's an interesting question. *long pause* As I said with the- with the inquiries. I always… <mark>prefer to email someone, and then make sure I can arrange the first meeting, and then, for my work experience as well, you know, if I've got the chance to meet someone face to face, usually it's always that I continue working with them, so if I've got that chance to meet someone, uh, so I al- I always think, you know, that will give myself more chances,</mark> um… I don't know, it's, it's a tricky question. I: Hrm… I think that there's something about difference, isn't it? And It's maybe about our own culture, you know, Polish people, we're... in my experience, our cul- it's um, we are a bit weary of difference, um… I- I think it- it's, for me, perhaps my own background, that you know, the, uh… that- that- I think that comes from our history as well, in that whatever was different was pretty dangerous, maybe, um… Yeah, but that's uh… that's really interesting. P: But it- it's the, you nailed me with that, I have to say, *laughs* pushed me against the wall with this one, so it- it is true, the fact that, um, <mark>I sometimes would shy away from picking up the phone… partly 'cause with counselling I can be quite paranoid</mark> that I have to be in a quiet place, and if my daughter is running around and I don't have much privacy, it's quite- I'm almost paranoid that they are going to pick up the phone so I run to the room or… uh… but you know, a	judged because of the fact that he is an immigrant. I took a risk of challenging his incongruent narrative I felt the need to help 8, self-disclose, as if I found if difficult to sit with his discomfort

Shame Being judged in a negative way as a foreigner	strong part of me, thinks at times I've got more chances that if I can email somebody back, or if I can make a face-to-face meeting happen, and yeah, maybe that fear of judgement that someone might think that, 'oh he's got a different accent, he's from a different culture, why would I not go for a native speaker or somebody who-', yeah... or if maybe they question, 'did this person get his qualifications here or did they get their qualifications in another country?'-	
	I: SO in a sense another thought would be- um- I'm just like, trying to follow your thoughts, and it's- the sense- it's almost- yeah, I feel as that we would be worse, that we would be the second best because we are foreigners.	I am trying to summarise what I am hearing
	P: Yeah, up to some extent yes, sometimes, yeah, sometimes if feel different – not always, but yeah sometimes I do feel this way, yeah.	8 agrees with me
	I: hrm... Yeah...	
	P: It's not like I was- it's not like I'm feeling that someone would be- could provide a better service than me, it's more that somebody might think that other people are better than me.	
	I: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.	
	P: I've definitely got that self-belief in my work, that I can be as good as anyone else, but maybe this fear of what other people think of me, if that makes sense.	
Insecurities Being judged	I: Yeah, and you- you know, it's um... I sometimes feel that- that- this fear or this whole issues, it's just so magnified by brexit... what do you think about that?	Perhaps I am imposing my own agenda?
	P: Uh... Not in my case, I would say. I think I always felt this way... I feel this way less and less, so I felt this way when I came over to England, and then that changed, you know, when I improved, learned English and improved my skills, train myself, educate myself, and I had that high level of confidence... um... so that's, um, that's this fear slightly- maybe not disappear completely but there was less of that, and maybe- and maybe I feel I feel a bit more under pressure now that I've moved to C because I'm not	More confident, settled with time passing, more confident with language

	dealing with that high volume of diversity that I was dealing with in London. I: What do you mean, can you tell me more about that? P: Um… so I think… as I was saying to many people before that I felt like a fish in the water in London, because it's such a great diverse society, um… when, as much as I love Dorset, and I wouldn't move back to London again, um, but obviously it's predominantly white English.	
Otherness Not belonging	I: And how does it feel to be surrounded by white, uh, English? I would even say in the UK; C is middle class white English? P: Yeah, to be honest, in terms of day-to-day living, you know, with neighbours and making friends, I- I feel 100% confident, in all honesty, I, you know, talk to people in the shops, in the street, in the beach, no problem at all, but in terms of work, it is slightly more stressful- work environment – because it's something new for me, so I'm more concerned about that. In terms of quality of living and social interactions I feel comfortable, sometimes even more comfortable than in Poland, uh... but, in terms of a working environment I'm not as confident.	For the first time Poland is being mentioned. Here in a context of social interactions and feeling confident
	I: And do you know why- where is that coming from? This- uh, you said you were more stressed here, why is that? P: I think maybe because I haven't really done… much wok in C, it's, like, a different part of England, and as I said I felt more confident in London because I had more clients and consistent work and, uh, some security, uh… and because I do less now in C – I: Those questions… they start coming and you start wondering why- why there is no phone calls… P: Yeah… I: Yeah… So, I wonder are there any professional changes in connection or during Brexit time – you said you move and that's a massive change but I wonder was it in	

	connection with Brexit? Or that's absolutely not connected?	
	P: No, no that's not connected with Brexit. We've been planning to move for a really long time.	
	I: SO It's just coincidence that Brexit happened in between?	
	P: Yeah… Yeah.	
	I: Um… And I- um… and…. And I wonder about any personal changes? Any- any, um… 'cause I think we spoke in the beginning that you said, um, you perhaps started feeling differently about the whole issue of differences in immigration, but any other personal changes in that?	
	P: Um…. No. No	
	I: Um… well from talking with- with- um… With people, I'm… with Polish people, I'm aware that quite few families moved back to Poland, and I wonder, was it ever on your mind because of brexit?	
	P: Um… no, no I don't think I considered moving back to be perfectly honest, no. <mark>I- I'm happy in the UK, um, really happy in C,</mark> apart from this professional difficulty at the moment, uh, but overall, I can easily see myself staying in the UK in C, definitely.	Now, I am aware that it feels like 8 doesn't really have choice, but stay. I wonder, if he feels that his mixed-race children wouldn't be accepted in Poland, not as accepted as he feels are in England?
	I: And have you ever considered going back to Poland? Or that's not… no thank you	
Being the other in Poland, worry for his children. Being different here and in Poland	P: No, no. I think it's also the fact that my wife is from here, um… I think <mark>I've got mixed race children as well, so I want them to grow up- maybe C is not the best place, uh but we've got a tiny bit of diversity in C,</mark> uh… but in [city name] where we don' we have none… Um, so yeah, it suits my lifestyle and then… looking at the future of my children, and my wife as well, I cannot picture myself going back… No**… I'm not a big patriot, sorry.**	When he said, "Im not a big patriot", I felt unexpected squeeze in my stomach, strong bodily reaction. I judged 8 on his response. That was not something you could say "up loud" in my family, you didn't have a choice, you had to be a patriot.

Worry about the family Not being accepted because of the difference	I: *laughs* *sigh* It's just something which you, I, you know, noticed, talking with other polish people, and they- um- that nowadays, someone always knows someone who is going back.	Listening to it back, I was stunned by my own reaction - laugh. I wondered if it was a nervous laugh, the reaction of feeling overwhelmed. Perhaps my laugh was an attempt to self-regulate as I became aware of my struggle in how to manage feelings. I wondered about shame affect in both myself and the client.
	P: Yeah, I've heard it as well, lots of, uh, even some of my friends feel like they want to go back at times, yah.	
	I: And do you think it's a stronger feeling? Stronger voice now? During the Brexit time? Or it's uh…	
	P: I think it's- **lots of people in my circle that- they felt strongly they want to go back because they are really angry, but as the time has gone by I think everyone is more mellow and kind of accept the situation, they're not talking about that as much as they used to. Initially lots of people were saying, 'we're gonna go back, we're gonna go back' but uh, they don't' really talk about it as much now.**	I felt moved by his narrative, "*they felt strongly they want to go back because they are really angry, but as the time has gone by I think everyone is more mellow and kind of accept the situation*". Have the given up? Where is their anger now?
	I: Hrm… yeah… Um… And I suppose the…. No, I think I should start from that question, but how do you feel about, um… not having a voice in that decision making, you know that basically the decision was… in the majority, I think, about immigration, or, I don't know, how you feel…. So I wonder how was that for you – that you didn't have a voice in that process?	I am still finding my own voice, lost after the last exchange. The question is muddled, which exemplifies the state of my mind.
Anger	P: I have to say I felt angry with myself and lots of other Polish people, um… it's not only in England, but also in America, that- I don't know what's the reason that we're not applying for British and American passports – I don't know why I mentioned America, but it's the same, like so many Polish people, uh, um, in the UK or in the states of other places, um… and, including myself, I should have a British passport considering how long I have	

Moral injury – taking the blame into himself	been in this country, and I have a chance to make my vote count… How do you know I didn't vote? I: Um… I'm guessing. I'm guessing, because, um, I didn't have a chance to vote, um, because I don't have a British passport, still, yes, like you said, I'm this, like you said, I could, but I never really bothered, there is something, you know, I didn't *need* to, I think, in the past.	I felt uneasy, put on the spot, like I have to find a good answer. I did not want to appear surprised or shocked, by his account. I felt overwhelmed and I feared that this may appear on my face.
Distrust		
		Angry with himself and other polish immigrant for not taking the opportunity for applying for British passport.
Anger directed at Polish immigrants	P: That's the same- same- same- same with me, but I feel I'm a little bit of a… ignorant… in that way, because… you know **it could contribute to something good, you know, if all of us have British passport, then we would be still in the EU, so as I said, I feel a little bit angry with myself and, uh, other Polish people who had the same opportunity but we haven't really…. Done it ourselves… which is… I would probably trace that back to our history as well, because we are sort of… like, passive.** I: But that- it's really- it's really interesting that you said about anger, and you said you feel angry at Polish people… P: And Myself. I: and yourself. P: First with myself, then with other Polish people. I: Um, do you… do you feel angry at anyone else? Like, you know, British people for voting actually for Brexit? Because that was the first time you mentioned anger. P: Hrm… Um… Initially I felt angry… Initially I felt angry, uh… I maybe now [have been] thinking longer about it, um… And then maybe, kind of looking back on our culture, how we behave towards other nations in Poland, how we are like in our acceptance, um… and I understand, you know, maybe why some of, you know, British people would… vote the way how they vote. If I	Parents in-law voted for Brexit. I am drawn to this, identify with his experience, as my parents-in-law voted for Brexit as well

Angry at British Betrayal (by his parents in-law)	would come from really loving and welcoming nation, that welcomes everyone to our country then maybe I would feel slightly differently… but yeah, I felt maybe more angry initially, uh… against English people, and how could they vote this way, uh… I no longer think about it, I've got maybe… more empathy towards the voters… especially, ==especially my parents in law, they voted for Brexit==. I: Hrm… Okay… So how do you feel about that? P: Which does make me really angry… I: Okay… P: That made me angry, but it's just a… once again they are lovely, they are loving, caring, amazing people, um… I: What do you think what was their reason for voting brexit, being mindful that you are foreign, that you are an immigrant from the European Union? P: Hrm… I think the logic behind it was that they are originally Sri Lankan, so they felt that people from the common wealth countries cannot come to the UK, and they sacrificed so much in the war, and contributed to the economy, and then the Europeans are free to come… so that was sort of their logic behind it, but yeah, looking at individual cases, and sometimes talking to good people, and, you know, and… figuring out that they vote against [for] Brexit- as I said, my kind of understanding changed with time, but ==initially it was a little bit of anger and disappointment as I was mentioning before.== I: And how- how do you feel… now? How is your family life? DO you think it has been affected because your parents in-law voted brexit? P: Um… No, I think if they would do it out of… if they had something against me, or… something about European… then I would feel differently, but no, nothing- nothing- initially I was obviously annoyed, but not anymore, I don't feel the same, I don't feel this way anymore. I don' think… our relationships haven't changed.	Incongruence – lovely people but I feel angry at them
Anger Disappointment		

Annoyed	I; um… Well… And um… what do you think you- you- your wife felt… um… knowing that her parents voted against, well, the European union. P: Oh she was really- she was really angry. I think she was much more angry than I was. I: Why do you think? P: Um… <mark>I know she was really hard on them, she told them they were stupid and didn't really know anything and… um… which I know she doesn't think of them but it was out of disappointment… um… I think because, yeah, these are her parents, and it's not the way how they brought her up, and I think also she mentioned that their decisions especially might affect me and my family, if they would want to come over, or um… so a bit about betrayal initially, but I think it's… the sae as me, with time, with time… especially…. She developed an understanding one day why they voted against it.</mark> I: SO you know, in a sense, Brexit *did* affect your personally life – it's caused some tensions in your very close family – well, between you and your wife as well? P: uh… I think as I was saying that when it happened, um… that was, you know, <mark>lots of emotions and lots of different feelings, angry, and disappointment and all those feelings, but it didn't last long</mark>, I would say, you know, it's not something that we carry on till now, it's something which is in the past now… *long pause* <mark>so It's something like being in a fight, and they keep punching your face so many times and you just think, 'this is the end of the world' but two or three days after, you know, you're getting back to reality, and a few weeks after you don't even think about it</mark>… I: But that's um... P: that's how I think about it I: Yeah, it's interesting that you said, you know, it's like being punched in your face and then, you know, you have to shake this off and stand up and fight again…	
Becoming numb to the pain		Long, enduring pain. It was difficult to stay in that moment. I shared an observation to further my understanding of 8

	P: No I wouldn't say that you have to stand up and fight again, no. I just… I would say more that you get hit a few times and then… it's just kind of moving on. But it's not uh… it's not something which affected me for a long period of time, is what I'm trying to say. I: Okay, yeah… Um… Well, I think I have finished all my questions, and I wonder if there is any question I haven't asked and in your opinion I should? P: Um… relating to Brexit? I: Brexit, Mhmm. P: Uh… I can't really… I can't really think of anything. Anything popped up to your mind? Anything which would help you with your research? I: No, well I think, you know, you answered, um, brilliantly, all my questions, so, yeah… And I wonder how it was for you to talk about Brexit with me? P: Um… it was- was interesting. I never really… um… I haven't really talked that much about Brexit with people, funnily enough, like conversation with the work colleagues and a few friends, but I didn't have many in-depth conversations like sitting down and discussing how we feel and how it affects us… uh… I: Do you think it's needed? P: Um… I don't feel as much now, but I think before, definitely. When it happened initially, when… you know, when we find out, you know, the news that we are out with Brexit, then I think that would be so useful, when, you know, you want to talk to someone, and talk to other people, having that in-depth conversation, how we, you know, how we feel about that whole situation. But with me, I find it quite difficult to talk about myself in general, so… but I always find it useful. I: Yep. Um, alright. So… I…. I think I have everything, um… and um… if you don't have any questions, I wonder if we could finish?	I missed 8 in this exchange.

	P: Yeah, yeah.	
	I: Alright, so thank you very much for the interview.	
	P: You're welcome.	