



Loss and Assimilation: Lived Experiences of Brexit for British Citizens Living in Luxembourg

Stephanie Knight¹ · Dean Fido¹ · Henry Lennon¹ · Craig A. Harper²

Accepted: 19 July 2021
© The Author(s) 2021

Abstract

Inconsistent political realities are associated with mental health issues such as hopelessness, anxiety, and depression. The psychological impact of Brexit is clearly an important and timely issue, but hitherto has been understudied. This study uses a critical realist approach to qualitatively explore the lived experiences of British citizens living in Luxembourg during the Brexit era. The study reports on semi-structured interviews conducted with 6 British citizens aged 18–65. An experientially focused thematic analysis was conducted, exploring two main themes: *Loss* (with psychological and broader social implications) and *Integration* (contrasting the mover's community with the receiving community). This study demonstrates the psychological impact of Brexit and highlights the urgency for future researchers and mental health practitioners alike — both in the UK and overseas — to consider the human consequences associated with political upheaval. Open access materials for this project can be viewed here: https://osf.io/38rg7/?view_only=b8c04dfc3fe5474f9aff4897e370b3e6.

Keywords Brexit · Thematic analysis · Integration · Mental health · Luxembourg

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) electorate voted by a majority of just under 52% to leave the European Union (EU; Electoral Commission, 2016). Widely known by its shorthand expression “Brexit”, this decision set in motion the dissolution of ties and commitments to EU trade deals, freedom of movement, and jurisdiction. Theresa May triggered article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on March 29, 2017 (Department for Exiting the European Union, 2017); marking the start of negotiations on the terms of separation, before making way for Boris Johnson on July 24, 2019, whose Brexit agreement with the EU was subsequently passed. On January 31, 2020, the UK Brexit transition period began, meaning that British representatives would no longer be present in the European Parliament or at EU summits. This train of actions contributed to uncertainties for many EU citizens in the UK, as well as for British citizens living across Europe (Lulle et al., 2018).

✉ Stephanie Knight
knight.stephie@gmail.com

¹ University of Derby, One Friar Gate Square, Derby DE1 1DZ, UK

² Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

In Britain, public opinion data has suggested a significant decrease in life satisfaction in the aftermath of Brexit, relative to a control group featuring other EU countries, with this effect more prominent in individuals who hold more positive views of the European Union (Kavetsos et al., 2021). Home Office data also suggested an increase of 41% in racially motivated offences following Brexit (Home Office, 2016, 2017), with the National Police Chiefs Council recording around 5468 racially motivated hate crimes (BBC News, 2016). While this may be unsurprising, given the popular notion that the “Leave” vote was driven by xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment (Matti & Zhou, 2017), more nuanced voter motivations have been recognised. For example, Harper and Hogue’s (2019) multivariate analysis of the moral intuitions of “Leave” and “Remain” voters indicated that a perceived loyalty to one’s ingroup did not predict “Leave” voting. Rather, those voted in favour of Brexit placed moral value on the concept of liberty. Nonetheless, participants who reported greater concern about the nature and pace of social change were also more inclined to support the Brexit argument, suggesting that some desire to “take back control” of both sovereignty and immigration levels contributed to the referendum outcome.

Irrespective of the motivations of voters, the “hostile environment” (Hiam et al., 2018, p.107) created in the aftermath of the referendum (Bradley, 2019) is likely to have contributed to decreased emotional health among migrants living in the UK. From an empirical perspective, Frost (2020) found that perceived discrimination was associated with symptoms of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) during a 6-month period following the EU referendum, and that these issues were most prevalent in Leave-voting, compared to Remain-voting. As such, Frost (2020) highlights the mental health risks to those who experience social stress in the form of discrimination, abuse, living with ambiguity, and unpredictability within their communities, which can be linked to changes in the socio-political climate. Further accounts of EU migrants living within the UK during this time have also been reported in Guma and Jones (2018), whereby unsettled attachment to the UK has manifested through hostility, physical and verbal abuse, uncertainty about one’s legal status, and experiences of negative affect. Moreover, although not all migrants have experienced (or at least noticed) changes in attitudes or behaviours from co-workers and supervisors following Brexit, those that do are found to report greater levels of perceived stress, which in turn is associated with greater intention to leave the UK and lower levels of mental well-being and life satisfaction (Martynowska et al., 2020). Together, public opinion and empirical data suggest a consistent story of negative well-being experienced by migrants following the EU referendum.

Such issues as ambiguity, novelty, uncontrollability, unpredictability, and anticipation of negative consequences, however, are not only experienced by immigrants to the UK (Al’ Absi, 2007). When 1700 UK residents were surveyed by YouGov (2019a), two-thirds felt they were either “fairly” or “very” unhappy as a result of Brexit and four in ten of those surveyed reported that the political situation was impacting negatively on their mental health. From an empirical perspective, correlational data indicates an increase in the use of antidepressants following Brexit (e.g. Liew et al., 2020; Vantoros et al., 2019); however, it would be remiss to ignore criticisms of Liew et al., such as prescription data being reported on prior to the referendum in addition to a lack of control over wider demographic and/or geographical factors (Gaddy, 2020). Moreover, prescriptions of antidepressants go little way to capture specific changes in mood and mental health. Additionally, over half of the surveyed Remain voters and one third of the surveyed Leave voters featured in YouGov (2019b) reported a decline in their mental health; a finding which remained unchanged when repeated in a larger sample later that year. These findings emphasise the scale of the damage to voters across the ideological spectrum. Additionally, a survey of

6000 Britons by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP, 2019) found that, on average, one-third believed that Brexit had “hurt” their mental health; with greater perceived impacts on those who were younger, less affluent, and who voted Labour and Liberal Democrat, relative to the UK Independence and Conservative Parties. From an empirical lens, when asked to document positive alternative outcomes of the UK referendum (e.g. using “if only” statements), not only were such reflections associated with lower self-reported well-being, but these negative associations were further moderated by individual differences such as just-world beliefs (Sirois & Iyer, 2018). Taken together, while these outcomes may be related to a visceral and/or psychological response to losing the referendum vote, the data do appear to suggest that Brexit appears to have brought about more profound mental health challenges for left-leaning and pro-European individuals.

The implications of Brexit remain unclear for many of the 770,400 British citizens living and working across the EU (ONS, 2020), with the impact on people’s lives dependant on each country’s individual integration policy (Collins & O’Reilly, 2018). In light of the complexities surrounding the interplay between politics, integration, and human psychological wellbeing, and that the human impact of Brexit has been overlooked by governments and their institutions (Brophy, 2019), this research set out to qualitatively study the lived experiences of Brexit on British citizens living abroad during the early and uncertain stages of this new political framework. The research focuses specifically on residents of Luxembourg, within which 6,119 British citizens were reported living at the time of the 2016 Brexit Referendum.

Method

Participants

In line with Braun and Clarke’s (2021) commentary on data saturation and owing to the difficulty underpinning the recruitment of our intended sample, we sought to recruit and interview between five and ten British citizens currently living in Luxembourg to marry logistical viability of the study with sufficient depth of data to form meaningful interpretation. Participants were recruited via snowball sampling using email advertisements and eight British citizens, between 18 and 65 years old, responded to an invite to participate. All participants had been living outside of the UK for at least fifteen years and were therefore not permitted to vote in the referendum. Henceforth, they are referred to as Remain-Minded (RM) and Leave-Minded (LM), respectively. Each participant received a pseudonym and the transcriptions reflect this.

Epistemology and ontology

The study set out to explore the lived experiences of British citizens living in Luxembourg during a particularly uncertain part of the Brexit era. We argue this topic is appropriately framed by a critical realist approach, which proposes that natural and societal objects possess real and independent underlying structures that have causal mechanisms, and produce events (Collier, 1994), whilst also recognising that material nature continues into human nature, manifesting a stratified reality that shapes different lived experiences (de Souza, 2014). Critical realism is appropriate because it respects the experiential complexity of the subject matter

while also acknowledging there is a reality where we can collate towards understanding in time (de Souza, 2014).

Materials and Procedure

After receiving a formal invitation to participate, which included demographic requirements, respondents received an information sheet which emphasised voluntary participation and outlined the benefits of taking part, researcher contact details, and details around confidentiality, data protection, and signposts for mental health support. Following informed consent, the lead researcher (SK) began the one-to-one semi-structured interviews using the interview schedule, which was designed to engage participants in discourse around: “Looking back, what were your initial reactions to the outcome of the referendum?”. One question was framed around the presentation of a letter, which all British citizens living in Luxembourg received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 5, 2019. This letter described the UK’s departure from the EU and how it would impact on their situation in the country, and that while the precise nature of these implications were not yet clear they would be determined by the eventual withdrawal agreement. The letter was provided as a prompt.

Two of the eight interviews took place via Skype (a digital communications platform), and all interviews were recorded using a Troax digital voice recorder. After each interview, the participant was thanked for their time and emailed a debrief statement. The first six interviews took place during December 2019, and the final two during the first week of January 2020. All the data was collected before Brexit took place on January 31, 2020. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, as the focus of the analysis was on content and not form (e.g. Griffin, 2007).

Qualitative Data Analysis

The interviews were analysed using an inductive and experientially focused thematic analysis, which looks for patterns of meaning in data. The analytic process consisted of six steps, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following repeated readings of the data, codes were given to interesting segments of the data related to the research question. Similar codes were grouped together into candidate themes. Revisions to the relations between these themes then led to some themes becoming collapsed into others, thereby delimiting the main themes and their subthemes. It was noted that the codes that coalesced around common themes related to RM participants. Upon further inspection of the data, it seemed that LM participants depicted an entirely different subjective reality, one defined by hope (cf. Lennon & Kilby, in press). Thus, a decision was taken at this stage to omit the two LM participants from the current analysis. It is aimed that a further study will explore this with a critical realist view to furthering common ground and dialogue between these oppositional realities. The extracts most illustrative of the RM sample’s themes are outlined below.

Results

Two main themes with two respective sub-themes were identified as demonstrated in Table 1: firstly, “Loss” (subthemes were “Intrinsic implications” and “Extrinsic implications”), and secondly, “Integration” (subthemes were “Mover’s community” and “Receiving community”).

Theme 1: Loss

“It’s sort of despair, sadness, incredulity, and disbelief” (Elliott).

A strong and recurring theme across all six interviews was a sense of loss, sadness, shock, and despair. Participants reported grieving over a world they previously occupied, and this sense of loss had both intrinsic (e.g. how participants were personally affected, how they have personally experienced loss, how they have seen loss for others, and increased empathy for others) and extrinsic implications (e.g. societal implications and loss drawn out of an identity to Europe).

Subtheme 1.1: Intrinsic Implications

When asked how the political situation had impacted them over the last 3 years, Daisy responded:

“Very insecure, incredibly sad. It’s like a breakup for me. And also, it’s also implied, I won’t have freedom of movement” (Daisy)

Daisy likens her experience to that of a breakup and seems to be invoking an atmosphere of grief through losing a valued relationship to a wider identity, which included a sense of freedom (Collins & O’Reilly, 2018). Loss and grief follow naturally after separation from that which one identifies with or feels emotionally attached to (Fraley & Shaver, 1999). In response to being asked how he felt taking a second nationality, Elliott shares his reservations:

“I’m very grateful to be able to have taken Luxembourgish nationality now, but I didn’t want to have to do it” (Elliott)

Despite being grateful for the opportunity to remain European, Elliot feels remorse for taking a second nationality now that their former reality has changed. They make sense of this reality by reflecting that they are in a fortunate position to have gained new citizens’ rights. The Meaning Reconstruction Model (Gillies & Niemeyer, 2006) identifies three activities: sense making, benefit-finding, and identity change. By considering the available benefits, Elliott appears open to adjusting to his new circumstances by formulating a new identity (Park et al., 2008). Despite inconsistencies in meaning making research (Park, 2010; Stroebe & Schut, 2001), most agree that stressful life situations shatter behavioural schemas and world views, which in turn might facilitate a cognitive-meaning-making process, whereby a person makes room for new meaning to be derived from previously unwanted circumstances (Park et al., 2008). This process may facilitate improved situational adjustment, by reducing dissonance and polarised thinking (Poxton, 2013).

Table 1 Salience of each theme across the entire sample

Main themes	Subthemes	Participants
Loss	Intrinsic implications	6
	Extrinsic implications	6
Integration	Mover’s community	6
	Receiving community	6

When asked how Brexit had impacted on their sense of belonging and identity, Elliott reflects:

“I don’t feel that my identity has changed (...) But in terms of kind of self-worth, I don’t think it did me very much good. I think it kind of ...yeah almost like you have to almost walk around with your head bowed (...) Because ...kind of a feeling of shame for what (...) the country I come from has done” (Elliott)

Elliott seems to have internalised the situation to the point of feeling shame. Disruption in one’s relationship to their social group and social identity has been linked to experiences of shame and dampened self-esteem (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which alongside self-evaluation are considered crucial for mental and social well-being (Mann et al., 2004).

When asked about their eligibility to apply for a Luxembourg passport, Leigh reflects on feeling loss related to loved ones whom they feel they are leaving behind:

“It sounds stupid, but the day I went to pick up my passport, I was crying because it felt like I was turning my back on my family. I mean it was quite emotional” (Leigh)

Collecting their new passport has seemingly made the experience of Brexit feel real; the experience has become visceral. Moreover, when asked about their feelings on Brexit, Angie relates this to depression; a common feature of loss and mental wellbeing (McHorney & Mor, 1988; Neimeyer & Burke, 2017):

“Not happy (...) the day after the election I was actually feeling really depressed – like someone had sort of stabbed me in the guts. It was just awful” (Angie)

When explicitly asked about the Brexit-related impact on their mental health, Angie shares about excessive feelings of stress which they believe has prompted them to seek psychological treatment:

“My mental health has suffered hugely, and last year I sort of had a sort of mini burn-out type thing - where I just, I just got very, very stressed and it was mainly the insecurity(...) it did impact my health and I did have to have treatment for stress” (Angie)

The experience of Brexit generates markers of deeply stressful life events which are of interest to clinicians, including situational factors such as low social support, unpredictability, role vagueness, job instability, low control, and inconsistency of reward (Cooper & Dewe, 2007; Hughes, 2019). The loss experienced by our participants reflects a social, political, and symbolic death, which closely resembles experiences of grief and loss reported elsewhere in relation to the loss of loved places through climate change (Barnett & Campbell, 2010; Bulkeley et al., 2016; Drew, 2013). As such, political disruption resulting from the unclear manner in which the UK is leaving the EU may facilitate feelings of despair, hopelessness, and helplessness (Hughes, 2019).

In order to understand the effect of mental stress on mortality, bereaved individuals in Denmark were followed for 17 years between 1997 and 2014. Overall, loss was linked with increases in short-term as well as long-term mortality, despite adjustments being made for physical diseases and mental health morbidities. This highlights how loss is threatening to those who are relatively physically and mentally fit. Evidence suggests mental stress plays a causal role in mortality in the bereaved, and may exacerbate pre-existing health conditions (Prior et al., 2018). Poxton (2013) explored the experiences of feeling stuck in the grieving process in four grieving individuals. The results highlight psychological risks of continuing to live with unresolved suffering, as well as the experiential implications of

remaining stuck in cycles of fear and impending doom. Having demonstrated the intrinsic implications for grief, we now examine extrinsic implications.

Subtheme 1.2: Extrinsic Implications

When asked how they felt about Britain leaving the EU, Daisy shared:

“The feeling is very sad, because I believe in unity in general and unity amongst nations, and I feel that this will change the outlook - political outlook as well for other countries, who may feel that they would also like to leave. I guess I fear the dissolution of Europe” (Daisy)

Daisy expresses concern for the wider implications of a potential collapse of their political and social reality, and may be mourning the loss of unity within their society (Collins & O’Reilly, 2018). After sharing similar concerns regarding their family, friends, and others in the UK, Elliott shared this reflection:

“Well, you know, I’ve read some fairly reliable sources that British passport holders are not getting the jobs, they’re not being considered for the jobs that they were before, because the employers don’t know what the implications are of employing British citizens anymore. And let’s face it, with everything that’s gone on, if we’re a nation that is seen to be rejecting however many other nations it used to be partners with, then there’s the chance that there will be some kind of racist backlash against us. (...) the UK is a very, very big part of the European Union and a lot of people really appreciate our input, and they feel let down. You know, people in the Netherlands and Belgium they feel let down by us. (...) It makes me feel sad, it makes me feel angry... it makes me feel yeah, all of those things” (Elliott)

Here, grief is linked to the idea that others might feel let down and rejected and Elliot seems to be grieving over the observed losses for people, society, and countries as a whole (Collins & O’Reilly, 2018; Fraley & Shaver, 1999). When asked whether their interest in politics had changed over the last few years, Leigh reflects on the wider societal implications of Brexit:

“(...) I’m in a privileged position, you know; how are other people being treated? (...) Windrush and EU citizens and people who you know, are working freelance - who haven’t paid into the health service, (...) haven’t paid maybe their social contributions to the higher extent because they’re looking after you know, their husband who is British (...) If they’re European they’re being faced with Leave in Britain now, even though they’ve lived there all those years - it’s just shocking, (...) so it’s kind of an eye-opener at how people are treated, and how little power you have actually. I think it’s been shocking” (Leigh)

The use of the expression “eye-opener” can be understood to symbolise an extrinsic gaze, whereby Leigh is witnessing injustice (Shapiro, 2002). The lived political and social realities of our participants are unlikely to return to pre-referendum conditions and so the experience of Brexit has the potential to transform their perceptions of themselves, the wider world, and how they navigate through it. A contemporary consensus in grief theory proposes that one’s character is forever transformed by the impact of loss (Weiss, 1993; Wortman & Boerner, 2007). This assumption contrasts older stage theories (Bowlby & Parkes, 1970; Kubler-Ross, 1969) that are still widely accepted by mental

health professionals as frameworks for “normal grief”, which posits that loss may eventually be transcended by the bereaved (Kilcrease, 2008). Data reported here suggest that our participants have engaged in processes of readjustment and restoration during which they have internally and externally begun to reevaluate their place in the world. Taken together, as the aftermath of grief has been linked to emotional distress and adverse psychological consequences such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and depression, effectively responding to and managing loss is paramount (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010; Stroebe & Schut, 2010). Throughout the next theme, the role of integration is discussed in the context of serving as a restoration strategy.

Theme 2: Integration

“I have much more faith in the government here than in the government in the UK”
(Elliott)

The theme of integration was prominent through all six interviews and was represented through two subthemes: firstly, *mover’s community*, which includes reflections on UK policy, as well as on society and life in the UK; secondly, *receiving community*, which includes how the receiving community contributed to the participant either wanting to integrate or feeling like this was an option available to them. It includes reflections on Luxembourgish society and life experiences in Luxembourg. A two-sided justification is being proposed for why participants seem to have become either integrated or assimilated according to Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1980; Lambert, 1977). On the one hand, participants seem to be experiencing disappointment, distrust, and resentment towards their mover’s community; aligning them towards their receiving community. On the other, participants report appreciation, trust, and gratitude towards their receiving community, which seems to have provided the conditions for both integration and assimilation.

Theme 2.1: Mover’s Community

When prompted to comment on how they felt about not having had a vote in the referendum, Leigh reflects on their sense of disenfranchisement:

“You cannot encourage people to go into Europe and build this European project, and then be disenfranchised after so many years. That’s not on” (Leigh)

Leigh seems to be describing a sense of abandonment after choosing to create a life outside of the UK under a now-uncertain pretence. When asked about whether they felt supported by the British Embassy or government, Leigh declares:

“No.... I don’t think so, no. And in a sense, I actually feel let down by the British Embassy. Although it doesn’t matter, because I’ve got my Luxembourgish passport, the realization that they basically, as far as I’m concerned - they don’t give a flying fuck – that’s what it feels like. (...) I don’t think so at all” (Leigh)

Leigh’s use of language here does not invoke a sense of solidarity with their mover’s community, but instead reveals a deeply fractured relationship. Moreover, when Alice was asked how they had been impacted by not having had the right to vote in either country while still applying for a Luxembourg passport, they shared:

“(…) it was… not being able to vote in the British one (….) made me quite negative towards the government, and unsympathetic. (….) Whereas I’m extremely grateful to live somewhere that they made it reasonably easy for us to do so, I do feel resentment, not of Luxembourg - I feel nothing but gratitude towards Luxembourg, towards my own country (….) we didn’t trust our own government enough to look after us” (Alice)

Alice expresses their resentment and lack of trust towards their mover community’s government. They indicate deep resent that they were not allowed to vote on matters which might impact their life in ways yet to be determined. When asked why they did not want to return to live in the UK, Angie responded in detail:

“We made a decision that we didn’t want our kids as young and older teenagers to be in the UK because of the sort of thuggish mentality that there is. (….) For young kids, particularly boys I think, there’s a real danger of being just picked on and beaten the shit out of - for no reason. (….) I just find that England’s falling apart. It’s just, it’s got so shabby, there’s no money for repairing streets you know, the infrastructure services are appalling, nothing runs on time” (Angie)

This statement frames the UK as an unsafe environment in which to raise their children. Although we do not possess evidence that our participants are formally rejecting their British identity, they report rejecting certain aspects of what British society has come to represent, politically. When reflecting on their mover’s community, our participants express a degree of alienation, a sense of social and institutional distrust, a sense of disenfranchisement and political distrust, and general disappointment (Berry, 1980; Sam & Berry, 2006). Rejection of their mover’s community sets a precedent for a possible assimilation with their receiving community to occur.

Acculturation is a process of change that occurs in individuals and groups of at least two different cultures (Redfield et al., 1936) — in this case, British citizens living in Luxembourg. Acculturation attitudes in individuals pertain to the various ways in which people align themselves in relation to the cultures they are in contact with, in regard to identity, values, attitudes, and behaviour (Berry et al., 1989; Sam & Berry, 2006). The assimilation strategy occurs when an individual expresses interest in severing ties with their heritage culture, while expressing a preference for aligning with and participating in the host culture and society. Whenever a person wishes to maintain their own culture, while simultaneously participating equally in the larger society, the integration strategy has been adopted. In the case where a person solely maintains ties to their heritage culture while rejecting the larger society, a separation strategy has occurred. Finally, when a person has little or no interest in maintaining and cultivating relations with either primary or secondary culture, a marginalisation strategy is unfolding (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). Participants of this study indicate wanting to integrate further with their receiving community, which has been demonstrated to lead to favourable mental health outcomes (Berry & Hou, 2016).

Theme 2.2: Receiving Community

When prompted to discuss the letter from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Elliott notes their happiness in receiving the document before describing a meeting with the Luxembourgish Prime Minister:

“I also met Xavier Bettel at an art exhibition. (...) When he came to me, I deliberately said, yeah, good evening – nice to meet you - in English, and he said oh you’re English, where are you from, and I said from London. And he said and you live here? Then he said, don’t worry you’ll be.... we are never going to throw you out. I thought that’s really reassuring and had it been any other politician, I probably wouldn’t have believed them, but I think that... I quite like Xavier Bettel, and I think he’s quite genuine on that sort of thing. And it showed his intent anyway, whether or not what-ever happens in the future, if the intent of the government of Luxembourg - the head of the government of Luxembourg was to say that to me, in public, in front of a lot of people, that’s quite...quite reassuring. Yeah, and that, that meant a lot to me” (Elliott)

The Prime Minister of Luxembourg has made Elliott feel *at home* during a time of uncertainty, which may indicate the presence of an integration strategy occurring. However, considering Elliott previously expressed disappointment in the UK, an assimilation strategy may be taking place, such that they are rejecting aspects of their home culture while simultaneously embracing something of their secondary culture (Sam & Berry, 2006). This is exemplified through:

“Well, I’ve got a heightened sense of belonging to Luxembourg” (Elliott)

When Alice was questioned about whether they felt supported in Luxembourg, they responded:

“(...) they treat you the way that Britain ought to be treating the Europeans in Britain you know... we’re just yeah so much more welcomed. (...) We do take it for granted. (...) I think a lot of us appreciate it more than we probably did before” (Alice)

It seems that Alice has taken a fresh perspective of their situation in the context of Brexit. Having previously expressed disenfranchise when reflecting on how their own country treats other Europeans, Alice describes a new appreciation for their receiving community. This likely resulted through a perceived distancing from their own country as a result of the previously outlined loss and disappointment (Sam & Berry, 2006).

“I thought that they had actively... were encouraging people to do it. (...) The government had made this positive new law, whereas there’s my country who wouldn’t let me vote, the country that I’m living in here is making it as easy as possible for me to vote. We’d always voted in local elections but couldn’t vote in the national ones - couldn’t vote anywhere in a national election. (...) Being able to vote is hugely important; you can’t complain if you don’t ...if you don’t vote. I’ve always wanted to be able to and now I can again so that was very positive” (Alice)

Having been excluded from politics in the UK, Alice had until recently been ineligible to vote anywhere, which made her unhappy. While Alex expressed disappointment in their mover’s community and associated political path, they have simultaneously developed a more meaningful relationship with the politics of their receiving community; indicating an assimilation strategy taking place (Berry, 1980; Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2006).

When asked whether Brexit had impacted on her in regard to her recent cancer diagnosis, Daisy replied:

“Only in the positive. I thank God I’m in Luxembourg and not in the UK. (...) Because my friends and family in the UK say, you would not have had such fast

treatment had you been under the NHS. And I needed fast treatment – so I got it. Thank goodness for Luxembourg” (Daisy)

Having recently received lifesaving cancer treatment in Luxembourg, Daisy reflects on the social and medical system compared to that in the UK. They conclude with a powerful statement, which demonstrates how they have taken comfort in the care of their receiving community at a time when their mover’s community has lost their trust — pointing towards an assimilation strategy occurring (Sam & Berry, 2006).

The assimilation strategy has not always been found to be the most adaptive outcome (Sam & Berry, 2006). The bidimensional perspective suggests that it is possible to cultivate a healthy identification within a second culture without losing identification with the primary one (Berry, 1980; Berry & Hou, 2016). The eventual adaptive outcome is then determined by how one relates to each independently of the other. The most adaptive outcome according to this model is *integration*, followed by *assimilation*, *separation*, and *marginalism* (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Ying (1995) found that Chinese Americans in San Francisco who demonstrated integrative patterns, experienced the least negative affect in relation to the other groups. Similarly, Chinese adolescent integrationists reported higher rates of self-esteem in comparison to groups who were either separationists or marginalists (Eyou et al., 2000). A third study on Vietnamese, Asian and Hispanic adolescents reported a significantly positive correlation between attitudes towards integration and levels of self-esteem (Phinney et al., 1992).

It is believed that the success of the more integrated subjects lends itself to their bicultural competence and easefulness (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). Assimilationists presented with more psychological distress in a study of Asian-Indian immigrants (Krishan & Berry, 1992), while Phinney et al. (1992) found them to have lower levels of self-esteem than other groups. A possible explanation for this phenomenon, proposed by Tajfel (1978), is that merging with a secondary group, while becoming alienated from an aspect of one’s own identity, would decrease self-esteem and ultimately reduce the quality of long-term adjustment. This should be considered when discussing the Brexit-related adaptation of participants in the current study.

The separationists were found to be less well-adjusted than their integrationist counterparts. Krishan and Berry (1992) found evidence of psychosomatic stress amongst Asian-Indian immigrants, while Ying (1995) reported higher rates of life dissatisfaction and negative affect in a Chinese immigrant population. The marginalists were found to have the lowest levels of self-esteem (Eyou et al., 2000; Sam, 2000), to experience the most acculturative stress (Krishnan & Berry, 1992), and to generally be the least well-adjusted group. A possible explanation is that if somebody leaves their group while simultaneously being unsuccessful in joining a new group, they become displaced and culturally maladjusted (Stonequist, 1937).

Such consequences highlight how British citizens living across Europe could potentially find themselves in psychologically compromising circumstances, depending on their concurrent conditions. Acculturation of immigrants involves complex processes of psychological and cultural transformation in individuals and within groups with different cultural roots (Berry, 1980). An acculturation process can be stressful and even troubled, leading to psychological maladjustments among immigrants, including depression, symptom distress, and negative affect (Sam, 2000).

Discussion

While recent psychological research has studied voter preferences in the context of Brexit (Harper & Hogue, 2019; Liberini et al., 2019; Macdougall et al., 2020), the human consequences of the referendum remain largely understudied (Brophy, 2019) — especially in populations of British citizens living within the EU. This research explored the lived experiences of Brexit for British Remain-Minded citizens living in Luxembourg. We found two main themes: “Loss” (subthemes: “Intrinsic implications” and “Extrinsic implications”) and “Integration” (subthemes: “Mover’s community” and “Receiving community”).

The sense of *bereavement* expressed by participants with the theme of “Loss” seems to entail a social, symbolic, and political death. While the loss expressed by participants is not equal to losing a person to death, it can be psychologically comparable; losing a social reality that they previously perceived to be *alive*. Previous research has demonstrated that loss of a lived reality (Collins & O’Reilly, 2018) can cause bereavement and that grief follows naturally when a person is separated from something they identified with or were attached to (Fraley & Shaver, 1999).

Individuals who experience loss as a result of social upheaval are at risk of developing adverse psychological states including stress and depression (Stroebe et al., 1993). Effectively addressing such loss is important to minimise long-term physical and psychological consequences (Parkes, 1996; Stroebe & Schut, 2010), with the “bereaved” unlikely to remain unchanged by their experience (Sam, 2000; Weiss, 1993; Wortman & Boerner, 2007). According to the Meaning Reconstruction Model (Gilles & Niemeyer, 2006), this process takes the form of sense making, benefit finding, and identity change — stages evident across all our participants to varying degrees.

As well as identifying Brexit-related loss within this sample, engagement in acculturation strategy was apparent (Sam & Berry, 2006). Our participants indicated that Brexit left a void for them; contributing to a sense disappointment and being forgotten by their mover’s community. Seemingly, this has reinforced a fractured relationship and social conditions within which an assimilation strategy can be undertaken. The void seems to have encouraged new meaning to be sought in order to make sense of their reality, and to alleviate a sense of loss from bereavement. Finally, new meaning has likely been cultivated by taking refuge in the receiving community. The outcome of these mutually arising and reinforcing conditions may be the origins of a new assimilation process occurring, which might not be conducive to the long-term adjustment of a person.

An acculturation process is stressful, involving complex processes of psychological and cultural transformation within groups and individuals (Sam & Berry, 2006). Furthermore, the unique environment of the receiving community will determine which strategy will eventually lead to the most adaptive outcomes (Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2006), meaning that in the case of British citizens in Europe, there will be at least 27 different outcomes. While some believe that assimilation is easiest when simply adapting to the receiving community (Berry, 1980), others find an integrative strategy works best, in which a person retains a healthy connection to their primary culture while becoming simultaneously aligned with their secondary culture. A possible explanation for this was put forward by Tajfel (1978) who suggested that merging with a new group, at the expense of becoming disjointed from one’s own identity, would decrease self-esteem and quality of long-term adjustment — resulting in a decline in mental health. As such, our study has demonstrated the need for psychologists and

mental health workers to carefully consider the impact of political upheaval on people's mental health — in this case, British citizens living Luxembourg.

Van Deurzen (2018) has established the Emotional Support Service for Europeans (ESSE) at their London-based Existential Academy, where a team of qualified therapists provide up to ten free of charge sessions to those experiencing Brexit-related distress. Through their work, they have observed how the ongoing sense of “limbo” endured by many EU citizens has strained their mental wellbeing (O'Carroll, 2019). The therapeutic value of people connecting with others in similar Brexit-related circumstances has been highlighted. It was also highlighted that those who withdraw and avoid proactively addressing their situation, are at risk of rapidly deteriorating conditions (Van Deurzen, 2018). The findings from the current study highlight the need for similar support services for British citizens who might be experiencing Brexit-related distress in the European Union's 27 remaining countries. Not only would such networks enable specialist mental health care, but they would afford expatriates the opportunity to congregate with similar individuals to both offer support to one another and integrate their British identity into their ongoing assimilation processes. Future research may consider the success of such schemes, should they be introduced.

Strengths and Limitations

Although our sample is modest in number, we draw on the work of Braun and Clarke (2021) and Shenton (2004) to ensure depth of interpretation and the demonstration of rigour. Additionally, we draw on methodological research pertaining to data saturation to justify this decision (Boddy, 2016), whereby we can have reasonable confidence that our study of six remain-minded British citizens living in Luxembourg that have been impacted by Brexit with similar demographics can meet and/or pass the sufficient point of data saturation. Accordingly, we are confident in the credibility of our methods, analysis, and participant responses, the dependability of our documentation, and the wider transferability of the knowledge we have presented within this manuscript. Below, we also cover confirmability through the recognition of our study's shortcomings as well as our position statement in an aim to reduce investigator bias. Our results are discussed considering study-specific limitations. First, although this study represents the initial step in understanding the lived experiences of Britons living in other EU countries during the months following Brexit, it is limited to both British citizens living in Luxembourg and individuals who were Remain-Minded. As British citizens who lived elsewhere as well as those who were Leave-Minded likely had different experiences during Brexit, broader replications would be beneficial to capture this picture more comprehensively. Second, three of our participants indicated that they felt being asked to reflect on their mental health was a challenging and novel experience:

“I'm not really involved (...) I've never actually really been involved in anything to do with the subject of mental health” (Chris)

Normalising discourse — and reducing stigma — around discussing and reflecting on one's mental health is a key clinical concern (Corrigan, 2018; Ekroll & Ronnestad, 2018), and one which would likely add further depth and quality to the data reported here as well as future datasets. Finally, we note that this data has been reported here from a purely thematic analytic approach, which leaves further scope for some of the more

phenomenological elements to be perceived in depth via accompanying analyses such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Though this is beyond the scope of the current manuscript, authors looking to extend this work might consider a dual methodological approach (thematic analysis/IPA) as has been used in health-related research such as Spiers and Riley (2019).

Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of British citizens living in Luxembourg during the early stages of Brexit. Findings show that British citizens feel as though they have been *bereaved* by Brexit; potentially contributing to deterioration in mental health. It has been demonstrated that while grieving over political loss and the new social reality, participants have equally lost faith in the UK in more general social and political matters. This might encourage the process of assimilation with Luxembourg. Whilst providing security in the short term, assimilation may not be an optimal integration strategy if it results in alienation from the mover's community. The current study provides a voice to Remain-minded British citizens living in Luxembourg in the post-Brexit era, but indicates a need for short-term mental health provision (as seen in the UK) alongside further research over the coming months as the full extent of Brexit-related implications emerge.

Positional Statement

The research was conducted in Luxemburg. The lead author (SK) is a British citizen living and working abroad and authors DF and HL were, at the time, SK's University supervisors based in a UK institution. Author CH is also a UK-based lecturer with expertise in political psychological studies. As such, Brexit has been experienced by all members of the research group, and the effect of which has been felt to varying extents. This experience was one of the driving points of SK planning and conducting this research. For purposes of transparency, all members of the research team voted "Remain" in the EU referendum; however, at all stages of the research, the authors have acknowledged their situational position within this research area and do not believe that their methodological decisions or interpretations of results were overtly impacted by this.

Declarations

Informed Consent All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent was obtained from all patients for being included in the study.

Conflict of Interest The authors no competing interest.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not

permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Al' Absi, M. (2007). *Stress and addiction: Biological and psychological mechanisms*. Elsevier Academic Press.
- BACP. (2019, April 11). One third of adults say Brexit has affected their mental health. BACP research finds. BACP. Retrieved from: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-frombacp/2019/11-april-one-third-of-adults-say-brexit-has-affected-their-mental-health-bacp-research-finds/>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Barnett, J., & Campbell, J. (2010). *Climate Change and Small Island States*. Earthscan.
- BBC News. (2016, October 13). *Race and religious hate crimes rose 41 % after EU vote*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-37640982>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Berry, J. W., & Hou, F. (2016). Immigrant acculturation and wellbeing in Canada. *Canadian Psychology/psychologie Canadienne*, 57(4), 254–264.
- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A. M. Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, models and some new findings* (pp. 9–25). Boulder: Westview Press.
- Berry, J. W., & Sabatier, C. (2011). Variations in the assessment of acculturation attitudes: Their relationships with psychological wellbeing. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(5), 658–669.
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Power, S., Young, M., & Bujaki, M. (1989). Acculturation attitudes in plural societies. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 38(2), 185–206.
- Boddy, C. R. (2016). Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research*, 19(4), 426–432.
- Bowlby, J., & Parkes, C. M. (1970). Separation and loss within the family. In E. J. Anthony (Ed.), *The Child in his family* (pp. 197–216). Wiley.
- Bradley, G. (2019, April 12). *We need to talk about the Government's secret hostile environment database*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/?s=hostile+environment>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(2), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846>
- Brophy, J., (2019, December 23). *Brexit and mental health: are you coping?*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/brexit-and-mental-health-are-you-coping>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Bulkeley, H., Paterson, M., & Stripple, J. (Eds.). (2016). *Towards a Cultural Politics of Climate Change: Devices, Desires and Dissent*. Cambridge University Press.
- Collier, A. (1994). *CR: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*. Verso.
- Collins, K. & O'Reilly, K. (2018). *What does freedom of movement mean to British citizens living in the EU-27? Freedom, mobility and the experience of loss*. London: Goldsmiths. [Available to download at <https://brexitbritsabroad.com/brexit-brits-abroad-reports/>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Cooper, C. L., & Dewe, P. (2007). *Stress: A brief history*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Corrigan, P. W. (2018). *The Stigma Effect: Unintended Consequences of Mental Health Campaigns*. Columbia University Press.
- de Souza, D. E. (2014). Culture, context and society—The underexplored potential of critical realism as a philosophical framework for theory and practice. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 17(2), 141–151.
- Department for Exiting the European Union. (2017, March 29). *Correspondence: Prime Minister's letter to Donald Tusk triggering Article 50*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-letter-to-donald-tusk-triggering-article-50/prime-ministers-letter-to-donald-tusk-triggering-article-50>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Drew, G. (2013). 'Why Wouldn't We Cry?' Love and Loss Along a River in Decline. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 6, 25–32.
- Ekroll, V. B., & Ronnestad, M. H. (2018). Pathways towards different long-term outcomes after naturalistic psychotherapy. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 25(2), 292–301.

- Electoral Commission. (2016). *EU referendum results*. Retrieved from <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Eyou, M. L., Adair, V., & Dixon, R. (2000). Cultural identity and psychological adjustment of adolescent Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23(5), 531–543.
- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (1999). Loss and bereavement: Attachment theory and recent controversies concerning “grief work” and the nature of detachment. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 735–759). Guilford.
- Frost, D. M. (2020). Hostile and Harmful: Structural Stigma and Minority Stress Explain Increased Anxiety Among Migrants Living in the United Kingdom After the Brexit Referendum. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 88(1), 75.
- Gaddy, H., Brexit, G., the geography of depression: A reply to Liew, , et al. (2020). *Social Science & Medicine*, 264, 113276.
- Gillies, J., & Niemeyer, R. A. (2006). Loss, Grief, and the Search for Significance: Toward a model of meaning reconstruction in bereavement. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 19, 31–65.
- Griffin, C. (2007). Being dead and being there: Research interviews, sharing hand cream and the preference for analysis of “naturally occurring data”. *Discourse Studies*, 9, 246–269.
- Guma, T., & Jones, R. D. (2018). “Where are we going to go now?” European Union migrants’ experiences of hostility, anxiety, and (non-)belonging during Brexit. *Population, Space and Place*, 25(1), e2198.
- Harper, C. A., & Hogue, T. (2019). The role of intuitive moral foundations in Britain’s vote on EU membership. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 29(2), 90–103.
- Hiam, L., Steele, S., & McKee, M. (2018). Creating a “hostile environment for migrants”: The British government’s use of health service data to restrict immigration is a very bad idea. *Health Economics, Policy, and Law*, 13, 107–117.
- Home Office (2016). Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015/16. Statistical Bulletin 11/16. <http://report-it.org.uk/files/hate-crime-1516-hosb1116.pdf>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Home Office (2017). Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017/18. Statistical Bulletin 20/18. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Hughes, B. M. (2019). *The psychology of Brexit: From psychodrama to behavioural science*. Palgrave.
- Kavetsos, G., Kawachi, I., Kyriopoulos, I., & Vondoros, S. (2021). The effect of the Brexit referendum result on subjective well-being. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A, Statistics in Society*, 184(2), 707–731.
- Kilcrease, W. (2008). Stages of Grief – Time for a new model. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-journey-ahead/200804/stages-grief-time-new-model>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Krishnan, A., & Berry, J. W. (1992). Acculturative stress and acculturation attitudes among Indian immigrants to the United States. *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 4(2), 187–212.
- Kubler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying*. Macmillan.
- LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H., & Gerton, J. (1993). Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114(3), 395–412.
- Lambert, W. E. (1977). The effects of bilingualism on the individual: Cognitive and sociocultural consequences. In P. A. Hornby (Ed.), *Bilingualism: Psychological, social, and educational implications* (pp. 15–27). Academic Press.
- Liberini, F., Oswald, A. J., Proto, E., & Redoano, M. (2019). Was Brexit triggered by the old and unhappy? Or by financial feelings? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 161, 287–302.
- Liew, T., Goodwin, R., & Walasek, L. (2020). Voting patterns, revoking article 50 and antidepressant trends in England following the Brexit referendum. *Social Science & Medicine*, 255, 113025.
- Lulle, A., Moroşanu, L., & King, R. (2018). And then came Brexit: Experiences and future plans of young EU migrants in the London region. *Population, Space and Place*, 24, e2122.
- Macdougall, A. I., Feddes, A. R., & Doosje, B. (2020). “They’ve put nothing in the pot!”: Brexit and the key psychological motivations behind voting “remain” and “leave.” *Political Psychology*, 41(5), 979–995.
- Mann, A., Hosman, C. M. H., Schaalma, H. P., & de Vries, N. K. (2004). Self-esteem in a broad-spectrum approach for mental health promotion. *Health Education Research*, 19(4), 357–372.
- Martynowska, K., Korulczyk, T., & Mamcarz, P. J. (2020). Perceived stress and well-being of Polish migrants in the UK after Brexit vote. *PLoS ONE*, 15(7), e0236168.
- Matti, J., & Zhou, Y. (2017). The political economy of Brexit: Explaining the vote. *Applied Economics Letters*, 24, 1131–1134.
- McHorney, C. A., & Mor, V. (1988). Predictors of bereavement depression and its health services consequences. *Medical Care*, 26(9), 882–893.

- Neimeyer, R. A., & Burke, L. A. (2017). Spiritual distress and depression in bereavement: A meaning-oriented contribution. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 35(1), 38–39.
- O'Carroll, L., (2019, June 2). More EU citizens are seeking help for stress and anxiety over Brexit. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/02/eu-citizens-seeking-help-stress-anxiety-brexite>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- ONS. (2020). *International migration – table of contents*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/tableofcontents>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Park, C. (2010). Making sense of the meaning literature: An integrative review of meaning making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(2), 257–301.
- Park, C. L., Edmondson, E., Fenster, J. R., & Blank, T. O. (2008). Meaning making and psychological adjustment following cancer: The mediating roles of growth, life meaning, and restored just-world beliefs. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 76(5), 863–875.
- Parkes, C. M. (1996). *Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Parkes, C. M., & Prigerson, H. G. (2010). *Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life*, Fourth Edition: Vol. Fourth edition Colin Murray Parkes and Holly G. Prigerson. Routledge
- Phinney, J. S., Chavira, V., & Williamson, L. (1992). Acculturation attitudes and self-esteem among high school and college students. *Youth & Society*, 23(3), 299–312.
- Poxton, L. H. (2013). “Doing the same puzzle over and over again”: A qualitative analysis of feeling stuck in grief. Thesis University of East London School of Psychology.
- Prior, A., Fenger-Grøn, M., Davydow, D. S., Olsen, J., Li, J., Guldin, M.-B., & Vestergaard, M. (2018). Bereavement, multimorbidity and mortality: A population-based study using bereavement as an indicator of mental stress. *Psychological Medicine*, 48(9), 1437–1443.
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist*, 38(1), 149–152.
- Sam, D. L. (2000). Psychological adaptation of adolescents with immigrant back-grounds. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 140(1), 5–25.
- Sam, D., Berry, J. W., (2006) (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology*, Cambridge University Press. pp. 142–160
- Shapiro, J. (2002). (Re)examining the clinical gaze through the prism of literature. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 20(2), 161–170.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63–75.
- Sirois, F. M., & Iyer, A. (2018). “At least David Cameron resigned”: The protective effects of just-world beliefs for counterfactual thinking after Brexit. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 121, 25–30.
- Spiers, J., & Riley, R. (2019). Analysing one dataset with two qualitative methods: The distress of general practitioners, a thematic and interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 16(2), 276–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1543099>
- Stonequist, E. V. (1937). *The marginal man: a study in personality and culture conflict*. Scribner/Simon & Schuster.
- Stroebe, M. S., & Schut, H. (2001). Meaning making in the dual process model of coping with bereavement. In R. A. Neimeyer (Ed.), *Meaning reconstruction and the experience of loss*. American Psychological Association.
- Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2010). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: A decade on. *Omega*, 61(4), 273–289.
- Stroebe, M. S., Stroebe, W., & Hansson, R. O. (1993). *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research and intervention*. Cambridge University Press.
- Szapocznik, J., & Kurtines, W. (1980). Acculturation, biculturalism and adjustment among Cuban Americans. In A. M. Padilla (Ed.), *Psychological dimensions on the acculturation process: Theory, models, and some new findings* (pp. 139–159). Westview Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). Intergroup behavior: II. Group perspectives. In F. C. Herri (Ed.), *Introducing social psychology: An analysis of individual reaction and response* (pp. 423–446). Penguin Books.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- van Deurzen, E., (2018, June 8). *The existential and emotional impact of Brexit*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.bps.org.uk/blogs/european-semester-psychology-2018/existential-and-emotional-impact-brexite>. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- Vandoros, S., Avendano, M., & Kawachi, I. (2019). The EU referendum and mental health in the short term: A natural experiment using antidepressant prescriptions in England. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 73(2), 168–175.

- Weiss, R. S. (1993). Loss and recovery. In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe, & R. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention* (pp. 271–284). Cambridge University Press.
- Wortman, C. B., & Boerner, K. B. (2007). Beyond the Myths of Coping with Loss: Prevailing Assumptions Versus Scientific Evidence. In H. S. Friedman & R. C. Silver (Eds.), *Foundations of health psychology* (pp. 285–324). Oxford University Press.
- Ying, Y. (1995). Cultural orientation and psychological well-being in Chinese Americans. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(6), 893–911.
- YouGov. (2019a). *YouGov/5 news survey results*. YouGov. Retrieved from https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9gs7o11mhl/5News_190118_Brexit_MentalHealth.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2020.
- YouGov. (2019b). *YouGov/5 news survey results*. YouGov. Retrieved from https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9gs7o11mhl/5News_190318_Brexit_MentalHealth.pdf. Accessed 24 April 2020.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.