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The Impact of the Brexit on EU Migrants' Identity Construction

with a Special Reference to the Polish, Italians and Romanians

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Dedication

This work is dedicated with love and affinity to:

My beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration, for having encouraged me and given me strength when I thought of giving up.

To my brothers, sisters (Abdelmounaim, Nedir, Zakaria, Fatima, Amina, and my little sister Saaida) and relatives.

To my friends Fidaa, Hanane, Fatima Houtia and Nadia

To Karim, who has supported me and believed in me throughout these five years.

To my teacher Ali Sidomar

To Hanane Kechida and her family

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Abstract

The UK decision to leave the EU, "Brexit", constituted a unique moment in the history of the EU, especially the free movement of persons. Making such a decision led to significant consequences on EU migrants' identity reconstruction and sense of belonging. This dissertation examines the impact of Brexit on EU migrants' identity and sense of belonging. The increase of xenophobia and discrimination against EU migrants led to the adaptation of different patterns of belonging and different coping strategies of identity reconstruction and self-representation by those migrants, mainly Polish, Romanians, and Italians. Though EU migrants have undergone different patterns of belonging, the Brexit has increased their attachment to a transnational identity where the majority of EU migrants adopted a European identity instead of their national identity or British identity.

Keywords: Brexit, EU, EU migrants, xenophobia, othering, identity, identity construction sense of belonging.

الملخص:

شكل قرار المملكة المتحدة بمغادرة الاتحاد الأوروبي لحظة فريدة في تاريخ الاتحاد الأوروبي، وخاصة فيما يخص حرية تنقل الأشخاص. أدى اتخاذ مثل هذا القرار إلى عواقب وخيمة على إعادة بناء هوية المهاجرين من الاتحاد الأوروبي وشعورهم بالانتماء. و عليه تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة ما هو تأثير خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي على هوية المهاجرين من الاتحاد الأوروبي وشعورهم بالانتماء. أدت زيادة كراهية الأجانب والتمييز ضد المهاجرين من الاتحاد الأوروبي إلى تكييف أنماط مختلفة من الانتماء واستراتيجيات مواجهة مختلفة لإعادة بناء هوياتهم ، وخاصة البولنديين والرومانيين والإيطاليين . على الرغم من أن المهاجرين من الاتحاد الأوروبي مروا بأنماط مختلفة من الانتماء ، إلا أن خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي زاد من ارتباطهم بهوية عابرة للحدود حيث تبنى غالبية المهاجرين من الاتحاد الأوروبي هوية أوروبية بدلاً من هويتهم الوطنية أو هويتهم البريطانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي ، الاتحاد الأوروبي ، مهاجرو الاتحاد الأوروبي ، كره الأجانب ، الآخر ، الهوية ، بناء الهوية، الشعور بالانتماء.

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General Introduction

On June 23, 2016, the UK held a referendum, where voters were asked whether to remain or leave the EU. The referendum outcomes were in favor of leaving the EU. The key factor that motivated the UK's exit from the EU 'Brexit' was the high number of EU migrants who were encouraged by the free movement of persons to move and reside freely in the UK as in any other member state.

In the aftermath of the referendum, the main focus of the political discourse, Brexit researches, and media was on the reasons behind the referendum, the economic and political impact of the referendum on both the UK and the EU, Brexit effects on the world order and economic system, and how the future might look without being a part in the EU. However, the real impact of Brexit was on EU migrants who were not given attention by the government or the media. Even after giving them the attention, British media focused only on the reactions of some groups of them. The underestimation of the real impact of the Brexit on EU citizens' identity, especially EU citizens from eastern countries by the media and the change of the British attitude towards EU citizens after the referendum was the main motivation behind conducting this research.

The impact of Brexit on EU citizens' social identity presents a recent case study for researchers. This dissertation is the first study to be done on this topic at the level of the Department of English at the University of Adrar.

To discuss how Brexit has affected EU citizens' identity and sense of belonging, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter outlines the origin of the free movement of persons in the EU in the first section. The second section of this chapter deals with the origin of the movement of three nationalities: Italian, Romanians, and Polish. I have chosen those three nationalities because they constitute the highest percentage of the EU

population in the UK and to see the difference between the effects of Brexit on citizens from an old EU country, citizens from EU8 country, and citizens from EU2 countries. Then, different motives for EU migrants to live in the UK are discussed in the third section of the first chapter. Finally, the last part of this chapter deals with the British attitude towards EU migrants since their arrival at the UK. Having these sections as subtopics in the first chapter, the chapter serves as an introduction and a background to the real impact of the Brexit referendum on EU migrants in the second chapter.

The second chapter in this research paper deals with the impact of Brexit on EU migrants living in the UK. The first section introduces the reaction of EU migrants to the pivotal event with special reference to the Polish, Italians, and Romanians. Next, it deals with the impact of Brexit on the identity formation process of EU migrants. Yet it starts with the definition of the concepts of xenophobia, othering, and racism, and then it discusses the real impact of Brexit on the EU migrants. The last section explains how xenophobic othering and racism have had a great impact on the identity reconstruction and sense of belonging of the three different nationalities: Polish, Italian, and Romanian, as well as their impact on their children's sense of belonging.

Chapter one:

A Historical Background to the Free Movement of

People in the EU

Migration without borders or what is known as Free Movement of Persons is one of the fundamental principles in the European Union since its establishment. It was established in 1992 by the Treaty of Maastricht. Under this principle, EU citizens and their family members have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States ("Free Movement of Persons"). However, migration within the European continent existed decades before the establishment of this principle. This chapter introduces a historical overview of the free movement of persons in the EU while the second section discusses the flow of migration from three different European counties to the UK. Then it moves to explain the motives of migrants of these three countries to migrate to UK. Finally, the chapter ends with the British attitude and reception of those migrant groups when they first came to the UK.

1.   Movement of People before the Creation of the EEC

Before the creation of the European Union and its predecessors, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), Europe used to be a continent of migrants. The process of European migration started by sending its people outside the continent mainly to America since it was the new world and the Promised Land for many. However, in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century European migrants had two other destinations. Half of the migrants went to colonies in third world countries while others started moving to other European countries (Recchi 2). Migration within Europe was almost as numerous as outside Europe mainly because the industrial revolution that touched several parts of Western Europe and forced people to look for work. In other words, the process of intra-European migration started mainly with workers and labor. For instance more than one million Italian left their home land to other parts of industrial European areas such as Germany and France from 1870s to 1913 (Bade58). In

addition, the mobility of people within Europe was free and without border controls and restrictions.

However, the First World War (1914-1918) affected the free movement of people by making restrictions and controlling the borders of countries. The restrictions of people mobility continued until the Second World War. Then when Europe started to recover from the massive destruction of the Second World War in the 1950s, labor migration was again encouraged to help recovering the economy of European countries. Migration flows in the period after the Second World War was from southern European countries to other countries in the north. Migrants who left to northern Europe were mostly from Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Greece (Recchi3).

3.1. Free Movement of Persons as a Principle Policy in the EU and its Predecessors

Free movement of persons was one of the primary goals of the European Union since its early days. Before it was established in the European Union as a law which provides EU citizens the right to move and live freely within EU territory, it was first established in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 as free movement of workers only and not any worker, but only those who were "qualified in coalmining and steelmaking occupation"(Art 69). However, the right of free movement had been generalized later on in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. The founding treaty of the EEC affirmed the right of EU workers to accept offers of employment made in another member state, to move freely within the EEC, as well as to reside and remain in another member state after they get employed (Art 48).

But still under article 48 in this treaty, migrants are treated as workers and seen as means of production but not citizens because the main goal of the EEC was to strengthen the economy of the member states. The real implementation of the free movement did not take

place at that time because migrants of the EEC were subjected to national laws just like third world immigrants. Workers "had to apply for work and residence permits, which could be denied by discretionary ruling" (Recchi3). The real implementation of the right of free movement of persons was achieved until 1968 by imposing some regulations and articles. (Recchi3)

Regulation 1612/68 adopted by the council of the EEC made some laws that insisted on the equal treatment between workers of other member state and national workers. Article number 7 in this regulation stated a national worker of other member state shall enjoy the same social and tax advantages as national workers. The new law that was provided by the council of the EEC in this regulation was in articles 10 and 11, where free movement was extended to family members of the worker and gave them the right to reside in the country with him/ her.

Later in 1990, the EEC adopted other directives such as Directive 90/364/EEC, 90/365/ EEC and Directive 90/366/EEC ("EUR-Lex - 31990L0364 - EN - EUR-Lex") in order to generalize the free movement and residence in other member state to the retired, students and those with independent means, provided that they have sufficient resources and medical insurance. The change of directives concerning free movement in 1990 meant that the EEC considered the free movement of people as a matter, which is far away beyond economic exchange between member countries.

The implementation of the free movement of persons continued to be extended later on in the Maastricht Treaty, which created the European Union in 1992 and upgraded the free movement of workers and their families into citizenship and considered it as an obligation which member states should put it into practice.

Those rights were to move, reside and live freely in any other member state.

The following figure summarizes the evolution of the free movement of persons from "workers" freedom to freedom of persons.

Figure 1 Historical Development of the Free Movement of Persons 1952-1992

1951
- The treaty establishing the ECSC introduced:
- The right of movement for workers who are qualified in coalmining and steel making.

1957
- Based on the treaty establishing the EEC and article 48:
- The right of worker toreside and remain in another member state after having been employed.

1968
- Regulation1612/68 extended the free movment of workers to:
- Family members of the worker.
- Gave them the right to reside in the country with him/ her.
- The worker has the right to have the same adventages just like other national worker.

1990
- Directives 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 90/366/EEC conferred rights of movments on:
- Self-sufficient persons, retired.
- Persons and students respectively.
- Those directives focused on free movement as right rather than an economic activity or process.

1992
- the Maastricht Treaty which created the european union changed the status of free movment of worekers and their families into citizens with some righits that should be adapted by all memebr states.
- those rights were to move,reside and live freely in any other member state.

Source: HM Government, "Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union – Single Market: Free Movement of Persons" www.gov.uk/review-of-the-balance-of-competences.

2. A General Overview of Italian, Polish, and Romanian Migration to the UK

To understand how EU nationals' identity construction and sense of belonging which can be affected in the context of the Brexit, it is necessary to explore the historical backdrop of the flow of migrants to the UK. However, this paper will focus only on three different groups of EU nationals in the UK. Those three groups are Italian, Romanian, and Polish migrants. Selecting only these three groups is because they constitute the highest percentage of the EU population in the UK and to see the difference between the effects of Brexit on citizens from an old EU country, citizens from EU8 country, and citizens from EU2 countries already mentioned on the introduction. According to the office for national statistics (ONS), the number of migrants from the EU to the UK is around 2.3 million in 2015: Polish are the largest EU nationals in the UK (831,000), Romanians are the second-largest EU migrants population in the UK (220,000) and then Italians with a number of 162,000 migrants in 2015 (ONS 2016).

2.1. Polish Migration History and Presence in the UK

Poland joined the European Union in 2004 with the other A8 countries. Historically, Poland has been a country of emigration. Concerning polish migration to the UK, migration flows from Poland to the UK existed during the period when Poland was under the Soviet control. However, this flow increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the removal of mobility restriction, yet for few sectors such as students and agriculture workers (Burrell).

On the eve of its accession to the EU, Poland changed its political system from socialism to democracy and its economy from planned to a market economy which caused high youth unemployment with a decrease in the wages. The results of this transition in both political and economic systems encouraged polish citizens to migrate to the UK since it was

one of the only three countries that did not put restrictions on the A8 and welcomed the labor market in the period of their accession to the EU. Marek Okólski and John Salt stated in their article *"Polish Emigration to the UK after 2004; Why Did So Many Come?"* that the number of polish registration and population in the UK had been increasing between 2004 and 2011, the total of polish registration was 705,890 and 62.2% of the total EU8 born population in the UK during this period (11). However, the number has increased to 905,000 polish citizen and 25% of the total EU27 born population in the UK in 2018(cited by Stuart-Taylor 35). The following figure shows the stock of the polish population in the UK in 2004-2013:

Figure 2 The stock of the Polish population in the UK in 2004–2013
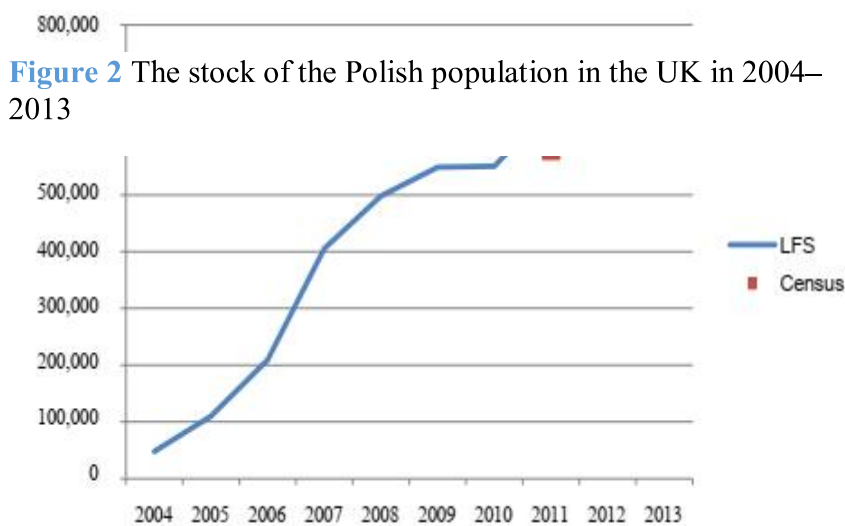
Source: Labour Force Survey (annual) and 2011 census.

Concerning Polish presence in the UK, Polish citizens have a comparatively widespread presence across the UK but they have less presence in London, unlike other EU nationalities. Their low presence in London which is a multicultural city can have an impact on their feeling of national identity and sense of belonging which is going to be dealt with in the next chapter.

2.2. Romanian Migration History and Presence in the UK

Romania, like Poland, before the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 used to be the most closed country in Eastern Europe. The collapse of communist regime encouraged Romanians to migrate to other European countries mainly to the west. However, Romania was not invited to join the EU with the other A8 countries until 2007 with Bulgaria though it was the first country to establish relationships with the European community in 1974(Andrén and Roman 3). In the period before Romania's accession to the EU in 2007, Romanians' migration to other EU countries was limited only for few high skilled workers in the 1990s when Romania was under economic recession because of the transition of the political system to democracy (Stuart-Taylor 39).

Even after its accession to the EU in 2007, Romanians, especially workers were restricted to migrate to the UK for seven years mainly because of the unexpected quantity of migrants from the EU8 countries in 2004 which forced Britain to be more careful about the wave of Romanian as well as Bulgarian migrants towards it (Roman 2). In 2014 when Romanians were able to migrate and be employed in the UK, the number of the Romania community in the UK increased from 9,000 in 2007 to 175,000 in 2014 (Stuart-Taylor 40) and has grown further to 415,000 in 2018 mainly because of the encouraging economic factors that were available in the UK rather than Romania(Stuart-Taylor 40).

2.3.   History of Italian Migration to the UK

Italy is a founding member of the EU. After it used to be an attractive target for emigration in the1980s and 1990s, Italy changed to be a country of migration in the 2000s, especially after the economic recession in 2008 (Lulle *et al.* 3). The Italian recession, like Romanian and polish recessions, pushed many youth and educated Italian to migrate to other

European countries -to the UK mainly- in order to find better jobs and lives. The first wave of Italian migrants to the UK started gradually in the 1990s. The percentage of Italians in the UK was about 17% between 1991and 2001 and it increased to 32% between 2001 and 2011(Lulle *et al.* 3).Concerning the presence of Italians in the UK, they are different from polish migrants. Most Italians see London as an attractive city to live in. British National Statistics showed that Italian National Insurance registration was based in London in 2013(Stuart-Taylor 34).

3. EU Nationals' Motives of Migration

3.3. Economic Motives

The original motives of migration are an important theme to be discussed in this work before tackling the impact of Brexit on EU nationals living in the UK. The desire to find work, get a better wage, and have a better higher education are indeed the common and the pre-eminent reasons behind the motivation for many EU nationals to migrate to the UK. Many EU nationals, especially those from the A8 countries claim that work is their main reason for moving to the UK.

Their willingness to move and work in the UK is due to the economic crises, the high level of unemployment, and the lack of work opportunities in their home country. Examples of countries that have an increased level of unemployment are the A8 countries such as Poland, the A2 such as Romania, and Italy as an example of the old EU countries. EU nationals from the countries exemplified above had chosen to migrate to the UK not only because of the high level of unemployment in their countries but also because the UK was among the only three countries that agreed on a free labor market. Like the case in Poland where there are almost no jobs and the wages are low, "we are doing easy work for small money. But small money here is big money in Poland. If we did the same in Poland - we would have no money," FG2 Polish men (Cook et al. 7).

3.2.   Escaping Discrimination and Persecution: Motives of the Gypsies

Unlike people who are encouraged to move to the UK to find better jobs, others are motivated to migrate to the UK to escape the persecution and the discrimination in their home country or other countries. The Roma/Gypsies[1] community has been persecuted and executed in their countries of origin since their early days in Europe. Even after the fall of the communist regime in 1989, the Roma community went under economic reconstruction, which was followed by a fall in the living standards and high level of unemployment (Cook et al 9). The economic crises resulted in an increase in the persecution of the A8 Roma in Eastern Europe which forced many of them to migrate to the UK. The need to find better jobs and wages is indeed the motive for many Gypseis to migrate to the UK, but their higher desire to escape persecution and discrimination, and find safer environment for their children is their main motive to migrate to the UK. The following passage taken from an interview done with a Roma citizen in the UK is an example of the motive of the Roma community to migrate to the UK:

> Racism against the Roma [in Slovakia] has escalated. I came to England to escape the racism in Slovakia. I was educated but work was out of the question due to racism and discrimination. We are normal human beings, but [in Slovakia] I could not work in a restaurant, people would not take food from me. (Cook et al 9)

3.3.   Other Motives

For migrants, their motives to migrate to the UK were for the aim of learning English, having partners in the UK and being independent. In this context, Italian migrant Elisa in her

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[1] The Roma /Gypsies are defined as an ethnic group of traditionally itinerant people who originated in northern India but live in modern times worldwide, principally in Europe

interview with Aija Lulle, Laura Morosanu and Russell King in their research about the impact of Brexit on EU nationals in Britain and their future plans stated that:

> I came to the UK at the age of 33. It's crazy because you are old, who gives you a job at 33? [And...] to be fair, it happened quite randomly. Meaning, the catering firm I was working for had some connections, it was trying to build some connections here, to open some branches. They asked me if I could move to the UK, because they would shortly open a branch. So, without knowing the language, I said, 'Ok!'. At least I will learn a new language. (…) I came to a country where there is meritocracy. (…) I voted for Brighton and Hove City Council [i.e. in local elections], I pay my council tax and I'm very happy to pay £70 per month, because I get it back in terms of services. Here everything is simpler, less bureaucratic, less twisted... I work, and I am happy. (Lulle et al 8)

4. British Attitude and Reception of EU Nationals in the UK

While the European Union welcomed the Free Movement of Persons and encouraged intra-European migration by generalizing it from workers to ordinary citizens and their families, Britain has a different view regarding the intra-European migration. At first, the UK welcomed the principle of the free movement by making its labour market free for the A8 countries while putting restrictions on other countries. However, the unexpected wave of migrants coming to the UK after 2004 forced the British government as well as the British citizens to change their attitudes towards EU nationals in the UK. This section introduces how the British received the EU nationals when they first came to the UK.

Italian, Romanian and Polish had experienced different reactions to their arrival from the part of the British people when they first came. The British attitude and reception of foreign EU-national depends on their origins, the place they live-in, their reason behind coming to the UK and depending on their plans for staying, whether short- time plans or long- time plans.

Starting with Italian migrants, the majority of the Italian migrants who came to the UK settled in London, which is a multicultural city. While living in London, Italian citizens received a positive attitude and felt welcomed from the part of the British. In addition, they found it easy to establish relations with people there (Stuart-Taylor 45). Virginia Stuart-Taylor reported in her research the feeling of her interviewee Giulia about how was her initial reception when she first came in to London. Giulia states, "I found it easy to integrate into London, and felt instantly at home, maybe even more than in some Italian places, because I was from the south of Italy so [...] in some parts in the north of Italy I feel less welcome than here."(45)

For other groups mostly Romanian and Polish, British reception and attitude towards them was not the same as Italian migrants. The negative reception they first received is due to their origin and their place of living. For Romanian migrants though they live in London, their experience with the British in their first days was not as they expected. Most Romanian migrants were treated negatively because of their nationality and origins. This kind of treatment was not only from the part of the ordinary citizens, but even in institutions (46). This discrimination has a great impact on Romanian's reaction to the Brexit referendum, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Concerning Polish migrants, their existence in other parts of the UK and not in London, especially in rural areas contributes to how the British treated them. Like Romanian, polish migrants had also faced racism and discrimination from the part of the British. Racism against polish is mainly because the British believed in the idea of Britishness that is strongly believed in rural areas in the UK rather than in London.

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Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the history of intra-European migration followed with a historical background of Italian, Romanian, and polish migration to the UK. It also provided those three nationalities motives to migrate to the UK and their reception by the British in their early days. Providing the elements mentioned above in this chapter helps in understanding the impact of the Brexit on them in general, their identity and sense of belonging, and their future plans whether to stay or to leave the UK.

Chapter Two:

# The Impact of the Brexit on EU Migrants in the UK

After settling in the UK, making their plans to stay there, and making it their second home country, EU nationals were surprised by the Brexit referendum that resulted in favor of living in the EU. The result of the referendum changed the way EU migrants see the UK. This chapter begins with EU migrants' reaction to the referendum and then defines some concepts such as xenophobia as introductory sections to the impact of Brexit on them. The other sections in this chapter are set to discuss the real impact of Brexit on EU nationals' identity and sense of belonging.

1. EU Nationals' Reaction to the 2016 Referendum

The United Kingdom referendum for the membership in the European Union took place on 23rd June 2016. The referendum resulted in 51.9% of the votes in favor of leaving the European Union. The result of the referendum was not expected for many EU migrants in the UK. The majority of the EU nationals reported their initial feeling regarding the result of the referendum as being shocked, surprised, and mostly disappointed. Yet their reactions and feelings about the aftermath of the referendum varied from one group to another depending on their nationality and the place they live in.

When EU nationals were asked about their initial reaction to the referendum, they had first expressed their anger about not participating in the referendum, especially when the government made it possible for the Irish and the commonwealth citizens like Indians and Nigerians to vote in the referendum (FOSTER). In Feniks "Report on EU nationals' reaction and long-term consequences of the EU Referendum", 44% of the participants felt that "it was unfair that they were not allowed to take part in the referendum"(11).

Figure 3 EU migrants' opinions about excluding them from the 2016 referendum vote
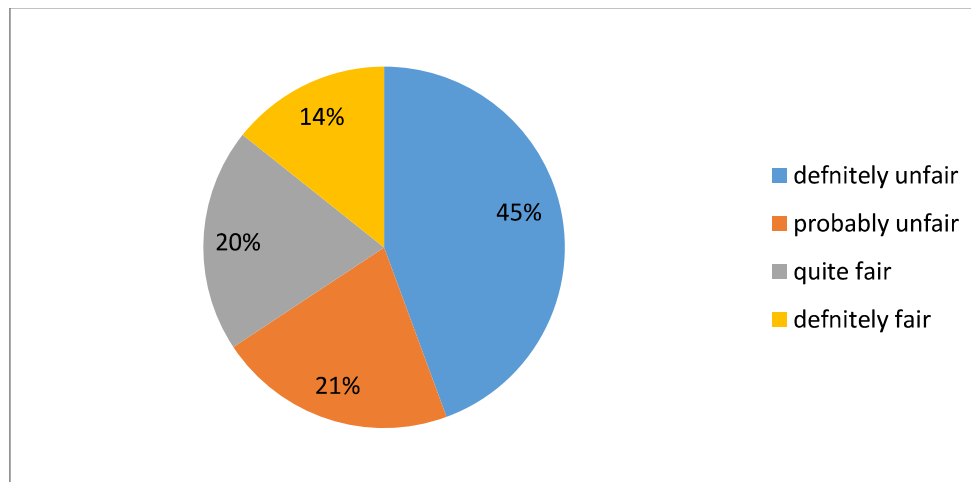
Source: Report on EU nationals' reaction and long-term consequences of the EU Referendum

Many EU migrants did not expect that the British would vote to leave the EU. The result of the referendum shocked migrants of the so-called "old EU" countries more than other Eastern European countries. Italian migrants who consider themselves as one of the old EU countries and the "A-class" migrants (King 2), felt betrayed when they first knew about the outcome of the referendum and they took the referendum result personally more than others did. After they have lived for years in the UK, specifically those who lived in London which they appreciated for its values, "ethos of diversity" (2), and for being a multicultural city and considered themselves as British citizens, Italian migrants felt discrimination for the first time and recognized that they are considered by the British as " migrants"(Stuart-Taylor 48). Giulia, an Italian migrant in the UK, expressed her reaction to the referendum as:

> You feel like you haven't understood anything for 10 years of your life, and you feel betrayed, because you have an image of London as very multicultural, and then from that vote you understand that this is not reality, this is just appearance, so your understanding of society is completely wrong. (Stuart-Taylor 49)

While Italians did not expect the result of the referendum, others had expected the results to leave the EU but they hoped that the British would not vote in favour. In Russell King's research about the reactions and experiences of young EU migrants in London, some participants stated that "saw it coming but hoped that they are wrong and that the British voters would not choose something so harmful for both 'them' – the Brits – and the immigrants"(King 2). Those who expected the result of the referendum were mainly Polish and Romanian. Their reaction and expectation about the result of the referendum was due to their experience of xenophobia and racism they had been facing since they arrived in the UK. Cristina, a Romanian migrant in the UK, said: "My partner was supporting Leave and I was listening to his and his friends' views, so I was 100% confident that the UK would vote to leave" (Stuart-Taylor 48).

2. **Brexit Effects on EU Migrants in the UK**

In the first days after the referendum, the main concern of the British government, the European Union, UK citizens in other EU countries, the British newspaper, and most EU nationals in the UK was how Britain's withdrawal would affect their rights. In this regard, the EU parliament with the British government conducted a 'Withdrawal Agreement' to protect the rights of both EU and UK citizens' rights. This section will focus only on EU citizens' rights that were protected under the Withdrawal Agreement because they are the main concern of this research paper.

The fourth part of this agreement instituted a transition period that lasted until 31 December 2020 (Cîrlig 3) in which EU citizens can benefit from the freedom to move to the UK. Yet most of the rights of EU nationals in the UK were preserved in the second part of the agreement. Part two of this agreement defines and categorizes which rights to be protected in this transition period. Those rights are categorized and varied depending on

the category of people as follows: residence and related rights, coordination of social security, equal treatment, and non-discrimination (6).

Regarding residence and related rights, EU citizens and their family members have the right to reside freely, exit from, or entry to the UK without a visa during the transition period. As far as residency is concerned, EU citizens can acquire a permanent residence if they live for five legal years in the UK. This right will be kept even if an EU citizen changes his status (6). Moving to social security, EU citizens will have the same rights that were provided to them before UK withdrawal. The same as residency rights, social security rights will be kept during the transition period and even after this period but only if EU citizens fulfill the conditions put by the agreement.

Therefore, Brexit would not have effects on EU nationals living in the UK as long as they respect and satisfy the conditions and laws that are set in the Withdrawal Agreement even after the official withdrawal of the UK from the EU. However, those migrants will lose the right to move freely to other EU countries after the end of the transition period.

Indeed, EU citizens are protected politically and economically under the Withdrawal Agreement, but they had been affected by the Brexit when it comes to discrimination though the British government promised to protect them from any kind of discrimination. That is not to say EU citizens did not face discrimination before the referendum, but it has been increasing since the referendum.

2.1. EU Migrants' Experiences of Xenophobic Racism and Othering in the UK Before and After the Referendum

Before discussing xenophobia and racism that EU citizens experienced before or after the referendum, it is necessary to define for the reader each concept in this section.

2.1.1. Definition of Xenophobia, Othering, and Racism

2.2.1.1.   Definition of Xenophobia and Othering

The term xenophobia comes from the Greek words xénos – 'the stranger' and 'the guest', and phóbos – 'fear'. Hence, xenophobia can be defined as 'fear of the stranger' and it is understood as hostility against 'foreigners'(Rzepnikowska 63)

It is defined according to the Oxford English Dictionary as "the deep antipathy to foreigners and foreign things."

While xenophobia is defined as the fear of the stranger, it is nowadays used to describe discrimination against foreigners and immigrants (Cherry). Xenophobia is divided into two types. The first type is xenophobia against culture or Cultural xenophobia. Under this type, the in-group communities do not only see their culture as superior, but they reject any tradition such as: music, language clothing, or other tradition of the out-group that could be another nationality. The second type of xenophobia is immigrant xenophobia which is the main issue discussed in this research. Immigrant xenophobia is when the in-group which is in this case local citizens reject and do not believe in the out-group people who are in this case migrants or immigrants from other countries.

Othering is defined according to the Macmillan Dictionary as treating people from another group as essentially different from and generally inferior to the group you belong to.

It is also seen as a phenomenon in which a person or a certain group is labeled as not fitting in with the norms of a social group (Cherry).

2.2.1.2.   Definition of Racism

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary racism is defined as "a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial difference produces an inherent superiority of a particular race."

Usually, racism is linked to and directed to those with a darker color or with unwanted religions; nonetheless, nowadays specially in the UK it tends to be directed to xenophobia. Racism recently in the UK is directed to eastern European migrants though they have the same skin color and the same religion. In this regard, Anthias and Yuval-Davis suggest that:

> Racist discourse posits an essential biological determination to culture but its referent may be any group that has been 'socially' constructed as having a different 'origin', whether cultural, biological, or historical. It can be 'Jewish', 'black', 'foreign', 'migrant', 'minority'. In other words, any group that has been located in ethnic terms can be subject to 'racism' as a form of exclusion. (cited in Rzepnikowska 63)

Nowadays racism in the UK is seen by Sivanandan as:

> Racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial countries, but at the newer categories of the displaced and dispossessed whites, who are beating at Western Europe's doors … It is racism in substance but Xeno in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism. (63)

3. EU Migrants' Experiences of Xenophobic Racism and Othering in the UK Before and After the Referendum

3.1. Xenophobic Racism and Othering in the UK before the Referendum

Before coming to the UK, Polish, Romanian and Italian migrants imagined Britain as a safe country with well-mannered upper-class people (Rzepnikowska 9). However, they were surprised by the reality of the British people when they first arrived. Italians in the UK have not come across any kind of discrimination before the referendum, but both Polish and Romanian migrants claimed that xenophobia and discrimination after the referendum were not new for them and they have experienced it since the first moment they came to Britain. For Romanians and polish, xenophobia existed in the places they lived in the UK (9). The reason why Polish and Romanians were receiving more abuse than Italians is the place they live in. As mentioned in the first chapter, unlike Italians who settled in London where there is less tolerance towards foreigners, most Romanians and polish settled in areas outside London. Those places are characterized by their xenophobia toward foreigners. One of the witnesses of EU migrants' experience of racism is Renia, a Polish migrant who lives outside London:
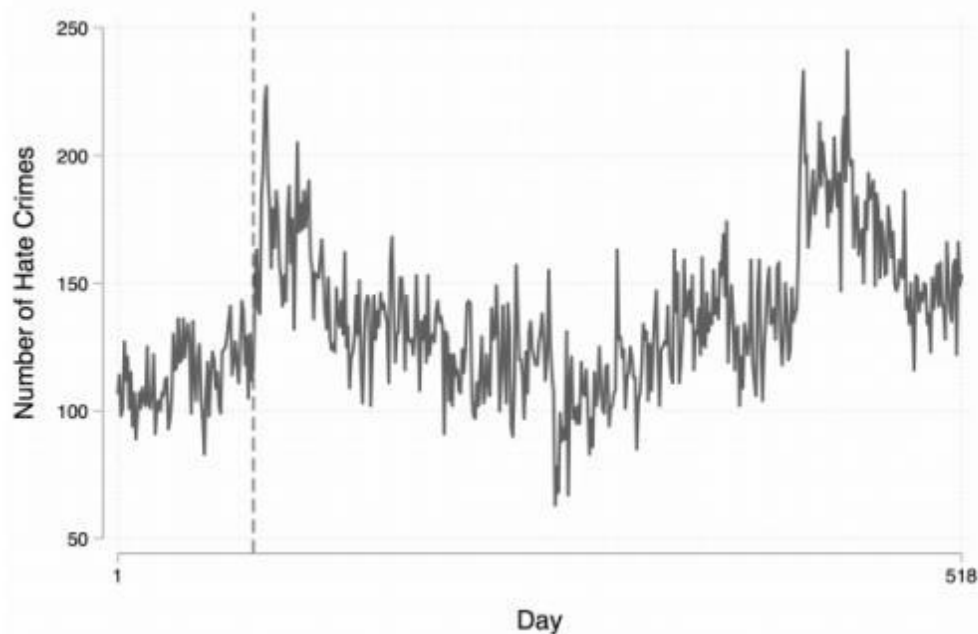
> When we moved in six years ago, the local kids didn't like us. I didn't understand them. They started laughing at us. We had unpleasant situations. When we were leaving the house they would throw stones at us. The parents didn't do anything about it. One day, one kid, a 10-12-year-old boy, from social housing, from large families, I suppose problematic, he jumped on top of the car, turned around, I was in the window,(Rzepnikowska 69)

3.2. Xenophobia and Racism against EU Nationals after the Brexit Referendum

According to national statistics in the UK, the number of discrimination and hate crimes against EU nationals had increased since the day of the referendum (Devine 1). All the three nationalities being studied in this paper stated in different researches and interviews that they came across discrimination from the British. However, it was the first
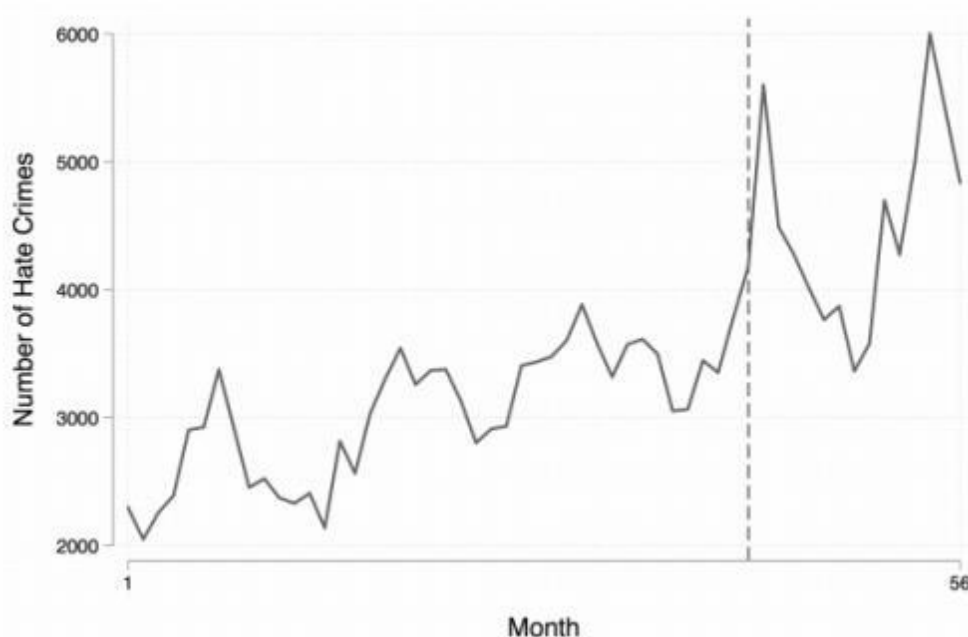
time for Italian migrants to experience harassment which was not something new for Romanians and Polish (Stuart-Taylor 50). The following two figures show the trend of daily and monthly hate crimes after the referendum.

Figure4:   Daily   Hate   Crime   after   the   Referendum

Source: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/19/hate-crime-did-spike-after-the-referendum-even-allowing-for-other-factors/

Figure 5: Monthly Hate Crime in the UK

Source: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/19/hate-crime-did-spike-after-the-referendum-even-allowing-for-other-factors/

The degree of the nationalities' perception of British xenophobia to them varied from one nationality to another. For Italians, they did experience abuse from UK citizens but they felt it was not related to them, mainly to Romanians and Polish in this case (Stuart-Taylor). Virginia Stuart-Taylor's Italian interviewee Sofia was told in her conversation with British citizens that the British xenophobia and racism were not about them, Italians, but about other Europeans, "it's not about you, it's the others that we don't want" or "People like you will be fine, don't worry" (Stuart-Taylor 51).

However, Romanians and Polish who had experienced abuse before the referendum, claimed that they noticed an increase in British xenophobia against them. Martyna, a Polish migrant in the UK, reports that the xenophobia towards them did not stop since the referendum: "Since the referendum, it's got worse, and my family in Wiltshire have heard comments, which people wouldn't have been brave enough to say before the referendum. For example, my brother applied for a job and someone said, "Why are you bothering, you'll have to go back anyway" (50).

To escape and reduce the abuse and discrimination of British people against them, EU migrants had to change their attitudes whenever they come in front of a British citizen. Their attitude to escape and avoid discrimination is going to be discussed in the following section.

4. The Way British Xenophobia Affects the Identity of EU Migrants in the UK

The referendum did not only affect EU nationals politically and economically, but it had a great impact on the increase of xenophobia, racism, and discrimination against them which had also directly affected their identity and sense of belonging. In her

introduction to the volume *Identity and Migration in Europe: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Maria Caterina La Barbera explains that migration had its impact on the process of identity formation and construction, and migrants often undergo a total transformation and reconstruction of their identity when they emigrate to another country because of the absence of their family, culture, and traditional identity markers that exit in their home country:

> Identity refers to the outcome of two main processes: self-representations and social categorization. The combination of these two processes results in the feeling of differentiation from others, the recognition of one's difference, the sense of belonging, and consequent mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which are in turn created, maintained, and reinforced through public policies and the law (La Barbera 9).

Talking about migrants, the result of the negotiation between the two processes, self-representation (individual identity) and social categorization (collective identity), can be affected either positively or negatively depending on the political policies, residency rights and laws, and the social environment the migrant or the group of migrants live-in in the host country. In the case of this research, Brexit and the increase of xenophobic othering and discrimination caused by it are the main effects on the process of migrants' identity construction or re-construction, especially on their self-representation and sense of belonging which are going to be discussed in these coming sections.

4.1. Self- Representation

Self-representation is a key paradigm in the construction of one's identity. In the case of EU Migrants in the UK after the Brexit, they needed to adopt selective strategies in

their self-representation to avoid British discrimination and xenophobia against them. Research studies such as "Rescaling Belonging in "Brexit Britain": Spatial Identities and Practices of Polish Nationals in Scotland After the UK Referendum on European Union Membership" by Kate Botterill and Jonathan Hancock shows that EU migrants living outside London had to adopt greater efforts in selecting strategies in their self-representation because of the nature of the British community outside London which are not the same.

However, the main strategy adopted by EU migrants in self-representing themselves in the aftermath of the referendum is masking their identity because of the abuse they receive from British citizens. Their reason for adopting masking identity as a self-representing strategy is to secure belonging and membership in the "in-group" which is in this case the British community.

4.1.1. Masking Identity

The increase of discrimination and xenophobia against EU nationals after the Brexit referendum forced many of them to hide and mask their identity using several social identity performances or coping strategies to avoid such behavior. Those coping strategies include avoiding talking in their native language in public spaces, adopting a neutral English accent, qualifying them by adding extra information, using English names instead of their original names to look more British.

The first coping strategy adopted by EU nationals living in the UK to mask their identity is to speak in English in public. According to the sociolinguist Peter Trudgill, language is an important tool in knowing one's identity. He asserts that the difference between languages and the inequality of their status can cause rejection of other languages (13), which forces people to abandon their language because they feel ashamed of it (193). Benedict Anderson also insisted in his book *Imagined Communities* that language is more

than knowing one's identity. He explains that a language is an important tool in building national identity: "What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue – is to the patriot" (154).

Therefore, based on Benedict Anderson and Peter Trudgill's theories of the importance of language in constructing both the individual and the national identity, Romanian, Polish and Italian migrants in the UK are in a place where one monocentric language is spoken by the majority of the population. In addition, the increase of discrimination against them forced EU nationals to avoid speaking in their mother language in public.

As mentioned above, EU migrants after the referendum were forced to avoid speaking in their native language and adopt the second coping strategy which is neutralizing their English accent so that they can reduce abuse. It was successful for some of them, especially for students of higher education and people with a high level of English and for those who live in London as a multicultural city. However, others mainly Romanian and Polish strong foreign accent when speaking in English had was the main cause behind their experiences of abuse more than other nationalities as Aleksandra, a Polish migrant stated: "I wasn't feeling that comfortable speaking Polish in public when I was meeting with Polish friends, so we'd speak English. We still have the accent, so it wasn't very successful, but we didn't want to give a trigger to anyone" (Stuart-Taylor 52). Failure in adopting the first two strategies, which are related to linguistic identity, pushed EU nationals to implement the third-social performance which is self-representing.

The other two performance self-representing strategies used by other migrants to mask their identity are enhancing their English language by adding extra information about their educational level, their English origins to qualify their nationality. Polish Zuzanna

and Romanian Cristina are two examples of EU migrants who had started to qualify their English by adding extra information since the referendum. Zuzanna tended to talk about her upbringing in Austria and Cristina always spoke about postgraduate studies in the UK whenever they talk to strangers (52). Zuzanna had moved further to Anglicize her name to Suzie for her work (52).

EU migrants in their self-representation tended to mask their identity, though it is adapted for the specific situation which is the Brexit and to avoid discrimination and abuse, which led them to turn into new or different group identification.

4.2. British Xenophobic Othering Impact on EU Migrants' National Identity and Sense of Belonging

As mentioned in the previous section, EU migrants were forced to mask their identity to escape othering, especially in areas outside London. However, their coping strategies in masking their identities have a great effect on their national identity reconstruction and their sense of belonging. Most EU migrants had been forced to move from their self-representation to self -categorization towards different group identifications.

Talking about group identification, Hogg and Wagoner's uncertainty identity theory proposes that in times of crisis, which is, in this case, Brexit and its outcomes, people are prone to turn to group identification or collective identities to reduce their self-identity uncertainty which is in this case to reduce discrimination against them (Hogg and Wagoner). In other words, when EU migrants failed in the individual level (self-representation) of identity construction, they had to move to the second process which is self-categorization (collective identity) aiming at reconstructing both their identity and sense of belonging again as a response to the referendum.

As far as the sense of belonging is concerned, EU migrants' sense of belonging had been affected. While some of them had an increased attachment of and sense of belonging, others had been affected negatively in terms of their sense of belonging. In this regard, Ronald Ranta and Nevena Nancheva in their article "Unsettled: Brexit and European Union nationals' sense of belonging" state that sense of belonging is sustained as a subjective and contingent choice of the individual to be included in a collective (4). They divided EU migrant's sense of belonging into four patterns (4). Those patterns are the breakaway pattern, cosmopolitan pattern, in-between, and the Patriotic pattern.

4.2.2. The Breakaway Pattern

The first pattern is the breakaway. In this pattern of belonging, EU migrants have a strong detachment from their home country and a strong attachment to acquire the British identity in general and Londoner identity in particular. The reason for their detachment from their community of nationality goes back to the pre-referendum period and their motivation to come to the UK and it had been strengthened after the referendum.

4.2.3. The Cosmopolitan Pattern

The second pattern of belonging is cosmopolitan. People under this pattern adopt an international identity. In the case of EU migrants in the post-referendum period, they tend to adopt the European identity. Most Romanians and Polish undergo this pattern by rejecting their nationality in favor of European identity and when they are asked about their identity they mask their identity by telling British citizens that they are Europeans. Their adaptation of the European identity instead of their original identity is not only because they want to avoid discrimination but also they are in a multicultural nation where European and non-European are living together. Hanjalka is a Romanian example of those who belong to this pattern:

I feel more European since I came here, to be honest. Europe didn't make much sense when we were in Hungary. But here when we have people from Africa, from America, from Europe then you feel, "Okay, I'm European." Meeting non-European people, that's how you feel what it means to be European. (Ranta, Nancheva 7)

4.2.3. In-between Pattern

The third pattern is the in-between pattern. In this pattern, EU migrants have a strong attachment to both their home country and the host country. The link between the two nationalities, communities, or countries is because people who belong to this pattern have relationships with people from the host country. In the case of the EU nationals in the UK, this pattern is to be found with Italians because they did not feel personally targeted by the referendum and the discrimination resulted from it. Their belonging to this pattern is also because they have lived longer than other migrants in the UK.

"My heart is still in Poland but I live in England, and my partner is British [… I]t's funny, because when I came here, I could really feel that English people, they do not like Polish. But I remember when I met my partner, I was like, "You know I'm Polish, right?" And he said, "And I'm English. What are you going to do about it?" It was such a nice exchange," Gosia a Poland migrant in the UK. (Ranta, Nancheva 5)

4.2.3. The Patriotic Pattern

Patriotic is the last pattern in the sense of belonging patterns according to Ranta, Nancheva. People of this group have a strong attachment to their home country. EU migrants of this group would not have immigrated to the UK if they found better work opportunities in their home counties. After the Brexit their strong attachment to their home country increased due to the discrimination and the abuse they experienced, their failed

attempts to have a neutral English accent and British friends, and because they are less likely to get permanent residency and British citizenship. Karolina, a polish migrant in the UK, is an example of the patriotic pattern. She states, "I'm still Polish, completely. I think I've got more Polish here"(Stuart-Taylor 60).

Another patriotic example after the referendum is Riccardo, an Italian migrant in the UK:

> My friend from Naples said: "I don't want to be British, I don't want to have a British Passport, even if I work here, I'm going to be Italian forever." It was kind of poetic, I liked that sentence. His reason was: "We are different, I cannot see myself as a British." I perfectly agree with him. We are not German or English or French, no, we are Italians, full stop, that's it. (Stuart-Taylor 60)

Both Stuart-Taylor as well as Ranta, Nancheva researches show a diverse spread of EU migrants across the four patterns of belonging with the majority of them in the in-between pattern and the cosmopolitan pattern and only few of them in the two other patterns (Stuart-Taylor 55) . What is noticed is that most Italian migrants exhibit an in-between pattern after the referendum because they did not feel personally targeted by Brexit and its xenophobic outcomes. Romanians and Polish are in the cosmopolitan pattern. The different diverse spread of EU migrants across those four patterns is due to the place they live-in in the UK whether in London or outside London and to the abuse each group experiences.

The following table shows the different diverse of EU interviewees in Stuart-Taylor research about the impact of Brexit on EU migrants in the UK:

Table 01: Categorisation of Interviewees into Ranta and Nancheva's Four Patterns of Belonging

	Italian	Polish	Romanian
1. Breakaway: Individuals with strong detachment from their nationality and a clear strategy to become British.	Matteo	Karolina	
2. Cosmopolitan: 'Citizens of the world' who adopt a transnational, European or international identity, over a national or local identity.	Giulia Gabriele	Martyna Aleksandra Agnieszka † Magda * Zuzanna *	Maria † Florin *† Mihaela Cristina
3. In-between: People who maintain links with both host and home communities, often through children or significant relationships and hover between these two.	Francesco *† Giacomo † Sofia † Antonio *†	Agata	Daniel *† Alina †
4. Patriotic: Those with strong and deliberate attachments to their home nationality, prioritising maintaining that identity over assimilating or integrating.	Riccardo		Andrei

* = international upbringing

† = UK citizenship or permanent residence card (all acquired since the referendum, except one: Daniel)

Source: Stuart-Taylor, Virginia Stuart-Taylor, Virginia. *Amidst Uncertainty and Othering, EU Citizens in Search of Belonging: The Impact of Brexit on Migrant Identity and Significant Life-Course Decisions.* Aug. 2019.

5. The Impact of Brexit on EU Children's Identity

The long-term consequences of the Brexit on EU migrants are on their children. Because their plans are linked to their children attachment to one of the two identities: national identity and British identity. This section is set to discuss how Brexit affects EU children in the UK because they have a great effect on their parents' future plans regarding whether to stay or to leave the UK after the Brexit.

EU children as other young EU migrants in the UK adopt different strategies of belonging. According to Elisabetta Zontini and Davide Pero EU children have undergone three patterns of belonging (7). Some of them have a great attachment to their parent's home country, others have a great attachment to the UK, and the last group has an attachment to both identities.

5.1. Navigating the either/or Discourse

Children under this pattern have a great attachment to either the place of origin of their parents or to the UK and they cannot link the two identities. The first group under this pattern has a natural attachment to their parents' original identity and when they are asked if they feel British or European they will adopt their parents' original identity. As Camilla, 13 years old, when she was asked about her nationality and whether she feels British or Italian, she answered:

> You can either go on where you were raised or where you feel attached to and where your parents are from. When people ask me, "ooh are you Italian or are you English?" I say "Italian". Straightaway, obviously even if I was born here and I was raised here I always think I am Italian, full-on Italian. I

don't classify myself as British or anything else, I'd always pick being

Italian over English. (Zontini and Pero 8)

The second group, however, has a strong attachment to the British identity. They prefer to adopt the British identity instead of their parents' original identity because they consider the place they live in is where they belong to. An example of children who belong to this pattern is an Italian 9- years old kid Claudio. Claudio insists on his Italian parents getting a British passport because he wants to feel British and not Italian (Zontini and Pero 1).

5.2. Living Two Parallel Lives

The second pattern of belonging is living two parallel lives where EU children try to belong to both their family and their British friends without mixing the two. Sara, 17 – years- old- is an example of children who belong to this pattern:

I have two worlds that do not mix, they have never mixed and, honestly, it's bad to say but I don't want them to mix. I don't want English people arriving in my Italian world, I don't like that, I really don't like that. My English boyfriend wanted to visit me in Italy and I said no. Not because I didn't want him but because nobody has to touch my Italy. (Zontini and Pero 9)

5.3. Beyond the Either/or Discourse

The last pattern of belonging according to Zontini and Pero is beyond the either/or discourse. In this pattern, children refuse to adopt the two nationalities separately. They are comfortable in expressing their dual identity. However, only a few children adopt " beyond the either/ or discourse". Fabrizio, a ten-year-old child (his father is English and his mother is Italian), feels comfortable while expressing his dual identity in front of others. He states, "I feel half Italian and half English. I like speaking two languages and I like both countries equally. (. . .) I support two football teams, one English, the same as my dad, one Italian, the same as my uncle" (Zontini and Pero 9).

From the view of European parents, they had been devoted to three patterns of belonging when it comes to the inheritance and legacy of their identity to their children. Some of them desired and encouraged their children to adopt their mother tongue because it is the only way to be attached to their identity as Francesco, an Italian migrant in the UK, expresses his view of bequeathing his identity to his kids:

> Because I want my kids to feel Italian, it requires them to speak Italian, in my view of what it is to be an Italian. [...] I have quite strong views about how language is fundamentally your identity and your sense of nationhood extends from language, which is the reason I joke about Belgian culture and Switzerland, because there's no such thing as a Swiss national. (Stuart-Taylor 78)

Others, however, encouraged their children to have a cosmopolitan pattern of belonging and to be de-attached from their original identity claiming that staying European is better than a specific identity (Stuart-Taylor 80).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the Brexit referendum affects EU migrants' identity and sense of belonging. Their feeling towards their national identity varied from one group to another depending on their experiences of discrimination, and their location in the UK. Even the way or the strategy they adopt to self-represent their identity differs from one migrant to another. Yet the majority of them chose to mask their identity which affects later their sense of belonging. This chapter ends with the impact of the Brexit on EU children because the long-term consequences of the Brexit on EU migrants and their future plans regarding whether to stay or to leave the UK depends on their children.

General Conclusion

The UK departure from the EU was a turning point in the history of intra-European migration with great impacts on EU migrants living in the UK. This research paper discussed the impact of the Brexit on EU migrants living in the UK. In order to answer the main question of this research, what impact would the Brexit have on EU migrants' identity construction and sense of belonging, this research paper was divided into two chapters.

The instant impact of the EU of the Brexit on Brexit on EU migrants was the increase of xenophobic othering and discrimination against them. Yet the real impact was on the reconstruction of their identity and sense of belonging. As mentioned in the second chapter, migrants' identity can either be reinforced or weakened depending on the circumstances they are in.

In the case of EU migrants who live in the UK, the impact of xenophobia and discrimination resulted from Brexit on them was different from one group to another depending on their nationality, and their location in the UK. Yet the majority of migrants being tackled in this dissertation, especially Romanian and Polish tend to mask their identity in front of the British by using different coping strategies such as speaking in a neutral English accent, qualifying their language by adding extra information, and Anglicizing their names.

Concerning EU migrants' sense of belonging in the aftermath of Brexit, this dissertation concludes that Brexit has prompted the majority of EU migrants towards a transnational European pattern of belonging to express their feeling of solidarity and affinity as a reaction to the referendum. Only Italians have undergone an in-between pattern where they are attached to both Italian and British identity. EU migrants' children also have undergone three different patterns of belonging.

However, the findings of this research paper about the long-term consequences of Brexit on EU migrants' identity and sense of belonging can differ from one nationality to another and from one generation to another. Even with this generation, their attachment to one of the four patterns of belonging and their decision to leave or to stay in the UK after Brexit can evolve in the future.

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