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**”I DON’T FEEL AS WELCOME HERE
ANYMORE, HOWEVER I HAVE NOT
EXPERIENCED RACISM YET”**

A discursive study on the social psychology of Brexit from a
Finn’s perspective

Faculty of Social Sciences
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TIIVISTELMÄ

Nelli Perttula: "En enää koe olevani tervetullut tänne, mutten kuitenkaan ole kohdannut rasismia vielä" – Diskursiivinen tutkimus Brexitin sosiaalipsykologiasta suomalaisen näkökulmasta
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Kirjoittaessani on helmikuu 2020, vain muutama päivä siitä, kun Britannia historiallisesti poistui Euroopan Unionista. Päätös poistua Euroopan Unionista oli Britanniassa kesällä 2016 järjestetyn kansanäänestyksen tulos. Britannian poistuminen EU:sta on nimeltään Brexit, joka tarkoittaa sitä, että vuoden 2020 loppuun mennessä Britannia ei ole enää Euroopan Unionin jäsen. Brexit on aiheuttanut epävarmuutta ja haastanut erityisesti EU-kansalaisten kuuluvuutta Britanniaan. Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten Britanniassa asuvat suomalaiset konstruoivat kuulumistaan ja kuulumattomuuttaan Britanniaan tammikuussa 2019, vain paria kuukautta ennen kuin Britannian oli alun perin määrä poistua Euroopan Unionista.

Keräsin tutkimuksen aineiston suljetun Facebook-ryhmän kautta E-lomake-kyselyllä, johon vastasi viikon aikana 194 Britanniassa asuvaa tai hiljattain asunutta suomalaista. Koska akateemista tutkimusta suomalaisten Brexit kokemuksista ei ollut, pyrin rakentamaan kyselylomakkeen avoimesti ilman johdattelevia kysymyksiä. Usea vastaaja puhui kuuluvuutensa menetyksestä Brexitin vuoksi, kun taas osa totesi, ettei ollut niinkään omasta asemastaan huolissaan. Tämän vuoksi valitsin aineistomenetelmäksi diskurssianalyysin, joka mahdollistaa ihmisten erilaiset tavat puhua asioista. Diskurssianalyysi on metodin lisäksi myös teoreettinen viitekehys ja se perustuu sosiaalisen konstruktionismin traditioon, jossa ihmiset nähdään kielen avulla rakentamassa sosiaalista todellisuuttaan. Diskurssianalyysi tutkii ihmisten kielen käyttöä tekemisenä, jolla pyritään saavuttamaan asioita. Tutkielman teoreettisena viitekehysnä toimii kieli toiminnallisena, kulttuuriin ja kontekstiin sidonnaisen asiana ja erityisenä taustateorianä toimii diskursiivinen näkökulma kuulumiseen, johon liittyvät vahvasti kategorisoinnin, *toiseuttamisen* ja identiteetin käsitteet.

Tutkimuskysymykseni oli: Minkälaisia kuulumisen ja kuulumattomuuden diskursseja aineiston suomalaiset konstruoivat Brexit Britanniassa. Lisäksi kysyin, minkälaisia funktioita näillä diskursseilla on ja minkälaisia identiteettejä ne rakentavat. Nostin aineistosta neljä diskurssia: *kuulumattomuus*, *aktiivinen ulossulkeminen*, *toiseuttaminen* ja *ansaitsevuus*. Diskurssit konstruoivat joko kuulumista tai kuulumattomuutta ja rakensivat joko vastustavia ja lohduttomia tai hyväksyviä ja joustavia identiteettejä. Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, miten Brexit ilmiönä haastaa aineiston suomalaiset uudelleenmäärittelemään kuulumistaan Britanniaan. Brexit on ilmiö, jossa kuka tahansa voi joutua epävarmuuden tilaan poliittisten, sosiaalisten ja diskursiivisten kamppailujen ristiaallokossa.

Avainsanat: Brexit, Kuuluminen, Kuulumattomuus, Suomalaiset, Diskurssianalyysi, Populismi, *Toiseuttaminen*

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ABSTRACT

Nelli Perttula: "I don't feel welcome here anymore, however I have not experienced racism yet – A discursive study on the social psychology of Brexit from a Finn's perspective

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At the time of writing, it is February 2020, only days after Britain historically left the European Union. The decision to leave the European Union was an outcome of a referendum on EU membership in June 2016. Britain's withdrawal from the EU is called Brexit, which means that by the end of 2020, Britain will no longer be a full member of the European Union. Brexit has caused uncertainty and challenged especially EU nationals belonging to Britain. The objective of this study was to analyse how Finns living in Britain constructed different belonging and non-belonging discourses in January 2019. Just over two months before Britain was supposedly leaving the European Union in the first place.

I gathered the data for this thesis via Facebook through an online Brexit-questionnaire made by myself. During the data gathering, there was no previous academic research of Finnish people's Brexit experiences. Thus I built a half-open, half structured questionnaire. Between January the 8th and 15th 194 Finnish participants had answered my questionnaire. Many talked about a loss of belonging to Britain, and others discussed why they mainly were not that worried. Due to the variety of the answers, I chose discourse analysis as the method, for it permits people even in similar positions to speak differently about a topic. Discourse analysis examines the contextual use of language. The theoretical starting point was language being performative, cultural and bound to a specific time in history. I chose a discursive approach to belonging to discuss how people before had used their language to construct belonging and non-belonging. Also, the concepts of categorisation, *othering*, and identity are essential.

The research question I asked was: what kind of belonging and non-belonging discourses do Finns construct in Brexit Britain. Additionally, I wondered what functions these discourses had and what kind of identities they constituted. The four discourses I found were: *non-belongingness*, *active exclusion*, *othering*, and *deservingness*. These discourses either constructed a loss of belonging or a sense of belonging to Britain. They also constituted either identities of resistance and hopelessness or identities of acceptance and resilience. The study illuminated how Brexit had made the Finnish participants renegotiate their belonging to Britain. Brexit is a phenomenon under which anyone seen as a *stranger* or someone from somewhere else could be constructed as the Other.

Keywords: Brexit, Belonging, Non-belonging, Finns, Discourse analysis, Populism, *Othering*

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1. Introduction

Over three years ago in June 2016, a small majority of British electorates voted to leave the European Union (EU) in a Referendum on EU membership (cf. Goodwin & Heath 2016, 323; Clarke, Goodwin & Whiteley 2017, 439). This process of Britain supposedly leaving the EU by the end of March 2019 was named Brexit, literally referring to Britain exiting the EU. Ever since the vote, the lengthiness and unclearness of Brexit have become causes of worry for many. Above all, millions of non-British EU citizens have been affected by the Brexit uncertainty and their future in Britain. The purpose of this master's thesis is not only to try and understand the process of Brexit but most of all, to give voice to Finnish nationals living in Britain. These Finnish nationals, among other non-British EU nationals, were excluded throughout the Referendum debate by having their right to vote denied (Tyrrell et al. 2019, 2).

Numerous surveys conducted (cf. Lulle, Morosanu & King 2018; Manners 2018; Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019) have acknowledged that the EU Referendum was above all a vote on the attitudes towards immigration, rather than towards the European Union. Many Brits living in other EU member states feel a loss of belonging to their nation due to Brexit (Higgins 2019). Similarity, research findings are suggesting that Brexit is a threat towards the rights of EU migrants and their participation, settlement and belonging to Britain (cf. Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019, 2; Ranta & Nancheva 2019, 4). Even though some studies on EU citizens in Brexit Britain haven't been done (cf. ch.2), the need for more research has been recognised (cf. Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019; Ranta & Nancheva 2019; Tyrrell et al. 2019). This thesis aims to bring some.

While writing this thesis, many people have asked me what it is that Brexit actually means. I find it difficult to answer the question as Brexit can certainly mean many things to different individuals, but above all, because Brexit does not have a clear definition yet. For, no one knows how Britain will leave the EU, under what circumstances, or whether leaving at all. This thesis emphasises that Brexit can be constructed in multiple ways, depending on who you ask, when, where and under what circumstances. I asked Finnish people living in Britain how they felt about Brexit at the beginning of last year (8 – 15.1.2019).

Without previous examples due to the topic being so current, I put up an online questionnaire (appendix 1) in a closed Facebook group for Finns living in Britain with multiple questions broadly

about experiences towards the Referendum result, uncertainties of Brexit and some background questions. Using a data-oriented analysis, I found these Finnish respondents very often stating that they were not welcome in Britain anymore immediately after the result of the Referendum in 2016. However, not everyone was feeling unwelcome but quite the contrary. Therefore, I chose discourse analysis as the method of analysis, for it allows various ways of speaking about a topic, also recognising the temporal uniqueness of the different ways people speak in. Discourse analysis argues that language does not only describe but is also a process of *doing* something (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 6). Discourse analysis is based on the tradition of social constructionism which argues that the world is socially constructed through language and could also be constructed in different ways, allowing for different world views to take place (cf. Gergen 2009; Burr 2015; Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 2016). I built a research question to complement the data and method of analysis such as follows: *What kind of belonging and non-belonging discourses do Finns construct in Brexit Britain?* The focus is on how these Finns talk about their belonging in Brexit Britain and what are the functions of their discourses.

The method of this thesis is a qualitative one, and I will begin Chapter two by going more into detail in the process of Brexit, including reasons behind the Referendum result and on the Referendum itself. Secondly, in Chapter three, I will present the background theory of this thesis which is a discursive perspective on how through language people construct belonging. The concepts of *identity*, *othering* and *categorisation* are essential. Next, in Chapter five and six, I will discuss the study design and chosen method of analysis in more detail. In what follows, I will present the empirical findings in Chapter seven. In Chapter eight, I will discuss an overview of the findings. Lastly, in Chapter nine, I will conclude with a discussion on the researcher's position in more detail, including ethical considerations with limitations and suggestions for further research.

2. Brexit

There is no clear definition for Brexit (yet). Thus I approach it through a discursive view, highlighting the multiple different ways it could be spoken about. Combining previous rather new research on Brexit, I come up with a brief definition of the different phases Brexit has gone through. After this, I will present a brief overview of the meaning of the European Union (EU) and Britain's more or less unique role in it since 1973. I will present research on both the voting patterns in the 2016 Referendum as well as possible reasons behind the voting result, in the upcoming section. The Chapter will continue by claiming that it is the rise of right-wing populism not just in Britain, but

other Western countries also (cf. Wodak 2015; Virdee & McGeever 2018), that has caused Brexit ever to become a reality. Lastly, I will conclude the Chapter with some studies conducted on EU nationals and Brexit.

It was Britain's Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, who put up the Referendum in June 2016 regarding Britain's position in the European Union. The motive behind the Referendum was to bargain a better deal for Britain in the EU. In result of the Referendum, a small majority (51,9% to 48, 1) of British electorates historically voted in favour of Britain leaving the European Union by the end of March 2019. (cf. Hobolt 2016; Goodwin & Heath 2016, 323; Clarke et al. 2017, 439.) Ever since the vote, the politicians and decision-makers of Britain have worked hard in terms of figuring out what kind of a relationship Britain will have with the EU in the future. From the very start, there were roughly three ways of delivering Brexit: either through a *no-deal*¹ scenario, a deal² or cancelling Brexit (which could happen through another referendum, a general election or shift in British politics). In short, it has been difficult for the British parliament to accept a deal that is worse than the current relationship between Britain and the EU. Nevertheless, for the unity of the EU, it is crucial not to give a withdrawing state a better deal than they already have as a member. (De Vries 2018, 11.) Thus, any outcome seems to be worse off for someone, adding to this that Britain is living under very divided times. Some even argue that never in history has Britain been this divided (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 331).

Cameron himself was in favour of staying in the EU and had even campaigned to Remain (Koller, Kopf & Miglbauer 2019, 5). Hence, after the Referendum result was clear, Cameron was forced to resign and give way to Britain's next Prime Minister: Theresa May. May fought to deliver Brexit for over two years and did come up with a 585-page-deal that the remaining 27 member states of the EU agreed on. However, the British Parliament voted this deal down three times. In result, Britain did not withdraw from the EU according to the plan by the end of March 2019. Due to the British Parliament not willing to leave without a deal, hold another Referendum, nor accept May's deal either, she had to ask for an extension of article 50³ from the remaining EU member states. After lengthy negotiations, Britain was admitted a new leave date by the end of October 2019. (cf. BBC News 2019; Euronews 2019a.) May did not succeed in her task and was also forced to resign, giving way to Britain's next Prime Minister: Boris Johnson since 23rd of July 2019. Johnson's most important mission would be to deliver Brexit.

Nevertheless, Britain did not withdraw from the EU during the end of October either. Johnson had to also ask for an extension of article 50 from the other EU member states. This time a new leave date was set to the end of January 2020 and a general election date was decided for the 12th of December 2019. As a result of the election, Johnson's Conservative party won by a majority which would mean that very likely Britain will leave the European Union by the end of 2020. (Euronews 2019b.) The British parliament and the EU have accepted Johnsons' withdrawal deal which includes a transition period until the end of the year 2020. During which the relations between Britain and the EU will remain the same. The agenda of this transition period is to negotiate the future terms and relations between Britain and the other EU member states.

I argue that Britain's last year's general election result in a way was a sign of people being fed up with Brexit and wanted it over and done with, whether or not agreeing with Britain withdrawing from the EU. The Conservative party was the only party (among the Brexit party) who still since summer 2016 was very much in favour of Britain withdrawing from the European Union.

2.1 Britain in the European Union

To understand what it means for a member state to withdraw from the European Union, it is important to understand what the European Union means. Broadly speaking the European Union is something between a nation-state and an international organisation consisting of (still) 28 liberal-democratic member states sharing common values (Cini & Perez-Solorzano Borrigan 2016, 3). Some (Bomberg, Peterson & Corbett 2012, 224) argue that the EU is exceptional, challenging and unique in many ways, for it allows member states to hold most of their sovereignty. In addition, national governments are permitted to maintain their power (Pinder & Usherwood 2013, 6).

The EU is built on four freedoms of movement: goods, services, capital and persons; known as EU citizen's rights (McCown 2006, 178). In result, EU member states have given up their right to decide who is entitled to cross their borders, which is one of the fundamental rights of nations. For people, the free movement means that EU citizens can move within the Union from one country to another to live and work under the same conditions as locals. Thus, intra-EU migration can be understood as different and more privileged than traditional movement coming from outside Europe, for EU migrants are entitled to equal treatment. In result, EU migrants should basically not experience discrimination. (Koikkalainen 2013, 86, 88.)

The European Economic Community (EEC⁴) that later became the EU was established in 1958 by six states: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy (cf. Bomberg et al. 2012, 76 – 77; Pinder & Usherwood 2013, 1 – 2). The idea of a more united and integrated Europe stemmed from the traumatic experiences Europe had gone through during the two brutal World Wars. Albeit peace was at the heart of a more united Europe, soon also a large common market became important. (Cini & Perez-Solorzano Borragan 2016, 1 – 2, 65.) Before Britain joined the EEC, her membership application was vetoed twice by France, the first time in 1963, followed by a rejection in 1967 (Miglbauer & Koller 2019, 87). Finally, in 1973, Britain was accepted as part of the EEC after the resignation of French President de Gaulle in 1969 (Pinder & Usherwood 2013, 19). Britain's relationship with the European Union has been referred to as uneasy and complicated ever since joining the EEC with multiple opt-outs and renegotiations (Miglbauer & Koller 2019, 87; Koller et al. 2019, 2).

The World Wars never defeated Britain as it did the founding states of the Community. Like most other EU member states, Britain differed in a way, that she never joined the Schengen, which is the ultimate removal of borders (Pinder & Usherwood 2013, 105, 107). Moreover, Britain is not part of the common currency EURO. Thus from the start deciding to have a more significant say in her immigration and monetary policy than most other members of the EU. I argue that in a way Britain was in a position that she did not *have to* fully participate like the founders and most members since did, not been defeated by the World Wars but also due to possessing one of Europe's biggest economies and populations.

It must also be recognised that Britain has played a significant and important role in Europe and can be understood as one of the main shapers of it (Gibbins 2014, 4) throughout history. Nevertheless, Britain's first referendum as member of the EEC was held on the fifth of June in 1975 when Britain had been a member for less than two years. It was also the first nationwide referendum held in British history. At the time, 67% wanted to remain as part of the European Economic Community, during a time when Britain was struggling with recession and high unemployment. (Butler & Kitzinger 1976, 1.)

In conclusion, if a country leaves the EU without any kind of a deal, it loses its four freedoms of movement. As mentioned earlier, especially non-British EU citizens in Britain, as well as British citizens on the Continent, are experiencing uncertainty over their current positions and their lives (Gietel-Basten 2016, 673). These people have been challenged to consider whether they have a right to stay in the host country or not if losing the four freedoms. Thus, Brexit must be understood as a phenomenon that has created uncertainty among British people and other EU nationals. Millions of non-British EU citizens live in Britain and vice versa over a million British citizens live in other member states enjoying the freedom of movement empowered by the European Union. Next, I will present research on the 2016 Referendum.

2.2 The Referendum

A referendum is a direct popular vote with a simple yes/no answer option, and it can be either binding or advisory. In January 2013 David Cameron promised in his *Bloomberg speech* (Bloomberg speech, 2013) the people of Britain a referendum on EU membership if the Conservative party would be re-elected (Koller et al. 2019, 5). The 2016 Referendum was an advisory vote asking whether Britain should remain as a member of the European Union or not. The Referendum result was a surprise for polls had forecasted most British electorates to vote to stay in the European Union. (cf. Virdee & McGeever 2018, 1803; Koller et al. 2019, 2.) Not even three years later is there a clarification what voting no meant. Moreover, referendums, in general, have been widely criticised as inaccurate ways of dealing with politics (cf. Wiberg 2011, 53).

Broadly speaking Wales and England voted Leave, whereas Scotland, London and Northern Ireland were more in favour of Remaining (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 323). Nevertheless, not all areas in Wales or England (besides London) voted to leave, or all areas in Scotland or Northern Ireland voted to remain. There were differences in voting patterns among different towns and cities. The turnout of the 2016 Referendum was as high as 72%, which meant that over 33 million British citizens took part in the democratic decision-making process. (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 325.) There was a clear division in voting patterns among age groups, for 62% of 24-34-year-olds voted Remain as in 60% of aged 65 and over voted Leave (Virdee & McGeever 2018, 1803).

Age can be seen to have played a role in the Referendum outcome, but so can education. For, typically, areas less educated than average, were more in favour of voting Leave than Remain (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 325). These results are not per se surprising as younger, educated and

higher earners are typically more in favour of the European Union, because of their higher value towards the freedom of movement provided by the EU (Ashcroft & Bevir 2016, 356). These people value the freedom of movement because they have the resources to use it. Education may, i.e. help with language skills and financial independence may ease affording to move into another country.

Above all, however; it has been recognised that economically less off than average areas would vote to leave with the *left-behind working-class* (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 325). Since the Brexit vote, academics have acknowledged Britain to be a divided nation with winners and losers of globalisation. Or in everyday language; it has been suggested that the Brexit result stemmed from economic inequalities in Britain. Those who have seemed to benefit the least out of globalisation or deeper European integration tended to vote Leave rather than Remain. (De Vries 2018, 17.)

Under the Conservative rule, income inequality in Britain has become one of the highest in the whole of Europe and especially the ideology of austerity introduced by the Conservatives in 2010 has affected this. The June 2016 Referendum meant that Britain had experienced austerity for six years. In result, many British electorates felt impoverished and vulnerable towards the extreme slogans of simple solutions such as making Great Britain great again. (Manners 2018, 1225 – 1226.) Working-class economic and social needs were seen not to have been met by the government (Gough 2017, 367). These *left-behind* social groups filled with insecurity, pessimism and marginalisation, felt as though the elites either in Brussels or Westminster were not sharing their values or representing their interests (Goodwin & Heath 2016, 331). Thus, they voted against Brussels where the EU headquarter is located and against Westminster where the British political headquarter is.

However, Euroscepticism is not only found among those who have suffered due to globalisation but also among those who are well off. Suggesting that these people are in such a position that they can afford to believe they will do even better on their own. (De Vries 2018, 6.) Britain was suffering due to recession 40 years ago during the first referendum on EU membership, which in a way may suggest why so many at the time believed Britain needed the Union. De Vries (2018) gives an example of Bournemouth, which is economically doing well and where unemployment is very low. Yet still, a majority voted to leave the European Union. Suggesting that intra-EU migration annoys some and Eurosceptic are primarily those who see their own national identity as superior over other nationalities, versus those transnationally mobile people who have, i.e. lived in other EU member states. (De Vries 2018, 15, 18 – 19.)

Public polls in Britain during the end of 2015 showed that people's opinion on the most pressing issue Britain was facing was immigration which was simply by the majority seen as too high. Especially after the Eastern European Union enlargement in 2004, when ten new member states joined the EU, Britain had faced an increasing amount of immigration from Eastern and Central member states. Also, the 2015 refugee crisis which the EU was facing shored public anxiety over migration. (Clarke et al. 2017, 11 – 12.) Suggesting that many people were in a way turning to their own national identity and wanted to empower that detriment to immigration. However, rather surprising is according to the quantitative study by Goodwin & Heath (2016, 328 – 329), that areas where there was the fewest recent EU migration, were the most likely to vote to leave the EU. Albeit regions with a rather high amount of EU migration tended to vote Remain, areas that had experienced a sudden increase in EU migration specifically over the last ten years voted Leave. The results suggest that especially sudden changes in population create concern about immigration. (ibid.)

Therefore, membership of the European Union can, raise the question of sovereignty and for some be a national question. After all, we mustn't forget that Britain was a leading empire still 150 years ago and especially some older Britons still maintain an imperial consciousness. (Condor & Fenton 2012, 386 – 387.) Additionally, Englishness has been found to be an essential motivator to vote Leave instead of Remain, people who stated themselves as English over British (Virdee & McGeever 2018, 1809). On the contrary, those who reported themselves as being Welsh tended to vote Remain more often than those who had a Welsh and British identity (Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019, 3). This is an exciting finding suggesting that Welsh nationalities did not necessarily vote Leave more often than Remain, even though as an area Wales was in favour of Leaving.

Next, I aim to show how Brexit was brought forth with the use of right-wing populist rhetoric.

2.3 Right-wing Populism

I argue among many scholars (cf. Koller et al. 2019) that the Referendum result was above all a result of the rise of right-wing populism in Britain. Populism, as a political approach is not a new phenomenon (Wodak et al. 2013). It is highlighted especially as a modern phenomenon which can be found widely around the world but most prevalently in the European and American democracies (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 21). Populism has different definitions and approaches as it may have various forms during different times and places (cf. Canovan 1981, 7; Taggart 2000, 5).

Populism can come from either side of politics left or right. Still, especially right-wing populism uses anti-immigration, xenophobia and anti-EU rhetoric. Broadly speaking the definition is also between some form of socialism combined with the left-wing populists and some sort of nationalism combined with the right-wing populists. In Europe, populism was a force that arose against, i.e. the frustrations over European integration and immigration in the form of populist radical right parties. (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 17 – 18, 21, 34.) Additionally, populism arose as a reaction against the dominance of particular parties of government (Taggart 2000, 73).

Right-wing populist parties have been on the rise in many European Union countries and can be found all around Western democracies (cf. Gidron & Hall 2017, 57; Virdee & McGeever 2018, 1802; Koller et al. 2019, 3). Hence, in Europe, populism is mostly right-wing (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 37). Thus, I also talk about right-wing populism among Brexit. Even though there are different forms of right-wing populist parties (Wodak 2015, 2) to distinguish their differences is not essential for this study. Hence, I will only broadly speak about right-wing populism.

Among all definitions, the main idea in populism is the division of society between the homogenous good *the people* and the *corrupt evil elite*. Populism is an ideology that demands politics to express and speak the language of *ordinary people*. Especially the political establishment and most people who hold leading positions within, i.e. politics are seen to be part of *the corrupt elite*. Thus, in a way, populism could be understood as a democratising force, for it aims to represent those who have been unheard in society by the political establishment. However, a fundamental issue in populism is that it treats equally only those who are seen to be part of *the people*. Those who are seen to not belong to *the people* are treated differently. Thus, anyone who is seen as allegedly not being part of the homogenous people can be mistreated. (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 6 – 7, 11 – 12, 18.) Populists argue that no one else can represent *the people* besides them. Therefore, anyone who does not support populist parties may be excluded from the morally pure *people*. (Wiberg 2011, 12; Muller 2016, 3.)

2016 is recognised by many as a year of increasing uncertainty due to the rise of populism in the West. The two primary examples of the growth of populism are precisely Britain's Referendum result to leave the European Union, and in a consecutive election, Donald Trump winning the presidential elections of America. (Croucher 2004, 1 – 2.) Moreover, if any other EU member state was to give out a Referendum on EU membership in 2016, a similar outcome could have possibly happened. Nevertheless, anti-EU rhetoric is not a new phenomenon in Britain. The United Kingdom

Independence Party (UKIP), ever since it was founded in 1993, has campaigned for Britain to leave the EU (Koller et al. 2019, 7). The anti-immigration discourse used especially between 2013 and 2016 stirs up a sense of public uncertainty and growing anxiety over xenophobic attitudes setting up the agenda for the day of the Referendum (Cap 2019, 69). The core action plan of the UKIP was to promote less or no EU membership in addition to more freedom and less or no immigration in addition to less unemployment and more Britishness (Wodak 2015, 35).

In the 2016 Referendum there were two primary campaigns Leave and Remain, the former campaigning in favour and the latter campaigning against Brexit (Manners 2018, 1215). The Leave campaign used right-wing populist rhetoric and put immigration under the red light and slogans such as *take back control*, stood out from the public debate (Koller et al. 2019, 7). Right-wing populist rhetoric is exclusive towards strangers such as minorities and migrants, who are not seen as part of the *people*, with the overall motto: “we have to defend ourselves against them” (Wodak 2015, 20 – 21). Immigrants were blamed for reasons such as the lack of jobs and poor wages. Politicians know there are pros and cons to immigration; however, populists tend to highlight the cons with immigrants’ contributions being absent. (Gietel-Basten 2016, 673 – 674, 678; Gough 2017, 367.) Manners (2018, 1215) argues that the campaigning behind the Referendum was between Remain reasoning why being a member of the EU is useful versus Leave being emotive, influencing people’s emotions (ibid).

Hostility towards migrants in Europe is on the increase, and they are being positioned in discourse as the new Other. The mainstream political discourse, such as media and political parties, are normalising *othering* on all levels of discussion. (Delanty, Wodak & Jones, 2011, 1.) The populist rhetoric of the Leave campaign in Britain was above all about nationality and borders to protect one’s nation from other nationalities. The 2015 refugee crisis was presented personally as Britain under attack. Adding to the anti-immigration rhetoric, a government that was committed to austerity, meant, that population growth was understood as the leading cause of a continued need for austerity. (Gietel-Basten 2016, 678.) In conclusion, right-wing populism arises as a solution to the failure of current parties in power to sort out acute social problems (Wodak 2015, 21).

Moreover, right-wing populism is not only a special form of rhetoric but also about specific content. The aim is to construct fear towards real or imagined dangerous scapegoats who are then blamed

for threatening and damaging societies. Right-wing populist rhetoric uses such as historical narratives and specific moral positions to legitimise *othering*. (Wodak 2015, 1, 6.) Therefore, anybody whether being the governing parties, foreigners etc. can potentially be constructed as the dangerous Other. However, the boundaries built in between *us* and the *other*, have been socially constructed over time; thus, they are doomed to change. (Wodak 2015, 4; Strani & Szczepaniak - Kozak 2018, 166.)

As stated above, there were different reasons why a phenomenon like Brexit became a *reality* in the first place. However, it has been evident that right-wing populism has been on the rise and was a key player among the Leave campaign campaigning to leave the European Union (cf. Koller et. al 2019). Arguably austerity had made people feel worse off. Still, it was the right-wing populist rhetoric that constructed foreigners and migrants as the undesirable Other who were to blame for the problems of Britain. It was immigration that was a central issue in the EU Referendum (cf. Lulle et al. 2018; Manners 2018; Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019) but next I will specify that especially EU nationals were put under the red light.

2.4 EU Nationals and Brexit

Specifically, EU migration was a central issue in the EU Referendum. The Leave campaign used anti-immigration discourse to blame the freedom of movement within EU member states causing *uncontrolled mass immigration* and problems in Britain. (Rzepnikowska 2019, 67.) In result, EU migrants became constructed as scapegoats, blamed for unemployment and overall dissatisfaction, threatening the British culture (Wodak 2011, 64). In a way, it was European migrants who were becoming the new Other (Rzepnikowska 2019, 70). Thus, I argue that especially European Union migrants were challenged to renegotiate their belonging to Britain after the Referendum result. Particularly the political discourses in the British media have paid little attention to the Referendum's impact on EU migrants and their belonging to Britain after Brexit (cf. Ryan 2018, 234; Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019, 2).

Although the outcome of Brexit could significantly impact the lives of non-British EU citizens in Britain, they were not allowed to vote (except the Irish) and through that have any influence on the Referendum result (Lulle et al. 2018, 3). Local and sometimes even national elections allow for EU nationals with settled status to vote, however; the Brexit Referendum was strictly for people with British (or Irish) citizenship (Tyrrell et al. 2019, 2). Tyrrell et al. (2019, 2) refer to the migration report

published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2017, that EU nationals in Britain do not often have British citizenship by their own choice or because it is a costly and complicated process. In addition to apply for citizenship, one has had to have lived in Britain for at least five years.

Hence arguably, the Referendum was constructed as a British-only matter, a matter of British national identity, in which the EU nationals “found themselves powerless spectators in the vote which decided their future – as EU nationals living in a soon to be a non-EU country” (Tyrrell et al. 2019, 2). I claim that it is the exclusion of EU migrants from voting in the EU Referendum that in the first place begun a process of *othering*. The *othering* legitimised active exclusion towards EU migrants. In result, just four days after the Referendum, hate crime against foreigners in Britain had risen 57% compared to the same time a year before. Surprisingly, post-referendum racism was aimed at anyone foreign or seen as the Other. (Komaromi 2016, 5.) Virdee & McGeever (2018, 1808) found striking about the increase in racist violence, that it was indicated at anyone seemingly an outsider whether being a black, brown or a white European migrant. The toxicity of the outcome of the Referendum deepened the recent trend, suggesting that both political and everyday life discourse had normalised the use of racism, especially towards racialised minorities. (Virdee & McGeever 2018, 1811.)

A recent study by Tyrrell et al. (2019) examined Eastern European 1.5 migrant generation experiences of Brexit with a specific interest in the sense of belonging to Brexit Britain and young people’s future plans. The results showed that for participants what it meant to belong to Britain was under deconstruction due to Brexit. They found a typical in-betweenness among the participants, which lead to various feelings of belonging and non-belonging through different national identities. Many wanted to remain in Britain, and many also felt the need to plan a future somewhere else. The study illuminated how Brexit uncertainty has challenged Central and Eastern European young people’s right to belong to Britain. (Tyrrell et al. 2019, 1 – 5, 8 – 9.) Rzepnikowska (2019) examined Polish migrant women’s pre- and post-Referendum experiences of racism and xenophobia. The study found that the participants’ privilege of whiteness disappeared as soon as they started talking, for their accent made them as the Other. (Rzepnikowska 2019, 72 – 74.) These findings are suggesting that having an accent from somewhere else is enough to be *othered* as different from the mainstream.

In their study, Guma & Dafydd Jones (2019) examined interviews conducted on EU nationals living in Wales during and after the Referendum. The results highlight that Brexit had an impact on EU migrants' sense of belonging and identity. The findings revealed that not just Eastern European participants had experienced hostility or violence but, i.e. also Portuguese nationals. In addition to personal hostility, through media coverage, participants knew hostility towards migrants had increased due to the Referendum. An important finding was also specific vulnerable groups such as unemployed or disabled people who had built their lives to Britain, for whom onward migration was not possible. For these people returning to their origin country or some other country is simply not an option. (Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019, 4 – 5, 8.)

Zontini & Pero (2019) examined especially Italian national children and parents living in Britain. Majority of the respondents were EU nationals, and a minority were also British due to having a British parent. The findings suggest that multiple belonging had become harder due to Brexit for the respondents. Even the respondents with dual citizenship were experiencing rupture to their belonging. (Zontini & Pero 2019, 8 – 12.) Ranta & Nancheva (2019) also examined EU migrant pre- and post-Referendum experiences. Their findings were similar to the previous studies; Brexit had disrupted EU nationals' belonging to Britain. From their data, respondents had begun constructing shared collective European identities. Likewise, with Tyrrell et al. (2019), they found an in-betweenness the participants used to both identify with origin and host community. (Ranta & Nancheva 2019, 4 – 5, 8.)

Belonging within EU migrants has not been the priority of academics until recently. Perhaps there has not been a need to because as outlined above, EU migration is different from traditional migration from third countries. (Ranta & Nancheva 2019, 2.) I had not asked about belonging in my Brexit-questionnaire (appendix 1), yet it was a theme that arose, and thus I began analysing it from my data. Belonging becomes crucial for my work the moment I recognise that right-wing populists who campaigned in favour of Brexit were challenging and asking who belongs to the country. Thus, it is not necessarily Brexit itself, but the way it has (and here in this thesis specifically) been constructed as an issue which influences EU migrants' belonging to Britain. Right-wing populism challenged who belongs to *us* and who are the Others that don't belong. Also, mainstream politics in Britain challenged belonging when it excluded non-British EU nationals from voting (in the Referendum) and talked about it only as a British matter. I am not suggesting that the Referendum

result made all people feel less belonging to Britain. Instead, I argue that specifically EU migrants were challenged to renegotiate their belonging.

3. How is Language Used to Construct Belonging

In this Chapter, I provide the theoretical framework of this work.

An interest of this thesis has been to examine the way Brexit has been constructed as a phenomenon that has the potential to affect particularly EU citizens' sense of belonging. However, the main aim of this thesis is to examine the belonging discourses Finns living in Britain constructed in January 2019 when answering my online Brexit-questionnaire. As this is a discursive work, both social constructionism as well as discourse analysis, serve as the broad theoretical frameworks of this thesis. I will discuss both in more detail in Chapter six. Nevertheless in short; language is understood as *doing* something instead of being only descriptive and is part of the formation of our social reality and not outside of it (cf. Burr 2015, 202; Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 2002, 19). Discursive research studies language use, which is everchanging, context and situation-specific during a certain time in history (Wetherell 2015, 317).

Thus, our understanding of the world, the categories and concepts we use are dependent on where and when in the world we live in (Burr 2015, 4). Therefore, even though the focus is on language use, I have built the theory around the concept of belonging because it is an important concept for my research. Additionally, because the focus is on language use, I have chosen to present identity, categorisation and *othering* as key concepts to help understand how people construct their belonging through language.

3.1 The Discursive Approach to Belonging

Belonging, how we feel about our position in the world comes into question most strongly when there is a sense of exclusion (Anthias 2006, 21). What I have argued earlier is that many EU citizens' belonging to Britain has been under renegotiation due to Brexit. Here I will discuss the importance of belonging to individuals, followed by examples of ways people construct their belonging through language.

Belonging is an essential human motivation (Baumeister & Leary 1995, 497) and need (Maslow & Frager 1987) which makes life meaningful. A sense of belonging is both a sense of fitting in (Lambert

et al. 2013, 1418) and about feeling at home (Yuval-Davis, Kannabirän & Vieten, 2006, 2). To fulfil this need, humans comprehensively drive to form long-lasting and favourable interpersonal relationships to which they belong to. The number of groups and relationships people form and need differ among cultures and societies. Nevertheless, it is understood as natural for all cultures and people to form groups. (Baumeister & Leary 1995, 497, 501.) For *us* to belong to *us*, there has to be a *them*, we do not belong to and thus, belonging as such requires and contains boundaries (Croucher 2004, 47).

Additionally, belonging is more than just about membership rights and duties as in the case of citizenship but also about identification with groups and other people. Furthermore, belonging is about specific social places constructed through these identifications and memberships, and the various social bonds related to these places. Through social inclusion, we may feel accepted in society. Thus, belonging means to feel accepted as part of a community, having a say in the future of the community and feeling safe within it. (Anthias 2006, 21 – 22.)

A discursive approach to belonging allows for different individuals to construct belonging in various ways, even at the same place and time (Yuval-Davis et al. 2006, 7). Moreover, language in discursive research is not stable but everchanging, allowing for norms, values and identities to change (Gibbins 2014, 10). Therefore, also belonging is something subject to change among different societies and individuals because it is discursively constructed rather than static or stable (cf. Yuval-Davis et al. 2006, 7; Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 43). In this work particularly, the temporal uniqueness of Brexit and the data gathering offer an insight into a specific time into the Brexit process. This work also allows for different people, seemingly in the same situation either to talk similarly or differently on their belonging and Brexit. People's views and thoughts change, and so does the media's, which may both affect the overall way Brexit is constructed.

Thus, arguably analysing people's language use is a reasonable way to examine people's belonging.

3.1.1 Identity in Relation to the Other

The notion of identity is essential when talking about belonging because identity comes to question whenever one is not sure where one belongs (Bauman 2011, 19). We often take identity for granted, although it is one of the most misunderstood in common academic usage (Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 41). Social psychology has, at times, assumed people to have one fixed identity which would prompt us to speak in a specific way representing whether we, i.e. possess an authoritarian personality or are tolerant individuals, whereas discourse analysts argue that identity is constructed,

flexible, multiple and incoherent (Wetherell 1996, 224 – 225). Hence, identity is never static but somewhat always changing and evolving in time, under the process of reconstruction (Wodak et al. 2009, 11; Gibbins 2014, 4).

Identity is built in relation to the Other, the relationship between two or more people sharing some kind of sameness (Wodak et al. 2009, 11; Gibbins 2014, 4). However, often members of certain groups see themselves and their group members as more similar than they actually are (Billig 1976, 325; Wetherell 1996, 212). For *us* to be who *we* are, can only exist in relation to someone we are not. For example, for someone to be European, there has to be someone who is from a non-European country who possess a different nationality for the European identity to makes sense. Suggesting that we need Others to be able to identify ourselves in relation to the Others. (Gibbins 2014, 14.)

Thus, the notion of difference is important because, through difference, we may become who we are. Hall (1997, 235) adds that difference as such can be both positive and negative. At the same time, though, we may see difference as scary and dangerous, creating anger towards the Other. (ibid.) Here what is important is to understand that differentiation is not the same as discrimination. Discrimination is only one way of behaviour dependent upon specific cultural definitions of certain categories. To think of discrimination as inevitable, may cause dangerous social and political implications. Especially a discursive approach helps understand discrimination as not unavoidable. Differentiation is a process which is determined not through a function of psychological but cultural factors. As well as differentiating an outgroup through negative and discriminative behaviour, it could be differentiated by generosity or charitability. The behavioural consequences of the process are dependent upon cultural variables. (Reichner & Hopkins 2001, 33 – 35.)

In result, identity production can happen in relation to either friends or foes. Hence, identity is both about belonging and not belonging. Even though the construction of identity stems from difference, it is both through dissimilarities and similarities. Albeit identity cannot exist without being positioned against the Other, the Other can be a friend rather than a seemingly enemy. (Gibbins 2014, 197 – 198.) The Other can be categorised as radical, non-radical and friendly and thus we do not have to assume *othering* always leads to the exclusion of some kind. The radical Other being identified as someone who is strongly different from the Self. (Gibbins 2014, 14.)

Identity is constructed within discourse in specific historical and institutional forms, within particular discursive practises in particular ways (Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 43). People construct defensible identities or other means to have their ways of events approved and supported by others (Burr 2015, 65). According to the theory by Jones & Krzyzanowski (2011, 44 – 45), identities are constructed both internally by *us* and externally by the powerful Other. For example, institutional gatekeepers can set certain criteria for entry to groups either through membership in a formal sense such as citizenship conditions or less formal everyday ways. (ibid.)

Identities have boundaries; however, they do not necessarily exclude other identities. A person may belong to a specific collective identity yet feel belonging to another collective identity. To put it simply; we may identify but not feel belonging, and alternatively, we may belong but not fully identify. Thus, multiple identities may exist in many ways. (Anthias 2006, 19 – 20; Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 42.) In other words, multiple identities is a concept when a person belongs to more than one collective group resisting the exclusion and differentiation processes (Wodak et al. 2009, 16 – 17). Multiple identities is a crucial point to bear in mind especially among a study on intra-European migration allowing where necessary for people to belong both to their origin and host countries, or to identify, i.e. both British and Finnish, or identify as Finnish yet feel at home in Britain.

3.1.2 Categorisation

Categorisation is particularly important in social psychology and categories are constructed in everyday discourse with various functions. Categorisation is a holistic part of people's discourse, for when in conversation people categorise themselves with other social categories such as friends, nationality, job titles etc. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 116.) We categorise everyone, including ourselves and see *us* as group members just like other people see themselves either sharing or not sharing our group membership. Thus, other people may see themselves as the same as *us* or different from *us*. (McGarty 1999, 2.) In result, for *us* to belong, someone else cannot belong.

Nevertheless, discourse analysts do not see this process of categorisation as a natural phenomenon but rather as a complex and delicate social accomplishment that does not automatically happen. We use categories in discourse in specific ways to accomplish certain goals, such as blaming or justification. (Potter & Wetherell 1978, 116.) Additionally, social categories of our daily life help make sense of society and ourselves as well as the Other (Wetherell 1996, 212). Categories are the

basis from which we construct our versions of the social worlds, yet instead of being static they are flexible and changing among different people's discourse in different situations (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 137). Moreover, these categories must be understood as socially constructed products of social activity in a particular historical context (Wetherell 1996, 212). Therefore, we must understand and treat categories as linguistic structures (Billig 1976, 332).

We all have many self-categories, but certain situations define which categories are more or less important to us. Through our self-categories, we receive the values, norms and understandings, to guide what we shall and shall not do. Depending on the situation, we may behave differently. For instance, in a conversation between a feminist and a radical feminist both may disagree, but once an anti-feminist joins the conversation, the discrepancy of the former decreases. (Reicher & Hopkins 2001, 38.)

Categorisation consists of simplification. Because people are motivated to value the self positively, differentiation between one's own and other categories is often radical and partial in favour of the ingroup. (Hogg & Abrams 2006, 183.) Discourses, like any other discriminatory action, can be used to problematise, marginalise and exclude outgroups, especially minorities. Sometimes all foreigners are alleged as members of one single homogenous group, simplified as migrants or foreigners, albeit coming from different countries with a variety of different backgrounds and motives. (Wodak 2011, 55 – 57.) As stated in section 2.3, right-wing populist rhetoric in the Brexit campaigning process used exclusive language against foreigners and constructed *them* all into a homogenous group. A discursive position perceives power precisely being operated among patterns of inclusion and exclusion instead of being a possession of material resources or capacity (Gibbins 2014, 10). There is surely nothing in common all foreigners in Britain share that the Britons do not or vice versa something all Britons have in common that other nationalities do not.

To clarify, if we assume the world is divided into two categories A and B, all the A's would possess something in common to distinguish them from all the Bs. If this was the case and social group categories would reflect the differences between groups, we could argue that stereotypes are true and all members of, i.e. a certain nation possess a distinguishing characteristic from all other nationalities. (Billig 1976, 326.) For instance, the stereotype of Finns being silent and going to sauna would be valid for all Finns, a distinguishing characteristic from all other nationalities. I happen to

know for a fact that not all Finns are silent or go to the sauna. Thus, instead of assuming similarities between group members would determine the existence of social groups, we could assume it is the differences between group members that determine the existence of these groups. In result, the mere feeling of similarity within a group membership rather than any traits or significant social facts underlying that label plays a central role in categorisation. (Billig 1976, 332 – 334.) In result, there need not be anything the Finnish participants of this thesis share in common with each other which would distinguish them from the British or other nationalities. Finnishness is only a social category just like any other nationality.

Condor's study helps us to challenge a view that social categories would be defined in common traits or moreover within any commonalities between category members. Highlighting that social categories may just as well refer to ways people exist within a common institution or territory. Rather than having to do with how we live together as well as who we are. (Reicher & Hopkins 2001, 45.) In her study, Condor (2000) asked English people about their country, and surprisingly the respondents were unusually sensitive and cautious when talking about their country. The careful way the participants spoke indicated a general awareness of the possibility that they might be held responsible for their nationalist thoughts. (Condor 2000, 194 – 195.)

Furthermore, instead of assuming belonging to be based on external sameness, it must be based to some extent on elective attachments. In other words, belonging requires an individual situating themselves in relation to a collective. Inevitably people with similar attachments in similar situations and backgrounds may develop different senses of belonging. (Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 46, 50.)

3.1.3 *Othering* and Discursive Discrimination

Discrimination, as stated by Boreus (2013), is “unfavourable treatment of people due to their alleged belonging to a particular group”. Discursive discrimination is the same unfavourable treatment, just through the use of language. (Boreus 2013, 294 – 295.) The discursive construction of cultural or racial *otherness* may exclude migrants and minorities from main social groups and accomplish domination over them. The discourse of exclusion is constructed most of all by people in official or semi-official positions of power and, i.e. institutionalise it on immigration policies. Thus, everyday racism and right-wing political extremism continue to exist. (Wimmer 2002, 208 – 209.) As there were two primary campaigns in Britain in 2016 either campaigning in favour of staying or leaving the EU, both voices were strongly heard. Above all, it was the discourse used by political

parties, politicians and people in power who decided what the news and media discourse were. The victory of the Leave campaign in a way may for some be understood as a legitimisation to exclude EU migrants.

Boreus (2006, 419) claims that very likely there is always some form of *othering* among discrimination. The preconditions for discursive discrimination are that categories are used to group people together and that *they and we* are placed into different categories. People distinguish each other between different categories, between themselves as belonging and distinguishing between Others who they see as not belonging, resulting in *othering* between the groups. The more diverse the Others are thought to be, the more differently they can be treated. Nevertheless, the treatment has not to be negative, drawing on an example of superheroes. We often see superheroes as considerably different to *us*, however mostly in a positive light, something superior to *us*. (ibid.) Racism is one form of discriminative practise (Burr 2015, 65 – 67). It is a different treatment of marginalising, excluding and discrimination against those who are perceived to be different based on their ethnic group membership (Wetherell 1996, 178).

In the process of *othering*, the categorisation is established by the dominant group which constructs group boundaries and situates other groups to lesser categories. Even though categories are made up, the different treatment of outgroups, as well as their experiences of being dominated, are real (Strani & Szczepaniak-Kozak 2018, 164 – 166). Rodin (2017) examined experiences of an integration project between residents and immigrants aiming to ease the formation of friendship-like relationships between each other. The study found that both the natives and foreign-born used *us-them* language. Emphasising that *othering* and belonging must be understood as deliberate constructive practises, not fixed processes. (Rodin 2017, 604, 609, 614.)

Huot et al. (2016, 132) recognise a trend in the discourse of desirable migrants who were seen as having skills and being able to contribute to society. On the contrary, undesirable migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers were seen as lacking these skills according to their economic potential. The former seen as deserving and the latter as undeserving. (ibid.) According to these findings, there should be no division of a worthy and undeserving migrant among intra-European migration; instead, all EU migrants should be treated as skilled migrants.

Johnson et al. (2004, 264) studied South Asian immigrant women in the context of health care services and their coping strategies towards being *othered*. The respondents sometimes distanced themselves from other South Asian women to be able to fit in the host country rather than *othered*. (ibid.) Arguably these women were *othering* against their alleged (nationality) group, to be able to fit in and belong to where they were (nation). Drawing on Jensen (2011, 73), a strategy for humanisation is to claim normality by stating one is not that different. Highlighting that *othering* is not a straightforward process, and individuals do not always accept becoming the Other. (ibid.) The study by Neiterman, Salmonsson, & Bourgeault (2015, 791) found that respondents who had a different nationality than the host country had experienced racism and discrimination, distinguishing their *otherness* from the group. However, they were also actively constructing their own sense of *otherness*. In conclusion, the experiences of being *othered* are everchanging and dynamic. (Neiterman et al. 2015, 790 – 791.)

In their study, Kim, Suyemoto & Turner (2010) found that people adopted from Korea who had lived in America all their lives questioned their sense of belonging due to visible appearance. The Korean participants, with their seemingly different looks, found themselves explaining to people where they were from all the time. (Kim et al. 2010, 184.) As stated in this section, it seems as though Brexit challenges the ‘typical’ *othering* process for anyone and everyone foreign or seemingly different could be constructed as the Other. Migrants and minorities have been *othered* in Britain already before the Referendum. However, after the Referendum, *othering* has been extended even to groups considered advantaged, being educated, white and middle class. (Zontini & Pero 2019, 2.)

Thus, I argue that even though we could construct Brexit in multiple ways, i.e., as a phenomenon under which anyone may face exclusion, the different ways people have experienced it is real. Brexit seems to support research in which *othering* is not only referred to those who are seemingly disparate. Suggesting that we *other* ourselves from the Others in terms of belonging more, i.e. to the mainstream by claiming we are not like the Others (non-mainstream). We may also *other* ourselves from the mainstream by not wanting to be part of it. Or then we may feel marginalised because we were *othered*. To conclude, for *us* to be *us*, we need a comparison towards someone we are not who we assume is different. To differentiate against someone does not have to be negative nor seen as natural. These categories which make up our sense of *them and us* are not seen as natural phenomena, but rather as human constructions bound to ideologies and

mobilised in rhetoric and argument (Wetherell 1996, 227). Because categories are not natural, neither is racism, discrimination or exclusion according to any similarity or difference. Brexit seems to underline this by demonstrating that anyone can be constructed as the Other who does not belong.

Next, I will present the research question around which I have built this whole work.

4. Research Question

In January 2019 the British Parliament voted on former Prime Minister Theresa May's deal on the future relations of Britain and the European Union for the first time. At the time of the vote, I was in Finland and had just closed my Brexit-questionnaire which had been open in a closed Facebook group for a week. Within this week, I had received 194 responses to my Brexit-questionnaire, of which 192 had permitted their answers to be used as data for this master's thesis. Even though the vote itself was not a topic the Finnish respondents talked about, the timing was unique in the sense that Brexit was spoken a lot in the news both in Finland and in Britain. From the number of responses, it is evitable that Finnish people have been affected by Brexit, but their voice has been missing. Often the Finnish participants demonstrated a loss of belonging or a sense of unwelcomeness due to Brexit. For this reason, I chose to analyse different belonging discourses.

Choosing to analyse the data with discourse analysis, language is above all seen as functional rather than only descriptive (Burr 2015, 68). Through people's language, we cannot find out people's experiences, emotions or memories. Although not denying they don't exist, just that we have no access to them through texts. (Burr 2015, 152.) Therefore, I cannot access these Finnish respondents' experiences, only their texts and accounts which they have constructed with the cultural resources available. Thus the aim is to examine what these Finns are doing with their writings. Also, what are the functions of their accounts and what they aim to achieve (Burr 2015, 150).

Discourse analysis is based on social constructionism which takes a rather different approach to epistemological positions than hard sciences such as physics and biology. Such sciences take positions of positivism and empiricism which assume that through observation the world reveals to us the way it is. Social constructionism does not assume the world is the way we observe it to be

but rather that there are alternative ways the world could be constructed. (Burr 2015, 2 – 3.) What we regard as real are not products of objective observations but outcomes of social interactions (Burr 2015, 5). A thesis based on social constructionism aims not to find the ultimate truth for it denies there is one. Instead, I aim to find out different versions of different people's Brexit realities.

When people speak, they also always construct their identity (Wetherell 1996, 225). Identities are constructed through the discourses culturally available to us upon our communication with others (cf. Hall 2011; Burr 2015, 123). Therefore, besides finding out what kind of belonging and non-belonging discourses the Finnish participants constructed, another specific interest was on their identity construction.

Thus the research questions this thesis aims to answer are as follows:

What kind of belonging and non-belonging discourses do Finns construct in Brexit Britain?

What is the function of the (non)-belonging discourses?

What kind of identities do these discourses construct?

5. Study Design

I will present the study design of this work in this Chapter. Firstly, I will explain the data collection process, and secondly, I will describe the gathered data. I will conclude the Chapter with some ethical considerations regarding data collection.

5.1 Data Collection – Brexit Questionnaire

The design of this thesis is a qualitative type to which I gathered empirical data through an online questionnaire (appendix 1) on Brexit, targeted for Finns living or recently had lived in Britain. I collected the data via a closed Facebook group supposedly made for Finnish people living in Britain. At the time of the data collection (15.1.2019) the group consisted of roughly 4700 (4752) members. I had been a member of the group since autumn 2017 when I was doing a student exchange in Britain. I had recognised there to be a low threshold in asking question among the group and for this reason, I also hoped to receive responses to my questionnaire. I put the questionnaire up in the evening of the 8th of January in 2019, just a week before the British Parliament would vote on Prime Minister May's suggested deal. The deal would try to determine the future relationship between Britain and the EU. Afterwards, we know that the Parliament voted against the deal with historically high numbers 432-202 the next week, followed by two preventions later.

Nevertheless, the outcome was not known during data collection. Thus I decided to leave the questionnaire open for only a week so that the result of the vote would not affect my data. Like said earlier, the timing of data collection was unique in terms that Brexit was talked about a lot in the news, not just in Britain but in Finland also. I closed the questionnaire a week after I had put it, on the evening of the 15th of January 2019, just less than an hour before the British Parliament's vote.

Due to Brexit being such a current topic without any research explicitly done from a Finn's perspective, I believed any new information would be valuable. Thus, without previous examples, the questionnaire aims to instead ask too much than too little. The online Brexit-questionnaire consisted of twelve questions of which half were open-ended questions to which the upcoming analysis is also based on. The questionnaire was structured to start with multiple-choice background questions for warm-up, which is recommended to ease the answering process (Valli & Aarnos 2018, 94). The aim of the background questions was also to describe the data as presented in the next section. The Finnish participants had not, in many cases, answered all the voluntary background questions and thus the data description as followed in the next section is not necessarily a whole representative of the data.

Albeit questionnaire questions should not be leading (Valli & Aarnos 2018, 93), the reader of this thesis, might recognise that one of the questions (q10) is a rather leading one, asking about the uncertainties Brexit has possibly caused. The reason for this is that I began with the aim to find out how Finnish people had coped with the uncertainties of Brexit. However, I found other themes more relevant, and thus, the outcome of the analysis was a data-oriented.

The questionnaire was put up with a cover text (appendix 2) both in Finnish and English stating that all participants and received data would be treated anonymously. Additionally, I invited to answer the questionnaire either in English or Finnish. In the cover text, I also encouraged anyone to answer the questionnaire who felt like they fit my description of being a Finn living (or recently had lived) in Britain. The link to the questionnaire could be shared further. However, because the group in question was a closed group, only copying the link onwards could anyone from outside the group fill in the questionnaire.

5.2 Data Description

Within a week the online Brexit-questionnaire received 194 responses of which two did not give permission for their answers to be used as data neither for this master's thesis nor further research;

thus I removed and destroyed their answers immediately. Of the 192 respondents, 85% were female, 14% were male, and one person had answered *other* than male or female as their gender. One respondent had not answered the gender question at all.

Over 70% of the respondents had a higher degree of education. 57% of the whole data were 30-49-year-olds. When asked about nationality, 85% stated themselves as being only Finnish. Thirteen of the participants responded being both Finnish and some other nationality, of which ten said they were both Finnish and British. Fourteen people did not answer anything when asked about nationality.

As mentioned earlier, I invited the participants to answer either in English or Finnish, even though the questionnaire itself was in English. Of the respondents 18 replied in Finnish, some used both English and Finnish in their answers, but most responded fully in English. Over 60% of the data participants had lived in Britain for more than five years, and five respondents had moved away by the time I gathered the data. I haven't changed the data besides clear spelling errors. Whenever I have translated from Finnish to English, I have mentioned it at the end of the quote, as NP. Translations necessarily change the meaning of the text. Still, I chose to use translations rather than exclude the answers in Finnish completely. The original versions of the quotes can be found in the END NOTES.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

Anonymity in research is essential because of the promise the researcher gives to the participants for their responses to be treated as anonymously and confidentially. It is also vital to allow the participants to speak their mind without others knowing. It is crucial to keep participants safe from possible harm that the research may cause. Thus, a promising start in keeping the researcher's promise is to already in data collection use online surveys or questionnaires so that the data is never identifiable. Although gathering identifiable information is not an issue if all recognisable parts are removed from the results. (Farrimond 2013, 128 – 130.) Even though I had thought I had gathered all data anonymously, some ethical considerations did follow, which I will briefly present here.

During the time of data gathering, I knew there were differences in areas in Britain on how they either voted against or in favour of Brexit. Thus, I was also interested in whether Finns living in

different areas in Britain would have differences in their responses. For this reason, one of the background questions asked for participant's postal code which can be called identifying data. Identifying data is something from which the participant can be identified. (Farrimond 2013, 128, 133.) In the end, I chose not to use participants' residency to describe the data, as it was such detailed. The reason I asked for postal code in the first place was that in Finland it is mostly presented as a five-digit number. In contrast, in Britain or at least in my data, the respondents would sometimes give their whole house name in the background question which asked about postal code. I found house name too identified and thus for the promise of anonymity chose not to use this particular background question at all.

I had put the questionnaire into a closed Facebook group asking anyone to answer who may have something to say about Brexit. Thus answering my questionnaire was completely voluntary. Nevertheless, to promote ethical considerations in addition to the twelve questions, there were two compulsory questions which asked for respondents' approval for their answers to be used as data for this master's thesis, following with a question asking whether the answers could be used in possible further research. Without ticking the boxes for *no* or *yes*, the participants could not submit their answers. After I have finished and handed in this thesis, I will delete all data from participants who did not permit their answers to be used in possible further research. I will also delete all data regarding postal codes.

I have strictly kept the data in my own use, saved it to Excel on my laptop that is secured behind a password. I will discuss more ethics regarding the researcher's position in Chapter nine. However, next, I will present the chosen method of analysis in more detail.

6. Research Method

I have chosen to use discourse analysis for the research method of this thesis. To understand discourse analysis, we must first understand social constructionism. Thus in the next sections, I will provide information firstly on social constructionism and afterwards on discourse analysis, followed by the analysis process itself.

6.1 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is a theoretical orientation which challenges traditional psychological and social psychological theories, offering critical and even radical alternatives for both psychology and

social psychology. Mainstream psychology has been criticised precisely for its imperialist way of seeing other cultures having colonised them specifically through Western ideas and ways. Social constructionism treats language as not only describing our world but as an essential part in constructing our reality. (Burr 2015, 1, 4, 65.) There are many different varieties of social constructionism. For clarity I aim to mostly refer to social constructionist Vivien Burr who is a metaphysical realist, meaning that she does not deny the existence of an external world outside of language (Pernecky 2016, 15, 143).

Social constructionism encourages us to reassess our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves. It invites us to challenge the categories we have divided the world into. Suggesting that these categories could have been constructed in various other ways. What we observe to be could be observed differently. Categories, concepts and ways of understanding are culturally and historically specific; at the same time, they are being produced through a particular culture and time in history. Similarly, instead of having categorised people according to gender, we could have categorised each other, i.e. according to height or eye colour. (Burr 2015, 1 – 5.) Therefore, we must not take categories as such. Instead of background questions asking about age, they could be asking about hair colour. The world could always be constructed differently with alternative use of language, and people approach the world all differently through their social relationships. Through these social relationships, we construct the world through communication in a way that it occurs to us. Even though it is the same world we humans live in, it means different things to us, and thus we experience it differently. (Gergen 2009, 3 – 5; Burr 2015, 4 – 5.)

Weak and strong forms of social constructionism accept that even though social realities are constructed, natural objects or scientific facts are not. Only the very strong or radical form of social constructionism denies a mind-independent existence or a world outside of language and text. (cf. Burr 2015, 94; Pernecky 2016, 142.) To clarify, even though social constructionists claim that people construct social realities, most do accept that language is not the only reality (cf. Edley 2001, 439; Pernecky 2016, 15). A non-extreme form of social constructionism does believe there exists a reality even outside discourse providing the material from which we construct our understanding of the world through discourse (Burr 2015, 114) and as soon as we begin to explain what there is, we enter the world of discourse. In other words, the understanding of rocks and trees as what they are, is socially constructed. (Pernecky 2016, 143.)

This thesis also aims to emphasise that even though there are multiple ways to construct Brexit realities through discourse, the experiences people have felt due to it are real. Not saying that someone else's experience is more real than someone else's; instead, that experiences whether negative or positive in general are real. Even though examining experience is not an aim of discourse analysis, the way people talk about their experiences is. However, it is not limited to this, but participants discourses, in general, are the interest of examination (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 160).

The debate between reality and truth among social constructionists vary and is sometimes named as the relativism - realism debate (Burr 2015, 95). The realist discourse analyst represents the ontological sense, whereas the relativist discourse analyst represents the epistemic sense of social constructionism (Juhila 1999, 162 – 164). The ontological sense of social constructionism assumes that there is a world outside of discourses, whereas the epistemic takes no position on the matter. According to an epistemological pronouncement, we cannot say that there is no world outside of discourse or that there is a world outside of discourse because we cannot know that, for we cannot go beyond the discourse. (cf. Juhila 1999, 162 – 164; Edley 2001, 436 – 437.) In result, the epistemic sense of social constructionism suggests that there is no need to divide the world and words, or between the material and the symbolic. Thus, instead of saying whether something exists or doesn't exist, social constructionists simply say that this something is socially constructed. (Edley 2001, 437 – 439.)

These constructions in their different ways include patterns of social action and the exclusion of others. Thus, our constructions of the world are also tied to power relations. These power relations affect what is permitted for different people to do and how others may legitimately treat others. (Burr 2015, 4 – 5.) For example, alcoholics were in the earlier days seen as responsible for their drinking, villains instead of victims, compared to nowadays when alcoholism (in the West at least) is seen as an addiction. Instead of punishment, alcoholics are believed to need treatment. (ibid.) Thus, even though the idea of constructing a world free of conflict or hate sounds wonderful, it is not entirely up to us but also dependent on the power relations.

Social constructionism denies the ways in which the world is understood as coming from an objective reality, suggesting that instead, the ways of understanding come from other people from the past and present. People are born to a world where specific conceptual frameworks and categories used by people in their culture already exist. (Burr 2015, 9 – 10.) People may perhaps

talk about what they have heard friends or relatives talk about or what has been in the broader political or discursive sphere (Gibbs 2018, 95).

People may take subject positions, meaning that they take a role in their discourse as a way of validating their saying. When people are not consistent even during one conversation, it does not mean that they are being contradictory but that they are simply adjusting their discourse to fit the specific situation. (Gibbs 2018, 95.) For instance, when I discuss Brexit on the train in England with someone I have never met, I will be more careful and cautious about what word choices to make. Not because I am embarrassed about my opinion regarding the topic but because I don't want to offend a stranger whose particular stand I am not aware of. On the contrary, when I discuss Brexit with a friend, I will be more open and freer in my discourse use, not only because I know where we both stand but also because I know that even if I said something she disagreed with, we would still be able to remain as friends.

Language changes and is situational and thus, for new ways of using words, a new shared meaning must be accomplished. However, depending on the situation, words have different meanings in different situations (Burr 2015, 55.) For me to ever begin to write about Brexit, some kind of shared meaning and definition of Brexit had to exist. Then again, Brexit is still a rather new phenomenon, affecting others so much more than others, thus having multiple different meanings for various individuals. Two years ago, I would have had little to say on the topic, whereas a year ago a lot more. Yet, not nearly as much as today.

Moreover, Brexit is an ongoing process which has no clear definition, and due to its changing nature, people's discourses on it are doomed to change also. Furthermore, looking three years back, Brexit was perhaps talked about somewhat differently than during now, then during my data gathering in January 2019. Then again three years ago, someone might have spoken about Brexit similarly than today. Nevertheless, I am claiming that thirteen years ago, the discussions on Brexit were very (if not completely) non-existent because Brexit didn't exist. Nevertheless, the UKIP party was already campaigning in favour of Britain leaving the EU, so perhaps Brexit did exist already then. Even though Brexit in a sense doesn't exist even today as there is no clear definition that would be comprehensive, it exists in people's discussions, in the media all-around Europe and specifically in this thesis and among my gathered data. Thus, in the world of discourse, Brexit is as real as any other phenomenon.

As already discussed in this section, the role of language is essential in social constructionism. Furthermore, discourse analysis is the method which analyses the use of language and what people aim to achieve by their language or in this case how Finns construct Brexit belongings. Thus, next, I will discuss discourse analysis in more detail.

6.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is both a method and a broad theoretical framework which has no universally agreed definition. Nevertheless, research most often suggests that discourse is used to mean talk, writing or singing with which people together bring the world into being. (Johnstone 2008, 29, 33.) Discourse analysis offers insight into how discourse can best be studied (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 175). Discourse analysts treat texts as “complex, cultural and psychological products, constructed in particular ways to make things happen”. The use of language among social interactions creates various social worlds and all texts can be used as part of research. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 3, 7.) As noted above, this thesis focuses on online writings.

According to Burr (2015, 24) the two major forms of social constructionist theory and research are macro and micro social constructionism. Micro social constructionism is typically referred to as discursive psychology. In contrast, macro social constructionism is often referred to as Foucauldian analysis. Both forms may be referred to as discourse analysis, and they can be used together not needing to exclude each other. (Burr 2015, 24 – 26, 179.) Micro social constructionism views us people as users and manipulators of language and discourse for our purposes and is interested in the situated use of language among people and “how people actively construct accounts in interaction”. (Burr 2015, 145 – 146.) Macro social constructionism states that people are subject to discourses which they cannot resist. An extreme form of macro social constructionism would see humans as secondary and as products of the discourse of their lives. (Burr 2015, 144, 154.) This thesis should be understood as a micro version of social constructionism because I see it is the Finnish participants using discourse instead of discourse using them. Even though, the use of discourse is always limited to a particular culture, situation and time in history.

The pioneers of discursive psychology Potter & Wetherell (1987, 9) argue that the study of language is specifically essential to social psychology, for it is simply the most primal and pervasive form of interaction between people. They claim that language is often taken for granted, however crucial for our everyday communication, thinking and reasoning. To put it simply: we could not think

without language as our thoughts are created through language and various social constructions. However, in everyday life, there is rarely a need to question language before misunderstandings occur or different cultures with different languages meet. (ibid.)

Any sorts of questions about humans in society may be answered with the use of discourse analysis. Thus, the use of discourse analysis offers endless opportunities to understand human beings more. (Johnstone 2008, 7.) Potter & Wetherell (1987,7) on the one hand emphasise the importance of language, and on the other hand, their focus is not merely on linguistics or discourse itself but more so in gaining a better understanding of the social world through social interactions and texts. Discourse analysis is broader than just language analysis as it aims to examine how people use language to make certain things happen. How people express emotions, exchange information, in general, *do* things in the world, and not only language as an abstract system. (cf. Potter & Wetherell 1987, 6; Johnstone 2008, 3.) Similarly, even though I examine the ways Finns talk about their belonging and non-belonging in Brexit Britain, I also aim to understand the world of Brexit where these Finns and other EU nationals have found themselves.

Potter & Wetherell (1987, 32) present three major components of discourse analysis which are: function, construction and variation. Function refers to people *doing* things with the use of language such as requesting, ordering, persuading or accusing. However, people are rarely explicit in this *doing process* and instead move crosswise and are less direct in what they aim to accomplish with their saying. There are no certain rules to be followed to know whether someone is persuading or requesting; rather the interpretations are dependent on the analyst reading the context. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 32 – 33.) An example could be a person in a late-night party saying that they are tired. They might be trying to indicate to their friend that they want to go home instead of directly saying they want to go home. However, someone else might interpret the same text as a request for coffee, for example.

Construction is a process that involves active selection in which some resources are used, and some are not. This active selection as such is most often not adequate. Instead, people simply use their language *naturally* the way it occurs to them instead of actively thinking about what to say or not to say and how. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 34.) We are not always aware or conscious in our practices as some practices become automatic or are deeply embedded in history and culture.

Nevertheless, discursive researchers assume that people's discourse is more likely patterned and ordered than chaotic. (Wetherell 2015, 317.)

Variation in discourse analysis suggests that language is used for many different functions and the same phenomenon could be described in various ways. These multiple ways offer alternative truths. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 35; Burr 2015, 76.) The focus in discourse analysis is on the discourse itself and how it has been organised and what it is doing (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 49). For instance, when people describe trees, especially if coming from different cultures, they will have different descriptions. When I think of a tree, I most often think of birch or spruce which are common species of trees in Finland. As someone who has lived in Finland most of her life, it is not a surprising finding. Thus, for me, a tree is either a green Christmas tree-like or zebra-coloured one. Nevertheless, someone in a similar position as I might be thinking about palm trees due to just been on holiday somewhere surrounded by palm trees. Additionally, not everyone will think about a specific tree species, simply because not everywhere in the world are there trees, for example. Thus, our explanations of trees will potentially vary.

Moreover, because all texts can be used as objects of research (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 3), even this thesis cannot become immune from this kind of analysing. I as a researcher must be aware of all the various ways this thesis could have been written and through that constructed a different view to Brexit. Drawing on Adler-Nissen, Galpin & Rosamond (2017, 575) "speaking about Brexit does not simply describe a given reality, it also constructs it". I acknowledge that researchers come from different places with different life views and already make a fundamental decision when choosing which topics are worth investigating more thoroughly. Different readers will also construct different opinions about this text and through that their Brexit reality may change to one way or another or not change at all.

6.2.1 Doing Discourse Analysis

Albeit, discourse analysis is above all a theoretical framework instead of a method as such (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 175), it provides some guidance for doing discourse analysis. To begin with, choosing the research question is essential, which both starts as well as guides the analysing process. Although it can and often does change during the writing process. (ibid.) My research question for this thesis also changed from only a non-belonging side to also a belonging side to

Brexit, as soon as I accepted the discourse variation. I chose a more analytical than a critical way of analysing: analytical and critical discourse analysis are the opposite to each other. Critical discourse analysis starts off with the assumption that someone is being oppressed and thus examines how the oppression is taking place and under what circumstances. Analytical discourse analysis is more open-minded to the data, not assuming it consists of any kind of injustice. Nevertheless, the findings may include injustice, and thus the two approaches mustn't need to exclude each other. (Jokinen et al. 2002, 86 – 87.)

Coding is also essential in discourse analysis as well as in all qualitative research, and it prepares to the actual analysis process, enabling the researcher to *go deeper*. Only after coding may the phenomenon of interest become visible. Often, moving between analysis and coding. Discourse analysis, as well as any qualitative analysis, includes a lot of re-reading the data over and over again. A discourse analyst does not seek for a general idea from the text but rather how something has been said or written, however fragmented or contradictory. Exceptions are as important as commonalities. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 168 – 169.)

Researchers both describe and construct social reality through their research which may have different consequences and thus s/he must be sensitive within the analysing and interpretation processes (Jokinen et al. 2016, 50). Thus, when I analysed my data, it was necessary to bear in mind that the data was gathered in January 2019 and the answers were given to a Brexit-questionnaire made by me, a Finnish university student — emphasising the context, specific situation and time in history.

Research also begins from a specific view. Arguably even two people who similarly use their language may experience the world differently. The other one did not necessarily use their language in a more consistent way than the other one, but simply because our cultural vocabulary is very limited. Taking a discursive approach to Brexit, I argue, enables Brexit to be as real as anything constructed in language. It is important to notify how much meaning Brexit has to different individuals, even though as such has not happened yet. In the next section, I explain in detail how I proceeded with the analysing process.

6.2.2 Analysis

After closing the questionnaire, I transferred the data into Excel and deleted the two responses from the participants who had not permitted their answers to be used as data for research. After which, I printed the data out and went through it over and over again.

As mentioned earlier, a loss of belonging due to Brexit was a theme many accounts discussed. Thus, I began searching for statements which somehow demonstrated a loss of belonging or a sense of not being welcome to Britain anymore. Quite quickly, I named these discourses because it eased my own way of categorising answers under these discourses. Nevertheless, accounts that instead of a loss of belonging discussed about applying for citizenship or seemingly spoke about a belonging side did not fit my categories of non-belonging. Thus, I began also searching for accounts that somehow reasoned why they did not feel unwelcome.

I also mentioned earlier that I chose to use an analytical discourse analysis rather than a critical one. However, my starting point had been rather critical, for I had positioned myself as a researcher who would find the injustice these Finnish respondents reported they had experienced due to Brexit, as well to discuss what other EU nationals had said. Partly this is perhaps what I have done. However, after going more into discourse analysis, an open coding process began to take place which I refer to as data-driven coding. The aim of data-driven coding is that it is done with an open mind. Recognising, however, that no one can have an absolutely open mind because we all start off with a specific idea. The researcher is both an observer of the social world and a part of that same world. We all have ideas of what we might expect to be happening, and as social scientists, we are likely to have more than many others as a result of our awareness of empirical research and theoretical ideas. (Gibbs 2018, 61.)

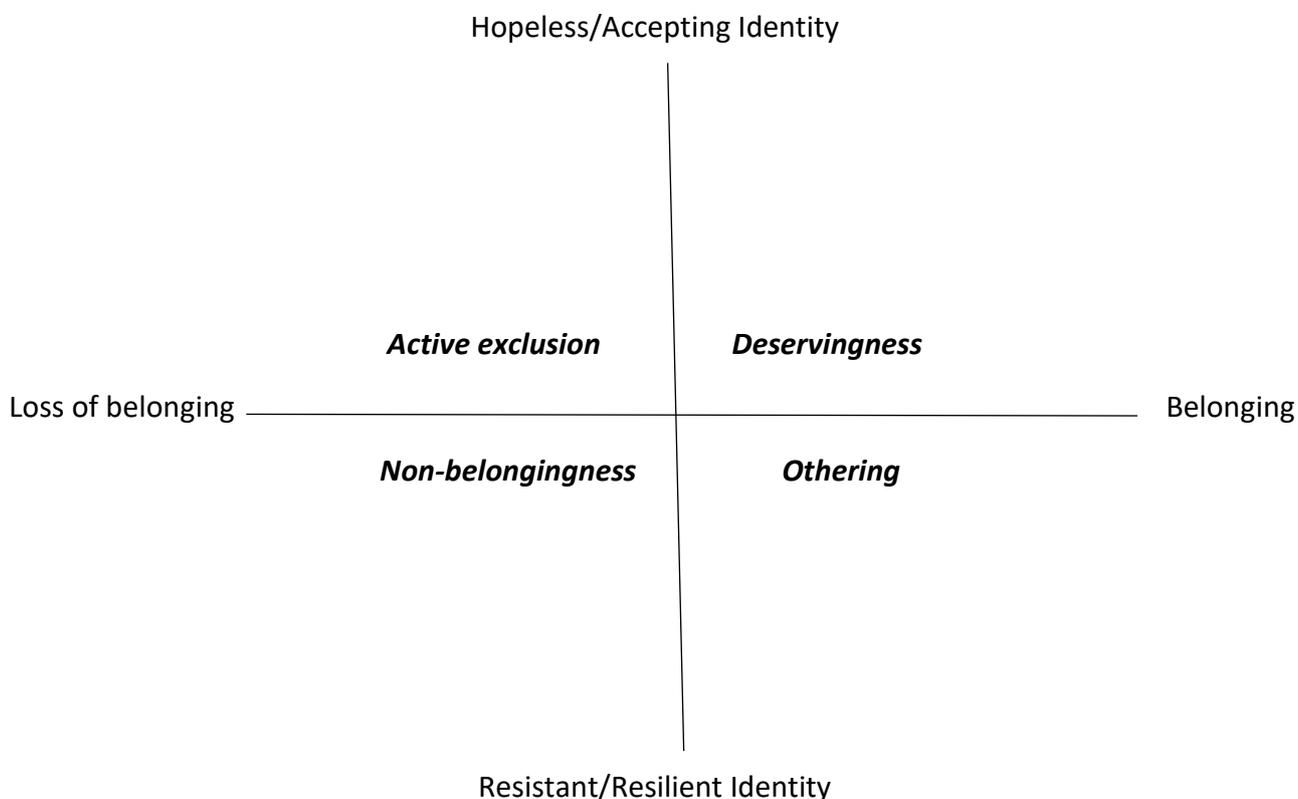
Finding another side to the construction of non-belonging to Britain, which is the belonging side, was only possible after re-reading the data and method over and over again. The re-reading helped me create a more open mind. Only after a long process of analysing fort and back did I realise the study participants were constructing a belonging and a loss of belonging with the use of their language. In the discussion Chapter (ch.9), I discuss my position as a researcher who has lived in Britain as a non-British Finnish national myself. I claim it has also helped me to come to the empirical findings as presented in the next Chapter.

This thesis has focused heavily on of EU nationals and Brexit, following next with a specific focus on how Finnish people talk about Brexit. For many of the study participants belonging was shaken but not for all. It is important to emphasise that none of the questionnaire questions (appendix 1) asked about belonging, yet this was a theme that arose many times. Thus, the research question aims to answer what kind of belonging and non-belonging discourses Finns construct in Brexit Britain, including the construction of both non-belonging and belonging

7. Empirical Findings

The objective of this thesis was to analyse Finnish participants different (non-)belonging discourses in Brexit Britain. The focus was in the function of these discourses and also the various identities they constituted. From the data, with the use of discourse analysis as presented in the previous Chapter, I found four different discourses that I have named as *non-belongingness*, *active exclusion*, *othering* and *deservingness*. These discourses were used to construct either a loss of belonging or a sense of belonging to Britain in January 2019.

Figure 1. Finnish participants' (non-)belonging discourses in Brexit Britain.



Horizontal axel = Function of the discourse; either a construction of belonging or a loss of belonging

Vertical axel = Identity construction

The figure (figure 1) presented above aims to distinguish these discourses from each other. The horizontal axel demonstrates whether I have placed the discourse as more of a construction of belonging or loss of belonging. In contrast, the vertical axel illuminates whether the discourse is more of a constitution of an active identity or a passive one, meaning that Others have decided for the participant. On the left side of the figure, I have placed *active exclusion* and *non-belongingness* as discourses that potentially construct the closest to a total loss of belonging. The difference between them is that *non-belongingness* constructs an identity of resistance, whereas *active exclusion* constructs more of a hopeless identity. On the right side of the figure, I have placed *othering* and *deservingness* as discourses that construct a sense of belonging. The discourse on *othering* constructs resilient and caring identities, whereas *deservingness* constructs more of an identity of acceptance, enabling Others to perform the categorisation process.

The discourses will sometimes overlap and can be seen as both complementing each other or as appearing independently. Some respondents may have used all of these different discourses while answering the Brexit-questionnaire. Hence, the purpose is not to distinguish people into discourses but people's language into discourses.

7.1 Non-Belongingness

The discourse on *non-belongingness* constructs a loss of belonging to Britain through accounts such as Britain no longer feeling welcoming or statements saying that participants have left Britain or are planning on moving out and through that construct resisting identities. Leaving Britain can be seen as taking resistance as in being someone who refuses to live in a country that no longer feels welcome. Thus, the function of the *non-belongingness* discourse is to both construct a loss of belonging to Britain but also to resist the loss of belonging and take one's own life into one's own hands by being in a position to leave and perhaps through that search for belongingness from somewhere else.

"Brexit has been the only factor ever that has made me consider moving back to Finland, or at least move into another EU country"

"I am thinking about returning to Finland just to make my life easier. Not having to worry everyday"

"I used to love London and recognised it as home, now I no longer feel like I belong here. If I moved out, I would miss certain things from here a lot, however I could live without them if alternatively I would feel at home and not alien. Even though no one has told me to leave, I no longer feel as rooted here" (translated by NP⁵)

These three accounts construct a loss of belonging to Britain due to considering or planning on leaving the country. The accounts are stating that belonging has not necessarily been lost completely but it has been challenged enough to make them think about returning to Finland or *at least* into *another EU country*. The first account highlights the power Brexit has in influencing people's belonging, for Brexit has been the only factor that has made one consider moving away. The second account is perhaps a more practical reason, planning on returning to Finland because of the everyday worry Brexit is causing. One fundamental reason Brexit is such a cause of worry for many is its unclear definition and the ongoing lengthiness of it.

The third account is constructing reasoning why one may not want to leave; *even though no one has told me to leave*. Despite all the reasoning, *I no longer feel like I belong here*. In a way, explaining to me that the feeling of being *alien* comes from somewhere else, not because people would have been discriminative. The account is explaining to me why they do not belong anymore even though they would miss certain things from London a lot. Because missing these things would be worth it if instead of feeling *alien* one would *feel at home*. All these accounts above are also constructing resistance towards Brexit Britain by having a possible backup plan to leave. They are demonstrating to me that it is up to them whether they stay or not.

"Just the uncertainty of me staying in this country and whether I want to stay. I love England, but it's not the same country I fell in love with"

"I no longer feel welcome or recognise the country where I first moved to work and study during the 1990s"

These two accounts resist the uncertainty and unwelcomeness of current Britain. The first account stating that it is not the country one fell in love with. The second account by saying that Britain has become a place one no longer recognises. In a way, these two accounts illuminate the change Britain as a country has gone through, becoming a place one no longer necessarily even wants to stay in. I argue that distancing the country from what one used to know can, in a way, be understood as a coping strategy to deal with leaving it. Or at least making it easier to make the possible decision of

leaving. Thus, these two accounts construct a loss of belonging to Britain but also resisting identities to cope with this possible loss.

“I saw the UK as a multicultural and welcoming country, far more than Finland. I felt like my potential future here had been taken away from me. My feelings have not changed significantly. I still don't know if me and my British partner want to live here long term”

“I deal with it by knowing it's not a forced choice: I'm here because I want to be. If this country becomes one I no longer want to be a part of, I will leave”

Similar findings demonstrate how Britain has become a place that does not feel like home and where one is not welcome anymore. Above the two accounts construct strong resisting identities by using words such as *I still don't know if me and my British partner want to live here*. In the second account, statements such as *it's not a forced choice*, and *I will leave, If this country becomes one I no longer want to be a part of*, demonstrate a resistance. They are resisting because the accounts are stating that the potential leaving or staying is up to them. The first account is also, in a way distancing the UK as a country that has become less multicultural and welcoming. A place where one perhaps does not even want to live anymore.

“Obviously I have a backup plan in case everything turns upside down and they do decide to start kicking people out. But I haven't really experienced any form of racism or exclusion for being an EU citizen”

“I felt betrayed by the Brexit vote, like I was no longer welcome and like the public had shown a side to itself I never imagined possible. Brexit was a strong driving force behind my leaving Britain to come back to Finland after over a decade living there”

In the former account, the word use *obviously* having a *backup plan* states that exclusion is a real threat for an EU citizen, for there is a fear of being kicked out. The account makes a division between *they* (probably the British decision-makers) and *people* (*assumedly EU citizens*). In result, the account *others* negatively against the British who may start kicking people out. Even though the account states not having experienced racism or exclusion for being an EU citizen, a backup plan has been made. The backup plan here demonstrates an identity of resistance. Nevertheless, also that there is still hope and belonging has not necessarily been lost but only shaken.

From the data, five respondents stated that they had already left Britain during the data gathering in January. The latter account demonstrates how Brexit became a reason one no longer wanted to stay in Britain, even after over a decade living there. Although leaving the country could be analysed as a total loss of belonging to Britain, it is also constructing a resistance as shown in the earlier accounts. One has decided to move back to Finland due to the Brexit vote and perhaps through that

search for belonging from Finland. I find it essential that even respondents who at the time of data gathering were not living in Britain anymore took the time to answer my Brexit-questionnaire. Brexit, which does not mean anything yet, has so much meaning to so many.

I have placed accounts which are either planning on leaving or have already left Britain as constructions of non-belongingness. However, the accounts with their use of discourse also highlight a way of taking up resisting identities. These accounts are perhaps accepting the situation for now but constructing resistance and no matter what take their future in their own hands. They have decided not to stay if they do not want to. I think this is a very empowering way of constructing identity as someone who has the strings of their lives in their own hands. Albeit, all the accounts above use language that constructs a strong resistance, next, I will demonstrate how people have different positions, and all decisions are not only up to them because of other people involved. Therefore, I am arguing that the *non-belongingness* discourse is also heavily influenced by other (meaningful relations) people's presence or the lack of this presence.

“Regardless of what happens now, UK is likely to experience poverty, insecurity and violence not seen for a long time. I would leave if my young adult kids also moved. I am mostly angry I didn't leave when they were small. But how was I to know...”

“As a nurse, I have experienced how many colleagues have returned to their homes in other EU countries and thus the workload is increasing. I would also very much wish to leave but the kids are here at home and their whole lives are in Britain” (translated by Np⁶)

Even though people need meaningful relations for the sense of belonging, these meaningful relations can also put people into a more vulnerable position. Meaningful relationships might put a person to a place where one is not only responsible for oneself. *Non-belongingness* in the accounts here is a desire to leave Britain. Still, active resistance is difficult to take due to meaningful relations. Nevertheless, the first account does construct resistance towards the situation by stating that *regardless of what happens now, UK is likely to experience poverty, insecurity and violence not seen for a long time, I would leave if my young adult kids also moved*. In a way, the account demonstrates strong disagreement towards Brexit but being a parent is more important, which is also the reason one has not left Britain. Also, the second account constructs a parent identity where putting their kids' needs is more important than leaving Britain, although stating a desire to leave like many of the colleagues.

In both accounts, meaningful relations are near as if blamed for being the reason one cannot leave Britain or why one cannot take an active resistance. The second account by stating *I would also very much wish to leave but the kids are here at home*. Thus, not everyone is in the position to leave nor take one's own life in their hands even though belonging would have been lost. Although both accounts are resisting the current situation, the responsibility of being a caring parent is more important. Thus, the decision of staying is actually up to them, although it is a decision they demonstrate being unhappy with.

"I have a family here; I own a house and a piece of land. I have lost lots of friends last two years; they have moved back to Finland or other European countries. I feel I belong less now"

Non-belongingness is also constructed through the loss of friends. Many accounts tell how the loss of friends who are often stated as being EU nationals, influence their belonging. For people to belong, meaningful relations are needed. Thus it is a clear explanation of why these respondents' belonging has been challenged or even lost. Adding to this that people need different amounts of meaningful relationships, i.e. family might not be enough, but many also need friends to feel belonging. Especially the account above explains having all these things here: family, house and a piece of land, yet *I feel I belong less now*. First constructing a well-off identity, but due to Brexit, it has been challenged. Belonging has not necessarily been totally lost because of the construction of a well-off identity at first. Having a family, owning a house and a piece of land do refer to capital which may help to resist a total loss of belonging.

"British people are no longer as friendly towards other nationalities. I used to be proud to speak Finnish to my children, but now I feel I get angry looks etc"

"I don't really feel British, because the locals seem to treat me differently because of my accent. This has become more obvious after the Brexit vote"

Here the first account describes a loss of belonging by categorising all British people as not being friendly towards other nationalities anymore. There is a division between British people and different nationalities that the account is categorising, stating that British people have been friendly before but not so much anymore. Speaking Finnish is a way to distinguish as the Other nationality (something else than the mainstream British) towards whom British people are no longer as friendly anymore. Here it is perhaps difficult to analyse an identity position; however, the division of all Britons as unfriendly towards other nationalities does categorise them as something negative. Something one perhaps does not even wish to be a part of. Thus, I have chosen to present the account as constructing an identity of resistance.

The latter account constructs a loss of belonging through the assumption of *locals seem to treat me differently because of my accent, and I don't really feel British*. The account is constructing an accent from somewhere else by *othering* the locals from oneself. The account is demonstrating that one does not belong as much with the locals. Also, one does not necessarily even want to be apart of them. The seeming treatment (which *has become* more obvious after the *Brexit vote*) from the locals is a reason one states not feeling British. Both accounts are constructing non-belonging but also resistance by categorising the British as less friendly towards other nationalities (which both the accounts are).

"At times I don't want to openly advertise being a foreigner"

"Mostly racist behaviour that has risen towards foreigners living in the UK, I haven't really made a big number of being a foreigner and try to avoid the whole Brexit conversation"

Similarly, as the previous account above the former account here is hiding one's foreign nationality because it could be a reason to be categorised as the Other, someone not British. I have placed the account under the *non-belongingness* discourse because it is resisting Brexit by hiding their nationality by not openly advertising *being a foreigner*. Hiding one's own nationality could be perceived as a coping strategy towards dealing with living in Brexit Britain. In a way, though, hiding one's nationality may be seen as a way to legitimately belong more, which could be seen as a sign of resilience. Nevertheless, I argue the account is constructing more a loss of belonging due to categorising oneself as *a foreigner*. Because if foreigners should hide their foreign nationality, they have also had to renegotiate their own belonging.

A way of dealing with the increase of racism toward foreigners is not to advertise being a foreigner as also done in the latter account, however; still categorising oneself as one. Both of the accounts through language construct identities of resistance. Perhaps to cope with a loss of belonging due to Brexit. Similarly, the accounts could be seen as constructing resilient identities, being able to hide their nationality to be able to belong more among the mainstream.

As shown above, the function of the *non-belongingness* discourse is the construction of a loss of belonging to Britain. Yet also an identity construction of resistance in some form.

7.2 Active Exclusion

I have categorised active exclusion as the discourse that potentially constructs the strongest loss of belonging, however not necessarily. Active exclusion is here understood as discriminative or exclusive behaviour, for example, through racist comments. Many of the Finnish participants state that either they have heard racism has increased towards foreigners, or they report that they have experienced it themselves. Contrary to the *non-belongingness* discourse, the function of active exclusion is not to take up identities of resistance but rather to construct hopeless identities.

“The day following the referendum I got wished happy Independence Day. It was surprisingly hurtful”

“I have been told to go home”

The accounts above demonstrate the importance of context in analysing people’s discourse use. In a different context, the first account might be surprising or at least raise questions; why would one state feeling hurt after being wished happy Independence Day? Here the Brexit Referendum which has been constructed as a British only matter; *happy Independence Day* refers to exclusive language against those who do not identify as British. Thus the account seems to be constructing an identity different from a British, for it is someone else’s nationality that is being celebrated. Even though wishing happy Independence Day is not usually directed in a racist or discriminative way, in here it is exclusive and through that may cause active exclusion.

The latter account could be analysed in a very different light if it was a sentence used by a kid at the playground, stating that s/he needed to go home for dinner. Nevertheless, *I have been told to go home* as a response to my Brexit-questionnaire notes that home means the place the respondent is from. Which in this case is most likely Finland, although, Britain is most likely their home nowadays. Thus, I have analysed it as discriminative or even racist behaviour. Both accounts are short in length and thus analysing identity again is not perhaps adequate. Nevertheless, both statements could be understood as constructing a hopeless identity, for neither one is taking up a resistance nor resilience.

“I felt unsafe, I felt naive for in having thought I was welcome. I felt ashamed that I hadn’t ever fully grasped what it was, emotionally, to be marginalised, ostracised, abused even”

This account is constructing a somewhat bitter identity by stating *I felt naive in having thought I was welcome*, as if not deserving to be appreciated. As if *to be marginalised, ostracised, abused even*, were the norms, supposedly for someone, not a native Brit. Thus, the account is both

constructing a loss of belonging and a hopeless identity, someone who should not (at least anymore) think of being welcome to Britain.

“I feel Finnish and in pre-Brexit England that makes me feel like an outsider”

“I feel like an outsider. I never felt like that until the morning of the Brexit results and every day since. I can pay taxes until I retire and contribute to society, but I will always be foreign”

“I used to [feel British], since the Brexit decision I’ve felt people see me as a foreigner”

This first account constructs a loss of belonging through one’s own national (Finnish) identity, which is not the mainstream British identity but *an outsider*. The use of *outsider* refers to a sense of non-belonging to Britain, for belonging is about feeling at home. The second account also constructs an outsider position by categorising oneself as an outsider and as a foreign national. The account states that one has never felt like an outsider before the morning of the Brexit results, and every day since. Seemingly though not lost all belonging as still stating to continue to pay taxes and contribute to society. Nevertheless, there is deep frustration in the tone of the account; as if no matter what s/he does, s/he will always be *foreign* and being *foreign* (in this case) means to feel like an outsider.

The latter account states that they used to feel British, but Brexit challenged this, and now *I’ve felt people see me as a foreigner*. Here an exclusion to being categorised as a *foreigner* has lost the sense of Britishness. Instead of being part of their (the British) group, they are *foreigners*. Interestingly some categorise themselves as a foreigner which they hide in terms of being able to cope or belong better and others construct non-belonging due to not wanting to be labelled as the foreigner. All the accounts above construct hopeless identities because there seems to be little they can do in their positions against their non-belongingness.

“I do worry more. And I do hear people being more negative about migrants”

“I don’t feel as welcome anymore, however I have not experienced racism yet”

These two accounts above demonstrate how external discourses and other people’s discourse use has affected the construction of these discourses. Because many others have reported that they have experienced racism, one reports a worry to experience it also. The former account could be constructing an identity that is something else than a migrant, and for this reason, people have not been negative towards oneself. However if the two sentences of the discourse are changed places: *I do hear people being more negative about migrants, I do worry more*, it would perhaps be more clear that constructing oneself as a migrant (towards whom people have been more negative) is the

cause of worry. I have analysed the discourse as latter explained and thus see it as a construction of active exclusion with a construction of a hopeless identity more than anything else.

The latter account with language such as *I don't feel as welcome anymore* constructs a loss in belonging, *however I have not experienced racism yet*, highlights that an experience of racism is likely to happen. Perhaps because so many others have also experienced it or because the news has talked about it. Then again, as the aim of discourse analysis is not to go beyond the text, the account could also use such discourse to demonstrate how they should not perhaps feel that unwelcome because they have not felt racism nor believe they will. However, the word use *yet* does refer to possibly experiencing racism at some point or having worry about it. Thus, I argue, the account is most likely constructing a hopeless identity.

"--the referendum took place on a Thursday night, and already on Saturday morning I was a 'fucking foreigner' in my home village. You could definitely feel the approval of looking down at foreigners ever since"

"I felt like Britain changed overnight. Suddenly British people started throwing rocks and spitting on foreigners on streets and hate crime increased. I was told at work that I only have a job because I tick a box by being an EU citizen as the company has to employ foreigners to be seen as a diverse organisation. I felt that after a decade living and working in London, I was no longer welcome"

Some of the Finnish participants report that they have experienced direct discrimination, exclusion and racism personally themselves, which has potentially affected their belonging, although not necessarily. Above both of the accounts demonstrate the Referendum result's timely uniqueness in influencing people's discourse use. *The referendum took place on a Thursday night, and already on Saturday morning, and I felt like Britain changed overnight.*

The first account states having experienced active exclusion by being categorised as a *fucking foreigner* in their *home village*. The account constructs a hopeless identity, someone who demonstrates an experience of active exclusion without pointing fingers at anyone. In the second account, all British people are being constructed as becoming hostile towards foreigners. The account is constructing a foreign identity (specifically EU citizen) and through that states not feeling welcome in London anymore, even, after a decade living and working there. The account reports having experienced active exclusion by being told to have a job only for the company to be seen as a diverse organisation. The account also constructs a hopeless identity.

"Being a white middle class woman from a Nordic country, I have faced very little discrimination. After Brexit I finally know what it's like"

The account above constructs first a privileged identity as *a white middle class woman from a Nordic country* which has seemingly protected from facing discrimination before Brexit. *After Brexit I finally know what it's like* could in a different context be analysed as something positive as often the use of *finally* refers to something positive one reports wanting to have experienced for a long time. However, in this case, I have analysed the account as more a construction of frustration and hopelessness because it is linked to discrimination. Whiteness, middle class or even someone from a Nordic country can be understood as adjectives used to construct a well-off migrant identity, yet even this status has not protected from being actively excluded in the world of Brexit through discriminative behaviour. In result, the account is constructing a loss of belonging through a hopeless identity.

The discourse on *active exclusion* emphasises that the political and other people's discourses have potentially had an influence on these discourses but also that Finnish people state that they have experienced active exclusion in Brexit Britain. *Active exclusion* constructs a loss of belonging and a passive hopeless identity.

7.3 Othering

A large part of the data consists of people who have lived in Britain for many years and state not being that concerned over their own lives in Brexit Britain. However, many are worried about the lives of Others. This could be explained through a person's need to belong, and perhaps *othering* Others as less belonging from oneself could secure one's own sense of belonging. Yet, the accounts through their privileged position are also able to construct caring identities. Some respondents say they have been *othered* from the mainstream for example as foreigners or migrants as noted in the *non-belongingness* and *active exclusion discourses*. In contrast, some of the respondents use *othering* to construct a stronger sense of their belonging to Britain. For instance, they are identifying themselves as people with a desirable identity and *different* from other foreign nationals. Hence, I claim that *being othered* can construct a loss of belonging and vice versa *othering* can construct belonging. Accounts that I have placed under the *othering* discourse state how they take the strings of their own lives in their hands. They can belong more and also construct resilient, often well-off identities.

“I immediately felt unwanted in the UK after the results of the referendum, and this feeling has worsened as the Brexit negotiations have been unfolding. I dealt with the genuinely anxiety inducing uncertainty - at that point after 20 years of living in the UK - by immediately applying for British citizenship (a process which isn't easy or cheap by any means). I had mixed feelings about doing this but reasoned the decision in that my entire life is here, and I did not want to live in uncertainty as this was affecting my mental health. I realised I was in a very lucky position financially to be able to do this. And it has also finally given me a voice in that I am now able to vote”

“I am in the process of applying for citizenship, which is expensive and hard. I do this so I can be sure I can stay here with my child”

Many of the respondents had their whole lives in Britain, and for them, there was perhaps no other option than to stay no matter what happens with Brexit. For these respondents moving out may not be a position they are willing or even capable of taking. In result, some had found another way through applying for citizenship or settled status. Nevertheless, applying for citizenship or settled status does not necessarily mean belonging more because belonging is more than just formal rights. However, it could potentially construct a stronger belonging to Britain by getting access to all legal rights even if Britain was to withdraw from the European Union.

The first account demonstrates that applying for British citizenship may ease anxiety and bring formal rights in Britain. The account does illuminate a worsened feeling of not being wanted in Britain. Yet, I have placed it under the *othering* discourse because I argue that a way of taking up a resilient identity is applying for citizenship (or, i.e. settled status). Applying for citizenship does not mean one will feel more belonging, yet the aim is this, and thus I argue it is more a construction of belonging than non-belonging.

Both of the accounts explain the difficulty behind the process of applying for citizenship. Nevertheless, both are in a privileged position to do so. Having access to formal rights may also resist the possibility of otherwise being *othered*. In addition to having a resilient identity by being able to apply for citizenship, the second account demonstrates a parent identity. By stating *I do this so I can be sure I can stay here with my child*. The accounts are *othering* against those who are not in such privileged positions, for example, financially. However, there is no form of negativity behind it.

“Not sure I'd say I feel British... But I certainly feel a sense of belonging, being part of something, part of this imperfect but in many ways good enough society”

“Less [feel British] than what I used to feel like prior to Brexit. Now I would describe myself European over anything else. I have started to think more about my ‘European identity’. Before Brexit I never thought about that at all”

“It’s who I am, where I come from, after 20 years in Britain I feel as Finnish as ever. I feel at home here but I’m not British”

For respondents who do not feel as though Finland (or any other country besides Britain) is a home for them anymore, it is essential to be able to sustain a stable position to Britain. Britain is home for these people even though not necessarily stating themselves as British. These accounts above construct belonging through multiple identities. The first account constructs a sense of belonging even though not necessarily categorising oneself as a Brit. The second account constructs belonging through a European identity for Brexit has challenged their British identity. Constructing a sense of Europeaness here seems to fill in the loss of belonging to somewhere else.

The last account, most of all, demonstrates how one does not have to categorise as British yet may still *feel at home* there. The account is constructing a strong Finnish national identity stating themselves *as Finnish as ever*, even after 20 years in Britain. One does not have to report being British to be able to feel belonging there. One can also have many identities and feel belonging to many places. Thus, the above accounts above all construct belonging through multiple identities and also construct identities of resilience through having flexible ways of coping with a loss of a certain nationality by constructing a stronger nationality to something else.

“Sucked, made me feel unwelcome. However, Scotland didn’t vote Brexit so this ‘unwelcomeness’ applies more to other parts of UK”

“London is different to the rest of England (and Britain). I don’t think Brexit will affect London that much, because London, I feel is a country of its own. However, I’m certain I’d be worried a lot more if I lived in rural areas, Wales for example”

“In London it is easy to be a foreigner, especially from Finland but some other parts of the country, EU people have experienced unpleasantness or hatred even”

Scotland and London as discussed in subchapter 2.2 voted in favour of remaining in the European Union in the 2016 Referendum, whereas Wales voted to leave which is also a topic found from the data. The first account demonstrates how Brexit was a cause of unwelcomeness. However, because one lives in Scotland which didn’t vote Brexit, *one* does not need to feel less welcome there.

The second account constructs London as *a country of its own*, and Wales as a *rural area* where one would be a lot more worried living in after Brexit. The last account also *others* some parts of the

country as places where *EU people have experienced unpleasantness or hatred even*. Contrary to London, where *it is easy to be a foreigner, especially from Finland*. Assuring one's own residence area is not hostile towards migrants may, in a way, enable migrants to feel a sense of belonging there no matter what. Thus, here especially *othering* one's own place as more accepting than some other areas is a construction of belonging, yet also a construction of a resilient identity by not allowing Brexit to affect them even though it potentially could.

I argue that in some ways explaining one's living area as less discriminative towards foreigners could be understood as a coping strategy. It is helping to cope with the outcome of Brexit, primarily if one categorises oneself as a foreigner and if Brexit is constructed (as I have done in this thesis) as anti-immigration. I have demonstrated under the *active exclusion and non-belongingness* discourse how, for many of the participants, there is a real threat to face discrimination due to being foreign. As seen here under the *othering* discourse, many point out to living in more migrant-friendly places and thus state not having experienced any discrimination. Which could also be understood as a way of expressing that even though the political discourse has said racism is increasing, in one's own area it isn't. It legitimises that it is okay to live and belong there, even as a foreigner.

It is important to add that not everyone who lived in London stated London to be a haven as seen in the former discourses on *non-belongingness* and *active exclusion*. Scotland was more clearly nearly always seen as a haven. However, because I chose not to include or analyse participants' residence area, it is unclear whether everyone from Scotland stated belongingness rather than a loss of belonging.

"Racism has increased in smaller cities but where I live and in my circles, haven't yet experienced any. Other more 'visible' immigrants have"

The above account explains how one has been safe from racism not only because of one's residence area but also due to not being a "*visible*" immigrant. The account categorises oneself as a *less visible immigrant* and thus reports not having experienced racism. As a result, the account is *othering* against more visible immigrants. Nevertheless, the use of brackets around the word "*visible*" does refer to the participant perhaps not wanting to *other* against "*visible*" immigrants yet does it anyway. Demonstrating how people can be very aware of their language use.

"I have thought rationally that there isn't much they can do to me. I'm settled here with a Brit and own my home. I haven't been worried about my personal circumstances. Some others who have not been in employment or are on state benefit worry me more"

"I think I'm safe, lived here for 22 years. But what about the others?"

The first account above is *othering* against other people who have not been employed or are on state benefit. Additionally, the account explains a right to be in Britain by being settled there with a Brit and owning a house. The account highlights that there isn't much that the assumedly mainstream Brits could do to take that away. Thus the worry is not personal, but it is for some *others*. Telling concern over others may in a way be constructing a stronger belonging. As in a way demonstrating that because others are in a worse off position, one should not worry over one's own situation.

The second account is also reasoning a belonging by stating that living in Britain for 22 years will assumedly be enough to feel safe; however, the worry is about *the others*. Although the accounts are *othering*, they are also constructing resilient and caring identities which emphasise that *othering* or categorisation as such do not have to be aimed negatively. Even though they may lead to, for example, exclusive or discriminative behaviour, these accounts are constructing both privileged and caring identities over the Others.

"I honestly don't worry too much for myself. I think too many people are being hysterical about it, just because every now and then there is a lot of news coverage about someone who's lived here for 20 years being treated terribly by the Home Office. Overall I do believe that a normal citizen with a Finnish passport and higher education will do just fine. That's not to say I don't worry about others, which is why I don't want Brexit to happen"

"I'm not really worried because I think my Finnish nationality will play in my favour, whatever the outcome"

For many of the respondents who explicitly stated having a Finnish nationality, Finnishness did play in their advance even though, i.e. not needing to live in Finland. Especially these two accounts construct a belonging through their Finnishness. Choosing to identify as a privileged Finn is, in a way, also *othering* against other nationalities. However, many did not talk about their Finnish citizenship at all (except when I had asked about it in the background questions). Being Finnish seems to play in favour for some of the respondents, however; as shown in the previous discourses above, not for all. Some had actively stopped speaking Finnish in public and in general, tried to hide being foreign. Thus, not for everyone, is Finnishness by no means a superpower.

The Finnish identity is constructed in the above accounts as a resilient survival identity. The first account states that *a normal citizen with a Finnish passport and higher education will do just fine*. Thus there is no need to worry personally besides over *others*. The second account also states that being a Finn will be an advantage *whatever the outcome*. In result, both accounts are building resilient identities and constructing a stronger belonging by *othering* those who are not Finnish.

“I think the impact of Brexit will have less impact on opportunities for EU citizens such as Finns, but it may impact people from newer/poorer EU countries more. I worry for my British friends within EU and what their rights will be”

Here the account categorises and *others* both against newer and poorer EU countries and also British friends within the EU. The *othering* happens by stating that newer/poorer EU countries will experience fewer opportunities than EU citizens such as Finns. Also, by saying that Brits within the EU might lose rights. Thus the account constructs both an older and wealthier EU national identity contrary to the poorer EU citizens. Yet also a privileged Finnish nationality who is in a position to be able to construct a caring identity, against the British friends who might lose their EU rights. The function of the *othering* is to demonstrate one will be fine in Britain and the EU even after Brexit. In result, here especially the account is constructing a strong, resilient identity through *othering* to be able to belong more.

“The increase of visible racism is angering. It’s unpleasant to admit, but as a someone with a certain level of income I’m less worried about my own status because I’m ‘financially desirable’. I’m more worried for my parents, sister and her family”

The account here demonstrates how people are careful with their discourse use and do not want to sound discriminative towards others by stating *it’s unpleasant to admit*. The account is less worried due to being *‘financially desirable’*, highlighting it with the use of brackets, being more worried over the family. Hence, the account again constructs belonging and a privileged identity but also a caring identity. The account is also being aware of *othering* and trying not to do it although doing it anyway.

“Very pessimistic as EU citizens could not vote in it [the Referendum], yet we are an integral part of the British society”

“I was also angry about the injustice – for not being able to vote made me feel like a second class citizen. I felt it was really unfair that even after contributing to this society for 20 years (by paying taxes and volunteering etc), I had no say on the matter while someone in Australia, who had never paid a penny of tax in the UK or visited the country, was able to”

“I am still offended people I know voted to get rid of us, which was the main motivation for most Brexiteers. I have been paying taxes diligently while I personally know British people who live off welfare and don't want to work voted to get rid of foreigners, who are apparently lazy”

Here the accounts are above all *othering* the mainstream British and reasoning why they deserve to be in Britain even more than some Brits. The first account constructs a deserving EU citizen identity by categorising oneself as part of the EU citizens. EU citizens who are *an integral part* of British society, and that's why it was very pessimistic they could not vote in the Referendum. The second account says being *angry about the injustice - for not being able to vote* even after *contributing to British society for 20 years by paying taxes and volunteering*. And yet they were not allowed to vote in the Referendum. The account is *othering* against British people who do not contribute to society, yet who were allowed to vote in the Referendum. The third account also constructs a desirable and deserving citizen identity by contributing to society by paying taxes, while personally knowing British people who live off welfare. These Brits had the guts to vote hard-working foreigners out. This account categorises *us* the foreigners and the Brexiteers as two distinct groups.

All the accounts above all demonstrate reasoning through *othering* why they specifically deserve and should be able to belong to Britain even more than some British nationalities because they are not a burden for the British society but quite the contrary, contributing to society in many ways. The accounts are constructing belonging, yet also identities of resilience and resistance, not accepting the current situation. These accounts are demanding justice, knowing they are deserving more than many Brits. They are showing resistance towards the situation and resilience due to the fact of being in such privileged positions.

“I am in a position that I will be able to remain in the country. There are so many EU nationals alike myself, working age, not claiming benefits, paying my tax, with UK university degree and mortgage tied in this country, that I feel there is no threat that I would be denied my rights”

“The least they could have done is assure the people who have been working and raising their families here that they are secure”

These two accounts above also construct strong deserving identities. The first account constructs a deserving identity by building the discourse through being *working age, not claiming benefits, paying taxes, having a university degree and mortgage tied to Britain*. The rather keen awareness of their deservingness to stay is a sign of a resilient identity. The second account constructs awareness of their deserving identity by categorising as a person who has been working and raising a family in

Britain. Thus they should be assured to stay. Additionally, the account is standing against the British decision-makers who should have assured people alike themselves are secure to remain in Britain. Additionally, the account is *othering* against those who have not been working and raising their families in Britain. A person who is deserving of staying is also deserving of belonging.

To conclude, the function of the *othering* discourse is both to construct a belonging and a resilient identity. Sometimes also an identity of resistance. Some were taking up an identity of resilience, i.e. through applying for citizenship, having decided to stay no matter what. In contrast, others were taking up an identity of resistance by not staying which was demonstrated in the *non-belonginess* discourse. In a way, both constructing resistance, the other one through belonging to Britain and the other through non-belonging to Britain (and through that perhaps belonging to somewhere else).

7.4 Deservingness

The discourse on *deservingness* constructs an accepting identity and belonging to Britain. By this, I mean that someone else has in a way done the competence and *othering* process by stating that the respondent is deserving and wanted in Britain. The participants are not themselves *othering* but giving this responsibility to the powerful Others, which in this case is most likely always the British mainstream. The function can be either to distance responsibility to Others or to reason one's own position through others, which was the case, especially with the previous *othering* discourse.

“The morning after the vote I felt like for the first time in 8 years that I was not wanted. Like I was a 2nd class human. I was feeling very low about the result although in my city the vote was to remain. My feeling has recently changed as I feel my kids will benefit from dual citizenship, and because my employer sent out a ‘we want you email to all its employees stating that they will pay all EU workers settled and pre settled status fees. It almost made me cry. I felt worthy again. And it is not about money – it’s about how it made me feel”

I have placed the above account under the *deservingness* discourse because the employer had reconstructed worthiness. The account is telling a story from the morning after the Referendum. And stating a feeling of not being wanted anymore, to the moment answering my Brexit-questionnaire, saying that feelings had recently changed. A severe belonging reconstruction was needed to feel *worthy again*. The account demonstrates how the employer's email that stated all employees were wanted, brought forth worthiness again. Most of all, this shows how meaningful relationships and other people affect how we feel about our belonging to a specific place. Here, not

just the employer who sent a welcoming email and paid for all employees pre- settled status (that will enable to stay in Britain even after a no-deal Brexit) but also the kids who will benefit from dual citizenship. It is unclear whether the kids have gotten dual citizenship due to Brexit or whether they had it already before. Nevertheless, emphasising that the kids will be fine and free to move between the two countries (Finland and Britain) no matter what an outcome Brexit brings forth. In addition to constructing a belonging, the account is also building an accepting identity.

“Lots of people say to me you will be fine as I’m in a good job and been here for a long time, but they don’t understand emotional stress and feeling of alienation that EU citizens here go through. I’m sad that my British partner will lose freedom of movement”

This account tells how other people enable one to be fine no matter what happens with Brexit. One has a good job and been in Britain for a long time. Lots of people have constructed *deservingness*. The account constructs a deserving EU citizen status although stating that it is the Others (*Lots of people*) who have enabled this. There is a mention of a *feeling of alienation* as an EU citizen, but the last sentence *I’m sad that my British partner will lose freedom of movement* refers to a bigger worry over the British partner than oneself. The account constructs belonging through the reasoning of Others and an accepting identity, accepting what Others have said, although reporting not necessarily being completely fine with the overall situation.

“However due to the privilege that comes with being white and speaking English with almost no accent I often receive comments from British people (even colleagues working in healthcare) telling me how I am ok for an immigrant as I sound normal, am basically British, etc”

“I was a bit shocked to learn how some of my colleagues etc supported Brexit big time and how they wanted to close borders etc. When I questioned them about the whole immigration issue I always got told the same answer how I am ok, but it’s about all the Polish, Hungarian, Romanian and Russian etc people....”

The first account begins by constructing a privileged identity for being a white person who speaks fluent English close to a native level. The account gives responsibility to the British people to enable one’s position as *ok for an immigrant*, who sounds normal. Sounding normal here refers to not having almost any accent and in the result being nearly *British*. Thus, the account is not deserving due to being Finnish, but due to being *basically British*. Also, it is the British people who have stated this *deservingness*. The account accepts being constructed by British people as a privileged immigrant. Even though the account began by *constructing a privileged identity* as being white and

speaking English with almost no accent, the responsibility of *othering* was given to the British people.

In the latter account, nationality has very likely played a role because of the categorisation of *Polish, Hungarian, Romanian and Russian etc. people* as not so ok migrants by the colleagues. The account is accepting the category as ok. However, the full stops at the end of the last sentence refer to disagreement with the colleagues' comments. Both accounts above construct belonging and accepting identities.

"It was a great shock. I felt so sad and felt like all of a sudden all the people around me might actually want to get me out of the country. It was weird at the same time, as I was in the hospital with my poorly daughter at the time and surrounded by immigrant doctors, nurses and other hospital staff, with only a small handful of British around me. Still, all of a sudden, I felt unwelcome. Especially as I am an immigrant living off benefits who hasn't been employed here ever. Not by her own choice though, but it doesn't diminish the fact that I sort of am a textbook example of what sort of immigrants are hated... On paper. On my face everyone is shocked and tells me they didn't want me out, even if they voted for Brexit"

As stated above, timely uniqueness is evident in many respondents' answers. Here the account seems to challenge and question the feeling of unwelcomeness even though surrounded by immigrant doctors, nurses and other hospital staff with only a small handful of British around her. Although surrounded by migrants like her, she still somehow feels different, excluded from the locals British. The account categorises oneself as *an immigrant living off benefits and a textbook example of what sort of immigrants are hated*. The account seems to be constructing an undeserving migrant. Yet, it is Others (*everyone*) constructing her as deserving and wanted in Britain, even though these Others voted for Brexit. The account is constructing herself as an undeserving migrant on paper, but Others are categorising her as a wanted migrant. Thus, the account constructs an identity of acceptance and belonging.

Deservingness, as presented above, is a discourse which constructs belonging and an identity of acceptance. The function is also to shred responsibility of the categorisation and *othering* process to Others who have in this case categorised the respondents as deserving. Next, I briefly combine my empirical findings with previous research and studies introduced throughout the thesis.

8. Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the different belonging and non-belonging discourses Finnish nationals constructed when answering my Brexit-questionnaire in January 2019. The four discourses I found from the data were *non-belongingness*, *active exclusion*, *othering* and *deservingness*. As stated earlier, with an analytical discourse analysis I was able to find discourses from the data that emphasised a loss of belonging to Britain due to Brexit but also discourses that demonstrated a feeling of being welcome in Britain even with Brexit. The use of discourse analysis demonstrated how the study participants used language to make things happen. Additionally, the Finnish participants constructed identities with different functions which are not fixed but changing and under reconstruction all the time.

The data indicated how the Finnish respondents talked about a disruption in their belonging due to the 2016 Referendum result, similarly as in the findings from the study by Guma & Dafydd Jones (2019), who had interviewed different EU nationals living in Wales. Especially the *non-belongingness* and *active exclusion* discourses constructed some form of a loss of belonging to Britain. Nevertheless, many did not state any kind of disruption in their belonging which was illuminated especially in the *othering* discourse. Participants who used *othering* explained and reasoned a right to belong, for example, by having a job or due to having lived in Britain for years. *Deservingness* and *active exclusion* were discourses through which respondents constructed accepting and hopeless identities. Other Brits had categorised the respondents to either deserving migrants or as undesirable foreigners who should go home. The function of the *deservingness* discourse was to construct a sense of belonging.

Based on the questionnaire data the study participants used their language in different ways to construct identities of resistance and resilience to cope with the disruption in their belonging due to Brexit or to demonstrate that no disruption had been made, i.e. either by leaving the country or applying for citizenship, which were evident in the *non-belongingness* and *othering* discourse. The participants also categorised themselves in different ways either *othering* or categorising themselves from the other foreign nationals or the mainstream British people. Some of the participants stated having experienced discrimination and built hopeless identities, yet others reported being categorised as deserving by the Brits and would construct identities of acceptance.

The discourse on *non-belongingness* includes language that constructs a loss of belonging, such as accounts that report wanting to leave Britain or losing friends who have left Britain. After the

Referendum result, many EU nationals did leave Britain, which is known as the Brexodus. Brexodus is also evident from my data for some had either left themselves or had EU national friends leave, many were planning on leaving. Losing friends that have returned to their origin countries, have for some of the Finnish respondents made Britain feel less like home, less belonging. I explain this by people needing meaningful relationships to be able to fit in and have a sense of belonging (Baumeister & Leary 1995, 497). Even though leaving or planning on leaving demonstrates a loss of belonging to Britain, it can also be seen as taking active resistance. Respondents who took power into their hands by deciding to leave if belonging was too shaken, were constructing *non-belongingness* but also identities of resistance. However, not everyone from the data was able to leave even if they reported a desire to, for example, due to their meaningful relations such as kids who had their whole lives in Britain. Similarly, vulnerable groups were recognised in the data of Guma & Dafydd Jones (2019) as people to whom onward migration is not possible due to health or family reasons.

The discourse on *active exclusion* above all constructed a loss of belonging to Britain through accounts that stated experiencing racist and discriminative behaviour. More often respondents stated that they had heard someone else had experienced racism or exclusive behaviour. I placed *active exclusion* as a discourse through which accounts did not construct strong resisting identities but in contrary built hopeless identities. As outlined in section 2.3.1, after the Referendum result, hate crime and post-referendum racism had increased towards anyone seemingly a stranger or an outsider (Komaromi 2016; Virdee & McGeever 2018). No one said that their Finnish nationality was a reason to experience racism. Still, their foreign nationality was something they did not want to advertise but instead hid due to the fear of exclusion. Thus, especially the discourse on *active exclusion* demonstrates the power political and media discourses have in influencing people's discourse use. I placed *active exclusion* as the discourse that potentially leads to a total loss of belonging; however, not necessarily.

The discourse on *othering* includes accounts which built resilient identities to belong more to Britain. Similarly, as Johnson et al. (2004) and Rodin (2016), in their studies, illustrate, *othering* was very evident from my data also. We may feel a loss of belonging when we are ourselves *othered*. Still, in terms for us to feel more belonging, we may be *othering* the Others ourselves. (Jones & Krzyzanowski 2011, 47.) A majority of the Finnish respondents had lived in Britain for over five years, still stated feeling a disruption in their belonging due to Brexit. Nevertheless, many were also

constructing a stronger sense of belonging through *othering* and reasoning why they specifically weren't that worried over Brexit. Instead, they were concerned over some Others who weren't, i.e. working or highly educated. *Othering* Others for these respondents reasoned their own belonging to Britain because there were people in worse off situations. The accounts on *othering* often constructed belonging detriment to the Others, however not necessarily in a negative light.

People distinguish each other between different categories, between themselves as belonging and distinguishing between Others who they see as not belonging, which may result in *othering* between groups (Boreus 2016, 419). Nevertheless, *othering* does not have to be negative or extreme (cf. Hall 1997, 235; Reicher & Hopkins 2001, 34; Boreus 2016, 419). Especially the Finnish participants who used *othering* were often constructing worrying and caring identities, stating that the worry of Brexit was above all towards the more vulnerable people.

Multiple identities presented earlier by Anthias (2006) was also a form of *othering* some of the Finnish participants used in their accounts to construct belonging. One does not have to feel British in terms of belonging or feeling at home and vice versa. One can also feel both British or Finnish or European and still feel belonging to Britain or any country one is living in. For some applying for citizenship helped to belong to Britain, however, because belonging is more than just citizenship (Anthias 2006, 21 – 22), it was not enough or even a solution to everyone. Applying for citizenship is also taking resilience so that one would not be *othered* due to having access to formal rights, just like the mainstream Brits.

Participants of the study took different positions and identities to, for example, construct stronger reasoning and belonging to Britain, i.e. through *othering* other migrants or British people and in a way creating a deserving migrant identity. *Othering* one's own residency as accepting or open-minded towards foreigners in this study is also a way of legitimising one's own reasoning and belonging to Britain. It was very clear from the data that participants who lived in Scotland or London often stated how their areas were different from the rest of Britain. These areas were open-minded and accepting towards foreigners, being areas that had voted to remain in the European Union.

From the data, nationality played a role for some but not for all. Many respondents had lived away from Finland for a long time (some even most of their lives) and did not feel like home there anymore. Thus, many did not mention their Finnishness unless when I had asked it in one of the background questions (q4). Nevertheless, for some being Finnish played in their favour. For these

respondents, the national identity they said was the reason they would be fine in Britain even after Brexit. Often those respondents who categorised themselves as Finns, found the power in their Finnish national identity to reason their being and belonging. In contrast, respondents who categorised themselves as foreigners or immigrants, in general, reported more likely a disruption in their belonging. Nevertheless, the data also included accounts who were cautious and avoided speaking Finnish in public. In my data probably respondents who don't dare speak Finnish in the streets or don't want to promote being a foreigner actively may be promoting their normalness to be able to fit in, as presented by Jensen (2011).

The discourse on *deservingness* is also a discourse through which accounts were not constructing strong resisting or resilience identities but contrary, took up identities of acceptance. Above all, the *deservingness* discourse includes language where the participants stated someone else had constructed the participant as deserving to stay in Britain. The participants were not themselves categorising as deserving but instead accepting what they were met with. Demonstrating how other people reason these participants specific right to stay and belong to Britain. In a way, this can be seen as a way for the participants to shred responsibility to Others so that they themselves would not *other*. In the study by Huot et al. (2016) migrants were constructed as deserving with skills, whereas asylum seekers were constructed as the undeserving, lacking these skills. Similarly from my data, respondents were constructed through an external Other as deserving. However, it was not necessarily a case of nationality but, i.e. a case of living in the country for long or having a job.

The study illuminated how the uncertainties of Brexit have also affected Finnish people, not just Eastern European (Tyrrell et al. 2019) such as the Polish (Rzepnikowska 2019) or Italian nationals (Zontini & Pero 2019). As stated, belonging is not static but everchanging, and for us to belong, someone else may be excluded, however not necessarily. The data indicated that Brexit is an abstract phenomenon with very diverse significations for different individuals. In its most straightforward meaning, Brexit (Britain exiting the EU) has not happened yet, nonetheless still affects the lives of millions of people for better or worse. I hoped to demonstrate the power of discourse, which is not only about describing but actively doing, being timely, historical and contextual. Thus, we must not take discourses for granted but rather be careful in the way we use them. We must bear in mind that the process of inclusion may also create exclusion which may affect one's sense of belonging. Which is, after all, a fundamental human need (Maslow & Frager 1987; Baumeister & Leary 1995).

Overall the findings conclude that even people in seemingly similar situations constructed belonging discourses in Brexit Britain in their own ways. Above all, the use of discourse analysis helped me to distinguish different belonging discourses the respondents built. Thus, I believe discourse analysis has suited well as the method of analysis for this study. The data of this thesis has revealed how differently Brexit has affected people's lives and especially Finnish people's belonging to Britain.

Lastly, the discourses I found mustn't be understood as any objective truths but as my social constructions. Someone else might have found different discourses from the data. The aim was not to find an exclusive truth about Brexit from the beginning denying there is one. I am instead accepting that people have different views and ways of speaking about Brexit. Because language is not stable but everchanging, so are these discourses. Also, the constructed identities may change just the way people present a different position and identity in different situations to different people (Burr 2015, 143). In this case, I analysed Finnish respondents' answers to my Brexit-questionnaire. Thus the outcome of the analysis must also be understood as a result of specific research, during a particular time in a certain culture.

9. Conclusion

Lastly, in this Chapter, I wish to both ponder some ethical considerations and limitations of this thesis as well as give suggestions for further research.

Objectivity is always an essential goal of doing research. It is something we aim for yet can never achieve. As this thesis is broadly based on social constructionism, I must include some ethical considerations among objectivity. Social constructionism regards objectivity to be impossible because it would imply for us humans to step outside of our humanity and view the world through no position at all. Instead, everyone sees and experiences the world from a perspective or another. We all stand somewhere, asking certain questions, using specific theories and assumptions. Thus, instead of aiming for full objectivity, researchers must recognise their positions with the topic and how it might affect the findings. (Burr 2015, 172.) I acknowledge that I decided to approach Brexit through a certain perspective. My perspective surely influenced the way the Brexit-questionnaire was built, depending on what kind of participants took part in it. As grown fond of the topic, I do recognise that more ethical consideration concerning researcher's position is needed.

Primarily, the biggest ethical consideration I *had to* be aware of throughout this writing process was my position as a researcher with the topic and data. I am a non-British Finnish national myself, lived

in and out of Britain before and during this writing process. Thus, I have also been affected by Brexit. I do realise that already some of the questions I asked in my Brexit questionnaire (appendix 1) were guiding towards the problematic sides of Brexit. Nevertheless, I believe my position as *alike* the respondents did play in my favour and helped receive such a rich and unique data. Since 2017 I have lived in Wales a couple of times and travelled all around Britain, never felt any kind of discrimination due to my background. This is just to demonstrate how big of a role the media has in influencing people's discourse use, i.e. towards Wales as noted in the empirical findings Chapter (ch.7), which as an area had voted for Brexit. I have talked about Brexit mostly among Remainers but also some Leavers. It has been evident that people come from different backgrounds and through that have different reasons to vote for something or not to vote at all. I argue it has been crucial raising awareness of specifically the side-effects of the Referendum result from a Finn's perspective, for it has mostly been missing. No one had yet conducted a study on Brexit merely through a Finn's perspective, yet the number of responses in only a week highlight that there was undoubtedly a need for one.

Accurately, the timely uniqueness of the data collection process needs to be emphasised and recognised. Never before in history has there been a situation in which a country has decided to leave the European Union, let alone negotiations on the further relations of the country and the EU have taken place. I am aware that Facebook, as a platform for data gathering, represents a selective sample of people (Valli & Aarnos 2018, 120). Nevertheless, qualitative study samples are if not always, most of the time somewhat selective. Additionally, not all Finns in Britain necessarily have Facebook, let alone are members of the noted above Facebook group. Also, not everyone, during the data gathering week, perhaps had time to answer my questionnaire. The Finnish embassy in London in 2019, estimates that over 20 000 Finns live in Britain (Finnish Embassy, 2019). Thus, even though the gathered data is rich, it must not be portrayed as a full representation of all Finnish people in Britain.

I decided to construct Brexit as a result of right-wing populist rhetoric, and in a way perhaps I myself normalised EU nationals' loss of belonging due to Brexit. Probably because of this, I also found articles where EU nationals belonging was on the agenda, to legitimise my work. Fortunately, I was able to see that there was another side to Brexit than just a loss of belonging, which was a construction of belonging. Someone else could have constructed Brexit as the only legitimate choice in making Great Britain great again. Without Brexit, I would not have experienced such a lively

writing process; neither would I have received such a unique data or written this thesis. Thus, if one were to analyse my own text s/he might find discourse use that in a matter of fact constructs positive aspects of Brexit. Even though I have and remain to strongly emphasise the uncertainty and problems Brexit has caused people, even to myself.

Throughout the writing process, some of my British friends were concerned that the purpose of my thesis would be to ruin the reputation of Britain somehow. As if I aimed to say that foreigners are not welcome there by anyone anymore. I hope it is clear to the reader that this was not the aim by no means. Nevertheless, hearing these concerns has helped me to be more open-minded towards the topic. It has also helped me to *listen* to my data more carefully and not only see the non-belongingness side of Brexit. Additionally, discourse analysis as a method has helped me to understand the bigger picture of Brexit as in the world of discourses Brexit is as real as any other phenomenon or concept. It has also helped me to accept and understand all the different Brexit realities people construct with their language use.

Therefore, not only what we talk about but how we talk about is as important (Fine 1994, 70). As this is a discursive study, I have learnt to challenge my writing and wonder whether I am myself using exclusive or discriminative language. I have had to be careful in my own language use as a researcher acknowledging for example that if I were to talk about Britain voting to leave the European Union, I would myself be excluding nearly half of the electorates who had voted Remain. Sometimes it was also challenging to decide which concepts to use to describe the questionnaire participants and EU nationals in general. I prefer to talk about EU nationals or EU citizens instead of EU migrants for the sake of the uneasy way migrants have been talked about in the media since the *refugee crisis*. However, the Brits are (still) also EU nationals. Thus sometimes, the use of EU migrant has felt like a better solution. My data, as well as some of the research I refer to have consisted of respondents with dual citizenship and thus using non-British EU nationals, has sometimes felt exclusive. However, as aimed to acknowledge throughout this study, categorising or *othering* need not lead to any forms of negativity, exclusion or discrimination.

Brexit is an ongoing process of *othering* (Guma & Dafydd Jones 2019, 1) as well as a cause of both uncertainty and loss of belonging for both EU nationals and British nationals in Europe. Brexit has, in a way, become a construct that legitimises the mistreatment and discrimination of other nationals. Brexit has also brought into light the division of Britain. For this reason, I have chosen to speak of Britain instead of the United Kingdom (UK) as it does not seem that united at the moment.

Krumer-Nevo & Sidi (2012) aim to raise awareness in the essentiality of resisting *othering* in academic writing. They claim that knowing the Other is the strongest driver to do qualitative research. Nevertheless, knowing the Other may become a potential source of dominance, especially when there is a vast difference in social power between the researcher and researched. Acknowledging that when the participants have told the researcher their stories, it is the researcher's way of writing and beliefs that have told their story. (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi 2012, 299.) The researcher holds the knowledge, received from former theories, respondents and other people. The participants' answers may have built a data. Still, instead of their voice being heard in the research report, it is the researcher's voice. (Burr 2015, 174.) Especially the analysis cannot be treated as objective but inevitably selective as already certain questions about certain social events have been decided to ask. An objective analysis would mean describing what there was in a text, without being biased by the analyst. (Fairclough 2003, 14 – 15.)

Thus, even though I have aimed to give voice to the Finnish respondents from my data, it is my way of writing, my chosen theories and my chosen perspective which has written the thesis. However, I do believe this is the closest to *giving voice* as possible. I also think that the gap between me and my data is not wide. Quite the contrary, I emphasise that this work has been dependent on the responses of the Finnish participants, realising that without them, this work would have never become a reality. I feel like I have been in a humble privileged researcher's position.

A need for further research on the topic is crucial; how is Brexit spoken among EU nationals now when Britain has been granted a new withdraw date to the end of January 2020? Have people grown numb or is the uncertainty more tangible than ever as Prime Minister Boris Johnson is determined to leave the EU with or without a deal. All these questions remain unanswered, and different people surely have different answers to them. Another important topic would be to continue to examine how British people are talking and experiencing Brexit and their belonging to Britain. Brexit is an ongoing process that still at the time of writing, in January 2020, has no official definition even though meaning so much to so many. I hoped to understand this mentioned process a bit more and thus chose to write my thesis about it. In conclusion, I have gained a lot of understanding of the reasons behind Brexit and the outcomes of it to different individuals. I hope the reader of this thesis has also learnt more of the so-called Brexit process.

Closing Words

It is the beginning of February 2020, while I am writing these final words for this thesis. In the late evening on the 31st of January, Britain historically withdrew from the European Union. At the time, I was visiting Finland from Wales, just days before I was about to move to England. I stayed up following the Brexit countdown from both the Finnish and British news. Many were celebrating, yet many were also hurt and scared. Still uncertain how Brexit would affect EU nationals who are now under pressure of applying for a new status in Britain. I felt sick to my stomach. It was the first time during this writing process I realised I am far from being an objective researcher. From social constructionism, I, of course, knew there is no such thing as an objective researcher. However, now I realised my position more clearly than ever. In fact, I could be analysing my own texts and get exactly similar results as the Finnish participants of my data. Brexit for me does not only mean my British family might lose their EU rights nor that all 'my people' in Finland could lose their British rights. Brexit for me also means that Britain could potentially be facing an increasing amount of problems, but so could the European Union. Additionally, Brexit for me means that right-wing populism won, rhetoric that excludes and categorises people into groups of deserving and less deserving.

Leaving with Johnson's deal means that a transition period remains till the end of 2020 during which nothing yet changes between Britain and the EU. During the transition period, Britain and the EU decide on the details of their future relations. Nevertheless, now there is no turning back, and Britain will definitely leave the EU, with more information to follow. Brexit marks an end of an era, yet also a beginning of something new and unknown. To conclude, I stand in a position I cannot run away from even if I tried, luckily, I wish not even to try to.

END NOTES

1. A no-deal scenario: All free movement would end between Britain and the EU until otherwise agreed
2. A deal: Determining under what circumstances Britain would leave the EU
3. Article 50: Any member state may decide to withdraw from the European Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements (European Parliament briefing, 2016)
4. EEC: European Economic Community, former European Union founded by Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and France in 1957 (cf. Bomberg et al. 2012; Pinder & Usherwood 2013)
5. Original version: *"Ennen rakastin Lontoota ja pidin sitä kotonani, nyt en tunne enää niin kuuluvani tänne. Jos muuttaisin pois, kaipaisin täältä tiettyjä asioita hurjasti, mutta pystyisin kuitenkin elämään ilman niitä, jos vaihtoehtona olisi, että tuntee asuinpaikkansa kodiksi eikä tunne olevansa vieras. Vaikkei kukaan minulle ole toivottanut hyvää matkaa pois täältä, niin en kuitenkaan ole enää yhtä juurtunut tänne"*
6. Original version: *"Sairaanhoitajana olen kokenut kuinka monet työkaverit ovat lähteneet takaisin koteihinsa EU-maihin, joten työtaakka vain lisääntyy. Kovasti haluaisin itsekin lähteä mutta lapset ovat täällä kotonaan ja heidän koko elämänsä on briteissä"*

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Appendix 1 – Brexit Questionnaire

https://elomake.uta.fi/lomakkeet/22792/lomake.html

I am writing my master's thesis on the topic of Brexit in the University of Tampere. The interest is in how Finnish people living in Britain have faced Brexit and whether it has affected their lives or not. The topic is very current and thus all answers are highly respected and important.

Brexit Survey for Finns living in Britain

The aim of this survey is to find out what kind of perceptions Finns living in Britain (or have recently lived) have on Brexit. The survey consists of 12 questions of which most are open-ended and all will be answered anonymously, either in Finnish or English. The answers will be used as data for a master's thesis carried out by student Nelli Perttula in the University of Tampere. All data will be treated and analysed confidentially.

Background Information

1. Age Younger than 18 years old 19-29 years old 30-49 years old 50-59 years old 60 or older than 60 years old

2. Gender Female Male Other

3. Highest level of education Primary school Secondary school Further education Higher education PhD

4. What is your nationality(s)?

5. How long have you lived in Britain? Less than a year More than a year More than two years More than five years I don't anymore

6. Where in Britain do you live (please give postal code)?

7. Do you feel Finnish? What does being Finnish mean to you?

8. Do you feel British? What does being British mean to you?

https://elomake.uta.fi/lomakkeet/22792/lomake.html

Brexit

9. How did you feel about the Brexit referendum in summer 2016? Have your feelings changed?

10. What kind of uncertainties has Brexit brought with it and how have you dealt with them?

11. Has Brexit changed your life? If, how?

12. Please add anything you may still have in mind concerning the topic of Brexit.

I give permission for my answers to be used as data for a master's thesis carried out in the University of Tampere. Thesis worker: Nelli Perttula Yes No

I give permission for my answers to be saved as data to FSD (Finnish Social Science Archive) for possible further research? Yes No

Osittainen tallennus

Tahdon tallentaa täyttämäni tiedot ja jatkaa myöhemmin linkistä, joka lähetetään antamaani osoitteeseen.

Sähköpostiosoite

Tietojen lähetykset

Tallenna

Appendix 2 – Cover text

I put the questionnaire with a cover text as shown below on Facebook with my own personal account and full name on the 8th of January 2019.

Heippa! Kirjoitan graduani Brexitiin liittyen Tampereen yliopistossa. Olen kiinnostunut Britanniassa asuvien (tai hiljattain asuneiden) suomalaisten näkemyksistä aiheesta. Jos sinulla on aiheesta sanottavaa, niin olisin todella kiitollinen, mikäli voisit vastata oheiseen kyselyyn joko englanniksi tai suomeksi! Aihe on todella akuutti ja ajankohtainen, joten kaikkien teidän vastauksenne ovat tärkeitä ja tervetulleita. Kyseluun vastataan anonymisti ja vastauksia tullaan käsittelemään luottamuksellisesti osana graduni aineistoa eikä ketään voida tunnistaa niistä. Kyselyä saa jakaa!

Hi! I am writing my master's thesis on Brexit and the specific interest is in the Finnish people living (or have recently lived) in Britain. Whether you have anything to say about the topic, I invite you to answer the survey attached. You may answer the survey in Finnish or English. The topic is very current and thus all answers are very important and much appreciated. You will answer anonymously, and all data will be treated confidentially. If you know anyone who might also be interested in the topic, please invite them to answer too!