

Dublin Business School

Trapped between two worlds:

*An exploration of client perspective of the role of culture in
cross-cultural psychotherapy*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	5
Abstract.....	6
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1 Context of the research study.....	7
1.2 Rationale for the research study	8
1.3 Aim of the research study.....	9
1.4 Limitations	10
1.5 Locating the researcher in the research	10
1.6 Structure of the research study.....	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE RESEARCH.....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Identity and culture	12
2.3 Responses to cultural diversity	14
2.4 Cultural assimilation	15
2.5 Multicultural psychotherapy	15
2.6 Role of the psychotherapist	16
2.7 Psychotherapy and inequality.....	17
2.8 Parenting differences: Collectivism Versus Individualism	19
2.9 Language	20
2.10 The expression of emotions	22
2.11 Conclusions	23
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	24
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	24
3.3 Intersubjectivity	25
3.4 The sample	27
3.5 Data collection	28

3.6 IPA procedure	30
3.7 Research quality	30
3.8 Ethical considerations.....	31
3.9 Conclusion.....	33
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	34
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 Intersubjectivity	35
4.2.1 Researcher awareness.....	36
4.3 Theme A: Construction of the self	36
4.3.1 On being divided	36
4.3.2 Dreams and identity.....	38
4.3.3 The process of adaption	39
4.3.4 Conclusion	40
4.4 Theme B: Resistances in the therapeutic relationship.....	41
4.4.1 Conclusion	44
4.5 Theme C: Cultural awareness	45
4.5.1 Conclusion	47
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	48
5.1 Introduction.....	48
5.2 Immigration and the identity change process	48
5.2.1 First style: Nicola’s denial	49
5.2.2 Second style: Angel’s experience	50
5.2.3 Third style: Diego’s integration	50
5.3 Resistances to the interview: A parallel process to psychotherapy	51
5.3.1 Transference and countertransference: The case of Nicola.....	52
5.4 Cultural awareness	53
5.4.1 Collectivism Versus Individualism.....	54
5.4.2 The expression of emotion	54
5.4.3 Cultural awareness of psychotherapy	56
5.5 Summary.....	56
5.6 Conclusion.....	57
5.7 Limitations.....	59

5.8 Recommendations and considerations for future research	59
References.....	60
Appendices.....	71
Appendix 1 Information sheet	71
Appendix 2 Consent form	73
Appendix 3 Demographic questionnaire.....	74
Appendix 4 Semi-structured interview.....	75
Appendix 5 Superordinate themes	76
Appendix 6 Sample Analyses	79
Table 1 Demographic information	28
Figure 2 Themes	34

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ABSTRACT

Rising rates of immigration and the increasing cultural diversity of the Irish society in the past twenty years contribute to the expansion of cross-cultural psychotherapy in Ireland. Most of the literature in cross-cultural psychotherapy focuses on the psychotherapist's perspective and research about client's perspective is still scarce. Thus this research study aims to enrich existing research about the experience of clients in cross-cultural psychotherapy.

The study's goal is to explore and understand the experience in psychotherapy of culturally diverse clients, and to provide practitioners with ideas for working with those populations. The sample of this research study consisted of three clients: one woman from Asia, other woman from Africa and a man from South America; who despite being psychoanalysts, agreed to be interviewed and to talk about their experiences as clients in cross-cultural psychotherapy with Irish analysts. Client's accounts were transcribed and analysed using a qualitative method: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Three themes emerged from the interviews: the construction of the self, resistances with the psychotherapeutic relationship and cultural awareness. This research stresses the need for psychotherapists of being culturally aware of their bias, using psychotherapeutic strategies that are consistent with client's values at the same time than appreciating client's cultural identity. The findings of this study reveal a parallel process between the participants' acceptance of their multicultural selves and their cultural awareness of the psychotherapeutic encounter.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes.”*
Marcel Proust

1.1 Context of the study

Cross-cultural¹ psychotherapy entails the encounter of multiple cultures in the psychotherapy room (Chambers & Smith, 2006). This phenomenon can be regarded as the result of the emerging pluralism in western countries (Leong & Lee, 2006). In particular, in Ireland according to the Central Statistics Office (2011) the number of non-Irish nationals living in the country grew from 224,261 persons in 2002 to 544,357 in 2011, representing 199 different nations. With this growing diversity in the Irish context is inevitable that psychotherapists will more and more meet clients with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Even though most psychotherapists are generally in agreement that issues of culture arise in the psychotherapy room, the lack of a comprehensive definition of the concept of culture produces much confusion and difficulty in the practice of psychotherapy (Sue, 1997). As a result of this what has tended to happen is that the notion of culture has been dismissed in therapy, and clients have been treated according to western beliefs and value systems (Helms & Richardson, 1997). This traditional notion of psychotherapy is described by "culturally encapsulated", calling for more cultural diversity in the delivery of treatment (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Palmer (2002) proposes that there is a need for expansion of knowledge and for more openness, tolerance, curiosity and acceptance to other cultural beliefs and practices as well as for psychotherapists to increase their levels of own cultural awareness and competency in working with diverse clientele (Leong & Lee, 2006).

¹ The terms of: cross-cultural, multicultural or intercultural therapy are used interchangeably

1.2 Rationale for the research

Psychotherapy research involving clients from different backgrounds and cultures has tended to focus on psychotherapist characteristics rather than in client's factors (Chang & Berk, 2010). Research shows that psychotherapist's multicultural competence is considered a critical characteristic for effectively working with clients, beyond ratings of general psychotherapist competence, expertness or trustworthiness (Fuertes & Brobst, 2002). On the contrary perceptions of psychotherapist cultural insensitivity and racial prejudice have been found to negatively affect minority clients' experiences of therapy (Chang & Berk, 2010).

From a psychotherapist perspective cross-cultural psychotherapy implies a wide range of challenges or misunderstandings. Misunderstandings may occur in cross-cultural psychotherapy due to different reasons: when psychotherapists view and evaluate their foreign and cultural different clients according to Western norms and standards (Seeley, 2006), when psychotherapists interpret client's culturally normative behaviours as impediments to achieving Western ideals of identity as resistances to treatment (Chin, 1993) or when psychotherapists reduce culturally specific patterns of emotional disturbance to variations on "universal" psychological disorders (Saleebey, 1994).

Other difficulties in cross-cultural psychotherapy stem from the conventions of psychotherapeutic practice which may violate the norms of the other cultures. Simply by asking clients to reveal intimate personal material or to express emotional reactions, psychotherapists may demand types of disclosures and interactions that client's indigenous cultures prohibit (Draguns, 1985). Furthermore psychotherapy's interest in fostering highly separated, individuated, and autonomous selves may be contrary to indigenous cultural values that emphasize collective welfare, interrelatedness, and interdependence (Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995).

Additionally, when psychotherapists lack cultural perspectives, they are less able to engage their foreign and ethnic clients in creating the shared conceptions of experience that are essential to psychotherapy (Seeley, 2006). Premature psychotherapeutic terminations, as well as misdiagnoses, culturally inappropriate interventions, and fragile treatment alliances, frequently ensue. Cross-cultural treatments that are ineffective are likely to persist as long as cultural perspectives remain outside the parameters of psychotherapy (Seeley, 2006).

Although psychotherapists who conduct intercultural treatments regularly confront such clinical challenges, yet little clinical research specifically examines the role of culture in psychotherapy (Seeley, 2006). Moreover, the limited research that exists on culture and psychotherapy, and on intercultural treatments, rarely has been informed by the views of foreign and ethnic psychotherapy clients. Instead most of this research has been based almost entirely on psychotherapists' points of view (Seeley, 2006).

Compared to psychotherapist factors, studies of client factors and their relationship to multicultural counselling process and outcome are relatively rare (Chang & Berk, 2010). Although studies of cross-cultural counselling scenarios suggest the relevance of different client factors such as ethnicity, identity or cultural values in predicting help-seeking preferences and psychotherapeutic process few studies have examined how clients' perceptions, attitudes and experiences relate to therapy process and outcome in cross-cultural counselling relationships (Kim, Ng, & Ahn, 2005).

1.3 Aim of the research

The cultural diversification of psychotherapy poses a variety of challenges for clients who attend psychotherapy with another individual whose native language and culture differ from theirs (Seeley, 2006). This study aims to acquire a better understanding of client's experience in psychotherapy with psychotherapists from a culture that differ from theirs.

This thesis seeks to highlight the client's perspective to enhance the understanding of whether and how culture matters in the therapy relationship. The main goal is to acquire a better insight of clients' experiences when attending cross-cultural psychotherapy. Secondly, the goal is to understand what works in cross-cultural therapy and finally to enhance psychotherapists' cultural competence in therapy.

1.4 Limitations

This research study is focused on the experiences of clients who attend cross-cultural psychotherapy in order to identify their personal experiences. For this purpose a qualitative research is carried out. The research is based on the analysis of three interviews from an Interpretative Phenomenological perspective. The aim of the interviews is to provide rich information from client's viewpoints; obviously any qualitative research is potentially influenced by the stances and beliefs of the researcher. This can be regarded as a limitation however it can also be regarded as an inevitable reflection of the complexity of working with individuals' multiple realities.

1.5 Locating the researcher in the research

My interest in cross-cultural psychotherapy is seeded from my personal experiences as a foreigner living, working and studying psychotherapy in Ireland. My upbringing in a mono-cultural environment has shaped my viewpoints and experiences which have been challenged later in my life as a result of my immersion in a new society. This is mainly due to my work in an intercultural context with individuals who have been discriminated due to cultural reasons and secondly by my personal experience in psychotherapy with a psychotherapist from a different culture and with a different language than mine. These factors, alongside with the lack

of client's voices in the psychotherapeutic research have strongly contributed to develop my interest in the role of culture in psychotherapy.

1.6 Structure of the research study

To begin, the literature review chapter firstly will examine the constructs of culture and identity. Secondly responses from the psychotherapeutic field to cultural diversity alongside the role of the psychotherapist will be examined. To conclude responses to cultural diversity, such as parenting styles, the use of language and the expression of emotions will be reviewed. Subsequently, the design of the study will be explained in chapter three. Analysed results will lead to discussion which will examine the findings of the study in relation to the literature review. In conclusion, recommendations will be made in relation to the findings obtained.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE RESEARCH

*“Silence is her angel as well as her enemy.
I feel in the gaps for her
And in so doing
I silence her further.”*
MireilleAstore

2.1 Introduction

This research study is focused on cross-cultural relationships in psychotherapy and examines how cultural factors manifest in the clinical setting. In focusing on cultural issues, other highly significant social factors, such as class and gender, are not explored but the literature suggests that the most neglected are the issues of culture (Eleftheriadou, 2010).

The research that exists in culture and psychotherapy and on cross-cultural or intercultural treatments rarely has been informed by the views of foreign or ethnic psychotherapy clients. Instead, most of this research has been based fundamentally on psychotherapist’s perspectives (Seeley, 2006). Despite limited client’s viewpoint, the research studies available have shown that clients tend to prefer psychotherapists from the same ethnic group (Harrison, 1975).

2.2 Identity and Culture

Identity denotes the sense of self and embraces elements that make a human being both unique and similar to others (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). The formation of identity is mediated by different factors: psychological, biological and cultural or social influences and thus is frequently influenced by life experiences (Mann, 2004). According to Markus & Kitayama (1991) as the source of values and personal beliefs, culture gives individual’s and group’s identity just as it limits and controls individual choices. The inevitably presence of tensions and splits within any cultural system, as claimed by Macintyre et al (1981) has significant

implications for the development of the self and for the practice of psychotherapy because it introduces into life the notion of multiplicity (McLeod, 2005).

In the case of immigrants, Pederson (1996) states that the adjustment process to a new culture is different for every individual and depends on many features. Yoshizawa-Meaders (1977) designed an identity development model based on different styles of adjustment to a new environment. The first style is characterized by the denial of one's own culture, the second one is defined by the need to hold onto old traditions and the third one involves an integration between one's own cultural identity and new influences. This styles will be further on discussed in relation to the experiences of the participants in this research study.

Despite the usefulness of considering the identity change process for immigrants in different stages or styles (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), Sue and Sue (1991) point out that "cultural identity development is a dynamic process" (p. 141), recommending the use of stage models from a flexible perspective.

While there is very little agreement by the cultural theorists about the meaning of culture (Halton, 1992), there is however a general acceptance that culture is a process that is not static but constantly changing in time and space within a given society (Eleftheriadou, 1994). Alternatively, culture may also be described as simply what is meaningful to a group. For example, cultural songs and rhythms can bring people together, providing the cultural group with a profoundly emotional experience (Storr, 1992). Moodley & Palmer (2006) point out that the concept of culture should not be treated as a global entity but as far as possible be disaggregated into a number of discrete variables or "constructs", such as values, ideologies, beliefs or preferences. Similarly, Ahmad (1996) states:

"stripped of its dynamic social, economic, gender and historical context, culture becomes a rigid and constraining concept which is seen somehow to mechanistically determine people's

behavior and actions rather than provide a flexible resource for living, for according meaning to what one feels, experiences and acts to change” (Ahmad, 1996, p. 190).

2.3 Responses to cultural diversity

Despite different types of psychotherapy such as Psychoanalysis, Person-Centred or Cognitive-Behavioural therapy are based on differing theoretical standpoints, they are all based on models of treatment which arise from the developed Western worlds’ perspective about the mind, emotional distress and healing (Bhugra & Bhui, 2006). These different types of psychotherapy were “monoculture” in nature meaning by this, that they were designed and applied in the context of Western industrial society, and had little to say about cultural diversity (McLeod, 2009).

A psychotherapeutic model which develops in a particular country, a specific historical era and during a concrete and scientific period inevitably promotes these influences in its mental representation of the world and the self (Marsella & White, 1982). Additionally within each society and its broad culture, there are sub-cultures which also shape definitions of normal from abnormal, healthy from ill, in need or help or not. Hence culturally determined states of distress give rise to models or treatments which are in accord with that culture’s understanding of distress (Marsella & White, 1982).

For example, in India is accepted that a “possessed person” can be cured by involving the local community in the healing process, thus possession becomes a means of seeking help in that specific cultural context. Knowledge that spirits of the ancestors and gods are present on earth and can possess an individual’s body is a prerequisite in a society which offers the possessed person culturally compatible healing leading to relief from distress (Perera, Bhui & Dein 1995). Sue and Zane (1987) suggest that for psychotherapists in order to be culturally credible is

necessary to conceptualize problems in a manner that is consistent with the client's belief system (Bhugra & Bhui, 2006).

Even though all psychotherapies are grounded in a specific culturally determined "model of mind" and its accompanying formulations about interventions and treatments (Bhugra & Bhui, 2006). Nowadays, however psychotherapy has responded to the trend towards multiculturalism in alternative ways. While some approaches try to "assimilate" or adjust client's culture within the therapy field, other approaches consider 'culture' at the core of a person's identity (McLeod, 2009). Below these models will be explored.

2.4 Cultural Assimilation

The psychotherapy community in the second half of the 19th century, attempted to react to the political and personal pressures arising from the equal opportunities movement and debates over racism by developing strategies for building a greater awareness of cultural issues into psychotherapy training and practice. This phase which generated a considerable literature on "cross-cultural and "transcultural" approaches to psychotherapy, signified an attempt to assimilate a cultural dimension into mainstream practice of psychotherapy, however it can be argued that this was not enough (McLeod, 2009). These approaches reduce culture to shared values, beliefs or behaviors, rather than viewing it as generative and constitutive of psychological experience (Seeley, 2006).

2.5 Multicultural psychotherapy

Multicultural psychotherapy incorporates the concept of culture as the centre of its image of the person. This new, cultural approach (Pedersen, 1991) was initiated from the perspective that membership of a culture is one of the main influences on the development of personal

identity. Consequently, the emotional or behavioural problems that a person might bring to therapy are a reflection of how relationships, morality or meaning are understood and defined in the culture in which a person lives his or her life (McLeod, 2009).

Multicultural psychotherapy is not based in an exhaustive training in different cultures and norms. Instead of depth knowledge in cultural issues, competent multicultural psychotherapists should be able to apply a schematic model of the ways in which the personal and relational world of the client can be “culturally constructed” (Falicov, 1995). Hence, the core of multicultural therapy is a sensitive interest and a genuine curiosity about the cultural experience of other people (Falicov, 1995). In relation to the aims of therapy, the task is to be able to appreciate client’s cultural identity and how the person defines himself or herself in cultural terms (McLeod, 2009). From this perspective, cultural identity is crucial in shaping and maintaining the way that a person defines problems and solutions, and the assumptions that he or she holds about what it means to be a person and what it means to be in relationship (McLeod, 2009). Following the role of the psychotherapist in the cross-culture encounter will be reviewed in more detail.

2.6 Role of the psychotherapist

The role of the psychotherapist is based in an attitude of equality, attempting to avoid hierarchies in description of behaviour. According to Eleftheriadou (1994) psychotherapists who work with clients from ethnic minorities need to explore client’s feelings at the same time as accepting client’s distrust and anger toward the majority culture (Eleftherriadou, p. 34, 1994). This approach emphasizes an appreciation of the differences in order to enhance true contact (Evans, 1996). Additionally, David and Erickson (1990) argue that psychotherapists need to adopt a quality of curiosity and empathy towards the cultural world of others at the same time than a similar attitude towards one’s own culture (McLeod, 2009). Furthermore, one

specific skill that can be observed in effective multicultural psychotherapists can be described as willingness to talk about cultural issues (McLeod, 2009).

Alternatively Ramirez (1991), states that the common feature in all cross-cultural psychotherapy is the challenge of living in a multicultural society. From this perspective Ramirez claims that a central aim in working with clients from all ethnic groups should be the development of “cultural flexibility”. Ramirez (1991) points out that even members of a dominant, majority culture point out the feeling of “ being different”, a sense of mismatch between who they are and what other people expect from them. The approach taken by Ramirez (1991) involves the psychotherapist matching the cultural and cognitive style of the client in initial meeting, then progressing on to encourage different experiences or behaviours in a given culture. A high degree of self-awareness and cultural flexibility on the part of the psychotherapist is needed to conduct this approach (McLeod, 2009).

It is essential for psychotherapists to be aware of their own stereotypes, attitudes and feelings in relation to people from other ethnic groups (McLeod, 2009) because some clients may have difficulties in trusting psychotherapists from a different ethnicity. Fundamentally, in Ireland psychotherapists are from the majority culture, and in consequence could be identified with white and racist society. Thus psychotherapists are seen by their clients "as both part of the problem and part of the solution" (d'Ardenne & Mehtani, p.78, 1989). This ambivalence towards the psychotherapists may be presented in resistances or transference reactions, which highlights the need for psychotherapist of being aware of cultural issues (McLeod, 2009)

2.7 Psychotherapy and Inequality

In the therapeutic encounter, both the culture and the self are present at any one time and throughout the cross-cultural psychotherapeutic process, the psychotherapist needs to be aware of both dynamics. Gilbert and Evans (2000) argue that psychotherapy theories lack awareness

of multicultural issues. Therefore, psychotherapy needs to question cultural assumptions and to integrate into its frame a sense of cultural awareness in order to respond effectively to clients from different cultures and contexts (Gilbert & Evans, 2005).

Ahmad (1996) declares that culture has often been used to divert attention away from factors such as social inequalities, imbalance of power or racism in the lives of ethnic minority communities (Ahmad, 1996, p. 190). Thus psychotherapists need to be self-reflective and examine assumptions which might unconsciously introduce and enact an imbalance of power in the therapeutic encounter (Eleftheriadou, 2006). An intensive psychotherapy may be experienced by the client as repletion of racial oppression and its accompanying power issues. To neglect this potential could simply generate a barrier that could conclude with premature termination and treatment failure (Eleftheriadou, 2006).

Andreou (1999) points out that psychotherapists have to balance the inner, private self of the client emerging within the cultural and racial context. It is important for psychotherapists to check and make sure that clients' conscious and unconscious experiences have really been understood. This implies checking through verbal and non-verbal feedback and the general emotional atmosphere in the room. If clients feel safe, and that their cultures are validated, they will share meaningful cultural elements. Otherwise, if clients sense the psychotherapist's discomfort or unfamiliarity with the issues, they may bring more neutral and impersonal cultural information, leaving out the affect (Steiner, 1996). In order to prevent this, the psychotherapist has to be able to remain open-minded, curious, tolerant and familiar with culturally diverse matters.

Differences in parenting style, language or expression of emotions between clients and psychotherapists may have an impact in the therapeutic encounter. Below, these components will be explained.

2.8 Parenting differences: Collectivism Versus Individualism

For psychotherapists who treat clients from other cultures, the conceptions of parenting need to be broadened so that they include cultural perspectives (Roland, 1996). Thus psychotherapists may investigate cultural specific themes of the parenting that their foreign and ethnic clients may have received. Roland (1996) considers that the need for attunement is strong among those foreign and ethnic clients because they are accustomed to highly interdependent interpersonal relationships. Thus those psychotherapy treatments should be tailored to individual's needs. For example Indian and Japanese clients frequently use modes of nonverbal communication in order to establish attunement with their psychotherapists (Seeley, 2006). These nonverbal modes include numerous varieties of silences, each of which conveys particular feelings and meaning within their culture. Consequently, psychotherapists that are unfamiliar with these meanings may misunderstand the nonverbal modes of communication of their clients (Roland, 1996).

Theorists, from Klein (1935) and Bowlby (1958) to Winnicott (1960) have conceived of the infant as situated in a matrix composed of itself and its biological mother or its main caregiver (Seeley, 2006). However the mother-child dyad is not the main socializing unit across cultures, rather it is a phenomenon restricted to the nuclear family common to the industrialized West, and that is changing due to women's increased employment outside of the home. In many societies such as in Africa or South America, infants are cared for by more than one mother figure or by an extended social group, making their attachment to multiple caregivers the norm (Kurtz, 1992). Hence foreign and ethnic clients are unlikely to conform to Western expectations regarding matters of autonomy, differentiation and attachment. Their culturally distinctive patterns of separations and individuations affect the development of their identity and merit therapeutic investigation (Seeley, 2006).

2.9 Language

Psychotherapy is primarily regarded as a talking cure. Indeed, psychotherapy depends in large measure on verbal interactions between clients and psychotherapists. But despite the obvious importance of mutually comprehensible conversations to the therapeutic enterprise, the implications for psychotherapy in cases where the client undergoes therapy in a non-native language have been insufficiently examined (Seeley, 2006).

In a research carried out by Pavlenko (2008) investigated the question whether multilingual individuals feel that they become different people when they change languages. Pavlenko (2006) analysis of the feedback of 1039 individuals revealed that two thirds of participants reported feeling different when using another language. Participants linked their perceptions of different selves to three main causes: cultural and linguistic differences, different levels of language emotionality; and different levels of language proficiency (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 10).

In the therapeutic encounter the lack of a common native language between psychotherapist and client may frustrate psychotherapeutic progress on various ways. Clients who speak a foreign language in therapy are continually translating from their native tongue into a foreign one. Such constant translation requires considerable intellectual effort, distracting clients from the emotional work of the therapy. But in addition culturally specific concepts defy easy translation. As a result, many clients who speak a second language in psychotherapy find it difficult to provide their psychotherapist with clear and precise portraits of their psychological distress (Bash-Kahre, 1984). Moreover, in cross-linguistic encounters, the linguistic nuances and changes in intonation that inform verbal communication are frequently lost (Flegenheimer, 1989).

The use of a non-native language in psychotherapy has further implications for intercultural therapy. Native languages are fundamentally bound up with early emotional experiences. The

mother tongue, which is acquired in infancy and in early childhood, acquires an association with early affects, fantasies and conflicts, alongside sensory experiences and relationships (Greenson, 1949). On the other hand, second languages typically are acquired later in life and frequently are learned in impersonal institutional settings. In consequence, they are often detached from the intense primitive feelings that were experienced in the native tongue. Additionally, when clients speak a second language in psychotherapy, primary feelings and experiences are often unavailable to them and therefore to their psychotherapists (Amati-Mehler, Argentieri & Canestri, 1993).

Pérez-Foster (1999) points out that the work in English with non-native English speakers can be: *“a pseudo-therapy” which simply sides with the client’s resistance to the mother tongue and the mother era, or a “quasi-therapy” where the essential material is lost in the complex cognitive traffic of bilingualism...*” (p. 202).

In relation to non-verbal communication Lago & Thompson (1996) declare that preschool children seem to be able to communicate and relate to children from different cultures, but this varies with development as gestures and movement patterns become more culturally defined. Moreover physical proximity between the psychotherapist and client will vary depending on individual attachment patterns, gender and according to cultural norms. These include eye contact, physical proximity or forms of address behaviours or gestures (Eleftheriadou, 2006). For example, in many cultures the right hand is used to shake hands. In Muslim cultures to offer someone the left hand may be seen as disrespectful, since the left hand is considered “unclean” and is not used for food intake (Eleftheriadou, 2006).

2.10 The expression of emotion

The expression of emotion is a facet of the cultural diversity that is central to psychotherapy. Different cultures have varying understanding of which emotions are “acceptable” and are allowed expression in public (McLeod, 2009). Additionally individuals who inhabit different cultural settings acquire divergent emotional repertoires, and because these repertoires are related to “*different ways of being a person in radically different worlds*” (Kleinman & Good, 1985, p. 3). Translating emotion words across cultures is not simply a matter of identifying equivalent terms in another language. Instead, it requires an understanding of the different cultural worlds in which emotions are situated (Seeley, 2006). For example, the emotion known as “amae” in Japan which is highly valued and refers to profound feelings of interpersonal interdependence an interconnection is unmarked in the American emotional repertoire (Doi, 1981).

Farooq et al. (1995) have found that people from Asian cultures tend to express depression and anxiety through physiological and bodily complaints rather than in emotional or psychological terms. Furthermore, Marcelino (1990) suggests that in Philippines' communities a comprehension of emotion words is only possible if Filipino terms of relationships are understood. These examples show one important challenges for multicultural therapy. Cultural differences strikes at the heart of the therapeutic endeavor and therefore the impact of cultural influences needs to be taken into account in order to gain a better understanding of how clients from different cultures may feel (McLeod, 2009).

2.12 Conclusion

After an examination of the literature on cross-cultural psychotherapy it is suggested that the recognition of client's culture can have a profound impact on the psychotherapeutic alliance. However there seems to be a lack of research on the client's experience, with the aim of shedding light to this matter this research will explore the experiences of clients in cross-cultural psychotherapy. In the next chapter, the participants, recruitment process and methods used for the research will be explained.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter elaborates the rationale for choosing a qualitative paradigm, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), as the most appropriate methodology for this research study. It explicates the key philosophical assumptions underpinning IPA and how this influenced the position of the researcher and the intersubjectivity process. The chapter also describes the procedures that were used to gather and analyse the data, and finally the ethical considerations of this study are outlined.

3.2. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Qualitative paradigms offer the researcher the possibility of understanding complex and subtle material that emerges within the therapeutic process or in the research inquiry (McLeod, 2011).

Thus, in order to capture the nuanced description of the complex and subjective experience of the participants in cross-cultural psychotherapy, a qualitative approach was utilized.

For the purpose of this research study the qualitative approach selected was IPA. The aim of IPA is to explore exhaustively how participants make sense of their personal and societal experiences (Reid, Flowers, and Larkin, 2005). This distinctive approach to qualitative research combines key ideas from phenomenology, ideography and hermeneutics. Firstly IPA is phenomenological in that it is concerned with studying an individual's personal perceptions or meanings as opposed to giving an objective perspective of individual's accounts (Smith and Osborn, 2007). Secondly, IPA gives the opportunity to explore individual cases in order to develop an idiographic understanding of participants, what it means to understand a particular participant's experiences, based on in-depth analysis (Bryman, 1988). Thirdly, hermeneutics

strives for interpretation and highlights the active role of the researcher in the dynamic process of the research (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Nevertheless, IPA's method emphasizes that both the participant and the researcher make personal interpretations of the process, thus it is considered as a two-stage interpretation process, or a "double hermeneutic" where the researcher is trying to understand the participant's interpretations (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Due to the active involvement of the researcher in the analysis, which is mediated by the researcher's own conceptions, language, social interaction and culture, the researcher needs to be aware of her own values and subjectivity in order to prevent the interference of these aspects with the quality of the research (Yardley, 2000).

3.3 Intersubjectivity

Different contemporary approaches to psychotherapy, such as Gestalt, Object Relations, or Self-psychology can be described as intersubjective since they recognize that human development is mediated by social contexts (Blackstone, 2006). Similarly within the research process, the context that influences participants' accounts includes not only the research environment and the wider cultural context but also the intersubjective relationship between the participants and the researcher. Thus, IPA assumes that both researcher and participant influence the research process which is considered as culturally rooted (Smith et al., 2009).

In order to make sense of the participants' accounts, the researcher needs to understand the ways their culture or world view and other cultures are comprehended (Ibrahim, 1985). This understanding includes an awareness of one's own philosophies of life and capabilities; lack of such understanding may interfere with the psychotherapeutic process (McKenzie, 1986). Thus only through the willingness to have personal cultural "givens" questioned through dialogue, can cultural differences be bridged and "cultural encapsulation" can be avoided (Pederson, 1991).

Therefore, for the purpose of this research the notion of intersubjectivity was introduced. Intersubjectivity is understood as a means to illustrate the causal interrelations between “two separate conscious minds” (Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft, 1994). Intersubjectivity describes the relatedness between the researcher and the participants and accounts for the ability to make sense of each other (Larkin, Eatough & Osborn, 2011). Thus the researcher reflected upon her encounters with the participants to gain awareness around her own world views and the intersubjectivity process.

Due to diverse reasons people who participate in a qualitative research interview may struggle to express what they feel or think. The goal of the researcher in these cases is to interpret why some participants do not wish to self-disclose as well as seeking to clarify what participants say or do not say (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Therefore in the interests of the quality of the study, the researcher is expected to take account of this interpretative process (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA has been criticized for not attending sufficiently to the influences of the researcher’s responses on participants’ comments (Woofitt & Widdicombe, 2006). However in this research study, the researcher made explicit the impact of personal beliefs, experience or biases by systematically using the technique of the empty chair in her own therapy (Smith et al., 2009). By using the technique of the empty chair the researcher could re-experience the interviews and establish an internal dialogue with each one of the participants in her own therapy. This allowed the researcher to be more aware of her own subjectivity, transferences and countertransference as well as the participant’s struggle with the researcher that may inform participant’s experience with their psychotherapists.

3.4 The Sample

The sample was purposely based on the participants' attendance to cross-cultural psychotherapy (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA advocates a homogenous and small sample size with the aim of enabling a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences to emerge, suggesting between three and six participants as an adequate sample size (Smith & Osborn 2008, p. 51). In this study three participants were recruited: one from Asia, other from Africa and another one from South America. The homogeneity was compromised because of the cultural diversity of the participants and the researcher. However despite of the differences the researcher obtained a reasonably homogenous group in which all the participants were in-training psychoanalytic psychotherapists residing in Ireland.

Participants were initially recruited via email. Nonetheless due to the poor response and the reduced number of psychotherapists in Ireland who have attended cross-cultural psychotherapy, the researcher had to contact them via phone calls. One participant was recruited via a phone call and two participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Patton, 2002).

The sample consisted of three psychotherapists; two participants were female and one was male. Participants ranged in age from 30 to 55 years old. They were all attending psychoanalytic psychotherapy at the time of the study and they had been attending therapy for between 2 and 15 years. Information about participant demographics with pseudonyms is presented in Table 1 below.

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to rate the level of satisfaction with therapy on a scale of 1–10 where 1 indicated “very unsatisfied”, 5 indicated a “neutral” experience and 10 indicated “very satisfied”, the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information

Pseudonym	Gender	Continent of origin	Age	Participant approach	Psycho-therapist approach	No. of years in psychotherapy	Helpfulness of therapy (1-10 Scale)
Nicola	Female	Asia	30s	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	2	6
Angel	Female	Africa	40s	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	6	7-8
Diego	Male	South-America	50s	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	Psychoanalytic psychotherapy	15	8

3.5 Data collection

According to McLeod (2001, p. 3) the main goal of qualitative research is the understanding of “how the social world is constructed”. This research study explores the views of clients in psychotherapy from different cultures and backgrounds, therefore a flexible open and honest approach is required to embrace different perspectives and views of the world. A semi-structured interview was chosen as the most suitable data collection method (Smith et al., 2009).

An interview schedule was created with ten broad and open-ended questions, which was informed by the literature review and the researcher’s personal interest (Lofland & Lofland 1995). The questions were reviewed by the researcher’s supervisors and colleagues. Feedback was given to the researcher and amendments were made following recommendations.

Throughout the IPA interview, the researcher was the one who guided the process, but the participant led the interview. Initially minimal prompts were used to guarantee that adequate

detail was collected for a meaningful analysis, however as a result of the interactions between the researcher and the participants, several questions were added or modified during the interview (Smith & Osborn 2003). After the first interview the researcher realized that the participant was highly interested in the researcher's professional/personal background; this curiosity enhanced the alliance and elicited the participant's free talk. Thus with the aim of encouraging participants to talk at length about their personal experiences, the researcher decided to include in the forthcoming interviews a brief introduction of herself in order to be a model for the participants.

The participants were interviewed at different venues according to their preference. The researcher arranged a room in her college for one of the participants; one participant was interviewed in his private practice and another one at a quiet coffee shop. All participants received by email an Information Form (see Appendix 1) explaining the purpose of the research; however this was explained again at the beginning of the interview. The form was handed to all the participants and the Consent Form (see Appendix 2) was read and signed by them.

In order to assist with establishing and maintaining rapport, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. One of the participants in the research refused to be recorded so notes were taken during the interview. Additionally, notes were taken immediately after each interview to capture the subjectivity of the researcher and the intersubjectivity of the process. The researcher used the technique of the empty chair in her therapy to re-experience the interviews and to shed light on possible bias.

3.6 IPA Procedure

In order to investigate the participants' experiences of cross-cultural psychotherapy, transcripts of the interviews were subjected to IPA. Each interview was analysed as a case study in order to embrace the individuality of each participant (Smith et al., 1999). The initial process of the analysis involved the active engagement of the researcher with the data through the reading and re-reading of the interviews. This task resulted in notes being made about what were considered key phrases or words, including summaries of content and the initial interpretations of the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

These notes were condensed to produce emerging themes for the transcript (Eatough, Smith & Shaw, 2008). The themes identified by the researcher represented the "essential" nature of the transcribed interview data (Willig, 2008). After each individual interview was analysed, the researcher began to identify connections and divergences between emerging themes (Smith et al., 1999). Themes were clustered together creating a master list of themes; by this way the analysis moved "from the particular to the shared" (Smith et al., 2011, p. 57).

3.7 Research Quality

Despite of the high level of subjectivity in IPA (Smith et al., 1999), one of the advantages of this analysis is the richness of the collected data (Moretti et al., 2011), however the data collected needs to be interpreted and coded in a valid and reliable way. One of the criteria that qualitative researchers use for evaluating the validity of the research is the criterion of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the methodological rigor and credibility of the study design and analysis (Morrow, 2005).

In this study the researcher was sensitised to different aspects of the data due to her interpretative position as a foreigner, female and psychotherapist in training who attends cross-cultural psychotherapy. Checks were regularly made to ensure that emergent themes were consistent with the data and were not merely a result of expectations that had been shaped by the researcher's awareness of relevant literature or by personal biases (Smith et al., 1999). Additionally, different techniques were used to establish and maintain trustworthiness throughout the process of data collection and analysis such as the use of a researcher's journal, supervision, the use of the researcher's therapeutic space as well as the use of rich descriptions in the analysis.

Firstly, supervision and the use of the researcher's journal helped the researcher to recognize her prejudices and expectations based on the understanding of the inherent subjectivity in IPA (Creswell, 2013). Secondly, psychotherapy helped the researcher to acknowledge transferences and countertransferences regarding the intersubjectivity nature of the research process. Thirdly through the provision of rich descriptions, direct quotes and relevant non-verbal utterances such as laughter, sighs or pauses the content of the interview was reflected in the analysis (Creswell, 2013).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in qualitative research includes different ethical considerations that may affect the outcome of the study. Prior to conducting the research, approval by the DBS research ethics board was received. Ramos (1989) points out three elements: the researcher/participant relationship, the researcher's subjective interpretations of data, and the design itself (Ramos, 1989). These principles were addressed in this study.

In relation to the researcher/participant relationship, the sample consisted of psychotherapists who agreed to explain their experiences as clients. Clients without psychotherapeutic training were considered as a vulnerable group, therefore they were screened out. Through this method possible harm was minimized and the power imbalance between researcher and participants was better adjusted (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2010). Regarding the researcher's subjective interpretations of data, the researcher was engaged in different activities to guarantee a deep reflection and a rigorous analysis. As previously mentioned, three of these activities were: personal therapy, individual supervision and the use of a journal to record reflections or hypothesis through the research process. Additionally, ethical considerations in relation to the research itself were addressed. The researcher obtained written consent forms from the participants in the study (Appendix 2). This principle adheres to the issue of respect and dignity to the participants so that they are not forced into participation and have access to relevant information (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2010).

Therefore information on key elements of research such as purpose, procedures, and participants' rights was handed to the participants (Appendix 1). The participants were aware that the participation in the research study was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Confidentiality was also provided by the researcher by using pseudonyms and by being very selective when describing defining characteristics of participants (Polit & Beck 2012). Furthermore identifying data, recordings and transcripts² were kept secure during the research.

² Transcripts notation used in quoted extracts (Smith et al., 2009, p.120):

- L 21: Line 21
- ... :Significant pause
- (Therapy): Explanatory information added by the researcher

3.9 Conclusion

IPA was selected to explore how clients perceive the cross-cultural psychotherapeutic encounter. In this IPA study, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with three psychotherapists in relation to their role as clients. Even though it is recognized that the analysis in qualitative research is based on the interaction between participant accounts and researcher interpretative framework, IPA has been successfully used to offer a theoretically-informed analysis of clients' accounts in the past (Glasman, Finlay & Brock, 2004). The next chapter will give voices to the psychotherapists who participated in this research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

*“The foreigner lives within us:
He is the hidden face of our identity
the space that wrecks our abode,
the time in which understanding and affinity founder.”*

Julia Kristeva

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse data that illuminates the experiences of clients in cross-cultural psychotherapy (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Three psychotherapists, from Asia, Africa and South America were interviewed in order to know how they make sense of their experiences as a client in cross-cultural psychotherapy (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The responses revealed a rich diversity regarding their experiences and their meanings of culture. This can be mediated by participants' differences in relation to country of origin, gender, age or number of years attending psychotherapy. Despite the variability in the participants' answers, three main themes were generated: the construction of the self as a process, resistances in the psychotherapeutic relationship encounter and awareness around culture.

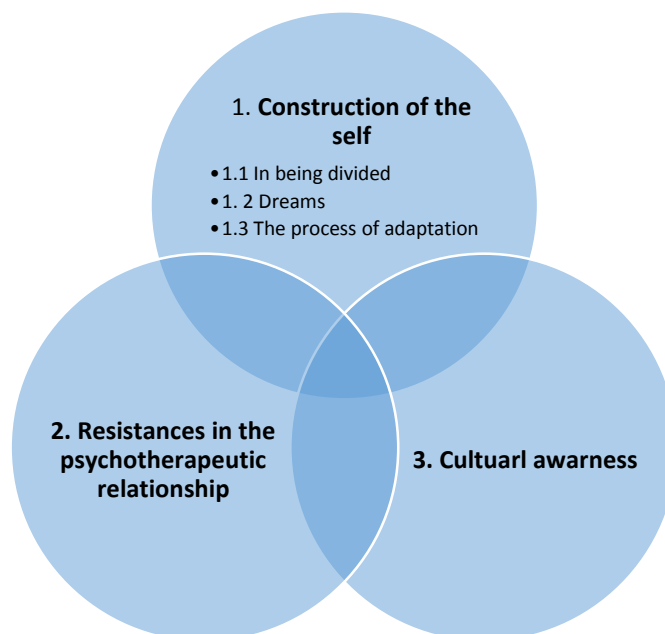


Figure 2: Themes and subthemes

These themes were taken to indicate shared understanding between participants, however the analysis also acknowledged the range and diversity of participants' responses to questions. In the following IPA analysis, extracts from interviews were selected as being examples of the main themes that emerged.

In addition to the themes identified above, the researcher has also found that intersubjectivity played an important role in the research process. Despite not being considered as a theme by itself due to the focus on the rich accounts of the participants, the researcher felt that something was missed out in the analysis and it was necessary to look at the intersubjectivity from a theoretical and experiential perspective as explained below.

4.2 Intersubjectivity

The meeting with each one of the participants in this research has hugely impacted the researcher. After meeting with Nicola, Angel and Diego the researcher could feel the struggles and difficulties that the participants have encountered in psychotherapy and in their lives. Nicola, the Asian participant, sat on the edge of the chair, shrunken with her arms folded, with her coat on. Nicola's emotions camouflaged by cold smiles and her refusal to be recorded or to disclose any personal information, provoked physical pain in the researcher and feelings of being dismissed or irrelevant. The African participant, Angel, had a constant wide smile, a relaxed posture along with a strong sense of identity and knowledge of her culture what created a strong curiosity in the researcher around her culture and a desire to be educated. Finally, the philosophical stance of the participant from South America, Diego, his openness and his reflections around deep contradictions in his identity alongside an acceptance of her current situation elicited an emotional response in the researcher based on a sense of sameness.

4.2.1 Researcher Awareness

Throughout the interviews the researcher was aware of her own defences which manifested as a sense of anxiety in her abdomen. At different stages during the interviews the researcher was brought back to challenging periods in her life such as her arrival in Ireland when she struggled between being herself and being integrated in an unknown country. Furthermore, the researcher could relate to the participants' experiences of being "the only non-native English speaker" or "feeling different" which led her to feel isolated at the same time as embracing compassion towards the participants. These traces of the participants and their unique experiences lingered and challenged the researcher, however the researcher could overcome these issues by embarking on a journey of exploration in her personal therapy and within the research analysis, by accepting differences and by allowing a close collaboration with her supervisor and a rigorous analysis of the content of the interviews.

4.3 Theme A: Construction of the Self

This theme is presented in the three participants, however the sense of identity is related to different features. Reflections around identity are made at different levels: on being divided, dreams and identity, and the process of adaptation.

4.3.1 On being divided

Diego offered a very personal and reflective account about his life journey, by relating his first experiences in Ireland attached to the feeling of being unique in a place where foreigners were rare. At the same time the use of the first person plural (We) denotes a sense of belonging within a reduced exclusive group, his own community. However according to Diego's experiences, after many years living in Ireland the notion of "being a foreigner" became more

salient due to the predominance of foreigners that led him to lose the sense of exclusivity. Integration appeared more difficult to him when the melting pot of varied ethnicities and cultures in the current society occurred. In his speech there is a sense of temporality and evolution regarding the sense of self in a new place.

Diego L.29: When I arrived in Ireland ... there were not many foreigners here. It took me months to see a black person in the street... There were six people from my community at that time, in the region of Dublin, maybe in the whole of Ireland, and for long time we were just the six of us and it was kind of ... I was fascinated by it, it was very easy for me to find my way around. Probably I was less a foreigner than I am now so was much easier to integrate those days I think ... almost you are like a big fish in a small pond, everyone wants to have a piece of you ... so I had a great time being able to connect with people ...

The construction of the self in a foreign country can be regarded as a process. Diego explains how the enjoyment of being unique shifted towards a sense of struggle and loneliness after acknowledging his lack of belonging to his community and by not being seen as special anymore. Thus a need to reconnect with his own culture emerged, bringing issues to the forefront in relation to feeling divided between two cultures.

Diego L. 46: But a few years ago I think I started struggling a bit ... With the private practice, the loneliness but the interesting thing is ... the early years in Ireland, because I arrived very early, my own community has grown, but I am not part of it, because I missed the boat, and suddenly there was this boom of people from my country in Dublin, and I didn't belong to it. I started feeling a bit stuck in a limbo zone, I have Irish citizenship but I am not Irish, I am living between ... in the limbo. So I realized that's the reality for the rest of my life.

Angel also recalled the process of being divided as a result of moving to Europe but from a collective perspective, the split is between the self and the family.

Angel L. 178: In my culture people have to be strong, they have to appear strong whatever the circumstances. In my culture we deal with problems ... you do your ritual so it's what helps you to cope with your life and to find meaning, sometimes you find meaning in spirituality, and then you are here. So what I see in Africans that are coming here it is that they struggle when they are isolated. Family and rituals sustain them, if that is broken it is hard to live in society, in Europe it's different it's the self-versus family.

It appears that the notion of culture is very relevant for Angel to the point that people's identity is defined in relation to culture e.g. "to be strong", or the use of rituals as a way to cope. As Diego mentioned previously, the feeling of loneliness appears when the individual is disconnected from the community. Thus there is a double dichotomy between the self and family, and also between the values of Africa and Europe. From the transcript it can be seen that Angel does not utilize the first person singular, her use of language moving from the first person plural to the third person plural may denote a sense of self within the collectivity, could this be seen as a way of trying to talk about herself in her culture? Angel seems to be a strong woman and she briefly mentions that she travels a lot to see her family. Hence it can be assumed that she keeps connected with her roots and she feels a belonging to her own group. Thus the cultural sense of identity is embedded in Angel who from a cognitive perspective embraces her differences as part of her culture.

4.3.2 Dreams and identity

All the interviewees are analytically trained so the unconscious has a central role in their work and in their narratives. The unconscious is manifested in dreams; in the case of Diego, his dreams are related with a location or with being an "outsider".

Diego L. 120: The issue of being a foreigner or being an alien, is something recurrent in my dreams, being in the north of Dublin or leaving Ireland, is very recurrent in my dreams, there is always something about a place. I want to stay here but I think my psyche is still struggling with it, still looking for home, but can be the history of my life (laughter).

Another personal account of her own identity is offered by Angel when she explains one dream.

Angle L. 215: Mine? (Talking about her thesis) it was an African subject, they (her supervisors) wanted a different aim ... because it was their preference. In my dream ... I was a male person wearing a beard, so that was questioning my identity, I said this is not going nowhere, this is not me. That's when I say in my culture if I see this it would mean this, when the therapist is struggling I say in my culture we use these words...

In this extract Angel speaks in first person singular to talk about her professional identity however there is a shift towards the end where she uses the first person plural to refer to her experiences in psychotherapy; that may denote the use of the collective to talk about her emotional identity.

In both cases it is described how the participant's identity was compromised; in the case of Diego in his dream his identity was associated with being an "alien" and in the case of Angel with being a male with a beard. Consequently inconsistencies between internal desires, the inner self and others' demands are manifested in their dreams. It seems that their dream brought awareness into their experiences, for Angel in relation to being an African woman and for Diego the acceptance of his struggles.

4.3.3 The process of adaptation

Diego recounts the process of adaptation in a new culture through his experiences in his training as psychoanalyst. Diego's hesitancy might indicate the difficulties in relation to being too self-aware and with being different and even though he was "able to get off his shelf", his self-conscious use of the language may indicate that the process of accepting himself was not easy and was uncomfortable for him.

Diego L. 256: In my training I was very much the foreigner, and that somehow made me be too self-aware in that kind ... even as a child I was never so self-aware, so it's kind of ... I went inwards too much, and I feel I suppose now that just now looking at that issues I feel able to get out of my shell. And you get very self-conscious in your own use of the language ... you don't ... If you don't feel well in being different you almost blame but you blame in the wrong way because you try to make yourself not visible ... and I became very aware of the language, other people communicating.

Diego explained that when a person is not comfortable with being different he may introject the badness of being different by blaming himself and making himself invisible. In doing so, he uses “You” what denotes a distancing from the self “I”. This probably can be a process he has experienced and that can be related with Nicola’s experience, the Asiatic and youngest interviewee.

On her arrival at the interview Nicola apologized for being late and despite being previously informed about the methodology of the research, she had a strong reaction when she saw the dictaphone. In a firm tone of voice she said “I don’t want to be recorded ... you can take notes but no personal information. Ireland is a small country and I don’t want to be recognized”. The intermittent absence of Nicola is due to her lack of willingness to share personal information or unconscious material.

Perhaps this refusal of being recognized is related to a sense of feeling uncomfortable in being different or in connection with past traumas. Her confusion around her own identity is explained: “People conceptualize me as a Vietnamese or Japanese, they think we are all the same from Asia, every country has differences ... in lifestyle. In Europe it is the same, people in Ireland are different compared to Spain ...” When I asked her to clarify what kind of differences she hesitates: “... but in relation to family relationships there are not many differences ... there are some differences”

Nicola gives a closed answer making clear to the researcher that she doesn’t want to share personal details. However, towards the end of the interview Nicola showed an interest in the researcher and she asked some personal questions in relation to the researcher’s background and country of origin. At a certain level a sense of identification occurred and this allowed Nicola to move towards a position of openness.

Nicola L.89: I left my family when I was 14 years, then I have not lived there since. I love to be myself, finding my way. This is not common in the country where I come from, most of young people stayed with family until they graduate, before they get married.

It appears that Nicola is in a process of individuation by rebelling against the traditional values and norms from her country of origin.

4.3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion all the participants expressed their views about the construction of the self as a process with different levels. Diego's journey through acceptance of the ambivalence of his life, Angel's strong cultural sense of identity or Nicola's struggle and search of her own identity, point out that all participants are at different levels in relation to the construction of their own self which was explored in this section.

4.4 Theme B: Resistances in the Therapeutic Relationship

The engagement within the analytic process may be influenced by the individual's mental stage of development. As part of the function of life experiences and intrapsychic processes, the interviewees expressed resistances such as regression, repression, displacement or intellectualization in the therapeutic relationship and concurrently within the research process. Prior to the interview, Nicola refused to fill out some general questions from a demographic questionnaire. Throughout the interview, Nicola articulates her idea of therapy as a process that facilitates the encounter of two "unknown" people. These responses can be regarded as strong resistances or defence mechanisms within the research process. It may indicate that Nicola is

comfortable with the anonymity, thus her participation in the interview may be a threat for her sense of safety, therefore her desire of remaining “unknown” during the interview.

Nicola L. 49: (Therapy) It’s a way of knowing each other in another context, it’s a kind of process ... nobody knows about me ... I’m there (in therapy) as an individual. My culture affects but in therapy ... nobody knows about each other that much.

The researcher felt an ambiguity in the sense that Nicola agreed to take part in the research and at the same time she was very hermetic and consciously she limited the information shared with the researcher; perhaps this ambiguity is based on a culture of complacency. The researcher experienced a strong countertransference, manifested as abdominal pain, based on Nicola's desire not to disclose personal information or even avoiding conversation; it can be suggested that Nicola’s desire of “being invisible” is achieved through her analysis.

Nicola L 56: In the analytical approach there is not conversation. There is not eye-contact from my perspective, I am in the couch ... people may be more comfortable speaking in their own languages, but analysis is not about comfortable feelings, it’s about the techniques that are used from Freudian or Lacanian tradition, every tradition is different.

The link between the analyses with its theoretical component may denote some sort of intellectualization. It can be suggested that psychoanalytic theory can be used as a way of distancing the subject from the “true self”. Conceivably, Nicola’s lack of experiences of safety prevent her from building a strong alliance with her psychotherapist or with the researcher.

Angel and Diego, from a different standpoint, also expressed the peculiarities of psychoanalysis in relation to the psychotherapeutic encounter. Angel emphasized her need of being culturally understood so that she is open to explain herself when needed.

Angel L. 144: Psychoanalysis is kind of different because if the therapist makes a statement “this is how I understood and this is not”, then I’ll say my culture do this, this means this in my language ... So yes I know I am more open.

Furthermore Diego talks about his psychotherapist stating that he has a strong identity rooted in his own culture that enhances the co-creation of a therapeutic space where two persons with two different cultural backgrounds meet and connect. Thus in comparison to Nicola, Diego and Angel experience therapy as culturally embedded:

Diego L. 169: I don't see my therapist, is behind me! but is very different to recall (non-verbal communication), with my other therapists was different ... but he is very warm is very fatherly, this is in a good time in my life, he is very Irish, is very Irish father, it's funny because he is very cultural self-aware, he has a very good knowledge of sociology, poetry, and he brings that to the work, I am meeting him in that level. I also come to the therapy with my culture, he sees me like that.

However this paternal countertransference, based on a father-Irish figure, was avoided for Diego for many years. When he recalled his four previous therapists, he realized that they all belonged to minority groups. Thus he recognized a search for identification with his therapists by avoiding the predominant culture. He explains this resistance of having an Irish therapist as so "don't feel overwhelmed by the Irish". L. 96

Diego L. 107: (talking about his second therapist) ... so again there was a choice because she was Jungian, it's an approach that is not the most common in Ireland. It's not the most common maybe there was a feeling of being a minority so looking for sameness in the same way, an unconscious motivation there is something about connecting, of not wanting to be overwhelmed, being a minority as well as a Jungian analyst.

Therefore the initial resistances of Diego in therapy has evolved towards a mature and balanced position based on openness, holding and understanding of his own process in therapy and outside the analysis. The split between his introvert and extrovert self are being integrated and assimilated by his new way of being where the suppression leads to a holding space.

Diego L. 196: Mmm, I think there is a time for anything ... I think it was beneficial to be years ago in the couch and be angry in silence, but now at the moment I think I really enjoy the process of understanding things, and be back and look at how I integrate things in my life that, to hold on to the suspense on my life, to hold rather than suppressed. There have been things, because it's very introvert work ... I think I have suppressed my extrovert self a lot, by being more occupied with my inner world and the world of other people...

In the case of Angel, her resistance with the interview is manifested through her use of the language from a collective standpoint. However as the interview progressed, Angel's narrative brings light on to this matter, stating that in her culture it is not common to talk about the self because the sense of collectivity is prioritized. Thus her avoidance in talking about her own experiences rather than being a defence within the process of interviewing is the way of talking in her own culture. It can be suggested that she use her clients' or others' experiences to talk about herself, thus the collectivity is used to talk about the self. Her hesitance in recognizing the lack of the "I" in her own language may denote the sharing of something very valuable and perhaps a fear to share too much, which may explain her attempt of deviating the attention towards the researcher's opinion. Additionally it can be considered that her own identity is culturally defined by different constructs "we laugh ... we speak about others ..." thus renouncing to those constructs may imply an identification with the predominant culture and a fragmented self.

Angel L. 259: For example my cousin had a problem with her husband and she was trying to explain it ... you learn that we actually ... we don't speak about ourselves and we try to look at others ... how do we actually communicate? We laugh, we joke, we speak about anger, we speak about others but actually in the language itself ... in the language itself it is not "I" in the language it's about collective, actually listening to my sister or my cousins and then I think: It is not "I" in it, it is like me and myself, there are two people in it. We struggle about this, there is a sense ... but what do you think?

4.4.1 Conclusion

Even though the researcher was not looking for psychotherapists with similar background, interestingly the three interviewees were psychoanalysts. This may indicate a parallel process between the development of the self from "not to be seen on the couch" towards a "holding space" where integration of the self can take place and defences can be assimilated. Resistances of clients in their analysis were explained with regards to their cultural experiences.

4.5. Theme C: Cultural Awareness

Nicola, Angel and Diego showed different levels of recognition of their own culture in the psychotherapeutic encounter.

In the case of Diego, after more than 15 years in analysis, he points out that recently the culture has acquired a central role in his therapy. According to him, this is due to the interest of his therapist and his invitation to explore and reconnect with his traditions, rituals and values. This indicates the need for a therapist to be culturally aware and to explore issues around culture. In relation to his cultural values Diego states that just now he feels that those are understood by his therapist. Talking about his therapist he says: “He actually makes me think about my culture, it’s interesting for me, he is interested in symbols, cultural issues as well, and he always brings me back.”

In comparison to his previous analysis, which last 9 years, Diego explains that currently he questions his identity, however before through a process of sameness he was not given the opportunity to reflect on his authentic self. Here it seems that a parallel process takes place where Diego relates to the researcher as an equal calling her by her first name, perhaps in the transference the interviewee sees himself reflected.

Diego L. 129: That’s an interesting question Lorena because I never thought about that ... the others treat me the same in a way, the current one makes me think about the theme of identity, the things that I am sacrificing ... and never had it before. I think he sees me in connection with my culture, and he has a deep knowledge of Irish culture as well. I’m living in a limbo zone and being aware of those things that I am sacrificing because there is a mourning ... I never had that before.

Conversely, Nicola expresses briefly her ideas about the impact of culture in psychotherapy pointing out that cultural knowledge is not a significant condition in psychotherapy: “It will be helpful if we know each other’s culture but would not be necessarily, anything relevant would come out in the session ... I don’t really consider the nationality in psychotherapy, I don’t

mind” (L. 67: Nicola (in analysis)). This may suggest that Nicola relies on the psychodynamic process to avoid voicing cultural issues. Equally Diego, who has lived in Ireland over two decades, acknowledges that for many years he repressed his own cultural identity in order to fit in the host country: “Maybe unconsciously in all those years here, in my process of adaptation I have to repress or suppress quite a lot of my cultural identity (L175: Diego). Perhaps this is a process that Nicola, who has been residing in Ireland for five years, is experiencing and so to feel integrated in the current culture she is forced to suppress a part of herself.

When Angel explains about how she chose her psychotherapist, she acknowledges how important the language and her psychotherapist’s knowledge about Africa was for her. Angel’s laughter may indicate that she was uncomfortable recognizing the need for a psychotherapist experienced in African culture, probably a difficult task for her due to the scarcity of psychotherapists with an African background in Ireland.

Angel L. 92: I wanted someone who at least speaks French or that has been in Africa somehow, I didn't want to waste my time explaining everything ... I wouldn't have gone with someone who was trying to learn about the Africa culture, I wanted someone experienced (laughing).

Angel described what she considers a very beneficial intervention in therapy, she felt culturally connected with her current psychotherapist when in the first session she offered her a glass of water therefore her psychotherapist’s identification with her own culture has enhanced the analysis.

Angel L. 308: That therapist (her first therapist) never offered me a glass of water, and then I had my other therapist that offered me in the first session a glass of water. In my own culture I would have done the same so in some way I culturally connected with that therapist. Any kind of active kindness is also cultural constructed, this is why the glass of water.

Finally, when interviewees were asked about further recommendations for psychotherapists in relation to the cross-cultural encounter Nicola refused to give any recommendations, however

Angel and Diego agreed on the need to be culturally aware and informed. Diego highlights the importance of valuing the culture of origin and recognizing the differences within oneself as a way to enrich the new culture. By using the phrase “you are almost Irish” Diego may be recalling introjections about not being “good enough” as result of being a foreigner, at the same time as trying to integrate his identity as a person who is living in Ireland but is not Irish.

Diego L. 269: Psychotherapists need to be very sensitive and appreciating a culture that is not even yours. That could be very firming to the client, to look at things, good things there, acknowledge the good bits in yourself and appreciation ... It is important to recognize the differences ... it's accepting the way you are, with differences ... I wonder about this phrase “You are almost Irish”. It's a very damaging thing to say to someone, you are good but not enough, very nasty phrase.

4.5.1 Conclusion

As was seen in this section, the awareness around culture can be represented in a continuum that goes from a denial of the differences to the integration of those differences and its recognition in the psychotherapeutic encounter. In the next section the resistances in the cross-cultural relationship will be explored.

*“For, as I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in
A circle nearer and nearer to the beginning”
Charles Dickens*

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, research about cross-cultural psychotherapy will be compared with the findings of this study. Bearing in mind the similarities among the participants in this study, it appears relevant to consider the notion of identity with respect to being an immigrant and a psychoanalyst. Theories in relation to the construction of the self as a process will be discussed alongside defence strategies used by the participants, specifically in the case of Nicola, will be discussed. Finally the theme of cultural awareness. In addition, the results of this study also highlight the opportunity for powerful therapeutic strategies in cross-cultural psychotherapy. Limitations will be argued and recommendations will be made.

5.2 Identity Change Process

Considering the identity development model designed by Yoshizawa-Meaders (1977), the cultural identity development of the participants in this study was analysed. It is suggested that each of the participants in this study uses a different identity development style which could explain the variety regarding their responses and experiences.

5.2.1 First Style: Nicola's Denial

The first style is characterized by the denial of one's own culture in an attempt to fit in the new context. This can be viewed in Nicola's case; through a process of conformity, Nicola prefers the values of the majority culture (Atkinson & Gim, 1989), underestimating thus the values from the Asian culture, her culture of origin where "interdependence, interpersonal harmony, and family stability" are seen as the ideal (Chiu and Lee, 2004, p. 218). In accordance with this Nicola says, "I don't have a particular thing about my culture" (L. 84). Additionally by choosing to leave her family home when she was fourteen, she distances herself from the Asian cultural ideals and she also denies the "culture shock" when the new culture was encountered, as opposed to Diego and Angel. The denial of her own culture is reflected in Nicola's answers about her analysis. Even though Nicola points out that her own culture is not relevant, according to the current research this may be masking her rejection of her own identity as an Asian woman living in Ireland. A psychotherapist's curiosity and openness about her own sense of the self in relation to the culture where she is living could help Nicola to embrace the multiple aspects of her identity.

"Culture shock" is a process which comprises a whole set of experiences of confusion, rejection and loss (Littlewood & Lipsedge, 1989). Diego recounted his arrival in Ireland and the shock that was for him not seeing people from different ethnicities in the street (L.29). Angel talked particularly about the experiences of shock in relation to others, the asylum seekers. She explained how asylum seekers experience a "shock" because while they struggle with the sense of safety and normality (L. 62), ordinary people worry about "small things". It can be suggested that this process has also been experienced by Angel, but she may verbalize it as a shared experience.

5.2.2 The Second Style: Angel's Experience

The second style occurs when immigrants hold onto old traditions and isolate themselves. Angel seems to be very attached to her cultural values and connected with members of her own community. However she starts to query her own cultural rigidity which may lead towards the development of her own autonomy (Yoshizawa-Meaders, 1977). This can be observed when Angel talks about her family members and she realizes how they struggle with expressing their experiences without talking about themselves, a constant mechanism used by her throughout the interview, the use of the community, the “we” to refer to the individual, the “I”. After the encounter with Angel, the researcher was left wondering if Angel would use the same way of expression in her own psychotherapy and how her psychotherapist would manage it, if so.

5.2.3 Third Style: Diego's Integration

Individuals in the third group flexibly express their own cultural identity while they are also receptive to new influences; this is what Yoshizawa-Meaders (1977) termed “trans-cultural identity” or “hybrid identity” in the words of Akhtar (1999). This third stage may refer to Diego's experiences, who in his therapy embraces his mourning for losses and realizes that he has sacrificed many things while living in a “limbo zone” (Eleftheriadou, 2010). As a result of the integration of the initial “culture shock” with the grief, he overcomes the dichotomies and integrates both cultures into his being by filling in the “transitional area” (Winnicott, 1953) with the local culture. Diego acknowledges this process stating that within his analysis he prefers to understand and integrate his differences rather than suppress them.

Nevertheless, this complete level of integration is discussed among authors, some of whom argue that a person can never fully be integrated in a new culture. This idea is captured in Diego's words by the notion of “being almost Irish, a very nasty phrase” (L. 227) he says,

because this implies not being good-enough or the incapacity to be completely Irish. Kohut (1977, p. 280) states that the adaptation of immigrants' psyche after cultural change can take "several generations". Eng and Han (2000) insist on this idea explaining how rather than being integrated many individuals may feel trapped between two realities or two worlds, "while remaining in an existence of suspended assimilation". Diego describes this experience symbolized by the figure of a shaman, as he states: "It's almost like a shaman that can go to another world, you have something that other people don't have and it gives you a certain flexibility, it allows you to move in two different worlds, not belonging to them" (L. 76).

5.2 Resistance to the interview: a parallel process to psychotherapy

Bowlby (1976) proposed that underpinning defences "is detachment, a deactivation of the fundamental and central need for attachment" (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 137). Therefore, when individuals are detached from their culture of origin or country, as in the case of Nicola, Angel and Diego the stable sense of self can be challenged that may lead to the occurrence of regression and adaptive defences such as splitting or denial (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1984).

Furthermore Conroy (2008, p. 100) states that immigrants need to cling to elements of their culture in order to experience a sense of identity continuance, this continued connection can act as a transitional space. This phenomenon was noticed in the case of Angel who, prior the interview, introduced the researcher to a friend of hers, with whom she shared the same language and ethnicity.

When individuals are unable to emotionally contain conflicting feelings from the old and new culture, defensive splitting occurs (Segun, 2001). This can be seen in the case of Nicola, who projects all her negative feelings onto her old country while she idealizes the new one (Walsh

& Shulman, 2007). Through this process mourning is avoided and there is a denial of grief (Eleftheriadou, 2010).

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) discuss how these defence mechanisms protect individuals against unbearable feelings such as guilt and anxiety; the repairing of such splitting leads to successful immigration outcomes (Dean, 2004, p. 31). Diego explains that thanks to his therapy, he could reconnect with his cultural rooted values and reconcile with himself acknowledging the split “I am not from here, I am not from there”. Findings indicate in psychotherapy “the need for respecting the role of defence mechanism... allowing space for feeling and experiencing the mourning process” (Walsh & Shulman, 2007, p. 370). Perhaps this is a process that Nicola is repressing, that Angel is questioning and that Diego is accepting.

5.3.1 Transference and Countertransference: The Case of Nicola

In this section the researcher will focus on the case of Nicola, who due to her resistant nature appears as if her life is contained in the present and there is no continuity with her past. Below, transference and countertransference will be explored.

From an intersubjectivity perspective, transference and countertransference are psychoanalytic concepts that are co-created by the meeting of two individuals (Hoffman, 1992) and they are used to describe the feelings evoked between the client and the psychotherapist (Eleftheriadou, 2010). The understanding of the researcher’s countertransference can be particularly useful with clients who are impenetrable (Eleftheriadou, 2010) and it can indicate a parallel process with the psychotherapeutic encounter. This is reflected in the case of Nicola by her negative attitude to collaborating with the interview process. Even though initially, the researcher could not verbally transmit the understanding of Nicola’s situation, the researcher patiently allowed herself to experience Nicola’s behaviours such as her desire to change the time of the interview just one hour before the agreed time, her late arrival to the interview, her refusal to share

personal information or her rejection to being recorded. This attitude indicated to the researcher how Nicola's unexpressed feelings or repressed emotions were displaced into behaviours. Furthermore, the recognition of tensions in the researcher's body as a consequence of feeling "irrelevant" allowed the countertransference to emerge and the researcher could contain Nicola's emotions. Due to the numerous references from Nicola to psychoanalysis from a theoretical point of view, the researcher left the interview wondering if Nicola could really engage with her own analysis or if she would use the couch as a way to hide or escape from reality.

Curry (1964) has developed the concept of transference to the notion of "societal transference". This includes all that the person may transfer from their cultural experiences to the psychotherapeutic alliance. In the interview, the researcher gradually came to understand the importance for Nicola of the "shared foreigner background" (Yi, 1998). Towards the end of the interview she said: "You are so lucky for being from such a lovely place, I've been two weeks in the south of Spain... in my own work in my country I used to work with migrants... I don't have a particular thing about my culture" (L. 84). The transference can suggest that Nicola idealizes the researcher's country and she underestimates her own country that may be related with the feelings experienced for the researcher in the countertransference of being "irrelevant".

5.4 Cultural Awareness

The notion of collectivism versus individualism, the expression of emotion, the use of language and cultural awareness within the psychotherapeutic encounter define the cultural awareness among the participants in this study.

5.4.1 Collectivism Versus Individualism

The perspectives of the participants in this study highlight the diversity in the way of thinking about the person. On the one hand, the Western manner of dividing up psychological reality into self and other does not capture Angel's reality. She has a different conception of the self and others as a collective or interdependent. Markus and Kitayama (1991) defined this interdependent construction of the self as way of "seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship" (p. 227). As an example of an interdependent sense of self Angel describes how in her culture she talks about herself by using others' experiences, therefore there is not a rigid border between oneself and others (Fajans, 1985). Hence this notion of her identity should be respected and explored in her own psychotherapy.

On the other hand, a basic premise in western culture is the belief in a separate "self" and the emphasis on individualism (Sue, Ivey & Pedersen, 1996). Nicola, whose culture of origin is Asiatic, claims through a process of identification with the Irish culture that her goal in life is to find "her own way". In relation to psychotherapy, usually independence and individuality are the goals to achieve in western psychotherapy, that can lead to a conflict among ethnic groups which value the collectivism and define "healthy" behaviours differently as is reflected in the case of Angel, who states that rituals and family are the best tools in order to overcome difficulties in her culture (Pérez-Foster, Moskowitz, & Javier, 1996).

5.4.2 The expression of emotion

One of the implications of the different senses of the self is the way they frame the understanding and expression of emotions. The three participants in this research pointed out that in their own languages there are different terms to refer to emotions; Angel described how in her culture to talk about emotional pain, people prefer to use the word "pressure" rather than

“stress”, since the latter is related to “white people” and to be hurried. Thus the term “stress” in her African culture means to identify with the Western values of mental health. Similarly Nicola and Diego indicated different ways to express their emotions in their respective cultures. Firstly, Nicola stated that in contrast to many people in Asia, she doesn’t show her emotions therefore her strong sense of individualization. In relation to Nicola’s attitude, Eleftheriadou (1994) argues that when there are noticeable differences, ethnic minorities often prefer to remain invisible in order to prevent being perceived as “defective”. Throughout the interview with Nicola in the countertransference, the researcher experienced a strong desire of hiding or “not being seen” expressed by Nicola’s desire of maintaining confidentiality and not being recognized within the research.

Secondly, Diego acknowledges the understanding of emotions as an internal experience but emphasizes the open expression of emotions in his country of origin. That implies a big difference in comparison to the Irish society where people are more reserved and avoid physical contact more. Thus in his process of acculturation Diego developed his introvert self more, leaving aside his extrovert self, rooted in his South American culture.

Thirdly, Angel’s notion of expression of emotion is related to the group and is expressed as a shared event, highlighting the need of being strong, laughter and avoiding crying just with the exception of funerals. Therefore, the focus of emotions in collectivist cultures is intersubjective, based on the sharing or participation in emotions rather than “having” them in an individual manner (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). In contrast to collectivist cultures, western cultures treat emotions as private and personal representations that come from within (Taylor, 1989) as in the case of Diego. Psychotherapists who work with culturally diverse individuals must be informed of the different ways that people can communicate their feelings.

5.4.3 Cultural Awareness of Psychotherapy

Two of the participants in this study strongly emphasized the need for curiosity, openness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity and appreciation of others' culture in the psychotherapeutic relationship, as well as the need to include the notion of multicultural psychotherapy as an element integrated in the training of psychotherapists. Nicola and Diego reflected on their experiences in their training and they noted the lack of intercultural studies, calling attention to the need for greater cultural awareness and intercultural training.

In the psychotherapeutic encounter, Diego and Angel were recommend to explore and to value cultural issues at the same time as learning from others in order to help individuals to integrate the good parts of the culture within the self (Eleftheriadou, 2010). Furthermore it is also important to explore and embrace elements of commonality and sameness that link diverse communities and cultures. Eleftheriadou (2010) points out that this is the most important area in order to prevent splits or pathologies due to cultural differences. In this study the researcher addressed the similarities and differences with the participants, the former is related to the idea of being an immigrant or foreigner and trainee in psychotherapy, the latter is related to having a different culture, age, gender or the psychotherapeutic approach chosen.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter the responses of the participants in the study were linked to the literature about cross-cultural psychotherapy. Participants' resistances within the research process were considered as a parallel process within their experiences in psychotherapy and specifically the case of Nicola was analysed. Finally participants' cultural awareness was explored in relation to the collectivism approach of Angel and the individualistic approach of Diego or Nicola. Additionally differences regarding expression of emotion were considered. While Nicola

dismissed the impact of culture in psychotherapy Diego and Angel highlighted the relevance of being culturally aware in the psychotherapeutic encounter.

5.6 Conclusion

The main aim of this research study was to acquire a better insight of clients' experiences when attending cross-cultural psychotherapy. For that purpose this research study explored the experiences of three individuals – Nicola, Angel and Diego– in cross-culture psychotherapy using IPA and from an intersubjective approach. The findings from the research study suggested a wide variety in their responses in relation to their experiences as clients in the psychotherapeutic encounter. Using the identity development model created by Yoshizawa-Meaders (1977) from a flexible perspective, there was found a parallelism between the participants' acceptance of their multicultural selves within their awareness around the impact of culture within the psychotherapeutic encounter.

Nicola's denial of her culture of origin, Angel's strong bond within the African culture and Diego's integration of his different selves reflected different levels in their adaptation process to the Irish society. Consequently their experiences in therapy are very exclusive and mediated by their sense of identity. Nicola manifested a lack of interest in the notion of Asian culture within her analysis, however the researcher experienced a sense of struggle with her in the countertransference, thus this avoidance of her cultural identity can be considered as a mechanism of defence. Angel showed a strong interest in educating the researcher in her African culture at the same time as recognizing the need for psychotherapists to be culturally aware along with respecting cultural values without judging culturally diverse clients. The cognitive approach of Angel and her sense of the community may be rooted in her cultural values of being strong, and collectivism. Diego, who from a very open stand accepted his

different self: his Irish self and his South American self, valued his experience in analysis as a way to reconnect with his values and embrace his differences within the Irish culture. These different human beings described a unique journey characterized by the struggle and the process of self-discovery which for immigrants is based in a “multiple identity” or multiple selves (Nana-Ama Danquah, 1999).

The three participants in this research study were currently attending analysis in English, their second or third tongue. However as opposed to the literature reviewed difficulties in the therapeutic encounter were not found in relation to the language. This can be related with the fact that the participants in the study were working as psychoanalysts thus an inadequacy with the language could be related with professionally incompetence. Similarly non-verbal communication in psychotherapy was not a significant element for the participants, since Nicola, Angel and Diego don't see their psychoanalysts because they lie on the couch or their analysts sit behind them. It is interesting that the three participants associate non-verbal communication with eye contact, ignoring other factors such as tone of voice or personal space. Further research in this field is recommended to explore whether psychoanalysis allows the covering of differences between the client-therapist dyad.

In the light of these findings, it is important for psychotherapists to be aware that culture-bound barriers are presented in the psychotherapeutic encounter. Thus, it becomes clear that effective cross-cultural psychotherapy occurs when the psychotherapist are informed, curious and appreciate the clients' culture from an open stance, valuing the differences of their clients. Likewise it is important that psychotherapists are aware of their beliefs and values. Additionally psychotherapists must be able to shift their therapeutic styles to meet the developmental needs of clients, knowing that the diverse cultural conceptions of the self or family cannot be seen as superior to another.

5.7 Limitations

Despite the study aiming to explore the experiences of clients in cross-cultural research, it can be argued that because all the interviewees were analytically trained, the cultural component of the psychoanalysis could have been interfering with their responses as clients in psychotherapy. The way individuals “consciously and unconsciously think of themselves” as analysts is a central idea in psychoanalysis (Wille, 2008). Equally for the development of the identity, this is also regarded as a developmental process that takes years to consolidate. Thus, the different responses of the participants could be mediated by their experiences as analysts. Firstly, Nicola, the Asian participant is working as analyst while she is still in her training, Angel, the central African participant has been working as an analyst for more than ten years, while Diego, the participant from the Eastern part of South America, has been working as an analyst for over twenty years. Hence the sample size of three participants is very limited and diverse; a more homogenous sample considering the age background and experience of the participants would be recommended.

5.8 Recommendations and Considerations for Future Research

A number of recommendations and considerations for future research emerged from both the findings of this study and from the research reviewed:

- Conflicting with the findings in this study, the research reviewed pointed out that language is a fundamental element in the cross-cultural encounter. Further research is recommended with clients who have attended therapy in their native language and in a second tongue to compare differences in relation to this matter.
- Further research with clients without a psychotherapeutic background is recommended.

- Due to the diversity in the responses of the participants in this study, it is suggested that further research with a more homogenous sample is undertaken, with individuals in a similar life stage and from analogous cultures.
- Because of the difficulty in finding culturally diverse psychotherapists and the lack of official information in relation to bilingual therapists or those from different cultures, more information and visibility is recommended for clients.
- Further research could be carried out in relation to the parallel process among clients who hide their differences and the obstacles in finding culturally diverse psychotherapists who, in an unconscious way, may hide themselves.
- Due to the impact of the countertransferences in the research process, psychotherapists should openly examine their values, prejudices and beliefs when working with clients from different cultures.
- Psychotherapists need to be open, curious and value their culturally diverse clients in order to effectively work with them.
- It is recommended that psychotherapists attempt to educate themselves about different cultures in order to be aware of their clients' values and notions about identity and family, calling for more cultural diverse trainings and workshops.

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APPENDIX 1

Participant information sheet

Introduction

My name is Lorena Sánchez I am a psychologist from Spain. Currently I am in my final year for a MA in Psychotherapy in Dublin Business School. I am researching the role of culture in the psychotherapeutic encounter. Specifically with my research I wish to acquire a better understanding of client's experience in psychotherapy with therapists from a culture that differ from theirs.

Purpose of the study

I would like to invite you to take part in a qualitative research study. If you agree to take part, you will be invited to attend an interview at a place of your convenience. I will ask you to answer some questions, there aren't any right or wrong answers I just would like to hear about your experiences as a client when attending cross-cultural therapy. The interview should take about an hour at the longest. The interview will be recorded and transcribed in written format.

Confidentiality

All the information you give me will be confidential and used for the purposes of this study only. The data will be collected and stored in a lock file and will be disposed of in a secure manner. You will be given a number for the purposes of the research and your name will not appear in the transcriptions or research papers. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time; if you withdraw from the study all the information collected in the interview will be destroyed.

For additional information please contact:

Researcher:	Ms Lorena Sánchez	Lore_sab@hotmail.com
Researcher Supervisor:	Ms Mary de Courcy	Mary.decourcy@dbs.ie

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the declaration and consent section.

DECLARATION

I have read this consent form and have had time to consider whether to take part in this study. I understand that my participation is voluntary (it is my choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage. I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that, as part of this research project, audio recordings and transcriptions will be made. I understand that my name will not be identified in any use of these records. I am voluntarily agreeing that any audio and transcriptions may be studied by the researcher for use in the research project and used in scientific publications.

Name of Participant (in block letters) _____

Signature _____

Date / /

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPROVED BY DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 2

Consent form

An exploration of client perspective of the role of culture in psychotherapy

Please tick the appropriate answer

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Leaflet attached, and that I have had ample opportunity to ask questions all of which have been satisfactorily answered.

Yes No

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely **voluntary** and that I may withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

Yes No

I understand that my identity will remain confidential at all times.

Yes No

I am aware that audio recordings will be made of sessions

Yes No

I have been given a copy of the Information Leaflet and this Consent form for my records.

Yes No

Participant _____
Signature and dated

Name in block capitals

To be completed by the researcher

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that he/she could understand.

Signature

Name in Block Capitals

Date

APPENDIX 3

Demographic Questionnaire

Name: _____	
Age: _____	Gender: _____
Country of Origin: _____	
Mother's Nationality _____	Father's Nationality _____
Number of years living in Ireland _____	
Languages spoken _____	

- What level of psychotherapy qualification do you hold?
 - Diploma
 - Undergraduate Degree
 - Master Level Degree
 - Doctorate Level Degree
 - Other
- What would best describe your psychotherapeutic approach?
 - Integrative
 - Psychodynamic
 - Humanistic
 - CBT
 - Psychoanalytic
 - Person Centred
 - Gestalt
 - Counselling Psychology
 - Other
- As a client, how many years have you attended therapy?
 - 1 year or less
 - 2 - 4 years
 - More than 5 years
- In relation to your own therapy, could please specify your therapist's ethnicity?
 - Asian / Pacific Islander

- European
- North American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other

- What would best describe the psychotherapeutic approach of your psychotherapist?

- Integrative
- Psychodynamic
- Humanistic
- CBT
- Psychoanalytic
- Person Centred
- Gestalt
- Counselling Psychology
- Other

- On a satisfaction scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with your own therapy?

- Considering your own experience in therapy, would you like to attend cross-cultural therapy again?

- Yes No

Why?

Please add any background information that you feel might be relevant, but is not covered in the questionnaire.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 4

Semi-Structured interview

1. I'd like to start by hearing a little bit about you.
2. As a client, could you tell me how you chose your psychotherapist?
3. Do you feel that your cultural values or beliefs were understood by your psychotherapist?
4. Do you feel that your psychotherapist demand disclosures that you were not comfortable with? Could you tell me a bit more? Could you explain it?
5. How do you feel that langue impacted in you work? If so in what way? What was missed out?
6. There is spoken and unspoken language, perhaps could you talk to me about that?
7. Can you describe any example when you didn't feel understood by your therapist? How do you negotiate emotion display in therapy? Body language?
8. What did you find the most beneficial intervention?
9. Can you tell me anything that may be useful to share with a trainee psychotherapist?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add, or any questions you wish I had asked?

APPENDIX 5

Superordinate themes

	<i>Nicola</i>	<i>Angel</i>	<i>Diego</i>
1. Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of self related to a profession L. 36 • Sense of not belonging L. 48 • Detached from therapist, from the “self” L. 34 • Connection with others, ambivalence L 39 • Struggle with identity L. 45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to explain herself, “I am different “ L. 8 • Trauma139 • “The I is not the I” L. 171 • Identity related to language, refusal of second language L.144 • To be strong L.179 • Individualism versus Collectivism “collectivity in yourself” L. 175 • Value of cognitions, no emotional content L. 170 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification with researcher L. 9 • Recognition of differences L. 32 • Struggle/Loneliness L. 36 • On Being foreigner-special L.35 • Not belonging L. 57 • “Living between, limbo zone” L. 60 • Rediscovering roots L.70 • Being an Alien L.120 • Lost, “sacrificing things” L. 130 • Mourning L.135 • Symbols L.128, • Cultural issues 130, “they treat me the same”L.130 • Process of adaptation L.175 • Repression of cultural identity, L. 190 • Suppressed-feeling exotic L.234
2. Resistances with the therapeutic relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of the past L. 43 • Unknown L. 47 • Nobody knows me L. 48 • Intellectualization L. 54 • Transferences L. 84 • Psychoanalysis is a different way of communication L. 144 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity in the work L.27 • Trust, safety in language 139 • Collectivism L. 171 • Rituals L. 201 • Education, to learn more about clients L. 328 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychodynamic approach, “very rigid” L.50 • Differences with others based on non-verbal communication L. 166 and accent L. 256 • Introversion: “Psychoanalytic world change my view and my personality” L. 214 • To be invisible:“ If you don’t feel well in being different you try to be invisible” L. 262

<p>3. Cultural Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging/ambivalence 27 • Recognition of culture/differences/ L. 66 • Consciousness around cultural perspective. 144 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism in yourself. L.175 • Reality: Cultural construction L.166 • Non-verbal language L.165 • Therapist need to appreciate other cultures L.269 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection: “my therapist sees me connected with my culture” L. 135 • “To enrich this culture with your culture” L. 273 • “To acknowledge the good bits in yourself and look at good things in your culture” L. 272. • Recognition of differences “ you are almost Irish, very damaging, nasty phrase” L. 277
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APPENDIX 6

Sample Analysis of Diego

Emerging themes	Interview	Initial comments
<p>Being Special Being at home</p> <p>In the past, struggle at work</p> <p>Currently, sense of belonging with an institution</p> <p>Changes</p> <p>Not belonging to his own community in a foreigner country</p>	<p>So did you feel more integrated in Ireland because there were less foreigner?</p> <p>Yes, almost you are like a big fish in a small pond, everyone wants to have a piece of you (laughing). So I had a great time being able to connect with people ... I felt I was here in the right time, maybe I created home here in the sense it was easy so it was difficult to leave, and then after my course I started my private practice ...</p> <p>Few years ago... I think I started struggling a bit with the private practice, the loneliness of it the fact that you work on your own.</p> <p>Then it appeared the opportunity to work in this service, you know, and I thought, I never wanted to work in a specific service like this... But it was a great experience first it helped me to come out of the comfort of working in a very rigid way many, very bounded psychoanalytic way of working. Then I think I have to adjust to a totally different way of working in a team, where I am not the containment as such, the service is the containment.</p> <p>The interested thing is through the early years in Ireland... because I arrived very early, my own community has grown, but I am not part of it... because I missed the boat. It started growing years after I was already stablished, and in my original group</p>	<p>The use of “ you” may denote distancing from the self</p> <p>Feelings of loneliness, not being special anymore</p> <p>Did he feel constrained by a very rigid way of working? It was related to a rigid sense of the self?</p> <p>Group as a containment, did he struggle with an extreme individuality?</p>

<p>Being stuck, split I-Other Acceptance Ambivalence Lost, mourning</p>	<p>there were few foreigners from those days but most people are the Irish, my close friends. And suddenly there was this boom of people from my country in Dublin, and I didn't belong to Dublin, and I didn't belong to it...</p> <p>I am living between, in the limbo. So I realized, that's the reality for the rest of my life, as much as I feel at home here... This is not my culture of culture of reference and I couldn't relate to my own community.</p>	<p>Sense of process, progression. "I" included in the community but as an outsider.</p> <p>Missing the boat, lost Being divided between two worlds, living between</p>
<p>New horizons Excitement, being part of his community. New generation: more confident</p>	<p>But working in this service, funny enough, a good percentage of people looking for the service are from South America... This work gives me the opportunity to meet a lot of people from my community in the safety of this space somehow I don't participate in the community but I participate in their lives and I love it! They are very open, I can see how one generation can do it better than the other one. This generation is much more confident, funnier...</p>	<p>Opportunity to reconnect Does he need to feel safe in doing so? Sense of proudness in new generation</p>
<p>Oppression Split, fracture Joking</p>	<p>They didn't grow up with a military government as I did...but rediscovering my roots is very important. And the fact that I don't belong here and I don't belong there this is going to be my song (laughing).</p>	<p>Moves from "they" to "I" to refer to experiences from his childhood. How this affected his confidence? Probably difficult environment to grow up, repression Anxiety?</p>

