‘Keeping Busy with Purpose’:

virtuous occupations as a means of expressing worth during asylum.

Helen Claire Hart

‘KEEPING BUSY WITH PURPOSE’: VIRTUOUS OCCUPATIONS AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING WORTH DURING ASYLUM

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of

Teesside University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This research was carried out with the support of a Career Development Grant

from the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation.

April, 2018

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II ABSTRACT

Individuals seeking asylum experience a complex set of socio-legal circumstances which limit opportunities and undermine their sense of worth. The challenges of the asylum process impact significantly on many aspects of daily life, reducing access to meaningful and dignified occupation.

This study employed a heuristic phenomenological approach, using a series of in-depth interviews to illuminate the everyday experiences of ten participants who have sought asylum in the United Kingdom. The aims of the study were to explore the meaning given to occupation by the individual; to consider the things which support or act as barriers to engagement in occupations, and analyse the perceived impact of experiences of occupation during asylum.

All participants spoke of the challenges of the asylum process, acknowledging the practical and policy based restrictions they faced, and the impact of attitudes and opportunities on their sense of their own worth and value.

Participants illuminated the potential of occupation to enhance their post migratory experience. They identified the importance of keeping busy, but the frustration of low demand activities which lack meaning. They demonstrated the desire to 'keep busy with purpose', using occupations to rise above their status as 'asylum seeker' and foster a sense of their personal value and worth.

Altruistic occupations, like volunteering, were highlighted as particularly meaningful. Individuals found that 'doing for others' provided the opportunity to express their virtues and values, enabling them to flourish, fulfil their potential and experience satisfaction.

At a time when opportunities are restricted, individuals require enormous drive, resourcefulness and energy to find and engage in meaningful everyday activities. Whilst any occupation may be valuable, virtuous occupations may have the potential to foster a 'light side' of occupation, countering the negativity that surrounds and devalues people seeking asylum, and fostering wellbeing in the short and long term.

III ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the following people who played a part in the production of this thesis.

My supervisory team, Dr Dorothy Hannis, Dr Shawn Costello, Dr Susan Cleary and Dr Alan Armstrong for their support, advice and guidance; and professional advisers Dr Mike Fleet and Dr Debbie Kramer-Roy for taking the role of 'critical friend.' Also, to the occupational therapy teaching team at Teesside University, for friendship, collegial support and academic discussion.

My thanks go to the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation who supported this research with a Career Development Grant, without which the research and dissemination activity would not have been possible. To link persons Pete Widlinski, Bini Arai and Fiona Cuthill for supporting the search for participants, to 'Alice' who helped me to pilot the project, and Abbie English, and everyone else involved in the creative dissemination projects.

To all my friends and family for supporting me and being patient whilst I gave this my full attention; particularly my parents, for conveying the value of education to me, my daughter, Madeleine, for sharing me and my husband, Andrew, for so patiently waiting for me.

And finally, to the research participants/co-researchers for their honesty and openness in sharing their experiences, and to all refugees who take such challenging steps in search of a safe home and a meaningful life.

Claire

IV GLOSSARY

MIGRATION RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Migrant – a person who lives temporarily or permanently outside of the country of origin, for a variety of reasons.

Forced migration (or forced displacement) – the coerced movement of people away from their home or home region, either internally (to another part of their nation) or externally (to a different nation).

Refugee – a person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 14).

Asylum seeker – a person who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Failed asylum seeker – a person whose asylum claim has been refused, and who has exhausted their legal right to remain within the United Kingdom (UK).

Unreturnable – a person who has failed in their asylum claim, but cannot be returned to their country of origin due to reasons beyond their own control, such as administrative, diplomatic or major health reasons.

Statelessness – a person who is not acknowledged as a citizen of any nation. Some people are born stateless, but others become stateless, usually due to discrimination or territorial change.

OCCUPATION RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Occupation – the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include things people need to, want to and are expected to do.

Occupational therapy – a client-centred profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation, thus enabling people to participate in their activities of everyday life.

Occupational science – an academic discipline aiming to generate knowledge about human activity or occupation, and the effects of occupation on well-being.

Occupational injustice – issues which negatively impact on access to meaningful and dignified occupations.

OTHER RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY

Human worth – regard for the individual on the basis of the roles they adopt or for them as an individual, based on the qualities they display.

Virtue – psychological processes that enables a person to think and act to benefit him- or herself and society.

Altruism – the principle of acting for the welfare of others, putting their needs ahead of one's own.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

COMPASS – Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services

CSOS – Canadian Society of Occupational Scientists

ENAR – European Network Against Racism

FLEX – Focus on Labour Exploitation

HAC – Home Affairs Committee

HCSC – House of Commons Selects Committee

IOM – International Organisation for Migration

JCWI – Joint Committee on the Welfare of Immigrants

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

NAO – National Audit Office

***ONS* –** Office of National Statistics

***RCOT* –** Royal College of Occupational Therapists

***RGCP* –** Royal College of General Practitioners

***UKBA* –** United Kingdom Border Agency

***UKVI* –** United Kingdom Visas and Immigration

***UNHCR* –** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

***VARRP* –** Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme

***WFOT* –** World Federation of Occupational Therapists

***WHO* –** World Health Organisation

***WONCA* –** World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians

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Images by Syria artist and refugee, Issam Kourbaj. The works are from the projects 'Another Day Lost' and 'Dark Water, Burning World', available at issmakourbaj.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

'In a sea of human beings, it is difficult, at times even impossible, to see the human as being.'

Aysha Taryam

This thesis includes the following chapters, designed to lead the reader through the background, research process, findings and discussion. It will begin with this brief **introduction** which identifies the rationale for the study, then the **background**, which defines key concepts for exploration and establishes the context of the study. This is followed by a **literature review** which underpins the study by sharing existing knowledge on a range of issues relating to occupation and asylum. The **methodology** chapter identifies philosophical approaches and is followed by details of the practical **methods** used within the study. Subsequently, key **findings** have been integrated with **discussion** to synthesise materials from throughout the earlier chapters, illuminate key phenomena and explore the implications of the study.

Within this introductory chapter I will establish the rationale for this research and clarify its aims. This study was inspired by a period of working in a specialist general practice for refugees and people seeking asylum, where I was employed to meet peoples' mental health needs. I saw the ongoing impact of forced migration and asylum on the occupational lives of clients and wished to illuminate these influences more fully.

Issues regarding occupational opportunities were frequently raised by clients and were a cause of significant distress. At that time there was limited evidence to establish an in-depth link between refugee needs and occupational opportunities, though research had suggested the need for meaningful activity, social capital and workplace access (Whiteford, 2000; Renner and Salem, 2009; Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Newman *et al.* 2013). Concerns were being raised by refugee support agencies regarding the impact of asylum processes and experiences on everyday opportunities, identifying the link between what they were and were not able to do and their general wellbeing. This could be seen in projects from diverse sources such as the Church of England's 'Faithful Cities' (Commission on Urban Life, 2006), Amnesty's collaborative campaign 'Still Human, Still Here' (2009) and the British Red Cross' advocacy report 'Not gone, but forgotten' (2010).

Over the past decade there has been a growing body of evidence regarding the impact of asylum, particularly on health and employment (Bloch, 2006; Phillimore, 2011; Fleay *et al.* 2014; Bäärnhielm, 2016; Priebe *et al.* 2016). Occupational issues remain a relatively neglected area of research, but evidence is beginning to reflect on issues faced by people seeking asylum in the US (Adrian, 2013; Stephenson *et al.* 2013), Australia (Maroney, 2015; Smith *et al.* 2014), and Europe (Heigl *et al.* 2011; Morville, 2014). Whilst these studies explore occupation and asylum or refugee experiences, they are often specific to a particular group (Andersson, 2013; Stephenson, 2013; Smith, 2013) or a particular occupation (Adrian, 2013; Aronson Torp *et al.* 2013; Bishop and Purcell, 2013; Murray, 2013) and, as the experience of asylum varies dramatically between nations due to differing policies and practicalities, there is limited transferability (Bennet *et al.* 2012; Huot *et al.* 2016a).

Human displacement and forced migration are complex and multi-causal processes (Zetter, 2015; International Organization Migration (IOM), 2016; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016), which have direct and indirect consequences on the occupational opportunities necessary to address human needs, access human rights, and create and maintain health (World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), 2014). Any migration can be challenging, impacting upon an individual through multiple stressors (Aspinall and Waters, 2010; Zetter, 2015; Blinder, 2017), but displacement and forced migration has additional challenges born from the lack of choice and control (Richards and Rotter, 2013; UNHCR, 2016). Forced migration creates an enormous and unpredictable transition, with the loss of the fabric of a familiar life (Farias and Asaba, 2013; Gupta, 2013; Huot *et al.*, 2013; 2014), where individuals experience major social, cultural and economic disruption, with a significant number of people never regaining their former quality of life (Connor Schisler and Polatajko, 2002; Bennett and McDowell, 2012).

As the numbers of the worlds' refugees have grown, so has the compulsion to understand and address their needs. The complex and challenging lives of refugees have become an important and often contentious feature of modern geography, law, politics, media and many other disciplines. Researchers seek to understand factors influencing movement in 'refugee producing' countries, document the journeys taken and capture features of the lives lived in host nations (Suto, 2013; Zetter, 2015; Gower, 2015).

The exploration of refugee issues in health and social care has grown, and occupationally orientated disciplines have been part of the drive to document, illustrate and understand the impact of forced migration on people's lives. Research is beginning to highlight how

much of the refugee experience occurs through the medium of occupation, and how crucial occupation can be in promoting a positive post migratory experience (Mansha, 2012; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013; Morville *et al.* 2014; Mayne *et al.* 2016; Huot *et al.* 2017).

In everyday use the word 'occupation' is usually understood to mean paid work, however, within occupational science and occupational therapy it has broader usage. Seminal authors in this field have defined occupation as purposeful, goal-directed human activity, occurring over the lifespan, affecting health and well-being (Zemke and Clarke, 1996; Wilcock, 2006; Christiansen and Townsend, 2009). Occupation has been described as the everyday activities that people need to, want to or are expected to do, either as individuals, in families or within communities (WFOT, 2015). Occupations are usually self-directed, personally initiated, goal-directed, and organised and require some measure of personal satisfaction (Yerxa, 1989; Kramer *et al.* 2003). The principles of occupation, and their application academically and in practice, are further discussed in the both the background and literature review sections of this thesis.

This study aims to add evidence of the subjective meaning of occupation during asylum by exploring the individual lived experience and illuminating the personal, contextual and cultural significance that individuals attach to their occupational experiences. It has been designed to capture individual perspectives on the role of occupation (including self-care, leisure, work, relationships and community participation) during the process of forced migration, and add a rich and detailed personal voice to reflect the impact of asylum on this central aspect of daily life.

From its inception the study has aimed to explore:

- The meaning given to occupation by the individual.
- What supported the individual in undertaking their chosen occupations during the asylum process, and which things acted as barriers.
- The perceived impact of experiences of occupation during asylum.

These findings have relevance to health and social care services, charities and agencies who seek to support refugees, as well as general health and social care providers attempting to meet needs across all populations. I hope that this thesis enables readers to appreciate the many benefits of engaging with meaningful occupation, raises the impact of asylum on occupational opportunities and engagement, and encourages services to harness the potential of occupation for the benefit of the individual and the United Kingdom (UK) as a host community.

BACKGROUND

2 BACKGROUND

'No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.'

Warsan Shire

In order to clarify and establish the context of the study, I will provide an introduction to issues in contemporary migration, outline the principle and practice of asylum as it is applied in the United Kingdom (UK), and identify the meaning of occupation as defined by occupational science and used by occupational therapy. Within this section, I will also explore how these features are interconnected and relevant to the field of study.

2.1 HUMAN DISPLACEMENT AND THE PRINCIPLE OF ASYLUM

There are an estimated 65.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, and every day conflict and persecution forces an average of 34,000 people to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere (UNHCR, 2016). The volume of displaced people stands at its highest since the Second World War, primarily as a result of war in Syria and major new displacement patterns in the Central African Republic and South Sudan (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2016; UNHCR 2016). Worldwide, people are displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, generalised violence or human rights violations, and includes the movement of people within the borders of their own countries (around 33.3 million people), or to other neighbouring countries, often less able to meet their needs

(around 86% of displaced people) (UNHCR, 2016). It is thought that if the worlds' refugees constituted a nation, it would be the 26th largest in the world (IOM, 2015; UNHCR, 2016).

Asylum, the principle by which the needs of forcibly displaced people are supported in a host nation, is considered one of the earliest hallmarks of enlightened society, and references to it have been found in texts written as early as 3,500 years ago (UNHCR, 2016). The legal recognition and protection associated with modern asylum was introduced as part of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, introduced following the Second World War to protect the interests of the increasing numbers of forcibly displaced people (Gibney, 2014; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015). The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, amended in 1967, is the key legislation governing refugee protection, and it aims to help clarify and protect the rights of refugees, who are acknowledged as amongst the most vulnerable people in the world (Guterres, 2011; Zetter, 2015; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

The 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the only global legal instruments explicitly covering the rights of refugees (UNHCR, 2010), yet they are not universally accepted and are frequently criticised as not fit for purpose (Facchini and Mayda, 2009; Mayblin, 2014). The Convention is seen as failing by those who wish for tighter restrictions on asylum, and by those seeking greater humanitarian application of the asylum principle. The Convention does not consider causes, prevention or the better management of migration, nor does it consider the needs of internally displaced people (Von Oswald and Schmelz, 2010). Critics of the Convention see it as a relic of old wars, and not reflective of modern ethnic violence and gender-based persecution; whilst others see is as insensitive

to national security issues such as terrorism and organised crime (Von Oswald and Schmelz, 2010). As a result, the application of asylum policy and practice is considered to have multiple failings (Costello and Mouzourakis, 2016) often due to its complex political backdrop (Zaun, 2017). However flawed, the Convention remains the only legislative response to human displacement, and with the realities of conflict, violence and persecution continuing to affect a growing number of people worldwide, it is still believed to be a necessity (Guterres, 2011).

The Convention defines a refugee as:

> '*…a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it*'
>
> United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 14.

Asylum law measures the needs of applicants against this definition, but is complex and changeable, and its interpretation and practical application differs across nations (UNHCR, 2010; Zetter, 2015). The next section briefly describes the features of the UK approach to asylum. Further discussion on the experience of asylum, the politics of asylum and critical appraisal of the system is presented in the Literature Review.

2.1.1 Migration and forced migration trends

Migration trends show a fairly static overall movement of people, constant over the past decades, at around 3% of the world's population (IOM, 2015). However, the numbers of migrants continue to grow, and there is a distinct difference between the numbers and needs associated with *elective* versus *forced* migration. Overall migration occurs as a web of movement between many nations worldwide, as the schematic below shows (Fig. 1):

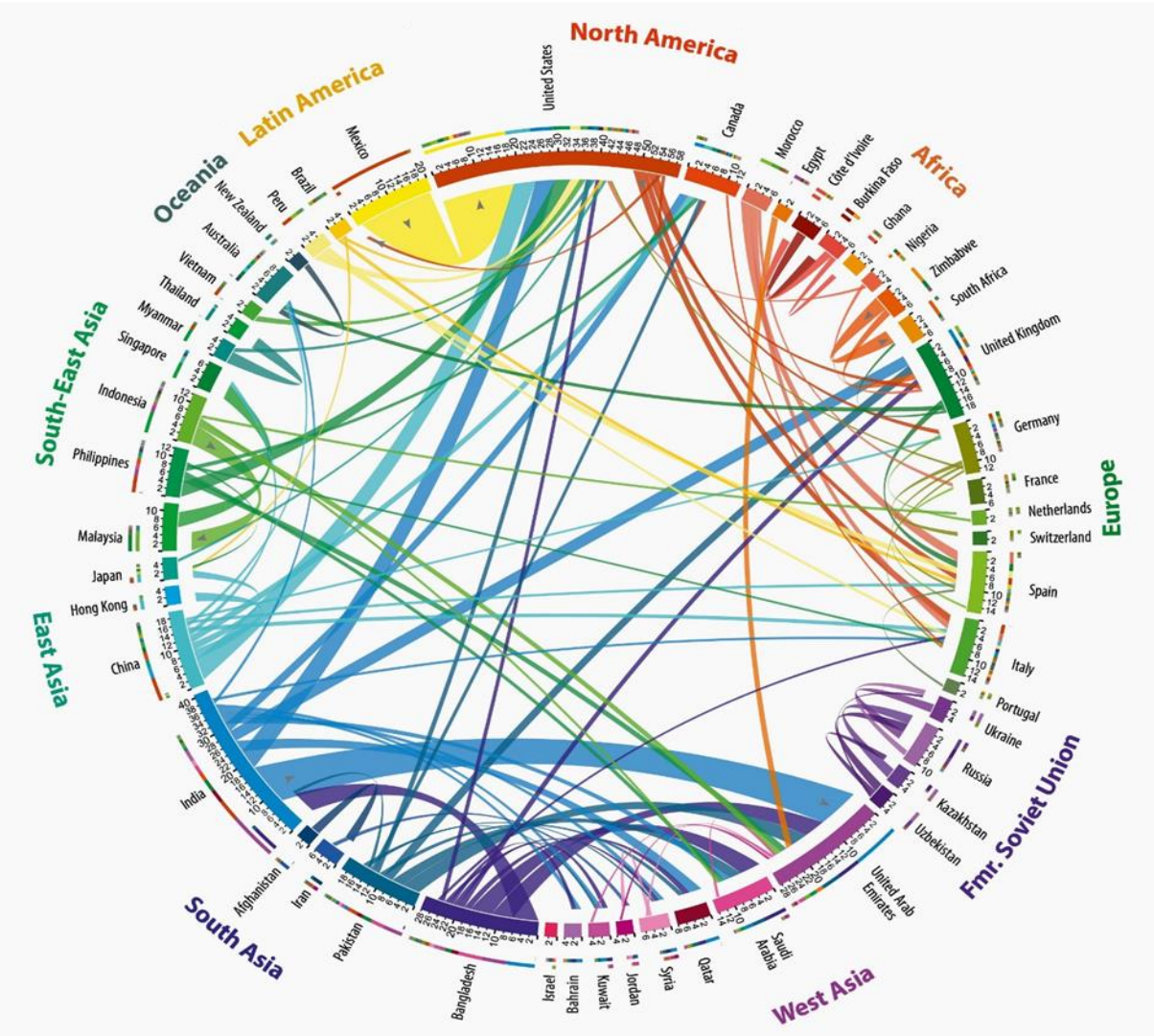

Fig. 1: Worldwide immigration 2005-2010 (Sander, Abel and Bauer, 2015).

This image reflects the majority of migration routes between 2005 and 2010, showing the complexity of human movement (Sander, Abel and Bauer, 2015). However, once the map is adjusted to focus on forced migration alone (as in Fig. 2) there is a significant change, showing displaced populations as large numbers moving from fewer countries (Sander and Bauer, 2017).

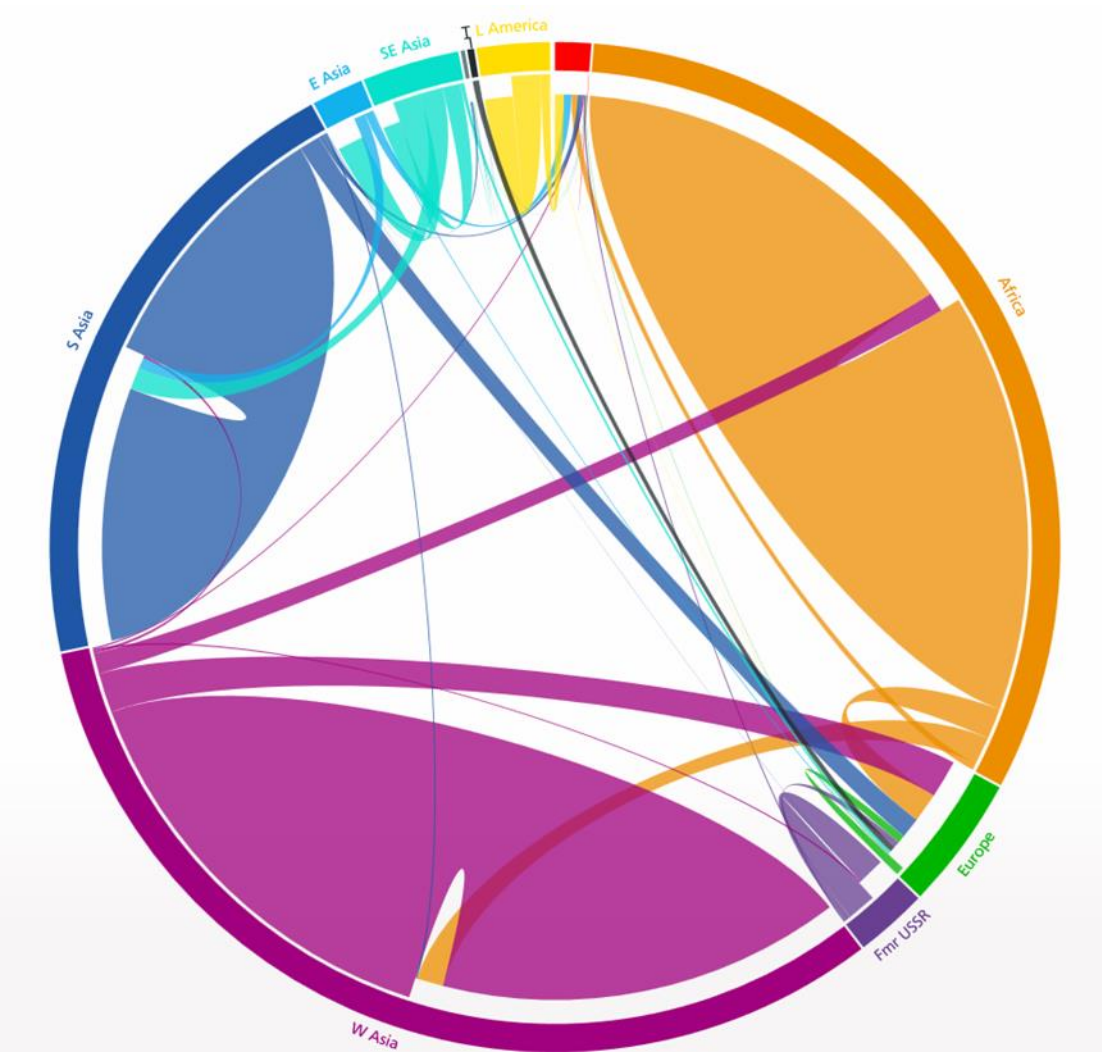

Fig. 2: Global flow of refugees between and within regions in 2015 (Sander and Bauer, 2017).

The most popular destination nations for immigration of any kind are the United States (46.6 million) and Germany (12 million), and the countries with the highest foreign-born

populations are the United Arab Emirates (88.4%), Qatar (75.7%), and Kuwait (73.6%) (IOM, 2015). Most of these people will be elective migrants, who have chosen to relocate for a wide range of personal or economic reasons. However, 2015 saw the highest recorded levels of forced displacement since World War II, as there was an estimated 45% increase in refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people compared to figures from just three and a half years previously (IOM, 2015; UNHCR, 2016). Forced migration occurs for very different reasons to elective migration and has a more profound impact on the individual, the nation they leave behind and any host nations they seek to settle in. The rationale for migration will be discussed in 'Motivation and Movement' (Section 3.1.13), however, forced migration can include internal displacement, displacement to neighbouring nations or movement to other nations further from one's own.

Many people are internally displaced within the borders of their own country, with an estimated 38 million people living internally displaced lives (IOM, 2015). The vast majority of refugees who leave their home nation, are hosted by neighbouring developing countries. For example, the majority of Syrian refugees are hosted by Turkey (2.2 million), Lebanon (1.2 million) and Jordan (almost 630,000) (IOM, 2015). This creates a situation where countries which already have limited resources often take a disproportionate number of people in need. There is evidence that this creates humanitarian, political, security, and development challenges for both the refugees and the host nations (Gomez *et al.* 2010).

However, this study focusses on those individuals who leave their locality entirely and seek asylum in the UK. The population of people taking major journeys to relocate has almost doubled between the end of 2014 and the first half of 2015. By the end of 2015, the EU received over 1.2 million asylum claims, more than double the number registered in 2014,

largely due to increased claims from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (IOM, 2015; UNHCR, 2016). It is likely that these figures are a conservative estimate of migration to the EU as it only includes official claims, not the 'unknowable' figure of all forced migrants.

2.1.2 The European migrant crisis

During 2015 more than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe, and the EU has faced the challenge of managing the influx of people, and divisions over how best to deal with resettling people, leading to the recognition that Europe was facing a migrant/refugee crisis (BBC, 2016; Crawley *et al.* 2017). The primary driver for the crisis was the conflict in Syria, though ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and human rights issues in Eritrea were major contributing factors (IOM, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Eurostat, 2017).

The prevalence of claims if shown below (Fig. 3), indicating that Germany has accepted the highest number of applicants (442,000), followed by Hungary (Eurostat, 2017). There is a major discrepancy between the readiness of different European nations to accept refugees, often on the basis of geography and political perspective. As a result, there have been debates about allocating quotas in an effort to share need more widely (Carrera, 2015; Eurostat, 2017). Whilst Germany faces issues with the numbers received, countries like Hungary face a higher proportion per head of population, and have less capacity to cope with the influx (IOM, 2016; Eurostat, 2017). Such discrepancies are the source of tensions across the EU, and there have been attempts made by the European Parliament to agree relocation plans to reduce the burden on nations such as Hungary, Greece and Italy. However, the UK opted out of the EU plans for a quota system, instead

opting to focus on resettling Syrian refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme in 2015. This has led to the acceptance of 809 of the 20,000 people intended for UK resettlement over the next five years (Home Office, 2017).

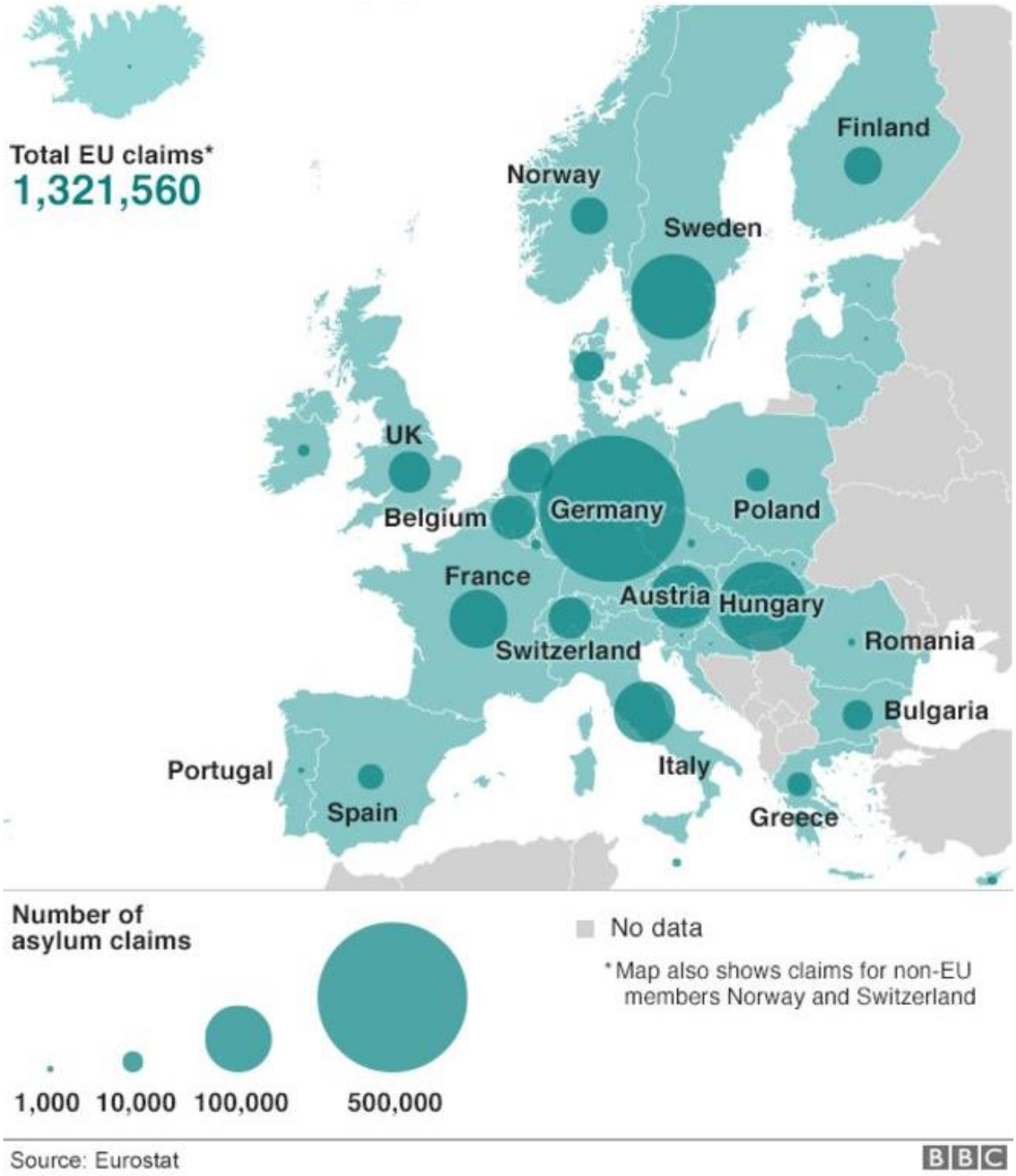

Fig. 3: Asylum claims in the EU, 2015 (Eurostat/BBC 2016).

Immigration draws commentary from many sources, and opinions on the needs of refugees arise from politics, media, academia, law, activism and public opinion. There is conflict between those commentators who see the humanitarian need of refugees and those who believe the burden on host nations to be too great (UNHCR, 2016; IOM, 2016; Migration Watch, 2018). Those who support the needs of refugees focus on the extreme experiences faced by people in their host country, and the dangerous journeys being taken in search of safety (Czaika and De Haas, 2013; Doyle and Aleinikoff, 2017; Red Cross, 2017). The alternate perspective often focusses on the cost of managing such large numbers of people, the potential for conflict between different faiths or ethnicities, and contrasts the needs of migrants with the needs of the existing population (Clemens and Sandefur, 2015; Sherwell and Squires, 2015). The breadth and depth of the debate with its diverse and polarised perspectives may render the crisis insoluble (Crawley *et al.* 2016).

One of the contentious issues lies in the question of why people leave their countries to come to Europe. There is a definite preference for Europe as a destination, over other neighbouring nations (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015; Crawley *et al.* 2016), shown by the dangerous routes taken to enter Europe (BBC, 2016). There appear to be trends of 'popularity' across the European nations, with Germany currently taking the largest number, but also seen as the most 'refugee supporting' nation amongst people arriving in Europe (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2017; Harding *et al.* 2015).

2.2 ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In 2015 there were 32,414 asylum applications made in the UK, with the majority of claimants coming from Eritrea, Iran, Sudan and Syria (Home Office, 2016a). These figures place the UK as 9th highest within the European Union (EU) (with Germany, Sweden and Hungary receiving the largest number of applicants) (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016; Eurostat, 2017), taking an estimated 1% of the worlds' refugee population (Refugee Council, 2018).

Immigration, in its varied forms, has long been a sensitive issue socially and politically in the UK, and the current climate reflects harsher policies and increasingly xenophobic attitudes towards people seeking asylum (Lewis, 2005; McKay *et al.* 2012; Philo *et al.* 2015; Blinder and Allen, 2016). For those critical of immigration levels into the UK, asylum is described as inefficient, costly and too open to misuse (Migration Watch, 2018). To those wishing to support asylum principles, it is described as inhumane and Draconian (Commission on Urban Life and Faith, 2006; Hartley and Fleay, 2014; Dankzuk, 2016; Refugee Council, 2016). Here the practicalities of asylum will be detailed, and within the literature review there will be further discussion of influences upon, and experiences of, asylum.

The UK asylum process is administered by the United Kingdom Visa and Immigration service (UKVI) which is a department of the Home Office. The UKVI consider claims made in line with the refugee definition given previously, and applicants must demonstrate that they are unable to go back to their own country (or if stateless, the country they usually live in) for fear of persecution, and must also be unable to live safely in another

part of their country, and have failed to be protected by authorities in their country (UKVI, 2018a). Additionally, they must be able to demonstrate that their persecution is related to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group which heightens individual risk, such as sexual orientation (UKVI, 2018a).

The process involves a period where the individual is awaiting an asylum decision, which varies significantly in length. During this wait individuals who are considered destitute can be supported by UKVI, under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (Home Office, 2016a). They can receive financial support and accommodation, the details of which are in the Literature Review, but face restrictions on their activities, such as work and education. All financial support and accommodation provided by Section 95 ends when a decision, positive or negative, is given.

The possible outcomes of an asylum claim are:

- **Permission to stay,** where the individual is given 'leave to remain' in the UK, usually for a period of five years, because their asylum claim is accepted.
- **Humanitarian protection,** where their claim has not been upheld, but they are believed to require protection from risks such as torture, violence or degrading treatment if they were to be returned to their country of origin. This is usually for a period of three years.
- **Refusal,** where the individual's claim is not upheld and they are required to leave the UK and return to their home country, either voluntarily or by deportation.

(UKVI, 2018a)

The context of asylum impacts upon individuals, services and communities, and is influenced by many things, including history, politics, economics, media attention and public opinion. This context will be explored in greater depth in the literature review, giving the reader a backdrop of contemporary influences, which shape the way that the host nation meets people seeking asylum. Below, the link is established between occupation and asylum, asserting its relevance as a subject for study.

2.3 OCCUPATION

Occupational science and occupational therapy hold the belief that occupation is the very essence of being human, and occupation is known to have an influence on health and well-being (Wilcock, 1998; Christiansen and Baum, 2005). There is substantial theoretical support for the value of occupation as providing feelings of accomplishment, satisfaction, self-esteem, health and well-being (Wilcock, 1998; Persson *et al*. 2001; Ikuigu, 2005; Roberts, 2011; Whalley Hammell, 2015) fostering a positive identity, social connections and establishing meaningful roles and routines (Wright St Clair *et al*. 2005; Hasselkus, 2011; Townsend and Polatajko, 2013).

Traditionally, the concept of occupation has been focused around self-care, leisure and productivity; however, this is increasingly being questioned as simplistic (Whalley Hammell, 2015) and lacking a focus on meaning (Reed *et al*. 2011). As a result, for the purpose of this study, occupation will include all purposeful human activity (Wilcock, 2006), reflecting any daily tasks and activities in which people engage and which have personal and subjective value (Kramer *et al.* 2003) without seeking to categorise them.

2.3.1 Occupational therapy and occupational science

The occupational focus of this study is rooted within the principles of occupation as they are understood by occupational therapists and occupational scientists, and the contributing role of both will be considered. Occupational therapy is a client-centred profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation, thus enabling people to participate in their activities of everyday life (WFOT, 2012). Established in the United States in the 1910s it seeks to use practical means to enable individuals to achieve independence and satisfaction in aspects of their daily life (Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT), 2015).

Occupational science was founded by occupational therapists to generate knowledge about human activity or occupation, and is the study of the effects of occupation on well-being (Yerxa, 1989). A relatively new academic discipline, emerging in 1989 and introduced by Elizabeth Yerxa, occupational science is described as the science of everyday living (Yerxa, 1989; Pierce, 2014) or the study of human occupations (Canadian Society of Occupational Scientists (CSOS), 2018). Occupational science seeks to understand humans' occupational nature, the relationship between occupation and health and the outcomes of contemporary lifestyles (Wilcock, 2006). It is a discipline which seeks to generate knowledge through both quantitative and qualitative enquiry (Zemke and Clarke, 1996; CSOS, 2018) to capture the complex and nuanced relationship between people and what they do in their daily lives (WFOT, 2005).

To clarify, the two perspectives of occupational therapy and occupational science are linked by, and share the same philosophical understanding of, occupation. Occupational

therapy is the therapeutic profession and occupational science is the underpinning academic discipline (Wright St. Clair and Hocking, 2012). The aim is for the two to work to the benefit of one another, and the populations they serve, with occupational science aiming to provide the profession of occupational therapy with its own scientific and research base for informing practice (Yerxa, 1989; Pierce, 2014).

2.4 OCCUPATION AND ASYLUM

People facing human displacement often lack access to basic opportunities and rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement (UNHCR, 2016). Whilst forced migration creates multiple major crises, one strand of concern is the occupational injustice faced by displaced individuals (Mirza, 2012; WFOT 2015). Context may differ, such as displacement to a neighbouring nation's refugee camps (AlHeresh *et al.* 2013), awaiting an asylum decision in a detention facility (Morville, 2014), or attempting to integrate after being granted refugee status (Whiteford and Suleman, 2013).

In the context of this study, the individual participants had all claimed asylum in the UK, and had either been granted leave to remain, were awaiting a decision or had been refused. In each case they face distinct needs arising from their socio-legal status and varied levels of access and support, all of which impact upon occupational opportunities and performance (Smith, H.C. 2015). The implications of an individual's asylum status affects all aspects of daily living, and it is recognised that refugees face many occupational injustices due to their lack of access to meaningful and dignified occupations (Whiteford, 2000; Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2012; WFOT, 2014).

Injustices vary, and may include:

- **Occupational apartheid,** where marginalised groups are denied the right to participate.
- **Occupational deprivation,** where there are lasting external forces preventing engagement.
- **Occupational marginalisation,** which is the reduction or restriction placed upon occupational choice.
- **Occupational alienation,** which is disengagement as a result of prolonged engagement with inappropriate or unrewarding occupations.
- **Occupational imbalance,** where individuals are under- or over-employed.

(Townsend and Whiteford, 2005; Wilcock and Townsend, 2009; Nilsson and Townsend, 2010; Durocher *et al.* 2013; Gupta, 2016; Hocking, 2017).

During forced migration individuals face a number of these injustices (Whiteford, 2000; Connor Schisler and Polatajko, 2002; Steindl *et al.* 2008; Morville *et al.* 2014; Huot *et al.* 2016a). For example, the injustices faced by refugees may begin in their country of origin, as a result of war, political and social restrictions or limited personal opportunities. They then face the major transition of forced migration, which interrupts the individual's occupational journey, often for lengthy periods. Individuals may then find their occupations inhibited by policies such as the denial of opportunities to work and study, or made more difficult to achieve through everyday practicalities such as language barriers (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Gower, 2016; Mayne *et al.* 2016; Nizzero *et al.* 2017).

The impact of occupational injustice creates lasting negative outcomes for individuals, families and the host community (Bennett *et al.* 2012; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Morville, 2014). It is accepted that occupation fosters adjustment and integration during this transition (Huot *et al.* 2013) maintaining health and promoting coping ability, even in extreme circumstances (Lunden, 2012; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013; Campbell and Steel, 2015; Mayne, *et al.* 2016). There is also a suggestion that occupation helps to preserve skills and identity – helping individuals to maintain a more consistent sense of self (Huot *et al.* 2013; Nayar and Sterling, 2013).

The challenge for many people during the asylum process is not only gaining access to occupation, but finding suitably meaningful occupations. Individuals benefit most from occupations that are intense and infused with meaning, coherence and commitment (Jonsson, 2008). Instead, most individuals find themselves filling their days with 'low challenge experiences', which provide little satisfaction (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Kronenberg *et al.* 2011).

A more detailed exploration of the impact of forced migration on asylum will be presented in the Literature Review.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY:

Asylum is a complex socio-legal framework arising from the challenges of human displacement, and has major implications for individuals, families and wider society. Much of the reality of displacement and asylum is experienced through, and arguably shaped by, occupational opportunities. This study aims to illuminate individual lived

experiences of asylum, adding to the growing evidence regarding the impact of asylum on well-being, and the less developed evidence on occupation and asylum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

'Escape is a good novel, a gripping movie, a holiday - not something I can imagine being forced into. I am used to thinking of home as something that gets left behind at the start of a journey, not something you might be travelling perilously towards.'

Adele Dumont

This chapter contains a review of the underpinning literature relevant to the study in order to deepen the understanding of the experience of human displacement, the meaning of occupation, and the connection between asylum and occupation.

In order to directly support the aims of this study, as stated on pg. 6, the chapter contains a review of literature exploring the meaning of occupation, the connection between occupation and asylum and the experience of asylum. There will also follow a statement of how this study relates to other evidence in the field.

3.1 THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

Human displacement is a complex, worldwide phenomenon, and the breadth and scope of the issues are almost impossible to fully reflect here. Within the background there is contextual detail representing modern migration. Below is an exploration of motivations for migration and the UK asylum experience.

3.1.1 Motivation and movement

It is often difficult to separate motivations for migration, and much of the immigration debate lies in what constitutes a migrant and what constitutes a refugee (Sengupta, 2015; UNHCR, 2016; IOM, 2016). As defined in the Introduction, refugees are fleeing armed conflict or persecution, and are in situations so perilous they flee their homes to find safety elsewhere. The term 'migrant', however, is often used to describe those who choose to move to improve their lives through work or education (James and Mayblin, 2016). Elective migrants who are seeking better lives are often identified as economic migrants and there is often confusion between the needs of elective or economic migrants and refugees or those experiencing forced migration (Blinder, 2017).

Conflating refugees and elective migrants can have serious consequences as it undermines public support for refugees by suggesting a greater element of choice in their decision (Gemie, 2010; James and Mayblin, 2016). This is believed to erode support by reducing recognition of their legal and moral entitlements (James and Mayblin, 2016). Whilst the distinction may be drawn between the two, agencies such as the UNHCR and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) acknowledge that both groups may face similar challenges and individuals may fit both categories at the same time (Clemens and Sandefur, 2015; James and Mayblin, 2016).

Zetter (2014) highlights how many forced migrants now fall outside traditional categorisations for refugees and asylum seekers, as contemporary drivers are more complex and multilayered. He cites the combination of intrastate conflict, poor governance, political instability, environmental change, and resource scarcity that fosters

migration, which may fall outside existing definitions of persecution, but nevertheless increases vulnerability and uncertainty and compels people to move (Zetter *et al.* 2006; Gemie, 2010; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

Migration is often considered in terms of push and pull factors, first introduced by Lee in 1966. Push factors capture a wide range of hardships in the country of origin, pull factors are the appealing elements of the intended destination (Lee, 1966). The push factors may be multitudinous, and often include a combination of conflict, political instability, environmental challenges and economic insecurity (Radu and Straubhaar, 2012; Clemens and Sandefur, 2015; James and Mayblin, 2016). Push factors are often met with disbelief and cynicism, where anti-immigration groups suggest that individuals are pulled by a desire for a better life more than they are pushed by adversities faced in their home countries (Gerritsen, 2017). Much of the anti-immigration media coverage focusses on the pull of the destination nation and minimises the risks faced in home nations (Philo *et al.* 2013; Gerritsen, 2017). However, UNHCR recognise around 84% of individuals coming into Europe come from the top ten high risk nations, considered 'refugee producing countries' where war and human rights abuses are well documented (United Nations, 2016; UNHCR, 2016). They have fled wars, like those in Syria and Somalia, extreme repression and forced labour (Eritrea), ethnic persecution (for example, Turkish Kurds or Roma) and terrorist threat (such as from ISIS or Boko Haram) (The Economist, 2015; Eurostat, 2017). Others may be fleeing poverty and lack of work, such as those coming from the Western Balkans and parts of West Africa (The Economist, 2015; United Nations, 2016; Eurostat, 2017).

Pull factors are those things which draw the individual to their host nation, and are similarly complex and difficult to ascertain. Pull factors may vary in strength, but can include geographical features such as proximity to their home nation (Datta, 2004; Migration Observatory, 2016a) or accessible travel routes (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015). There may be practical issues such as a common language (Adsera and Pytlikova, 2015; Migration Observatory, 2016a), historic associations relating to past colonial connections (Faccini and Mayda, 2009; Crawley, 2010) or family connections in the intended country (Czaika and De Haas, 2013). Individuals may also be drawn by factors such as economic and labour market opportunities, access to education and other opportunities (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Migration Observatory, 2016a; Geddes and Scholten, 2016), or the reputation of the intended nation as upholding religious freedom and human rights (Czaika and De Haas, 2013; Hamwee, 2016; Crawley *et al.* 2017).

In addition to external factors, there may be a personal draw or preference for some nations over others (Hamwee, 2016) and positive associations with certain places, such as Europe (Migration Observatory, 2016a; Czaika and De Haas, 2017). There may be personal or socio-cultural factors which guide choices, which are arguably more complex and embedded than more obvious pull factors, such as work. For example, a recent study identified the concept of 'harraga' (a term for illegal immigration) which is culturally rooted in parts of North Africa, incorporated in songs and sayings, and a common aspiration for many (Sansal, 2005; Fanack, 2015). This may be influenced by exaggerated positive views of the lives of migrants, presented out of pride or cultural reserve to those left behind, reflected in the French phrase *'a beau mentir qui vient de loin'* (beautiful lies come from afar) (Fanack, 2015).

The preference for any particular nation creates suspicion amongst opponents that refugees are drawn to countries with generous social welfare benefits (Refugee Council, 2010; Keen and Turner, 2016). However, evidence disputes migrant's knowledge of benefit systems prior to arrival (Gilbert and Koser, 2006; Crawley, 2010; Refugee Council, 2010) and shows that family connections, language and perception of positive human rights are preferred draws (UNHCR, 2016; Gerritsen, 2017). People appear also to be drawn by more established immigrant communities, either to be reunited with existing family, of to feel a greater sense of belonging (Crawley, 2010; Liebling *et al*. 2014). It is also suggested that migrants are drawn to nations who present a tolerant face, or with acknowledged human rights records (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The push away from other, less 'attractive' nations is often believed to be higher levels of poverty, difficult living conditions and little opportunity to work and support oneself (Hamwee, 2016; Keen and Turner, 2016).

There is often a focus in immigration discourse on pull factors over push, and perceptions of choice are often exaggerated by those who are hostile to immigration (Hamwee, 2016). In reality, many refugees have little or no choice of destination, and are at the mercy of traffickers (UNHCR, 2016; Galos *et al.* 2017). The risks involved in forced migration are enormous, and are further explored in the following section, 'Making the Journey.'

3.1.2 Making the journey

The unprecedented numbers of migrants crossing into Europe (1,800,000 in 2015) have often taken challenging journeys across increasingly dangerous routes (Frontex, 2018).

Many migrants face multiple risks, hardships and indignities throughout their journey. These include indefinite detention in prison-like conditions, casual racism, brutality and medical neglect (Webber and Abu-Hayyah, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Attempts to reduce access over land have led to increased numbers arriving by sea, and the IOM estimated that in 2015 1,011,700 migrants arriving by sea, and almost 34,900 by land (IOM, 2016). This sudden shift in routes to means a rapid change for host destinations, particularly Greece and Italy, and a vastly increased risk for migrants (UNHCR, 2016; IOM, 2016; Frontex, 2018). Most sea journeys are taken between Turkey and the Greek Islands, often in flimsy rubber dinghies or small wooden boats, over land is usually via Turkey and Albania (UNHCR, 2016). As routes are closed new routes open up, such as those across the arctic (Higgins, 2015). As a result of increased numbers and hazardous routes, each year record numbers of people perish or go missing while trying to cross international borders. IOM estimate over 7,927 migrants have died or gone missing in 2016, and they have seen major increases each year since their 'Missing Migrant Project' began (IOM, 2017). Deaths associated directly or indirectly with immigration are growing, including both border related and in-country deaths (Webber and Abu-Hayyah, 2015).

Travelling by sea is extremely perilous, and between 2014 and 2016 an estimated 8,000 men, women and children have died trying to cross to Europe, which is approximately ten people a day (IOM, 2016; Hernandez and Stylianou, 2016). Other border related deaths include freezing to death and deaths or injury as a result of brutality from border guards (Higgins, 2015; Kulcusar, 2016). There are also increased reports of refugees and migrants kidnapped, held against their will for several days, physically and sexually

abused, tortured or extorted by smugglers and criminal gangs at several points along key routes (UNHCR, 2016).

Some of the most infamous incidents have captured the attention of the media and the public, such as 71 people found asphyxiated in a lorry in Austria (Harding, 2015), the death of 360 people when their boat was shipwrecked near Lampedusa (BBC, 2013) and Alan Kurdi, the three year old Syrian boy drowned off the coast of Turkey (Kulcusar, 2016). Such instances have highlighted concerns, raised empathy and increased the pressure to act (Amnesty, 2015; Kingsley and Timur, 2015) against what Pope Francis called an 'affront to humanity' (The Guardian, 2015).

Fig. 4: Hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil. Chappate. New York Times, 2015.

Meeting the needs of migrants on this scale is undeniably a complex and challenging process. However, responses to the European migrant crisis have been heavily criticised from both those who feel it has been too slow and too limited (UNHCR, 2016; Red Cross, 2017) and those who feel it may have encouraged migration and increased problems within Europe such as terrorism (Von Oswald and Schmelz, 2010; Migration Watch, 2018).

European governments are unable to act 'upstream' to prevent the conflicts or natural disasters which creates mass migration, they are unable to prevent migrants from travel (despite measures to restrict them) and they fear that minimising risk in the journey may be seen as assisting traffickers or encouraging migrants (Rooney, 2013; Remáč and Malmersjo, 2016).

There have been large scale efforts made to respond to dangers. For example, following large scale loss of life when a smuggler's boat caught fire and capsized off the coast of Lampedusa an operation to intercept boats was introduced by the Italian navy. This project, called Mare Nostrum, took more than 140,000 people aboard during the space of one year. Concerns were raised that Mare Nostrum was acting as a 'pull factor' by making the crossing safer (Anelay, 2015). Mare Nostrum was replaced by Operation Triton, a far cheaper, scaled back approach managed by Frontex, the European Border Agency (IOM, 2016; Steinhilper and Gruijters, 2017). This does not appear to have discouraged migrants from making the crossing and the death toll has risen during the period of Triton (Steinhilper and Gruijters, 2017).

Preventable deaths do not only occur at a distance, and between 2010 and 2014 the UK recognised 22 deaths as attributed directly or indirectly to immigration and asylum

systems. This is the third highest number in Europe (when the UK is 10th highest in terms of asylum application numbers) (Webber and Abu-Hayyah, 2015; Blinder, 2017).

Having set the scene for the impact of the migrant crisis within Europe, the forthcoming sections focus on the specific context of UK asylum, as there are multiple differences between different nation's legal and practical management of asylum application. Whilst in the previous sections, I have considered 'migrants' as a more inclusive group, and reflected the European context of migration, the subsequent sections will focus specifically on asylum within overarching migration, and the specific UK context. This allows a clearer focus on the specific conditions and experiences faced by the participants in the study, as each European nation manages asylum and other types of migration differently.

3.2 THE UK PUSH AND PULL

The UK, common to all European nations, has its own unique approach to meeting asylum obligations. In this section, I will explore the impact of asylum in the UK and the approaches for management of asylum employed within the UK.

The UK has seen significant fluctuations in asylum claims over recent decades, and the most recent Home Office statistics (for 2015) show 25,771 claims for the year 2014/5, an increase of 10% from the previous year, but a significant reduction from the highest number in 2002 (84,132) (Home Office, 2016a; Migration Observatory, 2016a; Blinder, 2017). Asylum varies in its share of overall migration to the UK. At its height it was between 20% and 54%, though it was estimated at 7% of overall migration in 2014 (Blinder, 2017).

Nationalities of applicants change over time, reflecting points of crisis around the world (Crawley, 2010; 2017; Radu and Straubhaar, 2012). In 2015, the leading sources of asylum applicants in the UK were Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan and Syria (Migration Observatory, 2016a). Asylum applicants from Syria increased sharply in recent years, from 160 in 2010 to 2,846 in 2015 (not including the intended 20,000 people intended to be resettled through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (SVPR) by 2020) (Migration Observatory, 2016a; Home Office, 2017).

The profile of refugees coming into the UK in 2015 was 75% adults (58% male, 17% female) and 25% children (Blinder, 2017). Men tend to be overrepresented in asylum numbers as there is a greatest risk of them being forced to fight or being killed (Healey, 2010). There is also an assumption amongst male migrants that they will make the journey first to find a suitable place to live before getting family members to join them (Healey, 2010; Blinder, 2017; UNHCR, 2016).

Since 1991, the majority of initial decisions given on asylum claims in the UK have been refusals, and in 2015 this stood at around 64%. Between 70% and 86% of decisions are appealed against, and on average 28% of these appeals are granted (Home Office, 2016a). Final outcomes are around 39% granted leave to remain as refugees and 4% as humanitarian protection or discretionary leave (Home Office, 2016a). Around 38% of failed claimants are known to have left the UK (either through enforced removal or voluntary repatriation). This leaves 22% of claims unresolved or with unknown outcomes, and others unaccounted for or remaining unsupported within the UK (Migration Observatory, 2016b).

Acceptance of asylum applications are often linked to the country of origin, for example at the initial decision stage 87% of applicants from Syria were granted positive decisions, compared to 22% of applicants from Pakistan (Home Office, 2016a, Migration Observatory, 2016b). Grants were higher during 2015 than previous years, with 41% of applicants receiving refugee status of some form of protection; the highest number of positive decisions since 2003, reflective of the urgency and seriousness of the migrant crisis (Home Office, 2016a).

The UK has traditionally been perceived as a 'popular' destination with migrants, due to past colonial links, widespread familiarity with the English language and the idea that it is a free and civilised society (Wildsmith-Cromarty and Conduah, 2015). However, the perceived welcome to refugee from Germany may be responsible for its more recent popularity as a destination for many people entering Europe (Robinson and Segrott, 2002; Eurostat/BBC, 2016; UNHCR, 2016).

Public perception of the UK as 'soft' on immigration proliferates (Lewis, 2005; Fletcher, 2008) and the connections drawn with welfare claims and the concept of health tourism creates hostility and a sense of burden (Welsh and Schuster, 2005; Sippitt, 2015; Dayan, 2016). Asylum remains a divisive political and social issue in the UK, and the migrant crisis has further emphasised differences of opinion as those who fear rising immigration perceive a 'flood' of newcomers, whilst increased public awareness of loss of life has also fostered humanitarian concern.

The UK has been widely criticised as providing a 'cool' response to the migrant crisis (Harding *et al.* 2015) with limited provision that is 'inhumane' and 'denying dignity and

hope' (Bowes *et al.* 2009; Webber and Abu-Hayyah, 2015, pg. 14). The complex, shifting needs created by the crisis has meant that policies and intervention attempts have neither addressed the difficulties faced by the migrant nor the needs of Government in attempting to manage their presence (Clemens and Sandefur, 2015; James and Mayblin, 2016).

3.3 THE APPLICATION OF ASYLUM IN THE UK

UK asylum processes are often fraught with challenges and heavily criticised by both pro- and anti-immigration commentaries. This section explores in more detail the practicalities of asylum application, but also raises some of the most contentious aspects of the process.

The politically and socially sensitive nature of asylum means that asylum policies are often trying to walk a challenging line between meeting humanitarian need and allaying the fears of the UK population. This is a process that has become harder over recent decades, as calls for the reduction of immigration and hostility towards people seeking asylum have become increasingly politicised (Lewis, 2005; Fletcher, 2008).

UK asylum has been administered by various departments within the Home Office. UKVI were established to take over from the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) when it was disbanded due to poor performance and a closed, secretive and defensive culture (Travis, 2013a). The process is legally complex, practically challenging and involves large (and growing) numbers. The UKVI seek to administer the law and assess the likelihood of risk for applicants (UKVI, 2018a). During the process of seeking asylum individuals will be screened, photographed, fingerprinted, interviewed and required to provide

identifying documentation and supporting evidence. They will be allocated a caseworker, provided with asylum identification and may be detained or required to report regularly to the local police station (Home Office, 2015b).

The caseworker determines the applicant's account and any supporting evidence to determine whether the harmful treatment a person fears amounts to 'persecution', whether their fear is 'well-founded', whether it is for one of the five reasons specified in the Convention and whether the person could not find protection in another part of their country. The applicant must also identify the likelihood of future persecution should they be returned to their country of origin (Asylum Aid 2014; UKVI, 2018a). In cases where people do not qualify for asylum, but may face risks such as torture, violence or degrading treatment if they were to be returned, they can be granted a period of three years' 'humanitarian protection' (UKVI 2018a).

The UKVI aim to process claims within 6 months (UKVI 2018c), however, due to an extensive backlog of 32,600, many individuals have been living under the asylum process for an extensive period, with extreme cases of individuals living without a decision for as long as 16 years (Vaz, 2013). The duration of the wait for a decision is the main criticism levelled at the Home Office by the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee (HAC), which recognised that this has a significant human cost (HAC, 2013). Numerous refugee support agencies have highlighted the impact of the lengthy wait, including the deskilling of claimants due to the length of time out of work, the declining mental health of victims of torture, women trapped in abusive relationships and increased suffering through lengthy family separation (Brighter Futures, 2013; Walter, 2013).

Asylum decision making is undeniably a complex issue, and many of the experiences individuals face prior to arriving in the UK are highly sensitive and difficult to prove. Caseworkers are subject to significant pressures as a result of organisational priorities, overwhelming time pressure and 'compassion fatigue' (Taylor and Muir, 2010; Vine, 2011; HAC, 2013). However, failings in the process are often highlighted, for example, the 'postcode lottery' of claimant grants, where in one region as few as 14% of claims are accepted, and in another 62%, suggesting different application of the same criteria (Henderson and Pickup, 2014). The high number of overturned decisions at appeal (Amnesty, 2013), particularly for women (Refugee Council, 2017) is also suggestive of poor decision making.

It is also probable that asylum policy is not applied without prejudice and both UKVI and its predecessor, UKBA, have been criticised for applying the twin cultures of disbelief and denial (Souter, 2011; Mathysse, 2013). The idea that the Home Office departments start from a position of disbelief is widely reported by agencies such as Amnesty, Asylum Aid and the Immigration Advisory Service (Souter, 2011; Henderson and Pickup, 2014). There is a widespread assumption that most asylum claims are groundless or fraudulent, part of what the UNHCR describes as a 'refusal mindset', which leads caseworkers to disbelieve testimonies (Souter, 2011; UNHCR, 2011; Henderson and Pickup, 2014).

The UNHCR Handbook (2011) provides guidance which states that it may be difficult to present proof for some claims, and if the overall account appears credible it should be accepted unless there are good reasons for doubt. However, UKVI Handbook focusses on the importance of checking both internal and external credibility. Internal credibility is assessed by repeatedly checking the applicant's evidence for inconsistencies (HAC, 2013).

Refusal letters often contain speculative and subjective statements, or seize on minor discrepancies in claims made during lengthy and stressful interviews (Bianchini, 2011; Souter, 2011). Ideas of credibility can include the down-playing of evidence, such as the replacement of the term 'torture' with 'mistreatment' (Souter, 2011). There are situations where physical evidence such as scarring subsequent to torture, is said to be self-inflicted in order to secure refugee status, despite no evidence to support this assertion (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Amnesty, 2013).

Refugee agencies recognise that not all asylum seekers tell the truth, and claimants recognise the need for a verification process (HAC, 2013; Gerritsen, 2017), however the interview experience is particularly challenging. Interviews are conducted in a manner which does not take into account that the asylum seeker's story invariably involves distressing events, and sometimes deeply traumatic ones (Bianchini, 2011; Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; HAC, 2013). Interviews are fraught with issues of language and interpretation (HAC, 2013), gender (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Refugee Council, 2017), prejudice and disbelief (Mathysse, 2013), and are considered unsuitable for the level of vulnerability of the individual, or the sensitivity of the issues (Bianchini, 2011). The interview experience is often described as intimidating and adversarial, with claimants feeling they are not heard and clearly disbelieved (HAC, 2013). Particular issues have been raised about the interviewing of children and young people (Bianchini, 2011), women (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Refugee Council, 2017), traumatized individuals (Steel *et al.* 2004), and homosexuals (Bennett and Thomas, 2013; Mathysse, 2013), as they appear to face additional challenges in sharing their experiences in a hostile environment (Refugee Council, 2017). The interview may be the first time the individual shares such

deeply personal information (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Mathysse, 2013), they may be distressed and fearful, tired and confused, and are unlikely to feel unable to describe torture, rape or humiliation under such circumstances (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; HAC, 2013).

REFLEXIVE COMMENT:

A previous client of mine shared her experience of the Home Office interview, where she was required to disclose a number of extremely painful personal events, including rape, for the very first time.

Her male interviewer drummed his fingers on the table and refused her eye contact.

She described the cold inhumanity of his response, and his patent disbelief as a repetition of her earlier abuse, and equally traumatic.

This experiences chimes both with the research evidence presented here, and the experiences of disbelief described by participants during their asylum process, detailed in section 6.3.

Lack of access to suitable interpreters is also regularly highlighted, with the Liverpool Asylum and Refugee Association (LARA) providing the example that 85 languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but the Home Office offers interpretation only in Amharic, the official Government language (McPherson, 2014). Language issues have led to wasteful misuse of court time and distressingly prolonged asylum processes of the individual claimant (HAC, 2013).

Following the efforts to ascertain internal credibility, UKVI assess external validity against country of origin information, to see if the claim is contextually credible. Here UKVI has been described as having a culture of denial, including a refusal to believe and avoidance of supporting facts (Cohen, 2005, Souter, 2011). UKVI rely heavily on certain sources,

such as their own country of origin reports, excluding other sources of expert evidence. In some regions case workers are prevented or actively discouraged from doing any additional research (Vine, 2011). Even accepting that these country of origin reports are balanced, objective and contemporary, which may seem unlikely (UNHCR, 2013), the independent chief inspector of the UKBA acknowledged that the evidence from these reports can be doggedly or selectively followed depending on the decision making of the caseworker (Vine, 2011; Bohmer and Shuman, 2013).

In 2011, the Home Office's own report stated that 17% of refusal letters showed selective use of country information or unjustified assertions based on the evidence available and 33% used poorly referenced country information, making it exceptionally difficult to be sure that the decision was justified (Vine, 2011). UKVI also acknowledge that there is little or no training for case workers on the use of this crucial research evidence (Vine, 2011), and are urged to open themselves to wider sources of evidence (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Memon, 2012; UNHCR, 2013). The Refugee Council sought to remind the Home Office that 'the task of staff examining claims for asylum is to judge fairly, not to make it as difficult as possible for asylum claims to be made...and the culture of disbelief has no place in fair judgements' (Wren, 2013, p. 11).

Another credibility threshold is section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act (Home Office, 2004) explores behaviours which can reflect negatively on a claimant's credibility. This includes things like the failure to provide certain documents, provide reasonable explanations and failure to claim asylum in the first safe country they arrive in. Inferences are drawn in refusal letters such as 'in the light of your credibility having been damaged' (Henderson and Pickup, 2014, p. 1) without acknowledging the risks associated

with travelling with sensitive documentation (Bohmer and Shuman, 2013; UNHCR, 2013) or the ruling that assessors should not take into account illicit means used to enter a country as these may be unavoidable (UNHCR, 2011; Henderson and Pickup, 2014).

The effect of being disbelieved can be emotionally and psychologically devastating (HAC, 2013), and assessments of negative credibility can leave vulnerable people, with well-founded fears of persecution, facing incredulity, flawed guidance and ultimately horrible consequences (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; UNHCR, 2013).

UNHCR identify failings the basics of human rights law, the role of credibility within law, the use of speculative argument, failure of methodology in assessing credibility and poor use of evidence (Muggeridge and Maman, 2011; Bohmer and Shuman, 2013; UNHCR, 2013). There is a lack of clarity regarding criteria for assessment (Webber, 2009) and an inappropriately high burden of proof (UNHCR, 2011), far higher than legal courts require (Asylum Aid, 2013; Bohmer and Shuman, 2013).

REFLEXIVE COMMENT:

In preparing this section I recalled reading the legal findings on a client who had experienced extreme and ongoing domestic violence where the Judge stated that she 'accepted that the claimant had been raped and beaten but was not a victim of domestic violence as she had been able to seek medical help following assaults.'

The client was hurt and distressed but would not challenge the decision for fear of being seen as a troublemaker. She was later deported.

Had I not read the judgment myself I would not have believed such a statement possible, and I remain astounded that a female British judge would draw such conclusions. This reflects both the extreme implications of disbelief, but also the differing legal standards of law applied in asylum cases.

UKBA and UKVI have both been criticised for providing an inappropriate culture, where poorly trained staff hold significant legal powers (Taylor and Muir, 2010). There is a lack of service improvement, persistent poor performance and poor management, and a failure to learn from past mistakes (HAC, 2013). In 2010, whistleblower Louise Perrett described how staff mistreated, tricked and humiliated people seeking asylum, with staff expressing fiercely anti-immigration views and taking pride in refusing applications (Taylor and Muir, 2010). The independent Chief Inspector called this an absence of customer focus that would not be seen in any other Government department, and would not occur had they a less vulnerable and voiceless body of customers (Vine, 2013).

3.4 POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF AN ASYLUM CLAIM

Following the asylum process the claimant may receive one of the following outcomes:

3.4.1 Permission to stay

If an individual is considered to qualify for asylum they may be given leave to remain, usually for a period of five years, after which they can apply to settle in the UK. The short period of five years, introduced in 2005, can also mean that individuals find it difficult to make decisions about their future, to find work and make definite, longer term plans for their life in the UK (HAC, 2013).

Following a positive decision, the individual can begin to settle and build a new life in the UK, and are entitled to access work and mainstream benefits (Gower, 2015). However, outcomes are often poor and individuals face ongoing challenges to their health,

integration and occupations (Phillimore and Goodson, 2008; McColl *et al.* 2008; Morris *et al.* 2009; MacPherson, 2014; Mayblin, 2014).

3.4.2 Refused claims

Since 1994 there has been a consistent trend toward high levels of refusal (Blinder, 2017), and if it is decided that the individual has no reason to stay in the UK under asylum or humanitarian law they will asked to leave (UKVI, 2018b). People can request an independent appeal against negative decisions, and around 78% of failed claims are appealed against, with a success rate of 24% (Blinder, 2017).

If a person is unsuccessful in their claim they lose financial support and housing, becoming reliant on emergency support from various charities and facing extreme hardship and destitution (Dumper *et al.* 2006; Asylum Destitution Working Group, 2008; Smart and Fullegar, 2008, Cuthill *et al.* 2013). For some failed applicants 'hard case support' can be provided as part of Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (UKVI, 2018c). This is provided under stringent criteria and often relies on either illness or disability or the individual showing themselves willing to take steps to leave the UK (Crawley *et al.* 2011; UKVI, 2018c). In the first quarter of 2013, Section 4 support was granted on 61% more occasions than in the same period of 2012, suggesting a growing need (Cuthill *et al.* 2013; UKVI, 2018c).

3.4.2.1 Detention

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, detention should only occur where there are strong grounds that the individual may abscond, be uncooperative or

pose a security risk (Fazel and Silove, 2006; Ohtani and Phelps, 2016). However, around half of UK claimants will be detained in one at some point during the process (Triggs, 2013; Ohtani and Phelps, 2016; Silverman, 2018), often repeatedly (Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Migration Observatory, 2016b).

Detention is contentious, and is opposed by the UNHCR (Ohtani and Phelps; 2016), with the National Audit Office raising the huge human cost of inappropriate detention (Steel *et al.* 2006; Webber, 2009; Triggs 2013). The practice is seen by some as an attempt to deter 'undeserving' individuals from seeking sanctuary in the UK, as a punitive method to assuage public fears (Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Lentin, 2015; Ohtani and Phelps, 2016), or a display of 'noisy moral panic' as part of a negative societal reaction aimed at people who are 'easy to identify and easy to dislike' (Welch and Schuster, 2005, p. 397).

3.4.2.2 Voluntary and involuntary returns

In 2016, 39,626 people were removed from the UK or departed voluntarily after a removal process was begun (Migration Observatory, 2016b). Individuals can voluntarily return home through the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) which provides assistance with travel, contacts, advice and a 'reintegration support' payment of up to £2000 (UKVI, 2018c). Failed claimants who do not access VARRP can be forcibly returned, receiving a letter giving notice, followed by detention without warning and removal from the UK (UKVI, 2018b).

Enforced deportation is the costliest form of removal and UKBA paid more than £28 million for removal flights in the financial year 2010-2011 and pays an estimated £11,000 for each enforced removal of a rejected asylum applicant (Blinder, 2017). Voluntary

repatriation is considerably more cost effective (UKVI, 2018b), however, there is believed to be a decrease in numbers taking voluntary return (Refugee Council, 2016).

The safety of returnees is highly contentious, as the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33) determines that individuals should not be returned to countries where their life or freedom would be threatened. The challenge of determining the future threat to an individual is a complex one, but there is evidence of returnees facing incarceration, rape and torture upon their return (Ramos, 2011; Podeszfa and Manicom, 2012; Schuster and Majidi, 2013; Amnesty, 2015).

There is a recognised gap between the number of refusals and removals, which is a 'critical weakness' in the system (Migration Observatory, 2016b; Blinder, 2017 p. 8). This 'deportation gap' reflects three main groups, those who have become 'socially integrated', 'lost' or 'unreturnable' (Gibney, 2008; Vanderbruggen *et al.* 2014). Deporting failed claimants is often simplified in the public's imaginings, but in reality is fraught with diplomatic, practical and humanitarian complications (Migration Observatory, 2016b; Blinder, 2017).

3.4.2.3 Unreturnability

Unreturnability is a rarely considered aspect of asylum, where the person whose asylum claim has failed cannot be returned to their country of origin due to administrative, diplomatic or personal reasons beyond their control (Paoletti, 2010; UKVI, 2018b). These might include the inability to access necessary documentation, difficulties getting other nations to accept the individual's return, or health issues which prevent travel (Vanderbruggen *et al.* 2014). Along with uncertainty and financial hardship,

unreturnability is associated with frequent episodes of detention and repeated attempts to deport the individual, which is considered to have a profound impact on physical and psychological well-being (Paoletti, 2010; Vanderbruggen *et al.* 2014).

These many different outcomes all have very different implications for the individual and are part of the complex and controversial details of asylum. The purposive sample of individuals used in this study reflect all of these possible outcomes of asylum – there are individuals who have been granted leave to remain, people awaiting a decision and people who are failed claimants, who are either attempting to appeal, facing deportation or unreturnable.

3.5 ASYLUM SUPPORT

During the wait for a decision, individuals who are considered destitute can be supported under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which provides financial support and accommodation (UKVI, 2018a). The total number of asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of Section 95 asylum support in 2013 was 20,860 (UKVI, 2018a).

3.5.1 Financial support

Individuals receive financial support at £36.62 per week (for a single person), which is less than 70% of the rate of income support and equates to £5.23 a day for food, sanitation and clothing (Gower, 2015; UKVI, 2018a). Despite the rising cost of living the support for people seeking asylum has been 'substantially' reduced in 2015 (Gower, 2015, p. 3). The reduction introduced a flat rate for all applicants, which causes a disproportionate impact

on families with children (Gower, 2015; Refugee Action, 2017) and was a response to what the UK Government asserted was 'families receiving significantly more cash than is necessary to meet their essential living needs' and bring cash provision in line with some other European Union (EU) nations (UKVI, 2018c; Home Office, 2015a).

All financial support and accommodation provided by Section 95 ends when a decision, positive or negative, is given.

If an individual agrees to VARRP, or is deemed eligible for Section 4 'cashless support' (due to major health issues, for example), they will receive financial support via an Azure card, which contains their allowance, but no actual money. The Azure card is perceived negatively by users and support agencies as it can only be used in a limited number of shops and leaves the individual with no cash for daily necessities and travel costs (Reynolds, 2010, Carnet, 2014). The cashless system has been deemed inhumane by the Red Cross, who have identified issues with the process which prevent people meeting their basic living needs, has an impact on their health and opens them up to stigma and discrimination (Carnet, 2014).

3.5.2 Accommodation

Accommodation is provided with basic furnishings and utilities, and is offered on a no-choice basis, contracted to private providers on behalf of the UKVI (Gower, 2015). When I began working in this field, accommodation was provided by both the local council and some smaller private contracts. At that time the council provided visibly better-quality accommodation plus additional services such as help with orientation, registration with the local GP and the provision of children's activities. It was very clear to me that those

who received council accommodation were far better served, and as this dwindled I witnessed individuals and families accommodated in some insalubrious properties and left to orientate themselves.

Since 2013 accommodation has been provided by Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services (COMPASS), comprising G4S, Serco and Clearel, using a series of subcontractors. This represented an attempt to streamline and reduce costs, but was 'poorly planned and badly managed and is unlikely to yield the savings intended' (House of Commons Select Committee (HCSC) 2016, n.p.).

Private providers have been heavily criticised as providing substandard services with little attention to the needs of those they accommodate, particularly for the most vulnerable (Williams, 2012; Grayson, 2012; 2016). Whilst there is some improvement evident since 2013, COMPASS providers still fail in a number of crucial performance indicators, including property standards (National Audit Office (NAO) 2015). Service users and their representative have raised ongoing issues with substandard accommodation and failure to address issues (NAO, 2015).

Accommodation was said to be 'oppressive, unhealthy and totally unsuited', with examples of accommodation rated as a category 1 property (hazardous and unfit for human habitation) used to house a mother and five-month-old baby (Grayson, 2016, n.p.). In addition to issues with the physical accommodation, there are criticisms of the lack of sensitivity shown towards the needs of tenants, and behaviour that is 'below common decency' (Williams, 2012, p.1). Examples include the practice of providers entering a property without giving notice, which caused fear and distress, particularly to

female tenants (Teather, 2013), and reports that G4S and their subcontractors evicting a pregnant woman on the day her baby was due (Williams, 2012).

3.5.2.1 Dispersal

Dispersal was introduced following the development of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to promote distribution of claimants throughout the UK to avoid the concentration of individuals in the south east of England, which had become 'overburdened by the obligation' (Dankzuk, 2016, p. 33; Home Office, 2016b). Dispersal arrangements are primarily made in relation to the availability of suitable, cheap, 'low demand' accommodation (National Audit Office, 2014), resulting in uneven dispersal to areas with greater existing social issues and lower socio-economic standing (Burnett, 2011; Reed, 2015). The largest host areas have been north west England, Yorkshire and the Humber area, and north-east England (Refugee Council, 2017). The dispersal of individuals based on housing availability is criticised as it creates needs that services may struggle to manage, increases hostilities within local populations and can lead to 'ghettoisation' (Burnett, 2011).

3.5.3 Teesside – Local Context for Asylum Life

Teesside is a conurbation in the North East of England, centred around the town of Middlesbrough and including places such as Billingham and Stockton-on-Tees. According to the 2011 Census, the built-up areas of Teesside had a population of around 376,633 (Office of National Statistics, 2011).

Teesside is acknowledged as an area facing multiple economic and social challenges (Vale, 2009). Teesside has traditionally been associated with heavy industry, but prolonged decline in steelmaking and chemical industries has had a significant effect on the prosperity of the area. Taking Middlesbrough as the primary focus, there is an unemployment rate of 10%, double the national average (NOMIS, 2016; Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2018b), an average salary of £17,041 (the national average being £22,221) (ONS, 2018a), and it has the highest number of people claiming out of work benefit in the country (NOMIS, 2016).

In addition, Middlesbrough is considered an area experiencing high levels of poverty and disadvantage (Main and Bradshaw, 2014; NOMIS, 2016). The Index of Multiple Deprivation recorded Middlesbrough as the highest in the UK with almost 49% of its neighbourhoods 'highly deprived' (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2015) and an estimated 40% of children living in poverty (Main and Bradshaw, 2014). The health of people in Middlesbrough is generally worse than the England average, with general and lifestyle related poor health (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), 2016). Life expectancy is 14.2 years lower for men and 10.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Middlesbrough than in the least deprived areas (Main and Bradshaw, 2014; JSNA, 2016).

In addition to practical problems, Teesside, and particularly Middlesbrough, has an image problem, often promoted by negative political and media discourse. These include The Economists' description of Middlesbrough and Hartlepool as part of 'Britain's rust belt' (Knowles, 2013), Lord Howells' suggestion that the region had large uninhabited and

desolate areas, perfect for fracking (Stacey and Pickard, 2013), and a Guardian article making reference to Middlesbrough as 'Britain's Detroit' (Beckett, 2014).

Public funding in the north east has been declining at the fastest rate of any region in the UK (Innes and Tetlow, 2015), with the cumulative impact of local authorty cuts for Middlesbrough equated to -£156 per head of population, one of the highest in the country (Newcastle Council, 2011; Innes and Tetlow, 2015). This reflects an area that not only experiences multiple challenges, but is seeing its necessary means of support decline.

Teesside and asylum

Teesside has traditionally been an area of low ethnic density, with a White British population ranging from 97.6% in Redcar to 86.1% in Middlesbrough, compared to the national average of 79.8%. Middlesbrough has a higher non-British population than the rest of the North East and the migration rate has been rapid as a result of asylum dispersal policy (JSNA, 2016). This may be influential both in terms of the existence of communities able to support newly arrived individuals, and the readiness of local people to accept 'difference' in fairly homogenous communities.

Asylum accommodation is driven by access to available and affordable accommodation, and Middlesbrough has had a large number of properties available and house prices at half the national average (Guillot, 2014; Reed, 2015). As a result of this housing-based policy, Middlesbrough houses the largest number of newly arrived people seeking asylum of anywhere in the UK (Guillot, 2014; Reed, 2015). Middlesbrough alone was housing 746 adult asylum seekers; in contrast, the entire south-east region (excluding

London) was accommodating only 494. When the principle of dispersal was devised an advisory quota was determined of 1 in every 200 members of the established population, and Middlesbrough is the only place in the UK that breaks that limit, with one in 186.

Fig. 5: *Asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support, by local authority, per million population, as at end of September 2016 (Home Office National Statistics, 2016). Teesside indicated by ring.*

Teesside has some valuable services specific to meeting the needs of refugees, including advocacy and support agencies, practical and financial support including hardship monies from a dedicated charitable fund and church-based support from groups. There are also numerous refugee led community organisations (RCOs) feeding into the larger regional refugee networks plus specialist Primary Care services in both Middlesbrough and Stockton-On-Tees. The work done by these organisations provides emergency support,

advice and guidance, social contact and advocacy. Local councillors in Middlesbrough and neighbouring Stockton-On-Tees say they are proud of the welcome that asylum seekers have been given by the public, but there are frequent negative responses towards newly arrived communities (Reed, 2015).

There is evidence of raised public concern regarding the impact of asylum (over other forms of immigration) regarding health, education, housing, crime, social cohesion and employment (Cebulla *et al.* 2010; Migration Advisory Committee, 2012; Blinder and Allen, 2016). This is despite efforts by support agencies to reduce concerns by dissemination of 'myth busting facts' to allay fears and balance concerns. This may, in part, be due to the limited experience dispersal areas have of cultural diversity (Migration Advisory Committee, 2012; Blinder and Allen, 2016; Demireva, 2017).

An example of the push and pull of support and hostility is demonstrated in a specific set of circumstances, occurring in Middlesbrough, which caught the attention of the national press. What became known as the 'Red Door' issue was first highlighted in Middlesbrough when housing provider Jomast, under contract to G4S, received criticism for their policy of painting the front doors of all their asylum accommodation red. It was felt, by residents and asylum support agencies, that this identified occupants as people seeking asylum, increasing real and perceived vulnerabilities (Dearden, 2016).

Fig. 6: 'Red door' Jomast properties, Middlesbrough. Phil Noble/Reuters 2016.

The issue was reported widely by the local and national press and addressed by Government. Whilst it was acknowledged that this was a practical rather than deliberate action by Jomast, it was considered to open people to harassment and abuse (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2015). The practice has since stopped but it highlighted both the power of local agencies acting to give voice to the concerns of refugees in the area, but also raised some of the uglier opinions of local people, shared on social media and press comments pages.

3.6 THE UK ASYLUM CONTEXT

As the country provides a context underpinning experiences of asylum, and has a unique interpretation of asylum law, this section considers the things which shape responses to immigration in the UK.

The UK, like the rest of Europe, has been part of a long running economic downturn, and as a result, asylum is provided in a context of economic hardship and reduced social spending (Seymour, 2014; Blyth, 2015). The political rhetoric that has occurred in response to the migrant crisis has been particularly polarised, and is reflected by divisive media attention (Philo *et al.* 2013). These features influence public opinion on asylum and impacts upon the place people seeking asylum occupy in British society. This section explores the implications of these contextual influences on asylum seekers.

3.6.1 The context of an austerity welcome

The socio-political landscape of the UK shifts, and its policy regarding asylum shifts with it. This study has been undertaken during a period of austerity and economic depression, which is characterised by national hardship and reduced social spending (Blyth, 2015). Austerity is the process by which difficult policy measures are introduced to manage national economic crises. The context of austerity may have influenced national responses to immigration, as austerity is often linked to harsh attitudes towards marginalised and mistrusted groups, as economic pressure erodes compassion and social cohesion (Pontichelli and Voth, 2011; Seymour, 2014).

Austerity measures have become a major feature of the contemporary socio-political landscape, in the UK and across Europe (Butler, 2012; Hudson, 2013; Winder, 2015). Whilst some exponents assert that austerity measures are essential to redress existing financial difficulties (Winder, 2015), the need for austerity measures is criticised as unnecessarily Draconian (Blyth, 2015). The impact of austerity is multifaceted, as it is believed to magnify disadvantage (Butler, 2012; O'Hara, 2012; 2014; Blyth, 2015), impact upon health and social well-being (Hudson, 2013; Wind-Cowie, 2013) and reduce service provision (O'Hara, 2014; Blyth, 2015). In the UK, austerity measures have created a disproportionate burden on the most vulnerable, creating a 'cold climate' of reduced income and opportunity for people reliant on state support, including refugees (Heap, 2013, Duffy, 2013; Elliott, 2014; Valentine, 2014; Fisher and Nandi, 2015). People seeking asylum are facing a reduction in financial and practical support, coupled with an increased hostility towards their needs, which further exacerbates marginalisation for this already excluded group.

3.6.2 Asylum and austerity politics

Immigration has been perceived as a major political issue since the 1990s (Lewis, 2005), and a major analysis of all UK political debates over the last 15 years identified that asylum has commonly dominated parliamentary discussions (Fletcher, 2008). Much of the discourse focuses upon entitlements, including the practical implications of accepting asylum seekers (such as cost) and whether they were genuine and 'deserving' of support. There were multiple discussions regarding the potential or perceived impact of people seeking asylum on UK life, including national identity, social cohesion, competition for resources, race relations, religious expression and potential security

risks. Policy and legal obligations, European law and national reputation were all debated, with party political 'point scoring,' public opinion and press coverage all seeming to shape debate (Fletcher, 2008).

Governments have the potential to influence social attitudes through policies that set out government priorities, establishing who and what is 'worthy' of benefitting from public money (Abrahams, 2014). The focus of political rhetoric on asylum is thought to foster the belief by the public that people seeking asylum are making 'bogus' claims, being deliberately fraudulent and choosing the UK in order to access benefits (Robinson and Segrott, 2002; Gilbert and Koser, 2006; Zimmerman, 2011).

Party politics in the UK and across Europe has seen a move towards right wing and far right beliefs, frequently associated with periods of austerity (Hatemi *et al.* 2013; Smith, 2016). These beliefs are associated with strongly conservative views associated with authoritarianism, resistance to change, dislike of uncertainty and fear of the 'other' (Jost *et al.* 2003; Leone and Chirumbolo, 2007). At times when people feel economically uncertain those who are naturally more fearful and uncertain are more likely to be supportive of policies that provide them with a sense of surety and security, allowing politicians to strengthen their standing by exploiting public anxieties (Hatemi *et al.* 2013).

In right wing rhetoric there is often a disproportionate focus on immigration, intensifying the focus on differences and minimising awareness of needs. This negative attention is not grounded in evidence, but captures peoples' imagination and heightens their paranoia (Furedi, 2006; Gardner, 2009). Such messages promote separateness, widening the gap between 'them and us' (Hatemi *et al.* 2013).

In addition to generating distance between groups, these attitudes foster an appealing sense of group solidarity, with the desire to stand together and exclude others a natural and seductive response to economic hardship (Ahmed, 2004; Goodwin, 2006; Karyotis and Rudig, 2013). By grouping people together, and demonising the 'other,' the majority feel a greater sense of togetherness and personal value (Ahmed, 2004).

3.6.3 The Home Office 'hostile environment'

Daily life for people awaiting an asylum decision is very hard and the process itself is described as confusing, disempowering and traumatic (Mangazva, 2011; Bennett and Thomas, 2013). However, many practices adopted by the Home Office are deliberately chosen to make life particularly difficult for applicants, adding to their challenges (HAC, 2013).

When Theresa May was Home Secretary she laid out plans to create a 'hostile environment' for illegal immigrants within the UK (Travis, 2013b). A 'Hostile Environment Working Group' was established in 2012, by the then Coalition Government to devise new forms of hostility. Once attention was drawn to the group it was renamed the 'Inter-Ministerial Group on Migrants' Access to Benefits and Public Services' (Yeo, 2017). These plans were designed to discourage people coming to the UK, stop those who do come from overstaying and stop irregular migrants being able to access the essentials of an ordinary life (Yeo, 2017). This included practical exclusions from things like banking and driving, health services, rental accommodation and work (Travis, 2013b; Yeo, 2017).

Whilst the measures were intended to affect illegal immigrants, they have created blanket hardships for all immigrants, regardless of the legality of their presence (Yeo,

2017). Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, David Bolt has published reports indicating that hundreds of people are being wrongfully denied rights as part of the hostile environment plans (Bolt, 2016). The measures have been adopted in the belief that they are 'right' in principle, and because they have broad public support (Bolt, 2016).

However, this support does not always acknowledge the complexity of the system and the potential of very minor errors and omissions leading individuals into the hostile environment (Yeo, 2017). Examples include being a day late in a visa application, forgetting to include a photograph in an immigration application, or missing one of the hundreds of questions on the form, but also include errors made by the Home Office themselves (Yeo, 2017).

There is no proof that the measures work as there has been little evaluation and no clear measures in place; for example, the rate of the voluntary return of migrants (which has steadily grown since 2004), has slowed since the introduction of these measures (Bolt 2016; Yeo, 2017). There is also no recognition from within the Home Office of the potential damage of the hostile environment to individuals and communities, including increased risks of homelessness and discrimination (Methodist Church in Britain, 2016; Travis, 2016b). For example, Webber (2018) found that 44% of landlords were less likely to let to people and families who 'appear to be immigrants' and the Joint Council on the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), (2015) found 51% of landlords are saying they would now chose not to let to foreign nationals. There is also increased questioning of people who are judged as immigrants in what Yeo describes as the 'I need to see your papers because you are black' phenomenon (JCWI, 2016; Yeo, 2017).

3.6.4 Asylum and the media

Intertwined with political influences, various forms of media take an important role in shaping public opinion on immigration, with television, print and social media providing a backdrop of hostile commentary (Greenslade, 2005; Kamenova, 2014). Tabloid newspaper articles often promote sales by adopting a deliberately provocative tone, written to shock, anger and disgust readers (Briant *et al.* 2013; Philo *et al.* 2013) using divisive, irresponsible and damaging language (Clayton and Vickers, 2014) and focussing on individuals whose extreme and polarised lifestyles reflect little of the majority experience.

Philo *et al*. (2013) reported a clear increase in negative reporting on immigration, with the use of pejorative language and a focus on economic burden. They explored the views of members of the public, finding that attitudes were harsh, and based on distorted facts that people justified because they had read about them in the popular press. The anti-immigration press agenda portrays individuals as undeserving through the use of othering, deservedness and moralizing (Briant *et al.* 2013; Vickers *et al.* 2014), represents the needs of refugees as an unacceptable responsibility for the rest of society (Chauhan and Foster, 2013). There is generally greater empathy for women and children (Judge, 2010), yet press portrayals focus on young men and have a tendency to portray them in a threatening light (Buchanan and Grillo, 2003; Greenslade, 2005; Moore and Clifford, 2007). Such reporting is believed to have a direct impact on public opinion and foster discrimination and exclusion (Judge, 2010; Philo *et al.* 2013; Kamenova, 2014).

In addition to print media, social media is frequently used as a vehicle for sharing immigration related information, reaching many people who might not access newspapers or television news coverage. This includes anti-immigration materials shared as part of alleged political interference in elections in the UK and US (Shane, 2017) and long running viral campaigns (Kennedy, 2015). These often share false information and have prompted responses from governments concerned about inaccurate content and the intention to create resentment towards refugees (Pedersen, 2006; Kennedy, 2015).

3.6.5 Public perception

Uneasiness about immigration is common across Europe, and xenophobia is a growing concern (Minkenberg, 2013), but cross Europe research suggests that British citizens are more hostile to the idea of immigration than other European countries (Lewis, 2005; McLaren and Johnson, 2007; Blinder and Allen, 2016). Immigration dominates the public imagination, and people are demonstrating increased anxiety about the scale of immigration and its economic and social impact in a manner disproportionate to the actual impact (Lewis, 2005, Philo *et al.* 2013). This has fostered anger and fear, often occurring in areas with little or no impact from asylum, and reflecting little or no understanding of asylum within wider immigration issues, or recognition of the refugee experience (Lewis, 2005; McLaren and Johnson, 2007).

Whilst economic issues are often cited as a concern in accepting immigrants, it seems that western European nations are more concerned with aspects of culture and identity (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Zimmerman, 2011). People have expressed concern about a perceived decline in national authority and national identity (BSA, 2014; Blinder and Allen, 2016),

and fears that diversity of religion, language and tradition will have a negative impact on their country (Ivarsflaten, 2005; McKay *et al.* 2012).

In 1995, around two thirds of the UK population thought the number of immigrants should be reduced, but by 2003 this had jumped to three quarters (McLaren and Johnson, 2004). There has been a sustained trend of greater hostility towards people seeking asylum, reflected in opinion polls showing that the public perceive the UK to have 'too many' people seeking asylum, and that they come to the UK as they perceive the nation as a 'soft touch' (MORI for the Readers Digest, 2000; Lewis, 2005; McKay et al. 2012; Blinder and Allen, 2016).

There is a cyclical issue where the dominant negative political discourse, the powerful influence of print and television media and public opinion feed one another to increase negative impressions of immigration and encourage more and more Draconian responses. Public concern about immigration has mirrored the increased numbers of media reports about asylum (Briant *et al.* 2013; Buchanan and Grillo, 2003; Greenslade, 2005; Moore and Clifford, 2007; Kamenova, 2014), and political discourse, harsh Government responses and lessening numbers have not reduced negative public perception (Lewis, 2005). Direct contact with people seeking asylum is shown to provide a more accurate and more empathetic response (McKay *et al.* 2012), however, personal contact with people seeking asylum is often infrequent, and as a result peoples' opinion of people seeking asylum is rarely formed by interaction, rather by messages from other sources (Philo *et al.* 2013).

I hear them say, go home, I hear them say, fucking immigrants, fucking refugees.

Are they really this arrogant?

Do they not know that stability is like a lover with a sweet mouth upon your body one second and the next you are a tremor lying on the floor covered in rubble and old currency waiting for its return.

All I can say is, I was once like you, the apathy, the pity, the ungrateful placement and now my home is the mouth of a shark, now my home is the barrel of a gun.

I'll see you on the other side.

Warsan Shire.

3.7 EXPERIENCING ASYLUM

The influence of asylum is multi-layered and far reaching, affecting all aspects of daily life. The challenges can be seen before, during and after the individuals' flight from their country of origin. Before they leave their country, the refugees' development may already have been distorted by experiences of trauma or by limited opportunities for social or educational development (Bradby *et al.* 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016). The flight itself is often lengthy, hazardous and traumatic, and there are descriptions of the experience of a month-long journey in the hold of a cargo vessel from Africa, or of human traffickers increasing prices half way to their destination (De Mojeed, 2010; IOM, 2016; Galos *et al.* 2017).

The experience of seeking asylum finds people facing a lengthy, passive wait for a decision (Rotter 2013; Richards and Rotter, 2013), often dispersed to areas of limited ethnic and cultural diversity where they can feel isolated and vulnerable (Zetter *et al.* 2006; Hynes, 2011; Migration Advisory Committee, 2012; Blinder and Allen, 2016). This may foster a process called acculturation, the adjustment from one culture to another, which affects the individuals' sense of cultural continuity (Bhugra and Becker, 2005; Sam and Berry, 2010; Fox *et al.* 2016).

Individuals face limited access to opportunities, poor social and other types of capital, dwindling performance skills and wasted human potential (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Hocking, 2012; Morville, 2014; WFOT, 2012; 2016; Andriani, 2013). By law they are not permitted to work, they tend to have limited social opportunities and experience high levels of mental ill-health (Porter and Haslem, 2005; Robjant *et al.* 2009; Priebe *et al.*

2016). If a person is unsuccessful in their claim they lose financial support and housing, becoming reliant on emergency support of charity and face extreme hardship and destitution (Dumper *et al.* 2006, Smart and Fullegar, 2008; Bowes *et al.* 2009).

Whilst refugees are diverse in age, ability, resources and background, but the profile of UK refugees shows that 70% of principle applicants are male and 82% are less than 35 years old (Home Office, 2016a; Keen and Turner, 2016; Eurostat, 2017). Young adulthood is arguably a time of peak physical and cognitive development, increased confidence and the drive towards occupational outlets. We start to stabilize in terms of personality and intellect, develop stronger social networks and establish romantic and family relationships (Sigelman and Rider, 2017). However, access to opportunities is severely restricted for refugees and a wealth of negative experiences can result. Like any young adult, refugees want to feel they are being productive and generative, engaging with others, being part of a society and making a meaningful contribution (Rotter, 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016). Instead they find themselves struggling to fill the hours in their days and feeling that they exist on the margins of society (Bloch, 2006; Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Smith, H.C. 2015).

Physical and cognitive capabilities are undermined by a range of health issues – with high prevalence of mental ill-health, somatic expressions of distress and traumatic injuries as a result of torture (Bhugra, 2004; Bradby *et al.* 2015). Individuals' esteem and confidence is often eroded by ongoing low self-worth fostered by poor social standing, limited opportunities to express or improve oneself and an awareness of the negative stereotypes that exist around asylum (Grove and Zwi, 2006; Shapiro, 2008). There is massive instability in everyday life – with every aspect of everyday living arrangements

being influenced by limited choice and opportunity, and the daily wait for word on crucial decisions taken by others (Rotter, 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016).

This web of negative influences interferes with the individuals having a sense of connectedness to the people and activities that have meaning for them in the past, present or in the future. In this section I will explore key issues influencing individual experiences of asylum, including the impact of transition, the importance of belonging and the links between asylum and well-being.

3.7.1 Transition and change

The experience of forced migration is heavily shaped by the experience of change as every aspect of daily life changes, often swiftly and dramatically. The key features are reflected in the adjustment between one culture and another (acculturation), the sense of being between cultures (liminality) and the experience of high levels of uncertainty in everyday life (precarity).

3.7.1.1 Acculturation

Acculturation is the personal response to the process of cultural change experienced when people move between cultures, and interaction between the familiar and the new (Sam and Berry, 2010; Fox *et al.* 2016). The concept reflects the behavioural, emotional and psychological impact of changes to customs and institutions (Berry, 2006; Skuza, 2007; Kramer-Roy, 2012). Acculturation is a two-way process, with cultures influenced by people who join them, and being influenced by the cultures they join. However, the majority culture remains the dominant force with the bigger impact, meaning that

arriving immigrants are required to make the biggest adjustments (Berry, 2006; Skuza, 2007).

Refugee resettlement experiences vary, and are influenced by personal, cultural and experiential factors (Phillimore, 2011). Individual responses to stress and ability to integrate can affect outcomes (Phillimore, 2011; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013), but the external impact of a host nation's welcome and the resettlement policies employed also play a major role (Zetter *et al.* 2005; Zaun, 2017).

Berry (1997) determined a Fourfold model of acculturation, which reflected the duality of an individual's retention or rejection of their own culture alongside the adoption or rejection of the host culture. This creates four acculturation strategies:

- **Assimilation:** Where the individual relinquishes their existing cultures and wholly adopts the dominant or host culture.
- **Separation:** When the individual maintains their own culture, and rejects the host culture.
- **Integration:** Where the individual maintains their culture of origin but also adopts the cultural norms of the host culture.
- **Marginalisation:** Where the individual rejects both the culture of origin and the host culture.

Within this model, the attitude and behaviours of the migrant is acknowledged, but also a suggestion of how host societies anticipate people 'should' acculturate (Navas *et al.* 2005; Phillimore, 2011). The explicit or implicit values of the host society are likely to

shape strategies as much as the internal drivers of the individual, and yet host nations rarely reach consensus about what acculturation should include or how it could be achieved (Phillimore, 2011). The evidence suggests that acculturation is the pursuit of 'functional fitness' followed by 'complete adaptation' (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003), which seems to be suggestive of more assimilation than integration, with the emphasis on the incomer making major adaptations. Some aspects of culture are easier to adopt than others, and some differences easier for host cultures to accept (Navas *et al.* 2005). However, the more obviously an individual maintains their own culture, the more likely they are to experience discrimination (Berry, 2006; Fox *et al.* 2016).

There are currently no sources of evidence exploring the specific influence of acculturation on occupation. However, there is acknowledgement that transition both impacts upon occupation (Suto, 2009; Lunden, 2012; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013) and that occupation can promote adjustment during cultural and other transitions (Iwama, 2005; Shaw and Rudman, 2009; Pettican and Prior, 2011).

3.7.1.2 Liminality

Liminality is another strand of concern in the lives of refugees, and describes the experience of being on a threshold in place, person or time and feeling 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1969, p.95). Individuals and communities can experience liminality in a number of ways, relating to things like phase of life or rites of passge (Van Gennep, 1960), but for refugees the concept of liminality is often used to describe periods of time in refugee camps, or awaiting decisions on asylum, where the old life has been left

behind but a new life cannot easily be started (Andersson, 2013; Brighter Futures, 2013; Schaefer, 2013).

The experience of liminality could range from temporary, natural, anticipated life changes (such as negotiating adolescence), to permanent or forced changes like the ones faced by many refugees (Andersson, 2013; Schaefer, 2013). These vastly differing contexts must make for profoundly different outcomes (Beech, 2011; Baird and Reed, 2015). Bamber *et al.* (2017) highlight the differences between temporary and permanent liminality. Traditional ideas of liminality reflect the 'betwixt and between' stage as transitory and temporary (Powley, 2009; Daskalaki *et al.* 2016) whereas there may be life experiences which are more indeterminate and ambiguous (Beech, 2011; Johnsen and Sorensen, 2015) and reflect a state of being 'neither-this-nor-that, or both-this-and-that' (Bamber *et al.* 2017, pg. 3). This broader application of the concept of liminality is probably more reflective of refugee lives (Ellis and Ybema, 2010; Beech, 2011; Ybema, Beech and Ellis, 2011).

Little evidence exists to reflect the impact of liminality on well-being, however, it seems likely that the experience will affect the individual in a number of ways (Daskalaki *et al.* 2016; Simpson *et al.* 2017). In occupational terms, the transitional and uncertain nature of liminal lives leaves people with less suitable opportunities and, as a result, is often about seeking ad hoc solutions and constant compromise (Suto, 2009; Nissim and De Vries, 2014). Bamber *et al.* (2017) describe individuals as being in a state called 'occupational limbo,' where individuals feel 'locked into' a marginalised occupational identity (Allen-Collinson, 2004; 2006). They propose the concept of occupational limbo as another addition to the debate on liminality as 'always this-and-never-that', where the person's

choices and opportunities are always less than they had hoped and aspired to (Bamber *et al.* 2017).

3.7.1.3 Precarity

One of the features of forced migration is the rapidity and uncertainty of their particular transitions. They cannot rely on slow and steady change towards a known or anticipated goal, and instead face daily uncertainty (Richards and Rotter, 2013). This reduced predictability and security is described as a being in a state of 'precarity,' or living a precarious existence (Standing, 2011). Often associated with poverty and low opportunity, refugees have also been acknowledged as facing precarity (Banki, 2013; Janmyr, 2016; Baban *et al.* 2017). Their legal status, lack of recognition and everyday hardships make daily life particularly hard, but they also live with the reality that any limited support or opportunity they have in the present time could be lost or removed with little notice.

This degree of uncertainty is a common thread for people during forced migration. The sense of precariousness probably starting long before the point of actual migration, establishing a pattern of uncertainty for the person seeking asylum. This ranges from the multiple uncertainties of life in their homelands, though the potentially life-threatening risks of their journey to the prolonged uncertainty of the asylum wait. This uncertainty seems likely to aggravate the changes that are inherent in migrancy and acculturation, to place extreme pressures on the individual.

Whilst uncertainty is a fact of life, there is a significant difference between the generalised or global uncertainty faced by most people and 'event focused uncertainty'

such as fleeing danger or awaiting an asylum decision (Penrod, 2007, pg. 241). In a study exploring uncertainty and asylum, Richards and Rotter (2013) spoke about how the initial relief on arriving in the UK was quickly replaced by uncertainty in the face of the asylum process. Facing the high probability of a negative decision, feelings of mistrust towards agencies (Richards and Rotter, 2013), difficulties with legal and bureaucratic processes (Amnesty, 2013) and lack of knowledge and information (Wall *et al.* 2015) all raised anxieties and compounded the sense of precarity.

The experience of waiting is commonly spoken about by people awaiting asylum decisions (Brekke, 2004; Atfield *et al.* 2007; Rotter, 2015) and ordinarily people have a sense of waiting for something, looking ahead with some degree of hope (Bissell, 2007). However, during asylum there may be a lengthy wait and many disappointments before any final decision is received. This can cause declining hope and positivity and leave the individual feeling ignorant and powerless (Brighter Futures, 2013; Richards and Rotter, 2013).

Any transition has the potential to impact upon the meaning, rhythm, balance and the division of occupation (Jonsson *et al.* 2001; Jonsson and Josephsson, 2005). Transitions during forced migration are constant and complex, impacting on the individual in multiple ways (Kohli and Connolly, 2009; Doyle and Aleinikoff, 2017). Occupation is likely to be negatively affected by transition, but arguably occupation has the capacity to ameliorate some of its impact. Section 4.9 explores how occupation is affected by asylum and how occupational lives are constructed during asylum in the UK.

3.7.2 Belonging to person and place

There is recognition within the evidence of the impact of connectivity and capital for people seeking asylum. Individuals may have lost contact with families, networks and community, and may have limited access to social capital, which is considered particularly valuable during times of transition. Losing the key people and social structures that add substance and meaning to life can leave people isolated and excluded (Lee, 2006; Andriani, 2013; Crossley, 2013). Refugees are acknowledged as socially excluded (Hynes, 2011; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013) with limited social capital, few support networks and low service use (Stanciole and Huber, 2009; Zetter *et al.* 2015).

The importance of relationships and networks is often of great concern to the individual, either in terms of the networks left behind or the new ones to be fostered. Individuals have invariably been separated from many of the most important relationships of their past, and many have worries about the safety of family members, or grief resulting from the death or disappearance of loved ones (Lim, 2009; Elliott and Yusuf, 2014). Individuals face the challenge of trusting others in new and uncertain circumstances, may struggle with existing roles such as parenting and marriage with such huge external pressures, and may perceive new relationships as risky and dangerous (Lim, 2009; Bjornberg, 2011; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013).

Networks and communities are, in many ways, the background to the individual. Community provides a sense of belonging and a feeling of familiarity, not necessarily being with others who we know well, but being amongst others with a shared history and a shared familiarity with the environment. Refugees will often find themselves apart

from their community, and often dispersed into areas where they may not be able to find a suitable substitute community to welcome them (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

Individuals foster or sever relational links depending on cost and benefits associated with those relationships (Gyarmati and Kyte, 2005). Many refugees have learnt the costs of their relationships and networks in their country of origin, or have experienced the pain of having those links severed for them by death or exile. They may not wish to join others from the same country, due to historical tensions from their country of origin (Gyarmati and Kyte, 2005; Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2010), and they may find it hard to integrate into host communities, where a welcome may be scarce (Zetter *et al.* 2005). A conflictual environment is created by the vast diversity of refugee origins, wide ranging need, punitive legislative changes and a hostile media (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015). As a result, refugees are often seen as a community or group apart – not integrated and yet not really a community together (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

Refugees often find themselves trying to establish a home here, whilst processing the loss of 'homeland,' indeed whilst many refugees see the host country as their home around half would also wish to return home (World Vision, 2010; Kleinman, 2012). Attempting to put one's heart into life in the UK, when all that is familiar is left behind can leave people feeling bereft (Kleinman, 2012; Wessler, 2017).

A number of types of personal capital have been identified which may help people to lead an included and productive life - including human, economic, physical, time and social capital (Putman, 2000; Andriani, 2013; Li, 2015). Each of them captures different

everyday necessities, without which the individual may find life more challenging or less fruitful and where their personal potential may not be achieved. Perhaps, for refugees, social capital and connectedness with others is particularly necessary, as meeting a new and uncertain life must be immensely challenging, but doing it alone must truly compound the difficulties. Social capital may be the critical link to managing their current needs, addressing day-to-day concerns, feeling happier and more settled and gaining access to community and health or social care facilities (Bhatia and Wallace, 2007; Stanciole and Huber, 2009; Hynes, 2011; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

However, social capital focuses on cohesion and therefore, areas with high social capital, and therefore high cohesion, are often resistant to immigration, and, rather than fostering inclusion it creates separateness, suspicion and negativity (Zetter *et al*. 2005). Alongside this, many refugees come from places with high social capital, but at a cost. Social cohesion and collective identity can have negative implications, where exclusion of outsiders, excess claims upon certain group members and restricted freedom outweigh the significant benefits (Robinson and Rubio, 2007; Williams and Durrance, 2008; Demireva, 2017). Together, these features can prevent refugees from accessing social capital by interfering with trust and readiness to engage, and by providing barriers to cohesion within existing networks.

3.7.3 Asylum and well-being

Refugees in the UK experience numerous barriers to health and well-being (Bhatia and Wallace, 2007; McColl *et al.* 2008; Renner and Salem, 2009; Stanciole and Huber, 2009).

Despite the impact of the migrant crisis, and the multi-layered health and social care needs of people during asylum, financial and practical support for refugee services has declined with an increase in immigration based tension (Cuthill *et al.* 2013; Gibney, 2014).

A wide range of circumstances create or compound health issues for refugees, before, during and after migration (Robjant *et al.* 2009; Priebe *et al.* 2016). Experiences in the home nation include persecution, oppression and economic hardship and can be followed by a risky journey and separation from loved ones. On arrival in the UK, individuals face isolation, insecurity, poverty, discrimination and powerlessness, in a wholly unfamiliar environment (Montgomery and Foldspang, 2008; Steel *et al.* 2009; Crossley, 2013; Priebe *et al.* 2016).

As a result of this, many aspects of health can be influenced, but the most prevalent difficulties appear to be related to mental health (McColl *et al.* 2008; Preibe *et al*. 2012; Bogic *et al.* 2015; Bradby *et al*. 2015). Turrini *et al.* (2017) reviewed extensive international evidence of mental ill health in refugees and people seeking asylum and found around 40% experience depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder, levels far higher than in the host community (McColl *et al.* 2008; Robjant *et al.* 2009).

The process and policies associated with asylum are often linked to poor health outcomes (Koopowitz and Abhary, 2004; Fazal and Silove, 2006; Steele *et al.* 2006). Restrictive policies on healthcare, education, accommodation, welfare support and employment all function to socially exclude and marginalise refugees and asylum-seekers, both exacerbating existing mental health problems and causing mental distress (Preibe *et al*. 2012; Bogic *et al.* 2015; Bradby *et al*. 2015; Turrini, 2017). Despite the

acknowledgement of the vulnerability of refugees to mental ill-health, asylum and immigration policy is criticised as creating an environment which has a devastating impact on mental health, wellbeing and long-term integration (Ryen *et al.* 2008; Mind, 2009; Priebe *et al.* 2016).

Although already at risk of mental ill-health, outcomes worsen dramatically for individuals who fail their asylum claim (Robjant *et al.* 2009; Mueller, 2010; Blanchard and Joy, 2017). In addition to losing financial support and housing, they have reduced of access to healthcare services, are less likely to access professional help and face detention and deportation (Robjant *et al.* 2009; Poduval *et al.* 2015). There are examples of individuals with severe mental illnesses being detained in unsuitable conditions and facing pressures which directly worsen their health (Robjant *et al.* 2009; Triggs, 2013; Poduval *et al.* 2015). In 2009, a prison detainee with a diagnosis of psychosis was moved by the Home Office in what they documented was an attempt to 'unbalance' him, in order to facilitate his voluntary return to his country; an action that a Home Office psychiatrist said was totally normal in immigration detention (Taylor, 2012). The pressure of this phase is shown to create additional mental health problems, often with a heightened risk of suicide and self-harm (Cohen, 2008; McFadyen, 2010, Silverman, 2018) the impact of which appears to remain with the individuals long after detention (Koopowitz and Abhary, 2004; Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Newman *et al*. 2013).

In addition to multiple health and well-being needs, the help refugees are offered is often inadequate, culturally insensitive, and difficult to access (Bhatia and Wallace, 2007; Wilson, 2009; Robertshaw *et al.* 2017). The World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians

(WONCA) assert that refugees should have access to equitable, affordable and high-quality health care services (Royal College of General Practitioners (RGCP), 2017). However, services for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups show major inadequacies in the appropriateness and responsiveness of services, engagement between providers and communities and the quality of information available to service users, with evidence suggesting that refugees are excluded still further (Glover and Evison, 2009; Fountain and Hicks, 2010). As a result of the issues faced in overstretched and sometimes reluctant statutory services, the voluntary sector are often required to fill gaps, despite being overstretched and underfunded (Mind, 2009).

Robertshaw *et al.* (2017) identified that the challenges to service provision fall into three key areas; the healthcare encounter, the healthcare system and the impact of asylum. The relationship with service users is shaped by the ability of both parties to generate a trusting relationship, communicate effectively and generate cultural understanding. The system requires resources, capacity, organisation, inter-service collaboration and support, guidance and training for professionals (Robertshaw *et al.* 2017). However, there are barriers to achieving all of these (Priebe *et al.* 2016).

Access barriers include the service user's lack of knowledge of the services available and their entitlements, poor command of the language, lack of trust and differing health beliefs (Toar *et al.* 2009; Woodward et al. 2013; Bäärnhielm, 2016; Priebe *et al.* 2016). However, services also create barriers, such as concerns amongst health providers about entitlements and required documentation (RGCP, 2017). Even amongst empathetic health professionals, there is a lack of understanding and knowledge of refugee needs (Mind, 2009), but there are also suggestions that mental health services show

institutional racism (Mackenzie and Bhui, 2008; Bradby, 2010) and people seeking asylum may be still further excluded by layers of discrimination (WONCA, 2015).

Practitioners may be put off by the anticipated breadth and depth of a refugees' issues and the perception that their needs are different (Smith, 2005; McColl *et al.* 2008). They may doubt their skills or be contaminated by the negative beliefs around them (Woodward *et al.* 2013; Bäärnhielm, 2016; Priebe *et al.* 2016). In doing so, they set refugees further apart and see them as different, perpetuating their sense of separateness and isolation (Mackenzie and Bhui, 2008; McColl *et al.* 2008; Bradby, 2010).

Language barriers are also of concern, and interpreter access, particularly in dispersal areas where there are smaller ethnic populations, is problematic. Services find the cost a challenge and staff often lack confidence in working through interpreters (Mind, 2009).

Psychological services lack capacity and are extremely over-subscribed (RCP, 2017), particularly specialised provision such as responses to trauma, torture and services for young people (Mind, 2009). There are already limited culturally appropriate services in mental health care (Glover and Evison, 2009; Mind, 2009; Fountain and Hicks, 2010). Many traditional, best evidenced approaches to meeting health needs may not be culturally appropriate (Renner and Salem 2009; Newman *et al.* 2013; Castro *et al.* 2014; Andrews and Boyle, 2016). Some therapies can be associated with the development and maintenance of the victim role and promotion of helplessness, and research suggests that developing the resources and structures to add meaning to life, such as occupational outlets and social networks may be far more meaningful and productive (Butler 2005, Bloch 2006, Renner and Salem 2009, Newman *et al.* 2013).

3.8 OCCUPATION

Occupation is an enormously complex area for consideration, and it is not possible to do justice to all aspects of occupation described within occupational science or occupational therapy. This section seeks to reflect key issues in occupation, defining concepts and suggesting areas for debate within the professions, before focussing on aspects associated with migration and asylum.

3.8.1 What is occupation?

Occupation is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a job or profession' or 'a way of spending time', and it has been used since the mid-14th century to signify 'being employed in something' or 'a particular action' from an Old French word *occupacion* meaning 'pursuit, work, employment' (Etymological Dictionary, 2018. n.p). In occupational science and occupational therapy broad based definitions are often used, seeking to reflect breadth of experience.

> *Occupations include everyday activities undertaken to care for self and others, animals and living and inanimate objects; secure shelter and sustenance; raise children; develop and test abilities, learn, and experience a sense of competence; contribute to family and community; create or distribute material wealth; play and enjoy life; pursue interests; celebrate significant life events; express creativity and spirituality; preserve or regain health; and the things people do for rest and restoration*
>
> Hocking, 2013. p.1365.

Occupational scientists acknowledge the challenge of understanding occupations in depth due to the complexity of the concept and breadth of scope, as the quote above would suggest (Hocking and Wright-St Clair, 2011). Seminal authors have identified occupation as everything people do to occupy themselves (Townsend, 1997) and as a central aspect of human experience (Wilcock, 1993). Occupation encompasses all the active processes of looking after ourselves and others, enjoying life, and being socially and economically productive over the lifespan and in various contexts (Townsend, 1997).

Occupation enables basic human needs essential for survival, provides mechanisms for people to foster biological, social and cultural capacities, adapt to environments, and flourish as individuals (Wilcock, 1993). Occupations can range from mundane activity so embedded in daily life as to go unnoticed, to the extraordinary experience that defies common understanding. Occupations are both deeply personal and socially constructed, influenced by internal features such as personality or gender and external context such as environment or culture (Wilcock, 1993; Townsend, 1997; Hocking, 2013; Hocking and Mace, 2016).

Due to its complexity, the concept of occupation has long defied satisfactory definition by occupational therapists or occupational scientists, despite multiple attempts to reduce ambiguity (Hocking and Wright-St Clair, 2011). For the purpose of this study the definition generated by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists will be used, which describes occupation as 'the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include things people need to, want to and are expected to do' (WFOT 2016. n.p).

3.8.2 Understanding and illuminating occupation

Occupational scientists have attempted to categorise occupations to make concepts more manageable, most frequently describing them in terms of self-care, leisure and productivity (Whalley Hammell, 2015). Categorisation is difficult, particularly due to the layered complexity of occupation, ambiguity around definitions and lack of consensus (Wu and Lin, 1999; Müllersdorf and Ivarsson, 2010). Critics believe categorisation to be 'culturally specific, class-bound, and ableist' (Whalley Hammell, 2009, p. 107) and urge recognition of occupations on the basis of their value to the individual (Jonsson, 2008).

Occupational scientists are now encouraging evidence which can explore and illuminate this complex field in ways which are less focused on categories. These include reflections on the lived experience (Whalley Hammell, 2015), the nature of the occupation *per se* (Hocking, 2009), the motivation toward the occupation (Reed *et al.* 2010) or the contextual influences on the occupation (Dickie *et al.* 2006). This, again, suggests complexity and breadth of scope, urging the profession to fully understand the relationship with occupation in terms of the:

> *capacities, knowledge and skills required to participate in it, who participates and what is done; the rules, norms or processes governing participation; where and when participation occurs, using what resources; the regularity, duration, tempo and steps involved; the history of an occupation; its function and outcomes; the kinds of meanings it holds; its sociocultural, political, economic, geographic and historical context, and how occupations influence health.*
>
> Hocking, 2009 p. 140.

This is indeed a tall order, as the very nature of occupation is so vast it would be impossible to simplify it in any meaningful way. I would concur that traditional perspectives on occupation have been too concerned with categorisation and performance, and less focused on meaning. My experience has been that people have unique relationships with their occupations and these are amplified by cultural difference. People may engage in different occupations, for different reasons and in different ways but are seeking to find meaning that is embedded in their personal, social and national cultures. By focusing on meaning over performance there could be greater understanding of the motivation, context and role of cultural influence on occupational choice, which could be a useful addition to the professional knowledge base.

In the context of this study, it is appropriate to recognise the non-Western occupational context of the participants, which is difficult to 'know' and understand both from the ethnocentric, Western focus of academic discourse (Turpin and Iwama, 2011; Whalley Hammell, 2015) and my personal outsider perspective. This will be discussed further in the section 'The Cultural Context.'

3.8.3 The value of occupation

Much of the focus of Western occupational science and therapy relates to the transformative potential of occupation, particularly for people who are experiencing ill-health or disability, or whose lives are impacted by challenging life events. Townsend (1997) identifies four areas where the active process of occupation can be transformative: learning; organizing time and place; discovering meaning; and, exercising choice and control (Townsend, 1997).

3.8.3.1 Occupation and learning

It is Townsend's (1997) belief that occupation helps learning through an active process of planning, doing, and reflecting and that occupation can present opportunities or barriers to learn by doing. Occupation provides or demands skill development (Wildschut and Meyer, 2016) and can foster quality in 'doing,' allowing the individual to experience their own competence, skilfulness and mastery (Piškur *et al.* 2009; Holahan, 2014).

Occupational science and therapy has focused on the value of personal learning through occupation, with an almost evangelical fervour. The value of occupation as a tool for learning has been a foundation of the use of occupation within therapy and I would agree that the experience of occupation shapes much of what we know and how we learn. Halting, removing, restricting and re-entering occupations during migration could undermine learning, or provide some challenging lessons to learn.

3.8.3.2 Organising time and place

The relationship between occupation and time is reflected in the experience of occupation in the here and now, but also across time. Time used in occupation includes experiences such as engagement, presence and balance (Pemberton and Cox, 2015). There is also a sense of occupation over time, where personal priorities change over the lifespan and personal circumstances (Rowles, 2008). Occupation gives meaning to time (Pemberton and Cox, 2015) and is described both in terms of tempo and temporality (Clark, 1997). The tempo is the rhythm and pace of the occupation, and temporality reflects the relationship between past, present, and future (Clark, 1997).

The importance of time is often an overlooked facet of occupation, as there is a tendency to see a 'snapshot' of an occupational life, rather than its context in time. The impact of time is particularly noted by participants in this study, seen as something which is affected in both the here and now and across the life course.

Occupation and place are recognised as having a reciprocal relationship (Huot and Rudman, 2010). Place has a role in presenting occupational opportunities (Townsend *et al.* 2007) and occupation has a role in transforming experiences of place (Frank, 2011; Townsend *et al.* 2011) particularly during migration (Huot and Laliberte Rudman 2010; Huot *et al.* 2013). Rowles asserts that an understanding of place permits individuals to discover and create meaning (Rowles, 2008; Frank, 2011; Townsend *et al.* 2011).

Townsend suggests that there has been a tendency to focus on occupation *per se*, with little attention paid to the links between occupation and place (Rowles, 2011; Townsend *et al*. 2011; Huot *et al.* 2014; Galvaan, 2015). Full occupational participation may not be possible without addressing the social determinants that influence people (Townsend *et al.* 2011; Sakellariou and Pollard, 2012; Nayar and Stanley, 2015). Whilst there has been a recent increased emphasis on socio-cultural perspectives of occupation, the human context has not been sufficiently fore-grounded (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013). The interrelatedness of person and environment is extremely significant (Huot and Rudman 2010), requiring researchers to take a dualistic view of person and context (Dickie *et al.* 2006).

In migration, arguably more than any other time, place plays a role. Individuals are leaving behind a place which may be heavy with meaning, usually both good and bad,

with little or no choice. The place they find themselves is often inhospitable and extremely unfamiliar. Even once there, they may face great uncertainty and the three challenges of acculturation, liminality and precarity. Even if they are able to settle and make a new home, they have still to face the loss of the fabric and familiarity of home.

3.8.3.3 Discovering meaning

In Viktor Frankl's landmark text 'Mans search for meaning' he suggests that this is the ultimate focus of each human life (Frankl, 1959). He gives numerous instances where people kept going through the unimaginable hardships of concentration camp life by focusing on a central meaningful aspect of their lives (Frankl, 1959). These included many occupational elements such as relationship roles like husband or father, or the desire to complete unfinished work. Frankl captured the idea that even in the most extreme circumstances, if people have a reason to keep going they are able to endure. My experience of watching people cope and not cope with asylum has often followed this premise, with clients who had a focus better able to maintain their well-being and survive the hardships of asylum. The reasons varied, and included keeping going for their children, fighting the injustice of a failed claim or being useful as a volunteer, in each case they had a reason to engage with aspects of daily life.

Central to occupations that individuals, groups, communities and societies engage in, is the intentionality behind them (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013). People engage with occupations to satisfy a wide range of motivating factors, but invariably are seeking activities of meaning and purpose. The meaning of an occupation is often complex and tends to remain hidden, but has been described as the 'call' to the occupation, the thing

which draws the individual to that specific task over a myriad of other options (Reed *et al.* 2010).

Occupation has the means to create experiences that matter (Kuo, 2011) and whilst the occupations that generate meaning may differ, the gains are often the same (Leufstadius *et al.* 2011). They can include enabling a sense of worth, productivity and achievement, connecting with others, enjoyment and fun, valuable routines and time use and giving people a sense of their place in the cosmos (Leufstadius *et al.* 2006; Rowles, 2008). The ability or desire to meet some or all of these needs may differ across cultures, genders, ages and in line with peoples' opportunities.

Whilst any occupation has the potential to be meaningful, depending on the relationship the individual has with it, each individual will have some occupations that are more important and contribute to their well-being to a greater degree than others (Jonsson, 2008). Certainly, occupational science would assert that occupations are more satisfying if they involve wholehearted action, engagement with depth, focus and dedicated commitment (Morgan, 2010). Absence of this wholeheartedness may make occupational satisfaction illusive, if not impossible (Morgan, 2010; Colic-Peisker, 2009).

3.8.3.4 Choice and control

Individuals are believed to benefit from a choice of occupation (Abrahams, 2008) and that their performance of an occupation is improved by having choice (Ham *et al.* 2009). A sense of choice and control has a positive impact on identity and well-being (Robinson and Rubio, 2007; Abrahams, 2008) and fosters what is sometimes termed 'occupational potential' (Asaba and Wicks, 2010). The contextual potential is considered by the term

‘occupational possibilities’ which are the systems and structures in which people live and to what extent they support or promote occupations (Rudman and Huot, 2013).

Choice and control are frequently impacted upon by internal and external drivers, so may be considered in terms of both the human potential and the contextual potential. The occupational potential an individual has, and the choice of opportunities available to them, is a transaction between external structures and personal agency (Rudman and Huot, 2013). This reflects ideas regarding locus of control (Rotter, 1975; 1990), where individuals may be ‘internal’, believing they can control their own lives, and ‘external’ believing that their lives are controlled by external factors beyond their influence. This continuum (Rotter, 1975) may be influenced by multiple factors, such as personality, gender, culture and age (Shiraev and Levy, 2004; Schultz and Schultz, 2005; Wurtele *et al.* 2007). Locus of control can influence the individuals’ response to stressful events and alter outcomes substantially (Chung *et al.* 2007; Roddenberry and Renk, 2010).

There does not appear to be any existing evidence specifically exploring locus of control for refugees, but some studies hint at the influence it may have on the response to forced migration (Doggett, 2012; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2003). It seems likely that perceived choice and control could have particular relevance to people during displacement and forced migration, as so much of their lives are influenced and controlled by others. Forced migration suggests a degree of passivity, but for many involved active decision-making and taking control, however, asylum is characterised by high levels of passivity which can influence the individual on many levels, including their ‘occupational possibilities’ (Colic-Piesker and Tilbury, 2003; Doggett, 2012; Rotter, 2015).

3.8.4 Occupation, health and well-being

One core assumption from occupational science and occupational therapy is that engagement in occupation has the potential to influence well-being (Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2011), improve the human condition and the environment (Wilcock, 2006) and directly affect health (Durocher *et al.* 2013). There are multiple gains associated with engagement in occupation, including feelings of accomplishment and purpose (Wilcock, 1998; Ikuigu, 2005; Whalley Hammell, 2015) satisfaction, pleasure or fun (Persson *et al.* 2001; Ikuigu, 2005; Leufstadius *et al.* 2011). It provides people with routines and structures to the day (Ikuigu, 2005; Leufstadius *et al.* 2011; Hasselkus, 2011). Positive occupations can foster health and wellbeing (Wilcock, 1998; Aldrich, 2011; Leufstadius *et al.* 2011), promote a positive personal identity (Wright St Clair *et al*. 2005) and generate a sense of belonging or social connectedness (Ikuigu, 2005; Wright St Clair *et al.* 2005; Hasselkus, 2011; Whalley Hammell, 2015).

There is a tendency for occupational science and therapy to focus on occupations that are 'positive', foster health and well-being and are socially acceptable, however, some activities which may have negative elements or outcomes still meet the criteria of occupation (Kiepek and Magalhães, 2011). It is recognised that some occupations may not always be to the benefit of the individual or society, described as the 'dark side' of occupation (Twinley, 2013; 2017). There are often socially constructed values attached to occupations, suggesting whether they are morally unacceptable, deviant or unhealthy (Kiepek *et al.* 2013). It is possible that if occupations are only valued or considered if they are positive, this has the potential to stigmatise and marginalise individuals or collectives who engage in other occupations (Kiepek *et al.* 2013; Twinley, 2013; 2017).

3.8.5 Occupation, opportunity and occupational justice

One area of enquiry that has grown in consequence to both occupational science and occupational therapy has been the inequitable nature of occupational opportunities. Because occupational engagement is integral to human well-being, and because well-being is integral to human rights, access to occupation has increasingly been seen as a human rights issue (Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2011). This has been asserted by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in their position statement on occupation as a human right (WFOT, 2006). WFOT identify the right to access occupations that enable people to 'flourish, fulfil their potential and experience satisfaction' (WFOT, 2006 p.1) and outline the multiple external forces which create economic, physical and social exclusion. This call by WFOT to promote 'morally just societies', where access is supported for all, has become increasingly valued by the occupational community (WFOT, 2006, p. 1; Nilsson and Townsend, 2010; Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2011; Townsend, 2015).

A human rights perspective to accessing occupation is often linked with the term 'occupational justice', where occupational therapists and occupational scientists identify barriers to engagement in meaningful occupation (Braveman and Bass-Haugen, 2009; Durocher *et al.* 2013). There has been increasing recognition of disparities in access to dignified and meaningful occupations for different groups, including refugees (Whiteford, 2000, Al Heresh *et al.* 2013; Smith *et al*. 2014). Key authors such as Whiteford (2000), Townsend and Wilcock (2004); Pollard *et al.* (2008), Kronenberg *et al.* (2011), Whalley Hammell and Iwama (2012); Sakellariou and Pollard, (2012) and Townsend, (2017)

have identified occupational injustice as one of the core concerns for occupational science.

Occupational justice links concepts of social justice and justice of difference to recognise the right of all people to inclusive participation in everyday occupations (Nilsson and Townsend, 2010; Townsend, 2015). Injustices vary, and may include 'occupational apartheid' where marginalised groups are denied the right to participate or 'occupational marginalisation' where there is reduced or restricted occupational choice. 'Occupational deprivation' is where lasting external forces prevent engagement, 'occupational imbalance' is where individuals are under- or over-employed and 'occupational alienation' is disengagement as a result of inappropriate or unrewarding occupations, (Wilcock and Townsend, 2000, 2009; Townsend and Wilcock, 2004; Townsend and Whiteford, 2005; Townsend *et al.* 2011; Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2012; Durocher *et al.* 2013). There are increasing calls for societies which are occupationally just; fostering opportunities and choice (Nilsson and Townsend, 2010; Durocher *et al.* 2013; Gupta, 2016; Hocking and Mace, 2016; Hocking, 2017).

Occupational justice is underpinned by a belief in the right to engage in diverse and meaningful occupations to meet people's individual needs and develop their potential, which is central to the philosophy of occupational science (Durocher *et al.* 2013). This includes a moral commitment to engage in everyday justice (Townsend, 2015) recognising the right to inclusive participation in everyday occupations for all persons in society, regardless of age, ability, gender, social class, or other differences (Braveman and Bass-Haugen, 2009; Nilsson and Townsend, 2010). An occupational justice framework suggests that individuals' issues cannot be resolved by individual solutions,

and requires a focus on addressing the occupational needs, occupational rights and obligations of all citizens (van Bruggen, 2014), often by creating environments that stimulate, rather than hinder, the realisation of occupational potential (Braveman and Bass-Haugen, 2009; Whiteford, 2011).

An occupational justice framework offers justification and inspiration for places where either the individual or their setting is deprived of resources and opportunities (Al Heresh *et al.* 2013; Galvaan, 2015). The aim is to inspire and empower health professionals to use global thinking about occupation, health, justice, and the environment; and combine population and individualized approaches and promote full citizenship (Nilsson and Townsend, 2010; Fransen et al, 2015).

Whilst occupational justice approaches are seen as employing a positive, 'can do' approach (Hocking and Polatajko, 2013), there is also the recognition that it is riddled with pitfalls (Balliard, 2014). Occupational justice remains conceptually confused, creating barriers to usability and understanding (Durocher *et al.* 2013). Additionally, there is an assumption of heterogeneity which fails to reflect the nuances of multiple world views, possibly leading to well-meaning imposition of external values (Balliard, 2014).

3.8.6 The social context of occupation

Occupational activity invariably occurs in a social or cultural context, and there is a growing body of knowledge exploring these influences on occupational engagement, identity formation and experiences of meaning (Abrahams, 2008; Ulfseth *et al.* 2014). For many people, collective engagement in occupation is at the centre of their most meaningful activities (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013). Social connections may

include family, network or community, and can have a diverse impact on occupational opportunities. Occupations may be expressed through social connections, and social connections fostered through occupation (Farias and Asaba, 2013).

As previously noted, social capital is one of several types of personal capital which may enable people to achieve potential and feel socially included (Putnam, 2000; Skidmore *et al.* 2006). Smith, Y. (2015) suggests that social connectedness may be of particular importance to refugees, as meeting a new and uncertain life within an alien set of cultures must be immensely challenging, but doing it alone must truly compound the difficulties (Smith, Y. 2015; Sanchez, 2016). Many refugees have lost the supportive framework of people in their lives at the levels of family, network and community, leaving them concerned for those left behind and grieving lost relationships (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Elliott and Yusuf, 2014). Refugees are subject to social exclusion (Fisher and Nandi, 2005; Levitas, 2006) with limited social network capital on which to draw; their support networks may be absent and service use is low (Stanciole and Huber, 2009; Sanchez, 2016).

The benefit of social engagement and support is well documented, and has been a well explored area of need in refugee studies (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Elliott and Yusuf, 2014). Research suggests that those who travel to the host country with others, fare better than those who do so alone (Sanchez, 2016) and those who live in areas of higher ethnic density are often less isolated and less likely to face mental ill-health (Bhugra, 2004; de Mojeed, 2010; Campbell and Steel, 2015). Social capital and connectedness are correlated with improved language skills (Piller and Takahashi, 2010; Cheung and

Phillimore, 2013) practical 'success' such as better health and occupational outcomes and resilience (Lamba and Krahn, 2003; Akinsulure-Smith *et al.* 2013).

However, there are complexities. Whilst travelling with family may provide an inbuilt social network, they may also cause additional stress, or present demands which are overwhelming (Shisheva and Stewart, 2015). There are also concerns that for women, family presence may inhibit external connectedness and opportunity (Refugee Council, 2010). Additionally, people often face an extra layer of exclusion related to their status as 'asylum seeker,' making it harder to access existing capital in communities (Bjornberg, 2011; Burnett, 2013). As social capital is linked with cohesion, if people seeking asylum are settled into areas with high cohesion they may find the community to be resistant to immigration, thus, rather than fostering integration this may create separateness, suspicion and negativity (Zetter *et al.* 2005).

The person seeking asylum may also show a reluctance to engage socially with others, as they may have been part of an 'out group' in their home country. This may have meant they were already excluded, as they did not share a collective identity (Robinson and Rubio, 2007; Burnett, 2013; Hartman and Morse, 2018). They may also have faced the loss of connections through death or exile, making them reluctant to invest in relationships due to issues of trust, fear or the anticipation of loss (Gyarmati and Kyte, 2005).

3.8.7 The cultural context of occupation

Culture and occupation have many parallels, particularly in relation to meaning making (Castro *et al.* 2014). Occupations provide possibilities for negotiating different layers of the participants' own identities and cultural values, allowing them to negotiate the

relationship between their culture of origin and themselves through engagement with new or familiar occupations (Farias and Asaba, 2013). Traditionally, little has been done to capture the unique impact of culture on occupation, but increasingly evidence seeks to consider the role culture plays in understanding the interrelatedness of culture, occupational opportunity and identity (Phelan and Kinsella, 2009; Castro *et al.* 2014; Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013).

The embedded, everyday nature of occupation must mean that occupation is reflected differently in different cultures. There are the obvious differences in the things people 'do,' such as different work practices or domestic tasks, but also there are subtle differences which reflect different foci. For example, Western occupational literature often focusses on the value of independence and autonomy, or reflect different perspectives on what constitutes health and well-being (Al Busaidy and Borthwick, 2012). It may prove impossible to 'export' some of the ideas and value that shape occupational values from one culture to another (Bourke-Taylor and Hudson, 2005). As a result, it may be difficult to recognise the role of culture (Iwama, 2003; 2005) and its multi-layered impact (Castro *et al.* 2014), but not to do so has negative political, practical and theoretical implications (Castro *et al.* 2014).

Though it is important to explore the socio-cultural context of occupation, this is not without difficulty. Culture is not static, rarely homogenous and cohesive (Castro *et al.* 2014) and interactions can lie anywhere between oppressive and liberating (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013). As already highlighted, occupational theory and evidence often reflects Westernised views of occupation, with Western constructs regarding 'ideal' ways of living (Kantartzis and Molineux, 2011). This does not always reflect wider

understanding of occupational expression and is criticised as culturally biased and individualistic (Whalley Hammel, 2009; Kantartzis and Molineux, 2011; Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013; Gerlach *et al.* 2017). The persistent view of the individual versus the collective, typical of much of the occupational science and therapy literature, is unhelpful as it does not reflect different cultural views of self and others, meaning that critical contextual information is lost (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013; Gerlach *et al.* 2017).

I have anticipated the difficulty of understanding the complexity of occupation and the complexity of culture for the participants in this study. I have striven to reflect their perspectives with minimal cultural influence of my own, but acknowledge that my own world view is shaped by what I know and understand from my own occupational vista, and not possible to entirely set aside.

3.9 Occupation and Asylum

Within this thesis I have highlighted how occupation has meaning and purpose in individual lives, and indicated how refugees and people seeking asylum face multiple barriers to occupation. Here I will demonstrate the relationship between asylum and occupation; the impact that barriers to occupation have on the individual, and the potential for occupation to be of great benefit during and after the asylum process.

Occupations that have been part of the individual's personal, leisure or working life may be affected by the discontinuity of forced migration, which halts the chosen or anticipated path of their occupational life, impacting in a number of ways before, during and after their flight from their country of origin (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). An individual's occupations may be shaped by the challenges of life in their country of origin,

lost in their flight to the host country and denied by the policies and process of asylum (De Mojeed, 2010; Huot *et al.*, 2013; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013; Morville, 2014; Gupta, 2016).

As previously highlighted, refugees and people seeking asylum are identified as a group facing a number of occupational challenges (Whiteford, 2005; Morville, 2014). These may range from temporary occupational disruption, where there is a transient or temporary restriction from participation (Christansen and Townsend, 2010) to prolonged exile from necessary occupational engagement, described as occupational deprivation (Whiteford, 2000; WFOT, 2012). The economic, social and political context of asylum creates a condition of occupational deprivation (Hocking, 2012; WFOT, 2012; Huot *et al.,* 2013). The occupational limitations faced have a negative impact on individuals and communities, eroding skills and increasing individual vulnerabilities, worsening the impact of poverty and ill-health, emphasising isolation, and fostering community disharmony (McColl *et al.*, 2008; Lunden, 2012; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013; Maroney *et al.,* 2014; Morville, 2014).

Refugees often then find they have access to few meaningful, dignified occupations (Kronenberg *et al.* 2011), and instead their days are characterised by 'low challenge experiences' associated with apathy, negative stress and occupational deprivation (Jonsson and Persson, 2006). Jonsson (2008) describes the need for engaging occupations that are intense, infused with meaning, coherence and commitment – the very type of occupation that is absent from refugee lives. Crawford *et al.* (2016) identified the duality of influence affective refugees, where both personal characteristics and social structures affect outcomes. Refugee occupations are adversely affected through the lack of personal agency, reduced opportunity, reliance on charity or the attitudes of

people in the wider community (Bennett *et al.* 2012; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Morville, 2014; Gower, 2016).

Occupational barriers exist to work, education, volunteering, and networking, excluding individuals from mainstream society, exacerbating social exclusion and creating high levels of underemployment (Bloch, 2006; Phillimore and Goodson. 2006; Brahmbhatt *et al.,* 2007; ENAR, 2014). There have been a growing number of calls encouraging successive Governments to examine how occupational opportunities could be opened up for refugees, highlighting the value of work and other meaningful daily occupations to individuals and to society (Lee, 2006; Refugee Voices, 2008; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Lunden, 2012; Mayblin, 2014; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013). In the UK these include national campaigns such as 'Let Them Work' and 'Still Human Still Here' supported by a wide range of agencies including Student Action for Refugees (STAR) (2010), Refugee Voices (2009), Trade Union Congress (TUC), Brighter Futures and Barnardo's. The decreased access to occupational opportunities and hardening of immigration policy suggests that these calls have been largely unsuccessful in the face of popularist policies such as those forming the 'Hostile Environment' plans (Travis, 2013; Yeo, 2017).

The most obvious occupational absence lies in the policies which prevent people from working (Mayblin, 2014; UKVI, 2018a). The UK has one of the longest waiting periods for access to the labour market (European Network Against Racism (ENAR, 2017). In the past, those waiting for more than six months for a decision could apply for a work permit, however, this right was removed in 2002. People are able to request permission to work after 12 months, but this is discretionary and is rarely granted (ADWG, 2008).

Restrictions on work have been a response to the concern that employment would act as a significant 'pull factor' encouraging asylum applicants to target the UK (ADWG, 2008; Migration Observatory, 2016a; Geddes and Scholten, 2016). Conversely, evidence from the Home Office suggests that employment is not a significant factor in choice of destination (Robinson and Segrott, 2002). The impact of the policy to deny work is significant; particularly in undermining government attempts to combat social exclusion, or encourage integration (Lee, 2006; Phillimore, 2011). Without occupation people experience a loss of autonomy, agency and mastery (Bloch, 2006) and, particularly for failed claimants, there is a massive decline in physical and mental wellbeing (Robjant *et al.* 2009; Blanchard and Joy, 2017). Reduced occupation has poor outcomes for all, but evidence suggests that men tend to focus more on the loss of traditional productive occupations such as paid work, identifying the impact of the loss of role and daily structure (Stickley and Stickley, 2010; Werge-Olsen and Vik, 2012). Women were generally less focused on work type roles, but more on retaining identity (Steindl *et al.*, 2008; Werge-Olsen and Vik, 2012).

There has been little research of any scale on the occupational settlement of those people with established refugee status, though one large scale study identified that even when the right to work exists there is a significant struggle in finding and retaining work (Sargeant and Forna, 2001). Many individuals face a downward occupational mobility (Suto, 2009; Huot *et al.* 2016b). Unemployment is a significant issue, and though 87% of the refugee population had worked prior to coming to the UK, unemployment here was identified at 57% (though estimated at possibly between 60 and 80% in reality), far outstripping the rate of 7.9% amongst the indigenous population (ONS, 2018b). It was

also noted that only about 15% of refugees found employment of similar status here in the UK as they had held in their home country – representing significant underuse of skills and abilities, and possibly the depletion of skills during the lengthy wait for a decision (Lamba and Krahn, 2003; Lee, 2006; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Suto, 2009; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013). There are often issues with transferability of education, credentials and work experience to the UK jobs market, often due to lack of evidence and an unwillingness to accept unfamiliar qualifications (Ellis *et al.* 2016). ENAR report an 'immigrant glass ceiling' (ENAR, 2014), suggesting that educational achievements and qualifications are not sufficient to override discrimination based on ethnicity and race (ENAR, 2014). This issue is possibly even more pronounced for refugees than other immigrant groups (Buchanan, 2017; ENAR, 2017). As a result, The Wilberforce Society have been calling for more creative approaches allowing for skill recognition, to avoid the ongoing underestimation of immigrant's capacities in work and education (Ellis *et al.* 2016; Buchanan, 2017).

Motivation to work is high and, unsurprisingly, most refugees highlight the benefits of working as far beyond the financial – identifying their independence and personal dignity as being of great value (Dumper *et al.* 2006; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Suto, 2009; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013). Being unable to work and being reliant on benefits reduces the individual to being only an 'asylum seeker' – with attendant feelings of worthlessness and a loss of role and identity (Burnett, 2013; Trimboli and Taylor, 2016). Many individuals describe giving up comfortable lives with status and prestige, to be seen as beggars here in the UK, and talk of the frustration of being given benefits when they would prefer to work and earn their own money.

Whilst the priority for many is paid employment, many refugees seek opportunities for volunteering, gaining work experience, improving language skills and accessing further education (Bradby *et al.* 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016). Refugees can engage with voluntary work, but language barriers and opportunities can often make this difficult, and access to education is limited unless the individual can fund their own studies. Courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages are subject to increasingly tight parameters governing access, further preventing the development of essential skills (Bradby *et al.* 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016), and presenting a key barrier for refugees, both whilst they await a decision and if they are able to settle here (Bloch, 2006; Bradby *et al.* 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016).

However, whilst occupation has enormous potential for enhancing the post migratory experience, choice of occupation is also important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning which meet personal and cultural needs (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Heigl *et al.* 2011; Farias and Asaba, 2013; Smith, H.C. 2015). The motivation for occupations can be very varied, and might be as meaningful to some individuals as the activity itself (Taylor, 2015). Finding the right 'fit' occupation, when so many occupations are denied (Burnett and Chebe, 2009; Huot *et al.* 2013; Fleay *et al.* 2013; Fleay and Hoffman, 2014), takes energy, stamina (Lunden, 2012; WFOT, 2014), and a degree of social capital (Smith, 2013).

In the WFOT Position Statement on Human Displacement (2012) they highlight the impact of forced migration on occupation and the potential for occupation to enable individuals to move beyond displacement. There is a significant link between occupation and the adjustment necessary to manage migration, without which mastery and competency are undermined (Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013;

Nayar and Sterling, 2013). Individuals' capacity to access and make use of new opportunities may be an important feature of success in transition, allowing them to renegotiate ways of doing, being and belonging in their new context (Bennett *et al.* 2012; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013). Occupation has enormous potential as a means of communicating (and maintaining a connection with) something of one's pre-migration experience. It has the ability to generate a sense of purpose and productivity, giving individuals the feeling that they contribute meaningfully to their own future (Bradby *et al.* 2015; Priebe *et al.* 2016). It can act as a vehicle for networking, a medium for bringing people together and an opportunity to express aspects of cultural identity. If refugees are enabled to access occupations which foster commonality, establish identity and are analogous to work (Jonsson, 2008), they are likely to fair better in terms of their health, well-being and integration with host communities (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015).

3.10 Chapter Summary

The impact of human displacement on daily life is irrefutable, and there is growing evidence that occupational injustice arising from displacement has a profound effect. The existing evidence clearly shows both the damage of restricted occupation and the potential benefits of occupation to refugees and people seeking asylum.

The European migrant crisis has increased awareness of the socio-economic and humanitarian issues faced, but approaches to the management of migration remains divisive. The UK has been criticised as providing a 'cool welcome' to refugees, and has many policies which undermine well-being and integration.

Occupation has the potential to ameliorate some of the ill-effects of forced migration, but access is problematic. Better access to meaningful and dignified occupation is believed to have multiple gains for individuals and the host community.

The aims of this study, in its desire to illuminate the meaning of occupation, the connection between occupation and asylum and the experience of asylum, reflects common themes in existing evidence. It supports evidence from occupational therapy and occupational science which indicate that the meaning of occupation is of crucial importance to greater understanding (Reed *et al.* 2010), and is commensurate with the growing body of evidence directly linking occupation and asylum, whilst adding to the limited UK based research. The study shares many threads with current research evidence, but has focussed more on meaning over performance in occupation, and has explored the connection between being meaningfully and purposefully occupied and personal worth and value. This has only recently been identified as an occupational issue, and not previously linked with asylum or human displacement.

METHODOLOGY & METHODS

4 METHODOLOGY

'The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them'

Ralph G. Nichols

This chapter describes the decision-making processes undertaken in order to determine an appropriate approach to this study. It details the initial phase of considering different epistemological concepts, exploring options and choosing a methodology best suited to the subject, the needs of participants and the skills of the researcher. Following the decision-making process, there is discussion reflecting the facets of the chosen methodology, followed by the specific methods employed in Chapter Five.

4.1 EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, one of the three branches of philosophy (alongside logic and metaphysics) and reflects the ways in which knowledge is generated, valued and used (Steup, 2017). This section considers the features of epistemology in relation to occupational science and occupational therapy; it identifies the epistemological stance adopted for this study and it outlines the implications of the epistemological stance adopted upon methods and findings.

Epistemology is the principle of identifying and validating knowledge, characterised by a set of epistemic values established in the work of Kuhn (1977) as accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness. These values differ between communities of people, establishing specific principles and values shared by an 'epistemic community', such as key academic or practice leaders in a particular field. This epistemic community generate a 'disciplinary matrix' from which they can validate or reject particular types of knowledge establishing themselves as 'epistemic gatekeepers' (Hill Collins, 1991; Richardson, 2000; Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009).

The pursuit of knowledge is a complex process involving the generation, interpretation, use and validation of information (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). As a result, all epistemic communities experience pressures which shape their disciplinary matrix and therefore their approach to knowledge. These pressures may be internal and/or external and include a range of drivers including clear influences such as research funding or government policy, or subtle influences such as relationships with other academic groups or public opinion. This is likely to significantly shape the nature of research as part of knowledge generation, determining the types of knowledge that is valued and the way enquiry will be undertaken.

Knowledge of different types, and on different subjects is often prized differently or rejected, both within a discipline and in the wider academic society. What is studied, how it is studied and how it is disseminated is often decided by 'epistemological gatekeepers' within epistemic communities (Hill Collins, 1991; Richardson, 2000). Gatekeepers may vary, but can be any figure who may be influential to the group, profession or areas of enquiry. These gatekeepers establish the inclusion and exclusion

of knowledge, often implicitly and may therefore control its funding, publication opportunities and other means of knowledge generation and sharing (Hill Collins, 1991). This creates an environment where the knowledge of some groups is given greater standing and credibility than others (Hill Collins, 1991, Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009), excluding varied voices from debate (Rajack-Talley *et al.* 2015). Decisions regarding the value of knowledge are imprecise and open to individual interpretation, and communities' perspectives may at times contradict one another, which means that knowledge and theory generation is never neutral (Kuhn, 1977).

4.1.1 Epistemic reflexivity

In order to clarify an epistemic position and assert their uniqueness (Townsend and Polatjko, 2013) any mature discipline should be able to present and defend a coherent system of knowledge (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). To this end it is suggested that the profession engage with what Bourdieu termed 'epistemic reflexivity' which allows for exploration of the assumptions that underlie theory and practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). This process of reflexivity is defined by Sandywell (1996) as the act of interrogating interpretive systems, embedding the principles of reflection in their social and material significance. Epistemic reflexivity applies the principles of reflexivity to the conditions under which knowledge is generated and given status (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The process allows a community, discipline or profession to embrace a critical dimension and interrogate the conditions under which knowledge claims have been constructed in their field (Sandywell, 1996). By taking collective responsibility for their epistemological perspectives, the profession can reclaim traditions more attuned to occupational

concepts, thus ensuring their epistemology is consistent with core values (Yerxa, 1992, Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009).

By engaging with epistemic reflexivity, the profession can demonstrate that it is autonomous and mature enough to examine its underpinning stance (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). It is not necessary to seek a finished or universal understanding, but to engage with the reflective process (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009) as it enables a robust understanding of the historical and philosophical origins of its contemporary body of knowledge. In addition, it enables the profession to examine and challenge the dominance of wider influences and reintroduce creativity to the process of knowledge generation (Sandywell, 1996). In doing so, a profession can avoid adopting approaches which simply follow the dominant trend but engage critically in order to better understand social trends, discourses and political ideologies which reflect contemporary needs and challenge institutional and bureaucratic hegemony (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009).

4.1.2 Epistemology in occupational therapy and occupational science

The development of the disciplines of occupational therapy and occupational science has seen changes in epistemological focus, shaped by internal and external gatekeepers and influences. Internal gatekeepers include professional bodies, key authors, journal editors and research funding panels, all of whom can shape the focus of ideas and evidence. The disciplines of occupational therapy, and to a lesser degree occupational science, have arguably struggled more with the impact of external influencing factors.

Influences can be wide ranging, including the dominance of more powerful professions, such as medicine; the strength of positivism in knowledge generation and the pressure to follow evidence-based practice. In each case, the pressure of external voices can contradict the core philosophical principles of the disciplines (Yerxa, 1990; Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009; Reagon *et al.* 2010).

For much of the lifespan of the profession of occupational therapy, there has been an uneasy and ambivalent relationship with positivism, the strongest voice in health and social care evidence (Peloquin, 1991). Key occupational therapy authors have described how occupational therapy has sought power and status by forging close proximity with positivistic ideas and professions as they are ideologically dominant and socially powerful (Yerxa, 1990; Yerxa, 1992; Collins and Pinch, 2005; Reagon *et al.* 2010).

A positivistic idea of science tends to dominate over interpretive and practical conceptions of knowledge (Schön, 1992). However, occupational scientists define science simply as the means of which knowledge is produced (Zemke and Clarke, 1996; Chalmers, 1999), acknowledging that knowledge production does not necessarily follow the positivistic stance traditionally adopted (UK Science Council, 2016).

The traditional focus of positivistic science suggests a unitary way of knowing (Yerxa, 1992), often adopting knowledge uncritically as fact (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). In reality, science is a social construction influenced by beliefs, values and methodological failings, and a creative human enterprise, which renders it subjective, open to interpretation and fraught with ambiguity (Nicholls, 2005).

By not adopting the constrictions of positivism (Zemke and Clarke, 1996; Gadamer, 2006), occupational science is acknowledging the need for both a breadth of knowledge and diversity of its use, for which traditional positivist perspectives may be ill-suited (Yerxa, 1992; Duncan and Nicol, 2004; Duncan, 2011). Positivism has the potential to reduce the focus on person, environment or occupation and minimise the person and their experience (Yerxa, 1992; Reagon *et al.* 2010). As a result, the principles and concepts relating to occupation could be best evaluated by how well they contribute to individual lives rather than by their objectivity, precision and measurability (Yerxa, 1990; Yerxa, 1992; Reagon *et al.* 2010).

In addition to the dominance of positivistic science, occupational therapy and occupational science have been heavily influenced by the driver of evidence-based practice. Evidence-based practice is the concept of delivering services on the basis of sound evidence for cost effectiveness and measurable success (Forsyth *et al.* 2005), which has become a dominant theoretical paradigm and both an internal and external 'gatekeeper' for knowledge development (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). The principles of evidence-based practice are not necessarily flawed, but the process of determining the suitability of evidence on which to base practice is a challenging one (Schwandt, 2005; Tickell-Degnan and Bedell, 2005; Reagon *et al.* 2008).

Undoubtedly, a customer-focussed, cost effective approach to practice has many benefits (Taylor, 2007); however, the evidence base is not neutral and is based upon the values attributed when deciding which evidence is 'best' (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). The different types of evidence are garnered from different knowledge paradigms, but certain paradigms, as already discussed, are given higher status and recognition. This is

most notably demonstrated through the hierarchy of evidence, which prizes rational, empirical and deductive evidence above interpretive, experiential and inductive evidence (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009). This asserts a clear message that other forms of knowledge, which have influenced practice on a daily basis, are devalued (Mullen and Steiner, 2004; Blair and Robertson, 2005; Flynn *et al.* 2011).

Occupational therapy has been quick to embrace evidence-based practice, seeing it as a means of providing services which are attractive to commissioners; being perceived as of value by colleagues (Fleming and Mattingly, 1994); a degree of kudos and status borrowed from positivism (Sackett *et al.* 2000) and associated research funding (Davies, 2012). Whilst this has provided opportunities to strengthen the standing of the profession in some areas, it may have undermined some core epistemological principles on which the professional was founded (Duncan and Nicol, 2004; Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009; Reagon *et al.* 2010; Duncan, 2011).

Evidence-based practice can lead practitioners to follow wider trends towards technical, market-driven, reductionist approaches (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009), leading to a narrower scope of practice (Fleming and Mattingly, 1994). The pressure to adopt approaches which contradict professional philosophies leads to ontological rupture (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). This reflects a crisis as the academic community struggles with the powerful status of scientific knowledge, against a backdrop of messages regarding the legitimacy and value of the evidence they believe to be meaningful (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). It has also been described as a 'double bind' which results in a gap between the knowledge that is valued in practice, and the knowledge that therapists actually use (Fleming and Mattingly, 1994, p. 296).

In response, practitioners may use their own values and intuitive knowledge to develop 'underground practices' as a form of quiet resistance to enable them to maintain autonomy (Fleming and Mattingly, 1994 p. 296). This means that individual practitioners may assert that they follow evidence bases, but in reality they use a mixture of types of evidence, including tacit knowledge and practical wisdom (Blair and Robertson, 2005). The use of evidence from varied sources enables 'wise practice' or 'knowing practice' (Higgs, 2016). Instead of evidence-based practice, Kronenberg *et al*. (2011) highlights the value of 'possibilities-based practice', challenging the power of the evidence base, enabling new opportunities and forging practice in new areas, rather than being held back by limitations caused by valuing one type of knowledge over another.

A pluralistic perspective of what constitutes evidence has greater potential to reflect complexity (Whiteford, 2005; Whiteford *et al.* 2005), enabling the profession to embrace diverse ways of knowing and better serve the occupational needs of increasingly diverse communities (Kronenberg *et al.* 2005). It also allows for exploration and novelty (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009) and is more reflective of underlying professional philosophies (Kinsella and Whiteford, 2009; Flynn *et al.* 2011).

4.1.3 Epistemological reflexivity and this study

In addition to wider epistemological considerations, consideration has been given to my personal and professional epistemological stance in preparing for this study, and elements of that can be seen throughout the thesis. I have also reflected on the suitability of both methodology and methods for the subject matter and the anticipated audience.

The implication of positivism, science and the evidence base all have direct relevance to this study in a number of ways. The complexity of seeking personal meaning and experience from a culturally diverse population means that positivist traditions and traditional science are unlikely to find value in this study. It does not seek to capture anything measurable, or have generalisable findings. However, the methods have been designed to gain depth of awareness and illuminate a complex set of experiences from a group whose needs are multifaceted, and rarely captured.

The process of seeking financial support for a study exploring a niche element of the needs of a marginalised group was not without its challenges, and three previous grant applications failed. Feedback on previous applications acknowledged the merit of the study, but cited competition as the reason for refusal. It may be that an occupational focus may not have been the priority to different epistemic communities, but the rejections also acknowledge that some agencies prefer not to associate with politically sensitive issues such as asylum.

I am grateful to my own epistemic community for supporting this study, having acknowledged its value though a Career Progression Grant from the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation. Without this funding the study could not have been undertaken.

Through the reflexive process detailed in chapter 5, I was able to identify my personal epistemology and positionality, enabling me to establish the impact of this upon the study (Attia and Edge, 2017). The influences included my personal and cultural

background, professional background, the experience of working with refugees and the experience of approaching research, which is explored further in section 5.11.1.

4.2 METHODOLOGICAL DECISION MAKING

My approach to this study has been shaped both by the need of the research aims and my own perspectives and experience of research. I am certainly drawn towards qualitative research, and have undertaken phenomenological studies during my professional Diploma and Master of Arts. I can acknowledge that I am repelled by the facts and figures of quantitative research, but more than that I am excited by the richness of qualitative inquiry.

My previous research experiences have been pleasurable – I have enjoyed undertaking larger pieces of work, and being able to design and undertake studies that explore my areas of professional interest. I found the process meaningful and the data fascinating, and felt proud of both pieces at the time they were completed.

This study was always intended as qualitative, as the focus was on meaning and lived experience, this would be wholly unsuited to a quantitative approach (Silverman, 2016). Qualitative research provides the opportunity to generate new insights and illuminate fields of inquiry, understanding the complex and varied worlds typical of human experience (Richie *et al.* 2013; Silverman, 2016). Human sciences research often values qualitative research traditions and appreciates a number of shared key features such as a focus on whole experiences, meanings, essences and subjectivity, using first person accounts and researcher reflexivity (Moustakas, 1994). However, multiple traditions and

approaches subscribe to these ideas and the path to deciding on a research direction can be a complex one.

West (2013) states it is possible to begin with either careful consideration of epistemology and ontology, a clear research question or topic or a mixture of both. He suggests a pragmatic approach, moving creatively between the two to find the approach which will do what is required in the most efficient, effective and elegant way. As I had begun the study with a clear topic, and some experience of using phenomenological research methods at Master's level, there was a clear pragmatic desire to follow that approach. However, I also felt a reluctance to choose methods on the basis of familiarity, wishing to ensure that the chosen method was one best suited to the study.

The research decision making process is often given little attention, adding to the mystery surrounding qualitative processes (Alvesson and Karreman, 2012), so I determined to show my reasoning as fully as was possible. The decision-making process was guided by the 'Method Map' devised by Lähdesmäki *et al.* (2010) which guides researchers in making sound methodological choices in line with their research intentions.

The researcher starts with the aims of the research, which act as a guide, and the Method Map highlights typical aims in humanistic research, and suggests suitable methodological approaches in tune with these aims, in order to achieve continuity and coherence in methods (Lähdesmäki *et al.* 2010). The map provides a guided process to considering aims, strategies, data collection and analysis and underpinning philosophy, ensuring that the study follows an epistemologically consistent path (Lähdesmäki *et al.* 2010).

From this, it is clear that the approaches considered most appropriate to the study aims are interpretivist and relativist. Interpretivism is captured in sets of assumptions, including beliefs regarding the nature of reality as socially constructed and multiple and of knowledge as gleaned through meaning (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2009). Interpretivist research is interested in what is specific and unique and in abstract and relative concepts such as time, context and culture (Myers, 2008). The goal of interpretivist research is understanding rather than prediction and is a search for people's perspectives, thoughts and experiences, gleaned through an interactive, participatory and cooperative relationship (Myers, 2008; Pizam and Mansfeld, 2009). The relativist stance determines that no point of view has an absolute truth or validity, and have only relative, subjective value (Sela-Smith, 2002; Smith; 2004).

The Method Map recommended approaching the study with overarching interpretivist and relativist ideals; using hermeneutics, constructivism or phenomenological approaches, as they are most clearly in line with the study aims. Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of text interpretation and it is used in many areas of philosophy (Ramberg and Gjesdal, 2006). Hermeneutic research enables interpretations and in-depth understanding of the researched phenomenon, emphasising subjective interpretations of texts, art, culture, social phenomena and thinking, using a variety of methods (Koppa, 2011). Constructivism is the belief that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). It acknowledges the world as a human and social construction (Crotty, 1996) with methods that are relativist, transactional and constructivist (Lincoln

and Guba, 1985; Crotty, 1996). Phenomenology is the study of consciousness and first person perspectives, such as judgments, perceptions, and emotions (Farina, 2014).

Whilst the Method Map aided in reducing the number of possible approaches there remain many ways to approach this study, and any of these approaches are well suited to the nature of this area of study (Cresswell, 2009; Koppa, 2011). The commonality underlying these differing approaches suggests that they share many of the key features suited to the topic, and to add to the complexity of the decision-making process there is an overlap between approaches, for example, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Kafle, 2011). Indeed, Finlay suggests that differences between philosophical traditions within research are often overstated making subtle differences between similar approaches more difficult to appreciate (Finlay, 2009), and urges the researcher to avoid 'methodolatry' and embrace a 'hybrid' approach (Finlay, 2011).

Having seen that phenomenological research was indeed attuned to the research aims, and met the underpinning conceptual needs of the study, it seemed appropriate to make the choice to follow a phenomenological approach, the features of which are explored below.

4.3 PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology arose as a philosophy in Germany before World War 1, challenging the dominant views of the time on the nature of truth, and has since occupied a prominent position in modern philosophy (Dowling, 2004; Dowling, 2007). The word 'phenomenon' comes from the Greek 'to flare up, to show itself, to appear' (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement, which influenced the research approaches which are used for this study. It was founded in the early 20th Century by German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), with many other iterations following in Europe and the United States of America. There is no single or final definition of phenomenology, as it is neither a doctrine, nor strictly a philosophical school, and can be better seen as a philosophical attitude, an openness to experience, which can make it difficult to capture and understand (Dowling, 2007; Flood, 2010; Farina, 2014).

The epistemology of phenomenology focuses on revealing meaning rather than on arguing a point or developing abstract theory (Flood, 2010), and seeks to illuminate knowledge of things which traditional empirical-analytical sciences cannot provide (Van Manen, 1997).

Phenomenology is concerned with abstract and subjective concepts that had previously not been attended to, such as judgements, perceptions and emotions (Menon, *et al.* 2014). It seeks to develop understanding through awareness of the structures and properties of experience (Zahavi, 2003). Husserl's concept of phenomenology focused on the systematic reflection on and study of consciousness and the phenomena that influence consciousness. He focused on the idea of 'Intentionality' – the idea that consciousness is always directed at something (real or imagined) and the thing capturing attention is the intentional object (Husserl, 1962). Associated with this consciousness are responses such as pleasure, judgement and wishes (Husserl, 1962).

Husserl's phenomenology was countered, critiqued, developed and redirected by numerous hermeneutic philosophers and existentialists, as well as other philosophers

and sociologists (Finlay, 2011, Menon *et al.* 2014). However, the philosophical attitude that began with Husserl also spawned a research approach and set of methods which continues to have relevance across disciplines today (Flood, 2010). Phenomenology was translated from philosophy to research through shared core assumptions, including the desire to put the researcher's assumptions aside through a process called 'epoché'; to analyse human behaviours to foster understanding of the person and the society they inhabit (Moustakas, 1994; Finlay, 2011).

Traditionally, phenomenological research aims to capture how individuals experience and ascribe meaning to a specific phenomenon, focussing on the 'lifeworld' of the individual (Clarke, 2009). It values philosophy over empirical or scientific knowledge, suspension of judgements, the intentional nature of consciousness and reality only as it is perceived by the individual (Stewart and Mickunas, 1990). Phenomenology maintains a focus on the description of things as they appear, and of experience as lived, capturing the ambiguity, poignancy, complexity and richness of experience; making phenomenology an appropriate methodology for understanding the complexity of human issues (Finlay, 2009).

Phenomenology has been a popular research tradition for gleaning an occupational focus (Finlay and Ballinger, 2006; Clarke, 2009; Cronin Davis *et al.* 2009; Park Lala and Kinsella, 2011). It is, however, a diverse discipline, and there is significant uncertainty and controversy between the philosophical origins and divergent contemporary practices (Spiegelberg, 1982; Finlay, 2012).

4.3.1 Methodological debate in phenomenology

Phenomenology takes numerous forms, and there is much debate about the origins and direction of phenomenology, particularly in its application in health and social care. It is a shifting philosophy with many parallel currents (Spiegelberg, 1982) and there is significant uncertainty and controversy between traditional and contemporary phenomenologies. Traditional phenomenology is inspired by originating theorists such as Husserl, Heidegger and Merleu-Ponty, and contemporary interpretations of phenomenology include such approaches as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1990) and 'American phenomenologies' derived by Giorgi (1970), Natanson (1973), and vanManen (1990). These discrepancies primarily reflect ideas regarding phenomenology as philosophical rather than methodological; differences between descriptive and interpretive approaches and issues regarding rigour and suitability for health based research (Giorgi, 1997; 2008; Dahlberg *et al.* 2008; Busygina, 2009; Norlyk and Harder, 2010; Pereira, 2012). Finlay (2012) claims that the core differences between new and traditional approaches are in whether analysis is primarily descriptive or idiographic, whether the study is descriptive or interpretative, how great an emphasis is placed on researcher subjectivity, whether the study perceives itself as science or art and whether it employs modern or post-modern stances.

The next section considers the nature of this methodological debate and reflects some of the key features of concern, particularly whether phenomenological research methods remain true to the philosophical origins of phenomenology, and whether phenomenological philosophy can meet the needs of modern research cultures.

4.3.1.1 Traditional and contemporary phenomenologies

Traditional approaches to phenomenology tend to be descriptive, keen to 'bracket' researcher experience, approach research with a stronger emphasis on philosophy than on science, and use modernist perspectives. However, contemporary phenomenologies are described as postmodern in tradition, idiographic, interpretive, acknowledging the researcher more actively, and tending towards human science (Moustakas, 1994; Spinelli, 2005, Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Cronin-Davis *et al.* 2009).

Contemporary phenomenologies claim to be more scientific, methodologically sound (Giorgi, 1997; Norlyk and Harder, 2010) and contextually more appropriate through their adoption of a 'human science' perspective; seeking to understand the reality of the individual's experience as they engage with the phenomenon rather than the more objective reality of the nature of the phenomenon itself (Caelli, 2001). Crotty (1996) and Paley (2017), the most vocal critics of the use of new phenomenology, accuse researchers of betraying the fundamental aspects of phenomenology (McNamara, 2005; Paley, 2017). Paley (2017) states that contemporary researchers claiming to use phenomenology misconstrue the key concepts, creating discrepancies between the rhetoric employed and their actual practice. Crotty (1996) argues that research conducted in health (with particular reference to nursing research) is descriptive, subjective and lacks critique. The work of Crotty and Paley has been met with polarised views – as a challenging gift to health based research (Garrett, 1998), a scholarly, reasoned critique or a severe, judgmental, fault-finding criticism of nursing research (McNamara, 2005).

Caelli (2001) suggests that American philosophy changed and adapted the traditional phenomenologies developed in Europe by linking with the intellectual tradition, in which pragmatist philosophy, symbolic interactionism and humanistic psychology make important contributions. It would appear that the origins of IPA are reflected here as a UK parallel (Smith, 2004). Caelli (2001) argues that American approaches have merit as they are located firmly in the postmodern world where people live and where research is conducted, as opposed to the more nebulous philosophically orientated phenomenologies.

Newer approaches do not usually seek the pre-reflective experience but include thoughts and interpretations of the experience in the data collection and analysis, with a greater focus on reflexivity than epoché (as advocated by Husserl) otherwise described as 'bracketing' (Caelli, 2001; Cronin-Davis *et al.* 2009; Smith *et al.* 2009) (see section 5.8.1). Some new phenomenologies claim a stronger influence from the work of Heidegger than Husserl and emphasise the acknowledgement of methodological constraints on the researcher themselves and others' interpretations (Racher and Robinson, 2003). However, the allegiance with either has been considered to be flawed – as a betrayal of Heidegger (Paley, 2017) and a misinterpretation of Husserl (Crotty, 1996; Paley, 2017).

Cronin-Davis (2009) describes the most significant strength of IPA as its 'higher order interpretation' though in reality this appears to lie mostly in the absence of formal bracketing, the formalising of interpretation and the use of reflexivity. By acknowledging the researcher more, IPA does allow for a balance between the 'emic' and the 'etic' – those on the inside (participants) and those on the outside (researchers) (Cronin-Davis *et al.* 2009). Additionally, IPA claims to allow participants to tell their own

story whilst acknowledging researcher influence and permitting the 'professional capacity of interpretation' (Cronin-Davis *et al.* 2009 pg. 333); however, as with any other study, the danger would lie in oversimplification of, or hasty reduction and interpretation of data (Orbe, 2000).

4.3.1.2 Phenomenology in context

For many, context may dictate that their studies are more realistically 'inspired' by phenomenology, rather than being truly phenomenological (Finlay, 2009; Snow, 2009). In health, contemporary approaches attract researchers because they claim to maintain the core traditions of phenomenology (such as client centredness and awareness of the individual), yet arguably have the ability to articulate themselves with more structure, traditionally prized in what remains the medical and scientifically dominated arena (Garza, 2007; Flood, 2010; Finlay, 2012).

Contemporary phenomenologies have been justified as being more suited to clinical disciplines, such as nursing (Nicholls, 2009), psychology (Giorgi, 2008) and occupational therapy (Cronin-Davis, 2009) as they wish to understand the human condition rather than the phenomena as such (Caelli, 2001). Contemporary phenomenologies look for commonalities and culturally grounded meaning, considering the role of culture and tradition in understanding and articulating phenomena in a way that Husserl ignored (Valle and King, 1979; Caelli, 2001; Barata *et al.* 2006). Caelli (2001. p373) describes new phenomenologies as 'thoughtful, reflective, and previously interpreted descriptions of experience given by research participants, providing a broader canvas on which to paint a description of a phenomenon than is provided by traditional phenomenology alone'. In

this, new approaches claim their work as more contextually grounded and culturally aware, yet traditional approaches would argue that by effectively distilling the essence of phenomena, the culture and the context should be visible as aspects of the lived experience (Barata *et al.* 2006; Schulte Agyeman, 2008).

For many, it may be context that draws them toward the more prescriptive articulation of new phenomenology and IPA – a clear approach which can be more readily explained to participants, peers or funding groups. New phenomenologies enable the researcher to claim the foundation of an established philosophy, whilst seemingly modernising it for contemporary research cultures.

Phenomenology appears daunting to the novice researcher, chiefly because of its philosophical origins and complex theory base (Snow, 2009), and whilst Caelli (2001) calls for researchers to be less reticent about phenomenological study, Jones Porter (1998), suggests that it may take many years before a researcher faithfully adheres to the principles of phenomenological research. Norlyk and Harder (2010) found a lack of clarity around what made a phenomenological study phenomenological – with a failure to articulate clearly which approach guided the study or identify the philosophical assumptions. Naturally novice practitioners of any kind are drawn towards directive and prescriptive approaches to give them confidence.

Considering Jones Porter's (1998) comments about the enormous challenge of achieving depth in phenomenology, and the difficulties of articulating philosophical traditions in a hard science driven health arena, it is hardly surprising that approaches like IPA have seen such a meteoric rise in popularity. However, it is appropriate to remember that

phenomenological research is primarily about discovery and illumination, not about process – so the ultimate aim should be to find the approach which creates the best opportunity for exploration, rather than the more comfortable process for the researcher (Busygina, 2009).

The time and cost pressured environments of health pose their own challenges to researchers, and it may be that a clearer structure and more prescriptive approach has its attractions to clinician-researchers. Researching in this context requires the management of structural constraints and political demands (Eakin and Mykhalovskiy, 2005); and changes in the health research and university environments do not mesh easily with the core premise of phenomenology, leading to a more procedural and 'dumbed down' approach to qualitative research (Eakin and Mykhalovskiy, 2003; 2005). The changing structural and political demands of the health research agenda (Eakin and Mykhalovskiy, 2005) can allow proposals with more simplistic research methods to dominate (Gilgun, 2005; Darbyshire, 2010).

As noted earlier, within healthcare, positivism and quantitative research methods and evidence-based practice (EBP) take the lead (Nicholls, 2009). Despite a waning of enthusiasm for EBP amongst health professionals (Goldenberg, 2005; Wall, 2008; O'Halloran, 2010), RCTs are frequently still presented as the 'gold standard' in the hierarchy of research evidence, despite multiple limitations (Bondemark and Ruf, 2015; Boswell *et al.* 2016). This leaves qualitative researchers aggrieved that they are disadvantaged in the world of research funding due to a bias in favour of traditional 'hard science' research (Thorne and Darbyshire, 2005, Darbyshire, 2010). Indeed, obtaining funding is acknowledged as a greater challenge for qualitative researchers (Carey and

Swanson, 2003) in what is predominantly a 'quantitative jungle' (Thorne and Darbyshire, 2005). Many funding agencies, research institutions and universities embrace empirical forms of knowledge and marginalize unconventional research (Eakin and Mykhalovskiy, 2003; 2005). Gilgun (2005) has highlighted the way definitions of 'science' and the use of language within research funding processes exclude the perspectives and assumptions of many forms of qualitative research.

There is a growing recognition that the most effective research methodology should reflect the type of question, the individual's need or the relevance to the clinical encounter (Reagon *et al.* 2010), and an approach producing the most robust evidence should become the standard to which others are compared (Greenhalgh *et al.* 2014). Finlay (2009) acknowledges that it is not prudent to ignore the 'audience' for research– and that the researcher cannot ignore the wider political, instrumental and strategic interests that may have a bearing. The more analytical sounding (and perhaps more medically articulated) IPA may be seen as having appeal – yet there is a lasting conflict between the traditional standpoint of phenomenology with the 'real world' challenges of being taken seriously within a competitive research environment. As already highlighted, qualitative research is increasing in popularity as a challenge to the hegemony of positivism (Tavakol and Zeinaloo, 2004; Finlay and Ballinger, 2006), that is more in line with many professional paradigms (Reagon *et al.* 2010). This allows qualitative research, and approaches such as phenomenology, to contest the way EBP is perceived, democratising research and finding the most suitable approach rather than simply following the dominant voice (Salmon, 2007; Reagon *et al.* 2010).

In any phenomenology the researcher determines what works best in an interpretation of data (Pereira, 2012) and a `final' answer is never accomplished; instead the researcher is always left asking, 'What have I missed?' (Orbe, 2000). There appears to be a parallel here with the process of determining a 'best' approach to phenomenological research. Just as there are many possible interpretations of the data, there seem to be many different interpretations of phenomenological research. Exponents of 'new phenomenologies' appear to suggest that traditional approaches 'missed' something of the context of modern research and 'missed' something in the articulation of their methods (Caelli, 2001). Traditionalists see the new phenomenologies as potentially reductionist – 'missing' the open, exploratory perspectives of philosophy in favour of methodological direction and the myth of certainty (Busygina, 2009).

There are enormous challenges to using traditional phenomenology, and doing it justice, particularly for the novice researcher. Moving towards a more directive method does not necessarily remove this challenge, but doing so could risk undermining the strengths of phenomenology. The approaches may claim common origins, but are patently not employing the same methods and therefore it is highly unlikely that they will lead to the same outcome. This raises the question of whether new phenomenologies are doing what they claim or simply standing on the back of traditional approaches to give themselves a history.

Different philosophical commitments have taken phenomenological research practice in diverse directions but it is to be hoped that the core is unchanged – the description of things as they appear, and of experience as lived (Finlay, 2009). It is the ambiguity, poignancy, complexity and richness of lived experience (Finlay, 2009) that

phenomenology seeks to illustrate, and why it is so very appropriate to understanding the complexity of human issues. At their best, the new phenomenologies can claim the advantage of balancing phenomenological description with insightful interpretation and real-world flexibility; however, at their worst they could be seeking to understand complexity by using simple methods (Ballinger, 2004; Cairney, 2012).

Both traditional and contemporary approaches have elements well suited to this particular piece of work, and determining the more effective way forward required a decision between numerous versions of phenomenology. It felt important at this stage to maintain awareness of traditional philosophy, whilst also finding a path which reflected the real world needs of a contemporary study (Giorgi, 2008). The backdrop of the debate regarding phenomenology presents this study with the challenge of finding an epistemologically consistent approach, recognising the potential 'push' towards more classically 'scientific' research methods and acknowledging that phenomenology sacrifices breadth and scope for depth in its findings. The search for the appropriate approach is detailed below, which seeks to find the 'best fit' methodologically for the study aims, acknowledging limitations but seeking to maximise strengths.

4.3.2 Choosing an approach

Given that phenomenology aims to capture the vast and unique experiences of the individual it is perhaps unsurprising that such multiplicity brings a multiplicity of methods. As Reagon *et al.* (2010) states, if we acknowledge multiple truths we require multiple evidence bases. Garza (2007) suggests that the flexibility of phenomenological research and the adaptability of its methods to ever widening arcs of enquiry is one of its greatest

strengths. It is critical, however, that the method remains congruent with the philosophical underpinnings upon which it draws (Busygina, 2009) and that it clearly articulates how methods and philosophy meet.

However, as with all core research approaches, phenomenology can be expressed and undertaken in many different ways. In order to ensure the most appropriate approach was taken, one which would prove consistent with the research aims, the categorisation of different phenomenologies described by Finlay (2011; 2012) was considered.

APPROACH	**BRIEF DESCRIPTION**	**KEY THEORISTS**	**KEY POINTS**
DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL	To describe phenomena in normative or scientific sense. Anchored in data, without external theory.	Husserl Giorgi and the 'Duquesne school'	Use of bracketing, breaking data into meaning units and extracting through imaginative variation.
HERMENEUTIC *INTERPRETIVE*	Use of interpretation to develop themes on lived experience. Refracted through theory. Blends science and art.	Heidegger Gadamer Applied to human sciences – Jager, van Manen and Todres	No methods other than hermeneutic circle, where findings are intertwined with researcher interpretation and context.
LIFEWORLD	Descriptive and hermeneutic designs applied to lived experience, time/space and relations with others.	Developed from Husserl and Heidegger by thinkers such as Merleu Ponty, Dahlberg and Ashworth	Dahlberg – reflective lifeworld – exploring whole and parts of data in search of essence. Ashworth's idiographic approach uses practical thematic structure.
INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLGIST ANALYSIS	Structured version of hermeneutic phenomenology, exploring sense	Developed from Husserl and Heidegger by thinkers such as	Systematic approach looking at individual's meaning, using interpretations in search of depth.

	making and perception.	Gadamer and Smith. Links with psychology.	
FIRST PERSON	Researchers own experience used to examine and describe phenomenon, either descriptive or hermeneutic.	Origins with Husserl, work by Toombs, Young and Abrams.	Use of narratives interspersed with theory and literary accounts. Personal reflection deepens analysis.
REFLEXIVE RELATIONAL	Data emerges out of the researcher/co-researcher relationship. Reflexivity and inter-subjectivity celebrated.	Gadamer, Gendlin, Levinas and Buber, followed by Haling, Rowe and Moustakas.	Diverse methodologies, dialogical researcher-involved perspectives gained through dialogue, heuristic research aims at self-inquiry, reflexive dialogue and creative synthesis. Reflexive relational explores layered embodied subjectivity between researcher and co-researcher.

Fig. 7: Choices in phenomenology, adapted from Finlay (2011).

From this profile of differing styles, it became easier to determine the most well-suited approaches. Whilst Descriptive Empirical approaches form the foundations of early phenomenology, and are able to provide a detailed description of phenomena, the absence of interpretation has less appeal. On a personal level, whilst IPA is often used in health and social care, its high level of structure felt less intuitively 'phenomenological'. The personal and individual focus of First Person approaches did not immediately lend themselves to exploration over a number of participants. Hermeneutic approaches, whilst often using impenetrable language, add the interpretive element and are attractive in their mix of science and art, but also inform some of the other approaches.

Of the most well suited methods, the Lifeworld approach appeared to have direct application to this study in its recognition of the connection between lived experience and context, and Reflexive Relational approaches capture the interplay between participant and researcher. As a practical decision, based on comfort and confidence with the methodology and an effective mix with the researcher's underpinning professional philosophy, the decision was taken to use Reflexive Relational methodology, through Moustakas's Heuristic method.

4.3.3 Heuristic methodology

Heuristic research is based upon principles of the heuristic technique which means 'to discover or to find' (Moustakas, 1990, p.9). This is an approach to problem solving, learning, or discovery that employs practical methods to find satisfactory solutions to issues. Typically heuristics involve things like trial and error and the rule of thumb – reflecting a practical, intuitive means of solving a problem or making a decision (Ippoliti, 2015; Neth and Gigerenzer, 2015). Heuristics have generic application across diverse disciplines such as computer programming, mathematics and philosophy, where there is a need to understand and experience discovery prior to formulating a hypothesis (Kenny, 2012).

Within research, heuristic methodology was developed by Clark Moustakas, and encapsulates the meaning of 'heuristic' discovery through the use of self-reflection, explanation and elucidation of phenomena (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990). The approach incorporates a series of methods towards discovery, self-inquiry and dialogue (Finlay, 2011). It is a reflexive version of descriptive phenomenology,

influenced by the principles of phenomenologists Husserl and Buber, and the ideas of Carl Rogers, forefather of client-centred Rogerian therapy (Finlay, 2011). Where Moustakas' approach differs from other descriptive phenomenological approaches in what Finlay calls the 'implicit hermeneutic shift' and the focus on researcher engagement and personal transformation (Finlay, 2011, p. 163). According to Moustakas (1990), heuristic research is designed to reflect the researcher's hunches, thoughts and images to deepen knowledge and connect them to the core meaning of the phenomena being researched (Djuraskovic and Arthur, 2010). Douglass and Moustakas (1985, p.42) assert that heuristic research 'is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behaviour'. Heuristic research emphasises exploration and discovery in a way well suited to psychological and sociological academic research (Kleining and Witt, 2000).

Moustakas uses heuristic inquiry as a means of participatory knowing (Hiles, 2002), through tacit knowledge and indwelling (Moustakas, 1994; Hiles, 2002). The process of heuristic research requires a subjective process of 'reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation' in order to discover the meaning and essence of human experience (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985, p.40). Hiles (2001; 2002) asserts that inquiry of this type is no less scientific, or empirical, than any other area of inquiry, but the data may take different forms, such as subjective experience, discernment and direct knowing. The nature and focus of this approach makes the heuristic approach particularly relevant to researching authentic accounts of human experience (Hiles, 2002).

Heuristic inquiry began in 1984 with the ideas of Douglass and Moustakas, which introduced the ideas of immersion, acquisition and realisation. Immersion allows for the exploration of a question or theme, acquisition is the collection of data and realisation is the synthesis of findings (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985). From there Moustakas (1990, p.15) described the research process as 'a passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered' through means such as self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing and frame of reference.

Self-dialogue requires an explicit reflexive element to the work, the emphasis on a rhythmic to and fro of information between data and researcher to uncover one's own responses to the information contained (Moustakas, 1990; Attia and Edge, 2017). Tacit knowing, the idea that 'we know more than we can tell' (Polyani, 1966, p.4) reflects the appreciation of the whole of the phenomenon beyond the sum of its parts, like our ability to read feelings to assess mood. Moustakas describes this as akin to the way we locate an empty seat in a dark theatre – the sense of feeling our way and using subsidiary clues to locate what we need to find (Moustakas, 1990). The heuristic process guides the researcher to 'untapped aspects of awareness [where] tacit knowing operated behind the scenes, giving birth to the hunches and vague, formless insights that characterize heuristic discovery' (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985, p. 49).

Intuition is the ability to bridge implicit and explicit knowledge, using perception to link the mysterious with the clear and understood to find truths (Moustakas, 1990). The notion of indwelling captures a participatory process of inner reflection and discovery that leads to fresh insight and awareness; it is 'turning inward to seek a deeper, more

extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience… one dwells inside them and expands their meanings and associations until a fundamental insight is achieved' (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24). Heuristic indwelling occurs through a number of basic phases, choosing a text with which to engage (in this case a section of an interview or reflections), engage with the text as deeply as possible, exploring the demands it makes upon you, indwell over an extended period by exploration and discernment, following 'leads' from within the text, whilst maintaining a core focus. From there the researcher sifts through and gathers insights, meanings and themes, reflects on their authenticity, repeating as necessary, before formulating a creative synthesis to reflect both participation and authenticity which can be shared with others (Hiles, 2002).

Focusing enables the researcher to identify the qualities of an experience that may have stayed out of conscious reach; they are required to pause and clarify to 'make contact' with core themes (Moustakas, 1990). The final stage is the recognition of the role of the internal frame of reference; which Moustakas (1990, pg. 26) states as 'only the experiencing persons – by looking at their own experiences in perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and sense – can validly provide portrayals of the experience.' The opportunity to speak, openly and in trust, with the experiencing person, allowing them to share their perspectives, providing a unique and invaluable window of insight into their frame of reference.

Moustakas focussed on six interrelated phases which take the researcher on their experiential journey (Moustakas, 1990):

Initial engagement is the first stage, allowing an initial topic, theme or question to be identified. The researcher is urged to find an 'intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal compelling implications' (Moustakas, 1990; p. 27).

Immersion involved an intense engagement with the research topic, seeking to fully appreciate all elements of the question being asked.

Incubation permits the researcher's own tacit knowledge to percolate through into their consciousness.

Illumination encourages the researcher to review their own data and that of their co-researchers* to identify implicit meanings.

Explication allows the researcher to deepen their familiarity with the data and layers of meaning to generate key themes.

Creative synthesis is the production of a narrative description, including verbatim examples from the data, or through suitable means such as poetry, art or storytelling.

(Moustakas, 1990; 1994; Finlay, 2011).

*co-researcher is the term Moustakas used to describe participants.

The uniqueness of heuristic inquiry lies in its deeply subjective and creative connection between researcher and phenomenon (Sela-Smith, 2002). This six-staged process allows the researcher to engage slowly and at depth with emergent data, allowing a slow, deliberate and authentic analysis of findings. It seeks a compassionate interaction

between researcher and co-researcher to forge an emotionally connected approach, and as a result is popular amongst psychologically and therapeutically oriented researchers (Kleining and Witt, 2000; Sela-Smith, 2002; Finlay, 2011).

Heuristic inquiry requires the researcher to engage in a disciplined approach in search of the fundamental meanings embedded in human experiences. The researcher is very present in heuristic inquiry, and the experiences of the researcher are considered alongside those of the participants, or co-researchers (Moustakas, 1990). Introspection is encouraged (Kleining and Witt, 2000), allowing the researcher to experience the intensity of the phenomenon and generate another strand of evidence (Djuraskovic and Arthur, 2010). It requires passion and discipline to create a story that depicts deep meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1990). Such research is inherently personal and it allows for participants to have their stories understood and their voices heard (Salmon, 2007).

Furthermore, when participants are chosen for a heuristic study, they are not viewed as mere subjects in the study but as important co-researchers who are an integral part of the heuristic process (Moustakas, 1990). However, the researcher's own knowledge is considered equitable to that of other co-researchers because their own knowledge is an essential part of undertaking the phenomena (Djuraskovic and Arthur, 2010). The heuristic process exists as a chain, highlighting the importance of working with the heuristic process of others. The outcome is a creative synthesis which is shared and inspires others to engage in their own heuristic inquiry (Hiles, 2002).

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY:

Phenomenology is deemed a suitable methodology for appraising the perspectives and experiences of refugees. It provides the flexibility, reflexivity and sensitivity to meet the needs of the topic area, the participants and the researcher. Heuristic research methodology, as described by Moustakas (1990) is appropriately attuned to the study direction and well suited to research in human sciences, therapy and health (Finlay, 2011).

The Methods chapter describes how the features of phenomenology and heuristic research are interpreted for this study, detailing the specific approaches taken.

5 METHODS

This section seeks to demonstrate the processes undertaken throughout the study, the reasoning behind choices made and the way in which methods follow the methodological path established by Moustakas (1994). Attempting to show the complete research process would be unwieldy, so it will be demonstrated in stages, starting with the practical process, presented below in Fig. 8. The process of analysis, and links with the approach detailed by Moustakas (1994) will be considered separately in section 5.8.

Recruitment and Selection:	Link agencies were approached and provided with information and training. Written information was prepared and translated. Posters and flyers were made available within link agencies.
Participant information and preparation:	Individuals expressed wish to participate. Contact was made and information provided, with an information meeting provided to prepare participants and answer questions. Eligibility was established.
Consideration of needs and risks:	Language issues, any evident participant risks or vulnerabilities and practical requirements (such as travel or childcare) were considered.
Research interviews:	Up to three interviews were offered to each participant, with interpreters as required. Creative options were provided. Consent was established prior to the first interview.
Data management:	Once a participant had completed their chosen number of interviews, their audio recorded interviews were transcribed and a precis prepared to be used in participant review.
Participant review:	Wherever possible participants were invited to view the precis of their interview and comment further. Amendments were made if requested.

Fig. 8: Research process overview

5.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Any approach to gathering and selecting participants is likely to influence outcomes and in qualitative research problems of sampling are ever present (Robinson, 2013). This study utilises a purposive sampling strategy, where participants are selected with a purpose in mind, rather than randomly (Palinkas *et al.* 2013). Shultz (2006) states that a phenomenological study is better suited to purposive or purposeful sampling, and it is considered an appropriate strategy to manage sensitive research issues (Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2008).

A sample of ten participants was determined, to balance the desire for rich data and depth of analysis with practical constraints of time and access to participants (Mack *et al.* 2005; Guest *et al.* 2006). Within phenomenological studies it is customary to have small sample sizes from homogenous groups (Richie *et al.* 2003; Smith et al. 2009; Robinson, 2013) though suggested numbers vary (Cresswell, 1998; Palinkas *et al.* 2013). Guest *et al.* (2012) stated that participant numbers and data saturation is dependent upon the complexity of data and investigator's approach. Seidman shows reluctance to identify a number stating that '"enough" is an interactive reflection of every step of the interview process, and different for each study and each researcher' (2013, p.58). This study is not seeking homogeneity and has a potentially broad focus, which makes determining a number of participants challenging (Guest *et al.* 2006; 2012). However, as the study is exploratory in nature it does not seek a coherent shared message through saturation, rather an illumination of different lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Hiles, 2001; Finlay, 2011; Palinkas *et al.* 2013; Seidman, 2013).

All participants were required to have, at some time within the past five years, sought asylum in the UK, though their current immigration status could be varied. They may be male or female, from any country or of any ethnicity and speak any language. All participants were required to be over the age of 18, however, some individuals or cultures do not measure, record or take note of age and therefore participants may have been unable to identify or verify their age. Had there been any concern that a potential participant was under 18, and independent verification was not available, the individual would not have been included in the study.

Participants were engaged via established link agencies, which were able to act as 'cultural broker', as this is thought to promote trust (Preloran *et al.* 2001; Ryen, 2008). These were local refugee support charities (The North of England Refugee Service (NERS) and the Melting Pot)[1]. The agencies were provided with training or information sessions and requested to publicise the research, though not to 'promote', be coercive, or to be selective in the information they provided to attendees. Agency staff were under no obligation to participate in or support the research if they did not wish to, and telephone and face to face support was made available to them, as necessary. The

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[1] NERS is an independent, charitable organisation which exists to meet the needs and represent the interests of asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived or have settled in the North of England. It describes its role as accompanying and supporting refugees on their journey, and providing an authoritative voice on issues affective the refugee community in the region (NERS, 2015). The Melting Pot was a social support facility run by volunteers from a local Baptist Church, they provided hot food, games and activities and access to a charitable fund for destitute failed asylum seekers. (Since the research activities were conducted this service has folded).

I have no clinical or practice links with these services and they are not statutory health or social care providers.

agencies, through key interested individuals, informed their population of service users about the research project, displayed posters and flyers and, for those who expressed an interest, provided contact details to the researcher.

The ten participants were the first ten people who expressed an interest, with all interested parties meeting the criteria and participating in the study. There was no further selection, and recruitment halted as soon as sufficient people were available.

5.2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND PREPARATION

All individuals who expressed an interest in participating were invited to meet the researcher face to face before deciding to commit. The link agency gave the interested people options for contacting, or being contacted by, the researcher, and mobile phone numbers were exchanged in all cases. In this initial meeting possible participants were provided with written and verbal details in order to fully inform their decision. Copies of all written materials provided are available in Appendix One.

As participants may not be fully conversant with research principles, detailed and accessible written materials were required to ensure individuals were fully informed in making their decision to participate (Preloran *et al*. 2001; Liamputtong, 2007; 2012). The written information provided in the participant information sheet, marketing poster, consent form and reply slip were all professionally translated in line with World Health Organisation translation guidelines (Temple and Young, 2004), into the five most common languages of individuals dispersed to the Middlesbrough area – Arabic (Modern), French, Farsi, Kurdish Sorani and Tigrinya.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend that data is processed in a way which allows for cross-cultural and conceptual continuity, rather than linguistic/literal equivalence (WHO, 2015). They recommend the use of forward-translations, back-translations and pre-testing. Translation should be undertaken by a single translator, with a degree of familiarity with the subject and skill both in English and the target language. They should be fully instructed, emphasizing the importance of conceptual rather than literal translations, and encouraging the use of simple, clear and concise translations. Materials should then be independently back translated into English to identify discrepancies and problematic phrases. Pre-testing allows practical issues to be noted (WHO, 2015). For this study, all written preparatory materials were translated by a professional translation firm, who agreed to undertake the process following the WHO guidance (WHO, 2015). An audio version was also provided, to reduce barriers to inclusion for those who did not read in their own or other languages.

During the initial discussion, individuals were given the opportunity to discuss the study in detail and ask questions, and for the researcher to establish their eligibility in line with inclusion criteria. In order to limit attrition and maintain regular contact, individuals were offered either a multilingual appointment card or a text reminder for sessions. In each case text messages were preferred, and were sent as a gentle confirmation reminder prior to first full session, and if requested, on following sessions in order to promote attendance and maintain contact (Perron *et al.* 2013).

5.3 CONSIDERATION OF NEEDS AND RISKS

In any research it is essential to support participants in order to minimise risk and encourage effective participation, particularly where the participants may have other vulnerabilities or content may be sensitive (Liamputtong, 2007; Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2008). Consideration was given to a wide range of ethical issues, and aspects of personal comfort, in order to foster well-being throughout the process.

In order to foster and maintain a positive researcher/participant relationship and ensure the study sensitively meets the needs of its participants, a longer, more participant led relationship was encouraged, enabling greater agency for participants and fostering choice and control (Eide and Allen, 2005; Conrad and Campbell, 2008; Ryen, 2008). On a practical level, participants were encouraged to determine pace and approach wherever possible – for example in choice of the date, time and frequency of interviews. Consideration as given to travel costs and childcare needs, trying, wherever possible, to ensure that any negative implications of attendance were minimised.

A consent form, provided in the participant's own language or in an audio version was made available and completed prior to commencement of the first research interview (Appendix Three). Consent was recorded by participant signature in all cases. Throughout the study if there had been any doubt about a person's ability to give informed consent then they were to be considered ineligible to participate. The standard for identifying mental capacity was taken from the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and established at initial contact and monitored throughout.

Participants were invited to choose a pseudonym for use throughout the research, in order to allow participants to make their involvement as personalised or as anonymous as they wish (Wiles *et al.* 2006; McNair *et al.* 2008). Traditional, researcher led pseudonimising of data can leave participants feeling they have lost ownership over data (Grinyer, 2002) and self-selection of a pseudonym may even help underline the confidentiality issues associated with participation (Gerrish and Lacey, 2010).

A personal name is a feature of personal identity and whilst research has been conducted into the implications of one's name, little has been done on the meaning of it to the individual (Cresswell, 2015; Wodak, 2016). The particular use and non-use of names for people seeking asylum has been acknowledged as part of a dehumanising process and the incorrect use of names unfamiliar to British ears may be commonplace (Khilay, 2013). People seeking asylum may frequently have had their names mispronounced (Khilay, 2013), or been encouraged to anglicise them (Wallis and Robb, 2012).

Considering the possible vulnerability of the client group, there was a clear insistence that the chosen pseudonym was not their name or part of their name, and every effort was made to support participants in making a safe and appropriate choice of pseudonym, recognising the importance of maintaining anonymity balanced against the importance of having a voice.

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

I recall a client with whom I worked for a number of months before she indicated that the name I had been using was not her given name. She had travelled to the UK using a false passport, and on arrival explained that the passport was false, but presented extensive documentation to indicate her true identity. The Home Office chose to believe she was the woman named on the passport, and declined her other evidence. From that time she had been known to them, and elsewhere, by the name on her false passport. From then she elected to return to using her given name, and the experience proved pivotal in her personal development.

The desire to identify with a name felt like something I wished to foster within the research. More than half of the participants initially wanted to use their own name, and when the ethical issues were explained, chose a name which had significance as a family name or a nickname. This feels like it reflects something about the importance of personal names when someone may otherwise feel disconnected from the family, network, community and culture.

5.4 LANGUAGE

The nature of cross-cultural research requires recognition of specific linguistic challenges, and whilst this study recruited many English speakers there are many aspects influencing language use and understanding, which will be explored here. This section considers the role of language, the implications of research conducted in a second, or third, language, the use of interpretation and translation, and raises the issue of participant language bias.

5.4.1 Language and access

Awareness of language barriers in research is growing as part of the access agenda and the widening of diversity within communities (Temple and Young, 2004), and part of giving voice to, and empowering individuals (Murray and Wynne, 2001). Whilst

translation and interpretation make the research possible, they do not eliminate concerns, though some researchers perceive that professional interpretation 'solves' the problem by providing full accuracy (Temple, 2005). However, 'there is no neutral position from which to translate and the power relationships within research need to be acknowledged' (Temple and Young, 2004. p. 164). Concerns have been raised that researchers routinely exclude non-English speakers from their research and when they do include them, they often fail to make specific provision to meet their needs (Avery and Bernard, 2014). Lack of awareness of linguistic issues is a 'strange omission' considering the traditions of openness and awareness associated with qualitative research (Edwards *et al.* 2006. p. 2).

Many methodological issues have been identified in working across languages, and yet are frequently overlooked in cross cultural studies (Wallin and Ahlström, 2006; Kirkpatrick and van Teijlingen, 2009). Undertaking research across language barriers may be an essential part of the access agenda, ensuring that research reflects the widening diversity in our communities; however, very little is published on the problems of conducting qualitative interviews where language barriers exist (Quintanilha *et al.* 2015). Many researchers simply do not consider using non-English speaking participants (Avery and Bernard, 2014), others believe their inclusion is not relevant to their study area, and others exclude on the basis of cost (Avery and Bernard, 2014).

With about a third of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the UK without any English language skills (the proportion is higher for women), language and communication are major barriers to everyday life (Morris *et al.* 2009). For many people, being unable to speak one's 'mother tongue' means a degree of exclusion, and dependency on others to

speak for them (Temple and Young, 2004). Acceptance of, and respect for, migrants' identities are important preconditions for second language acquisition and integration (Wodak, 2012) and despite it being perceived as valuable for migrants to learn English, access and availability of suitable training continues to decline (Piller and Takahashi, 2010).

Working with people who do not require interpreters, but for whom English is not their first language, also has issues (Murray and Wynne, 2001). Whilst appearing proficient people may feel less confident, happy and intelligent when speaking in a second language, making it harder for people to openly express themselves (Murray and Wynne, 2001).

Language is not a neutral backdrop to research as languages are often afforded a great deal of power, defining difference and commonality (Temple and Young, 2004; Temple, 2005; Berthoud *et al.* 2013). Arguably, English has great power as the dominant language of the host nation, but also as the third most widely spoken language in the world (Ethnologue, 2015). The politics of language is significant as it plays an increasing role in the dynamics of hierarchy, power, participation (Edwards *et al.* 2006) and identity (Wodak, 2012). For some individuals, language may be part of their difficult and disjointed lives, and sometimes becomes part of the open hostilities and disbelief of the asylum system (Blommaert, 2009). There is a significant focus on importance of speaking English as a means to integration and the foundation of citizenship (Penn, 2008; Blackledge, 2009). Language competence has acquired the status of a key gatekeeper – providing access for some and rejection for others (Wodak, 2012). Language assessment procedures are employed as an instrument of control, such as language tests are a legal

requirement for some 'groups' but not others (Wodak, 2012), and trends towards increasingly high levels of linguistic ability (Bauböck and Wallace Goodman, 2010). Blommaert tells of a man whose complex history shaped an atypical language repertoire, which became a major reason for his asylum refusal (2009).

5.4.2 Language, meaning and understanding

This research, as with any qualitative inquiry, requires a reliance on language as a means of understanding. Within research there has been a tendency to view language purely as a tool to accomplish the enquiry (Willig, 2007; 2009). However, it is not just a tool, or a technical label for conveying concepts, but an important part of conceptualisation, incorporating values and beliefs (Edwards *et al.* 2006). The role of language has particular significance where individual meaning is important, and as qualitative research seeks to study meanings in subjective experiences, the relationship between subjective experience and language should be considered. Language is a two-way process, used to express meaning, but also influencing how meaning is constructed (Van Nes *et al.* 2010). Languages and using language manifest 'who we are', and we define reality partly through our language and linguistic behaviour, creating a close, emotional relationship between language and identity (Wodak, 2012).

As language is the primary means of conveying the subtle and often abstract messages sought in qualitative research, it is important to consider the effectiveness of communication when trying to understand another's lived experiences (Willig, 2007). There is no single translation of a text or dialogue, so rather than an exact match there may be a 'dazzling array of possible word combinations that could be used to convey

meaning' (Edwards *et al.* 2006. p. 3). Language use varies as meaning is embedded on a personal and cultural level and it is deeply individual (Aneas and Sandin, 2009; Wodak, 2012). In this study, there are some cross linguistic aspects, but even where English is the common language it seems appropriate that there will be difference in the way English is used around the world.

Even where language is shared, understanding cannot always be assumed due to its richness and diversity (Polkinghorne, 2005; Van Nes *et al.* 2010). Arguably, an individual's social reality may be unique to one's own language, meaning that those who speak different languages may perceive the world differently (Van Nes *et al.* 2010). Challenges in the representation of meaning may be experienced in any communication, but when cultural contexts differ and interlingual translation is required there is added complexity (Van Nes *et al.* 2010). As there is no single meaning to be gleaned from an individual's lived experience there can be no one translation to fully convey meaning (Temple and Young, 2004). Meanings may also not always be accessible, or be difficult to express across languages (Van Nes *et al.* 2010).

Within phenomenological studies an accurate sense of meaning is core (Van Nes *et al.* 2010) and there is an aim to reduce the distance between the meanings as experienced by the participants and the meanings as interpreted in the findings (Polkinghorne, 2005; Squires, 2008), thus the sensitive recognition of the role of language and attention to the transfer of meaning can influence rigour in the qualitative research process (Smith *et al.* 2008; Van Nes *et al.* 2010).

5.4.3 Translation and interpretation

The growth in cross-cultural research over recent decades has highlighted the importance of the use of interpretation and translation and the associated challenges for researchers (Kirkpatrick and van Teijlingen, 2009; Kale and Hammad, 2010). Interpretation is the transfer of verbal information from one language to another and translation is usually the transfer of information in a written form (Language Scientific, 2015). The use of translation and interpretation is complex and fraught with challenges, but also opens up opportunities for communication that, without a third party, would be impossible (Kale and Hammad, 2010; Kale and Syed, 2010).

In order to promote inclusivity in research, language barriers cannot be ignored (Squires, 2008; Shimpuku and Norr, 2012). Major language-based failings are seen in many research studies, with only 15% of studies meeting the recommended criteria for trustworthiness in cross-language methods (Squires, 2008). This creates issues in achieving depth and detail in qualitative data (Smith *et al.* 2008). As a result, researchers are encouraged to consider the role of language difference in their studies (Wallin and Ahlström, 2006), and be explicit about the role of the interpreter (Shimpuku and Norr, 2012).

The use of translation or interpretation does not solve all problems with language difference (Temple and Young, 2004), and attention should be paid to conceptual equivalence across dialects (Squires, 2008), continuity across multiple interpreters (Squires, 2008), interpreter influence (Edwards *et al.* 2006) and the loss of subtle meanings (Van Nes *et al.* 2010). In response to these issues researchers need to approach

interpretation more systematically (Squires, 2008), and reflexively (Kirkpatrick and van Teijlingen, 2009), promote trustworthiness through thorough knowledge of the interpreter's role (Wallin and Ahlström, 2006).

In this study, professional Interpreters were offered to all participants for whom English was not a first language, for all research sessions. The decision to use an interpreter was made by the participant and the option offered to all participants, regardless of perceived language ability. Interpreters were sourced through the NERS interpreting service, and were provided with a set of guidelines based on good practice guidance for interpretation (Appendix Two). Should an interpreter be required it was intended that they be used consistently for the same participant, in order to maintain comfort and continuity (Hadziabdic, 2009; Searight and Armock, 2013).

Consideration was given to access for rarer languages (Kale and Syed, 2010), interpreter training (NERS, 2015), verification of linguistic skill (Quintanilha *et al.* 2015) and personal characteristics (Edwards, 2010). My approach was co-operative, with open discussion with the interpreter regarding role and expectations (Edwards *et al.* 2006; Van Nes *et al.* 2010). In this way I hoped to have the best possible version of the data, but also a clear insight into any potential issues with interpretation (Squires, 2009; Van Nes *et al.* 2010).

Of the participants who expressed an interest in the research, six were from African nations where English is widely spoken, two had good English skills developed since their arrival, one had limited English but declined an interpreter, and one used an interpreter throughout, details of the language profiles can be seen in Fig. 9.

Participant name	Language	Interview language issues
Alice	English is the official language of her nation, she has been an English speaker since infancy.	Interpreter not required
Shahin	Farsi speaker, through English developed since arrival in UK	Elected not to use interpreter
Oliver	Oliver has limited English, but did not name his 'mother tongue'. English is the fourth most widely spoken language in his country of origin. He chose to conduct the session in English.	Elected not to use interpreter
Freeman	Born in a multilingual African nation Freeman learnt English in early adulthood and is a proficient speaker.	Interpreter not required
Goziem	English is the official language of his nation, she has been an English speaker since infancy.	Interpreter not required
Ola	English is the official language of her nation, she has been an English speaker since infancy.	Interpreter not required
Tete	English is the official language of her nation, she has been an English speaker since infancy.	Interpreter not required
Sam	Born in a multilingual African nation Sam learnt English in early adulthood and is a proficient speaker.	Interpreter not required
Tendei	English is the official language of her nation, she has been an English speaker since infancy.	Interpreter not required
Ali	Kurdish Badini, with some English.	Used interpreter for all sessions.
This table aims to indicate the prevalent languages, but though the majority spoke English many were multilingual and had other primary languages.		

Fig. 9: Participants and language

Ali, who was the only participant to use an interpreter, has a complex history of language barriers here in the UK as he speaks a rarer dialect of a common language. He has frequently had the wrong interpreter provided for him, including during Home Office interviews. As he now has developed some English he was able to request a specific interpreter, and indicated satisfaction that he felt both understood and could understand what was said to him. He spoke a mixture of English phrases and his own language throughout the interviews.

Despite my determination to include non-English speaking people in this study, and attention to providing translated materials and professional interpretation, the majority of participants were proficient in English. It is also notable that two individuals preferred to communicate in English, although their communication was inhibited by this.

This is not representative of the population of refugees in the UK, and calls into question whether other influences may play a role in selection. It may be that the link agencies engaged people who were English speakers, or that English speakers felt more enabled. This has been highlighted in section 8.1, as one of the limitations of this study, but also provides an illustration of why exclusion from research on the grounds of language may be multifaceted and complex (Avery and Bernard, 2014).

5.5 RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

The decision to use interviews as the primary source of data was decided early in the research process. Siedman (2013) suggests that interviewing is inherently phenomenological and Moustakas (1990) identifies informal conversational interviewing as the most consistent with heuristic research, allowing the researcher to follow the natural rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration, and create a spontaneous and naturally unfolding dialogue (Finlay, 2011; Moustakas, 1990; 1994).

The interviews were established as a set of three, allowing participants the freedom to attend less if necessary, and the session length of up to 1.5 hours. These decisions were in line with the format suggested by Seidman (2013) who recommends a three interview series, a session length of 90 minutes and a frequency of 3 to 7 days apart. He believes this allows for life history gathering, exploration of details and reflection on meaning

(Seidman, 2013). I felt this also allowed for the slower pace of working through an interpreter, or for developing trust between researcher and participant (Moustakas, 1994; Ryen, 2008; Hadziabdic, 2009; Searight and Armock, 2013).

Interviews were held at Teesside University in the School of Health and Social Care, and wherever possible the same room, facilities and media were used for the same participant to aid continuity and participant comfort (Finlay, 2011). Sessions were arranged at a time and frequency to suit the participants. Whilst three sessions were offered only two participants attended for three sessions, six attended twice and two elected to attend only once. In each case they indicated they felt they had spoken as much as they wished to and felt satisfied that they did not need a further session.

The actual session was conducted using the principle of 'conversational interviewing,' also known as 'flexible interviewing' (Kvale, 2006; Currivan, 2008; Lavrakas, 2008; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This allows the researcher and participants greater fluidity than standardised or structured approaches, as it is unscripted (Lavrakas, 2008; Hamill, 2014). Those who favour this approach believe it to be better suited to phenomenological research as it allows for greater clarification, exploration and illumination of the topic area (Currivan, 2008; Lavrakas, 2008; Hamill, 2014). The flexibility of the 'conversation' allows for more informality (Roulston, 2008), more focus on meaning (Hamill, 2014; Given, 2008) and for the researcher to follow the participant's line of discussion, making it inherently more phenomenological (Moustakas, 1990). The informal and casual tone of the interviews is thought to actively build the relationship, and the 'small talk' that is typical of everyday conversations facilitates openness, informality and rapport (Kvale, 2006; Roulston, 2008; Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Conversational interviewers strive to

create a friendly and informal atmosphere in which participants are respected as equal partners who are free to share their understandings concerning the research topic (Roulston, 2008; Given, 2008). It is worth acknowledging that working across languages and across cultures may alter the ability to build rapport.

Conversational Interviewing approaches emphasise the value of everyday, mundane conversation skills, and is seen as emancipatory (Fontana and Frey, 2005) as it allows participants to engage in something more familiar and less hierarchical than other styles may be (Roulston, 2008). There is a suggestion that flexible, conversational studies also yield the more 'accurate' data than standardised approaches (Schober and Conrad, 1997; 2000). However, the approach requires a skilled interviewer, able to incorporate informality with focus, and capable of showing the requisite respect and sensitivity to the participant (Roulston, 2008; Turner, 2010). Some authors have criticised the approach as naive and simplistic, and suggested that it has the potential to be manipulative (Kvale, 2006; Roulston, 2008), raising the realities of the researcher's role in guiding or distorting the conversation (Given, 2008; Rubin and Rubin, 2011).

5.5.1 Creative opportunities

From the study inception, I had decided that a creative method would be explored in order to promote different means of communication and a reduced focus on language. Having explored options for visual methods it was decided to provide a range of creative media to facilitate narrative discussion and exploration. Any creative output was not for external analysis by the researcher, but for exploration during the sessions.

The decision to use art and craft materials is relatively unusual within research, but has precedents, particularly in cross-cultural research (Barata *et al.* 2006; Buckingham, 2009; Kara, 2015). There has been a rapid growth of interest in using creative or visual methods in research (Wiles *et al.* 2008), which can include work generated in one of four ways: 'found data'; 'researcher created data'; 'respondent created data' and 'representations', and can include photographs, film, video, drawings, media images or models (Prosser and Loxley, 2008). Weber and Mitchell (2004) identify the ability of visual media to allow for a more creative and interactive research process and capture the hard to express, such as abstract ideas or sensitive concepts. Through art it is possible to produce more memorable and resonant output that can be communicated more holistically and more accessibly than traditional academic work (Weber and Mitchell, 2004).

Within this study a wide variety of media was made available, providing a spectrum of arts and crafts reflective of the cultural origins of participants, following discussion with local arts agency Tees Valley Arts. The options included prepared photographic images, pens, pencils, wax crayons, chalk, charcoal, pastels, white and coloured paper in different sizes, air drying clay, modelling putty and collage materials and a collection of different shaped rocks and stones. These are materials I would routinely use in therapeutic work with clients, and felt they had potential within the research relationship (photographs of the materials, and a selection of the prepared images can be seen in Appendix Four). Materials were chosen to meet varied skill and interest level – from pre-prepared images to raw materials, and were displayed in different ways around the room, with example pieces completed as part of my epoché process (as can be seen in Appendix Four). It was hoped that this would pique interest and make the media as accessible as possible,

however, excluding the pilot participant no individual took the opportunity to use any of the materials, even where individuals expressed an interest in art in their personal lives. Whilst this study generated very little respondent created data, there is researcher created data, generated as part of epoché and reflexivity.

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

In the initial phases of the research the lack of engagement with creative options was a source of frustration to me, as there had been a great deal of preparation and an element of struggle in gaining agreements from the PhD research committee to allow me to undertake creative approaches.

The decision taken by participants not to engage with creative opportunities felt like a criticism of the decision to use the media, and vindicated the negative opinions I had received.

Through reflexivity it became clear that this frustration was personal to me, and that the research itself was not being hindered by the absence of creative outputs. The participants spoke freely and openly and did not appear inhibited within sessions, so, whilst the offer of creative options remained in sessions, the 'need' I felt to use them subsided and the frustration was left behind.

The majority of the literature regarding visual methods is extremely favourable, though there is acknowledgement of the ethical issues arising from creative media generated as part of the study (Wiles *et al.* 2008). However, there is little discussion in the literature about reasons why individuals may be reluctant to engage with creative approaches. Creativity has variations around the world, and whilst the majority of people see creativity as having value, only 1 in 4 see themselves as living up to their own creative potential (Brady and Edelman, 2012). It is suggested that a workplace focus on productivity rather than creativity, and a stifling education system leads to people doubting their own creativity (Brady and Edelman, 2012).

5.6 DATA MANAGEMENT

The sessions were intended to be video recorded, as this was considered the method likely to yield the most effective record of the discussions (Heath *et al.* 2010), and some of the earlier interviews were captured in this way. Issues arose in accessibility and effectiveness of recording equipment, so it was determined that audio capture was providing sufficient material alongside supporting notes.

All materials containing participant information were held in a locked filing cabinet within Teesside University, or on a password protected computer, in line with the requirements of the ethics committee.

The audio recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber, and checked against the recordings, by the researcher. From initial transcripts a précis was formed, which maintained the full content of the participant's commentaries. This precis was then used to support participant review, detailed below.

5.7 PARTICIPANT REVIEW

At the point where the participant elected not to continue, or where three interviews had been undertaken, all participants were offered the opportunity to attend a final meeting at the University to view the precis of the transcript and reflect upon it. The opportunity for the participant to review the early findings, in a relatively raw and unprocessed state fosters validity. It allows participants to judge and reflect upon the credibility of the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) generating feedback, checking for accuracy of interpretation and insight regarding meaning (McMillan and Schumacher,

2006). Ashworth (2003) states that within phenomenology member checking is not the aim, but that the process of participant review shows respect to the participants and recognition that they have been heard.

In reality, the gap that elapsed between sessions and review was lengthy, due to the extensive amount of data gathered, and review was undertaken around a year after the interview period. In part this reflects what Zurbriggen (2002) acknowledged as a common procrastination, where researchers feel reluctant or overwhelmed in the face of the practically and emotionally demanding process of analysis.

Of the ten participants, review occurred in seven instances – six face-to-face and one using telephone contact and postal communication of the precis of discussions, as the participant had moved out of the area. The remaining three were not contactable and there were no means of finding out their whereabouts.

5.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Polkinghorne (1989) acknowledges that transforming a collection of interview data into an accurate, clear, and informative structural description is a complex, difficult process. The underlying concept in phenomenological data analysis is to immerse oneself in the data, engage with it reflectively, and generate a rich description that will enlighten the reader as to the deeper essential structures embedded in that particular experience for a particular individual (Moustakas, 1994; Thorne, 2000). Shultz (2006) described the continuing process of total immersion into the written data, and reflective periods required to contemplate data to bring forth the meaning and essence of the phenomena.

Moustakas' stages*	S-C-K tasks**	Expectations of the stage	Researcher activity
Epoché	Epoché Repeat for each participant/ interview	Set aside prejudgments and obtain a full description of one's own experience of the phenomena	Epoché conducted on a series of occasions, prior to interviews. The process of Epoché included meditation, recording spoken thoughts, reflexive notes and through creative media. See section 5.10.1.
Phenomenological Reduction	Establish invariant horizons Seek textures Repeat for each participant/ interview	Materials are broken into components and explored to fully describe the experience	Verbatim transcripts read and re-read. Meaning units identified and slowly collapsed to generate themes. Task repeated for each interview and participant, with data explored separately, then collectively – to seek universal description. See section 5.8.2. At this stage a precis was taken to participants for review, as described in section 5.7.
Imaginative Variation	Create sense of structures Develop textural-structural description of meanings and essences Repeat for each participant/ interview	Components considered from varied perspectives and distilled into essential themes	Data explored in different ways, including use of creative media, recorded spoken thoughts, note taking and mind mapping. Sometimes transcripts viewed openly, sometimes with a focus – e.g. looking at my interaction or exploring occupational facets of discussion. Examples are presented in Appendix Five.
Synthesis	Construct a textural-structural description, representing the whole	A composite textural-structural description is presented.	Themes and examples combined with reflexive observations to complete rich description of phenomena.

Fig. 10: Overview of the Analysis Process

* Moustakas' process is detailed further, below.

** Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen stages of analysis, as recommended by Moustakas (1994), described on pg.163.

The data was analysed to explore emerging themes, using the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method adapted by Moustakas (1994). This is an established method for distilling themes from data to create rich structural and textural descriptions of individual experience (Moustakas, 1994). The method is considered particularly practical and useful (Cresswell, 2013) and offers a staged approach to guide the researcher through the process of Epoché, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation and Synthesis. *Epoché* or *bracketing* requires the researcher sets aside prejudgments, in order to approach research data (a verbatim transcript) with an unbiased and receptive eye. *Phenomenological reduction* where materials are broken into components and explored freely to give a complete description of the experience. *Imaginative variation* allows the components to be considered from varied perspectives and distilled into essential themes. Materials are then drawn together in a process of *synthesis* to derive a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience.

Data was gathered from transcripts, reflexive recordings and responses gathered during 'participant review', and all are reflected in the gathered themes. In the initial stages on analysis, data was considered separately from each participant, before being gathered together, to preserve a sense of the individual. Where material could be considered sensitive, it is discussed separately from other key information in order to preserve anonymity.

The adapted Stevick Colliazzi Keen method of analysis was modified by Moustakas (1994) from the work of Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1973) and Keen (1975). This approach allows the researcher to adopt a transcendental approach which allows them to approach the phenomena with a fresh eye and open mind (Moustakas, 1994; Chun, 2013). The phases described in brief above allows recognition of the role of the researcher, in depth analysis of data and rich, thick description (Moustakas, 1990; 1994; Merriam, 2009). Through these phases both noema (phenomenon) and the noesis (meanings) can be captured, analysed and presented, emphasising subjectivity and authenticity (Moustakas, 1994; Chun, 2013).

The Stevick, Colaizzi, Keen method (Moustakas, 1994) breaks these four stages into the following process:

1. Obtain a full description of your own experience of the phenomenon, using the phenomenological approach (***Epoché***).
2. From the verbatim transcript complete the following steps:
    a. Consider each statement for its significance in describing the experience.
    b. Record all relevant statements.
    c. Retain each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement. These are the ***invariant horizons*** or meaning units of the experience.
    d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
    e. Synthesise the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the ***textures*** of the experience, including verbatim examples.
    f. Reflect on your own textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a description of the ***structures*** of the experience.

g. Construct a ***textural-structural*** description of the meanings and essences of your experience.

3. Repeat these steps using the verbatim transcripts of the experiences of each of the other co-researchers (participants).
4. From the individual textural – structural descriptions of their experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description, integrating their descriptions into a ***universal description*** of the experience, representing the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994, pg. 122).

To explore the process in greater detail it begins with what Finlay calls 'researcher curiosity and pre-understandings', acknowledging that no researcher embarks without a sense of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2012, p.175). They go on to embrace the phenomenological attitude through the process of epoché to 'see with fresh eyes' (Finlay, 2012, p.175).

5.8.1 Epoché

Epoché is the theoretical intention to suspend judgments, introduced by Edmund Husserl as an expression of sceptical thought. The intention of epoché (sometimes called 'bracketing') is to see the world naively and examine phenomena without preconception (Christensen and Brumfield, 2010). Engaging in epoché (or 'bracketing') within phenomenological research involves a process of acknowledging and 'setting aside' assumptions and beliefs about a phenomenon to examine how the phenomenon presents itself in the world of the participant. The goal is not the pursuit of objectivity, but awareness, connectedness, and explicit subjectivity - allowing the researcher to

remain 'fully engaged, involved, interested in and open to what may appear' (Finlay, 2011. p.23).

The process requires open and in-depth reflection to explore where the researcher's existing knowledge and experience may be likely to connect interpretively to the meanings arising from participants' data (Bednall, 2006). Little is written of the action of epoché, leading to confusion regarding epoché and reflexivity (Bednall, 2006; Myerhoff and Ruby, 1992). Researchers are simply urged to describe their own experiences to increase alertness to their underlying feelings about the research topic, they should then relinquish biases and look at the topic with a fresh eye (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009). There is contention about this concept, with controversy over the potential for the individual to truly set perspectives to one side (Crotty, 1996; Ashworth and Lucas, 2000). Alongside epoché authors like Dahlberg *et al.* (2008) talk about the principle of *bridling*, which is 'restraining one's pre-understandings [which would] limit the researching openness' (Todres *et al.* 2007; Dahlberg *et al.* 2008, p.16). Bridling, or holding back on the interpretive process can encourage the researcher to dwell with the findings, slow down and allow time for the phenomena to reveal themselves slowly (Todres *et al.* 2007; Dahlberg *et al.* 2008; Finlay, 2012).

Within this study, I employed epoché in different ways and at different stages. Initially I used epoché through meditation, in depth reflection and creative approaches to record my perspective. Later I embedded reflexivity throughout the study to monitor and explore emerging thoughts and emotional responses to the participants, the research process and the data collected. Findings from epoché and reflexivity can be seen in section 5.11.

I would agree that the ability to truly setting aside all judgement is unlikely, but believe that a thorough recognition of researcher positionality, though the activities such as those I used for epoché, is valuable. Robust reflexive awareness, gathered throughout the process can help the researcher determine their own place in the findings. I also feel that the idea of *bridling*, and delaying interpretation is valuable to ensure that participant voices remain undiluted for as long as possible.

5.8.2 Phenomenological Reduction

Transcendental phenomenological reduction is a stage where data is considered with an open mind and from different perspectives. It requires the researcher to see the phenomena as it appears, free of preconceptions (ideally set aside through epoché) (Moustakas, 1994). The process is *transcendental* in its exploration of meaning, *phenomenological* because it transforms the world into phenomena, and *reduction* because it leads us back to understanding our experience of 'the way things are' (Schmitt, 1971, pg. 30).

This is not simply a focus on the facts, but includes the 'rhythm and relationship between the phenomenon and self' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90) something that is achieved by looking and describing, then repeatedly doing so until the textural qualities have been thoroughly explored 'rough and smooth; small and large; quiet and noisy; colourful and bland; hot and cold; stationary and moving; high and low; squeezed in and expansive; fearful and courageous; angry and calm' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). I took time to read and re-read each transcript, sometimes looking for specific things – such as occupational elements, or my own influence, other times deliberately looking with nothing specific in

mind. Each analysis did generate different aspects of the data, and allowed me to feel fully familiarised with the content and 'feel' of the interviews.

Within phenomenological reduction there is a process of *horizontalization*. This reflects the phenomenological concept of horizons – the potential to see and re-see an event or experience in multiple ways from multiple different perspectives, allowing for unlimited discovery (Moustakas, 1994, Finlay, 2011). These vistas each carry equal value, and once identified, and when overlapping or repetitive horizons have been removed, they form the 'invariant horizons' (or meaning units) of the data (Moustakas, 1994).

For this study, phenomenological reduction included spending time reading and re-reading verbatim transcripts in order to ensure understanding. Each transcript was considered separately, then together with other details from the same participant. 'Meaning units' were identified by gently removing extraneous detail and considering every remaining statement with equal attention.

To show the typical process, Fig. 11 below is an example of phenomenological reduction from one of Alice's transcripts:

'Raw' transcript excerpt:
They come into your house when they want to come into your house. It was only asylum, that people just enter your house randomly, any time they wish, because you are an asylum seeker, you know. It's not good, it's not a process that leaves people, you know, in a stable mental state, it really doesn't. It takes guts, it takes courage, you know, for somebody to go through asylum and then you come out the same, it's really hard, it's very, very difficult. Because what the system does to you, it doesn't help your mental state at all, it really doesn't, it doesn't. And to think that, you know, I'm sure they've seen evidence of that, they've seen how people's lives have changed, how they've come into asylum, they're OK. By the time they come out they're mentally unstable, they've seen that, but yet still nothing has changed. It's just the same process, you know, you claim your asylum, they send you where they want to send you, you know. You have your housing providers who can come, feel free to enter your house any time they wish, you know. And then you can't sleep at night because of the amount of, I never used to sleep, I never used to sleep, you know.

Removal of extraneous material* and generation of meaning units:
They come into your house when they want to come into your house. *It was only asylum, that people just enter your house randomly, any time they wish, because you are an asylum seeker.* *It's not a process that leaves people, you know, in a stable mental state.* *It takes guts, it takes courage, you know, for somebody to go through asylum and then you come out the same.* *It's really hard, it's very, very difficult.* *What the system does to you, it doesn't help your mental state at all.* *I'm sure they've seen evidence of that, they've seen how people's lives have changed.* *They've come into asylum, they're OK, by the time they come out they're mentally unstable.* *They've seen that, but yet still nothing has changed.* *You claim your asylum, they send you where they want to send you.* *You have your housing providers who can come, feel free to enter your house any time they wish, you know.* *And then you can't sleep at night because of the amount of, I never used to sleep, I never used to sleep, you know.*
Meaning units collated:
They come into your house when they want to come into your house. *You have your housing providers who can come, feel free to enter your house any time they wish, you know.* *It was only asylum, that people just enter your house randomly, any time they wish, because you are an asylum seeker.* *It's not a process that leaves people, you know, in a stable mental state.* *It takes guts, it takes courage, you know, for somebody to go through asylum and then you come out the same.* *It's really hard, it's very, very difficult.* *What the system does to you, it doesn't help your mental state at all.* *They've come into asylum, they're OK, by the time they come out they're mentally unstable.* *I'm sure they've seen evidence of that, they've seen how people's lives have changed.* *They've seen that, but yet still nothing has changed.* *You claim your asylum, they send you where they want to send you.* *And then you can't sleep at night because of the amount of, I never used to sleep, I never used to sleep, you know.*
At this stage a precis was taken to participants for review, as described in section 5.8. *This enables both researcher and participant to reflect on content, clarify any areas of confusion, and discuss any omissions they wish to request.*
Statements were ordered and slowly collapsed to generate themes. This intersects with imaginative variation (section 5.9.3), as it begins to generate phenomena. Notes in grey are my additions and thoughts.

Housing providers can enter your home at will: *They come into your house when they want to come into your house.* [Housing providers] *'can come, feel free to enter your house any time they wish, you know'.* *'only asylum that people just enter your house randomly, any time they wish, because you are an asylum seeker'.* *Status and powerlessness. Even in ones' own home.* Lack of choice/control *You claim your asylum, they send you where they want to send you.* *Powerlessness – lack of choice* Impact of process on mental health: *'It's not a process that leaves people, you know, in a stable mental state'.* *'What the system does to you, it doesn't help your mental state at all'.* *'They've come into asylum, they're OK, by the time they come out they're mentally unstable'.* *Clear sense of impact – process=mental ill-health.* Sleeplessness: *'And then you can't sleep at night because of the amount of, I never used to sleep, I never used to sleep, you know'.* *'because of the amount of' she doesn't finish. Stress? Worry?* Home Office knowledge of impact: *'I'm sure they've seen evidence of that, they've seen how people's lives have changed. They've seen that, but yet still nothing has changed'.* *Feels like this says something about the lack of care within the system – they see it and it doesn't change.* Coping/surviving: *'It takes guts, it takes courage, you know, for somebody to go through asylum and then you come out the same'.*
This task was repeated with all interviews for each participant, with data explored separately, then collectively – to seek universal description.

Fig. 11: Management of transcribed data.

***** Where I felt that the 'voice' of the participant could be lost I retained words which supported the feel of conversation, even where content may not be strictly necessary to the core message.

This data is then used to elicit imaginative variation, as detailed below.

5.8.3 Imaginative Variation

From this textural description the process encourages the construction of the structural epitome of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This involves seeking the possible meanings by varying frames of reference and exploring from different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). This involved considering any possibility, and using a degree of imagination and intuition to illuminate the relationships and themes pertinent to the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (1931) saw this as describing the essential structures of a phenomenon using free play of fancy, 'we find in fantasy the potential meaning of something that makes the invisible visible' (Husserl, 1931, p. 40).

It is possible, through imaginative variation, to see structural themes reflecting countless possibilities including aspects of time, space, materiality, causality, and relationship to self and others (Moustakas, 1990). It arises through a process of varying possible meanings from the textural description, recognizing underlying themes that account for the emergence of the phenomenon. The researcher considers the structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts about the phenomenon, such as the structure of time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self, or relation to others – searching for examples which illustrate the invariant structural themes and structurally describe the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

This was the stage I found most challenging, as I was struck with the desire to remain slow and thoughtful in my analytical approach, to avoid being 'careless or slovenly' (Dahlberg, 2008, pp. 130). I also wanted desperately to do justice to the multiple horizons, and not 'lose' essential data between phases, leading to me feeling 'stuck at

phenomenological reduction. I approached the data on multiple occasions, seeking to tell the participants' full stories yet feeling I was unable to 'see' themes emerging. I had dwelled within the data for some length of time and had been fearful and tentative in my approach to it – feeling the weight of responsibility (Romanshyn, 2007; Finlay, 2011; 2012).

Individual themes where relatively straightforward, generated through the process shown in section 5.9.1, Fig. 11, but translating the myriad of similar ideas into credible, meaningful phenomena meant letting go of a lot of information to concentrate on central messages. Examples of exploratory mind maps generated during this process can be seen in Appendix Five, showing repeated attempts to sensitively gather themes from the enormous volume of data. The fact that I used multiple different approaches to attempt to elicit themes is consistent with the 'free play' of imaginative variation (Husserl, 1931). By exploring the data differently for different participants, at different times and with different foci, I hoped to enable a more playful, experimental rather than regimented approach (Husserl, 1931; Moustakas, 1994; Turley *et al.* 2016).

5.8.4 Synthesis

The synthesis is undertaken by combining textural and structural perspectives to capture and emphasise the phenomena in full and in context (Moustakas, 1994). This stage was previously acknowledged as 'creative synthesis' in Moustakas' earlier work (Moustakas, 1990; Finlay, 2011). Often following a period of mediation and solitude, the researcher is able to use both tacit knowledge and intuition to illuminate the phenomena (Moustakas, 1990; 1994).

Thorough familiarity with the data allows the researcher to move beyond constricted attention to the data itself and allow the ideas to grow, becoming a comprehensive expression of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher may present findings generated during this process as either a narrative depiction using verbatim accounts, or through other creative media such as poetry or drawing (Moustakas, 1990; Finlay, 2011).

The final emergence of synthesised ideas was unexpected and occurred when I had stepped away from the data to concentrate on a different element of the thesis. This had allowed me time to think of the data as a 'bigger picture' rather than getting lost in detail. This meditative, quiet thinking time was essential for me to begin to 'see' at a phenomena level. I had a single thought (which is expanded upon in section 7) and found elements of the interviews reaching out to connect themselves, associating time and again to present a web of interlinked horizons. On seeing the central theme I now cannot unsee it – it is everywhere in the data, as Todres would say the study is 'wet through' with it (Todres *et al.* 2007).

This intuitive response felt more naturally emergent and congruent than my earlier analytical attempts (Finlay, 2012), and when I returned then to the data I felt like the central message had been hiding, and had stepped forward when it, or I, was ready.

5.9 MANAGING RISKS

The study has full ethical approval from Teesside University School of Health and Social Care Ethics Committee, and an overview of the management of ethical issues can be seen in Appendix Six.

The ethical approval process required the satisfactory consideration of participant selection and recruitment processes described above. Risks were considered for both participant and researcher. There was no anticipated physical risk to participants, but there was the potential for emotional distress, as the study encouraged individuals to share aspects of their past, present and future which may be emotionally charged. Whilst this may be cathartic, it was anticipated that it would be emotionally challenging for participants (Corbin and Morse, 2003; Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2009).

I am an experienced occupational therapist, with a Masters in Counselling, with over 25 years as a therapist working in mental health services and in excess of six years' experience of meeting the mental health needs of refugees. I therefore anticipated that issues raised would be familiar to me, and that I would be well placed to support participants, where necessary. It was also important, however, to recognise the boundaries of involvement and role of the researcher. Had it been felt that any participant required additional support, which fell beyond my remit (as identified by the participant, researcher, or supervisors) a pre-determined support strategy would have been put in place, a copy of which can be seen in Appendix Seven. This indicates a staged approach to the level of intervention on the basis of identified need, and included planned strategies for managing emotional and psychological support needs, including signposting, or referral on to appropriate agencies for therapeutic help. In line with my Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (RCOT 2015), confidentiality would only be breached if it was agreed by myself and my supervisors, that it is essential to prevent harm to the participant or an identified other, and this was made explicit in the participant information sheet.

Whilst some degree of emotional distress arose in sessions, no participants required additional support beyond the session.

The nature of refugees' lives is such that the researcher could anticipate some distressing content and expected to be emotionally affected by this (Dickson-Wright *et al.* 2007; 2009). In order to avoid long term negative effects, or a negative influence existing on the research process, issues were discussed with the supervisory team, and noted in reflexive expression. Had I considered it necessary, provision was made in advance to discuss issues anonymously through my existing therapy supervision network, maintaining confidentiality.

Support opportunities were offered to other individuals who were involved in managing the data gathering process, including the transcriber and interpreter, in recognition that their contact with the experiences of participants may generate distress (Kiyimba and O'Reilly, 2015).

A significant challenge to achieving ethical approval from Teesside University School of Health and Social Care Ethics Committee was raised about the likelihood of discussing illegal working during the study. Whilst the research was not expressly looking at issues regarding work, it was anticipated that there may be occasions when illegal working would be mentioned by participants. In order to satisfy the concerns of the committee I approached UKBA and confirmed that there was no legal obligation to inform UKBA or the Police if illegal working is reported me. Additional advice was sought from the Teesside University Legal Services Officer, Gary Singh, and Dean of the School of Health and Social Care, Professor Paul Keane OBE in order to clarify this position.

5.10 Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary instrument of inquiry in phenomenological studies, as the 'human instrument', the researcher is the only suitable option for researching the multifaceted knowing and feeling associated with humanistic enquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 2003; Morrow *et al.* 2001, Moustakas, 1994). Contrary to quantitative researchers, who seek to distance themselves from the participants and the research question, the qualitative researcher is participatory (Moustakas, 1994; Lodico *et al.* 2010; Merriam, 2009).

There is an inevitability to the researcher's presence within phenomenological studies, as the data collection is heavily influenced by, and reliant on the relationship between researcher and participant (Finlay, 2011). It is therefore essential that the assumptions, experiences, and biases of the researcher are explored and openly acknowledged (Morrow *et al.* 2001). The phenomenological discipline using Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method dictates that the researcher will be one of the participants, and the other participants are co-researchers (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998). Through the process of Epoché and Reflexivity the researcher's opening stance, and ongoing experiences are explored and shared alongside other data (Moustakas, 1994; Finlay, 2012). Naturally, having shared experiences with participants will impact upon data, connecting interpretively to the meanings arising (Bednall, 2006). By allowing the voices of the data to emerge authentically the data can stay closer to the participant's own frame of reference (Bednall, 2006).

Managing sensitive research or potentially vulnerable participants present particular issues. Whilst much of the literature rightly focusses on the needs of participants, there is a recognition of the impact of emotionally demanding or sensitive research issues on the researcher and other involved parties (Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2007, 2008, 2009).

The researcher is required to immerse themselves deeply, both in personal interactions with the participant, and with emerging data. Dickson-Swift *et al.* (2009) described the impact of this on maintaining boundaries – including the boundaries between researcher and friend, researcher and therapist, and professional boundaries. Later identifiying the impact of issues relating to rapport development, use of researcher self-disclosure, listening to untold stories, feelings of guilt and vulnerability, leaving the research relationship and researcher exhaustion (Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2007).

Zurbriggen (2002) identified that the unexpected nature of some qualitative material makes it hard to anticipate, and be prepared for, the impact. She also described the impact of research spilling into other aspects of the researchers' lives – such as having an impact on their relationships with others, particularly where the 'other' may represent a negative element in the research, or hold conflicting views.

5.10.1 Epoché and Reflexivity

This section highlights the findings of epoché and reflexive notes made throughout the research process. Here the major process and themes of epoché and reflexivity are detailed, and my responses to them, where appropriate. The process of reflexivity involved identifying my expectations and anticipated outcomes, acknowledging my beliefs and ideas about refugees and capturing my responses to the process, the

participants and the data I gathered. Reflexive material was gathered through a range of creative work, recorded spoken thoughts and diary entries, as there are suggestions that visual methods may achieve deeper reflexivity (Weber and Mitchell, 2004; Attia and Edge, 2017). Where it has felt prudent to do so, I have added 'reflexive comments' during the body of the thesis, in order to integrate materials and support points. This incorporates epoché used prior to the research, reflexivity used during the process of data gathering, and reflects anecdotal experiences, memories and thoughts generated during the completion of the thesis.

My epoché process presented a range of insights which could influence my positionality, including the lack of diversity in my upbringing, my experiences of practice as an occupational therapist and my years of working in specialist refugee services. These experiences shaped my attitudes in multiple ways, including my attitudes towards racism and xenophobia, acceptance of 'difference', and the value I ascribe to social and occupational justice. The key themes generated across my personal data were: *expectations and bias, researching in a hostile environment, responding as therapist, feeling strongly – sadness and anger, the process and approach and responsibility*.

5.10.1.1 Expectations and bias:

Confirmation bias is potentially a feature of any research and there are differences of opinions about how fully one can possibly lay expectations aside or whether to embrace them and acknowledge their role in the data (Reiners, 2012). I believe that my active participation in interviews and my beliefs about asylum are certainly likely to influence findings, so I have sought to be explicit about this in the hope of generating more

understanding rather than hoping to lay these beliefs to one side (Moustakas, 1990; 1994; Finlay, 2011; Reiners, 2012)

Naturally I had expectations of what I might find, on the basis of my years of work with refugees, and was concerned that I would only discover what I set out to search for, despite wishing to remain open to new material. I am reassured on this matter as I have found a number of central themes which were beyond my expectations, and some areas I anticipated which have featured little. In my reflections on sessions, there are certainly points where I respond with surprise; *'it's amazing, the energy she has'* (Reflections following session with Ola) and others where there is familiarity; *'I've heard this so many times'* (Reflections following session with Shahin).

I feared that my own perspective on refugees generated in me a desire to portray my participants in purely positive terms. In acknowledging this desire, I have returned to the data to ensure I have not excluded material that may have seemed negative or 'incriminating'.

5.10.1.2 Researching in a hostile context:

I am aware that researching in the current UK culture involves facing the fixed beliefs about immigration and asylum, which are constantly fed by negative media attention and public hostilities. My research process is influenced as I am both sensitive and defensive about my research subject, and often anxious when asked about my studies by people whose opinions I cannot gauge.

I find I am searching for empathy for one of the most discriminated against groups in UK society. I have felt challenged, angered and saddened and feel a duty to challenge public opinion in a way which is often personally uncomfortable for me. This study was undertaken at a time immigration was an increasingly politicised issue, particularly during two general elections and the Brexit referendum vote. The constant (and primarily negative) attention of press and politics on immigration has meant that the subject has remained a divisive issue throughout the period.

Within my epoché this feature is quite prominent, I note the hostilities I see in print and social media and I explore my dichotomy about publicly challenging others; '*it makes me feel guilty, sometimes I'm scared to say anything but I hate myself if I don't speak out*' (Preparatory epoché #2). There is recognition that researching excluded groups may have additional implications for the researcher, where the judgements of others or pressures on participants may create particular ethical, practical and emotional challenges (Poole *et al.* 2007; Schulte Agyeman, 2008; Bhopal, 2010).

In addition to the social context, I also reflected on the experience of working within the framework of the asylum process. My previous practice had been limited primarily by the capacity and progress of the client, but here there were such extreme external forces that directly act against client progress. In my experience, the asylum process robs people of choice and control, impacting on their health and well-being and preventing them from being productive. I found this to act against the philosophical, theoretical and practical elements I rely upon as a therapist.

In addition, I had naively believed that the process of asylum would be fair and just and that I would be able to support the decision-making processes. However, I have found the process harsh and unyielding, the administration of asylum often inhumane and the decision making arbitrary. I saw many people with horrific experiences coupled with lots of impartial evidence who still did not qualify for asylum in the eyes of the Home Office. There were people who had lost every family member in rebel fighting, witnessed the rape and murder of relatives, been repeatedly incarcerated and tortured, been deliberately set on fire, had their children kidnapped only to find their bodies weeks later. The horror was often truly unimaginable, and I can hardly begin to describe the challenge of bearing witness to such nightmares. The ongoing torment of asylum made worse these traumas. Many clients spoke about how the asylum system was punishing them, imprisoning them or torturing them – just like the things they had left behind. I was, and am, ashamed of how my Government met these individuals, and countless others like them.

5.10.1.3 Responding as therapist:

I am aware that the role of researcher and therapist differs greatly, but when I listen to the interviews I can see and hear that I am immersed in the interview, often fully, and sometimes I can see I am present as therapist and not researcher. I cannot realistically separate out the things I have added or where I may have lead the participant, so the interviews are the product of a discourse that occurred between us. I have alternated between feeling somewhat ashamed of my inability to keep myself 'out' of the conversation, and encouraged that we were able to connect effectively, often on a first

or second meeting. In the end – it is what it is. I am there, I am a therapist, and the research data is what comes from that. I do not think I can be one and not the other.

Finlay has identified the value of this interplay in her approach 'relational-centred research' (Finlay and Evans, 2009). The work is founded on the principle of 'being with' where the process of the research is a key part of the participants' growth and learning (Finlay, 2011). Whilst there has been a tendency to perceive dual roles within research as problematic, there have been increasing calls to recognise potential benefits from this duality (Dallos and Smith, 2008), particularly where reflexive approaches can generate greater understanding from within the relationship (Bager-Charleson, 2014) or the research experience is a sensitive one (Dickson-Swift *et al.* 2009). Fleet et al. (2016) calls for the therapist researcher to close the gap between the skills used within both roles, as this presents an opportunity to generate findings more applicable to therapeutic practice. The researcher's empathic presence, coupled with the capacity to be reflexive about what occurs creates an opportunity for participant openness and growth (Finlay, 2011; Attia and Edge, 2017).

Within this study I can see many occasions during the interviews where I undeniably *behave* like a therapist. This perhaps continues in my earlier processing of findings, making it hard for me to process data as data, and not see it intrinsically linked to individual who shared it. My desire to sensitively hold every scrap of what I was told and not step beyond the participants' frame of reference is typical of the thinking inherent in my counselling training as well and my occupational therapy practice. The more pivotal analysis came when I was able to relinquish some elements of that role to allow myself a little more distance and the opportunity to view the data as a researcher.

5.10.1.4 Feeling strongly – sadness and anger.

Each session promoted sadness and anger in significant amounts, in each post interview review I express sadness at the hardships faced. I had tears after many sessions, and expressed feelings of exhaustion. This is not unprecedented in sensitive and emotionally challenging research (Weller and Caballero, 2009).

I express anger that the individual's potential is not being acknowledged or permitted to flourish, and shame at their negative experiences within the UK; *'I can't bear that we do this to people, I'm embarrassed'* (Reflections following interview with Tete). Additionally, more optimistic emotions were pride and indebtedness – I felt real gratitude at peoples' openness and honesty and was struck by their courage and decency in the face of such extreme circumstances; *'I'm amazed, I keep hearing them making excuses for the stuff they face, they accept so much!'* (Reflections following interview with Sam).

5.10.1.5 The process and approach

An issue that arose early in the process was the reluctance participants had to use creative media. Having fought to be permitted to use creative approaches I felt frustrated that I was not getting the response I had anticipated. I had used similar methods as a therapist, and felt they might encourage depth and exploration with less reliance on language, which I anticipated might be useful. I acknowledged that people may have a reluctance to participate, so chose a wide selection of options and presented the options in what I hoped was a non-threatening way. Alice used prepared photograph images, which guided some of her discussion, but otherwise people seemed disinterested and declined the option. In audio recordings my frustration and anxiety at

not being able to engage people creatively is clear, and I use words like 'anxious,' and there is something pleading in my tone. I was anxious to try to make the creative options appealing, and encourage participation, but through the reflexive process I realised the desire to encourage the participants had more to do with my need than theirs; *'I don't think they need it. I want them to, but they don't need it… no one has seemed inhibited, they're doing fine without it – it's just me!'* (Reflections following interview with Freeman). On making this connection I felt considerably more comfortable, and whilst I continued to offer the range of creative media, I no longer felt I was 'failing' in my approach when they remained unused.

I was able to use the creative media for my own process, during epoché and reflexive moments, which I do believed helped me to explore with breadth and depth. I also found that recording my own thoughts using a Dictaphone was freeing, as it stopped me from censoring myself or determining what to put down.

5.10.1.6 Responsibility:

I found myself feeling guilt during sessions, where people talked about painful events. Whilst this was very familiar from providing therapy I knew that this time they were opening up to meet my need as a researcher, rather than as part of a therapeutic process. I felt this might be exploitative, and whilst participants were fully informed of the risks I still felt I could be causing 'unnecessary' pain; *'I feel awful, it's not like practice, not like giving them years of my time… I don't want to feel I'm using them.'* (Reflections following interview with Shahin).

I knew I was not pushing for painful or personal details, and I trusted that the experience had the potential to be cathartic for them, but still felt greatly relieved when a number of participants said either after sessions, or at review, how they had found it good to talk.

I also felt guilty at managing and wading through data looking for what I wanted – I tried to lose the least data possible, and still hope that, over time, I might publish on a range of issues that are not fully explored in this thesis. I wanted to do justice to participants' honesty and openness, and not 'cherry pick' their words to fit my purpose. This is reflected in the challenges I faced in reducing the findings to themes, where my first iteration of the findings was almost 90,000 words long, as I was so keen to maintain the full story.

5.11 ESTABLISHING QUALITY

The quality of a phenomenological study is said to be contingent on the confidence the reader can have that the outcomes or findings are well-grounded and well-supported (Polkinghorne, 1989). There is much debate about how to judge the quality of qualitative research (Rolfe, 2006; Trochim, 2006, Pringle *et al.* 2011). Some authors believe that attention to quality allows the researcher to consider the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). However, others are critical of such attempts. For example, Rolfe (2006) highlights the challenges faced in approaching trustworthiness on the assumption of a belief in a unified nature of qualitative research. In reality, he says, researchers either judge qualitative research against the same criteria as quantitative research; seek to establish a set of unified criteria for judging only

qualitative studies, or questioning the appropriateness of predetermined criteria for judging qualitative research. He argues for the third, believing that the variety of research paradigms makes a single set of criteria impossible (Rolfe, 2006). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) propose 'disciplined subjectivity' as a means of promoting quality, through the researcher's rigorous self-monitoring, continuous self-questioning and re-evaluation of all phases of the process, plus the provision of a 'decision trail' for others to follow.

Whilst the challenges of an accurate reflection of trustworthiness in the complexity of qualitative research is acknowledged, it does have potential to describe the relationship between the study and its context (Collier-Reed *et al.* 2009). However, there is a general consensus that the researcher must persuade the reader that the steps taken in the study have followed a logical thought process that can be traced and viewed as valid (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004, Collier-Reed *et al.* 2009).

The approaches taken may take different forms, dependent on the primary purpose of the phenomenological research (Collier-Reed *et al.* 2009). This study followed a number of key approaches suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Spencer *et al.* (2003) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006). These attended to issues of:

- *Contribution:* the ability of the study to contribute to knowledge or understanding (Spencer *et al.* 2003).
- *Defensibility:* the appropriateness of the research design and strategy to answer the research question (Spencer *et al.* 2003).

- *Rigour:* how systematic and transparent research processes have been (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).
- *Dependability*: how consistent findings are, and how replicable the approach (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).
- *Generalisability:* reflects the potential for wider meaning to be drawn from the findings (Spencer *et al.* 2003; Trochim, 2006).
- *Transferability:* the appropriateness for application to other groups, individuals or settings (Spencer *et al.* 2003; Trochim, 2006).
- *Confirmability:* confirms the neutrality of the study, bias, motivation and the relationship between researcher and participant (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Trochim, 2006).
- *Credibility:* reflecting the 'truth' of the findings, and their ability to honestly and accurately reflect the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Spencer *et al.* 2003).

From its inception I aimed for this study to make multiple contributions, seeking to promote findings in different ways to be accessible to academic audiences, practitioners and refugee agencies. In this study a dissemination plan was determined and refined throughout the research period and interim findings were shared and published to ensure timeliness (see Appendix Eight). A wide range of dissemination opportunities have been considered, including the report completed for funding agents UKOTRF, academic articles, conference presentations or workshops and this thesis. Future dissemination includes additional academic publications, information sheets for local refugee agencies, training and information workshops for interested parties and an animated short film to be shared via social media. These multiple approaches have the

aim of meeting the needs of different consumers, presenting findings in accessible ways and reaching widely to increase impact.

To meet the requirements of defensibility I sought a logical, clear, responsive research design with underpinning theoretical framework (Spencer *et al.* 2003). The methodological underpinning, epistemology and methods adopted have all been detailed in this thesis, and attention paid to consistency between theory and approach. Advice was taken throughout the process from the supervisory team, NERS, individual refugees and colleagues to determine and refine the research design, as stakeholder involvement fosters quality (Spencer et al. 2003).

Rigour was sought through the systematic and transparent collection, analysis and interpretation of data, in order to present a clear intellectual analysis process. This also creates additional dependability, where findings can be considered more consistent and the research process more likely to be replicable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Phenomenology, and particularly reflexive relational studies such as this, are exploratory and therefore difficult to capture in detail (Lodico *et al.* 2010; Finlay, 2011). Every effort has been taken to present the process clearly, though exact replication would be challenging. However, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state that replication of the study is not the goal, but to see the work clearly in context, enabling others to understand similar situations and apply these findings in subsequent research.

The multiple means used to record data, and the detailed structure adopted to analyse findings were both chosen with the intention of promoting rigour and dependability. The recording process has been identified, including video and audio evidence,

transcripts and reflexive accounts. By utilising the Stevick-Collaizzi-Keen analysis method there is staged guidance to encourage a systematic and thorough approach (Moustakas, 1994; McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). I sought to capture rich and detailed information, including a sense of the context of collection.

I have attempted to foster credibility through traditional means of triangulation, such as participant review and corroboration with other evidence sources (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Spencer *et al.* 2003). Despite the fact that phenomenology is only a reflection of personal, rather than objective 'truths', I have acted to present the findings in a way which maintains participants' personal truths. Finlay (2011) asserts that credibility in phenomenology comes from the presentation of findings in a balanced and comprehensive manner, reflecting the full diversity of findings and demonstrating the path taken to arise at themes. This should retain the original sense of the data, with tentative assertions or conclusions where there is uncertainty (Spencer *et al.* 2003).

This study does comprise of multiple strands of data, and member checking or participant review has been used to promote a sense of the participants' voice (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Every effort was made to maintain the correlation between the verbatim transcripts and the final themes, collapsing themes slowly and with care to avoid swift interpretive 'jumps' and reflect how the phenomena were distilled (Moustakas, 1994).

The desire for transferability or generalizability is often minimal in phenomenological work, so any application of the findings to other populations or places within this study is tentative. It may be possible to see application to refugees in other nations, or other

marginalised and challenged populations, but whilst I make limited connections in the discussion, this option lies with the reader.

The pursuit of confirmability reflects the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Spencer *et al.* 2003; Shenton, 2004; Trochim, 2006). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a prolonged research relationship with interim data analysis and corroboration. Data should be recorded verbatim, using participant statements and quotations and using 'low-inference descriptors' where recording is precise, literal and detailed. A clear description of researcher role, participant selection, social context and strategies for data collection and analysis. Producing a thick, authentic narrative description, showing what is typical and atypical in the findings and exploring alternative explanations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

Bracketing/epoché and continual reflexivity has been used to openly acknowledge values and minimise or identify their impact on the data. Training and written guidance has been made available for link agency staff and the interpreting service to ensure they are aware of their role. Every effort was taken to support participants and ensure their comfort and well-being in line with ethical approval.

Collaborating with refugees and refugee agencies, promoting choice for participants and the use of member checking or participant review all uphold a democratic and participatory approach and demonstrate sensitivity, empathy and respect (Spencer *et al.* 2003). As the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the

phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Participant feedback is the task of sharing the researcher's interpretations and conclusions with the participants themselves checking for accuracy of interpretation and insight regarding meaning and intention (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

I have sought to maintain an openness to emergent meanings and subjectivity, allowing the participant voice to take the foreground until the very final stages when a synthesis needed to occur (Moustakas 1990; 1994). I wished to ensure that all findings were presented reliably, doing justice to the voices of participants and providing sufficient open and honest reflection to fully acknowledge my own place within the findings. Findings and themes have been sought slowly and with care, to ensure that the correlation between the participant voice and the final thesis is accurate, collapsing themes only when time and familiarity allowed it. Crucially, I wanted the research process to foster the participant in expressing their lived experience, allowing the richness and detail of their story to be captured and their voices to be fully heard.

DISCUSSION

6 PRE- DISCUSSION

We can all be refugees
We can all be told to go,
We can be hated by someone
For being someone.

Benjamin Zephaniah

With the purpose of enabling readers to engage more effectively with this thesis, the decision has been made to combine the findings and discussion. It is hoped that this allows the connections between participant contributions and academic debate to be more clearly articulated.

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

Before embarking on the findings and discussion, I wish to acknowledge the enormous challenge I experienced when deciding what materials to leave out. I have struggled to omit threads of participant's discussions because I had a strong desire to be fair to the data and respect the participants' honesty.

I felt incredibly 'stuck' at times, trying to retain as much content as I could whilst still trying to find the key message in what had been said. It took a number of attempts for me to let go of some aspects of what participants had told me, and I am indebted to my supervisory team for helping me to relinquish some of the content and focus on distilling particular phenomena.

The shift came as a kind of epiphany. I stepped away from the thesis for a period, and threads of data suddenly seemed to align themselves. Connections presented themselves and the core phenomena began to emerge. I hope that the thesis now contains enough of the participants' voice to do justice to their generosity, whilst using the findings to allow something novel to emerge.

In order to tell more of the 'whole story' there will be introductory sections, detailing some of the experiences faced by the participants, in order to provide context. Following this, information will be presented more thematically, with academic discussion embedded.

6.1 INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

This study reflects the experience of ten participants, six men and four women. Their countries of origin are Eritrea, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia. At the time of the interviews their ages ranged from 25 to 45, with a mean age of 33.1 years, and they had lived in the UK for a period of between 1 and 8 years, with a mean of 5.6 years.

Their asylum status differed, two had refugee status (Alice and Sam), with leave to remain in the UK for a period of five years; four were awaiting decisions regarding their asylum claims (Freeman, Goziem, Ola, Tete) and four had failed claims (Oliver, Shahin, Tendei, Ali). Of those, two received section four emergency support (Shahin and Ali) and two were without any support (Oliver and Tendei).

Below, Fig. 12 shows an overview of the participants, with general demographic details. This is followed by brief participant vignettes, providing an insight into the experiences of each individual.

PSEUDO-NYM*	DEMO-GRAPHICS	ASYLUM STATUS	OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND	INTERVIEWS ATTENDED
ALICE	Female Mid 30s Sierra Leone	Arrived 2007. Recent refugee status.	Alice had a high-status job in TV and media, and was a women's rights activist.	Attended 3 interviews
OLIVER	Male Early 30s South Africa	Arrived 2006. Refused asylum – no support, destitute.	Oliver was a fisherman but also ran a small business buying and selling.	Attended 1 interview
SHAHIN	Male Early 30s Iran	Arrived 2008. Refused asylum – emergency support.	Shahin was a University student.	Attended 1 interview
FREEMAN	Male Late 30s Guinea	Arrived 2008. Awaiting decision.	Freeman worked in shipping and tourism.	Attended 3 interviews
GOZIEM	Male Mid 40s Nigeria	Arrived 2006. Awaiting decision.	Goziem was a social worker, but also ran building firm.	Attended 3 interviews
OLA	Female Early 40s Nigeria	Arrived 2010. Awaiting decision.	Ola ran her own business, buying and selling.	Attended 2 interviews
TETE	Female Late 20s Guinea	Arrived 2013. Failed claim, supported during fresh claim.	Tete worked for local government in administration.	Attended 3 interviews
TENDEI	Female Mid 30s Zimbabwe	Arrived 2013. Failed claim – no support.	Tendei worked as a cleaner/housemaid.	Attended 2 interviews
SAM	Male Late 20s Eritrea	Arrived 2009. Refugee status.	Sam was a University student.	Attended 2 interviews
ALI	Male Early 30s Iraq	Arrived 2008. Failed claim – receives emergency support.	Ali was a farmer then joined the army.	Attended 3 interviews

Fig. 12: Participant details

*Self-chosen Pseudonyms

ALI is a 25 year old man from the Middle East who came to the UK in 2009.

He was part of a tight-knit farming family, very close to his mother and happiest working on the farm and caring for his family. He was skilled with mechanical things and working with animals.

He answered a call to support his national army which had been decimated by war. He did not consider this a career choice, but a duty and a means of supporting his family. Despite the dangers he mostly enjoyed his time in the army due to the camaraderie and enjoyment of working together with people of different backgrounds.

Ali received a written death threat to his home, and when one colleague was murdered he felt his life there had become untenable.

With family support he raised money to flee and undertook an arduous journey over many countries, in a series of lorries, not knowing his destination. On arrival he was met by police with dogs and describes being terrified. He was taken into detention and was so afraid he couldn't eat or sleep. He was moved several times and had difficulties making himself understood as his language is uncommon and the wrong interpreters were often used. At times he felt suicidal during this period.

He was moved to Teesside, which he finds preferable as it is quieter and he has been able to settle. He accessed local support services for English classes and other activities, but these were stopped due to funding cuts. His claim for asylum failed and he receives Section Four emergency support due to substantial and ongoing health issues. This provides him with basic accommodation and payment using an Azure card.

Ali has no contact with home as his family have fled the area and he no longer has the means to communicate with them. He has experienced some very positive support at times, but lives a quiet, isolated life. He values the input of a local Church, and volunteers at a local support service. He enjoys cooking, and volunteering at a local refugee support agency.

ALICE is a 38 year old woman who comes from a West African nation. She came to the UK in 2007, choosing the UK as she had been partially educated here in her youth, and had some family connections here.

Alice had a difficult upbringing and as a result was driven to prove herself and studied and worked hard to achieve. She became a nationally renowned journalist and was an outspoken critic of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Though her work carried significant risks it was also a means of achieving status, personal control and a sense of value following her earlier experiences. As a result of her work she was repeatedly threatened and targeted, until an attempt on her life made her determined to flee.

Life in the UK was initially very difficult for Alice and she particularly struggled with the lack of purpose and meaning to her daily life. She was moved to Teesside where she lived alone with her first child for a period, later to be reunited with her child's father. She began to challenge herself to return to issues in women's rights and FGM and used volunteering to develop networks and bring a sense of purpose. She has established her own women's health charity, and worked with schools, universities and with policy makers to raise concerns regarding FGM.

This made a significant difference to her wellbeing, and she lived positively, despite practical hardships, without focussing on her asylum status. Just days before the research interviews began she gained refugee status, having previously been refused.

Alice is an articulate woman, a popular figure in the area, well known and influential, and people frequently turn to her for support. She continues to work voluntarily to support others, but is applying to study and has plans to develop a new career.

FREEMAN is 36 and comes from a small country in West Africa.

Freeman had worked within travel and tourism, and enjoyed working with people from overseas. He began to face difficulties in the national climate, as he had changed faith. Additionally he lost his wife and child in a car accident, so felt he had nothing left to remain at home for and wanted to start afresh away from pressures and corruption.

Freeman came to the UK in 2009, with the four children of his late brother, for whom he was guardian. They were dispersed to Teesside , which he generally likes, though initially some local people were hostile. His nieces and nephews faced some challenges settling here, and the bots experienced conflict at school. The head teacher of the boy's school questioned their age, and without discussion with Freeman, took his concerns to both authorities and press, suggesting that the boys were adults. This resulted in the boys being excluded from school pending age assessments, and the girls being taken into care. The boys were confirmed as legally children after one year of time away from school. The girls remain in care, and the boys have returned to their education, though the hiatus impacted on them educationally and emotionally.

Freeman himself lives with a partner who has refugee status, and helps to support him. He is awaiting an asylum decision and is NASS supported. He works as a mentor and provides community activities for other people seeking asylum. He is an active member of various refugee networks and has won awards for his community work.

GOZIEM and **OLA** are husband and wife, but participated separately in the research. They originate from a West African nation, but came to the UK at different times. When their daughter was born they began to experience pressure to have her undergo Female Genital Mutilation, which they were both opposed to on the grounds to their faith, education and family experiences.

GOZIEM is 45 and was born during a period of civil war, growing up through many political and social changes. He is interested in the socio-political history of his nation, and sees corruption and inequality in his wealthy and resource-rich country.

He gained an education, trained as a social worker and also volunteered in prisons and mental health services. He also ran his own building business. When he found himself under intense pressure from family members he decided to leave for the UK, assuming this would remove the tensions for the rest of the family.

He lived in London, where he established friendships and connections, particularly through the church. He and Ola would see one another sporadically during that time. Goziem is a sociable, articulate man who has made many connections locally over a very brief period. He is active in the church, keeps fit and sings in the choir.

OLA is 41. She also studied and worked, running her own business buying and selling. Whilst Goziem still remained at home he did most of the family negotiations regarding the pressure to undergo FGM, as women are traditionally excluded from such decisions. In Goziem's absence the pressure began to increase for Ola and eventually, whilst pregnant, she was assaulted at gunpoint. Following this she was too afraid and she and their two children flew to the UK to be reunited with Goziem. She was so unwell on arrival she spent some months in hospital before the birth of their third child.

Ola joined Goziem to live in London, where they had strong community links. They were helped by their church to manage during this time, but lived in overcrowded and extremely expensive accommodation. On Ola's arrival they claimed asylum as a family and now receive NASS support. Ola is the primarily asylum claimant and Goziem and the children are applying as dependents. They were dispersed to Middlesbrough, and whilst initially reluctant to move they have settled well, the children are successful in school and they have established volunteer work and study opportunities for themselves. They have since had a further baby.

Ola is very orientated towards family and faith. She has made some friends and feels happy with the busy pace of family life.

OLIVER is a 30 year old man from the South of Africa.

Oliver lost his parents in his childhood, but was raised by his grandmother. He had a fairly happy childhood, he attended boarding school and did averagely well. In his adulthood he worked in a number of fields, working for himself, buying and selling and

eventually having his own business. He appreciated the independence of working for himself, but unfortunately his business failed. His employees were angry and he owed them money, which he couldn't pay. Hostilities between them escalated until he was threatened and beaten.

He decided to leave and arrived in the UK in 2006. He has lived for a long period without support having failed in his claim for asylum. He is unsupported and lives sleeping on the floors and sofas of friends. He relies on charitable funds from a local agency who give him £5 per week and some food.

He has a very limited lifestyle, restricted on many levels.

SAM is a 32 year old man from an East African nation. He came to the UK in 2010.

He grew up happily, part of a close knit, well-educated family. He was studying at university when war broke out between his country and a neighbouring one. He had completed compulsory national service and as a result was drafted back into the army to take part in this conflict.

Students frustrated by the impact of conflict on their studies went on strike in protest. As retribution for the strike, students were recalled early and sent to the most dangerous places to flight. Sam went 'AWOL' which presented great risk to him and his family and he decided to leave the country. He took a lengthy, dangerous journey on foot and was imprisoned for a period. He was able to negotiate his release and worked to raise money to leave for a country in the Middle East. He lived there for a period, but it was exploitative and risky.

He finally made his way to Europe, and having spent some months in the 'jungle' at Calais, arriving in the UK by lorry.

On seeking asylum in the UK he was dispersed to Teesside and was granted asylum, with leave to remain for a period of five years. Sam is an active man, with a passion for work and study. His English skills are particularly good, and having volunteered initially he found work for a charity when his refugee status was granted.

SHAHIN is 28 and grew up in the Middle East. He was part of a happy, fairly affluent family. He had a good life and was early in his University career, studying sports science. He was fit, sporty and active and had plenty of friends. He ran daily, played football and went climbing at weekends in the mountains.

Life became complicated when Shahin's father was imprisoned for holding opposing political views to the government. He was ill-treated in prison and on release was physically and mentally affected. The family were concerned that Shahin would be unsafe and made arrangements for him to flee.

He came to the UK in 2008 and initially settled fairly well. He had friends, played sport and was learning English. As his claim failed his health worsened and he began to become increasingly isolated. He currently receives Section Four support due to health issues. Shahin strives to be independent and dislikes people to see his less able sides. He has some good friendships, but as his opportunities have reduced over time, he spends much of his time at home alone.

TENDEI is 35 years old and grew up in southern Africa. She arrived in the UK in 2008. Tendei has had a restricted and difficult life from early childhood. Tendei's father was in conflict with the national government and as a result she faced many restrictions and was temporarily displaced to another country during her childhood. When the family decided to try to return to their home nation her father was murdered and she and her sisters were assaulted. They have since lived outside their country of origin.

Tendei was trafficked to the UK but the man responsible was arrested on arrival and she was left with no passport and no money or contacts. She did not know of any support services and as a result was vulnerable to a number of difficult and exploitative experiences in her early time in the UK. After a number of years she was informed by friends that she could apply for asylum, and for a period this gave her some stability and safety.

Tendei left her children to come to the UK, initially cared for by her mother. He mother has since passed away and her sister now supports the children. Tendei had anticipated being reunited quickly, but this has not occurred. She is deeply distressed to be apart from her sons, with only limited telephone contact with them.

She has since exhausted her claim for asylum and receives Section Four support due to ill health. She is struggling with low mood and physical health issues. She is willing to return home, as she is tired of living in the post asylum tension and desperate to be reunited with her family. However, she still fears deportation and would prefer to be in control of her own return.

TETE is 27 and comes from the West of Africa. She has a good education and she and her husband worked and were saving to build their own home.

She, like Goziem and Ola, faced pressure for her baby daughter to undergo FGM. Her father, an academic living overseas was opposed to the practice, but Tete's husband's family held more traditional views. The family conflict became very difficult and when she was pregnant with their second child she left to take a break and visit family in the UK, in 2013. Whilst here her husband told her the family were planning to undertake the procedure on her return, despite his protests.

The new baby was born here in the UK and the family intend to circumcise both girls to avoid Tete being able to take flight again. As a result she remains in the UK, her husband at home in Africa. He has never seen his second born child.

Her initial claim for asylum failed but she has a second 'fresh' claim and as a result has NASS support.

She lives with her two young children and keeps busy with volunteer work when she can. She has some friends but her closest ones have moved away. She struggles with her living conditions and caring for two young children with little support.

In order to promote the accurate reflection of the individual lived experience, each participant's account was explored separately, before themes were elicited. Where there were concerns regarding the sensitive nature of some materials, they were separated from individual accounts to promote confidentiality.

Below 'The Push' details the circumstances precipitating a participant's decision to leave their country of origin, and 'Seeking Asylum' details their experience of the process.

6.2 THE PUSH

All participants spoke at length about their lives at home, for some participants life at home had started well, for others it had long held difficulties. In all cases there was a specific point where life at home became untenable and the journey to the UK began. Reasons varied, and for some there was a single 'final straw' moment and for others a web of negative influences which precipitated the decision to leave. This section reflects the decision-making process that led to their asylum journey.

Oliver had a business which failed, and left him owing money to his employees. They threatened him, and eventually attacked and physically beat him. He felt he needed to be safe and start again somewhere new. Alice made the decision to return to the UK, where she had lived and studied in her teens, following a prolonged series of events, the details of which she has asked to be omitted from the study.

Shahin's father had been in disagreement with the Government, which led to his imprisonment. When he was eventually released he was in poor health physically and mentally. The family were afraid that, as eldest son, Shahin would be at risk and urged him to leave the country. Freeman faced a mixture of issues including social, political and family disputes. When he converted from Islam to Christianity he was ostracised by his family. Freeman's mother, with whom he had always been close, died and his partner and child died in a car accident. He was also impacted upon by political upheaval and corruption.

Goziem left following prolonged pressure from his family to have his daughters undergo Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). He had believed that his absence would reduce the

burden on his wife Ola. However, Ola joined him following an assault. She described how seven armed men attacked her in her own home, which left her afraid and ashamed.

Tendei witnessed her father's murder and was raped in her childhood, she was displaced to a neighbouring country where she lived in poverty. This was followed by years of hardship, abuse and exploitative work. Tete was visiting the UK during her pregnancy when her husband informed her that his family were pressing for their daughter to undergo FGM. They agreed she would remain here whilst he negotiated the child's safety, which he has not been able to do.

Sam had engaged in a student protest against his government, in punishment for which he was called up to fight on the front line in an ongoing war, in the most dangerous part of his country. He went 'absent without leave' and had to go into hiding. Ali had joined his national army to fight alongside US and Allied forces. He received a letter from a terrorist organization threatening to behead him as a collaborator. When one of his colleagues was murdered his family agreed he should leave the country.

In each instance, the rationale for the decision to take flight centred on the desire for safety or freedom, risk to self and others, exploitation or a recognition that opportunities were being halted. There was a mixture of being drawn towards something positive; '*I was like, if I will came there, I will get something, maybe I'll go to school, I will do things for myself, you know, start a job to help my family… But unfortunately, I didn't get anything up to now*' (Tendei), seeking safety; '*All I was thinking about, my life, my safety, that's all I cared about at the time - not where I'm going, who's taking me, is it legal or illegal… I was always concentrating on the safety of my life*' (Ali), or fleeing from negatives; '*I said, no, I*

want to leave, I can't face this environment, being harassed by men, attacking you, bully you, yes, pushing you… it was just something I couldn't bear again' (Ola).

The reasons for coming to the UK varied from the deliberate to the accidental. Alice had lived here before, Freeman spoke some English, and family members had previously lived here. Goziem had some family in the UK, Ola came to be with him. Tete was already here, visiting extended family. Sam, Oliver, Shahin, Tendei and Ali came without a clear destination, because it was the route chosen by their traffickers.

The journeys taken by individuals were also varied, from arriving by plane on a legal visa to being smuggled in a lorry and were, in the main, frightening, risky and expensive. Leaving was challenging on multiple levels, with individuals having to leave assets behind, sell what they could, and keep things secret; *'Everything you have to hide, because you fear, if they leak it out you don't know where you might end, you might die, you know, you might be in prison'* (Freeman), often leaving without explanation or goodbyes; *'didn't say goodbye, didn't say anything. It was so sad… it was hard, it was very, very hard to leave without telling anyone'* (Alice).

Some journeys were particularly risky; Tendei was trafficked by a stranger who offered to help her, and even though she feared he may kill her she felt she had no choice but to take the risk. He told her she could pay when she got to the UK, but a price was never agreed. He was arrested at Heathrow and she was left without a passport, accommodation or contacts. Ali recalls *'we had nothing, food, water, we are in the back of lorry for days, we don't know where we are, where you're going.'* Sam's journey involved walking hundreds of miles with little or no food and water and the constant threat of

hijackers, smugglers and Government military. He was arrested and imprisoned until he was able to bribe his captors to gain his release. He later spent some months in the Calais 'jungle' before making his way in a lorry to the UK.

These events reflect 'typical' experiences of refugees arriving in the UK, and are consistent with the evidence presented in the Literature Review. The evidence on rationale for forced migration only occasionally captures the enormous range of pressures people face, and it is not possible for me here to wholly capture the experiences described to me. I was struck by the enormous push people felt to leave their homeland, and all the people and things that it holds, and in almost every instance their focus on the need to leave behind risks and hardships far outweighed any desire to gain from being in the UK.

6.3 SEEKING ASYLUM

All participants expressed thoughts on the asylum system, describing it as hostile and unfair and highlighting their experiences of loss and sacrifice.

Alice and Sam have refugee status. Sam's was granted on initial application, Alice's took five years, having previously been refused. Tete, Freeman, Goziem and Ola are all still part of the decision-making process, though they have had initial refusals. Tendei, Oliver, Shahin and Ali have all received final refusals.

Regardless of outcome, they have all described the process as stressful, lengthy, complex and frustrating; '*you've fled your country and you come here and seek sanctuary...you get not be recognised, you're being denied your rights… all that has been*

stripped away, so you're left thinking why, why, why, why?' (Freeman). All participants made some mention of the asylum system as unfair, reducing them in status and treating them badly; *'I've not been treated the way I should be treated - being an asylum doesn't mean that I should be treated totally different…I think I should be treated a bit fair'* (Tete). The process was said to be confusing and difficult to understand, with little or no help to interpret what was happening and multiple obstacles put in your way; *'they do everything possible to make sure people leave or are being frustrated'* (Goziem).

A common theme of the asylum process is the experience of being disbelieved and voiceless. There are elements of disbelief in the Home Office decision-making for a number of the participants, either because they doubt the content of the claim, or the level of risk faced. This leaves the individual feeling angry, frustrated and hurt. Having shared her most painful experiences Alice had not anticipated being disbelieved; *'It's worse when they say 'we don't believe you'…somebody sits there, after reading all the things that I've been through, and then they just write back and say we don't believe you.'* Tete shared her feeling of 'voicelessness'; *'you're not given the chance to talk about it, you're not given the chance to be listened to. I just wish someone can just enter my heart and then know that I'm telling them is the truth'* (Tete).

The participants described losses faced during asylum that were global and complete, affecting every aspect of their daily lives; *'I had a normal life over there, but I came here I lose everything'* (Shahin); *'I'd got my car, I'd got my business, but, you know, you just have to abandon everything and then start all over again'* (Ola). The women particularly used the word 'sacrifice' to capture their experience of these losses, often ascribing their sacrifice to meeting the needs of their children; *'I came there for a reason, sacrificed my*

job, my family, my marriage and everything. I have to just sacrifice because of my kids, I have to sacrifice, but it's so hard' (Tete).

All participants reflected on facing wide-ranging and constant issues, including financial, practical and legal challenges, things which left them feeling '*dumped*' (Tete), '*distressed'* (Tendei), '*humiliated'* (Goziem). Alice highlights the particular feelings of lack of control and unpredictability commonly experienced; '*they show that they have control over your life, you're not asked where you want to live, they just send you wherever they want to send you, they do anything they want to do to you'* (Alice).

The initial experience of being in the UK was a mixture of fear and unfamiliarity, for example Sam and Ali spoke about arriving to be met by Police with dogs, and Tendei described feeling lost and unsupported when her trafficker was arrested. Ali was so afraid he couldn't eat or sleep and required medical attention and Ola, who was heavily pregnant on her arrival, was admitted to hospital due to stress. They describe a bewildering processing phase and moves between police cells, interview rooms and hostels.

Every participant, except Sam, cited the same example to illustrate the experience of asylum; attending the local police station weekly to 'sign in', which is used as a monitoring process by the Home Office; **'***the police station is one place where we dread, because you can go there to sign and you don't come back, you know'* (Alice). They described the fear of detention and deportation, the intrusiveness; '*sometimes they make some very derogatory comments, they ask some unwanted questions, you know';* and the frustration of dealing with bureaucratic arrangements. The experience of 'signing in' is

reflective of the controlling, dehumanising and anxiety provoking wider process of asylum.

These experiences are reflective of existing evidence on the impact of being part of the complex and bewildering asylum process. The loss and adjustment of acculturation and liminality are clear, and leave people feeling voiceless and lost. The unfairness and injustice of asylum was a poignant element of people's narratives, with multiple stories of feeling ill-treated, criminalised, humiliated and disbelieved. This was often painful to hear and I admit to feelings of shame and anger at the deliberate creation of the hostile environment of asylum.

7 DISCUSSION

After the long struggle to make sense of multiple strands, the findings of this study suddenly began to align themselves and present in terms of phenomena. Even as I write this, I realise I visualise this process as having happened without my intervention; like flowers turning toward the sun, or baby birds straining to be fed. In reality, it was the result of prolonged 'immersion' and 'incubation' (Moustakas, 1994). I had indeed found my seat in the dark theatre (Moustakas, 1990), groping my way until I could settle down and picture what I had come to see.

The core realisation came with the thought 'It's all about worth.' I could suddenly see connections between the value ascribed to individuals during asylum and the potential of occupation to either foster or undermine value and worth. I repeatedly heard how the experiences faced impacted on the individuals' sense of their own value. This could be experienced through the multiple losses faced in becoming a refugee; '*I have nothing, nothing now'* (Oliver); through the impact of a system that '*makes you feel like rubbish, that you are rubbish'* (Shahin), through public attitudes that devalue '*people see you as a beggar'* (Goziem) or through limited opportunity to prove ones' own worth; '*I have so many ideas, ways to contribute… but the system won't let me do anything'* (Freeman).

Participants' reflections on occupation linked directly to their experiences of devaluation and worth, either negatively or positively. Limited access to meaningful occupation appears to continue the process of devaluation, either through reduced engagement, or

engagement at a level they associate with low status or limited purpose. The most positive, purposeful occupations enabled individuals to rise above the impact of asylum, maintaining a more positive sense of self. The most valuable occupations were those with a 'higher purpose', particularly those done for the benefit of others, or occupations closely linked to past meaningful engagement, allowing individuals a degree of constancy in their changeable lives.

Here in the discussion I will explore the meaning of occupation to people seeking asylum in terms of its relationship with their (and others') sense of their worth. I will detail the ways in which refugee lives are devalued and their worth undermined by policy, media attention and public perception, before briefly exploring the nature of human worth and how it is ascribed and 'measured'. I will then establish occupation as a measure of worth and explore the potential for occupational engagement to foster a sense of value, or for occupational exclusions to further undermine the individual.

7.1 DEVALUATION OF PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

'I am unwelcome and my beauty is not beauty here.'

Warsan Shire

Internal and external drivers can influence experiences of value and worth for people seeking asylum, creating a dynamic interplay between how they are perceived and how they view themselves. Sections 3.6 and 3.7 have already introduced some of the evidence exploring the external processes which can negatively affect a person during asylum.

There are a number of issues which directly affect the way people seeking asylum are valued, particularly by their host community, including policy decisions central to asylum law and practice, and attitudinal issues influencing the way people are perceived by the host community. The public acceptance of immigrants in the UK is conditional, and the overriding view is that immigrants (and particularly ethnically different immigrants) are bad (Blinder and Allen, 2016). The assumption is that immigrants are job stealers, benefit scroungers or terrorists, unless they can prove their worth with Olympic medals, medical qualifications or exceptionally good baking, in which case they can be awarded the status of 'good immigrants' (Shukla, 2016).

As highlighted in the literature review, dramatic changes occurred in the perception of migrants, and particularly people seeking asylum around the mid-1990s. These changes reflected increased number of migrants (Eurostat, 2017), fear, uncertainty and lack of

knowledge of the drivers for migrancy (IOM, 2016; UNHCR, 2016) and challenges for governments and other agencies in the management of refugees across Europe (Carrera, 2015). The increased politicization of immigration issues (Lewis, 2005; Fletcher, 2008) led to increasingly Draconian responses to asylum provision (Fletcher, 2008; Bennett and Thomas, 2013), and the concept of the 'hostile environment' detailed in section 3.6.3 (Travis, 2013).

Despite causing real hardship to immigrants (Bowes *et al.* 2009; HAC, 2013), and not deterring migrancy as successive governments had hoped (Travis, 2013; Yeo, 2017), a tough stance on immigration has broad public support (Fletcher, 2008; Bolt, 2016). The connections drawn between the rights and needs of migrants has been linked with ideas about their worth and value on a number of levels, creating a clear distinction between 'them and us' (Burnett, 2013).

7.1.1 The dynamics of devaluation

Much of the information circulating publicly about refugees undermines their standing, either by devaluing them directly, or focussing on the costs associated with their needs rather than the opportunities arising from their potential (Philo *et al*. 2013; Chauhan and Foster, 2013). Successive governments have been caught between positioning the asylum seeker as an economic threat and presenting the asylum seeker as a humanitarian figure in need of refuge, in what Gibney (2014) terms a 'paradoxical response.' McFadyen (2016) described Britain as meeting refugees with 'hostipitality,' a pretence at hospitality with a hostile undercurrent. The concepts of othering, moralising and deservedness are widely used in political and media portrayals, heightening the idea of a

‘problematic’ population who are different, unworthy and do not deserve assistance (Grove and Zwi, 2006; O’Hara, 2014; Warner, 2014).

7.1.1.1 Othering

Othering involves the creation and use of labels to define and characterise groups, objectifying them, and establishing them as subordinate or deviant (Grove and Zwi, 2006; Shapiro, 2008). Many stereotypes exist regarding marginalised groups, taking the form of ‘tropes’ (overused images, words and representations) (Fahnestock, 2011), such as the repeated use of words like ‘swamped’ and ‘bogus’ in relation to immigration (Zimmerman, 2011; Chakrabortty, 2013).

Such representations have the potential to create lasting impressions, engendering hostility (O’Hara, 2014). Othering creates an environment where individual identity ceases to be recognized. Individuals are not simply devalued, but also denied status and considered unworthy of respect (Fraser, 2000). Fraser (2000) describes how the battle for personal recognition is at the heart of issues around identity, multiculturalism and human rights. As people balance their need for a shared humanity with the desire to maintain cultural and personal distinctiveness, group identities can be drastically simplified, increasing the sense of separation and generating intolerance (Fraser, 2000; Danermark and Gellerstedt, 2004).

There has been a marked decline in public empathy and understanding for many of the most disadvantaged groups in our society, corroding compassion for those most in need and having a negative impact on social cohesion (Valentine, 2014, Valentine and Harris, 2014; Demireva, 2017). Large scale studies by The Equality Commission (Northern Ireland)

(2011) and the British Attitudes Survey (2012) noted an increased hardening of attitudes and growing social division, particularly towards migrants (EC, 2011; BAS, 2012).

Othering is a significant issue for people seeking asylum (Grove and Zwi, 2006; McKay *et al.* 2012), where the impact of external forces, such as politicians and the media, foster a sense of separateness and cast them in a negative light (Wurie Kahn, 2012). The othering of refugees leaves them feeling like an outsider in both their country of origin and their host country, which has a profound impact on their identity and sense of belonging (Burnett, 2013). This is actively promoted by labelling, which underlines their separateness and heightens their sense of isolation (Zetter, 2006; Burnett, 2013).

Labelling is one of the key features of othering, allowing a shift in language and vocabulary with one 'singular intention—to convey an image of marginality, dishonesty, a threat, unwelcomed …' (Zetter, 2006, p.184). The politicisation of the 'refugee label' to suit governmental interests has embedded the use of hostile terminology into the wider political discourse of resistance to migrants and refugees (Zetter, 2006; McFadyen, 2016). This has changed yesterday's 'deserving refugee' into the 'menacing and unwelcome alien' of today (Marfleet, 2006, p. xii). The labels reduce the individual's personhood, removing all their identifying, humanising features and potential, 'Look at me, look at all the things I am capable of, and think of all the things you could call me – a student, a lover of literature, a budding architect, a friend, a symbol of hope even, but what am I called? A refugee' (Zephaniah, 2001). Tete captures the power and impact of the asylum label when she said; '*I am asylum, I am asylum, forever, when people look at me, I will always be asylum.*'

Othering often focusses on aspects of 'difference,' and the more difference is perceived the more the individual's identity is changed, both internally and externally (Sydnor, 2010; Burnett, 2013). Individuals use their sense of similarity and difference to strengthen their identity (Grove and Zwi, 2006) and the more racially different refugees feel the more they are othered (Parker and Brassett, 2005), feeling like 'the most foreign 'foreigners'' (Burnett, 2013, p. 19).

Oliver, Tendei, Tete and Ola all mention the feeling of being 'foreigners' here in the UK, and of feeling easier in the company of other people seeking asylum. They reflected on the growing numbers in Teesside as a positive, making them feel less alone; '*before, you can count the blacks in Middlesbrough; but now… but now it's not like that - I say, yes that is to show that things are improving*' (Ola).

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

I remember at the time feeling shocked on hearing Ola say that the increased immigration in the area was a good thing. In my reflexive notes I record 'Can't imagine a local saying that!'

Even though I am personally very positive about immigration into the UK, this reinforced for me the power of the received message that immigration is overwhelmingly negative.

There was a sense of needing British people to meet them part of the way in establishing a rapport; '*I need some encouragement from others, I cannot just push myself in, I need to see that I am welcomed, I am accepted and I'm allowed*' (Ola). Tete feels that there needs to be some compassion, and recognition of the reasons people would choose to flee; '*they should also remember that we are human beings - though maybe there are some people who are doing it just for the sake of doing it, but there are some people who are also doing it to save their kids or to save their lives or something.*'

As the gap between in group and out group or 'them and us' grows, the likelihood of integration and cohesion further reduces, making it harder for the UK population to see the realities of who refugees are and what they might need.

7.1.1.2 Deservedness

The concept of deservedness has played a significant role in British politics in many ways, with ideas about who is deserving and undeserving shaping attitudes towards people in need. Most famously, the idea of a deserving and undeserving poor became part of British legislation from the late 1500s, finally categorised in the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. The deserving poor were those who were poor through no fault of their own, either too young, old or ill to work, or those who would work but could not find work (Alchin, 2012). The undeserving poor were those who could work but would not, and consequently they were considered as the idle poor, and they were to be publicly castigated (Bloy, 2002). There was no recognition of external factors which created hardship at these times, which were beyond the control of the poor, such as the excesses of the ruling classes, rapid inflation and decreased charitable support due to the dissolution of the monasteries (Boyer, 1990). In the intervening years, attitudes towards deservedness have continued to dominate perceptions of individuals who require help and support, with the current period of austerity facilitating the re-emergence of traditional distinctions between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Pennington, 2011; Guardian Editorial, 2012; Valentine, 2014).

As successive governments in the UK have sought to reduce the substantial costs of welfare and social support, there has been an increased use of political stereotyping,

leading to individuals being negatively portrayed (Garthwaite, 2011; Clery, 2012). Welfare and social support becomes linked with fecklessness and irresponsibility (Bowlby, 2010; Eaton, 2011) and provision becomes connected with morality and deservedness (Bowlby, 2010; Clery, 2012; Guardian Editorial, 2012).

This concept of a deserving and undeserving poor links with the idea of the 'desirable immigrant' and 'undesirable immigrant' (Warner, 2014), where the host population will accept those they see as useful or for whom they feel empathy, but reject others. In the context of the portrayal of people seeking asylum by politics and the press, the public are unlikely to see individuals' value or recognise the true challenges they have faced. In asylum, the idea of deservedness has become a lynch pin concept, particularly asserted through the use of the label 'genuine asylum seeker' (McFadyen, 2016). The idea of the genuine applicant has proliferated since the early 1990s, and has juxtaposed the idea of an 'ideal' applicant against failed claimants, who are seen as bogus. In reality, in order to achieve refugee status and be seen as genuine the individual must meet a wide range of criteria, many of which outstrip the legal requirements for asylum (Marfleet, 2006; Gibney, 2014; McFadyen, 2016). The suggestion is that those who fall short of the criteria in any way are unworthy of refugee status because they were not really in need, had other options or had an ulterior motive for coming to the UK (McFadyen, 2016), and therefore do not require or deserve support.

Tete, Goziem, Sam, Freeman and Ali all spoke about the impact upon them of attitudes towards asylum in the UK. They are aware that the focus is often on financial burden and access to benefits; '*money and benefit was the last thing on my list, I never even thought about it, if I didn't have to leave I would not*' (Ali) and Goziem stated; '*The Home Office, all*

they believe is, they see almost every foreigner who comes here from an economic angle.' Alice, Shahin, Goziem, Ola, Tete, Sam and Ali all had significantly higher standards of living in their home country, and made major financial/lifestyle sacrifices to come here; '*We have two houses back home, big houses, very expensive too… unfortunately it's not safe to return, it's not safe'* (Ali). Shahin was deeply offended by suggestions made by a local girl that he would marry for a passport; '*I don't have nothing but I can't sell myself, you know.'*

There is little question that people seeking asylum (and immigrants *per se*) are seen as undeserving, or at the very least, less deserving (Philo *et al*. 2013). Their needs are frequently juxtaposed against other groups and viewed with hostility and suspicion (Kennedy, 2015; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015). Ideas of deservedness are propagated by the media and politicians, but also resonate with the experiences of ordinary citizens in their everyday lives. People tend towards judgement of others and seek to feel superior, so may be drawn to flawed evidence if it meets this need (Leone and Chirumbolo, 2007; Wurie Kahn, 2012). As a result, people readily attribute issues such as unemployment and poverty to the failings of individuals (Valentine, 2014). This focus on the moral or cultural worth of others demonises people in need, obscuring other causes of inequality and socio-economic exclusion and eroding care, compassion and social responsibility (Valentine, 2014; Valentine and Harris, 2014; Safdar and Strickland, 2016).

Even where there are efforts to promote a more positive vision of refugees, the principle of deservedness can prevail, many of the advocacy pieces written tend to focus on the value of specific individuals who have talents or vulnerabilities (Judge, 2010). Whilst well intentioned, these accounts fail to reflect the inherent value of all refugees, focussing on

ones which are exceptional as a means of countering the more hostile messages which proliferate (Judge, 2010; Philo *et al.* 2015).

7.1.1.3 Moralising

The debate around the needs of refugees often takes on a moral dimension, with divisions fostered by 'moral panic', a theory characterised by a disproportionate perception of the threat of a particular group on society, with a resultant growth of hostility (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009; Cohen, 2011). Moral panic occurs when people are provided with information, from a source they perceive as credible, which presents behaviour in terms of some form of moral violation (Goodwin 2006). This defines a target group as a threat to societal values and interests, vilifying them and increasing the likelihood of them becoming marginalised. Groups begin to be portrayed as 'folk devils', with extreme negative portrayals and perspectives circulated by press and public opinion (Cohen, 2011).

The language of policy has become increasingly entwined in what Duffy (2013) describes as falsehoods, distortions and ugly rhetoric. The focus is often on the worth of the individual, and whether they are deserving of support, leading to portrayals of people as 'fictional feckless bogeymen' (Williams, 2013, p 1), who have little to contribute and who are at the root of societal ills. This dehumanises people, allowing harsher treatment and reduced support to become justified (Bambra and Smith, 2010; Heap, 2013; O'Hara, 2014), with little or no acknowledgement of wider socio-economic hardships the individual may face (Zimmerman, 2011; Chauhan and Foster, 2013).

A number of participants referred to issues with media coverage of asylum issues, but Freeman had firsthand experience when his family were the subject of local and national news coverage. The Daily Mail, The Telegraph and local newspaper The Gazette reported hearsay from his nephew's school, suggesting that the two boys (then aged 14/15 years) were in their twenties. The press articles, laden with pejorative language and inaccuracies, suggested the boys were exploiting the school system and suggested they were presenting a risk to young girls; *'Nobody came to me to hear my own story… they just look on one side, you know…you don't have any way to fight them back.'* As a result of the school's decision and attendant publicity, the boys were excluded from school until, one year later, they were proved underage and allowed to return to their education. The local paper printed a retraction and follow up story, the Daily Mail and Telegraph did not.

This is typical of the anti-immigration press agenda, which demonises young men as threatening (Banks, 2012), and in this case supported their direct exclusion from essential occupations. This followed one of three problematic 'tropes' employed by the media, which are refugee as 'threatening', refugee as 'talented' and refugee as 'traumatised' (Judge, 2010). In these powerful messages gender, age and ability are all used to either present refugees negatively, or attempt to act as advocates. In doing so, there is either a tendency to cast young men as dangerous and troublesome, women and children as vulnerable ad traumatised, or to focus on individual's skills and potential to cast them as having special qualities (Lynn and Lea, 2003; Pupavac, 2008; Judge, 2010). Somewhat like the use of disability tropes, this presents a polarised view of refugees and fails to challenge underlying discrimination and exclusion (Zetter *et al.* 2006; Judge, 2010; Philo et al. 2013).

Hostile media is blamed for identifying people seeking asylum as 'folk devils' (Wurie Kahn, 2012) through sustained negative coverage, which has generated 'moral panic' (Smart *et al.* 2007; Cohen 2011; Wurie Kahn, 2012). The asylum seeker 'folk devil' is mainly depicted as the culturally inferior 'other' (Johnstone, 2013). This often done through the process of 'criminalising' immigration (Parkin, 2013), which has seen criminal and immigration law become increasingly intertwined (Spena, 2013). Seemingly disparate developments relating to border controls, conditions of entry, capacity for detention and deportation and increased criminal sanctions for migration offences all reflect the intent to criminalise migration (Parkin, 2013). The key message in these policies is that immigration is illegal, and that migrants are likely to be criminals. This fosters a decline in public empathy (Buchanan and Grillo 2003; Smart *et al.* 2007) as immorality such as criminal behaviour is often connected with reduced views of personhood (Coghlan, 2011; Vilhauer, 2013). As a result, there is a failure to see asylum as a humanitarian issue and immune to an ethical policy commitment (Wurie Kahn, 2012).

The impact of criminalisation is not lost on the participants; '*you see yourself like a criminal, which you are not, it's very humiliating, you know… I mean we are humans… it's embarrassing*' (Goziem). A number of the men stridently denied any wrong doing, clearly wishing to present themselves as law abiding people; '*I never give any trouble, never a fight in all my life*' (Shahin).

The perceptions that the public have of people seeking asylum appear to create direct barriers for the participants in this study, making it harder to establish friendships with British people. Very few had any connections with British people beyond professional relationships, such as solicitor, health visitor or therapist; '*it's very difficult, it's very, very*

difficult, because some people are very nice, but it's difficult to make friends with some people too because you feel that the moment they know you are asylum, they sort of keep themselves away from you, yes' (Tete).

7.1.1.4 An example of the dynamic of devaluation

Health tourism provides an affective example of the dynamic of devaluation. Health tourism is defined as the deliberate use of the UK National Health Services by migrants, and the discussion of health tourism focuses on the cost to this overstretched, nationally precious resource (Boseley, 2013; Dayan, 2016). It is reported widely and is presented as 'foreigners abusing the system' by politicians and the press (Boseley, 2013), however, evidence for health tourism is, at best, tentative (Prederi, 2013; Kings Fund, 2015) and the Government estimate the actual cost to the NHS as 0.3% of health spending (Prederi, 2013).

The discourse around health tourism does not acknowledge that migrants are disproportionately low users of healthcare (Prederi, 2013; Dayan, 2016), or that costs can be partially offset by the saving made by British people using services abroad (Hanefeld *et al.* 2013). There is also a disproportionate attribution of health tourism to particular nations deemed 'high risk' (such as Nigeria) (Merion Thomas, 2017). However, in reality, many overseas users of health services are visa over-stayers, often from countries such as the US and Australia (Lunt *et al.* 2011; Hanefeld *at al.* 2013), as health tourism is most likely to occur in people who live in nearby nations, speak English and are culturally similar, contrary to the popular myths (Prederi, 2013; Dayan, 2016). This has led to

concerns about how people are questioned about their entitlement to healthcare (Lunt *et al.* 2011), and the suggestion that 'they only ask the brown ones' (Yeo, 2017).

In considering health tourism, we have an issue which presents a genuine challenge for government, but which is presented by politics and the media and perceived by the public as being far bigger in impact than the facts suggest. Problems within the NHS are frequently suggested as being part of the immigration issue, thus combining the two most hotly debated political topics (Leach, 2015). Media attention fosters a sense of burden and misattributes the issue to specific groups of migrants, often the most 'foreign of the foreigners' (Burnett, 2013). The messages are clear, there is the greedy and different 'other,' whose health needs and service use are often exaggerated and often linked to stigmatized health issues like HIV. These features combine othering, deservedness and moralising to breed a sense of them and us – *our* NHS being abused by *them*.

This dynamic echoes throughout the asylum and immigration debate and reflects an underpinning belief that people seeking asylum are a problem, that they are taking rather than giving, and that they impact significantly on the lives of the indigenous population. However, recognising the process is one thing, understanding how and why it occurs may be another. There are several suggested principles at the root of the devaluation process. One is the inherent xenophobia of the UK as a host country. It would certainly seem that the UK has a history of othering the 'foreigner,' and racism has been seen as 'part of the national psyche' (D'Onofrio and Munk, 2004; Wearing, 2016) the origins of which may be rooted in the power and status of our colonial history (Olusoga, 2016). There has long been a tradition of fear and hostility towards foreigners (Olusoga,

2016), but this appears to be growing in intensity (BAS, 2014; Wearing, 2016; Shukla, 2017).

A full discussion of the history and implications of racism and xenophobia in the UK is beyond the remit of this study, but it is appropriate to acknowledge that the principle ideas that suppose one group superior to another are likely to form some part of the devaluation process.

With this backdrop, there is also the suggestion that the socio-political landscape of austerity and the rise of right wing politics have used the immigration debate to achieve political gain, as detailed in section 9.6. Increased hardship has fostered the desire to focus on an external 'foe' and create political scapegoats for difficult political decisions (Zetter, 2006; Burnett, 2013).

REFLEXIVE NOTE

During participant review Goziem reflected on the pervasive negative ideas that exist about immigrants. He has grown up in a nation greatly affected by European migrants, who shaped their language and culture.

He indicated his suit, saying 'I'm wearing white man's clothes, speaking a white man's language.' He contrasted the welcome, and often deference, shown to British people by his countrymen compared to the welcome immigrants receive in the UK.

I was struck by the arrogance of a nation who has taken its own way of life to so many parts of the globe, yet is so fiercely afraid of the potential of others to undermine the idea of 'Britishness.'

This has become a cyclical process by which austerity increases the need for prioritisation of services and support (Duffy, 2013). In order to encourage the public to accept or endorse planned cuts to services, provision is linked to deservedness (Bambra and Smith, 2010; Valentine, 2014, Smith, 2017). To promote this message, media and politicians convey messages using fear and the distortion of facts to promote 'othering' (Briant *et al.* 2013; Philo *et al.* 2013). Support is diminished for people who are labelled

‘undeserving’, with reduced public empathy leading to increased marginalisation (Valentine, 2014). From there, further exclusion becomes easier, as the individuals have less support and their needs are less well acknowledged (Duffy, 2013; Smith, 2016).

The impact of this kind of political stance is troubling. It is frequently suggested that ‘anti-immigration elites’ from within politics, the media and public life seek to persuade the public of a heightened threat in order to justify restrictive immigration and asylum policies (Ivarsflaten, 2005). Gibney (2014) suggested that asylum policies which wield a ‘cruel power,’ such as deportation, are achieved through a conscious policy process which allows them to undertake tasks which are incompatible with respect for human rights.

This occurs through subtle shifts in what is sometimes referred to as the ‘Overton Window,’ or the window of discourse, which is the range of ideas the public will accept (Lehman, 2012). By altering public perceptions of an issue, the window can move to allow hitherto unacceptable ideas to become mainstream. The push towards increasingly Draconian measures, that might otherwise seem unacceptable, often occurs through a gradual shift in public perspectives, reflecting a shift in moral attitude, fostered by government and media output (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Gibney, 2014; McKay *et al.* 2012).

This powerful social and political discourse shapes access to rights and opportunities (Harré, 2012). The devaluing messages that surround the asylum debate shape the social ‘position’ that people seeking asylum hold, as ‘it is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others’ (Moghaddam and Harré, 2015 p. 3). This has direct moral implications, confirming personhood, identifying the value of

the 'other' and determining how (or if) their needs will be met (Slocum and Van Langenhove, 2003; Harré, 2012).

7.1.2 The impact of devaluation

As a result of austerity and changing attitudes, refugees find themselves facing increased economic hardship as a result of decreased provision, combined with the impact of negative attitudes. Their everyday hardship is reduced to a purely economic issue, debated by politicians, often without compassion, with assumptions and generalisations eroding public sympathies. This has the potential to worsen personal outcomes by feeding myths, fostering exploitation and reducing their status in society (Eaton, 2011; Zimmerman, 2011; O'Hara, 2014; Crawford *et al.* 2016).

Through 'othering' the normal moral rules of society are more readily broken, causing mainstream society to care less and act more punitively (Ebyen, 2004; Eaton, 2011). Hate crimes, though believed to be severely underreported, showed an increase of 18% in the year 2014/15 alone (Corcoran and Smit*h,* 2016), with media attitude legitimising bullying (Philo *et al.* 2013). The dynamics of marginalisation not only alter public opinion, but shape opportunities and access to services through a process called 'bordering' where boundaries develop which prevent people from equitable opportunities (Ebyen, 2004). There is a significant human cost to this, as individuals experience increased isolation, loneliness, heightened stigma and shame, increased psychological pressure, and physical and mental ill-health (Grove and Zwi, 2006; Heap, 2013; O'Hara, 2014). Alongside this lies the perceived lack of empathy from others, including those administering the welfare

system, and a lack of self-esteem fuelled by media and political rhetoric (Clery, 2012; O'Hara, 2014).

Exclusion and deprivation occur in multiple layers; people are left to face the impact of daily hardships, the challenges of austerity, reduced access to services, and hardened attitudes and discrimination (Elliott, 2014; Philo *et al.* 2013). These interconnected issues can foster exclusion, reduce outcomes and opportunities for recovery and further widen already problematic gaps in opportunity (Butler, 2012; Duffy, 2013; Elliott, 2014; O' Hara, 2014). The multi-layered and pervasive impact creates a 'durable inequality' which is both entrenched and extremely hard to escape.

7.1.2.1 On well-being

The realities of health inequalities for immigrants in the UK are widely acknowledged and incontrovertible, and is discussed in more detail in section 9.7.3. All participants identified some way in which asylum and life in the UK had had a negative impact on their health and well-being. The effects were linked to reduced levels of activity and high levels of stress.

Shahin describes how he lived a fit, active, sociable life in his home country and during his first year in the UK he barely left the house due to a mixture of fear and low mood. Ali describes the impact of constant stress; '*as a result of this kind of life I think a lot, that will have some impact on you physically and mentally.*' Tete says her biggest fears are for her and her children's health due to stress and inadequate accommodation; '*when I was coming here, I don't have any health issues, I'm a strong woman, but with the way things are going, I'm afraid about my health, I'm really worried about my health.*'

Individuals with physical ill-health include Shahin, who has back and stomach problems for which he takes medication and accesses physiotherapy, and Ali has stomach problems and epilepsy. One of the participants is HIV positive, (who I have decided not to identify to increase anonymity), and they are anxious about others discovering their condition, particularly in shared accommodation, as the condition is highly stigmatized (Bhopal, 2012). They fear returning to their home nation because health provision is less widely available, and stigma often prevents people from seeking help, for fear they will be rejected by family, friends and the wider community.

Mental ill-health is the greater of the issues raised, with all participants highlighting concerns either for themselves or other people seeking asylum. Oliver, Shahin, Alice, Freeman, Ola, Ali, Tete and Tendei have all identified their own mental health issues directly and at least half of the participants have accessed mental health services through primary or secondary care. Goziem and Sam did not specify issues, though Goziem has identified times when the pressure felt extremely hard to cope with.

Oliver describes how he is troubled by negative thoughts about past, present and future, worrying about his family and asking 'what if…' He repeatedly describes tiredness as arising from the thinking, and links it with symptoms typical of depression, including low mood, sleep disturbances, appetite loss and poor motivation (Mind, 2018). Like Oliver, Shahin also describes tiredness in in a way which is suggestive of depression; he says that this is primarily due to too much time thinking; *'Much think, think; everything is together – my life there – my life here – future – I think sometimes all tired, tired, I want to say tired. Tired, tired, tired.'* He also has problematic sleep – getting only a few hours of sleep a night, with early morning wakening. He experiences times when it is hard to go out

because he feels so awful, as a result he is isolating himself and sees very few people; '*I can't bear for people to see my horrible face.*' Ali describes the impact of the stress on his memory and concentration; '*I can't concentrate, that's how I feel these days, I just can't deal with things that get in my head. I feel busy in my head.*'

Ali, Alice and Tendei all describe times in the past where they felt suicidal; '*I was just this person who was frustrated, who was depressed, you know, who was suicidal, wanted to end her life, my life didn't mean anything*' (Alice). There were times where Alice would pray she would be hit by a car, and where Ali was so hopeless he thought about suffocating himself.

REFLEXIVE NOTE

Sam did not identify mental health issues within the interviews, and he expressed himself with great positivity, appearing to adjust very well to life in the UK.

However, I am very sad to say that prior to publishing this work Sam committed suicide.

His reasons are not known but this suggests that even where an individual has refugee status and appears to be adjusting, mental health issues remain of grave concern.

The process and experience of asylum is directly linked to mental ill-health by participants, reflecting the evidence linking asylum and mental ill-health (Preibe *et al.* 2012; Bogic *et al.* 2015; Bradby *et al.* 2015; Turrini *et al.* 2017; Taylor, 2017). Asylum '*just brought me down, I didn't even know who I was anymore, I didn't even care about my life*' (Alice). There are practical effects such as those faced by Oliver, whose status as a failed claimant adds directly to his issues. His sleep problems (initial insomnia and early morning wakening) are worsened by the practical difficulties of sleeping on different people's floors/sofas, and his appetite is further hampered as he has nowhere to prepare or cook food. There is also the impact of ongoing fear; '*I have this fear in my mind that the*

UK Border Agency always comes to people's house to take you away in the early hours of the morning, so the slightest sound I will wake up, if I hear a car I get up and I go to the window and have a look, because I'm thinking maybe it's them' (Alice). *'I'm sure they've* [the Home Office] *seen evidence, they've seen how people's lives have changed, how they've come into asylum, they're OK, by the time they come out they're mentally unstable, they've seen that, but yet still nothing has changed'* (Alice). Alice was very clear that the limited access to occupation was major feature of low mood; *'I just spent all my days in my house doing absolutely nothing, becoming very frustrated, and just basically wanting to end my life'* (Alice).

7.1.2.2 On experiences of service provision

These inequalities, which impact on health well-being and occupational performance, are furthered by the process of devaluation within health and social care provision. Inadequacies in the knowledge and skills of service providers may be part of the problem, but also lack of cultural sensitivity (Bhatia and Wallace, 2007; Robertshaw *et al.* 2017), lack of responsiveness (Glover and Evison, 2009; Fountain and Hicks, 2010), beliefs about health service entitlements (RGCP, 2017) and institutional racism (Mackenzie and Bhui, 2008; Bradby, 2010) may all shape experiences.

Despite the 'healthy migrant effect,' which suggests that migrants are frequently healthier than the host population (Gimeno-Feliu, 2015), immigrants within the UK have poorer overall outcomes in terms of physical and mental health (Jayaweera, 2014). Access to, and use of, health care is adversely affected by socio-economic circumstances

and immigration regulations (Kings Fund, 2015; Jayaweera, 2014) and immigration policy can offset the health migrant effect (Giannoni, 2016).

All participants expressed some positive experiences of healthcare, though many also highlighted concerns. Some felt that provision was too narrowly focussed, preferring the medical model over other, more culturally appropriate therapeutic options. For example, Tete said she would have liked a forum where people could explore ways of managing mental health issues, but was only offered medication; '*I told them, everything is not about medication*' (Tete). Shahin saw a psychologist, which he found unhelpful as the intervention was too structured and goal orientated; ''*You should have a goal', what you talking about – what is my goal? Six years I have been here I don't have anything to do.'* Eventually he says the psychologist told him; '*if you don't have a goal don't come in.'*

In addition, there was often a sense that their health concerns were not being taken seriously by professionals. Shahin found that doctors assume he has little knowledge of health and health care, and that he can be seen as demanding, explaining that you don't get help, but '*If you ask for too much they think you are being selfish and impolite.'* Tete reported that she had sometimes felt unheard; '*I feel like I'm not a human being anymore… it's like they don't care.'*

Ali also described a culture of disbelief in health care, and during his participant review he showing me a letter from a hospital doctor, to his G.P., regarding a diagnosed neurological condition which Ali has had since his teens. The letter contained a number of value judgements and language that suggested that the author disputed and disbelieved Ali. This did not follow the typical written style I would anticipate seeing in a

letter between NHS professionals. Ali stated; '*if the doctor would come to my home and see me without medication he would see straight away that I tell the truth.*' I perceived this letter as an expression of the culture of disbelief and institutionalised racism I have witnessed in the NHS provision and health service inequalities of many of my clients (McKenzie and Bhui,2007; Fanin, 2017).

Health and social care provision may struggle to provide the culturally competent service that best meets the needs of people during asylum (Beagan, 2015; George *et al.* 2015). The wider reduction in social spending is acknowledged as having a disproportionate impact on immigrants (O'Hara, 2012; Duffy, 2013), and other essential support services, such as refugee charities, are eroded by reduced funding and charitable donations (Cahalane, 2017).

To summarise, refugees and people seeking asylum are faced with a set of circumstances where their worth and value is often challenged and their personhood undermined, which links directly with reduced value in the eyes of others and reduced opportunity. Often refugees have limited ways to demonstrate worth through roles or life performance, and their individual qualities are masked by stereotyping and tropes used to generalise and vilify. My sense from the data gathered in this study is that asylum directly strips away value and worth, and that the occupational pursuits chosen by participants reflect their desire to reignite their sense of their value.

THE GIFT

You came to the party and you brought a gift
It is beautiful,
Wrapped,
Tied in a bow.

Perhaps the paper has got a little torn, perhaps the colour isn't right.
But it is a gift.

It is precious and took you a lifetime to create it, choose it, make it.
It wasn't cheap and it wasn't easy.

Here, at the party, you present your gift
Hold it before you, offering it with generosity, love and hope.
The host looks away, embarrassed.

Inside the packaging, worn on the journey, is something beautiful.
If the host will just look, open it, take a peek.

It is something useful, productive.
It should be taken from its box, shown off, shared, celebrated, loved.

You came to the party and you brought a gift
If we don't open it, we don't see the contents.
It is our loss.
We can't partake in its beauty or its usefulness.
But neither can you.

Claire Smith (2015)*

*I wrote this poem as part of my reflexive process, whilst reflecting on the negativity around migrants and the lack of recognition of worth.

7.2 HUMAN WORTH AND VALUE

I recall that many years ago someone said to me, 'people are people, wherever they are from.' It seems such a simple phrase, but it has stayed with me because I am often aware of the lack of personhood afforded to many marginalised groups – including refugees. Somehow, being born in another country can be enough to reduce your needs to an economic burden, a social nuisance or a potential risk. I have seen through the course of my work that people *are* people, their lives just as important as my own, their hopes and dreams just as vivid. The injustice of seeing people as less worthy due to their status as 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' is enormous, and it is the role of occupation within this devaluation that I intend to show during the course of this discussion.

It occurred to me, in approaching this subject, that the worth ascribed to people by others is a somewhat amorphous idea. Indeed, Google 'human worth' and you will find that a human is valued at $160 in terms of its base elements (Data Genetics, 2013), their value based on lifestyle factors can be calculated by questionnaire (my own is just under $2 million) (humanforsale, 2017), and that their insurance value lies at around £129,000 (Kingsbury, 2008).

Of course, when we talk of human worth we usually acknowledge that our meaning is less reductionist than the value of its components, and we know that we could not put a monetary value on our life, or the lives of those we love. I was intrigued by the idea that our value could be calculated by questions about our gender, educational history or alcohol consumption (Humanforsale, 2017). However, I wondered how the value of

human beings is usually determined, and how many lives are judged on the basis of arbitrary perceptions of their worth.

Whilst my own price allocation might be affected by my age, or my level of exercise, I know that external validating factors such as family, education and work mean that I don't *really* need to question my value. However, if I found myself in a place where my family and community were not there to support me; if I couldn't work and my qualifications became worthless; or my communication skills were compromised by a language barrier, I wonder if I would still feel so secure in my worth?

7.2.1 Ascribing Human Worth and Personhood

The way in which we determine the value of others is highly complex, but include regard for the individual on the basis of the roles they adopt (either for the status of that role or their performance of it), or for them as an individual, based on the qualities they display (Dillon and Respect Zalta, 2014). In addition, there can be regard shown to people simply because they are people, demonstrating a moral responsibility and set of rights associated with 'personhood' (Foster and Herring, 2017). Personhood reflects this 'intrinsic' view of worth, based on the idea that a life has worth because it is a life, rather than the 'instrumental' view that worth is based on what a person does with one's life (Armstrong, 2007).

Debating personhood would be a thesis in its own right, however, the connection is relevant as ascribing personhood involves multiple strands, such as philosophical, legal and political concepts such as citizenship, equality and liberty; and the rights,

protections, privileges, responsibilities and legal liability associated with it (Dillon and Respect Zalta, 2014; Foster and Herring, 2017).

Personhood is relevant to the needs of refugees, who have often found their rights and personhood compromised in their country of origin. It seems beyond debate that refugees would meet any definition of 'person,' yet their personhood is often socio-politically denied or challenged in terms of rights and opportunities (Mauthe and Firth, 2013; Bhimji, 2016). Even though 'human rights' are considered universal in their importance, their application is not ubiquitous (Penn, 2008; Bhimji, 2016; Foster and Herring, 2017).

There is a general recognition of a human rights agenda by those who debate refugee needs, however, whilst human rights have been widely applied to the legal and practical needs of refugees, this sometimes falls short of capturing abstract and subtle issues such as the impact of age or gender (Firth and Mauthe, 2013). Personhood as a concept has little acknowledgment within asylum research; however, it can reflect what happens to individuals in terms of their social positionality and opportunity (Mauthe and Firth, 2013; Harre and Moghaddam, 2015; Bhimji, 2016). Personhood could help form a more robust understanding of asylum lives (Mauthe and Firth, 2013), and the full challenge of establishing worth and status during asylum (Bhimji, 2016). As a result, Sydnor (2010) calls for a re-conceptualizing of forced displacement that establishes the initiative and agency of refugees as persons.

Personhood underpins the debate about the 'moral obligation' to respect all persons, regardless of merit, and how that can be reflected in their opportunities and treatment.

The concept is complex and controversial, due to the challenge of identifying what constitutes a 'person.' There are debates between academics with differing foci about whether a person is a person because they have human DNA, or because they have cognitive ability, because they are socially acknowledged by others, because they are sentient or because they have a degree of capacity (Foster and Herring, 2017). As a result of these levels of debate, personhood is often mired in controversy around issues such as slavery, foetal rights and animal welfare (Kurki and Pietrzykowski, 2017). Charles Taylor's definition is widely used:

> *A person is a being with a certain moral status, or a bearer of rights. But underlying the moral status, as its condition, are certain capacities. A person is a being who has a sense of self, has a notion of the future and the past, can hold values, make choices; in short, can adopt life-plans. At least, a person must be the kind of being who is in principle capable of all this, however damaged these capacities may be in practice.*
>
> (Charles Taylor, 1985, p. 97)

The implications of acknowledging personhood are far reaching. Personhood is multi-layered, and explored through three dimensions; how I am to myself (selfhood), how I am to you (autonomy) and how you are to me (dignity) (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, 2015). This recognises the interplay between selfhood, autonomy and dignity, all three of which are undermined by the multiple discriminations faced during asylum (Firth and Mauthe, 2013).

In acknowledging the often disabling and devaluing labels used to categorise refugees (Zetter, 2006), personhood has the potential to change not only the views of others, but the views of refugees themselves (Syndor, 2011). Refugees with a sense of their own personhood can become 'purposive actors with the capacity for agency' as well as being seen as part of our moral community (Syndor, 2011, p.54)

In addition to how others ascribe value to an individual, the individual must ascribe their own worth through self-esteem (Crocker and Knight, 2005). There is little evidence exploring issues of self-esteem within refugee populations, but there is some recognition that self-worth is associated with identity, often as a result of labelling and interactions with others (Verkuyten and Kekuee, 2001) (to be discussed in section 7.4).

During asylum, people can find their self-esteem reduced by the practicality of chronic hardship and limited opportunity, their autonomy directly undermined by policy and their dignity eroded by hostile attitudes (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, 2015). It may also be that occupation is part of the dynamic of 'contingent self-esteem', where the individual's own sense of self-worth is determined by external factors such as the approval of others, social comparison or particular events (Knee *et al.* 2008). Contingents may vary, but can be driven by things like relationships or perceived success (Knee *et al.* 2008; Schone *et al.* 2015). However, limited occupational opportunities may well also undermine self-esteem by limiting positive interactions, integration and means of preserving identity.

Self-esteem and occupation may also be interconnected, as the lower an individual's self-esteem the harder it is for them to engage occupationally (Greenhaus, 1971; Greenhaus and Simon, 1976; Lancaster and Mitchell, 2008), and the less occupational opportunities

they have the less they have the means for creating positive internal self-worth (Verkuyten and Kekuee, 2001; Lancaster and Mitchell, 2008). Whilst Maslow suggested that the underpinning human needs were essential before the individual could progress to meet higher needs (Maslow, 1943), some refugee agencies challenge this by suggesting that some of the higher needs are a greater priority to the individual (Wordsworth, 2017). Going hungry, for example, was mentioned in passing by a few participants in this study, but the desire to be loved or the need to feel productive was mentioned by all. Wordsworth (2017) suggests that Maslow needs to be reinterpreted to consider things less sequentially, recognizing that if we focus only on meeting basic needs before considering other levels we are failing to see what the individual finds most meaningful, or what is essential to their sense of worth or esteem. Maslow's highest levels were all about meaning, dignity, purpose, identity, legacy, and faith (Wordsworth 2017) – the very things that create and are created by our sense of worth.

On acknowledging an individual's worth and personhood through selfhood, autonomy and dignity, we can then consider what we value in a person, how we identify their worth and recognise their qualities.

7.2.2 Worth Through Virtue

Human worth is often associated with qualities that are respected in others, such as morality, reason and relatability (Dillon and Respect Zalta, 2014), and intrinsically linked with ideas of virtue, or moral excellence (Russell and Daniel, 2013). This suggests that people value others who they see as having a socially, morally or intellectually superior

character (Hursthouse, 2013), suggestive of an overall 'good human' who can demonstrate their virtue (Russell and Daniel, 2013).

Worth is connected with virtue because virtues are an expression of higher values; a virtue is said to be more than simply a tendency to act in a particular way, as it is an entrenched or habituated trait (Armstrong, 2007; Hursthouse, 2013). Virtue has been defined as 'any psychological process that enables a person to think and act so as to benefit him- or herself and society' (McCullough and Snyder, 2000, p. 1). The focus of many virtues is on being 'other regarding', undertaken not for oneself, but for others (Armstrong, 2007). A virtue is not reflected by a single action, but by a multilayered disposition reflected though multiple actions, emotions, emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations and sensibilities (Hursthouse, 2013; Russell and Daniel, 2013; Kraut, 2016).

The concept of virtue is underpinned by three key ideas: *arete, phronesis* and *eudaimonia*. *Arete* is the concept of excellence, *phronesis* is practical or moral wisdom and *eudaimonia* is the idea of human flourishing (McDowell, 1979; Hursthouse, 2013; Swanton, 2005; Kraut, 2016). The concepts of *arete, phronesis* and *eudaimonia* reflect the breadth and scope of thinking on virtue and the forms of virtue that are prized by others. The idea that people can express levels of excellence in practical and moral terms and live a good life that allows them (and others) to flourish is embedded in occupational therapy philosophy and occupational science beliefs (Hayward and Taylor, 2011; Royeen *et al.* 2017).

Philosophy connects the idea of virtue with the fundamentals of purpose, for example, Aristotle says that the virtue of a knife is to cut, so this would mean that a virtuous knife

would cut well. Therefore, the study of virtue seeks to understand the purpose and meaning of human beings in much the same way we understand the purpose of the knife (Korsgaard, 2008; Aristotle, 2009).

There has been much reflection on the notion of virtue by philosopher's past and present. There have been several attempts to capture which virtues make a good person, and which virtues need to be exercised in order for a person to be seen as a morally good person. These including Socrates' belief that knowledge is the only virtue (Pangle, 2014), the four cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, justice and temperance) based on the teachings of Plato (McDowell, 1979; Figgis, 2011; Plato, 2018) and Aristotle's list of eighteen virtues, which included moral and intellectual virtues (Aristotle, 2009).

Aristotle introduced this more comprehensive vision of a virtuous life and identified *eudemonia* as the proper goal of human life (Aristotle, 2009; Pojman and Fieser; 2009; Hurtshouse, 2013). He believed that proper and nurturing activity in life is achieved by the practice of the following moral virtues:

1. **Courage** in the face of fear

2. **Temperance** in the face of pleasure and pain

3. **Liberality** with wealth and possessions

4. **Magnificence** with great wealth and possessions

5. **Magnanimity** with great honors

6. **Proper ambition** with normal honors

7. **Truthfulness** with self-expression

8. **Wittiness** in conversation

9. **Friendliness** in social conduct

10. **Modesty** in the face of shame or shamelessness

11. **Righteous indignation** in the face of injury (Aristotle, 2009).

In addition, Aristotle identified three Intellectual Virtues – *Nous, Episteme* and *Sophia. Nous*, or intelligence, is the basic understanding which allows human beings to think rationally; *Episteme*, or scientific understanding and reasoning and *Sophia*, or theoretical wisdom (Aristotle, 2009; Strathern and Keeble, 2013). Aristotle also identified the additional traits of *Gnome* (good sense) *Synesis* (understanding), *Phronesis* (practical wisdom) and Techne (art, craftsmanship) (Strathern and Keeble, 2013). A number of these traits could be expressed occupationally. Virtues can be experienced as what Aristotle said was a 'golden mean' on a continuum between two vices (Aristotle, 2009; Kraut, 2016). The polarised vices are a deficiency and an excess, and the virtue is the central point reflecting balance and optimum – for example, the virtue of self-control is the midpoint between the deficiency of indecisiveness and the excess of impulsiveness (Strathern and Keeble, 2013; Kraut, 2016).

The desire to capture the benefits of virtue has been ongoing, and the positive psychology movement have returned to the idea of virtue to connect it with well-being. Segilman (2002) identified three paths to happiness, described as PERMA, including a *pleasant life*, savouring positive emotions through relationships and activities; a *good life*,

through flow activities and a level of occupational engagement and a *meaningful life*, through belonging, meaning and purpose. He believed these to capture the pursuit of authentic happiness and well-being, which he believed added to the dominant theories on well-being (Segilman, 2002). These traditionally include *hedonism*, which is the search for the best balance of pleasure over pain; *desire theories*, seeking to satisfy preferences or desires and *objective list theories,* the achievement of objectively worthwhile pursuits (Segilman and Royzman, 2003; Crisp, 2017).

In one of the most comprehensive contemporary explorations of virtue (Shryack *et al.* 2010), Peterson and Segilman (2004) sought to identify 24 character strengths and virtues that are valued across history and across many cultures. They identified categories following the themes of courage, justice, humanity, temperance, transcendence, and wisdom (Peterson and Segilman, 2004), often further reduced to *Cognitive Strengths, Temperance Strengths, and Social Strengths* (Shryack *et al.* 2010). Their model, called Virtue in Action (VIA) focused on a greater understanding of human flourishing and *eudemonia* (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and included:

Courage: bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality and zest.

Justice: citizenship, fairness and leadership.

Humanity: love, kindness, and social intelligence.

Temperance: forgiveness and mercy, humility, prudence and self-control.

Transcendence: the appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality.

Wisdom: creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective, innovation.

(Peterson and Segilman, 2004).

These virtues were determined through an extensive review of existing literature and professional consensus (Dahlsgaard *et al.* 2005; Shryack *et al.* 2010), and VIA is widely used as a foundation for contemporary debate on virtues. Through these virtues, Peterson and Segilman (2004) identify the potential gains in terms of well-being, and connections are frequently drawn between well-being, happiness and virtue (Haybron, 2007). There is evidence that the character strengths highlighted in VIA are positively linked to well-being and life satisfaction (Park *et al.* 2006; Park and Peterson, 2008; Wood *et al.* 2011; Forest *et al.* 2012). There seems to be a path connecting the underpinning moral values of the individual, the choices they make in deciding to express these values and the outcomes for themselves and others.

Whilst reading about Peterson and Segilman's work on virtue, I was particularly struck by the resonance of their categories of virtue with the messages I heard in the participant interviews. The language felt very familiar, perhaps a little more accessible and contemporary than Aristotle, and I had a sense of these virtues as being very prevalent in the data I had gathered. The more time I spent 'indwelling' the more of these virtues were surfacing. I had begun by seeing some elements as guiding the choice of occupation (particularly in seeking out altruistic occupations, described in section 7.6.4), but the more I looked to the virtues the more I could hear them as a primary driver in many aspects of the individuals' daily lives, and inherently linked with expressions of self worth.

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

The first time I recall noticing virtue explicitly during the research study was when I interviewed Sam.

He explained how, when incarcerated in prison in Sudan a friend paid a bribe to secure his release. It transpired that this was a man he had only just met, who had been similarly imprisoned. I was struck by how generous the man must be to use his money to help Sam, who was ostensibly a stranger.

Sam seemed puzzled, explaining that this was culturally typical. He said 'If I have a hundred pound I will not put that hundred pound in my pocket' indicating how he would want to use his money to help others. He gave a number of examples of times when he, or others had done something similar.

My response was to feel both inspired and ashamed by such generosity, often amongst people who have very little.

Here I will briefly reflect the presence of Peterson and Segilman's (2004) list of virtues in the participant's experiences. Some of the issues will be revisited later in the thesis, but here I will establish the broader importance of virtue in their lives.

Courage

The idea of courageousness incorporates bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality and zest (Peterson and Segilman, 2004). I see evidence of great courage in the accounts given by participants. They have shown bravery through their willingness to take the enormous risk to leave their homes and take perilous journeys. They show persistence and resilience in their capacity to endure the multiple challenges of life under the asylum process.

Most participants acknowledged periods of '*why me?*' (Ola), but a desire not to give in to it: '*OK turn it around: this issue of depression… is as a result of how you cope*' (Ola). The

importance of being seen to cope was also prevalent; *'I am unhappy but it doesn't mean the whole world should know that I am unhappy'* (Tendei).

There was a strong sense of putting the past behind, for example, Ola felt that removing herself from the threats she had faced at home allowed her to feel greater courage: '*sitting down in a different environment makes me say, OK now it's gone, it's done, you can't help it – now that you are in a different place, nobody can attack you.'* Several participants described the need to 'put on a brave face,' focusing on new opportunities or the benefits of positivity; *'You just have to somehow sum up courage, you know, and continue, just continue fighting'* (Freeman).

The capacity to persevere begins to dwindle over time; '*I can't wait six years more, ten years more, five years more. When I get to grandfather I can get papers? You say OK, do again, do again, no problem. How many times, how many times?'* (Shahin), but all but the longest here (Shahin and Oliver) showed a desire to endure*; 'You have to keep on, don't give up, that's what I always say, I say don't give up, don't give up… it's not where you fall down, it's where you lift yourself up, take up the next step'* (Freeman). This made me recollect a client I saw many years ago who, faced with hardships, would pinch her skin to indicate the colour and say *'We are African, we get on with it.'*

Their integrity is shown in their desire to be seen as decent, honest people, and to de-bunk the myth of the 'bogus asylum seeker.' They show vitality and zest through their ongoing optimism, energy and vigour.

The energy and vitality shown by participants in their engagement in daily activities, was often remarkable. The most active participants describe the desire to seek out activities;

Sam described being *'hungry for opportunities, always looking for more.'* Goziem identified multiple activities that he and his family engage in, but was clear that he would like to do more; *'I mean, we are willing to do more, if we have the opportunity.'*

Justice

The idea of justice reflects the concepts of citizenship, fairness and leadership (Peterson and Segilman, 2004).

The nature of citizenship is complex in this context, as people seeking asylum do not hold citizenship in the UK, and may be generally stateless (Hovy, 2010). However, in the sense that citizenship may include activities reflecting 'civic engagement' (Terkla and O'Leary, 2015) and 'good civil behaviour' (Heater, 2004), there is certainly evidence of the desire to contribute to citizenship through their actions.

Freeman, Goziem, Sam and Alice are the most directly active in community work, providing voluntary services and playing an active role in social support networks. Freeman has received a number of awards for his community work, which are obvious external validators; *'I got an award last week as community champion, then last year I won the Star Award.'*

Fairness was frequently discussed, with some recognition of the UK as a fair society, where Sam and Ali described experiencing less discrimination than they had faced elsewhere. However, the unfairness of the asylum system was widely discussed, more details of which are presented in section 2.4. The general value of morality was noted, with the importance of acting on one's conscience, following patterns of moral behavior established by family or faith.

Humanity

The most prevalent virtue expressed in the interviews – humanity – encompasses love, kindness, and social intelligence (Peterson and Segilman, 2004).

The value of love, friendship and social connectedness gained through relationships was central to each participant; *'it is a powerful thing, being part of a community, part of a family'* (Sam). Being apart from family was a common theme for all; *'The first couple of years it was the hardest because I was thinking and missing the family, mum and brothers and sisters and friends and everything – It's just hard for any individuals to be away miles and miles from home'* (Ali). In all cases there was experience of being part of a large extended family, with multiple strands of support, the loss of which is a major adjustment. There was some discussion of the practical helping role of family, for example with child care, but the primary reflection was one of loss, with Sam fearing he might not see his ageing parents again, and Ali tearfully saying; *'I want nothing more than to see my mother again, just for one day.'*

Those who had close relationships in the UK expressed feelings of support and companionship. Ola and Goziem, as husband and wife, talked at length (and independently) about the value of their relationship. Ola frequently spoke about *'standing together,'* reflecting on how they work together to cope with day to day life and provide the best for their children. Similarly, Goziem reflects that being together means coping together; *'We came for a purpose, I had a reason for coming, and the same reason why she came, we are here to save our heads, and whatever situation we find ourselves we have to manage it together.'*

Relationships were a central feature of the individual's experience, providing comfort; *'it's really nice just even my little child giving me a hug, it means so much, you know, it really does'* (Alice), joy *'It gives us purpose, those are the only sorts of joy we have, so we don't really care about what the Home Office or whatever are doing'* (Goziem) and purpose; *'if I'd been these eight years without a wife and kids, then I would say I've lived a wasted life'* (Goziem).

Temperance

Temperance reflects forgiveness and mercy, humility, prudence and self-control (Peterson and Segilman, 2004). This was an unexpected feature of the research for me, and the reflexive notes made show how often I was struck by participant's modesty and forgiveness of others.

A number of participants discussed experiences of direct hostility towards them, including stone throwing, broken windows and verbal abuse; *'people opening their window and shouting, go home, they start swearing 'You asylum seeker, go home, this and that, throw stones'* (Goziem); *'sometimes they can be very unpleasant to you, yes, by calling you names and the general terms used most of the time is calling us Paki… calling that I'm black, refugee, what am I doing in this country, why I not go back'* (Ali).

Despite finding this intimidating and distressing, the behaviour was met with surprising levels of acceptance and tolerance. There was a tendency to minimize hostility; *'I pretend as if nothing happened, I said 'Oh this one is a minor thing, let me just forget about that,' You cannot take everything, every little thing and then add it on to your problems'* (Tete). Sam and Ali both made excuses for behaviour of those who abuse them, putting it down

to mental health problems, drug and alcohol issues, age and low intelligence; '*I don't take it personally because I know they are young, that's how much they can think… you don't consider them as full, like conscious people'* (Sam). Ali attributes his tolerance to his mother, who always told him to '*smile and say thank you to people who make trouble for him.'*

Both Goziem and Freeman had been particularly persistent in countering negative behaviours by local people within his community. Freeman said; **'***I wanted to know my neighbours, so like I went knocking at the doors saying, 'Hi, Good Morning'...he just slammed the door in my face.'* He found that with perseverance he managed to break down barriers; '*we are now like, living like a big family, you know, you don't know much about me and if I don't know much about you as well, we'll always be quarrelling, but if you tried to know me, I try to know you, then we'll be walking hand in hand.'* Goziem felt that his family's positive presence in the community helped others to see him as worth getting to know; '*so gradually we became friends with the community, so those bad things don't happen to us again.'*

Another feature was the humble and modest desires shown by participants. Shahin, for example, says he wishes for '*normal things, I didn't want anything more – just like a normal man.'* He says he has always aspired to a simple life – he says he is '*not a greedy man*' and wants only '*enough money, just little. Money for life, not life for money.'* Goziem would like a little luxury, having had a high standard of living in his home country, but is willing to work hard for '*nice things'; I will work very hard...I'd be a very good contributor to the tax system, NI* [national insurance] *because I will work.'*

Transcendence

Transcendence reflects the appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality (Peterson and Segilman, 2004).

There is little beauty in a life during asylum, little chance for people to engage with beautiful things and beautiful places. I thought of Ali, who during the interview showed me photographs of the spectacular mountains around his home in Northern Iraq. It made me think of the numerous people who have talked of the beauty of their home; of lush greenery, imposing mountains and wide skies. Britain is undoubtedly a beautiful country, but the best of it is rarely seen by refugees who are dispersed to the poorest and most deprived urban areas (JSNA, 2016). This can mean that people lose the beauty of home, without regaining it here, adding to their experiences of cultural bereavement (Bhugra and Becker, 2005).

Despite many hardships, gratitude was a feature for every participant. There was gratitude to the Government, key asylum support agencies and local churches. Health and social care services (particularly the specialised General Practice services for refugees and people seeking asylum) were valued for practical and emotional help. They identified good services such as counsellors and health visitors; '*I would never ever forget* [my therapist], *she has always been there, and helped me a lot, I still remember every single time I would come along…I can't think of anybody else who has been so helpful in my life*' (Ali). Many participants identified the kindnesses shown by people from local churches, sometimes for spiritual support, sometimes practical. Ola felt the help she receives is all

God given; *'He will not come down but he can also send somebody, touching somebody's heart, 'Oh, let me aid this person.'*

Hope was present for some, but showed signs of dwindling over time. There was a tentativeness about expressing hope, and a fear that the things they had hoped for were lost. The desire for a *'normal life, just normal'* (Shahin) was common. No one expressed the need for particular gains; '*I asked for freedom, I asked for a future, so I've got everything. So everything that I get more than that is extra'* (Sam).

Wisdom

Wisdom is shown through creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective and innovation (Peterson and Segilman, 2004).

There was evidence of innovation and entrepreneurialism in many participants, who had managed the demands of multiple jobs and businesses in their home country, and sought out occupations here in the UK, despite the restrictions (as will be detailed later in this chapter). However, the strongest aspect of wisdom lay in the love of learning. Studying was evidently highly prized as an occupation, particularly by the men. Goziem says an education is the basis of '*pride, confidence and everything, learning make a man, a proper education, a complete man… you might be rich, fine, but when you are not educated, you are still a nobody.'* Alice reflected on coming into the UK education system in her teens, where she was amazed to find children who didn't wish to go to school. She explained that schooling is valued very highly in Africa, so the idea of wasting an opportunity for an education was beyond her.

These many expressions of virtue seem a very stark contrast with the public image of people seeking asylum. The systematic devaluation of refugees has become ubiquitous and overshadows any individual efforts made to live a 'good life.' Below is an acknowledgement of the process and impact of the pervasive devaluation of people during asylum.

7.3 Occupation and Asylum

I believe that asylum experiences and processes directly undermines a person's sense of worth, and the denial of occupational opportunities compounds that. I see occupation as having the potential to either continue the process of devaluation, or help the individual to find meaning and demonstrate their worth.

As occupation is believed to have transformative potential (Townsend, 1997), then it follows that a significant lack of opportunity to engage occupationally will be negatively transformative. It is clear that occupational opportunities are hampered by migration, and actively denied by UK asylum policy. There has been recognition that these practical barriers have a wide-reaching impact, with individuals seeking asylum in the UK experiencing high levels of occupational disruption and deprivation (Hocking, 2012; WFOT, 2012; Huot *et al.,* 2013; 2016).

7.3.1 Asylum and occupational opportunities

As highlighted in the literature review, occupation is shaped by asylum. The limited access to occupation faced by people during (and often after) asylum is significant, and

even activities that are available tend to be low-demand occupations with limited gains (Jonsson and Persson 2006; Kronenberg, 2011).

All participants were subject to limited occupations; for some this began in their home country, for others it was a feature of asylum in the UK. Opportunities had been restricted by a range of political, social or economic barriers which created feelings of powerlessness; '*sometimes the situation and circumstances put you in a position where you don't need to be, or you don't want, but that's life and the situation*' (Ali).

In their home nations, all participants faced some form of restrictions, including poverty, restricted access to education and discrimination. For example, Sam described governmental controls on work and education; '*there's no such thing where you can choose where you want to be,*' and Tendei was prevented from going to school from a young age when her father was in dispute with the political leader. Goziem explained how University places were influenced by money and power; '[people] *can't go into University, not because they're not intelligent, but because* [they] *are not rich enough… and if my sponsor is the Mayor of this town and your sponsor is a nobody, I'll go in first, you understand?'* (Goziem). Goziem, Shahin and Sam all spoke of how their Governments sought to undermine education in order to limit challenges from within the population; '*they don't want educated people… they always challenge them, so they don't want them*' (Sam). Access and opportunities were also shaped by discrimination, and individuals had experienced discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, faith and gender; '*even if you are progressing every day, even if you are working very hard to get somewhere, it is always something that puts you down*' (Sam); '*Oh, there's discrimination, serious discrepancy in the category of people and what you do*' (Goziem).

Within the UK, the limitations of asylum create circumstances where there are long periods of unpredictability and passive waiting (Huot *et al.*, 2013; 2016; Rotter, 2015). This period of waiting felt very significant to many of the participants, with people talking of *'lost years'* (Oliver). Ali says; *'going through an asylum procedure, it can be very, very hard and traumatic… because of the waiting, that you have to wait just long, that has some impact on your mental health.'* The passivity and lack of control reduces the sense of adult capacity and manhood, and Oliver says this makes him; *'a boy* [I] *feel like I'm 10 years old.'*

The evidence in this study reflects how restrictions grow over time, both as a result of internal factors such as stamina, energy and motivation, and external factors such as policy restrictions and poverty. The impact is cumulative, and Tete describes it as being *'pushed down… it's getting me down slowly, it's getting me down.'* Before her positive decision, Alice felt similarly; *'there's so much that I could take, I can't handle this anymore, this is the end of it.'* As the years progress positivity becomes harder; *'5 years more, 6 years more, 4 years more? I'm tired you know? You can wait for something maybe one years – I make for myself a plan, yeah? What can I do… years and no opportunities'* (Shahin). Several participants reflect on the strength of character required to cope; 'mo*st people wouldn't stand, most people wouldn't stand it, you know, if you have a weaker mind you wouldn't stand it, not in a year - make you just want to disappear, you know'* (Freeman).

For Shahin the wait has been interminable, and has had a major impact on his occupational opportunities; *'I can't do anything'* and when asked what he would like to do he shook his head and said; '*when you don't have anything to eat how are you talking about a nice cappuccino?'* As Goziem is the oldest participant he experiences the wait

slightly differently; *'we are aging, just imagine, take eight years out of my age, and I don't know when this will come to an end.'* He and I are of similar ages, so he notes the length of my career and my likely pension arrangements, *'OK, I'm 45, I don't have any pension, I'm not even thinking of one, so you see the difference?'*

The passage of time is often experienced passively, and Alice who later found active ways of coping, felt that the earlier three or four years were spent *'just waiting and wasting time.'* Ali spends a lot of time thinking about what has happened and what will come; *'I will be thinking about most of it, like the past, now, future, because I feel like, you know, I've wasted my six years of my life in the past because I've not done much, not achieving much.'*

7.3.2 Keeping busy with purpose

The phrase 'keeping busy' was used by every participant, with levels of activity ranging from those who have very little to keep them busy, to those who could describe themselves as very busy. For example, Goziem describes the mixture of individual and family activities he and Ola are engaged with, including volunteering for charities and their church, childcare and activities for the children and three different education courses to help them develop in IT and English (even though they are English speakers). This drive to participate was so strong that even seemingly unnecessary activities, such as the English course, was seen as valuable as a means of keeping busy.

Sam, Alice, Goziem, Ola and Freeman all mentioned the value of having a work-like structure in their week, gained through volunteering. Freeman describes his day; *'I always leave my house 9 o'clock in the morning, I'm always out until maybe late, I don't like to sit in*

the house doing nothing.' Ola likens this to how the structure of school helps her children cope with asylum; *'you know for kids, I believe they adjust fast because they go to school now, they're busy, they're always busy, so they don't really get it.'*

However, all participants faced a general lack of occupational opportunity; *'I couldn't do anything, I was just at home 24/7, frustrated, depressed, and that's enough for somebody to want to end their life, thinking all the things that you've been through'* (Alice). This limited range of occupations was common, '*if I'm at home I just sit down watching the TV*' (Ola); '*just living on the bed doing nothing or cleaning*' (Tendei) or '*lots of time spent doing nothing*' (Oliver); '*just eat, sleep, TV, walk*' (Ali). The lack of choice and opportunity creates what Tendei calls; *'a small life compared to what I was doing before.'*

All participants mentioned that some tasks, like housework, provided little satisfaction, and were a means of spending time without much sense of purpose. Oliver said that housework was often the only thing he could find to do, and as he is homeless he does it to help and contribute in other people's houses when they let him stay. All the women identified that domestic chores were not enough to keep them feeling occupied; *'I think maybe, oh this thing is dirty, I try to clean it up, by the time it's clean, what's left to clean?'* (Ola).

Ola captures the need to go beyond simply 'keeping busy' when she says *'not only keeping busy, but keeping busy with purpose.'* Participants identified activities as a means of promoting a sense of purpose in a range of ways. They identified the desire to feel they were still moving forward with their lives at a time when they might otherwise feel their lives have been halted.

There is frustration at untapped potential and loss of essential skills; '*Sometimes you feel like handicapped… you have all these ideas, you know, you want to work, but the system doesn't allow you*' (Freeman); '*I have no opportunity to do what I should be doing… do what I am trained to be – what I love…I can't practice, and the* [skills] *are fading away gradually… all the methods I'm forgetting, information that I don't use regularly*' (Goziem).

All participants acknowledged that inactivity and under-occupation were negative and impacted upon their well-being. Goziem describes having too much time on his hands as '*the Devil's Workshop,*' saying that people who sit back and wait for things to happen will '*grow fat and depressed.*' Ola also acknowledges that lack of occupation creates time to ruminate; '*I was sitting inside on my own, thinking of the situation, when the kids have gone to school, nothing to do, nobody to talk to… it makes me feel uncomfortable, I feel bad, I feel rejected*.'

In addition, opportunities appear to worsen over time, and there was an apparent correlation between the access to occupation, length of time in the UK, asylum status and being in the country with family. Those with the least to do appear to be individuals who have been here the longest, are here alone and have failed claims, such as Oliver and Shahin, both of whom described limited levels of activity and lots of time alone. Men and women appeared to be fairly equal in their activity levels, but perhaps with slightly different foci, as the women had more family-focused tasks, and the men more on work and education.

In addition to the restrictions of policy, the practical hardship of living on asylum adds another layer of constraint; '*nothing, I don't have nothing. I don't have enough for myself many times, sometimes I haven't penny for eat*' (Shahin). Oliver receives his only support from a local charity, '*£5 from the church, they give £5 and food…I don't take* [food] '*cos I don't have place to cook.*' Ali and Tendei both have an 'Azure card,' this cashless system, which is clearly linked with stigma, discrimination and hardship (Reynolds, 2010; Carnet, 2014). Azure makes some everyday tasks harder, like making a phone calls or paying for transport; '*not having a little bit of cash in your hand that you can use for little things, let's say emergency*' (Tendei).

REFLEXIVE NOTE

During the process of the research I was struck by the response to the provision of vouchers as a gift to participants. They were presented with a £20 high street voucher for every session attended, in gratitude for giving their time to the research.

In every instance there was an initial refusal of the voucher, and the participants needed to be encouraged to take it. They were keen to indicate that they did not participate to gain a reward, but later several people shared how valuable the £20 had been. Tete said she had been able to stock up on nappies and wipes and Ola and Goziem used it to buy small Christmas gifts; 'it's good to be able to give, not just be the one always needing and taking' (Ola).

I was humbled by the generosity and selflessness shown, and felt a sense of personal shame at how hard their lives are if such a small amount of money made such a difference to them.

For participants with children, money was a more pressing concern, as they felt they were often unable to meet their children's needs due to financial hardship. Tete identifies that there have been many times where she has gone hungry to try to give her children a little extra, and that her eldest asks her for things she cannot provide, like a television; '*I think about the money that they give me, if I buy a TV from that she will not*

eat.' Goziem and Ola highlight the pressure to provide opportunities such as school trips and football practice for their four children; '*at the end of the day we end up squeezing ourselves, you know, to pay some money'* (Goziem). Tete expends a lot of energy looking for free, accessible activities; *'because when she is inside the bedroom, her toys is in the bedroom, the three of us, just imagine, a bed, a cot and all the toys, everything, we do everything in the bedroom.'* She described the guilt she feels in seeing how much harder her child's life is here; *'back at home they were free…I cannot say we were rich but at least my daughter she can play around, it was all open.'*

There was a clear sense that keeping busy had multiple benefits. Tendei uses the phrase *'keeping busy is keeping well,'* as inactivity gives her extra time thinking, which brings with it feelings of depression. Ola similarly says that if she does not maintain activities during the day she struggles with too much time thinking; *'It's no use sitting down, the issues are still there.'* The more purposeful the activity was, the more it helped them to cope, for example, Ola states that keeping busy helps avoid negative thoughts and sleep better; *'So if I'm not busy I'm just… you start thinking… If I've been in, doing nothing, I've got to use drugs so I can sleep, else I can't even sleep.'* Freeman says the focus on the needs of others helps keep him fighting and keeps him well; *'it keeps my mind free, you know* [when he is volunteering] *I forget my own problem, and just see what's in front of me. That's helping, just keeping me cool, keep me forgetting my own worries and problems, you know.'*

Alice highlights what she sees would have happened had she not been engaged in volunteering; *'I wouldn't be where I am today. I would have waited maybe five years, would I have still been alive, or maybe not at the mental hospital because of breakdown, you*

know.' She recognises how far she has come from the worst moments during her asylum process. *'Sometimes I can't and I'm just, you know, thankful to God that those moments, those dark days, when I just wanted it all to end, that it didn't.' 'I've been here, how people who have come here, seek asylum, maybe friends, you know, they've had that taken away from them, and at the end of the day I've seen the road, the path that their lives have taken, just because they didn't have, they didn't do like what I'm doing, when I decided to volunteer'.*

Participants also described keeping busy as being part of a bigger plan to move ahead with life and put the past behind. Ola describes this as a conscious decision; '*I've put that behind, the bad memories, the incidents. I say 'well, it's done and it's gone, let me push on'.* Occupation plays a role in this, and she links her level of activity to her long-term well-being; '*I believe by still doing, I would definitely get there one day.'* Ola actively seeks out opportunities based on how they can push her forward; '*I want to see which one will benefit me… you gather little and you join them together, you will get something good from it.'*

Freeman describes occupation as helping him in '*going well'* whilst he awaits the Home Office decision; '*I just have to focus and do what is right, until somebody says, OK.'* Alice describes how volunteering has stopped her from focussing on the outcome of her asylum claim; '*I even forgot that I was still in asylum, you know, because so many doors were open for me, opportunities that I had, you know, I didn't even think about getting my status anymore.'*

The ability to continue or possibly progress within daily life appears to be of importance to all; *'I make sure that I have activities every day…I just keep going, moving, moving, moving, yes, but I know it helps me, it helps a lot'* (Tete). Activity and occupation allowed some participants to engage with others, develop or maintain skills and look to their futures, and those who were most active describe this as being part of achieving a sense of a normal life: *'I'll wake up in the morning, I'll take my daughter to nursery and then I say I'm going to work'* (Alice).

7.3.3 Work and the work ethic

The most profound gap in participants' occupations was that of paid work, and this was a primary issue for all; *'the only regret at the moment is that I'm not working, I'm not making money, I'm not touching lives'* (Goziem). Oliver says *'work is the key'* and central to his experience; *'if you have a job and accommodation everything comes from that.'* The lack of work opportunity is *'wasting time'* and *'makes me less a man'* (Oliver); *'I'm wasting my energetic age'* (Goziem). Tete says *'You don't mind to sweat for your own wellbeing or the wellbeing of your kids, but no, you are not working, you are totally restricted from work, you don't work and then you don't have anyone else to help you.'*

All participants had been in paid employment prior to coming to the UK, except Shahin who was at University and had not yet embarked on a career. Oliver, Freeman, Goziem and Ola had all run small businesses, either as their main job or as a supplementary job. Other careers ranged from Alice who was a high-profile television journalist; Goziem, a qualified social worker; Sam worked in retail management for a global company; Ali was

in the Army; Freeman was operations manager for an international company; Tete worked in local government administration and Tendei worked as a domestic cleaner.

In each instance work had been a central feature of their daily lives, and linked to their personal identity. Goziem spoke about the strong work ethic in his country, which he says is cultural, personal and in response to external pressures like financial hardship; *'we are the overtime people, just bring the shift.'* He contrasts this with local people who he says *'are just relaxing and collecting the dole, you know, they don't even want to hear anything about work.'* They connected work to their sense of worth; *'if I'm working I'm a man… happy'* (Oliver), and the chance to demonstrate their value; *'I think for me it was to prove I could do something, something bigger'* (Alice).

The loss and absence of work was keenly felt; *'I had my life – my work – and then it was snatched away from me'* (Alice), expressing great frustration; *'you're not allowed to work, that's the most stressful thing, I tried to see if I can work because I don't want to be on benefit because me, I used to work before'* (Freeman).

Individuals described the 'downward drift' in occupational opportunity for refugees should they gain status. Both Shahin and Goziem specifically spoke about the lowly jobs available to people once they receive a positive decision; *'to think that somebody could expect you to go and work in kebab shop, just, you know'* (Shahin); *'go to the kebab shops, go to chicken and chip shops and ask for jobs, or try maybe driving. What kind of life? Oh man, they humiliate you'* (Goziem). There was a sense that existing skills and abilities were not taken into account; *'its a waste of opportunity, just a waste of skill, intelligence and time'* (Goziem). There was also the fear that loss of occupation would be permanent;

'I lose my job now, I know how hard it is to get a good job, yes. So when I go back, I have to go back from zero again' (Tete).

Despite frustration, there is an acceptance of the rules regarding work during asylum, Goziem acknowledges; *'since we became asylum seekers, it was clearly stated that you are not allowed to work, and if you are caught working, it will damage your credibility, do you understand? So even if I would have wanted to, I'm not even thinking about it.'* Oliver is frustrated by the rules but resigned to them; *'can't break it, must tolerate it.'*

Shahin desperately wanted to work and applied numerous times for a work permit which was never granted. He expresses frustration at the unfairness of the asylum restrictions, how despite never having been a criminal, or being in trouble, he gets neither status nor a work permit; *'10 times I asked for [work permit] I didn't get. Everybody had, everybody get* [permission to work] *but I didn't. I didn't understand'.*

REFLEXIVE NOTE:

I've met very few people who have received work permits, the only client I can recall who was awarded one was a professional footballer.

I always found it interesting that of all the skill and potential I saw in my clients, the Home Office chose only to recognize that of the footballer.

Alice, Freeman, Goziem, Ola, Tete, Tendei, Ali and Sam are all involved in some form of voluntary work. For Goziem and Sam volunteering began back in their home country, Goziem felt that volunteering in social work, in his country of origin, allowed him to work in areas where funding for support was poor, particularly prisons and mental health services. For Goziem, work needs to have a moral or ethical value; *'to some people, the wealth to them is paramount',* for him he wants only *'real work, with a meaning.'* For Sam, volunteering was part of his faith and family life from his childhood; *'I used to, I always like volunteering, since when I was young… they will teach you to volunteer in places where*

there are privileged [sic] *people, they brought us up like that, try doing something for people.'*

Here in the UK, voluntary roles included administration (Tete, Ola, Tendei), interpreting (Sam), community support (Freeman), advice and guidance (Goziem), mentoring (Freeman), cooking (Ali), cleaning (Ola, Ali, Tendei) and supporting health services, education and research (Alice, Freeman, Sam). The roles were usually undertaken within refugee charities or on behalf of religious groups. They were either supporting the agencies/organisations themselves, through things like administration and cleaning, or providing services for other refugees, like free hot meals, orientation to the local community or interpreting. There was also an element of advocacy and education, where individuals would speak to identified groups like health and social care students, raising awareness of life during asylum and highlighting their needs within service provision.

Further discussion of the rationale the participants gave for volunteering can be found in section 7.7.3, as part of a discussion on occupations that display 'altruism.'

7.3.4 Opportunities for belonging

All participants spoke about the importance of relationships, either reflecting on the difficulties accessing relationships or the potential for relationships to provide practical and emotional benefits. The desire to integrate socially was strong, but sometimes difficult to achieve; '*I tried my best to get out and integrate with the community. I asked myself the question 'What should I do, who should I become friends with and what's best to do in this country?''* (Ali). Sam described how being busy could open opportunities for integration and adjustment; '*Not only busy but getting to know people, the culture and*

everything, so we can't do that sitting at home. So I thought that [volunteering] *would be a good chance for me to meet people, speaking, improving my English at least by speaking.'*

Oliver, Shahin and Ali talked about the effect of having limited opportunities to interact; '*I'm seeing no one… every day I look around here [indicates his one room accommodation] I see sofa-TV-fridge-door, nobody else'* (Ali). Oliver says he finds it harder to forge relationships in the UK, he does have friends but they don't compare to relationships that have grown over time and are '*not close like people you grew with'*. The three men also identify low mood as contributing**;** '*I'm not well… sometimes, I feel so horrible, and I say 'no, I don't go out any more'* (Shahin).

Tendei and Tete identified the benefit of friendship. When Tete arrived, she was very anxious about being alone; '*I feel that wow, I will be all alone here, at least when you have a good neighbourhood, it helps, yes, but when you don't have anyone, you're so unfortunate.'* Although Tete has a poor relationship with the woman who shares her flat she has had good friends, one who is like a mother to her and another with whom she was very close, who moved away; '*My friend who left, she really used to help a lot, she was there for me… she used to give me a lot of courage.'* Friendships provide people with practical help; '*watch my baby, get shopping'* (Tete), emotional support and distraction; '*that was how I was able to cope, how I take my mind off things like that, being with friends here was able to take me out of that situation*' (Ola).

All the women talked about the way they perceive friendships as family by calling people '*brother or sister, auntie or uncle'* (Ola), they explain this as typical of their cultures. The closeness of these connections was linked to shared heritage and culture; '*we're totally*

different, we've got different nationalities, yes, but even if you're not from my place, we're still the same. I might not get a language but we have the same reasoning' (Ola). This makes it harder to reach out to British people; '*If I walk to you now, I can't just approach you like that, I have to take time… but if I walked to somebody that's from my country, I know what, we've tried to understand from each other'* (Ola).

Churches of several faiths provided a source of connectivity for a number of participants, and this included religious activity and worship, social connectedness and the provision of support. Faith based activity such as church attendance, charity work and reading religious texts were noted as valuable for some participants. For some individuals their engagement was practical, as churches are a primary source of asylum support; for others they have always been active church goers. The support by churches of different faiths was valued, for example, Ali is a Muslim he greatly appreciates the help he receives from Christian churches on Teesside; '*they are Christians yes, but I would appreciate everybody's feelings and beliefs, I will respect and accept everybody's belief.'* He finds social and practical support there; '*it was about communication and gathering as a little local community, other than worship or anything*.'

For Sam, faith provided a mixture of spiritual gains, intellectual stimulation, opportunities for activities and lots of time spent with good people '*So we had our faith, we had a lot of joy, happiness.'* Goziem and Ola are active church goers and much of their family life is orientated around the church and church activities, he has been a lay preacher when living in London, sings with church choirs and is involved in church committees. In addition to spiritual gains, the church is the primary means the family have of accessing activities (including singing, sports and family activities) and support. Tendei has a strong

Christian faith, and finds comfort in her beliefs and support from people from her church, particularly at times when her mood is too low to go out and they come to talk to her and pray with her.

Ola's belief in God is central to her well-being; *'I pray and thank God for keeping us alive'* giving her direction and assurance *'when I read my Bible, there are some messages I get from there, there is a verse… that means, what you want say it and the almighty God will do it for you.'* Being part of a congregation makes them feel supported in the community; *'it's a group you belong to and for you to be identified with it'* (Ola).

There is often a sense that faith will help to sort out the wider issues; *'we just pray that* [God] *will touch their heart to say, OK this family, they've really suffered, let them go on with their lives, you know'* (Goziem). Alice feels that God loves her *'no matter what'* which provides her with reassurance; *'God is there, never mind everything that's happening… God is there and things will get better.'* Tendei believes that God is in charge of her destiny and He determines the outcomes of her life *'If God says you are going to get these things, I'm going to get it, if God says… you will struggle in your life, that's the way it is. If God says I'm going to die, I'll die.'*

In addition to connecting with people, refugees face a challenge in connecting to place. The arrival in a new environment, often entirely different to ones's home, involves massive acculturation. As Ali captures; *'Almost everything was different to me… the rules, the system, how it works, the country, even nature wise… clothing wise, both gentleman and ladies wearing different stuff back home than here, it could be anything.'* Even for Sam, who had a positive decision, there were challenges in the initial adjustment period;

'when I first came, what I think is that you're just free – that was the best thing. Then there is a lot of things, you need money, you need to get used to the system and you don't know anybody, you don't know what is expected from you.'

When someone has migrated through choice the adjustment may be huge, but it is usually 'one way;' with the intention of making the new location one's home. However, in forced migration the process is clouded by the lack of choice and the lack of certainty. It must be tremendously hard to live somewhere for many years without knowing whether every week might be your last; *'You can be in one house today, tomorrow you get a letter that says 'pack your bags', they move you to another house, another city, another town. I mean who wants to live like that?'* (Alice). This is an everyday risk for Shahin; '*I have house yeah, but what about tomorrow? I don't want they put me out in winter'* (Shahin).

REFLEXIVE NOTE

I am reminded of a woman who told me of her practice of buying only enough food for the day ahead. She said she couldn't bear the thought of the food she could ill afford being left behind if she was taken by immigration officers.

The thought of such day to day uncertainty, especially for the mother of young children, made a huge impression on me. I could not imagine living with so little constancy and so great a daily threat.

Positive elements of life in the UK are acknowledged, particularly in recognizing social systems and infrastructure compared to their home country; '*where people are poor, people live in squalor, it's not because they want to, more because the system hasn't provided for them the opportunity to become what they originally want to be'* (Goziem). This is contrasted with the sometimes limited use of opportunities by people in the UK; '*they have every opportunity to go to school for free, and they end up smoking and drinking and taking drugs, it's a shame… not embracing the opportunity that's open to everyone'*

(Goziem).

Several people noted the contrast between collectivist and individualist cultures. All participants were used to having far less government provision, but a greater focus on *'the extended family system'* (Freeman), which would prevent the levels of destitution and homelessness they have seen here. '[We] *would pick him up straight away, accommodate him, give him a room, make sure he's fit - you don't want to see your family member outside, sleeping rough, the shame comes back to you, you know'* (Goziem).

Shahin recognises the lack of community support here for him compared to if he was at home; *'If I was in Iran you know I ask my neighbours; 'excuse me I don't have bread.' But if I ask English people 'I have a problem'. Oh – no chance. Honestly – no chance.'* This sense of being unsupported by those around you seems alien when coming from a different culture where; *'we are always there for our people'* (Sam).

The ability to see the UK as 'home' varied, with several individuals describing the experience of liminality; of being stuck between past, present and future (Turner, 1969), described in section 3.7.1. They thought often about where they would be in the long term. Shahin describes feels trapped between being failed and not being able to be returned to his country; *'They can't send me back home, they don't let me to going to another country… you don't want me, you can't deport me, I can't work - what you want to do with me?'*

Goziem feels tied by issues from home, such as the needs of his elderly mother; *'something has come up every day, so many thoughts and incidents, leading to us thinking about home.'* This can make him wish he was back home; '*there's no day we don't make*

comparisons with the situation here and back home, you know.' The fear of the future troubles Tete, and leaves her wondering if the sacrifices she is making can be worth it; '*I will never be happy in my life I know, that was the way I felt…I was desperate. Why should I be here, wasting my time here struggling? And at the end I will not, my children will not be safe because I will be wasting my time and maybe return back home, later they will return me back home.'* She holds on to the reassurances she receives from friends and her husband '*that's the only opportunity you have for you to save them.'*

Whilst there was some sense of comfort or temporary belonging here in the UK several people said they still thought of their own country as home. Tendei reflects; '*you know, home is home, I'm here but I always feel home, yes…Ive lived in other countries, but they are not my home'* and Sam echoes; '*your homeland is like your mother, so everybody needs his mother.'*

7.3.5 Seeking occupational constancy

I recall, some years ago, when a gentleman described himself as having been '*lifted up, put on a shelf and left to go dusty while they decide what will happen.'* The description was vivid and captured something that I heard regularly when people described their lives as 'halted' or 'blown off course.' There was something very significant about the sense of one's life plan being lost, and the challenge of being able to regain it, particularly when choice and control was so limited. Participants in this study shared the same sense of a lost or interrupted life path, particularly linking this with their occupational losses and desires.

For a number of participants there was a sense of using occupation to provide a feeling of constancy, either maintaining skills from their past roles, seeking activities to replicate their preferred occupations from home, using skills they might need in future or preparing for future opportunities.

Of the participants in this study, those who were able to use transferable skills for something close to their previous occupation seemed the most satisfied; *'I see myself working in a setting where I can do something similar to what I was trained to do, it gives me cause for happiness, you know'* (Goziem). Alice, Freeman, Goziem, Ola, Tete, Tendei, Sam and Ali all show some form of constancy through their occupations, for example Alice is continuing to campaign against FGM and Goziem gives advice and guidance to fellow refugees, echoing his role as a social worker. Ali utilises skills he gained from his family, cooking recipes he learnt from his mother to cook for destitute refugees.

The closer the similarity to past occupations the more positive and satisfying the experience appears to be. For example, Alice says her voluntary work allowed her to reconnect with her *'old self'* through the return to familiar activity; *'for me to have got that opportunity… to be able to campaign about the same issues in this country, I think that was just that point where my life just changed'* (Alice).

This suggests that despite occupational disruption, and often deprivation, participants felt a powerful drive to engage, but particularly with occupation that were *familiar*. The greater the consistency of one's occupational life the greater the consistency in the sense of self, with familiarity breeding a solid identity (Stickley and Stickley, 2010; Kuluski, 2014).

The only people for whom occupational constancy is absent are Oliver and Shahin. Though both men describe times in the past where they have maintained or reinstated occupations, neither have any current links to either work, study or hobbies from their past lives. Both are alone, have failed claims and Shahin is 'unreturnable'; as a result they face long-term hardship, tightening restrictions, and the absence of a 'reason' to participate (such as the needs of a loved one). Together this appears to have robbed them of the impetus to engage.

With each transition, the individual has to reconstruct their lives by linking their past and future occupational selves (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011), however, the autonomy, choice and continuity required to achieve this are unlikely to be experienced by people during asylum.

> *We must remember that not everyone has the opportunity to compose a personal sense of identity. Many* [people] *spend entire lifetimes in regions of extreme political chaos, severe personal restriction, or dire economic circumstances where survival demands adherence to a limited range of roles, activities and beliefs. For these people the story of ideal personal and social identity, composed in a society that is itself trustworthy, autonomous and generative—may be a bitter parody of their lived experience.*
>
> Sorell and Montgomery, 2001 p. 123.

The more profound the gap between past and present occupations the more individuals expressed frustration. Goziem talks of '*decay through disuse*' and the fear that his skills would gradually fade because he couldn't practice. He, like others, has tried to find

activities which in some way reflect things of meaning from their past, but he remains aware that his current occupations are not his 'first choice'. These occupations may be close enough to provide some sense of continuity, but may also be distant enough to frustrate – like a ghost version of the occupation that the individual was previously driven to do. This act as a reminder that, whilst meaningful occupations provided many positives, the hardships of forced migration and asylum are not removed and the occupations used do not necessarily negate occupational injustices.

The impact of biographical interruption (Bury, 1982) on occupational lives has been well documented (Faircloth, 2004; Locock, 2009; Kuluski, 2014), usually with the focus on major health events such as Stroke or Motor Neurone Disease. Biographical interruption acknowledges the impact of major health events on the 'taken for granted' nature of people's life plans, and how major change associated with health (and arguably any major transition) undermines the sense of continuity and confidence in one's future (Bury, 1982; Williams, 2000; Locock, 2009).

Despite significant impairments, individuals tend to seek 'biographical repair', returning to the life path they intended as closely as they can (Kuluski, 2014). The evidence proposes that individuals actually find a flow in their biographies, rather than facing a lasting interruption (Faircloth, 2004) suggesting that there is a powerful drive towards adaptation which allows individuals to maintain their crucial occupations (Kuluski, 2014). Even in the case of terminal illness there was evidence of the desire to repair and restore (Locock, 2009). This would suggest that this is innate, despite the nature of hardships, impairments or end point. This is reflected in the behaviours of the participants in this study, who expressed the desire to stay close to their existing occupations. The

constancy that this afforded them, allows them to '*do things… that will be viable for you and then for the future as well*' (Goziem).

The need for refugees to adapt to occupational losses is widely acknowledged (Huot *et al.* 2016a; 2016b), however, prolonged occupational deprivation limits occupational adaptation and is dependent on the person's previous environments, and the transferability of their education, occupations and skills to the new context (Suleman and Whiteford, 2013). Occupations can be added, abandoned or altered (Townsend and Polatajko, 2013), if the individual is unable to perform their previous occupations and their skills were not valued (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Smith, 2012; Smith *et al*., 2013). Adapting occupations to cross the past-to-present divide can bridge gaps between the individual and the dominant cultures of their host community, maintaining a sense of constancy in their daily lives (Bishop and Purcell, 2013; Horghagen and Josephsson, 2010; Mirza, 2012; Morville and Erlandsson, 2013; Werge-Olsen and Vik, 2012).

This process is associated with optimistic outcomes, and 'the majority [of people] get on with life and make what they can of the extraordinary circumstances in which they find themselves' (Stickley and Stickley, 2010, p. 336). However temporary the environment, it would appear that people make efforts to maintain and re-establish their identities through occupation when they arrive (Huot *et al.* 2016a), showing hope, motivation and a drive for self-improvement (Werge-Olsen and Vik, 2012; Boyle, 2014).

In their discussions on the impact of liminality, Borg and Soderland (2014a; 2014b) identified the difference between passivity and the kind of active management of liminal

lives described above. Individuals focus on the social or task elements of their lives and either actively work to reduce the ambiguity of the situation, or passively waiting for the circumstances to be managed by others (Borg and Soderland, 2014a). This drive to hold on and demonstrate personal agency is part of the desire for occupational constancy, challenging occupational liminality (Bamber *et al.* 2017).

I would argue that the concept of 'occupational constancy' could broaden our understanding of the potential for occupation to counter biographical disruption, by identifying the process of maintaining, or returning to, an existing occupational path during transitions such as forced migration (Smith, 2016). Occupational constancy seeks to build upon the accepted idea that occupations can be disrupted in a number of ways, causing a significant impact for the individual (Christiansen and Townsend, 2009). It builds on this by linking with ideas from biographical repair, suggesting that people are driven to regain occupations that are meaningful due to their familiarity.

Reed *et al.* (2010) highlight the interconnectedness of past, present and future as a key aspect of meaning in occupation, allowing the individual to demonstrate their potential and possibility to others. This may be of particular importance where major transitions, such as ill health, halt the path the individual imagined they were taking, where occupations are thought to go some way to help people connect past with present (Blair, 2000; Shaw and Rudman, 2009, Pettican and Prior, 2011; Dickie et al. 2006; Kercher, 2014).

The idea of 'occupational constancy' is one which has not yet been explored widely in occupational science of occupational therapy literature (Smith, 2017), however, several other studies have captured some element of the need to maintain some occupational

constancy. Richards and Rotter (2015), who explored the impact of uncertainty and waiting in asylum, identified two key strategies, hope and action. By finding a sense of hope individuals were able to imagine a positive outcome and desired future (Eliott and Olver 2007; Richards and Rotter, 2013). By investing themselves either emotionally, socially, materially or financially in some form of action they were able to prevent the all-encompassing impact of asylum (Richards and Rotter, 2013).

They identified how people were living 'as if' they had control over their futures and a greater degree of certainty (Richards and Rotter, 2013). This was also raised by Sharpe and Curran (2006) who described people's obstinate desire to create and find continuity in their occupational lives, and highlighted in my first publication in this field in 2005, when I described the need to 'live life in the short term' during the lengthy wait for a decision (Smith, 2005, p. 478).

I have always felt intrigued by the capacity clients had for creating a life in the here and now – and I've wondered what enables one person to do that and another not, and the findings of this study show the impact of external pressures on the individuals landscape of hope, creating or reducing the impetus to keep trying. The experience of occupational constancy could help 'anchor' the person during times of such rapid and widespread change.

7.4 Occupation as an Opportunity to Show Worth during Asylum

Having established the multiple potential gains of occupation (Townsend, 1997), it has become increasingly clear that the meaning of an occupation often lies in the intentionality behind it (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013). The search for meaning may

vary in direction, but the motivating factor behind the action seems to be of great importance (Reed *et al.* 2010). Returning to Gier's concept of virtue and action, where the virtue of a knife is to cut (Gier, 2006), I argue that the participants in this study needed purpose behind their actions and were driven by the need to show their worth and express their virtues.

I have seen the struggle to find the 'right occupation,' one which will allow the individual to rise above the impact of asylum, maintain occupational constancy and create a positive sense of self. By choosing occupations (where choice is available) which allow the expression of courage, justice, humanity, temperance, transcendence and wisdom (Peterson and Segilman, 2004), the individual is able to establish a pattern of daily activities which reflect their best selves.

Professor of psychology and behavioral economy, Dan Ariely (2012), has extensively studied the reasons behind people's labours, trying to understand the intentionality and the 'call to the occupation' (Reed *et al.* 2010). He postulates that meaning is key, and often undervalued in our efforts to understand people's response to occupations (Areily *et al*. 2008; Areily, 2012).

The participants in this study have engaged with occupations which reflect virtue, a 'light side' of occupation, and (in response to occupational injustices) have experiences of the occupations which have a 'dark side.' Historically, occupational science and occupational therapy have focused on the positive potential of occupation to aid health and well-being (Whalley Hammell and Iwama, 2011). However, this often fails to acknowledge occupations which have a 'dark side' (Twinley, 2012) as introduced in section 3.8.4.

7.4.1 The 'dark side' of occupation during asylum

There were certainly instances where participants had engaged in occupations with a dark side, often due to limited alternative opportunities. These are occupations which may have harmful, disruptive or 'antisocial' elements (Kiepek and Magalhaes, 2011; Twinley and Addidle, 2012). These occupations are not deemed pro-social, healthy or productive, and can include occupations that are *'anti-social; criminal; deviant; violent; disruptive; harmful; unproductive; non-health-giving; non-health-promoting; addictive and politically, socially, religiously or culturally extreme'* (Twinley, 2012; p. 302; Twinley and Addidle, 2012).

Whilst these occupations may be detrimental to the individual, or wider society, they may still hold meaning for the people that engage in them (Ikiugu, 2005; Hasselkus, 2011; Roberts *et al.* 2011). Occupations with a 'dark side' still meet the criteria of occupation, in that they give meaning to life; are important determinants of health, well-being and justice; organize behaviour; develop and change over a lifetime; shape and are shaped by environments and have therapeutic potential (Kiepek and Magalhaes, 2011).

Occupational disciplines cannot claim to be truly holistic, client-centred and occupation-focussed without acknowledging a broad range of occupations as experienced by a broad range of individuals. If occupational therapy or occupational science thinks about occupation *only* as something positive, productive and health-giving, we may be neglecting the self-damaging, deviant or disrupted (Pierce, 2012). It is possible that a more inclusive recognition of occupations could can make the understanding of

occupation more socially relevant and personally inclusive to more people (Pierce, 2012; Twinley, 2017).

Refugees face a number of issues that reflect the 'dark side' of occupation; primarily because they are likely to have a limited range of occupations from which to choose. Within the position statement on 'Occupation as a Human Right', the World Federation of Occupational Therapists have identified choice of occupation as essential to occupational justice (WFOT, 2006; Otsuka, 2008). However, refugees face limited opportunities and choice, and a high level of low-challenge occupations (Jonsson and Persson 2006), as a result they may be tempted or forced to engage with occupations they may not otherwise have chosen (Pollard *et al.* 2008).

The developing work on the dark side of occupation has focussed on activities of choice (Kiepek and Magalhaes, 2011; Twinley and Addidle, 2012). However, there are many occupations that occur coercively (WFOT, 2006). Whilst the occupation may be the same, the dynamic underpinning the occupational choice may be different (Abrahams, 2008). As choice is part of what motivates individuals towards an activity (Abrahams, 2008; Otsuko, 2008; Galvaan, 2015), it may be harder for someone to derive satisfaction from an occupation they have undertaken coercively than one they have entered into through choice.

The UNHCR identify the need for access to appropriate work as a human right, but not a reality, for refugees (Beer, 2012). Access to the right kind of work can be of benefit to both the refugee and the host community, and the denial of work has multiple negative implications (Gower, 2016). Without access to livelihood opportunities, refugees are at

risk of being harassed, exploited, marginalized, or sexually abused (Beer, 2012; Moran, 2017). Denied the right to work, refugees are forced to resort to negative economic coping strategies – prostitution, crime, begging, child labour, and illegal, dangerous and exploitative work (Crawley *et al.* 2011; Refugee Council, 2011; Geddes *et al.* 2013; Lewis *et al.* 2014; Lawrence, 2015;). This can lead to serious protection risks especially for those already more vulnerable such as women, young people and the elderly (Crawley *et al.* 2011; Beer, 2012, Geddes *et al.* 2013; Lewis *et al.* 2014; Moran, 2017). Even where work is permitted (with refugee status), prejudices, stereotypes, racism and intolerance from the host community limit the possibilities for refugees (Suto, 2009; Beer, 2012; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; ENAR, 2014).

The increasing restrictions placed upon people seeking asylum create barriers to occupations (Dwyer *et al.* 2011; Lewis *et al.* 2014; Mayne *et al.* 2016); alongside which, finance for asylum support projects has declined (Beer, 2012; Gibney, 2014). Such restrictions increase vulnerability and force individuals to undertake less suitable occupations (Dwyer *et al.* 2011; Nizzero *et al.* 2017). In addition, public impressions worsen, as migrants who engage with negatively perceived activities face heavy criticism (Beer, 2012). Beer (2012) suggests that the greater the opportunity to work, the less likely an individual is to engage in criminal activity, either because their basic needs are being met or because they are simply too busy.

Within this study there were a number of threads which reflect the 'dark side' of occupation. Exploitative, dangerous and negative occupations have been a feature of participant's past. Ali enlisted with the Army voluntarily and Sam had been conscripted, for both this involved risk and fear. For Sam, front line warfare was used as a

punishment for political activism, and the risks were so high he went Absent Without Leave, losing every other aspect of his daily life in the process; but *'staying was a death sentence'* (Sam). Tendei and Alice both describe the impact of having to take what Tendei described as 'lowly' jobs, sometimes for a roof over their head rather than payment; *'very low, yes, I was cleaning their house, washing their clothes and you know enough, in fact they will treat you like a, you know, you are nobody'* (Tendei), both described sexual harassment and abuse as being a regular risk whilst in domestic servitude.

Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX) (2017) highlight that whilst the gap between what they describe as 'decent' work and modern slavery may appear significant, but small issues can increase and poverty can create greater dependency on work. This increased vulnerability enables abuses and exploitation by employers (FLEX, 2017). Sam explained how he experienced a period of working in Dubai, for a major British retail company. He worked excessive hours and was paid less than white workers; *'it wasn't fair, you know, it wasn't fair but you don't have any other choices, so you have to live with it, just accept it and live with it.'* He was permanently afraid and felt very vulnerable, knowing that if he didn't satisfy his employer's demands his visa could be rescinded and he could be deported back to his home nation, which he says *'would be a death penalty.'* These risky lives are a significant feature of the 'push' for refugees to leave their home nations. Limited access to occupational opportunities and occupations that are grossly unsuitable, coercive or dangerous, may create the conditions of forced migration (Clemens and Sandefur, 2015; James and Mayblin, 2016; United Nations, 2016).

Here in the UK, the issues continue. Three of the men had engaged in illicit work, where they were legal prevented from employment, but undertook *ad hoc* work such as leafleting. They took the work when they had no other means of support; '*That was the period when I had no support, no accommodation, no nothing, I did just to support and survive at that period of time*' (Ali). In each case they worked for only short periods, and stopped as soon as they were able, feeling that the risks associated with breaking the law were too high. Shahin spoke about his feelings of humiliation at having to take low status and exploitative work out of desperation. He described being laughed at by local children, who said leafleting '*is a job for a refugee*' (Shahin), echoing evidence of the emasculating and undermining effects of low status work (Keeley, 2008; Refugee Council, 2011).

Several of the women spoke about being open to exploitation by men, and the more vulnerable they became in terms of their asylum claim, the greater this risk became. Tendei had the most consistent experience of exploitation, beginning in childhood. Her experience in the UK has included the questionable intentions of her trafficker, who appears to have followed a modus operandi typical of sexual trafficking (Refugee Council, 2009). She then found herself homeless and with no support; '*I was homeless, I was just moving up and down, I cannot hide, I was going, if any man asked me, I will go to him and I will stay with him… when he finished with me he'd throw me out.*' After a period she met a man with whom she had a longer-term relationship, she described him as her boyfriend, but also described herself as 'house-helper' to him; '*I was in the house helping him, cooking for him, because I didn't know friends here, the only friends I have is him, cooking for him, cleaning the house.*' The reality for Tendei was that sex was her only

means of having a roof over her head. This is often termed 'survival sex,' a form of prostitution where sex is traded by individuals in great need (Flowers, 2010; Hope Ditmore, 2010). There is significant evidence that men, women and child refugees engage in survival sex as a result of the pressures of poverty and homelessness (Jones and Ksaifi, 2016).

Some of the occupations identified by participants, however negatively experienced, did meet occupational criteria. They have meaning (often as a means to an end), are determinants of health and well-being, are linked to their experiences of justice and shape and are shaped by environments (Kiepek and Magalhães, 2011). Many of the occupations, such as survival sex, are often seen by others as undertaken with a degree of choice, perhaps out of familiarity (Mallon and McCartt Hess, 2005) but the coercion and lack of choice cannot be underplayed (Watson, 2011).

There remains potential for a greater understanding of the context which creates or inhibits occupational choice. Galvaan (2014) suggests that this is a transactional process established through a mixture of *habitus* (deeply ingrained behaviours as a result of lived experience) and *doxa* (common opinion). Her work showed that the interplay of social environment with collective and contextual histories influenced occupational choices (Abrahams, 2008; Galvaan, 2014). This fosters the idea that occupational choice may not be fully open to everyone, and that occupational injustices may limit choice, or skew the individual's vision of what choices there may be.

The idea of the 'dark side' of occupation is still in its relative infancy, and is something that is still 'in the shadows' in terms of its illumination (Twinley, 2012). Authors on the

subject propose that in such an evolving concept it would be gainful to better understand the underlying value of such occupations (Kiepek and Magalhaes, 2011; Twinley, 2012; Twinley, and Addidle, 2012). I would add that the refugee context could be an important opportunity to explore how the light or dark sides of occupation can be created by access and opportunity. Much of the existing evidence on the 'dark side' of occupation focusses on occupations with a 'pull factor', something that draws the individual towards them, such as the oblivion of addiction (Kiepek and Magalhães, 2011) or thrill of violence (Twinley and Addidle, 2012). However, this study demonstrates that motivations towards occupations may be complex, and include a 'push and pull', and the push factors may include desperation, great need, force or coercion.

7.4.2 The 'light side' of occupation during asylum

If occupation can have a dark side, I would suggest it can also have a light side. This is something that goes beyond the traditional beliefs that occupational therapists and occupational scientists have in the potential of positive occupation. This study argues that people may be inspired to engage in occupations with a higher purpose, inspired by their own virtues.

There has been limited recognition within occupational therapy and occupational science of how occupational choice might be inspired by virtue, through there have been recent suggestions that occupation can be a means of achieving *eudemonia*. Royeen *et al.* (2017) has described the pursuit of a good life can be supported through healthful engagement in meaningful occupation, and Hayward and Taylor (2011) suggest that *eudaimonic* approach to well-being should become a routine outcome of occupational

therapy. Both suggest that a 'good life' can be based upon the application of purposeful and meaningful activities that relate to quality of life, well-being, self-actualization, and human happiness (Hayward and Taylor, 2011; Royeen *et al.* 2017).

Within this study there is much evidence of the value and meaning of virtue-orientated occupation, partly in pursuit of *eudemonia,* but also as an expression of *arete* or excellence, and *phronesis,* practical or moral wisdom (McDowell, 1979; Hursthouse, 2013; Swanton, 2005; Kraut, 2016). These virtuous drivers were most powerfully demonstrated in participant's desire to 'do for others.' Below the use of altruistic occupations as an expression of virtue is explored an example of higher purpose, 'virtuous' occupation.

7.4.3 Altruism and virtue-orientated occupation

What particularly struck me, as themes began to emerge, was the altruistic element to many occupations in which participants engaged. As individuals spoke of 'keeping busy with purpose' they repeatedly highlighted how the chance to 'do for others' was a powerful source of personal satisfaction. They indicated that they preferred altruistic occupations, perceiving them as providing meaning and purpose, fostering kinship and cultural norms, providing a valued identity and establishing occupational constancy.

Altruism is the principle of acting for the welfare of others, putting their needs ahead of one's own. Altruistic behaviours include helping, comforting, sharing, cooperation, philanthropy, and community service (Batson, 2011) and as a result may form part of a range of daily occupations. The premise of altruism suggests actions undertaken by an individual for the benefit of a third party, without an expectation of reciprocity and

usually with a cost to the individual (though the nature of the cost can vary, including financial, time, energy or skills) (Draguns, 2013).

There is a philosophical debate regarding altruism, as some theorists question its existence and suggest that altruists are ultimately acting for their own good (Feigin *et al.* 2014), or fulfilling a selfish biological imperative (Dawkins, 1976). Other authors focus on the multiple gains for the altruist and others as being of greater importance than the underpinning motivation (Batson, 2011). Few altruistic activities occur without some intrinsic gains, so it is suggested that the altruist is motivated towards rewards (Feigin *et al.* 2014). This is often described as 'doing good to feel good', endocentric, pseudo-altruistic, or egoistic (Karylowski, 1982; Van der Linden, 2011). The rewards highlighted include increased self-esteem and satisfaction, a desire for reciprocity or reward or the intention to promote their reputation (Van der Linden, 2011; Feigin *et al.* 2014). However, other researchers have found that rather than encouraging the altruist, attempts at reciprocation or payment can be counterproductive, undermining the act and demotivating the altruist (Van der Linden, 2011).

In response to this debate Batson (2011), one of the key authors on altruism, recognised four different motives for altruistic behaviour: *egoism*, which is acting for the benefit of oneself; *altruism*, which is acting for the benefit of another person; *collectivism*, which is acting for the benefit of a particular community and *principlism,* which is acting in response to a moral principle. Batson believed that if the primary goal of the action is the benefit of the other, regardless of motivation, it can still be considered altruistic, as distinct motives can co-occur (Batson, 2011).

REFLEXIVE NOTE

I've given a lot of consideration to the debate on why people behave altruistically. My supervisor has frequently asked me what my own perspective is and my conclusion every time is 'I just don't care.'

I recognise the value of considering the reasons, but first and foremost I'm a pragmatic, person-centred therapist. As a result, I am more interested in my client's perspective on why they *do something, and therefore what it means to* them.

It is somewhat similar to the role of religion in my therapeutic practice. I'm an atheist, but I don't need to believe in God to see the many costs and benefits of religion in other people's lives, nor to enable the individual to foster the most valuable aspects of their faith.

There are many suggested drivers for altruistic behaviour, including kinship, empathy, learned behaviours and moral beliefs (Madsen *et al.* 2007; Batson, 2011; Draguns, 2013). The kinship connection suggests that people are more likely to act altruistically to someone they see as similar on the basis of a range of features, including physical appearance, name or shared membership of an 'in-group' (West *et al.* 2006; Madsen, 2007; Barcaly, 2011). People may also be encouraged to act by feelings of empathy or emotional concern (Eisenberg *et al.* 2004; Penner *et al.* 2005; Madsen *et al.* 2007; Batson, 2011). An empathic response may also cause the altruist to reduce their awareness of

their own distress and negative emotions as they elevate their concern for, and awareness of, the needs of others (Madsen *et al.* 2007).

Other reasons for the development of an altruistic attitude are suggested as arising from social learning, where people are socialised into helping behaviours and influenced by parental and social norms (Lerner, 1980; Dovidio and Penner, 2004; Penner *et al.* 2005). It is also believed that altruism may be a personality trait, as altruists are believed to exhibit higher standards regarding justice, social responsibility, moral reasoning and empathy (Rushton and Sorrentino, 1981; Penner *et al.* 2005).

Whilst the philosophical debate regarding altruism focusses on questions of true selflessness there are many sources which focus positively on the gains for the altruist, concerning themselves more with outcomes for all, rather than motivating factors. Altruism is acknowledged as having multiple benefits, these include increasing social interaction and generating valuable social capital (Salvati, 2008). Altruistic activities such as volunteering are associated with significant and long-lasting benefits to physical health, mental health and longevity (Musick *et al.* 2001; Post, 2005; Otake *et al.* 2006; Brown *et al.* 2008; Wright, 2013). Altruism is also seen as fostering life satisfaction, subjective happiness and a sense of purpose (Keonig *et al.* 2007; Wright, 2013). Altruism also fosters feelings of happiness and well-being, part of the virtuous cycle of helping others, doing good and subsequently feeling good that has been described as 'the helper's high' (Post, 2005; Otake *et al.* 2006; Van der Linden, 2011; Wright, 2013).

Altruism has received little attention within occupational therapy, beyond its role as a professional value (Kanny, 1993; Taussig 2006; Thrash, 2008). However, it appears that

altruism may have many occupational components, as it is both expressed through occupation, and may be a motivator for occupations. Few studies have considered altruism as part of occupational choice. Hatter and Nelson (1987) considered the gains from altruism for older people, and there have been studies exploring the positive meaning gained from specific altruistic activities such as care giving (Taylor, 2015) or volunteering (Black and Living, 2004; Schnell and Hoof, 2012). Making the connection between altruism and occupational choice is in line with recent calls to focus more on meaning than purpose when considering occupation (Reed *et al.* 2010; Taylor, 2015) as this is an important step forward in understanding the occupational choices people make (Ellerin, 2015; Taylor, 2015).

7.4.3.1 Occupation and altruism

Eight of the ten participants identified their most purposeful occupations as ones which they did for the benefit of others. The nature of the activities varied and included volunteering in refugee agencies, mentoring young people in education, working to raise awareness in higher education, supporting research projects and undertaking charity work. Half of the participants engaged with two or more altruistic activities during their week. For example, Freeman worked collaboratively with several local universities, sharing experiences and raising awareness of asylum issues through classroom activities and research participation. He also mentored young people through education and into work. He was part of a local project to help orientate people seeking asylum who were newly arrived in the area, and also ran group activities for people to help them integrate and participate, including a community garden which was accessed by refugees and local people together. For Freeman, the single thread of meaning that he identified

throughout these occupations was the opportunity to do for others; *'just see if I can help people, you know, contribute to people - that makes me more happier than thinking about myself'* (Freeman).

The influence of altruism seems to have been present in many ways before, during and after their flight, suggesting that their drive to help others was not particular to their current circumstances. Altruistic behaviours have formed part of their lives at many stages, as an embedded feature of their occupational choice, even where choices were extremely limited. Some participants provided examples of altruistic activities they had undertaken from their earliest years, including Sam whose faith encouraged him to volunteer whilst he was growing up; *'I always like volunteering, since when I was young… in places where they are under-privileged people… they brought us up like that, try doing something for people'* (Sam), and Tendei who, as a young girl, forfeited the chance for her own education in order to work and provide for her family; *'my sisters, they go to school, because I have to stand for them to work as a house-helper to pay school fees for them, so at least they've gone to school'* (Tendei). As an adult, Ali chose to join his nation's army, despite the risks, in order to protect his family and homeland, and Goziem volunteered in psychiatric and prison services where he identified an unmet psychological or social need; *'nobody's going to pay for that, so, I see a need, I volunteer'* (Goziem).

Following arrival in the UK, despite multiple challenges and limited resources, the participants have all sought ways to use their skills to the benefit of their families, networks or community. This included the ongoing need to financially support others at home, through what are described as 'returns'. This includes family and people within

the wider community who are in need; *'So you have… responsibility for your family, but at the same time there are some friends, neighbours and stuff, who are struggling to live'* (Goziem). Even in the financial hardship of asylum people try to send money home whenever possible; *'So sometimes it's beyond your ability or you can't afford to help them - even if you can't afford – can't say no, you have to starve'* (Goziem).

7.4.3.2 Drivers for altruism

Participants were able to give a clear rational for engaging in altruism, and these reflected the typical motivations of kinship, empathy, learned behaviours and moral beliefs highlighted within the literature (Madsen *et al.* 2007; Batson, 2011; Draguns, 2013).

Kinship.

The general connection between occupation and connectedness to others was described by all participants. Eight out of the ten arrived alone, and one other arrived with only her young child, and everyone mentioned the pain of being separated from parents, spouses or children. Participants reflected that relationships fostered a sense of belonging and commonality. They acknowledged the value of support from others and mutually beneficial relationships, but there was particular appreciation for relationships which allowed them to focus on the needs of a third party. They particularly appreciated being needed and valued by others; *'if I'd been these eight years without a wife and kids, then I would say I've lived a wasted life - that's our joy, you know, every other thing doesn't make us happy'* (Goziem). The opportunity to engage in altruism enabled connectivity and belonging in all cases. The very nature of altruistic activities meant they were directly engaged in a meaningful way with other individuals or groups.

Amongst the participants those who had been in the UK for the longest, and whose claims had failed, there was far less connectivity with others and no contact with family at home. They felt they had less to offer to others, and less energy to bring to activities involving others; *'I'm not well…I feel so horrible, no, I don't want to go out anymore…I don't want people to see my horrible face'* (Shahin).

Empathy and emotion.

In part the desire to do for others was borne out of empathy, appreciating the challenges others had faced and wanting to help them to avoid isolation and hardship. This encouraged actions such as Freeman volunteering for an orientation project to help individuals new to the area and Ali, helping at the service supporting people who are destitute; *'those who arrive recently, we show them around, make them comfortable, so they can feel free to settle'* (Freeman).

Their empathic response meant that they not only wanted to support others, but also minimised their own needs. They all highlighted instances of others facing greater difficulties than they, themselves; *'lots of people are feeling worse things than I'm even feeling…you hear some other things that are more horrible than mine, you hear a lot of things from people, people are facing'* (Tete). Several found that this gave them strength to help others – putting on a smile to cover their distress, helping others in order to distract them from their own fears; *'you look at their situation, you are like, oh my God, I'm even better off, why do I have to worry so much?'* (Goziem). By choosing to focus on the needs of others it became easier for them to identify as the 'helper' rather than the

person needing to be helped; *'I mostly forget my own problems when I started listening to other people, their stories'* (Tete).

A cultural imperative.

The participants all linked their desire to act for others with early learned behaviour generated by family, faith and culture. They described parents and other key figures who they admired as having established a pattern of providing for others within their community, supporting extended family and working charitably. Nine participants stated that their altruism linked with cultural norms from their country of origin, as they described themselves as being from cultures that are; *'always there for one another… like a giving culture [where] everybody is willing or probably hungry to share everything you have'* (Sam). They noted differences in values between their home nation and the UK, recognising the UK as individualistic, with excellent statutory support but limited support between members of society. Five of the individuals also made a connection between altruism and their spiritual or religious beliefs.

Moral beliefs.

These influences became embedded as part of their own moral values, encouraging them to put others before themselves; *'I think some of the things that I do is just for my conscience… that's for my inner conscience'* (Sam); *'It's not just all about what will I gain? What also can I contribute?'* (Ola). Goziem, a trained social worker, described 'helping' occupations as 'real work', where he could see himself making a difference, giving others hope and changing lives; *'When you see people at the end of the day smiling away, in thanks, you know, in appreciation. You visit them… you now see changes in them, happiness*

in the home' (Goziem). There were also reflections from all participants on the importance of being good and doing good. This sometimes arose out of a sense of what is *'morally right'*; *'I do whatever is asked, do what is right. I do give, you know, I give to people'* (Freeman), and sometimes out of desire to *'give something back'* (Ali), recognising the role of kindness and support they, themselves, had received; *'once you've been supported and helped like that… you're expected to do your best and… do something back'* (Sam).

Intrinsic gains

Individuals were able to describe multiple gains from engaging with altruistic activities. At a very simple level these occupations provided them with valuable structure in their weeks or days, and a reason to get up and leave the house; *'It's a relief to me in a way because I'm doing something other than staying in the house doing nothing'* (Tendei). There was a general sense of having purpose and making progress; *'I just keep going, moving, moving, moving, yes, but I know it helps me, it helps me, it helps a lot'* (Tete). Other gains lay in opportunities to use existing skills or develop new ones, to learn about UK culture or develop their English skills.

All participants spoke of times when their physical or mental health had been adversely affected by the asylum experience and the limited opportunities it presents; *'it's very unhelpful to be with loads and loads of time on your hands - it is the Devil's Workshop'* (Goziem). They made strong links between the experience of keeping busy and their physical health; '[we are] *not just sitting… getting fat and depressed'* (Goziem) and

psychological well-being; '*while you are thinking about that [work] you are not thinking about other things*' (Tete).

Crucially, the opportunity to do for others allowed them to see themselves as '*more than an asylum seeker*' (Tete). The activities and roles they undertook allowed them to rise above their legal status, demonstrate their worth and reconnect with elements of their old self.

Ali presents an example. During the interviews, he became particularly animated when talking about cooking at a church-run support group for destitute failed claimants. He began by attending when his own claim failed, but was drawn to helping out and preparing food for the group. The activity provides him with positive feedback and praise from others, allowing him to see himself as having skills of value; '*they were happy the way I was cooking the food - everybody is happy and enjoying, this is about my cooking*' (Ali). This combination of feeling productive and receiving feedback that what he does has value allows him to see his worth in a way no other regular activity provides. It also enables him to give something back to the church, as he has found them very supportive; '*I try my best to do even a little in return, cooking, cleaning, servicing and helping people and like providing some food for people*' (Ali). In addition, he describes an element of continuity in this activity, as he learnt to cook from his mother, with whom he was extremely close. As a result, the experience of cooking for others connects him with his past, his family and his culture.

There were instances where the chance to act for others allowed individuals to show they are '*the right kind of person*' (Freeman), demonstrate their worth to the community

and set a path for others by being a positive role model; *'So they've seen those traits in me and the right things, I don't smoke, I don't drink… and every time they're having an activity you'll see me there'* (Goziem); '*you should be a role model to* [your children]' (Tete). Two of the men had received significant external recognition for their efforts, in terms of social standing and local awards, and whilst they were proud of this, the external gains appeared to be secondary to the other benefits of the experience.

Being the Recipient

An unexpected element of exploring altruism arose when participants spoke about the challenge of receiving support from others. There was gratitude expressed by all participants for those who had helped them at various stages in their process, however, there was also a reluctance to be seen as 'in need', and several participants identified the challenge of being open to kindnesses shown by others. This ranged from a relief not to need help through to an active reluctance to take help, with individuals preferring to focus on helping others than needing help themselves; '*deep inside, you know, you feel less like as a man, it's where I come from - because I have to look after you, not be looked after'* (Freeman).

The individual participants had all engaged with a number of altruistic occupations, demonstrating altruism, collectivism and principlism; prompted by kinship, empathy, learned behaviour and moral principles (Batson, 2011). In doing so they raised the potential of virtue-orientated occupations such as these as an occupational vehicle to meet mutliple needs.

Within this thesis I recognise the known benefits of altruism, (Post, 2005; Otake *et al.* 2006; Keonig *et al.* 2007; Brown *et al.* 2008; Salvati, 2008; Wright, 2013), applying them to refugees and exploring the potential for altruism, as meaningful occupation, to promote successful resettlement (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Lunden, 2012; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013; Mayblin, 2014; Nayar and Sterling, 2013; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013).

Altruism promoted connectivity within this marginalised and 'othered' group, who experience limited social capital (Grove and Zwi, 2005, Philo *et al.* 2011; Kamenova, 2014; British Attitudes Survey, 2015). Whilst altruism is not particular to any group or culture, it is actively fostered in collectivist cultures, and each of the participants come from cultures which are considered significantly more collectivist than the UK[2] (Ting-Toomey, 2012; Hostede 2010). The individuals involved in this study were used to far higher levels of social capital and connectedness. Such networks are particularly valuable to people who find themselves within a foreign culture and without familial connections (Smith *et al.* 2013), helping them to gain support and establish themselves (Eisenberg *et al.* 2004; Salvati, 2008; Van der Linden, 2011).

During the passive, stagnant wait for an asylum decision (Rotter, 2015) altruistic occupations provided a means of retaining a sense of self. All participants had been adversely affected by asylum, either through the lack of personal agency, reduced opportunity, reliance on charity or the attitudes of people in the wider community, this is in line with existing research findings (Bennett *et al.* 2012; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Morville, 2014; Gower, 2016). Enabling people to demonstrate their virtues through

[2] The Hofstede cultural dimensions identify the UK as having a individualism score of 89, whereas their home nations range from 20 to 41 (Hofstede 2010)

occupation helps them to reveal core features of their identity when other measures of value (such as wealth or status) may not be present (Van der Linden, 2011).

7.5 THE POTENTIAL OF VIRTUE-ORIENTATED OCCUPATION

Wilcock (1998; 2006) says that occupation is the interplay between doing, being and becoming, and I would assert that virtue-orientated occupations provide a particularly special type of 'doing'. By 'doing' in a virtuous way, one is expressing higher values which reflect 'being' and the individuals innate capacities (Wilcock, 2006; Barcaly, 2011; Whalley Hammell, 2015). Becoming is particularly difficult for refugees to achieve, due to the impact of occupational disruption and deprivation (Smith, H.C. 2015; Mayne *et al.* 2016). However, in this study, occupations that have a higher purpose have shown themselves as promoting the occupational constancy that enables individuals to see their longer-term goals and higher purpose in action.

What people do, and are seen to do, is intrinsically linked with their identity, and positive occupation is believed to foster positive identity through validation by others (and, in turn, self-validation) (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011). Through occupation, an individual can demonstrate key character traits to others, and gain a fuller sense of their self (Holland, 1973). A person's occupational identity becomes an essential part of how they are societally recognised, giving them clearly identifiable roles and defining their status (Allen-Collinson, 2004; 2006; Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011). These features all promote the individuals sense of themselves as living a good life, in line with their own virtues. Whilst there has been some limited recognition of the role of occupation in experiencing one's self-worth (Lancaster and Mitchell, 2008; Martin *et al.* 2008; Landa-Gonzalez and

Molnar, 2012), there is little recognition of its role in establishing worth *per se,* or in promoting one's worth to others. This study shows the potential of the right kind of occupation, chosen to reflect the individuals core virtues, to foster occupational identity and address their fundamental need to feel their worth and value.

Any meaningful occupation has the potential to provide significant gains for people during and after the asylum process, but for the participants in this research the most meaningful occupations were ones they undertook for the benefit of others. Despite having very little capital, individuals chose to prize actions done for the good of others above almost any other. They could have used their energies towards a more selfish end, but identified something intrinsically valuable about doing for others which has made this a source of meaning.

If we are going to provide a meaningful, occupationally focussed approach to enabling refugees, we must start by recognising where occupation is in the individuals' own list of priorities. By exploring the occupation through its orientation, or intentionality, we see what people value and desire (Ramugondo and Kronenberg, 2013), or what they were 'occupassionate' about in the past (Kronenberg, 2011). This is the 'call to action' that shows us what a person cares for, either in terms of people or things, giving us the most valuable information to direct our interventions (Reed *et al.* 2010. p144).

It is easy to see if people are 'keeping busy', but not as easy to see the meaning that their busy-ness holds. Low-demand occupations have a Sisyphean quality, destructive to the human spirit (Areily, 2012). People are motivated by occupations which require a degree of effort (Blustein 2008; Norton *et al.* 2011) and provide a sense of progress and

productivity (Hsee *et al.* 2010; Keinan and Kivetz, 2011). The experience of feeling valued also impacts upon the individual's experience of occupation, and their occupational performance, as recognition from others encourages people to strive harder and accomplish more (Ariely, 2008; Norton *et al.* 2011). Areily *et al.* (2008) stated that people like to see the fruits of their labours, but also like to have others recognise the fruits of their labours, which gives additional weight to the gains of altruistic occupations, which have good outcomes for the recipient, but also act as a visible sign of the altruist's efforts.

Virtuous occupations, as the antithesis of the 'dark side' of occupation, can bring light and positivity, illuminating dark and colourless lives and enabling individuals to 'rise above' their status as asylum seeker or refugee. They provide scope for the people to make visible their assets and strengths, be seen by others as a valued human, and therefore see oneself as of value.

In my own experience, it is easy to forget the value of occupation when you are facing a person who has witnessed the murder of their whole family, who has been repeatedly raped or who has been tortured. Bearing witness has important therapeutic worth (Blackwell, 1997; Gautier and Scalmati, 2010), and I believe there is a place for hearing someone's story (if they wish to share it), believing them and caring about it. However, as therapists we can get stuck there, feeling overwhelmed and seeing ourselves as unable to help. In doing so we are not challenging the injustices (occupational or otherwise) that the individuals face, and we may even be promoting their sense of powerlessness and victimhood (Blackwell, 1997; Smith, 2005; Gautier and Scalmati, 2010).

Nietzsche (Nietzche, 1920) reminds us that pity is a depressant, draining the strength from both the person who feels it, and the object of their pity. Pity robs us of life preserving and life enhancing energies, it 'persuades men to nothingness' (Nietzche, 1920, p. 7). To progress beyond noxious experiences, people need to be met with hope and idealism, which are essential to generate optimism and counter meaninglessness (Yalom and Lesczc, 2005), and help us to see potential in even the hardest of circumstances (Frankl, 1959).

REFLEXIVE NOTE

I remember working with a young man who felt he had lost everything and was being treated unfairly by the asylum system. He seemed so young and vulnerable, I felt desperate to make life easier for him.

I grew increasingly anxious that I wasn't being 'helpful' enough, and expressed this to the client. He said he didn't expect me to change his circumstances, he just wanted me to hear him and understand.

By focussing on his basic needs, I was, unwittingly, devaluing him – seeing him as someone who needed fixing. When I stopped trying to 'help' I found him to be resourceful and courageous, even though his external circumstances did not improve.

Wordsworth (2017) reminds us that finding meaning in life is equally or more important than finding food that day, giving examples of how a person can tolerate going without many things, but still needs to protect their identity, gain recognition, and feel loved. This echoes Frankl's (1959) assertion that meaning makes hardship tolerable, and Neitzche's (1889) statement that 'He who has a strong enough why can bear almost any how.'

If we focus where the meaning is for the individual, we are directing our energies towards *their* values, *their* purpose, and *their* idea of what a 'good life' is. A *eudemonic* life is almost the antithesis of what many refugees are living, but that reality is created by circumstances rather than their capacity. Occupational justice requires us to see the circumstances that create barriers to diverse and meaningful occupation (Durocher and Gibson, 2013). In order to meet people's individual needs and develop their potential we must make a moral commitment to engage in everyday justice (Townsend, 2015), recognising the right to inclusive participation in everyday occupations for all persons in society, regardless of age, ability, gender, social class, or other differences (Nilsson and Townsend, 2010).

An occupational justice framework identifies the need for occupational therapists to strive beyond the basics to see the occupational needs, occupational rights and obligations of all citizens (van Bruggen, 2014), often by creating environments and opportunities that stimulate, rather than hinder, the realisation of occupational potential (Whiteford, 2011). The idea of all this untapped potential is enormously frustrating, particularly when you observe the circumstances which actively prevent, undermine or devalue that. When the individual is surrounded by powerful messages which undermine their worth; voices which may have started in their country of origin and grown more clamouring with their journey to the UK; it is critical that we focus on the value of the individual, recognising their uniqueness and capability. We must see beyond the legal labels, the external messages, and even often the individuals own lost sense of self, to see the potential hidden within.

In 1972, Frankl stated that seeing a person's value and potential is crucial to enabling their search for meaning and purpose. He explains that if we set a path for our clients which underestimates their capability we contribute to their frustration and lack of progress. He urges therapists to presuppose that all people have an innate search for meaning, and that, by overestimating potential we can promote man to what he can really be – what he is capable of becoming (Frankl, 1972). Seeing potential will mean seeing virtue, in the person's behaviour, values or desires. If occupations can be found which speak to a higher purpose, they may help the individual approach life with a focus on more than just 'keeping busy', but achieving true purpose through actions that have meaning on multiple levels.

Occupations allow the individual to show themselves and others what they are capable of (Reed *et al.* 2010). So, in looking for a suitable occupation we must 'pitch high' and seek out occupations which do not simply meet a basic need to keep busy, but speak to the individuals core virtues and enable them to be a version of their 'best self.' Some aspects of the individual's life during asylum may be immovable, but that does not mean there are not areas of improvement that can be made. As Milton Erickson said, *'if you lift the handle a lot could be done with the pot'* (Erickson and Haley, 1985, p.47).

LEARNING FROM THE STUDY

8 LEARNING FROM THE STUDY

'If you cannot read the beautiful things that have happened in someone's life, why should you care about their sadness?'

Chris Cleave

This chapter describes the key issues arising from the study in terms of limitations, potential for application in future research and implications for practice.

8.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This, like any study, has a number of limitations which will affect the findings and the inference that can be drawn from them. The study is small in scale, with only ten participants, and as such cannot be considered representative of any wider population. Refugees are not a homogenous group and the wealth of experiences and backgrounds makes generalisability in any study limited (Schweitzer and Steel, 2008). However, in phenomenological studies the concern is not to generalise, but to describe and illuminate the experiences of the individuals involved (Palinkas *et al.* 2013; Siedman 2013).

Whilst every effort was made to source participants without deliberate selection, some influence cannot be excluded. It may be the case that link agencies selected, however unintentionally, participants they believed would be best able to engage, or would give

the best accounts (Lavrakas, 2008). The issue of language was raised in Chapter 5, and the fact that almost all participants were English speakers (though of varying degrees) hints at either external influence by the link agents, or self-selection by participants (Avery and Bernard, 2014). The educational level of the majority of participants was also high, and this may be unrepresentative (NIACE, 2009).

It is acknowledged that self-selection in research can change the pattern of participant type, often focussing on those who are more capable (Lavrakas, 2008; Collier and Mahoney, 2011). As the nature and character of the participants form a significant part of the themes arising, and it is not possible to say whether this group of participants are reflective of a particular trend towards virtue and altruism amongst refugees, or because they are virtuous and altruistic people they may be more likely engage with a project looking for volunteers (McKann *et al.* 2010; Mein *et al.* 2012).

The other major influencing feature lies in the 'presence' of the researcher, and though efforts have been made, through epoché and reflexivity, to maintain authenticity, researcher bias cannot be entirely removed. Instead I have attempted to be open in my self-expression throughout, showing my response and acknowledging my influence where I can, as is recommended within Reflexive Relational research such as this (Moustakas, 1990; 1994; Lodico *et al.* 2010; Finlay, 2011).

Finally, the themes arising do so in response to my interaction with the data; something that occurred through the 'rhythm and relationship between the phenomenon and self' (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). In the context of this study, it is appropriate to recognise the non-Western occupational context of the participants, which is difficult to 'know' and

understand both from the Western focus of academic discourse (Whalley Hammell, 2015; Turpin and Iwama, 2011) and my personal outsider perspective. The themes are, by no means, the only interpretation that can be made. I can see a number of different strands of evidence which could be reflected upon, so I consider these findings one truth amongst many (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Spencer *et al.* 2003).

Despite these limitations, the study is strengthened by consistency between philosophy and methods (Moustakas, 1994; Lähdesmäki *et al.* 2010) attention to quality through consideration of contribution, defensibility, rigour, dependability, generalizability or transferability, confirmability and credibility (Richie *et al.* 2013), and open acknowledgment of potential influences and limitations (Spencer *et al.* 2003; Finlay, 2011).

It is difficult to determine how I might change the approach if I were to repeat this study, there are certainly issues I would like to address, such as the possible selection of participants, lack of non-English speaking participants etc. However, I had already made every effort to avoid these issues, yet they remained a concern. I would hope that further education of link agencies may minimise these outcomes, and had a larger body of participants been reached it may have been possible to select a different representation of refugee lives. The lack of interest in creative opportunities was disappointing to me, as discussed on pg. 158, however a different cohort of participants may feel differently. An alternative method that I would consider is photo elicitation (Richard and Lahman, 2015), which may be a more accessible means of adding an occupationally orientated method, as I had wished. However, any method will have imperfections, and the most significant thing about the process I have undertaken is that

they have yielded an enormous amount of rich, personal data, capturing both anticpipated and unexpected aspects of life during asylum.

8.2 ONGOING DISSEMINATION

It is intended that the findings of this study will be disseminated in a number of ways. The requirements of my funding for this study included a report of interim findings, submitted to the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Foundation. From this, key findings were widely disseminated to interested occupational therapists through the RCOT website, a copy of which can be seen in Appendix Eight.

In addition to this thesis, Appendix Eight also includes a range of other academic output, including examples of conference presentations, abstracts and publications from national and international journals. At the point of submission there are two further international conference papers accepted at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress and plans for several future papers.

It is intended that several other activities will be undertaken to broaden access to key findings. I am offering my time free to key local refugee agencies, including NERS, Justice First and the Regional Refugee Forum, for workshop opportunities to disseminate key ideas to refugees, and people who support them. Workshops will also be made available to occupational therapy practitioners, academics and students who express an interest.

Information sheets will be produced, and translated into several key languages, enabling wider access for refugees who do not read English. Finally, I am currently seeking funding

to produce a short animated film, suitable to be shared via social media, potentially worldwide. This will enable members of the public to access information regarding the core messages of the study, raising the impact of devaluation and the potential for occupation to foster worth.

This multi-layered approach has been adopted to spread the information widely and target both academic and non-academic groups, with the intention of reaching different consumers and increasing the potential impact of the study. Already these findings have been well received by occupational therapists and occupational scientists, with expressions of interests in my work, requests to share findings, invitations to speak nationally and internationally, and output in peer reviewed conferences and journals.

My intention to broaden the scope of dissemination is driven by my desire to make the findings applicable to any person who can use them, and I hope that through workshops, information sheets and the animated film, key messages can be shared widely, promoting positive messages and encouraging an asset focussed, creative approach to creating occupational opportunities for refugees.

8.3 POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the same way that there are many potential truths than can be taken from the findings of this study, there are many different strands which could be valuable to research further.

Initially, I would be interested to see if a different cohort of participants would prioritise the same issues. My anecdotal experience of working with refugees would support the

idea that they actively seek occupation, and that occupations with choice, control and purpose are considered most beneficial. I am also very familiar with clients showing a desire to 'rise above' their status as asylum seeker, in order to show their worth. It may help to determine if the passage of time or changes in asylum status are met differently by different people.

There are a number of concepts within this thesis that have not been widely explored by occupational science or occupational therapy. There is potential for the idea of occupational constancy to be further considered, either with refugees, or with other groups facing biographical interruption. Additionally, the idea of virtue as an influence on occupational choice is a novel one, adding to very early ideas about occupational opportunities and eudemonia (Taylor, 2015). Further consideration of 'higher purpose', or 'virtuous' reasons for engagement in occupation could be examined to identify the potential of 'possibilities based practice' (Kronenberg, 2011). Further exploration could make a case for a more optimistic, idealistic approach to practice, seeing greater potential and using virtue to promote growth.

Undertaking a larger study to specifically consider the role of virtue-orientated occupations like the altruistic ones detailed in this thesis may give insight into personal, social and cultural drivers for virtuous acts, adding to existing understandings of occupational choice. Some consideration of the interface between virtue and the person's first choice occupations, such as paid work, may also be valuable, identifying the costs and benefits of occupational choice for both individuals and communities, exploring the capacity for other occupations to replace work or support work skills in both the long and short term.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

There are many things I would like any reader to take from this study. I would like them to have a more robust understanding of the realities of life during asylum, and the impact that context, opportunities and attitudes have on the individual. I'd like them to have developed their knowledge of the impact of forced migration on occupation, and how this may reduce or raise an individual's sense of worth.

Crucially, I would wish any reader to remember the message that 'people are people' but asylum seekers are not JUST asylum seekers. If you can take nothing else from the study, I would like you to take an image of Ali, animated and excited as he describes how he cooks the best Biriyani, Goziem talking with pride about his daughter's excellence on the football field, or Alice going to No. 10 Downing Street, to educate politicians on the practice of FGM. What struck *me* during the interviews was the capacity people have to reach high, despite their hardships. From the simple to the extraordinary, each and every participant was able to describe something they were passionate about, however fleeting, something that powered their motivation, drove them to aspire and to show their 'best selves.' I would like any reader to take their message of optimism and hope, something that I found humbling and inspiring.

Of course, if you are an occupational therapist, there is much more that you can take from these findings. The impact of a new life in a new country touches every aspect of a person's occupational life (Huot *et al.* 2016a; Trimboli and Taylor, 2016). With a new socio-cultural landscape to negotiate and understand and limited access and opportunity, individuals find themselves experiencing significant changes to the

structure and content of daily occupations (Gupta and Sullivan, 2013, Huot *et al.,* 2013; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013; Morville, 2014). The experience of leaving behind the known and 'starting over' in an unfamiliar host community creates major disruption in all aspects of everyday life (Gupta and Sulivan, 2013; Huot *et al.,* 2013). They often face a process of acculturation, and a lack of cultural continuity between old life and new leaves individuals experiencing liminality (Turner, 1967). To cope with the process individuals must quickly adapt to new occupations, whilst managing the loss of familiar ones (Whiteford, 2005; Morville, 2014).

Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing the post migratory experience, but choice of occupation is important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning which meet personal and cultural needs (Burchett and Matheson 2010; Heigl *et al.* 2011; Farias and Asaba, 2013; Smith, H.C. 2015). Every participant in this study was able to identify occupational injustices experienced since they arrived in the UK. They faced apartheid and marginalisation due to policies and practicalities which prevent access (Burnett and Chebe, 2009; Huot *et al.* 2013; Fleay, Hartley and Kenny, 2014; Fleay and Hoffman, 2014). There was evidence of disruption in all cases, the length of which appeared to be influenced by the level of support they had to gain access to occupations, plus their spoken language. Individuals gave examples of the impact of occupational deprivation, which appeared to become more entrenched over time, due to declining personal resources and increased restrictions within the asylum system. Where people described satisfying occupations, they had worked extremely hard to access them, something which took energy and stamina (Lunden 2012; WFOT, 2014).

Crawford *et al.* (2016) highlighted the dual impact of both personal characteristics and social structures during asylum. This multilayered impact of internal and external influences is powerful and pervasive, leaving both the individual facing asylum, and those who seek to support them, with a Sisyphean task. If we consider the social structures first, the barriers created by policies which create a hostile environment, impacting on many aspects of the individual's occupation, are unquestionably an injustice. The denial of occupations which are considered a human right, such as work, impact hugely on the well-being of individuals, families and the host community (Refugee Council, 2011; Huot *et al.,* 2013; Gupta, 2013). The implications of policy driven exclusion and occupational deprivation are wide reaching, and in addition to the impact on health, well-being and skills, I would assert that occupational deprivation increases vulnerability to engagement in occupations which have a 'dark side', and may be unhealthy, dangerous and exploitative (Twinley, 2012; Lewis *et al.* 2014; Kiepek et al. 2014; Lawrence, 2015).

In terms of personal characteristics, the individual may face barriers such as language and cultural differences, but are also greatly influences by poor mental and physical health, which is a common sequelae of forced migration (Priebe *et al.* 2016; Jayaweera, 2014). Limited occupational opportunities and poor occupational choice making it harder to integrate and cross such barriers, reducing well-being and eroding identity (Jonsson, 2008; Durocher and Gibson, 2013; Burnett, 2013).

This study, like others in the field of forced migration (Bishop and Purcell, 2013; Crawford *et al.* 2016; Gupta, 2013, Huot *et al.* 2016, Ingvarsson *et al.* 2016; Mayne *et al.* 2016) have highlighted the dynamic of losing and seeking to regain occupations to promote a sense of self in time (Clark, 1997; Kuluski, 2014; Pemberton and Cox, 2014). In an attempt to

capture this phenomenon, I have described a drive towards 'occupational constancy' in section 7.3.5. I see the potential of the concept of occupational constancy as naming a feature of people's occupational drives during times of major change. In recognising the specific desire to maintain constancy between past present and future, through a push towards familiar occupations, we can identify an important driver within occupational choice. Close attention to the clients' history, existing skills and frame of reference may form part of traditional approaches to practice, but often the enormous losses of forced migration may disguise a persons' occupational path, or make it more challenging to apply existing skills differently in a different context. Seeking occupational constancy could enable us as practitioners to direct client energies effectively, promoting well-being and satisfaction, and maintaining crucial aspects of an individual's identity and sense of worth (Smith, 2017).

I concur with the growing assertion that traditional perspectives on occupation have been too concerned with categorisation and performance, and less focused on meaning. By attending to meaning we can see that the motivations for some occupations might hold as much meaning as the activity itself (Taylor, 2015). My experience has been that people have unique relationships with their occupations and these are amplified by cultural difference. People engage in different occupations, for different reasons and in different ways but are seeking to find meaning that is embedded in their personal, social and national cultures. By focusing on meaning over performance there is a greater understanding of the motivation, context and role of cultural influence on occupational choice, which is a useful addition to the professional knowledge base (Abrahams, 2008; Hayward and Taylor, 2011).

A focus on virtue has the potential to challenge the westernised view of the world that occupational therapy and occupational science holds, and which hampers movement into social and political spheres of practice (Hayward and Taylor, 2011). As occupational therapists of occupational scientists we have a responsibility to hear the call in the WFOT (2006) position statement on human rights. We must seek ways to promote 'human flourishing,' potential and satisfaction through occupation, but also challenge the multiple external forces which create economic, physical and social exclusion. By seeking potential and creating opportunities we are fulfilling our traditional roles, by challenging inadequacies and speaking out against harsh attitudes we are broadening our scope and meeting our occupational justice agenda.

By approaching our practice in ways which commit to social transformation we can challenge dominant, negative voices which act against the individual's occupational expression of their human rights (WFOT, 2006; Rudman, 2010). By being aware of the power relations and processes through which occupational injustices are created and sustained, we can speak up against them (Kronenberg and Pollard, 2006; Galheigo, 2011).

I acknowledge that this is not always easy. A busy working world and a barrage of negative impressions, may erode empathy and make a person-centred mind-set more difficult to achieve (Shapiro, 2008). It is sometimes easier to maintain a distance from need and vulnerability in others, however, empathy is the foundation of meeting challenges and honouring difference (Mathieu, 2007; Shapiro, 2008; Osofsky, 2011). A genuinely person-centred approach safeguards human dignity and appropriate moral values (Blyth, 2015), countering the cynicism of devaluation.

The ‘good immigrant’ is often portrayed by advocacy groups through their display of virtue and occupational success (Judge, 2010; Shukla, 2016; Hardcastle, 2018). However, the value of our clients must not lie in their benefit to UK society, or their exemplary behaviour. It shouldn’t matter if the person is exceptional – they are a person. Their need for protection should not be linked to their potential benefit to society, or their outward appearance of value (Judge, 2010). So, whist this study is reflecting the engagement of refugees in virtuous behaviour, I wish to be clear that the importance of the virtue is for the individual, not the host community. The key benefit lies in the potential for the individual to express themselves through occupations of their choice, not to present virtuous occupations as a reason for others to acknowledge their worth. By recognising the inherent worth of every client, regardless of origins or socio-legal status we can promote and maintain individual personhood, protecting their rights as a humanitarian necessity (Kronenberg and Pollard, 2006; Zetter, 2015; Zetter and Ruaudel, 2015 Galheigo, 2011).

Occupational barriers are most effectively breached by using a solution-focussed approach built upon positive attitudes, advocacy and creative problem-solving (O’Hara, 2012). Possibilities based practice encourages practitioners to use energy and ingenuity to meet needs and explore solutions (Kronenberg, 2011). However, my addition to this principle is the encouragement to ‘aim high’ in our approach to occupations for refugees, looking for the best means to explore the individuals ‘best selves’, and not underestimating their potential.

AND THIS IS US

The iron ore is a refugee, it comes from abroad.

Sometimes we have to move from the places that we belong to - forced to throw

everything away and even to leave loved ones behind.

That moment,

when we look over our shoulders

and we knew that there was no turning back.

We went across borders, mountains, rivers,

using different ways,

horses, lorries, trains, ships and our feet.

And often we were used and exploited,

touched, bitten, burnt by fire and destroyed.

At times we became stronger –

shiny and useful.

Some people look at us differently,

aliens, foreign bodies,

solid stones without any feelings.

And some treat us with kindness and warmth,

with soft hands.

Some ignoring us and put us behind walls,

some trying to understand our cultures.

Some worry from us because we are different,

and some try to discover the world behind us.

Some of us find new lives,

new shelters, new environments.

And some are still waiting

to be a part and feel home again.

Hassan Wadi (2008)*

*This poem was created as part of a refugee art project entitled *'And This is Us'* at MIMA, the Middlesbrough Museum of Modern Art.

CONCLUSIONS

9 CONCLUSIONS

'People floating like pollen in search of more fertile soil.'

Andrew Crofts

Refugees and people seeking asylum have multi-layered needs which range from everyday essentials, like safety and shelter, to 'higher needs' such as productivity, belonging and identity (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Stephenson *et al.* 2013). The needs that are met during the process of asylum are only the most basic - a place to sleep, a little money for food, all of which can be stopped at any time (Bennett and Thomas, 2013; Cuthill, 2013). The experiences of poverty and precarity mean that those basic provisions are part of a fragile, liminal life (Banki, 2013; Janmyr, 2016; Baban *et al.* 2017), where the focus of support services is on meeting the bare minimum of needs, and the things that are given are given grudgingly (Crossley, 2013; Bolt, 2016).

Political 'point scoring' and hostile media attention (Fletcher, 2008; Philo, 2013) reduces the refugee to a series of labels and tropes (Zetter, 2006). Misunderstood, feared and often hated, individuals find themselves facing 'hostipitality' within the host community (McFadyen, 2016). This 'hostile environment', created by a mixture of policy, *habitus* (deeply ingrained behaviours) and *doxa* (common opinion), further reduces opportunities (Galvaan, 2014).

In addition to reduced external resources, the skills, experience and passion of the individual is left lying fallow by the denial of occupational opportunities (Burnett and Chebe, 2009; Huot *et al.* 2013; Fleay and Hoffman, 2014). The lengthy, passive wait (Rotter, 2015), with insufficient occupational engagement, allows capacity to decline (Morville and Erlanssen, 2013; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013) and self-esteem to dwindle (Akinsulure-Smith *et al*. 2013; O'Hara, 2014). Daily life becomes a process of negotiating for basic needs, filling time with low-demand occupations and existing on the fringes of society (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Horghagen and Josephsson, 2010; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013), captured perfectly when Tete described it as '*just like you're in a civilised prison sort of.*'

It is clear that the denial of occupational opportunities to people during asylum is an occupational injustice (Burnett and Chebe, 2009; Huot *et al.* 2013; Fleay *et al.* 2014; Fleay and Hoffman, 2014). It is a waste of their passion, enthusiasm and skills, and creates unhappiness, isolation and hardship (Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013; Campbell and Steel, 2015; Mayne *et al.* 2016). However, the findings of this study also show how the denial of occupation is a denial of human worth. If occupation is a means to express identity and demonstrate one's value, and the opportunity to do so is *deliberately* removed, to reduce positive outcomes such as well-being and integration (Doyle, 2009; ENAR, 2014), it is an act of willful cruelty.

Refugees and people seeking asylum are more than inmates in a 'civilised prison.' They are men, women and children with lives before, lives now, and lives to come. As occupational therapists or occupational scientists we have a role to play in using the skills

and potential from past lives, minimising the challenges of asylum life in the here-and-now, and creating the means of a productive future.

Refugees and people seeking asylum are undeniably devalued in multiple ways, and as their sense of self-worth and value is eroded, so is their personhood, identity and opportunity (Jonsson, 2008; Burnett, 2013; Durocher and Gibson, 2013). The link between devaluation and occupation is possibly cyclical; the less valued an individual is the less opportunities are presented to them (or the more barriers are placed in their way). The less opportunity they have to participate in meaningful occupations the less means they have of demonstrating value to others. The less occupationally engaged they are, the less worth they may feel. This may be a continuous spiral, creating a downward drift in both the individual's sense of worth and their occupational engagement.

Connecting the strands of past, present and future through occupational constancy allows the individual to maintain essential threads of identity and self-worth. In addition, approaching occupation with a focus on its' 'light side' can raise people above the limitations of occupational deprivation, towards the most meaningful, purposeful expression of their most virtuous selves.

This study aimed to explore the meaning given to occupation during this challenging period; seeking to understand what supported the individual in their occupations and what acted as barriers, and how this impacted on the individual. The study has highlighted the value ascribed to occupation by the participants, the occupational injustices associated with asylum, and the power occupation has to ameliorate some of

the impact of forced migration. I have demonstrated that individuals crave the opportunity to engage with occupations, but that in order to bring the greatest benefit the occupations need to be the right *kind* of occupations.

This study has contributed unique insights into the role of higher purpose occupations, and a need for occupational constancy, both of which are not explored by other authors in the field. Participants' raised the potential of occupation to redress the impact of the undermining experiences of asylum. By accessing occupations with meaning, and the potential to promote occupational constancy, they felt enabled to 'keep busy with purpose' and foster their best selves.

The findings show the particular value attached by the participants to occupations that they do for the benefit of others, the ones which are the best reflection of their virtues and values. This encourages for occupational therapists and occupational scientists to consider the role of virtues in human flourishing and *eudemonia* (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), well-being, happiness and life satisfaction (Haybron, 2007; Park and Peterson, 2008; Wood *et al.* 2011; Forest *et al.* 2012). This creates an opportunity to consider the 'light side' of occupation, based on the pursuit of virtuous occupation, encouraging individuals to aim high with an optimistic and hopeful view of their own potential.

Human displacement is at the highest levels ever recorded, with 65.3 million people living in exile (UNHCR, 2016). Never has it been more important to consider the occupational needs of people facing forced migration. It is my belief that the use of occupation as a tool against people, preventing engagement in order to foster a 'hostile environment', is

grossly unethical. However, the decision to limit or prevent occupational engagement also tells us how *powerful* occupation can be. It appears that successive governments have feared the potential of occupation to embed people in UK society and help them build their lives here. I would argue that this study tells us that occupation, correctly harnessed, can push back against the hostilities, enabling individuals to reflect their many virtues and show their worth.

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10 REFERENCES

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11 APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Written information for participants, including:

- Poster
- Participant Information Sheet
- Reply slip

Examples of written information translated into other languages

- Poster in Farsi
- Participant Information Sheet in French
- Consent Form in Arabic
- Reply slip in Kurdish Sorani

Transcript of the audio version of the Participant Information Sheet.

I am looking for people who might be interested in contributing to research into:

THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

This research will explore the way that your access to everyday activities (like self care, leisure and work) is influenced by your experiences of seeking asylum.

Teesside University

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UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation

If you are a man or woman, over the age of 18, who has sought asylum here in the UK within the past five years you may be able to participate in the study. If you would like more information, without obligation, please ask a member of NERS staff.

AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Researcher: Claire Smith

INFORMATION SHEET

This study aims to gather stories about the experiences of everyday life and activities for people who are seeking, or have sought, asylum in the UK—and forms part of a PhD study on this subject.

It is intended that the findings will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of how asylum affects people, and findings may be published with the intention of promoting better opportunities for people seeking asylum.

I am interested in a better understanding of:

- *Your own thoughts and feelings about the way you spend your time now, compared to other times in your life*
- *How much your activities have changed since you came to the UK to seek asylum*
- *What things influence how you spend your time here*
- *What you think is the impact of these changes on yourself now, and on your future*

This information sheet will tell you what you need to know about the study, to help you to decide if you would like to participate.

It includes:

What will happen during the research

What happens after the research

Using interpreters

Confidentiality

Possible effects of participation

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions after reading this information sheet, please do not hesitate to contact me for more details on 01642 384930 or h.c.smith@tees.ac.uk. You can ask questions and find out more, without obligation, to be sure that participating in the research is right for you. **Thank you.**

People who wish to participate in the research will be asked to:

Return a reply slip, speak to NERS staff or contact researcher to find out about the research

Meet to discuss the research and decide if it is right for you

30 minutes

Meeting One

60-90 minutes

Meeting Two

60-90 minutes

Meeting Three

60-90 minutes

In these meetings there will be time to talk and/or use art materials to explore your experiences and thoughts on how you spend your time

Meet a final time to check the Information gained for accuracy

Up to 60 minutes

What happens in meetings:

There will be an initial chance to meet and discuss the research, this will be held at the North of England Refugee Service offices in Middlesbrough. This is simply a chance to see if the research is suitable for you, and answer any questions you may have. The main research meetings will be held at **Teesside University**, in the same room each time, on a day and time that suits you.

You will be given the opportunity to talk, and art and craft materials to use if you wish to, for between 60 and 90 minutes on three separate occasions. If a session feels too long, or you don't want to continue after any of the meetings just let me know – you do not have to explain your reasons.

You can talk freely on any matter that *you* think is relevant and if you would like to use art and craft materials there are a wide range available in the research meetings. These include paints, clay, photographs, fabric, and a range of objects - and they are available to you because they can allow a different way or expressing yourself, and can help you to show your thoughts and feelings. You do not have to do anything, or discuss anything you don't want to.

The session will be recorded using video recording equipment, this is only used to help me make the most accurate record of discussions. If, during a session, you don't want something you do or say to be video recorded a cloth will be available to cover the camera, giving you privacy—this will still provide an audio recording.

Using Interpreters:

For anyone who does not have English as a first language an interpreter will be made available, at no cost, for all sessions. You will be asked to identify your preferred language, ethnicity and gender and wherever possible an interpreter will be found to meet that preference, and the same one used throughout. If you are unhappy with your interpreter you can let me know without giving your reasons and another will be sought.

What happens after discussions:

After the sessions I will make a record of what was discussed and you will be able to look at it, to see if you agree that it is a true record of what was said. At any time up to 24 hours after seeing this, you can decide if you wish to withdraw from the study. After this time the information gathered will become part of the study and would be difficult to separate your information from other findings.

You can withdraw in a number of ways—you can tell me, email me, or text me—without giving your reasons. If you are not comfortable contacting me yourself you can ask a member of staff from NERS to do it on your behalf. If you want me to remove the information you have already given please make that clear. If we lose contact, for whatever reason, during the research process, I will assume it is alright to continue to use the partial information you have already given, unless I hear from you to tell me to withdraw it.

Confidentiality:

If you agree to take part, all the information that I collect from you will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications – you will be known only by your chosen pseudonym and all details that might identify you will be removed from the information. All information gathered will be kept either on a password-protected computer or in a locked cabinet at Teesside University, and will only be seen by the research team, who are named on the next page. Apart from me, nobody will have any details which can be used to identify you. Your information will only be held until the study is completed, after which any information that could identify you – including the video recordings – will be destroyed.

Whilst you might recognise phrases, art work or ideas if you read the final study, other people will not be able to identify you from these details.

Confidentiality will only ever be broken if I am concerned about your safety, or the safety of others—in which case I will have to discuss this with my research supervisor for advice, but will always discuss this with you first.

Possible effects of participating:

I will make every effort to avoid harm or discomfort for you. The research is not intended to be intrusive, painful or difficult; though talking about things that are meaningful to you may sometimes be upsetting. If this happens, or you experience any other difficulties during the research I will try to support you, but will also give you details of how to get further help, should you need it, following the research.

There may also be positive effects from being involved in the research, in having the opportunity to tell someone of your experiences and share your views, and in contributing to research for people with similar issues as your own.

As an expression of gratitude for the time you are giving in participating in the research I would like to offer you a £20 high street gift voucher, which can be spent in many shops on items of your choice. You will be offered a voucher for each of the three main research sessions and the follow up meeting. These vouchers are a gift, and do not have an impact on your benefits or NASS support.

Agreeing to participate:

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. Please ensure that you have a clear idea of what the study entails, and feel free to ask any questions. Deciding not to participate will not have any negative effects for you.

Remember that agreeing at this stage does not affect your right to withdraw later, up until 24 hours after our final meeting, if you change your mind. If you don't complete the sessions and we lose contact I will assume you have withdrawn after two weeks.

A BRIEF REMINDER:

The aim of the study is to understand how you spend your time and how this is influenced by seeking asylum

Participating in the study is voluntary

It would involve meeting up on up to five occasions

Interpreters are available, free of charge, for all sessions

You will have an opportunity to check my understanding of what you have said

Your information will be treated as confidential at all times

You will have the option to withdraw at any time until after the whole research process is complete

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, for further information you can contact:

The researcher:
My name is **Claire Smith** and I can be contacted on 01642 384930 or h.c.smith@tees.ac.uk

The study supervisor:
Dr Dorothy Hannis can be contacted to discuss any concerns or questions on 01642 384526

An independent contact:
If you wish to speak to someone not involved in the study, you can contact **Alasdair MacSween** Ph.D B.Sc.(Hons) MCSP, Principal Lecturer in Research Governance, Chair of School of Health & Social Care Research Governance and Ethics Committee on 01642 342965

You can write to any of the above named people, by name, at this address:
School of Health & Social Care
Teesside University
Middlesbrough
Tees Valley
TS1 3BA

This study has been sponsored by **Teesside University**, and supported by the **United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Fund**

Teesside University

UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation
Building the evidence - creating the future

Painting reproduced with the kind permission of Wondesen Hailemorayam

THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

REPLY SLIP

If you are interested in hearing more about the study WITHOUT OBLIGATION, please return this form to a member of staff at NERS

YOUR NAME:

Your language:

How and when you wish to be contacted:
(Please supply either a mobile number, or an address for contact)

من به دنبال افرادی هستم که ممکن است به مشارکت در پژوهشی با عنوان زیر علاقه مند باشند:

معنای اشتغال از نظر افراد پناهجو در بریتانیا

این پژوهش به بررسی چگونگی تحت الشعاع قرار گرفتن فعالیت های روزانه شما (همچون مراقبت شخصی، تفریحات و کار) به موجب تجربیات پناهجویی می پردازد.

UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation
Building the evidence - creating the future

Teesside University

اگر زن یا مردی بالای 18 سال هستید و به دنبال پناهندگی در بریتانیا طی پنج سال گذشته بوده اید می توانید در این پژوهش شرکت کنید.
اگر مایلید بدون ایجاد هیچ گونه تعهدی اطلاعات بیشتری کسب کنید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان NERS گفتگو کنید.

UNE ANALYSE DE LA SIGNIFICATION DE L'OCCUPATION POUR LES DEMANDEURS D'ASILE AU ROYAUME-UNI

Chercheuse : Claire Smith

FICHE D'INFORMATIONS

Cette enquête vise à recueillir des récits reflétant les expériences liées à la vie et aux activités quotidiennes des personnes qui demandent, ou ont demandé, l'asile au Royaume-Uni, et relève d'une étude de doctorat sur le sujet.

Son intention est de contribuer à la connaissance et à la compréhension de l'impact de l'asile sur les personnes, et ses résultats pourront être publiés dans le but de favoriser l'amélioration des opportunités des demandeurs d'asile.

Je cherche à mieux comprendre :

- *Vos pensées et sentiments personnels sur la façon dont vous passez actuellement votre temps, par rapport à d'autres périodes de votre vie*
- *Dans quelle mesure vos activités ont changé depuis que vous êtes arrivé(e) au Royaume-Uni pour y demander asile*
- *Quelles sont les choses qui influencent la façon dont vous passez votre temps ici*
- *Quel est, selon vous, l'impact de ces changements sur vous-même, aujourd'hui et pour votre avenir*

Cette fiche d'informations vous indiquera ce que vous devez savoir sur l'étude afin de vous aider à décider si vous souhaitez participer.

Elle couvre les points suivants :

Ce qui va se passer pendant l'étude

Ce qui se passe après l'étude

Le recours aux interprètes

Confidentialité

Les effets possibles de la participation

Décider de participer ou non

Si vous avez des questions après avoir lu cette fiche d'informations, n'hésitez pas à me contacter pour plus d'informations au 01642 384930 ou par email à l'adresse h.c.smith@tees.ac.uk. Vous pouvez poser des questions et vous renseigner sans aucune obligation, afin d'être sûr(e) de bien vouloir participer à cette étude. **Merci.**

استكشاف أهمية العمل لطالبي اللجوء السياسي بالمملكة المتحدة

استمارة الموافقة

برجاء قراءة الإقرارات التالية بعناية ووضع علامة على المربع في حال موافقتك:

- ☐ لقد قرأت نشرة المعلومات الصادرة في سبتمبر 2012، والخاصة بالدراسة المذكورة واستوعبت ما جاء فيها وأتيحت لي فرصة سؤال بعض الأسئلة.
- ☐ أدرك أن المشاركة في هذا البحث أمرًا اختياريًا ويحق لي الانسحاب في أي وقت حتى بعد 24 ساعة من لقائنا الأخير. ولا يلزم علي إبداء السبب ودون أن ينتقص ذلك من أي حق من حقوقي.
- ☐ أوافق على إمكانية تسجيل مناقشاتي المتعلقة بالبحث عبر الفيديو. إذا شعرت بعدم ارتياح خلال الجلسة يمكنني إغلاق الفيديو بحيث لا يتم تشغيل سوى التسجيل الصوتي.
- ☐ تأكدت من الحفاظ على السرية طوال الوقت. أدرك أنه إذا كان لدى الباحثة أية مخاوف بشأن سلامتي أو سلامة الآخرين، فإنها ستناقش هذا الأمر مع مشرفها، ويتم اتخاذ المزيد من الإجراءات إذا دعت الضرورة لذلك.
- ☐ أعلم أنه سيتم حفظ جميع البيانات على كمبيوتر الجامعة المؤمن بشكل لا يكشف عن هوية أصحابها. أدرك أن جميع المستندات الأخرى المتعلقة بمشاركتي سيتم حفظها في خزينة حفظ الملفات المؤمنة بمدرسة الرعاية الصحية والاجتماعية.
- ☐ لقد اخترت أن يتم الاشارة لي خلال البحث باسم مستعار، وليس اسمي / أو جزء من اسمي.
- ☐ أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

اسم المشارك.....التوقيع.....

اسم الباحث.....التوقيع.....

التاريخ.....

پارچە وەرەقەی وەڵامدانەوە

ئەگەر ئارەزووی وەرگرتنی زانیاری زیاتر دەکەیت لەسەر توێژینەوەکە بەبێ پابەندبوون، تکایە ئەم فۆرمە بگێڕەرەوە بۆ یەکێك لە کارمەندەکان لە NERS

ناوی خۆت:

زمانەکەت:

چۆن وە کەی حەز دەکەیت پەیوەندیت پێوە بکەین:
(تکایە لە خوارەوە ژمارەی مێیاڵ یان ناونیشانێك بنووسە بۆ پەیوەندیکردن)

مانای پیشە لەلای ئەو کەسانەی کە داوای پەناخوازی دەکەن لە بەریتانیا

'AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM'

Researcher – Claire Smith

Information Sheet

This study aims to gather stories about the experiences of everyday life and activities for people who are seeking, or have sought, asylum in the UK. It forms part of a PhD study on this subject. It is intended that the findings will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of how asylum affects people, and findings may be published with the intention of promoting better opportunities for people seeking asylum.

I am interested in a better understanding of:

- Your own thoughts and feelings about the way you spend your time now, compared to other times in your life
- How much your activities have changed since you came to the UK to seek asylum
- What things influence how you spend your time here
- What you think is the impact of these changes on yourself now, and on your future

This information sheet will tell you what you need to know about the study, to help you to decide if you would like to participate.

It includes – what will happen during the research, what happens after the research, using interpreters, confidentiality, possible effects of participating and deciding whether to participate.

If you have any questions after hearing this information, please do not hesitate to contact me for more details, on 01642384930 or at h.c.smith@tees.ac.uk You can ask any questions and find out more, without obligation, to be sure that participating in the research is right for you, thank you.

People who wish to participate in the research will be asked to:

- Return a reply slip, speak to NERS staff or contact the researcher to find out about the research
- Meet to discuss the research to help you to decide if it right for you. This may take around half an hour.
- You will then have the opportunity to meet up to three times for up to one and a half hours. In these meetings there will be time to talk and/or use art materials to explore your experiences and thoughts on how you spend your time.
- Meet one last time, for up to one hour, to check over the information you have provided to see if it accurately reflects what you said.

These meetings will be held at Teesside University, wherever possible in the same room each time, at a time and day that suits you.

You can talk freely on any matter that you think is relevant and if you would like to use art and craft materials there are a wide range available in the research meetings. These include paints, clay, photographs, fabric, and a range of objects - and they are available to you because they can allow a different way or expressing yourself, and can help you to show your thoughts and feelings. You do not have to do anything, or discuss anything you don't want to.

The session will be recorded using video recording equipment; this is only used to help me make the most accurate record of discussions. If, during a session, you don't want something you do or say to be video recorded a cloth will be available to cover the camera, giving you privacy—this will still provide an audio recording.

For anyone who does not have English as a first language an interpreter will be made available, free of charge, for all sessions. You will be asked to identify your preferred language, ethnicity and gender and wherever possible an interpreter will be found to meet that preference, and the same one used throughout. If you are unhappy with your interpreter you can let the researcher know without giving your reasons and another will be sought.

After the sessions I will make a record of what was discussed and you will be able to look at it, to see if you agree that it is a true record of what was said. At any time up to 24 hours after seeing this, you can decide if you wish to withdraw from the study. After this time the information gathered will become part of the study and would be difficult to separate your information from other findings.

You can withdraw in a number of ways—you can tell me, email me, or text me—without giving your reasons. If you are not comfortable contacting me yourself you can ask a member of staff from NERS to do it on your behalf. If you want me to remove the information you have already given please make that clear. If we lose contact, for whatever reason, during the research process, I will assume it is alright to continue to use the partial information you have already given, unless I hear from you to tell me to withdraw it.

If you agree to take part, all the information that I collect from you will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications – you will be known only by your chosen pseudonym and all details that might identify you will be removed from the information. All information gathered will be kept either on a password-protected computer or in a locked cabinet at Teesside University, and will only be seen by the research team, who are named on the next page. Apart from me, nobody will have any details which can be used to identify you. Your information will only be held until the study is completed, after which any information that could identify you – including the video recordings – will be destroyed.

Whilst you might recognise phrases, art work or ideas if you read the final study, other people will not be able to identify you from these details.

Confidentiality will only ever be broken if I am concerned about your safety, or the safety of others—in which case I will have to discuss this with my research supervisor for advice, but will always discuss this with you first.

I will make every effort to avoid harm or discomfort for you. The research is not intended to be intrusive, painful or difficult; though talking about things that are meaningful to you may sometimes be upsetting. If this happens, or you experience any other difficulties during the research I will try to support you, but will also give you details of how to get further help, should you need it, following the research.

There may also be positive effects from being involved in the research, in having the opportunity to tell someone of your experiences and share your views, and in contributing to research for people with similar issues as your own.

As an expression of gratitude for the time you are giving in participating in the research I would like to offer you a £20 high street gift voucher, which can be spent in many shops on items of your choice. You will be offered a voucher for each of the three main research sessions and the follow up meeting. These vouchers are a gift, and do not have an impact on your benefits or NASS support.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. Please ensure that you have a clear idea of what the study entails, and feel free to ask any questions. Deciding not to participate will not have any negative effects for you.

Remember that agreeing at this stage does not affect your right to withdraw later, up until 24 hours after our final meeting, if you change your mind. If you don't complete the sessions and we lose contact I will assume you have withdrawn after two weeks.

A BRIEF REMINDER:

The aim of the study is to understand how you spend your time and how this is influenced by seeking asylum

Participating in the study is voluntary

It would involve meeting up on up to five occasions

Interpreters are available, free of charge, for all sessions

You will have an opportunity to check my understanding of what you have said

Your information will be treated as confidential at all times

You will have the option to withdraw at any time until after the whole research process is complete

Thank you for taking your time to listen to this information, for further information you can contact:

Me, The researcher:

My name is Claire Smith and I can be contacted on 01642 384930 or h.c.smith@tees.ac.uk

The study supervisor:

Dr Dorothy Hannis can be contacted to discuss any concerns or questions on 01642 384526

If you wish to speak to someone not involved in the study, you can contact Alasdair MacSween Ph.D B.Sc.(Hons) MCSP, Principal Lecturer in Research Governance, Chair of School of Health & Social Care Research Governance and Ethics Committee on 01642 342965

You can write to any of the above named people, by name, at this address:

School of Health & Social Care

Teesside University

Middlesbrough

Tees Valley

TS1 3BA

This study has been sponsored by Teesside University, and supported by the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Fund

APPENDIX TWO

Good practice guidance provided for interpreters

AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

GUIDANCE FOR INTERPRETERS

This study aims to gather stories about the experiences of everyday life and activities for people who are seeking, or have sought, asylum in the UK.
It forms part of a PhD study on this subject, and the findings will be used to promote better opportunities for people seeking asylum.

Reproduced with the kind permission of Wondesen Hallemorayam

This information sheet will tell you everything you need to know about interpreting for people participating in the study.

Please read it carefully before agreeing to interpret in the research

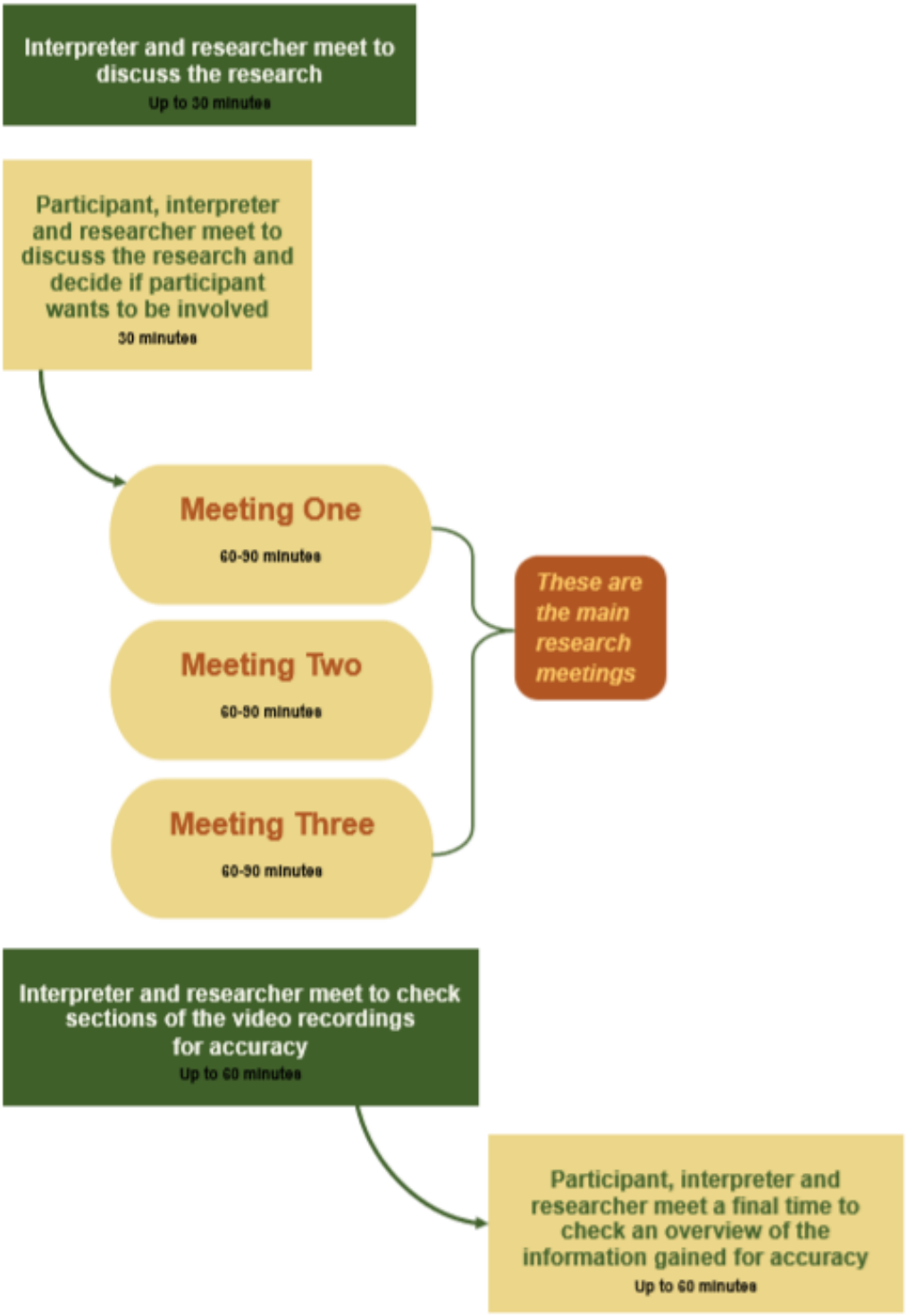
The study is designed to illustrate people's experience of occupation – including all aspects of self-care, leisure and work – and how it might be influenced by seeking asylum in the United Kingdom.

This guidance gives you some extra information to help you to understand the study, and some direction regarding the researchers' expectations and requirements.

Please read it, and feel free to ask any questions. If you are not happy to interpret in the research, or have any reservations, please let the researcher know before we start.

The researcher is interested in a better understanding of:

- ***Participants thoughts and feelings about the way they spend their time now, compared to other times in their lives***
- ***How much their activities have changed since they came to the UK to seek asylum***
- ***What things influence how they spend their time here***
- ***What they think is the impact of these changes on them now, and on their future***


Interpreter and researcher meet to discuss the research
Up to 30 minutes
Participant, interpreter and researcher meet to discuss the research and decide if participant wants to be involved
30 minutes
Meeting One
60-90 minutes
Meeting Two
60-90 minutes
Meeting Three
60-90 minutes
These are the main research meetings
Interpreter and researcher meet to check sections of the video recordings for accuracy
Up to 60 minutes
Participant, interpreter and researcher meet a final time to check an overview of the information gained for accuracy
Up to 60 minutes

What happens in meetings:

The meetings will be held at **Teesside University**, in the same room each time, on a day and time that suits the participant. They will be given the opportunity to talk, and art materials to use if they wish to, for between 60 and 90 minutes on three separate occasions.

Participants are invited to talk freely on any matter that *they* think is relevant and session will be recorded using video recording equipment.

Video recording is only used to help the researcher make the most accurate record of discussions.

Arranging interpretation:

All participants who do not have English as a first language are offered an interpreter, at no cost, for all sessions. They asked to identify their preferred language, ethnicity and gender in an attempt to match them with someone they feel comfortable with. They have the right not to work with you if, for whatever reason, they are not comfortable—so if they indicate to you that they do not wish to use you as an interpreter inform the researcher immediately. It is understood that this is *not* a reflection on you as an interpreter, but may be a matter of personal choice and it is important that the participant feels able to be honest and open.

Beginning to work together:

At the beginning of the research we will be making clear to the participant the different roles we have and you will have the opportunity to introduce yourself. It will be important that we explain that we are both bound by a confidentiality agreement.

It is important for the participant that you remain impartial, for example—that you don't try to persuade them to do or say anything particular, nor do you try to advocate for them.

Whilst I will not directly facilitate your opinion on aspects of the session if you feel there is something important for me to be aware of—for example, relating to a cultural issue, the participants communication, or to relationship developments—please feel free to raise them during the post session debrief. Only if the issue is absolutely essential should you raise it during the session.

Following the sessions we may find it helpful to spend a few minutes clarifying any issues or to debrief without the participant present. This is not compulsory and depends on how each session has gone. I do not expect perfection and am happy to give and receive feedback as the sessions go on.

After the sessions the researcher will make a record of what was discussed and you will be asked to see if you agree that it is a true record of what was said. If necessary you might be asked to look at sections of video, to clarify points.

The relationship between researcher, interpreter and participant is a complex one and is bound to take practice—so we will be working together, supporting one another to make the sessions work as best they can.

What happens in meetings:

The meetings will be held at **Teesside University**, in the same room each time, on a day and time that suits the participant. They will be given the opportunity to talk, and art materials to use if they wish to, for between 60 and 90 minutes on three separate occasions.

Participants are invited to talk freely on any matter that *they* think is relevant and session will be recorded using video recording equipment.

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The relationship between researcher, interpreter and participant is a complex one and is bound to take practice—so we will be working together, supporting one another to make the sessions work as best they can.

A BRIEF REMINDER:

The aim of the study is to understand how people spend their time and how this is influenced by seeking asylum

It would involve meeting on up to seven occasions

Your role will be essential to the success of this research

In research (as in many aspects of interpreting) professional and linguistic competence are crucial

The researcher is experienced in providing therapy through interpreters and values your role and experience

Support is available to you throughout the research process

Possible effects of interpreting:

The researcher appreciates that interpreting is challenging and exhausting, and may also be distressing at times. The research is not intended to be intrusive, painful or difficult; but it may nevertheless be upsetting. If you would like to talk about any aspect of the research content you have the option of a debrief following each session.

Thank you for considering interpreting in this research

If you have any questions about any aspect of the research or your role within in please contact the researcher
(see the details below)

Declaration:

I .....have read this guidance and am happy to participate in the research as interpreter for research participant speaking.....language/s

Date:

The researchers name is **Claire Smith** and she can be contacted on **01642 384930**

If you wish, for any reason, to speak to the person overseeing this study, please contact:

Dr Dorothy Hannis - (01642) 384526
School of Health & Social Care, Teesside University, Borough Road, MIDDLESBROUGH, TS1 3BA.

APPENDIX THREE

Participant consent form

AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Consent form

Please read the following statements carefully and tick the box only if you agree:

I have read and understood the information sheet dated September 2012, for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

I am aware that participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any point up until 24 hours following our final meeting. I do not have to give a reason and none of my rights will be affected. ☐

I agree that my discussions with the researcher can be video-recorded. If I become uncomfortable during the session I can cover the video so that only audio recording will occur. ☐

I have been assured that confidentiality will be maintained at all times. I understand that if the researcher has any concerns about my safety, or the safety of others she will discuss this with her supervisor, and further action taken if this is deemed necessary. ☐

I am aware that all data will be stored on a secure University computer only in anonymised form. I am aware that all other documents linked to my participation will be kept in a secure filing cabinet in the School of Health and Social Care. ☐

Within the research I have chosen to be referred to by a pseudonym, this is NOT my name/part of my name. ☐

I agree to take part in this study. ☐

Participant Name.....**Signature**.....

Researcher name.....**Signature**.....

Date.....

APPENDIX FOUR

Examples of art materials and pieces created as part of researcher epoché process.

Images created during epoche and reflexivity:

Four images, using various media, epxoring poitionality and responses to themes.

Selection of art materials made available for use during sessions:

Includes:

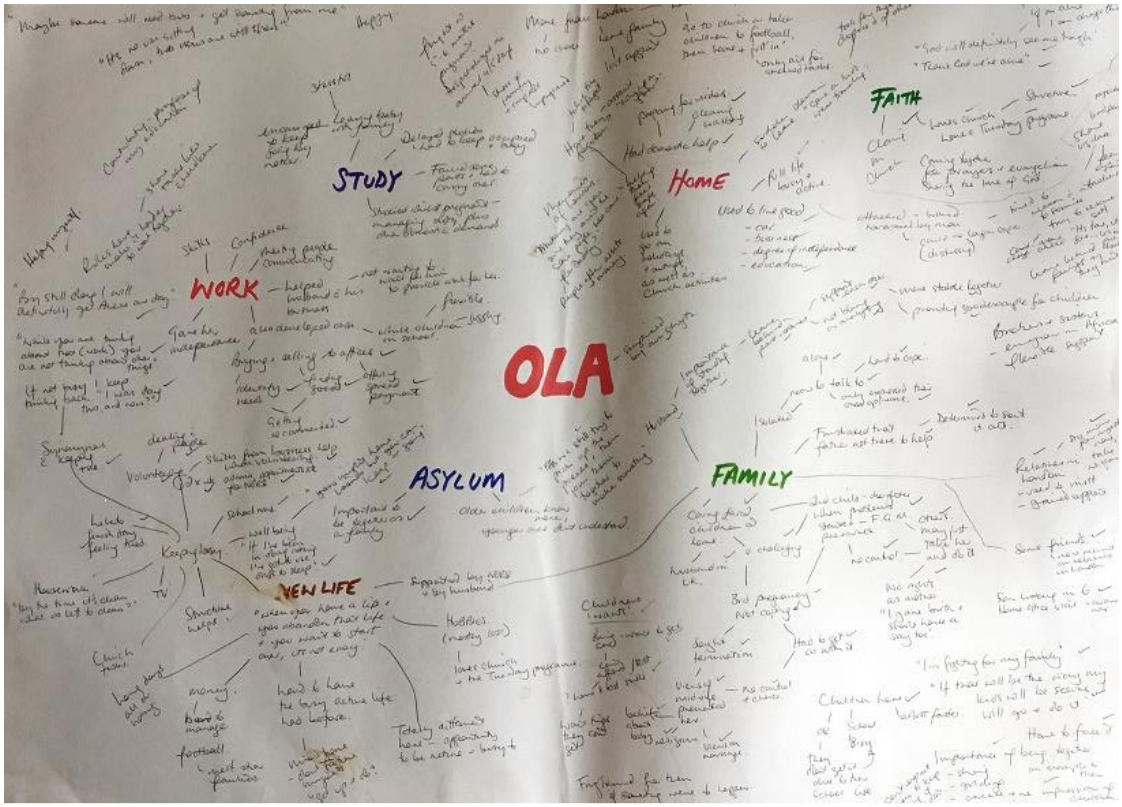
- Box of selected stones of different shapes and sizes
- Air drying clay
- Prepared photographs
- Paper, white and coloured
- Canvasses of different sizes
- Pastels
- Crayons
- Watercolour paints
- Collage materials

APPENDIX FIVE

Analysis examples.

Includes examples of process notes made during the analysis of data.

Examples of specific analysis for individuals Ola and Shahin, demonstrating different approaches to exploring content.

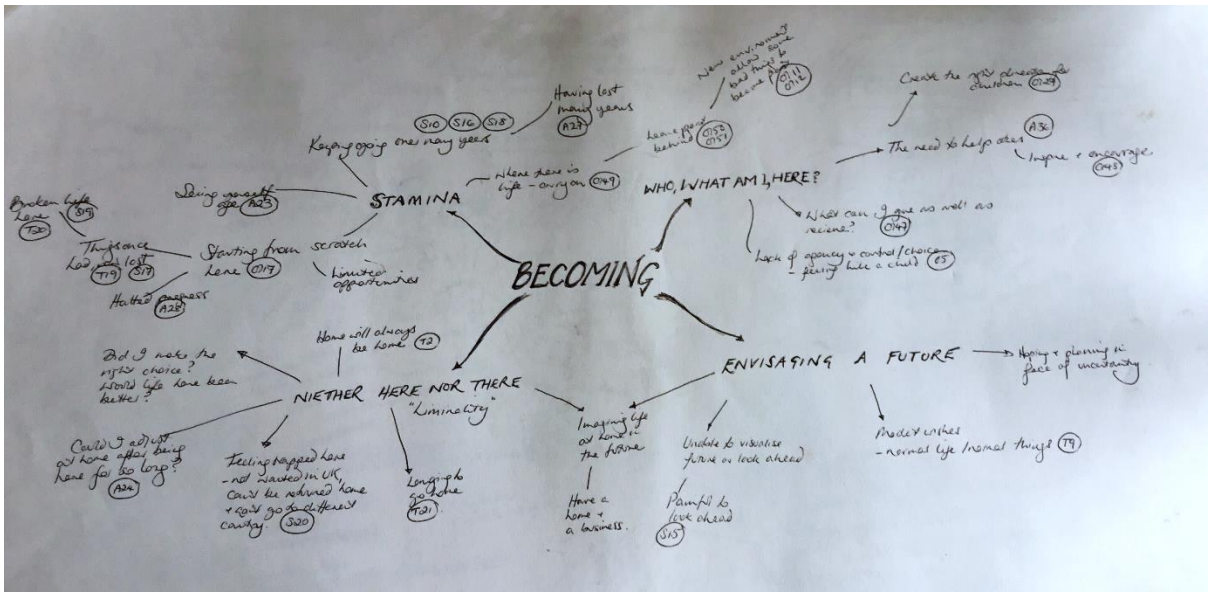


Sometimes I don't want to speak about the past it makes problems again.	Unable to work. Normal life left behind.
Yeah, I understand that.	
I see last psychologist at Stockton- I don't know what he was called. He said 'You should have a goal', talk to me – what you talking about – what is my goal? Six years I have been here I don't have anything to do. OK, tell me something, OK.	Goals? Goal focussed approaches, typical of service - ? not meeting needs, not responsive.
You can wait for something maybe one years - I make for myself plan yeah? What can I do …I don't have…what can I do? After that, I have no…[inaudible] I don't understand.	Waiting, for years. Loss of youth – papers in old age? (links with previous comment, pg. 4)
It's very hard to have a plan when you have no real opportunities.	
No opportunities	Modest needs – normal man.
What would, what would you have liked to have been doing whilst you're here?	Fears for the future – have house today but what about tomorrow?

[pause] *You're not sure?* I can't do anything what are you talking about – I don't know. For example – when you don't have anything to eat how are you talking about a nice cappuccino? *Yeah, yeah, there is no point looking at the big things when you can't have anything.* Normal things, normal for a start – I don't have anything – bank card, nothing for six years. I use my phone just for calendar something like that. I don't have any [inaudible] *Not being able to have a bank account, not being able to have a landline telephone… What does that say to you about who you are?* Rubbish	Having nothing. Unable to get work permit. Unfair system – other people get decisions, work permit etc. Adult tasks? Missing the usual/everyday essentials – control, choice, autonomy? Behaviour good – no fighting here or in Iran. No involvement with the Police.

Broad exploration of early concepts and ideas, such as Doing, Being, Becoming & Belonging:

More detailed exploration of themes arising:



APPENDIX SIX

Information regarding ethical approach and approval.

Teesside University
Middlesbrough Tees Valley
TS1 3BA UK
www.tees.ac.uk

Teesside University

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Direct Line: 01642 384124

8th November 2012

Dorothy Hannis
School of Health & Social Care
Teesside University

Dear Dorothy

Study No 146/12 - AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. Researcher: Claire Smith. Supervisor: Dorothy Hannis.

Decision: Approved

Thank you for submitting an amended application pack. I am pleased to confirm that the comments raised by the School of Health & Social Care Research Governance and Ethics Committee have been addressed in your amended application pack and your study has been approved through Chair's Action. Your study may proceed as it was described in your approved application pack.

Please note:

Where applicable, your study may only proceed when you have also received written approval from any other ethical committee (e.g. NRES) and operational / management structures relevant (e.g. Local NHS R&D). A copy of this approval letter **must** be attached to applications to any other ethical committee. If applicable please forward to me a copy of the approval letter from NRES before proceeding with the study.

In all cases, should you wish to make any substantial amendment to the protocol detailed, or supporting documentation included, in your approved application pack (other than those required as urgent safety measures) you must obtain written approval for those, from myself and all other relevant bodies, prior to implementing any amendment. Details of any changes made as urgent safety measures must be provided in writing to myself and all other relevant bodies as soon as possible after the relevant event; the study should not continue until written approval for those changes has been obtained from myself and all other relevant bodies.

On behalf of the School of Health & Social Care Research Governance and Ethics Committee please accept my best wishes for success in completing your study.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Alasdair MacSween
Chair
Research Governance and Ethics Committee
School of Health & Social Care

North of England
REFUGEE SERVICE

21st November 2011

To whom it may concern

Research into occupational limitations for refugees and people seeking asylum

As the Information and Communications Manager for the North of England Refugee Service, and I was approached by Claire Smith in relation to her above research.

Following discussions with Claire where we discussed the process, including various safeguards, confidentiality, use of interpreters, and Claire agreeing to come to a team meeting to talk about the research results and how they may be used in a practical sense, I am therefore happy to be a point of contact to help identify and access potential interviewees.

NERS will be interested in the results of the research and believe it would provide a useful and useable piece of work to highlight the current situation of the targeted communities.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or clarification of the role of NERS.

Yours faithfully

Pete Widlinski
NERS Information and Communications Manager

3rd Floor, Sylvan House, 12-16 Woodlands Road,
Middlesbrough, TS1 3BE
Telephone: **(01642) 217 447** *Fax:* **(01642) 232 414**
Registered Office, 2 Jesmond Road West, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PQ
Registered Charity No 1091200, Company Limited by Guarantee No 3643622

PRECIS OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM PRESENTED TO TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ETHICS COMMITTEE
Project title:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF OCCUPATION TO PEOPLE WHO SEEK ASYLUM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
Study aims and background information were stated.
Participants:
All participants will have, at some time within the past five years, sought asylum in the UK, though their current immigration status may be varied. They may be male or female, from any country or of any ethnicity and speak any language. It is intended that all participants will be over the age of 18. However, there may be a number of reasons that make certainty of age difficult. Some individuals or cultures do not measure, record or take note of age and may therefore be unable to identify their age; and individuals may travel without suitable documents to verify age. However, if a person is seeking asylum in Middlesbrough it is almost certain that they will have been dispersed here by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or UKBA, and this is not done to those travelling independently if considered younger than 18. Where the researcher has any concern about an individual's age, and independent verification is not available, the individual will not be included in the study.
Participant numbers:
Within phenomenological studies it is customary to have small sample sizes from homogenous groups (Smith & Osborn 2007 pg 55-56) and saturation is not necessary to achieve meaningful data for phenomenological analysis. This study utilises a purposive sampling strategy (participants selected with a purpose in mind, rather than randomly) and in order to allow the researcher to commit to deep analysis a sample of approximately 10 is anticipated. This should permit richness within data, whilst accommodating practical constraints of time and access to participants etc. If only partial involvement occurs (for example, the participant only attends one session) the researcher will continue to recruit until 10 full participations have occurred.
Selection processes:
Participants will be accessed via a local charitable organisation, based in Middlesbrough, the North of England Refugee Service (NERS) which offers a range of support services to refugees

and people seeking asylum. The researcher has no clinical or practice links with this service and NERS is not a statutory health or social care provider.

Informal contact has been established with NERS to discuss the principles of the study, and the manager Mr Pete Widlinski has expressed that he, and NERS Middlesbrough office, are happy to be involved in the study .

The researcher will attend a staff meeting to brief the NERS staff on the nature of the research and it will be stressed that their role is to act as an intermediary but that information must be provided in an equitable manner to all NERS attendees and no selection should occur within the service. NERS staff will be supported by telephone and in person throughout the process, as necessary. The staff of NERS are under no obligation to participate in or support the research if they do not wish to.

Possible participants will be informed of the study via posters and information sheets translated by professional translation services into the five commonest languages of people accessing services at NERS, which are Arabic, French, Farsi, Kurdish Sorani and Tigrinya. All written materials for participants will be professionally translation, and translation will be undertaken in line with WHO guidelines and will include back translation.

These will be displayed in common areas around the NERS building.

Additionally an audio version will be provided of information to ensure that literacy is not a barrier to inclusion.

Information for participants will detail the nature and aim of the study, their eligibility, the implications of participation and the means of indicating their interest.

The researcher will attend existing meetings held at NERS where refugees meet for support and information, in order to inform the attendees about the study. This will be a purely informative process to generate awareness of the study amongst potential participants, and will not include any coercive aspect.

Possible participants can indicate an initial interest either direct to the researcher or via an identified NERS staff member, who will provide an initial information sheet in the participants own language, and/or a copy of the audio version. If they wish to find out more an initial meeting will be established with the researcher. In order to maximise participant control at this stage the NERS staff member will enable them to indicate a choice of venue for this meeting (at NERS or at Teesside University) and choice of type of interpreter (on the basis of language, gender and ethnicity, political stance etc, wherever possible). A reply slip, completed either by the potential participant or the NERS staff member, will be provided for the researchers' information, indicating how the individual wishes to be contacted.

The decision to use an interpreter will be made by the participant and the option will be offered to all participants for whom English is not a first language, regardless of perceived language ability. All interpreters will be accessed through professional interpretation services at NERS where the required language is available. Alternative Interpreters will be sourced from other local agencies where none can be supplied by NERS, but only trained interpreters, with Codes of Practice and Confidentiality agreements, will be used will be used. Interpreters will be provided with a set of guidelines based on good practice guides – indicating what is required of them during the research sessions. At this initial discussion there will be opportunities to discuss the study in detail, ask questions and establish their eligibility in line with inclusion criteria. At this point the individuals will be asked how and when they would like to be contacted if they wish to consider their participation further. The participant will be invited to identify a suitable day and time to begin the research sessions. Appointment reminders will be provided in the participants own language, for each session, from a standardised NHS approved system. This can be accessed via the following URL - http://www.newcastlepct.nhs.uk/services/community-health-services/health-development-and-improvement/health-development-service/newcastle-refugee-and-asylum-seekers-health-action/translated-information/standard-appointment-letters
Procedures:
A consent form will be completed prior to commencement of the research. It will either be recorded in written format with a signature on the consent form, or by verbal format if literacy is an issue. This will be audio recorded and if appropriate translated by the interpreter. Following the provision of informed consent, general demographic data will be gathered including age, gender, country of origin, asylum status & length of time spent in the UK. Participants will be invited to choose a pseudonym for use throughout the research, in order to allow participants to make their involvement as personalised or as anonymous as they wish (Conway 2004, McNair et al 2008, Wiles et al 2006). Traditional, researcher led pseudonimising of data can leave participants feeling they have lost ownership over data (Grinyer 2002) which with a participant group who already feel voiceless and marginalised, ownership may be advantageous. Gerrish & Lacey (2010) suggest that self selection of pseudonym may even help underline the confidentiality issues associated with participation. Considering the possible vulnerability of the client group, there is a clear insistence that the chosen pseudonym is not their name or part of their name. Every effort will be made to

support participants in making a safe and appropriate choice of pseudonym, recognising the importance of maintaining anonymity balanced against the importance of having a voice. Participants will be offered the opportunity to choose from a range of artistic media with which to engage (for example paints, air drying clay, collage). The decision to use artistic media rests with the participant, but the option is there to enable varied ways of expressing ones experience, without being heavily reliant on language. As the creative approach is primarily to facilitate narrative discussion and exploration, any artistic end products will be analysed by the participant themselves, rather than any external analysis by the researcher. The use of art is designed as a means to facilitate discussion and a wide variety of media will be made available and attempts will be made to provide a spectrum of arts and crafts reflective of the cultural origins of participants following discussion with local arts agency Tees Valley Arts. The three meetings will be held in one of the SOHSC interaction rooms – the same room for each session, but any initial contact meeting can be made at the NERS office in Middlesbrough, which will be familiar to all participants. Unfortunately space and privacy precludes the use if NERS as a venue for the research sessions themselves. Each session will be video recorded to aid the analysis process. Participants will be made fully aware of the intention to video sessions.

Sessions will be video recorded throughout in order to enable the researcher to gain the richest possible data. Video materials and transcripts of discussion will be double checked with the interpreter to maximise linguistic accuracy.

The sessions will be narrative driven interviews and include (if chosen by the participant) engagement with the creative media. The session length will be 1.5 hours – the length being dictated by the slower pace of working through an interpreter. It will be made clear that the participant may stop the session at any time within the 1.5 hours if they wish to.

Fully qualified Interpreters will be present, and the same identified interpreter will be used for a particular participant throughout, to promote continuity (Engstrom et al 2010, Hadziabdic 2009). All interpreters will be given a detailed brief regarding the researchers expectations of them for the session, and de-brief opportunities will be made available by the researcher after each contact to ensure they are supported.

After each session the recordings will be observed by the researcher in preparation for the coming session.

At an agreed point following the close of the three sessions participants will be invited to attend a final meeting at the university to view their own work and reflect upon it, plus view a précis of session transcripts, again the interpreter will be present. This is intended as an

opportunity to show respect to the participants and show recognition that they have been heard, rather than specifically an exercise in validity, though errors may be corrected (Ashworth 1993) The participants will be informed before they give their consent that they can withdraw from the study at any time until 48 hours after this final meeting, without penalty. All data will be analysed using the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen (2004) method for phenomenological analysis to explore emerging themes. This is an established method for distilling themes from data to create rich structural and textural descriptions of individual experience (Moustakas 1994). Data will include verbal and non-verbal communications, as well as the researcher's and participants' interpretations of any artistic/creative output. Participants will be invited to view their own work and reflect upon it, plus view initial analysis of session transcripts to determine accuracy.
Risks to the interests of participants:
There is no anticipated physical risk to participants, but there is the potential for emotional distress. The study will be encouraging individuals to share aspects of their past, present and future which are emotionally charged and whilst this may well be cathartic it is anticipated that it will be emotionally challenging for participants. The researcher is an experienced occupational therapist, with a Masters in Counselling and in excess of six years' experience of meeting the mental health needs of refugees. It is therefore to be expected that issues raised will be familiar to the researcher and they will be well placed to support where necessary. As it is important to recognise the boundaries of involvement and role for the researcher, if it is felt by the participant, researcher, or supervisors, that a participant requires addition support, which falls beyond the researchers' remit, details of how to access this will be provided to the participant. All participants will be provided with details of a range of local support agencies, should they be affected by issues discussed. Where the researcher feels that the participant may need emotional or psychological support they will be provided with the name and details of the local gateway worker for mental health to whom people can self-refer for assessment, signposting, short term therapeutic help or referral on to appropriate agencies. This has been agreed with the gateway worker. If it is felt that the participant would be in need of an appointment urgently, or may be unable to make arrangements for themselves, an appointment with the gateway worker can be arranged for them by the researcher. It will be ensured, prior to the research session, that the gateway worker is available to provide support if necessary.

As in the researchers' own Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (COT 2011), confidentiality will only be breached if it is agreed by the researcher and supervisor that it is essential to prevent harm to the participant or an identified other. This will be made explicit in the information provided prior to the research sessions, and discussed with the participant if it arises. Whilst the researcher is not expressly looking at issues regarding work, there may be occasions when illegal working is mentioned by participants. In order to do justice to the research it will be important that participants are able to be honest and open. UKBA have confirmed that there is no legal obligation to inform UKBA or the Police if illegal working is reported to the researcher, and advice has been sought from the Teesside University Legal Services Officer, Gary Singh, and Dean of the School of Health & Social Care, Professor Paul Keane OBE in order to clarify this position.
Risks to the Researcher:
The nature of refugees' lives is such that the researcher can anticipate some distressing content and is likely to be emotionally affected by this (Meffert et al 2010). In order to avoid long term negative effects, or a negative influence existing on the research process, issues will be discussed with the supervisor. Where the researcher considers it necessary, issues can be discussed anonymously through their existing therapy supervision network, maintaining confidentiality.
Gaining consent:
Please see Consent form – this will be provided in the participants own language. Consent will be established prior to commencement of narrative gathering. It will either be recorded in written format with a signature on the consent form or by verbal format if literacy is an issue. This will be audio recorded and if appropriate translated by the interpreter. If there is any doubt about a person's ability to give informed consent then they will be considered ineligible to participate. The standard for identifying mental capacity will be taken from the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and will be established at initial contact and monitored throughout. The researcher is a qualified occupational therapist and counsellor with twenty years' experience of assessing mental health status, and over six years of assessing mental health of refugees and feels competent to make such evaluations.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Participant support plan.

SUPPORT PROCESS FOR PARTICIPANTS

In order to ensure sufficient emotional support for all participants the following process has been determined:

Level of impact	Description	Action during session	Action following session	Researcher requirem't
None	Minor emotional reaction without outward signs of distress	General support provided during session	None, though any interim issues will be checked prior to commencement of next session	None
Minimal distress	Some outward signs of emotional state. Contained easily during discussion	Should participants have a manageable level of distress, containable during the session, the researcher will support them using listening skills	Provided the distress is short lived and appears to be resolved by the close of the session no further action will be taken. The distress will be raised for discussion in subsequent meetings to ensure no lasting impact.	None
Moderate distress	Significant outwards signs of emotional distress or anger. Containable during session	Should participants have a manageable level of distress, containable during the session, the researcher will support them using listening skills	Provided the distress is short lived and appears to be resolved by the close of the session no further action will be taken. The distress will be raised for discussion in subsequent meetings to ensure no lasting impact.	Discussion with research supervisor
	Significant outwards signs of emotional distress or anger. Some containmen t during session, participant remains distressed at close of session	Where emotional reaction feels less contained the participant will be reminded of their right to halt the session. They will be given time to allow feelings to reduce, and researcher will support them during the session with listening skills. They may choose to continue, to postpone or to withdraw from sessions. Further support opportunities will be discussed.	Should the client request further support their attention will be drawn to available agencies on the pre-prepared information sheet. If they are happy to consider these and/or make contact themselves then no further action will be taken. The distress will be raised for discussion in subsequent meetings to ensure they are comfortable to continue.	Discussion with research supervisor. Clinical supervision if necessary.
			Should the client request further support but be unable/unwilling to contact available agencies without help this will be done for them by the researcher. A meeting will be established as soon as possible with the Gateway Worker who can identify suitable responses to need. The distress will be raised for discussion in subsequent meetings to	

			ensure they are comfortable to continue.	
Major distress	Outward signs of distress or anger, difficult to contain during session, session may become unviable	Where emotional reaction feels less contained the participant will be reminded of their right to halt the session. They will be given time to allow feelings to reduce, and researcher will support them during the session with listening skills, whilst determining future needs The session will be halted.	Should the client request further support but be unable/unwilling to contact available agencies without help this will be done for them by the researcher. A meeting will be established as soon as possible with the Gateway Worker who can identify suitable responses to need. Should the gateway worker be unavailable and the participants' presentation warrant doing so, the Crisis Team can be contacted. It is anticipated that research sessions will be discontinued in this instance, but discussion with participant will determine outcome.	Discussion with research supervisor and clinical supervision is necessary.

APPENDIX EIGHT

Academic output, including details of publications and conference presentations.

PUBLICATIONS:

Below is a list of publications completed during the process of the study.

Copies of the articles are provided, using the pre-publication format.

Smith. H.C. (2017) 'Finding purpose through altruism: the potential of 'doing for others' during asylum', *Journal of Occupational Science*, 25(1), pp. 87-99.

Smith. H.C. (2016) 'Austerity and the rise of hostility towards marginalized groups', in: Sakellariou, D and Pollard, N. (Eds.) *Occupational Therapies Without Borders: integrating justice with practice.* 2nd edn. Edinburgh: Elsevier.

Smith, H. C. (2015) *Key Findings: An exploration of the meaning of occupation to people who seek asylum in the United Kingdom*. United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation. Research Career Development Grants, Multifarious. Available at: https://www.cot.co.uk/uk-ot-research-foundation-ukotrf/funded-project-outputs-0#sthash.W3JtFodS.dpuf

Smith. H.C. (2015) 'An exploration of the meaning of occupation to people who seek asylum in the United Kingdom', *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 78(10), pp. 614-621.

Smith. H.C. (2017) 'Finding purpose through altruism: the potential of 'doing for others' during asylum', *Journal of Occupational Science*, 25(1), pp. 87-99.

ABSTRACT

Refugees are increasingly acknowledged as facing significant occupational injustice and they experience multiple barriers to finding meaningful occupational opportunities. Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing the post migratory experience, but choice of occupation is important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning which meet personal and cultural needs.

Altruism is the principle or practice of doing for others, and can be expressed through, or be a motivation for, a range of occupations. This paper asserts that 'doing of others' can be particularly meaningful, and may provide opportunities for personal, social and cultural rewards.

The findings presented here arose as part of a study exploring the occupational experiences of people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom. This phenomenological study gathered data from ten participants through a series of in depth interviews. The study found that participants held a preference for altruistic occupations. Participants engaged with a number of altruistic occupations, prompted by kinship, empathy, learned behaviour and moral principles. The occupations appeared to promote connectivity, positive sense of self and a connection between past and present occupations, called here 'occupational constancy'.

In seeking occupations rich with meaning and purpose, the drive to 'do for others' could provide individuals with opportunities to live well in the here and now, and rise above the hardship and marginalisation of asylum and forced migration.

Keywords

Altruism, Asylum, Occupation, Refugee.

INTRODUCTION

The reasons behind peoples' occupational choices may be many and varied and this

article aims to explore the role of altruism, defined as actions done for the benefit of others (Feigin, Owens and Goodyear-Smith, 2014) in determining occupational choice for a group of people who have sought asylum in the United Kingdom (UK).

Human displacement and forced migration are associated with wide ranging personal and social challenges, including occupation injustices. This article reflects the experiences of a small group of individuals whose displacement has led them to seek asylum in the UK. The findings used reflect the theme of altruism which arose as part of a wider study exploring the meaning of occupation to people seeking asylum in the UK. All participants in the study spoke about the difficulties they had finding suitable occupational opportunities. They talked about the value of not only 'keeping busy' but 'keeping busy with purpose' and repeatedly highlighted how the chance to 'do for others' was a powerful source of personal satisfaction. They indicated that they preferred altruistic occupations, perceiving them as providing meaning and purpose, fostering kinship and cultural norms, providing a valued identity and establishing occupational constancy.

This article will explore the occupational issues faced by refugees and introduce the principle of altruism, linked with occupational choice, to explore the potential of altruistic occupations to provide meaningful engagement for refugees and others facing major transitions.

BACKGROUND

Asylum and Occupation

Human displacement is at the highest levels ever recorded, with 65.3 million people living in exile (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016). Nearly 34,000 people are forcibly displaced every day as a result of conflict or persecution, often lacking access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement (UNHCR, 2016). Whilst forced migration creates multiple major crises, one strand of concern is the occupational injustice faced by displaced individuals (Mirza, 2012).

Context may differ, such as displacement to a neighbouring nations' refugee camps (AlHeresh, 2012), awaiting an asylum decision in a detention facility (Morville, 2014), or

attempting to integrate after being granted refugee status (Whiteford and Suleman, 2013). In the context of this study, the individual participants had all claimed asylum1 in the UK. The principle of Asylum is established in Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention which states that a refugee is a person who:

> *"owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UN General Assembly 1951).*

This includes people where the individual has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision; people refused asylum, where applications have been refused and the legal process of making a claim is exhausted, and refugees, where the individual has been granted leave to remain in the UK on the basis of an upheld claim for asylum, humanitarian or other reasons (United Kingdom Visas and Immigration, 2016). Each of the three groups has distinct needs arising from their socio-legal status and varied levels of access and support, all of which impact upon occupational opportunities and performance (H. C. Smith, 2015).

The implications of an individual's asylum status affects all aspects of daily living, and it is recognised that refugees face many occupational injustices due to their lack of access to meaningful and dignified occupations (Whiteford, 2000; Hammell and Iwama, 2012; WFOT, 2014). Injustices vary, and may include 'occupational apartheid' where marginalised groups are denied the right to participate, 'occupational deprivation' where there are lasting external forces preventing engagement, 'occupational marginalisation' which is the reduction or restriction placed upon occupational choice, 'occupational alienation' which is disengagement as a result of prolonged engagement with inappropriate or unrewarding occupations, and 'occupational imbalance', where individuals are under- or over-employed (Wilcock and Townsend, 2000, 2009; Townsend and Wilcock, A.A., 2004; Townsend and Whiteford, 2005;Townsend, Cockburn, Letts, Thibeault and Trentham, 2007; Hammell and Iwama, 2012).

The injustices faced by refugees may begin in their country of origin, as a result of war, political and social restrictions or limited personal opportunities. They then face the major transition of forced migration, which interrupts the individuals' occupational journey, often for lengthy periods. Individuals may then find their occupations inhibited

by policies such as the denial of opportunities to work and study, or made more difficult to achieve through everyday practicalities such as language barriers (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Gower, 2016; Grogan, 2016).

The impact of occupational injustice creates lasting negative outcomes for individuals, families and the host community (Bennett, Scornaiencki, Brzozowski, Denis and Magalhaes, 2012; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Morville 2014). It is accepted that occupation fosters adjustment and integration during this transition (Huot, Rudman, Dodson, and Magalhães, 2013) maintaining health and promoting coping ability, even in extreme circumstances (Lunden, 2012; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013). There is also a suggestion that occupation helps to preserve skills and identity – helping individuals to maintain a more consistent sense of self (Huot et al. 2013; Nayar and Sterling, 2013).

The challenge for many people during the asylum process is not only access to occupation, but finding suitably meaningful occupations. Individuals benefit most from occupations that are intense and infused with meaning, coherence and commitment (Jonsson, 2008). Instead, most individuals find themselves filling their days with 'low challenge experiences' which provide little satisfaction (Kronenberg, Pollard and Sakellariou, 2011).

This study raises both the challenge of, and value of, finding occupations that are attuned to individuals and provide meaning and purpose. It raises the particular value attached by the participants to occupations that they do for the benefit of others, as they identified altruistic actions as presenting the most meaningful opportunities

Understanding Altruism

Altruism is the principle of acting for the welfare of others. Altruistic behaviours include helping, comforting, sharing, cooperation, philanthropy, and community service (Batson, 2011) and as a result may form part of a range of daily occupations. The premise of altruism suggests actions undertaken by an individual for the benefit of a third party, without an expectation of reciprocity and usually with a cost to the individual (though the nature of the cost can vary, including financial, time, energy, skills etc) (Draguns, 2013).

There is a philosophical debate regarding altruism, as some question its existence and suggesting that altruists are ultimately acting for their own good (Feigin et al. 2015). Other authors focus on the multiple gains for the altruist and others as being of greater

importance than the underpinning motivation (Batson at al., 2011). There are many who assert that 'true' altruism does not exist, as underpinning motivations may be selfish (Batson at al., 2011).

Few altruistic activities occur without some intrinsic gains, so it is suggested that the altruist is motivated towards rewards (Feigin et al. 2015). This is often described as 'doing good to feel good', endocentric, pseudo-altruistic, or egoistic (Karylowski, 1982; Van der Linden, 2011). The rewards highlighted include increased self-esteem and satisfaction, a desire for reciprocity or reward or the intention to promote their reputation (Van der Linden, 2011; Feigin et al. 2015). However, other researchers have found that rather than encouraging the altruist, attempts at reciprocation, payment etc. can be counterproductive, undermining the act and demotivating the altruist (Van der Linden, 2011).

In response to this debate Batson, one of the key authors on altruism, recognised four different motives for altruistic behaviour (Batson, 2011):

EGOISM Acting for the benefit of **oneself**
ALTRUISM Acting for the benefit of **another person**
COLLECTIVISM Acting for the benefit of a particular **community**
PRINCIPLISM Acting in response to a **moral principle**.

Batson believed that if the primary goal of the action is the benefit of the other, regardless of motivation, is can still be considered altruistic, as distinct motives can co-occur (Batson, 2011).

There are many suggested drivers for altruistic behaviour, including kinship, empathy, learned behaviours and moral beliefs (Madsen et al. 2007; Batson, 2011; Draguns, 2013). The kinship connection suggests that people are more likely to act altruistically to someone they see as similar on the basis of a range of features, including physical appearance, name or shared membership of an 'in-group' (West, Gardner and Griffin, 2006; Madsen, 2007; Barcaly, 2011). People may also be encouraged to act by feelings of empathy or emotional concern (Eisenberg, Valiente and Champion, 2004; Penner, Dovidio, Schroeder and Piliavin, 2005; Madsen et al. 2007; Batson, 2011). An empathic response may also cause the altruist to reduce their awareness of their own distress and

negative emotions as they elevate their concern for, and awareness of, the needs of others (Madsen et al. 2007).

Other reasons for the development of an altruistic attitude are suggested as arising from social learning, where people are socialised into helping behaviours and influenced by parental and social norms (Lerner, 1980; Dovidio and Penner, 2004; Penner et al. 2005). It is also believed that altruism may be a personality trait, as altruists are believed to exhibit higher standards regarding justice, social responsibility, moral reasoning and empathy (Rushton, 1981, Penner et al. 2005).

Whilst the philosophical debate regarding altruism focusses on questions of true selflessness there are many sources which focus positively on the gains for the altruist, concerning themselves more with outcomes for all, rather than motivating factors. Altruism is acknowledged as having multiple benefits, these include increasing social interaction and generating valuable social capital (Salvati, 2008). Altruistic activities such as volunteering are associated with significant and long lasting benefits to physical health, mental health and longevity (Post, 2005; Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui and Fredrickson, 2006; Brown,

Brown, House and Smith, 2008; Wright, 2013). Altruism is also seen as fostering life satisfaction, subjective happiness and a sense of purpose (Muzick and Wilson, 2003; Keonig, McGue, Krueger and Bouchard, 2007; Wright, 2013).

Altruism has received little attention within occupational therapy, beyond its role as a professional value (Kanny, 1993; Taussig 2006; Thrash, 2008). However, it appears that altruism may have many occupational components, as it is both expressed through occupation, and may be a motivator for occupations. Few studies have considering altruism as part of occupational choice. Hatter and Nelson (1987) considered altruism and occupation in older people, and there have been studies exploring the meaning of specific altruistic activities such as care giving (Taylor, 2015) or volunteering (Black and Living, 2004; Schnell and Hoof, 2012). Making the connection between altruism and occupational choice is in line with recent calls to focus more on meaning than purpose when considering occupation (Reed, Hocking and Smythe, 2010, 2011; Taylor, 2015) as this is an important step forward in understanding the occupational choices people make (Ellerin, 2015; Taylor, 2015).

THE STUDY

The study from which these findings have been drawn is an exploration of the meaning of occupation to people seeking asylum in the UK. The study is phenomenological, and as such, aims to capture the ambiguity, poignancy, complexity and richness of experience; this focus makes phenomenology an appropriate methodology for gleaning an occupational focus (Clarke, 2008; Cronin Davis, Butler and Mayers, 2009, Finlay, 2009; 2011; Park Lala and Kinsella, 2011).

The research was ethically approved by Teesside University School of Health and Social Care Ethics Committee, and funded by the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation. Participants were accessed via local refugee support agencies where any person was invited to express their interest, provided they were over the age of 18 and had sought asylum within the past five years. Data was gathered through a series of up to three informal conversational interviews, of up to an hour and half each. This allowed participants to engage at a slower pace, develop trust and explore at depth (Siedman, 2013). The decision on how many sessions to attend lay with the participant. Whilst the study was open to speakers of other languages, five participants spoke English as a first language, three others spoke English with varying degrees of fluency and only one elected to use an interpreter. Advice was taken from refugee support agencies to ensure study design was appropriate to participants needs, and a staged support process was put into place to meet any issues arising during the interview process.

The data was analysed using the adapted Stevick-Colliazzi-Keen method, which is a staged process designed to maintain the authenticity of the data and capture the meaning and essence of an experience (Moustakas, 1990). The stages include epoche to acknowledge and set aside researcher perspectives, phenomenological reduction where data is considered openly, from different perspectives, horizontalising which aims to give all data equal consideration. The researcher then employs imaginative variation to elicit themes and then synthesise material from the earlier stages to generate a rich, textural description (Moustakas, 1990; 1994)

The participants

Ten participants were involved in the study, and the table below shows their profiles, asylum status and occupational background. At the time of the interviews they had lived in the UK for between 1 and 8 years (with a mean of 5.6 years), and their asylum status differed; two had refugee status, four were seeking asylum and four had been refused asylum.

Pseudonym	Demographics	Asylum status	Occupational background
ALICE Attended 3 interviews	Female Mid 30s Sierra Leone	Arrived 2007. Recent refugee status.	Alice had a high status job in TV and media, and was a women's rights activist.
OLIVER Attended 1 interview	Male Early 30s South Africa	Arrived 2006. Refused asylum – no support, destitute.	Oliver was a fisherman but also ran a small business buying and selling.
SHAHIN Attended 1 interview	Male Early 30s Iran	Arrived 2008. Refused asylum – emergency support	Shahin was a University student.
FREEMAN Attended 3 interviews	Male Late 30s Guinea	Arrived 2008. Awaiting decision.	Freeman worked in travel and tourism.
GOZIEM Attended 3 interviews	Male Mid 40s Nigeria	Arrived 2006. Awaiting decision.	Goziem was a social worker.
OLA Attended 2 interviews	Female Early 40s Nigeria	Arrived 2010. Awaiting decision.	Ola ran her own business, buying and selling.
TETE Attended 3 interviews	Female Late 20s Guinea	Arrived 2013. Failed claim, supported during fresh claim.	Tete worked for local government in administration.
TENDEI Attended 2 interviews	Female Mid 30s Zimbabwe	Arrived 2013. Failed claim – no support.	Tendei worked as a cleaner/housemaid.
SAM Attended 2 interviews	Male Late 20s Eritrea	Arrived in 2009. Refugee status.	Sam was a University student.
ALI Attended 3 interviews	Male Early 30s Iraq	Arrived 2008. Failed claim – receives emergency support.	Ali was a farmer then joined the army.

THE FINDINGS

Occupational opportunities

All participants spoke about their desire to be active, using the specific phrase '*keeping busy*' repeatedly; '*there's no use sitting down, the problems will still be there… I just 'get up*

and do'' (Ola). They linked this principle of keeping busy with the search for meaningful occupations. They reflected upon occupations which they felt had limited meaning, such as housework and watching television; *'if I'm at home I just sit down watching the TV … I think maybe I try to clean up, but by the time it's clean, what's left to clean?'* (Ola). There was a sense from all participants that these occupations were used to fill time, rather than provide satisfaction.

This sense of under-occupation or low challenge occupation was perceived as systemic, with the asylum system preventing them from easily finding more meaningful outlets; 'you have so many things you want to do, so many ideas, but the system won't let you' (Freeman). All participants described feeling frustrated and 'handicapped' by their lack of suitable occupations; 'I have no opportunity to do what I should be doing… do what I am trained to be – what I love' (Goziem). All spoke about the impact of time passing and the waste of valuable years; 'I've wasted six years of my life… because I've not done much, not achieved much' (Ali); 'it's a waste of opportunity… just a waste of skill and time. You begin to regret the time' (Goziem). They demonstrated the drive to undertake more and actively sought out opportunities; 'we are willing to do more, if we have the opportunity' (Freeman).

Finding Meaning Through Altruism

Eight of the ten participants identified their most purposeful occupations as ones which they did for the benefit of others. The nature of the activities varied and included such things as volunteering in refugee agencies, mentoring young people in education, working to raise awareness in higher education, supporting research projects and undertaking charity work. Half of the participants engaged with two or more altruistic activities during their week. For example, Freeman worked collaboratively with several local universities, sharing experiences and raising awareness of asylum issues through classroom activities and research participation. He also mentored young people through education and into work. He was part of a local project to help orientate people seeking asylum who were newly arrived in the area, and also ran group activities for people to help them integrate and participate, including a community garden which was accessed by refugees and local people together. For Freeman, the single thread of meaning that he identified throughout these occupations was the opportunity to do for others; *'just*

see if I can help people, you know, contribute to people - that makes me more happier than thinking about myself' (Freeman).

The influence of altruism for these individuals seems to have been present in many ways before, during and after their flight, suggesting that their drive to help others was not particular to their current circumstances. Altruistic behaviours have formed part of their lives at many stages, as an embedded feature of their occupational choice.

Some participants provided examples of altruistic activities they had undertaken from their earliest years, including Sam whose faith encouraged him to volunteer whilst he was growing up; 'I always like volunteering, since when I was young… in places where they are under-privileged people… they brought us up like that, try doing something for people' (Sam), and Tendei who forfeited her education from an early age to work and provide for her family 'my sisters, they go to school, because I have to stand for them to work as a house helper to pay school fees for them, so at least they've gone to school' (Tendei). As adults Ali chose to join his nation's army, despite the risks, in order to protect his family and homeland, and Goziem volunteered in psychiatric and prison services where he identified an unmet need; 'nobody's going to pay for that, I see a need, I volunteer' (Goziem).

Following arrival, despite multiple challenges and limited resources the participants have all sought ways to use their skills to the benefit of their families, networks or community. This included the ongoing need to financially support others from home, through what are described as 'returns'. This includes family and people within the wider community who are in need; 'So you have… responsibility for your family, but at the same time there are some friends, neighbours and stuff, who are struggling to live' (Goziem). Even in the financial hardship of asylum people try to send money home whenever possible; 'So sometimes it's beyond your ability or you can't afford to help them - even if you can't afford – can't say no, you have to starve (Goziem).

Where participants were able to find some commonality between what they had done before and what they did now they stated they felt it provided a degree of continuity and allowed them to connect their past lives in some way with the present. 'That's what I'm doing now again you see, so that's the same' (Goziem); 'I had so much satisfaction to think that this is the job that I love, this is what I was doing back home when I had to flee and come to this country' (Alice). Seven of the participants had found some continuity

between past and present, for example, Alice had an extremely prestigious job in her country of origin, but for many years during her asylum claim her occupations were limited to home and childcare.

She describes herself as depressed and suicidal in that time 'I just spent all my days in my house doing absolutely nothing, becoming very frustrated, and just basically wanting to end my life' (Alice). She began to volunteer in a local women's health charity, campaigning against Female Genital Mutilation (as she had done at home) and felt she reconnected with her sense of her 'old self'. She has become an active full-time volunteer, and with the recent success of her asylum claim she is making work and study plans.

However, the more profound the gap, the more difficult the individuals lives appear to be. This was reflected in the only participants not actively doing for others in the present time. Oliver and Shahin had been occupationally active at earlier stages in the asylum process, and had examples of doing for others. Their earlier involvement in activities had faded and they had lost stamina for continued engagement; 'Five years, six years, four years more?...do again, do again, how many times? I'm tired you know, I'm tired' (Shahin). For those who felt more able to look ahead the focus lay in 'making a difference' through their occupations, making a meaningful life here in the UK or returning home to do good for their own damaged homeland; "I want to go back home, to be honest, and do something that can help the people"(Sam).

Drivers for altruism

Participants were able to give a clear rational for engaging in altruism, and these reflected the typical motivations of kinship, empathy, learned behaviours and moral beliefs highlighted within the literature (Madsen et al. 2007; Batson, 2011; Draguns, 2013).

Kinship. The general connection between occupation and connectedness to others was described by all participants. Eight out of the ten arrived alone, and one other arrived with only her young child, and everyone mentioned the pain of being separated from parents, spouses or children. They reflected that relationships fostered a sense of belonging; *'it is a powerful thing, being part of a community, part of a family'* (Sam), and particularly the pseudo-kinship 'sister' and 'brother' relationships which they identified as typical of their home cultures. They also described a sense of commonality with other

'foreigners', *'we've got different nationalities, yes, but there, even if you're not from my place, we're still the same…I might not get a language but we have the same reasoning'* (Ola).

They acknowledged the value of support from others and mutually beneficial relationships, but there was particular appreciation for relationships which allowed them to focus on the needs of a third party. They particularly appreciated being needed and valued by others; *'if I'd been these eight years without a wife and kids, then I would say I've lived a wasted life - that's our joy, you know, every other thing doesn't make us happy'* (Goziem).

The opportunity to engage in altruism enabled connectivity and belonging in all cases. The very nature of altruistic activities meant they were directly engaged in a meaningful way with other individuals or groups. Amongst the participants those who had been in the UK for the longest, and whose claims had failed, there was far less connectivity with others and no contact with family at home. They felt they had less to offer to others, and less energy to bring to activities involving others; *'I'm not well…I feel so horrible, no, I don't want to go out anymore…I don't want people to see my horrible face'* (Shahin).

Empathy and emotion. In part the desire to do for others was borne out of empathy, appreciating the challenges others had faced and wanting to help them to avoid isolation and hardship. This encouraged actions such as Freeman, volunteering for an orientation project to help individuals new to the area and Ali, helping at the service supporting people who are destitute; *'those who arrive recently, we show them around, make them comfortable, so they can feel free to settle'* (Freeman).

Their empathic response meant that they not only wanted to support others, but also minimised their own needs. They all highlighted instances of others facing greater difficulties than they, themselves; *'lots of people are feeling worse things than I'm even feeling…you hear some other things that are more horrible than mine, you hear a lot of things from people, people are facing'* (Tete). Several found that this gave them strength to help others – putting on a smile to cover their distress, helping others in order to distract them from their own fears; *'you look at their situation, you are like, oh my God, I'm even better off, why do I have to worry so much?'* (Goziem). By choosing to focus on the needs of others it became easier for them to identify as the 'helper' rather than the

person needing to be helped; *'I mostly forget my own problems when I started listening to other people, their stories'* (Tete).

A cultural imperative. The participants all linked their desire to act for others with early learned behaviour generated by family, faith and culture. They described parents and other key figures who they admired for providing for others within their community, supporting extended family and worked charitably. Nine participants stated that their altruism linked with cultural norms from their country of origin, as they described themselves as being from cultures that are; *'always there for one another… like a giving culture* [where] *everybody is willing or probably hungry to share everything you have' (Sam).* They noted differences in values between their home nation and the UK, recognising the UK as individualistic, with excellent statutory support but limited support between members of society. Five of the individuals also made a connection between altruism and their spiritual or religious beliefs; *'[God] will not come down but he can also send somebody, touch somebody's heart, Oh, let me aid this person'* (Ola).

Moral beliefs. These influences became embedded as part of their own moral values, encouraging them to put others before themselves*; 'I think some of the things that I do is just for my conscience… that's for my inner conscience'* (Sam); *'It's not just all about what will I gain? What also can I contribute?'* (Ola). Goziem, a trained social worker, described 'helping' occupations as 'real work', where he could see himself making a difference, giving others hope and changing lives; *'When you see people at the end of the day smiling away, in thanks, you know, in appreciation. You visit them… you now see changes in them, happiness in the home'* (Goziem). There were also reflections from all participants on the importance of being good and doing good. This sometimes arose out of a sense of what is 'morally right'; *'I do whatever is asked, do what is right. I do give, you know, I give to people'* (Freeman), and sometimes out of desire to *'give something back'* (Ali), recognising the role of kindness and support they, themselves, had received; *'once you've been supported and helped like that… you're expected to do your best and… do something back'* (Sam).

Intrinsic gains. Individuals were able to describe multiple gains from engaging with altruistic activities. At a very simple level these occupations provided them with valuable structure in their weeks or days, and a reason to get up and leave the house; *'It's a relief to me in a way because I'm doing something other than staying in the house doing nothing'*

(Tendei)'; '*I don't like sitting there, I always leave my house at 9am, always out until late*' (Freeman).

There was a general sense of having purpose and making progress; '*I believe by still doing, I would definitely get there one day*' (Ola); '*I just keep going, moving, moving, moving, yes, but I know it helps me, it helps me, it helps a lot*' (Tete). Other gains lay in opportunities to use existing skills, or develop new ones, to learn about UK culture or develop their English skills; '*not only being busy, but getting to know people, the culture and everything, so we can't do that sitting at home*' (Sam).

All participants spoke of times when their physical or mental health had been adversely affected by the asylum experience and the limited opportunities it presents; '*it's very unhelpful to be with loads and loads of time on your hands - it is the Devil's Workshop*' (Goziem). They made strong links between the experience of keeping busy and their physical health; '[we are] *not just* sitting… getting fat and depressed' (Goziem) and psychological well-being; 'while you are thinking about that [work] you are not thinking about other things' (Tete).

The opportunity to do for others allowed them to see themselves as '*more than an asylum seeker*' (Tete). The activities and roles they undertook allowed them to rise above their legal status, demonstrate their worth and reconnect with elements of their old self. Ali presents an example. During the interviews he became particularly animated when talking about cooking at a church-run support group for destitute failed claimants. He began by attending when his own claim failed but was drawn to helping out and preparing food for the group. The activity provides him with positive feedback and praise from others, allowing him to see himself as having skills of value; '*they were happy the way I was cooking the food - everybody is happy and enjoying, this is about my cooking*' (Ali). This combination of feeling productive and receiving feedback that what he does has value allows him to see his worth in a way no other regular activity provides. It also enables him to give something back to the church, as he has found them very supportive; '*I try my best to do even a little in return, cooking, cleaning, servicing and helping people and like providing some food for people*' (Ali). In addition, he describes an element of continuity in this activity, as he learnt to cook from his mother, with whom he was extremely close. As a result, the experience of cooking for others connects him with his past, his family and his culture.

There were instances where the chance to act for others allowed individuals to show they are 'the right kind of person', demonstrate their worth to the community and set a path for others by being a positive role model; *'So they've seen those traits in me and the right things, I don't smoke, I don't drink… and every time they're having an activity you'll see me there' (Goziem); 'you should be a role model to [your children]' (Tete).* Two of the men had received significant external recognition for their efforts, in terms of social standing and local awards, and whilst they were proud of this the external gains appeared to be secondary to the other benefits of the experience.

Being the Recipient

An unexpected element of exploring altruism arose when participants spoke about the challenge of receiving support from others. There was gratitude expressed by all participants for those who had helped them at various stages in their process; *'I would never ever forget* [my therapist], *she has always been there, and helped me a lot, I still remember every single time I would come along… I can't think of anybody else who has been so helpful in my life'* (Ali). However, there was also a reluctance to be seen as 'in need', and several participants identified the challenge of being open to kindnesses shown by others. This ranged from a relief not to need help through to an active reluctance to take help, with individuals preferring to focus on helping others than needing help themselves; '*deep inside, you know, you feel less like as a man, it's where I come from - because I have to look after you, not be looked after'* (Freeman).

DISCUSSION

Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing the post migratory experience, but choice of occupation is important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning which meet personal and cultural needs (Burchett and Matheson 2010; Heigl et al. 2011; Farias, 2013; H. C. Smith, 2015). Every participant was able to identify occupational injustices experienced since they arrived in the UK. They faced apartheid and marginalisation due to policies and practicalities which prevent access (Burnett and Chebe, 2009; Huot et al. 2013; Fleay, Hartley and Kenny, 2014; Hartley and Fleay, 2014). There was evidence of disruption in all cases, the length of which appeared to be influenced by the level of support they had to gain access to occupations, plus their spoken language. Individuals gave examples of the impact of

occupational deprivation, which appeared to become more entrenched over time, due to declining personal resources and increased restrictions within the asylum system. Where people described satisfying occupations they had worked hard to ensure they has sufficient activity, though they acknowledge that this took energy and stamina (Lunden 2012; World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), 2014).

It is clear that any meaningful occupation has the potential to provide significant gains for people during and after the asylum process, but for the participants in this research the most meaningful occupations were ones they undertook for the benefit of others. There was clear evidence of Batson's strands of altruism (2011) as, despite having very little capital, individuals chose to prize actions done for the good of others above almost any other. They could use their energies towards a more selfish end, but identified something intrinsically valuable about doing for others which has made this a source of meaning. This raises the possibility that motivations for some occupations might be of as much meaning to some individual as the activity itself (Taylor, 2015). The aspects of their chosen occupations which specifically made them valuable lay in their ability to connect with others, show their individual worth and maintain links between past and present. Altruism promoted connectivity within this marginalised and 'othered' group, who experience limited social capital (Grove and Zwi, 2005, Philo, Briant and Donald, 2011; Kamenova, 2014; British Attitudes Survey, 2015). Whilst altruism is not particular to any group or culture, it is actively fostered in collectivist cultures, and each of the participants comes from cultures which are considered significantly more collectivist than the UK (Ting- Toomey, 2012; Hostede 2010). Individuals were used to far higher levels of social capital and connectedness, and this is considered particularly important for people within a foreign culture and without familial connections (Y. Smith, 2013). Altruistic occupations may therefore be valuable as a tool for gaining support and establishing yourself when living in an unfamiliar place (Eisenberg *et al.* 2004; Salvati, 2008; Van der Linden, 2011).

During the passive, stagnant wait for an asylum decision (Rotter, 2015) altruistic occupations provided a means of retaining a sense of self. All participants had been adversely affected by asylum, either through the lack of personal agency, reduced opportunity, reliance on charity or the attitudes of people in the wider community (Bennett *et al.* 2012; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Morville, 2014; Gower, 2016). Altruism is

said to help individuals to demonstrate core features of their identity when other measures of value (such as wealth or status) may not be present (Van der Linden, 2011). Altruism also fosters feelings of happiness and well-being, part of the virtuous cycle of helping others, doing good and subsequently feeling good that has been described as 'the helper's high' (Post, 2005; Otake et al. 2006; Van der Linden, 2011; Wright, 2013). Maintaining a connection between past and present occupations could provide what could be called 'occupational constancy' during periods of transition, which is known to impact on occupational lives (Blair, 2000; Shaw and Rudman, 2009, Pettican and Prior, 2011; Dickie, Cutchin and Humphrey, 2006; Kercher, 2014). Occupational constancy could be described as the maintenance of, or return to, an existing occupational path during transitions such as forced migration. There was a determination to maintain links with previous occupations and a desire to feel they had some continuity between past and present. Those who were able to use transferable skills for something close to their previous occupation seemed the most satisfied, however, where people have skills to use and cannot there is significant frustration. Goziem, a social worker, talks of '*decay through disuse'* and the fear that his skills would gradually fade because he couldn't practice. He, like others, have tried to find activities which in some way reflect things of meaning from their past, but he remains aware that his current occupations are not his 'first choice'. These occupations may be close enough to provide some sense of continuity, but may also be distant enough to frustrate – like a ghost version of the occupation that the individual was previously driven to do. It is notable that, whilst altruistic and other meaningful occupations provided many positives, the hardships of forced migration and asylum are not removed and the occupations used do not necessarily negate occupational injustices.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this small scale study, and these findings are unlikely to be representative of any wider population. It is impossible to say whether this group of participants are reflective of a particular trend towards altruism amongst refugees, as altruistic people may be more likely engage with a project looking for volunteers. Refugees are not a homogenous group and the wealth of experiences and backgrounds makes generalisability limited.

The research process may have been influenced by the 'presence' of the researcher, and though efforts have been taken to maintain authenticity in the data, bias cannot be entirely removed.

Implications for occupationally orientated research and practice

This study introduces the connection between altruism and occupational choice, which may be a useful means of understanding what makes occupations done for others particularly meaningful. It adds to the call for meaning to become a stronger focus of occupationally orientated enquiry. Future research could identify a wider sample for greater comparison, and also actively identify individuals who are not engaged in meaningful occupations to consider the barriers. There is potential to explore occupational constancy, and the desire to keep close to existing occupations. It would be valuable to consider the meaning of this to the individual, what draws people to occupations they have previously preferred, and how they feel about limited access to them.

For professionals interested in using occupation to meet the needs of refugees, this study supports the value of occupation, and the challenge of ongoing occupational injustice. Findings encourage the use of a targeted approach to find altruistic occupations which appear to have a particularly strong personal and cultural 'fit' to help to address many of the implications of forced migration. The finding may be applicable to other groups who face significant transition or marginalisation.

It was clear throughout the study that individuals placed significant value on occupation, particularly 'keeping busy with purpose'. Their occupational choices reflected a desire for kinship and connectivity, an empathic connection with others and a cultural and moral underpinning. They sought occupations to maintain health and well-being and showed the desire to focus their attention away from their own needs. Meaningful occupations were ones which linked past present, and sometimes future, providing a sense of occupational constancy. They presented individuals with the chance to rise above their asylum status and be the 'helper' rather than the 'helped'.

Altruism is an immeasurably complex set of ideas and experiences (Batson, 2011) which continues to face debate, mostly focused on the *rationale* for an individual's actions, rather than the *meaning* it holds. It is questionable whether, from an occupational perspective, the underlying motivation for doing good is of particular importance, when

the individuals express so many gains from the experience. However, understanding motivation in terms of *meaning* can help us see 'the call' of the occupation, the thing that drives the individual towards it and makes it meaningful (Reed *et al.* 2010, Kuo, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Forced migration is a growing worldwide issue and implications for individuals, families and host communities are immense (UNHCR, 2016). Amongst the many aspects of hardship faced by refugees, the impact of occupational injustice is increasingly acknowledged (Whiteford, 2000; Bennett *et al.* 2012; Hammell and Iwama, 2012; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Al Heresh, 2013; Durocher, Gibson and Rappolt, 2013; Morville, 2014; WFOT, 2014).

The overall study aimed to explore meaning behind occupational choices for participants, and in doing so raised the potential of altruism as an occupational vehicle to meet needs. The individual participants engaged with a number of altruistic occupations, demonstrating altruism, collectivism and principlism; prompted by kinship, empathy, learned behaviour and moral principles (Batson, 2011). This article has recognised the known benefits of altruism, (Muzick and Wilson, 2003; Post, 2005; Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui and Fredrickson, 2006; Keonig, McGue, Krueger and Bouchard, 2007; Brown, Brown, House and Smith, 2008; Salvati, 2008; Wright, 2013), applying them to refugees and exploring the potential for altruism, as meaningful occupation, to promote successful resettlement (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Lunden, 2012; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013; Mayblin, 2014; Nayar and Sterling, 2013; Suleman and Whiteford, 2013)

During asylum, when access to occupation is significantly restricted, people require enormous drive, resourcefulness and energy to engage. Occupation during asylum is linked to both social structures and personal characteristics, requiring researchers and practitioners to both challenge social structures (World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), 2006; 2014), and build on personal characteristics (Crawford et al. 2016). By directing drive towards occupations undertaken for the benefit of others, the individual may be able to make the most of limited resources, providing short term solutions and long term gains. Doing for others may be an effective antidote to the impact of transition and hardships of asylum, proving rich, diverse opportunities to foster occupational engagement and constancy.

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At times of economic hardship, occupational therapists are aware of the challenge of managing precious resources in overstretched health and social care services. It is important, however, that the reasoning and judgments underpinning the provision of occupational therapy are fair. Therapy does not occur in a vacuum and occupational therapists are not immune to political and social opinions, which often convey ideas about the needs, rights and opportunities of groups and individuals within society. There is growing recognition of a link between economic hardship and changing attitudes towards marginalised groups, with influences from politics and media steering public opinion (Briant et al. 2013, Philo et al. 2013).

Whilst occupational therapists are required to provide services without prejudice, they are still susceptible to socially constructed messages about the needs, or even the worthiness of clients. In this chapter I use a mixture of literature, theory and student opinions to encourage critical awareness of what shapes people's opinions and how they might impact upon the services occupational therapists provide.

In preparation for this chapter, and to better understand the learning needs of my students, I undertook a stand-alone project with volunteers from the BSc and MSc Occupational Therapy programmes at Teesside University, discussing the impact of media on perceptions of marginalised groups. Below I explore the interplay between austerity, marginalisation, politics and media to understand their impact on attitudes towards individuals.

The impact of austerity

Austerity is the process by which difficult policy measures are introduced to manage national economic crises. Austerity measures have become a major feature of the contemporary socio-political landscape, with varied but substantial impact across nations and across groups (Holthuis, 2013). Although many of the examples used here are from

the United Kingdom (UK), similar debates occur across Europe and beyond (Ciobanu, 2012; Holthuis, 2013; Karanikolos et al. 2013).

Whilst some assert that austerity measures are essential to redress existing financial difficulties (Winder, 2015), the need for austerity measures is contentious (Blyth, 2015). The approaches taken to austerity are widely criticised as unnecessarily draconian as they are associated with economic hardship and reduced social spending (Blyth, 2015). These measures create a 'cold climate' of reduced income and opportunity, particularly for those most reliant on statutory support (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014).

Austerity is seen as magnifying disadvantage, as individuals experience unemployment, job insecurity, income reduction, soaring living costs, welfare cuts and reduced access to services (Butler, 2012; Ifanti et al. 2013; O'Hara. 2013). These circumstances have significant implications for health and social well-being, as there is an important relationship between a prosperous economy and the health of the population (Hudson, 2013). The correlation between poor health and unemployment, debt and financial insecurity is well established and incontrovertible (Wind-Cowie, 2013), with some of the most negatively affected groups experiencing the most significant health implications (Duffy, 2013; Karanikolos et al. 2013; Elliott, 2014).

In addition to the impact directly on health and well-being, austerity measures have implications for service provision, with service reforms and spending cuts leading to lower statutory provision and greater reliance on voluntary organisations (Holthuis, 2013; Ifanti et al, 2013; O'Hara, 2014). There is also inefficiency and inequality in the manner in which available funding is used, with waste still a major issue and questions raised about the equanimity of spending (Duffy, 2013; Molloy, 2014). The British National Health Service (NHS) has become an increasingly and unsustainably costly service (National Audit Office, 2012) and major efforts are being undertaken to review all services to make huge efficiencies (Carter, 2015). The necessity to reduce waste is widely accepted, however, savings made at the current rate are potentially unsustainable, and it is not yet possible to measure the impact of savings on patient care (National Audit Office, 2012). There are also concerns raised by public health strategists about the focused prioritisation of services, where expensive showcase treatments are made available

because they appear to have public support, without any analysis of how the funds could be spent on other priorities (Potter and Knight, 2011).

In the UK, austerity measures require a 10.8% reduction in public expenditure, however, 50% of these cuts occur within local government, whose primary function is the provision of social care (Duffy, 2013). This creates a disproportionate burden, particularly for those most vulnerable, such as people with disabilities, mental health problems and immigrants (Ciobanu, 2012; Elliott, 2014; Heap, 2013, Duffy, 2013; Valentine, 2014).
Vulnerable groups often experience multiple layers of disadvantage, and the impact of austerity measures can be cumulative, due to the combined effects of regressive taxation and cuts across social care, benefits and housing (Duffy, 2013). In considering this cumulative impact, Duffy (2013) asserts that the burden for people in poverty is five times that of the rest of the population, for people with disabilities it is nine times that of the rest of the population, and for people experiencing the most severe disabilities it is nineteen times that of the rest of the population.
Cumulative cuts may add to existing challenges, which are part of an ongoing fight for equality (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010), such as higher than average living costs for people with disabilities (Zaidi and Burchadt, 2004) or labour market exclusion for migrants (Kingston et al. 2015). Additionally, policies around austerity are rarely responsive enough to the kind of complex lives and interlocking challenges experienced by people in need, so the limited social protection provided often compounds difficulties by being inflexible and unresponsive (Perry et al. 2014).

As a result, people with existing needs, already facing inequalities, experience a range of circumstances made more challenging by austerity. They experience more frequent and less manageable personal crises and become less able to participate in their communities. They rely more heavily on families, and health and social care services, which are increasingly providing limited services due to budgetary constraints (Duffy, 2013). In addition to this increased need, there are features of increased marginalisation for the groups highlighted as most vulnerable, adding an
extra element of complexity to both their need and the likelihood of getting their needs met (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014; Valentine and Harris, 2014).

Marginalised groups

Having become concerned about what I saw as increasingly troubling attitudes towards marginalised groups in wider society, I decided to explore the perspectives of occupational therapy students, in order to gauge their learning needs. I undertook a project with nine volunteer students, where they were asked to consider the nature of marginalisation and some of the possible influences and outcomes. This was undertaken in two parts, via email. The students were given a series of open questions, followed separately by a number of examples of media coverage of a particular group, to explore how marginalisation may be fostered.

When the students were asked *'Who you imagine might be 'marginalised' in the United Kingdom?'* they identified a diverse range of people, but most commonly immigrants and benefit recipients. There was an appreciation that people may become marginalised as a result of age, ability, ethnicity, faith, origins, health, need, culture, opportunity, appearance or lifestyle choices. This highlights the complexity of the issue, where so many groups can be identified as marginalised, perhaps with multiple layers of exclusion, and where factors may vary by location and over the course of time (Cohen, 2014).

The process of marginalisation can often develop through a combination of the dynamics of three processes: 'othering', perceived deservedness and moralising, which are discussed below. These processes allow people to be seen and treated as separate, distant and disconnected from wider communities and can impact upon their health and well-being (Grove and Zwi, 2006).

Othering

Othering involves the creation and use of labels to define and characterise groups, objectifying them, and establishing them as subordinate (Grove and Zwi, 2006; Shapiro, 2008).

Many stereotypes exist regarding marginalised groups, taking the form of 'tropes' (overused images, words and representations) (Fahnestock, 2011) from the repeated use of words like 'swamped' and 'bogus' in relation to immigration (Chakrabortty, 2013) to the representation of people with disabilities as either sinister or pitiful (Haller, 2010).

Such representations have the potential to create lasting impressions about, for example, disability and mental ill-health (Coyle and Craig, 2012; O'Hara. 2013), engendering sympathy or pity, or hostility and ridicule, neither of which leave room for progressive opportunity and fulfilled potential (O'Hara, 2013).

Othering creates an environment where individual identity ceases to be recognized. Individuals are not simply devalued, but also denied status, and considered unworthy of respect (Fraser, 2000). Fraser (2000) describes how the battle for recognition is at the heart of issues around identity, multiculturalism and human rights. As people balance their need for a shared humanity with the desire to maintain cultural and personal distinctiveness, group identities can be drastically simplified, increasing the sense of separation and generating intolerance (Fraser, 2000; Danermark and Gellerstedt 2004).

There has been a marked decline in empathy and understanding for some of the most disadvantaged groups in our society, corroding compassion for those most in need and having a negative impact on social cohesion (Valentine, 2014, Valentine and Harris, 2014). Large scale studies by The Equality Commission (Northern Ireland) (2011) and the British Attitudes Survey (2012) noted an increased hardening of attitudes and growing social division, suggestive of a shift in public opinion. When people were asked to reflect on their views on various groups of people, imagining them as a work colleague, neighbour, relative or friend, there was less compassion and greater prejudice than in previous surveys, with the most negative attitudes expressed about travellers, transgender people, Eastern European migrant workers, and people experiencing mental health problems (EC, 2011). Researchers found that negativity had particularly increased towards welfare recipients and immigrants, but they also found diminishing compassion for groups such as disabled or retired people, previously considered the deserving poor (BAS, 2012).

Deservedness

The concepts of the deserving and undeserving poor have long been an aspect of attitudes towards people in need. Since medieval times there have been efforts, including public floggings, branding and hanging, used to dissuade 'idleness' in the poor. British legislation from 1563, and the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601, offered

categorisations of poverty: the deserving poor were those who were poor through no fault of their own, either too young, old or ill to work, or those who would work but could not find work (Alchin, 2012). The undeserving poor were those who could work but would not, and consequently they were considered as the idle poor, and they were to be publicly castigated (Bloy, 2002). There was no recognition of external factors which created hardship at these times, which were beyond the control of the poor, such as the excesses of the ruling classes, rapid inflation and decreased charitable support due to the dissolution of the monasteries (Boyer, 1990). In the intervening years, attitudes towards deservedness have continued to dominate perceptions of individuals who require help and support, with the current period of austerity facilitating the re-emergence of traditional distinctions between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Pennington, 2011, Valentine, 2014). Currently (September 2015), much of the debate on deservedness centres on welfare and benefits with powerful messages regarding the place and value individuals hold in society (Bowlby, 2010; Clarey, 2012; Johnes, 2012).

Moralising

The debate around the needs of some groups often takes on a moral dimension, with divisions fostered by 'moral panic', a theory characterised by a disproportionate perception of the threat of a particular group on society, with a resultant growth of hostility (Cohen, 2014; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009). Moral panic occurs when people are provided with information, from a source they perceive as credible, which presents behaviour in terms of some form of moral violation (Goodwin, 2001). This defines a target group as a threat to societal values and interests, vilifying them and increasing the likelihood of them becoming marginalised. Groups begin to be portrayed as 'folk devils', with extreme negative portrayals and perspectives circulated by press and public opinion (Cohen, 2014).

Ideas of deservedness are propagated by the media and politicians, but also resonate with the experiences of ordinary citizens in their everyday lives, meaning that they now attribute issues such as unemployment and poverty to the failings of individuals (Valentine, 2014). This focus on the moral or cultural worth of others demonises people

in need, obscuring other causes of inequality and socio-economic exclusion and eroding care, compassion and social responsibility (Valentine, 2014; Valentine and Harris, 2014).

Austerity and marginalisation

This link between attitudes, marginalisation and austerity is a phenomenon which has been repeated at a number of times throughout history, when economic pressures have eroded compassion and social cohesion (Pontichelli and Voth, 2011).

Just as Tudor hardships fostered hostility towards the 'undeserving' poor, the Great Depression of the 1930s fuelled the rise of German National Socialism (the Nazi Party). When, in the 1930s and 40s, the Nazi Party ran media campaigns attacking groups they perceived as undeserving, few would have anticipated the implications.

The process began with the exploitation of the vulnerability of people with disabilities and major illness. They utilised propaganda describing people with disabilities as 'useless eaters', bemoaning the cost to the hardworking German of maintaining their 'unworthy lives' (Mostert, 2002).

Text for the image: "This hereditarily ill person will cost our national community 60,000 Reichmarks over the course of his lifetime. Citizen, this is your money."

Reproduced courtesy of the Deutsches Historisches Museum.

From this, the German people experienced reduced empathy and a heightened sense of burden, enabling people with disability and ill-health to become the first victims of the holocaust, with vast numbers of children and adults exterminated and experimented upon as part of the Action T4 programme[3].

Whilst we may reflect on such events as historical aberrations, they are repeated with enough frequency to create an association between economic challenges, attitudes toward marginalised groups and horrific outcomes (Mostert, 2002; Seymour, 2014).

Changing perspectives of particular groups, driven by othering, deservedness and moralising, could indeed be the beginnings of demonization like we have seen in the past and continue to see across the present day world (Disability Rights UK, 2012; Ponticelli and Voth, 2012; Tyson et al. 2014). At the very least such demonization presents a major additional challenge to people as they become vulnerable to negative public judgment (Bambra and Smith, 2010; British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014).The example of National Socialism and the 'useless eaters' also shows the connection between politics, media, propaganda and attitudes which, then as now, play a role in shaping public opinion (Mostert, 2002).

Politics and attitudes

[3] Action T4 was a programme of forced euthanasia, in wartime Nazi Germany, which officially ran between 1939 and 1941, and unofficially until 1945. Physicians were directed to judge patients 'incurably sick, by critical medical examination' and then administer to these patients a 'mercy death'. 70,273 children and adults with disabilities and ill-health were killed during the official period, and a further 200,000 following later on (Action T4, 2014).

Governments have the potential to influence social attitudes through policies that set out government priorities, establishing who and what is 'worthy' of benefitting from public money (Abrahams, 2014). As successive governments in the UK have sought to reduce the substantial costs of welfare and social support, there has been an increased use of stereotyping about specific groups, leading to individuals being negatively portrayed (Garthwaite, 2011). Just as previous generations have perceived generosity as benefitting the idle poor (Pennington, 2011), there continues to be an assertion that social support rewards fecklessness and irresponsibility (Bowlby, 2010; Clarey, 2012) and there have been calls to re-moralise services around the principle of deservedness (Bowlby, 2010; Clarey, 2012).

The language of deservedness and the language of policy have become entwined in what Duffy (2013) describes as falsehoods, distortions and ugly rhetoric. The UK government approach to unemployment benefit fraud, for example, changed some years ago to routinely use the terms 'cheats' and 'thieves'; yet, their own evidence shows that only 0.7% of benefit overpayments are due to fraud (DWP, 2014). Similarly, over recent years social security provision in the UK has been reframed as 'welfare', which parliament members assert convey a shift from entitlement toward stigma (Horris, 2011). Language changes such as this are not insignificant and may be part of a process of dehumanising benefit recipients; as Williams says "we never used to talk about welfare in terms of humans, but the word has been in everyday UK usage, for as long as I can remember, to describe animals" (2013, p.1).

The debate regarding benefit payments for individuals out of work has become framed in the rhetoric of 'skivers versus strivers' following a number of high profile speeches by political figures (Bambra and Smith, 2010; Heap, 2013; O'Hara, 2013). The suggestion is that some individuals are worthy recipients of support and others not, generating what Williams calls a "fictional feckless bogeyman" (2013. p 1), an individual viewed as having little to contribute and being at the root of societal ills. The dehumanising of people receiving benefits allows difficult economic decisions, such as extensive budget cuts, to be justified (Bambra and Smith, 2010; Heap, 2013; O'Hara, 2013), with little or no acknowledgement of wider socio-economic causes that may contribute to individual difficulties (Chauhan and Foster, 2013).

During the current period of austerity, as in the past, there is evidence of movement towards the far right. Increases in far right politics and activism can be seen in many countries, ranging from increased support for political parties such as *Front National* in France and *Golden Dawn* in Greece, to single issue groups such as Germany's anti-Islamic *Pegida* and Russia's homophobic *Occupy Paedophilia*. Despite differences of activity between these groups and parties, they all hold strong conservative views associated with authoritarianism, resistance to change, dislike of uncertainty and fear of the 'other' (Leone and Chirumbolo, 2007; Jost et al. 2003). These features of right wing thinking are often heightened at times of economic uncertainty, and people who are naturally more fearful and uncertain are more likely to be supportive of policies that provide them with a sense of surety and security (Hatemi et al., 2013).

Messages that appear to be attuned to these conservative fears are often popular, and organisations, political groups and media agencies which utilise this are believed to strengthen their standing by exploiting public anxieties (Hatemi et al. 2013). There is often a disproportionate focus on marginalised groups, intensifying the focus on differences and minimising awareness of needs. Consider how often mental ill-health is linked with violence, homosexuality with paedophilia, or immigration with terrorism. This negative attention is not grounded in evidence, but captures peoples' imagination and heightens their paranoia (Rose, 2004; Furedi, 2006; Gardner, 2009).

Such messages promote separateness, widening the gap between 'them and us' (Hatemi et al., 2013). In addition to generating distance between groups, these attitudes foster an appealing sense of group solidarity, with the desire to stand together and exclude others a natural and seductive response to economic hardship (Ahmed, 2004; Goodwin, 2001; Karyotis and Rudig, 2013). By grouping people together, and demonising minorities, the majority feel a greater sense of togetherness and personal value (Ahmed, 2004). Indeed, it has been suggested that in Greece, the European nation most profoundly affected by austerity (Ifanti et al. 2013), hardship has led individuals who identify themselves as native Greeks to feel a sense of entitlement in comparison to immigrant populations, providing a focus for blame and allowing them to channel their anger as an antidote to their own economic hardship (Carastathis, 2015).

Media and attitudes

Intertwined with political influences, various forms of media take an important role in shaping public opinion, with television, print and social media providing a backdrop of hostile commentary (Jasper, 1997). Tabloid newspaper articles often adopt a deliberately provocative tone, written to shock, anger and disgust readers (Braint et al. 2013; Philo et al, 2013) using divisive, irresponsible and damaging language (Vickers et al. 2014) and focussing on individuals whose extreme and polarised lifestyles reflect little of the majority experience.

Braint et al. (2013) and Philo et al. (2013) reported a clear increase in negative reporting on issues such as disability and immigration, with the use of pejorative language and a focus on economic burden. They explored the views of members of the public to the needs of benefit claimants, refugees and people with disabilities, finding that attitudes were harsh, and based on distorted facts that people justified because they had read about them in the popular press (Braint et al. 2013; Philo et al. 2013).

By way of example, in November 2013 the Daily Mail newspaper ran the headline "Taxpayers' £10,000 bill to teach failed asylum seeker to fly." It tells the tale of brothers Yonas and Abiy Kebede who after coming to the UK from Ethiopia as children, were abandoned and entered the care system. On leaving care Yonas, 21, planned to take flying lessons prior to a university place to train as a pilot, and Abiy, 20, planned to start a degree. The Daily Mail expresses shock at their entitlement, and the cost of this decision, which is based on the council's legal obligation to help meet training costs for care leavers. The opinion of the author is clear as they express their outrage at the "enormous sums" provided to support the professional qualifications of the two men (Harding, 2013, p.1). The article uses quotations describing 'farcical decisions', 'free rides' and 'blank cheques' and focuses on the 'deeply unfair' impact on taxpayers, with an emphasis on the worthy hardworking people who 'scrimp and save' to provide their children higher education (Harding, 2013).

This portrayal is typical of such tales of the undeserving (Coyle and Craig, 2012; Vickers et al. 2014). The article, like many of its kind, shows the use of othering, deservedness and

moralizing, representing the reported problems as an unacceptable responsibility for the rest of society (Chauhan and Foster, 2013).

Another example began around 2007, through email and social media messages. They alleged that people entering a nation illegally get a job, driver's license, pension card, welfare, credit cards, subsidised rent or a loan to buy a house, free education and free healthcare. The messages also suggested that illegal immigrants were entitled to financial assistance worth up to £29,900 per year, in contrast to pensioners who received only £6,000 a year in benefits (Kennedy, 2015). The messages circulated in many nations, including America, Australia, Canada and India, and the content was altered to reflect the specifics of the intended nation. Various national governments and refugee agencies have investigated the original source, which is unknown, raising concerns about the inaccurate content and its intention to create resentment towards refugees (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). The clear juxtaposition of illegal immigrants and pensioners not only raises an issue of cost, but also reflects the principles of othering and deservedness.

In the student project, the group were provided with a series of tabloid newspaper articles relating to the payment of Incapacity Benefit. The students highlighted how complex issues were explored through unqualified facts, statistics and pseudo-evidence such as 'official tests show', with sound-bites from influential characters, all of which made content more compelling and harder to challenge. The material was constructed to be personal, with the use of individual stories and examples providing a target for the readers' anger. Images were carefully selected and language used to paint a powerful picture, condemning individuals with words such as idleness, festering and waste, which carry the subliminal associations of disgust. They noted how individuals are caricatured to exaggerate themes, while their needs and circumstances are rarely considered and greatly simplified. Each article focussed on groups less likely to evoke empathy, and individuals who are rarely typical, including those whose issues are hidden or harder to define. The students were concerned that accessing only one source of information left the reader with a greatly simplified and unchallenged message.

The students acknowledged that the evidence they gained was often limited and skewed, containing distorted facts and failing to fully reflect the underpinning socio-political factors that may have created or contributed to the hardship faced by individuals. They recognized that much of the information they received had an emotional element that focused on blame and burden, and suggestions that the actions of a few can be taken as a reflection of the behavior of the masses. In many instances, marginalised individuals, because they did not follow the majority, were seen as morally, religiously or financially corrupting, with television, print and social media sensationalising stories, making entertainment out of negative stereotypes and fostering fears.

The students described these various sources of information as propaganda, recognising it as the selective use of partial facts, from narrow sources, to reinforce a particular message (Shah, 2005). Fiske and Taylor (1991) described people as 'cognitive misers', keen to simplify their approach to information and therefore drawn to clear and direct messages rather than complex ones. Powerfully persuasive, information presented in this way provides a simplified message, attractive in the context of a volume-heavy information age (Hamilton, 2013; Johnston, 2013).

Often, the primary media or political messages are not received first hand, and the student group identified that they are often accessed second or third hand from the opinions of family, friends or colleagues. This reflects the two-step flow theory (Katz and Lazarfield, 1955), which suggests that information from the mass media is processed and disseminated by opinion leaders at a local level, who add personal influence to the message. We rely on the integrity of these leaders to ensure the appropriateness of the message, but with increasing streams of media, particularly accessible online, our messages may become increasingly simplified and come from multiple, unreliable sources.

Perhaps increasingly, with the rise of social media, people are bombarded with information, processed by a range of opinion leaders of various levels of credibility, providing swathes of information we cannot meaningfully process. The ease with which

we can 'like' a sentiment or an idea, without critically considering the quality of it, can be seductive, turning social media into a modern propaganda channel (Johnston, 2013).

The impact of austerity and marginalisation

There are multiple features at play in the process and continuation of marginalisation. There is a cyclical process by which austerity increases the need for prioritisation of services and support (Duffy, 2013), and as the public are required to accept or support these priorities, the planned cuts are linked to deservedness (Bambra and Smith, 2010; Valentine, 2014). To promote this message, media and politicians convey messages using fear and the distortion of facts to promote othering (Briant et al. 2013; Philo et al. 2013). Support is diminished for those people labelled 'undeserving', with reduced public empathy leading to increased marginalisation (Valentine, 2014). From there, further exclusion becomes easier, as the individuals have less support and their needs are less well acknowledged (Duffy, 2013).

As a result of austerity and changing attitudes, individuals may find themselves facing increased economic hardship combined with the impact of negative attitudes. Their everyday hardship is reduced to a purely economic issue, debated, often without compassion, with assumptions and generalisations eroding public sympathies. This has the potential to worsen personal outcomes by feeding myths and fostering exploitation, reversing the efforts made over recent decades to give recognition to individuals as fully equitable members of society (Crawford, 2013).

Through 'othering' the normal moral rules to be broken and mainstream society to care less, and act more punitively (Ebyen, 2004; Clarey, 2012, Coyle and Craig, 2012). Hate crimes, though severely underreported, have shown an increase of 18% in the year 2014/15 alone, with the rise affecting all hate crime strands (race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity) (Corcoran et al. 2015). 91% of respondents to a survey by Disability Rights UK (2012) identified rising negative press portrayals as fostering

hostility and hate crime, having little doubt that the deteriorating situation is being driven by 'benefit scrounger' abuse, with media attitude legitimising bullying (Philo, 2011; 2013).

The dynamics of marginalisation not only alter public opinion, but shape opportunities and access to services through a process called 'bordering' where boundaries develop which prevent people from equitable opportunities (Ebyen, 2004). There is a significant human cost to this, as individuals experience increased isolation, loneliness, heightened stigma and shame, increased psychological pressure, physical and mental ill-health (Grove and Zwi, 2006; Heap, 2013; O'Hara, 2014). Alongside this lies the perceived lack of empathy from others, including those administering the welfare system, and a lack of self-esteem fuelled by media and political rhetoric (O'Hara, 2014).

Exclusion and deprivation occur in multiple layers; people are left to face the impact of daily hardships, the challenges of austerity, reduced access to services, and hardened attitudes and discrimination (Elliott, 2014; Philo et al. 2013). These interconnected issues can foster exclusion, reduce outcomes and opportunities for recovery, increase carer burden and further widen already problematic gaps in opportunity (Butler, 2012; Elliott, 2014; Duffy, 2014; O' Hara, 2014; Purton, 2014). The multi-layered and pervasive impact creates 'durable inequality', entrenched and extremely hard to escape.

Forging better outcomes

Austerity undeniably presents a challenge to effective service provision, but creativity and energy can present opportunities where stretched services may otherwise feel unable to help (Wind-Cowie, 2013). O'Hara (2013) and Butler (2012) encountered what they described as extraordinary support where individuals and organisations improvised 'grassroots' solutions to everyday hardship. These projects often ran with minimal funding, showing the resilience and ingenuity of individuals and organisations. Their examples included parents taking over a support group for families of children with a learning disability, and people on a housing estate coming together to pool resources and advice to help with day to day solutions. They provided practical and emotional support, built networks for inclusion and integration, focussed on solutions and helped one another to manage crises (Grove and Zwi, 2006; O'Hara, 2013; Butler 2012).

Occupational therapists often demonstrate the kind of creative, solution focussed and sustainable practice suited to meeting needs in austere times. Traditionally, services have focused on downstream 'repairing' following crises, but a focus on 'preparing' upstream can develop individual and community capacity, resilience and control (Holthuis, 2013).

Occupational therapists have the opportunity to use positive attitudes, advocacy and creative problem solving to make a difference to this process of marginalisation. The principles of occupational therapy acknowledge the value and uniqueness of the individual, encouraging a person-centred, possibilities-driven approach to meeting needs and exploring solutions.

In order to retain values in tune with occupational therapy's guiding principles, it is important to reflect on the processes that influence their perceptions of others around them. A busy working world and a barrage of negative impressions may erode empathy and make the maintenance of a person-centred mind-set more difficult to achieve (Shapiro, 2008). It is sometimes easier to maintain a distance from need and vulnerability in others, however, empathy is the foundation of meeting challenges and honouring difference (Shapiro, 2008). A genuinely person-centred approach safeguards human dignity and appropriate moral values (Ifanti et al. 2013), countering the cynicism of the agenda of marginalisation to foster what Kronenberg calls "possibilities based practice" (2010, p.11).

Lane and Tribe (2010) describe the client as the most valuable knowledge resource, so instead of attending to the misused and distorted narratives presented by others, occupational therapists can maintain awareness of their clients' need and unique experience through their first hand narrative. This can be augmented by sound evidence, from varied and reliable sources, explored with an open and critical mind.

Within practise, occupational therapists have a responsibility to challenge and, where possible, address the occupational injustices that form part of marginalised lives (WFOT, 2006). By seeing the impact of policy and media on public attitude and acknowledging its implications in the lives of others, it is possible to advocate for better access to services and opportunities, and address prevailing harsh attitudes.

Occupational therapists can adopt the role of 'opinion leader' to educate and raise awareness, challenging stereotypes or poor quality evidence shared by others. By sharing balancing, research informed, evidence (such as the short animated film "All in this together: are benefits ever a lifestyle choice?" by Dole Animators (2014)), it is possible to raise awareness of the realities of marginalisation in a meaningful and accessible way.

The power of a single contradictory message should not be underestimated, consider the impact of the photographs of Aylan Kurdi, the Syrian child drowned off the coast of Turkey. The image followed prolonged and almost exclusively negative coverage of migrants to the UK, yet it not only challenged the opinions of many members of the public, but influenced media reporting, political rhetoric and mobilised increased aid (Barnard and Shoumali, 2015).

Conclusion

At times of hardship the need for service prioritisation is a reality, however, the question remains whether professionals are being persuaded by insidious messages that one client deserves services more than the next?

Occupational therapy has great potential to focus on the most meaningful possible outcomes for an individual, to take account of their context and circumstances, and to use ingenuity to find low cost solutions to occupational issues. However, if we do not see need fairly and equitably across client populations we are failing to uphold our values.

Similarly, if we silently ignore the rising hostilities around us we are failing to challenge injustices which impact widely on occupational choice and opportunity. As Holocaust survivor Wiesel said in his Nobel acceptance speech, "we must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented" (1986, p.1).

The tale of the Kebede brothers, presented in the newspaper article "Taxpayers' £10,000 bill to teach failed asylum seeker to fly" is an example of how political and media message can devalue individuals and add to their marginalisation. It is also an example of

two young men whose determination and aspiration has allowed them to rise above those barriers.

By seeing the capacity and potential of the individual, and challenging the rhetoric of demonization, occupational therapists can work with individuals who have been impacted by the interplay of hardship and negative attitudes. After all, what is occupational therapy if not an opportunity for all people to learn to fly?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the following students from Teesside University BSc and MSc Occupational Therapy courses for giving their time and opinions in the preparation of this chapter: Chris Britton, Richie Brown, Vicky Field, Natalie Greenwell, Clare Johnson, Amanda Peach, Rachael Ward, Hayley Watson, and Rachel Wetherall.

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Key findings

Asylum – a challenging context: all participants spoke about the hardships of the asylum process which shape their experience of so much of their daily life. The occupational issues they identified acknowledged:

Doing - the value of doing was very clear, particularly in relation to work, knowledge development and engagement in altruistic occupations. The restrictions faced were of major concern.

Being – occupation was synonymous with well-being and personal value.

Belonging – individuals identified their belonging to both place and people and they explored the location of home and community, the value of relationships, family, friendships and love and the value of collectivism.

Becoming – was difficult to identify with the future uncertain and the challenge of keeping going.

- The capacity to engage was clearly evident and keenly felt by participants.
- Participants benefitted from supported engagement, particularly on first arrival and for those here alone.
- Maintaining stamina over lengthy periods proves challenging
- Any occupation was better than no occupation, but well-matched occupations gave direction and purpose and kept them feeling valued and healthy.
- Participants had a desire not only to 'keep busy' but also to 'keep busy with a purpose' and prized helping others above all other occupations.

Each participant identified altruistic drives as the most meaningful aspects of their 'doing', the positive elements of their 'being', in the connections through 'belonging' and in what little they could identify to help them 'become'.

Project aims

This study aims to add a rich and detailed personal voice to reflect the impact of asylum on everyday occupations. The study explored:

- The individual's experience of occupation before leaving their home country, during the asylum process and (where relevant) after seeking asylum.
- The meaning given to occupation (including self-care, productivity and leisure activities) by the individual.
- What supported the individual in undertaking their chosen occupations during the asylum process, and which things acted as barriers.
- The perceived impact of experiences of occupation during asylum.

Background

Refugees are acknowledged as experiencing occupational issues – from temporary occupational disruption to prolonged exile from necessary occupational engagement (World Federation of Occupational Therapists 2012).

The transitions refugees face create a discontinuity which halts the chosen or anticipated path of their occupational life, impacting in a number of ways before, during and after their flight from their country of origin. For many individuals, occupations have been shaped by the challenges of life in their country of origin, lost in their flight to the host country and denied by the policies and process of seeking asylum (de Mojeed 2010, Lee 2006, Whiteford 2005, 2000).

There is a significant link between occupation and the adjustment, integration and reconstruction necessary to manage migration, without which mastery and competency are undermined (Gupta 2013, Mondaca & Josephsson 2013, Nayar & Sterling 2013) Individuals' capacity to access and make use of new opportunities may be an important feature of success in transition, allowing them to renegotiate ways of doing, being and belonging in their new context (Bennett et al 2012, Gupta 2013).

Methodology

This study is informed by traditional phenomenological principles and approached the data using heuristic inquiry. This involves holding a close connectedness with the research question, having openness to one's own experience and tacit knowledge and the explicit use of intuition (Moustakas 1994). Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with participants, offered the opportunity to talk and/or engage in a range of art and craft activities to facilitate discussion through informal conversational interviewing.

Ten participants were recruited purposively via local non-statutory refugee support agencies. The participants were four women and six men, ages between 25 and 45 years, from a range of African and Middle Eastern nations. Their period of stay within the United Kingdom varied from just over one year to eight years (with an average of 5 years 4 months). Their asylum status varied, from having full refugee status to being destitute and unsupported.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing post migratory experiences, but the choice of occupation is particularly important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning which foster connections and purpose, and in particular feed their need to feel valued.

Occupation can encourage the necessary life skills required to grow, adapt and successfully negotiate major transition (Kerwin 2013, Whiteford & Suleman 2013). Occupations provide a route to integration and participation within the host community (Bennett et al 2012, Nayar & Sterling 2013) and allow the individual to renegotiate their cultural and personal identity in their new environment (Bennett et al 2012, Farias 2013, Nayar & Sterling 2013).

During asylum, when access to occupation is significantly restricted, people require enormous drive, resourcefulness and energy to engage, so, directing energies effectively may make better use of the scant opportunities available. If, of all options available, people gain most from altruistic occupations due to their ability to promote a sense of worth, purpose and connectedness to others, this can be harnessed to do more to promote 'doing, being, belonging' and even the illusive 'becoming'.

This study, conducted in 2012-2014, received funding via a Research Career Development Grant from the UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation

Grant holder: Claire Smith

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all ten research participants, especially 'Alice' who piloted the study. I wish to acknowledge the role of link individuals and agencies, particularly Bini Arai of the North of England Refugee Service, and Fiona Cuthill of the Melting Pot. PhD research supervision was provided by Dr Dorothy Hannis and Dr Susan Cleary of Teesside University, with additional support from the occupational therapy learning set. I wish also to thank Teesside University for supporting my studies, and the UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation for funding the research activity.

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Abstract:

Introduction

Seeking asylum creates circumstances that impact significantly on occupational opportunities, leading to negative outcomes for individuals, families and the host community. Understanding the specific meaning of occupation during this major life transition provides valuable insights regarding occupation cross-culturally, during transition or under socio-legal restrictions.

Method

This study employed a phenomenological approach, using a series of in-depth interviews to illuminate the role of occupation in the everyday lives of 10 participants.

Findings

All participants spoke of the challenges of the asylum process, and the powerful drive to keep busy. They each identified the special role of occupations done for the benefit of others – family, network or community – linking these with cultural ideals and their own desired outcomes of value and purpose.

Conclusion

Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing post-migratory experiences, but the choice of occupation is also important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning that foster connections and purpose, and in particular feed their need to feel valued. Occupations undertaken for the benefit of others connect with culturally appropriate collectivist ideals, and seem to do more to promote 'doing, being, belonging' and 'becoming'.

Keywords:

Occupation, refugees, asylum seekers

Introduction:

Forced migration is a complex process, creating an enormous and unpredictable transition, with the loss of the fabric of a familiar life and the removal of many valued occupations (Farias, 2013; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Huot et al., 2013). Migrants are increasingly acknowledged as experiencing occupational issues, from temporary disruption to prolonged exile from necessary engagement (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2012). This study considers the experiences of people at three stages of the asylum process, each of which creates specific and different needs that impact upon occupational performance.

- People seeking asylum – where the individual has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision regarding their right to asylum.
- People refused asylum – where applications have been refused and the legal process of making a claim for asylum is exhausted.
- Refugees – where the individual has been granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom on the basis of an upheld claim for asylum, humanitarian or other reasons (Refugee Council, 2015).

Study aims:

Despite a growing body of evidence regarding the impact of asylum on well being, occupation, in its broadest sense, has been a neglected area of research, with a greater focus on health and employment (Huot et al., 2013; Nayar and Sterling, 2013; Suto, 2009). This study aims to capture the refugee experience, as it occurs through the medium of occupation (Huot et al., 2013; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013), by exploring:

- the individual's experience of occupation before leaving their home country, during the asylum process and (where relevant) after seeking asylum;
- the meaning given to occupation (including self-care, productivity and leisure activities) by the individual
- what supported the individual in undertaking their chosen occupations during the asylum process, and which things acted as barriers;
- the perceived impact of experiences of occupation during asylum.

Literature review

The experience of seeking asylum finds people facing a lengthy, passive wait for a decision. They experience limited access to opportunities, poor social capital, poor

mental and physical health, dwindling performance skills and wasted human potential (Burchett and Matheson, 2010; Morville, 2014). During asylum they are not permitted to work and are reliant on low-level financial support from the National Asylum Support Service, and if unsuccessful in their claim, they lose financial support and housing, becoming reliant on emergency support from charities and facing extreme hardship and destitution. Where someone has refugee status, they can begin to build a new life in the United Kingdom (UK), and are entitled to access the same opportunities as British citizens. However, outcomes are often poor and individuals face ongoing challenges (Mirza, 2011; Mpufo and Hocking, 2013). The transitions faced by refugees create a discontinuity that halts the chosen or anticipated path of their occupational life, impacting in a number of ways. Occupations may have been shaped by the challenges of life in their country of origin, lost in their flight to the host country and denied by the policies and process of seeking asylum (De Mojeed, 2010). The economic, social and political context of asylum in the UK creates a condition of occupational deprivation, where individuals are precluded from participation (Huot et al., 2013; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2012). There are significant barriers to occupations, including work, education, volunteering and networking, excluding individuals from mainstream society, exacerbating social exclusion and creating high levels of underemployment. These occupational limitations have a negative impact on individuals and communities, eroding skills, increasing vulnerabilities, worsening the impact of poverty and ill-health, emphasizing isolation and fostering community disharmony (Lunden, 2012; Whiteford and Suleman, 2013). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists has identified occupation as a human right that enables people to flourish, fulfil their potential and experience satisfaction (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2006). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (2012) position statement on Human Displacement highlights the impact of forced migration on occupation and the potential for occupation to enable individuals to move beyond displacement. Occupation promotes the adjustment, integration and reconstruction necessary to manage migration, without which mastery and competency are undermined (Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Nayar and Sterling, 2013). Occupational access and opportunity is

an important feature of success in transition, allowing individuals to renegotiate ways of doing, being, becoming and belonging in their new context (Bennett et al., 2012; Gupta and Sullivan, 2013).

Method

This study is informed by traditional phenomenological principles, as this has been a favoured research tradition for gleaning an occupational focus (Finlay, 2011; Kinsella, 2012). Phenomenological research aims to capture how individuals experience and ascribe meaning to a specific phenomenon, focusing on the 'lifeworld' of the individual. It strives to capture the ambiguity, poignancy, complexity and richness of experience, making phenomenology an appropriate methodology for understanding the complexity of human issues (Finlay, 2011). Phenomenology has been identified as appropriate for cross-cultural research, allowing us to find answers that are more relevant to the research participants (Liamputtong, 2010), explore complex and abstract concepts across cultures and create the necessary climate for the participant to respond comfortably, accurately, comprehensively and honestly (Moustakas, 1994).

Recruitment and selection

Participants in the study were required to be aged over 18 years old and to have been seeking asylum within the past 5 years. They could be male or female, from any country of origin, of any ethnicity and could speak any language. A purposive sampling method was employed, as appropriate to sensitive issues or potentially vulnerable participants, and 10 participants were sought to balance the desire for rich data against practical constraints.

Information, preparation and support

In order to access participants sensitively, two trusted link agencies were used to promote trust (Ryen,2008).Bothwere charities providing advice, destitution support and social contact. Staff and volunteers from the agencies facilitated contact, and arranged initial meetings with the researcher. Accessible written materials were supplied in audio format and professionally translated into five locally required languages (Liamputtong, 2010). Qualified interpreters were made available and given guidance notes, and each participant would have access to one consistent interpreter throughout their process (Hadziabdic and Hjelm, 2014). As there was potential for emotional distress inherent in

this study, a detailed support strategy was determined with staged interventions to cater sensitively for differing needs.

Ethics

The study received full ethical approval from Teesside University School of Health & Social Care Ethics Committee, encompassing consent, confidentiality, recording and management of information, and right to withdraw. In order to protect identity, pseudonyms chosen by the participants were used throughout.

Research sessions and activities

Informal conversational interviewing was selected as inherently phenomenological, allowing the researcher to create a spontaneous and naturally unfolding dialogue (Finlay, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). Conversational interviewing is used to generate data through talking in an informal and conversational way, creating a research environment in which participants feel free to participate in extended discussions (Roulson, 2008). Audio recordings were professionally transcribed, and participants were invited to discuss a pre´cis of their own session transcripts as an opportunity to show respect and recognition for the researcher. Analysis was undertaken using the Stevick–Collaizzi–Keen method, adapted by Moustakas (1994), an established method for distilling themes to create rich structural and textural descriptions of individual experience.

Researching across cultures

Conducting cross-cultural research is rife with methodological and ethical challenges and intensely biased by Eurocentric philosophies and paradigms (Liamputtong, 2008). Participants may face a wide range of barriers to engagement in research such as language, gender roles and cultural norms; in addition, research processes may be unfamiliar, trust issues may influence the research relationship, and sensitive or distressing materials may make opening up a challenge (Ryen, 2008). In order to minimize the impact of barriers and increase personal agency, participant choice took precedence whenever possible. Attention was given to methodological choice, forming and maintaining the relationship, information and preparation, and participant involvement and choice. People seeking asylum were involved in the planning, preparation, piloting and marketing of the study. There have been ongoing opportunities for involvement in dissemination, and data are being presented in varied formats that are

accessible to refugees and refugee support agencies, in order to avoid materials being channelled only towards academic or professional audiences.

The role of the researcher

As the researcher is the primary instrument of inquiry in phenomenological studies, there was an inevitability to researcher presence in this study (Finlay, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). The author is an occupational therapist with experience of providing therapy to refugees, and it was important in this study to be explicit about the researcher's experience and perspectives. Epoche or 'bracketing' (where assumptions and beliefs are shared and set aside) and reflexivity (ongoing reflections) were employed through written reflections and supervisory discussions, allowing the researcher's stance and experiences to be explored and shared alongside other data (Finlay, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). The key themes related to expectations and bias, feelings of responsibility towards participants, researching a socially and politically sensitive issue, and managing the dynamic of researcher–therapist.

Findings

The study participants included four women and six men, between 25 and 45 years of age, with a mean of 33 years. They came to the UK from a range of nations in Africa and the Middle East and have lived in the UK for between 1 and 8 years, with a mean of 5 years 4 months. Of the 10 participants, two had refugee status, three were seeking asylum and five had failed their asylum claims. Of the failed claimants, one was being supported whilst awaiting a decision about a fresh claim, three had 'Section Four' emergency support and one had no financial support.

Emerging themes

All of the participants spoke about the hardships of the asylum process, which shaped much of their experience of daily life. They faced challenging experiences before coming to the UK, and often undertook perilous journeys to get to the UK, before entering the complex socio–legal framework of asylum. They had all undertaken great sacrifice to come to the UK; in every case the decision was taken under duress, and they spoke of the multiple losses of leaving family and homeland. The participant findings arose from analysis reflecting the principles of Doing, Being, Belonging and Becoming, which have already been linked with migrant and refugee experiences (Gupta and Sullivan, 2013; Wilcock, 1999).

Doing

'Doing' featured most heavily, and all participants spoke of the importance of being busy and having some degree of daily structure, expressing the pleasure of getting up with a purpose, and ending the day feeling tired. People engaged with a range of activities, though they prioritized work, volunteering and education. Whilst they aspired to occupations with purpose, to halt declining skills, avoid wasting time and keep them well, many felt restricted and unfulfilled. All participants had worked in their country of origin, identifying work as promoting confidence, skills and independence. They stated that they did not wish to take benefits – instead wanting to work, earn, pay taxes and contribute – describing themselves as feeling 'handicapped' by the legal limitations on work, feeling 'You have all these ideas, you know, you want to go to, you want to work, but the system doesn't allow you' (Freeman). Feeling able and having energy and not being allowed to work frustrated participants; they found themselves 'lying on the bed, doing nothing', wasting time and skills – 'I have no opportunity to do what I should be doing... do what I am trained to be – what I love' (Goziem).

They highlighted the 'downward drift' of occupation and opportunity under asylum. They were aware that even with the right to work, highly skilled immigrants face the humiliation of taking work of low status – 'What kind of life. Straight away when you get your status they say go and work in a kebab shop' (Shahin). Education was a popular theme for all participants and they studied whatever was available, though access was increasingly restricted. The value of education was linked with respect, pride, confidence and good judgement – 'Learning makes a man, money a ready man, but a proper education – a complete man' (Goziem). Eight of the participants undertook regular voluntary work 'I always like volunteering, since when I was young they brought us up like that...to try doing something for people' (Sam). They spoke of the value of 'helping' occupations that made a difference, gave others hope or was morally the right thing to do. They identified many benefits from helping others, such as gaining and maintaining skills, the enjoyment of being with others, opportunities to learn about UK culture and develop their English – 'Not only busy but getting to know people, the culture and everything, so we can't do that sitting at home' (Sam). However, the most commonly identified gain was the focus away from one's own problems to listen to the needs of others – 'I mostly forget my own problems when I started listening to other people, their

stories' (Tete). 'Doing for others' also lifting them from being 'an asylum seeker' to a person of worth and value – 'I'm helping people like me as well. When I'm sitting on that chair, they don't think I'm asylum. Yes but in my mind, I said, I'm just like you' (Tendei). After their own reliance on the support and charity of others, they appreciated being the person helping rather than the one to be helped.

Being

All participants spoke to some degree of the impact of asylum on their sense of self, their spiritual self and their well being. They described the impact on physical and mental health, believing that asylum 'ground people down – 5 years more, 6 years more, 4 years more? I'm tired you know? If someone sees me they think I'm very good, but they don't know anything about inside' (Shahin). They made clear links between busy and active and health and well being, particularly through avoiding time spent thinking negative thoughts. All participants spoke of the impact of asylum on their sense of their personal value, particularly influenced by the way they are perceived as 'asylum seekers', and the lack of value and status this affords them – 'I am asylum I am asylum I am asylum – everywhere people see me, they just see asylum' (Tete). The lack of choice and control was particularly distressing, describing asylum as making you feel 'like rubbish', another that it made you 'not a man – I feel like I'm 10 years old – I have no choice, go where I'm sent' (Oliver). They all considered themselves to be industrious by nature, with lots of energy and skills to offer, and spoke of the cultural imperative of work in their home countries. For the men in particular, their inability to work during
asylum felt emasculating, removing a key part of their role –'You know, deep inside...you don't feel like as a man. It's where I come from. My wife don't need to work because I have to look after you...that's where I come from. So you need to work' (Freeman). They took evident pride in their achievements here and, whilst they enjoyed positive feedback and sometimes awards, they also appreciated being able to see themselves living 'a positive life', behaving well and being a good role model for others.

Belonging

The discussions on belonging fell into two categories, belonging associated with place and belonging associated with people.

Belonging and place. People expressed mixed experiences of life, both in their country of origin and in the UK. For most there were good earlier lives, which included work,

education, family life, positive social relationships, active hobbies and a healthy environment. Later there was some demarcation event that shifted their experience of daily life and moved them towards the decision to flee. Most had left behind all they had of value, or used it to fund their flight, and the drop in standard of living was significant for all participants – 'We have two houses back home and they are very huge, big houses, very expensive too. But then unfortunately it's not safe to return' (Ali). Life in the UK included many hardships, such as a hostile welcome, major cultural adjustments, language barriers and lack of social capital. 'Almost everything was different to me when I came, in terms of the rules, the system, how it works, the country, even nature wise, and then the clothing wise...it could be anything' (Ali). Initially very afraid, but nevertheless keen to integrate, they faced multiple barriers 'I felt lonely and isolated... I couldn't speak the language, so I was like blind, it was very hard for me to just kind of find the path' (Sam). They identified the practical and emotional support they received during this period as invaluable, particularly from the agencies and individuals who helped to orientate them, helped them manage the complex and unfamiliar processes of daily life in a foreign country, and, once settled, provided links to occupation and activity. For some, returning to their country of origin holds no attraction; for others, the sense of lost home remains strong – 'Your homeland is like your mother, so everybody needs his mother' (Sam).

Belonging and others. Those who are here without any family find this very difficult, identifying loneliness and homesickness, and all mention key individuals left behind – parents, siblings and in one case children – with great sadness: 'I want to be with my family, everybody would want, I think everybody wants to be near their family' (Sam). Having family with them here appeared to give a greater sense of purpose, greater rewards and more occupational outlets and connections. 'I think if we, I mean just make a family, wherever you are you can make a family, you can make a home, that's what I believe' (Freeman); family allowed people to create a sense of home, focusing on keeping the family together and being a good role model. For those who were here without family the loneliness was profound: 'Yeah, oh – get lonely many times. My life is lonely in England. All the time' (Shahin), and opportunities to find love and create a family were limited. Individuals felt they had insufficient stability and too little to offer to gain the relationships they needed, and expressed worries they may have missed their

opportunity for a partner and children, speaking of 'lost years' in their young adulthood when they wished to be getting married and having children. Friendships appear to run very deep for the participants, particularly the women, for whom neighbours become 'sisters'. Friendships promoted the feeling 'I am welcomed, I am accepted and I'm allowed' (Ola), making the difference between coping and not coping with practical and emotional needs. None of the participants identified relationships with local people other than passing or professional ones, yet wished to integrate and be understood: 'If you tried to know me, I try to know you, then we'll be walking hand in hand' (Freeman). All had experienced racism, and they were very aware of negative public opinions that exist around asylum: 'There are some very narrow minded people. So I tend to ignore things such as, they don't know you but they say, they say that you are a lot of things, to be honest' (Sam). All raised themes relating to collectivist ideals and the importance of putting others before themselves, ensuring the well being of their family, friends and others through financial, moral and emotional support: 'It is a powerful thing, being part of a community, part of a family' (Freeman). They prize the stability and support of standing together, and clearly located these behaviours and values as part of their cultural norms, describing themselves as being from 'giving cultures' that are 'always there for one another' (Sam). Most of the participants came from large families and were used to a large, supportive framework, including direct and extended family members on whom they could readily call. They see themselves here with little social capital and support, where it is very hard to be an outsider: 'If I was in Iran you know I ask my neighbours "excuse me I don't have bread". But if I ask English people "I have a problem". Oh – no chance. Honestly – no chance' (Shahin). They identify the UK as individualistic and noted the difference between the UK system – where state support is significant but family support limited – as in direct opposition to their experiences from their countries of origin.

Becoming

The most challenging aspect of occupation addressed in the interviews was that of 'becoming'. Views of the future were very mixed, with individuals who had been granted refugee status feeling able to look ahead with optimism
and make plans. Those who were happiest and most able to cope did so through a combination of avoiding thoughts of past and future and keeping busy: 'I miss home –

but I don't torture myself, just "get up and do'", and the importance of occupation was clear: 'By still doing I will get there one day' (Ola). Those who had families coped in order to show the children how to cope, or in order to support their loved ones: 'I always say, you have to keep on, don't give up, that's what I always say, I say don't give up, don't give up. It's not where you fall down, it's where you lift yourself up, take up the next step' (Freeman). Having an injustice to fight also gives some purpose and energy: 'So you have that fire that builds in you, you try to make it, like a challenge, you know, to bring it out, you know, to fight it, never give up, yes' (Freeman). The purpose and hope appeared less strong for those whose asylum process continues unsuccessfully, and for those with nobody to keep going for. Their focus lay on the impact of waiting and the need for stamina over prolonged periods of time: 'You say "Okay do again, do again, no problem". How many times? How many times' (Shahin). For those whose claim has ended, facing only deportation or lengthy periods of destitution, there was palpable despair and hopelessness. They talk of struggling against the tiredness and distress, of the desire to 'give up': 'I came here I lose everything. I don't know what can I do now. I can't wait six years more ten years more, five years more. Maybe when I get to grandfather I can get papers?' (Shahin). Failed claimants recognized they were trapped, unable to be deported or to go elsewhere: 'You don't want, you can't deport me. I can't work. What you want to do with me?' (Shahin). There was frustration expressed where people found their energies and efforts thwarted: 'I will be thinking about most of it, like the past, now, future, because I feel like, you know, I've wasted my six years of my life in the past because I've not done much, not achieving much'(Ali).One participant explained how a psychologist had told him he needed goals, to which he asked: 'How do you have goals when you have no opportunities?' (Shahin). Uncertainty made their day-to-day lives very challenging, with difficulty planning and preparing for a future that cannot be anticipated. This was most profound for the failed claimants who were reliant on emergency or charitable support – they feared they would lose their accommodation and have to live on the street, and often focused on aspects such as bad weather, homesickness or isolation. Unhappiness and practical hardship a clear part of everything they do; the experience of the end of the asylum road is summed up by one young man, who described his life in the UK as 'broken'. They shared the fear of deportation or detention, and one of the women felt her time away from family was so painful that she

was ready to instigate her own return. Tired of waiting and fighting to stay she was willing to follow any decision: 'I'm struggling, I am struggling...But what I'm praying, I don't want them to detain me any longer. Whatever they are going to decide, I'll take it, I can go, because I'm tired now' (Tendei). Excluding those with refugee status, no one felt able to look to the future; they either lived in the 'here and now' or avoided looking ahead to a path they found full of fear: 'So you just continue because normally if you just give up, it's going to crush you down' (Freeman).

Discussion

Engagement in meaningful and dignified daily occupation has the potential to foster and maintain health, well being and coping skills, even in extreme situations (Lunden, 2012; Mondaca and Josephsson, 2013), and for these participants, the ability to engage was positively associated with well being. For these individuals, what they learned, how they worked and who they engaged with shaped them in their country of origin, maintained them in their flight and supported their transition. The capacity and desire to engage here in the UK is clearly there and keenly felt, and well-matched occupations have given direction and purpose and kept them feeling valued and healthy. It is important to acknowledge that occupational engagement is not easily achieved, and these participants showed vigorous occupational adaptation (Lunden, 2012; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2012). Most benefited from supported engagement, particularly on first arrival, but also identified the challenge of maintaining stamina over lengthy periods, particularly if here alone. For those whose asylum claim was unsuccessful, the gradual erosion of access and opportunity impacted on occupations and left them feeling less the person they had been when they arrived. The key message from participants lay in their desire not only to 'keep busy' but also to 'keep busy with a purpose' – whilst any occupation was better than no occupation, they prized helping others above all else. They each identified altruistic drives, showing investment in their connections – actively supporting others and developing mutually beneficial relationships, voluntary work roles and community support. This appeared in the most meaningful aspects of their 'doing', in the positive elements of their 'being', in the connections through 'belonging' and in what little they could identify to help them 'become'. The drives expressed are likely to be generated by a mixture of cultural and person influences, all of which have established links with ideas of altruism. Altruism is a

complex concept, but can be defined as intrinsically motivated actions undertaken for the benefit of others (Draguns, 2013). The two most common interpretations of altruism relate to feelings of empathy (Batson, 2011) and notions of kinship (Madsen et al., 2007), and it is clear that participants experienced empathy generated, in part, by shared experience, and that they prized the kinship of family or pseudo kinship of 'brother' and 'sister' friendships. It is also suggested that, whilst altruism is not particular to any group or culture, it is actively fostered in collectivist cultures (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2012), and each of the participants comes from cultures vastly more collectivist than that of the UK (Hofstede, 2014). Very little work has been done on the role of altruism in occupation, beyond its part in occupational therapy values. Altruistic actions are acknowledged as having a positive impact on both physical and psychological well being, generating valuable social capital (Salvati, 2008), and Wright (2013) identified increased levels of social interaction, life satisfaction and purpose gained from participating in altruistic activities. This nature of altruistic occupations, such as volunteering, appears to meet cultural and personal needs for a more meaningful 'fit' (Heigl et al., 2011; Iwama, 2005). During asylum, when access to occupation is significantly restricted and people require enormous drive, resourcefulness and energy to engage, directing their energy effectively towards these specific kinds of occupations may be particularly valuable. If we are able to tap into or direct drive towards a meaningful focus, we may be making better use of scant opportunities for better short and long-term outcomes. As Heigl et al. (2011) raise the link between collectivism and purpose in occupational choices, it is possible that altruism, as part of a collectivist mindset, can be harnessed to generate purpose and direct underused energies.

Implications

For individuals facing forced migration, managing their transition and making meaning in an unfamiliar host country may be particularly difficult, and whilst we are beginning to explore the potential of occupation to help people during the process, we need to consider not only access to occupation but the nature of that occupation. Occupational therapists may be able to consider the application of altruistic activities as effective routes to inclusion and meaningful engagement. This study enables us to begin to see patterns of meaning in occupation. It is, however, a small-scale study, and is limited not only by the number of participants, but the inherent lack of homogeneity of people

within the asylum process. Further research could explore differences of meaning for different genders, different counties of origin and for individuals for whom language creates a greater barrier. It may also be valuable to separate people of different asylum status to explore further the role of the socio–legal pressures they face, and in particular to further explore the impact of asylum on the ability to consider the concept of 'becoming'. Further exploration linking altruism and occupational choice is intended.

Conclusion

Occupation has enormous potential for enhancing postmigratory experiences, but the choice of occupation is also important. People strive to move beyond simply 'keeping busy' to find occupations of real meaning that foster connections and purpose, and in particular feed their need to feel valued. Occupations undertaken for the benefit of others tap into culturally appropriate collectivist ideals, using the desire to be altruistic to promote 'doing, being, belonging' and even the elusive 'becoming'.

Key findings

- Asylum influences the experience of 'doing, being, belonging' and, in particular, 'becoming'.
- Altruistic occupations have significant potential to meet the need for purpose and meaning, sustaining individuals during transition.
- This study contributes an understanding of the impact of asylum on occupation, whilst exploring the role played by the nature, focus or choice of occupation for the best outcomes.

What the study has added

Whilst adding awareness of the value of occupation for people during asylum, this study has highlighted the potential for altruistic activities to provide potentially the greatest benefit to the individual.

Research ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from Teesside University School of Health & Social Care Ethics Committee on 8th November 2012.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

The study was funded by the United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation Career Development Grant.

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

I have presented findings from this study at the following national and international peer reviewed conferences.

Hart H.C. (2018) *Finding purpose through altruism: the potential of 'doing for others' during asylum*. Oral presentation WFOT Congress, Cape Town, South Africa. May 2018.

Hart H.C. (2018) *The push and pull of the dark side of occupation*. Workshop. WFOT Congress, Cape Town, South Africa. May 2018.

Smith. H. C. (2015) *Finding purpose through altruism: the potential of 'doing for others' during asylum.* Oral presentation COT Annual Conference, Brighton. June 2015.

Smith, H. C. (2014) *Qualitative research across cultures: creating new research traditions to meet contemporary needs.* Workshop, WFOT Congress, Yokohama. June 2014.

Smith, H. C. (2014) *Finding meaning through occupation: Seeking asylum in the United Kingdom.* Oral presentation, WFOT Congress, Yokohama. June 2014.

Smith, H. C. (2014) *Exploring emerging themes – the meaning of occupation to people seeking asylum.* Oral presentation COT Annual Conference, Brighton. June 2014.

Smith, H. C. (2012) *Meeting across cultures – the pursuit of competency.* Workshop. 9th COTEC Congress, Stockholm, Sweden May 2012.

Smith, H. C. (2012) *Finding meaning through occupation: Seeking asylum in the UK.* Oral paper. 9th COTEC Congress, Stockholm, Sweden May 2012.

Hocking, C, Townsend, E, Smith, H. C, Kramer-Roy, D (2012) *Preparing occupational therapists for the future: Addressing diversity and justice in educational curricula*. Workshop. 9th COTEC Congress, Stockholm, Sweden May 2012.

Smith, H. C. (2011) *Life in transition – gaining a sense of productivity and belonging whilst seeking asylum,* Paper. British Psychological Society Glasgow May 2011.

Smith, H. C. (2010) *Finding meaning through occupation: refugee narratives from the UK, Paper.* World Federation of Occupational Therapists 15th Annual Congress, May 4-7th, Santiago, Chile.

Smith, H. C. (2008) *Life in transition: gaining a sense of productivity and belonging whilst seeking asylum.* Paper. Council of Occupational Therapists of the European Countries 8th European Congress, Hamburg, Germany, May 2008.

Smith, H. C. (2008) *Finding happiness in transition: gaining a sense of productivity and belonging whilst seeking asylum*. Paper. Happiness, Health & Wellbeing. Middlesbrough, June 2008.

Smith, H. C. (2007). *The Lifespan Interrupted: The experience of adults seeking asylum in the United Kingdom*. Paper. World Federation of Mental Health Annual Conference, Oslo, Norway. November 2007.

Smith, H. C. (2007). *Family Network & Community: Loss, exclusion, adjustment and the need for social capital for refugees and people seeking asylum*. Seminar. British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy, Birmingham, November 2007. BACP:London.