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The Role of a Music Group in Addressing the Needs of Asylum-Seeking Women and Their Children

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ABSTRACT

Music’s capacity to bring about positive change in the areas of well-being and health for marginalised groups is well documented. This study examines the outcomes of musicking for a group of asylum seeking mothers who face particular challenges in the British socio-political landscape, in the areas of language and communication, cultural understanding and identity, and social and psychological well-being. This research interrogates notions of integration and examines ways in which the UK asylum system has further ‘othered’ the participants, whose sense of identity is dislocated, and whose anxieties may be transmitted to their children. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how musicking has been influential in addressing some of these challenges.

The progress of five mothers with children under three, who attended a Music for Mothers Seeking Asylum project, was followed for over three years. A journal, kept throughout the project and beyond it, and interview data were both analysed using an approach based on grounded theory. The use of an interpreter in interviews necessitated the use of back-translation in order to facilitate analysis of two of the interviews, which raised issues in the area of communication.

This study examines how musicking impacts on mood, self confidence and identity, language acquisition, and development of maternal and social interactions. It was found that group musicking has the capacity to provide a setting in which the participants experience ‘collaborative flow’ and the creation of a liminal space, leading to the emergence of communitas. This was found to be dependent upon the type of space in which musicking took place. Musicking provided a safe rehearsal space for the trying-out of new identities, contributed to increased self-confidence and led to language acquisition, closer maternal and social bonding, increased cultural understanding, and heightened mood which lasted beyond the musicking, into their daily lives.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Elizabeth Scott Hall, declare that the thesis entitled The Role of a Music Group in Addressing the Needs of Asylum-Seeking Women and Their Children
and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that: this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University; where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated; where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed; where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work; I have acknowledged all main sources of help; Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself; None of this work has been published.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis is underpinned by my experience in the area of relationships forged between parents and children through music. It is relationship through music that has inspired me to carry out this research. The significance of mutually rewarding musical interactions within the maternal dyad had become apparent to me during my study of early childhood music and of the impact of music on children's musical development. In undertaking my Masters dissertation, my experiences of working with mothers and their children had raised a number of questions. These questions could be applied to a number of different groups of mothers and, in this particular context, I have chosen to look at a group of asylum-seeking mothers who faced very different circumstances from those who participated in my Masters research project.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of group music-making in relation to the well-being of a group of asylum-seeking mothers and their young children who participated in the 'Music for Mothers Seeking Asylum' (MMSA) project. Further, it is to discover how this might impact on their ability to achieve a sense of belonging, both within the music group and beyond it in their wider daily lives. This demands an exploration of the musical activities that took place, and involves an interrogation of the impact of the music activities on the participants.

To this end, my first question is 'What is music's capacity for creating communities among women and their children seeking asylum?'. It brings me to the further question, 'What does it mean to be a person seeking asylum?'. To answer this requires me to interrogate and problematise the notions of 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee', taking into account asylum seekers' experiences of living in the UK and the ways in which Immigration law, Border Agency actions, and the socio-political landscape impact on the daily lives and well-being of people seeking asylum. This leads me to enquire, 'How can a music group for asylum seeking mothers and babies have relevance when their futures in the UK are uncertain?'. This question necessitates an exploration of the psychological and physiological impact of the musical activities in connection with the participants' own, and others' perceptions of their needs, and the nature of the musical activities, strategies and interventions that developed during the time of the project.

A further and closely linked issue is: 'How does music interplay with ethnicity, gender, and different constructions of identity?'. For many participants originating from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the role and place of women and children often differs from, and sometimes conflicts with, the approach to gender equality in the UK. There is potential both for the rejection of, and adherence to, their different cultural values. It is common for those with shared languages and cultures to form initial social relationships that share commonalities involving language, ethnicity and experience (Zetter, Griffiths and Sigona, 2005). This has led me to consider how far it is possible for asylum seekers and their children to integrate into their local neighbourhoods, and to ascertain whether their participation in the music group could make a significant contribution to the development of social interaction and cultural understanding. To this end, I followed the progress of the women in this study, not only during the course of the project, but also for several months after the project ended. In the following section, I describe how my personal history and past work have led me to undertake this current research.

1: 1 Working with parents and children.

The background to this thesis begins with the work I did in 2001, when I took on the role of music co-ordinator at a school in a deprived inner city area. The cognitive and emotional development of many children at the school was below expectations for their age, in relation to National Curriculum levels. There was a consensus among the teachers that this was due to a lack of appropriate stimulation and interaction at home, and it appeared that many of the problems of the children I encountered had begun at the start of their lives. With this in mind, I had approached the manager of the Sure Start programme that was being set up in the inner city, with the proposal that I set up a special project for mothers and carers with babies and pre-school children to sing and play musical games together.

Sure Start is a UK Government programme whose aim is ‘to deliver the best start in life for every child by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support’ through a wide range of programmes. The guiding principles, drawing on best practice in early education, childcare and Sure Start local programmes, are reproduced in Appendix I.

It is widely accepted that the relationship between primary care-givers and their children plays a crucial role in children’s well-being. I had anticipated that the musical interactions experienced during music sessions might promote an increase of such interactions at home, and that music activities would also function as a tool to promote learning and provide positive experiences in many areas of children’s development, as established by Trehub and Trainor (1998); Hargreaves (1986); Freeman (2000); Sloboda and Deliege (1996); Feldman, Granat et al (2009).

In September 2001, having been awarded funding by Sure Start, I had put in place a pilot music project, with the stated aim of promoting parent-child bonding, supporting speech and language development, and of providing a safe and friendly environment for musical and social interactions. Sure Start management evaluated the project through their quarterly monitoring procedures, which included attendance figures, transcriptions of unstructured interviews, and evaluation forms filled out by parents and carers. Within the first year, such had been the enthusiastic response of mothers in the pilot project, it was judged, by the Sure Start managers, to have been successful. Further funding was given for this to be continued as a full project and, subsequently, two further groups were established in the town centre's most deprived areas.

1: 2 The role of singing

I had become fascinated with the ways in which singing worked in the three differently constituted groups where similar musical activities took place, and I wanted to discover how the music projects had contributed to the attitudes and experiences of the mothers who regularly attended those music groups. At the same time, I had felt it was important to examine my own practice and so began a research project for a Masters degree. The analysis of fourteen unstructured interviews with mothers uncovered issues of confidence and self-esteem, loneliness and friendship, isolation and community, and mother and baby bonding. These interrelated issues were found to have been positively affected by participation in musical activities. Singing together with their children in a group had had a positive effect on mothers' well-being and self esteem; songs and skills learned were shown to be sustainable and repeatable; interactions between mothers and their children were seen to have increased in daily life, and unconfident and post-natally depressed mothers had gained in confidence.

It was not until I began to interview the participants that I discovered that four of the mothers had been previously diagnosed with, and had been on medication for, Post Natal Depression. Malloch (2002) and Robb (1999) have established that behaviours of children are negatively affected by their mothers' depressed state, and this can have an adverse affect on their development. This is of particular concern in relation to the most disadvantaged in society, which Sure Start has endeavoured to address. All four post-natally depressed mothers claimed that their participation in the music group had been a major contributor to their recovery.

The potential for mothers to use songs to change children's mood or behaviour had contributed to this increase in confidence, while my role as a group leader also provided a model that had enabled the mothers to use a greater range of strategies with their children to relieve potentially stressful situations. Additionally, the mothers said that they felt empowered because of increased self confidence, greater social exchange and their ability to use a range of new strategies to positively influence their children's behaviour.

1: 3 The outsiders

A small number of asylum seeking mothers had come to the music groups, but, for them, the projects did not appear to work. Few asylum seekers lived within the geographic boundaries that gave access to the three, previously described, Sure Start projects and, for the very few who did come, there was no real opportunity for them to engage with the regular, and predominantly, first language English-speaking participants in the music groups. Language, it appeared, had been a significant barrier for them, and the songs were new to the mothers, who, unfamiliar with baby songs or with music groups, had found it hard to join in with either the singing or the social exchanges that took place at the end of the music sessions. For many of their children, whose speech had already begun to develop, such difficulty had been less evident, and they had often been able to join in more easily and engage in play with the other children.

The regular participants' animated conversations had been too rapid to for the asylum-seeking mothers to understand, however, and any friendly approaches by the 'regulars' did not last long when conversations faltered, due to the asylum seeking mothers' lack of understanding of English. The 'regulars', having made attempts to communicate, turned back from their efforts, returning to their comfortable chatter. Non-English-speakers were, in effect, excluded and made even more aware of their 'foreign-ness', despite my own efforts to make them feel welcome.

My decision to start the Music for Mothers seeking Asylum (MMSA) project was based on the notion that some of the positive outcomes might similarly be achievable for those excluded mothers, if they could participate in musical activities with a group of mothers linked by circumstance, if not necessarily by language, ethnicity or culture. According to the mental health charity, Mind, in their 2009 report, *A Civilised Society: Mental Health provision for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in England and Wales,* refugees and asylum seekers often experience considerable mental distress owing to extreme and often lengthy disruption to their lives. The report makes clear that there is a higher incidence of mental distress in asylum seekers and refugees than in the wider population, with trauma-related psychological distress, depression and anxiety being the most common diagnoses The report further states that 'progressively more restrictive UK asylum policies have had an increasingly negative impact on mental health and wellbeing' (Mind, 2009: 2).

Many of the women who participated in the MMSA project had faced oppression, war and torture in their own countries and were experiencing mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression and were suffering from a range of other trauma-related symptoms. I hoped to discover whether these other forms of depression might, as in the case of the previously described post-natally depressed mothers, be positively influenced through musicking.

It was at this point I concluded that, in order to vigorously examine the outcomes, it would be necessary to conduct this as a full-scale, robust research project, which led to my undertaking this study. By bringing together asylum-seeking mothers from a wide range of cultures to sing together and make music with their children, I have had an opportunity to encounter some very courageous women and to investigate whether our music making has had any effect on their making new lives in this country.

Music has the capacity to positively change mood and physical state (Ansdell and Pavlicevic, 2005; Hillman, 2002) and can affect social interactions (Clift and Hancox, 2001; Boyce-Tillman, 2009 and Trevarthen 2002). All of the women with whom I wished to make music were uncertain as to whether they would be allowed to remain in the UK. Many were traumatised and most found themselves to be outsiders in the neighbourhoods in which they had been housed. Because so few asylum seeking women had accessed my previous projects, I wanted to discover how such women, from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with a range of experiences of trauma and marginalisation, could be brought together to make music with their children. This was unknown territory to me and, in order to discover ways of offering group musical experiences that might offer some positive experiences, I decided to set up a group specifically for mothers seeking asylum.

Kastrup and Arcel (2004: 556 - 557) allude to David Kinzie's (2001) identification of asylum seekers' primary needs for 'physical and emotional safety, predictability of relationships' and 'reestablishment of social relationships'. I believed that singing with their children in a safe group atmosphere, together with others who were in similar circumstances, might give them the opportunity to, if only briefly, escape the realities of their uncertain daily lives and experience the shared fun and laughter of a friendly music group.

1: 4 Themes and issues

During the course of the project I kept a journal in which I reported my observations of actions, conversations and events, and my reflections on these. In addition, at the end of the project, I recorded and transcribed participant interviews. As my data accumulated over time, I discerned several overarching and intertwining themes and sub-themes. The first theme centres around the ways in which what actually happened through the music sessions impacted on participant mood.

The mothers' level of participation changed over time, as their increased familiarity with the songs and games appeared to engender a greater level of confidence to join in vocally and physically. When the mothers sang with their children, there was often much laughter and cheerfulness. I explore how the songs and activities, supported by the use of instruments and props have supported the mothers' engagement in the group. I learn how the mothers viewed the time they spent in the project and consider how positive changes in mood have had a wider impact on their daily lives beyond the project. This has led to an exploration of music's capacity to create a space in which transformation takes place (Boyce-Tillman, 2000 and 2009), a notion that will be investigated in further chapters.

The second, and closely related theme, is that of social interactions, both musical and non-musical, and the role of music in relationship, as well as in the areas of language and communication. Singing together in a group has the potential to bring about a sense of unity and to promote mutual support and friendship. I explore aspects of relationships and language through the MMSA participant actions and interactions and investigate whether songs and games that support mother and child communication and bonding are also capable of functioning as support for communication between the adult participants, both within the group and in the wider world.

The body of neurological and psychological research, which is discussed in Chapter Three, evidences ways in which music, and singing in particular, has the capacity to positively change mood. I investigate the effect of the music project on the feelings of well-being, safety and self confidence of the mothers and children, both within the music sessions, and beyond them, as they encounter the challenges of their daily lives.

A third theme is that of power relationships and the role of music in empowering the participants. I explore how post traumatic stress and culture shock, coupled with the uncertainty of their future lives, may have reinforced the mothers' feelings of disempowerment. I consider the role that the music project has played in combating these challenges. This has led me to examine the changes that the women have experienced through their time with the music group, and to explore the roles played by members of the dominant culture in this.

Identity: the outsider as 'other' (Said, 1978), as social outsider and subjugated knower (Foucault, 1980) is an interconnecting theme that emerges throughout this work. This theme encompasses different cultural constructions of gender and how the participants dealt with new cultural values over the time of the project. All the participants in the MMSA project came from cultures in which men traditionally played dominant roles and women's voices were suppressed. Two of the five women in this study were unmarried, while the other three had had arranged marriages. Only one of them was still living with her husband at the end of the project.

The women had a range of different views on women's place in the British culture and I investigate whether some of these views were altered over the time of the project. I examine how the notion of 'otherness' is changed as individuals identify themselves in relation to their perceived belonging to particular groups.

I consider how participation in the music group has affected the mothers in terms of their self esteem. This is linked to the way in which new relationships with 'non-outsiders' plays out in terms of self identity.

1: 5 Setting up the Music for Mothers Seeking Asylum (MMSA) project

The beginning of the work underpinning my thesis involved my having discussions with local Sure Start managers, who accepted my outline proposal to begin the MMSA group, and who signalled their willingness to fund the project. This new group was to be an addition to the other parent and child music groups which I was already running across the city.

I arranged a visit to the local asylum and refugee support drop-in centre to meet staff there to discuss my idea. At the centre, a rather dilapidated church hall, which I shall refer to as venue A, the Red Cross international tracing and message service had a desk, and there were several screened-off areas for the advisors, (both professional and volunteer) to help with problems with asylum applications and related issues, such as housing, financial matters, education and training. There was a counter serving free food and drink which was run by a mixture of church volunteers and asylum-seekers, and a large area with tables and chairs, where people were able to eat and drink or wait for their turn to talk to an advisor. A representative from the city's counselling service used a screened-off area inside the church. I was allocated a semi-closed-off area inside the church, at the opposite side to the counselling desk, which was used as a play area during church services.

1: 5: 1 The resources

I had decided, from the start, that if the women in the project were to feel valued, then the resources available should be of good quality to support that sense of value. This reflected deeper issues in the project, which were about respect and value.

I brought with me a range of props and musical resources: a keyboard, a xylophone and boxes of newly purchased, good quality, brightly-coloured musical instruments designed specifically for young children. These were: hand drums; small floor drums; tambourines; maracas; castanets; finger cymbals; chime bars and a two-octave xylophone. Other resources included hand and finger puppets, flowing scarves, ribbons, soft toys and an assortment of brightly illustrated children's books, which had been loaned to the project by the city library. There was a range of bi-lingual books, including English with Arabic, Farsi, Chinese and French. Amongst the English books were picture dictionaries, recipe books, a range of story books commonly found in the nursery classroom, and others that contained words and pictures relating to the different topics and themes of songs.

1: 5: 2 Setting up the space

The pattern of the music sessions was the same each week. My intention was to create a predictable and structured environment which might contribute to a sense of order, safety and stability for the mothers and children within the group, in contrast to the unpredictability of their daily lives outside it.

Each week, upon arrival, I set out the seats in our allocated area at the back of the church, with the help of the project volunteer, Amy. We would often be assisted by anyone else who had arrived especially early. Seats were arranged in a horseshoe-shape, in order to enable the participants to have a clear view of me as I modelled actions, or used hand puppets and other resources. It also ensured that the participants were able to clearly see my mouth movements when I sang words that were unfamiliar to them.

Next, refreshments were organised in the church hall kitchen. This involved preparing the urn, putting out jugs of fruit squash and setting out cups and plates for sandwiches, cakes and biscuits, in readiness for the end of the music-making part of the session. Toys and instruments were then put out for the children in the centre of the music area. As the other mothers and children arrived, they were able to play with toys and instruments or share books with their children, until it was time to begin singing.

I used this 'play' time to make a note of the participants' names and to talk with each of the mothers, welcoming newcomers and introducing them to any other participants they did not know. Occasionally, if someone had sent me a text, or had called me, to let me know they were on their way, but were going to be a little late, I would extend the play time for a little longer, to give them enough time to arrive, before starting the music activities.

The centre staff had been asked to encourage any women who had come with their children to see advisors, to join us. As a result, women would sometimes come in after their appointments, or be called out for them, at any time during the sessions. Late-comers were always greeted on arrival, and no-one left without our saying ‘goodbye’, which meant that the sessions were often subject to interruption.

1: 5: 3 The structure of the musicking sessions

The range of musical and other activities that developed during the course of the project, has led me to refer to what took place in the sessions as ‘musicking’, after Christopher Small (1998), who defines ‘musicking’ as a ‘human encounter between human beings that takes place through the medium of sound’ in a ‘physical and social setting’(1998: 10). He proposes that musicking is:

> To take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called “composing” or by dancing).
> (Small, 1998: 9)

Small suggests that this meaning might also be extended to those who participate, in any way, in a musical performance, ‘whether it takes place actively or passively’, and which might include the person who sets out the chairs or makes the tea. It involves relationships between ‘person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even, perhaps, the supernatural world’ (Small, 1998: 13).

The music sessions had a clear and predictable structure, because I believed that it would be helpful for the participants to know what to expect each week, and that this could contribute to a sense of routine in an otherwise less-structured week. The structure of our musicking remained the same at all the different venues.

I made up a short song, *Time to tidy up* to signal that it was time to start our musicking. As I sang the ‘tidy up’ song, everyone began clearing away the toys, and most were able to join in with the simple words. The song was repeated until toys were away and the mothers had taken their children onto their laps. At the start of the project, I was often asked to take an older sibling on mine and, as a result, I tried to ensure fairness by taking different children in turn, whenever possible.

Next, we sang the same, simple, repetitive greeting song, *Say hello* in which each person was sung to by name. Everyone was quickly able to join in with this and the children appeared to particularly enjoy hearing their names sung in a song. (See Appendix II for further songs, which are listed under categories of type and purpose).

A lively action song invariably followed, in order to engage the children in as enjoyable a way as possible, and to facilitate newcomers' participation through copying the actions, if not through singing. Next, I usually introduced a new song, repeating it several times, so that there was opportunity for the learning of both words and actions. New songs were usually repeated the following week, to support the previous new learning. Most of the songs had a chorus, or similar verses with slight changes to each repetition, which helped to reinforce the participants' learning of the words. The most popular and frequently-sung songs involved the children in being rocked, bounced, swung, tickled, kissed and hugged by their mothers.

Other regularly repeated songs were accompanied by the playing of instruments or by the use of puppets, scarves and soft toys. In Venue A there was little space for dancing, although dancing was often included in the actions of some songs. Circle songs and dances, such as the *Hokey Cokey* and *This is the way we ...* were often used. Later in the project, after we moved to more spacious venues, a freer and more spontaneous form of dancing developed.

In order to provide a framework for the choice of songs, I frequently employed a variety of themes that, in the early days of the project were chosen by me but, as the project developed, were suggested by the participants. These were themes such as 'transport'; 'shopping'; the weather; 'myself'; 'animals'; 'time' (the seasons and months, days of the week). To illustrate the vocabulary that was associated with subjects of the songs, I used actions, pictures, puppets, and toys. I also invited the participants to choose their particular favourite songs: older children often contributed suggestions which were, almost every week, *Twinkle, twinkle little star*, *All the little ducks*; *Bouncy children* and *Let's all tap together*.

I regularly made up songs, set to familiar tunes, in response to conversations in the time after music-making, whenever I had discovered a need for particular subject vocabulary, or as the result of suggestions made by participants in the previous week's session. While I always had a written session plan, in order to keep the sessions 'pacey' and the children engaged, I was keen to respond to the participants, so this was always no more than a flexible framework which usually consisted of no more than a dozen songs.

Our music making lasted from twenty five to thirty minutes and ended with a 'goodbye' version of the *Say Hello* song. After the end of this final song, there was usually a spontaneous burst of chatter around the room. During this time, I went round the whole group to find out what everyone wanted by way of refreshment. I did this with the aid of volunteer Amy, and any other participants who wanted to help would go to the kitchen with us, to help carry through the food and drink.

Over refreshments, the talk, which is exemplified in subsequent chapters, contributed further to my learning about the women and their lives, and this time provided an opportunity for the formation of friendships between participants. This ‘social time’ continued for twenty to thirty minutes, until it was time to leave. Then began the clearing away and washing up of cups and plates and the sharing out of any remaining food for the mothers to take home. Toys and instruments were put away, the chairs were stacked, and the room was clear by the time the last of the participants had departed.

1: 6 The settings

Over the time of the project we met at four different venues, which I refer to as A, B, C and D. After we had moved from venue A to venue B, a nearby church hall, where we met for three weeks, we moved again, to venue C, a Children’s Centre at the eastern edge of the town centre. Venue D was the most central Children’s Centre, where I had been running a music group for several years and to which several MMSA participants came after that project ended.

The drop-in centre manager at venue A, whom I shall call Kate (this is not her real name which, like all names in this work, has been changed to maintain anonymity), was welcoming and pleased to see an initiative that might address a problem they were experiencing with children at the drop-in. This was mainly due to the fact that there were no facilities within the centre to accommodate children, apart from a small area in one corner of the hall where the few available toys were put out on a small mat. The lack of a suitable space for children created difficulties both for their parents and the people who worked there. Children sometimes ran around noisily, interrupting private advice sessions, which caused disruption for everyone. Kate told me that a group for mothers and children would be a very welcome addition to their resources and, when I told her that it fell within the local Sure Start’s aims for community cohesion, she immediately promised me her full support, and the project was put in place in April 2006. An early entry in my journal describes the space I was given to start the project.

> There was no separate space available in the hall, but, inside the church itself, there was a small, partly enclosed area in a rear corner of the church for young children to play in during Sunday services. The opposite corner was screened off and used by the legal advice service. It was far from perfect, but, as it was all we had, I agreed to make it our 'music space'.
>
> (Journal: 27th March 2006)

Kate came to see the group whenever she was able, although she did not participate in the sessions at venue A. It quickly became clear that our allotted space at the back of the church, which was accessed through the church hall, was, in my view, gloomy, cold, inappropriate for many people of other firm religious beliefs, and not sufficiently secure for the more active children. When the financial year ended, Sure Start provided further funding for the MMSA project to be continued. The mothers who attended regularly agreed that it would be better to meet at a new venue, and the project moved, initially to another church hall, venue B. However, this venue did not offer the level of hoped-for privacy, which quickly led to our decision to take up the free offer of a large room in a new Children's Centre, venue C.

After the project ended in June 2008, I invited all the MMSA participants to join a particularly well-attended music group held in another Sure Start centre, venue D, in the heart of the city, when it re-commenced in the autumn term. This group had, in the past, been one to which previous asylum seeking mothers had not returned after their first visits. I followed the progress of the MMSA participants who attended the these sessions: I wanted to see whether the changes, wrought through their past MMSA project experiences, might have enabled the women to participate with confidence and integrate into the group, in contrast with the past exclusory experiences of asylum seekers that had prompted the setting up of the MMSA group in the first place. This 'open to all' group, which I shall describe more fully in further chapters, was for both male and female adult participants and their children who came from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

1: 7 How this thesis is structured.

This thesis is structured around nine chapters. This first chapter sets out the themes that emerged from my data and my rationale for the development of the music project. In Chapter Two I examine notions of asylum within the socio-political context of Britain from the 1950s to the present. I review a range of literature that examines and problematises cultural diversity and issues of identity. Notions of 'the Alien, 'Otherness' and themes of the 'Other' as subjugated knower, along with cultural aspects of ethnicity, race and gender are explored., I discuss differing notions of identity, community and integration, and the way in which government strategies have impacted upon cultural diversity in Britain.

In Chapter Three I focus on the literature pertaining to the effects of music in relation to cognitive and emotional development and, in particular, its role in mother and baby interactions. Here, I explore the view that singing together with others can provide a means of stimulating pleasant feeling-states and provide a means of emotional healing. Issues of identity are examined in the light of Foucauldian thinking and in relation to notions of empowerment. Music's role in this will be examined with regard to its physiological and psychological effect.

I present the methodology that underpins my research in Chapter Four, in which I discuss issues of researcher partiality and reflexivity and explore the impact of a feminist approach. I also problematise the use of language, particularly in a cross-cultural context, exploring a range of analytic strategies that have led to my taking a multi-method approach in the examination and analysis of my journal notes, case histories and interviews. Chapter Five presents brief case histories of the women who participated in this research. The further chapters relate to the overarching and intertwined themes and sub-themes I have outlined in section four of this chapter.

In Chapter Six I examine the ways in which the project affected the social interactions of the participants. Here, I explore the impact of musicking on language acquisition, the development of maternal and social interactions and the development of friendships and increased social exchange in the different venues. I investigate ways in which musicking has had an effect on participants beyond the boundaries of the project itself. Chapter Seven presents an exploration of a range of ways in which participant mood and emotion were affected through musicking, and examines the influence of changed feeling-states on the participants, not only within the group, but also in their wider daily lives.

I examine, in Chapter Eight, issues of participant empowerment, both in the context of the MMSA project and beyond it. As the project evolved, the regular participants became increasingly self confident and independent, and I explore a variety of ways in which this self confidence played out. The final chapter presents conclusions from the analysis of the evidence that emerges, and raises issues surrounding integration, social and emotional well-being, and the acquisition of new learning.

1: 8 Summary

In this chapter I have described my work with parents and children and the way in which the ‘Outsiders’ motivated me to set up the MMSA project. In seeking to answer the question, ‘What is music’s capacity for creating communities among women and their children seeking asylum?’ I have indicated the potential role of musicking and described the different contexts in which the music project took place. Having introduced the themes and issues that emerged during the course of my research, I set out the structure of this thesis.

In the next chapter, I explore the terms ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’, and present an overview of the historical and political contexts of asylum in the UK.

Chapter 2 Asylum Seekers: policies, debates and integration issues.

In this chapter I first set out an overview of the legal framework of the Asylum system in a historical and cultural context, with reference to relevant literature. I explore some of the debates in twentieth and twenty first century Britain surrounding immigration, asylum and integration. The classification of categories such as ‘community’ and ‘ethnicity’ has often been applied uncritically within the framework of legislative and societal literature. Griffiths, Zigona and Zetter (2005:21) recognise the use of the term ‘refugee community’ as a functional paradigm and suggest that ‘the term “community” is one of the most contested concepts in the social sciences.

I explore different notions of ‘community’ and ‘social inclusion’ in the light of ideas surrounding Britishness national identity and different views of ‘the outsider’ as social and political outcast and subjugated knower. I examine these in relation to gender and identity, with reference to national, racial, regional, ethnic, social and cultural aspects, and to the social and emotional well-being of asylum seekers.

I began this research with little knowledge of what it means to be a refugee or asylum seeker and, in exploring meanings and issues, I first define the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’, and examine the subject of asylum in recent international historical and political contexts. I then investigate a number of issues surrounding asylum in the UK, in order to present an overview of the circumstances under which Asylum seekers endeavour to start new lives.

2: 1 What is a Refugee?

The 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was set out by the League of Nations (predecessor of the United Nations). The term ‘Refugee’ is defined in Article 1a: 2 which states:

> As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to wellfounded 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.
> (The 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees Article 1a: 2)

The Convention is intended to ‘alleviate their consequences by offering victims a degree of international legal protection and other assistance and, eventually, to help them begin new lives' (UNHCR, 2007). This legal document defines who is a refugee, and sets out their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1951 Convention was agreed to address the problems of displaced persons, mostly Europeans, in the aftermath of World War II and, at the time, it had been anticipated that within three years or so, the Convention would be redundant. Instead, by the 1960s, crises erupting in Africa and Asia produced increasing numbers of refugees.

To address the growing refugee crisis, the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, thereby removing the geographical and temporal restrictions from the 1951 Convention.

2:1: 2 What is an Asylum Seeker?

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees defines asylum seekers as 'persons who have applied for asylum or refugee status, but who have not yet received a final decision on their application'. It also uses a more general definition of asylum seekers as 'people who move across borders in search of protection'. The 1951 Convention on Human Rights does not specify the criteria for determining refugee status, and each state has been left to establish its own procedures.

While the Convention offers protection for those who, being without documentation, unlawfully entered a country, as long as 'they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence (Article 31), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the 'right of persons to seek and enjoy asylum', although this is not stated in the Convention. The Convention does, nevertheless, protect those refugees who 'lost, left behind or could not obtain proper documentation and so entered a potential asylum country unlawfully'.

The offer of temporary protection (TLR) is an exceptional measure to facilitate the speedy admission of mass influxes of displaced persons and to counter the overwhelming pressures on Asylum systems as a result of such events as the conflict in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. In October 1999, the European Council met in Tampere, Finland, to establish an agreement on this issue, which led to the 2001 Directive. The aim of the directive was to establish minimum standards, reduce disparities and provide burden-sharing between E.U. member states on the basis of solidarity, and was intended to complement the wider, existing protection measures of the 1951 Protocol.

Since the latter part of the twentieth century, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people seeking asylum due to, for example, wars in Africa, former Yugoslavia and in the Middle East. These large numbers have brought about radical changes in attitudes and policies towards refugees and asylum seekers, and the societies into which asylum seekers arrive deal with them in different ways. How to deal with the impact of such sudden influxes, and how to facilitate integration of large numbers of people into host populations, have been a source of debates shaped by the attitudes of governments, the way in which asylum claims are processed, and how asylum seekers are represented in the media.

2: 2 Approaches to integration

Different countries have diverse approaches to ‘integration’, a term that is understood differently across a range of societies and cultures. Recognising ‘our increasingly diverse societies’, Article Two of the *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: All Different, All Unique* (2001) states:

> …it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.
>
> (UNESCO, November 2001)

In some countries, integration is sometimes understood in terms of cultural assimilation, where minorities are required to shed their cultural differences and merge with a notional, majority culture. This is exemplified in the French approach: the immigrant, as part of the process of becoming a citizen, is expected to share fully in the social heritage of France, and live according to French society’s prevailing way of life and cultural norms. There are current debates across Europe about veiling, and, in France, when the law to ban the Niqab and the Burka was in the planning stage, the French State Council was known to have considered that such a law might be ‘unconstitutional and violate European human rights laws’(BBC News, 15th June).

Across Europe, veil-banning laws are also currently in place or under debate, and the hijab, or headscarf, is also under consideration for being banned from certain areas of public life. This points towards what might be termed a growing western-centric position, where the ‘foreigner’ must conform in order to belong.

Tony Gatlif, the French Algerian-born film maker and composer, of Gypsy roots, makes the ‘foreigner’ and ‘marginalised other’, a common theme in his films. In *Je Suis Né d’une Cigogne*, Luna and his Algerian Muslim family are seated around the table in their apartment in Paris, listening to an Arabic radio programme as a meal is being served. When the postman knocks at the door, Luna's mother rushes to change to a French radio station that is broadcasting western classical music, to give the impression the family's successful assimilation into the French culture. Luna walks out when his father puts pork on Luna's plate, insisting that he must eat it to demonstrate that he accepts his new 'French' identity. This scene, contrasting the family's public and private identities, reflects Gatlif's lived experience of the superficiality and unacceptability of the forced conformism of French assimilationist practices, which he views as requiring the denial of self, a change in personal identity and the rejection of ethnic ties.

This example illustrates how social demands for conformity are neither democratic nor humane, but are othering and subjugate difference. Delanty (2003:93-96) suggests that there is a dominant culture which migrant groups have to adjust to, but to whom certain concessions could be made, rather than there being equal, but different, cultural entities within a nation-state. He suggests that 'the kind of assimilation it demands is a coercive one' and that minority groups must deny their cultural traditions and effectively become French.

Fukuyama (2006: 9) suggests that in societies such as in Canada, the USA and Europe, cultural diversity has been viewed as little more than 'a kind of ornament to liberal pluralism', providing 'ethnic food, colourful dress and traces of distinctive historical traditions to societies often seen as numbingly conformist and homogeneous'. Sivanandan (2006) put forward the notion that the mounting campaign against multiculturalism marked the beginning of a policy of assimilation 'passed off as a virtuous attempt at integration'. He suggests that cultural diversity has the potential to lead either to integration or to separatism, and that the outcome is dependent upon the 'politics and socio-economic context' of the country concerned. It calls into question issues of both national and individual identities.

The way in which asylum seekers and refugees of different ethnicities facilitate negotiation of the public sphere is influenced by the rights and the processes in which they are involved when seeking asylum and by the way they are treated by the host nation.

2: 3 Refugee and asylum seeker rights and processes in the UK

Until April 2003, UK asylum claimants, whose circumstances were outside the remit of the Refugee convention but within the scope of the Human Rights act, the UN Convention Against Torture (ratified in 1988) or in line with Home Office policy for unaccompanied minors, could apply for Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR).

Subsequently, Humanitarian Protection (HP) and Discretionary Leave to Remain, (DLR) replaced this.

DLR is only granted outside the immigration rules in very limited circumstances to people who have been refused refugee status but who do not fulfil the criteria for humanitarian protection. HP is for those refused Refugee status, but who cannot return to their own country of origin because of risk to life, or person for reasons of death penalty, unlawful killing, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Humanitarian Protection is given for up to five years, after which asylum seekers may be granted continuing status and given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), or Leave to Enter (LTE). LTR is granted if an applicant meets the criteria for Refugee status.

In recent years, the Home Office and UK Asylum processes have been under continuing criticism by refugee and asylum NGOs (Non-Government Organisations), both local and national, including The Refugee Council, The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK (ICAR), the Church of England and Refugee Action. NGOs have raised concerns about the treatment of Asylum Seekers, not only for the length of time it has taken to make decisions about leave to remain, but also in regard to a number of other asylum issues, particularly the lack of accurate advice and interpretation for newly-arrived applicants, the forcible return of asylum seekers to their country of origin, where there is ongoing fighting or persecution; the holding of asylum seekers, including children, in detention centres that are, to all intents and purposes, little more than prisons.

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The asylum application process has undergone many changes as new immigration and asylum acts have been passed and, subsequently, amended. In April 2000, under the 199I Immigration and Asylum Act, the compulsory dispersal or asylum seekers was introduced with the aim of reducing the demand in areas where there was a lack of housing. A new agency, the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), was set up to oversee the dispersals and, from 2005, NASS had responsibility for the Accommodation 2005 project.

In 2006, according to the Home Office Border Agency, seventeen out of every hundred asylum applicants were recognised as refugees and given asylum, and nine out of every hundred applicants, who did not qualify for refugee status, were given permission to stay for humanitarian or other reasons. In the following section I examine some of these bureaucratic procedures and discuss their impact on the MMSA participants.

2: 3: 1 The claims backlog and fitness for purpose

The Asylum system continues to undergo review as it struggles to clear a huge, long-term backlog of applications. In 2007, the Home office was split into two separate departments for security and for justice. The new Department for Constitutional Affairs took control of probation, prisons and prevention of re-offending and was renamed the Ministry of Justice. The Home Office continues to deal with terrorism, security and immigration. A new process was introduced to place each principal Asylum seeker with one person, the case owner, to deal with every aspect of the application which, from the start to the conclusion of the application, was estimated to take six months. The backlog of decisions more than doubled between the first quarters of 2007 and 2008. After the introduction of the new scheme, 40% of cases were completed within six months of receiving the application. The aim was to complete 90% of cases within six months by 2011.

In July 2006, the Refugee Women's Resource Project at Asylum Aid produced a report (Asylum Aid, 2006) evidencing the Home Office's failure 'to adhere to its own guidance on dealing with gender issues in asylum claims'. This was despite having adopted the guidance two years previously, in the wake of extensive lobbying by NGOs and campaigners. The Asylum Aid report raised concerns about the lack of recognition of human rights abuses, and women's claims for protection being 'wrongly dismissed'.

In 2011 the Independent newspaper (4th November) reported that Border Agency figures showed a tripling, in six months, of 'lost' cases from 40,500 to 123,000. By March 2012, there were 150,000 people who had been refused leave to stay and just under 101,000 cases in the ‘controlled archive’ which covers asylum claimants who applied before 2007, but with whom the UKBA had lost contact and was trying to trace. The remainder of the backlog included 21,000 asylum cases, including some that remained unresolved after many years.

There were also 3,900 foreign national prisoners living in the community and awaiting deportation. The full range of changes in Government Acts and systems implemented over recent years is outside the scope of this brief overview, but it can be seen that the laws relating to this are complex and constantly changing. For those still awaiting the outcome of their cases, such statistics engender anxiety and uncertainty. Such inefficiency makes their situation even less secure.

The Independent Asylum Commission Interim Report (2008) alludes to inhumane treatment of detained asylum-seekers, difficulties for asylum-seekers in obtaining legal advice, and gross inconsistencies in official decision-making and states that the Asylum system ‘falls seriously below the standards to be expected of a humane and civilised society’. The report’s key conclusions are set out below.

> The Commission has found almost universal acceptance of the principle that there must be an asylum system, and that it must be applied fairly, firmly and humanely. These criteria must be fulfilled for the UK system to be ‘fit for purpose’.
> The Commission has found that the UK asylum system is improved and improving, but is not yet fit for purpose. The system still denies sanctuary to some who genuinely need it and ought to be entitled to it; is not firm enough in returning those whose claims are refused; and is marred by inhumanity in its treatment of the vulnerable.
> (Independent Asylum Commission Interim Report: 2008)

The stated that ‘from decision making to deportation… our asylum system is deeply flawed, treats vulnerable people in an inhumane way and brings shame on the UK’ and called on the Government to heed the Report and to ‘make the changes in public policy that are badly needed’.

Van der Veer and Van Waning (2004) describe how the ‘inner sense of safety’ of traumatised asylum seekers is undermined. They cite Janoff-Bullman’s (1992) description of how ‘victimising life events challenge three basic assumptions’ ... ‘about oneself in the world: the view of personal invulnerability; the view of oneself in a positive light...and belief in a meaningful, orderly world’ (Van der Veer and Van Waning, 2004: 188).

The Independent Asylum Commission Interim Report’s reference to ‘some of those seeking sanctuary, particularly women, children and torture survivors’ who ‘have additional vulnerabilities that are not being appropriately addressed’ is exemplified by

Marie's case. Marie, who is described more fully in Chapter Five, had been a victim of imprisonment and torture for four years, and suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She was initially refused Leave to Remain and it took several years of appeal hearings before her claim was finally accepted. Her health, both physical and emotional suffered as a result of this.

The British political approach to asylum seekers and refugees has a fundamental impact on other issues surrounding asylum seekers. In the following sections, I focus on the British political and socio-economic approach to cultural diversity, immigration and integration.

The plural society that exists in the present day UK has expanded from the post-war diaspora of former British Colonial subjects to include migrants from new European Union member countries and those seeking a 'safe haven' from countries around the world. Many of these are war-torn countries which are subject to political conflict and human rights abuses.

Immigration, integration and race relations have become matters of increasing importance and attention in British society. After the end of the Second World War, many British cities and neighbourhoods had been rapidly transformed when new immigrants, mainly from the British colonies, whose ways of life were widely different from that of the 'host' population, rapidly increased in number. There were new social divisions emerging, particularly in regions where financial and social deprivation prevailed. Discrimination on the grounds of skin colour was still legal and many immigrants were subject to racial prejudice.

Gilroy (2005) suggests that, in modern life, a failure to acknowledge the role of racism and Britain's imperial past in shaping contemporary British culture has led to a deepened need for understanding the notion of English identity. Gilroy associates the power of concepts of heritage and identity with

> ...the widespread desire to elevate Englishness into an ethnicity, and the impulse to recast Britishness so that it acquires an almost racial resonance. At root, these impulses are hostile responses to the supposedly disruptive presence of cultural diversity.
>
> (Gilroy, 2005: 36)

Gilroy raises concerns about national identity as 'belonging to the product of particular historical circumstances, which we should be able to recognise as belonging to the country's post-colonial phase' and suggests that 'placing anxiety over national identity (and the desperate pursuit of a certainty which can banish it) must be understood as the consequence of excessive and unwelcome immigration' (Gilroy, 2005: 36-37).

2: 4 Shifting identities in a new country

Asylum Seekers live in hope of a life of safety and self-determination, yet many remain as marginalised others in a culture whose protracted bureaucratic procedures leave them in an uncertain state, emotionally and socially, which creates a dislocated sense of identity. With their leaving behind the assurance of old identities, comes uncertainty. Baumann (2005: 13-14) suggests that discussion about 'identity' surfaces when either individuality or belonging is thrown into question.

Bourdieu (1990) refers to 'habitus' as a 'product of history' that 'produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the themes generated by history' (Bourdieu, 1990: 54). Changes in identity come about through interactions and events in daily life and are more readily perceived where previously taken-for-granted identities can no longer be taken for granted. Said (2003: 332) refers to the construction of identity as involving 'establishing opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from "us" '. Gary Taylor and Paul Spencer's (2004: 4) view identity as a 'work in progress' that is being re-appraised and closely bound up with the 'circulation of cultural meanings in society' and view identity as being 'intensely political'.

According to Spencer (2006), 'overlaps in the behavioural repertoire of peoples having characteristically different experiences … are likely to give rise to invalid assumptions of mutual understanding' which can lead to 'conflict and misunderstanding or selective perception of the "Other" ' (Spencer, 2006: 103).

Citing Bentley's (1987) study of ethnic relations in Guyana, Spencer illustrates differences between the public and private domains in an example of street traders who, in public, are friendly and 'play down' differences between cultural groups, but who' he suggests, may 'readily deride their erstwhile associates, borrowing freely from the available lexicon of stereotypes to describe their encounters' when they are 'with cohorts of their own ethnic group' (Spencer, 2006: 103). This is to suggest that the social codes of a group may be set aside in order to facilitate encounters with the (public) wider world and to resist the imposition of limitations by the (temporarily) dominant culture of the working environment they enter on a daily basis. Equally, it might suggest that it is the limitations of their own ethnic group that are eschewed but that, as family and friendships are intertwined with the private aspects of their daily lives, derision of other groups is a means of re-establishing those relationships in the face of 'us and them' ways of thinking.

2: 5 Views of Britishness

Despite references to core universal values, there has been much discussion about Britishness, national identity and the politics of belonging, and about determining who does or does not belong, regardless of their formal citizenship status. Goodhart (2005: 163) suggests 'The 'roof (of national identity and citizenship)

> … is the glue that connects a working class person and a middle class person, a northerner and a Londoner, a Scot and a Cornishman and across the racial divide, say, a British Pakistani with a British Arab.
> (Goodhart, 2005: 163)

This notion is taken up by Nigel Harris (2004: 4) who reminds us that 'historical British or English have been riven with social and political difference' and that 'the only common values were those the ruling order held on their right to rule'. Harris suggests that the British have, throughout history, attempted to impose 'common values through laws relating to certain types of conformity such as common language, dress or religion both at home and in the colonies' and that it is the 'failure to acknowledge' the part that racism and colonialism have played in forming present-day Britain that has 'led to a deepened need for understanding the notion of English identity'.

In the British Council's1999 report *How The World Sees Britain*, the result of a Mori poll amongst those 'expected to be the decision makers and opinion formers of future years in 13 countries round the globe', found the 'images that best summarize the countries of the United Kingdom' were 'mostly trivial or superficial ones, and overwhelmingly visual: kilts, mountains and whisky for Scotland, castles and rugby for Wales, the Royal Family, Big Ben and the Tower of London for England'. It seems almost impossible to characterize what constitutes a British national identity which may well be said not to exist, except in stereotypes. Past 'outsider' notions of Britishness were of a dominant, upper class cricket-playing, tea drinking nation, recognisable as such because it was so frequently seen abroad in the days of British imperialism and this view was subsequently perpetuated in film and literature.

Anderson (1983, revised 2006: 6) states: 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined' and suggests that communities are distinguished by 'the style in which they are imagined'. It is difficult to characterise what constitutes a British national identity, which may well be said not to exist, except in stereotypes.

In April 1990, in an interview for the *Los Angeles Times* (20th April), Norman Tebbit suggested a 'Cricket test', proposing that people from Britain's ethnic minorities should not be considered truly British until they supported the England cricket team, in preference to that of their country of origin. According to an article by Darcus Howe in New Statesman (3 July, 2006), Howe questioned Tebbit during the making of a television programme for Channel 4 to discover that Tebbit is, himself an immigrant ‘from the lowlands of Europe. Howe reports that Tebbit told him that the ‘tribespeople from whom he came were proud to lift themselves from their lowly status up into the hallowed corridors of the English’. Howe suggests that ‘Implicit in what he (Tebbit) said was his acceptance of inferiority’. I would add that Tebbit demonstrated a remarkably patriarchal view which assumed an imperialist notion of superiority of the English. The ‘Cricket test’ initiated a continuing debate about identity, and what it means to be British.

In 2007, I received, in an email, a ‘joke’ definition of Britishness. I reproduce it below, despite not knowing its actual origins, because it is apposite in demonstrating how modern life in the UK has changed with rapid advances in communication and transport and the increased economic and cultural interdependence.

> Being British is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then stopping off for a Chinese or Indian ‘take-away’ or a Turkish kebab on the way home to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a Japanese TV. And the most British thing of all? Suspicion of anything foreign!
>
> (Author unknown)

Stereotyping of social groups is one of many ways in which identities are constructed and difference is constituted, and this necessitates closer examination.

2: 6 Oppression and identity

Here I examine, within a Foucauldian framework, how identity and social groupings play out in creating other-ing and oppression. Foucault (1948) acknowledges that ‘Power relations are extremely widespread in human relationships’ and emphasises that he does not view political power as being everywhere, rather that, in human relationships, there is a ‘whole range of power relations that may come into play among individuals, within families, in pedagogical relationships, political life…’ (Foucault, 1948: 434)

Hayes (2002, para. 3) suggests that individuals are ‘oppressed by virtue of their membership in a particular *social group’*, and referring to Cudd (2006) defines san oppressed group as

> a collective whose members have relatively little mobility into or out of the collective, who usually experience their membership as involuntary, who are generally identified as members by others, and whose opportunities are deeply shaped by the relation of their group to corollary groups through privilege and oppression’.
>
> Hayes (2002, para. 3)

Hayes describes this oppression as ‘the systematic limiting of opportunity or constraints on self-determination because of such membership’. Those who are thus othered’ may be seen as being oppressed by those who exercise ‘controlling systems that permeate modern society, from prisons to schools and into domestic life, through practices of the self and practices of government’ (Foucault, 1977a).

Foucault (1984a) puts forward the notion that the true political task facing our society is to look more closely, and with a critical eye, at the working of institutions, particularly those that appear to be both neutral and independent. Bauman (2005: 12) suggests that it is ‘important, when looking at issues of culture and identity to bear in mind the position from which people speak’. Belonging, in the context of social groups, becomes a signifier of identity, a multi-layered notion that is shaped by the conditions in which we live.

Foucault (1979: 201-203) refers to the Panopticon, a prison building designed in eighteenth century England by Jeremy Bentham, who described it as ‘a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example’ (Bentham, 1787). The Panopticon has a central tower from which an observer is able to view every aspect of the building so that the consciousness of being constantly visible will create, in its inmates, the consciousness of being constantly visible to ‘superiors’, thus assuring the ‘automatic functioning of power’. It renders visible prisoners and staff alike, so that there is constant pressure on all to adhere to the rules and power. According to Foucault (1981):

> Panopticism is one of the characteristic traits of our society. It's a type of power that is applied to individuals in the form of continuous individual supervision, in the form of control, punishment and compensation, and in the form of correction, that is, the molding and transformation of individuals in terms of certain norms. This threefold aspect of panopticism - supervision, control, correction - seems to be a fundamental and characteristic dimension of the power relations that exist in our society.
>
> (Foucault, 1981: 70)

This method of social control extends surreptitiously downwards into every corner of that society. He who knows he is being watched assumes ‘responsibility for the constraints of power’, so becoming ‘the principle of his own subjection’ as he becomes his own, internal policeman.

2: 6: 1 Self-policing

O’Grady (2005: 4) suggests that policing one’s own thoughts, feelings and actions to ensure ‘conformity to commonly accepted ideas and practices is an ingrained mechanism of social control in modern western societies’. This is exemplified by the way in which the husband of one of the women in this study felt his family should be seen to be making every effort to integrate, to the extent that he and his wife eschewed the asylum seeker and refugee groups that were available in the town, a strategy that served to distance the family from the support and help that could be gained from them. He was certain that his visibly embracing Britishness would help his case, imagining that he would be observed to be doing his best to adapt to life here. The MMSA group was the only group he encouraged his wife to attend, once he understood that, in a group facilitated by an English woman whom he trusted, we spoke and sang in English.

According to O’Grady (2005: 18 -19), ‘Like the commonly accepted standards and norms it supports, self-surveillance has become such a taken-for-granted part of psychic make up that it is mostly invisible to conscious awareness’. Relating this to affirmation of self, she maintains that ‘ in societies whose basic organising principle is the group norm’, (such as here in the UK) self- surveillance reproduces the constant monitoring, differentiation and ranking of individual conduct’ as ‘better or worse than’ or ‘normal’ or ‘deviant’. Self-checking and seeking reassurance that one is behaving ‘acceptably’ was evident with many of the asylum-seeking people I encountered.

O’Grady intimates that this means that ‘when a person fails to conform to accepted identity modes, aspects, or even a whole of their self can be experienced as “wrong”’. The term ‘Identity modes’ here refers to the dominant, or mainstream, culture. She cites skin colour, gender and sexuality as examples and states that ‘Being affirmed culturally is a crucial element of a robust sense of self’. O’Grady reminds us to be conscious not only of the way that ‘mainstream culture continues to discriminate against those who do not fit into its norms’ but also of the ‘ceaseless invitations to internalise this oppression’ that ‘privileges specific ways of being – white, male’… and ‘has entailed the creation of social others’ although, I suggest, not without the possibility of resistance.

Identity is determined by a complex web of factors such as geographical location, age, gender, workplace, and is defined by such factors as dress, language, dialect or accent. The invisible, taken-for-granted is made visible when brought face to face with difference. This was made evident in the accounts of women in the MMSA group who had previously been in control of their personal circumstances such as, for example, Amy, who had belonged to a powerful and wealthy family in her country of origin, and Mica and Marie who had both been wage earners before coming to the UK, where they were not allowed to work. Connolly (2002: 64) points out that Identity ‘requires differences in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty’. Identity in relation to notions of Britishness has significance for the participants in my research and I explore this in the following section.

2: 7 Identity and notions of Britishness

In 1965, the first Race Relations Act was introduced by the Labour government to outlaw racial discrimination and the Race Relations Board was established to foster better community relations and investigate complaints.

In a BBC Two Television broadcast on 8th March 2008, about Enoch Powell’s (1968) infamous ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech, in which Powell had asserted that his (white) constituents in the working class areas of the city no longer recognised their communities as ‘theirs’, Roy Hattersley suggested that Powell had ‘legitimated racism’. There were counter-responses from anti-racists leading to demonstrations against racism and the 1965 Act was tightened. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), with powers to prosecute, was established and with this, a new multiculturalism was born. Funding was made available to promote pride in ethnic diversity and to encourage participation as citizens. The Labour government’s aim was integration without assimilation.

My own view is that, perhaps, the term ‘integration’ might be better represented here by the term ‘social wellbeing’. Keyes’s (1998) model identifies five dimensions of social well-being which are first, ‘Social integration: the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who constitute their social reality’ The second is ‘Social acceptance’: the construal of society through the character and qualities of other people’. Next is ‘Social contribution: the evaluation of one’s social value which includes the belief that one is a vital member of society, with something of value to give to the world’ Keyes’s fourth and fifth dimensions are of ‘Social actualisation’ and ‘Social coherence’ which he describes as ‘the perception of the quality, organisation and operation of the social world, including a concern for knowing about the world’ (Keyes, 1998: 122 - 123).

Sennett (1999: 25 - 27) suggests that meaningful social inclusion must satisfy three basic criteria: first, ‘ mutual exchange by which people are recognized as included and to whom obligations are owed’; second, ‘ritual, the means by which social bonds are maintained’ and third, ‘witnesses to one’s conduct and actions which involves accountability to, and dependence on, others’. There have been many measures taken by successive governments to reduce social discontent and, at the same time, increase social inclusion in recent decades.

2: 8 Britain and social change

At the end of the 1970s, when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stated that people were rather afraid that this country might be ‘swamped’ by people from other cultures, the British Nationality Act of 1981 was passed in an attempt to bring British nationality more in line with immigration policy and to reduce automatic right of entry to the U.K. in response to the racial unrest. In the same year, in the wake of the Brixton Disorders and riots in Toxteth, Peckham and Tottenham, in November Lord Scarman presented his Report to Parliament. The Report indicated that there was a need for ‘urgent action’ to prevent racial disadvantage becoming an ‘endemic, ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society’. (Scarman, 1981)

Immigration policy in the 1990s brought about a tightening of restrictions in response to perceived threats of undesirable immigration where many were seen as economic migrants, rather than asylum seekers with ‘genuine’ claims - the notion being that most asylum seekers seen as ‘economic migrants’ rather than genuine asylum seekers.

It was not until an enquiry into the way police had dealt with the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 that, in April 2001, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, came into force, amending the 1976 Act. This Act made it unlawful for any public authority to ‘discriminate, directly or indirectly, in any of its public functions, with limited exceptions’. It gave the public sector a legal duty to promote equal opportunities and promote good relations between ‘persons of different ethnic groups’.

Asylum seekers have encountered numerous obstacles to acceptance as a result of global and national events since 2001 which have brought further changes in immigration race relations policy, and which are set out in the following section.

2: 8: 1 Obstacles to integration in the UK

The 2001 bombing of the Twin Towers in New York, the war in Iraq and the 2005 London bombings have raised anxieties about Muslim immigrants in particular and the fear of extremism. Sivanandan notes that in the wake of the July 7th London bombings ‘Ethnic minorities have now, in the domestic context of the war on terror, effectively to subsume their cultural heritage within Britishness’ asserting that the UK has conflated ‘multiculturalism with culturalism and ethnicism, assimilation with integration, extolling British values to the exclusion of all others’.

These events have continued to raise concerns about Britain’s growing multi-ethnic population. Those seeking a place of refuge in Britain come to live amongst those who harbour these fears. They are sometimes labelled as ‘free riders’ or bogus asylum seekers. An article in the *Daily Mail* (25th May 2007) stated:

> The asylum system is at the mercy of those who lodge claims only after they have been caught by immigration staff or police officers. In many cases, they have been in the country for months or years but - by claiming to be a refugee - they can avoid deportation. Officials are obliged to consider every claim and provide benefits while they are doing so, even if the claimant entered the UK illegally. The (Home Office) research shows that only three in ten asylum claimants follow the proper procedures for applying to stay in the UK.
>
> (*Daily Mail*: 25th May 2007)

There was no mention of the fact that many who seek asylum are considered ‘illegal’ or ‘bogus’ simply because of the circumstances under which they arrived. Some arrive without any kind of identification, afraid of approaching the police or uniformed Immigration officials, (based on their experiences of brutality in their home countries) and ignorant about what to do in order to lodge a claim. Articles such as this have done much to promote a negative view of fellow humans in need of help.

The women in the MMSA project had told me of their desire to live in freedom in the UK. They were keen to learn about British culture and to participate as much as possible in the daily life and social activities in their neighbourhoods. Some of the local people they met were those who had spoken to me about their resentment towards ‘immigrants’ and ‘free-loaders’ housed in the inner city.

At another of my Sure Start music groups, I spoke with a couple, Jean and Jack who lived with their four children in a small, two-bedroomed council flat, and who had been on the Council housing waiting list for several years in their attempt to move to a larger home. They were becoming increasingly frustrated as immigrant families appeared to be given housing ahead of them. They told me that the housing system accommodates those in urgent need before it helped those who already had somewhere to live. New families coming into the area were frequently given housing as an emergency measure. Those housed in unsuitable accommodation, as were Jean and Jack, remained low on the waiting list. The couple blamed the Council for operating what they view as an unfair system. They also blamed the increasing immigrant population, of whom asylum seekers were, they suggested, part of ‘the problem’. In reality, asylum seekers do not take up council homes in their area, but are given accommodation owned by a social housing association which works in partnership with the Council and NASS.

This anecdote illustrates one of the ways in which asylum seekers, through no fault of their own, become demonised. It also demonstrates that the two-way process of integration is sometimes hindered by the mistaken view that local council policy is unfair, by those who perceive the stranger as a ‘cuckoo in the nest’ of their community. Yet, in face to face encounters with these strangers, having been given an opportunity to talk, this couple was able to view them as individuals and accept them into the group and have friendly conversations with them. They still retain their belief that there are too many immigrants and too many ‘bogus’ asylum seekers.

Goodhart (2005: 160) describes the rise of ‘security and identity issues in welfare states as a ‘powerful feeling that other people, especially newcomers, are unfairly jumping ahead in the queue of life’. Increased immigration, competition for jobs and long waiting lists for housing and health services have all served to heighten a sense of unfairness, particularly amongst the poorest in our society.

2: 8: 2 Integration and the right to work in the UK

In July 2002, the government removed the right of asylum seekers to work. Previously they had been allowed to work after the first six months of their application being made. In response to this, Nick Hardwick, Chief Executive of the Refugee Council, stated that the reason asylum seekers had been allowed to work after six months was ‘because successive Governments, including the present one, have failed repeatedly to make asylum decisions within their own targets of six months’ and that ‘this measure is guided by political expediency...’ (2002). He pointed out that this would ‘condemn asylum seekers to a life of dependency and poverty’. In a Response to the 2006 Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill, which proposed that refugees should only be given a five year right to remain and upheld the ban on working and maintained a highly restrictive regime, the Refugee Council stated:

> For effective integration to take place, support should take into account people’s experience, their health and family situation. The integration process should begin at the point of arrival in the UK, rather than after refugee status has been awarded.
> (Refugee Council: Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill: Key Issues and Concerns: January 2006)

This change in policy was particularly significant for Mica, which I further describe in Chapter Five (p101). At this time, Mica had been living and working in London for three years, waiting for her case to be decided. Mica talked with great pride of how she had worked, paid her own rent and bought her own furniture, until the law was changed. When the right to work was removed, she was forced back into a life of dependency and poverty, desperate to work, but now barred from doing so.

The 2009 Mind report states that for men, waiting for leave to remain and being barred from maintaining their roles as bread-winner ‘has a significant impact on many men, leading in many cases to chronic loss of self-esteem, and in some cases to relationship breakdown, domestic violence...’ , and that ‘ men from some areas of the world fear Western liberal attitudes will lead to them losing control over their wives and daughters, thereby causing another threat to their self-esteem and status’. (Mind: 2009: 12) Such impact is exemplified in Naina’s situation; her husband, suffering from PTSD and unable to cope additionally with his loss of self-determination and control began to become increasingly controlling and violent towards Naina. After neighbours reported loud arguments and heard her being beaten, they called the police and he was speedily deported.

Kunz (1973), interrogating the position of the refugee (here, this term is generalised to describe both asylum seeker and refugee) suggests:

> He has arrived at the spiritual, spatial, temporal and emotional equidistant of no man's land of midway-to-nowhere and the longer he remains there, the longer he becomes subject to its demoralizing effects.
> (Kunz, 1973: 133)

The Refugee Council’s (2006) response to the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill (2006) emphasized that denying asylum seekers the right to work would have a deleterious effect on their ability to integrate into UK society and stated that Home Office should increase its capacity to deal with refugee settlement and integration issues.

2: 9 UK integration and the multicultural debate

Under Tony Blair’s leadership, New Labour’s multicultural standpoint promoted the view that ethnic differences should be celebrated. According to Zetter, Griffiths, Ferretti and Pearl (2003), in the UK, the State has operated with a multicultural notion of citizenship that renders it, initially, at least, comparatively more open to refugees. Over time, however, this has been the subject of disagreement and debate. Malik (2002) regards it as ironical that, as a political process, multiculturalism had undermined what was valuable about cultural diversity. He suggests that diversity ‘allows us to expand our horizons, to compare and contrast different values, beliefs and lifestyles, and make judgements upon them’ through engaging in political dialogue ‘that can help create more universal values and beliefs, and a collective language of citizenship’. Malik proposes that such debate was being suppressed by contemporary multiculturalism in the name of 'tolerance' and 'respect' (Malik, 2002).

In April 2004, Trevor Phillips, then Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, was quoted as stating that multiculturalism was out of date and no longer useful, not least because it encouraged ‘separateness’ between communities. In the wake of the 2001 New York World Trade Centre and July 2005 London bombings, the *London Evening Standard* (November 28th 2006) reported that Phillips believed that discussion should revolve around issues of an integrated society, in which people were equal under the law, where there were some common values and that ways should be found to ensure that ‘diversity does not become separation, leading to ethnic ghettoes’. Below is an account of Phillips’s and Malik’s debate with Arun Kundnani and Sadiq Kahn at a charity fundraiser in 2005

> When the Chair pressed them to define multiculturalism, Kundnani defined it as ‘ethnic pluralism recognising difference between groups within the public sphere’. Sadiq Khan said multiculturalism was "mutual respect based on common ethics". Philips said that multiculturalism was "valuing the things that divide us more than the things that unite us". Finally, Malik spoke of multiculturalism as consisting of "policies of cultural diversity which require us publicly to celebrate difference". There we have it: a plurality of definitions and no two the same.
>
> (Rahman, May 14th 2007)

It is clear that communities of difference exist everywhere and give rise to ‘otherness’ by their very existence. It is when this ‘otherness’ is seen as being on such a scale that disrupts the status quo that new tensions often arise where the social landscape is changed by ‘strangers’. The rejection of such changes would appear to be a natural human reaction.

Modood (2005: 1) views the concept of post-1960s racial equality through multiculturalism as problematical, being built on ‘colourexplicitness rather than colourblindness’ and suggests that it ‘breaks the link between assimilation and equality’. Conversely, Beck (2006: 135) argues that if Europe espouses colourblindness, it prolongs cultural imperialism; there is a tension between overcoming ‘the Other’s otherness… treating that person as an equal’ while at the same time, denying the ‘reality of otherness’.

There is a view that the argument for integration masks an instrument of state control: Harris (2004) suggests that governments have always believed that if they can impose their interests upon all citizens, then through values alone, conformity would be ensured. He states that 'for long periods, governments have striven to compel this outcome by trying to enforce social homogeneity', suggesting that collaboration does not need common values and that those we do have are those we share with the rest of the world, these being, 'to over-simplify, a passionate preoccupation with births, deaths and marriages'.

The ability of Asylum Seekers and Refugees to integrate into their 'communities' has been viewed as an important issue in their settlement, but there seems to be little clarity as to what is meant by 'community'. Community has become something of a 'buzz word' in debates about integration, and this frequently-used term demands further examination.

2: 10 Integration, groups and the term 'community'

The term 'community' is often used in political and academic discourse and it is used widely despite a lack of clear understanding or agreement as to its meaning. NGOs and Government have produced documents reporting on 'community' initiatives in the drive for 'community integration', although the word, 'community' has multiple meanings and has become a politicised expression. It is clear that the relationship of 'community' to wider society has been the subject of debate in race relations. Baumann, (1996: 20) citing Terence Turner (1993: 415), suggests that the notion of community essentially involves the idea of 'difference' and that this has been supported through multiculturalism. He further suggests that ethnic boundaries risk reification through community studies.

New Labour had a stated commitment to 'community', exemplified by Tony Blair's statement, cited in Nash and Christie's (2003) Executive summary for the IPPR report *Making Sense of Community*. Blair stated 'Community is the governing idea of modern social democracy…a key task for our second term is to develop greater coherence around our commitment to community' (Blair, 2002).

The ECRE defines integration as a long term, dynamic and two-way process that relates both to societal aspects of integration (in terms of participation in aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the host country) as well as to refugees' own perception of acceptance by, and membership in the host society. Ager and Strang's report for the Home Office (2004b: 8) states 'At the most basic level, absence of conflict and 'toleration' of different groups is considered to reflect integration'... 'The majority of individuals – both refugees and others within the studied communities – had expectations beyond this to a community where there was active 'mixing' of people from different groups'. Their report states that 'Many additionally identified “belonging” as the ultimate mark of living in an integrated community. This involved links with family, committed friendships and a sense of respect and shared values’.

Korac (2003: 90) has observed a tendency for ‘refugee research to take a 'top-down' approach-focusing on structural and organizational aspects of integration, to the exclusion of focusing research on the 'voices', feelings and experiences of refugees. Castles, Korac, Vasta and Vertovec (2002) cite Kuhlman’s (1991) range of criteria to be met when defining integration.

> If refugees are able to participate in the host economy in ways commensurate with their skills and compatible with their values; if they attain a standard of living which satisfies culturally determined minimum requirements (standard of living is taken here as meaning not only income from economic activities, but also access to amenities such as housing, public utilities, health services, and education); if the socio-cultural change they undergo permits them to maintain an identity of their own and adjust psychologically to their new situation; if standards of living and economic opportunities for members of the host society have not deteriorated due to the influx of refugees; if friction between host population and refugees is not worse than within the host population itself; and if the refugees do not encounter more discrimination than exists between groups previously settled within the host society: then refugees are truly integrated.
>
> (Kuhlman, 1991: 7)

Goodhart sees the aim of ‘liberal nationalism/integration’ as being ‘to reinforce a strong sense of membership among all citizens in an increasingly complex and fragmented social world’ and as merely requiring that ‘a citizen from the majority ethnic group acknowledges that members of ‘minority ethnic, racial or religious groups’ have the possibility of being ‘full and welcome citizens of Britain’ (Goodhart, 2005:162 - 164).

2: 10: 1 Notions of community in the debate about asylum seeking

Definitions of ‘community’ vary widely and the term is frequently to be found in public policy documents, including many cited previously in this chapter. It appears to be used with an assumption that its meaning will be understood. The frequently used designations ‘Christian’ or ‘Muslim’ community, refer to diverse individuals who share a range of religions and denominations whose beliefs may be diverse and contradictory. The convenient ‘catch-all’ categorisation of such people ‘communities’ does not take account of the composition of individuals, whose behaviours and attitudes are acquired through lived experiences and which gives each person their own unique identity and character.

One notion of community is summarised by Frazer (1999) as

> A concept with open frontiers and vague contours, which seems to extend across a very heterogeneous class of things, which conveys a wealth of meaning- it appeals to people's emotions, it is shot through with value judgments, it conjures up associations of images from a wide, wide range of discourses and contexts.
>
> (Frazer, 1999: 60)

Nash and Christie’s (2003) report for the Institute for Public Policy Research, *Making sense of community*, suggests that ‘the definition of “community” must capture what kind of social relationships government should legitimately protect and support for all’. In the context of their report, they define community in terms of ‘community of place’; that is, ‘social relations in particular places’ consisting of a ‘rich variety of social ties, all of a minimally trusting and civil nature, where those ties are grounded in a shared commitment to place’ (2003: ii), later reminding the reader that ‘ “Community” is a slippery term, perhaps the most easily abused in the social science and political lexicons’ (Nash and Christie, 2003: 88).

Sayyid (2004) suggests that ‘we are dealing with political processes that are trying to forge communities and identities’ and that ‘forms of identification’… ‘whether they use so-called ethnic labels or class or any other criteria, politics is about making people form up, and produces a division between those who disagree and those who agree’. The 2006 Report for the Commission on Racial Equality suggests that ‘race relations’ involves established white communities and established ethnic minority communities. There appears to be an assumption that the term ‘community’ in this context represents a commonly understood notion of boundaried communities. However, the ambiguity of such a widely-used and contested term has been problematised by Amit (2002), who suggests that focus on the idea of community, either as imagined or symbolic has frequently been disconnected from the significance of real social ties.

Anthony Cohen (2002) suggests that ‘ “community” now seems to have become a normative, rather than a descriptive term’ and that ‘Even used descriptively across and within different societies to denote different groups of people who live …close to each other, “community” is so vague as to be virtually meaningless’ (Cohen, 2002: 169). He qualifies this by suggesting that it is ‘the sentiments of community which are of our age which, arguably are more sensitive to reality’ rather than the semantic descriptions of past sociologists years ago.

My own view of community is that it is a shifting concept, encapsulating a sense of shared identity that is subjectively constructed by those inside and outside particular groups. For the purposes of clarity, I refer to ‘community’ when it is cited in literature, and use the terms ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘social grouping’ in the context of my own study.

2: 11 Politically-driven categorisations of cultural groups.

Despite references to core universal values, the current debate about Britishness starts with the politics of belonging, much of which is about determining who does or does not belong, regardless of their formal citizenship status. Foucault (1977a; 1984a) suggests that the true political task facing our society is to look more closely, and with a critical eye, at the working of institutions, particularly those that appear to be both neutral and independent.

Foucault (1982) uses the term ‘dividing practices’ to describe the ‘objectification of the subject’. He suggests that one dividing practice is the identification of people who exhibit difference, such as those displaying physical, cultural or ethnic difference: they become objectified and this objectification leads to their isolation, and they become marginalised and ‘othered’. A second form of ‘dividing practice’ is scientific categorisation and, together, these two forms of classification are, according to Foucault (1982), totalising and divisive. He posits the view that personhood is a culturally specified production, a totalisation technique. Foucault describes how the documentation of lives through the invention of medical and other types of files which, through writing, capture and fix individuals in time. The use of such files, for statistics and establishment of ‘norms’, then promotes the construction of knowledges about people. These knowledges become global and unitary and develop into instruments of social control

Foucault describes a third, and different mode of objectification, which he terms ‘subjectification’. This mode, he suggests, is one in which people are themselves agents through the monitoring of their own behaviours in relation to their perception of cultural ‘norms’, which have become accepted as ‘truths’. White and Epston (1990: 20 - 21) discuss Foucault’s (1984a) description of the proliferation of discourses (concerning sex) that led to ‘an increasing incitement for persons to talk about it’. These discourses led to observation, categorization, recording and the construction of ‘normative truth’. This notion can equally illustrate the way in which the subject of ‘Asylum Seekers’ has become a subject of ‘truth’ discourses. There are, according to Foucault, no truths, but interpretations of truth which have been constructed through cultural discourse, which Foucault (1979; 1984a) refers to as ‘normalising truths’.

The administration of government-funded initiatives and services frequently involves the acquisition of information about the ethnicity of the end-users. Foucault (1971: 219) refers to systems of exclusion as relying on institutional support, claiming that it is ‘probably even more profoundly accompanied by the manner in which knowledge is employed in a society’. Whilst the information I am asked to collect is used to monitor take-up and to ensure that steps are taken to encourage inclusion and for planning ahead in, for example, particular health and education issues, I believe that the categorisation of service users into distinct groupings highlights difference which can be, despite the intention, an exclusive practice.

To exemplify this, I offer a personal anecdotal example. In my work I would use a form to collect client information for the Children’s centre database. This involved not only taking information about birthdates, contact details, parental marriage status, doctor’s surgery address, and whether or not they smoke, but also ethnicity. A copy of this form is in Appendix III. Categories of ethnicity are delineated as ‘White –British’, ‘Mixed’ ‘Black or Black British’, ‘Asian’ and other comparable descriptors. These are subdivided into categories so that ‘Mixed’ allows the choice of White and Black (Caribbean; African; Asian; Any other mixed background). This form of categorisation appears, to me, as a visible symbol of oppression, which I felt I must resist, having been placed in the uncomfortable and, I believe, unethical, position of asking people to choose an appropriate category or having, myself, to make decisions about classifications of skin colour.

Peter Ratcliffe (2004: 36 - 38), in asking whether ethnicity and ethnic groups are measureable, suggests that there is ‘an atavistic allusion to Social Darwinian notions of “racial purity” into the classifications with the “White” category followed by “Mixed” ’. One Afro-Caribbean woman, a teacher, and participant in the music group at venue D, viewed the gathering of such information as an important means of establishing whether services are being accessed by those from ethnic minority groups. She was happy to describe herself as ‘Black, Afro-Caribbean’, while other mothers and carers made it clear to me that they found this categorisation to be offensive and racist. I do not know how one is supposed to make colour categorisation judgements. In another of my Sure Start music groups, a Portuguese-speaking mother from Brazil, with dark golden-coloured skin and the tight curls and facial features one might associate with African origins, chose to describe herself as Female, Portuguese-speaking and from Brazil and chose to omit any reference to her skin colour.

Although I refused, on ethical grounds, to complete this part of the form, I invited participants to provide information about their first language and country of origin. This was acknowledged and accepted by local management. These forms originate from a government department that appears to view skin colour and ‘the terms

‘Asian’ or ‘Black African’ as a better means of identifying clients than would identification of their first language or country of origin.

2: 12 Adapting to life in Newtown

The quest for a safe haven in Newtown raised issues for the women asylum seekers and refugees as well as for the neighbourhoods where they were housed. Uprooted, (and often traumatised) individuals had to begin living in what, for them, was a new and strange culture. They were confronted with others’ ideas of who they were and were dependent upon government agencies to provide for them. In many cases, the women were unable to communicate in English. In addition to the distress and anxiety of coping with a new language and culture, their having to negotiate the asylum process itself compounded their difficulties.

For the women who attended the MMSA project, there are tensions between old, cultural norms and values of their home countries and those in the UK as espoused in laws relating to equality. It is a great leap for a woman positioned within the relationship of marriage, or her immediate family, to accept new cultural norms that contravene the values of her home or religion and status as a female. This is exemplified by a discussion I had with the MMSA group when one mother, Ooma suggested that ‘here, you don’t need to ask a man for permission’ (Journal: 23rd April 2007), although she indicated that not to do so would cause severe problems at home, were *she* to act independently of her husband in any way. Ooma was both overwhelmed by, and at the same time, quite envious of the freedoms of some of the women she encountered.

The politics of belonging is not only about citizenship or identities, but also about emotional attachment, securities and insecurities. It is also about a world separating ‘us’ from ‘them’, with unstated assumptions that there are defined and fixed boundaries and that the commonalities between those on one side of a boundary are sufficient for them to be regarded as a homogenous group. Kendall, Gulliver and Martin (2007) acknowledge the ‘positive ambitions that asylum seeker and refugee parents had for their children’.The MMSA participants were from a wide range of ethnic and cultural origins who shared the commonality of their being asylum seeking mothers who wanted to give their children a good start in life in Britain.

Despite cultural and language differences, the mothers enjoyed the sense of belonging in a group in which those who spoke the same languages were able to facilitate interpretation and help one another. Noel Dyck (2002:19) suggests that ‘participation in an organised group’ reflects ‘newly formed relationships between people who would probably not otherwise know one another had they not participated in a common activity'.

2: 12: 1 Encounter with the 'other' in a local context

Several months before of the women from the MMSA group began to attend the 'open-to-all' music group at Venue D, I had an intense exchange there with a young, white teenage mother, Jackie who, although she had never met an asylum seeker, launched into a verbal attack on 'immigrants' and what she called 'bogus asylum seekers' in particular, with great anger. She felt that they had 'no right to come here in such numbers'….'taking homes and jobs we need for ourselves', citing examples from negative articles in the press. She felt that their difference in language, dress and customs were 'spoiling things' and that everything was changing, and not for the better. I explained to her some of the realities of life for asylum seekers and gave her details of some of the traumatic experience and injustices they encountered.

Subsequently, when the MMSA participants began to attend this group, I asked Jackie to help me explain to Ooma, who was heavily pregnant with her second child, how to access the maternity services to which she was entitled. I left them talking together and, at the end of the session, they were still sitting together chatting. They eventually became good friends and Jackie often invited Ooma and her husband to her home. Having encountered the 'Other', Jackie had gained an insight that caused her to re-think her preconceptions about asylum seekers where, previously, never having met any, she had known of them only as members of a vilified social group.

Communication between long-time residents and newcomers, particularly in neighbourhoods where there was a large increase in the number of 'strangers' was not only a result of antipathy on the part of the 'old' residents, but also, in some part, due to the inability of many of the asylum seeking mothers to speak or understand English. The significance of language here necessitates further exploration.

2: 13 The significance of language

Language is not only the principal conveyor of symbols ideas and beliefs and important to ethnic groups, but, as Gerry Smyth (1997: 212) proposes, it becomes a 'powerful possession in itself, something to be protected and preserved as the main badge of (ethnic) identity' and commonalities of language represent 'one of the most important ways in which (ethnic) groups identify themselves'. Smyth suggests that language, as a significant factor in group identity, is situated alongside such other forms of communication as social behaviour, body language and other forms of non-verbal communication and warns that these communicative acts are laden with the potential for cross-cultural misinterpretation, especially when combined with limited vocabulary of learners of English.

This misinterpretation is exemplified by Argyle (1994:195), who describes ‘The Englishman who depreciates his own abilities in what turns out to be a highly misleading way’ and the 'Arab who starves at a banquet because he is only offered the dishes once’. He suggests that bodily movements and gestures are social signals that have conventional meanings, the result of complex histories and understood within cultures. Such non-verbal signals may have widely differing interpretations in different settings and misinterpretation may contribute to the building of barriers between different ethnic groups. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002:26) describe life as ‘experimental’ where 'inherited recipes for living and role stereotypes fail to function' as people are ‘changing, building new identities’.

The 2005 Strategy consultation paper ‘Integration Matters’, states (Paragraph 1:7) ‘Asylum seekers will learn much simply from being in Britain and from their contacts with officials, voluntary workers and neighbours; their knowledge of English will improve’) citing this as a reason for facilitating the free teaching of English for only those who had achieved refugee status. The Refugee Council, in its response to the consultation paper stated ‘We feel that the recent limitations put on access to free ESOL for asylum seekers by the Learning and Skills Council represent a retrogressive step’. (Paragraph 1:4) and, in Paragraph 2, ‘We have long argued that the integration of refugees should start on Day One of the asylum claim and not wait until they get a positive decision’.

Given the length of time that the women I encountered had to wait for Leave to Remain, the lack of access to language classes did, in fact, present a major obstacle to their learning English. Whilst there were opportunities for accessing ESOL classes at a local multicultural centre, there were no free child care facilities available. Mothers of older children in school were able to go to classes during school hours, but not the mothers of pre-school children in the MMSA project. In 2009, a report on refugee settlement in Sheffield by Olga Evans and Rosemary Murray stated ‘Women with children accessed the least ESOL education and made least progress’ naming lack of childcare as a barrier, along with ‘other practical difficulties and social role expectancies’. It is clear that the problems of the women in Newtown are shared with others across the country.

2: 14 Summary

The preceding sections have shown the complexity of the global and national processes involved in seeking asylum. We can see how, over recent decades, as successive governments have endeavoured to address the needs of immigrants, the bureaucratic systems that have been put in place have been slow and have caused distress for those awaiting the outcome. The growth of NGO support organisations, and their responses to government changes in the way in which asylum claims are managed, indicates a tension between government and NGO views of what constitutes fair and humane treatment.

The difficulties that asylum seekers face in the UK, in both legal and cultural contexts, and the incapacity of the system to deal with applications fairly and speedily are bound up with issues of integration. The debates surrounding multiculturalism have played a key role in political contexts and I have shown how different notions of integration have brought up debates about identity and what constitutes ‘Britishness’. Through a Foucauldian lens I have problematised identity and the construction of otherness, leading to oppression, and how this plays out in the daily lives of people seeking asylum.

Following discussion of the term ‘community’ as a shifting concept, containing within it a sense of involvement and interconnectedness, we can see how it is used in multifarious ways that incorporate essentially unclear and misleading, but taken-for-granted, definitions concerning the categorisation of cultural groups which shape societal views of such groups.

In the following chapter, I examine the way in which musicking has the capacity to contribute to the learning of language, the development of new attitudes and relationships, and to the promotion of greater emotional and mental health, leading to the formation of group identity.

Chapter 3 Music and well-being

This chapter concerns the literature that contributes to the rationale for the MMSA project. I examine mother and baby musical interactions and the physiological and psychological effects of musicking. The relationship between asylum-seeking mothers and their children may be negatively affected as a result of trauma and anxiety, and I here present a range of views concerning the impact of early musical interactions within the maternal dyad on infant brain development and on the mother and child relationship.

Singing has been demonstrated to have been an effective vehicle to promote language acquisition and to encourage social bonding. This chapter will provide an overview of a range of evidence that demonstrates that musicking has the capacity to provide a means of emotional healing, to lower anxiety and to increase learning potential. In the following section I first explore a range of views suggesting that singing together with others has the capacity provide a means of stimulating pleasant feeling-states.

3:1 Group singing and well-being

When people make music together, they act together in a common purpose, be that to keep in time when working or marching, to produce a performance or to celebrate. The reasons are manifold, but it is the potential for music to function as an activity that benefits well-being and acts as ‘social glue’ that underpins the rationale for the Asylum Seeker mother and baby music project. Boyce-Tillman (2000: 36- 40) cites Leonard (1978) who states: ‘harmonious activity, having a shared pulse, such as singing and marching’ ... ‘makes those participating more like one another’ and that ‘When a group of people makes music together their unity is restored’.

Increased well-being associated with group singing has been examined by Clift and Hancox (2001) who found strongly perceived positive benefits for participants of a choral singing group who were experiencing relatively low psychological well-being. Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz and Stewart (2009) examined over one thousand questionnaire results of choral singers, finding six ‘generative mechanisms’ by which singing may impact on well-being and health. These are listed as ‘positive affect; focused attention; deep breathing; social support; cognitive stimulation and regular commitment’ (Clift et al, 2009: 55). The participants of this study were from a range of choirs and choral societies and it is not clear from this research whether this included choirs involving marginalized groups. This positive effect on participant mood is further supported by Sue Hillman (2002) and Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2005), while Bailey and

Davison (2003 and 2005) reveal the potential for community-based singing activities to play a therapeutic role. Unwin, Kelly and Davis (2002) indicate that both singing and listening to singing, where listener and singer groups were in a shared space, has a significant positive effect on emotional state. Kenny and Faunce (2004) report that in group singing activities, patients experiencing chronic pain were found to have 'increased active coping responses' (2004: 58). It was proposed that a combination of physiochemical responses, coupled with the distraction provided by the activity, were most likely to be responsible for this.

Bailey and Davison (2003) found that singing in a group created a potential for social bonding between the members of a choir for homeless men and their later (Bailey and Davidson 2005) comparison of middle class and marginalised homeless people's choirs demonstrated similar clinical-type benefits between the two groups, but, in terms of group process, there were marked differences. 'Members of the marginalised group placed high importance on camaraderie and valued social support and normalcy [sic] as very important'. With regard to cognitive stimulation, the positive effects on the marginalised group were seen as 'concentration, opportunities for cognitive stimulation and ordered thought processes' (Bailey and Davidson 2005: 298).

Mithen (2005: 208) describes the significance of 'synchronising vocalisations and movements in music-making in the establishment and reinforcement of social bonds. He states that it 'appears to be cognitive coordination that is induced by the music, the arousal of a shared emotional state and trust in one's fellow music-makers'. Mithen cites William McNeill's (1995) account of his 'sense of pervasive well-being' and 'strange sense of personal enlargement' when 'moving and vocalising together' during army drills, an activity that McNeill generalised into 'a consequence of group music-making'. Mithen suggests that the essence of McNeill's argument is that 'communal music-making is actively creating, rather than merely reflecting, that pleasing sense of unity'. Mithen (2005: 214 - 216) expands on this notion of unity suggesting that the shared emotional state resulting from making music together with others brings about a loss of self-identity. He suggests that there is no 'other with whom to co-operate, just one group making decisions about how to behave'. Benzon (2001:13) suggests 'music allows us, for the duration, to radically reconceive and reconstruct our relationship with the world'.

Darley (2001: 336) , basing his view on the evidence of group value theorists, suggests 'an individual who perceives that a group he is in treats him in ways that signal that he is a respected member of that group feels an enhanced self-esteem'.

In the following section I shall examine the way in which this shared emotional state and sense of group identity contributes to the emotional health of those participating in musical activity.

3:1:2 Addressing emotional needs

Kellmer Pringle (1975: 33 - 40) has identified 'the need for love and security; the need for new experiences, the need for praise and recognition and the need for responsibility' as four basic human needs that are required from birth to, and throughout, adulthood. The potential for mothers' impaired capacity for parenting, such as insecure attachment or insecure parenting style or insecure attachment' (Auerhahn and Laub, 1998, in Walter and Bala, 2004: 501) is described as 'potentially damaging for children' as well as for families whose stability and interactions may be negatively affected by 'shattered trust, emotional numbing, parental depression or violence'. Trevarthen (2004) suggests:

> The intensely shared pleasure of pride in knowledge and skill that others applaud, as well as the feeling of shame in failure that threatens loss of relationship and hopeless isolation are as important to the mental health of every human being as the emotions that seek comfort and care for the body.
>
> (Trevarthen 2004:18)

Trevarthen's statement is particularly relevant in relation to the discussion, in Chapter two concerning mental health of asylum seekers. Music has long been linked with the potential for stress relief and healing, particularly in the area of music therapy (a field that has developed from quasi- professional beginnings to become an evidence-based field of research), as well as in the area of psychology of music, as evidenced by Eades (2004), Orth, Doorschodt, Verburgt and Drožđek (1998) and Priestley (1975). The therapeutic effect of musicking, and of singing, in particular, is confirmed outside the realms of music therapy and its positive impact is being exploited with increasing frequency in medical settings.

Brown, Chen and Dworkin (1989) propose that both singing and listening to music have the ability to distract attention from the perception of pain and can arouse emotional experiences which have a beneficial function. It is on the basis of such evidence, and on evidence from my own past research, that I have rooted my conviction that musicking holds the potential for increasing well-being.

3:2 Music and empowerment

The restorative impact of singing is due to a combination of factors, according to Austin (2002: 235 - 236). She suggests that primarily, it facilitates deep breathing which slows the heart rate, which, in turn, has a calming and stilling effect upon the nervous system, resulting in relaxation. Austin views neuromuscular activity and muscular patterns as being linked to psychological patterns and emotional response. She describes the power of singing as ‘empowering: sensing the life force flowing through the body; feeling one’s strength in the ability to produce strong and prolonged tones’ (2002: 236). Austin suggests that ‘Owning one’s voice is owning one’s authority and ending a cycle of victimisation’ and views singing as bridging a gap between mental and physical problems. This view reflects Thurman’s (2002) concept of the ‘bodymind’, which regards every aspect of the body and mind as being inextricably intertwined.

Boyce-Tillman (2000: 11 - 12) suggests that dominant value systems in Western culture are based on the goals of scientific reality and order and these value systems have marginalised and subjugated associative ways of knowing, non-causal knowledge, emotion and subjectivity, and that ‘Music making potentially becomes a way of challenging the dominant system as well also of supporting it’.

Musical interactions, within the context of music therapy, are perceived as a means of stimulating social interaction, improving ‘mutual contact, communication and group sense’ (Orth et al, 2004: 452). It must be borne in mind that music therapy is a method of *treatment* in that it employs music to help patients to cope better with their problems. Its purpose is therapeutic rather than musical, and its aims, through the process of making music, are to achieve benefits for participating patients (or clients).

Batt-Rawden (2006), in describing ‘empowering’ musical rituals, states:

> It is of great importance to highlight the fellowship of musicking as a powerful aid to creating, reshaping or restructuring, which ties friendships and connections in specific social and cultural contexts to provide a sense of coherence and integration.
>
> (Batt-Rawden 2006: 551)

Singing for holistic health benefits has achieved increasing recognition and acceptance: there is a plethora of research literature to support this.

In the context of an investigation of the effects of choral singing with homeless men, Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrmann, Hodapp and Grebe *(*2004: 623) found that group singing led to ‘increases in positive affect and Secretory Immunoglobulin-A and negative affect was reduced’. Their results suggest that ‘choir singing positively influences both emotional affect and immune competence’. Gene Cohen (2006: 4) found that older people who engaged in choral participation for the first time, by contrast to a comparison group who did not sing, had fewer visits to doctors and reported a reduction in the number of over-the-counter medications taken.

The MMSA group, although it is not a choir, meets for singing and musicking together and I suggest that the emotional affect is comparable. It was evident that many of the women in the project faced physical, emotional and psychological ill health. They had had to give control of their fate to the asylum system and, with this adding to their past traumatic experiences, their sense of safety and trust was lost. I draw from Omeri, Lennings and Raymond's (2004) concepts of hardiness and 'transformational coping'. They suggest that 'transformative effects of trauma can evolve' from the 'loss of taken-for-granted belief in safety, trust and control' and how, 'following trauma, gaining control through actions can enable opportunity for growth, albeit that this may co-exist with loss and grief reactions' (Omeri et al, 2004: 24 - 25). The MMSA project participants had the potential to gain some sense of control, both through their commitment to attending the group, and through the musical and social interactions that took place within the project. Such creative activity has the potential for 'healing and rebalancing the system physically, psychologically and spiritually' in the wake of traumatic events'. (Boyce-Tillman, 2000: 16).

The emotions, or character states, of the women in the project, that 'motivate human behaviour'(Lazarus, 1991: 4) have been given a prominent role in this research. Lazarus has suggested that the 'failure to give emotion a central role puts theoretical and research psychology out of step with human preoccupation'. Past negative experiences in the life of asylum-seeking mothers, which reflect negative feeling-states, present a significant influence in the social and emotional continuum in their lives and those of their children. Simich, Beiser and Mawani (2003) suggest that 'validation from people of a similar background who have been through similar experiences is important for refugees' mental well-being' (Simich et al, 2003: 888).

Following chapters will provide evidence that such validation was made possible in the context of a group whose members had had similar experiences, and where time was allowed for these experiences to be shared.

Carter (1998), who suggests that social interactions and attachment are influenced by neuroendocrine activity, has concluded that physical states and reactions of the body, including the status of the central and autonomic nervous system, influence the readiness of an individual to engage in social behaviours, form relationships and social bonds, and regulate reactivity to challenges of either a social or physical nature. This activity regulation has been further evidenced in the findings of Wismer Fries, Ziegler, Kurian, Jacoris and Pollak (2005), who established that the vasopressin and oxytocin neuropeptide systems, critical in the establishment of social bonds and the regulation of emotional behaviours, are affected by early social experience.

The effects of musical activity on body and mind represent significant aspects of the way in which the MMSA project has contributed to increased perceptions of well-being. The outcomes of music making in terms of self-expression, self-confidence, self-esteem and ability to relate to others, are closely linked to participation in group musicking. The potential for music to encourage a sense of empowerment in the participants, provides yet another strand in the rationale of the music project.

3:3 Music, mind and body

I have been informed by a raft of literature that suggests that musicking, and singing in particular, has the power to affect intellect, imagination and state of mind, and is present in every human culture in many forms. Bannan (2000: 295) suggests that singing for holistic health benefit has been recognised in the UK for some time. From lullaby to opera, in concert hall or home, music reaches all of us in a plethora of forms and through a variety of media. That it touches us all in some way is at the heart of my exploration into musicking as a potentially life-enhancing force. Here I provide some background on a range of scientific views that give account of the way in which musicking impacts on the whole person, or ‘bodymind’ (Thurman, 2002).

In describing the way in which physiochemical changes take place in the context of pleasant feeling, Thurman (2002) explains:

> The body states and the neuro-endocrine processes that induced them will be co-encoded in the nervous system along with the perceptual, conceptual and behavioural events that occurred at the same time... These ‘feeling state modulators’ evaluate the relative importance of an experience and can intensify either ‘pleasant’ or ‘unpleasant memory tags’.
>
> (Thurman, 2002: 216 - 217)

Thurman further suggests that the neural processes which produce pleasant feeling states tend to enhance immune function and stress-hardiness. Thurman (2002: 166) asserts that human affective states are created when ‘numerous physiochemical events are cascaded into bodyminds as a reaction to remembered people, places, things and events’. Right and left limbic system areas and the orbital areas of the right and left frontal lobes act together with the hypothalamus-pituitary and the autonomic nervous system and influence the immune and endocrine systems to produce body-wide changes in physiochemical states.

When a neuron fires, a neurotransmitter is released and binds to a receptor. It is significant that the development of neural receptors for specific chemicals and the *number* of specific receptors that develop is determined by usage (Lamb, 2007; Gerhardt, 2004). Two major indicators of such physiochemical changes, secretary immunoglobulin A and cortisol, have been identified as readily assessable through salivary sampling. Jager (2007), using this method, found that individuals with histories of family depression have higher early-morning levels of cortisol than those without such histories. Ahnert et al (2004) established that cortisol is present in significantly high levels in children experiencing stress and anxiety when separated from their primary carers. Kestler, Brennan, Walker and Stowe (2006) assert that raised cortisol levels are also found in post-natally depressed mothers and infants, whose mothers demonstrated less positive affect, showed elevated cortisol levels. Diagnosis of peripartum maternal depression is seen to predict greater levels of cortisol in the infants, leading to the conclusion that the mother's positive affect is important for the infant's ability to regulate stress. Frequent, musical activities that have the capacity to raise the levels of pleasure-producing chemicals in mother and child can make a positive contribution to wellbeing, given that the neural connections to the specific receptors in the brain can be strengthened by usage.

I believe it is of great importance, therefore, that the children of depressed, stressed or anxious mothers have experiences of healthy interactions with their care-givers and experience happy times together which will support the formation of neural receptors that will determine their future emotional health. The future emotional lives of the children of the asylum-seeking mothers in this study are highly dependent upon the experiences of their mothers, for whom musical activity has the potential to improve well-being.

Freeman (2000), who investigated socialisation in the context of music and dance, cites Pedersen, Cladwell, Jirikowski and Insel (1992) who found that, during copulation and lactation, 'the neuropeptide, oxytocin, released into the basal forebrain ...appears to act by dissolving pre-existing learning by loosening the synaptic connections in which prior knowledge is held' which effectively 'opens an opportunity for new learning' (Freeman, 2000: 417-422).

Sloboda (2004) takes account of the evidence of Papoušek (1992 and 1996), Dissayanake (2000) and Custodero (2002) in supporting the notion that preverbal communication is innately musical, facilitates the cognitive and social development of the young child and closer bonding with the caregiver. This view is further proposed by Stern (2004: 78 -79) who, in the context of preverbal communication, suggests that ‘mirror neurons’ are ‘active when we try to read other people's intentions, take part in their emotions, experience something that the other is experiencing and take hold of an observed action in order to imitate it, all of which is about empathy and the establishment of interpersonal contact’. Stern describes how mirror neurons are ‘activated within someone who observes another person executing an action, such as playing an instrument’ and suggests that these’ neural firing patterns are the same as the pattern would have been, had the observer himself performed the action’. This, he proposes, causes us to ‘experience the other as if we were executing the same action, feeling the same emotion, making the same vocalization…’ and that ‘ This “participation” in another’s mental life creates a sense of feeling/sharing with/understanding the person, in particular, the person’s intentions and feelings’ (Stern 2004: 79).

Storr (1992: 24), when referring to the physiological changes that take place during music activity, states that music-making ‘is an activity which is rooted in the body’. Since Storr published *Music and the Mind* in 1992, further technological advances have facilitated greater understanding of the way in which music acts on the whole person. With these advances, which include functional magnetic resonance imaging and magnetoencephalography, musical development has been explored from the earliest years of life, including pre-birth and through to adulthood.

Research in the spheres of anatomical, neuropsychological and biochemical study has extended our knowledge about the processes involved in musical activity. Because of the inter-relatedness of the affect of behaviours of the children on their mothers, and of the mothers on their children, it is appropriate, here, to briefly examine musical development pre-natally, through childhood and into adulthood.

As magnetic resonance techniques have advanced, it has become possible to gain greater knowledge regarding neural firing patterns in indicating how the brain responds under different stimuli. MRI scans have facilitated increased understanding of the physiochemical changes that take place when engaging in musical activities. When relaxed, happy and singing, perhaps to oneself, or singing along to a song, the endocrine system causes pleasure-producing chemicals to be released into the circulatory system. As indicated by Thurman (2002), these pleasure-producing chemicals, the ‘dopamine-norepinephrine-serotonin-endorphine-enkephalin prominent transmitter molecule recipes’ can lead to the experience of music to be associated with pleasure. This becomes encoded in memory and ‘the communication of motives and experience’ is supported by systems of sympathy neurons in the regulatory core of the brain, and by the vitality affects they generate’ (Thurman 2002: 23).

The concept of ‘vitality affects’ was established by Stern (1985), who describes ‘vitality affects’ as not emotion, per se, but ‘forms of feeling’ that describe qualities related to intensity, movement, contour and shape.

Thurman, Chase and Langness (1987: 21) describe how ‘the psycho-neural characteristics of the mother ‘…affect the psycho-neural characteristics of her baby in utero’. The hormones passed from mother to baby during ‘feeling states’ are passed through the umbilical to stimulate the same in the in-utero child and ‘similar ‘feeling states’ which are experienced over a long period of time can create biochemical ‘imprints’ involving memory on a growing baby’.

3:4 Musical interactions in the maternal dyad

Sylva and Lunt’s (1982: 49 - 51) discussion of cross-cultural studies of attachment proposes that the quality and intensity of interaction between adult (as initiator) and child, or child (as initiator) and adult, is of greatest importance. The notion of the significance of carer –child interactions was first posited by John Bowlby (1951), whose view was later supported by Richard Bowlby (2007). John Bowlby’s theory of attachment led him to posit what has become known as ‘Bowlby’s Maternal Deprivation Hypothesis’ which suggests that disruption to, or a breakdown of a child’s close bond with his or her primary attachment figure, (usually the mother) will lead to serious negative consequences. This theory has been interrogated and refined by others, such as Sunderland, (2007) and Ainsworth (1965 and 1967), who categorises attachments as ‘secure’, ‘anxious-avoidant (insecure)’ and ‘anxious-ambivalent or resistant (insecure)’, Ainsworth indicates that children may form attachments to familiar others, in hierarchies of relationship.

In chapter five, I describe the behaviour of the two younger children of Naina. Naina’s traumatic experiences in Afghanistan had been compounded, in the UK, by separation from her daughter, and extreme anxiety concerning her application for asylum. Schechter and Willheim (2009) may provide a possible explanation for her children’s behaviour:

> Over repeated interactions with the caregiver, the infant has learned what they may reliably expect in terms of comfort and security and has modified their attachment behaviour accordingly. For example, the avoidant infant appears to have learned that very little or nothing will be offered by the caregiver and adaptively suppresses overt proximity seeking behaviours.
>
> (Schechter and Willheim, 2009)

Gerhardt (2004:41) alludes to Turner, J., (2000) and Feinman (1992), who have identified eye contact and body language (social referencing) as conveying information for the developing infant. Naturally occurring interactions, shown to be musical in timing and pitch in healthy emotional situations, can be traced to the early months of life (Papoušek, 1992 and 1996; Dissayanake, 2000 and Custodero, 2002). Such naturally-occurring interactions may be inhibited as a result of the anxieties experienced by Asylum Seeking mothers.

3:4: 1 The development of maternal interactions

Woodward's (1992) investigation of auditory function established (1992: 44) that there is 'sufficient embryonic evidence to suggest that some hearing function begins about twenty five weeks before birth'. Woodward suggests that appropriate stimulation may increase children's possible ability potential, particularly in relation to music and speech and language. The developing foetal brain, having experienced the mother's voice and emotional affect is primed for a 'communicative musicality' which 'seems to be an intrinsic organising principle for all movements in healthy parent-infant interactions' (Malloch 1999: 13 - 18). Two major contributors to parent - child communication have been identified by Papoušek (1996: 89 - 90). The first is the musicality of preverbal communication, one of the most significant features of both infantile vocalisation and infant directed speech (IDS) or 'motherese'.

The physical and psychological state of the pregnant mother impacts directly on the foetus because not only can the foetus hear sounds within the womb, but also, a shared blood supply ensures that the mother's physiochemical state influences the 'feeling' state of her baby. In the womb, the baby hears the mother's voice and receives, across the placental barrier, the psychochemical outputs of the mother. Exposure to acoustical stimulation may 'exert structural and functional effects on the pre-natal auditory system nervous pathway' (Lecaunet, 1996:24).

The foetus perceives the contours and rhythms of the mother's song via sound waves crossing the amniotic fluid, while concomitantly experiencing neuroendocrine change, as demonstrated by Thurman and Grambsch (2000).

The second major contributor is 'a set of non-conscious intuitive behaviours ... which can be best interpreted as parental didactic support for infant's perceptual, cognitive and communicative abilities' (Papoušek, M. 1982: 103). It is widely recognised that mothers intuitively modify their speech tempo, dynamics and pitch and the newborn child responds. Trevarthen and Malloch (2002: 10) observe that the mother's voice, when talking to her child, is melodic and that IDS is ‘organised in repeated phrases’ creating ‘animating incidents and slow, cyclic “narratives” of emotion’. Trevarthen (1999: 155) suggests that the nature of neonate responses, the ‘mimesis’ of gesture and rhythmic expression within the mother-child dyad illustrates the important role of the timing of actions of both mother and child and form the basis of human intersubjectivity and musicality. Trevarthen refers to such ‘protoconversations’ as a primary intersubjectivity which initiate a process of cooperative awareness and ‘sympathetic engagement in expressive exchanges’. Malloch (1999: 29-57) established that the pitch and timbre qualities of the maternal voice change in response to the infant, concluding that communicative musicality is of great importance for healthy mother and child communication.

It is this predisposition to musicality that provides a rationale for the musical work with asylum-seeking children and their mothers who have all experienced varying levels of fear and loss, either during pregnancy or post-natally. Dissayanake (2000) describes the close, early interactions between infants and their caretakers as the ‘prototypes for what will later become our later experience of love, allegiance, art and other forms of transcendence’ (Dissayanake, 2000: 16).

Mother and baby music has gained recognition as a means of promoting the cognitive and social development of the young child. Sloboda (1985) examined musical behaviours in the first years of a child’s life, although these were more concerned with acquisition of musical skills. Sloboda’s later (2004) work takes account of Mechthild Papoušek (1992; 1996) and Custodero (2002) in supporting the notion that preverbal communication is innately musical and facilitates cognitive and social development of the young child and closer bonding with the caregiver.

According to Balbernie (2007: 1) ‘A baby’s emotional environment will influence the neurobiology that is the basis of mind. From the infant’s point of view the most vital part of the surrounding world is the emotional connection with his caregiver’. Balbernie suggests that a secure and well-balanced emotional life in adulthood is dependent upon this fundamentally important attachment relationship and, further, that this is influenced by affective states during infancy. Balbernie states that it is a ‘child’s early experiences’ and ‘the quality of care-giving’ that determine the number of cortisol receptors. A child who experiences disruption and high levels of stress is likely to have a significantly raised level of cortisol receptors. Balbernie cites Schore’s (2003: 33) assertion that ‘Increased corticosteroid levels during infancy selectively induce neuronal cell death in “affective centers” in the limbic system and produce permanent functional impairments of the directing of emotion into adaptive channels’.

The role of music in promoting positive interactions between mothers and their young children and the associated development of receptors for pleasure-producing chemicals may provide a counterbalance to the negative effect of the development of raised levels of cortisol receptors. The physiological impact of musical activity, therefore, has the capacity to positively affect the well-being of the women and children in the MMSA project. I develop this idea further in the following section.

3:5 The effect of musicking in the context of a different project

At the start of the MMSA project, positive interactions were sometimes instigated by the children, who drew their mothers in to the activities. In the context of my own experience with the three original Sure Start mother and baby music projects, (Scott Hall, 2005 and 2008) singing together with their children in a group was demonstrated to have a positive effect on mothers' well-being and self-esteem. This positive effect had led to their feelings of success as mothers, and to their sense of empowerment. Unconfident and post-natally depressed mothers gained in confidence through playful, musical interactions with their children and were drawn into the activities by their children's laughter and enjoyment.

Boyce-Tillman (2005:8) describes the way in which, during an inter-generational/inter-cultural music workshop in London, a Russian child's enjoyment overcame his parents' initial reluctance to involve him in the social activities. When one of the facilitators took him to the centre of the circle of activities and gave him an instrument to play with, Boyce-Tillman reports:

> His happiness enticed his parents to come and join in and now, for the first time, they all looked very happy. They appeared to be transformed by the improvisatory activity. The baby had led the family into this experience of difference-in-relationship.
>
> (Boyce-Tillman 2005:8)

One of the reasons for feeling isolated or depressed, cited by women in the MMSA project, was the difficulty they had in communicating in English. Language barriers often hindered their day-to-day encounters with neighbours and local service providers. The following section explores the way in which music plays a role in assisting language acquisition.

3:6 Music and language acquisition

The women's inability to communicate effectively in everyday situations, such as shopping or accessing health services contributed to their feelings of disempowerment. With older children, whose English was far more fluent, and who spoke together in

English at home, there was frustration for the mothers, as they struggled to understand what their children were saying. Steven Pinker (1994: 159-160), in discussing one of the greatest difficulties in language acquisition, explains ‘There are no little silences between spoken words the way there are white spaces between written words’. In other words, to the inexperienced ear, speech is a continuous stream of sounds. In all the songs used in the MMSA project, every syllable had its own note: in this way, the division of speech sounds represented a means of separating each individual sound within the ‘stream’. The songs, therefore, had the potential to facilitate the women’s better understanding of spoken English.

Eve Gregory’s (1996) work in reading for children with English as their second language highlights the role of music in language learning. Gregory (1996: 108) points out that songs ‘enable emergent bi-linguals to practice with others the pronunciation of difficult sounds which means that they do not have to practice alone’. She gives examples of the songs from which learners can abstract sets of rules for the new language, such as ‘This is the way we ...’ to the tune of ‘Here we go round the Mulberry bush’, a song we often sang, and to which I added new words. Such additions were often made as a result of conversations or questions during the sessions. Initially, we sang at a moderately slow tempo, until everyone knew a verse well enough to join in. Other examples of the use of songs used specifically for language acquisition are given in later chapters, and further examples are to be found in Appendix II.

Many of the women in the MMSA project believed that identifying useful terms, and talking and singing about them, would help with discussions in English. Activities were implemented over the following weeks to specifically support language acquisition. A range of themes such as shopping, food and children’s education became planned topics of discussion after music. This entailed the introduction of associated vocabulary, aided by the use of picture books and ESOL resources from the city library and the internet. The topics encompassed many of experiences where the women felt in need of language support and this often led to lively talk, during which multiple interpretations, as previously described, were often needed to achieve common understanding.

Gregory’s (1996) explanation of children’s learning through song applies equally to adults in the context of my work, as concluded by Stephen Krashen, (1982: 43-44) who, referring to an earlier (Krashen, Long, and Scarcella 1979) review of empirical research on the effect of age and second language acquisition, came to the generalized conclusions that second language learners generally achieve greater proficiency when exposed to that language in early life, but adults initially acquire basic skills faster than children. Children, however, eventually achieve higher overall proficiency than adult beginners.

One possible explanation of this, according to Krashen, is that adults have greater conversational competence: that is, they are better at encouraging speech and at getting the native speaker to modify it for greater comprehensibility by asking for help, changing the topic, and directing the conversation.

Salcedo (2010:3) suggests that the simultaneous engagement of the right and left hemispheres of the brain ‘would seem to indicate that music possesses an invaluable key to incorporate the whole brain in the learning process’. Salcedo cites Guglielmino (1986:20) who states “Songs bridge the [brains] hemispheres, strengthening retention through a complementary function as the right hemisphere learns the melody, the left, the words”.

Wanda Wallace’s (1994) exploration of music and recall ability, determined that spoken text was the least frequently recalled, followed by rhyming text, and then with melodic text as the easiest to remember. She asserts that text is better recalled when it is heard as a song rather than as speech, provided the music repeats so that it is easily learned.. This supports the notion that verbal memory is improved by musical training. (Wallace, 1994:1471).

Krashen (1982:31) also sees second language learning as being related to the affective state of the learner. He cites Dulay and Burt’s (1977) Affective Filter Hypothesis as a significant variable relating to the success of second language acquisition in the classroom and suggests that motivation, self confidence and low anxiety levels are significant factors in achieving positive learning outcomes. The women in the project indicated their eagerness to learn English, but, in their daily lives, their levels of self-confidence were low, and anxiety levels were high. The MMSA project aimed to create as many opportunities as possible, in order to establish a space that fostered the leaving-behind of the world outside, with all its concomitant uncertainties and anxieties.

3: 7 Summary

The literature I have discussed in this chapter supports the notion that musicking, and group singing in particular, has the potential to bring about positive changes in both body and mind. This is of particular relevance in relation to the ways that what actually happened in the music sessions impacted on participant mood, one of the overarching themes in this study.

The literature surrounding group singing and social bonding indicates that musicking has the capacity to provide a means of stimulating pleasant feeling-states. The physiological and biological impact of music-making on the ‘bodymind’ has been identified and relates to the way the developing mind is shaped, even from before birth, by early musical experience and the early interactions between mother and child.

For some of the women seeking asylum, traumatic events had disrupted these natural musical experiences and interactions within the maternal dyad, and I have evidenced ways in which musical activity has the potential to address this. The therapeutic aspects of musical experience play an integral role in the development of maternal social interactions. The physiological and biological impact of musicking and the therapeutic effect are inextricably linked and have the capacity to influence social interactions and mutual exchange between children and mothers.

The acquisition of English as a second language has been demonstrated as being enhanced through singing, which, in turn, supports the development of communication and understanding, while shared past experiences provide a common ground for talk.

Social interaction is dependent not only upon the desire to communicate with others in the group, but also on the *ability* to do so. Social interaction is also intertwined with ways in which issues of identity and empowerment emerge. These issues run through later chapters in which I describe a multiplicity of ways in which these play out. In the following chapter, I set out a more detailed description of the music sessions and describe how a space was created, in which the outside world could be left behind.

Chapter 4 My methodological approach

In the first part of this chapter I set out my standpoint and describe how I accessed the women in this research. I examine my own position within the development and outcomes of the project, taking into account its influence on me, through discussion of the role of the researcher. I problematise dilemmas in researcher-participant relations and researcher partiality, taking into account the importance of reflexivity.

I then set out the approaches and methods I have used for the gathering of my data, explaining the rationale for choosing them, and outlining and evaluating the methods of analysis that I have adapted to make sense of the data in light of the cultural differences, and communication and language difficulties that were present.

4: 1 My position in relation to this research

I am a white, British-born, middle class mother, wife, researcher, teacher and musician. I have experienced violence and loss in my life but have no experience or personal understanding of the depth of fear and violence that many of the participants in the project have faced. I am an atheist, unlike all the women in this study who hold Christian or Muslim beliefs.

I describe myself as a feminist researcher in the sense that I believe that women are oppressed through what is essentially a patriarchal culture and that feminism concerns the contesting of gender inequalities in the social world. As Maguire (1987:79) suggests, I view the task of the feminist researcher as ‘to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression, in all its forms’ and to work ‘individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression’.

The women’s involvement in the music project intersects with my own. Glaser (1978: 2-3) acknowledges the difficulty the researcher faces, in terms of personal involvement, when undertaking participatory research. Glaser (1978: 2- 3) states ‘When the researcher’s life is in some way bound up with that of the research subject, it is impossible for the researcher to remain wholly detached from the subjects’.

We are all inextricably linked and, with Edwards and Ribbens (1998), I share the view that as researchers ‘finding ourselves in the position of both participant and researcher, we experience the dilemma of seeking knowledge and understanding in the margins of two intersecting worlds’. They suggest that access to participants in research is a ‘privilege cemented through informal exchange between researcher and participant’.

Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh and Sales (2007) cite Rist (1981:272**)** who suggests that trust is ‘maintained through acts of reciprocity’. For feminist researchers, paying particular attention to acts of reciprocity is of fundamental importance. These acts can be characterised as attempts to equalise the relationships of power that exist in the researcher participant relationship.

4: 1: 2 Researcher subjectivity

My position as a feminist researcher must be examined with regard to issues of influence and power. My own strengths, shortcomings, assumptions, struggles and internal conflicts, and my role within this research, necessitate examination.

A reflexive approach has resulted in my examining, with a more critical eye, my perceived relationships with the participants. The power relationships in this research are multi-dimensional: the hierarchical relationship between myself, as researcher, and the participants, as researched, is constantly shifting. It demands interrogation of the notion that I may be viewed, perhaps, as representative of the dominant culture, one who has access to knowledge about agencies that can provide help and support; a ‘useful’ person to know’ who also provides brief opportunities for the women to leave behind their everyday worries and pressures. It demands that I question how my perception of what I view as friendly relationship is related to reality.

My position is unavoidably influenced by my perception of the relationships that have developed between me and the other women and children in the group. Over the time of this research project, the participants and I have conversed together in a friendly companionship that extended beyond the group musicking sessions. We experienced fun and laughter together, disclosed personal stories, and shared intimate moments. Although I believe that there were mutual feelings of respect and trust, I am also aware that the relationship was uneven, and that my position as researcher had the potential to prompt the women to say what they imagined I wanted to hear, possibly from a desire to be of help, or in order not to hurt my feelings. There was, equally, the potential for participants to give accounts that they believed would be acceptable within the terms of the dominant culture that I represent.

I espouse an, anti-positivist approach that calls for an ‘awareness of partiality’ (Donini, 1994: 63 - 64). The women in the project were vulnerable in many ways. Most of the women I encountered did not speak English fluently and had had to find ways of surviving, both socially and economically, in an alien culture, while waiting, in uncertainty, to discover their fate. As, over time, the women began to tell me more about their past and present lives, I was profoundly affected by their stories, which included accounts of traumatic experiences. These accounts were slowly uncovered as we came to know one another more intimately. Our talks aroused in me feelings of admiration, affection, and a desire to help in more practical ways, when feasible. My involvement with the women in the MMSA project raises the issue of power relations, which is of fundamental significance and necessitates further exploration.

Fawcett and Hearn (2004: 206 - 207) propose that ‘the researcher operates reflexively as a research participant rather than expert,’ and suggest that ‘by placing women at the centre stage and focussing on the researcher’s experience and biography, it is considered possible to produce accounts of the social which are unbiased, or less biased’. This proposition is one which I have adopted and have endeavoured to keep at the heart of my research.

Dominant power-knowledge systems which serve to maintain totality, stability and order are described by Lyotard (1979) as being represented through meta-narratives, or grand narratives – grand wide-sweeping theories of knowledge or science or history. I am ‘on the margins between different social worlds’…and as researcher, I ‘embody and directly experience the dilemma of seeking knowledge and understanding on these edges’ (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 2).

The postmodern view acknowledges that our inner world of experiences, each narrative, is subjective. Boyce-Tillman (2005) suggests that postmodernism has encouraged moves beyond ‘the Cartesian view of the unified separated self… central to the project of Western rationalism, to the valuing and respect for “difference”’ Boyce-Tillman (2005: 13).

May (1993: 14) asserts that by focussing on people’s meanings and interpretations of the world the researcher is able to gain some insight into their ‘understandings and interpretations’ of their social environments. It is such understanding that I aim to discover in my own research. Each narrative is one historically specific version of events. I, as researcher, am ‘a real, historically located person who will have an impact on the research process and outcomes’ and consider the researcher’s autobiography, not simply as important information, but view this as ‘far from being the enemy of insight and profound knowledge, (it) is a powerful resource to be used to understand others’ life histories’ (Munro et al, 2004: 299). In order to gain insight into the private lives of the participants and to understand how, if at all, a music project can be of help and support, I must penetrate below the surface to enable the voices of the women in this research to be heard.

4: 2 Gaining access to mothers seeking asylum

I have described, in Chapter 1, the way in which I set up the MMSA project with the support of the drop-in centre manager, whom I describe as a gatekeeper. Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh and Sales (2007, 4: 1) propose a typology of the ‘key features of gatekeepers in a continuum from formal to informal'. Kate's role is that of comprehensive gatekeeper in that she has 'spent considerable time addressing the day-to-day needs of socially excluded individuals' (Emmel et al, 2007: 9.6) through a role that has 'a specific remit to address health and social care in the population, and who 'see their role as including wide-ranging referral across service provision' have 'long-standing relationships with individuals and groups' and that 'through these long-term relationships, in which such needs in people's day-to-day lives are addressed, that trust is developed'. (Emmel et al, 2007: 5.3)

At the drop-in, at venue A Marie, a thirty two year old single, childless, tri-lingual asylum seeker, who is viewed as a 'universal auntie' by many of the mothers seeking asylum, played a significant role in encouraging drop-in visitors to attend the MMSA project.

Maria, who acted as a volunteer interpreter of Tigrinya and Arabic for the drop-in and for local counselling services, had close and influential relationships with many of the mothers. Her role is best described as that of 'informal gatekeeper' in that informal gate-keepers 'have limited links to service providers and no mechanisms for referral, use their own resources to address the needs of those they work with in a relationship which is an end in itself and live and work in the community'. Their relationship with socially excluded people is 'one of befriending, supporting, and protecting those that they see as vulnerable and frequently misunderstood (by service providers) in the community' (Emmel at al, 2007: 4.1)

Within the MMSA project, Marie had a variety of roles: she was gatekeeper, interpreter, befriender, participant, and helper. Her plural role will be examined through analysis of the data I accumulated during the course of the project. Both Kate's and Maria's roles as gatekeepers influenced the project's development. The role and influence of Marie as gate-keeper in the context of this action research project are examined in later chapters with reference to my journal and other texts.

When I asked potential participants if they would be willing to take part in my research, I explained to them that is was my intention to look at the effects of participation in a mother and baby music group specifically for asylum seekers. I made it clear to them that all their names and place names used would be changed to maintain their anonymity. I emphasised to the women that the purpose of the group was primarily to offer an opportunity for musicking and fun together with their children and that I intended to see how this played out. I made it clear that I would be keeping a written record of what happened in the group for this purpose, and emphasised to all that the MMSA project welcomed everyone, regardless of whether or not they wished to participate in the research. I also stressed that this was to be an ongoing project funded by Sure Start. Most participants indicated that they were pleased to be involved, while Marie and Mica told me that this made them feel important, that someone wanted to know about them and help asylum seekers.

4: 3 My rationale for utilising qualitative research methods

Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for bringing to light participants' viewpoints, discovering their stories and for providing descriptive detail. Glaser (1978) states: 'A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind… rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data'. Any comparison of the small number of unique 'stories' gathered from this small scale ethnographic project is certainly not intended to 'yield laws or generalisations such as hold in the natural sciences' (Hammersley, 1990: 603). However, I anticipate that ideas resulting from this work may contribute to work in the context of promoting asylum seeker and refugee well-being and learning.

My approach takes heed of Foucault's (1975: 107 - 108) view of 'systems of knowledge definition and codification' as being 'often developed within institutions, (such as universities, hospitals, government departments) whose representatives have vested interests in defining what counts as knowledge, and in classifying knowledge in particular ways'. Donini (1994: 63-64) suggests that, in the past, research has been traditionally undertaken by males and that their rationalistic style of research has 'viewed the research participant as an object' and that 'the approach object is thus 'ruled and subdued' through a view that sees itself as objective and neutral. Such 'scientific' evidence is exemplified by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 12), who cite the nineteenth century 'scientific evidence' produced by (male) scientists to 'prove' the inferiority of women, through the use of categories such as brain size and other physical and behavioural differences.

This research project was conceived within the qualitative tradition of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). My approach is underpinned by feminist and anti-racist methodological principles 'in order that theory should be derived from the actual experiences of research participants' (Mirza, 1995: 165). My intention has been to access the participants' viewpoints, to re-tell their stories and provide the possibility, within a personal, human context, of accessing descriptive detail and so aid the discovery and production of greater understanding in the context of a small project.

4: 3: 1 Action research: methodological approaches

My aims in this action research are to gather and interpret data in order to refine my practice, to enable me to examine how the participants themselves viewed the project and to examine whether the notion of music as a tool for social well-being is viable. Action research is described by Reason and Bradbury (2001) as a 'participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes'. They propose that it 'seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people', and 'the flourishing of individual persons and their communities' (Reason and Bradbury, 2001: 1).

My research is to be undertaken in the light of Carr and Kemmis's (1986) early definition of action research as:

> a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.
>
> (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 162)

This research is concerned with the discovery and production of greater understanding in the context of a small project (Rolfe and MacNaughton, 2001). It involves examining the effects of my own and participant actions both within and outside of the music group. My initial approach is based on the early work of Kurt Lewin (1946 and 1948), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Dick (2002) and Reason and Bradbury (2001) in that, as I began this action research, I created a spiral of steps, in a cycle of planning; group discussion; action; reflection; fact-finding; and further group discussion regarding the result of the action, in order to inform the next step. MacNaughton (2001: 211) identifies the process as a cycle of observing, planning, implementation, reflection, sharing and theory building to inform further actions of planning, implementing and completing the cycle with observing.

The importance of reflexivity is emphasised by Mauthner and Doucet (1998: 120-122).They suggest that 'reflexivity also means acknowledging the critical role we play in creating, interpreting and theorising research data' and that 'a profound level of self-awareness is required to begin to capture the perspectives through which we view the world'. … 'In other words, in analysing data we are confronted with ourselves and with our own central role in shaping the outcome'. The nature of working with a group of women and children was such that it was sometimes necessary for me to make decisions or undertake actions 'thinking on my feet'. My spiral of action and reflection enabled me to critically consider how my actions had been informed by my own feelings and theoretical knowledge, how successful they had been, and to explore the criteria by which they could be judged.

4: 4 Data analysis based on Grounded Theory

My journal, the spiral of action and reflection and the interview transcripts constitute the data analysed in this study. According to Doucet and Mauthner (1998), data analysis is not a ‘discrete phase of the research process confined to the moments when we analyse interview transcripts. Rather, it is an ‘ongoing process which takes place throughout, and often extends beyond, the life of a research project’. Doucet and Mauthner (1998: 124)

There is a wide range of analytical methods available in the researcher’s ‘toolbox’ and I have found that the use of more than analytical one tool has been invaluable in the process of gaining greater understanding. I have drawn together the cyclic processes of action research and grounded theory: I view both of these reflexive, iterative processes as being complementary. The action research cycle informed my immediate actions and furthered my understanding of the research context, and grounded theory (Glaser 1998) facilitated the discovery of core categories in the analysis of the interview transcriptions, my journal and in the spiral of action and reflection.

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967: 3 - 5) propose that the best approach is ‘an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research.’ They state ‘A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind... Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data’.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe the interrelated ‘jobs’ of theory in sociology as being firstly ‘to enable prediction and explanation of behaviour’; secondly ‘to be useful in theoretical advance in sociology and thirdly, ‘to be usable in practical applications’. The next ‘jobs’ are: to ‘provide a perspective on behaviour’ and ‘to guide and provide a style for research on particular areas of behaviour’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 3).

Glaser proposes that one should enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible ... ... ‘In this posture, the analyst is able to remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases’ (Glaser,1978: 2 - 3). Glaser later states that ‘Preconceptions will be neutralized by what is being generated’ (Glaser, 1998: 90).

As I first began analysis of my journal, aware that everything that I reported was written from my own personal view point, complete with all my unconscious preconceptions and assumptions, I took from Charmaz (2006) the suggestion that the researcher, rather than see her ‘perspectives as truth’ should try to see them as ‘representing one view among many’. Charmaz (2006:54) points out that ‘careful coding ... helps you to refrain from inputting your own motives, fears or unresolved personal issues to your respondents and your collected data’.

I analysed my journal data and the spiral of action and reflection using incident-to-incident coding to uncover similarities between incidents and, further, to identify differences. Charmaz (2006: 53) recognises that making comparisons between incidents ‘likely works better than word-by-word or line-by-line coding’ because observational notes, ‘already consist of your own words’. This method not only served to uncover themes, but also facilitated my own reflective engagement with the data which inevitably voices my own conscious and unconscious views. An example of this coding is to be found in Appendix IV.

The interviews were analysed line by line: choice of words is limited for the second language English speakers and participant responses mostly were very brief due to their language difficulties. Through re-reading for similar and dissimilar incidents, statements and events, more focused coding of my data enabled me to identify further ideas. For example, the notion of the group as a rehearsal space emerged much later in my analysis, after I noticed the occurrence of music as preparing children for school, and what might be construed as ‘role play’ songs, such as those covering mothers’ visits to the doctor and other songs contextualising the use of new vocabulary. I also separated out the data relating to each of the individual women in order to examine each separately and compare these stories and significant events. Initial categorisation of themes facilitated identification of sub-themes, and I followed developments in each, comparing interview data with my observations.

The overarching themes that emerged from all the data, previously set out in Chapter 1 (1: 5), and which informed my further investigation further are first, how what actually happened through the music sessions impacted on participant mood. This overarching theme covers a range of sub-themes that includes: how the children responded to the different musical activities and how the mothers reacted to their children’s responses to the songs and to the use of instruments and props; how the mothers themselves reacted to them; how different ways of participating changed over time.

All of these sub-themes are closely intertwined with social interactions, musical and non-musical, and music in relationship; language and communication. Here, I examine the ways in which the musical activities engendered interactions between the adults and how the social aspects changed over time. Exploration of the mothers' views of their own and their children's participation gives insight into their changing relationships with their children and their hopes for the future. The nature of the changing relationships and the role of musical play in the maternal dyad are explored. The function of singing in language acquisition; the ways in which the women communicated together and how other activities in the music group contributed to this, closely relates to the development of relationships between the participants and with others outside the group.

With regard to power relationships, empowerment and the role of music in this, I am aware that people seeking asylum, as 'subjugated others' lack a voice. They are subject to the vagaries of asylum law and its changes, have no say in where they can live, cannot work, have limited access to services, have very little money. The ways in which the women's voices could be heard in the context of the project is examined. This is set in relation to the raising of confidence and the psychobiological impact of music on self esteem and well-being.

My exploration of the theme of identity: the outsider as 'Other' as social outcast and subjugated knower reveals differences between the mothers' perceptions of different ways of being in the world, and how they cope with the challenges that their position of uncertainty brings. The sense of one's identity, knowing how and where one fits in, is lost for many asylum seekers. There is disorientation as one's view of oneself is changed and confused in this new position which is shaped by factors such as how one is viewed and treated by others and by the contrast with how one felt oneself to be regarded in their previous life.

The wide range of backgrounds from which the women originate affects how they view their positions both as women and as asylum seekers. Life in a country, whose culture, values and way of life are, in so many ways, different from their own, raises issues of identity and the associated conflicts, challenges and opportunities. These issues closely interconnect with the different cultural constructions of gender and how the participants dealt with new cultural values over the time of the project. For some, the freedoms of Western women were to be aspired to, while for others, such freedoms were daunting. Different gender constructions play out in widely different ways and are, inevitably, closely intertwined with issues of power.

Through re-reading and comparing and contrasting similar and dissimilar incidents, statements and events, more focused coding of my data enabled me to identify further ideas and to recognise behaviours and strategies which had not surfaced in my earlier analyses.

4: 5 Gathering the data

Data collection was predominantly in the form of a journal in which I kept my account of the interactions I had with the project participants, both during and beyond the music sessions. At the end of the MMSA project, the five selected research participants were interviewed, and the transcribed interviews were added to my data.

I found the process of journaling to be essential in order to be reflexive and regard it as a form of self-interview (Ribbens, 1998). The journal documents my observations; reports of conversations; group discussions; observations of relationships that developed between the participants, including myself as participant, and it records actions of individuals in the group. I made journal entries at the end of every music session, after encounters with participants and other meetings or events that related to my research.

Integral to the reflective process was the analysis of all my journal entries from the start. I used a system of colour-coding, highlighting in colour, key words and the different themes that emerged, line by line, describing them in the margin. This enabled me to quickly identify commonly-occurring themes and issues as they emerged and allowed me to examine them both in and out of context. For example, initially, I used one colour for 'mood' and scrutinised these passages in order to separate them into finer categories, link them to other issues and themes. This served to support understanding of the personal stories that the women have told me and facilitated the construction of the five individual histories in later chapters. Following is an extract from my journal. All names have been changed to maintain participant anonymity.

> As I come back from the car with a box of instruments I meet Naina with 2 children Zafar and Witha. She's been shopping and is on her way home, but when I say I'm going to do music, she decides to come in with me. She hesitates at the door, apparently overwhelmed by the unusually large number of people inside and almost runs away, but I gently touch her arm and she seems to calm down. We go through to our space and I start the music session. The two older children join in happily with me and Naina's children as I start some singing games. Naina watches at first, then takes Zafar onto her knee and helps him clap to the beat. I invite Witha to sit on my lap, which he does with alacrity. We all clap, rock, stamp, and bounce our way through some action songs. Mariam comes in crying and starts talking with Naina. They talk quite loudly in Dari and I try to keep the children's attention, almost in competition with the voices of the two women, in an effort to distract them from Mariam's upset. I take all the children on my knee one by one and sing 'All the little ducks', tipping each one, including Mo, upside down at every chorus. There are shrieks of laughter and both women stop talking briefly and watch. Neither woman speaks much English, but they see that the children are engaged and feel able to return to their animated conversation. Mariam is much calmer now.
>
> (Journal 12th June 2006)

Briefly, in this passage, are themes of mood: shyness and fear of unknown others; confidence; reassurance; calmness; crying; laughter. These were bound up with: my own role and my actions and reactions; music as distraction; children's responses; communication, both verbal and non-verbal between participants; familiarity; songs; other participant actions.

4: 5: 1 Group talk

Based on the notion that 'a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers' facilitates discussion, from personal experience, of the topic that is the subject of the research (Powell et al, 1996: 499), group discussion provides an effective means of communication and adds to, and enhances the data. While the presence of others can be supportive of the expression of different views, it must also be borne in mind that it can also stifle openness when the owner of a particular view knows that others may disapprove of it and judge them negatively.

In the context of the MMSA group, there was a forum for debate and the expression of different points of view. Group talk presented opportunities for clearer expression of opinions. Jenny Kitzinger (1995: 299) claims (in the context of focus groups, but I would assert that this is valid here) that group discussion facilitates exploration of issues important to the participant when the researcher has 'a series of open ended questions and wishes to encourage research participants to explore the issues of importance to them, in their own vocabulary, generating their own questions and pursuing their own priorities'.

Kitzinger explains that through analysis of the 'operation of humour, consensus, and dissent and examining different types of narrative used within the group, the researcher can identify shared and common knowledge'. Kitzinger suggests that this facilitates sensitivity to cultural variables and is why this method of data collection is 'so often used in cross cultural research and work with ethnic minorities'.

Bourdieu reminds us that 'as soon as two speakers exchange utterances, there's an objective relationship between their competences, not only their linguistic competence their more or less complete command of the legitimate language) but also their whole social competence' (Bourdieu, 1977: 68). Geert Hofstede (1984) maintains that 'Our thinking is affected by the categories and words available in our language…' and suggests that 'researchers and their informants may hold different normative expectations about the use of language. In some cultures and subcultures, being polite to the other person is more important than supplying objectively correct information' (Hofstede, 1984: 27).

The informality of the ‘chats’ that took place in the MMSA group after music was such that there was joking, teasing and even risqué and intimate conversation, as well as serious discussion about problems, plans and ideas. Sometimes, I used handy scraps of paper, or whatever was available, to record what was said in abbreviated form, either at the time, or as soon afterwards as I was able. At the end of each session I always made a note of any songs, activities, ideas or requests for the following week, so this provided me with a good opportunity to make my quick notes. In this way I was often able to note direct quotations and jot down significant details when spontaneous group discussions took place before or after the music activities. I then wrote as a fuller account in my journal as soon as possible afterwards.

I felt it was important to avoid bringing formality to any discussions that arose as a result of topics raised within the group, and was sometimes reluctant to interrupt the flow of conversation, or dispel the comfortable atmosphere in which spontaneous discussion arose. For this reason, I did not sit as an observer and take ‘formal’ notes and, in practice, it would not usually have been possible when I might have a child on my knee or a teacup in my hand.

When the MMSA project was about to come to an end I invited each of the five women in my study to participate in interviews. This was to provide an opportunity for them to look back over the time of the project and tell me their views about how they felt it had impacted on them, and to substantiate the data for my case studies.

4: 6 Interviews and Conversations

Bourdieu (1977: 37) proposes that the interview is one of the weakest research methodologies, suggesting that interviewees are liable to provide an 'official account', one reifying norms, values and ideals – what they believe they think *should*, rather than what actually *does,* happen. I would argue that by understanding and accepting this possibility, I can, with my knowledge of the participants, try to take this into account and seek to identify such tactics. When interviewing individuals who have already shared confidences and secrets with me in prior friendly, conversational exchanges, the unstructured interview might, perhaps, be viewed as ‘a conversation’. Oakley (1981: 41) suggests that when the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical, and when the interviewer willingly engages with the participant and ‘invests their own personal identity in the relationship, then the goal of the interview is more likely to be realized’. Such engagement, coupled with a relative freedom of discussion implies a willingness on the part of the interviewer to understand the interviewee's response in the wider context of the interview. Oakley proposes that a meta-narrative, unrelated to the specific subject of enquiry, may then begin to emerge and that such a metanarrative has the potential to counteract and destabilize an interviewee's perception of unequal power relations.

The unstructured interview can guide further enquiry and provide opportunity for spontaneity in the interview allowing further discussion of previously-known issues. The data produced through unstructured interviews is likely to be *less* encumbered by the interviewer's own agenda, although, as Peter Collins (1998: 1:3) points out, 'even the apparently most "unstructured" interview is structured in a number of sometimes subtle ways'. The act of initiating an interview unavoidably governs the nature of the event which 'most people will understand to consist of particular roles and rules: shaped, that is, by a particular structure'. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 270) citing Lincoln and Guba (1985), view unstructured interviews as 'useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know and relies on the respondents to tell her'.

The use of audio recording equipment captures much less than the full conversation: gestures and other means of expression remain unseen. I noted such information at the time and incorporated this into the conversation transcripts. This additional information provided 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973: 12) to enable me to place talk within the speaker's own 'culturally established structures of meaning'.

Barker and Johnson (1998) consider the interview as a vehicle for enacting or displaying people's knowledge of cultural forms, suggesting that questions cannot be neutral and indicate how people understand each other and their social world. They point out that respondents' possible uneasiness may lead to 'avoidance tactics if the questioning is too deep' and suggest that it is 'impossible, just as in everyday life, to bring every aspect of the encounter within rational control' (Barker and Johnson 1998: 230).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 279) remind the researcher that 'It is crucial to keep in mind the fact that the interview is a social, personal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise'. Jane Ribbens (1998) refers to earlier research with groups of Western mothers (David et al, 1996) and asserts that it 'testifies to women's extensive and automatic assumption of obligation and responsibility as mothers, such that as a researcher, even questions that are carefully thought out to be value neutral will be heard as carrying moral overtones' (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998: 33). The unstructured or semi-structured interview allows room for individuality and individual circumstances and can facilitate spontaneity or naturalness of response.

4: 7 Challenges arising in relation to the interviews

Communication in English was not easy for many women in the project who had a limited vocabulary with which to express themselves. The assistance of a familiar woman to act as interpreter is essential for those who still have little ability to express themselves in English. Alexander, Edwards and Temple et al, (2004) have noted, in the context of official interviews, 'People mostly prefer family or friends to interpret for them. They trust them because they have an ongoing relationship with them that includes emotional commitment and loyalty' (Alexander et al, 2004)

With this in mind, I had engaged the help of Marie, who also interprets for local counselling services and accompanies many families for interviews with Refugee Action and other agencies. I explained, and we discussed, the interview consent forms. All were willing to sign, although, at first, Ooma had been concerned that her signing the form might indicate that she did not trust me. When I explained that I was not allowed to proceed without her signature, she willingly signed it.

4: 7: 1 Using an interpreter

I knew, from my own past experience, that the presence of recording equipment may be inhibiting and can bring a formality and artificiality to a one-to-one interview or conversation. I had rejected the use of a video recorder as being too intrusive, in favour of using a small tape recorder. Before I engaged participants in the recorded interviews, I ensured that they understood the interview information letter and the consent form, copies of which are in Appendix VI.

First, I interviewed Amy at her house one evening, when Amy anticipated that Raif would be asleep. Interviews with Mica, Naina and Ooma took place in a Sure Start centre room that had folding partition doors, which allowed me to divide the room in two to form an interview room and a separate play area for the children. As each mother was interviewed, the others stayed with the children. Marie was there as interpreter, and I interviewed her later in her home.

When I asked Amy to allow me to record an interview her, when I used the word 'interview', she began to look anxious and I responded quickly to reassure her that this was in no way related to 'official' interviews. I assured her that I simply wanted to have a conversation with her to summarise her view of the MMSA project and record it so that I could listen back to it carefully afterwards. Amy's prior experiences had been of interviews in which officials demanded answers on which her future life depended: interviews here were fraught with fear. I would use her words, I told her, to add to and clarify what I had written in my journal. From that point on, I did not use the word ‘interview’ but substituted ‘talk’ and ‘conversation’ when I later approached each of the other four women to make our arrangements. I explained that the purpose of the conversations I wished to record was to tell me, in their own words, their views regarding the MMSA project.

At the start of Amy’s interview, when I turned on the tape recorder, Amy was overwhelmed by its presence and, demonstrating great discomfiture and shyness, covered her face with her hands and giggled. It took a few minutes for her to feel more at ease, but once she had overcome her initial awkwardness, she relaxed a little. Throughout our talk, her hands repeatedly returned to her cover her face. In reality, the presence of a tape recorder, which introduced a formality previously not experienced between us, initially made talk very difficult to some extent, for everyone I interviewed.

Despite his mother’s attempts to get him off to sleep before I arrived, Raif was awake and lively. For part of the time, he sat snuggled up to me on my knee, although he sometimes left my lap to jump energetically on the bed.

Amy’s initial response had been to ignore my opening request for her to tell me about the time when she first arrived in the city. Instead, she produced a piece of paper in order to read out a statement she had painstakingly written out for me. I warmly thanked her for having taken the trouble to do this and told her that I immensely valued what she had done. I suggested that it would be of greatest help to me if we could chat a little first, and asked her to read out what she had written at the end. Amy read the letter aloud to me at the end of the interview, saying that it had proved useful for her to look back and think about some of the significant changes that had been taking place in her life.

At the start of each further interview ‘conversation’, I had begun by asking the women to think about their feelings when they first began to attend the project and to recall their initial impressions. With this more structured approach, once they had overcome their initial reticence and begun to respond, two of the women were better able to talk more freely because of their command of English. The more structured beginnings opened up the way to a less structured form of exchange. It was not always possible to achieve more than very short responses, particularly from two of the women who had insufficient command of English to express themselves, and I frequently resorted to re-phrasing questions, sometimes asking far more specific questions in the process than I had originally intended, in order to achieve better understanding.

Given the difficulties encountered by participants in articulating their views in a language foreign to them, the issue of gaining meaning from interviews is problematical here. During the interviews, the women sometimes looked to me to supply the word they could not think of. Whilst aware that this might be viewed negatively as potentially influencing responses, when ‘put on the spot’ it seemed appropriate for me to behave ‘as usual’ and to help out with words when my questions or responses were followed by the hesitations, questioning looks or gestures that had become the unspoken way of signalling that my help was being sought. This was noted in the interview transcriptions.

In the past, when analysing transcriptions from interviews with English speakers, I had listened to the recordings to time the pauses and responses. However, in this research, timing of the interviews was a far more complex exercise, because the responses were frequently delayed as respondents took time to understand questions and to formulate their responses, with a considerably narrower range of vocabulary than is more commonly available to first language English speakers.

The interviews with all but two of the participants were challenging. For example, Mica is a very private, independent and proud woman and her gestures, body language and facial expression were an indication, during our talk, that she was not completely comfortable. During conversations in music group sessions, even when talking in her own language, she did not speak very much about her daily life, as did the other women and, in conversations, would often avoid a discussion by immediately jumping to another, completely different idea and talk about that instead, as in the following excerpt.

> Me: I think when I met you, you told me you had some of your problems, and I wondered, erm, what made you keep coming back to the Music group, even when it was in Venue A.? [*This has been changed because I had named the venue.*]
> M This minute, I’m just coming for the child because my child, I can’t keep them at home because she’s – she wants to share with the children, but if you ask me about my problems, and I got to the libraries, I can’t explain. – It’s hard for me.
> Me Yes?
> M I want to keep it private, like.
> Me O.K. No problem. No, no, no.
>
> (Mica, Interview 51-63)

It is possible that Mica had misunderstood my question, and had thought I wanted to know about her problems or, possibly, she had wanted to protect her self esteem in the face of her inability to express herself as well as she would wish. I am aware that she is very proud of her ability to speak English as, in the past, she had rejected any suggestions about attending language classes, stating emphatically that she did not need them. Mica’s statement that she wanted to ‘keep it private’ was, to me a clear signal that she did not feel comfortable, at which point I had hastily agreed, ‘OK, no problem’.

It is also possible that Mica may have found Marie's presence unwelcome, despite her assurances to the contrary, and therefore, may have been unwilling to share personal information. As I began our 'conversation', I became aware that, in my desire to hear her view, I was repeating questions and posing them in different ways in my attempt to elicit a fuller response and that she was trying very hard to talk only in English. It was also difficult for me to keep asking her to repeat phrases I could not understand. On two occasions Marie relayed my questions to Mica in Tigrinya and Mica gave all her responses directly to me in English. The interview examples of Ooma's words are given in back-translation: all other women's responses were in English and have been reproduced directly from the transcripts.

4: 8 My approach to interpretation and translation

Birbili (2000) suggests that the quality of a translation is influenced not only by the competence and autobiography of the translator, but also by the relationship between the researcher and translator. Temple and Edwards (2002) remind us that interpreters, like researchers, bring their own assumptions and concerns to the interview and the research process. Temple et al suggest 'The research thus becomes subject to 'triple subjectivity' (the interactions between research participant, researcher and interpreter) and this needs to be made explicit'

In order to analyse the interview data, it is important to be able to identify first person statements and to know exactly what was said, how my questions and comments were relayed and what the responses were, prior to being relayed back to me in English. Hofstede (1980: 28) discusses the difficulties that may be encountered in cross-cultural talk, noting that translators sometimes 'filtered meanings according to their countries' dominant value systems'. He suggests that 'back-translation by a second bi-lingual, comparing the back-translated text with the original, resolving differences by discussion' is a 'wise safeguard against translation errors' but notes his own preference for a 'one-shot translation by a gifted translator' who is 'familiar with the content matter'.

To ensure that I understood how Marie might have elaborated upon what had actually been said, I sent the sections of interview in Arabic and Tigrinya to be translated into English by a London-based firm of professional translators, and so unconnected with any of the participants. This was in order to establish whether questions and answers had been relayed with relative accuracy: I sought *meaning* as much as literality. I also wanted to discover whether Marie's helpful attitude might have caused her to censor or change meaning in any way, in order to provide answers that she believed would be pleasing to me.

Reflecting on her own interpretation and translation work, Temple (2006) discusses her choice of the English word for Polish '*dokucza*' and gives a number of possible interpretations, demonstrating how she had made her choice based on her knowledge of the context and speaker. She demonstrates how all her possible choices could 'be judged to be "correct" and suggests 'readers can discuss whether they agree with my choice'. Temple points out:

> In most translated texts they are not given any choices' and that 'The choice of suitable word or concept equivalence is integral to interpretation/translation and is rooted in the experience of the translator/interpreter. It cannot be solved by technical manoeuvres such as back translation'.
>
> (Temple, 2006: 13).

I would argue that my own attempt to better understand the participants' responses through the use of an additional and independent translation has provided valuable further insight into different possible meanings. After the independent translations had been made, it was enlightening to discover the differences between what my own, and the interpreted questions and between the two different versions of the participant responses. For the first time, I was able to see clearly how the spoken word had been subject to Marie's elaboration in translation. The potential for misapprehension had been less in evidence during conversations in the context of group talk, with multiple contributions to establish meaning.

I suggest that my own personal experience and knowledge of the women's mode of communication in the context of the group has facilitated the uncovering of meaning. It has been only through the differently translated versions of the interviews that I have been able to identify instances of embellishment. This is exemplified in my interview with Ooma, which is reproduced in Appendix VII. I had asked Ooma what is was like for her when I had first met her and she had not taken up my invitation to come to the music group. Marie asked her:

> Did you understand? She is telling you the first time when she first met you in [Venue A], you were very sad and you were quiet, you didn't talk at all, so how did you feel when she told you come to the music class, how did you feel?
>
> (Ooma, interview with back-translation: 16 – 18)

Following is the back-translation of Ooma's response.

> All right, thank God, I enjoy the fresh air with the children and to be out of the house.
> I feel happy when I go to her.
> When I go to her class, and start to do the actions with the children
> I am in a different world.
> I forget my problems. I forget everything.
> (Ooma, interview with back-translation: 21-24)

Here, the back-translator has used '*fresh air'*, although, in this context: 'air' may also mean 'atmosphere' or 'way of being'. Meaning can be drawn from the statement in context. Following, is Marie's very different interpretation from the initial transcription of Ooma's words.

> She say that the first time when she came and you told her to come to the class, really she was very sad and she had a lot of problems, but first time when she came there and it was in the church, and she don't give that freedoms and feel free, but after that when she moved she really feel free and always when she came to your class she have a little problem but in that class she forget, just like she is in another world. All her problem – all everything – it has gone, and she feels just like she has just got freedoms. She meet some people she talk with some people, and before, she doesn't have that, you know. Even if she saw someone, she can't greet someone, but now she have a friend, she talk – and the children…. And her daughter was very happy to meet other childrens and play with them.
> (Ooma, interview with back-translation: 26-34)

In this way I discovered how Marie had added her own interpretation of my questions, and to Ooma's answers to me. She knew the respondent intimately and had been using this knowledge to elaborate upon the response. The question itself concerned Ooma's feelings when she *did not* come and the back-translation allowed me to see where Marie had elaborated or changed meaning. Marie had used the words '*told* you to come'' when, in my question, I had used the words '*asked* you to come'. Small and subtle changes are unavoidable, but it must be borne in mind that they have the potential to change the implications of what has been expressed.

I recognise that information which has been communicated through interpreted interviews and conversations cannot be taken at face value. Temple (2006) cites Brian Roberts (2002:176) who has suggested that 'in many of the social sciences, the result of the recent "cultural or linguistic turn" has resulted in an emphasis on language and representation and the detailed analysis of "texts"'. Roberts (2002: 4) suggests that this has 'produced a diminution or disappearance of the creative, active role of individuals'. It has been essential to delve into the motivations, reasons and dynamics behind the different accounts, in order to analyse and make sense of the interviews and other data I have collected.

4: 8: 1 Checking back

I had been concerned about some instances of inaudibility in the recording of Ooma's interview, which led me to check any possible unclear translation and back-translation. To gain further clarity, I arranged a meeting with Ooma and Marie, so we could listen to the recording together, with copies of my first transcription and the back-translated version. There had been three parts of the recording that were too quiet to be clearly understood and both women listened several times to the relevant parts of the recording and were able to identify what had actually been said.

Marie told me that the back-translator had probably not been familiar with some of the regional Arabic language differences, and had given a literal translation to a name. She and Ooma together were able to rectify this error, and Ooma was also able to reconstruct part of a sentence, concerning the use of the church, that had been almost inaudible on the recording, which had consequently been left out of the initial transcription and shown as 'inaudible'. Marie was able to re-translate it carefully and re-check with Ooma. For example, in the back-translation, the word '(Inaudible)' was identified by Marie and Ooma together as '*and to be out of the house'.* I was then able to include the clarified phrases in the final transcript.

4: 9 Summary

In this chapter I have set out the range of processes and methods for collecting and analysing the data and my rationale for using these methods. Here, we can see that there have been several issues which needed to be addressed concerning interviews and conversations, where language capability is limited, and when different cultural understandings, interpretations and translations add to the complexity of data gathering and analysis.

Even when taking into account my own partiality, the emotional and social backgrounds of the respondents and the plurality of approaches utilised, it is clear that, in the pursuit of authentic reproduction, the complex sets of relationships between the respondents' stories and experiences present diverse challenges. Taken-for-granted assumptions in relation to meaning must be explored and identified: as Mauthner and Doucet (1998: 140 -141) have acknowledged the 'process of transformation ... is changed by and infused' with the researcher's identity and becomes a different story to those 'originally told by the respondents'. Through my attempting to identify the challenges, I have endeavoured to conduct my data analysis in such a way that I am able to better hear the participants' voices and gain greater understanding, in order to facilitate representation of their perceptions and viewpoints.

In the following chapter, I introduce the women in the project, with descriptions of their past histories and backgrounds, and provide an overview of their participation and progress.

Chapter Five: Introducing the women

This chapter outlines the histories of the five women who took part in this research. Some of the women who came to the project attended for too short a time for me to gather sufficient material for study in this context, or were not willing to be involved in my study. Some were dispersed to other parts of the country; others were forcibly removed; others were not able to attend after their children had started attending nursery school.

While all the participants had stories to tell, Naina, Ooma, Mica Marie and Amy, from diverse backgrounds and with differing levels of communication skills, were all willing to be involved in this research. They were amongst those who attended with sufficient frequency or regularity to enable me to collect data over a period of time, which facilitated the drawing out of views that highlighted differences that otherwise, may not have been revealed.

I describe ways in which aspects of their progress and changes, over the time of the women's participation in the project, are related to the impact of musicking on social interactions and language, on mood, identity and empowerment, which are the overarching themes that have emerged in this research.

5: 1 Amy

Amy is the daughter of a wealthy business man and powerful tribal leader. A West African Muslim, Amy had lived much of her early life as a refugee in a neighbouring country before her family returned to their country of origin. She had been educated at a French-speaking private school, where, she tells me, she learned English and did well, especially in mathematics. On leaving school, she had gone to work for her father's business, unlike most of her friends who were married soon after leaving school.

Amy met and fell in love with a Christian man, but kept this a secret from her family, who would not approve. She continued to work for her father, who decided that she should eventually take over the book-keeping for his firm. To this end, he arranged for her to go to a college in London to study book-keeping, basic accountancy and to learn English. Education is a common factor in immigration: many people come to the UK to study because of the UK's good reputation in higher education.

Amy had had every intention returning home after gaining her qualifications and met with her boyfriend to say goodbye before she left. When she had been in London for only six weeks, she discovered that she was pregnant. She phoned home and told her parents. Her father was both furious and devastated and refused to have anything further to do with her. He said that she had brought shame on him, his family and his tribe and would face death if she ever returned home. Her boyfriend, on hearing the news, went into hiding. He knew that f he was discovered, Amy's father would kill him. Thus Amy found herself alone and pregnant in London. Her father sent no more money and Amy felt her only option was to apply for asylum. The subject of inter-family relationships and shame has been discussed in Chapter Two, and is a theme that I examine through the case studies set out in ensuing chapters.

Amy continued to live in London until her son, Raif, was born and there met a woman from her home country, who offered her support and friendship. When Raif was three months old, she was sent to live in Newtown. Coping alone with her tiny son, far from the one friend she had, and not knowing whether she would be given asylum, Amy, a shy person, was unhappy and lonely, and felt deeply shamed. There was no-one else from her country nearby, no-one she could talk to, except for the volunteers at the asylum drop-in who helped her find a solicitor and who provided her with a French interpreter to help her negotiate her way through the asylum process. It was at the drop-in that she discovered the music group and began to attend regularly.

5:1:2 Amy in the Group

Over the course of time, Amy developed from being a shy, ill-at-ease member of the group to one who was prepared to undertake administrative tasks and help in the running of the group. Her child had, from the start, responded with great pleasure to the musical activities and his evident pleasure drew her into the group. We shall see examples, in successive chapters, of the musical strategies that enabled Amy to participate with growing freedom and ease, both with her child and with the other women in the group.

5: 2 Naina

Naina was brought up in the mountains of Afghanistan. She did not go to school and grew up illiterate. She was married just after her sixteenth birthday and went to live with her husband, an army driver, in Kabul. Her daughter, Tamina, was born almost two years later and, after another two years she had a son. Naina was pregnant with her third child when her husband was captured by the Taliban. Unable to go out alone, under Taliban rule, she was dependent, in her husband's absence, on his brothers who lived close by. When her third child was born, her parents came to help her and took Tamina home with them. Naina could not go with them, having been told by her husband's family to wait for his return. Soon afterwards, fighting broke out in the streets around her home and she lived in terror. She saw one of her brothers-in-law shot, his body lying with many others, while anyone trying to recover a body was shot in the attempt by snipers.

Escaping, during this time from his captors, her husband was shot. Injured and traumatized, he returned to Kabul to his wife and sons and, together, they crossed the still-open border to Pakistan, (closed two days after they crossed) to find relative safety with his father in Karachi. Naina recalls leaving her house and having to step over piles of dead bodies in the street in their panicked escape from the city. There was no opportunity to go to get Tamina and her husband rejected Naina's pleas to go to her, saying it would be too dangerous.

Her husband's family helped them to get to England, where they applied for asylum. Two years later, Naina's parents travelled to Karachi to deliver her daughter into the care of Naina's parents-in-law. Naina was then able to phone Tamina regularly, and quickly discovered that her daughter was very unhappy and desperately wanted her mother, especially after both of her paternal grandparents died and an uncle was killed by the Taliban.

Naina gave birth to a third son after arriving in the UK. Her husband was becoming increasingly unpredictable and violent in his behaviour. Naina believed he had been traumatized by his time in captivity. He began to beat Naina and, on one occasion, the police were called. He was deported to Pakistan and Naina was left alone to cope. She spoke almost no English but, at the Asylum drop-in, and with the help of an interpreter, she was helped to apply for the benefits she was due, as a now single parent. Naina was very depressed and often in tears, missing her literate, English speaking husband, who had hitherto handled everything for which she now must take responsibility. She was also constantly worried about Tamina, who had been passed into the care of her eighteen year old cousin.

Naina managed to save enough money to send regularly for Tamina to pay for her keep, and to attend a school where English was taught. This was in the hope that the little girl could come to join her in England, should Naina be given leave to remain.

When I first met her at the drop-in, her oldest son was at school, she was in tears. Her youngest child was energetic, bored and was running around the hall, but she barely seemed to notice. I invited her to come with her children to the music group and she accepted my invitation. Naina's attendance was spasmodic in the first six months and, intitially, Zafar, her youngest son, often ignored her, as did Witha. Zafar was frequently aggressive and, initially, refused to join in, or sit on Naina's lap and she struggled to control him. Naina started to attend with increasing frequency and, eventually, became a regular participant.

5:2:1 Naina in the group

At first, Naina did not participate, but watched her children as I and others in the group helped them to join in. After attending several sessions, Naina began, hesitantly, to join in with the musical activities with her children who quickly grew to love, and engage fully in the musical activities, especially where boisterous physical activity was involved. Naina's English improved over time and increasingly, she became able to communicate more effectively with other participants. In my earlier chapters I have discussed the importance of verbal communication and, in the further chapters, we shall see how Naina's communication skills increased as she engaged with her children and with other mothers in the group, and how the musical and non-musical activities facilitated increased self-confidence enabling her to form friendships both within and, later, outside the music group.

After the project had come to an end, Naina was given leave to remain and later, gained British Citizenship. She applied for a visa for her daughter to join her in the UK. I went to court with Naina to support her visa application appeal and evidenced, through the reproduction of some relevant journal entries, Naina's distress and anxiety about Tamina. Tamina finally arrived in the UK in August 2010.

5: 3 Mica

Mica, a proud and independent Roman Catholic woman, had been educated at a school where she learned some basic English. On leaving school, she had gone to work in her father's shop, and had continued to work there after her marriage. In 1996 she had come to the UK with her Muslim husband, who had insisted that they leave their one-year-old son behind with relatives, believing the journey to be too dangerous to be undertaken with a baby. Upon arrival, they had each, independently, applied for asylum.

Asylum seekers had been allowed to work at that time, and Mica and her husband had quickly found jobs. Mica's earnings were used to send money to her family for her son's keep and to begin to build a new life in London. After seven years, and still waiting for their applications to be processed, she had a daughter, Dura. After the decision was taken to disperse asylum seekers from London, they were moved to Newtown. Her husband returned frequently to London, to visit friends who offered him a permanent place to stay. After this, he rarely returned to visit his wife and child. Mica still maintains a friendly relationship with her husband whom she visits from time to time.

It was just after moving to Newtown that Mica met Naina, who lived in the same street, one of predominantly private terraced housing on the outskirts of the town. They lived almost a mile away from the other nearest areas of housing allocated to asylum-seekers and met and became friends, after passing one another in the street.

It was Naina who brought Mica and nineteen month old Dura to the drop-in. Both women had had to leave a child behind in their countries of origin and this, and their being neighbours, drew them together. Mica had been apart from her son for so much longer than she had ever imagined and the years of waiting for the Border Agency to decide her fate had been agonizing and disempowering. She told me that she lived for her children and would do whatever she felt necessary to ensure a good future for them. After she first encountered the music group and, convinced that it would be good for Dura, she eventually became a regular participant.

5: 3: 1 Mica in the Group

At the drop-in music sessions, Mica kept herself apart from others in the group at first, insisting, in her limited, and broken English, that she came only for her daughter. She had said that she wanted Dura to learn English songs which, she felt, would give her a head start in preparation for nursery school. Mica’s belief that the musical activities were educational, enjoyable and, therefore, good for her daughter, encouraged her to attend with increasing regularity. It was after the group moved to Venues B and C that Mica began attending more regularly. In 2008, I realised that she had begun to anglicise Dura’s name and had started calling her ‘Dora’.

Mica appeared to be conscious of a need to demonstrate her independence and the ability to cope with daily life, never asking for help or advice from anyone other than her solicitor. Although she was friendly towards the other participants, and quick to offer help, Mica did not reveal any personal information in the group. She kept away from asylum seeker support groups, except when seeking specific advice from legal advisors. We shall see later how the group’s musical and social interactions led her to form friendships that continue to the present.

5: 4 Ooma

The youngest of three sisters and one brother, Ooma came from a small North African town near the Mediterranean coast, where Arabic and French were the common languages spoken. At nineteen, she was married to her cousin, Mohammed, a retail trader from the south of the country. They set up home together, and it was two years after her marriage that Mohammed was first arrested by the secret police, and tortured for his political activism, knowledge of which he had carefully kept from his wife. He was released, then re-arrested and tortured on several occasions and, during these times, Ooma was visited by the secret police. She told Mohammed nothing of what transpired during these visits, convinced that, in his traumatized state, he would not be able to cope with further distress.

They had decided that having children would be impossible, given their circumstances, but, after six years of marriage, Ooma became pregnant. Fearful of having a child in their current situation, and following massacres and renewed political upheaval, they sold all their belongings to pay for their passage to the UK, where they applied for asylum. Six weeks after their arrival and, alone in hospital, and with no understanding of English, Ooma gave birth to Flora. Twelve weeks later, they were moved to a house in Newtown and immediately went to seek advice at the drop-in. I met them two weeks after their arrival in Newtown. They looked thin, tired, and extremely anxious and upset, neither talking to each other or anyone except their legal advisor. Ooma was constantly in tears, eyes cast down to the floor. It was only after I had extended several invitations for Ooma to go into the church for music that she finally came to the group. At the end of a music session, when I had been carrying in several bags of donated baby clothes for the group, I had approached the couple again. My further invitation, and the offer of clothing, led Mohammed to tell her to go into the church to get some clothes for Flora.

Ooma received a warm and sympathetic welcome from all the other women, but she showed no interest in anything or anyone. The mothers and children rummaged amongst the clothing to find clothing to fit the baby. Ooma had tried to refuse at first, but the mothers and Witha would not accept her refusal, and insisted that she take them. She left with many lovely baby clothes, head bowed, saying, ‘Merci, merci beaucoup’ in a low voice. I did not see her again until after the summer break. This time, encouraged by her husband, she hesitantly came in to join the group. At the end, when everyone else had gone, and, having realized that, through the song *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*, she had learned some English words, she became more animated, indicating that she wanted me to sing it again for her. We stayed for some time together as she, with increasing delight, repeated the song with me and I saw her smile for the first time. From this point, she came almost every week. Ooma participated with increasing enthusiasm and gusto, only ever missing a group session because of illness, and for several weeks preceding, and following the birth of her second daughter, an event at which both her husband and I were present.

Ooma's attempts to attend ESOL classes were hindered by lack of available childcare, although she briefly attended classes while her husband looked after Flora. However, he was studying electrical engineering and, after passing his first exams, had begun a new set of modules, whose times clashed with Ooma's ESOL classes. Because of this, she gave them up.

When Flora was three, she started at a local preschool where I was running a staff and parent programme in early years music. Ooma attended these sessions too. She joined in with all the songs, some of which were new to the other adults, which enabled her to confidently display her knowledge of them. Flora had initially been very anxious when starting at nursery, and had cried when Ooma or Mo left her there. The head of the preschool told me that Flora had become much more settled as soon as they began singing. The positive impact of singing had been so clearly observed by all the staff, that singing time had been introduced at the start of every day there. They believed it had provided both distraction and emotional support for Flora and for several other anxious children, who would usually stop crying as they participated in the singing.

Ooma and her family were forcibly returned to their country of origin in October 2009. Many of the women who had become her friends when she joined the 'open to all' group at the end of the project wrote to the Border Agency and to their MPs to protest against their removal, and one of the group participants set up a Support the (Ooma's) Family group on Facebook. Cards, letters, parcels of clothing and money were sent to Ooma and the children, while Mo was again repeatedly imprisoned, tortured and released. I maintained telephone contact with them throughout their time there. They escaped to Northern Europe a year later, with the practical help of family members and political activists in their own country and with the aid of money sent to them by their UK friends. They have since been visited in their new country by several of the British friends they had made through the music group.

Ooma became seriously ill as a direct result of the stress incurred on her return and is now suffering from systemic organ failure. Only because of the medical care available to her in the Netherlands, where the family has been given leave to remain, has the progress of her illness been delayed. Her doctors are certain that, had she remained in Algeria, where she was unable to access medical treatment, she would not have survived.

5: 4: 1 Ooma in the group

In subsequent chapters, we shall see how Ooma was affected by, and how she dealt with, new cultural values over the time of the project. Different cultural constructions of gender were initially confusing for Ooma, and we see how she tried to make sense of this. Musical and non-musical actions and events are examined in relation to their role in Ooma's increased self-confidence and ability to communicate and in her changing relationship with her husband.

5: 5 Marie

Marie, a Christian, lived with her mother, younger sister and three younger brothers in the border area of a war-torn East African country. She spoke Arabic, Amharic and Tigrinya and was taught, and excelled at, English. Because her mother was unwell and her father had died when she was fifteen, from that age, Marie looked after the family, working in a shop and undertaking whatever other work was available to earn money for them. At twenty four, she was kidnapped and taken across the disputed border area to be imprisoned by her neighbouring country's soldiers.

She survived in prison for four years, the subject of beatings, torture, extreme sexual violence and starvation, until fighting broke out in the disputed area, which was briefly recaptured and she was released. Fleeing to the coast, she was helped to find a place on a boat and, after several weeks, arrived in the UK. On arrival, ill and deeply fearful of anyone in a uniform, and with no papers or possessions, she made her way to London where she lived as a beggar on the streets.

After six months, some people from a local church who had seen her plight, took her into their home and helped her to apply for asylum. Marie was quickly found a room in a hostel and began to get medical help. She was surrounded by friends at the church who continued to support her. At this point, seeing the way in which people had put their Christian beliefs into loving actions was sufficient motivation for Marie to become a 'born again' Christian.

When making her application, she was too traumatized to say much about the torture and other abuses meted out to her, especially to Border Agency officials who took a cynical and disbelieving view of her story. At her hearing, the judge accepted her story, but said that there was now sufficient calm in her home country that she should return there. Marie was refused Leave to Remain and, terrified at the prospect of being returned, immediately appealed against the decision.

She was moved to Newtown, and given a room in a house with two West African women and their children. It was not a quiet house and, suffering with flashbacks, unable to sleep and, when she did, suffering nightmares and night terrors, she found life exhausting and her health continued to suffer. She started attending counselling for post-traumatic stress and went regularly to the asylum drop-in. Her facility with languages was quickly identified as she helped with interpretation for others at the drop-in.

Marie met and interpreted for many women who had been through events similar to some of those she had experienced: she believed it to be her Christian duty to help them. Thus Marie became an invaluable helper at the drop-in and was formally accepted as a volunteer. Eventually, she became an interpreter for the counselling service too, which had an intensely negative impact on her, as she re-lived the terrors of others and took on their distress.

Marie became well-known and trusted at the drop-in and was often asked to be a chaperone for some of the women whose husbands did not allow them to go out alone. This position of trust gave Marie an insight into the lives of many families seeking asylum and she occupied a position of influence in that section of the local population.

Marie was told about the music group as, through her duties on the door, she would be the first to encounter any families with children and was in a position to tell them about it and encourage them to attend. One Monday, when she was looking after a sick friend’s toddler, she brought him into the group, confessing that she was glad her friend’s illness had given her the opportunity to participate. I let her know that she was welcome without a child and told her to come whenever she wanted to.

From this point, Marie came to the group to join in with the musical activities whenever she was free. Often, she was busy with her volunteer duties outside in the hall and could not come in but, at the end of the morning, when it was quieter, she would invariably come to join in the social time afterwards. Marie continued to come to the group in the afternoons, after it was moved to a new venue.

As part of the programme of dispersals, she was sent to live in a town in the west midlands. I, along with others from Newtown, maintained contact with her. She returned to Newtown as often as she was able. Friends from her church sent her money for coach tickets and she never missed coming to the group during her visits. She was then moved again and, when confronted with the order to move a third time in less than a year, to a coastal town in the south east, was told that she would no longer receive any financial support or housing if she did not comply. Her friends in Newtown rallied round, and a family from her church offered her a home with them, which she accepted. She moved back to Newtown and continued to come along to the group until the end of the project. She was finally given leave to remain in 2009. Now a British citizen, Marie works as a language support assistant in local schools.

5: 5: 1 Marie in the Group

Marie sometimes acted as interpreter in the group, and it was because of her encouragement that several new participants came along. She loved to participate in the music activities, especially when there were children she could take onto her knee, and she enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the other women in the safe atmosphere of the group. In further chapters I show, with particular reference to Maria, how ‘Otherness’ is constructed in the area of asylum-seeking and how language and communication in both musical and non-musical interactions play a significant role in this.

5: 6 Moving on

When funding for the MMSA project came to an end in 2008, I invited all the women to join a pre-existing and well-attended music group held in a Sure Start centre, Venue D, near the city centre, when it re-commenced after the summer break. Over that summer, Naina, Amy and Mica were given leave to remain and they began to look towards building a more secure future for themselves. In the September, Naina’s youngest child was able to take up a free nursery place and Naina began attending full time English classes at a local college. She continued to attend the new group whenever she had the opportunity, as did Mica, who had begun a training course in social care, as Dura was given a full-time nursery place. Amy and Ooma, along with others from the MMSA project attended this group, which I shall describe in the following chapter.

5: 7 Summary

I have described the five women and have given a brief overview of some of the ways in which their progress is related to the interconnected and overarching themes that were set out in Chapter One. The changes that took place during their time in the group, and which I have briefly outlined, offer a view of the difficulties that they had to overcome and the way in which the asylum process presented new challenges to their well-being. In relation to what actually happened through the music sessions and the impact on the participants, in following chapters, I demonstrate how these women, who all attended the sessions irregularly because of the demands of home and family, gained in confidence. This happened over time, as during the sessions they became familiar with the music activities and with each other. I show how singing what were to become familiar songs, using props, playing instruments and dancing together had a positive effect on the mood of both adults and children. Through the songs, a new dimension of play was opened up, which enhanced mother-child relationships, particularly where trauma, depression and unhappiness had impacted negatively.

The desire to speak English was shared by all the women and communication was facilitated by songs and games and by language-based activities in the social times. The whole group found ways of communicating through co-operative effort. In every case the participants' interactions with others were improved and relationships with children were enhanced as the women learned new ways of playing with their children. In a following chapter I examine how social interactions, musical and non-musical; music in relationship; language and communication played out in the context of the music group.

With regard to power relationships, empowerment and the role of music in this, I shall show how the balance of power over the time of the project clearly shifted. It has been a continuing dilemma for me as to how to use my 'power as an insider' to help 'outsiders'. It has resulted in my helping Ooma and Naina outside the confines of the project, and this has been time-consuming. The women's feelings of disempowerment were reduced as the participatory aspects of the group's development put much of the decision-making into their hands; self-esteem and confidence, closely linked with one's sense of identity grew over time.

The issue of 'Identity'; the outsider as 'Other', social outcast and subjugated knower; and how 'Otherness' is constructed in the area of asylum-seeking will be explored further. All of these women could be regarded as marginalized others in our society. In following chapters we shall see how the music sessions enabled them to deal with their sense of 'otherness', aspects of which are intertwined with different cultural constructions of gender. I consider how the participants dealt with new cultural values, particularly allied to gender, over the time of the project.

Gender, and the way that it plays out in various cultures, is clearly very significant for this study. There were many examples of the disadvantage felt by these women because of the mismatch between the gender constructions in their own culture and those in the UK. This issue will also be examined in further chapters. In the next chapter, I examine the impact of the project on each of the women in the area of social interactions, language and communication in both musical and non-musical contexts.

Chapter Six: The impact of the project on the development of social interactions

In this chapter I examine the impact of the project on the development of social interactions and the sharing of experiences, both musical and non-musical. Social interactions, both within and outside of the group, were influenced by factors such as language, the children and their responses to music group activities and their interactions with their mothers. The inability to speak English, which I briefly touched upon in the previous chapter, initially presented a barrier to some of the women in their capacity to engage in social interactions involving English conversation with people they encountered in daily life and, to a lesser extent, in the music group with other mothers seeking asylum. The most common languages represented in the music group were French, Arabic, Farsi, Dari and Tigrinya.

At the drop-in centre, interpreter services helped those seeking asylum to cope with bureaucratic processes, and social contact appeared to be primarily between those who shared common languages. Much of the talk I witnessed there appeared sombre, reflecting the anxieties that so many applicants were experiencing. There was also a sense of caution in the amount of personal information that was exchanged. Women, who themselves, or whose husbands, had been political activists in their own countries, were cautious about revealing any information that might possibly be used against them. There were suspicions about secret police activities, and fears that government supporters or spies might, themselves, be masquerading as refugees or asylum seekers. Certainly, amongst a number of people I met at the drop-in, it was believed that there were attempts by secret police to gain information about people currently living in the UK who were ‘wanted’ in their countries of origin. That such ideas were being circulated is likely to have contributed to a general sense of mistrust.

The requests for help with character and other references I received from Amy (and others not included in this research), were often the means through which private details were first shared with me. The building of trust and friendships between participants of different nationalities, or with me, was possibly a safer strategy for some who may not have been so ready to share personal information with someone from their own country. Hynes (2006:7) states: ‘The desire to live a normal life meant that in some cases aspects of personal histories, legal status and other issues considered shameful would be hidden or kept secret from friends or work colleagues. The exchange of personal information was, most frequently, based on need for ‘instrumental’ or ‘informational’ help through the formation of instrumental relationships. Simich et al (2003) have proposed that ‘instrumental' or 'weak ties’ offer support and affirmation through the sharing of experiences and suggest that validation from people of a similar background, who have been through similar experiences, is ‘important for refugees' mental well-being’ (2003: 888).

Initially, the women’s relationships with both with me and with others in the group might be best described as ‘instrumental’. At first, Mica and Amy said little about the circumstances under which they came to seek asylum and it was over time, and as trust was built between us, that they began to share personal information. I never asked personal questions of any of the women beyond those necessary to complete Sure Start registration forms. My resistance to categorization by skin colour, coupled with the fact that I that I did not hold an uncritical view of the asylum system, may have demonstrated to the women that I did not represent ‘authority’ in any formal sense, and that I might actually prove to be a sympathetic ally.

I shall first examine the way in which language, in the project’s non-musical contexts, played a role in the development of social interactions.

6: 1 Social interactions and language in non-musical contexts

During the course of my research, it became evident that the social interactions of the women in this study were initially limited to other refugees and asylum seekers (Smyth, 1997; Connolly, 2002; Dyck, 2002). Many of the asylum seekers’ interactions with white British people appeared to be predominantly functional, and involved speaking to drop-in advisors or people fulfilling bureaucratic or advisory roles, such as solicitors, or the police. The MMSA group provided a contrasting setting.

During the first months of the project, attendance had fluctuated and, in her interview, Marie talked of the initial reluctance of many women to come to the group. She told me

> When you start to do the music, and it’s so – how is the children – they like it, and most of the women – the mums – just like they say, “Oh that’s rubbish.” I’ll be honest with you. “That’s rubbish. How can someone who’s come all the way and do some with the hand *(makes clapping movement)* and...” (sneezes). And then for me I say them, “Because you come from another countries, different countries, especially if you come from Africa, you don’t read the children, your children with singing and all this stuff, that is the way, you know. You don’t sing for them. No. They don’t play with them. It’s really very rare, you know, because the life’s very tough there.
>
> (Marie, interview: 32-43)

Marie’s statement demonstrates the way in which, for the women she referred to, a very different sociocultural practice, involving singing in a group with their children, was perceived by women from other cultures (Bentley, 1987) and how, as a result, difference was emphasised (Spencer, 2006). Marie, who had played an important role in encouraging many mothers to come to the group, which had gradually attracted a core of regular participants, elaborated further on the lack of singing and playing with children in the context of child-rearing for many of the women she encountered. She told me, ‘And I saw the difference, really, after that. The children, at first, they like it, O.K, and then the mums, they like it’. (Interview, Marie: 51-53). This relates to Boyce-Tillman’s description of the way in which a child can draw in the parent, leading to ‘difference in relationship’ (Boyce-Tillman, 2006: 7)

Because the sessions were structured so that musical activities were started at a set time and were immediately followed by a social time, after our musicking had brought us together in a unified group (Leonard, 1978; Hillman, 2002; Ansdell and Pavlicevic, 2005), we talked together about a variety of experiences. These covered subjects such as, for example, motherhood; men; child-rearing and cooking. I had been surprised, initially, at the way in which the women successfully communicated with others in the music group whose language they did not share. Discussing such topics was often a complicated process and, despite being hampered by lack of vocabulary, was usually fun, too, as we pulled faces and gesticulated. There were frequent misunderstandings that had to be clarified through two or three translations, until everyone present was able to follow and respond (Argyle, 1994). My understanding of French proved useful in conversations with women from French-speaking countries, although my less skilled spoken French often was a cause for merriment. The challenge of speaking in a ‘foreign’ language was something we all shared and was, to some extent, an equalising experience. The ability to openly discuss private or intimate subjects appeared to serve as a means of drawing all the women, including myself, even closer together.

When Naina and Ooma began attending the music project, both had been, initially, almost totally dependent upon their husbands who were both able to speak English. This was a position of dependency bound up with the cultural norms of their ethnic origins, although Naina’s situation had changed when her husband had been deported, leaving her solely responsible for her own and her children’s access to the services they needed. Such dependency, coupled with their position as ‘outsiders’ in British society reflects Hayes’ (2002: 3:para. 2) notion of oppression ‘through membership in a particular social group’. In their situation, the ‘othering’ of asylum seeking women was compounded by the ‘othering’ and marginalisation of women within their own cultural origins, (Baumann, 2005; Bourdieu, 1990*)* thus presenting a dual barrier to their ability to communicate with others.

It appeared that all the mothers found it reassuring to discover that their children, on starting at nursery, had a repertoire of songs they knew which had enabled them to join in with singing. Also, their experience of being in the structured music sessions, and playing with other children in an English-speaking environment, had helped to prepare them for the nursery setting. This is exemplified by Mica's assertion that her daughter's knowledge of songs had helped her settle in when she started attending her nursery, and which was further supported by the anecdotal reports I received from staff at the nurseries that Raif and Flora attended.

6: 2 Group structure and dynamics

I had initially intended that my own role would be that of 'democratic' leader (Lewin, Lippet and White, 1939). However, this was not possible at the outset: I was the owner of a particular set of knowledges: knowledge of children's English language songs and musical interactions; of education and health services; and other cultural and social knowledge. I was responsible for setting out the structure of the musical activities and, initially, the women looked to me for this. The purpose of the group was made clear to all participants when they first came:

First, to introduce to the participants English language children's songs, and engage them in music-making and social exchange and second, to offer the participants a safe place in which they might briefly escape the realities of their uncertain daily lives to experience the shared fun and laughter of a friendly music group.

When the music sessions first began, attendance was sporadic and there was no clear group identity. Participants attended predominantly when waiting for appointments at the drop-in. After the first six months, several mothers began to come specifically to attend the group, and started to appear on a regular basis. Amy, Naina and three other mothers not included in this study, were the first to attend regularly and, as they became familiar with the structure and content of the sessions, I helped them to plan future activities and to suggest topics they thought useful to sing about for the following sessions. Having realised that they were beginning to acquire an extended vocabulary through some of the songs and conversations, the women not only suggested songs, but also began to initiate conversations about different aspects of daily life. Because of the variety of languages spoken, in any discussion, each person present was drawn in to the conversation in order to contribute to an interpretation, or simply to ensure their inclusion.

Marie was a well-liked, kindly and popular presence in the group who was frequently called upon to provide translations from Arabic and Tigrinya. I had asked her to encourage the women to attempt to speak for themselves in the group. As women began to be better able to express themselves in English, Marie encouraged and supported them and offering help only when a particular word or phrase was sought.

Because there were frequently new members in the group and other members leaving, to a certain extent, one might view the group as repeatedly being 'new'. The constant presence of children and the co-operative attempts to speak in English led this group, with its clearly structured activities, to develop its own particular set of behaviours and interactions. Topics of conversation after music generally involved knowledge exchange, sometimes in a structured way, and sometimes in informal talk. This talk was constantly subject to interruption because of the lively presence of the children.

Ascribing particular outcomes to group musicking has often, in the past, been examined without reference to group structure and dynamics. It is pertinent, therefore, to briefly examine some of the more common group outcomes and endeavour to identify, wherever possible, particular outcomes resulting directly from music activities and those of group membership. Seger, Smith and Mackie (2009: 461) suggest that when people think of themselves in terms of membership of a group, there is an impact on emotional responses when contrasted with individual emotions, particularly when, before questioning, they are primed to think of themselves in terms of group members, rather than individuals.

The notion of 'entrainment', which has been identified in reference to musicking, is also present in the literature about group processes. Hinsz and Tomhave (1991) examined facial expression from a contagion hypothesis and concluded that 'When smiles are initiated in a social setting, the smiling may spread by contagion' (1991: 592). Hatfield Cacioppo and Rapson (1994: 83 - 84) suggest that 'catch' emotions are affected by facial, postural and movement mimicry activity and cite Hoffman (1987) who evidenced emotional contagion between parents and children. This is further supported by Kestler, Brenna, Walker and Stowe (2006), whose conclusions support the significance of maternal mood states in relation to children's well-being.

Janice Kelly (2001: 176) indicates that a group leader who is high in expressiveness may be particularly likely to influence the emotional characteristics of her group and suggests that 'organisations may develop particular norms for emotional display that constrain the feelings and expression of emotion among organisational members'.

From the start of each group session, the action songs and games were such that, regardless of linguistic understanding, the songs, particularly those involving tickling, kissing and bouncing, raised a sense of fun and laughter in the group, especially with the children. My own enjoyment and enthusiasm were clearly visible and the strong desire of most of the women to leave their problems outside appeared to be met.

There grew an expectation amongst the women that they and their children would experience a happy interlude within the group sessions, something they desired and encouraged. In essence, the experience of happiness appeared to have been their ultimate goal.

6: 3 Naina's social interactions

During my first encounter with Naina, she had struggled to find words to explain why she had been crying. Victimising life events and a lack of positive experiences had assailed her 'inner sense of safety' (Van Waning, 2004). Her halting English is exemplified in my journal account of an early conversation we had.

> She says 'Husband, Pakistan, not know, my daughter, Pakistan'. Tears come as she says, 'My daughter, I want her.... come here'. I ask her how old her daughter is. She understands the question, replying, 'Tamina, 8 now, my daughter'. I put my hand on her arm and cannot help but show I see her pain.
>
> (Journal: 8th May 2006)

When Naina first came to the music sessions, she joined in with actions, but none of the song words. As she continued to come to the music group, I saw that, supported by the many repetitions, (Krashen, 1982; Gregory, 1996) she was able to better join in with the songs. Through the songs that introduced positional words and the names of animals and foods, she slowly gained some new vocabulary. Naina's increasing vocabulary was most evident in her exchanges with her children, particularly with Witha, who, after starting to go to a nursery, was quickly acquiring English and was beginning to communicate with his brothers in English, rather than Dari.

I have previously described (Chapter Five) how Naina, in October 2006, had invited Mica to accompany her to the music group at Venue A. Their only common language was their limited English, but this did not appear to have been a problem for them. Their desire to communicate with one another surmounted the difficulties they both had with the English language.

When I interviewed Naina, she told me that she had not known anyone prior to attending the group: Marie and Amy were amongst the first people she had met. Below is an extract from the interview, which presents a rather stilted conversation in comparison with her much more fluent talk a year later, after she had been attending full-time ESOL classes. I commented that she had been very quiet when I first met her and said I thought she had changed since then.

Me What kind of things happened, do you think, to make you change?
N Because he [it] is making me happy. I have a lot of friends from different countries.
Me Yes?
N I still enjoy.
Me And we all had to speak English! How did that feel, having to speak, you know, when we did everything in English?
N Yes, I like it.
(Naina, interview: 105-121)

I had pursued this, asking Naina how it had been for her to talk to other people in the group. She spoke of it being ‘good...a lot of friends’. To clarify, I asked her about prior friendships.

Me ....you made friends in the group, but did you have friends before that?
N No.
Me You didn’t? So the group – you were saying – is it coming to the group….?
N (interrupts, nodding emphatically) Yes. I have a lot of friends now. Before I have none.
Me And when you found that you were making friends, how did that make you feel?
N Feel happy. Just happy. (Clasps her hands together and shakes them back and forth)
(Naina, interview: 125-136)

Naina’s lack of meaningful and positive social interactions and friendships, prior to joining the group, was clear. The MMSA group, for Naina, had been a place of positive experience (Thurman: 2000) and a place where new friendships had been formed.

At Venue A, Naina sometimes encountered another Afghan mother, Samar, and, on the few occasions that Samar came into the group, she talked mainly to Naina. On one occasion, Samar had come in, without her child, to see an advisor. Afterwards, she had come into the ‘music space’ in the church, and had started talking to Naina when we were singing, distracting the children and negatively affecting what had been a happy atmosphere. Afterwards, I asked Naina about Samar. Naina appeared to be less than sympathetic, telling me ‘Everyone ...problems. Not her...everyone! She cry, cry. Me, I cry, everyone cry sometime. Not in group. Not to cry in group... sing, be happy. Talk ...

happy talk in group'. (Journal: 12th June 2006) The importance of the group, as a place where problems could be left behind, was conveyed in Naina's words.

Aware of the possibility that these feelings had been influenced by my stated idea that the group was to provide a brief respite from 'the world outside', and concerned that Naina might feel that it was not appropriate to discuss problems in the group, I told her that I would like to think that people were able to talk about anything, including their problems, when we were together. I also agreed with her that it would be better to keep music time separate from time for talk. For Naina, the drop-in at Venue A had been the place to which she brought her problems, and the music group provided welcome opportunity to sing with her children in a separate space, away from discussion of those problems.

In February 2007, I noted in my journal that, although Naina's understanding of English was now quite good, she still struggled to express herself in English. She told me that her two older boys spoke English well, due to their time in school and nursery, and that they spoke English when playing together at home, a common feature of children's ability in second language learning (Krashen, Long, and Scarcella 1979). Naina discussed this in the group when we were talking, during the social time after a music session, telling us that she often had to ask them to translate what they said into Dari. Naina was very proud of all her children's ability to speak English and told us that her children had helped her to learn a little more English. She found this reversal of roles amusing. "'Listen me', she says, laughing. 'Children teach, mothers learn'". (Journal: 12th February 2007).

Naina had changed drastically since her early attendance at the group, when she had talked very little, and only on a one-to-one basis. Unable to find words to express herself when she first began to attend, Naina had spoken little with other mothers in the group social time after music, although she was able to engage with others in her limited English. None of the others who attended regularly shared her language, but she eventually became able to express herself with humour and confidence. The changes I witnessed in her interactions in the group were mirrored by those of Ooma who, over time became an ebullient member of the group with a great sense of fun.

6: 4 Ooma's social interactions

I have described how Ooma, when I first met her, did not make eye contact with me and only looked at her husband, Mo, or at the floor. I had not even been sure that Mo had told her of my invitation to come to MMSA, and had repeated my invitation in French, which she had not accepted. I had wondered whether Mo had not wanted her to come with me into the church, a suspicion he himself later confirmed to me, because of his understanding of the use of a place of worship. Views of the use of the religious space will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Ooma had spoken to no-one else until she and her husband were introduced to Marie, who had been called in to act as interpreter when the man who had previously interpreted for them was absent.

When, finally, she did join the group, it was only after her first experience of musicking with other mothers, and when all but she and Amy had left, that we first established a degree of communication. My rather limited ability to speak French had been useful in this, as it had enabled us to converse together. The following week, when Amy, Ooma and I were, again, alone together after our music session, and their children were dozing in their buggies, I had noticed Amy rubbing her stomach and asked what was wrong. Amy had had no vocabulary that allowed her to explain in English, but was able to make herself clear to Ooma and me in French. Below is a description of this from my journal.

> I ask her if she's ok and she says, 'yes, it's ... chacque mois' and when I tell her we use the word 'period', she says she had not known what to call it. Mime turns out to be a useful medium and through it, I realise that 'women's' problems are very difficult to talk about without the right vocabulary. We identify 'period' 'heavy period, late period, period pain, sanitary towels' and put these into simple sentences that could be useful. I put the sentences to the song 'River is growing'
>
> (Journal: 6th November 2006)

Laughing together, we had sung the song repeatedly, and the incorporation of this vocabulary into song form proved useful in enabling both women to retain what they had learned. This supports the notion that learning through song (Salcedo, 2010; Gugliemo, 1986; Gregory, 1996) is of great effectiveness and that language learning is positively influenced not only by motivation, but also by low levels of anxiety (Krashen, 1982; Dulay and Burt, 1977).

This sharing of intimate issues had been a significant event for Ooma. I later learned, from Marie, that Ooma had mentioned this discussion to her and that she had told Marie she had felt as if she had been with her sisters. She had missed being able to discuss personal 'women's things' and our talk had made her feel less alone, and had encouraged her to feel, even more, that she could comfortably interact with us. In my journal entry for 11th December 2006 I note 'She (Ooma) is so quiet out in the hall, but in the relative privacy of our little space, she becomes freer and talks and sings with less inhibition'.

The impact of language learning through songs was of great value to Ooma, who recognised singing as a means of gaining a key to communicating in English, as well as its being an enjoyable activity in itself. I had asked, during her interview, for which Marie acted as interpreter, whether she had found singing English songs helpful. Her translated response, below, was through Marie, so refers to me in the third person.

> Yes it does help me. It helps me to speak. I don't know English well enough. I learnt many words. Before, I didn't understand English. When I go to the class with her they speak in English and I keep quiet and don't talk. Little by little, thank God I understand. I have improved, thank God.
>
> (Ooma, back-translated interview: 212 - 216)

When the project moved to Venue B, the initial sense of privacy there appeared to promote a greater sense of liberty. Marie, when I interviewed her, viewed the move away from the venue A church as marking a significant change. At this second venue, where we met for only three weeks, I saw how all the women developed a greater sense of freedom, and described in my journal how, after our first music session there, they had become increasingly loud and excited.

> We play a sing-song alphabetical word game – 'I went to the shops and I bought …' (items in alphabetical order). As the game proceeds round the circle, each person has to repeat all the previous items and include a new one beginning with the next letter in the alphabet. Whenever anyone forgets a word in the sequence, others call it out. Naina concentrates very hard and rarely forgets part of a sequence, but is interrupted, as are Nancy, Lena, Radia and Ella because Amy and Ooma keep interrupting. Whenever a word is introduced that they have difficulty in pronouncing, I am called upon to help with any pronunciation difficulties. They insist on repeating it until they are satisfied they can pronounce it correctly, with everyone joining in to correct them. This results in much hilarity and Naina and Radia start poking fun at them, each time they interrupt.
>
> (Journal: 5th March 2007)

At the next venue, C, the Children's Centre, after coming for several weeks, Ooma began to remove her hijab as soon as she came into the room. The privacy of our setting facilitated feelings of greater intimacy and Ooma felt able to relax, safe in the knowledge that this was 'our room'.

On one occasion, after Amy had arrived with tiny plaits in her hair, Ooma asked Amy to plait her hair too. Often, after this, before the music began, they were to be found sitting together, Amy brushing or plaiting Ooma's hair. Amy and Ooma started to grow closer and, when we were able to go into the soft room, both would get into the ball pool, ostensibly to help the children, but would end up hurling balls at each other and at anyone who was within range, causing much hilarity all round.

Ooma, who had originally been highly dependent upon her husband, had been isolated, depressed and friendless. At that time, Marie, much older than Ooma, had, to some extent, provided a mother-figure and, while this relationship continued, Ooma and Amy were able to share a different sort of relationship that was bound up with their being the same age and with their both having the confidence and sense of freedom and fun to briefly engage together in more 'juvenile' play.

6: 5 Mica's social interactions

Mica was a proud woman who did not like to ask anyone for help. It was Naina with whom she had most in common, despite the fact that they were only able to communicate in their limited English. She had not known anyone in Newtown until she had met Naina, who had introduced her to the group. In her interview, she talked of this friendship.

> You know, somebody, if he doesn't have friends, like, it's not easy. Like, it's hard, but many people, they don't have friends, or they don't, say – you can't go somebody's house to talk or something. I have – Naina ... She's Naina, she's my friend, we've come together to the children for play, and we as well have made another friends there.
>
> (Mica, interview: 76-80)

Mica appeared to feel it was important to be seen as self-sufficient and independent, preferring to struggle to make herself understood and usually refused Marie's offers of help with English, although Marie's facility in English was far greater than Mica's. A private person, Mica rarely spoke of her personal life or her past when she came to the group, although she was always friendly and willing to be of help to others and never asked me for any sort of help.

Mica's pride in her ability to speak English, which she believed she spoke very well, exemplified to me Blommaert's (2002) recognition of the way the ability to speak a language in her own country carried with it a 'status that is not necessarily transferable'. Mica spoke fast in one to one conversations, rarely letting her lack of vocabulary interfere with her desire to communicate, and frequently used the word 'thing' when she did not know a word. In the group, she rarely spoke at any length, although she was not afraid to give her point of view and spoke highly critically to me about the asylum process.

After we had moved to the children's centre at Venue C, Ella, one of the regular participants in the MMSA group, was forcibly removed to the Congo, a distressing event that shocked us all, and which served as an untimely reminder of the vulnerability of all asylum seekers. Following this, Mica spoke angrily and at length about how hard it was to do nothing but wait to find out if they all would be given leave to remain. She pointed out that if people were able to work, at least they would have something to occupy their time and their thoughts. It was the first time that she had spoken in front of everyone about her past life.

My account of this, following, is taken from my journal.

> She (Mica) says she desperately wants to be able to earn her living and says she would do any job no matter what. She had helped her father run his shop in Eritrea and says she really misses work. She recalls how, when she first came to the UK she was allowed to work and had rented and furnished her own little flat in London until the law changed in 2002 when she was forced to stop and was moved to Newtown. She had to find somewhere to store all her furniture and says that what is provided for her here is shabby in contrast with ‘my own lovely things I buy myself, from my own money, by my hard work’. She can no longer send enough money to support the son she was forced to leave behind with her brother. He was a small baby when she left him, afraid that he would not survive the difficult journey here, she reminds us. She had thought she would be able to bring him to the UK almost as soon as she arrived here. It’s been almost 10 years since then, she says, and she fears that they will be separated for years to come. She at least has her daughter, who was born here and who, she tells me, provides her with a reason to keep going. It is unusual for Mica to say so much in the group, despite her volubility in a one-to-one situation. She has never said so much all at once, usually preferring to listen to others and comment briefly in response to what they have said. Her strength of feeling is clear. The others make sympathetic comments of agreement in response to this outburst.
>
> (Journal: 2nd April 2007)

Mica’s strength of feeling, following Ella’s removal, appeared to have motivated her to speak more fully than ever before in the group. All the women agreed that everybody’s situation was different, and that they had to be optimistic and continue planning for a life in the UK, if not necessarily in Newtown. We immediately turned to discussing possible activities for the group to organise in the future, and identified areas of daily life where vocabulary was problematical.

After the move to Venue C, Mica started to form other friendships within the group. The most significant of these was the close relationship Mica formed with a Tibetan participant, Kim, whose younger daughter was close in age to Dura. They began to meet frequently and often looked after each other’s children: sometimes one would bring the other’s child to the group when a prior commitment would, otherwise, have caused one of their children to miss a music session. Although there were other women from Eritrea present, of the relationships she had with others in the group, Mica’s friendships remained strongest with Kim and Naina.

6: 6 Amy's social interactions

Her role as MMSA volunteer obliged Amy to interact with all who came to the group, despite her shyness. In July 2006, when she had only been a volunteer for a few weeks, I noticed how Amy more readily engaged with the other participants, taking others' children onto her lap, handing out instruments and organising refreshments. Amy spoke little to the other mothers, but communicated mostly with a smile. Rachel, an early years student volunteer, who was visiting the group for six weeks, had established a friendly relationship with Amy. When I discovered that I would have to be away and would be unable to hold the group, I asked them both if I should cancel that week's session. Both told me they would go to welcome any mothers who might come and, perhaps, sing some songs together. Amy said she would come and set up, organise refreshments and do some singing too. Rachel, who had led singing whilst on a nursery placement, immediately agreed.

Following my absence, Amy told me that she and Rachel had held a short singing session, but that only one other mother had come. I viewed Amy's agreeing to step in to help, with a volunteer whom she hardly knew, and leading the singing with people she might not know, as clear evidence of increased confidence. I noted: 'Rachel told me that Amy suggested songs to sing and the other mother and Rachel had joined in with her' (Journal: September 18th 2006).

It was Amy who had taken the initiative when Ooma first appeared in the group, talking with her and offering a hand of friendship. It had been clear that Ooma was depressed and friendless. Amy and Ooma both spoke French and, as Ooma began to attend regularly, I often asked Amy to interpret for me when my own French proved inadequate. We often talked together after the music group was over and we were clearing up. Amy's position as interpreter also appeared to give her further confidence in her ability to speak English and she gradually became more communicative with all the other women. Amy told me:

> At home I try to sung English song for him. This meeting help me with my English because I learn new words, and when we sung together I forget all stress for English....
> I meet more mums there. We chat, chat. Learn more things about babies' education.
> It was a good experience for me.
>
> (Amy, interview: 299 – 303)

As Amy's confidence in communicating in English further increased, she began attending cookery classes, where she encountered British-born women from her neighbourhood. She told me that the other women at the cookery class were friendly and fun. On several occasions, on encountering other women from the class, they had stopped for a short chat. I view Amy's entering into social exchanges outside the group as being the beginning of what Sennett (1999) describes, in the context of integration, as 'meaningful social inclusion'. This demonstrated to me a new sense of independence and a willingness to initiate new interaction both within, and beyond, the group.

6: 7 Marie's social interactions

I have described, earlier, the role played by Marie as an unofficial gatekeeper, which allowed her access to other groups and individuals. Marie was convinced that the music group was beneficial for everyone and was a place that fostered friendship. She reported a conversation with a previously isolated and depressed mother, Lisa. Marie had brought the initially reluctant Lisa to the MMSA group, and Lisa had continued to come after Marie had been moved away.

> She told me, you know, "Because you push me to go to Liz's group and I am happy, you know, and I'm wait to go, and every Monday to go there. And even her son, she told me he never saw any children. Only to stay with her and her boyfriend, and she told me now it right. She used to know the children, you know, and when she told me that, really I'm say, "Oh my goodness." ...And I tell her what she told me, "Now I have the confidence to speak some English." I know her, just like I know her very well. She has lived more than eight years here.
>
> (Marie, interview: 218 – 228)

Although her voluntary work as an interpreter for the local counselling service gave Marie some sense of purpose, it also increased her negative emotional state, privy as she was to the many traumatic accounts she witnessed in the course of her work. Marie carried not only her own, but other people's problems and found it very hard to cope emotionally. She told me:

> When I start to come every times, and I'm really enjoying it because I have a lot of problem, you know, and when I came here, it's just like I forget everything. I know I don't have child, you know, but I come there and I wait for Monday, you know, to go there and to spend some times there, you know
>
> (Marie, interview: 89 – 92)

Her love of children, as well as her love of singing, gave Marie the opportunity to engage in social interactions away from the stressful contexts in which she worked. She would often take a child on her lap, when a mother brought more than one child to a session, and she attributed her increased sense of well-being to the positive effect of musicking in the group. This view further supports the findings of Clift and Hancox

(2001) and Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2005). Marie's improved state reflects the concept of 'generative mechanisms', these being 'positive affect; focussed attention; social support; cognitive stimulation and regular commitment' (Clift et al, 2007).

In her interview, Marie told me:

> But from that group, I think what this means love, and what is means expressed, and especially that day. You see, I can't believe people can love me like that, and as I say, I deserve that, you know. And I say, "Oh, thanks God, thanks for coming this group." Because I used to go to many places to work just like voluntary, you know, but this is the really closest group for me, and close programme because I always like go there, because I feel they are not pretending, you know. They really love me and really I love them, you know, and I love that place to come, I need to tell you that, really.
>
> And even, you know, I'm from Africa, some from East, some from South, some from West, some from North, but – and some Muslim and some Christian – but we don't feel everythings, you know, - all this difference; they don't feel it really, there.
>
> (Marie, interview: 324 – 330)

It was clear that Marie had experienced a deep sense of belonging and connection with the other participants in the music group, and she talked about this several times during her interview. It seems likely that it was when Marie had discovered that she had to move to another town, and had had to say goodbye to us, that she fully realised that a large part of her life had been affected by her participation in the music group. Marie perceived a sense of equality and integration within the group and valued it, and demonstrated her wish to remain involved by travelling back from the midlands to visit the MMSA group at every possible opportunity.

6: 8 Social interactions after the end of the MMSA project

When the project ended in July 2008, I invited the MMSA participants to attend my town centre Sure Start music group at Venue D, when it re-commenced after the summer break. Several mothers, including Mica, Ooma, and Amy came along and began to attend regularly. By the end of that summer, all the women in the MMSA group, except for Ooma and Marie, had been given leave to remain, and were moved into council housing. Naina's youngest child, Zafar, had started attending nursery on Mondays at the beginning of September 2008, and so they did not come to this group.

On Mica's first visit to Venue D, the Sure Start 'open to all' music group, at the beginning of October 2008, Dura had immediately begun playing with a little boy, Jake. His white, British mother, Emily, was welcoming, and immediately started a conversation with Mica, inviting her to sit with her and a small group of other participants with whom Emily was friends. Emily had been a long-time participant of this group and she, and three of the other mothers there that day, had been present during prior discussions about asylum seekers. They had some understanding of the way in which asylum seekers and immigrants were subject to exclusionary social practices. It is possible that my previous suggestions, regarding the active welcoming of asylum seekers, by longer-term members of the Venue D group, had been positively influential.

When Sarna and Deka, also from the MMSA project arrived, Mica greeted them warmly and introduced them to Emily. They all sat together chatting until it was time for music. Amy arrived soon afterwards and her arrival was acknowledged with friendly greetings by the mothers present. Raif, on seeing Dura and Jack, immediately went over to them and the children played together until it was time to start music.

I had learned from Mica that Dura, or ‘Dora’ as she was now known, had been attending nursery and readily engaged in play with the other children.

> Mica tells me that Dora has settled in well at nursery and believes that being in the MMSA group had been helpful in preparing her for nursery. ‘They sing - same songs, Dora she love this thing and make her happy at nursery. She talk, play other children, like in group’.
>
> (Journal: 1st October 2007)

This suggests that the experiences gained in the group may have been instrumental in helping Dura re-create the pleasant feeling states associated with the songs when she was at nursery (Freeman, 2000). The group had, effectively, provided a rehearsal space in which Dura was able to practice and prepare for experiences in the world outside.

Amy had once visited a Sure Start mother and toddler group with me in June 2006, but had not returned there again. It transpired, much later on, that Amy thought someone there had made a racist remark to her. Below is my account of this.

> I ask if she [Amy] would like to come too. She says she isn’t sure as, when I took her, someone was nasty to her and ‘racist’. I am aghast. There was only one family there and everyone else present was there as a service provider of some sort – library, health visitor, etc. I ask what they said to make her feel so bad. ‘They called Raif a monkey’, she said. Rachel and I look at one another and we both smile – we know this expression! I probe further. Did they say it with a nasty look? No. Did she know that ‘monkey’ is often an affectionate word we use, particularly with toddlers? No, she doesn’t know this expression. We cite times when we might call a baby a ‘little monkey’ or ‘cheeky monkey’ and talk about clothing printed with the words ‘I’m a cheeky monkey’.
>
> (Journal: 9th October 2006)

1984) was, for Amy, one which had become an ‘othering’ experience. It may also indicate that her expectations were that she would be viewed as a marginalised ‘Other’. She was relieved at the response we gave her, and was pleased to have finally raised what had been, for her, such difficult subject. ‘Little monkey’ eventually became an often-repeated phrase which Amy used for Raif, accompanied by a chuckle, as she reminded me ‘not racist!’

The well-attended Sure Start group at Venue D proved to have been enjoyable for Amy and Raif. The welcome she received from the other participants, coupled with the familiar presence of other women from the MMSA project, Mica, Kim, Sarna and Deka, encouraged her to return. Over the following weeks, several more women joined the group and, by mid-November, when Ooma had begun to attend once more, the group had between sixteen and twenty regular participants. These included British, Polish, Russian, Pakistani and Indian- born women and the past MMSA participants were no longer the only second language English speakers present.

I asked Mica how she felt about coming to this group. She told me: ‘Yes, I like this – a lot of people. Big group, the children that together sing. I like’ (Mica, interview: 236). Amy’s response, to this question (Amy, interview: 334 - 335) was similar. ‘The first time it is no easy to go to enjoy another English woman, (laughs) although ... I found fantastic!’

Amy had started to go regularly to stay with a friend in London, initially with the intention of returning to live there, in order to resume the college course that had originally brought her to the UK. Amy attended the Venue D Sure Start group whenever she was in Newtown. It was after having been away from Newtown for several weeks that she came to the Sure Start group on a rainy day when few people had come and sat talking to two Polish women who were new to the group. In my journal (15th October 2008) I noted the way in which Amy had become the ‘expert’, passing on her knowledge to the newcomers.

> The Polish women discuss with Amy some of the difficulties they are encountering as newcomers to the UK. We talk together about life in England. The Polish women say they can all go to shops that sell food from their own countries and have contact with other compatriots, but it’s little everyday encounters with English –speakers that they are finding most challenging. Amy is sympathetic, saying that it was the same for her at first. She tells the Polish mothers about some of the ESOL classes and gives them directions to the multicultural centre.
>
> (Journal: 15th October 2008)

Lackmi, a recently arrived asylum-seeking mother from Sri-Lanka, who spoke no English, came with her husband and daughter to the group for the first time in any

English. After the music session, when Mica saw them sitting apart from the others, she went straight over to them, acting as ‘hostess’ and ensuring they all had something to eat and drink. When Mica turned from them to attend to Dura, Ooma immediately went to them, making a fuss of their baby and communicating with them by means of gesture and speech and smiles. All the women from the MMSA who attended the Venue D group acted as confident and friendly hosts to all new participants.

6: 9 Social interactions through musicking.

The musical activities, which I have outlined in Chapter One, were initially to promote pleasureful and playful interactions between the mothers and their children (Sylva and Lunt, 1982; Gerhardt, 2004, Feinmann, 1992 and Bowlby, 2007). Marie, who had lived with several African mothers, and who knew many of the asylum seekers at the drop-in told me:

> The mothers, they have too many worries. They don’t play with their children. In their countries where they came from, they think only about how to survive. And here also, too many troubles. They care for their children, but not play, I tell them, come, play, sing with your children, have fun.
> (Journal: 22nd November 2006).

Amy, the first mother I interviewed, had asked me to her house to interview her in the evening, when Raif should have been asleep. However, he was wide awake when I arrived and, throughout the interview, he sang fragments of songs he had learned in the group. There were snatches of ‘The wheels on the bus’, ‘Horsey, horsey’ ‘Twinkle twinkle little star’, as well as the greeting song I sang to start every music session. Singing English songs appeared to have become an integral part of his self-expression and was a reflection of the song play he engaged in with Amy at home. I had asked Amy about her feelings when she first came to the group.

> L How did you feel?
> A I feel…Um *(hands over face)* …A little bit strange.
> L Yes, I would expect that. I think everybody probably did – (*both laugh*). And when we started doing the singing?
> A Ah! And when we started music, great, great, great…me and Raif, we went every Monday to the play group and, um, another woman also come with her children to sing, to learn new songs, mmm. I think, umm, many children like to listen to the music.
> (Amy, Interview: 24-28)

It can be seen, from Amy's words, that the engagement in musical activity, coupled with her child's own engagement had overcome Amy's initial feeling of strangeness.

Amy, who had joined in very tentatively at first, when she had first begun to regularly attend the music group in June 2006, had been quick to take another child, Ra-ad, whose parents were with an advisor, onto her knee. She had gently bounced and rocked both Raif and Ra-ad. When we sang 'All the little ducks', a song that involved tipping the children backwards, so that they were almost upside-down, I took Ra-ad onto my lap, to give Amy the chance to rock Raif more energetically. I had noticed that Amy had continued to rock Raif extremely gently, unlike Naina, who was tipping Zafar completely upside-down. Amy had focussed most of her attention on Raif, only looking over at me to copy new actions. She treated him as if he were very fragile and would not survive any boisterous movements.

When, the following week we repeated the song, she was, again, extremely gentle with him. T he following week, she appeared a little less unconfident and, when we sang the same 'upside-down' song again, she tipped Raif slightly further backwards. I noted, (Journal 10th July 2006) 'He tries to rock back even after we have stopped and hangs his head as far back as it will go, refusing to sit upright'. I had then spoken to Amy about this:

> I ask Amy if she is worried about Raif when it comes to tipping him backwards. She tells me she doesn't want him to be scared. I think it is Amy who anxious about handling Raif, because he certainly appeared to want to rock just as much as Zafar. I think, perhaps, she is not a confident mother, and wonder if this may be because she is inexperienced and has been coping entirely alone with him.
>
> (Journal: 10th July 2006)

In time, Amy became more confident with Raif. She had been in a depressed state, both before and after he was born, and I view this as significant here. As we have seen in Chapter Three (2: 9), the mother's positive affect is important for the infant's ability to regulate stress'. (Kestler et al, 2006). Initially, Raif had been easily upset if Amy tried to rock him vigorously, and had resisted and clung to her. He did not initially respond well to others, either, but over time, he had become much more confident and adventurous. It is likely that the positive impact of frequent musical activities was such that the levels of pleasure-producing chemicals, in both mother and child, had made a positive contribution to the wellbeing of them both, given that 'the neural connections to the specific receptors in the brain can be strengthened by usage' (Kestler et al, 2006).

Naina's boys were boisterous and very physically active, and the contrast between Amy's and Naina's interactions with their sons was noticeable. Zafar loved the more vigorous action songs, demanding every time he came, that we sing 'Ducks', as did his brother Witha, who usually came to sit on my knee while Zafar sat on his mother's lap. Sometimes, Naina used this song as a means of distracting Zafar at the end of singing at the drop-in, if he attempted to leave our space to explore the church.

Naina often had difficulty remembering song words, although her children had soon learned with most of the words. Naina told me that the children sang the songs and demanded knee rides at home and, when talking with Witha and Zafar, I discovered that Naina had been singing some of the songs away from the group.

> We play 'shops' and pretend to make food. I sing the chopping song as we pretend to make various dishes, chopping to the beat and pretending to put our ingredients into a big pot. Witha tells me they sing the supermarket song at Tesco's for Zafar. He says he helps his mum with shopping but 'Zafar, he's naughty' and has to sit in the trolley. He says that he and Nasri fetch things to put in and 'sing them' for Zafar to teach him the names. I ask Zafar for his favourite song. He says, 'Ducks' and Witha says he makes his mum 'do it all the time at home'.
>
> (Journal: 14th May 2007)

The way in which the music impacted on Ooma was clearly identifiable. Ooma quickly joined in with all the song actions, even when she was unable to join in with many of the words, and she enjoyed playing with Flora in this way, demonstrating delight at her daughter's happy reactions. As soon as the music sessions started, Ooma became animated and playful and, after the singing, her more lively humour continued and she increasingly began to interact with the other mothers. This I relate to the pleasure-producing chemicals that are generated being associated with the pleasureful experience of musicking. (Thurman: 2002). When I interviewed Ooma, I commented on the change I saw in her when she started coming to the music sessions.

> I enjoy the fresh atmosphere with the children and to be out of the house.
> I feel happy when I go to her. When I go to her class and start to do the actions with the children I am in a different world.
> I forget my problems. I forget everything.
>
> (Ooma, back-translated interview: 161- 19,)

Ooma's change in mood was reflected in her interactions with Flora and other children. She began smilingly repeating snatches of songs as she tickled Flora and any other children who were close by. In initiating such play, other mothers would join in and the gloomy church often echoed with laughter, children's and mothers' alike, in the social time, especially when Ooma was there. It was not until after we had moved from the church, however, that the music sessions became freer. The church had been dark, even with lights switched on and, while in our ‘music area’ our physical space was limited, and the large echoing church beyond had been a distraction for curious toddlers who, from their vantage point on their mother’s laps, could see the large space which they found inviting to run round and explore.

Ooma recognised singing as a means of gaining a key to communicating in English. I had asked during her interview, for which Marie acted as interpreter, whether she had found singing English songs helpful. Her translated response, below, was through Marie, so refers to me in the third person.

> Yes it does help me. It helps me to speak. I don’t know English well enough. I learnt many words. Before, I didn’t understand English. When I go to the class with her they speak in English and I keep quiet and don’t talk. Little by little, thank God I understand. I have improved, thank God.
> (Ooma, back-translated interview: 212 - 216)

Mica took the musical activities seriously, in that she tried very hard to learn the words of songs and always encouraged Dura, her daughter to copy actions, showing her how to play the instruments that we played. She delighted in Dura’s responses, telling me in her interview:

> If I see my child is happy, means I am happy. That is the life. That is because I’m coming for her. I want to take her outside for her. I want to – I wish her to everything she is and enjoy. She’s really enjoy it, and future is for her.
> (Mica, interview: 209-211)

The nature of the musical activities dramatically changed at our second venue, where the spacious room allowed for much greater freedom of movement than at venue A. I had previously played a keyboard for songs that involved movement and usually, while the older children danced about independently, the mothers remained seated and bounced or danced their children about on their laps. At our second and well-attended meeting in the new venue, when we began singing, ‘What shall we do with bouncy children?’ on the piano, Ooma got up and started to dance, as described in the following journal extract.

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Ooma gets up and starts to dance, sweeping off her hijab and throwing it over to her chair. She is completely engaged in the music, swirling, whooping, pulling the others to their feet to join in. This is the crying, downcast woman who can rarely break free of the husband who only allows her to come because he knows and trusts Marie to be her 'chaperone'. She is transformed. Her beaming smile and her free body movement are like those of a young, carefree girl. This is a bigger and better version of the woman who learned 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' with me in the church...

(Journal: 5th March 2007)

Everyone in the group had continued smiling when the dancing came to an end: the high spirits remained during the social time afterwards when we played a word game, and the smiles had persisted as we left the building at the end of the session. This positive effect supports the notion of music as stimulator of social interaction, communication and group sense evidenced by Orth, Doorschodt et al, (2004), Kreutz et al, (2004) and Fries et al, (2005). This intense experience, during which all participants appeared to have entered a state of flow, (Csíkszentmihályi**,** 1990) proved to have been a turning point in the way the women in the group participated in the musical activities. Naina had told us all, at that time, about how much she had enjoyed being together with everyone in 'our group' and, when I interviewed Ooma, I asked her about this time.

Me	Do you remember that day when you danced and got everyone to dance? What were your feelings then?
H	[Speaks in Arabic]. Actually, when I heard the music, I also like that music a lot. I felt free and that I was safe. There are no men with us Thank God. When I go with her I feel safe, I am not afraid. When I go with people I feel afraid but with her I don't feel scared and I feel free. (Laughs)
L	And when you go outside –you still feel so free? …And when you go home do you feel so free?
Me	After you left that group, did you feel the same feeling? And when you went home, did that feeling disappear?
H	[Speaks in Arabic]. No, no. The day I met her, my life changed. Monday is very, very nice.

(Ooma, Back-translated interview: 131 – 138)

The sense of freedom which Ooma describes is related to her feelings of safety; being in the group, her enjoyment of the music and the exclusion of men from the group. Here the music group presents a transformative space for Ooma in which she is completely caught up in the moment. Until then, only the children had danced. Mica, usually reserved, except when interacting directly with her daughter, had also joined in uninhibitedly. In retrospect, I see this as a defining moment of musical engagement and, from this point onwards, our music sessions were more participatory. The following week, after we had been singing some counting songs, using my finger puppets, to my surprise, Mica gestured to the piano, indicating that she wanted me to play.

> Again, there's dancing, but this time, it's Mica who is swirling and whooping, laughing and pulling everyone to their feet to join in, baby in one arm, the other sweeping in circles in the air. It isn't quite the same as the spontaneous eruption of last week, and when Mica gestures to Ella to join in, she remains seated but Mica, smiling and gesturing, dances over to Ella and pulls her to her feet. Once up, Ella, baby on one arm, encouraged by a laughing Amy, joins in the dancing.
>
> (Journal: 12th March 2007)

Mica had dropped her usual reserve to engage in a shared activity that gave rise to her desire to repeat pleasant experiences in a 'safe, non-threatening situation' (Thurman: 2000).

Amy had looked embarrassed at first, and had not joined in immediately, but the high-spirited actions of the others, and their insistence that she join in, finally moved Amy to get up onto her feet. Once she had started dancing, she had then begun to move more freely until it appeared that she had been swept up in the mood of the other women, singing and spinning round uninhibitedly, Raif held in one arm, her free arm waving to the strong beat of the music.

These first spontaneous, expressive acts coloured the nature of the music sessions and spontaneous singing and dancing subsequently became a common feature of our musicking.

6: 10 Expressions of feelings in relation to musicking

As we have seen in the earlier sections of this chapter, the group evolved over time and activities had been introduced, to help the participants learn more about living in Newtown. In June 2007, the group had been offered the opportunity to have an ESOL tutor visit the group every week to hold classes. This was dependent upon the regular attendance of a minimum of six women. My awareness of how much time, after singing together, was spent in non-musical activities, caused me to question whether coming to music may have become something the women felt they had to do to in order to access other learning. This offer provided an opportune moment to elicit their views. I reminded everyone that, as this was their group, they could choose the sort of activities we did, and I told them that if they wanted to miss out the music part in order to do more English learning activities instead, that would be possible. I had a pen and paper on my lap and, as they began to respond, I quickly noted their responses, which I later recorded in my journal.

Naina looks aghast and says, ‘No Lizzie, please, it’s for the music. It is good, music, to sing with children. Is very nice. I love! Children, love song, play, dance’.
‘No music?’ says Ooma and looks anxious. Amy explains ‘To sing... is great. We learn songs, children learn songs. Makes us happy, we are the music group. Other things, they are good, but the music, -ah... very important’. Ooma says, ‘English song, speak English. La musique, c’est tres important – me fait tres heureuse, chanter avec tous les autres... Flora, me, we love’. Mica looks serious. ‘This is for the children, is good to learn. Songs, make happy together’. I’m trying to write this all down as they speak and say that what they are telling me is good to know. Lisa asks Mica, in Tigrinya, to explain that she ‘needs’ the music more than anything else and Milly says she likes the group just as it is, with no changes.
Everyone in turn says that they love the music, and that they love learning the songs and singing with their children. Having an additional activity that helps them learn more English is good and they want to continue with both music and the other activities. ‘Group, it help us, be strong, talk to people, be no ‘fraid.’ says Naina. Amy nods. ‘Confiance’ she says. Ooma agrees.
Mica says that she thinks it helps Dura to integrate at nursery. Lisa is having difficulty following all this and Mica interprets for her. She looks at me then says something to Mica, who tells me that this is the only group Lisa comes to and that she loves it and loves learning the songs. ‘Everyone, sing, I like’ says Lisa in halting English.

(Journal: 23rd April 2007)

It quickly became apparent, from their responses, that our musicking played a role of great importance for the women. They equated it with happiness and confidence; musicking had given them the assurance that they were doing something enjoyable for the benefit of their children, had created a sense of group identity and helped them to form friendships.

6:11 Summary

At the start of the project, social interactions between the women in the group were minimal. Language posed difficulties in communication, and the idea of coming together in a group for singing and music-making was new to all the participants, whose daily lives were focused on gaining leave to remain and on surviving the financial, social and psychological difficulties they faced.

The musical activities created a space in which transformation took place, while the settings, in which the music group met, influenced the nature of the musical activities and the intensity of the experience. In the church, there had been no sense of privacy or intimacy and, when the project moved away from there, a sense of group belonging began to emerge more strongly. Singing together became, for the women, a purpose to attend, rather than its being an additional activity to undertake while waiting for appointments. The impact of singing on the bodymind (Thurman, 2002; Clift et al, 2009;

Clift and Hancox, 2001) and the subsequent ‘high’ experienced after singing together helped overcome Mica’s and Amy’s natural reserve and enabled them to join in with greater freedom and spontaneity. The singing, and other musical activities, resulted in feelings of well-being that enabled the women to engage more fully with their children and with one another. For the children too, there were beneficial outcomes. Both Raif and Dura had demonstrated increased levels of confidence, security and sociability at nursery, when familiar songs were introduced.

Singing English songs and engaging in musical play with their children also facilitated the repetition of such experiences at home. This is exemplified by Amy, who developed a new confidence when interacting with her son, and by Naina, who found herself giving knee rides to her youngest son at home and singing with her children in the supermarket.

For Ooma, who discovered that she could learn English through singing, and could learn English songs, the opportunity to begin forming friendships was opened up. The emotional states of the women were positively affected beyond the sessions and, in the next chapter, I further examine how this played out.

Chapter Seven: The impact of musicking on participant mood.

In this chapter, I examine ways in which musicking has effect on mood and emotion, both during musicking and beyond the music sessions, in the participants' daily lives. I take account of how the ways in which songs were used and how the settings in which musicking took place influenced and supported the participants' engagement with one another.

There is a close link between mood and emotion: both are words whose meanings are subject to differing interpretations, and which are sometimes used fluidly and interchangeably. Mood, according to Batson, Shaw, and Oleson (1992) 'reflects a change in expectation the general likelihood of positive or negative affect in the future' they suggest that emotion 'reflects the existence of a specific goal or of perceived change in one's relation to a specific goal in the present'.(Batson et al, 1992: 301)

Schwartz and Clore (2007: 386) suggest that emotions arise in 'response to ongoing, implicit appraisals of situations with respect to positive or negative implications for one's goals and concerns' and 'the experience of a positive or negative emotion may also leave us in a positive or negative mood after the emotion dissipates and its specific cause is no longer attended to', and Lazarus (1999), describes 'hope' as an emotion, one in which despair is ever-present in the background, suggesting '…hope, more often than not, stems from a situation in which we must prepare for the worst while hoping for the better' (Lazarus, 1999: 36).

In the context of this work, I view emotion as a shorter-term, reactive state which has the capacity to influence the prevailing state of mind, or mood.

7: 1 Participant mood and musicking in the different settings

The Asylum Aid Report (2006) has evidenced the failure of the Home Office to adhere to its own guidelines, while waiting times for hearings and appeals against negative decisions had been increasing, which allowed asylum seekers little certainty about their future lives. The Asylum system, 'marred by inhumanity in treatment of the vulnerable' (Independent Asylum Commission, 2008) had engendered constant uncertainty and anxiety for most of the people I encountered at the drop-in.

After my first visit to the drop-in centre, I noted in my journal (27th March 2006), 'I am struck by the way in which so many there do not make eye contact, but sit quietly and tensely, paying little attention to others'. The mood of most of the clients had appeared to be subdued, unhappy and anxious as they waited to access the help they needed.

Marie told me:

> Children play by themselves and fight together at home. Is problem for children, mothers unhappy, depressed, you know? Because 'they have too many bad things to think about and there is much unhappiness. There is not enough money and they don't know if they can stay. Many problem to live here. You write this!
>
> (Journal: 24th July 2006)

At the start of the project, when the music sessions took place in the church, (described in chapter 1: 6), I had viewed the religious space as being a challenging place in which to provide any opportunity for fun. There was a wide range of nationalities and languages in evidence at the drop-in, and many of the people there experienced difficulty in communication, not only with the drop-in workers, but also with one another. There was little evidence of social exchange and many, who had come to seek help, sat alone.

From the start of the project, the women's increased familiarity with the songs and games appears to have engendered a greater level of confidence to join in vocally and physically, while singing together had appeared to engender entrainment. Becker (2001: 151-153) refers to rhythmic entrainment as an experience during which 'Many persons, bound together by common aims, may experience revitalisation and general good feeling'. When the mothers sang with their children, there was usually much laughter. Over time, as more women joined the group, there appeared to be an expectation that the music project would provide an opportunity for their children to acquire knowledge of songs and to gain experiences that would help prepare them for starting nursery.

In the early weeks of the project, I had been concerned that too few women would attend the group and that we would not be able to attract new participants. My concerns were based on the fact that the group met in a religious space and that most of the people who came to the drop-in were focussed on the problems they brought to the drop-in. However, when there were regularly more than eight women present, including some who had two or three children, there was far too little room for the more boisterous music activities I had wanted to facilitate, such as dancing. Lack of space and the religious function of our venue provided a persuasive reason for Sure Start to agree that the group could be held elsewhere. After the group moved away from venue A, I perceived a significant change in the behaviour and general mood of the participants.

In this chapter I examine the ways in which the mothers' level of participation grew over time in the different venues. I explore how the mothers viewed their times together and investigate whether positive changes in mood during the sessions had a wider impact on their daily lives. I examine how the songs and activities and the use of instruments and props, may have further influenced the mothers' engagement in the group.

7: 2 Naina in venue A

When I first encountered Naina at the drop-in, I noted in my journal (8th May 2006) 'She seems very depressed and frequently on the verge of tears'. Naina had paid scant attention to the two sons she had brought with her, who were running noisily around the hall, sometimes aggressively approaching other children, much to the dismay of the advisors, who showed great relief when I took them with me into the church. Her children's lack of response to, or eye contact with Naina, and the lack of communication between them, in the early months of the project, is illustrative of Robb's (1999) and Malloch's (2002) account of the negative impact on children, of disruption in the attachment relationship. The children's behaviour further supports Balbernie's (2007) assertion that communication and behaviours are adversely affected by the mother's depressed state.

Naina had been very hesitant about going into the church, but Kate and Marie had given her encouragement and she had allowed me to take her in. Her first experience of music-making with her children had appeared to take Naina out of her tearful state when she engaged, at his insistence, with her youngest child, Zafar, during the session. I characterise Naina's first experience as an example of 'difference in relationship' (Boyce-Tillman, 2006: 7).

The instruments and props I introduced appeared to have been influential in engaging the children, as evidenced in my journal.

> In the church, I get out my drums. The 4 year old, Witha, is very active and runs around, but soon is fascinated by the drums. I sing a song and everyone plays the drums with me. I then sing several action songs and for a short while, all are happily engaged with the music. Naina tries to join in – sings repeated words 'up and down', 'jump' and 'clap'. I use my crocodile and monkeys puppets to illustrate number songs. She repeats the numbers and appears to repeat words she can relate to meaning. I sing 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' and the 4 year old copies the actions.
>
> (Journal: 8th May 2006).

For Naina's children, the church, presented an attractive space for running, climbing and exploring, which had created some anxiety for Naina. The other participants, and Amy and Mica in particular, on seeing Zafar's fascination with this inviting area, rallied to support Naina when he tried to run off to explore.

Over time, both Naina's children had responded to their mother much more with this additional support, clambering onto Naina's lap and paying better attention to her when she gave them an instruction. I soon learned that the singing of their favourite action songs, *All the little ducks* and *Someone is knocking,* which involved playing the drums when their names were sung, or '*Five little monkeys'* using finger puppets, was often a means of quickly re-engaging Naina's children. The use of instruments and props made an important contribution to attracting many of the participants and provided additional focus for children. All the mothers appeared to have as much enthusiasm for playing the instruments as did their children.

As Naina began to engage more closely with her children in the musical activities, the incidents of 'escape' lessened. Her children's behaviour became much less boisterous and aggressive than previously when, according to the manager, they had invariably presented difficulties for drop-in advisors and their clients. The drop-in manager, Kate, told me (Journal: 31st July 2006) that Naina seemed to be much more responsive to, and involved with, her sons. She appeared to be more relaxed and communicative, and was more confident in the way she dealt with her children.

Naina's situation had not changed and she was still subject to the same anxieties but, more frequently, was in a positive mood when she came to the drop-in for advice. Sloboda (2004), Papoušek (1992 and 1996) and Custodero (2002) have demonstrated that repeated singing with their children influences closer bonding with their primary carers, which is exemplified in Naina's telling me (Journal: 24th July 2006), 'Witha sing 'Jump' song. I play children in house'. The significance of Naina's words was clear: the songs repeated at home appeared to have drawn her into playing and interacting more closely with her children. Her engagement in musical and other play at home also indicated to me that her positive mood lasted beyond the time of the music sessions.

The final session before the 2006 summer break was to have been the last for Naina. Zafar was to start at nursery the following term, so I had been surprised when she returned in September. Naina told me that nursery ended at eleven thirty and she had rushed round to the drop-in as soon as Zafar had come out. My account of this is below.

> We are singing when, suddenly, Naina appears. I express (delighted) surprise. 'I want to come' she says and hugs me tightly and kisses me. ... She's so pleased to see us all and I wonder if she might be feeling rather isolated and missing the group. Then Naina tells me she has a new friend, Mica, a neighbour, also an asylum seeker, who she wants to bring and that, even if she arrives late, she wants to continue coming along after collecting the children from nursery. She seems really keen to remain part of this group and I have seen a great change in her over time. She appears more confident and happy and places importance on coming here. She knows she will be greeted by familiar people whom she sees as friends, and has repeatedly said that she loves the music.
>
> (Journal: September 26th 2006)

Bailey and Davidson's (2005) assertion that singing in a group creates a potential for social bonding is apposite here.

I had noted: 'When we sing *All the little ducks,* Naina tells us all that her children love this song and that "they always sing, sit (on) me at home"' (Journal: 2nd October 2006). The songs that involved physical actions, such as bouncing, jumping or moving to the beat, held great attraction for Naina's boys and, at home, re-enactment, as evidenced by Thurman (2002: 23), had served to draw Naina into increased interactions with her children.

7: 3 Mica in venue A

Mica always spoke in a hushed voice in the church, but participated in all the song activities and, after seeing her she smile as she sang, I had asked her what she thought about the music sessions. She told me it was 'very nice for her daughter' and maintained that she came only for her daughter's sake. In her interview, Mica, later reflecting on the group at venue A, told me:

> At that time, I mean, I had asked you why you sing in the church on a Saturday [Monday]. I don't have any idea, but I'm coming with my child, with another children and women....
>
> ... I think at that time, we have, I think, I don't know, the place is rough like. For children it is happy. It is like crowd - small.
>
> (Mica, interview: 20-21; 35- 36)

Despite the fact that, for Mica, it was 'rough' and crowded place, an important factor in Mica's participation appeared to be that of the children's enjoyment. She had told me, (Journal: 28th February 2008) 'Everything... it is for them, for my children. To have good education, good future'. It was as if Mica viewed her attendance at the group as a parental duty.

Mica largely did not interact closely with the other women in the group, except Naina and one other mother, either during music-making or in the 'social' time afterwards, although she was always was polite and kindly towards others. Outside the church, however, Mica became a little more talkative.

For Mica, the church appears to have imposed on her a need for greater formality, despite the song-games and musicking that took place there. In order to leave the church, it was necessary to pass through the drop-in, which immediately brought her situation back to mind. Nevertheless, in her interview, Mica acknowledged that, when participating in musicking, one was able to leave problems behind. Marie, interpreting for Mica, told me ‘Sometimes she feels she is good when she’s singing, but when she go out, it’s still – her problem is there’. (Mica, interview: 101-102)

I draw from Mica’s words that her quiet and restrained behaviour in the church was not only due to the setting, but was also due to of her anxiety surrounding the long process of application for asylum, the continuing separation from her son, and concerns about her accommodation. There appeared to be a tension between her notions of good mothering and the reality of her son left far behind. These are all issues that have been the central concern in NGO responses to the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill (2006) and the Independent Asylum Commission Interim Report (2008). Mica’s restraint in the church setting will be contrasted, later in this chapter, with her greater involvement and participation after the group moved to a different venue.

7: 4 Amy in Venue A

Amy had also approached the Church music sessions a little uneasily at first, although she rarely made negative comments and was always extremely polite and careful to avoid saying anything that she thought might be offensive to anyone in the group or to me. I often asked her to give me her opinions and to tell me her genuine feelings about the group, explaining that I needed to know what worked and what did not, in order to ensure that the group could continue and grow. It was not until I asked her to assist me as a volunteer that she began to find it easier to voice her opinions. When the idea of moving away from the church was put forward, Amy had been enthusiastic. I noted in my journal (11th December, 2006) that Amy had remarked that the church ‘was not the best or nicest of places’.

When I interviewed her, recalling her view of the church, she told me:

> At first it was a little bit strange because the place is a big church. Maybe some women is a bit scared to go in, and – and the mother come, no just for song but for another thing.’
>
> (Amy, interview: 93 - 94).

After having been taken on a volunteer role, Amy began to engage much more with the other women and told me, in her interview that the effect of participating in the music group was not only that she enjoyed our musicking, but also that the increased sense of purpose and responsibility that accompanied her volunteer role had contributed to her self-confidence and improved emotional state. This was evidenced in her growing aspirations: ‘Amy says she wants to be part of British life and join lots of groups and events at children’s centres’ (Journal: 22nd January 2007). Amy had attributed her prior reluctance to visit any other groups to her intense shyness, lack of confidence and difficulty in communicating in English.

7: 5 Ooma in Venue A

Ooma, when we were discussing the proposed move to a different venue, had remarked, in English, ‘Church, no good, children’ and explained with Marie as interpreter that ‘many women won’t like being in the church because they are Muslim’ (Journal: 17th January 2007). For Ooma, the church was a place to be used solely for worship, and its use as a space for any other activities had been surprising. It was not until after we had moved to the Sure Start centre that Ooma more clearly identified the reasons for her unease about the church venue and I raised the subject again during her interview. She told me:

> When it was in the church it was not comfortable. We remember when we went to the church. I feel the church is not for children, people go and complain. When my daughter came here, I was not comfortable.
> (Back-translation, Ooma interview: 39 - 42).

Later, Ooma enlarged on this view:

> We say the church is better for worshipping, it shouldn’t be for children. They’re dirty things, they play with toys, have messy biscuits and juice. The church is for worshipping only, not for children.
> (Back translation, Ooma interview: 103 - 106).

The fact that she still came to the group, despite her feelings about its being held in what she perceived to be an inappropriate venue, strongly suggests that her desire to attend far outweighed her misgivings. It appears to have been the musical activities that had enabled Ooma to overcome her discomfiture about being in the church. When I asked her if she had continued to feel uncomfortable there, Ooma told me that when I had begun to sing action songs, they had made her smile. ‘It is a nice class, I liked it. She (Liz) made nice movements. Her movements are nice’ (Ooma, back translated interview: 65 - 68). With these words, her thumb and forefinger moved together to represent a duck’s quacking beak and she touched her head, shoulders and knees.

During the sessions in the church, Ooma bounced Flora on her knee and helped her to hold and play the instruments and began to join in with whichever repeated choruses she had learned. When singing songs that involved jumping, tickling, kissing and rocking, she always turned Flora to face her, delighting in her daughter’s happy responses to the lively actions. This is indicative of the mutually rewarding interactions cited by Carter (1998) and Wismer Fries et al (2005). Her increasing confidence, when singing together with the other mothers, evoked for me the notion of entrainment (Cross, 2009, Leonard, 1978 and Clayton, Sager and Will, 2005).

The way in which the musicking had impacted on Ooma was clearly evident. Throughout her first session, Flora had gurgled and smiled, responding to the songs with evident pleasure, and this response appeared to have helped Ooma to feel more relaxed. It was after Ooma had realised that the actions in the songs could provide a means of understanding the words, that her mood and attitude became even more positive.

Ooma had quickly joined in with all the song actions, even when she had been unable to join in with many of the words. She enjoyed playing with Flora in this way, and responded to her daughter's reactions with smiles and hugs. After having become more familiar with the songs we sang most frequently, as soon as we started our musicking, Ooma became much livelier and, during the social time after the singing, she increasingly began to interact with the other mothers (Austin, 2002). I associate her response with the generation of pleasure-producing chemicals, associated with the pleasureful experience of musicking (Thurman, 2002; Kenny and Faunce 2004) and to the sense of companionship that emerged after singing together in a group with other mothers (Unwin, Kelly and Davis, 2002). This provided a great contrast to the isolation she had experienced since her arrival in the UK. When I interviewed Ooma, I commented on the change I had seen in her when she started coming to the music sessions. She told me:

> I enjoy the fresh atmosphere with the children and to be out of the house. I feel happy when I go to her. When I go to her class and start to do the actions with the children I am in a different world. I forget my problems. I forget everything.
>
> (Back- translation, Ooma, interview: 16 - 19)

Ooma's altered mood was reflected in her interactions not only with Flora, but with the other children too. She began smilingly repeating snatches of songs as she tickled Flora and any other children who were close by. When she initiated such play, other mothers would join in and the church would often echo with laughter.

For Ooma, it appeared that there had been several factors which provided motivation for her increasing involvement with the MMSA group, one of which was her perception that the songs could provide a means of learning English vocabulary. Another significant factor was that the group provided her with the companionship of other women, which she had missed after fleeing to the UK. Her child's response to the songs and Ooma's own love of music had provided strong incentives from the start. At the end of one session, she told me, emphatically, 'Musique! J'aime la musique' (Journal: 30th

October 2006). That day, I had watched her as she made her way through the drop in and left the church building to walk along the road, still singing to Flora.

7: 6 Marie in venue A

Marie was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and, when I first met her, her emotions had quickly surfaced and she was continually tearful. She told me that she had no reason to live and that it was only her strong Christian faith that had prevented her from acting upon her suicidal feelings.

At venue A, Maria began to come in to talk to the mothers in the group whenever she had the opportunity and, invariably stayed until the end of the session, unless called back to assist in the drop- in. It was when she brought a friend's child and stayed for an entire session that she told me that she wished she had a child of her own, so that she could join the group (Journal: 12th June). Later, in her interview, Marie told me:

> ...when I start to come every times, and I'm really enjoying it because I have a lot of problem, you know, and when I came here, it's just like I forget everything. I know I don't have child, you know, but I come there and I wait for Monday, you know, to go there and to spend some times there, you know, and when I come, that's like I singing and playing, you know, even with the children, and just like I need that things, you know, and the song, and I – even me, I play the song with you and everythings, I feel very happy, you know. Really, I feel happy, and yes, I wait every Monday because I put it in my mind, every Monday I need to go there.
>
> (Marie, interview: 90 - 97)

What I take from this is that Marie attributed her improved emotional state to her participation in group musicking, change evidenced by Boyce-Tillman (2010), Trevarthen (2002) and Trevarthen and Malloch (2000). Kate, who knew her well, believed that the music project had given Marie something to look forward to every week and that 'she always seems to be much more optimistic on Mondays' (Journal: 8th November 2006).

The way in which Marie attached importance to the music project may be seen to exemplify the way in which 'feeling state modulators' evaluate the relative importance of an experience and can intensify either 'pleasant' or 'unpleasant memory 'tags' (Thurman 2002: 216 - 217). Her heightened positive emotions during the musical activities were thrown into stark contrast with her generally depressed state and she began to view the music group as a means of achieving a happier state of mind. It is likely that this contrast, coupled with the contrast between the atmosphere within the group setting inside the church, and the drop-in hall, had led her to put great faith in the music group's capacity to promote a more positive emotional state., which was remarked upon by the drop-in manager.

> K, who only sees the women outside the group, says she has noticed changes in the women who attend regularly. Mica, Ella and Ara seem much happier and K remarks that Iris has really ‘come out of her shell’. She points out that Amy has become much more confident and sociable. Naina has changed in many ways and is paying attention to her children and they seem to relate to her more closely. They are also much better behaved, now she is taking an interest in them, which has made a positive difference for everyone else, who found it hard to work when they were running round, unchecked. She has noticed great improvements in the general *mood* of the women in the group. ‘Much more positive’, she says.
>
> (Journal: 8th November 2006)

While responses to musical activities in the church had been positive, and the mood of most participants appeared lightened when singing together, the extent to which musicking could change the mood of the women in the group was not fully realised until we moved away from the drop-in centre.

7: 7 Music in a different setting

The mood of most of the participants appeared to become more carefree when singing together, but the extent to which musicking could change the mood of the women in the group became apparent when we moved to a different setting. The new venue, B, offered a larger, lighter and more private space. This appeared to facilitate a greater sense of freedom of expression and group cohesion. The core activities at the drop-in, a place of support for those experiencing legal and life-changing anxieties and crises, were both audible and visible reminders of the temporary status of the music group members. After the group began to meet away from the drop-in centre, some women, who had not accepted invitations to join the drop-in group, began to appear at the new venues and others, who had come only when visiting the drop-in, no longer attended.

Away from the drop-in, the women seemed to be better able to respond to, and focus on, the music. An early sign that the women felt more relaxed had been when, one participant, Mariam, removed her hijab. Another, Ranu, had then allowed hers to slip to the back of her head, although Ooma, the only other hijab-wearing Muslim present, kept her hijab on until the second time we met at Venue B.

Because the music group was not a formally structured group, and involved the highly interactive presence of, and focus on, the children, I have found relatively little in the literature about group behaviours that is relevant to this particular group. The mainstream literature pays greatest attention to group structure and dynamics in the areas of therapy and business and the role of 'place' is little evidenced in this area of literature. Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey (2002: 108 -109) suggest, in the context of counselling and therapy groups, 'groups often fail because of their physical setting', and Rodney Napier and Matti Gershenfeld (1985: 50) briefly mention physical environment as having a 'significant impact on communication and interaction in groups'. Vernelle (1994) states what appears to be obvious: 'A group does not flourish in a room full of broken furniture, or that is too big, too small, too cold or too hot'. Despite the shortcomings of our first meeting place, women had come, nevertheless, and had learned songs, played with their children and had been able to leave their worries behind for a short time.

From the changes in behaviour and mood that became evident in the new settings, I suggest that the emotional and physical impact of the drop-in setting had negatively affected the nature and number of possibilities for musicking and social activities (Napier and Gershenfeld, 1985: 50). The physical separation from the drop-in appeared to support a mental distancing from it and facilitate spontaneity. It became clear that those who came to the new venues now came *specifically* for what each believed they, and their children, might gain from the MMSA group, be it the pleasure of singing together and socialising with other women and children, the acquisition of English and greater understanding of the British way of life, or preparing their children for learning and socialising in school.

7: 8 Naina in the new settings

The privacy of the subsequent venues, in contrast to the drop-in, facilitated a sense of greater intimacy. At the second, and much more private, church hall, venue B, when Ooma had spontaneously begun dancing to the song *'Bouncy Children',* Naina had joined in and danced with her children. I noted:

> Naina is also enjoying the dance and takes her children by the hand to join in. After some time, everyone's out of breath and it feels like a good moment to change the pace and I sing and start a circle dance, round left, right, in to the middle and out. After several 'rounds' we sit back down and finish off with some bouncy tickly songs for the children. The children, including Zafar, still in a state of excitement, appear to focus much more on their mothers' smiling faces and show little interest in anyone else. Perhaps this is because they are unused to seeing their mothers in such high spirits. Witha and Zafar insist on sitting on Naina's lap.
>
> (Journal: 5th March 2007)

This experience of dancing exemplifies Mihalyi Csíkszentmihályi's (1992) notion of being 'in flow'. He describes this as 'the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter' (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997: 4) and that this 'optimal state of harmonious consciousness' had created a space in which the outside world was forgotten. It became evident that Naina was now able to engage and have fun with her children, who had begun to stay physically much closer to her. They both paid more attention to her and the number of times that Zafar's behaviour warranted intervention diminished. That participation in the music group had a positive effect on Naina was noticed by Marie, with whom Naina had established a closer relationship.

Marie told me:

> Naina, before she had a lot of problems, you know, and she is not really patient with her children. She beat them, you know, but now a long time she stopped doing that, you know. She stopped to do that. And just like, you know, sometimes she ignore them. If they start, before, always beating, shouting – things like that, but now, no. No. Not shouting.
> ... I saw her with Witha and Zafar, especially with Zafar.... With Zafar, she play with him and singing with him, just like that.
>
> (Marie, interview: 285 - 298)

I viewed Marie's words as confirmation of closer bonding between Naina and her children, which supports Freeman's (2000: 419) statement that '...bonding is not simply a release of a neurochemicals in an altered state. It is the social action of dancing and singing together, which induces new forms of behavior, [*sic*] owing to the malleability that can come through the altered state'.

By the time we moved to Venue C, the Children's Centre, Naina's increased confidence within the group was clear.

> Naina has had her long hair cut short, is wearing a little make-up and looks younger and prettier as a result. She loves everyone's positive reaction, but complains that she's a little overweight. MK demonstrates some tummy-trimming exercises and Ooma has a go too, and soon everyone is on the floor doing crunches and sit-ups and laughing at their own efforts. That she is paying more attention to herself appears to be a good sign to me. She seems much more happy and confident.
>
> (Journal: 19th June 2007)

Away from the drop-in centre, conversations became freer and the participants began to discuss their feelings and emotions, intimate women's issues, family relationships, the asylum process. The increased confidence that Naina began to demonstrate played out not only in her playful interactions with all the children, but also, in her willingness to suggest possible solutions to problems under discussion, and making proposals for future group activities.

When, at Venue C, after our musicking, Naina Amy and Mica would not hesitate to leave their conversations to look after any child needing attention, when all the women were talking together. Previously, Naina had only been concerned with her own boys' boisterousness, but now they were calmer and more attentive to her, she often played with them and drew in the other children.

Naina began to demonstrate a mischievous sense of humour, which emerged more frequently as we talked together after the music activities. This is exemplified below, in the following short exchange.

> Ooma yawns and Naina says 'Tired? ... No sleep?' with a smile. Ooma smiles back, catches Naina's eyes and blushes, then covers her face and giggles. This doesn't go unnoticed and Naina gently teases her. 'Your husband... happy today, yes?' Ooma blushes even more, still giggling and everyone laughs.
>
> (Journal: 19th June 2007)

By this time, the mothers who attended regularly knew each other well and identified themselves as 'belonging' to the group and I asked Naina about this when I interviewed her.

> L ...you made friends in the group, but did you have friends before that?
> N No.
> L You didn't? So the group – you were saying – is it coming to the group….
> N (Interrupts, nodding emphatically) Yes. I have a lot of friends now. Before I have none.
> L And when you found that you were making friends, how did that make you feel?
> N Feel happy. Just happy. (Clasps her hands together and shakes them back and forth)
>
> (Naina, interview: 126 -146)

Naina had frequently commented that singing in the group made her happy and, after a young, pregnant Afghan woman, Kamila, joined the group, I noted in my journal:

> Naina says she's singing at home with her children and that it makes her 'more happy with her children'. She talks with Kamila – explains what we do in the group and interprets what she's said to us all: - 'everyone is an asylum seeker, we all sing English songs and have all made friends'. We all ask her, with Naina's help, when the baby's due. It's in 3 months' time. Kamila speaks and understands little English but, although appearing rather quiet and shy, is drawn into the singing once we get started. Naina says she told Kamila 'English songs good for children, good for us too, everyone happy.' Witha, agreeing with his mother, tells me that they play the CD and sing 'all the time'.
>
> (Journal: 11th June 2007)

Naina's own words and actions support Hillman's (2002) and Ansdell and Pavlicevic's (2005) evidence of the significant effect of participant mood in singing groups. Naina attributed this to her involvement in the group and to singing together which she described as her first happy experiences in the UK. The account volunteered by Witha serves to emphasise that the musical experiences gained through group singing had been taken home and had continued to impact on the family's activities, bringing about change in the dynamics of their relationships. Naina had been unable to join the 'open to all' group after the end of the project, because Zafar had started to go, full time, to pre-school and she had began working as a city council-sponsored volunteer, having been finally given leave to remain.

7: 9 Ooma in the new settings

I have previously described (Chapter 6: 4) the way in which, at Venue B, Ooma had responded to the music when she threw off her hijab, twirled round the room and pulled the other women to their feet. This venue had afforded sufficient space and privacy for Ooma to feel freedom and to be drawn, uninhibitedly into the music. In her own words, 'I felt free and that I was safe' (Ooma, back translated interview: 130). The dramatic changes in Ooma's emotional state appear to evidence Austin's (2002) 'empowering and restorative effects of group singing', further supporting the positive affect identified by *Kreutz et al (*2004).

In April 2007, Marie began attending book-keeping classes and was only able to come for the first half hour of each session. She went to speak to Mo and was able to convince him that the music group was a safe place for Ooma to go alone: he agreed that she could attend without having Marie present and also gave his consent for Marie to take Ooma to a new multicultural group, although this had not lasted for more than a few weeks, because Ooma had invariably returned home in a miserable state.

There appears to be a spiral of change in which Ooma's enjoyment of the musical activities facilitated the forming of closer relationships with the other women. This, in turn, further magnified her feelings of increased well-being, self-confidence and belonging. She told me that she missed her sisters but that 'the group is like a family...sisters' (Ooma, interview: 383). In a conversation with her husband at their home, he told me that he had many problems but that he was pleased that she could go to the music group.

He talks about the multicultural group and how it had only served to make Ooma more miserable, because they talked about how bad everything was, but that my group made her happy. She learns, speaks a little English. When she comes home we play.... she teaches me the songs, we listen to your CD and sing and get happy'. Flora ...has woken up and Ooma brings her in. Mo takes her on his knee and sings 'The wheels on the bus', helping her with the actions. I join in with the song. She starts to giggle when he bounces her. 'You see Lizzie', he says, smiling, 'We sing, have fun, forget problems'.

(Journal: 10th October 2007)

This conversation indicates that Ooma's more positive mood in the MMSA group had had a wider effect on her daily life and had impacted positively on family interactions at home. Having seen the positive changes in Ooma, and realising that his wife was safe there, Mo had felt that he did not need to worry about her, even when Marie was absent.

The facilities at the venue C Children's Centre provided opportunity for play and, when we had access to the ball pool, Ooma, markedly high-spirited after singing, frequently engaged in play. She was uninhibited, noisy and mischievous, often hurling balls at me and the other women sitting at the edge, drawing us all in to her play. I noted in my journal:

Ooma takes off her hijab and shoes and dives into the ball pool, along with the children. She's 'like a kid at Christmas' and throws balls and plays with the boys. Mica turns to me with a smile and remarks that Ooma is like a child herself.

(Journal: 2nd April 2007)

Mica, the most reserved of all the participants had, to my surprise, then joined in too. The privacy of the setting and the opportunities for play, after the mood-enhancing musicking, appears to have engendered behaviours that could never have emerged so fully in the drop-in centre.

When the project had come to an end June 2007, and the women were invited to join the 'open to all' group at venue D in the city centre, Ooma began to attend there. Men also attended this 'open' group and, to my surprise, this posed no difficulty for the usually protective Mo. He told me 'You help her so much. I know I can trust you and you'll make sure she's OK' (Journal: September 15th 2007).

Ooma interacted with all the other adults and became particularly close to several of the women there, all of whom were British born. A newcomer, Jo, who was pleased to be able to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds, told me that she had asked Ooma what it was like to start living in a new country as an asylum seeker. Jo reported that Ooma said she had left her country 'because of her husband's political problems and that she had been very unhappy, but that after she had started coming to music group, everything was better'. (Journal: 28th January 2008).

Mo would occasionally accompany his wife to the open group, joining in with the singing, taking older siblings when a spare lap was needed and helping to set out tables and chairs for snack time. He chatted with the other adults during the social time and was delighted to see Ooma confidently talking with the other mothers. Mo told me 'Lizzie, she change with you. She make English friends. When she come home from there, she sing. We sing your songs to Flora. She play, we play together. Thanks you she so happy' (Journal: 3rd December 2007). Mo was convinced that singing in the group had had a positive impact on Ooma and was, himself, keen to participate as often as possible, joyfully and confidently singing the songs Ooma had taught him at home.

7: 10 Mica in the new settings

In January 2007, Dura had started going to nursery and I did not see Mica again until February. She was looking extremely upset and was on her way to see an advisor. I told her of our plans to meet in the afternoons at the new venue (B), and invited her to come along. She immediately said that she would come and, when we parted, she said, 'Not the drop-in. New Hall a good place, very nice.' (Journal: 5th February 2006). Mica's positive reaction to the new venue indicated to me her view of the importance of setting. Mica was still a little 'guarded' the first session and, at the second session, participated with evident enjoyment in the dancing that Ooma had instigated. In the third week at the new venue, I witnessed a dramatic change in Mica, which I reported in my journal, (below).

> We sing some counting songs, using my little finger puppets and Mica gestures towards the piano. I go over and start playing. Again, there's a spontaneous outbreak of dancing. Mica is swirling and whooping, laughing and pulling everyone to their feet to join in, baby in one arm, the other sweeping in circles in the air. It isn't quite the same as the spontaneous eruption of last week, and when Mica gestures to Ella to join in, she remains seated. Mica, smiling and gesturing, dances over to Ella and pulls her to her feet. Once up, Ella, encouraged by a laughing Amy, joins in the dancing. As everyone becomes breathless, I draw the music to an end. The children are excited and don't want to stop and even baby Christopher, initially a little alarmed by all the commotion, has caught the mood and is smiling and bouncing in Ella's arms. The women hug their children and each other as we return to our seats and sing some more songs.
>
> (Journal: 15th March 2007)

This activity exemplifies Clayton, Sager and Will's (2005) notion of 'music's capacity to enable participants to act and contribute to music-making simultaneously'.

From that point, Mica appeared to lose much of her reserve and appeared to view the group as a place that presented a ‘safe, non-threatening situation’ (Thurman: 2000) where she could regularly engage both musically and socially. Mica’s assertion that ‘Songs, make happy together’ (Journal: 23rd April 2007) was evidenced in her increasingly enthusiastic participation, relaxed manner and growing friendship and intimacy with the other women. The neuroendocrine activity resulting from singing and dancing may be seen as influencing her engagement in’ social behaviours and the forming of relationships and social bonds’ (Carter1998: 810). Mica’s increasing sociability and warmth towards others indicated to me a positive change of mood that she attributed to feeling happier at the new venue. She liked the lightness, space and privacy and felt that the group now provided a place in which she and her daughter could interact more freely with each other and with the other women and children.

> She tells me her happiness can only be complete once she has her son with her, but she is much more optimistic and feels that Dura has had a good start in life, because she can join in with all the songs at nursery, is confident in meeting and speaking with the other children and this, she tells me, has helped her to integrate.
>
> (Journal: 23rd. April 2008)

Mica continued to attend the group until December 2008, when Dura began attending pre-school full time at the start of the following term. Mica had indicated that she lived with remorse and guilt from having left her son behind, and it appeared to me that she had been intent upon demonstrating that she was focussed primarily on her children and on being a good mother. Each week, she had smiled as she engaged in musical play with her daughter, but without giving any sign that she was entitled to enjoyment for *herself*, on her own account. In time, she had begun to sing, laugh, smile and dance unreservedly along with the other mothers and, on leaving the sessions, she had joined the other mothers as they talked and laughed together on their way home. That Mica’s behaviour changed so dramatically after the move would appear to support my view that the drop-in setting had presented a negative influence and that the new settings had brought about positive change.

7: 11 Amy in the new settings.

The way in which Amy related to the other women in the group appeared to change as a greater sense of fun pervaded the atmosphere of the sessions in the new venue. When I had asked about the importance of the music activities in relation to some of the other activities that the group might explore, Amy had told me ‘To sing... is great.

We learn songs, children learn songs. Makes us happy, we are the *music* group. Other things, they are good, but the music, -ah... very important!' (Journal: 23rd April 2008).

Amy began to plan for her future and displayed an optimism which I had not seen previously, despite the fact that she did not yet know if her application for asylum would be approved. Amy's developing positivity was made manifest in her taking up new courses, encouraging the other women to join her, and in her making plans for the future.

Amy was drawn into the conversations that took place in the social time after music more readily than when in the church, where she had focussed more on preparing refreshments and organising resources. That this work had provided the naturally reserved Amy with a means of interacting with the other women without the need or opportunity to disclose very much information about herself, can only be conjecture but, in hindsight, and with my personal knowledge of her, I believe this to be a feasible inference. The room at the Children's Centre had its own kitchen area and preparing for, and clearing away after the refreshments evolved into work shared sociably by everyone.

Ooma, whose French language Amy shared, chattered and laughed with her and Amy appeared to have overcome her shyness within the intimacy and familiarity of the group. Amy began to display a much more cheerful countenance and a lightness of mood, engaging with the other women in a lively manner, joining in with the affectionate teasing that sometimes occurred, and from which she had previously refrained. Boyce-Tillman, in the context of improvisatory music and stress, but applicable, I suggest, in the wider area of musicking, puts forward the view that 'Music can be a place where adults can play safely. There is expansiveness in the context of an accepting, trusting group' Boyce-Tillman (2000: 262). In her investigation of different types of teasing, DiCoccio (2001) states:

> How satisfied partners are in the relationships will determine what communication is relationally and situationally appropriate. The greater the relationship satisfaction, the more likely it is that the breadth and depth of what is appropriate or tolerated will expand.
>
> (Di Coccio, R. (2001:268)

DiCoccio explains, 'Gently and affectionately teasing one another can be viewed as reflecting a confidence in, and intimacy between, the group members'. Ooma, who had become a gregarious member of the group, was instrumental in drawing Amy in to the conversations that took place after the music activities. I had always encouraged Amy to give her point of view, but when others in the group also made it apparent that they valued her contribution, this served to encourage her greater involvement. Being valued and held in affection by familiar others in the group was a positive experience that encouraged Amy to drop her reserve.

7: 12 Marie in the new settings

Marie was excited about moving away from the drop-in. Because the group now met in the afternoon, she was, initially, able to remain for an entire session without other calls on her time and began to help the mothers who had more than one child, calling herself ‘auntie’ to them. Marie was a regular visitor to many mothers she knew, both from the drop-in and from her work as an interpreter, and was instrumental in introducing several new participants to the group. The new participants told me Marie had told them that the group was not only beneficial for their children, but also that that participating in the musical activities would make *them* happy too.

I recorded Lisa’s first appearance at the group, when Marie had brought her along with her twenty month old son, Safi. Lisa spoke very little English, but was able to convey to me that Marie had told her she must come, because ‘sing- make happy and smile’ (Journal: 19th March 2007). Marie had then added that she had also informed Lisa that it would be good for her son, who had no contact with other children. Later, during her interview, she recalled a conversation she had had with Lisa.

> ....she told me, you know, “Marie, I thank you very much, but how would I be really, because… Anything like this, she told me, you know, “Because you push me to go to Liz group and I am happy, you know, and I’m wait to go, and every Monday to go there, and even her son, she told me he never saw any children’.
>
> (Marie, interview: 220 - 224)

Lisa was clearly unhappy, often appearing with eyes swollen from crying. The other women present were immediately supportive of Lisa. At first, Lisa did little to engage her son in the activities and the other women would try to encourage Safi and invited him to sit on their laps, along with their own children.

At first, Safi had preferred to sit alone and play with toys, strongly resisting any attempts to bring him into the music circle, and we agreed to leave him while we sang and danced. Meanwhile, Lisa was drawn into singing and playing instruments and gradually began to relax. Safi, watching quietly as he played, was eventually drawn into the activities too, and sat on his mother’s knee to be tipped up, bounced and tickled. Whenever Safi joined his mother, I would introduce hugging and kissing actions into the repetitions and, slowly, as the weeks passed, Safi began to sit on his mother’s lap from the start of our musicking.

Marie was very proud about having introduced Lisa to the group and took great pleasure in pointing out to me how Lisa appeared transformed at the end of our music-making.

> ‘To see her smile like this, and start to have fun with her, this is new. I never before see her smile like this – and talk to people so much before. It is this group. The music, the children, everything’.
>
> (Journal: 30th April 2007)

Marie’s faith in music as a means of changing her own mood was supported in what she had seen in terms of the changes she saw in many of the mothers whom she had encouraged to join the group, but particularly with regard to Lisa.

Marie continued to wrestle with her PTSD and physical health issues. She reported sleeplessness, anxiety, night terrors and ‘black days’ when she never left her bed. She later told me that when she was in depression, coming to the group had provided motivation to leave her house and spoke of this in her interview.

> I wait for Monday, you know, to go there and to spend some times there, you know, and when I come, that’s like I singing and playing, you know, even with the children, and just like I need that things, you know, and the song, and I – even me, I play the song with you and everythings, I feel very happy, you know. Really, I feel happy, and yes, I wait every Monday because I put it in my mind, every Monday I need to go there.
>
> (Marie, interview: 92 - 97)

Marie was often one of the first to arrive at the children’s centre and, when I set up my keyboard, she liked to try to play melodies she remembered from her youth. Playing with one or two fingers, she would be delighted when she had managed to work out a phrase and would perform it proudly, particularly when Mica, her fellow Eritrean, arrived.

After the summer of 2007, when Marie had been moved to the West Midlands, she began to come back for weekends whenever she was able. Every time she returned to Newtown, Marie would come to music, telling us that there was no place like ‘our’ music group where she could come to forget her problems. Musicking together and singing appear to have represented for Marie, who suffered from both physical and psychological pain, an opportunity to experience ‘increased active coping responses’ (Kenny and Faunce, 2004; Kelly and Davis, 2002). The music group appears to have provided Marie with a sense of being nurtured, included and loved. She usually left to return to the midlands at the end of the social time, able, she told me, to face the coming days with a more positive attitude.

Eventually, after eight months, having been told she must relocate, yet again, this time to East Sussex, Marie decided she could take no more and, although aware that she would lose all her benefits if she did not comply, she refused. A family from her Newtown church offered her a room in their home and Marie moved back to Newtown to live with them. She continued to come to the music group until the end of the project.

Marie told me:

> I don’t trust anyone, but from that group, and the way the women treat me. Really, they show me all this love. And I say, “Oh, thanks God, thanks for coming this group.” Because I used to go to many places to work just like voluntary, you know, but this is the really closest group for me, and close programme because I always like go there, because I feel they are not pretending, you know. They really love me and really I love them, you know, and I love that place to come, I need to tell you that, really.
>
> (Marie, interview: 326 - 330)

Mithen’s (2005: 208) description of the way group musicking contributes to ‘reinforcement of social bonds, arousal of a shared emotional state and trust in one’s fellow music-makers’ takes on particular significance in the light of Marie’s words.

7: 13 Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that attendance at the music group was seen, by the participants themselves, to have had a positive impact on mood. Much of the literature concerning music and effect reports clear links between music and well-being (Mithen, 2005; Clift and Hancox, 2001; Kenny and Faunce, 2004) and physiochemical changes caused by neurological and biological events in the ‘bodymind’ (Thurman, 2002), but a number of factors other than the music itself are inextricably intertwined with these outcomes. I have previously demonstrated that, while language learning contributed to the pleasure of singing, the ability to learn was, itself, enhanced by changed feeling-states brought about through musicking.

The religious function of the venue A music space, and the knowledge that a man might enter the church at any time, prevented some of the women from feeling at ease. A sense of intimacy was not possible when the space provided at the drop-in lacked privacy the physical proximity to the drop-in served as constant reminder of the women’s problems and their precarious and vulnerable state.

When the group moved away from the church, timing and intention became of increased importance: previously, women had often come into the group when they were waiting for, or had been to see advisors and this no longer happened. Those who had originally come specifically to attend the MMSA group continued to attend and arrived in time for the start of musicking, so that our musicking was no longer subject to interruption.

The provision of a separate and private space facilitated other musical activities that had not been possible at the drop-in. Women felt enough at ease to remove their hijabs, much as they would at home with family and female friends and spontaneous dancing and singing occurred in the new venue, in an environment that was perceived as being safe.

Musicking together brought about changes in mood and emotion which then facilitated the development of deeper intimacy and increased mutual support and friendship. It positively affected the children's enjoyment: the diminished need for the mothers to restrict their children's movements contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere.

Although I focus on the mothers in this work, and references to their children have featured comparatively little, it must be acknowledged that the children's enjoyment contributed to the music group atmosphere, and this also had a positive effect on mothers' well-being. The songs and games learned were reported to be sustainable and repeatable; interactions between mothers and their children increased in daily life, which, in turn contributed to longer-term positive mood beyond the confines of the group.

As much as the children drew in their mothers, so the children themselves were also drawn in to their mothers' joyful high-spiritedness as they sang, danced and moved to music and song in a variety of ways. This became a mutually rewarding and bonding experience, which both mothers and children alike sought to re-enact at home, thus extending and amplifying the positive affect.

As the women themselves gained greater personal enjoyment, from having been a means of 'entertainment' for many who had come to the drop-in for advice, the MMSA project, developed into an event to which the women specifically came and in which full participation and enjoyment was made possible. Issues surrounding increased confidence and a growing sense of empowerment, and the role of music in this, as the women themselves began to transform and shape the group to meet their other needs, requires further examination. In the following chapter, I will examine power relations and my own position in relation to the women.

Chapter Eight: Empowerment and the role of musicking

In this chapter I explore how the stresses of life in an alien culture, coupled with the uncertainty of their future lives, had reinforced the mothers' feelings of disempowerment. The power to decide their futures was set within the bureaucratic processes and systems which were subject to changing policies, and outside their control. I consider how the music project played a role in the women's sense of confidence and increased sense of empowerment. This necessitates examination of the participants' perceptions of the changes they experienced through their time with the group, and exploration of the roles played by members of the dominant culture in this.

Of the four areas I identified in Chapter One, as requiring examination, the issue of power relationships is significant, both with regard to my own position in relation to the women in the project, and to the position of the women within a socio-political context. Interrogating the notion put forward by Patai (1991) that 'researchers should avoid representing individuals or groups who inhabit less powerful social positions', Gillies and Alldred (2002) suggest that 'not to speak about, or, for, 'others' encourages silences and gaps, which marginalize and exclude'. This, they suggest, cements 'the privilege of those with the more powerful voices' (Gillies and Alldred 2002: 40 - 41). I acknowledge, with Glaser (1978), Edwards and Ribbens (1998) and Fawcett and Hearne (2004) that I, in my roles as researcher, being situated in two intersecting worlds, cannot remain totally detached from the women in this research.

It is important to clarify my use of the word 'empowerment'. It is an extensively-used word that has different meanings in feminist, political, financial, racial and other contexts. In this present context, I borrow from Kastrup and Arcel (2004: 557), who define empowerment as the 'process by which a marginalized person becomes aware of power dynamics and develops skills to gain control over his or her life without infringing on others' rights'. It has been suggested (Hayes 2002) that when marginalized people, such as asylum seekers, who possess subjugated ways of knowing (Boyce-Tillman: 2004) become aware of the power structures in which they are placed, it becomes possible for them to find strategies of resistance (Foucault: 1969).

I use the term 'empowerment' in the sense of 'enablement': the building of self-esteem and confidence and the acquisition of knowledge that facilitates an enhanced ability to cope more effectively within the limitations imposed by their status as asylum seekers. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify coping as: '…constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person. (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984: 141).

I had initially approached the MMSA project with the notion that I would promote equality and respect within the group. As Huo and Binning (2008) state, 'the experience of respect matters to people because it satisfies two core motives of social life – the striving for status and the need to belong' (Huo and Binning, 2008:1572). They view these core motives as 'organizing principles' which are 'liking and status evaluation', through which 'respect feedback from the group shapes attitudes and behaviors that affect the welfare of the collective (social engagement) and of the individual (self-esteem and health)'.

Huo and Binning cite Simon and Stűrmer (2005) in proposing that: 'respectful treatment increased individuals' perception that they are welcomed or accepted within a group in which they are a member' and that 'communication of respect by group members results in increases in willingness to engage in group-serving behavior and identification with the group'. (Huo and Binning, 2008: 1574).

As an 'insider' within the UK cultural landscape, and because my funding, with its concomitant (previously described) bureaucratic functions, came from Sure Start, my position of relative power was highlighted. However, the women also saw that I resisted the classification by race and ethnicity demanded on the registration forms. This resistance, and my candid recognition of the unfair asylum processes with their long waiting times for decisions, and the forcible removal of vulnerable people, was in sympathy with the views of the women I encountered. This shared view, I believe, opened the way to more open communication and trust between us. As Charmaz (2006) states, '...we gain access through the trust that emerges through establishing on-going relationships and reciprocities' (Charmaz, 2006: 110).

Darley (2001: 346) suggests, '…granting a person " respect" involves treating that person in ways that convey that the group values [her] membership in the group'. To this end I encouraged the women to demonstrate their own particular knowledges and competencies, placing them in the role of 'expert', whenever opportunities arose.

Schuyler and Boston, in Napier and Gershenfeld (1985), cite French and Raven's (1960) conceptual schemes of power: Referent; Legitimate; Expert; Reward and Coercive. My own position of power in this context may be best described as 'Referent power' in that 'the powerful person has power because we accept his or her influence and do it voluntarily'. At the same time, my role was one of possessing 'Expert' power, based on my particular knowledge of songs and my knowledge of British culture and having links to local schools and nurseries.

In addition, there is the notion of my being viewed as possessing ‘Reward’ power. In this respect, I was the possessor of knowledge and potentially useful influence, particularly with regard to the possibility of providing character references.

In terms of status hierarchies in groups, Ridgeway (2001) suggests ‘Exchange, functionalist and symbolic interactionalist approaches’ all ‘emphasise the goal-oriented nature of interaction’. She suggests that such approaches to group interactions, creates ‘positive interdependence ...among actors’ (Ridgeway, 2001: 354 - 355). For all the women who came to the MMSA project for an extended period of time, familiarity with both the group setting and the songs facilitated a sense of control, which was demonstrated in their actively welcoming of newcomers to the group. Newcomers gave the longer-term members an opportunity to become aware of, and demonstrate, their status as group members.

8: 1 Power relationships and reciprocity

In order to attempt to hear and represent the voices of the women in the project, it was important to have relationships of trust. Emmel et al, citing Rist (1981), suggest that trust is ‘maintained through acts of reciprocity’. It was such acts that, I believe, expressed trust between us. Acts of reciprocity, according to Emmel et al, (1981) may be seen as attempts to equalise the relationships of power that exist within this participant-researcher relationship. Charmaz (2006: 110) proposes: ‘Ignoring such reciprocities not only weakens your chances of obtaining telling data but, moreover, dehumanizes your research participants- and yourself’.

At the start of the project, I had struggled to find a balanced approach. I was, and continued to be, the recipient of many acts of kindness in the group and received many invitations to participants’ homes for meals, and for Eid and birthday celebrations. I also received, from many of the women who came to the group, bought and home-made small gifts and cards, with painstakingly-written messages of love and good wishes. Although refreshments were supplied and paid for from funding, from time to time, many mothers both within and outside of this study, brought me home-made sweet and savoury foods, each time presented with pride and pleasure at my requesting instructions on how to make them. I viewed these gifts as touching and unexpected acts of kindness and reciprocity. Marie, in her interview, explained her view of the women’s feelings towards me.

> You are very kind – not only me; everyone there. I think something. I tell you this and everyone – all these ladies they told me that. Just like they told me they never saw someone like you. Because you were just like I think always convincing them the right person, you know. Maybe it's not matter just like we are poor. We are from this place, but for them this has changed for them really. Just like, they know you help and whatever you do, because you love them, not because they are different or something like that.
>
> (Marie, interview 369 - 375)

A cynical view might be taken that the giving of gifts, food and recipes were strategies enacted in order to gain advantage of my potential influence. The singing, fun and laughter that we shared in the music sessions serve, I believe, to contradict such a view.

Cookery, and providing good meals for their families when they had so little money, was a source of great pride for all the women in the group. I acknowledged their expertise and they saw that I enjoyed learning from them: I was a willing pupil and accepted with gratitude the particular knowledge they were able to share with me in this area. I had great respect for the women in the project: I valued them as 'subjugated knowers' (Boyce-Tillman: 2007: 11) and was pleased that they felt able to share their particular knowledges with me. It is also likely that my grateful acknowledgement of their kind words and deeds contributed to the women's self-esteem and confidence. Marie was clear about the changes she saw in the women over their time attending the music group. During her interview, she told me:

> And for most of them, the ladies, when they came there, maybe you also noticed that they don't have any confidence with themself. They don't have any confidence, but now, you know, they are free. You feel that they are free. They can talk. They can chat, you know.
>
> Marie, interview: 264 - 267

Increased confidence has been a recurring theme in previous chapters: musical activities, leading to mood enhancement, maternal and social bonding and increased social exchange have all been contributing factors. I view confidence and self-esteem as essential building blocks of empowerment. Next, I shall examine some of the ways in which changes have become apparent through the increased confidence and self esteem of the five women.

8: 2 Amy's developing self-esteem

Amy was the first person in the group to ask me for any kind of help, and this was several months after she had taken on the role of volunteer. Showing me the related correspondence which revealed to me, for the first time, the reason for her application, Amy asked me to write a letter of support for her asylum appeal. She had previously shared anecdotes about her family life and had spoken to me about the sort of personal issues that, she informed me she would only have discussed with her mother and sisters, but had never mentioned her reason for seeking asylum, or the deep sense of shame she felt. Amy, eyes cast down, told me ‘For family, father, mother, scandale – j’ai honte’ (Journal, 27th November 2006). I had pointed out to her that in the UK, single motherhood is an unexceptional and commonly accepted status within British culture and was not generally judged negatively, or considered to be a matter of shame. She had not known this and it appeared to comfort her.

I had then told Amy that I admired the way in which she provided for her son, and respected her for making every effort to secure a good future for him: she could be proud of herself because she was a good mother. Although she had been a regular visitor to the asylum drop-in centre, Amy had never before asked anyone other than her solicitor to help her in this personal way and told me that I was the first member of the ‘host society’ with whom she had formed a relationship. I had been happy to give her a supporting letter giving an account of her desire to integrate, and how this had played out in her volunteer activities and her eagerness to learn not only the language, but to learn about British culture. Here, therefore, my being British may be viewed as being a useful aspect of my position, based within a relationship of trust.

Amy began to realise that, in the group, at the heart of which musical and social interactions facilitated nurture and mutual respect and, having been singled out to take on a role of responsibility as a volunteer, others viewed her very differently from the way in which she had viewed herself. Amy told me, in her interview, that her role as volunteer had helped her to gain in confidence.

> Me When I asked you “Will you be a volunteer?” How did you feel?
> A I feel, erm – happy and I - I don’t know how to say that in English.
> (French) Confiance? You know –confiance?
> Me Confidence!
> A Yes.
>
> (Amy Interview: 259 - 266)

The interactions with other mothers who provided a range of models of motherhood, and the conversations that took place in the group, especially concerning children and issues of discipline, play and learning provided a source of new knowledge and experience for Amy.

8: 2:1 Amy: empowerment in motherhood

I saw significant changes in Amy's relationship with her son. She was tentative in her handling of her year old son when she first came to the music sessions and I noted in my journal, 'she very gently rocks Raif, but doesn't tip him very far back, as if he is very fragile and won't survive such boisterous movements' (26th June 2006) and, the following week I noted:

> Amy is very gentle with Raif, rocking him only slightly to and fro. When we sing 'Let's all jump, tickle, rock, together' I see she is still only bouncing him very gently, unlike Naina, who tips Zafar completely upside-down. Amy appears to be fascinated by Naina's confident bouncing and rocking of her sons.
>
> (Journal: 3rd July 2006)

The following week, I had asked Amy if she was worried about tipping Raif backwards and she told me that she did not want him to be scared. Amy had, at first, appeared to be an anxious, unhappy and unconfident mother, possibly because she was stressed, inexperienced and had been coping with Raif in relative isolation. It was likely that such stress and isolation would have had a significant effect on Raif's responses (Malloch, 1999; Schore, 2001).

Park (1999: 94) cites Perry (1995), who suggests that the 'perpetuation of an anxious state keeps the panic response open for so long that it becomes highly sensitised, and subsequently requires only a minor stimulus to set it off again'. Park reports a case study (Van Ijzendoorn, Juffer, and Duyvesteyn, 1995) in which, through therapy, a depressed mother's changing patterns of behaviour had impacted positively on the insecure attachment relationship with her child (Park, 1999: 97). The repeated, playful, musical interactions, in which Amy had begun to increasingly engage, appeared, over time, to promote both Raif's confidence, and her own. The following September I noted:

> Amy and Naina love their children's reactions to all the 'upside down' actions. Raif is lively and hangs upside-down on Amy's lap. I recall his past nervousness and see a change in him and, significantly, a relaxed and confident-looking mother.
>
> (Journal: 18th September, 2007)

When I interviewed her, Amy told me, 'The music for babies make me happy. I meet more mums there. We chat, chat. Learn more things about babies' education' (Amy interview: 318-319).

Amy asserted that the music group is ‘good for people who not happy. Sing with children make you smile’ (Journal: 24th July 2006). This statement confirms her increased sense of well-being in the group sessions. Amy’s confidence and increased self-esteem were built up through a range of experiences including having a volunteer role; being empowered through using her voice in singing (Austin:2002); the acquisition of English vocabulary through the medium of song and the confident model of mothering presented by Naina and the other mothers in the group. The building of new friendships was enabling and empowering for Amy as a mother, while her confidence was further supported through conversations about child development.

8:2: 2 Amy: coping and preparing for the future

Amy, in her volunteer role, had appeared to become even more confident at venue C, the Children’s Centre, where she began to independently organise the children’s play and took an interest in the paperwork, filling in the registers and assisting me as I completed the forms necessary for reporting to funders. During a group discussion, when Mica brought up the subject of work, I had asked everyone what they thought of the job opportunities for women and the sort of freedoms we have. I noted, ‘Amy says that she had started a book-keeping course in London and wants to resume her studies so she can get a good job later’ (Journal: 2nd April 2007).

Amy increasingly asked me for advice on childcare and, during conversations about education and children’s health, indicated a deepening interest which led her to investigate the possibility of accessing training and gaining qualifications in order to work in early years settings. This was despite her having no assurance, at the time, that she would be granted Leave to Remain, which indicated not only Amy’s determination to build on her experience gained within the music group, but also an optimism and a sense of hope. Hope, Lazarus (1999: 36) suggests ‘more often than not, stems from a situation in which we must prepare for the worst while hoping for the better’. Amy was convinced that, should she be able to follow her now burgeoning ambitions, she would make use of her experiences in the music group to take up a career in childcare.

I had asked Amy if she intended to stay in the UK, after she had discovered that an old friend from her ‘home’ country was living in France. Following is my account of her response.

> She tells me that she would prefer to stay in England, because the opportunities for work are far better and she thinks Raif would have a better life here. ‘This is a good place, she tells me. ‘I want to stay here. Perhaps I work with children, in nursery. You show me ...we sing, I learn, children learn, we play, children learn. Maybe no book-keeping, children – this is interessant... Maybe, perhaps...’. I see an independence of spirit that has grown over time and she has become self-sufficient – she takes decisions and tells me about them now, whereas, she had needed encouragement to sign up for classes or to go to new places or events.
>
> (Journal: 31st May 2007)

Amy began attending more English classes to ensure she would be able to cope with the written work that would be involved should she be able to access an early years training course. Amy had managed to find a nursery place for Raif, who was now old enough to go to nursery while she attended ESOL classes. Raif’s nursery was one which I visited weekly, to help the staff learn about ways of using songs to promote children’s learning and to create an atmosphere of fun. Most of the songs I had introduced there were also used in the MMSA project. I was told by Katy, a member of the nursery staff, that, on his first day there, Raif had, initially, been very withdrawn and anxious after his mother had left him.

> Kelly tells me that on his first day, Raif had been upset when Amy had left, but that they had begun the morning, as usual, with some of ‘my’ songs and he had immediately begun smiling and was soon singing at the top of his voice and anticipating all the actions. She told me it was clear that he knew the songs and this opportunity to sing seemed to have increased his confidence, and that he appeared happy and sang to himself as he played during the morning.
>
> (Journal 15th September 2007)

I suggest that singing had presented an opportunity for Raif to re-experience the positive feelings (Thurman, 2002; Unwin, Kelly and Davis, 2002) that he had experienced during the MMSA sessions, thus enabling him to cope with a stressful situation, transforming what had begun as an anxious time into an enjoyable experience. Raif’s experience demonstrates that the positive outcomes of musicking have the potential to be transferable for children as well as for their mothers.

8: 3 Ooma’s developing confidence

The Asylum processes that imposed uncertainty regarding the future lives of Ooma’s family were, as discussed in Chapter two, disempowering. What later emerged as further and significant disabling factors were: living with the secret trauma of having been raped during her husband’s imprisonment and torture, and Mo’s refusal to allow her to leave the house unless accompanied by him or Marie. Ooma had never told Mo about the rape, believing that his finding out would compound his already considerable mental problems.

In examining Ooma's developing confidence within the group, and the amount of personal freedom she experienced there, it becomes clear that that there were significant changes in her relationship with her husband which can be directly related to the impact of group musicking.

Huysmans (2006: 88), in examining freedom in the context of security, suggests that people 'must identify the dangerous forms of freedom and decide how to protect against them'. For Mo, on an individual level, it appeared that allowing his wife to engage with others, the possibility that she might disclose private information carried with it a perceived threat to the family's bid for asylum. Mo was convinced that he was under constant scrutiny (Foucault, 1981; O'Grady, 2005) and was convinced that his observed behaviour would influence the result of his asylum application. Through his endeavours to be seen to demonstrate his family's suitability as potential British citizens, Mo's notion of integration might be more closely allied to assimilation, as illustrated by Gatlif (1998).

His anxiety that Ooma might discuss their affairs with anyone who might then gossip about them had appeared, at first, to be a reason for Mo to prevent her from leaving the house unaccompanied. When Marie, whom Mo had initially encountered when she acted as interpreter for him at the drop-in, reassured him that Ooma would be safe at the music group, he had agreed that Ooma could attend, if Marie was willing to be there with her. Once, when Marie had been unable to come, Ooma had come on her own. I noted in my journal:

> Ooma's' husband approves of Marie and he lets Ooma come, when he can entrust her into Marie's care. I don't know whether she tells him about the times that Marie isn't there, but I suspect she may not.
>
> (Journal: February 26th 2007)

The delight that Ooma had expressed during singing, her first attempts to learn the English from song words and her subsequent, positive change in mood when she returned home after the music sessions, eventually convinced Mo to allow her to attend the group every week. Ooma's understanding of English continued to increase during the music sessions and, although she did not have many other opportunities to speak English, her developing understanding gave her increased confidence to attempt conversations in other situations.

Mo had allowed Ooma to join the other MMSA mothers on a Newtown Sure-Start funded visit to a children's farm. This was a particularly joyous event for Ooma. Many Newtown music group participants from across the city were there and, for the first time, Ooma encountered, and was able smile at 'strangers' in this expanded group of mothers and communicated with them with confidence. At one point, as we went over to see the duck pond Ooma started singing *All the little ducks*.

> Ooma starts singing *All the little ducks*... it's her favourite song and she sings it at home. Amy joins in too and I just listen with delight as they walk along singing together. Across the pond a mother, from another city centre music group takes up the song with her toddler. We wave across to her. Ooma says 'Good, very nice, belong to people in Newtown. They accept.'
>
> (Journal: 2nd July 2007)

8:3.1 Ooma: trust and disclosure

Soon after the farm visit, Marie's news of her impending dispersal from Portsmouth to the Midlands, (under the 199I Immigration and Asylum Act), constituted a crisis for Ooma. Everyone was shocked and upset, especially Ooma, who burst out sobbing uncontrollably when Marie broke the news. I understood that, with her departure, Ooma's limited freedom was likely to be curtailed. Below is my account of this.

> Marie arrives and we talk with her about her impending departure. She is very upbeat about it in front of everyone, but Ooma is crying and sobbing almost uncontrollably. Marie tells her 'take your problems to Liz –she understands and you can trust her'. But, of course, I can't speak her language and their shared language has played an important part in their relationship. And, without Marie, Ooma's husband will be less likely to allow her to go out so much.
>
> (Journal: 16th July 2007)

Prior to her departure to the midlands, Marie had visited Mo to try to persuade him that, without her there to interpret, Ooma should attend ESOL classes. Ooma was now more prepared to stand up for herself and used Mo's notion of the importance of being seen to try to integrate (O'Grady, 2005, Foucault, 1981) to support this. She successfully argued her case and embarked on a short ESOL course, which she attended until the start of October, when she began to attend the new Sure Start city centre 'open' group in venue D.

It was when she started attending this group that Ooma, unasked, took on a greater role in assisting me, welcomed newcomers to the group and, with Mica, organised and gave out refreshments, engaging in conversation with each person. Her greatly increased ability to communicate in English, initially gained through the songs and language games developed in the group sessions, had provided a significant contribution to Ooma's development of confidence and self-esteem. I noted:

> Mica and Ooma have suddenly become the experienced ones and I am reminded of a description of integration* in which one of the measures is the ability to feel they are able to give to the community. Here they are the 'givers'.
>
> (Journal: 5th November 2008)
>
> *(Keyes, 1998)

After her first session at venue D, Ooma had invited for me tea at her home and told me that her husband wanted to talk to me. It transpired that he had been hoping that I might be willing to write a letter of support to the Border Agency, which was considering his appeal. As we sat together, he began to talk. First, he told me that he was appealing against his refusal from the Border Agency and asked me if I would write a character reference. I agreed and we sat together while Ooma was in the kitchen making tea. Below is the account of our talk.

> Mo is pleased to see me and, while Ooma goes to the kitchen, I ask him how things are going. He tells me he's struggling with his work, because he doesn't sleep well. I ask him if he still worries about Ooma going out without him, as he had in the past. It had been hard for Ooma, he said, because, in truth, he was really scared of being alone and so had often prevented her from going out. He said that when alone, 'bad' thoughts came to him about harming himself and that going to classes and studying, often late into the night, was what kept him going... and the hope of asylum. He tells me how Ooma had suffered as a result of his terrors and it was one of the reasons she had been so depressed. He tells me that when she joined 'my' group, she had started coming home smiling and singing and that the change in her had helped him... ...Then he pauses and says quietly, 'When she goes out and I am alone, I get so scared. I tell this to no-one –except my counsellor. Now I tell you. I am scared I do something bad to myself, sometimes, too...' He makes a gesture of slashing his wrist. D (counsellor) says it's PTSD after I was tortured in my country. But now, I go to college and I want her to come to your group.... Now we sing at home, have fun and I forget my problems. But when I am alone.... Thank you, Lizzie, you did this for my family. We know we can trust you.
>
> (Journal 10th October 2007)

This conversation highlighted for me the important role of trust and how this played out outside the MMSA group.

Ooma's husband had frequent episodes of paranoia and was fearful of being left alone, a characteristic of the PTSD he was suffering. Wilson (2004), in his discussion of posttraumatic self-configurations describes the 'imbalanced self 'typology' as consisting of 'extreme emotional instability'. They fear abandonment and being left alone without others to rely on for nurturance, love and security'. Wilson suggests that this fear is exhibited in behaviours such as 'outbursts of anger or states of anxiety and agitation'. It was not until his disclosure to me that I gained a better understanding as to why he had been so restrictive.

This meeting also uncovered Ooma's own, hitherto undisclosed trauma. In so clearly indicating to me, as her husband spoke, that these had not been empty 'threats against his family', I understood that Ooma had possibly signalled a wish to talk about it. When Mo later went left the room, I asked her:

> 'Ooma, did something bad happen to you? I saw you look at me when Mo mentioned the secret police'. She says, 'They touched me – it was very bad - these men, they hurt me'. 'Are you saying it was a sexual attack?' She nods, biting her lip and says 'I cannot tell Mo –he is too ill (points to her head) – what they do to him is very bad too. Is too hard for him. He cannot know. Never'. I tell her we can find counselling help if she needs it, but she says 'No, I am OK – it is finished. I am safe here now. I am better to tell you – just to say to you this, make me... feel better now.'
>
> (Journal 10th October 2007)

I viewed these two separate disclosures to me as indicative of a high level of trust between as well as revealing the deep need of each to share such long-held confidences. Joop de Long (2004: 172), writing in the context of therapy, suggests:

> Apparently there exists universal ambiguity in dealing with a traumatic past. People are also ambivalent about what they bring forward in their daily discourse and what they actually do or appreciate when it comes to coping with traumatic stress. People might feel they do not want to embarrass their fellow survivors by talking about their haunting pasts. .. and yet survivors can find enormous relief when they share their memories with others, whether through a self-help group, an individual or family session, or a ritual.
>
> (de Long, 2004: 172)

Such relief may also be experienced outside the therapeutic context and I suggest that, in this instance, I represented a trusted confidante.

I agreed to not discuss this again unless she wished to do so, telling Ooma I thought she had been extremely brave and that I had enormous respect for her. I indicated to her that I understood, from personal experience, something of what she had suffered and that, although this was traumatic, she herself had not done anything of which she should be ashamed: it was not her fault. I reiterated this several times and told her that I applied this thinking to my own experience. I reminded her that I was very proud to know her. Ooma never referred to the subject again.

It is impossible to establish whether it was Ooma's disclosure to me, coupled with Mo's acknowledgement of his own difficulties, which wrought a further positive change in her behaviour, but subsequently, Ooma's self-esteem appeared to be heightened and she became much more self-assured and increasingly independent.

8:3: 2 Ooma's empowerment: her marriage and the wider world

When Ooma joined the open group at Venue D, Mo sometimes came along after his English class and met some of the women with whom Ooma had become friends. They greeted him with warmth and brought him into their conversations. As he and Ooma said goodbye at the end of a session he indicated his pleasure at Ooma's experience in the group.

> Mo says how much he appreciates how greatly the group has helped her and says, 'Lizzie, she change with you. She make English friends. When she come home from there, she sing. We sing your songs to Flora. She play, we play together. Thanks you she so happy.'
>
> (Journal: 3rd December 2007)

Ooma became a confident role model during the singing: demonstrating the song actions with Flora; giving out instruments; leading the dancing; encouraging less confident newcomers to join in and offering her lap, as I did, to those children whose mothers were unable to accommodate them. Ooma's forming of new friendships, her increased well-being and the concomitant positive impact on his life at home convinced Mo that his wife's greater freedom was not the threat he had originally imagined it to be. Also, he realised that, in wishing to be seen to try to integrate, it was his wife, rather than he, who had made the greatest progress. Mo saw that her expanding friendships gave her further opportunity to integrate into wider society. He also saw that, occasionally, other fathers would attend the sessions and, despite his previously strongly-stated views about the presence of men and, possibly, because he was also welcomed into the group, he offered no further objections.

It became clear that Ooma and Mo were developing a new, mutual trust: Ooma's growing independence led her to accept invitations to visit some of the British-born women in their homes and to sign up to, and attend, a variety of Sure Start courses. Mo viewed this as a further, positive move towards integration and, seeing how his wife had become friends with many of the English women, began to actively encourage her and allowed Ooma to make her own social arrangements.

Ooma formed a particularly close friendship with one British-born mother, Jo, who spoke fluent French, and who gave Ooma a great amount of support by taking her on shopping trips and visiting her at home. When he was able, Jo's husband attended the music group and spent time with Mo. They both joined in heartily with all the songs, and the two families formed a close bond, regularly meeting up away from the group. Mo talked with all the participants and played with the children during the social times, demonstrating a hitherto unseen self –confidence and sociability. When Ooma went into labour with their second daughter, Muna, Mo, having talked with some of the other fathers at the group, attended the birth. He told me, that day, that he would never have dreamed of being present for the birth and that, in his own country, this would have been unthinkable.

Sure Start budgets were becoming increasingly tight when, in March 2008, I was told that funding was to be diverted for the setting-up of new music groups in different parts of the city in the next financial year: the venue D group would not receive further funding after June 2008. The group's participants, without my knowledge, on hearing this, started a petition, which they had sent to the area manager, asking her to review the decision and continue to provide funding. I discovered that Mo and Ooma, Mica and other former MMSA participants had all signed this. As a result, the group had been given a reprieve and was allocated further funding until June the following year.

In May 2009, I had reminded everyone in that group that these were to be our last few sessions and that the group would come to an end the following month. Mo was so upset that, quite independently, he wrote to the manager on behalf of his family, asking her to reconsider. I found out about the letter not from Mo, but from the Sure Start manager, who passed the letter, one of several from a variety of participants, to me. A copy of the original letter is in Appendix VIII

I reproduce the body of the letter, verbatim, below.

> We would like to say our family have started attending this music group since on 5th April 2006. My family want to say we have had access to many oprtinity in this goup music. For example Liz Scott Hall was made an every effort to halpe my family to integrate into the community so we have made a great relationship with other family (British-born). My daughters enjoy the project and the activites in this music group so my family would like to say the absence of this music gourp would be a loss not only to us, but also to many others.

I view this act of writing as demonstrating not only Mo's certainty that the music group had fulfilled his own and Ooma's desires to feel a sense of belonging and shared ownership, but also significantly, that they had felt sufficiently confident to openly resist the closure of the group.

8: 4 Naina: her children, music, and empowerment

Naina had struggled to cope with life as a single parent after her husband had been deported to Pakistan after having beaten her. She had understood, and spoken, very little English when she first came to the drop-in: her husband had always spoken on her behalf. Her inability to communicate had left her isolated, fearful and miserable and she had no friends from her home country. Her husband had provided a strong role model for her sons, who missed their father, and they were confused and unsettled and now paid little attention to their mother. Naina had found every aspect of her life as a newly single mother to be enormously challenging and was still grieving for the daughter she had been forced to leave behind in Afghanistan. I have previously described how Naina's sons caused a disturbance whenever they appeared at the drop-in. They had been boisterous and, sometimes, aggressive and Naina had, at times, appeared to be almost unaware of them. However, when she felt unable to cope with, or control them, she had resorted to physical punishment. Marie, who had witnessed this, explained:

> Naina, before she had a lot of problems, you know, and she is not really patient with her children. She beat them, you know, but now a long time she stopped doing that, you know. She stopped to do that. And just like, you know, sometimes she ignore them. If they start before always beating, shouting – things like that, but now, no. No. Not shouting. With Zafar, she play with him and singing with him, just like that ...
>
> (Marie interview: 293 - 298)

In the early music group sessions, frequently, Zafar had not wanted to sit on her lap and had struggled to get away from her. Between July 2006 and February 2007, my journal entries record many accounts of Naina's struggles with Zafar, and later entries record the ways in which the other group members had begun helping Naina to distract him and prevent him running off. I associate Zafar's earlier relationship with his mother with the view that children's early negative experiences in relationship have the potential to disrupt the attachment relationship. (Balbernie, 2007; John Bowlby, 1971; Richard Bowlby, 2007).

I have previously described how musical interactions affected Naina's ability to communicate, and how the fun and laughter Naina experienced in the group had a positive impact on her mood and on daily life. She and her sons had told me of their singing together at home. In drawing closer to her sons, paying more attention to them and seeing their positive responses to her, Naina became better able to parent them without resorting to physical punishment and they responded to her with increasing displays of affection. In June 2008, I called in to see her at her home. My account, below, demonstrates the way in which Naina had changed.

A small altercation breaks out upstairs and Naina goes to the bottom of the stairs and calls Zafar down. Zafar, leave your brothers - come play here. You are shouting - please come here and be quiet. Zafar comes downstairs and says ‘Sorry’ and gets out some crayons and starts quietly drawing at the coffee table. I am quite taken aback. He is so polite, I tell Naina. Now, she says, he’s good boy. All my boys, they better ... do what I say. Always? I ask. No, they are boys, she says, with a wry smile. They good boys. I not stress with them. I ask her, how did this change, how so different now.
She tells me, ‘I sing and play Zafar when he little and be happy in house. He want please me now. You, you did never shout, but they do what you say. You make games –no smack. Is better. No smack.

(Journal: 26th June 2008)

Naina’s increased lightness of mood after the music group sessions, coupled with the range of strategies she had acquired in the music sessions to engage with her children and manage their behaviour, and singing together at home had fostered a growing closeness with, and attentiveness to them. Mutually rewarding interactions had contributed to closer bonding, security and affection. This created a calmer atmosphere in the house. Naina, who had been so distant from her children when I first met her, had come out of her withdrawn state to actively and affectionately care for her sons. Here, I saw Naina empowered as a mother, calmer and better able to cope with daily life.

8: 4: 2 Naina: The music group and empowerment

I have previously described Naina’s increased self-confidence in the group and in her wider daily life. Her view of herself had gradually changed as she had been obliged to carry out tasks previously undertaken by her husband. The other women appeared to provide Naina with a positive view of single parenthood. The emotional support that Naina took from membership of the music group (Kastrup and Arcel, 2004) , and the friendships she formed, enabled Naina to feel that she was a valued member of the group, which supported her increased self-esteem (Darley, 2001). This new sense of value facilitated discussion of personal issues. This is exemplified during a group conversation about opportunities and freedoms for women in the UK.

Naina told us, ‘Men – no good, men! ... Tell you what to do. Want everything for them. Women not important, just to cook, make family. Better, *no* men, do what we like.’ When I then asked her if she could imagine having a job, she replied ‘Yes, I must work. I don’t need a man’, adding ‘but sometimes I miss a man, - you know?’ and grinned mischievously.

(Journal 23rd April 2007).

The idea of working outside the home had been alien to Naina when she first came to the group yet, a year later, she was coping without her husband and was able to contemplate having a job.

The singing of ‘shopping’ songs led to discussions about where to buy certain foods and, at the end of group sessions, the women began to go together to explore different shopping areas and identify new places to buy the best bargains. I have previously described how Naina and her sons listed shopping items in the supermarket while singing songs learned in the group. Naina’s husband had previously done all the shopping, but, encouraged by the group shopping trips, she began to go independently beyond her immediate neighbourhood. This helped her to take better control of her finances: she used money sparingly, putting a limit on her spending to ensure that she was able to set aside enough money to spend on her daughter’s education.

Without her husband’s presence, Naina was able to make more frequent phone calls to family in Pakistan and speak to her daughter and those who were looking after her. She arranged for Tamina to attend a school where she would be taught English, making payments directly to the school to avoid the possibility of the money being spent in other ways. Illiterate in her own language, after Naina had gained sufficient confidence to attend ESOL classes, she began to learn to read and write in English and made excellent progress. She read with her children every evening after school, using their books to support both their learning and her own. Naina gained a position as a volunteer in a charity shop, where her literacy and conversational skills were put into practice and where she received workplace training. From her original situation of great dependency, Naina has emerged as a confident and independent woman.

8: 5 Marie, the music group and empowerment

Marie had quickly identified herself to me as a victim of torture, when I first met her. In the music group, Marie was a person of high standing, a volunteer at the drop-in who had personal knowledge of many of the women, through her roles of confidante, chaperone and interpreter. Her interpretation and translation skills were called upon frequently and she took pride in possessing a set of knowledges not possessed by many of the people seeking asylum she encountered. That Marie had been placed in a position of respect and great affection, through her kindly and sympathetic approach, did not protect her from the torments of PTSD. Interpreting for counselling sessions, while elevating her status and signalling to her that she was fulfilling a much-needed role, appears to have had the effect of deepening her depression, rather than having given her a sense of purpose. Her sense of helplessness was clear when she spoke to me about some of the problems that had been revealed to her.

> I suggest to Marie that it must be difficult for her to have so many other people's problems to cope with on top of her own - she says she hears so many of these stories through her interpretation work for the counselling service. What becomes apparent is that this is impacting strongly on Marie, who is finding the work to be very stressful and upsetting. She responds with a shake of her head – so hard – so hard to hear their problems – they speak of torture, prison, many bad things. I dream about these – I carry them after – it makes me so depressed – I cry for these people. It's like I suffer for myself and then I suffer for them.
> She says, - you are a good friend to me. I can tell to you these things and you care. I tell her that I do care, but stress that I am not a counsellor and that, although I wish I could, I cannot offer her the help she needs. Counselling – for me no good, she says. It is their job, they don't care, or why expect I can interpret for them and not see how I get upset. I hear stories and I am crying when I tell back in English.
>
> (Journal: 22nd November 2006)

Marie's experiences of counselling sessions for others had resulted in her being reluctant to seek help for herself. She told me 'Your group, to be in your group, to sing, have friends who want nothing from me – just friends – and talk to you – better than a counsellor' (Journal: 22nd November 2006). The group represented a place of freedom from discussion of problems and where no demands were made on her. Musicking, singing and dancing appear to have provided the main respite from her internal torment.

Because Marie felt positive about the group, and through her being acquainted with a large number of women, Marie encouraged mothers with babies to attend the group and, when she brought Lisa for the first time, I recorded in my journal:

> Lisa speaks very little English, but tells me that Marie had told her she must come, because 'sing - make happy and smile'. Marie added that she had also told Lisa that it would be good for her son who had little contact with other children.
>
> (Journal 19th March 2007)

Several weeks after Lisa had started attending the group, Marie told me:

> She has many problems and never goes out. To see her smile like this, and start to have fun with her, this is new. I never before see her smile like this – and talk to people so much before'. She ascribed the change in Lisa solely to her coming to the music group, asserting 'It is this group. The music, the children, everything. So good to sing together in group. Make her happy'.
>
> (Journal: 30th April 2007)

Marie took pride in belonging to the group and here, it can be seen she believed that the music, the friendliness and inclusivity provided a counterbalance to negative feelings. Marie appeared to see herself as a ‘recruitment officer’ and often brought to the group women she encountered through her interpretation work. She took great pride in this, and felt valued in the music group more than in any other setting.

> From your group, - you know, for me, I don’t trust anyone. I don’t trust anyone, - but from that group, and the way the women treat me. Really, they show me all this love. I don’t know, because obviously I think no-one can love me, only my family.
>
> (Marie, interview: 112-118)

Marie’s bouts of sleeplessness and night terrors continued, but the ‘black’ days that had kept her in her room for days at a time virtually ceased, so that Marie rarely missed a music session, except when she was staying with friends in London or attending college. Marie explained:

> I wait for Monday, you know, to go there and to spend some times there, you know, and when I come, that’s like I singing and playing, you know, even with the children, and just like I need that things, you know, and the song, and I – even me, I play the song with you and everythings, I feel very happy, you know. Really, I feel happy, and yes, I wait every Monday because I put it in my mind, every Monday I need to go there.
>
> (Marie, interview: 93 – 97)

Marie’s feelings of success in having brought new participants to the music group and the regular respite from the onerous demands regularly made on her, coupled with the transformational qualities of musicking, appear to have helped to reduce Marie’s feeling of powerlessness, elevate her sense of self-worth and had given her a sense of belonging.

8:6 Mica, the music group and empowerment

During most of her time in the music group, Mica had been a very private person, although always helpful and friendly, she did not usually confide in me or the other women. It seemed important to her to be as self-sufficient and independent as possible. Mica had been living in the UK for many years and had experienced working and earning her own living and, when she spoke of this, it was with anger at what she saw as a great injustice.

Mica had told me that the fact that I was doing research, and wanted to hear her views, made her feel she was of some importance, that someone wanted to know about asylum seekers and help them. Her belief that the musical activities were educational and enjoyable, therefore, good for her daughter, encouraged her to attend and, at the same time, she was pleased to be involved in a research project.

It was only after the project had ended, and some of the asylum-seeking mothers had begun attending the ‘open to all group’ in venue D, that I saw Mica begin to become much more out-going and gregarious. She took great pleasure in her indicating her status to newcomers as someone who ‘knew about the music group’, explaining the structure of the sessions and how the children sat on parents’ laps for music, followed by a social time. This new group, to which she now belonged, possibly symbolised membership of a less ‘oppressed’ group than the MMSA group. Adopting Hayes’s (2002 para. 3) notion of oppression through membership of ‘particular social groups’, I suggest it is possible that, in Mica’s view, the British-born participants with whom she now socialised, possessed a higher social status and that, by association, her own status was raised.

Mica embraced every opportunity to interact kindly and companionably with many of the local British-born mothers and acted as a warmly welcoming ‘hostess’ to newcomers, many of whom were not first-language English speakers. I had become aware, in October 2007, of a change in the way that Mica addressed her daughter, having realised that her pronunciation of her daughter’s name had changed slightly.

Originally having been clearly pronounced ‘Dura’, the name had evolved into ‘Dora’. I noted:

> Mica calls over to her, asking her to give a toy to another child, clearly calling her ‘Dora’. I go over to ask Mica if I have the correct spelling for Dura’s name in my paperwork. (Mica had spelled out Dura’s name for me when I first had first met her). She gave me the anglicised version, telling me, I call her this; it is her name, ‘Dora’. It would appear that, gradually, Mica has adapted her pronunciation of her daughter’s name, with a small and barely noticeable change, and has now adapted the spelling.
>
> (Journal, 1st October 2007)

This name change possibly represented a either a desire for her daughter to be associated more closely with a British, rather than Eritrean identity, or was, perhaps a move to adapt to the more anglicised pronunciation of her name by nursery staff and others who had mispronounced Dura’s name and possibly had, unwittingly, anglicised it.

In the open group at Venue D, Mica appeared empowered in her ability to demonstrate the social, cultural and musical knowledge she had accumulated during her time with the MMSA group. Here, she was able to demonstrate that she was a member of society with something of value to offer (Sennett, 1999) and need no longer consider herself or her re-named daughter as belonging to a group of marginalised others.

8: 8 Summary

Musicking together has been the foundation from which changes in mood have emerged, and from which confidence and self esteem have grown. There is the budding of optimism, from looking ahead to the next session of the music group to contemplating a future in which the women would be able to use their skills (from the past and newly acquired) and talents so that they were better able to do what they needed for themselves. For all the women, the idea of a working life and coping alone appeared to have become the norm.

The instrumental relationships (Simich et al, 2003) that were in evidence, changed over time as closer ties developed between the women and also with me. Amy's first confiding in me, through her initial need for a reference, had led to further trust between us. Reciprocity had been essential in achieving a levelling-out of power and enabling each group member to feel that they could be 'givers' as well as 'receivers' (Sennett, 1999). Amy gained in confidence as a mother and began to be aware that she could make her own decisions about her future, should she gain Leave to Remain. Feeling sufficiently confident to consider her own future for herself, Amy then decided upon a new career. The knowledge of childcare and development she had gained over her time in the group, coupled with the self-assurance she had developed, provided her with the stimulus to make a complete change of direction.

For the other mothers, there were different factors involving empowerment that shaped their lives. For Ooma, there was empowerment in her relationship with her husband. Once dependent upon Marie as chaperone, it had been Ooma's increased lightness of mood, confidence and optimism after group musicking that had led her husband to acknowledge that she should have greater freedom.

Naina, through her increased confidence, had been able to deal effectively with aspects of daily life for which she had previously depended upon others, including her husband, to undertake. At home, the better management of discipline and her children's behaviour had provided an environment where her children flourished, and in which she felt in control. Marie gained a new sense of being acknowledged and valued, which had led to her increased sense of self-worth, while Mica had found empowerment through utilising the skills and knowledge she had acquired through her participation in the MMSA group.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

I set out, in this thesis, to interrogate the possible benefits of group musicking with a group of marginalised asylum-seeking mothers and their children, in the areas of belonging, sense of safety, self esteem and confidence. I have evidenced ways in which, for both mothers and infants, musicking increasingly encouraged moments of spontaneity; the further letting-down of inhibitions; the leaving-behind of the world outside and respite from tension and anxiety. My enquiry has led me to explore how musicking has been a tool for creating a space in which these changes took place, both in the group and in the participants' wider daily lives.

The use of group musicking, as the medium through which this exploration was undertaken, has necessitated investigation beyond the boundaries of musicking alone, involving an exploration of notions of community, group and individual relationships and identity. I have explored ways in which, within an open group of asylum seeking mothers and their babies, musical, linguistic and cultural learning took place during group musicking sessions.

All the women who participated in the MMSA project were living a precarious existence and were negotiating their way through an overloaded asylum system that had been deemed 'not fit for purpose' (Independent Asylum Commission Review, 2008). While the situation outside the group had not changed, I endeavoured to provide something that was constant in a changing landscape. This different situation depended not only on what I did, but on the participants and the space itself.

9: 1 Countering negative circumstances

Successive governments have endeavoured to address the needs of people seeking asylum, but bureaucratic systems are slow and this continues to be a source of distress for those awaiting the outcome of their applications. I have described how many of the women were anxious and unhappy or depressed as a direct result of living in a state of uncertainty and, for those who carried traumatic memories of killings, torture, violence and the loss of close family ties, there were additional burdens.

The asylum drop-in centre, venue A, where I began the project, was one of many NGO support organisations serving to address issues of fair treatment of asylum seekers in the face of the UK's overburdened bureaucratic immigration systems. It quickly became clear that asylum seekers primary needs for 'physical and emotional safety, predictability of relationships' and 'reestablishment of social relationships' (Kastrup and Arcel, 2004; Kinzie, 2001) were not being satisfactorily or appropriately addressed. It has been made clear that there were also further difficulties which were bound up with issues around integration and ‘community cohesion’.

While most of the women attending the MMSA project had expressed a desire to ‘fit in’, their not knowing where they might end up, in terms of neighbourhood, town or even country, were additional impediments to their well-being. The incapacity of the asylum system to deal speedily with the women’s applications for asylum had a deep and negative effect on the participants and I have illustrated a range of chronic and acute psychosocial threats to psychological health, particularly for those with a history of pre-migration trauma, that were experienced by the project’s participants.

The commonly stated wishes of the women in the project were, in essence, to attain social well-being (Keyes, 1998; Sennett, 1999), in that they simply wished to settle down; be able to live in safety; communicate with neighbours, teachers, health and other service providers and to feel a sense of order, purpose and belonging. The need for belonging gave significance to the regular sessions which facilitated a measure of predictability for the MMSA group participants. All the women had emphasised to me the importance of knowing that, on Mondays, they could attend the group. Their anticipation of this regular access to pleasurable, musical and social experience served to promote behaviours that would further encourage them. This thesis attempts to address the notion that the formation of communitas through musicking has the capacity to positively affect the women’s views of self and the nature of relationships, both within the group and outside it, in their wider daily lives.

Attending the group, as evidenced by the participants, appears to have restored some sense of order and purpose in their otherwise disarrayed lives.

9: 1: 2 The role of the leader

The position of researcher, in the margins of two overlapping worlds, is complex and I have acknowledged, in Chapter Four, the impossibility of total detachment. Musicking is a group act which fosters the disappearance of hierarchical differences and, in that disappearance, my role as researcher sometimes became blurred. The participants’ many acts of musical reciprocity facilitated trust and a sense of equality between us. I played different roles within the group: researcher, facilitator, friend and supporter and sometimes found these different roles difficult to manage. At the outset, I had imagined that I might be able to be of help to the women, but did not realise how I would be drawn into caring about them, how they might help me, or how complex would be the relationship between us.

This research project has given me new knowledge and understanding surrounding issues for asylum-seeking mothers. I witnessed the forcible removal of several families and shared the sense of helplessness and grief at the loss of people I had come to know. I was involved in supporting Naina in her application to bring her daughter to join her and, in Ooma's case, I was able to help her and her family find safe refuge elsewhere, following their forced repatriation and her husband's return to torture.

The relationships I experienced have contributed to my greater understanding of the lives of many of the 'marginalised others' I have encountered during the course of this work. I have also gained a deeper understanding of the cultures of the group participants and my political views, concerning the desperation that leads families to seek asylum, the processes involved in their settlement, and in the carrying out of forced repatriation, have been re-shaped by what I have learned.

For some women in the project, their relationships with me and with one another, in the early days of the project might be best described as 'instrumental' (Simich et.al. 2003, Omeri et al.: 2004). There was the opportunity for the sharing with one another of information about the asylum processes and also, the opportunity to engage with me as a potential UK-born ally who might be willing to supply character references or provide access to information about support services.

When the MMSA music project first began in venue A, many of the asylum seeking mothers who came to attend appointments there had welcomed it as an opportunity to engage in an activity that initially provided a diversion while they waited for advice. There, women initially came to the music sessions at irregular intervals and I suggest that it was their recognition of particular benefits such as their enjoyment of musicking, mood enhancement, childrens' positive experiences and social contact that provided them with motivation to begin attending on a more regular basis.

As leader, I was aware of my position of power (Gillies and Alldred, 2002) and I acknowledged and valued the subjugated knowledges possessed by the participants and supported opportunities for the creation of a space in which the sharing of these knowledges was encouraged.

One of the elements that fostered their sense of 'belonging' in the group was the musical reciprocity, which contributed to the building of mutual trust. As the group's leader and facilitator, my position, as discussed in Chapter Four, was of influence regarding ethos and behaviour in the MMSA group, as well as in the other projects I ran concurrently (Napier and Gershenfeld 1985; French and Raven: 1960) The manner in which the group developed supports the notion (Huo and Binning: 2008; Stűrmer and Simon, 2005; Frazer, 1999) that respectful treatment (Lord et al, 2001) increases the perception of being welcomed and fosters motivation to identify with the group. My valuing and responding to participant feedback facilitated the development of the participants' increasing control over the activities, both musical and non-musical, which the women in the group had indicated were important and relevant for the achievement of new learning and increased enjoyment. In this way, my role as 'leader' diminished as my role as 'facilitator' increased.

I have described how the regular participants at venue D had welcomed the women from the MMSA group, when they began attending. Some of the women had previously spoken out against asylum seekers in our discussions, I suggest it is possible that they wished to be seen to be conforming to what I had suggested, and Sure Start endorses, to what was acceptable behaviour. In Chapter Two, I discussed O'Grady's notion of self- surveillance and

The participants' positive experiences of mother and baby action songs encouraged the forging of closer relationships with their children and each other. Through musicking together, there emerged the desire to further re-enact these experiences.

9: 2 The environment: creating a liminal space

At the time of the project's conception, I had not been fully aware of the importance of place until it became clear that, in the church, (venue A), the world 'outside' could not always be separated sufficiently to facilitate the construction of a different world inside the group. That the church environment could not, for many, provide sufficient comfort and security, became particularly clear when contrasted with the non-religious and more private environments of subsequent venues, in which intense liminal experiences took place. While venue A provided an easily accessible, initial point of contact, there, the group sessions nonetheless provided a structure in a week hitherto predominantly formally structured by visits to legal advisors or to police stations for registration. The use of a religious space had discouraged potential participants.

I have shown how the impact of the music activities on participant mood changed within the different settings. It became clear, after leaving venue A, that the church's lack of privacy, coupled with the fact that it was a place of worship belonging to a particular faith tradition, had not only deterred some women from attending. Also, for some, the sense of proximity to the place to which they brought their problems provided a constant reminder of their situation. Nevertheless, the opportunity to sing together and to enjoy mutually rewarding interactions with their children provided the incentive to continue to attend the group in venue A, in order to repeat the pleasant experiences that occurred (Thurman 2002).

Further, when the mothers focused on their children, mutually rewarding interactions increasingly emerged within the maternal dyads (Bowlby, R., 2007; Papousek, 1996; Custodero, 2002; Trevarthen, 1999), and the positive psycho-biological impact of singing together (Thurman, 2001; Storr, 1992) also resulted in the leaving-behind of the 'outside' problems of daily life.

The positive impact of group singing on the mothers was more evident in venues B and C, both of which facilitated a sense of privacy that resulted in the mothers' increased sense of freedom. The inhibiting factors that had been present: the religious space: close proximity to the space in which problems and anxieties were discussed; the lack of privacy and the arrival and departure of mothers waiting for their appointments no longer applied. I have suggested that, through musicking, lay the potential for the women to find safety, order and positivity, during the time they were together in the group. As the leader, my task was to create opportunities for the all women to participate and to create a different environment, a space in which transformation might take place: in effect, a liminal space.

The first, spontaneous act of uninhibited dancing together in venue B had been a joy-initializing and intense 'flow' experience, after which every participant felt a sense of wholeness, 'not only internally, but also with respect to other people and the world in general' (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990; Darley, 2001; Mithen, 2005). Thus embodied, this experience was re-enacted in subsequent sessions (Thurman, 2001; Clift et al, 2007).

I identify these intense, transformative events as 'liminal' experiences (Turner, 1969). It has been proposed (Boyce-Tillman, 2000 and 2010) that the creation of a liminal space depends on the leader, the participants and the environment together. In this liminal space the group members were drawn closer together in what Turner (1990) designates as 'spontaneous communitas'.

The notion of 'liminality', is derived from Van Gennep's (1908, translated 1960) concept, in the context of ritual and rites of passage. Turner (1969) has taken from Van Gennep the notion of severance, liminality and return. Turner (1969: 132) defines 'existential or spontaneous communitas' as the 'transient personal experience of togetherness, one based on common humanity and equality rather than recognized hierarchy'. In the liminal stage, hierarchical differences disappear to be replaced by a new social structure in which communitas spontaneously forms.

'Spontaneous communitas' may be best described as an intense community spirit in which all present share a common and equalizing experience. Turner views ‘liminality’ as an intense time and place of withdrawal from normal forms of social action in which normal societal, spatial or spiritual structures are temporarily suspended, a description that readily lends itself to the nature of the experiences of the women in MMSA group.

At Venues B and C, and with an established ethos of inclusivity, I have shown how those who had become familiar with the group began to confidently provide a welcome to newcomers, and how this played out beyond the MMSA project when participants moved on to the open group in Venue D.

9: 3 Communitas and flow

I view liminal, or transformative, experiences as relating closely with ’flow’ experience. Csíkszentmihályi (1992) defines flow as a state in which ‘people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it’. In essence, flow involves the experience of intrinsically rewarding activity, involving acting with ‘deep and effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life’ (Csíkszentmihályi, 1992: 4). In such moments there is a loss of consciousness of time, where one is completely taken up by the present moment, when consciousness of self disappears, and in which there is a sense of personal control and the disappearance of the self, which ‘emerges stronger after the flow experience’ (Csíkszentmihályi, 1992: 49).

Csíkszentmihályi (1992: 65) describes surgeons working in an operating theatre reporting the ‘sensation that ... the individual is subordinated to the group performance... ... in which all involved share in a feeling of harmony and power’. He refers to this as ‘group flow’. In my view, this relates to Mithen’s (2005) description of the formation of group identity and unity through which there is no ‘other with whom to co-operate, just one group making decisions about how to behave’. Csíkszentmihályi (1990: 41- 42) suggests that ‘When the flow episode is over, one feels more ‘’together’’ than before, not only internally, but also with respect to other people and the world in general’. The sense of joy within the flow experience is such that ‘once we have tasted this joy, we will redouble our efforts to taste it again’.

The different, and relatively less goal-focussed experiences of flow in the group’s musicking, leading to awareness of, and interaction with others, as the self disappears and the group becomes ‘as one’ in communitas, might be more appropriately described as ‘collaborative flow’. I suggest that the ‘collaborative flow’ experiences in musicking in the MMSA group were characteristic of the liminal experiences in which communitas was formed and through which positive change took place. Csíkszentmihályi (1990: 17) posits the notion that, in order to overcome life's problems and pressures, one must learn to 'provide rewards' to oneself. There was intrinsic motivation for the women in the group to repeat the positive and rewarding experiences of musicking, both within the group and outside it, at home with their families.

Boyce-Tillman (2009) paper concerns the 'transformative qualities of a liminal space' that are 'created by musicking' and suggests that 'when the musicker establishes a relationship with all the domains which then fuse' this can 'cause the musicker to enter the liminal space' (p5). She further states:

> The security of the space provided by the musical event enables normal boundaries to be porous. This opens up new possibilities of elaborate and innovative fusions between the alterities within the self and also with others who are different from us.
>
> (Boyce-Tillman 2009:11)

Boyce-Tillman, (2000: 2) proposes the following domains of musical experience: 'Expression, encompassing the evocation of mood, emotion, atmosphere; 'Values – relating to the context of the music-making experience in terms of 'the macro area of culture and the micro area of a particular event'; the world of abstract ideas in which musical ideas are explored and 'Materials - the environment'. Where all these come together in relation to the participants, there is the potential for complete absorption in musicking and the forgetting of the world outside, the effect can be transformative.

Boyce-Tillman adds the caveat (2002: 6) 'But some musical experiences do not transport us to this space/time dimension. This is when we fail to establish a relationship with a particular domain'. Although, at Venue A, the songs and activities presented enjoyable interludes, the physical space, inhibited some participants from entering fully into all four domains. It became clear that musicking which takes place in a context that neither provides a sense of security nor facilitates a degree of physical and emotional separation from the outside world does not facilitate the creation of an intense liminal experience.

The initial greater sense of safety and ease in the other venues was evidenced in the spontaneous eruptions of singing and uninhibited dancing and the women's clearly stated celebration of freedom from the limitations imposed by the presence of others outside the group. The physical leaving-behind of the outside world for musicking together provided greater opportunity for learning, concentration and emotional expression and for the creation of intense liminal experience.

In the context of mother-infant communication, music 'as a shared activity can give rise to bonds of affection and new learning in company' and has a healing power that ‘confirms the natural motives for sharing musicality’ (Trevarthen, 2002; Trevarthen and Malloch 2000). According to Freeman (2000: 422), ‘The role of music as an instrument of communication beyond words strikes to the heart of the ways in which we humans come to trust each other’.

9: 4 Play, pretending and rehearsal

Newman and Fulani (2011) describe how their ‘All Stars Project’ for socially, emotionally and financially deprived children who were ‘low performers’ (2001: 1- 5), uses the strategy of an initial pretence that all the participating children are, in the words of Vygotsky, ‘a head taller than they really are’. Children learn and develop by ‘performing a head taller than they are’ (Vygotsky, 1978: 102). This is based on the understanding that ‘pretending, or “creatively imitating” or performing in social contexts, is how human development is produced’. Newman and Fulani’s view is derived from Vygotsky (1978 and 1986).

Vygotsky observed children’s language development, and the way in which parents ‘pretend’ that early babblings are speech and have ‘conversations’ with the infant. With such language ‘scaffolding’ in place, the infant responds with increasing facility, eventually reifying the ‘speaking child’ the parent has been pretending she is. In pretending, there is the possibility of the ‘trying-on’ of new identities. Newman and Fulani (para 20), para 20), in the context of social therapy, suggests that ‘Helping people to continuously create new performances of themselves is a way out of the rigidified roles, patterns and identities that cause so much emotional pain’.

In her exploration of the notion of a ‘liminal music space for cultural and personal transformation’, Boyce-Tillman (2009: 13) suggests ‘In the liminal musical space we are brought into encounters with a huge range of possibilities’. She proposes that this signifies that the interface between these diverse encounters – ‘with the other-than human world, the volatile expressive world, new discourses and new cultures can enable new patterns and ways of knowing’. Boyce-Tillman (2009) associates the liminal experience with that of the humans in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream,* which takes place in two separate locations, the wood and the city. Boyce-Tillman views the wood as a marginal, ‘magical space’ which is still ‘related to the everyday world’ (2009: 7- 8). The humans’ loss of power to the fairies results in the temporary loss of responsibility, which allows them to try out new personas and the humans emerge, changed, from the magical wood.

In a similar way, musicking in the MMSA group has the potential to facilitate the trying-out of new personae, such as those of English speaker, successful mother, accepted group member and musicker, so the music group then becomes a space in which these new identities are rehearsed and performed, before being taken back into the world outside.

9: 4: 1 From marginalized ‘Other’ to insider: leader, participants and environment together.

I have exemplified how ‘otherness’ was changed as individuals identified themselves in relation to their perceived belonging to the MMSA group. When one’s sense of identity is, to some extent, shaped by factors such as how one was viewed and treated by others, questioning one’s sense of self (Baumann, 2005; Spencer, 2006) may be ameliorated through validation in a new relationship.

The ‘subjugated ways of knowing’ (Boyce-Tillman, 2004; Foucault: 1969) that had been previously valued in the cultural landscape from which the women originated, appeared to have had little place in their new environment. However, within the group, the women became ‘insiders’ and their subjugated knowledges, demonstrated in the women’s sharing of their particular expertise such as in the areas of self-help, child-rearing and cookery, were valued and validated. I suggest that this was one of the constituents in the re-construction of self esteem. In group decision-making processes, particularly regarding the nature of future session activities, my position of facilitator, and of an equal, following the disappearance of hierarchical differences in communitas (Turner, 1969), enabled the women to call upon me to share my particular knowledges and to share theirs with me. This is exemplified in the way in which the group developed to include, at the women’s request, introduction of language-learning songs and a range of activities to support other learning. The participants’ increased confidence in speaking in English contributed to a spiral of learning, increasing confidence, improved self-esteem and empowerment, leading the women to feel a deeper sense of ‘ownership’, and the identification of self as ‘belonging’.

9: 5 Mothers, children and music

The notion of meeting with unknown others for music and play was unfamiliar within the different socio-cultural practices of the mothers (Bentley, 1987; Spencer, 2006) and was, initially, a new and strange experience for those who attended the project. As Marie had suggested, they did not sing or play with their children, not only because of their cultural backgrounds, but also because, in the face of trauma and anxiety, most of the mothers were primarily focussed on achieving Leave to Remain. I have also described how the associated anxieties involved took their toll on the women’s ability to interact and have fun with their children (Auerhahn and Laub, 1998; Trevarthen, 2004; Thurman, Chase and Langness, 1987).

The positive effect upon the children of the musical interactions through singing provided an opportunity for increased intense engagement between mother and child (Dissayanake, 2000: Papousek: 1982). This essential engagement with their children (Bowlby, J., 1971; Bowlby, R., 2007) promoted a 'vitality affect' (Thurman, 2002) which supported the communication between the mothers and their children (Sylva and Lunt, 1982; Gerhardt, 2004). I have shown how the psychological impact of musical activity on the maternal dyad (Schore, 2003; Custodero, 2002) positively affected the well-being both of the children and their mothers through the liminal experiences within the group, and beyond these in the world outside.

The use of good quality instruments and props served to denote the high value of the musical activities and also provided an attraction and point of focus which served to draw in children, such as Naina's, who had been unused to participating in a group. This was particularly helpful when the mothers, for whom this was also a new experience, found it difficult to keep their children on their laps in venue A, where there was scope for exploration of such a large space.

The children's enjoyment of musicking was not only evident in the music sessions, but, as I have further demonstrated in chapters seven and eight, to have had a positive effect at home and beyond the home, playing out in Raif's first day at nursery and in Mica's assertion that Dura (Dora) had been helped by her experiences in the group. The effect of the musical learning and enjoyment that had been experienced by the children in the group sessions had supported their confidence when they started to attend nursery. The group sessions, viewed in retrospect, had become, in effect, a rehearsal space in which the children were able to practice the behaviours, cultural learning and nursery songs that prepared them for nursery and preschool. The music sessions also led to the children's increased confidence and well-being in their preschool setting. The heightened enjoyment of singing familiar songs appeared to divert children from the anxiety of separation from their parents (Bowlby, J., 1971, Bowlby, R., 2007). The children's early experiences within the MMSA group, of language-learning through musicking with their mothers, facilitated their earliest communication and understanding in English.

9: 6 Language acquisition

In social conversations, where the work of interpretation and translation was effected collaboratively, it was found that this method not only made communication possible, but also, seeking for general meaning facilitated inclusivity and engendered feelings of cooperation and acceptance. Singing together in a group has been shown to have the capacity to promote enhanced mood: the consequent low levels of anxiety attained through group musicking, and the concomitant increased self-confidence (Dulay and Burt, 1977) became significant contributors to the women's second language acquisition (Wallace, 1994; Guglielmino, 1986).

The developing confidence in communication, first through the use of songs (Pinker, 1994; Gregory, 1996) within the collaborative and sheltered environment of the group, provided further incentive to the women to pursue additional language-learning activities after the singing. This encouraged them to think about areas of daily life where greater knowledge and practise of conversation might ease their ability to communicate outside the group.

The cultural learning that took place around such occasions as seasonal and celebratory events led to further events being planned, both at the group sessions and in their homes as well. Increased knowledge about such organisations as health and social services gave the women greater confidence to access them.

The ability to learn English has been shown to have had the effect of increasing self-esteem and increasing the potential for social encounters to take place. This was later evidenced in the interactions that took place in the 'open to all' group, when first-language English speakers, new to this group, were greeted and take care of with confidence by women who had belonged to the MMSA group and who felt sufficiently empowered to take on this role..

The difficulties encountered by asylum-seeking mothers, in accessing ESOL classes which gave access to free and appropriate childcare are likely to remain unchanged. Songs can be adapted to encourage the use and understanding of the vocabulary of common daily activities and interactions. For those whose attendance at ESOL classes was reliant on access to free child care, the model of the MMSA's initial acquisition of English was judged successful by the participants. I suggest that the MMSA group might provide a useful model for fun-based early language acquisition and cultural learning.

9: 7 Beyond communitas

The sense of intimacy, fostered through the privacy of the setting, and the necessity for planned intention to attend, was further evidenced by not only by the mothers, but also their children. This was exemplified in my description of Naina's children telling me about their engagement in musical play at home with their mother;

how they enjoyed coming to music, and how Raif sang songs from the group during Amy's interview. Mica, who, in her interview, had told me that after the music sessions her problems continued to pre-occupy her, at home, regularly played the CD she had received: and her daughter participated in every action song with the greatest of enthusiasm. When spontaneous singing and dancing activities took place in the MMSA group, the children were excited by, and delighted with their mothers' happiness. This served to further closer bonding between mothers and children and intensified the sense of communitas. This exemplifies Thurman's (2000) assertion that 'the greater the perceived benefit, the more intense the pleasant feelings become'.

Ooma, Naina, Amy and Marie all claimed, both during group music sessions and in their interviews, that their increased sense of well-being and positive mood lasted beyond the music sessions. The impact on Ooma, the only woman in this study who lived with her husband, was the most readily identifiable, supported, as it was, by the evidence of her husband, who asserted that her happiness after the music sessions affected her mood at home, leading him to also learn and sing the songs at home. His anxieties about his wife were reduced, which had a positive effect on their family life and provided, for him, a new source of hope, an improved ability to cope, and reduction in stress. (Hillman, 2002; Ansdell and Pavlicevic, 2005; Bailey and Davison, 2003 and 2005).

The musical and social interactions within the group were such that the women were able to try out different performances of the self (Newman, 2012, Newman and Fulani, 2011). Such 'pretending' (Vygotsky, 1978 and 1986) allowed the participants to create performances of successful selves, free of anxiety, opening up possibilities for new learning, communication and friendship. I suggest that the liminal space, in which communitas was realized, became, in effect, a rehearsal space for the trying-on of new identities and the practising of new learning, which served as preparation for future encounters in wider daily life. In Chapter two (2: 6) I referred to Sennett's (1999) criteria for social inclusion and I suggest that these have been met in microcosm in the MMSA group.

9: 8 Identity and Changing Views of Self

The differences in culture, language, dress, religion, and values between each of the women in the project, and between them and the British-born, long-term residents of their neighbourhoods, were wide and varied. For most of the women I encountered, who were recently arrived, there was relatively little support, other than from local NGOs or from other asylum seekers who had been in the UK for long enough to have knowledge to pass on. They were beginning a new and uncertain period of their lives in 'an increasingly complex and fragmented social world' which has entailed 'the creation of social others' (Goodhart 2005: 162). The adjustments that must be made, in order to cope with life in a new culture, throw previously accepted norms into question. Although all the women came from cultures in which men traditionally played dominant roles and women's voices were suppressed, the majority who came to the MMSA were single or had been separated from their husbands. The absence of men necessitated the taking on of new responsibilities and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that would enable them to survive. For others, who were with their husbands, as was Ooma, there were tensions between the perceived freedoms that were so clearly evident in British society, yet which were not available for them.

Social integration was fostered initially through the letting-down of inhibitions through musicking and MMSA group participants perceived themselves as 'belonging' to the group. It became evident that this sense of group identity had provided affirmation, where previously they had had the sense of being members of a marginalised 'social group' (Hayes, 2002; Foucault, 1977a). Musicking presented a means of facilitating 'maximal communicative power' (Bourdieu, in Hage, 1997) that engendered a sense of belonging.

Through the MMSA project, the individuals' fragmented stories come together to form consistent stories which provide a level of constancy in an environment of change and uncertainty. Giddens's (1990: 92) description of the lack of 'confidence in the continuity of their self-identity' and lack of 'constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' applied to most of the MMSA group's participants. For Ooma, this had meant that her husband had restricted her movements and not allowed her to leave the house without a chaperone. For Naina, who had lived with similar restrictions until the deportation of her husband, initially, her new 'freedom' had been unwanted, demoralising and frightening.

Musicking together in a group with other women who were not all subject to similar restrictions, and who were not unused to making their own way in life, exposed Naina and Ooma to new possibilities and opened up a more positive view of their situation.

The freedoms they saw that I and other working women enjoyed were influential in helping them understand differences in gender values, giving scope for imagining a different sort of life for themselves. Increasing confidence facilitated the asking of questions leading to exploration and greater understanding of British culture, in terms of education, food, feminine care and many other aspects of daily life in Britain.

I suggest that through group musicking grew the confidence and will to explore new identities and engage in adapting to a culture where gender identities are more fluid.

While groups of many kinds exist to bring together people who will benefit from the shared activities and interests, here, it was *musicking* which had the capacity to create powerful and repeatable positive physiological and emotional responses, and which created a sense of social inclusion.

9: 9 Suggestions for further research: the importance of location for multicultural work

This research has demonstrated that the use of a particular building has the potential to exclude people who hold firm religious beliefs. The approach, in the Church of England, to the variety of uses that are made of church buildings contrasts greatly with that of the Muslim faith and the use of mosques. Many mosques in the UK invite people of all religious faiths to visit and learn about the Muslim faith and provide guidance on their websites about the rules and etiquette required for all who enter there. Taken for granted by Muslims, these universal rules are set out on a wide range of websites for non-Muslim visitors. The ehow.com web page *How to be Respectful When Visiting a Mosque*, which brings together common rules of etiquette for mosque visitors, states first that clothing should be modest and that bright colours should be avoided. Further, women should ensure their arms, legs and head are covered and clothes that are tight, clingy or revealing should not be worn. The bringing in of food is clearly forbidden and visitors are requested to ‘not eat anything that gives bad smell’ before going into a mosque, to avoid ‘mouth odour, which might disturb those who are praying’. It was made clear that small children should not be brought into the mosque, because they ‘might make noise or urinate’ there. It is also ‘very undesirable that people should talk loudly or do something undesirable’ that might disturb people who are praying. It is also made clear that members of the opposite sex should never offer to shake hands upon greeting.

I have seen, at first hand, when teaching in schools, how the recent rise in religious fundamentalism has impacted on attitudes to spaces of faith and offer my own anecdotal evidence in relation to this.

In the nineteen eighties, a local church, the only building sufficiently close and large enough to accommodate all the children and their parents from a Newtown school, was used for large performances and concerts. At that time, more than one third of the children came from Muslim families. Only one or two children of the Muslim faith were not allowed by their parents to attend these events. While the proportion of Muslims in the school has not changed significantly, more recently, very few of the Muslim children are now allowed to go into non-Muslim religious spaces.

Across the UK, Imams demonstrate different approaches to religious spaces. While multi-faith dialogue has resulted in events of multi-faith worship in a variety of religious spaces, different views are put forward by some Imams who see such events as conflicting with their religious values. This view has sometimes been extended to include church halls.

` The church hall has long been viewed, amongst church congregations as being a secular space. It is clear that what constitutes a secularized space does not always appear to be accepted as such by people of other strong religious beliefs. For them, there may be issues around religious artifacts on display, such as, for example, crucifixes, books, leaflets or stained glass windows depicting religious themes that may be taken for granted, unnoticed by those who belong to the particular faith community.

In the Church of England, there is a blurring of the boundaries between what is seen to constitute a sacred and secular space. The 2009 report, *Churches and Faith Buildings: Realising the Potential* demonstrates a fundamental difference in the use of their churches and associated buildings. As many churches have increasingly struggled to maintain congregation numbers, so new uses are being sought for the buildings. The foreword to this 2009 report was written by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government, the Minister for Rural Affairs, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Third Sector.

The parliamentary ministers suggest that the report is an ‘essential step in the process of developing a comprehensive body of resource and advice for faith communities and the community sector for their work as local partners’. Acknowledging that church buildings are ’liabilities as well as assets’ the report aims to make evident the available support for helping to ‘release the full potential of church and faith buildings as community resources without all of the burden falling on the local congregation or worshipping community’. Churches have started to provide accommodation for other faiths, and to provide hubs for local neighbourhoods, where both religious and secular activities take place. I had been surprised to discover, from the *Churches and Faith Buildings Report* (p 5), that that there are already twelve post offices which operate from church buildings.

Church halls are assumed, by many voluntary organizations and community groups, to constitute acceptable secularized spaces. Yet, for people of different faiths coming into a new culture, particularly in the face of the recent rise in religious fundamentalism, what constitutes an acceptable non-secularised space appears to have become, in some areas, problematical.

While churches, such as the many that host ‘community’ initiatives, provide help for those of other faiths and give a home to asylum seeker and refugee advisory services, it is not clear if there are those who would potentially benefit from access to such services, but do not, because of the associated religious values connected with those places. It is possible that there may be many people who hold strong non-Christian religious beliefs that find themselves excluded from access to the services that are currently provided. What may appear to be a suitable venue may, in reality, exclude those who either hold strong religious convictions, or do not understand that, in Britain, church halls are usually considered to be non-religious spaces.

I suggest that the use of buildings that are associated with religious faiths, and those belonging to the Church of England in particular, owing to its ownership of property across the UK, be given greater consideration with respect to their potential to exclude people of different faiths.

9: 10 Suggestions for further research: interview interpretation:

In my examination of research in the area of asylum-seeking, interview data appears to represent a common source of information. However, many statements that have been cited have been given by those for whom spoken English is a new or emerging skill, and much data has been gained with the aid of interpreters. My experience of the interpretation of interview questions and responses in multilingual settings has caused me to review how interpreters may give their own interpretation or elaboration of both question and response. Translated interview data, therefore, may be more misleading than it is valuable. I attempted to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation and elaboration by using back-translation, returning with this to the respondent and first interpreter to be examined with a view to gaining further clarity and accuracy of meaning. The use of an outside interpretation agency facilitated what might be described as a less-biased translation, although, even using this method, differences in regional language emerged, which resulted in my having, together with Ooma, Mica and Marie, to re-examine the back-translation of their interviews, listening again to the recordings with them to gain further clarification. In multi-ethnic research, it is important not to accept all interpreter-facilitated responses uncritically. Much of what is learned about asylum seekers and refugees is through interpreted statements, and interpretation of information from non-first language English speakers is complex. Although I used a variety of strategies to try to achieve understanding, it is clear that further research is required in the area of language interpretation.

9: 11 Further research: language learning

Language-learning, achieved through the use of songs and collaborative talk had never been an aim of the project, but it demonstrates how the project became shaped by the stated needs of the women, as the result of their difficulty in accessing ESOL classes. The difficulty in access to language-learning for asylum seekers has been widely identified (Evans and Murray: 2009, Refugee Council: 2005) and I suggest that, as more families arrive in the UK, either from EU countries as immigrants, or from further afield as asylum seekers, it is mothers with young children, who do not work and have no access to childcare, who face the greatest difficulty in learning English. Because the resources required were few, this was a cost-effective means of supporting new learning for non-English speaking mothers and their young children at a time when the ‘bottom line’ had become an increasingly significant factor for funders.

Through group musicking there is the potential for new learning (Freeman, 2000: 422; Trevarthen, 2002; Trevarthen and Malloch, 2000), not only of language, but also of different cultural practices, leading to the forming of new social ties and a greater sense of belonging, particularly in areas where ‘culturally and materially inscribed groups’ who might offer mutual help (Werbner, 2005) are not present.

Further research that includes cost-benefit analysis may clarify the potential of musicking as an additional means of accessing language and cultural learning.

9: 12 Music and well-being: suggestions for further research

I have described the difficulties encountered in pre-school settings where young children, who do not speak English, left in the care of people whose language they cannot understand, must cope with these hurdles in addition to the anxiety of separation from their parents (Bowlby, 1971). Such difficulties might be pre-empted by providing opportunities for the setting up of specifically-targeted music groups, either within preschools, or for example, in Children’s Centres, for them to experience English songs and language with their parents in informal and enjoyable ways .

Given the current challenges faced by schools and early years settings, in coping with increasing numbers of children and their mothers who do not speak English, the opportunity to learn English through group musicking with its associated playful, musical and social interactions, might provide a means of lessening the strain on current services.

Group musicking may also have similar, related effect in a wider arena. Depression, which I discussed in Chapter three, is a not uncommon occurrence, and cognitive behavioural therapy and pharmacological intervention are the most common means of addressing this. The effects of such interventions, while predominantly addressing the needs of mothers, may not necessarily immediately address the needs of their infants. The impact of interruption to maternal bonding due to maternal depression has been demonstrated to have consequent, negative effect on the developing child (Sunderland: 2007; Gerhardt: 2004; Bowlby, J. 1971; Bowlby, R.:2007). I suggest that positive outcomes, similar to those evidenced in the MMSA project have the potential to emerge in music groups set up specifically for depressed mothers and their babies, as an additional means of addressing this.

The current financial and political landscape has led to cost-cutting in health and social care, and further research may reveal whether musical interventions might present a cost-effective strategy for its potential therapeutic effect on depressed mothers. The development of positive maternal dyadic relationships also has the potential to lead to a more positive long-term effect on the well-being of their infants.

The first weeks of pre-school may be difficult for some young children to adjust to, with anxiety at separation from their primary carers. For children who have little or no understanding of a language used in an unfamiliar environment, the emotional impact is likely to be greater. For many native English language-speaking children, in a setting where verbal communication facilitates understanding of the children’s needs, the singing of familiar songs and nursery rhymes can provide a mood enhancing effect and reduce anxiety. For mothers who are not able to communicate in English, or who have little understanding of the local culture, there is little opportunity for them to prepare their young children for preschool. Their own ability to engage with daily life events may also be compromised: as in the case of asylum-seeking mothers, language barriers and lack of cultural knowledge are disadvantageous. Where communities of shared-language speakers form, there is the potential for an increased sense of separation from the wider population.

Further research into the provision, for immigrant mothers and infants, of similarly constructed music groups may reveal potential for addressing such disadvantage and foster confidence and wider social interaction within the ‘host’ society. Such groups might provide a ‘rehearsal space’ for future social interactions.

Musicking within the MMSA group had the capacity to create powerful, repeatable positive physiological and emotional responses leading to the trying-on of new identities, closer maternal and social bonding and engagement in cultural learning.

Having fun together with others; communicating; sharing particular skills and knowledges; gaining self-esteem and confidence, a sense of belonging and being valued have been demonstrated to be outcomes of group musicking with asylum seeking mothers and children. I suggest that when marginalised others come together and experience the heightened positive emotional effect of musicking together, beyond musicking, there is the potential for further positive and beneficial experiences across many areas of daily life.

Appendix 1

Sure Start guiding principles

Sure Start guiding principles

Sure Start supports families from pregnancy right through until children are 14, including those with special educational needs for those with disabilities up to age 16. The guiding principles, drawing on best practice in early education, childcare and Sure Start local programmes, are:

1. Working with parents and children

Every family should get access to a range of services that will deliver better outcomes for both children and parents, meeting their needs and stretching aspirations.

2. Services for everyone

But not the same service for everyone. Families have distinctly different needs, both between different families, in different locations and across time in the same family.

Services should recognize and respond to these varying needs.

3. Flexible at the point of delivery

All services should be designed to encourage access. For example, opening hours, location, transport issues and care for other children in the family need to be considered. Where possible we must enable families to get the health and family support services they need through a single point of contact.

4. Staring very early

Services for young children and parents should start at the first antenatal visit. This means not only advice on health in pregnancy, but preparation for parenthood, decisions about returning to work (or indeed, starting to work) after the birth, advice on childcare options and on support services available.

5. Respectful and transparent

Services should be customer driven, whether or not the service is free.

6. Community driven and professionally coordinated

All professionals with an interest in children and families should be sharing expertise and listening to local people on service priorities. This should be done through consultation and by day to day listening to parents.

7. Outcome driven

All services for children and parents need to have as their core purpose better outcomes for children. The Government needs to acknowledge this by reducing bureaucracy and simplifying funding to ensure a joined up approach with partners.

Sure Start website Available at: http://www.surestart.gov.uk/aboutsurestart/about/thesurestartprogramme2/ Retrieved 6/4/2006.

Appendix II

Songs used in the project

Beginning and ending songs

Time to tidy up *(Tune: The farmer's in his den)*
Time to tidy up, Time to tidy up
Time to put the toys away,
It's time to tidy up.

Say hello
Say hello... hello,
Say hello... hello,
Say hello... hello,
Say hello... hello.
Hello Flora, hello, *(Each child is named in turn round the room)*
Clap your hands, *(clap, clap)*
Stamp your feet... *(stamp, stamp).*

(Atwell, Coult, Rust and Stafford)

Action songs

Silver seabird
Silver seabird, walk on the sand, walk on the sand, walk on the sand.
Silver seabird, walk on the sand, all on a sunny day.
(And ...Silver seabird, jump in the waves, fly in the air, dive in the sea, catch all your fish and rock on the boat)

(ESH)

Row, row, row your boat
Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.
Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream.
If you see a crocodile don't forget to scream!
Row, row, row your boat quickly back to shore.
If you hear a lion, don't forget to roar!
(*Adults sit with children on laps and facing them, holding hands, 'rowing' to and fro).*

(Traditional)

Row row row
Row row row
Over the sea we go
Pull the oars and pull again
Row row row
V2 Row row row *(Rowing vigorously*)
Through the storm we go
Pull the oars and pull again
Row row row
(*Adults sit with children on laps and facing them, holding hands, 'rowing' to and fro).*

(ESH)

Pop a little pancake *(To the tune of 'Skip to my Lou')*
Pop a little pancake in the pan
Pop a little pancake in the pan
Pop a little pancake in the pan
That's what I'll have for dinner.
And...
Sprinkle on the sugar with a sprinklety sprinkle. *(Tickle)*
Squeeze on the lemon with a squeezety squeeze, *(Hug)*
Toss a little pancake in the pan *('Toss' baby up)*
Eat a little pancake, num num nummm. *(Pretend to nibble, especially in tickly places!)*
(Margaret Shephard)

Can you play at peepo?
Can you play at peepo, peepo, peepo?
Can you play at peepo?
Play a game with me.
Peep in – peep out! Peep in – peep out!
Can you play at peepo?
Play a game with me.
(Can you play at.....? bouncing, tickling, jumping, clapping....etc).
(Alison Street)

Ready and...
Ready and ...up and down and up and down
And up and down and up and down
And up and down and up and down
And here we go again!
(Change to over, under; in, out; backwards forwards or use other positional vocabulary. Wave a scarf up and down to the words, help baby move arms, legs or whole body for each verse)
(Words: Wendy Prevezer, Music: Alison Street)

Let's all clap together
Let's all clap together, clap together
Let's all clap together. Clap clap clap.
Clap clap this –a-way
Clap clap that –a-way
Clap clap all the day, Clap clap clap.
(And jump, stamp, march, wobble, hug, kiss, rock, shake, dance)
(Unknown)

Sit down here
Sit down here, sit down there
Everybody's saying 'Sit down here'
But…
I can't sit down and I won't sit down
Because my feet want to stamp like this.
Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp,
Stamp, stamp, stamp.
(Use other actions such as jumping, creeping, twirling, wriggling, rocking)

(Alison Street)

Fingers like to wiggle

Fingers like to wiggle waggle,
Wiggle waggle, wiggle waggle,
Fingers like to wiggle waggle,
Up and down your back.
(And 'All around your tum; up and down your legs; up above your head; all around your toes ...and so on).

(R. Holgate)

Criss cross, apple sauce

(Say this slowly and rhythmically)
Criss cross, apple sauce, *('draw' a cross on child's back)*
Spiders crawling up your back. *(creep your fingers up)*
A cool breeze *(blow on child's neck)*
A tight squeeze *(big hug)*
And now you've got the shivers! *(tickle all over)*

(Sheena Roberts)

Roly poly up

Roly poly, roly poly up, up, up.
Roly poly, roly poly down, down, down
Roly poly, roly poly out, out, out.
Roly poly, roly poly in, in, in.
(Roll hands around each other in the direction indicated by the words)

(Traditional)

The bicycle song

I like to ride my bicycle.
I ride it to the shop.
And when I see the big red light I know I have to STOP.
Yellow to get ready and green to ...GO
(*Children use hands to 'pedal' and run round until a red card is held up. Yellow and green cards set them off again)*

(Unknown)

Crossing Roads *(Tune: Jingle Bells)*

Watch that truck, watch that truck (or bus, car etc)
Driving down the road.
It can't stop as fast as us
With its heavy load.
Crossing roads, crossing roads,
On our way to school.
Stop and listen, look around.
That's the golden rule.

(RoSPA)

Walking in the rain

Walking in the rain, walking in the rain, Look, there's a puddle, let's jump, SPLASH!
Walking in the rain, walking in the rain, Look, there's a puddle, let's jump, SPLASH!
Children take turns to play a drum or tambourine on 'Splash!'

(ESH)

This is the way the ladies ride

This is the way the ladies ride
Trit trot, trit trot, trit trot. *(bounce)*
This is the way the gentlemen ride –
Gallop, a-gallop, a- gallop. *(Bounce harder!)*
And this is the way the farmer rides.
Hobbledy-jig, hobbledy-jig,
And DOWN into the ditch! (*Tip child down)*

(Traditional)

Sit down here

Sit down here, sit down there
Everybody's saying 'Sit down here'
But…
I can't sit down and I won't sit down
Because my feet want to stamp like this.
Stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp, stamp,
Stamp, stamp, stamp.
(Use other actions such as jumping, creeping, twirling, wriggling, rocking)

(Alison Street)

If you want to be happy

If you want to be happy
And have a happy day
And spread a little joy around,
Here's a lovely way.
Make a face, make a face
Spread a little joy around
And make a funny face.
Introduce other actions: stamp your feet, jump and jump, clap your hands etc.

(Hampshire Music Service)

Here is the bee hive

Here is the bee hive *(hold fists together)*
But where are all the bees *(hold up hands)*
Hidden away where nobody sees. *(Cover fist with other hand)*
1, (buzz!) 2, (Buzz) 3, 4, 5 Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. *(Tickle children on 'buzz')*

(Graham Westcott)

Terrible crocodile

Look at the terrible crocodile. I- o I- o I- o
He swims along with a great big smile, I- o I- o I- o
See his jaws are open wide –oh no, oh no, oh no!
And poor little (Zarchais) is nearly inside ...SNAP!
(Spoken) But (Zarchais) got away!

(Unknown)

Horsey horsey

Horsey horsey, don't you stop.
Listen to your feet go clippety clop
Your tail goes swish and the wheels go round.
Giddy-up, we're homeward bound.

(Paddy Roberts)

Little Donkey
Little donkey we must go *(rock child on lap)*
Very carefully, very slow
Over the meadow down the lane,
Gently take me home again.

Little donkey we must dash *(bounce)*
Listen to the rain go splishety splash
Over the puddles, down the muddy lane
Let’s get home and dry again
Clip clop clip clop clip clop and STOP1

(ESH)

Slowly, slowly
Slowly, slowly, very slowly goes the garden snail….
Slowly, slowly, very slowly, see his shiny trail.
Quickly quickly, very quickly runs the little mouse…
Quickly quickly, very quickly back into his house

(Unknown)

Circle dance with role play
There is little Wallid sitting on a stone
Crying and weeping because he’s all alone.
Cheer up Wallid, wipe your tears away
Choose a friend whose turn it is to come and play.
Second verse –melody sung to ‘la’

(All hold hands and dance in a ring around the ‘crying’ child who then chooses a partner to dance with him in the centre. The friend then becomes the ‘crying child’ and we repeat the song).

(Traditional)

If your name is... (Circle game)
If your name is Wallid *(Flora, etc).*
And you’ve got a big smile, *(you’re wearing blue shoes, trainers etc).*
Jump into the circle,
Jump and jump and jump

(Unknown)

Little green frog
Gallump, *(jump up)* went the little green frog one day
Gallump, went the little green frog
Gallump, went the little green frog one day
And the frog went gallump, gallump, gallump.
But we know frogs go (clap) la, la, la, la, la,
(clap) la, la, la, la, la, (clap) la, la, la, la, la,
We know frogs go (clap) la, la, la, la, la,
They don’t go gallump, gallump, gallump.
(Miaow, little black cat; and other animals)

(American traditional)

Songs specifically for using instruments

Shake and Stop!

We're going to shake and shake and shake and stop! *(Pause for silence)*
Shake and shake and shake and stop!
Shake and shake and shake and stop!
Shake and shake and shake and stop!
This is how we shake and stop!
(Using hands, maracas. jingle sticks, or to 'tap and tap' using drums, chime bars, castanets)

(Unknown, adapted by ESH)

The instrument song

Raif is shaking his shaky egg, shaky egg, shaky egg (castanets, jingle stick, tapping on his drum etc).
Raif is shaking shaky egg,
Now he's going to stop.

(ESH with Boakes-Clark and Burke)

Someone is tapping

Flora, (Zafar etc). is tapping on a drum, *(chime bar or other instrument)*
Flora is tapping on a drum,
Hey there children, listen to Flora,
Flora is tapping on a drum
(Pass round a drum, or give everyone a drum to play in turn).

(ESH with Boakes-Clark and Burke)

Slap, clap

Slap, clap, hands down by your side (v1)
Slap, clap hands away to hide
Slap, slap, wave them high and then
Hands come rolling down again.
(Use maracas or jingle sticks and sing 'shake,' instead of slap clap)

(Eileen Diamond)

Focus on vocabulary

Days of the week *(Tune: the Adams Family)*

There's Sunday and there's Monday
Tuesday and there's Wednesday
Thursday and there's Friday
And then there's Saturday.
Days of the week (Clap, clap)
Days of the week (Clap, clap)
Days of the week, days of the week
Days of the week (Clap, clap)

(Unknown)

Food calypso
Please may I have a banana (*or any other food*) to eat?
It’s food that I like
It’s a lovely treat
And it’s good for my body
From my head to my feet.
Please may I have a banana to eat?

(ESH)

Where is your...
Where is your tongue? *(nose, elbow, wrist etc).*
Where is your tongue?
I’ve been looking for it all day.
Have you lost it along the way?
Where is your tongue?
(Spoken) Oh, there it is!

(ESH)

We all hold hands *(Tune: Here we go round the mulberry bush)*
We all hold hands and dance in a ring, dance in a ring, dance in a ring,
We all hold hands and dance in a ring, we’re glad we’re all together.
This is the way we clean our teeth, wash our hands etc...

(ESH)

Chopping chant
Chop the carrot, *(onion etc).* chop and chop, *(claves can be played to ‘chop’ to the beat).*
Chop from the bottom to the top.
When it’s finished, put it in the pot.
Chop the carrot, chop and chop,
(We have an imaginary pot in the centre of the circle and make a soup, choosing ingredients from memory or from picture dictionaries and recipe books).

(ESH)

The supermarket song *(Tune: Big red wagon)*
Chorus
Bumping up and down in the supermarket trolley
Bumping up and down in the supermarket trolley
Bumping up and down in the supermarket trolley
We are going shopping.
Verse
Put the sugar *(carrots, bananas etc).* in the supermarket trolley...

(ESH)

‘**It’s a fine day for...** *(Tune: There’s a hole in my bucket)*
It’s a fine day for building, for building, for building *(jumping, tickling, etc).*
It’s a fine day for building, for building
So let’s build a tower *(and so we all jump..).*

(Wendy Prevezer, adapted by ESH)

This red car *(Tune 'The wheels on the bus')*
This little red *(big blue etc).* car *(bus, van, lorry)* is, going fast, going fast. *(or slow)*
This little red car is going fast
Down the road'.

(ESH)

The wheels on the bus
The wheels on the bus go round and round
Round and round, round and round.
The wheels on the bus go round and round
All day long.
(*The wipers, horn, doors, lights go... etc. with appropriate actions).*

(Traditional)

Old MacDonald *(adapted after the farm trip).*
We all went out to the farm,
What a lovely day!
And on that farm we saw some geese *(pigs, cows, sheep, hens, goats, ducks, tractors, friends)*

(Traditional)

Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
(Arms, elbows, tummy, hips, tummy hips ... Chest, bottom, thighs and calves
Forehead, eyebrows, cheeks and chin)

(Traditional, adapted ESH)

Going to the doctor *(Tune: There's a hole in my bucket)*
Q: Can I please see the doctor, the doctor the doctor,
Can I please see the doctor as soon as can be?
A: Come to the surgery...
Come to the surgery ....tomorrow at six

Well, sit down please and tell me now what is the problem
Tell me what are the symptoms you're having right now?

I have an ear ache, an ear ache.... (stomach-ache, headache, temperature, rash)
And I've had it since Monday
Please examine me so you can tell what is wrong.

This prescription for antibiotics will help you,
Now go straight to the chemist –three tablets a day.
(This song was adapted for other situations – dentist, health visitor, etc)

(ESH in collaboration with project participants)

Counting songs

Down by the river (*using fingers/ finger puppets)*
Down by the river, not far away,
Five (four three etc). little frogs went out to play.
With a shooby-do wop and a hippety hop,
One jumped into the water - SPLASH!

Down in the river, not far away,
Five (four three etc). little frogs were swimming one day.
With a shooby-do wop and a hippety hop,
One jumped out of the water - POP!
This can be sung as an 'on the lap song'. Dip baby down on 'splash' and bounce them high on 'pop'.

(ESH)

One two three four five
One two three four five once I caught a fish alive.
Six seven eight nine ten, then I let it go again.
Why did you let it go?
Because it bit my finger so.
Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on my right.

(Traditional)

Five little monkeys
Five little monkeys swinging in a tree.
Along comes a crocodile as quiet as can be. (*Whispering voices).*
'Hey Mr. Crocodile, you can't catch me!' *(Monkeys make faces at the crocodile who chases after one)*
And one little monkey ran away.
(Spoken) Oh, Dura's too big- he can't catch her!
Four little monkeys etc.
(The children have monkey puppets. 'Mr. Crocodile' (glove puppet) snaps his hands together on the beat and tries to catch a monkey. The monkey's mother protects him from the crocodile and the 'monkey' is safe).

(Traditional)

Five little ducks
Five little ducks went swimming one day
Over the hills and far away.
Mother duck said 'Quack, quack, quack,
But only four (three, etc). little ducks came back.
(After no ducks come back, they return, counting up again)

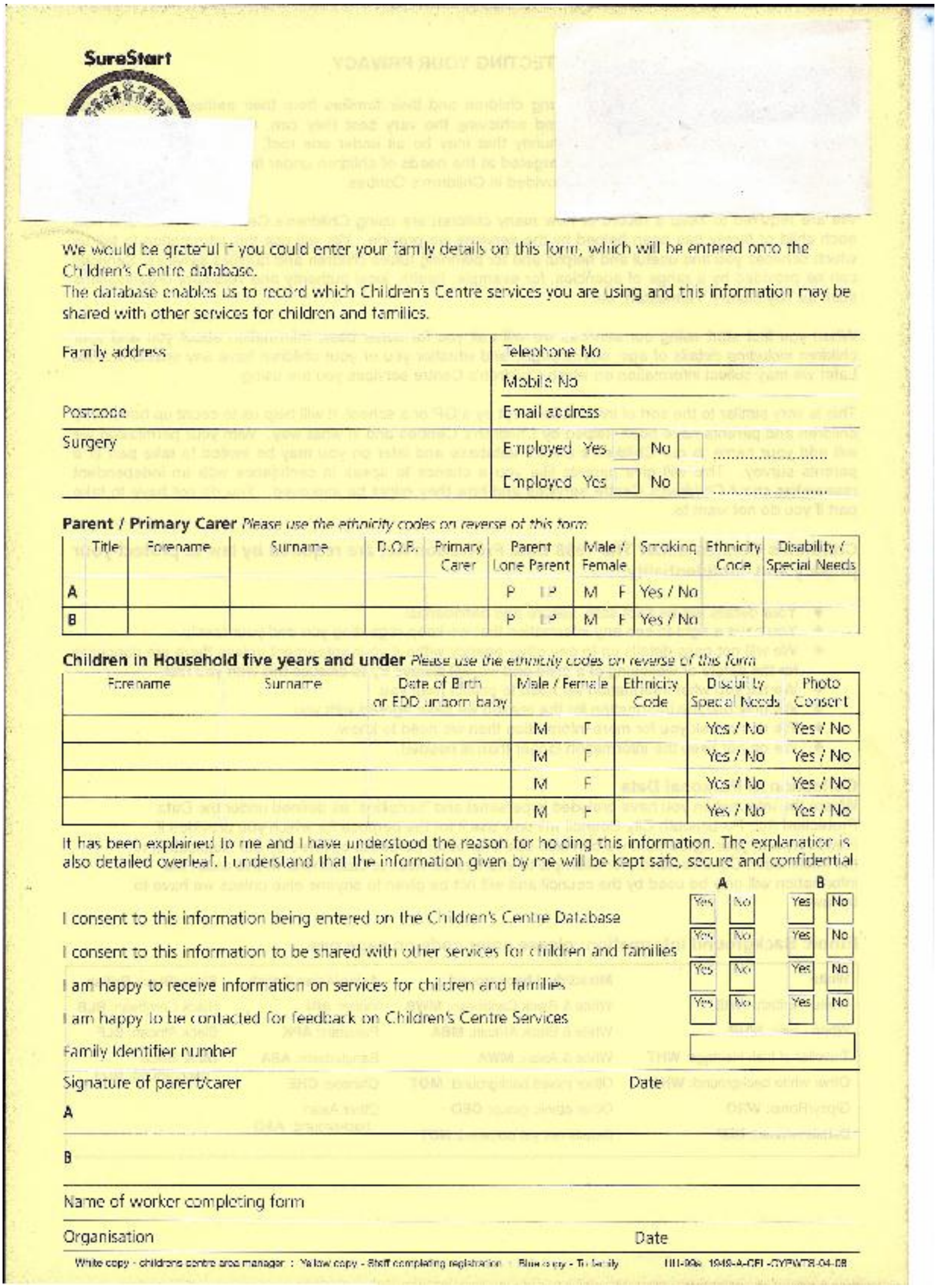
(Traditional)

Traditional nursery rhymes
Twinkle twinkle little star
Baa, baa, black sheep
Wind the bobbin up
Rain, rain, go away
See saw, Marjory Daw
Humpty Dumpty
Ring a ring of roses
Incey wincey spider
Hickory Dickory Dock
Two little dicky birds
The grand old Duke of York
Round and round the garden

Party songs
Hokey Cokey,
Here we go Looby Loo
Here we go gathering nuts in May
Happy birthday to you

Appendix III

Sure Start registration form



SureStart

[redacted]

[redacted]

We would be grateful if you could enter your family details on this form, which will be entered onto the Children's Centre database.
The database enables us to record which Children's Centre services you are using and this information may be shared with other services for children and families.

Family address
Telephone No
Mobile No
Postcode
Email address
Surgery
Employed Yes ☐ No ☐ ....
Employed Yes ☐ No ☐ ....

Parent / Primary Carer *Please use the ethnicity codes on reverse of this form*

	Title	Forename	Surname	D.O.B.	Primary Carer	Parent Lone Parent	Male / Female	Smoking	Ethnicity Code	Disability / Special Needs
A						P LP	M F	Yes / No		
B						P LP	M F	Yes / No		

Children in Household five years and under *Please use the ethnicity codes on reverse of this form*

Forename	Surname	Date of Birth or EDD unborn baby	Male / Female	Ethnicity Code	Disability Special Needs	Photo Consent
			M F		Yes / No	Yes / No
			M F		Yes / No	Yes / No
			M F		Yes / No	Yes / No
			M F		Yes / No	Yes / No

It has been explained to me and I have understood the reason for holding this information. The explanation is also detailed overleaf. I understand that the information given by me will be kept safe, secure and confidential

	A		B	
I consent to this information being entered on the Children's Centre Database	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
I consent to this information to be shared with other services for children and families	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
I am happy to receive information on services for children and families	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No
I am happy to be contacted for feedback on Children's Centre Services	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Yes	☐ No

Family Identifier number ☐

Signature of parent/carer Date

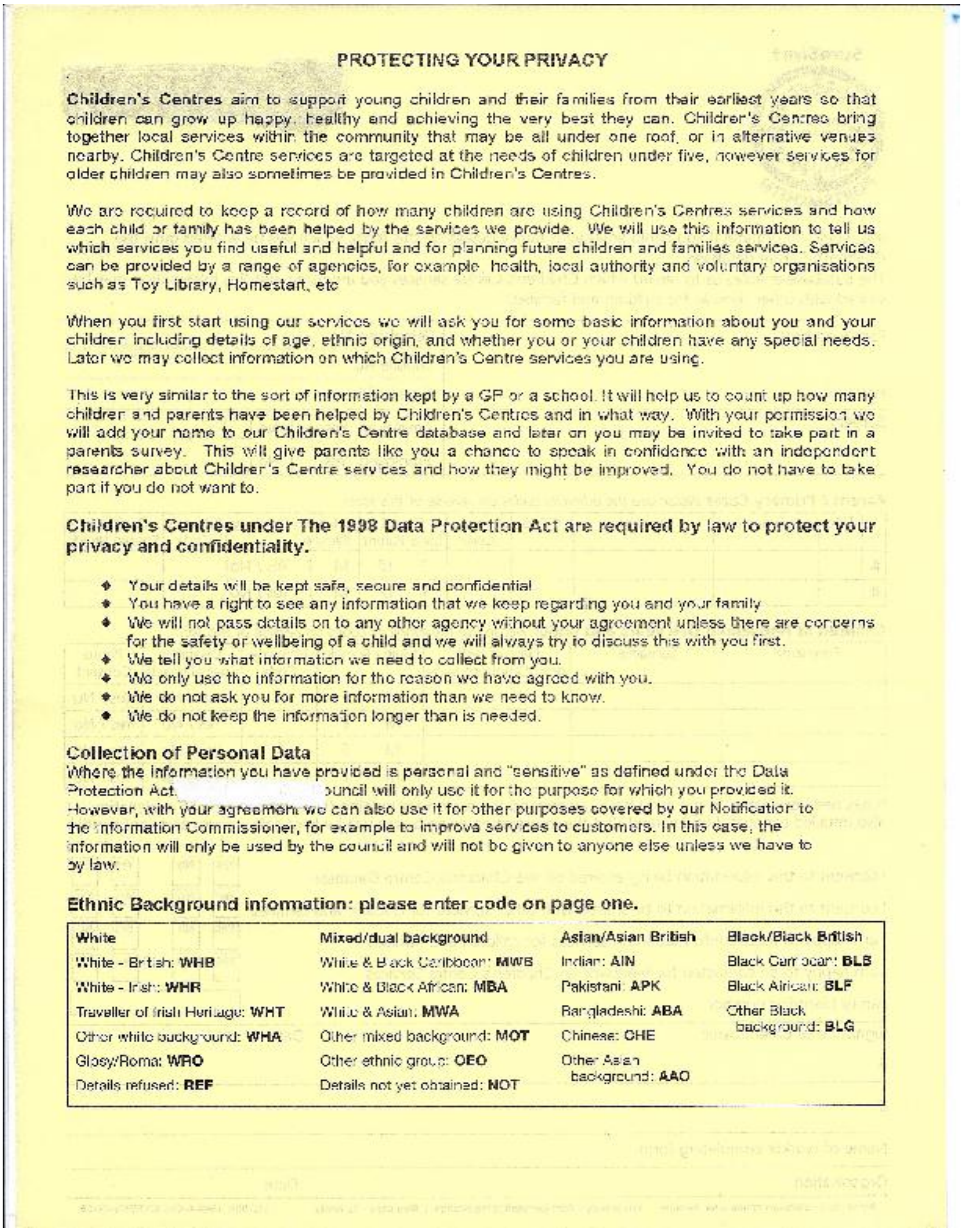
A

B

Name of worker completing form

Organisation Date

White copy - childrens centre area manager : Yellow copy - Staff completing registration : Blue copy - To family HH-99a 1949-A-CFL-CYPWTS-04-08



PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

Children's Centres aim to support young children and their families from their earliest years so that children can grow up happy, healthy and achieving the very best they can. Children's Centres bring together local services within the community that may be all under one roof, or in alternative venues nearby. Children's Centre services are targeted at the needs of children under five, however services for older children may also sometimes be provided in Children's Centres.

We are required to keep a record of how many children are using Children's Centres services and how each child or family has been helped by the services we provide. We will use this information to tell us which services you find useful and helpful and for planning future children and families services. Services can be provided by a range of agencies, for example health, local authority and voluntary organisations such as Toy Library, Homestart, etc

When you first start using our services we will ask you for some basic information about you and your children including details of age, ethnic origin, and whether you or your children have any special needs. Later we may collect information on which Children's Centre services you are using.

This is very similar to the sort of information kept by a GP or a school. It will help us to count up how many children and parents have been helped by Children's Centres and in what way. With your permission we will add your name to our Children's Centre database and later on you may be invited to take part in a parents survey. This will give parents like you a chance to speak in confidence with an independent researcher about Children's Centre services and how they might be improved. You do not have to take part if you do not want to.

Children's Centres under The 1998 Data Protection Act are required by law to protect your privacy and confidentiality.

- Your details will be kept safe, secure and confidential
- You have a right to see any information that we keep regarding you and your family
- We will not pass details on to any other agency without your agreement unless there are concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child and we will always try to discuss this with you first.
- We tell you what information we need to collect from you.
- We only use the information for the reason we have agreed with you.
- We do not ask you for more information than we need to know.
- We do not keep the information longer than is needed.

Collection of Personal Data

Where the information you have provided is personal and "sensitive" as defined under the Data Protection Act, [redacted]ouncil will only use it for the purpose for which you provided it. However, with your agreement we can also use it for other purposes covered by our Notification to the Information Commissioner, for example to improve services to customers. In this case, the information will only be used by the council and will not be given to anyone else unless we have to by law.

Ethnic Background infomation: please enter code on page one.

White	**Mixed/dual background**	**Asian/Asian British**	**Black/Black British**
White - British: **WHB**	White & Black Caribbean: **MWB**	Indian: **AIN**	Black Caribbean: **BLB**
White - Irish: **WHR**	White & Black African: **MBA**	Pakistani: **APK**	Black African: **BLF**
Traveller of Irish Heritage: **WHT**	White & Asian: **MWA**	Bangladeshi: **ABA**	Other Black background: **BLG**
Other white background: **WHA**	Other mixed background: **MOT**	Chinese: **CHE**	
Gipsy/Roma: **WRO**	Other ethnic group: **OEO**	Other Asian background: **AAO**	
Details refused: **REF**	Details not yet obtained: **NOT**		

Appendix IV

Sample of Action and reflection

Reflection

The children enjoyed the new opportunity to play and participate in the fun day activities. I had pointed out and introduced Amy to several unmarried mothers, Amy and Nancy have now seen at first hand that the stigma attached to single mothers, which would lead to their deaths in their home countries, does not exist in the context of SS. This appears to have helped Amy accept the common acceptance of unmarried status and may help her overcome her feelings of shame, to some extent.

Language difficulties hindered Amy’s and Nancy’s enjoyment and involvement with the other (English-speaking) parents. A kindly-meant remark (you’re a cheeky monkey) had actually led to Amy’s feeling offended- she thought someone was being racist. It would be helpful to build in some elements for increasing cultural understanding in the music sessions and in the social time afterwards.

Was I over-optimistic in thinking that they could cope with or enjoy joining in with such events, when language is so fundamental to their being able to interact with English-speakers? They need to be able to communicate much more effectively and gain greater understanding of English to derive any personal benefit from attending other groups. They both want to be more involved with local groups, but it is not easy for them when they can’t converse with ease and are still very unconfident. My initial thoughts are that language classes are more likely to be of help than attending a group where communication is lacking, but lack of childcare is a major obstacle for them. How can I extend the music activities to introduce more language-learning, while still involving the children? I have no experience of ESOL and realise that I need to learn more about it. At the same time, I am clear – I cannot be a substitute ESOL teacher, my work is about music, but at least I can introduce useful vocabulary, incorporate it into songs and facilitate/give experience of conversation, Anything that is additionally beneficial that arises from the music – making is a bonus.

Action

Explore ESOL resources on the web - find out how English is taught and what is the sequence of teaching/learning – grammar, sentence construction, what vocabulary will be most useful for the mothers. Meet with ESOL teacher friend who directs me to some more useful teaching resources to access on the web. http://swearercenter.brown.edu/Literacy_Resources/esol.html has much helpful material.

I speak Marie who agrees to assist/interpret a group discussion re language difficulties. At the next session we identify particular situations where lack of English is causing the greatest difficulties and what areas of vocabulary the women would find most useful.

Reflection

Dealing with health issues and shopping were identified as the most common areas of difficultly. The women see that Tesco's is much cheaper than the small local ethnic suppliers, but don't know what some of the foods are. They suggest that greater knowledge about British food and how to cook it could help them save money. They are adamant that their 'own' food is best but they also want their children to experience food of the country they hope will become their home. The women appear to be enthused at the prospect of having some focus on language learning. All have some very basic English but I now better understand how much their lack of ability to talk to doctors and officials, solicitors, undermines their confidence to engage in any kind of talk. How I might introduce in the context of a music group and still keep the children engaged? What songs can I adapt or make up in these areas?

Action

Read further about language learning–Eve Gregory, Stephen Pinker are extremely helpful sources. Meet with the librarian to identify and borrow some new picture books to illustrate food words. Look at some of the songs the women already know and re-write or adapt them. First I make songs about the body, naming body parts. 'Where is your tongue?' readily leans itself to extension. I re-work the 'periods' song I improvised several weeks ago to create a 'running commentary' song about going to the doctor.

Look for SS practical projects where activities are not language-dependent and find that a new cookery course will start in 5 weeks. Contact the person running them to discuss the needs of women in the music group and ensure there will be at least three places for music group participants.

Next session, I introduce 'Where is your...?' 'Bumping up and down in the supermarket trolley', the children enjoy the actions and the mothers enthusiastically pick out pictures of vegetables and food items to learn the names through singing. I tell the mothers about the new SS cookery course,

Reflection

Positive feedback from the women who say they found the new songs helpful and told back to me many of the words they could remember –The combination of repetition, visual cues and song appears to have reinforced new learning. I saw that the children enjoyed the bouncing actions I put with them, and the mothers of verbal-age children were happy to see their children learning with them. All, particularly Naina and Nancy, are enthusiastic about learning new food vocabulary and discovering fresh ideas about different foods - and want to try them out.

Appendix V

Sample of early coding

Confidentiality Past experiences Place Sharing personal history Asylum issue Shame/embarrassment Family money and power Education Gender religion values Parental trust -employment Education Unplanned pregnancy Secrecy and discovery Leaving behind loved ones Punishment –honour killing Banishment Confidence/trust/time Unplanned asylum Past richness poverty Loss of contact with home Shame My role- comforting Sharing trust Sympathy/ encouragement Confidentiality Loss of relationship Honour killing Mother response/rejection Emotion	As we pack up, I ask Amy if she'd like to talk to me, but she says she'd prefer to go outside. She looks serious and unsmiling. Sitting in the sun on a bench near the church, with Raif in his buggy, wordlessly, and with her head down, Amy hands me some papers that set out her grounds for applying for leave to remain and the refusal. Through these, I learn her story. Her wealthy father, a powerful man –a tribal leader with businesses across the country had paid for her to come to college in England to study book-keeping and English. Although women did not usually have good opportunities for anything other than low-grade work, her father, a Muslim, had nevertheless decided to allow her to take up a good position in his business, when she had qualified. Six weeks after her arrival in the UK, she had discovered that she was pregnant. She had been meeting a Christian man in secret, which, on its own, would be seen as unforgivable by her family. Promising to wait for her return, they had bid one another a passionate farewell. Soon after her arrival, discovering that she was pregnant, she rang home to tell her parents. Her father, devastated, furious and shamed by his daughter and told her never to return or face death. She could never go back. I feel that Amy, in sharing what appear to me to be embarrassing (for her) details of her life, has shown that she trusts me. It has taken seven months. So, I discover that she never wanted to leave her country. Her life in poverty here, away from all the people she loves, is hugely different from the rich life she had before. After I read the document, I look up at her. Her eyes are cast down; she appears ashamed, embarrassed, doesn't look at me. I put my arm round her – 'You must find it so hard, I say, to be so separated from your family'. She hugs me, saying. 'Now you know about me'. I tell her that I will not discuss this with anyone and that I understand that this is 'private'. 'You are a good mother to your beautiful son, I tell her. You can be proud of that.' But I am curious. 'What happened when you told her boyfriend?' I ask her. She says he didn't want anything more to do with her. And, as her angry father would seek revenge for the loss of his family's honour and that of his tribe, her boyfriend would have had to flee for his life and she no longer knew where he was. She is fighting back tears.

Appendix VI

Sample consent letters and forms

C/o Research & Knowledge Transfer Centre
University of Winchester
West Hill
Winchester SO22 4NR

Dear..............,

I would like to invite you to take part in a study to find out about whether or not the ‘Music is Fun’ project has had any effect on mothers who attend and on their relationships with their children. I would like to talk to you about how you feel about doing music with your child and how you think your child feels.
I have chosen to invite you to participate in this research because you have attended the ‘Music is Fun’ group for more than six weeks. It is up to you whether or not to take part and, if you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. To help you, more information about this project is included in the attached sheet. Whatever you decide, it will not stop you from attending the ‘Music is Fun’ sessions or any other Sure Start activities. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Please feel free to discuss the project with me

Liz Scott Hall

Dear Liz,

I have read the information letter. I understand that any information I give will be treated with confidentiality. I agree to take part in the study ‘Crossing Borders: A Study of the efficacy of Music in programmes for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Adults and Children’

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signed

Date

INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

Before you decide whether you want to take part in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Why is this study being done?

It is hoped that the results will give an insight into how music projects may, or may not contribute to the everyday lives and feelings of Asylum Seeker and Refugee mothers and their children in the area they live. The results of this study will be used to contribute to a Doctoral thesis which will be completed over a six year period. If you wish to see this, I will give you access to the completed work. You will not be identified in any report or publication. The findings will be given to Sure Start ABC to contribute to their evaluation of Sure Start projects.

Why are you being asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because you have attended six or more music sessions.

What does it involve?

The study will take the form of observations of the music sessions and one or more interviews of less than one hour. There may be a follow-up interview to clarify any points that are not clear and to check that I have understood what you have told me. The conversations will be recorded. All recordings will be written out and shown to you and all information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. Names will be changed to ensure the privacy and anonymity of all participants and their children and the recordings will be kept only for verification of the research. After this has been done, your recordings will be destroyed if you wish. Any information I receive will be treated with confidentiality. The location of the project will not be stated.

Who will have access to the information you give?

All information, written, tape recorded, or held on computer disk will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, which exists to protect your rights. I will keep all records in a secure, locked place which will be accessed only by me.

During the course of my research, I will consult with University academic staff who are also subject to the rules of confidentiality. All information I share with them will have been changed to ensure that you cannot be identified. The findings of the research will be published in a doctoral thesis. However, no names will be made known and all names will be changed to protect anonymity.

Your rights

It is up to you whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Whatever you decide, it will not stop you from attending the 'Music is Fun' sessions.

Contact for Further Information: Liz Scott Hall, Direct Telephone number...

Appendix VII

Example of interview

This interview took place in a meeting room in the children's centre where the 'open to all' group usually meets for the music sessions. We had lunch together first and the atmosphere was jovial. One mother, Naina, whose children are now all at school, had not met up with the group for the last school term, so this was the first time we had all met up together for some time. Everyone invited had already been told of the purpose of our meeting and knew that it was to be anonymous and that their signed consent was required. When we had cleared away all the dishes, I brought in a box of toys for the children and used the room dividers so that we could have one separate part of the room for interviews. Ooma was the first and Marie, her close friend and our interpreter helped me to explain the consent form, which Ooma deemed 'unnecessary' saying she trusted me completely and knew that I would not to do anything that would not be good for her. I explained that any research I do must have signed consent, so she then signed the form. She said she was happy to help in any way she could and I responded that the best way she could help me was to be completely honest, because if I could find out not only what went well, but also what didn't go so well, or how the project could have been better, then that would be very helpful. If I wanted to run the project again for other mothers, any information she gave me would enable me to do it better next time – I needed to learn from my mistakes. Ooma was quite at ease and did not appear to be fazed by the tape recorder. Flora sat quietly on her lap throughout the interview.

L Liz

H Ooma

I Interpreter I’m trying to see what has happened since we started. When you were at (Venue A), when I first met you, you were very sad, and very quiet, and I asked you, “Would you like to come to Music?” and… you didn’t come. You didn’t come. (Laughs). So, can you remember what it was like for you, at first, when I asked you and you didn’t come?

L (Ooma looks to Marie –I indicate to Marie to speak)).

I Translates. Did you understand? She is telling you the first time when she first met you in Pars, you were very sad and you were quiet, you didn’t talk at all, so how did you feel when she told you come to the music class, how did you feel?

H Speaks in her own language. All right, thank God, I enjoy the fresh atmosphere with the children and to be out of the house. I feel happy when I go to her. When I go to her class and start to do the actions with the children I am in a different world. I forget my problems. I forget everything.

I (Translates). She say that the first time when she came and you told her to come to the class for the fun, really she was very sad and she had a lot of problems, but first time when she came there and it was in the church, and she don’t give that freedoms and feel free, but after that when she moved she really feel free and always when she came to your class she have a little problem but in that class she forget, just like she is in another world. All her problem – all everything – it has gone, and she feels just like she has just got freedoms. She meet some people she talk with some people, and before, she doesn't have that, you know. Even if she saw someone, she can't greet someone, but now she have a friend, she talk – and the children…. And her daughter was very happy to meet other childrens and play with them.

L Mm. When we were at the church, at PARS, was there ever any problem to come because it was a church, for either you or for Ahmed?

I Translates. When it was in (venue A) inside the church, it was not comfortable for you?

H Speaks in her own language. Yes, there were some people, the place here is comfortable, but when it was in the church it was not comfortable. We remember when we went to the church. I feel the church is not for children, people go and complain. When my daughter came here I was not comfortable

I (Translates). She say "Yes, that is true." When you told her to come, and sometimes she come in and sometimes not, because she doesn't like to go to the church, because the church is not for the children, and she feels just like she is a Muslim, and with her scarf and everything, and enter there, and there is another people was there in the PARS and they most of them Muslim, just like what she thought about, she's a Muslim, and how can she go to the church inside, even if there is place for the children, it's not right for her to go in. And then later she doesn't feel that confidence, and she was not happy, but when you are moved, she's really happy.

L The first time that I was there, and you were there, together, that day nobody else came. There was no-one. Just you and me, and er, do you remember I showed you (sings) “Head, shoulders, knees and toes,” and that was the first time I saw you smile. So even when we were in the church, you still – did you feel – once you had realised that we could sing and the English songs we were singing, um, was it better, um, or did you still feel a bit difficult about coming into the church?

I Translates. She is telling you the first time you smiled when she did some actions, so you started to smile, even when you had smiled very little before you went in, or did your feelings change a bit?

H Speaks in her own language. (Laughing), actually, I wasn’t thinking about the children, I had other things on my mind. I liked her movements when she told me come to our class for the children. My husband told me go. It is a nice class, I liked it. She made some nice actions. Her actions are nice.

I (Translates). Yes, she says, yes, when you did that [Reconstructed] action and signs, she started to smile, and smile and she feel better because before she was very scared – heart pound she’s there in the church, but she feels a little bit better, you know, just like relaxed and feel comfortable.

L And sometimes then there were other women who came and we had several people –like Amy – who came, and other people that we became like a group. We all knew one another, and it was after that that we moved, and we went to the church; that other church, where Ma Afrique meet, and how was that? How was that for you?

I Translates. When you changed to the other place where there is Ma Afrique, and a week or two had passed [Reconstructed] so then what were your feelings? The same feeling that was in Pars, or different?

H Speaks her own language. No, when we changed the place; in the first church it was all very nice, xxxx Road. It's a nice place here. (*The children's centre where the interview takes place)* Here, it's very, very nice, very, very nice; in here very, very nice. My husband is... [in English)]. My husband also likes this place. When you come here you feel it is a place for children. You feel your children are happy, (Inaudible due to laughter) but here she likes it a lot.
(In English) very very very nice. In here very, very nice. My husband is in here. Mohammed says 'Oh, lovely!'.

I Translates again. She says even her daughter, you know, and her husband, now he is very happy because it's not at the church, but before even in that church it's better than in past, but still they feel it's in the church. This place is not for children, you know. And even her husband, he doesn't mind, but he's not happy with it, but now, when they moved from there and you came here for Sure Start, really he accepted it, and he's happy with that. And even she – she's happy with that, even her daughter.

H Speaks in her own language. We say the church is better for worshipping, it shouldn't be for children playing. They play with (inaudible) [Reconstructed] toys, have messy biscuits and juice. Not right. The church is for worshipping only, not for children. This place here [*children's centre*] is better for children.

I (Translates). She says not because she and her husband have problem with the church   because they are Muslim, but *because* they are Muslim, and they know the Mosque is only for prayer, not to take children to play inside. And same thing is for the church. This is for God and place for praying and worshipping, and something for God,   How can the children go there. It's only just like for respecting. Not because they have problem with Christian and Muslim. No, no. Only for respecting.

L Of course, the church at the end of your road –X Road, when we went – that wasn't in the church, it was in a building – it was not in the place for worship; not for prayer. It was in a separate place, and I remember something that I always smile (laughs). When we were there, we had a room – the second time we were there – we had a room with a piano, and I played, (sings) "What shall we do with bouncy children," and Ooma, – you had your hijab, whoosh – you threw it on the chair, you got up. Flora was small – she wasn't walking– you held her, and you made *everybody*, everybody, we all had to get up, we all danced, and that, to me, I thought, "This is somebody who is happy," but if you think about that, there were maybe several things that made you happy. One, maybe that just the music, two, the people around, and generally, maybe you ...you felt a little different inside. Can you remember that and tell me about the things that made you feel so happy? (Laughs).

I Translates. Do you remember that day when you danced and got everyone to dance? What were your feelings then?

H Speaks in her own language. (lively, laughing)Actually, when I heard the music, I also like that music a lot. I felt free and that I was safe. There are no men with us Thank God. When I go with her I feel safe, I am not afraid. When I go with people I feel afraid but with her I don’t feel scared and I feel free. (laughs)

I (Translates). She feel at that time just like freedom. She is free. She can do whatever she can do – whatever she can do at that time she can do that dance, and the product is she is very happy, and she can just only explain in one word, just like freedom, and she is free.

L Yes. In that moment, in that place, with us, and when you go outside – you still feel so free? And when you go home do you feel so free?

I Translates. After you left that group, did you feel the same feeling? And when you went home did that feeling disappear?

H Speaks in her language. No, no. The day I met her, my life changed. Monday is very, very nice.

I (A). So the happiness that you displayed was with you until you got home?

H Yes thank God. I tell my husband. My husband says good, but no men!

I (Translates). She say yes. She is feel very happy, and that freedom is not only in that place. Even when she went home, she explained to her husband – she explained to her husband, and her husband, he told her, “I hope there is no men.”

Interruption. A staff member and a workman enter the room without knocking. How ironic!

L I’m sorry – excuse me. [I g*o to door and explain that they cannot come in. usher them out. H. starts to put on her hijab*

Interview resumes.

L I’m sorry.

I It’s O.K. No problem. It’s OK!

L She didn’t realise that we had the room. I’m sorry.

I It’s O.K. And she say, after that, really she feel that free, and she was very happy, and when she went home, she explain to her husband, and her husband immediately he told her – “I hope there is no men there when you open your … (imitates pulling back a headscarf) She said, “No, only there is only ladies and it’s O.K., and all the day, she is happy.

L So, if this had been a group with men in it? (Laughs).

I Translates. She said if there were men you wouldn’t have been happy?

H Speaks in her own language. Yes. When you make movements, [Reconstructed] do actions, dance. I make movements - when there are no men with us. I feel embarrassed when there are men with us. I feel very embarrassed. When we are women with women, no problem. I get embarrassed. (Laughs)

I You don’t feel comfortable

I (Translates). She say if there is men, she can’t feel that freedom, and she can’t be happy, but she always happy and she likes when there is woman only, because she can feel free, even whatever she can say, before she doesn’t have that complete freedom, even with woman, but when she starts to come this group, she feels free even with the other woman, she can share with them what her problem and what she feels, and everything, and - but with men she can’t.

L Yes, I totally understand. And – I was going to – yes, one of the things, that time, that first song, “Head and shoulders…”,

H Yes.

L and you said “English! English!”.

H Yes, yes! Nods emphatically and smiles

L So, do you think that in any way, singing English songs has helped or not?

I Translates. What are your feelings when you sing in English? Does this help or not help?

H Speaks in her own language. Yes it does help me. It helps me to speak I don’t know English well enough. I learnt many words. Before I didn’t understand English. When I go to the class with her they speak in English and I keep quiet and don’t talk. Little by little, thank God I understand. I have improved; I get confidence, thank God.

I (Translates). She say when she start to came to your group, she doesn't know English, and er - but when you start to sing and to do, she really love – she understand, even now she can – someone, if she speak with her, she can reply because she know a lot, a lot of things in that group, especially the English, and happy with the song.

H Yes (Nodding and smiling

L When we moved into this building, and then we mixed with the other group, and sometimes there were – there was a husband who used to come, um, and even now, there's a lady – (Name) she's Indian, and her husband.

H (In English) Yes, yes, No problem, Lizzie. This is O.K.

L No problem?

I No problems.

L Because this is a different group? Are you happy with this new group?

I Translates. This is a different group. Are you happy with this group?

H Yes, no problem, my husband coming.

H Speaks in English My husband come and he say …. Speaks in own language. Sometimes my husband needs some thing or I have something, he comes to me here. Also my husband comes to me at the class. No problem. Really no problem.

I (Translates). She says she doesn’t have a problem even if just like, even sometimes, her husband, he – she need something. He came to her and there is another lady there. Also they are Muslim. Even if the husband come, she said that because she put her scarf and everything, but only the difference, because if all woman, she can take off the scarf and just like sit, but if she know that men came, she put her scarf, but no problem.

H No problem.

L Yes. Oh, yes. Since you’ve been coming, have you been to – have you found that you’ve been able to do other things, such as a class? Did you go to any classes here? For cookery, or …?

I Translates. Yes, about cooking, did you learn something? What did you learn?

H Speaks in own language. Some words, what can I say? Some cooking, I forgot its name. Thank God, I used to like the classes a lot. When I used to come here, Flora (re-translated from ‘a flower’ –the name was a literal back-translation to ‘a flower’) used to cry, sometimes she used to cry.

I (Translates). Yes, she says she learns some erm, cook, O.K., and even she know most of the fruit, the vegetables meant before she did them and that is really help her.

L Do you remember when we did cookery at the other place? Did you enjoy that? (Laughs).

H Rolls her eyes and laughs –pulls a face as if she has a bad taste in her mouth.

I Translates. When we were cooking here?

H Stops laughing, still smiling and after listening to Marie, answers (M’s) question in own language. You know I don’t eat meat or chicken (inaudible) [Reconstructed] because I only eat halal. Thank God she used to make me food with only vegetables. Sometimes I come, sometimes I would have an appointment, I would not come.

I (Translates). Yes, she says, she was happy when she came to the course, and also the lady, she was really nice.

H Yes

L That was Annette, Annette doing the cookery course?

I Annette – yes.

L And you came – I didn’t know you were doing this. You did this by yourself? Nobody did it for you. You did it. Yes?

I Translates. She is telling you, nobody told you to come and do this, you yourself

H Speaks in own language. No, no Sometimes she used to tell me,
'come Ooma', (inaudible) - [Reconstructed] Mica, that is - is Ok, Ok! Sometimes
at 10.30 I would go, sometimes, she comes to the house and I would have an
appointment, sometimes she'd come and I would have guests and could not go.

I (Translates). She's saying she feels more confident, you know, even when she
came to that course, and now even she's started for the English course and she
thinks one day she can go herself and do some more courses. But now she has more
confidence because she came to that in that group – in your group.

L Ah. (Laughs). That's fantastic. And what about Flora? Is she – when you think?
(Zarchais comes in and gives me a kiss). Oh, Hello darling.

(Naina comes in and removes her son from the room)

L Do you remember when you first were singing some of the songs – the English
songs – normally a mother always sings a little. She always sings maybe at bedtime
or *some*times she sings to her child. Did you ever sing– begin to sing any English
songs?

I Translates. She is saying to you, when you started to come here they sang some
songs for the children, on the bases that before they go to sleep they sing for them.
Did you try to sing for her?

H Replies in own language. Yes, I go ‘tickle, tickle’ and her father too goes ‘tickle, tickle’ and she laughs. I don’t know the songs by heart, but Mo, but ‘tickle, tickle’ yes and ‘shoulder, head’ (laughs). Sometimes ‘duck, duck’ (Inaudible) Her father goes ‘tickle, tickle, quack, quack’ Laughter.

L All the little ducks?

H (English) Sometimes Little Ducks – ducks, ducks, ducks. Speaks in her own language. What is said here?

L Quack, quack, quack?

I (Translates). She says she can’t know all the songs, but she knows Tickle tickle, and Shoulder, Head, and she sings this song for her. Even her dad, he did something.

L So has Mo learned some of the songs now as well? (laughs)

H Yes.

L So you’ve been teaching your husband English songs?

H Yes.

I Translates.

H Speaks in own language. We took the CD when last year we all had one.

I (Translates). She says the CD what you gave them before she keep it and now she plays and for that reason with her husband she learns some ... learns some of them.

L (Laughs). Oh, that's fantastic. Do you have any thoughts about things that maybe weren't so good in the group?

I Translates. She is saying to you, are there some things which are not good, you didn't like in the group?

H Speaks in own language. No, nothing. (Shakes her head emphatically)

L I can't think of anything else to ask you, (Laughs), because you've just been so fantastic for saying all this, but maybe later I will think of something.

I (Translates). She has no more questions to ask you, but if she thinks of a question, she will ask you.

H Speaks in own language Yes. No problem

I (Translates). No problem.

H Yes, No problem

H Speaks in own language When we meet at the door she says, 'Ooma' and she talks to me.

L There is one thing - one thing that occurs to me. Erm, when you were first here you didn’t know anybody, so through the group (baby’s voice, Flora blows a kiss) (L-laughs) – so through the group, did you make any special friends from coming to the group?

I (Translates) Before you came to the group, you didn’t know the people, but then you came to know them. Do you have any of them now as a friend?

H Speaks in own language Here in the group?

I (Translates) Yes in the group.

H Speaks in own language Yes, there is an English lady who has a young daughter who wears glasses.

I (Translates). She says there is one, er, British woman, and her daughter, she’s er …

L Chloe?

I Yes, she’s her friend. Good relation with her.

L That’s a British woman. And did you make any – well, you obviously made friends in – before –before we had the big group, with everybody?

I Translates. Before the big group, when we first met each other, did you have friends?

H Replies. From the other group?

I (Translates). The first group, did you have any friends? (English) Because she doesn't have any problem.

H Amy. (Laughter) Marie...This group is like a family... sisters.

I Just like – this whole group just like one family, all the sisters.

H Yes. Speaks in her own language. Your friend...who was it?

I (Translates). Your friend …she came with you

L Rachel?

H No.

L At the church?

H No.

L You don't mean Kate?

H Kate. (Speaks in her own language). Kate was very nice with us.

I (Translates). Even Maggie, she's very lovely lady, and just like, you know, Ooma's sister.

L This Friday, you’re going to the zoo – to the farm, I mean – on Friday? X Farm.
You have the tickets?

H Yes.

H Speaks in her own language. Last week I went to English class

I (Translates). Yes, she says before she then had to one of this college, school for
English, and she went there and she register and they tell her to come back after
three weeks. To start.

L Ah! So you’re starting English classes?

H Yes._Because there is crèche.

I (Translates). Yes, she says because they take her children – they have a crèche for
her daughter.

L Is this North area?

H Not North area. In here.

L Oh, this one – here?

H Yes.

L How fantastic.

H Ticket.

Pause - H looks in her bag and produces a leaflet.

L Ah – 24th April – here. Oh, right. That one?

H Yes.

L That's good. And when you were at the groups for Music, that was when we saw that notice.

H Yeh, yes.

L I'd forgotten. Now you see, Ooma – she organises things for herself now. (Laughs).   That's fantastic.

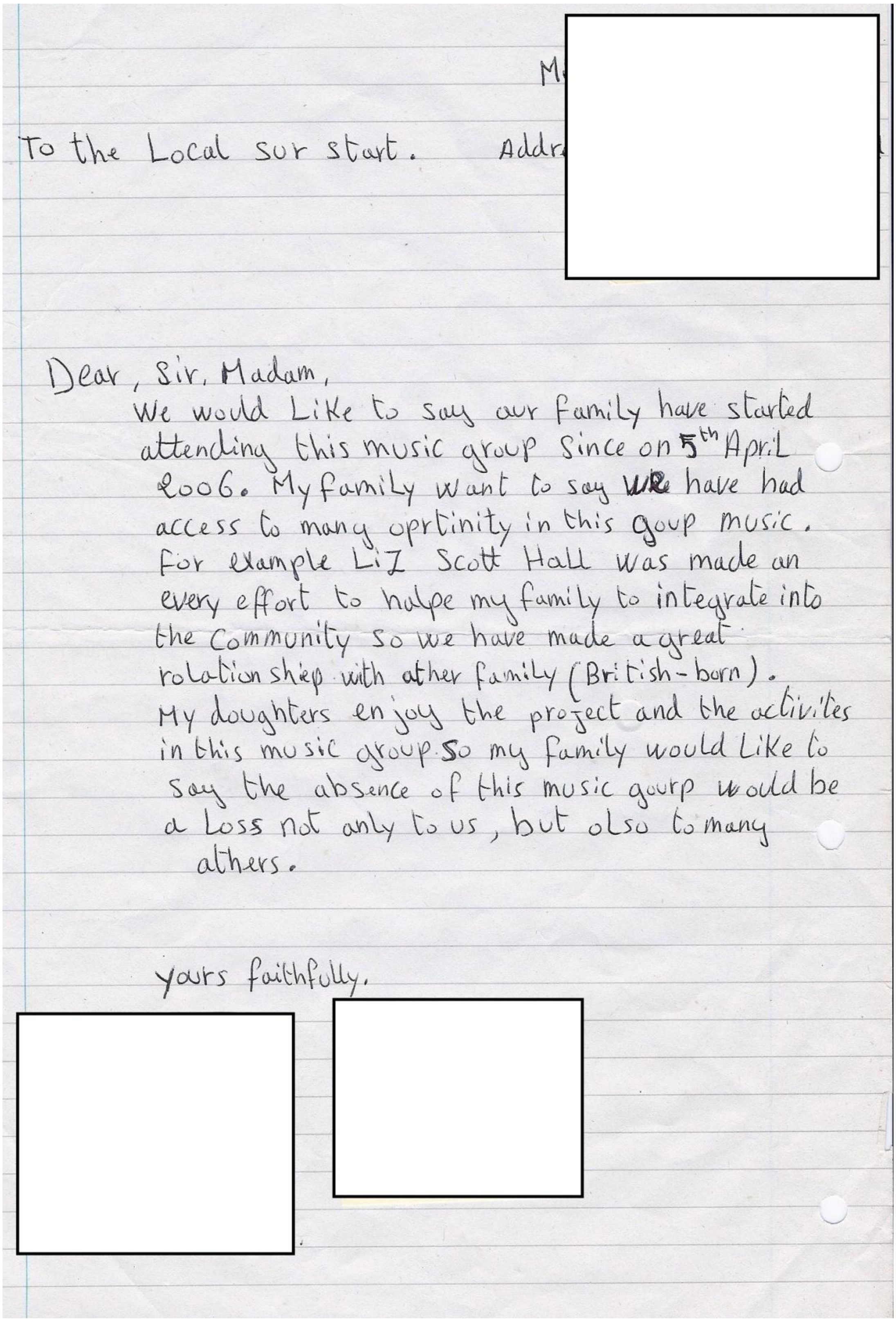
I She's British now. (All laugh). And even me, I'm surprised, because really now she's started speaking English, and that would be – that's good.

L It will be fantastic. I'll turn off the tape recorder. I'd better go and say that the man can …..

Interview ends.

Appendix VIII

Copy of letter from Mo



[redacted]

To the Local sur start.

Dear, Sir, Madam,

We would Like to say our family have started attending this music group since on 5th April 2006. My family want to say we have had access to many oprtinity in this goup music. For example LiZ Scott Hall was made an every effort to halpe my family to integrate into the community so we have made a great rolation ship with ather family (British-born). My doughters enjoy the project and the activites in this music group. So my family would Like to say the absence of this music gourp would be a Loss not anly to us, but olso to many athers.

yours faithfully,

[redacted]

[redacted]

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